KEEP THE PROMISE, ACCELERATE THE CHANGE

Taking stock of gender equality in Europe and Central Asia 25 years after Beijing
UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality.

GENERATION EQUALITY

UN Women is bringing together the next generations of women’s rights activists with the gender equality advocates and visionaries who were instrumental in creating the Beijing Platform for Action more than two decades ago. Collectively, these change makers of all ages and genders will tackle the unfinished business of empowering women through a new, groundbreaking, multigenerational campaign: “Generation Equality: Realizing women’s rights for an equal future”.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UN Women, the United Nations or any of its affiliated organizations.

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It is a moment to take stock. In 2020, a confluence of anniversaries celebrating milestone commitments to gender equality provides a chance to evaluate what we have achieved and where we lag behind. It is a time to stiffen our resolve to guard against regression, and step up our demands for irreversible, transformative change.

Now 25 years old, the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, agreed at the Fourth World Conference on Women, is among the most important of the 2020 anniversaries for gender equality, as it is widely considered the blueprint for realizing women’s rights. The women’s activists who did so much to secure it, still today keep its aspirations and demands alive and moving forward, working now in alliance with a vibrant new Generation Equality.

In 2020, we also mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the 20th anniversary of the landmark Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, and the 5th anniversary of the global Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Women itself commemorates its 10th anniversary. To both take stock and look forward, we will convene the 2021 global Generation Equality Forum, co-chaired by the governments of France and Mexico. Centred on civil society, it will bring together a world of people committed to realizing the promises that have so much to secure it, still today keep its aspirations and demands alive and moving forward, working now in alliance with a vibrant new Generation Equality.

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As part of preparing for the forum, this publication takes a specific look at where we are in achieving the bold vision of Beijing in Europe and Central Asia. Based on national reviews conducted by 53 countries, and rich in hard data, the report should serve as a useful snapshot and reference point for activists, policymakers and other proponents of transformative change.

The good news comes from signs of significant progress. Women and girls are more educated than ever, many more women are in politics, and women are living longer and healthier lives.

But the report also highlights how much more must be done. Women participate less than men in the labour force, get paid less and are more likely to be in vulnerable employment. Inequalities and discrimination in access to education, health care and pensions prevail. Millions of women and girls still experience violence and harmful practices, which are deeply rooted in gender-based discrimination and patriarchal norms. COVID-19 is now exacerbating many disparities and violations, threatening the progress that has been made.

We hope the data and findings on the following pages will be used to enrich advocacy, mobilize societies, raise aware and revitalize public debate. With Beijing still a guiding light, we know what must be done. If we come together, and make the right choices and investments, we can keep the promise and accelerate the change. Another 25 years must not go by before we get to gender equality.

Alia El-Yassir
UN Women Regional Director, Europe and Central Asia
2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. This landmark gathering of nations led to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a blueprint for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Over the past 25 years, countries have taken long strides towards gender parity and equality. More women are in school, the labour force and the corridors of political power than ever before. Women direct businesses and earn more income. Fewer are consigned to child and early marriages. Yet a long road still lies ahead in achieving the core commitments of the Beijing Platform and the more recent 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In October 2019, a regional review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action took place, involving the 56 countries covered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Representatives of United Nations Member States, women’s civil society organizations and activists, international development partners and other stakeholders came together to take stock of progress, and ongoing and emerging challenges that impede women’s advancement.

Coinciding with the 5th anniversary of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Beijing+25 regional review marked an occasion to foster the integration of reporting and actions to realize both sets of commitments, and intensify attention to gender equality across the global Goals. Based on the regional review, and a series of national review reports and consultations, UN Women’s Europe and Central Asia Regional Office issued a regional assessment analysing positive trends and reversals in individual countries, subregions and the region at large.

This current publication complements the regional assessment by adding data-based evidence on progress and gaps in gender equality and women’s rights. The report specifically looks at six dimensions: inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work; poverty eradication, social protection and social services; freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes; participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions; peaceful and inclusive societies; and environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation.

Data cover the period from 1995 to 2015, and to 2019 for some countries and subregions with verifiable figures. The report considers seven subregions of countries under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. These comprise South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Central Asia, newer European Union countries, European Union (EU)-15 countries, Western European countries without European Union membership, and North America and Israel (see Annex I for the full list of countries by subregion).

A brief summary of findings

Proactive labour policies across the region have improved prospects for inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work. Labour force participation among women aged 25 to 49 has climbed. Yet women still constitute the majority of those employed part-time, often due to childcare and parental care responsibilities that have remained disproportionately high. Substantial numbers of women are still consigned to vulnerable employment, including in informal work, in family-run businesses or family-owned farms, and as
own-account workers. For them, wages are low, savings are nearly impossible to accrue, and access to financial resources such as old-age pensions is constrained.

Entrenched occupational and educational segregation sustain traditional feminized sectors and occupations, and help keep women out of the top echelons of private and public organizations. Women with children were 33 per cent less likely to be gainfully employed compared to women without children. Many countries have made great gains in adopting policies to achieve gender equality, prohibiting harassment and discrimination, extending learning for pre-school children, and increasing paternal and maternal benefits. Yet the failure to attain gender parity keeps inclusive development and shared prosperity out of reach.

All across Eastern and Western Europe, fertility levels have remained around 1.8 per cent, below the population replacement level. Another demographic trend has been significant population ageing with a visibly female face. Over the previous two decades, the life expectancy of women increased by close to four years. Women outlive men by an average of 6.1 years, and as much as 10 years in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Poverty eradication and expanded social protection and social services, especially related to pensions and old-age security, are critical to women’s empowerment across the life span.

Positive trends are evident in maternal mortality, access to modern contraceptives, and sexual and reproductive health services. Yet early pregnancies remain a problem in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia, amid widespread opposition to comprehensive sexuality education in schools. In most countries, the share of women and girls equals or exceeds that of men and boys in overall educational enrolment and attainment, except for Central Asia.

Legislative frameworks guaranteeing freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes have gained momentum in all subregions. Among the 47 member States of the Council of Europe, 45 have signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which has ushered in new laws, protections and services, and increased access to justice. Yet gender stereotypes and discrimination fuel high rates of violence against women and girls. Homicides committed against women by men they know are prevalent in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia. Domestic violence occurs in all countries. Among people who are trafficked, 90 per cent are female victims, mostly for sexual exploitation. Strategies to prevent violence against women and girls have proven most effective in curbing violence by intimate partners, but even there, budgetary constraints, low political will and gaps in institutional capacity have been serious stumbling blocks.

From national parliaments to local governments, women’s presence in politics in the region has doubled over the past two decades. Most subregions have seen rising levels of participation, increased accountability and more gender-responsive institutions, including through the use of quotas and special measures. Yet the picture is mixed; men still dominate in many domains. While women now hold 25 per cent of all ministerial positions and have gained gender parity in some professions like the judiciary, they lag far behind men in others, notably journalism, law enforcement and national armed services. Consistent gender mainstreaming across all sectors is undercut by insufficient financing and budgeting targeted at achieving gender equality.

Women make growing contributions to peaceful and inclusive societies in the region, yet in chronically limited roles. Some who stand up for human rights have been repressed and/or persecuted. Few take part in peace talks, which often means that deliberations and agreements neglect the needs and rights of women and girls. Even though nearly two thirds of countries have adopted national action plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, the lack of adequate financing restricts much change on the ground. Little attention has been paid to long-term, gender-responsive relief and recovery efforts in major crises, despite the region’s spike in refugees and asylum-seekers. Most countries do not recognize gender-based persecution as a basis for seeking asylum.

Concerning environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation, gender perspectives are mostly absent from national policies to protect the environment, respond to climate change and manage disaster risks. Overall, women remain underrepresented in positions related to these fields. Their highest involvement in environment, transport and energy is in EU-15 countries, where their share is still only 35 per cent. Gender parity has been achieved in international negotiations on climate change, however.

Countries need to intensify and invest in the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated statistics in national and subnational decision-making, towards making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.
DIMENSION 1: INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

Achievements in inclusive development and shared prosperity are underpinned by women’s economic empowerment and equal participation in the economy. Over the past 25 years, significant efforts to support women’s inclusion in the workforce have been made through proactive labour market policies addressing the gender pay gap, and helping to reconcile work and family responsibilities. Yet structural barriers to gender equality and gender discrimination prevail. These manifest as gaps in labour force participation and pay, occupational segregation, unequal working conditions, and the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

Women’s workforce participation has generally moved closer to men’s, yet large gender differentials remain among prime working-age adults, especially during the family formation years. Between 1995 and 2019, the labour force participation rate among women aged 25 to 54 increased from 73.4 to 76.6 per cent, while men’s decreased marginally from 91.9 to 90.9 per cent.¹ The largest workforce participation rate increase occurred in South-Eastern Europe (from 42.5 to 48.7 per cent), where levels remained low compared to the EU-15 countries (from 68.6 to 80.2 per cent).² In Central Asia, with a subregional average of 70.1 per cent, women’s engagement in the workforce is remarkably low in Tajikistan at 35.5 per cent. In Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with an average of 84.4 per cent, the lowest level is observed in the Republic of Moldova at 54.1 per cent.³ Rather than engaging businesses around principles of corporate social responsibility, many countries, such as Albania, Azerbaijan and Hungary, rely on state subsidies to promote the hiring of female workers by the private sector, including women with disabilities and ethnic minorities.⁴ Women are three times more likely than men to hold a part-time job, often as a result of child- and parental care responsibilities. Between 2007 and 2017, part-time employment among women remained stable (29.8 and 30.1 per cent, respectively) but increased among men (8.2 and 10 per cent, respectively).⁵ In 2017, over half of all women employed in Western European countries without European Union membership (52.3 per cent) and one third of women in EU-15 countries (38.1 per cent) held part-time jobs.⁶ Part-time employment among women remained generally low in the eastern part of the region with the exception of Azerbaijan (23.6 per cent), Malta (25.4 per cent) and Armenia (33.6 per cent).⁷ In 2017, the highest shares of men in part-time employment were in Switzerland (18.9 per cent) and the Netherlands (28.8 per cent).

One in every 10 women is employed in a vulnerable job (9.8 per cent), either as an own-account worker (7.5 per cent) or contributing family worker (2.3 per cent).⁸ Women holding these jobs often lack decent working conditions, including inadequate contracts, earnings, social protection and representation by trade unions, all of which undermine their fundamental rights as workers.⁹ In 2019, one in every three women in South-Eastern Europe (32.8 per cent) and Central Asia (33 per cent) was engaged in vulnerable employment, yet there were diverse trends across these subregions.¹⁰ South-Eastern Europe was characterized
by large shares of female contributing family workers (22.2 per cent among all employed women) and relatively large shares of female own-account workers (10.6 per cent). A quarter of women in Turkey (24.8 per cent) and over a third of women in Albania (37.4 per cent) contributed to family businesses. In contrast, women in vulnerable employment in Central Asia were primarily engaged in self-employment (28.2 per cent of all employed women), as opposed to contributing to family businesses (4.8 per cent). In that subregion, self-employment was highest in Uzbekistan (32.5 per cent) and Tajikistan (37.8 per cent).

