

IN BRIEF

WOMEN ON THE MOVE IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Bridging Rights, Protection and Opportunities

April 2026



1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a defining feature of social and economic transformation in Europe and Central Asia (ECA)¹, a region that simultaneously functions as a space of origin, transit and destination. More than **26 million** people born in ECA countries live outside their country of origin, while the region also hosts over **17 million** international migrants and displaced persons.² Women account for around half of both emigrants and immigrants in the ECA region, with higher shares in several subregions, reflecting the continued feminization of migration.

When supported by inclusive institutions and rights-based policies, migration can contribute to economic resilience, demographic sustainability and women's economic empowerment. However, across the region, women on the move are disproportionately concentrated in informal and precarious sectors (particularly care, domestic and low-paid service work), face barriers to labour-market integration, skills recognition and social protection, and are exposed to heightened risks of exploitation, harassment and gender-based violence. These risks are compounded by insecure legal status, dependency-based residence arrangements, weak labour protections and entrenched gender norms that shape mobility choices and constrain women's autonomy across all stages of migration.

In line with international commitments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and other relevant international labour standards and regional human rights frameworks, this advocacy brief examines how migration governance across ECA can be strengthened to ensure that women's mobility translates into equal rights, protection and economic opportunities rather than reinforcing inequality and precarity.

¹ Unless stated otherwise, the ECA countries considered in this research are those included in the following subregions: 1) Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244), Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia; 2) Türkiye was treated as a separate subregion; 3) Eastern Europe (Republic of Moldova and Ukraine); 4) Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan); 5) South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia).

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). 2025. International Migrant Stock 2024 [International Migrant Stock. 2024. \[Total, origin; Table 1\]](#). All countries included in this research are reflected in the calculation, except for Kosovo.

In response to these regional dynamics, UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, in collaboration with International Organization for Migration (IOM), commissioned a comprehensive study on the gender dimensions of mixed migration in the region. The research analysed numerous robust data sets to generate policy-relevant evidence on how gender shapes migration trajectories, opportunities and risks, while identifying critical gaps that limit effective, gender-responsive migration governance. It examined women's motivations, experiences and constraints across diverse contexts, including labour and educational migration, family migration, transit and mixed movements, forced displacement, trafficking, return, and emerging forms of environmental and climate-related mobility.

The research covered five subregions: **Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Caucasus and Türkiye**, reflecting the region's role as a space of origin, transit and destination. These subregions are shaped by intersecting dynamics of economic inequality, conflict and displacement, demographic changes, labour demand, restrictive legal regimes and climate stress. The study applied a feminist analytical framework that recognizes migration as a gendered and socially embedded process rather than a gender-neutral economic choice. It moved beyond vulnerability-only narratives to examine both constraints and agency, highlighting how migration can contribute to gender-transformative change, while also showing why empowerment is neither automatic nor guaranteed. Outcomes depend on intersecting inequalities related to class, ethnicity, legal status, family roles, enjoyment of rights and access to services across all stages of migration: from departure and transit to destination, return or reintegration.



To ensure a robust and comparable evidence base, the regional study applied a mixed-methods approach combining desk review, quantitative analysis and qualitative insights. It drew on national administrative and statistical data, complemented by international data sets from the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Eurostat, using a standardized analytical framework to enable cross-country and subregional comparison. Qualitative evidence was strengthened through interviews with 13 key stakeholders at regional and national levels, including representatives of international organizations, government institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) directly engaged in supporting women migrants across different contexts. The analysis was guided by an intersectional lens and paid particular attention to data availability and quality. While the research encountered a series of limitations – notably gaps in regular migration monitoring, limited gender and intersectional disaggregation, inconsistent definitions across countries, and the under documentation of irregular, circular and environmental migration – the analysis draws on the most comprehensive and comparable evidence currently available across the region. These limitations do not undermine the validity of the findings; rather, they highlight systemic shortfalls that require more systematic, open and gender-sensitive migration data systems across the ECA region.

