

## UN WOMEN SERIES:

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COVID-19 response in Europe and  
Central Asia



From  
the People of Japan



# ONE YEAR OF COVID-19:

A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19  
Socio-Economic Policy Responses  
Adopted in Europe and Central Asia





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## A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia



UN Women Regional Office  
for Europe and Central Asia



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>COVID-19</b>	Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>LNOB</b>	Leave No One Behind
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the first year since it was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020, the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has deeply disrupted people's lives with far-reaching social and economic repercussions. Governments faced huge implications in crafting timely and effective responses to and recovery efforts from the pandemic's disruptions and its compounded social and economic impacts. The pandemic has shifted gender dynamics and inclusivity efforts, rendering women, children and vulnerable and disadvantaged households and groups more exposed to deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities.

Many countries that were able to suppress initial outbreaks are now experiencing second and third waves of infections, which in some countries have reached a critical stage. For the rest of 2021, the pandemic is predicted to remain or deepen its surge with a grim and clouded socio-economic outlook.

Persistent under-investments in gender equality and women's empowerment in the pre-COVID-19 era already hindered women's gender-equal development and undervalued their contributions to their families' and communities' socio-economic development. As the pandemic continues, it has shifted gender dynamics and inclusivity efforts, rendering women, children, and disadvantaged groups, more exposed to deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities. Data from UN Women (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to wipe out progress from 25 years of efforts dedicated to increasing gender equality.<sup>1</sup>

The pandemic has also triggered a labour market crisis of significant proportions. This crisis has had disproportionately negative effects on women, particularly those who face multiple and intersecting discrimination, such as discrimination based on class or migrant status. The impacts of COVID-19 on women in the labour market has rolled back progress, particularly for those women and vulnerable groups at greatest risk of joblessness, poverty, increased inequality and who risk long-term, crisis-induced socio-economic scarring.

This **ONE YEAR OF COVID-19** study presents a gender analysis of socio-economic policy responses adopted in 18 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia over the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Areas of intervention fell largely into three categories: social protection measures; labour market measures; and economic, fiscal and business stimulus measures. The government measures under these categories and detailed in this report include both emergency and recovery measures taken to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and to build resilience against future crises. Some countries' priority measures have been accompanied by longer-term socio-economic recovery efforts.

This report analyses the measures taken with a gender lens<sup>3</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.<sup>4</sup> By applying these perspectives, governments can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and vulnerable groups while bolstering the fundamentals of 'building back better' after the pandemic.

1 UN Women '[Whose Time to Care? Unpaid Care and Domestic Work During COVID-19](#)'

2 Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

3 A gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include an explicit reference to "women" and "seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis." (See [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological Note](#))

4 The LNOB principle's methodology considers measures that directly address and make explicit reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups. LNOB is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals

This report documents emergency measures introduced to 30 April 2021. The measures under analysis were compiled from six data sources: the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker.<sup>5</sup> Though this study applied a rigorous analysis, it is important to note that the underlying data “should be interpreted with caution.... there may be gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, overreporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures.”<sup>6</sup> It should also be noted that because the study took a broad approach that drew on multiple sources, some data points presented may differ from the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker of September 2020.

The accompanying ‘Mapping’ and ‘Snapshot – Gender & LNOB’ tables present comparable practices in delivering gender-responsive emergency socio-economic support. Accompanying policy briefs recommend specific support for women and other vulnerable groups by building more inclusive social protection systems, and promoting more inclusive labour markets and business stimuli measures for women entrepreneurs and women owned businesses. The policy briefs also suggest that greater gender responsiveness in policy-making is crucial for women and girls to “weather a crisis, bounce back and rebuild” and to facilitate sustainable, longer-term change.<sup>7</sup>

Recognizing that the region is highly diverse, with varying social and economic systems that can support or curtail a country’s resilience to emergencies, this report includes and moves beyond a generalized regional overview to look at measures adopted across the three subregions (Central Asia, the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans and Turkey). This report makes no attempt to rank subregions or countries/territories; it

offers evidence of emerging country practices as a way to improve socio-economic policy responses and measures that benefit women and vulnerable groups and that strengthen responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and future emergencies, shocks and challenges.

For the region as a whole, this report shows that the governments of 18 countries and territories revised their national budgets to offer **emergency state fiscal assistance packages**. These varied in scope and scale, ranging from 0.15 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina to 9 per cent in Kazakhstan and to 12.8 per cent in Turkey. All governments also launched emergency responses in an attempt to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, **477 social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business stimulus measures were recorded** as introduced and/or enhanced. Of these measures, 220 (46 per cent) were directed towards social protection through extended schemes for registered beneficiaries as well as those not usually covered by social assistance or social insurance; 175 (37 per cent) were directed to economic, fiscal and business stimulus responses (e.g. subsidies and support to the economy and businesses), while 82 (17 per cent) were directed to the labour market for salary and wages support for workers and the self-employed, and labour regulatory adjustments).

The importance of gender equality during a crisis cannot be overstated; the socio-economic impacts of a crisis are never gender neutral, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. The analysis of recorded measures taken from a gender lens reveals that of the 477 measures, only **34 (7 per cent) specifically reference women and can therefore be classified as gender-sensitive**. This evidence calls for governments to prioritize adequate and timely gender-responsive policy responses in the context of COVID-19 and other crises. In comparison, **135 measures (28 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle** in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

5 [Council of Europe: Promoting and protecting women’s rights at national level; International Monetary Fund Policy Tracker on Policy Responses to COVID-19; ILO Country Policy Responses; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development POLICY TRACKER: Tackling COVID-19 - Contributing to a global effort; World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures; UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#) .

6 [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

7 UN Women (2020) [From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)

The five **Central Asia countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)**, which have historically had less-developed and more fragile social and economic systems, introduced 83 measures. The measures were mostly in the social protection category (40 measures), followed by measures in the economic, fiscal and business category (31 measures) and then measures in the labour market category (12 measures). Of these, only three measures (4 per cent) from two countries – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – can be classified as being gender-sensitive. In comparison, 29 measures (35 per cent) from all five countries can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle.

The six **Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine)** adopted 209 measures, of which 100 measures fall under the social protection category, 75 measures fall under the economic, fiscal and business category, and 34 measures fall under the labour market category. Of these, only 13 measures (6 per cent) from four countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova) can be classified as being gender-sensitive. Fifty-eight measures (28 per cent) from all six countries can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle.

The six **Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Turkey** adopted 185 measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Of these measures, 80 fall under the social protection category, 69 fall under the economic, fiscal and business category, and 36 measures fall under the labour market category. Of these: only 18 measures (10 per cent) from all seven countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. In comparison, 48 measures (26 per cent) from the seven countries can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle.

The immediate government responses recorded in this study have focused on addressing urgent social and economic needs. However, analysis of these responses suggests that notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic's exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities, most of the measures introduced were not designed with a gender or LNOB lens. These gaps call for wider and longer-term gender-responsive and inclusive changes and reforms to social protection and labour market systems and for supportive macroeconomic policy reforms. These will provide the foundation for

an equitable, stronger, sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and will improve future crisis preparedness.

### Improving emergency responses and building more inclusive social protection systems for women and vulnerable groups

Greater support is needed to expand access to unconditional cash transfers, unemployment compensation and other social protection measures. For example, creative support is needed to facilitate improvements to digital payment infrastructures because women and vulnerable groups often lack access to financial institutions (particularly online banking) or lack the digital literacy to apply for and access social protection provisions online.

Social protection measures also need to take into account unpaid care work. Governments' formal recognition of unpaid domestic and care work as 'real' – and critical – work is essential to equitably reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work burdens among women and men. Such recognition, reduction and redistribution will contribute to broader social and economic well-being.

For maximum impact, the development of social protection systems must be linked to a conducive macroeconomic framework, including labour market, fiscal and monetary policies. Current social protection programmes and systems should be assessed and evaluated through a gender lens and should adopt the LNOB principle.

To help prioritize the needs of women and vulnerable groups, governments must involve and collaborate with local governments and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, in all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating social protection systems and provisions.

### Improving emergency responses and building more inclusive labour markets for women and vulnerable groups

Labour market measures need to recognize and consider the specific constraints that women and vulnerable groups face when working in informal sectors and in self-employment. Across the region, women are more likely to be working in the 'feminized sectors' of the labour market, which have been hardest hit during



the pandemic. Such sectors are typically characterized by workers being less likely to work from home and by being disproportionately employed in the informal sector with low pay, precarious employment, poor working conditions and limited employment rights.

This report presents the range of labour market measures that have been adopted to support businesses and workers' jobs, wages and incomes. It also demonstrates that the momentum in labour market interventions needs to be maintained and expanded to reach beyond formal employment.

Long-term planning and policymaking in relation to employment protection and jobs programmes must include targeted support for young women (in the form of education, training and apprenticeships), informal workers and small business owners. This support must include information and communications technology resources and infrastructure that are key to the digital economy. Governments must develop a national-level focus on gender-responsive employment policies that will improve women's access to decent employment and revalue care work with paid employment. Investments (particularly urgent investment in the care economy) and commitments to create decent and greener jobs for women and men will strengthen the economy.

