

EASTERN EUROPE

Lead

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Structural barriers and negative trends

- Our countries suffer from political instability. This hinders the continuity of public reforms in the field of gender equality in general, and specifically in the field of women's economic empowerment.
- The implementation mechanisms for the laws are very unsteady, for these reasons the good laws that the 7 states have, do not provide the desired results;
- The gender dimension is not integrated into all public policies for all development areas and implementation of programs for gender policies are always underfinanced, and are not among the financing priorities of the governments;
- Low level of dialogue and cooperation between governments and civil society organizations in addressing women's problems and implementing gender-oriented development policies;
- Lack of corporate culture of monitoring and evaluation of public policies implementation towards gender equality achievements;
- A strongly stereotyped mindset of the society and low-level actions done by stakeholders to make the society understand the value of equality between women and men in building the democratic society and society development;
- Significant women's underrepresentation on Politics in Parliament, Government, Regional and Municipal Councils;
- Economic empowerment and financial independence of women is one of the most important triggers that can help eliminate violence and support healthy families. Nevertheless, countries fail to recognize its importance. There is a need to have a broader approach to women's economic empowerment;
- Public employment policies do not have sufficient focus on unemployed women, especially among those from the most disadvantaged groups. Despite the efforts of the

Governments to reduce unemployment, women are still “leading” in the unemployment statistics. Little is done to focus on improving women’s access to decent jobs, which can also reduce the level of emigration among women and help preserve families;

- Lack of sex-disaggregated statistical data in most areas of development policies. Our countries are weak in collecting sex-disaggregated data to make women voice heard and gender inequalities to be seen. Without data, big or small, all initiatives are doomed to failure in the long run. Insufficient attention to gender analysis simply means that women’s contributions and concerns remain too often ignored.



Progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action

Civil society organizations appreciate:

- The steps undertaken by the Government of Armenia to enshrine equality between women and men in the national Constitution, and to develop policies to fight domestic violence and human trafficking;
- the actions of the Government of Azerbaijan to create a countrywide online database on domestic violence against women, to improve the collection, analysis, and the use of data; and to implement national programmes to increase women's economic empowerment. As a result, the percentage of women entrepreneurs has increased by a factor of seven, from 4 per cent to 29 per cent;
- The efforts of the Government of Belarus to increase women's participation at the decision-making level. The proportion of elected members of parliament who are women is 32.5 percent, and that of members of local councils is 48.2 percent. It should be mentioned that the system for protecting victims of violence has also improved: this includes protective orders and the obligation on the perpetrator to temporarily leave the premises of the victim of violence;
- The significant actions of the Government of Georgia to emphasize in the Constitution real equality and to improve the legislative framework on gender equality, violence against women and girls and women's rights; to strengthen Georgia's national institutional framework for monitoring and advancing women's equality including at municipal level, and to ratify of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention);
- The achievements of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to improve the legal framework on gender equality that include: introducing 14 calendar days of paid paternity leave; prohibiting sexist language and sexist images in advertising; strengthening the institutional mechanism to ensure gender equality at central and local level; and introducing a 40 per cent gender quota in electoral and decision-making processes;
- The significant actions of the Government of Romania to adjust the national legal framework to meet international standards by incorporating distinct provisions and measures regarding compliance with equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men in the labour market, participation in decision-making, education, culture and

information, elimination of gender roles and stereotypes; and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention);

- The efforts of the Government of Ukraine to expand anti-discrimination legislation, including the legal framework on gender equality; to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security”; to strengthen the national mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men by introducing coordination of government efforts on gender policy in the mandate of the Vice Prime Minister and by creating the post of Governmental Commissioner for Gender Policy; and to develop a new system for preventing and combating domestic violence and gender-based violence.



Recommendations beyond Beijing+25

Investing in women’s economic empowerment, political participation and ending violence against women are among the most urgent and effective means to drive progress on gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth. Based on the above-mentioned challenges, the following proposals/recommendations are developed:

- Integrated gender dimension into all public policies for all development areas;
- Provide/allocate sufficient funds from national budgets for the implementation of programs for gender policies;
- Implement gender-based budgeting and public procurement based on gender data.
- Collect systematically data, at the national and regional level, to support decision-making and policy implementation at different stages of implementation;
- Strengthen gender focal points in governmental agencies and/or establish where they do not exist. Extend this practice into the public administration at the local and regional level. Central and local authorities need to get involved in combating any anti-gender action that reinforces the inequality between women and men and prevents gender education in schools;
- Introduce gender quotas in electoral legislation with strong enforcement mechanisms and enhance the national legal framework from gender perspectives, for countries where it does not exist;
- Improve national legal frameworks for encouraging political parties and parliaments to eliminate gender discrimination and harassment and/or address such incidents accordingly;
- Strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between governments and civil society organizations in addressing women’s problems and implementing gender-oriented development policies;
- Develop policies and action plans focusing on the advancement of women entrepreneurship.
- Offer state-supported scholarships for women choosing STEM careers;

- Develop infrastructure at the local level that will help women become more economically active
- Improve and extend access to family planning and health care programs for women in rural and remote areas;
- Strengthen primary medical and health care services and develop the road infrastructure from and to remote areas, thus increasing girls' and women's access to educational, health, social, employment and other qualitative public services;
- Conduct systematic gender audit of all public services, with a special focus on healthcare, educational and employment services to permanently adjust them to the real needs of women;
- Ensure ending sexual harassment practices, stalking, bullying and alike, by offering continuous training, monitoring for both women and men on the job, at schools and universities. Women must feel safe!
- The states and its servants need to seriously assume responsibility for the prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV), protection of victims and punishment of perpetrators to send a clear message of zero tolerance to VAWG not merely through statements, but through concrete actions;
- Constantly check how policies secure rights for most vulnerable categories and enroll them in consultations;
- Elaborate and implement mechanisms for the protection of women living in conflict-affected areas;
- Develop mechanisms for multiplication of the good practices in women peace and security areas;
- Strengthen the capacities of directors of media outlets in the field of gender equality, who are responsible for the directions the media promotes. Also, continue with building capacities of media on gender terminology, on gender equality and equip media and journalists with arguments to explain to the public at large why gender equality matters.