This brief draws on the findings to translate evidence into actionable messages for policymakers, development partners and stakeholders. Its objective is to translate this evidence into clear, actionable priorities that support governments, regional processes and partners in strengthening gender-responsive migration governance and institutional frameworks, ensuring that migration contributes more effectively to inclusive development, gender equality and social justice.

Following this introduction, Section 2 outlines key regional patterns in gendered migration dynamics across the ECA region. Section 3 builds on this analysis to identify the main structural gaps in migration governance and the opportunities for strengthening gender-responsive systems. The brief concludes with Section 4, which outlines priority actions to guide governments, regional processes and partners in advancing gender-responsive migration governance across the region. **The brief is complemented by five subregional profiles**, each summarising key findings for the respective subregion.

2. REGIONAL MIGRATION DYNAMICS AND STRUCTURAL GENDER PATTERNS

2.1 Drivers and mobility trends

ECA is a migration crossroads shaped by shocks, inequality and climate pressure. Europe and Central Asia sits at the intersection of the European Union (EU), Middle East and Eurasian corridors, and recent shocks have sharply reconfigured mobility, such as the full-scale war in Ukraine, geopolitical shifts in the South Caucasus and unresolved post-conflict dynamics in parts of the Western Balkans. Moreover, climate and environmental risks (floods, droughts, water stress, earthquakes and heatwaves) are increasingly reinforcing migration pressures by undermining rural livelihoods and straining urban resilience. Across subregions, many countries have reached upper-middle or high-income status³ and high human development,⁴ but persistent inequalities, governance constraints⁵ and structural gender gaps⁶ continue to limit inclusive development. Demographic decline and population ageing are widespread,⁷ while labour markets underperform relative to the EU, especially in women's economic participation and leadership, creating both push factors (limited decent work) and pull factors (labour demand abroad).

Gender norms are a structural driver of who migrates, how and into what work. Deeply rooted gender norms shape mobility decisions and outcomes. The *2023 Gender Social Norms Index*⁸ indicated that most populations across ECA hold at least one gender bias, particularly regarding women's economic roles. In practice, this means women's migration is often channelled into feminized and undervalued sectors (domestic work,

care work and low-paid services) and women's mobility is frequently framed as part of family strategies rather than as an independent economic choice.

International migration from ECA is expanding rapidly and feminizing. Estimates⁹ show that the number of people born in ECA countries and living outside the region has significantly increased since 1990, reaching more than 27 million by 2024. Women account for slightly more than half of ECA-born migrants,¹⁰ and their numbers have grown faster than men's in recent years, confirming a clear feminization of migration. At the same time, ECA is also a major host region: migrant and displaced populations continue to grow in absolute terms and women form a growing share of migrants residing in the region.¹¹ This strengthens the case for gender-responsive reception, protection and integration systems, especially for access to decent work and skills recognition, healthcare and sexual and reproductive health services, protection from gender-based violence, and childcare and language support that enable labour market participation.

Women's mobility is embedded in regional labour markets, demographic change and care systems. Across subregions, women migrate not only as accompanying family members but as workers, students, caregivers and independent economic actors responding to persistent labour-market inequality, limited access to decent work and entrenched gender norms in countries of origin.¹² At the same time, destination countries rely heavily on women's labour in care, domestic and service sectors to sustain ageing populations and address workforce

³ World Bank Data Help Desk. n. d. . "[How does the World Bank classify countries?](#)"

⁴ UNDP. 2025. [UN Human Development indices](#).

⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit. 2024. [Democracy Index 2023](#), Transparency International. 2025. [Corruption Perceptions Index](#).

⁶ World Economic Forum. 2024. [Global Gender Gap 2024](#).

⁷ World Bank. Undated. [World Development Indicators](#).

⁸ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2023. [2023 Gender Social Norms Index](#).