### **Improving emergency responses and making economic, fiscal and business support more inclusive of women and vulnerable groups**

Across Europe and Central Asia, government fiscal packages have included expanded social protection measures and the deployment of cash transfers to help vulnerable and at-risk individuals and households. Governments should adopt programmes that include more regular cash transfer payments for women and vulnerable groups.

Government packages have generally been provided through a combination of spending reallocations, spending increases and sovereign guarantees to support affected businesses. It is crucial that governments continue to ensure that their fiscal measures keep all people, households and businesses (including women owned MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises) and business sectors dominated by women) afloat. In focusing support for the most vulnerable and those most affected by the pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis, emergency and fiscal packages must scale up what is being offered such that the packages are sufficient to raise whole families.

Fiscal responses must continue to reduce critical gaps in women's, vulnerable groups', workers' and job seekers' access to social protection and employment provisions. As part of their long-term economic policymaking and post-crisis coordination, governments across the region need to address systemic and pre-existing inequalities and integrate an intersectional approach to recovery planning in order to build fairer and more resilient societies.

## 2. CONTEXT AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As of 6 May 2021, slightly over a year since the COVID-19 outbreak was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020 (having first been detected in December 2019), there have been over 154 million confirmed cases and over 3.2 million deaths worldwide.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding the global roll-outs of COVID-19 vaccines aimed to protect and bring back some form of normality to people's lives, jobs and livelihoods, the World Health Organization has warned that "vaccines do not equal zero COVID" and that the "pandemic still has a long way to run."<sup>9</sup> In 2021, the pandemic is predicted to remain or deepen its surge in many countries and has a clouded socio-economic outlook that "risks further weakness."<sup>10</sup> Further, since December 2020, a number of countries have reported new variants of the COVID-19 virus that are spreading much faster than the original strains.<sup>11</sup>

The socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and government-imposed national or partial lockdown measures to curb the pandemic's spread continue to disrupt markets and demand/supply chains, compelling businesses to close or scale back operations. COVID-19 continues to deeply disrupt almost all aspects of people's lives, with repercussions on employment, loss of jobs and livelihoods, and has had adverse social impacts too. For governments, there were huge implications in crafting timely and effective responses to and recovery efforts from the pandemic's disruptions and its compounded social and economic impacts.

Many countries that were able to suppress initial outbreaks are now experiencing a second or third wave of infections, which in some countries have reached

a critical stage. The continuing spread of COVID-19 is placing additional burdens on women and other vulnerable individuals, groups and populations. This could further fuel the pandemic's already gender-disproportionate socio-economic impacts.

Outbreak responses, re-introduced lockdown measures and other restrictions have shifted gender dynamics and inclusivity efforts, rendering women, children and vulnerable and disadvantaged households and groups more exposed to deep-seated socio-economic inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities. Persistent under-investments in gender equality and women's empowerment in the pre-COVID-19 era already hindered women's gender-equal development and undervalued their contributions to their families' and communities' socio-economic development. Data from UN Women suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to wipe out progress from 25 years of efforts dedicated to increasing gender equality.<sup>12</sup>

While national solidarity and socio-economic measures are essential to helping all people get through the COVID-19 pandemic, states should also undertake critically important measures aimed at countering the pandemic's regressive effects. These measures should help women, individuals and at-risk populations (particularly those already underserved by social assistance services) that are experiencing the highest degree of socio-economic, employment and livelihood marginalization. The design of these measures should be informed by gender data and should incorporate the LNOB principle.

8 [World Health Organization Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#)

9 World Health Organization Leaders: 'Vaccines Do Not Equal Zero Covid' | NBC

10 [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Economic Outlook, December 2020](#)

11 BBC News, [Covid: World Health Organization in 'close contact' with UK over new virus variant](#), 20 December 2020

12 UN Women ['WHOSE TIME TO CARE? UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK DURING COVID-19'](#)

In protecting and building women's and vulnerable groups' resilience against the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) also highlighted that COVID-19 could reverse decades of progress made for gender equality and women's rights, and advocated for women's leadership and for women's contributions to be at the centre of resilience and recovery efforts.<sup>13</sup> In his Policy Brief, the Secretary-General emphasized "across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs [and] are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. They have less access to social protections and are the majority

of single-parent households. Their capacity to absorb economic shocks is, therefore, less than that of men." This demands for COVID-19 recovery and socio-economic response plans to support and protect the needs and rights of people affected by the pandemic, with particular focus on women, most vulnerable groups, and people who are at risk of being left behind. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which includes states from Europe and Central Asia, calls for post-COVID-19 recovery policies to "consider carefully the socio-economic inclusion of excluded groups" and their economic marginalization.<sup>14</sup>

**TABLE 1:**

**Vulnerable Individuals, Households and Groups Most at Risk of Being Left Behind in Accessing and Benefiting from COVID-19 Policy Responses**

• Women	• Survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence
• Children, adolescent and youth, especially girls, and young women, and orphans	• Refugees, regular and irregular migrant workers and internally displaced populations
• Single mothers, including pregnant and lactating women	• Ethnic minority women and marginalized groups, including people in informal settlements and homeless
• Women-headed households	• Elderly persons
• Informal and formal home-based women workers	• Persons with disabilities
• Rural women and communities living in remote rural areas	• People living with HIV/AIDS
• Divorced women	• LGBTI people and communities

Social protection programmes in the COVID-19 pandemic response and other crises should protect all people's human capabilities and livelihoods. Universal access to social protection programmes can help women and vulnerable groups cope with crises and mitigate socio-economic shocks. Such systems can provide effective, transformative and sustainable safeguards to emergencies if they are well designed, scalable, well-coordinated and flexible and are implemented to reduce inequalities, build human capital and build socio-economic resilience. Sustainable Development Goal 1, target 1.3, calls for the implementation of

"nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable."<sup>15</sup> As the World Bank notes, "well-designed social protection programmes are cost-effective, costing countries on average about 1.5 per cent of GDP."<sup>16</sup>

Labour market policy responses that include and promote diversified livelihoods and income sources can also help women and vulnerable groups withstand and cope with shocks of COVID-19 and other crises. Sustainable Development Goal 8, target 8.3, calls for the promotion of "development-oriented policies

<sup>13</sup> [UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/468918>

<sup>15</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>

<sup>16</sup> [The World Bank In Social Protection](#)

that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises including through access to financial services.”<sup>17</sup> Recovery from COVID-19, emergencies and resilience-building can be supported with measures that secure and/or increase women’s incomes, offer opportunities to expand their livelihoods and resources, and safeguard them from productive risks.

States should draw on lessons learned from other countries’ responses to the COVID-19 and similar pandemics (such as the 2014 Ebola crisis in West Africa and the 2016 Zika outbreak in the Americas), particularly in terms of the crises’ far-reaching gendered implications. The context of these pandemics responses shows that they posed serious threats to women’s engagement in social and economic activities; the responses show and that by applying and integrating a systematic and intentional gender approach to policy measures and actions leads to better management of socio-economic impacts.

In the case of Ebola, the African Development Bank was urged to integrate the socio-economic recovery of women into government responses in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In its report, the African Development Bank emphasized “an urgent need to mitigate the economic losses of women during the pandemic and to position them for economic recovery and eventually, economic empowerment in the aftermath of the pandemic” and “a need to ensure that women are empowered to help them rebuild.”<sup>18</sup> During the Zika pandemic two years later, the Executive Director of UN Women stressed the need for women to “be at the centre of the response” and gave a “stark reminder that disease epidemics tend to intensify vulnerabilities among already marginalized and at-risk populations.”<sup>19</sup> Six years after the Ebola crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and response measures are again impacting women’s economic security and posing risks with little or disproportionate social protection to women and households, groups and populations that are most at risk of being left behind.

The UN’s COVID-19 framework of urgent socio-economic support to assist Member States to respond to the pandemic discloses that during the Ebola outbreak, “more people died from the interruption of social services and economic breakdown than from the virus itself.” This statement in itself is a call for states to adopt approaches that will minimize and mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 and that will promote gender-responsive sustainable socio-economic recovery and resilience building. Approaches incorporated into policy responses by state and international development institutions include:

- Integrating a gender lens and the LNOB principle into immediate emergency and long-term socio-economic policy responses and measures;
- Removing barriers that hinder women and vulnerable groups in accessing and benefiting from socio-economic support, including social benefits, basic services, employment and job protections; and
- Introducing and/or scaling up measures that build socio-economic resilience and recovery of women and marginalized and vulnerable groups and preparing them for future emergencies.

Across Europe and Central Asia, states are unlikely to be able to ensure that their current and future emergency policy responses will be gender-sensitive if they do not also address systemic and pre-existing gender inequalities.

