

WOMAN: pp. 40-44

The Test of “Politladys” (Political Ladies)

Competence & Accessibility. The WOMAN test takes Austria’s most well-known Politladys under the magnifying glass. We checked Glawischnig, Prokop & Co. How good are they really? And: Who reacts to inquiries?

Politics today is no rope pulling around best content. It represents a tough competition for the most successful media appearances. A female politician must constantly work on her image and must concentrate a complicated content in a few central messages. Whoever can sell herself better, will gain scores. WOMAN wanted to know it exactly: Who connects the best? We tested the 13 most well-known domestic Politladys in the categories professionalism, credibility, accessibility, and styling. Competent tester for the first three categories: Regina Jankowitsch.

“Nail test”. Forty-year old Jankowitsch is one of the rare female coaches in Austria and an expert for “political leadership”. She advises her customers in media training and leadership competence. The WOMAN editorship made available to Jankowitsch video recordings and TV appearances of all 13 female politicians. In accordance with the verbal evaluation of the coach, the WOMAN editorship assigned scores for the ranking. In the category “professionalism”, Jankowitsch took the professional competence and the know-how in dealing with the media under the magnifying glass. With “charisma” she was concerned with courage and the ability to inspire others. “Credibility” evaluates the authenticity. Jankowitsch: “Here it concerns, whether someone appears authentically, whether the body language of the politician fits together.”

“A perfect female politician does not exist. However, Burgstaller and Glawischnig are full professionals.”

The decision over the best occurrence and outfit is being made by the stylist Eva Stefanski, 30. She works for many years as an advisor in style questions. For the evaluation she received from the WOMAN editorship photo materials from all active female politicians. In order to find out, which of the Austrian Politlady reacts to requests from woman citizens, the WOMAN editorship sent out fictitious inquiries under a private e-mail address to all. From the eight reply mails, five were very detailed.

Too bad: Maria Rauch-Kallat, Ursula Plassnik, Liese Prokop, Waltraud Klasnic, and Benita Ferrero-Waldner did not react at all.

The results in the detail.

- The winners – ex aequo – are the polit-professionals Gabi Burgstaller and Eva Glawischnig. Regarding the province governor of Salzburg, Jankowitsch was impressed by Burgstaller's strength, to speak positively in public about the political competitors. "Her arguments she concentrates on the most important topics, thus no danger exists, to dissipate one's energies." Our e-mail – in her case referring to child care facilities – was professionally answered. The green deputy chair Eva Glawischnig appeared to Jankowitsch remarkably authentically. She received scores for her natural speech and her perfect media performance: short sentences, many good "phrases", metaphorical comparisons, which generate a practical understanding.

"Contest. Which politician can sell herself the best?"

- Minister of Justice, Karin Miklantsch, ranks second. "In the meanwhile, her handling of journalists is as if from the text book. Also, when inquired five times, she certainly remains friendly", so Jankowitsch.
- An "old hand" in politics made it to the third rank: almost nothing can irritate Waltraud Klasnic. "For delicate questions she gives short

answers. This rule she controls perfectly, but she does not exaggerate it so far that one gets the feeling, she wants to evade.”

- Vienna’s Environmental City Councilwoman Ulli Sima shares the fourth rank with the FP Party Chair Ursula Haubner. Sima’s charisma and credibility vary – depending, whether she is concerned with a topic, so our judgment. “Haubner again can withstand attacks: with a good view contact, a strong voice and an offensive behavior”.
- In the midfield lie the SP’s National Council President Barbara Prammer and the Minister of Education Elisabeth Gehrler. Both try to make themselves understandable in public appearances with examples, their credibility, however, often shifts.
- Because our expert misses with EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner naturalness, she only places on the sixth rank. “That she repeats important arguments and facts is, in appropriate proportions, a good method”, emphasizes the coach. For her outfit she receives, as the only one, all scores.
- Madeleine Petrovic, Green Party Chair in Lower Austria, “argues well and comprehensible, however, appears often burdened.”
- Far behind lie the VP Ministers Liese Prokop (Interior) and Maria Rauch-Kallat (Woman). Both also did not reply to our mails.
- The last rank is occupied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ursula Plassnik, VP. Jankowitsch: “In the television she rarely shows feelings, her credibility is based, above average, on her intellect and expertise.”

“The perfect female politician will never exist”, supposes the expert. “Already won has the one, who knows, which goal she aims at. Pure

staging is not successful.” The true professionals elaborate their perfect appearance – and remain authentic.

Tanja Duffek