⁹ UNDESA. 2024. [International Migration Stock 2024](#). Table 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Çitil-Akyol, C. 2024. "[Perceptions of women of Turkish origin living abroad on being a migrant: Existence as a woman](#)." *International Migration* 62(6), pp. 175–188; Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency. 2020. [Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education \(CBHE\) Action: Regional Report on Eastern Partnership Countries](#); Salikutluk, Z., J. Giesecke and M. Kroh. 2020. "[The situation of female immigrants on the German labour market: A multi-perspective approach](#)." SOEP Papers, pp. 1702–2020.

shortages.¹³ Women’s migration is therefore shaped by interconnected structural drivers: unequal economic opportunities, unpaid care responsibilities and sustained demand for feminized labour across borders.

Climate change, environmental degradation and disasters increasingly interact with economic fragility and conflict to influence women’s migration decisions.¹⁴ While the scale and form vary across subregions – from drought-related rural mobility to disaster-induced displacement – women are often disproportionately affected due to their concentration in agriculture, limited access to productive resources and heavier unpaid care responsibilities that limit their adaptive and coping mechanisms.



2.2 Gender patterns and systemic constraints affecting women on the move

While migration dynamics vary across subregions, the analysis reveals how social norms shape gender patterns affecting women’s migration experiences across ECA. Four cross-cutting dynamics are particularly visible: labour-market segmentation and deskilling, the role of care economies and dependency structures shaping mobility, persistent exposure to gender-based violence along migration pathways, and important gaps in the availability and use of gender-sensitive migration data. At the same time, uneven integration of gender considerations across migration governance frameworks limits the extent to which these structural dynamics are addressed in policy and programming.

Labour segmentation and deskilling

Women migrants across the ECA region frequently migrate with equal or higher levels of education than men, yet face disproportionately high rates of overqualification, occupational downgrading and weak recognition of their skills. Across the region, various forms of overqualification among certain groups of migrant women reaches particularly high levels,¹⁵ reflecting systemic barriers rather than individual deficits. Obstacles such as slow or costly credential recognition, language requirements, limited access to professional networks, employer bias and care responsibilities restrict women’s access to jobs that match their qualifications.¹⁶

¹³ Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa. 2021. [Armenian Migrants in Turkey: An All-Female Story](#); Toksöz and Ünlütürk-Ulutaş. 2011. “[Göç Kadınlaşıyor mu? Türkiye’yeYönelen Düzensiz Göçe İlişkin Yazına Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Etnisite Temelinde Bakış](#)”, S.Sancar. Birkaç Arpa Boyu: 21. Yüzyıla Girenken Türkiye, Vol. I. İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları. pp. 191-218; U.S. Department of State. 2022–2024. [Trafficking in Persons Report 2022–2024](#). [link directs to 2024 report; reports for 2022-2023 and country-specific data accessible via site navigation].

¹⁴ Eraslan, A. 2024. “Between transience and permanence: Forced migration experience of Hatay residents after the 6 and 20 February 2023 earthquakes.” *Folklor / Edebiyat*, 30(4/1), 120; FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization). 2022. [National gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods](#); IOM. Undated. [Exploring the links between migration, environment, and climate change in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

¹⁵ Güveli, A. and N. Spierings. 2022. [Migrant women’s employment: International Turkish migrants in Europe, their descendants, and their non-migrant counterparts in Turkey](#); IOM. 2025. [Gender aspects in migration and return: Women’s experiences in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan](#), p. 24; IOM. 2024. [Poland: Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods of Refugees from Ukraine](#). DTM Quarterly Report, October–December 2024; OECD. 2022. [Labor Migration in the Western Balkans](#).

¹⁶ Mikolaj, J., H. Kulu, I. Delaporte, et al. 2025. “[Origin, generation, and destination country context: Employment changes and childbearing among female immigrants and their descendants in the UK, France, and Germany](#).” *European Journal of Population* 41, 26.

As a result, many migrant women are concentrated in feminized sectors such as domestic work, long-term care, hospitality, retail services and low-paid agricultural work.¹⁷ These sectors are frequently characterized by informality, weak labour protections, dependency on employers or intermediaries and limited access to social protection, resulting in precarious working conditions even when migration is regular.¹⁸ This pattern reflects both structural constraints in labour markets and sustained demand for migrant labour in care and service sectors linked to ageing populations and labour shortages in destination countries. The resulting deskilling reduces earnings, weakens long-term economic security and limits pension accumulation, representing a loss for migrant women as well as for origin and destination economies that fail to fully utilize available human capital.

Care economy dynamics and dependency structures

Care responsibilities play a central role in shaping women's migration decisions, labour-market outcomes and economic autonomy across the ECA region. Women frequently migrate to fill care deficits in destination countries, particularly in domestic work and long-term care, while continuing to sustain transnational responsibilities for children, older relatives and other dependents in countries of origin.¹⁹ At the same time, male-dominated labour migration often leaves women behind managing households, farms and unpaid care work, increasing time poverty and limiting their own employment and mobility opportunities.

Women's mobility is often framed as part of family strategies rather than recognized as an independent economic choice,²⁰ while family-linked residence permits and sponsorship arrangements can create legal and economic dependency. These dynamics contribute to delayed labour-market entry, restricted access to social protection and limited economic autonomy for migrant women.

As highlighted in the subregional profiles, migration systems across the region are deeply intertwined with care economies that operate across borders. When women migrate, many become primarily concentrated in domestic and care economies. In many cases, they sustain paid labour often combining subsistence farming or informal work²¹ in destination countries while simultaneously absorbing unpaid care deficits within households and communities with intensified unpaid domestic labour. These dynamics form part of broader transnational care chains, in which care responsibilities are redistributed across families and countries.²² Yet these cross-border care arrangements remain poorly captured in official data and largely invisible in migration governance and policy design.

¹⁷ Anti-Discrimination Centre, FIDH and ILI. 2018. [Invisible and exploited in Kazakhstan: The plight of Kyrgyz migrant workers and members of their families](#); GRETA. 2024. [Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human beings by Türkiye](#); Insjider. 2023. [Astra: Zbog bogate i moćne porodice iz Beograda istina o eksploataciji Filipinke u Srbiji ostaje zamagljena](#); IOM. 2024. [Poland: Economic inclusion and livelihoods of Ukrainian Nationals](#).

¹⁸ Armstat; European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. 2025. [Closing the Gender Gap in Vocational Education and Training: A Path to Inclusive Growth](#); IOM. 2023. [Migration Profile of the Republic of Armenia 2023](#).

¹⁹ OECD. 2022. [Labor Migration in the Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits](#).

²⁰ Çitil-Akyol, C. 2024. "Perceptions of women of Turkish origin living abroad on being a migrant: Existence as a woman." *International Migration* 62 (6), pp. 175–188; Author's calculations based on Eurostat. [Population on 1 January by age group, sex and country of birth](#) [Author's calculations based on Eurostat data](#).

²¹ FAO. 2022. [National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods. The Republic of Moldova](#); FAO. 2025. [National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods. Georgia](#).

²² Hochschild, A. R. 2000. "Global Care Chains and Emotional Surplus Value" in Hutton, W. and A. Giddens. (Eds.) *On the Edge: Living with Global Capitalism*. pp. 130–146; Yeates, N. 2009. [Globalizing Care Economies and Migrant Workers: Explorations in Global Care Chains](#). Palgrave Macmillan.

Persistent gender-based violence risks

Gender-based violence is a persistent cross-cutting risk along migration pathways, particularly for women in irregular or transit situations, victims of trafficking those working in informal sectors and displaced women.²³ Yet these risks remain significantly underreported.²⁴ Stigma, fear of deportation or job loss, dependency-based residence arrangements, lack of female interpreters and weak gender-sensitive screening procedures continue to discourage disclosure. Security-focused migration management approaches can further limit the identification of protection needs,²⁵ leaving many cases undetected and insufficiently addressed.

Data availability, visibility and use

The desk review and analysis of available evidence conducted for this research indicate that the visibility of women's migration experiences remains limited in existing data systems across Europe and Central Asia. Sex-disaggregated migration statistics often remain confined to headline stocks and flows, while key dimensions of women's migration – including care responsibilities, sector of employment, informality, legal-status transitions and exposure to violence – are rarely captured systematically. Important forms of mobility, such as irregular, circular, transit, return and environmentally driven migration, are particularly weakly documented. Fragmented administrative systems, inconsistent definitions and uneven country coverage further constrain comparability and the ability to support evidence-based policymaking.



Uneven integration of gender in migration governance

More broadly, gender integration across migration governance remains uneven. While regional migration governance in ECA is supported by multiple policy dialogues, EU-linked mechanisms and international commitments, implementation remains inconsistent. Gender considerations are more visible in asylum and anti-trafficking frameworks, but remain less systematically integrated in labour migration, integration, return, border governance and responses to environmentally driven mobility. As a result, structural barriers affecting migrant women continue to be insufficiently addressed across several stages of migration systems.

²³ Demirdizen, D. 2013. [Türkiye’de Ev Hizmetlerinde Çalışan Göçmen Kadınlar: Yeni Düzenlemelerle Yarı Köle Emegine Doğru mu? \[Migrant Women Working in Domestic Services in Turkey: Towards Semi-Slavery with New Regulations?\]](#) Çalışma ve Toplum, 3, 325–346; Toksöz, M. & Ünlütürk-Ulutaş, Ç. 2011. “Göç Kadınlaşıyor mu? Türkiye’ye Yönelen Düzensiz Göçe İlişkin Yazına Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Etnisite Temelinde Bakış”, in S. Sancar (Ed.), Birkaç Arpa Boyu: 21. Yüzyıla Gिरerken Türkiye, Vol. I, pp. 191–218. İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları; Marković, J., and M. Cvejić. 2017. [Nasilje nad ženama i devojčicama u izbegličkoj i migrantskoj populaciji u Srbiji. Atina](#); IOM. 2025. [Ukraine - Internal Displacement Report - general population survey round 20 \(April 2025\)](#); UNFPA. 2024. [WE ARE HERE: A qualitative rapid assessment of Gender-based violence among refugees in Armenia](#); UNICEF. 2021. [Gender-based violence programme overview: Serbia – refugee and migrant response](#).

²⁴ Stojanović, T. 2023. [Gender-Sensitive Policies in the Field of Migration](#). Grupa 484.

²⁵ Ibid.

3. GAPS AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

The gaps and opportunities outlined below translate the patterns identified in the analysis into key areas for policy attention and reform.

3.1 Data and evidence systems

STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Migration data systems remain fragmented and weakly harmonized across institutions and countries.
- There is limited availability of sex- and age-disaggregated data.
- Key dimensions of women's migration remain insufficiently captured, including care responsibilities, sector of employment, skills recognition, remittance use and exposure to violence.
- Irregular, transit, circular, return and environmentally driven mobility remain particularly under-measured.
- Women's labour market outcomes, deskilling and reintegration trajectories are not systematically tracked.
- Gender analysis is not yet consistently integrated into migration monitoring and reporting systems.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- There is growing recognition across the region of the need for more harmonized and policy-relevant migration data.
- Existing statistical and administrative systems provide an entry point for integrating gender-sensitive variables while applying strong do-no-harm safeguards.
- Mixed-methods approaches can complement official statistics and help capture less-visible dynamics, including care arrangements and informal employment.
- Stronger regional coordination could improve the comparability of data and strengthen evidence-based policymaking.