Women's workforce participation varies by marital status and declines as childbearing progresses. In 2017, in the eastern part of the region, where data were available, never-married women aged 25 to 49 were more likely to be employed than their married counterparts in Turkey (52.1 compared to 34.3 per cent), Armenia (57.2 compared to 48 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (76.2 compared to 56.2 per cent) and the Russian Federation (83.1 compared to 80.7 per cent). The reverse pattern was apparent in the Republic of Moldova (43.7 compared to 54.4 per cent), Serbia (53.8 compared to 64 per cent), Albania (55.7 compared to 61 per cent) and Belarus (87.8 compared to 92.1 per cent). In most of these countries, employment levels were highest among widowed women.

Labor force participation rate in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Women with no children</th>
<th>Women with three or more children under 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young women aged 15 to 24 are more likely than men to not be in education, employment or training (NEET). From 2013 to 2017, 15.2 per cent of women and 12.1 per cent of men aged 15 to 24 were in this category, after declines from 2008 to 2012 (18.6 and 13.3 per cent, respectively). Female rates remain highest in South-Eastern Europe, where women aged 15 to 24 are twice as likely to be NEET as men.
as likely to be NEET than men of the same age (32.3 compared to 15.8 per cent). The difference is largely driven by Turkey (34 compared to 14.6 per cent). It is lowest in Western European countries without European Union membership at 5 per cent.

Continuous increases in women’s labour market participation over the last decades have often gone hand in hand with their move into women-dominated jobs, rather than a more widespread distribution across sectors and occupations. They have found limited access to senior and management roles. In 2019, women accounted for the majority of workers employed in food and accommodation activities (55 per cent), education activities (72 per cent), and human health and social sector activities (77.8 per cent). In addition, more than 2 in every 10 women employed in South-Eastern Europe (22.6 per cent) and Central Asia (22.8 per cent) worked in the agricultural sector. Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation, coupled with the higher likelihood that women will hold part-time jobs and interrupt their careers, contribute to perpetuating the gender pay gap and cement gender income inequalities across the life course.

Persistent horizontal occupational segregation is addressed primarily by initiatives to eradicate educational segregation, particularly the greater inclusion of women and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Just one third of graduates from STEM programmes in tertiary education are female, however, with only a marginal rise from 32.4 to 34.3 per cent between 2009 and 2013, and 2014 and 2018. These low levels have become an emerging area of concern, given the prominence of these fields in forecasted employment opportunities.

Over one in every three managerial positions are occupied by women, a share that increased slightly from 33.6 to 37 per cent between 2003 and 2007, and 2013 and 2017, reaching 41.1 per cent in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. It remained remarkably low in South-Eastern Europe, despite nearly doubling during this period from 8.7 to 16.6 per cent. From 2013 to 2017, the Russian Federation (41.3 per cent), Poland (41.3 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (42 per cent), Latvia (46.3 per cent) and Belarus (47.6 per cent) were closest to achieving equality.

Pay inequality remains pervasive, with women earning on average 21.6 per cent less than men per month from 2013 to 2017, although the pay gap has narrowed since 2003 to 2007 (26.9 per cent). In the eastern part of the region, significant reductions were achieved during this period by Armenia (from 57.9 to 32.5 per cent), Ukraine (from 31.4 to 21.2 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (from 29.1 to 13.5 per cent) and Romania (from 18.8 to 3.7 per cent), among others. Conversely, stagnations or increases occurred in Bulgaria (from 18.8 to 20.1 per cent) and Belarus (from 20.6 to 25.4 per cent). Regardless, current levels remain unacceptably high. In the western part of the region, countries have made progress towards enforcing pay equality. For instance, the Transparency in Wage Structures Act adopted in Germany in 2017 created an individual right to information about the wage structure for all employees of companies with more than 200 employees. Employers must also disclose the statistical median of the average monthly gross remuneration received by the opposite gender.

Laws prohibiting workplace discrimination are essential for addressing the multiple forms of gender discrimination faced by women, including in hiring, promotions, working conditions, remuneration and sexual harassment, yet even where these exist, they are not always effectively implemented. Biases are acutely felt by women from marginalized and excluded groups, such as ethnic and racial minorities, who face even greater challenges to accessing decent work. In the eastern part of the region, women are currently banned in 300 or more professions in Kyrgyzstan (446 professions), the Republic of Moldova (331 professions), Tajikistan (326 professions) and the Russian Federation (320 professions). Recently, the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan partly eliminated such legal restrictions on women’s employment by reducing the number of banned professions from 456 to 320 and from 287 to 219, respectively. In Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, references to the list of banned professions have been removed from labour codes, but restrictions still exist. In Armenia, the list of occupations and professions banned for women, minors and people with disabilities has not been repealed, while in Georgia, professions on this list are still banned for pregnant and nursing women.

There is an absence of effective legislation and mechanisms for combating workplace sexual harassment in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asia. Finland, Norway and Spain, among other countries, have made significant advances in this area, requiring private employers to establish internal equality plans. In Finland, these must include a sexual orientation and gender identity component. Representing a significant milestone in the international legal framework, the ILO Convention (C190) on Violence and Harassment opened for signature in 2019, incorporating the prohibition of violence and harassment in the workplace into international labour standards.
The countless hours women spend in unpaid care and domestic work remain a great obstacle to being able to access decent employment. Based on evidence available for 17 countries since 2011, women spend twice the time as men in unpaid care and domestic work.40 In Kazakhstan and Turkey, women spend three and five times as much time in unpaid care and domestic work as men, respectively, while the gender gap is narrowest in Belgium and Norway (1.2 times).41 The provision of affordable childcare and elder care services, paternity and parental leave, universal health care and tax incentives, alongside infrastructure development, such as water and waste management, clean energy and public transportation services, can have an impact on redistributing this burden, and reconciling work and family life.42

A significant shortage of kindergartens and preschools in parts of the region impedes women’s workforce participation. Almost 9 in every 10 girls and boys participated in organized learning the year prior to starting primary education (87.7 per cent). Yet significant subregional differences prevail.43 Between 2009 and 2013, and 2014 and 2018, the share decreased in South-Eastern Europe from 73.5 to 66.8 per cent for girls and from 74.7 to 68.6 per cent for boys, a decline driven by Turkey. But it increased in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus from 86.4 to 93.4 per cent for girls and from 85.6 to 94.2 per cent for boys.44 EU-15 countries, newer European Union countries and Western European countries without European Union membership virtually achieved universal coverage during both periods.45

Paternity leave, and flexible parental leave and leave-sharing arrangements support women’s participation in the labour force and the involvement of fathers at home, breaking down gender stereotypes around caregiving roles. Paternity leave was recently introduced in countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic and the Republic of Moldova, and extended in Italy, Spain and Switzerland.46 In the United Kingdom, working parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of pay in the child’s first year.47 Yet paternity leave entitlements remain inadequate or unavailable in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asian countries.48 In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, fathers are granted only unpaid paternity leave. Low uptake in other countries is prompted in part by traditional social norms. Infrastructure, service development and institutional support for women workers with families remains insufficient, primarily in the eastern part of the region.49

Tax reforms to incentivize women’s return to work and to reduce the costs of care for families are vital. In 2015, Austria created a tax incentive to have an income above the marginal employment threshold to encourage women’s full-time employment.50 Similarly, persons who take care leave or who work part-time and care for someone the rest of the time have a legal right to a carer’s allowance, free health and pension insurance, and a supplement for dependent children.51

Entrepreneurship is crucial to economic development, promoting social integration and reducing inequalities, yet women continue to face limited access to markets, credit, financial services and products, infrastructure and procurement opportunities, and face discriminatory property and inheritance laws, all of which limit access to capital.52 Women remain less likely than men to have an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider, with the lowest access levels in Central Asia (43.4 per cent) and South-Eastern Europe (55.9 per cent).53 Most initiatives for promoting women’s entrepreneurship remain gender neutral, resulting in limited outreach to and use by women in many countries, particularly those from vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities and conflict-affected women.54

Women’s property rights are central to economic development and gender equality, allowing them to start and grow businesses, invest in their families, and live with agency and dignity.55 Yet despite formal equalities in the right to own property and inheritance, sociocultural norms and practices impedes women’s ownership and inheritance in several countries, including Albania and Georgia.49 In Albania, women own only 8 per cent of land as they are marginalized in inheritance practices, and property is often registered under the “head of household”, a role reserved for men.57 In Central Asia, harmful traditions still persist and sons generally inherit parents’ property. Overall, women’s lack of knowledge about their rights, legislative gaps, incorrect judicial and administrative practices, and a lack of monitoring of the implementation of the law all contribute to women’s inability to own property on an equal basis with men.58
SNAPSHOT

Economic security and autonomy remain elusive for many women, especially in their childbearing years

Legal reforms are helping women and men to reconcile work and family life

Several countries have improved maternity leave entitlements, either by expanding leave time or by increasing the rate of pay during leave.

The share of mothers with newborns receiving a maternity benefit is universal except for:

- Azerbaijan: 14%
- Uzbekistan: 16%
- Kyrgyzstan: 23.8%
- Georgia: 24%
- Kazakhstan: 44.6%
- Tajikistan: 59.5%
- The Russian Federation: 63%

Paternity leave has been introduced or expanded in several countries, although it remains unavailable or inadequate in those where its unpaid status along with traditional social norms result in low uptake.

Yet women remain less likely to participate in the labour force, advance in their careers and control assets than men, and more likely to be in lower-paid and vulnerable employment.

More men between the ages of 25 to 54 are in the labour force than women.

- Women: 76.6%
- Men: 90.9%

Approximately 23% of women in the region are employed informally.

In 16 countries, more than 15% of young women aged 15 to 24 are not in education, employment or training, including:

- Armenia: 37.5%
- Turkey: 34%
- Albania: 32%
- Kyrgyzstan: 30.1%
Women earn on average 21.6% LESS than men every month\(^6\)

The gender pay gap in monthly earnings exceeds 20% in 20 countries, ranging\(^7\) from 3.7% in Romania and 5.9% in Slovenia to 38.3% in the Netherlands and 49.4% in Azerbaijan.

Motherhood pay gaps are prevalent, evidencing discrimination between mothers and non-mothers, and between mothers and fathers.

In Lithuania, the hourly gender pay gap stands at 16%.

Yet single mothers earn 33% less than single fathers\(^8\).

Women spend on average 2\(\times\) as many hours as men on unpaid care and domestic work\(^9\).

LESS THAN HALF of girls and boys participate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age in\(^7\) Tajikistan (11.6%), Uzbekistan (36.4%), North Macedonia (44.4%), and Uzbekistan (37.4%)

In the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic, women with disabilities are 3 and 4 times more likely to be unemployed than women without disabilities, respectively\(^7\).

LESS THAN HALF of adult women have an account at a financial institution or mobile-money service provider in eight countries, including Azerbaijan (27.7%), Turkmenistan (35.5%), and Uzbekistan (36%).

In Romania, women earn on average 21.6% less than men every month\(^6\).

Women from marginalized and excluded groups face even greater challenges to access decent work.

In the Russian Federation and the Czech Republic, women with disabilities are 3 and 4 times more likely to be unemployed than women without disabilities, respectively\(^7\).

Labour force participation of women aged 15 to 64\(^7\)

Montenegro:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roma</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>non-Roma</th>
<th>26%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Bosnia and Herzegovina:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roma</th>
<th>13%</th>
<th>non-Roma</th>
<th>24%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
DIMENSION 2: POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The availability of and access to social protection and social services is crucial to reduce poverty, combat inequality and promote social inclusion. Equal access to educational qualifications empowers women in all areas of their lives, while improved health and equitable and affordable access to health services play important roles in reducing poverty.

