

Iveta Radičová supports gender equality and anti-discrimination reforms in Armenia

In early March, the former Prime Minister of Slovakia (2010–2012) and Club de Madrid member Iveta Radičová will visit Armenia to support gender equality initiatives and anti-discrimination policies. Her agenda includes meetings with government representatives, civil society actors, and the international community.

The mission is in the framework of the EU EQUAL project, implemented in Armenia by the OxYGen Foundation and supported by the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD). This program aims to strengthen women's political, economic and socio-cultural rights by promoting inclusive policies in a country where 55% of those living in poverty are women.

On March 5, Radičová will participate in the National Conference on Gender Equality, where she will share her political and social experiences with government officials, members of the National Assembly, and civil society organizations. Key topics include gender equality reforms, women's political participation, and the adoption of an Anti-Discrimination Law.

Radičová will also meet with the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Narek Mkrtychyan, to discuss initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment. Women represent 52.7% of Armenia's workforce, a significantly higher percentage than the global average (39.5%).

With her experience as Slovakia's former Minister of Labor and Social Affairs (2005–2006), Radičová will provide insights on addressing various challenges, such as closing Armenia's gender pay gap, where women earn only 61% of the average male salary, and tackling the fact that 52% of working-age women are unemployed.

Support for Women's Political Leadership

Through this visit, Club de Madrid supports the joint efforts of state and non-state actors to empower women and promote their political leadership. This organization, which brings together over a hundred former heads of state and government, emphasizes that women's political participation is essential for strengthening democracies.



- Prime Minister of Slovakia (2010–2012)
- Member of Club de Madrid
- A social policy expert at the European Commission
- Member of the World Council of Women Leaders
- European Coordinator of the TEN-T Mediterranean Corridor

Currently, women hold 36% of seats in the Armenian Parliament but only 6% of mayoral positions, highlighting the need to increase their representation in decision-making roles, especially considering that women make up 53% of the population.

Despite the magnitude of the challenge, women, alongside many gender-focused men, are leading significant changes in Armenia, achieving remarkable progress in recent years. Armenia's advancement in the Global Gender Gap Index reflects this progress: from ranking 102nd in 2016, it climbed to 61st out of 146 countries in 2023.

The changes are significant. In 2017, two years before the introduction of a political party quota system, only 10% of parliamentarians were women. By 2021, this figure had risen to 23%, reaching the current 36%. Women's voter participation is also increasing. Of course, as in the rest of the world, there is still a long way to go.

Support for the Anti-Discrimination Law

Radičová's visit also coincides with Armenia's ongoing debate on the adoption of the Law on Ensuring Equality and Protection Against Discrimination, a mechanism designed to guarantee equal treatment and prevent discrimination.

On March 6, the former Slovak minister will meet with a group of parliamentarians and the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, Rustam Bakoyan, who, alongside civil society organizations, are promoting the proposed legislation.

Club de Madrid highlights that the draft law is based on Armenia's national legal framework and the international human rights treaties it has ratified. Its adoption would strengthen institutional capacity and civil society, reaffirming the government's commitment to a more equitable and inclusive country.

By supporting these legal reforms, Radičová's visit underscores the urgency of advancing transformative gender-focused policies to protect the most vulnerable groups, particularly in a context where more than 50,000 women and girls have been displaced following the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh war.

Achieving these goals is a challenge shared with the international community. As a member of Club de Madrid, Radičová will also meet with the Head of the European Union Delegation to Armenia, Vassilis Maragos, and other diplomatic representatives.

Club de Madrid reaffirms that closing gender gaps and eradicating discrimination are fundamental pillars for strengthening democracies. The initiatives it supports in Armenia align with this vision.