It is against this backdrop that countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia have provided priority policy responses and introduced and/or enhanced social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business measures to mitigate the socio-economic implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Within their responses, states have, in varying degrees, included measures specifically targeting women and vulnerable groups. Some states’ priority measures have also been accompanied by immediate response and longer-term socio-economic recovery efforts.

<sup>17</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>

<sup>18</sup> [Women’s Resilience: Integrating Gender in the Response to Ebola](#)

<sup>19</sup> ‘Women must be at the centre of the response’. [Statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women](#)

# 3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ONE YEAR OF COVID-19 STUDY

UN Women's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office and Field Offices continue to work towards strengthening the gender responsiveness of COVID-19 and other emergency measures. This highly diverse region hosts countries of "less developed economies and communities, particularly in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia,"<sup>20</sup> with fragile social and economic systems that weaken their resilience to emergencies, crises and COVID-19. All countries have taken measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic; some countries have implemented gender-targeted interventions in domains that disproportionately impact women more than men.

The UN Women regional emergency project 'Responding to the Urgent Needs of Women and Girls in Marginalized and Vulnerable Situations Exacerbated by the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) in Europe and Central Asia', will use gender data-driven policy advocacy, impact analyses and research on COVID-19 to promote emergency measures and socio-economic support that reaches women who have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will also work to ensure that the lives and livelihoods of women and girls are adequately supported and protected in future pandemics, challenges and emergencies. This project is being implemented between June 2020 and May 2021, with generous support from the Government of Japan. The conclusions, analysis of best practices and gender-responsive policy recommendations from the 'One Year of COVID-19' study will be widely shared with policymakers, practitioners and civil society.

In responding to the urgent needs of women, vulnerable groups and people most at risk of being left behind in Europe and Central Asia, a mapping has been carried out to:

- Document reported emergency measures undertaken by states in the Europe and Central Asia region and review them from a gender lens and the LNOB principle;
- Present comparable practices in delivering gender-responsive emergency socio-economic support in Europe and Central Asia; and
- Propose gender-responsive COVID-19 policy recommendations that address emergency response, recovery and resilience and that help countries prepare for future pandemics and shocks.

The mapping compiles secondary data on socio-economic emergency support measures that were introduced and/or expanded upon by 18 countries and territories in the Europe and Central Asia region. The mapping is based on research conducted up until 30 April 2021 by UN Women and key development partners, including the Council of Europe, the International Labour Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker (see Annex I). Because the study drew on multiple sources, some data presented may differ from the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker of September 2020.

In addition to emergency government fiscal responses introduced by countries/territories (such as state fiscal assistance packages and socio-economic support policies and programmes), data, evidence and country practices are presented under three categories and 15 subcategories:

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<sup>20</sup> [Building more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Europe and Central Asia](#)

**1. SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES**, with eight subcategories:

- II. Cash transfers;
- III. Unpaid care work;
- IV. Housing relief/utility and in-kind support;
- V. Other welfare benefits and assistance;
- VI. Unemployment benefits;
- VII. Paid leave and sick leave;
- VIII. Family, parental and childcare leave;
- IX. Pensions and disability benefits.

**2. LABOUR MARKET MEASURES**, with two subcategories:

- I. Salary/wage support to the employed and self-employed;
- II. Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement.

**3. ECONOMIC, FISCAL AND BUSINESS STIMULUS MEASURES**, with three subcategories:

- I. Subsidy and relevant support to businesses, including entrepreneurs, self-employed and MSMEs;
- II. Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs, including rebates on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc.; and
- III. Monetary policy and guarantees for businesses and the economy, including liquidity support.

The study's analysis applies both a gender lens and the LNOB principle and identifies COVID-19 emergency measures under three dimensions: social protection; labour market; and economic, fiscal and business.

The gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include an explicit reference to women and “seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis.”<sup>21</sup> LNOB is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. Measures incorporate the LNOB principle by directly addressing and/or explicitly referencing vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

The mapping is accompanied by a snapshot analysis of country measures by subcategories where one or more response or action may be considered as gender-sensitive or gender-responsive and/or includes mitigation efforts to LNOB (see Annex II).

Subregional factsheets for Europe and Central Asia summarize and provide an overview of policy measures adopted by governments in three subregions: Central Asia, the Eastern Partnership, and the Western Balkans and Turkey (see Annex III).

A series of policy briefs draw on this study and its gender analysis to make specific recommendations to support women and other vulnerable groups. The briefs suggest that greater gender responsiveness in policymaking is fundamental for more expansive and inclusive social protection systems,<sup>22</sup> and labour and business markets. Such support is crucial to improving emergency responses for women and girls capacity to “weather the crisis, bounce back and rebuild,” and to facilitate sustainable longer-term change<sup>23</sup> (see Annex IV).

These evidence-based knowledge products can be used as a bridge to support analytical gaps and can provide advisory services and assistance in:

- National, regional and global policy advocacy efforts on COVID-19 (and preparing for future socio-economic shocks), with special emphasis on women, women in vulnerable situations, marginalized groups and those most at risk of being left behind; and
- Regional and intergovernmental policy dialogues on women's economic empowerment, sustainable livelihoods and COVID-19 recovery.

21 [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

22 UN (2021) [COVID-19 and social protection in Europe and Central Asia](#)

23 UN Women (2020) [From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)



# 4. HOW THE REGION RESPONDED TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

A mapping on 'COUNTRY RESPONSES: COVID-19 Social and Economic Emergency Measures (Social Protection, Labour Market and Economic, Fiscal and Business Stimulus) in Europe and Central Asia' presents data and country practices collected on socio-economic emergency support measures adopted by 18 countries and territories in the Europe and Central Asia region.<sup>24</sup> The mapping of state responses to the COVID-19 pandemic is organized under three categories: social protection measures; labour market measures; and economic, fiscal and business stimulus measures (each general category has several subcategories).

Information in this report is based on available data on policy measures that states enacted in order to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and to strengthen social and economic security. The information highlights gender-sensitive responses put in place to help mitigate the pandemic's negative impacts. By applying a gender lens and

the LNOB principle in COVID-19 emergency responses and measures, states are upholding their critical role to mitigate the pandemic's adverse, disproportionate and different impacts on women, vulnerable groups and those who are furthest behind.

The findings of this study should be interpreted with caution as the underlying data may have "gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, over-reporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures."<sup>25</sup> This report makes no attempt to rank subregions or countries; it offers evidence of emerging country practices as a way to improve socio-economic policy responses and measures that benefit women and vulnerable groups and that strengthen responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and future emergencies, shocks and challenges.

## 4.1

### Regional Summary: Europe and Central Asia

At the regional level, this mapping records that as part of their emergency responses,<sup>26</sup> governments of all 18 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages. These packages varied in scope and scale, including through anti-crisis funds, ranging from 0.15 per cent of GDP in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to 9 per cent in **Kazakhstan** and to 12.8 per cent in **Turkey**.

Furthermore, all governments introduced emergency responses in the form of socio-economic support policies and programmes to address the economy and citizens' economic vulnerabilities. In applying a gender lens to the mapping and information collected, three countries (**Albania**, **Azerbaijan** and **Georgia**) categorically referred to the inclusion of women in their responses. From the LNOB principle, five

<sup>24</sup> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

<sup>25</sup> [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

<sup>26</sup> Annex I: Mapping on COVID-19 Emergency Measures and Socio-economic Support, sheet 1, columns B and C on Emergency Government Responses

countries (**Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**) explicitly included vulnerable households and groups in their emergency policy-level responses.

Across the 18 countries and territories, 477 social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business measures were recorded as introduced and/or enhanced to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Of these 477 measures, only 34 (7 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women. Further, only 135 measures (28 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by region and subregion, the measures can be summarized as:

By Region and Subregion	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>	<b>220 (46%)</b>	<b>82 (17%)</b>	<b>175 (37%)</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>34 (7%)</b>	<b>135 (28%)</b>
Central Asia	40 (48%)	12 (15%)	31 (37%)	<b>83</b>	3 (4%)	29 (35%)
Eastern Partnership	100 (48%)	34 (16%)	75 (36%)	<b>209</b>	13 (6%)	58 (28%)
Western Balkans and Turkey	80 (43%)	36 (20%)	69 (37%)	<b>185</b>	18 (10%)	48 (26%)

#### 4.1.1 Social protection measures

In Europe and Central Asia, 220 measures (46 per cent of the 477) were directed towards social protection by extending schemes for registered beneficiaries and by widening safety nets to include the 'missing middle' – people that were not normally covered by regular social assistance or social insurance. Data evidence of country practices related to social protection measures was collected on targeted cash transfers schemes, housing and utility relief, in-kind support, unemployment and leave benefits, pensions and disability benefits, and other welfare benefits.

Of these 220 social protection measures, 17 (8 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women, and 121 (55 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

#### 4.1.2 Labour market measures

In Europe and Central Asia, 82 measures (17 per cent of the 477) were directed towards the labour market, with overarching responses offering support in salary

and wages to employed and self-employed persons as a means to protect and offset sudden losses of jobs, income and livelihoods. Policy responses under this dimension also included labour policy/regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Of these 82 labour market-related measures, 6 (7 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women, and 13 (16 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

#### 4.1.3 Economic, fiscal and business measures

In Europe and Central Asia, 175 of 477 measures (37 per cent of the 477) were directed towards economic, fiscal and business responses. These responses include central and national bank interventions (such as monetary policy support, guarantees for businesses and liquidity support), subsidies and other relevant support to businesses (including to entrepreneurs, the self-employed and MSMEs), and other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (including rebates on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns and loans).



Of these 175 economic, fiscal and business measures, 9 (5 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive. Five measures offer targeted support to women-run businesses and entrepreneurs; four measures support feminized economic sectors (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment compared to that of men).

The following subsections provide a breakdown of the mapping findings, including analysis from a gender lens and the LNOB principle. The subsections are presented under the subregions of Central Asia, the Eastern Partnership, and the Western Balkans and Turkey.

## 4.2

### Subregional Summary: Central Asia Countries

#### CENTRAL ASIA

Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – Turkmenistan – Uzbekistan

In **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**, 83 social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business measures were recorded. Of these 83 measures, only three (4 per cent) can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women, and 29 (35 per cent) can

be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by subregion and country/territory, the measures can be summarized as:

Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Kazakhstan	13 (45%)	5 (17%)	11 (38%)	<b>29</b>	1 (3%)	10 (35%)
Kyrgyzstan	7 (44%)	1 (6%)	8 (50%)	<b>16</b>	0 (0%)	5 (31%)
Tajikistan	5 (56%)	0 (0%)	4 (44%)	<b>9</b>	0 (0%)	2 (22%)
Turkmenistan	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	1 (34%)	<b>3</b>	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
Uzbekistan	14 (54%)	5 (19%)	7 (27%)	<b>26</b>	2 (8%)	11 (42%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40 (48%)</b>	<b>12 (15%)</b>	<b>31 (37%)</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3 (4%)</b>	<b>29 (35%)</b>

#### 4.2.1 Social protection measures

Out of the 83 measures collected from all five Central Asia countries, 40 measures (48 per cent) fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle, show that only one 1 out of 40 social

protection measures (3 per cent) from one country can be classified as being gender-sensitive. Uzbekistan was the only country that made explicit reference to women ("elderly women") as one of the beneficiaries of in-kind support. Twenty-five measures (63 per cent) from all five Central Asia countries can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



## TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Targeted social assistance was provided online for the first time to families. This was part of new measures developed for vulnerable populations.
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	Recipients on existing poverty-targeted cash transfer programmes and on cash transfer programmes for persons with disabilities were provided with an automatic extension of the standard one-year enrolment term if their term expired during quarantine. Financial assistance expanded to include low-income families.
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Supplementary temporary cash benefits were introduced for select recipients on the payroll of Tajikistan's Targeted Social Assistance programme.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Existing social benefit programmes were expanded to include more low-income families. A six-month extension on social allowances was introduced for some low-income families whose term expired between March to June 2020.



## HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

<b>Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Uzbekistan</b>	Housing and utility relief provided a deferral of utility service charges and fees. In-kind support through food baskets, hygiene kits and medical supplies supplemented cash transfers to low-income families, children and adults with disabilities, the elderly and other socially vulnerable groups. Kyrgyzstan deferred payment of utility service charges and fees until January 2021.
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Tajikistan introduced in-kind support in the form of free medical care to citizens placed under medical care and COVID-19 patients.
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	Mobile vans of health-care services provided medical masks and sanitary supplies at subsidized rates to populations in remote and rural areas.



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS (SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE)

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Cash transfer measures equivalent to the minimum wage were introduced for individuals who lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. Some employees who lost jobs will be compensated at 40 per cent of their former salaries for up to six months. The country is also financing an extension to the list of citizens entitled to a new social payment in connection to a loss of income, with emphasis on low-income families and the most vulnerable. Better access to paid leave is also being offered to employees issued with a temporary "certificate of incapacity for work" for the period of quarantine.
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Tajikistan provided sick leave and compensation benefits to citizens placed under medical care and to COVID-19 patients.

<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Simplified procedures were adopted to apply and access unemployment assistance benefits. Sick leave for the duration of quarantine increased from 60 to 80 per cent of salary (depending on employment history) to 100 per cent of salary for everyone. Further, sick leave now covers parents whose child is in quarantine (linking it to unpaid care work). One-off compensation granted to health-care and medical staff infected with COVID-19 while dealing with patients. In supporting families during school and kindergarten shutdowns, parents were granted annual leave without affecting the regular annual paid leave schedule (even if employed for less than six months).
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## UNPAID CARE WORK

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Families with four or more minor children or full-time students under 23 were included in the eligibility criteria for a multi-child parenting state allowance, regardless of income.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	A one-off compensation policy was adopted to support unpaid care work for carers of health-care or medical staff who suffer severe health damage due to being infected with COVID-19 while dealing with patients. To support the unpaid care work of working parents whose child is in quarantine, the state's paid leave and sick leave benefits were extended to include parents, who can now apply for and benefit from sick leave for the duration of the quarantine. Parents receive 100 per cent of their salary (an increase of 20 to 40 per cent, based on employment history).



## OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS

<b>Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan</b>	Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan took measures to control prices on essential food items, consumer and medical products. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have developed other initiatives directed to vulnerable populations, such as support for the elderly with increased pension indexing.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Uzbekistan extended social safety net coverage by 10 per cent and extended child care benefits and material assistance to all beneficiaries. Pension payments were fully transferred to bank cards, and temporary disability benefits for parents were issued at 100 per cent.

### 4.2.2 Labour market measures

The mapping collected 12 measures in the labour market category from four Central Asian countries (**Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**). The measures adopted protect the jobs and incomes of employees and assist employers of businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also include labour policy and regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle, show that only 1 out of 12 (8 per cent) of the labour market measures from one country can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Uzbekistan** was the only country that made explicit reference to women ("pregnant women") as one of the beneficiaries of labour regulatory adjustments on new work arrangements (distance-working with flexible working hours). Four measures (33 per cent) from two countries (**Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan**) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



## SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Kazakhstan is financing an extension of wages beyond early October 2020 to the end of the pandemic for vulnerable individuals and businesses, with wage subsidies channelled through firms to employees of MSMEs. Bonuses were announced for health-care workers and police officers responding to COVID-19 issues.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Uzbekistan has prohibited the termination of employment contracts for employees who are the parent (person, substitute, guardian or trustee) of a child under 14 who is COVID-19 infected or placed in quarantine. Uzbekistan has also fully transferred salary payments to bank cards. Uzbekistan has financed interest-free loans for the payment of wages to employees of businesses that have suspended their activities in quarantine and has established a State Fund for Entrepreneurship Support for job creation. Uzbekistan has also set up material incentives and salary supplements of 120 per cent for health-care workers dealing with COVID-19 patients.



## LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS

Labour policy/regulatory adjustments and/or reinforcement measures were collected for three countries. **Uzbekistan** made explicit reference to

“pregnant women” as one of the beneficiaries of new work arrangements, and **Kazakhstan** and **Uzbekistan** specifically mentioned vulnerable groups:

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Enbek, the state programme for developing productive employment and entrepreneurship, includes targeted apprenticeships for youth among its employment subsidies and trainings.
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	For employment retention, the Kyrgyzstan Labour Code is to be amended to prohibit the dismissal of workers and employees, except for good reasons.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Policy responses introduced new work arrangements to transition employees, especially pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities or chronic diseases, to remote work with flexible working hours.

### 4.2.3 Economic, fiscal and business measures

Overall, and as part of their emergency responses, governments in all five countries in Central Asia revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through COVID-19 anti-crisis funds, ranging from 2 per cent of GDP in **Uzbekistan** to 9 per cent in **Kazakhstan**.

Out of the 31 economic and fiscal measures collected, only one measure offered support to the feminized sectors of the economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women’s employment compared to that of men).

<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Credit support to SMEs included an exemption from taxes and social payments from 1 April to 1 October 2020 for select sectors, including the wholesale and retail trade sector, which represents 18 per cent of women’s employment and 10.8 per cent of men’s employment.
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While business and entrepreneurship stimulus measures were recorded in all five Central Asia countries, analysis revealed that **no country** offered business stimulus measures that can be considered

gender-sensitive in that they offer categorical reference to women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs.

## 4.3

### Subregional Summary: Eastern Partnership Countries

#### EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

Armenia – Azerbaijan – Belarus – Georgia – Moldova – Ukraine

For **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**, 209 social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business measures were recorded.

Of these 209 measures, only 13 measures (6 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women, and 58 measures (28 per

cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by subregion and country/territory, the measures can be summarized as:

Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Armenia	19 (50%)	8 (21%)	11 (29%)	<b>38</b>	6 (16%)	14 (37%)
Azerbaijan	16 (50%)	5 (16%)	11 (34%)	<b>32</b>	1 (3%)	9 (28%)
Belarus	12 (55%)	2 (9%)	8 (36%)	<b>22</b>	0 (0%)	6 (27%)
Georgia	21 (54%)	7 (18%)	11 (28%)	<b>39</b>	5 (13%)	18 (46%)
Moldova	8 (30%)	6 (22%)	13 (48%)	<b>27</b>	1 (4%)	4 (15%)
Ukraine	24 (47%)	6 (12%)	21 (41%)	<b>51</b>	0 (0%)	7 (14%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (48%)</b>	<b>34 (16%)</b>	<b>75 (36%)</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>13 (6%)</b>	<b>58 (28%)</b>

#### 4.3.1 Social protection measures

Out of the 209 measures collected for Eastern Partnership countries, 100 (48 per cent) fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle, show that only 6 out of 100 (6 per cent) of social protection measures from three countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia** made explicit references to women (“women,” “pregnant women,” and/or “women-headed households”) as one of the beneficiaries of

utility relief and/or in-kind support. **Armenia** included references to “women” and “single pregnant women” as recipients of unemployment-related one-time financial assistance. **Georgia** explicitly mentioned women as income-earners as recipients of social compensation and schemes for the increased unpaid care work that they have had to take on due to COVID-19. Fifty-four measures (54 per cent) from **all six Eastern Partnership countries** can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



## TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES

<b>Armenia</b>	Households enrolled in the family benefit system (and eligible as of April 2020) received one-time assistance of 50 per cent of the amount of the social benefit or the family benefit. Of this, 70 per cent was an additional cash payment, and 30 per cent was to a utility operator. Alternatively, recipients could use the funds to clear debt arrears. Households registered in the Family Benefit Programme, but not yet receiving assistance, received emergency social assistance payments for three months.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Azerbaijan expanded coverage of its Targeted Social Assistance to include low-income families whose term for receiving social assistance expired during the quarantine period.
<b>Belarus</b>	Existing monthly social benefit support was extended for up to 12 months for families with many children.
<b>Georgia</b>	Recertification procedures of Targeted Social Assistance were postponed, and simplified application and enrolment procedures were introduced. A resolution introduced three monthly beneficial temporary cash transfers for families with set rating scores, including for persons with severe disabilities and children with disabilities.
<b>Moldova</b>	Increased social assistance was introduced during the state of emergency for vulnerable people and families with children.
<b>Ukraine</b>	A one-time additional cash transfer was introduced for current beneficiaries of child disability payments. Existing social entitlements were extended for the quarantine period without the need to reapply, including unemployment benefits.



## HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

<b>Armenia Azerbaijan Georgia</b>	Utility bill payment relief was introduced for vulnerable and socially marginalized groups through energy subsidies or suspended payments. Georgia extended its state support to cover the winter season. In-kind support of food, hygiene and medical supplies were provided to eligible recipients. In Armenia, specific recipients included the unemployed and “pregnant women” in hardship. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, support was referenced to families hardest hit (which added an additional burden for women), women-headed households, internally displaced populations, refugees, single elderly people, single parents, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.
<b>Belarus</b>	Belarus introduced doorstep payments of utility bill payments by postal workers from citizens’ place of residence and home delivery of in-kind support (medicines and food) to older people in need and people with disabilities.
<b>Ukraine</b>	Ukraine introduced household utility subsidies for vulnerable groups, a moratorium on penalties and disconnection, and simplified requirements for enrolment (eligibility and access) to the Housing Utilities Subsidy programme. Ukraine launched a web platform to coordinate the provision of targeted in-kind social assistance and delivery of services to the elderly, poor and vulnerable (including people with disabilities, single parents and internally displaced populations).



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS (SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE)

<b>Armenia</b>	Lump-sum financial assistance equivalent to the monthly minimum wage was offered to recipients, including unemployed women and those whose husbands lost their jobs between 13 to 30 March 2020; single pregnant women with no job as of 30 March 2020 or those unemployed; families with children under 14 released from work after 13 March 2020; families with a child aged 0 to 18 where both parents do not have a registered job as of 12 March 2020 and no part-time or full-time work from 12 to 31 March 2020; select persons in formal employment between January and March 2020 who lost their job between 30 March to June 2020; and persons in informal employment of certain sectors.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Azerbaijan introduced two monthly one-off payments equivalent to a living wage to people who lost their jobs and continued insurance payments and stipends during quarantine for those whose unemployment insurance payments expired but had yet to find employment. Lump-sum payments equivalent to a subsistence minimum were given to job-seekers who were registered with the State Employment Service proactive appointment system.
<b>Belarus</b>	Eligibility of the existing sick leave benefit policy was expanded to include people who work and pay fees to the Social Protection Fund (or such fees are paid by their employers) during periods of self-isolation.
<b>Georgia</b>	Six months of financial support were introduced to those who lost their jobs or are on unpaid leave during the pandemic. One-off payments were introduced for self-employed persons who lost their jobs. Persons who were once employed in the informal sector will receive one-time support.
<b>Moldova</b>	Existing unemployment benefits (insured and uninsured) were extended to include previously excluded persons, offering them access to a grant up to a minimum salary (subsistence levels). The eligibility criteria for those registered as unemployed to claim unemployment benefits was widened to include returning migrants and the self-employed.
<b>Ukraine</b>	The minimum unemployment benefit was increased, including for those whose employment history does not qualify them for a full benefit. Key employment services moved to e-platforms with simplified procedures. Social Insurance Fund paid sick leaves and introduced temporary compensation for income losses of COVID-19 patients.



## UNPAID CARE WORK

<b>Armenia</b>	Lump-sum assistance for each child was stipulated for families with children under 18 in which neither parent has a registered job (among other criteria) and for socially vulnerable families with children under 18.
<b>Belarus</b>	Temporary incapacity benefits were introduced to support persons responsible for children 10 years and below who go to kindergarten or elementary school (if the latter were in contact with a COVID-19 patient) carers.
<b>Georgia</b>	While developing a support scheme for families, the needs of women as the ones often taking on the largest load of care work were considered.
<b>Ukraine</b>	The state extended existing childcare support (for children under 10) to include private entrepreneurs.



## OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS

<b>Belarus</b> <b>Georgia</b> <b>Ukraine</b>	Price control measures were imposed, including price subsidies on basic and essential food products. In their response, Georgia referenced targeted at low-income families and vulnerable groups.
<b>Armenia</b> <b>Azerbaijan</b> <b>Georgia</b>	Financial assistance in the form of tuition fees was introduced for students, with Azerbaijan and Georgia targeting students from socially vulnerable families.

### 4.3.2 Labour market measures

The mapping collected 34 measures in the labour market category from all six Eastern Partnership countries. Measures adopted protect the jobs and income of employees and assist employers of businesses affected by COVID-19 to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also included labour policy and regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle, show that only 3 out of 34 (9 per cent) of the labour market measures from two countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Armenia**

and **Georgia** were explicit in offering direct labour market assistance for “women” with salary and wages support; Armenia mentioned “pregnant women” and “women” hired workers and individual entrepreneurs working in Armenia’s predominant women employed sectors. Georgia mentioned “women” in the informal sector as recipients of targeted financial support.

Four measures (12 per cent) from three countries (**Armenia**, **Georgia** and **Moldova**) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



## SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED

<b>Armenia</b>	Financial assistance was introduced for pregnant women and individuals working in the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors. A lump-sum payment (based on the minimum wage) was given to hired workers and individual entrepreneurs (formal employment) in the private sector, specifically in hotel and hostel, public catering, tourism, barber shops and beauty parlours (which predominantly employ women) and the retail trade, if they were employed on 1 March to 15 June 2020. Armenia introduced one-time grants to cover the salaries of every fifth employee and partial reimbursement of loans taken by firms to cover worker salaries. Temporary jobs were created for socially vulnerable groups in the agricultural sector.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Azerbaijan provided partial coverage of salaries as a measure to support job retention in the private and public sectors for individual and micro-entrepreneurs and business owners. Introduced job creation measures included paid temporary public jobs.
<b>Belarus</b>	Belarus introduced job entitlement measures for those working under self-quarantine to keep their jobs and to receive at least two-thirds of their salary.



<b>Georgia</b>	Georgia introduced one-time assistance for people employed in the informal sector and the self-employed (the decision to support non-formal employees was indirectly targeted to provide social assistance to women). Under the second lockdown scheme, a further one-off payment was announced for individuals employed in outlets or facilities whose operations will be suspended. State subsidies were offered to employers to retain jobs, and lump-sum payments were made to the self-employed. Low-earning salaries were made fully exempt from income tax for six months.
<b>Moldova</b>	Moldova guaranteed a minimum income for families with low revenues during the state of emergency. Workers in non-operational public units had their salaries paid in full through the state budget.
<b>Ukraine</b>	Employers were compensated for wages paid to partially furloughed employees, with SMEs receiving support in the amount of one minimum wage per employee. Part-time employment status was introduced for employees of SMEs during the quarantine. Eligibility requirements for the Guaranteed Minimum Income programme were relaxed.
<b>Belarus Georgia Moldova Ukraine</b>	Financial compensation was introduced to health-care, medical and social support staff responding to COVID-19 through increased salaries, bonuses and/or one-time cash assistance. Georgia included teachers in their measure, and Ukraine offered a 300 per cent salary top-up to medical personnel working with COVID-19 patients.



## LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS

Although measures were collected for five countries (**Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine**), no measures were recorded that can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they reference women. Only **Armenia** had a measure that can be considered

as inclusive of the LNOB principle in that discussions to reform/readjust labour legislation to include “workers with children at home” can be considered as support for care work.

<b>Armenia</b>	Labour legislation adjustments are being considered to either set up new or to extend existing parental care schemes to workers who care for dependent children. Proposed Labour Code amendments will allow employees to receive compensation from employers equal to the minimum hourly rate, flexible working hours and other supportive measures. Labour reinforcements will mandate that businesses that have resumed operations ensure safe working environments, including the safe transfer of workers to and from their workplaces.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Azerbaijan introduced worker protective legislative measures aimed at employers. The measures prevent unjustified dismissals and layoffs in the private sector. This follows a state announcement that people forced to stay at home or not work at full capacity are able to receive a salary. Amendments introduced to the On Social Insurance law provide deductions in mandatory social insurance contributions, with privileges for business entities engaged in individual entrepreneurship under the conditions of COVID-19.
<b>Georgia</b>	An order approved general recommendations for all business sectors to ensure occupational safety and health.
<b>Moldova</b>	In Moldova, an amendment was drafted for the Labour Code to institutionalize telework. The country has called for reinforcement of flexible hours, individual work time and compliance to occupational safety and health measures as stipulated in the labour legislation.

<b>Ukraine</b>	A law governing unemployment benefits was amended to introduce a new type of entitlement; the so-called 'furlough benefit' related to a quarantine is set at two-thirds of the basic wage (and not exceeding the minimum wage). Ukraine also passed quarantine-related legal amendments and legislation to regulate remote work, flexible schedules and salaries for business interruption periods.
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### 4.3.3 Economic, fiscal and business measures

Overall, and as part of their emergency responses, governments in all six Eastern Partnership countries revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through anti-crisis funds ranging from 2 per cent of GDP in **Armenia** to 4 per cent in **Belarus**.

Out of 75 economic, fiscal and business measures collected, two measures from **one country** support the feminized sectors of their economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment, compared to that of men).

<b>Armenia</b>	Three-year SME loans were introduced with no payment obligation for the first six months to companies, including those in the health and social work sector, which accounts for 8.4 per cent of women's employment (this is 6.7 per cent more than men's employment in the same sectors). In addition, individuals and legal entities working in the agricultural sector were provided with loans (co-financing and/or loan-leasing interest rate subsidies), where agriculture accounts for 32 per cent of women's employment compared to 26 per cent of men's employment.
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Business and entrepreneurship stimulus measures from two countries can be considered as being gender-

sensitive in that they categorically reference women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs.

<b>Georgia</b>	"Women-run businesses" were targeted in small grants and economic programmes with some preconditions and application barriers removed to increase the number of women applicants.
<b>Moldova</b>	"Women entrepreneurs" were included as grantees under an approved draft law to implement the Interest Grant Programme to support businesses and entrepreneurs.

## 4.4

### Subregional Summary: Western Balkan Countries and Turkey

#### WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

Albania – Bosnia and Herzegovina – Kosovo – Montenegro – North Macedonia – Serbia – Turkey

For **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey**, 185 social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business measures were recorded.

Of these 185 measures, only 18 (10 per cent) can be classified as gender-sensitive in that they specifically

reference women, and 48 measures (27 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by subregion and country/territory, the measures can be summarized as:

Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Albania	12 (55%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	<b>22</b>	4 (27%)	8 (36%)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 (32%)	5 (26%)	8 (42%)	<b>19</b>	1 (5%)	2 (11%)
Kosovo	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	<b>20</b>	1 (5%)	5 (25%)
Montenegro	10 (43%)	4 (17%)	9 (39%)	<b>23</b>	1 (4%)	7 (30%)
North Macedonia	10 (37%)	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	<b>27</b>	2 (7%)	9 (33%)
Serbia	10 (44%)	4 (17%)	9 (39%)	<b>23</b>	4 (17%)	5 (22%)
Turkey	22 (43%)	10 (20%)	19 (37%)	<b>51</b>	5 (10%)	12 (24%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80 (43%)</b>	<b>36 (20%)</b>	<b>69 (37%)</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>18 (10%)</b>	<b>48 (26%)</b>

#### 4.4.1 Social protection measures

Out of the 185 measures collected for the Western Balkan countries and Turkey, 80 (43 per cent) fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle, show that only 12 out of 80 (15 per cent) of the social protection measures from four countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey** made explicit reference to women as one of the beneficiaries of some

form of social protection (cash transfers, utility relief, in-kind support, unemployment benefit and/or paid leave and sick leave). Eight of these measures (67 per cent) mentioned “women heads of families,” “pregnant women,” “new mothers,” and “widowed women” as recipients of cash transfers.

Forty-three measures (55 per cent) from **all six Western Balkan countries and Turkey** can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



#### TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES

<b>Albania</b>	Albania doubled existing social assistance financial packages and focused on supporting the most vulnerable first. Benefit payments doubled for recipients of ‘ <i>Ndihma Ekonomike</i> ’ (a flagship cash transfer programme), including to parents of two or more children where mothers are primary recipients, unemployed orphans over 25, orphans aged 18 to 25, survivors of trafficking and survivors of domestic violence. Economic assistance payments also doubled for three months for survivors of domestic violence who have a protection order issued and for people under the economic aid scheme, including women heads of families.
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Local governments provided financial assistance to the elderly and to families with low or no income.
<b>Kosovo</b>	For two months, Kosovo doubled all payments to existing social welfare recipients. An additional three months of payments were provided to all beneficiaries of social assistance who receive a stipulated monthly payment (provided they are beneficiaries of only one scheme). Verification procedures for social assistance benefits were suspended.

<b>Montenegro</b>	One-off financial assistance was extended to social welfare beneficiaries.
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Vulnerable households will receive financial support through existing social assistance schemes and cash vouchers for two months.
<b>Serbia</b>	Universal and one-off cash transfers were offered to each citizen over 18 under the following schemes: Financial Social Assistance; Caregiver Allowance; Child Allowance; and Maternity Leave Benefit for child care. One-off payments were made to temporary benefit beneficiaries, and three-month extensions were granted to social assistance beneficiaries (child benefits, personal care benefits and compensations related to special care of the children) whose entitlement expired on or after 15 March 2020). Cash transfers were also extended for beneficiaries who are carers, have children or are on maternity leave.
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkey increased cash assistance to families in need, including an increase in the monthly amount transferred to Social Benevolent and Solidarity Associations in order to protect the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Existing social aid extended to families in need who were ineligible for previous aid programmes. Turkey launched a National Solidarity Fund to help citizens in difficulty. Turkey increased cash transfers targeted to women (including new mothers); conditional cash transfers for health, postnatal and pregnancy payments increased by 29 per cent. Monthly transfers also increased for women who recently lost their husbands.



## HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

<b>Albania</b>	Albania provided electricity consumption relief, housing assistance and home delivery of in-kind support (food, medical products and other services) to those in need (e.g. the elderly, people with disabilities, recipients of economic assistance), to those who were rendered homeless by the November 2019 earthquake and to groups under the economic aid scheme (women were identified by the government as comprising a considerable number of the latter group). Albania postponed property, premises and house rental payments for two months for individuals and families who stopped working, students and select businesses.
<b>Kosovo</b>	Kosovo suspended payments to public utility companies.
<b>Montenegro</b>	Montenegro doubled electricity subsidies for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable households.
<b>North Macedonia</b>	North Macedonia postponed social housing rent for vulnerable households. To boost local consumption and limit informal cash exchanges, North Macedonia issued thirty-day valid payment cards to citizens from the poorest and most vulnerable households that earn less than the minimum wage. In-kind support (basic food and hygienic products) was extended to beneficiaries of means-tested programmes.
<b>Serbia</b>	In-kind assistance in the form of hygiene packages and essential food products were provided to most vulnerable women.
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkey offered relief for utility payments; student loan debts and rents in public residences were deferred for three months (extendable for a further three months). Secure places were provided to the homeless to protect them from COVID-19.



## UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS (SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE)

<b>Albania</b>	Payments were doubled to those who receive unemployment benefits and for persons under the economic aid scheme, including women (if they applied by 10 March 2020). Cash lump sums were made available to all employees who were dismissed, starting from the date quarantine restrictions to 10 April 2020, in all enterprises permitted to operate and to all formally employed employees in select enterprises allowed to operate. An employment promotion programme, launched in September 2020, partially covers re-employment costs of those rendered jobless during lockdowns. Coverage for formal-sector employees is 50 per cent of wages (at the minimum wage) and a full share of social contributions. Coverage for informal-sector employees is the full cost of social contributions (employees and employers share), which will be covered for one year.
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Government aid for activation programmes may be reallocated for immediate assistance to the unemployed. Financial aid was extended to unemployment benefits in order to support job retention and/or increase unemployment benefits.
<b>Kosovo</b>	Kosovo introduced three months' assistance to citizens who lost their jobs due to COVID-19.
<b>Montenegro</b>	Montenegro introduced a six-month, 70 per cent subsidy of the gross minimum wage of newly employed workers in SMEs if workers have become unemployed, and one-time financial assistance to all persons recorded as unemployed and who did not receive any other compensation (financial or material security). A two-month subsidy of 70 per cent of the minimum wage was given to people in self-isolation or quarantine. Long periods of sick leave were made extendable by General Practitioners (a committee is normally required to approve such requests).
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Those who lost their jobs will receive a monthly allowance of 50 per cent of the average monthly net wage of the employee for the last 24 months. North Macedonia has also accelerated access to the social protection system for workers who lost their jobs or were part of the informal economy for two months per household. The period of paid leave from work due to pregnancy, childbirth (maternity/paternity leave) and parenthood and adoption continues to flow, and the salary compensation continues to be paid until the expiration of COVID-19 measures, tabled as 27 September 2020.
<b>Serbia</b>	Serbia introduced new measures to stimulate youth employment and skills training and to motivate employers to hire them. All employees in medium and large private enterprises whose work was terminated from 15 March will be given 50 per cent of their monthly wages (this includes part-time employees that meet select criteria). Government directive calls for all employers to give full compensation to employees in self-isolation or who have contracted COVID-19 due to direct exposure to the virus at work. This includes 100 per cent remuneration of salary for medical staff, care workers, police and military infected by COVID-19 during their duty.
<b>Turkey</b>	Social transfers were extended to low-income families and workers who lost their job without qualifying for short-term working arrangements or unemployment insurance. Extensions were made to the short-term working scheme (to 31 October 2020) and the unpaid leave scheme (to 17 September 2020). The floor of unemployment insurance compensation was raised for workers who were granted unpaid leave. Financial support was introduced for employees who were forced to take unpaid leave and who could not benefit from short-term work from March.



## UNPAID CARE WORK

<b>Montenegro</b>	Montenegro introduced a wage subsidy of 70 per cent of the minimum wage for employees (women and men) on paid absence (April to May 2020) who had to stay home to care for a child under the age of 11.
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## OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS

<b>Albania Kosovo Montenegro Serbia Turkey</b>	Pensions assistance was introduced and/or extended through some of the following measures: increases in pension indexing or monthly pension assistance, the establishment of new limits plus compensations for the lower levels and to low-income pensioners, suspension of verification procedures and early payments. Kosovo granted three months of additional payments to all beneficiaries on pension schemes who receive a monthly payment of less than EUR 100 (provided they are beneficiaries of only one scheme).
<b>Albania</b>	Albania introduced a protocol on the 'Functioning of Public and Non-public, Non-residential Centres, Providing Services for Persons with Disabilities', during and after the natural disaster period, until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic's physical/social distancing measures.
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Price freezes were introduced for basic necessity products (food products, medicines and disinfection products). Students were offered partial reimbursement for university tuition fees and IT courses.
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkey accelerated support for and increased the allowances of social assistance and solidarity foundations, including for farmers. A three-month advance social assistance payment was introduced for the elderly and disabled people where the social assistance payment was not predicated on income or disability criteria. Eligibility for support from the National Solidarity Fund was extended to households that were ineligible for other programmes. Public banks introduced long-term credit mechanisms for households with low monthly incomes.

### 4.4.2 Labour market measures

The mapping collected 36 measures in the labour market category from all six Western Balkan countries and Turkey. The adopted measures protect jobs and employee incomes and assists employers of businesses affected by COVID-19 to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also included labour policy/regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Findings of the mapping from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that only 2 out of 36 (6 per cent) of the labour market measures from two countries can

be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Montenegro** and **Serbia** made explicit reference in offering direct labour market assistance for "women" in the form of salary support through subsidies for women caring for a minor and salary increases for predominantly "women" care workers in nursing homes, respectively.

Five measures (14 per cent) from five countries (**Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia**) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Country responses and practices include:



## SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED

<b>Albania</b>	Albania introduced payments of minimum wage support for interrupted periods of business activities, including to employees, self-employed small businesses and family businesses with unpaid family members. Companies can access overdrafts to pay employee wages for up to three months. The Sovereign Guarantee Fund can be accessed as collateral in support of large businesses seeking loans for employee salaries.
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	From March until one month after the end of the state of emergency, Bosnia and Herzegovina covered minimum wages for all employees in the real sector and, for sectors closed by a government decision, will cover one month's full salary contributions and minimal salary contributions for one month. Financial assistance was introduced for business entities and entrepreneurs to retain jobs where revenues have declined and who have not reduced employee numbers.
<b>Kosovo</b>	Kosovo introduced two months of salary support for the second half of 2020 and for 2021 as wage subsidies for workers in pandemic-affected businesses and new workers hired by businesses. The selection of eligible businesses is based on a plan that identifies sectors and categories of workers that are most in need.
<b>Montenegro</b>	Montenegro introduced a two-month wage subsidy of 70 per cent of the minimum wage for employees in sectors that closed due to COVID-19 and a 50 per cent wage subsidy for employees in sectors at risk due to lockdowns. A 15 per cent increase was stipulated in the March 2020 wages of health-care workers, and salary subsidies were offered for medical licenses paid in April and May 2020, with 70 per cent of the basic salary offered to each employee (men and women) caring for a minor under the age of 11 (linked to unpaid care).
<b>North Macedonia</b>	North Macedonia introduced four months of salary support, with subsidized contributions to employees of affected companies. Subsidized contributions for employees (up to 50 per cent of the average salary paid in 2019) were provided to the tourism, transport and catering sectors, provided that companies do not reduce the number of employees below its number from February 2020.
<b>Serbia</b>	Serbia introduced a three-month wage, which includes payment of minimum wages for all MSME employees and entrepreneurs and three months payment of 50 per cent of the minimum wage for employees in large enterprises and employees who are currently not working. A two-month wage subsidy targeted SME employees and the salaries of care workers in nursing homes (who are predominantly women) increased by 10 per cent. A 10 per cent wage increase was also announced for the public health-care sector. Public-sector health workers are to receive a further one-off assistance by the end of 2020.
<b>Turkey</b>	<p>Turkey introduced wage payments for contracted state schoolteachers during periods of closure, a three-month (maximum) performance payment for health-care employees, and monthly minimum wage support to workers until the end of 2020. The existing Short-term Work Allowance was extended from three to six months in order to cover wages in firms that reduced working hours or halted operations.</p> <p>A short-term work allowance can be granted to workers who paid social security premiums for the last 60 days and unemployment insurance premiums for at least 450 days in the last three years.</p>





## LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS

Labour policy/regulatory adjustments and/or reinforcement measures were collected for five countries (**Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia** and **Turkey**). However, no measures were recorded that can be classified as being gender-sensitive. Only two countries (**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

and **North Macedonia**) had measures that may be considered as inclusive of the LNOB principle in that discussions to reform/reinforce labour legislation to workers included “single-parent households” or “parent of children up to 10,” which can also be considered as support for care work.

<b>Albania</b>	The Normative Act Number 2 on The Prevention and Combating of the Infections and Infective Diseases provides for new penalties on an employer’s non-compliance with the Act’s measures and protocols.
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	A state decision was made on institutional procedures to ensure the protection of life and employee health. Labour protection measures were reinforced to support parents, including single-parent households. The labour protection measures recommended that employers ensure that one working parent is enabled to stay at home with children under the age of 10 and proposed measures such as flexible working arrangements, telecommuting, reorganization of work into two shifts, reduction in overall working hours and improved health and safety measures for employees at workplaces.
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Employees were encouraged to work from home, if possible, and release-from-work obligations were introduced for one parent of chronically ill children up to 10 years of age. Completion of annual leave from last year until May 2020 was made mandatory.
<b>Serbia</b>	In Serbia, employers are obliged to allow all employees to work from home if working from home is feasible (in line with the general act of the employer and the labour contracts). Employers who are not in a position to organize work from home for employees are required to organize work shifts with as few workers gathering in the same premises as possible.
<b>Turkey</b>	A new law legalized unpaid leave arrangements with a fixed allowance for workers that are granted unpaid leave. The law prohibits employers from firing workers during the law’s validity (to July 2021). New legislation authorizes the President to take decisions on the extension of the Short-term Work Allowance (consequently extended to October 2020) and to extend the layoff ban in order to minimize the effect of the pandemic on the labour market. The state has also eased the application criteria for the Short-term Work Allowance in order to protect employment and employers. Ministerial guidance was passed for all workplaces on occupation safety and health. All public employees, regardless of their employment situation, were given the right to flexible work.

### 4.4.3 Economic, fiscal and business measures

As part of their emergency government responses, governments in all six Western Balkan countries and Turkey revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through anti-crisis funds ranging from 0.15 per cent of GDP in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to 12.8 per cent in **Turkey**.

Out of the 69 economic, fiscal and business measures collected, only **one measure** offers support to the feminized sectors of the economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women’s employment compared to that of men).



<b>Kosovo</b>	Interest-free loans were provided to publicly-owned enterprises facing financial difficulties due to the pandemic; public sector employment represents 47.8 per cent of female employment and 33.4 per cent of male employment.
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Notably, business and entrepreneurship stimulus measures from three countries can be considered as being gender-sensitive in that they categorically reference women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs.

<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	“Business activities of women” was included as recipients to be facilitated to access financial funds for MSMEs under a guarantee program.
<b>North Macedonia</b>	The Development Bank will offer a 30 per cent grant for “companies run or founded by women” that are export-oriented or that introduce innovation and digitalization in their operations.
<b>Turkey</b>	Turkey announced a grant programme for “women cooperatives” under their Cooperatives Support Programme.

# 5. ANNEXES

## ANNEX I. MAPPING ON COUNTRY RESPONSES:

COVID-19 Social and Economic Emergency Measures (Social Protection and Labour, Business and Economic Stimulus) in Europe and Central Asia

<b>ALBANIA</b>	
1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 8 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<p>(1) Two support packages adopted for people and businesses at LEK 45 billion (2.8% of GDP) under the Normative Act March and April.</p> <p>(2) Third supported package of LEK 135 million announced in August.</p> <p>(3) 2021 budget adopted on 16 Nov allocated LEK 14.2billion (0.8% of GDP) to COVID-19 related spending, and includes LEK2.5 billion for a temporary increase in the payments for social assistance and unemployment benefits. (IMF)</p>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>Economic measures undertaken to support employed people in small businesses, unemployed people, and people under the economic aid scheme (includes women heads of households, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, retired persons and those left homeless from the Nov'19 earthquake).</p> <p>All those who are part of these categories will benefit, including women who compose a considerable number of this beneficiary's category (CoE)</p>
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) Doubling of benefit payments to recipients of Ndihma Ekonomike (flagship cash transfer program) (includes parents of 2+ children [women are the recipients], unemployed orphans 25+ years, orphans 18-25 years, victims of trafficking, and victims of domestic violence).</p> <p>(2) Doubled payment of economic assistance (for 3-months) to the most vulnerable first – survivors of domestic violence who have a protection order issued and for people under the economic aid scheme, incl. women heads of families.</p> <p>(OECD, CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Payment of benefits for food and non-food products, and reimbursable medicines, etc. (CoE)</p> <p>(2) Provision of housing assistance and home delivery of food, medical products and other services to those in need (elderly, disabilities, recipients of economic assistance etc.), homeless due to November 2019 earthquake and groups under the economic aid scheme – where women comprise a considerable number. (CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, CoE)</p> <p>(3) 2-months postponement of property, premises, or house rental payments for individuals/families who have stopped working, students, select businesses.</p> <p>(4) Relief in electricity consumption. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>

<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Double payments to those who receive unemployment benefits, and for persons under the economic aid scheme (includes women, if they applied by 10 March 2020). (OECD, CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Lump sum for all employees dismissed during the period to 10 April 2020 (starting from time restrictions applied) in all enterprises allowed to operate.</p> <p>(3) Lump sum for all formally employed employees in select enterprises allowed to operate (certain activities exempted) (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(4) Employment promotion program launched in September 2020 to cover part of reemployment costs of those who lost their jobs during lockdown. For formal sector employees programme covers half of the wages (at the legal minimum wage) and employers' full share of social contributions for the duration of the program (4 or 8 months). Informal sector employees will have the full cost of social contributions (employees and employers share) covered for one year if they formalize. (IMF)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) Increase in pension's indexing, establishing new limits plus compensations for the lower levels.</p> <p>(2) Protocol on the Functioning of Public and Non-Public, Non-Residential Centers, Providing Services for Persons with Disabilities, during and after the Natural Disaster Period, until the end of the physical/social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>(UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, other)</p>
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) Assistance to pay minimum wage support for interrupted period of business activities (includes employees, self-employed small businesses, and family businesses with unpaid family members – equivalent to a state-set monthly salary). Third support package gives an additional minimum wage to public transport workers. (IMF, OECD, CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Companies can access overdrafts to pay employee wages for up to 3-months. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Sovereign Guarantee Fund to be used as collateral in support of large businesses getting bank loans for employees' salaries. (ILO)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	The Normative Act Nr. 2 "on "The Prevention and Combatting of the Infections and Infective Diseases" provides for new penalties on employers non-complying with measures and protocols of the Law. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	(1) 2-months rent postponement for small business who have stopped operating. (OECD)

<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Provision of loans for working capital for all private companies who were tax-compliant and solvent pre COVID-19. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Tax deferral measures for garment industry, Call Centers, tourism, and small businesses with turnover below LEK 14 million exempted from paying profit tax to end-2021. (IMF, OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(3) Guarantee fund set up for loans to businesses hit by lockdown measures. (UN Women/ UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) Government guaranteed 60% of the loans and interest capped at 5% (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Support to liquidity bottlenecks - penalty-with free deferred loan instalments and restructured loans without additional provisioning or downgrades for borrowers' status. (OECD)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ARMENIA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 1 March 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	AMD 150 billion (USD 313 million, 2% of GDP) emergency response package to support households and businesses and mitigate the socio-economic issues related to the pandemic. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>As at end-Oct, authorities adopted 24 support packages of around 192.3billion AMD (USD 367 million). Measures fall into four broad categories: (i) subsidized 2-3 year loans to provide short-term support to affected businesses and SMEs; (ii) direct subsidies to SMEs and businesses to help maintain their employees; (iii) grants to entrepreneurs and firms; and (iv) lump-sum transfers to the vulnerable including individuals who were unemployed after the COVID-19 outbreak, families with or expecting children, micro-businesses, general population who needed help with utility bills, and temporary part-time employment.</p> <p>Part of the budget will support post-crisis recovery. (IMF)</p>
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) One-time assistance of 50% of the amount of the social benefit or family benefit for families enrolled in the family benefit system and eligible as of April 2020. (70% as an additional cash payment and 30% to utility operator (funds can also be used to clear debt arrears).</p> <p>(2) Extra social assistance payments - a 3-months emergency benefit - to households registered in the Family Benefit Program, but not yet receiving it. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Programmes to assist vulnerable groups with food supplies, including home delivery and protective and hygiene kits.</p> <p>(2) New measures to assist the unemployed and pregnant women in hardship and paying for utility bills. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) 1-months reimbursement of 30-50% on natural gas and electricity bills for low use consumers. These transfers will be automatic and universal, with no obligation to apply. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>

<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) One-time payments for citizens with limited income who lost their jobs between mid-late March. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) One-time financial assistance to women who were not employed and those whose husbands lost jobs between 13-30 March (single pregnant women with no job as of 30 March or those unemployed are considered as beneficiaries). (OECD, CoE, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Assistance to families with children under 14, who face bottlenecks due to the shrinking labour market (formal employees with certain criteria) released from work after 13 March. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(4) Support to persons who were in formal employment (with certain criteria) and lost their job after 13 March.</p> <p>(5) Beneficiary support package for families with a child aged 0-18, where both parents do not have a registered job as of 12 March, and no part-time or full-time work from 12-31 March.</p> <p>(6) Lump sum payment (monthly minimum wage) to select persons in formal employment between January-March who lost their job end-March to June. Persons in informal employment of certain sectors (banking, insurance, loan offices, investment companies) are included in the package.</p> <p>(7) Looking to provide cash payments to those sent for mandatory leave and/or being laid off. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(8) Lump sum payment equal to the minimum wage non-cash assistance (through bank transfer) to private sector employees of affected areas, including if employer either terminated its work or was liquidated.</p> <p>(9) Lump sum equal to the minimum wage non-cash assistance (through bank transfer) to affected self-employed entities with select criteria. (ILO)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	<p>(1) Lump-sum assistance for each child for families with children under 18, where both parents do not have a registered job plus other select criteria. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Lump-sum payment for socially vulnerable families with children under 18. (ILO)</p>
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	Financial assistance for students. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) Persons with disabilities will continue to receive assistance without the disability re-evaluation process. (OECD, CoE)</p> <p>(2) Provision of pensions via home-delivery services. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>

LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) Businesses with 2-50 employees received one-time grants to cover the salaries of every 5th employee.</p> <p>(2) Financial assistance introduced for pregnant women and individuals working in the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Partial reimbursement of loans taken by firms to cover the salaries of their workers.</p> <p>(4) Lump sum payment (set for the minimum wage) to hired workers and individual entrepreneurs (formal employment) in the private sector specifically in hotel and hostel, public catering, tourism, barber shops and beauty parlours (where a large number of women are employed) and retail trade, if they were employed on 01 March-15 June.</p> <p>(5) Temporary job creation for socially vulnerable groups in the agricultural sector. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) