

Spain - Women Take Top Positions

The world was robbed by an assassin earlier this year of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, who might well have become Pakistan's leader.

There was once a time when having a woman in a powerful political position was unheard of. Those days are gone, for the most part. There always will be people who oppose the idea, but they are becoming the minority.

Margaret Thatcher paved the way for the future of women in politics. She held the position of British prime minister from 1979-1990, the longest tenure in that office since 1827.

She led the Conservative Party from 1975-1990 and was the first and only female (to date) to hold either position. Nicknamed 'The Iron Lady' she was a close ally of U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Margaret Thatcher once said, 'The woman's mission is not to enhance the masculine spirit, but to express the feminine. Hers is not to preserve a man-made world, but to create a human world by the infusion of the feminine elements into all of its activities.'

Women Now the Majority in the Spanish Cabinet

Thatcher isn't the only woman to hold an important political position. Spain's newly elected Prime Minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, has a strong platform for gender equality. Until recently, his cabinet was equally split between male and female members. He changed that balance when he named a woman, Carme Chacon, as the new defense minister.

This created a shift that made a majority of the cabinet female for the first time in history. Nine of Spain's 17 cabinet members are now women. Zapatero also is planning to raise the number of women in the Spanish armed forces.

Zapatero's choice for defense minister has been met with some skepticism because Chacon lacks a military background.

She earned her law degree from Barcelona University. In 1989, she joined the Cataluna Young Socialists. Later, she joined the PSC Catalan Socialist Party. Her first formal experience in politics came in 1999 when she was elected first deputy. The following year, she was elected as a Socialist MP for [Barcelona](#). Chacon was later given the title of first vice president of Congress.

Hillary Clinton Runs for President

Another prime example of women in politics is Hillary Clinton. In 1992, she became the U.S. first lady when her husband, Bill Clinton, was elected president.

She proved herself a headstrong woman during their eight years in the White House. She ran for and won a seat in the U.S. Senate in 2000. She was re-elected in 2006. Her formidable 2008 presidential campaign has helped to break through even more barriers for women in politics.

Hillary Clinton has held strong to her beliefs in health care, women's rights, child advocacy and a fair voting process. She also has taken the stance that the fight at home over the U.S. economic crisis is just as important as the fighting going on overseas.

Women in Politics

More and more qualified women around the world are entering the political ring and they are paving a path for the future of women in politics. A growing need for equality has made it possible for more women to run for office.

We may one day see a time when having females in top leadership positions, or in the majority of a nation's leadership, is no longer viewed as a unique occurrence, and Spain is leading the way with women being holding the majority of the country's top political posts.

About the Author

Tribune Properties produce a series of European travel guides including for the Spanish island of Tenerife at <http://www.yourtenerife.net>

The guide includes airlines who offer [Tenerife flights](#) to the island's airport.