Europe and Central Asia is at the forefront of a global demographic transformation from population growth to population ageing. Between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, the total fertility rate remained below replacement level, increasing marginally from 1.7 to 1.8 live births per woman aged 15 to 49, while the share of persons aged 65 years or older increased from 12.7 to 16.8 per cent between 1995 and 2020. Today, older persons account for around two in every five persons in Western European countries without European Union membership (18.4 per cent), newer European Union countries (19.4 per cent) and EU-15 countries (20.8 per cent). Young people aged 15 to 24 account for around 10 per cent of the population across all subregions except Central Asia (15 per cent) and South-Eastern Europe (15.5 per cent).

Women are living longer and healthier lives. Female life expectancy at birth increased by 3.7 years in Europe and Central Asian between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, from 76.9 to 80.6 years. Male life expectancy at birth rose by 4.9 years, from 69.7 to 74.6 years. From 2015 to 2020, women lived on average 6.1 more years than men, a gender gap that was highest in South-Eastern Europe (5.8 years), Central Asia (5.9 years), and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (10 years). The largest relative gains in female life expectancy were in subregions with the lowest life expectancy levels, namely, Central Asia (from 68.3 to 74.4 years), Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (from 72.3 to 77.3 years), and South-Eastern Europe (from 73 to 80 years). Female healthy life expectancy at birth increased 2.5 years between 2000 and 2016, from 67.7 to 70.2 years, suggesting that on average, women in Europe and Central Asia live around 10 years with ill health or disability. During the same period, male healthy life expectancy at birth increased 4.2 years, from 62.8 to 66 years. In 2016, women in the region lived on average 4.1 more healthy years than men.

Ageing has a female face, since women account for 58.1 per cent of people aged 65 or older. This share is highest in Central Asia (60.2 per cent), newer European Union countries (60.3 per cent), and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (66.5 per cent). Gender differentials in life expectancy are particularly large in some countries of the two latter subregions, where women outlive men by around 10 years. These countries include Latvia (9.9 years), Belarus (10 years), the Russian Federation (10.7 years) and Lithuania (11.1 years). Older women are less likely to be married than older men, or to remarry. They are also less likely to be outlived by male spouses.
Significant health inequities prevail across and within countries. For instance, women in Turkmenistan live on average 14.6 years less than women in Spain.21 Between 2000 and 2016, the female non-communicable disease burden decreased significantly in all subregions, remaining highest in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (16 per cent) and Central Asia (19.6 per cent).22 In 2016, deaths from non-communicable diseases accounted for over 20 per cent of all deaths in Tajikistan (22 per cent) and Turkmenistan (22.9 per cent).23

The accessibility, affordability and quality of health-care services remains of concern, especially in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is often women in rural and remote areas and minority women, such as the Roma, who lack access to health care due to the distance required to travel to facilities, the costs of service and waiting periods.24 In 2015, the universal health coverage service index was markedly lower in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (63.7), South-Eastern Europe (69.5) and Central Asia (70). That reveals variation in ensuring equitable and affordable access to health services, especially for the poor and most marginalized groups of

Life cycle inequalities in income, education and employment expose many women to poverty in old age, exacerbated by limitations on pension entitlements and a lack of control over financial resources.14 As the number and share of older persons grows across the region, older women play a central role in the provision of care to younger generations, as well as to their older relatives and relatives with disabilities.15 In parallel, increasing long-term care needs tend to be absorbed informally by middle-aged women.16 The share of people aged 65 and older receiving long-term care in institutions is estimated to range from less than 1 per cent in Poland and the Russian Federation to 9 per cent in Iceland.17 Likewise, the share of those receiving publicly funded long-term care services at home is very small in many countries in the eastern part of the region, yet it stands at 25 per cent in Denmark.18 In almost all countries, around 80 per cent of long-term care recipients are aged 80 or older.19 Policies that holistically address older persons’ needs in terms of social protection, health, housing, transport and civic life, and facilitate women’s and men’s reconciliation of employment and care work throughout the life course remain key.20

### Change in life expectancy by subregions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe and the Caucasus</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newer EU countries</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America and Israel</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-15 countries</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe no EU membership</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe and the Caucasus</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newer EU countries</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America and Israel</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-15 countries</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe no EU membership</td>
<td>84.3</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>81.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the population. The lowest health worker density among all subregions, with 19 physicians and 31.6 nurses per 10,000 people from 2013 to 2017. The universal health coverage service index stood close to or above 80 in other parts of the region, yet high self-reported unmet needs for health care due to distance, expense or waiting lists among women aged 16 or older were consistently reported in Greece (9.9 per cent) and Estonia (17.8 per cent). In some countries, women continue to face gender bias and discriminatory treatment by health-care personnel, as well as the provision of inadequate and inappropriate medical services, including obstetric violence. These barriers are exacerbated for women with disabilities, women living with HIV, displaced women and women from conflict-affected areas, minority women and LGBTI women.

Progress towards sexual and reproductive health outcomes has been uneven. Access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and counselling remains a challenge, particularly in the eastern part of the region, resulting in low modern contraceptive use, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions, preventable maternal deaths, and high rates of cervical cancer and sexually transmitted infections. Access limitations may be partly attributed to a resurgence of socially conservative values and policies, and are especially acute for adolescents and young girls, women living in rural areas, poor women, women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women, and minority women, among others, all of whom face intersectional discrimination in the realization of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Barriers to knowledge and access to modern contraceptive methods remain in the eastern part of the region, where many women continue to rely on traditional methods. Between 1995 and 2019, the share of married and in-union women aged 15 to 49 using modern contraception increased from 31.2 to 44.6 per cent in South-Eastern Europe, and from 42.4 to 52.9 per cent in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. These shares stood well below the regional average of 60.9 per cent in 2019, due to the high prevalence of traditional contraceptive methods in the two subregions (23.5 and 13.3 per cent, respectively). In 2019, although more than 8 in every 10 married and in-union women of reproductive age had their need for family planning satisfied by modern methods in the western subregions, this share was considerably lower in South-Eastern Europe (55.9 per cent) and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (69.1 per cent). Many women remain unable to freely decide on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, including whether and when to have children.

Maternal mortality decreased by more than a third between 2000 and 2017, from 22.7 to 14.3 deaths per 100,000 live births. Although maternal mortality was reduced by half in the eastern part of the region, levels remain unacceptably high in some countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and Central Asia. These include Armenia (26 deaths per 100,000 live births), Azerbaijan (26 deaths per 100,000 live births), Uzbekistan (29 deaths per 100,000 live births) and Kyrgyzstan (60 deaths per 100,000 live births). In 2017, maternal mortality stood below 8 deaths per 100,000 live births in newer European Union countries (7.8 deaths per 100,000 live births), EU-15 countries (5.8 deaths per 100,000 live births) and Western European countries without European Union membership (3.8 deaths per 100,000 live births).

Adolescent birth rate in selected countries (live births per 1,000 women aged 15-19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate (2019)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>39.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Early pregnancies remain a concern in a few countries, calling for expanded access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. The adolescent birth rate nearly halved between 1995-2000 and 2015-2020, from 33.3 to 17.7 live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. Nonetheless, Albania, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan witnessed stagnations or increases in adolescent fertility during this period.
Adolescent birth rates are highest in the second and third countries, at 55.8 and 57.1 live births, respectively, per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 from 2015 to 2020.41

Early pregnancies severely curtail adolescent girls’ educational and employment opportunities, imposing long-term, adverse impacts on the quality of their lives and the lives of their children, especially in parts of South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and Central Asia. This underscores the importance of integrating age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) into school curricula. Nonetheless, opposition to CSE is still widespread in the region, with respondents in only five countries – Belgium, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden – perceiving that there is hardly any opposition in their national contexts.42 Among these, Estonia and Sweden link sexuality education and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, as students visit youth clinics to receive CSE lessons and become familiar with the services offered.43

Countries across the region have expanded access to and improved the quality of sexual and reproductive health care in numerous ways, including through physical infrastructure development, removing cost as a barrier, and developing specialized, gender-responsive policies. Azerbaijan recently established several perinatal centres, while in Norway, national antenatal guidelines ensure women and newborn-centred care, including mental health support and home visits.44 In Latvia, vulnerable women can access State-funded contraception, and in Switzerland, migrant women have access to birthing courses, post-partum home visits, and information in their native languages in dedicated reception centres.45

Cervical and breast cancers, alongside other reproductive system cancers and infertility, affect growing numbers of women and may be preventable or curable if detected early. Cervical cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among women in the eastern part of the region, where more than 38,000 new cases and 18,000 deaths occur every year.46 Breast cancer is a common disease among women in all subregions except Central Asia.47 Incidence and mortality rates remain higher than the global average (66.5 cases and 12.9 deaths per 100,000 women, respectively), driven in some contexts by the lack of screening initiatives.48 Albania developed clinical guidelines on breast cancer screenings in 2015.49

The number of HIV-positive women is increasing in the eastern part of the region. Between 2000 and 2017, the number of new HIV infections among women aged 15 to 49 per 1,000 uninfected people nearly doubled in Central Asia, from 0.10 to 0.19, and doubled in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, where levels remain highest, from 0.34 to 0.74.50 In contrast, EU-15 countries saw notable declines during this period, from 0.10 to 0.07 new HIV infections among women aged 15 to 49 per 1,000 uninfected people.51 In 2019, approximately 1.4 million people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were living with HIV.52 The 30 per cent increase in new infections observed since 2010 reflects insufficient political commitment and domestic investment in national AIDS responses.53 Outside of the Russian Federation, which is home to 70 per cent of people living with HIV in the region, the rate of new HIV infections is stable.54 Insufficient access to sterile injecting equipment and the unavailability of opioid substitution therapy have stymied efforts in the Russian Federation to prevent HIV infections among people who inject drugs.55 Armed conflict has disrupted testing, prevention and treatment services in areas of eastern Ukraine not controlled by the Government.56

In most countries, women and girls either equal or exceed men and boys in overall educational enrolment and attainment, except in Central Asia.57 In Tajikistan, for example, girls comprise only 22 and 35 per cent of primary school and secondary vocational school graduates, respectively, and they are likely to drop out in ninth grade to undertake domestic work obligations.58 Tajik women account for just 42.5 per cent of graduates from tertiary education.59 Despite formal equality, discrimination against women and girls persists in the form of gender bias and stereotypes in teaching materials, and challenges on enrolling and teaching in certain fields.

Horizontal and vertical gender segregation characterizes education systems. Women remain significantly overrepresented as teachers in primary and lower secondary education, with the exception of Finland, and underrepresented in tertiary education and academic positions.60 In the Czech Republic, for example, 84.7 per cent of all teachers are women, while men account for 85.1 and 75 per cent of public university professors and assistant professors, respectively.61

Women outnumbered men among tertiary education graduates across the region from 2014 to 2018 (57.2 per cent).62 They accounted for only one third of graduates from STEM programmes (34.3 per cent), and for over three quarters of graduates from health and welfare programmes (77.3 per cent).63 Empowering
As the region’s population continues to age, strengthening contributory and non-contributory pension schemes, as well as social protection measures that support women in reconciling care responsibilities and work, is vital. After a lifetime of work and caring for young and older generations, many women lack an adequate pension for a dignified retirement due to their higher likelihood of experiencing career interruptions, holding part-time employment and earning less than men. From 2014 to 2017, all women and men above statutory pensionable age were receiving a pension in 16 of the region’s countries, including the majority of new European Union countries, the Russian Federation, France, Germany and the United Kingdom. In others, however, women’s pension coverage levels remained far from universal and lower than men’s levels. The largest coverage gaps were in Malta and Spain, where virtually all men receive a pension (100 and 95.5 per cent, respectively) yet less than half of women do (42.8 and 44.5 per cent, respectively).