3.2 Protection and access to services

STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Gender-sensitive standards remain uneven across border, transit, reception and asylum settings.
- Limited privacy, lack of female staff and interpreters, and weak trauma-informed procedures continue to hinder safe disclosure of protection needs.
- Access to services often depends on legal status, location and project-based support.
- Gender-based violence remains significantly underreported across migration pathways.
- Referral systems remain inconsistent, particularly in transit and irregular migration contexts.
- Longer-term protection and reintegration support remain insufficient for many survivors of trafficking, violence and exploitation.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong international and regional normative frameworks already exist and can be more consistently translated into operational practice.
- Anti-trafficking systems and survivor-centred approaches provide an entry point for broader gender-responsive reforms.
- Temporary protection arrangements for displaced Ukrainians demonstrate how inclusive legal status and early access to services can reduce protection risks and support women's autonomy.
- Existing cooperation between governments, UN entities and CSOs provides a foundation for strengthening coordinated protection responses.

3.3 Economic inclusion, labour and care

STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Women migrants remain concentrated in low-paid, undervalued and often informal sectors, especially care, domestic work and services.
- High levels of overqualification, deskilling and weak recognition of qualifications undermine women's economic autonomy.
- Labour inspection and rights enforcement remain weak in sectors where many migrant women are employed.
- Limited childcare, language training, housing support and professional networks constrain labour-market participation.
- Return and reintegration systems remain largely care-blind and insufficiently responsive to women's livelihood realities.
- Migration governance rarely recognizes transnational care chains or the redistribution of unpaid care across borders.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Demographic ageing, labour shortages and rising care needs create incentives for reform.
- Expanding regular labour-migration pathways could better reflect women's participation in labour mobility.
- Growing policy attention to care economy reform creates opportunities to link migration governance with investments in childcare and long-term care systems.
- Improved skills recognition and stronger labour-market integration policies could reduce deskilling and support more equitable economic outcomes.

3.4 Participation and representation

STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Migrant women remain insufficiently included in migration policy design, implementation and monitoring.
- Gender considerations are often treated as a specialized issue rather than a standard of good migration governance.
- Consultation mechanisms with migrant women and women-led organizations remain limited or ad hoc.
- Monitoring frameworks rarely include indicators on participation or gender-responsive outcomes.
- Women in less-visible migration situations, including irregular or transit contexts, remain largely excluded from decision-making spaces.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Women-led and migrant-led civil society networks across the region provide important expertise and accountability mechanisms.
- Community-based protection and support models offer practical lessons for more inclusive governance.
- Regional and national migration dialogues provide platforms where migrant women's perspectives can be more systematically integrated.
- Strengthening consultation and accountability mechanisms could improve both policy responsiveness and legitimacy.

3.5 Governance and policy architecture

STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Gender integration remains uneven across all stages of migration and is still concentrated mainly in asylum and anti-trafficking frameworks.
- Labour migration, integration, return, border governance and environmental mobility remain largely gender-blind.
- Coordination between migration, labour, social protection and gender equality institutions is often weak.
- Policy commitments are not consistently translated into operational guidance, financing, monitoring and accountability mechanisms.
- Fragmented governance and data systems continue to limit joined-up and evidence-informed responses.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

- International commitments such as CEDAW and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provide a strong normative basis for gender-responsive migration governance.
- EU-alignment processes continue to incentivize policy convergence and institutional reform across several countries in the region.
- Regional consultative migration processes – including the Prague, Budapest and Almaty Processes – offer platforms where gender-responsive standards, monitoring and peer learning could be more systematically integrated. Similarly, platforms such as the UN Network on Migration can be leveraged to reinforce the operationalization of anti-discrimination principles in migration policies through enhanced coordination, normative guidance and capacity-building.
- National gender equality mechanisms, including CEDAW reporting processes, national gender equality strategies, and Women, Peace and Security action plans, can play a stronger role in shaping and monitoring migration policy reforms.

4. PRIORITY ACTIONS

Addressing the gendered inequalities documented across migration systems in ECA requires structural reforms in migration data, governance and regional cooperation, anchored in existing international commitments and translated into operational practice. The following priority actions outline concrete steps to strengthen gender-responsive migration governance across the region. These actions require coordinated engagement by national governments, regional migration processes, international organizations, UN agencies and civil society actors.

