



COVID-19
RESPONSE

UN
WOMEN



COVID-19 GLOBAL GENDER RESPONSE TRACKER

Factsheet: Europe and Central Asia, December 2020

Background

Globally and in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, women have been disproportionately affected by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Since the beginning of the pandemic, violence against women and girls has intensified all over the world, and the ECA region is no exception. Data from multiple sources show an [increase in cases of gender-based violence](#), and particularly domestic violence, reaching a peak of [65 percent](#) in Kyrgyzstan. The pandemic has also deepened pre-existing gender inequalities, especially in women's access to social protection services and their disproportionate share of unpaid care work: a recent UNDP [survey](#) conducted in Turkey shows that women undertook four times as much unpaid work as men during the lockdown, while a UN Women [gender assessment](#) reveals that in Central Asia three out of every five women face higher risks of not being able to access health care services. Women also face heightened risks of seeing their income and livelihoods decrease: between April and May, [women's earnings](#) decreased between 15 percent (North Macedonia) and 52 percent (Turkey) in the region.

Drawing on the [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#), a global database compiled by UNDP and UN Women, this factsheet provides an overview of policy

measures adopted in the ECA region across three key dimensions: the surge in violence against women and girls, the increased burden of unpaid care work, and women's economic insecurity due to losses in income, livelihood and jobs. Overall, the gender dimensions of policy responses have been uneven, with substantial differences among countries and territories across the region.

The COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker

The COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker monitors policy measures adopted by governments worldwide to tackle the COVID-19 crisis, and highlights responses that have integrated a gender lens. The tracker is coordinated by UNDP with substantive leadership and technical contributions from UN Women. It can provide guidance for policymakers and evidence for advocates to ensure a gender-sensitive COVID-19 policy response.

Gender-sensitive measures and methodology

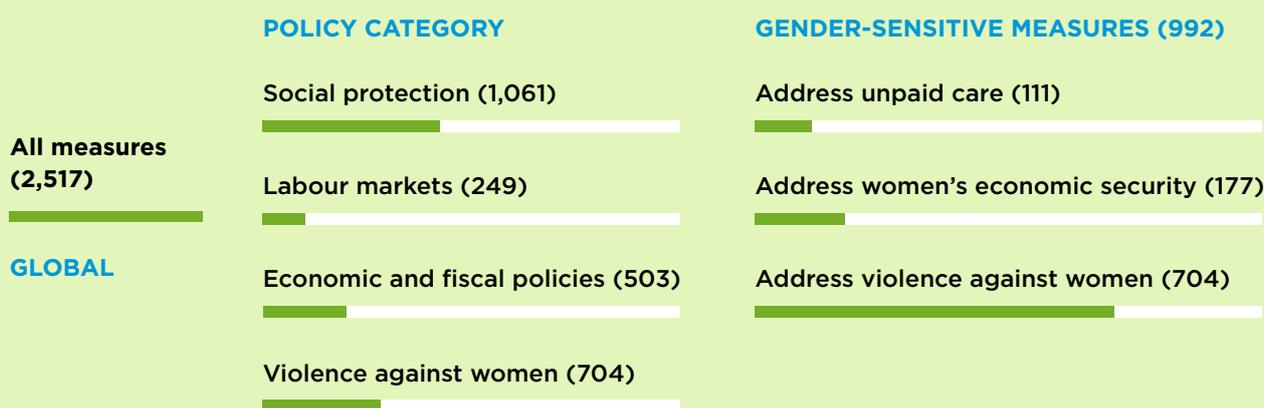
Gender-sensitive measures are defined as those that seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis, notably violence against women and girls, unpaid care work and economic insecurity.

The measures currently included in the tracker fall under four categories:

1. Social protection
2. Labour markets
3. Violence against women
4. Economic and fiscal policies

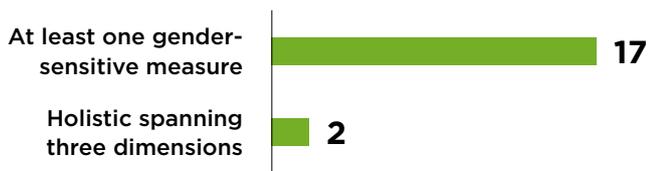
For the purpose of this analysis:

-  All violence against women measures are categorized as gender-sensitive by default;
-  Social protection and labour market measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they target women's economic security or address unpaid care;
-  Economic and fiscal measures are defined as gender-sensitive if they provide support to female-dominated sectors of the economy, on the assumption that this is likely to protect women's employment and thereby their economic security.



Gender equality in policy response

Number of countries and territories by scope of gender response



Across the ECA region, 17 countries and territories¹ have adopted a total number of **82 gender-sensitive measures**. These **represent a third** of the total socio-economic measures adopted in response to COVID-19 (82 measures out of 248). Data show that governments are prioritizing policies to combat **violence against women and girls**, which has escalated since the start of the pandemic: across the region, 54 measures have been adopted to support women survivors of gender-based violence, while measures taken to address **women's economic insecurity** (14) and the increased burden of **unpaid care** (14) are much fewer.