Large differences remain between women’s and men’s pensions. In the European Union, for instance, women’s pensions were on average 37.2 per cent less than men’s in 2016. The gender pension gap can be attributed to the lower incomes earned by women due to horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, women’s decisions to interrupt their careers or work part-time to reconcile family and work life, and unequal mandatory retirement ages established for women and men. Given that women live longer than men, the gender pension gap results in an increased risk of poverty.

Women are more likely to be at risk of poverty than men; that is, to have an income below the threshold for being at risk of poverty, set at 60 per cent of the national median equivalent disposable income after social transfers. This is evident in all subregions with sex-disaggregated data, namely, Western European countries without European Union membership (14.4 per cent of women compared to 13.2 per cent of men), EU-15 countries (17.8 compared to 16.4 per cent), newer European Union countries (17.9 compared to 16.1 per cent) and South-Eastern Europe (22.9 compared to 21.9 per cent). In the two last subregions, around one in every four women were at risk of poverty from 2016 to 2019, including in Estonia (24.2 per cent), Montenegro (24.2 per cent), Bulgaria (24.3 per cent), Serbia (24.6 per cent), Lithuania (24.9 per cent), Romania (24.9 per cent) and Latvia (25.1 per cent). Countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asia lack estimates of the risk of poverty. Using national poverty lines as a poverty threshold, the share of poor persons from 2013 to 2017 was estimated at 10.8 per cent in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and 14.3 per cent in Central Asia.

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Women’s and girl’s access to public services and social protection is key to achieving gender equality, and reducing poverty and inequality

Women and girls are more educated and living longer and healthier lives

Nearly 57.4% or 6 in every 10 tertiary graduates in Europe and Central Asia are women.

In 2016, female healthy life expectancy exceeded 65 years in all subregions, remaining highest in EU-15 countries at 73.8 years and Western European countries without EU membership at 74.4 years.

Yet many women and girls remain trapped in poverty, and inequalities and discrimination persist in access to education, health and pensions.

In 2016, the gender pension gap exceeded 30% in 11 European Union countries, including Greece.

The narrowest pension gaps were in Estonia, Denmark, and Slovakia.

At-risk-of-poverty rates from 2016 to 2019 were higher among women than men in 31 out of 35 countries with sex-disaggregated data.
In 2014, the employment rate of female graduates in the European Union who studied in STEM fields at the tertiary level was

76%

more than 10 percentage points lower than the rate for men with the same qualifications83.

Modern contraceptive use falls below the average of least developed countries (36.6%) in eight countries in South-Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, including:

- Azerbaijan: 20.9%
- Montenegro: 14.3%
- Albania: 4.3%

Between 2000 and 2017, the number of new HIV infections among women aged 15 to 49 per 1,000 uninfected people in Kazakhstan and Belarus increased 7 and 10 times, respectively83.

Women in Kyrgyzstan are 30 times more likely to die giving birth than women in Belarus, Italy, Norway or Poland84.

Migrant and minority women and girls face severe discrimination and exclusion in accessing public services and social protection.

In 2019, women accounted for over half of the region’s international migrants (51.4%)85.

Completed compulsory education for girls aged 18 and 21:

- Albania:
  - Roma: 40%
  - non-Roma: 96%
- Serbia:
  - Roma: 57%
  - non-Roma: 93%
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women and girls constitutes a human rights violation of vast proportions, representing a serious impediment to women’s equality in all areas of life. Despite notable progress in the development and enforcement of legal and normative frameworks, and in the provision of services for victims and survivors, significant gaps prevail. And even as deep-rooted drivers of abuse persist, the rapid advancement of technology has opened up new digital spaces where women are being threatened, intimidated and harassed. Improvements in data collection, research, analysis and harmonization have been uneven. Reliable data and research often remain difficult to obtain.

The adoption of the Istanbul Convention is driving States’ commitments to end violence. As of June 2020, the Istanbul Convention had been signed by 45 out of the 47 countries in the region that are members of the Council of Europe, and had received 34 ratifications. Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation remained the two countries that had not signed the landmark treaty, while Armenia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom had not ratified it. In various countries of the eastern part of the region, opposition to signature and ratification has been a focus of rising conservative movements. The Istanbul Convention has been less of a driving force outside of Council of Europe member States, namely, in Central Asia. Yet it remains open for signature and ratification by any country.

The harmonization of national legal frameworks with the Istanbul Convention has generally brought increased protection and access to justice for women, and contributed to the increased quality and accessibility of specialist and general services for survivors.

For instance, Albania, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Malta and Romania recently expanded domestic violence laws to encompass broader concepts of violence against women and gender-based violence. The United Kingdom passed legislative amendments criminalizing controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or family relationships. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the new Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska will treat domestic violence as a criminal offence instead of as a misdemeanor. Serbia has drafted its new Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, which defines and prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, sexual harassment and incitement to discrimination. It also amended the Criminal Code to criminalize non-consensual acts of a sexual nature in line with the Istanbul Convention. Albania, Belgium, Hungary and Kyrgyzstan, among other countries, have established crisis centres offering specialized services for sexual violence survivors. Rape crisis centres were created in North Macedonia and Serbia, albeit shortcomings remain in both scope and quality. At the other end of the spectrum, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation decriminalized the offences commonly invoked in domestic violence cases, reducing them to administrative offences.

Despite advances and the high priority accorded to this issue by most States, significant gaps remain in law and practice. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Liechtenstein, Russia and Turkmenistan, among other countries, still have no dedicated legislation on domestic violence or other forms of violence against women. Controversial legislative amendments in the Russian Federation in 2017 decriminalized first battery offences among family members and reduced penalties for abusers, putting survivors in greater danger, and sending a message...
of impunity to perpetrators. At least 15 countries have not established clear criminal penalties for domestic violence, and at least 10 have not instituted specialized courts or procedures for domestic violence cases. All Eastern European and the Caucasus and Central Asian countries except Georgia and the Republic of Moldova lack one or both of these. They were in place in all South-Eastern European countries, however. No country in the region criminalizes all nine forms of violence laid out in the Istanbul Convention.

Share of women and girls (18 to 74 years) who have experienced intimate partner violence in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Domestic violence remains systemic, normalized and tolerated. Prevalence rates are quite high in many countries, particularly considering the underreported nature of the phenomenon. Among the 32 countries with data for 2012 to 2017, intimate partner violence among women and girls aged 15 to 49 was most common in Turkey (11 per cent), Kyrgyzstan (17.1 per cent), Tajikistan (19 per cent) and Georgia (19.8 per cent). In contrast, 9 per cent or less of women and girls aged 18 to 49 in EU-15 countries and newer European Union countries had been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner during the last 12 months. The prevalence of intimate partner violence was highest in Belgium (8 per cent), Finland (8 per cent), Greece (8 per cent), Hungary (8 per cent), Slovakia (8 per cent) and Bulgaria (9 per cent), and remarkably low in Cyprus (3 per cent), Luxembourg (3 per cent), Poland (3 per cent) and Spain (2 per cent). A survey conducted in 2018 among women and girls aged 18 to 74 in selected South-Eastern European and Eastern European and the

Caucasus countries found that intimate partner violence is generally more common in the latter subregion.

Few countries have criminalized stalking in the eastern part of the region, where many women and girls have become stalking victims at the hands of intimate partners and non-partners. This is especially acute in more traditional Central Asian societies, where women are seen as being under men's protection, and laws do not adequately protect them from abuse and harassment.

Homicide represents the most extreme form of violence against women, a lethal act on a continuum of gender-based discrimination and abuse. While most homicide victims are men, killed by strangers, women are far more likely to die at the hands of someone they know. From 2013 to 2017, the region's female homicide rate was 1.68 victims per 100,000 women. Levels in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus were more than double the regional average, however, at 3.63 victims per 100,000 women. The prevalence of homicide was least common in newer European Union countries (0.90 victims per 100,000 women), South-Eastern European countries (0.70 victims per 100,000 women, excluding Turkey), EU-15 countries (0.69 victims per 100,000 women) and Western European countries without European Union membership (0.49 victims per 100,000 women).

Female homicide rate, 2013-2017 (victims per 100,000 women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate (victims per 100,000 women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Russian Federation</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Violence against women and girls is rooted in gender-based discrimination, patriarchal social norms and gender stereotypes. From 2010 to 2014, 33.8 per cent of women and 39.8 per cent of men in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus believed it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife. In Central Asia, a higher degree of tolerance of violence against women and girls translated into the highest prevalence of intimate partner violence. In this subregion, 38.3 per cent of women and 45.3 per cent of men agreed with such a statement. In contrast, such views were held by a minority of women and men in EU-15 countries and newer European Union countries such as Cyprus (10.5 and 16.4 per cent, respectively), Romania (10.5 and 16.8 per cent), Spain (10.3 and 13.4 per cent) and the Netherlands (9 and 19.8 per cent).

Ensuring the effective implementation of protection measures remains a challenge for many countries, those in both the initial and more advanced stages of developing systematized forms of protection for survivors of intimate partner and domestic violence. The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), under the Council of Europe, has observed that the implementation of protection orders is not effectively monitored. Only a few countries, such as Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden, have employed electronic monitoring of perpetrators. GREVIO has further expressed concern about exceptions to protection orders being carved out in cases where parents have joint custody, with potentially fatal consequences for both the survivors and children.

While effective protection and response measures are required to address both imminent and ongoing violence, prevention strategies represent the best and most cost-effective policy, particularly if children and youth are engaged. In this regard, Iceland has adopted an annual campaign addressing intimate partner violence among youth, called Crazy Love, that stresses the importance of boundaries and consent, but also covers other topics, such as sex, pornography, gender equality, abusive behaviour and how to seek help.

Women and girls accounted for nearly 9 in every 10 victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation (89.5 per cent) among countries with sex-disaggregated data for 2014 to 2017. Girls under 18 represented 20.2 per cent of all female victims. In the eastern part of the region, 243 and 319 female victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation were identified in Bulgaria and Hungary, respectively, in 2017. Around 500 victims were identified in Italy (461 victims), Germany (466 victims) and the Netherlands (510 victims) in 2016. On the other hand, men and boys were disproportionately affected by human trafficking for forced labour, servitude and slavery, accounting for over three quarters of all victims (76.8 per cent). Regardless of purpose, human trafficking victims tend to come from poor countries, regions or communities, reflecting structural economic and social inequalities.

Domestic violence and human trafficking represent the primary focus of countries’ efforts to combat violence against women and girls, yet other forms of violence are prevalent in parts of or the entire region, including harassment, femicide, and harmful practices such as early, child and forced marriage, female genital mutilation, gender-biased sex selection and honour-related violence.