4.1 Strengthening gender-sensitive migration data systems

- **Harmonize definitions and classifications across migration types.**

Align national migration typologies with international statistical standards and ensure consistent application across all types and stages of migration. Strengthen coordination among national statistical offices, migration authorities and sectoral institutions to enable comparability across countries and over time.

- **Expand gender-sensitive indicators beyond sex-disaggregation and strengthen their analytical use.**

Integrate indicators that capture key dimensions of women's migration experiences – including care responsibilities, employment quality, sector of work, skills recognition, informality, remittance use and exposure to violence – using ethically sound methodologies. Strengthen institutional capacity to analyse and use these data so that gender-sensitive evidence informs migration policy design, planning, budgeting and monitoring through regular migration profiles, improved data-sharing and stronger analytical collaboration across institutions.

- **Strengthen regional data comparability and monitoring.**

Promote agreement on a core set of gender-sensitive variables and support harmonized data-sharing across key migration-related systems – including labour mobility, return, trafficking and social protection – while respecting data protection and privacy standards.

- **Improve measurement of migration forms that remain insufficiently captured in official statistics.**

Strengthen evidence on circular, seasonal, return, irregular and environmentally influenced mobility through systematic sex- and age-disaggregation and complementary mixed-method approaches, including qualitative research that captures less-visible migration experiences.

- **Integrate migration modules into national surveys.**

Incorporate gender-sensitive migration questions into household and labour-force surveys to better capture labour-market outcomes, recruitment channels, skills recognition, care responsibilities and the socioeconomic impacts of migration.

- **Strengthen gender-responsive reporting within migration and gender equality frameworks.**

Strengthen Member States' capacity to report on gender dimensions of migration within national, regional and international reporting frameworks, including migration reviews and gender equality monitoring processes, through technical guidance, harmonized indicators and peer learning mechanisms.

4.2 Institutionalizing gender-responsive migration governance

- **Align migration governance with international commitments.**

Strengthen the alignment of national migration policies with existing international and regional standards relevant to gender-responsive migration governance. These include: the CEDAW Convention (including its General Recommendation No. 26 on women migrant workers); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; and relevant International Labour Organization standards, including the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Conventions on social protection and equality of treatment. Translate these commitments into operational guidance, labour protections and accountability mechanisms within migration governance systems.

- **Mainstream gender equality across all stages of migration.**

Integrate gender analysis, sex- and age-disaggregated indicators and accountability mechanisms across policies governing emigration, immigration, transit, asylum, return and environmentally influenced mobility. Strengthen coordination between migration, labour, social protection and gender equality institutions to ensure coherent implementation.

- **Strengthen gender-responsive labour migration and integration systems.**

Promote safe, regular and rights-based labour mobility for women by improving access to formal labour migration pathways, strengthening skills recognition and reducing barriers to labour-market participation. Ensure labour protections extend to sectors where migrant women are concentrated, particularly care, domestic and service work, while expanding access to social protection, childcare, language training and other integration support.

- **Promote inclusive migration governance and policy formulation.**

Institutionalize meaningful participation of migrant women and women-led CSOs in migration policy development, implementation and monitoring. Structured consultation mechanisms can strengthen policy design, ensure that governance frameworks reflect lived realities and improve accountability.

- **Strengthen survivor-centred protection systems.**

In accordance with CEDAW GR26, particularly Article 26(c), ensure that migrant women who experience violence, exploitation or abuse have effective access to protection, assistance and remedies regardless of migration status. This includes embedding trauma-informed procedures, gender-sensitive screening and accessible referral pathways across border, transit, reception and protection systems.

- **Integrate migration governance with national care policies.**

Align migration frameworks with investments in childcare and long-term care systems, recognizing the role of transnational care chains and the redistribution of unpaid care across borders. Strengthen portability of care-related social protection benefits and policies that prevent migration systems from reinforcing unequal care burdens.

4.3 Advancing regional cooperation with a gender lens

- **Embed explicit gender commitments in regional migration processes.**

Strengthen the integration of gender equality across regional migration dialogues and platforms by incorporating sex- and age-disaggregated analysis, gender-sensitive indicators and regular reporting mechanisms. Regional consultative processes can support policy convergence and peer learning on gender-responsive migration governance.

- **Promote safe and regular migration pathways at the regional level.**

Support regional cooperation to expand access to safe and regular migration pathways for women, helping reduce exposure to exploitation, trafficking and abuse.

- **Advance decent work and social protection portability regionally.**

Promote ethical recruitment standards, labour protections and coordinated portability of social protection benefits, including health, maternity and pension rights, particularly in sectors where migrant women are concentrated, such as care, domestic and service work.

- **Strengthen cross-border cooperation to prevent trafficking and exploitation.**

Enhance survivor-centred referral mechanisms and coordination among anti-trafficking authorities, labour inspectorates and protection services across countries of origin, transit and destination. Strengthen cooperation on long-term reintegration support and protection for survivors.

- **Strengthen knowledge generation, management and dissemination.**

Invest in the systematic generation, documentation and sharing of evidence on gender and migration, including emerging trends, good practices and lessons learned. Strengthen knowledge-management systems and promote regional exchange to ensure that evidence informs policy development, programme design and operational practice across countries.



4.4 Strengthening participation and accountability mechanisms

- **Institutionalize structured consultation.**

Ensure meaningful engagement of migrant women and women-led organizations in migration policy design, implementation and monitoring. Structured consultation mechanisms can strengthen policy responsiveness and ensure that governance frameworks reflect the lived realities of migrant women across different migration pathways.

- **Embed accountability and gender monitoring.**

Introduce gender-responsive monitoring mechanisms within national and regional migration governance frameworks.

- **Designate gender focal point functions.**

Establish institutional mechanisms within migration authorities and relevant regional platforms to support gender mainstreaming, coordination and quality assurance across migration governance systems.

- **Strengthen legal protections for migrant women workers.**

In line with CEDAW General Recommendation No. 38 on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, strengthen and enforce employment legislation designed to protect all women workers, including migrant workers, regardless of migration status, skill level or sector of employment. Ensure that labour protections effectively cover sectors where migrant women are concentrated, including care, domestic and service work.

- **Strengthen understanding and protection responses to forced criminality through a gender lens.**

Promote regional research and cooperation to better understand patterns of forced criminality and exploitation affecting migrants, with attention to gender- and age-specific risks faced by women and children. Strengthen identification and protection mechanisms for migrants coerced into criminal activities through trafficking, exploitation or abuse, and improve coordination between anti-trafficking frameworks, labour inspectorates and criminal justice systems so that victims are recognized and protected rather than penalized.

- **Ensure migrant women are included in national violence prevention and protection frameworks.**

Review and strengthen national legislation and policies on gender-based violence to ensure that migrant women – regardless of migration status – have safe and effective access to protection, justice and support services, including shelters, legal assistance and psychosocial support.

- **Strengthen strategic advocacy for gender-responsive migration policies.**

Strengthen the use of data analysis, research and evidence generation to inform and support coordinated advocacy efforts at national and regional levels aimed at integrating gender equality into migration policies, legislation and public discourse. This includes engagement with policymakers, regional platforms, WLOs/WROs, and other civil society actors working on the rights of women on the move, to translate existing international commitments into concrete policy reforms and implementation measures.

- **Build institutional capacity of front-line actors for gender-responsive protection and service-delivery.**

Strengthen the capacity of government actors, including border officials, migration authorities and front-line service-providers, to apply gender equality and protection principles in their daily work. This includes training on survivor-centred approaches, safe and ethical identification of risks and specific needs, and the use of clear referral pathways to ensure timely access to protection, services and justice for women and girls, while promoting coordination across sectors and institutions