¹ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Data for Turkmenistan is not available, as it reports no confirmed cases of COVID-19.
* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

However, the response remains **inadequate, given the scale of COVID-19's impact on women.**

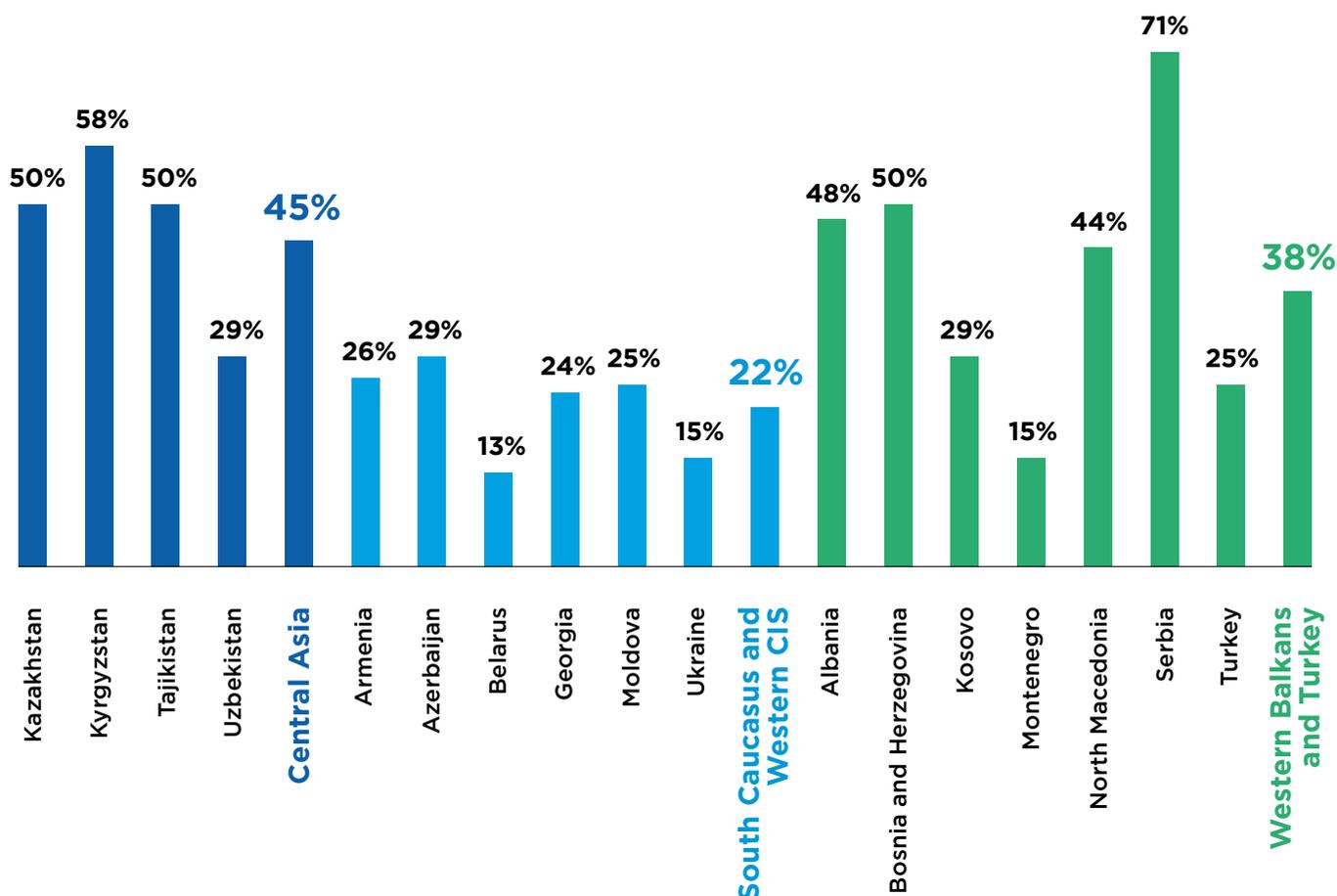
Only two countries (Albania and Serbia) have adopted measures that span all three dimensions. In **only six countries** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia and Tajikistan), nearly or more than 50 percent of all measures may be classified as gender-sensitive, with Serbia recording an outstanding 71 percent.

In total, countries and territories in the ECA region have adopted **166 labour market and social protection measures**. Only 23 of these measures (**14 percent**) may be considered as gender-sensitive, in that they target women's economic security or address unpaid care. Similarly, of the **28 economic and fiscal measures** adopted across the region, only **18 percent** are designed to support women-dominated sectors of the economy and aim to protect women's employment.