One of the areas where digital transformation yields worse outcomes for women and girls than for men and boys is exposure to cyberbullying. This form of violence, which disproportionately targets girls, as well as women in the public sphere such as politicians and journalists, constitutes an emerging concern. For instance, in the European Union, 1 in every 10 women aged 18 or older (11 per cent) report having experienced sexual cyberharassment since the age of 15. That is, they have received unwanted, offensive, sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or faced inappropriate, offensive advances on social networking sites. Among adolescents and youth aged 18 to 29, the prevalence is as high as 20 per cent. Nonetheless, few countries beyond the European Union have addressed this form of violence from a gender perspective, with many yet to criminalize it.

Early, child and forced marriages severely curtail adolescent girls’ educational and employment opportunities, carrying long-term, adverse impacts on the quality of their lives and the lives of their children. From 2013 to 2019, early and child marriages were most common in South-Eastern Europe, where 13.2 per cent of women aged 20 to 24 years were first married or in union before age 18, followed by Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (9.2 per cent, excluding the Russian Federation) and Central Asia (7.7 per cent). In 2019, the legal age of marriage for girls was 18 in all 51 countries with available data, yet penalties for authorizing or entering into child or early marriage had been established in just 21 countries. Albania, Turkey and all Eastern European and the Caucasus countries with a high prevalence of child marriage are among those that have not instituted punitive measures against those who promote, permit, perform or are part of such harmful practices.
of marriages can now only be conducted after these have been sanctioned by state registration offices. Turkey adopted an Action Plan on Combating Early and Forced Marriages 2019-2023, while Georgia established an interagency working group to address both harmful practices. In the western part of the region, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden revised legislation to abolish any dispensations for the marriage of minors. The United Kingdom criminalized performing or arranging female genital mutilation overseas, increased the sentence from 5 to 14 years, permitted lifelong anonymity for survivors, and established a protection order specifically for female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Although prohibited, sex-selective abortions, including forced sex-selective abortions, persist in a few societies in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and South-Eastern Europe. This practice is driven by entrenched social and family norms favouring male children, the emergence of modern reproductive technologies, and the impact of low fertility on reproductive strategies among couples, all of which lead to skewed sex ratios at birth. From 2015 to 2020, there were more than 110 boys born for every 100 girls in Armenia (111 boys for every 100 girls) and Azerbaijan (113 boys for every 100 girls). Significant imbalances were also observed in Georgia (107 boys for every 100 girls), Serbia (107 boys for every 100 girls), Montenegro (107 boys for every 100 girls) and Albania (109 boys for every 100 girls). Countries have made progress in addressing legislative gaps and gender stereotypes. The share of Armenian women stating that their families had a preference for sons declined from 45 to 13 per cent between 2011 and 2017.

Few countries have the capacity to collect prevalence and administrative data on violence against women and girls. GREVIO monitoring has revealed that few countries disaggregate data by all relevant factors, including the form of violence, the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, and other relevant factors such as disability status, or sexual orientation and gender identity. Limited data coupled with underreporting continue to mask the true scale and nature of the phenomenon.

### Share of women aged 20 to 24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Early, child and forced marriages, and female genital mutilation are more likely to affect girls from minority ethnic, religious and migrant communities, and conflict-affected populations.

The practice of child marriage remains widespread in Roma communities. Roma women aged 20 to 49 are more likely to have married before age 18 than their non-Roma counterparts in South-Eastern European countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (27 compared to 11 per cent), North Macedonia (33 compared to 10 per cent), Montenegro (41 compared to 8 per cent), Serbia (44 compared to 9 per cent) and Albania (50 compared to 7 per cent). In Georgia, a study concluded that most older women of Avar ethnicity in Kakheti had either undergone female genital mutilation or heard of it. It also suggested that the practice remains central to the ethnic group’s identity and might be practised clandestinely.

Some countries in the region have stepped up action to address harmful practices. Kyrgyzstan enacted a Law on the Prohibition of Religious Marriage Ceremonies with Minors and toughened the penalties for bride kidnapping to up to 10 years in prison. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the religious registration
SNAPSHOT

The Istanbul Convention is driving state commitments to end violence against women and girls, yet significant gaps prevail in the development and enforcement of legislation, service provision, and data and research.

45 out of the 47 countries in the region that are members of the Council of Europe have signed the Istanbul Convention, including 34 that have ratified it.

At least 15 countries have not established clear criminal penalties for domestic violence and at least 10 countries have not instituted specialized courts or procedures for domestic violence cases.

Limited data and underreporting continue to mask the true scale and nature of the phenomenon.

Millions of women and girls still experience various forms of gender-based violence, including harmful practices, which are deeply rooted in gender-based discrimination, patriarchal social norms and gender stereotypes.

Among the 32 countries with data available from 2012 to 2017, intimate partner violence among women and girls aged 15 to 49 was most common in Turkey (19.8%), Tajikistan (19%), Kyrgyzstan (17.1%) and Georgia (11%).

The female homicide rate (victims per 100,000 women) in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus was 3.63, compared to 1.68 in Europe and Central Asia.

From 2014 to 2017, women and girls accounted for 23.2% of victims of human trafficking for forced labour, servitude and slavery, and for 89.5% of victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.
Marginalized and vulnerable women and girls face an increased risk of violence and obstacles accessing victim and survivor services.

In the Republic of Moldova, Roma women are **2.4 times** more likely than non-Roma women to think it is justifiable for a man to hit his wife.

In South-Eastern European countries such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, Roma women aged 20 to 49 are between **2.5 and 7 times** more likely to have married before the age of 18 than non-Roma women.

Tolerance towards violence against women and girls is highest in Central Asia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women and Men believe it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife.

In the European Union, **1 in every 10** women aged 18 or older (11%) report having experienced sexual cyberharassment since the age of 15.

Among adolescents and youth aged 18 to 29, the prevalence is as high as 20%.

From 2013 to 2019, more than **1 in every 10** women aged 20 to 24 years was first married or in a union before the age of 18.

From 2015 to 2020, skewed sex ratios at birth were observed in boys for every 100 girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

indicating the prevalence of sex-selective abortions.
Women’s participation in decision-making is essential for a functioning democracy and good governance reflecting the needs and priorities of women and men, and for strong gender-responsive institutions. Although the number of women in leadership roles has increased in the last decade, men still dominate politics, holding the vast majority of seats in national parliaments and local governments as well as top government positions. Measures for strengthening and institutionalizing national gender equality machineries and the allocation of finance for gender equality are generally insufficient. Progress in the collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics and data disaggregated by sex remains a challenge. Combined with the lack of identification of intersecting vulnerabilities, this means that fundamental elements of evidence-based policymaking are not in place.

Women’s representation in national parliaments nearly doubled between 2000 and 2019, increasing from 15.3 to 27.8 per cent of seats.¹ This significant gain has been driven by changes in electoral systems, political party rules and attitudes towards women in parliament, as well as the use of temporary special measures such as legislated gender quotas. Women’s political participation remains lower in the eastern subregions, however. In 2019, women held less than one in every four parliamentary seats in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (17.2 per cent), Central Asia (21.1 per cent), South-Eastern Europe (22.3 per cent) and newer European Union countries (23 per cent). Women accounted for one in every three parliamentarians in Western European countries without European Union membership (33.9 per cent) and EU-15 countries (34.9 per cent).²

Share of women in national parliaments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to decision-making positions at the local level is generally higher. From 2018 to 2019, women held more than one in every four seats in deliberative bodies of local government in 34 of the 44 countries with data. Women’s participation was highest in France (40.4 per cent), Norway (40.8 per cent), Albania (43.6 per cent), Sweden (43.8 per cent), Iceland (47 per cent) and Belarus (48.2 per cent). Women’s representation in local governments was significantly lower in Romania (12.5 per cent), Turkey (10.1 per cent) and Armenia (9 per cent). Across the region, few women lead municipal councils, however. A recent study of 41 countries found that the share of female mayors was only 15.4 per cent in 2019, up from 11 per cent in 2008.

If adequately designed and enforced, temporary special measures, including quotas, can accelerate women’s political representation at all levels. As of June 2020, two out of three countries had electoral quotas for women at the parliamentary level. Gender quotas were least common in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and Central Asia, with only Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan promoting their use, and Kazakhstan nearing approval. At the local level, one in three countries have introduced mandatory quotas, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine.

Too often, temporary special measures have not resulted in substantial increases in women candidates or women elected to office. The lack of effective enforcement mechanisms has been a challenge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania, Malta, North Macedonia and Uzbekistan, calling into question the political will behind ensuring equal representation, the most basic element of democracy. To boost compliance with its 40 per cent quota, Luxembourg amended the political party financing law, restricting funding to parties that are not compliant. Montenegro established a women’s political network in 2017 that brings together members from 16 political parties, including opposition parties. It advocates for amending the Law on Financing Political Parties to allocate more resources for women’s groups within parties. Other South-Eastern European countries have taken similar measures.

Women comprised 12 Heads of State or Government in 2019, up from just 4 in 2000. Women held the highest position of executive power in Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Norway, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia and Switzerland.

Women held one in every four ministerial positions in 2019 (25.6 per cent). In EU-15 countries (40.3 per cent) and Western European countries without European Union membership (37.1 per cent), women accounted for over one third of all ministers. At the other end of the spectrum, female representation fell below the regional average in all eastern subregions in 2019, namely in South-Eastern Europe (24.3 per cent), newer European Union countries (20.2 per cent), Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (13.2 per cent) and Central Asia (6.4 per cent). Women accounted for less than 10 per cent of ministers in nine countries.

Share of women in ministerial positions

Violence and discrimination against women in politics constitutes a significant problem in the region, preventing them from seeking political office and engaging in political processes. A recent study based on voluntary one-to-one conversations with 123 women from 45 countries, encompassing members of parliament (81 women) and parliamentary staff (42 women), found that an overwhelming majority had been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks (58.2 per cent), had been the target of comments on their physical appearance or based on gender stereotypes (67.9 per cent) or had suffered psychological violence during their term of office (85.2 per cent).Around half had received death threats or threats of rape or a beating (46.9 per cent), and 24.7 and 14.8 per cent had suffered sexual and physical violence, respectively. Many respondents underscored the absence of a mechanism or service to which to direct complaints and seek support. Younger members of parliament and those working on gender equality issues were often singled out.

Entrenched gender stereotypes perpetuate violence and discrimination against women in politics. From 2010 to 2014, half of women (49.5 per cent) and two thirds of men (66 per cent) in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus believed men make better political leaders than women. Attitudes towards women in politics were more negative in Central Asia, where 65.3 per cent of women and 77 per cent of men agreed with this statement. In contrast, these views were held by a minority of women and men in the Netherlands (7.9 and 13.8 per cent, respectively) and Sweden (9.2 and 12.3 per cent, respectively).

Women’s participation in decision-making in the private sector continues to significantly lag behind men’s, particularly in managerial roles and on the boards of private companies. From 2013 to 2017, 37 per cent of all managerial positions were occupied by women, representing a slight increase from 33.6 per cent from 2003 to 2007. During the same period, the share of women in senior and middle-management positions increased from 32.1 to 35.6 per cent. Countries in the eastern part of the region such as Poland (41.3 per cent), the Russian Federation (41.3 per cent), Slovenia (41.9 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (42 per cent), Latvia (46.3 per cent) and Belarus (47.6 per cent) were closest to achieving equal representation in managerial roles. This reflects the legacy of both World War II and communism, which boosted women’s labour force participation and encouraged them to learn skills for jobs traditionally dominated by men. Women occupied one in every three seats on boards of the largest publicly listed companies (32.3 per cent) in EU-15 countries in 2019, a threefold increase since 2005 (9 per cent). In newer European Union countries, however, progress was much slower during this period, from 12.1 to 16.9 per cent. In Turkey, women’s share nearly doubled between 2010 and 2019 from 9.7 to 18.1 per cent, while in the Russian Federation it stood at 10.6 per cent in 2019.

In most countries, gender parity has been achieved in the judiciary except for the highest courts. From 2015 to 2017, women comprised over half the region’s judges (55.6 per cent), a share that was highest in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (60.9 per cent) and newer European Union countries (66.4 per cent). Women accounted for just over a quarter of constitutional court judges during the same period (28 per cent). Female representation in such courts was lowest in Turkey (5.9 per cent), Ukraine (11.1 per cent), Kazakhstan (14.3 per cent) and Spain (16.7 per cent), and highest in Germany (43.8 per cent), Georgia (44.4 per cent), Lithuania (44.4 per cent) and Slovenia (44.4 per cent), with no country achieving full equality.

Women were underrepresented among journalists in 11 of the 15 countries with sex-disaggregated data from 2016 to 2017, primarily in the western part of the region. Women equalled or outnumbered men only in Hungary (50 per cent), Denmark (52.1 per cent), Finland (52.4 per cent) and Slovenia (63.1 per cent). The largest gender gaps, where women were fewer than 4 of every 10 journalists, were observed in Portugal (39.7 per cent), Ireland (38 per cent), Croatia (36.3 per cent), Iceland (35.7 per cent), Israel (35.6 per cent) and Sweden (20 per cent). High-level managerial and ownership positions in the media are predominantly occupied by men. For instance, women account for 30.2 per cent of media heads in Kazakhstan.

The underrepresentation and portrayal of women in the media perpetuates gender discrimination and stereotypes. A recent comparative study in selected European countries highlighted that in France, female characters enjoyed just 42 per cent of screen time, dropping to 29 per cent during peak programming (18.00 hours to 20.00 hours). Women were also significantly underrepresented among experts invited to speak on TV (35 per cent), including political experts (27 per cent). In the United Kingdom, women older than 55 are seen less frequently on TV, while in Hungary, the number of female presenters and hosts decreased significantly underrepresented among experts invited to speak on TV (35 per cent), including political experts (27 per cent). In the United Kingdom, women older than 55 are seen less frequently on TV, while in Hungary, the number of female presenters and hosts decreased by more than 60 per cent above the age of 40.

Most countries have gender equality policies in place, yet gender mainstreaming across all policy sectors is still far from becoming a reality. Gender is frequently mainstreamed in health and social protection policies, but lacking in the economic, financial and
Progress in the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender statistics remains uneven, particularly in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and Central Asia. This stems from low technical capacity, lack of political will, and inadequate resources.41 For instance, in 2018, the national statistical plans of Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan were not fully funded, while national statistical legislation in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine did not comply with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.42 North Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan have not conducted population and housing censuses in the past 10 years, although the three countries are scheduled to conduct them in 2020 Census Round.43 The low level of completeness of the Tajik civil registration and vital statistics system is equally worrying, with birth and death registration falling below the 90 and 75 per cent coverage thresholds, respectively, in 2017.44

Regrettably, the adoption of the SDGs has not driven improved data collection practices on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the eastern part of the region, where many countries remain unable to generate key SDG indicators, such as those measuring the prevalence of violence against women (indicator 5.2.1), time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (indicator 5.4.1), and the gender pay gap (indicator 8.5.1), among others.45

The lack of disaggregated data by sex, and in terms of intersecting vulnerabilities, such as age, geographic location, disability status, HIV status, migratory status, ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation and gender identity, is a primary concern for all countries. Increasing demand for monitoring and reporting on the most vulnerable population groups46 poses a number of challenges for the statistical community, including the need to increase the statistical sample in surveys to draw statistically significant conclusions on gender differences among and within smaller groups.

Countries have advanced in developing, adopting and implementing methodologies for gender-responsive budgeting, yet much remains to be done. In 2018, among the nine countries with data in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, none fully met the three criteria — intent, allocation tracking and transparency — to make systematic public budget allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment.38 Azerbaijan and Montenegro did not meet any requirements, while Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia met at least one of the three criteria.40

Finland developed the Gender Equality Barometer to provide information on opinions, attitudes and experiences related to gender equality in various areas of life. It is an important tool for assessing gender equality in the country.47 Questions are revised annually to reflect topical issues and the need for new data. For example, in 2017, revisions addressed considerations on the diversity of gender, relationships and families, and online harassment. The data collected are no longer gender binary.48
Women are demanding equal power and representation in political life

More women are in politics than ever before

Women’s representation in national parliaments nearly DOUBLED between 2000 and 2019.49

From 2018 to 2019, women held more than 1 in every 4 seats in deliberative bodies of local government in 34 of 44 countries with data.51

Number of women as Heads of State or Government52

Despite progress, women are still largely excluded from politics, policies, budgets and data collection

Across the region, women account for at least 4 in every 10 parliamentarians in just four countries.54
Women in politics continue to face gender stereotypes and discrimination, threats and attacks

From 2010 to 2014, half of women and two thirds of men in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus believed men make better political leaders than women.

In Central Asia, shares agreeing with this statement were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many countries in the eastern part of the region remain unable to generate data for key SDG indicators, such as:

- prevalence of violence against women (indicator 5.2.1)
- time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (indicator 5.4.1)
- the gender pay gap (indicator 8.5.1)

Women members of parliament and parliamentary staff from 45 countries (123 women interviewed) reported that:

- 85.2% had suffered psychological violence during their term of office
- 67.9% had been the target of comments on their physical appearance or based on gender stereotypes
- 58.2% had been the target of online sexist attacks on social networks
- 46.9% had received death threats or threats of rape or a beating

Female representation at the ministerial level

FALLS BELOW the regional average (25.6%) in all eastern subregions, namely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subregion</th>
<th>Representation (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Europe</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newer EU countries</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe and the Caucasus</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among 9 countries with data in South-Eastern Europe, and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, NONE fully met 3 criteria to systematically make and track public budget allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment in 2018.
A recent desk-based analysis of 75 NAPs elaborated by members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from 2005 to mid-2019 indicates positive trends in the number of issues covered by the plans, particularly around the prevention and participation pillars. Emerging women, peace and security issues, such as disasters and violent extremism, have been increasingly reflected in the plans. Other signs of positive progress are the increased specificity of monitoring and evaluation components, and greater use of inclusive practices, although civil society engagement continues to lag behind. Budgeting remains a concern, with most NAPs not featuring agency- or programme-specific financial allocations, and even lacking broadly defined budgets.

The limited capacity and commitment of key stakeholders involved in NAP implementation results in such financial shortages, which can limit gender-sensitive conflict prevention, peacebuilding and negotiations for peace restoration. The women, peace and security agenda continues to be considered secondary to national security policy, with laws and policies lacking context-specific and gender-sensitive analysis, and primarily focusing on women as victims. A complex set of patriarchal social norms, including common stereotypes that security-related issues are traditionally men’s issues, continue to reinforce these gaps and place women in a disadvantageous position.

Today, the rise in violent extremism and its deeply misogynist ideology poses a threat to regional security and the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Yet this may also open opportunities to capitalize on women’s roles in conflict prevention, and increase their participation in national and regional...
security processes. Women and girls are differently affected by violent extremism. They are often the first victims of violent extremist groups, experiencing horrific violations of their rights. They may also be perpetrators of violent extremism themselves, including through support for family members. Their association with violent extremist groups is due to a complex combination of factors, often involving coercion, cooperation, enslavement, kidnapping or subjugation in their communities, among other issues. In many cases, the lack of consistent and coherent policies on returnee women and girls associated with terrorist or extremist groups renders them prone to abuse.

Recent research suggests that women foreign terrorist fighters are returning at a considerably lower rate than men and children. Globally, only between 3 and 4 per cent of the 7,366 recorded returnees from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic were women, despite comprising between 10 to 13 per cent of all Islamic State affiliates. At the subregional level, women account for less than one in every four Islamic State affiliates in Western Europe (16 to 17 per cent), Eastern Europe (12 to 23 per cent) and Central Asia (10 to 13 per cent), and for less than 1 in every 10 returnees from these subregions (Western Europe, 8 per cent; Eastern Europe, 5 per cent; and Central Asia, less than 1 per cent).

Women's direct participation in peace and conflict negotiations increases the sustainability and quality of peace. A global study investigating 82 peace agreements for 42 armed conflicts between 1989 and 2011 found that agreements with women signatories were associated with durable peace. The same study discovered that such agreements have a higher number of provisions aimed at political reform and a greater implementation rate. Another global study based on an analysis of 98 peace agreements involving 55 countries between 2000 and 2016 found that they are more likely to have gender provisions when women participate in official and high-level talks or unofficial dialogues that support the main negotiations.

In Europe and Central Asia, women's participation in peace processes remains low, despite some progress. Ten years after the launch of the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia, women comprise 30 per cent of negotiators. In Ukraine, low women's engagement has been evident in high-level talks on the settlement of the international armed conflict in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as in peacekeeping. Nonetheless, this represents an improvement from the late 1990s and early 2000s, when women accounted for a very minor share of negotiators. In conflict-affected countries and the European Union, consistent support has been offered to build the capacity and support the inclusion of women mediators in active negotiations.

### Share of women involved in Peace Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Agreement (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>(Dayton Agreement, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>(Erdut Agreement, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(Good Friday Agreement, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>(Rambouillet Accords, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Macedonia</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>(Ohrid Agreement, 2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Peace agreements have rarely included gender-sensitive language. Between 1995 and 2019, only 23 of the 241 peace agreements signed by countries in the region included provisions specifically addressing women’s inclusion and rights. Less than 1 in every 10 peace agreements (9.5 per cent) made explicit references to women, girls, widows, mothers or lactating women; to violence against women and girls, including sexual violence; or to resolution 1325 or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Women remain underrepresented in the military, police and diplomatic corps, most notably in conflict-affected countries. In the eastern part of the region, women held less than 2 of every 10 armed forces jobs from 2013 to 2019 in the seven countries with data: the Czech Republic (7.4 per cent), Croatia (8.9 per cent), Albania (13 per cent), Armenia (13.8 per cent), Hungary (14.5 per cent), Cyprus (14.9 per cent) and Bulgaria (15.3 per cent). In the western part of the region, women in the Netherlands and Norway accounted for 8 and 26.9 per cent of all those employed in armed forces positions, respectively. Countries have made progress in increasing women’s representation in the military in recent years. For instance, women have been integrated into United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military missions for the first time in Albania, held senior decision-making and command positions in the armed forces of Slovenia, and gained access to all combat positions in the United Kingdom.

On average, men largely outnumbered women in the police in the 33 countries with data from 2012 to 2017, holding more than 8 out of every 10 staff positions (83.3 per cent). Women’s share of police staff exceeds one third in Estonia (35 per cent), Latvia (36.8 per cent) and Lithuania (38.6 per cent). Sweden is the only country where women outnumber men (66.3 per cent).
Conversely, women hold less than 10 per cent of staff positions in the police in Albania (9.8 per cent), Georgia (9.5 per cent), Italy (8.4 per cent), Portugal (7.8 per cent) and Turkey (6.1 per cent).

Women are underrepresented at the highest diplomatic ranks, accounting for just 21.7 per cent of all ambassadors in the 32 countries with data from 2012 to 2017. A great degree of variation exists, with female representation being generally higher in the western part of the region. For instance, women head more than a third of embassies from Ireland (35.2 per cent), Estonia (36.6 per cent), Slovenia (40 per cent), Canada (43.1 per cent), Sweden (45.3 per cent) and Finland (45.6 per cent). In contrast, women account for less than 15 per cent of all ambassadors in Montenegro (14.7 per cent), Israel (12.5 per cent), Spain (12.1 per cent), Italy (10.8 per cent), Georgia (10.3 per cent), Armenia (7.5 per cent), Belarus (7 per cent), Kazakhstan (3.5 per cent) and Ukraine (1.5 per cent).

In recent years, the region has witnessed a spike in refugee and asylum-seeking populations, primarily as a result of conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. At the end of 2019, the region’s countries were home to 7 million refugees and 2.2 million asylum seekers. Refugee populations remained considerably lower in the eastern part of the region with the exception of the Russian Federation (42,000), Serbia, Kosovo (26,000) and Bulgaria (20,000).

Number of refugees in selected countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Refugees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>3.6 mln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.1 mln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>408,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>254,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>208,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>136,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>133,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>110,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Women outnumbered men among refugee populations in only 3 of the 16 countries with complete sex-disaggregated data: Montenegro (53.6 per cent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (57.7 per cent) and Turkmenistan (61.3 per cent), all of which are home to small refugee populations. In Turkey, less than half of all refugees were women (46 per cent) and around 2 in every 10 were girls under 18 (22 per cent). In Germany, these shares stood at 38.5 and 14.7 per cent, respectively. Women and girls are among the most vulnerable to different forms of violence that take root in times of war and displacement, including sexual violence and exploitation, child marriage and human trafficking.

Germany and Turkey each hosted over 300,000 asylum seekers at the end of 2019, who were 45.9 and 35.5 per cent female, respectively. As primary destinations, both countries spent significant resources to respond to the sevenfold increase in applications for asylum and international protection, and in the case of Germany, to support migrant women’s integration. In Sweden, women’s asylum applications are examined separately, and payments to asylum seekers are granted individually, rather than on a family basis. Numerous countries in the European Union and South-Eastern Europe affected by the migration crisis developed targeted initiatives to ensure access to health care, social welfare services and employment for women migrants.

Since 2014, a few countries have recognized gender-based forms of persecution as a basis for claiming asylum and international protection. In most contexts, however, women and girls who seek asylum on such grounds face legal obstacles in obtaining recognition of their refugee status. This is due in particular to judicial interpretations of the category “membership in a particular social group”, as well as the refusal of judges to recognize rape and sexual violence as a form of persecution rather than an individual crime. For instance, on an application in the United Kingdom by a victim of rape from Afghanistan in the early 2000s, the initial adjudicator refused to recognize the rape as persecution because “the only reason for the rape of the Appellant in Takhar was because her assailant found her attractive, and therefore that the attack was purely personal and no more than a common crime”. The decision was overturned on appeal.

Some countries have made progress in ensuring access to justice for women victims of conflict-related sexual violence, as enshrined in Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010). Bosnia and Herzegovina amended the State-level Criminal Code in 2015, removing references to the use of force in the definition of rape as a crime against humanity. Entity-level legal amendments now regulate the rights of survivors of conflicted-related sexual violence, including their access to reparations. In 2016, Croatia passed the Act on the Rights of Victims of Sexual Violence During the Armed Aggression Against the Republic of...
Croatia in the Homeland War.\textsuperscript{48} Prior to its adoption, war crimes victims could only receive indemnification through individual criminal proceedings brought against perpetrators. The Act regulates the rights of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence to both indemnification and services. Despite the legal advances in both countries, however, survivors continue to be stigmatized through the lack of awareness and capacity of judicial and other authorities.\textsuperscript{49} In 2015, Kosovo passed the Regulation on Defining the Procedures for Recognition and Verification of the Status of Sexual Violence Victims During the Kosovo Liberation War, offering victims reparations such as a personal disability pension, access to health services abroad for health conditions that are a consequence of war and for which no domestic treatment is available, and priority in public and private employment, among others.\textsuperscript{50}

Women, girls and gender non-conforming people standing up for human rights have faced increased repression and violence, particularly in the eastern part of the region following the rise of conservative movements.\textsuperscript{51} Since 2015, the United Nations has recorded and verified 187 killings of female human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists in 41 countries across the globe.\textsuperscript{52} In the region, egregious incidents involving women human rights defenders, women journalists and their families have recently been recorded in Albania, Kazakhstan, Malta and Ukraine.\textsuperscript{53} Experts from national women’s machineries and civil society organizations in South-Eastern Europe have warned about an increase in hate messages on social media inciting violence against women in political and other leadership positions, as well as against feminist and LGBTQI organizations.\textsuperscript{54} The protection of human rights defenders has seldom been addressed in public policy frameworks, however. In 2017, the United Kingdom developed Guidelines for Working with Human Rights Defenders, including women human rights defenders, while Sweden adopted the Action Plan Defending Free Speech to protect journalists, elected representatives and artists from exposure to hatred and threats.\textsuperscript{55}

Intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination continue to impede efforts to reach marginalized and vulnerable women, including women with disabilities, ethnic minorities, poor women, migrants and refugees, LBTQI and sex workers, among others.\textsuperscript{56} Yet some landmark achievements have occurred. For example, Ireland passed the Marriage Act and Children and Family Relationships Act recognizing same-sex marriage and family relations.\textsuperscript{57} Malta amended its Constitution and the Marriage Equality Act to recognize same-sex marriage and civil unions, while Cyprus established civil partnerships for same sex couples in 2015.\textsuperscript{58} In Belgium, as of 2016, married mothers are automatically recognized as parents without having to undergo adoption proceedings, and transgender persons can modify their civil status without medical procedures. In 2019, Iceland approved a bill enabling persons above the age of 15 to define their own gender.\textsuperscript{59}

Nearly 4 in every 10 dollars spent by members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on bilateral aid targeted gender equality as a principal (primary) or significant (secondary) objective (37 per cent), amounting to a total of USD 41.7 billion in 2015-2016.\textsuperscript{60} Bilateral agreements targeting gender equality as a principal objective, however, only represented 4 per cent of total aid expenditure or USD 4.6 billion.\textsuperscript{61} Belgium and Canada dedicate between 60 and 70 per cent of their official development assistance (ODA) to gender equality, either as a principal or significant objective. The share exceeds 80 per cent in Iceland, Ireland and Sweden.\textsuperscript{62} Between 20 and 30 per cent of ODA from Turkey, the Czech Republic and Slovenia targets gender equality.\textsuperscript{63} France and Sweden have explicitly qualified their foreign policy and assistance as feminist, while the Netherlands applies feminist principles to ODA.\textsuperscript{64} Many donor countries have continued to provide financial support to international justice fora and mechanisms, including the Trust Fund for Victims linked to the International Criminal Court, and the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies, among others.\textsuperscript{65}

The women, peace and security agenda remains severely underfunded. While globally, the overall share of bilateral aid for the promotion of gender equality in conflict-affected contexts has increased since 2010, the proportion going to programmes with gender equality as the primary objective has stagnated at under 5 per cent, relying on a very small group of major donors.\textsuperscript{66} Women’s leadership continues to be impeded by lack of access to sustainable funding sources, with only 0.2 per cent of bilateral aid to conflict-affected contexts going directly to women’s organizations from 2016 to 2017.\textsuperscript{67}

In Europe and Central Asia, services and programmes to address gender-based violence in emergencies remain underresourced. In 2019, the Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan raised just USD 400,000 or 12.9 per cent of the USD 3.2 million needed to address gender-based violence.\textsuperscript{68} This represented a sharp decrease from the previous year, when USD 1.8 million was provided of the required USD 2.5 million (72 per cent). In both years, resources to address gender-based violence were the lowest amounts among all clusters and sectors, accounting for just 1.3 and 1.9 per cent of all resources stipulated under the 2018 and 2019 Humanitarian Response Plans, respectively.\textsuperscript{69}
SNAPSHOT

Women’s leadership in building peaceful and inclusive societies has never been more urgent

Progress in implementing the women, peace and security agenda remains uneven

Since 2005, **36 countries and Kosovo** have developed NAPs for resolution 1325

Yet **only 8 countries**

**costed or budgeted NAPs at the time of adoption:** Albania, Canada, Kosovo, the Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom

Despite their essential roles, women are often excluded from peace processes, and remain underrepresented in the military, police and diplomatic corps

Among the **nine countries** with data from 2013 to 2019

**the share of women in the armed forces ranged**

from 7.4% in the Czech Republic to 26.8% in Norway

Between 1995 and 2019, just **9.5%** of peace agreements signed by countries in the region **included provisions specifically addressing women’s inclusion and rights**

**Women held on average**

16.7% of staff positions in the police

in 33 countries with data from 2012 to 2017

**Women headed just**

21.7% of embassies from 32 countries with data from 2012 to 2017
The region has witnessed a spike in refugee and asylum-seeking populations, requiring gender-specific policies and financing.

At the end of 2019 the region’s countries were home to

- 7 million refugees
- 2.2 million asylum seekers

**Two thirds** of the region’s refugees were hosted by.

- **3.6 million**
  - **50.9%** Turkey
  - **16.3%** Germany

Women outnumbered men among refugee populations in only 3 of the 16 countries with complete sex-disaggregated data.

- **53.6%** Montenegro
- **57.7%** Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **61.3%** Turkmenistan

Women refugees accounted for:

- **46%** Turkey
- **38.5%** Germany

Since 2014, only a few countries have recognized gender-based forms of persecution as a basis for granting asylum and international protection.

In 2019, only 1 in every 10 dollars needed to address violence against women and girls in emergencies was raised under the Ukraine Humanitarian Response – 12.9% or

- USD 400,000 out of USD 3.2 million

---

**LARGELY UNDERFUNDED**

- Turkey
  - 50.9%
- Germany
  - 16.3%
Climate change and environmental degradation are among the most pressing issues facing the region and the world. They have decidedly gendered impacts in displacing communities, interrupting income generation, increasing unpaid labour burdens, and negatively affecting health, especially for women and girls. Yet gender perspectives and sex-disaggregated data on the impact of climate change are largely absent from national environmental protection, climate change and disaster-risk management policies, including in disaster-prone countries. Women remain underrepresented in public and private-sector positions in these fields. On the whole, governments, businesses and civil society must take transformative actions to mitigate and adapt to climate and environmental crises.

Few countries have integrated a gender perspective into environmental protection, climate change and disaster-risk management policies. Only a handful of countries within the European Union have begun to adopt meaningful laws and policies, although recent agreement on the European Green Deal by the European Commission is likely to build momentum. Sweden, for example, integrated gender into the Action Plan on a Toxic-Free Everyday Environment, as well as into environmental assessments and trainings on disaster management and civil defense. Gender has been prioritized in ODA on the environment, disaster-risk reduction and climate change by donor countries such as Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. A few countries recently affected by natural disasters, such as Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, have begun to address disparate gender impacts and mainstream gender into disaster risk management.

Across the region, women remain underrepresented in environment and climate change positions in the public and private sectors. In 2019, women comprised a third or less of ministers responsible for the environment, transport and energy. They held 16.4 per cent of these positions in newer European Union countries, 20.8 per cent in countries in South-Eastern Europe, 23.5 per cent in Western European countries without European Union membership, and 34.9 per cent in EU-15 countries. Across these four subregions, women had no presence in such ministerial positions in 11 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, North Macedonia, Poland and Turkey. Conversely, they held at least half of such positions in seven countries: Austria (50 per cent), Belgium (50 per cent), Liechtenstein (50 per cent), Montenegro (50 per cent), Finland (66.7 per cent), France (75 per cent) and the Netherlands (80 per cent).

Women’s representation was significantly higher—but still below parity—among senior officials responsible for the environment, transport and energy in newer European Union countries (37.7 per cent), Western European countries without European Union membership (39.3 per cent) and EU-15 countries (45 per cent), and somewhat lower in South-Eastern Europe (17.8 per cent). In 2019, nine countries had achieved or surpassed parity in these areas.
Share of women senior officials responsible for the environment, transport and energy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 2019, women accounted for less than a quarter of all persons employed in the utilities sector (22.5 per cent). This share was lowest in South-Eastern Europe (2.5 per cent) due to women’s marginal presence in electricity, gas, water and waste management companies in Serbia (2.8 per cent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1.8 per cent), North Macedonia (1.4 per cent) and Turkey (1.2 per cent). Women’s levels of representation were higher in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (27 per cent), where women in the Russian Federation and Ukraine comprised 26.4 and 31.3 per cent of those employed in the utilities sector, respectively. Elsewhere in the region, women’s higher representation stood out in Denmark (26.7 per cent), Portugal (27 per cent) and Kazakhstan (28.5 per cent). In Finland, efforts have been made to increase women’s participation and leadership in related private-sector enterprises, including in clean energy and technology.

Women comprised a third of graduates from tertiary STEM programmes from 2014 to 2018, and outnumbered men among graduates in natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (53.4 per cent). Women accounted for around 6 in every 10 graduates from these three fields in South-Eastern Europe (59.7 per cent), Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (60.7 per cent), Central Asia (61.5 per cent) and newer European Union countries (66.3 per cent). In the eastern subregions, women’s overrepresentation was most evident in Albania (69.9 per cent), Poland (70.7 per cent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (71.9 per cent), Georgia (72.2 per cent) and Kyrgyzstan (72.9 per cent). In contrast, a more gender-balanced picture emerged in the EU-15 countries, where women slightly outnumbered men (51 per cent). They were less likely than men to graduate from such programmes in Belgium (41.4 per cent), the Netherlands (43.8 per cent), Germany (46.8 per cent) and France (49 per cent).

Women accounted for just under half of all graduates from agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary tertiary programmes from 2014 to 2018 (47.2 per cent). Women dominated graduations from these fields in newer European Union countries (52.7 per cent), while virtual parity was observed in EU-15 countries (49.9 per cent). Conversely, women were underrepresented among graduates in South-Eastern Europe (44.5 per cent), Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (38 per cent), and Central Asia (32.4 per cent).

Share of women who graduated from agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary tertiary programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The region’s countries are on track to achieve gender parity in international fora addressing climate change. At the 25th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Madrid in December 2019, women were overrepresented in delegations from newer European Union countries (57.4 per cent), and slightly underrepresented in delegations from Western European countries without EU membership (48.1 per cent), EU-15 countries (45.9 per cent) and countries...
in South-Eastern Europe (41.4 per cent). Parity was
achieved or surpassed by 20 out of the 37 countries
with available data, including six countries where
women accounted for more than 7 in every 10 delegates:
Lithuania (71.4 per cent), Latvia (72.2 per cent), Slovenia
(72.7 per cent), Liechtenstein (75 per cent), Bulgaria
(76.9 per cent) and Finland (79.2 per cent).

Women's representation was considerably higher in
national delegations participating in the United Nations
Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
subsidiary bodies. In 2019, women comprised nearly half
of delegates from countries in South-Eastern Europe
(45.7 per cent) and EU-15 countries (48.8 per cent), and
more than 6 in every 10 delegates from newer European
Union countries (61.8 per cent) and Western European
countries without European Union membership (62.5 per
cent). At this level, 25 out of 37 countries with available
data had achieved or exceeded parity. This pattern was
also observed at the UNFCCC intersessional meetings in
Bonn in June 2019, where women accounted for more
than half of national delegates from Western European
and other countries (52 per cent) and Eastern Europe
(58 per cent).

The inadequate management of hazardous chemicals
and pollution, and the associated impacts on the
health of women and girls remain a concern in Eastern
Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asia. In 2016, the
regional female mortality rate attributed to unintentional
poisonings stood at 0.5 deaths per 100,000 women, yet
Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asia
exceeded that at 0.8 deaths per 100,000 women. Conversely, female mortality was considerably lower in
EU-15 countries (0.3 deaths per 100,000 women), newer
European Union countries (0.2 deaths per 100,000 women), countries in South-Eastern Europe (0.2 deaths per 100,000 women) and Western European countries
without European Union membership (0.1 deaths per
100,000 women). Men were on average twice as likely
to die from unintentional poisonings as women (0.5
deaths per 100,000 women compared to 1 death per
100,000 men). Across the region, female mortality exceeded that of males in three countries: Germany (0.2
deaths per 100,000 women compared to 0.1 deaths per
100,000 men), Italy (0.3 deaths per 100,000 women
compared to 0.2 deaths per 100,000 men), and France
(0.6 deaths per 100,000 women compared to 0.3
deaths per 100,000 men).

Women of reproductive age, and pregnant and
lactating women in particular, are among the most
susceptible if exposed to hazardous chemicals
and pollution. Adverse sexual and reproductive
health outcomes have recently been documented in
Kazakhstan. Chronic exposure to high concentrations
of minerals and toxic pollutants through unsafe
drinking water, due to water scarcity caused by the
Aral Sea crisis, has increased maternal morbidity
and mortality, infertility, and pregnancy and fetal
development complications.

Female mortality rates due to unintentional
poisoning in selected countries
per 100,000 women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Deaths (per 100,000 women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Russian Federation</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The lack of clean fuels and technologies poses
serious health risks to women and children, who are
generally the main procurers and users of household
energy. In 2018, in Uzbekistan, at least 15 per cent
of the population did not primarily rely on clean fuels
and technology. This share stood at 19 per cent in
Georgia and Tajikistan, 20 per cent in Albania, 23 per
cent in Kyrgyzstan, 25 per cent in Romania, 34 per
cent in Serbia, 35 per cent in North Macedonia, 44 per
cent in Montenegro, and 55 per cent in Bosnia and
Herzegovina. Often, wood, crop wastes, charcoal,
ccoal, dung or kerosene, among other unclean fuels, are
used with inefficient technologies such as open fires
and leaky stoves, leading to high levels of household
air pollution. In 2016, nearly 27,000 women across
the region died prematurely after being significantly
exposed to household air pollution. Over three
quarters of such deaths occurred in Tajikistan (1,088
deaths), Uzbekistan (1,454 deaths), Bosnia and
Herzegovina (1,456 deaths), Georgia (1,472 deaths),
Serbia (2,574 deaths), Ukraine (3,215 deaths), Romania
(4,530 deaths) and the Russian Federation (4,559 deaths).
Climate justice and environmental sustainability depend on GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP

National policy agendas must urgently prioritize the integration of gender perspectives into environmental protection, climate change and disaster-risk management strategies.

Only a few countries in the European Union have begun to adopt meaningful laws and policies in these fields, although recent agreement on the European Green Deal by the European Commission is likely to build momentum. Countries recently affected by natural disasters, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, have begun to address disparate gender impacts and mainstream gender into disaster risk management.

Developing the capacities of women and communities on disaster preparedness and response, and establishing systemic approaches to disseminate information during such events remain central concerns.

Women are underrepresented in environment and climate change positions in the public and private sectors.

In 2019, women comprised a third or less of ministers responsible for the environment, transport and energy.

In 2019, women accounted for LESS THAN A QUARTER of people employed in the utilities sector, with the lowest share, 2.5%, in South-Eastern Europe.

From 2014 to 2018, women outnumbered men among graduates in the natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (53.4%), and were underrepresented among graduates from agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary tertiary programmes (47.2%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Women Represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newer European Union countries</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern European countries</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western European countries without EU membership</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-15 countries</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant progress has been made towards achieving gender parity in climate negotiations

At the 25th UNFCCC Conference of Parties in Madrid in December 2019

- Women outnumbered men in delegations from Western European countries without EU membership (48.1%)
- They were slightly underrepresented in delegations from EU-15 countries (45.9%)
- Women accounted for more than half of national delegates in delegations from South-Eastern European countries (57.4%)

At the UNFCCC intersessional meetings in Bonn in June 2019

- Women accounted for more than half of national delegates (57.4%)
- They were slightly underrepresented in delegations from Eastern European countries (58%)

Polluting and unsustainable strategies of economic growth must be replaced by new green models that put ecological and social well-being first

In 2016, nearly 27,000 women across the region died prematurely after being significantly exposed to household air pollution

- The inadequate management of hazardous chemicals and pollution, and the associated impacts on the health of women and girls remain major concerns. In 2016 mortality rates from unintentional poisoning were:
  - 0.8 deaths per 100,000 women in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus and Central Asia
  - 0.5 deaths per 100,000 women in Europe and Central Asia
ANNEX 1. SUB-REGIONAL GROUPINGS

The Europe and Central Asia region comprises seven subregions:

**South-Eastern Europe**
- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Montenegro
- North Macedonia
- Serbia
- Turkey

**Eastern Europe and the Caucasus**
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Georgia
- Republic of Moldova
- Russian Federation
- Ukraine

**Central Asia**
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan

**Newer European Union countries**
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Hungary
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Malta
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Slovenia

**EU-15 countries**
- Austria
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

**Western European countries without EU membership**
- Andorra
- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Monaco
- Norway
- San Marino
- Switzerland

**North America and Israel**
- Canada
- Israel
- United States of America

References to *eastern subregions* and to *countries in the eastern part of the region* refer to the subregions of South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Central Asia and newer European Union countries.

References to *western subregions* and to *countries in the western part of the region* refer to the subregions of EU-15 countries, Western European countries without European Union membership, and North America and Israel.
ENDNOTES

Introduction

1 References to the eastern subregions and to countries in the eastern part of the region refer to the subregions of South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Central Asia and newer European Union countries. References to the western subregions and countries in the western part of the region refer to the subregions of EU-15 countries, Western European countries without European Union membership, and North America and Israel.

Dimension 1

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid
39 Ibid.
Dimension 2


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.


8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.


44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.


47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.


57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.


71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.


26 Ibid.


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31 Ibid.


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44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.


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GREVIO is the independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by States parties. GREVIO elaborates reports evaluating legislative and other measures taken by the parties to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. In cases where action is required to prevent a serious, massive or persistent pattern of any acts of violence covered by the Convention, GREVIO may initiate a special inquiry procedure. GREVIO may also adopt, where appropriate, general recommendations on themes and concepts of the Convention. GREVIO’s membership is governed by Article 66 of the Istanbul Convention.


Dimension 5


2. All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

3. Ibid.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


22 Ibid.


25 Ibid.


27 Ibid.


32 Ibid.


34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.


41 Ibid.


43 Ibid.


45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.


48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.


61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.


67 Ibid.


69 Ibid.


73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.


76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

Dimension 6


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


9. Ibid.


12. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.


32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.


40. Ibid.


42. Ibid.