Proportion of gender-sensitive measures out of the total COVID-19 related policy measures, by type and country/territory (source: COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker)

Country/territory	Economic and fiscal	Social protection	Labour market	Violence against women	Gender-sensitive measures
Kazakhstan	33%	0%	-	4	50%
Kyrgyzstan	-	0%	-	7	58%
Tajikistan	-	0%	-	1	50%
Uzbekistan	0%	30%	33%	-	29%
Central Asia	25%	16%	33%	100%	45%
Armenia	60%	8%	0%	2	26%
Azerbaijan	0%	13%	0%	3	29%
Belarus	-	14%	0%	-	13%
Georgia	0%	9%	33%	4	24%
Moldova	0%	0%	-	2	25%
Ukraine	-	0%	0%	3	15%
South Caucasus and Western CIS	21%	7%	8%	100%	22%
Albania	0%	18%	0%	9	48%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0%	0%	50%	3	50%
Kosovo	25%	0%	0%	4	29%
Montenegro	0%	11%	50%	-	15%
North Macedonia	-	20%	50%	2	44%
Serbia	-	63%	0%	5	71%
Turkey	0%	8%	13%	5	25%
Western Balkans and Turkey	10%	18%	21%	100%	38%
ECA region	18%	13%	17%	100%	33%

Gender-sensitive measures



How are sub-regions doing?

All countries and territories across the ECA region, with the exception of Belarus, Montenegro and Uzbekistan, have adopted measures to respond to the increase in **violence against women** during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support women and girls who are survivors of violence. The majority have been adopted in the **Western Balkans and Turkey** (28, compared to 14 in South Caucasus and Western Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and 12 in Central Asia).

Countries and territories in the Western Balkans and Turkey also perform better than the other sub-regions on gender sensitivity of the **social protection** and **labour market measures** adopted. However, gender-sensitive measures represent respectively only 18 percent and 21 percent of the total social protection and labour market measures. In South Caucasus and Western CIS this percentage is remarkably lower: among the 57 social protection and 13 labour market measures adopted across the sub-region, less than eight percent are targeted to women.

As regards **economic and fiscal measures**, 21 percent of those adopted by governments in **South Caucasus and Western CIS** may be regarded as gender-sensitive, a percentage more than twice as high as in the Western Balkans and Turkey. **Central Asia** reports only one gender-sensitive measure, out of the four economic and fiscal policies adopted. Besides, the absolute number of economic and fiscal measures taken across the entire region remains particularly low: only five of these policies were designed to address women's economic insecurity.

Stronger actions are needed to address barriers to women's access to social protection services and protect women's economic security, as well as to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 related increase in gender-based violence. Finally, more effective measures are necessary to address the severe care crisis that the pandemic has revealed, to reduce and redistribute care work and invest in the entire care economy to build back better.

Examples of measures adopted by governments

CENTRAL ASIA

➤ In **Kazakhstan**, potential victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and owners of grocery stores, vendors and pharmacies were given a [code phrase](#), the use of which by a woman (including by phone) signals the incidence of domestic violence and the need to inform the police immediately.

➤ In **Kyrgyzstan**, the government [expanded](#) and strengthened existing hotlines, also including online psychological services (112, 118, 1227, 111). The government also encouraged survivors to call the 112 service, under the Ministry of Emergency Situations, which has unfolded the system in all big cities and provinces of the country. Calls are further re-directed to relevant services.

➤ In **Uzbekistan**, a [working parent](#) (only one of the two) was given a paid leave for the duration of shutdown of schools and kindergartens without affecting the regular annual paid leave schedule.

SOUTH CAUCASUS AND WESTERN CIS

➤ In **Georgia**, to mitigate the socio-economic effects of COVID-19, the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development has expanded [economic support programmes](#). As a result, more women are now allowed to apply. Moreover, women-run businesses and women applicants receive extra points during the assessment of applications.

➤ In **Moldova**, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection undertook a rapid GBV assessment collecting data and information on

the needs of survivors during and after the state of emergency, as well as an evaluation of the system's response to cases of GBV during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis.

➤ In **Ukraine**, the Ministry of Interior and the National Police have launched the [@Police_Helpbot](#) chatbot on Telegram Messenger to inform people about domestic violence and help survivors of violence find aid.

WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

➤ In **Albania**, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection has developed and approved a standardized [Protocol](#) on the functioning of public and non-public residential centres providing housing services for victims/survivors of domestic violence and for victims/survivors of trafficking in the COVID-19 pandemic situation. The aim of the protocol is to assist service providers (shelters) to function as effectively as possible in accordance with the restrictions due to COVID-19 preventive measures.

➤ In **Serbia**, to support the provision of long-term care, the salary of care workers (a majority of them women) in nursing homes has been [increased](#) by 10 percent.

➤ In **Turkey**, the Ministry of Trade announced a [grant programme](#) for women cooperatives aiming to alleviate the economic impacts of COVID-19, where each cooperative could appeal for up to TRY150,000 (equivalent to USD19,000) under the Cooperatives Support Programme of the Ministry.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Istanbul Regional Hub, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

Design: Oksana Iashchuk
All rights reserved



COVID-19
RESPONSE

UN
WOMEN

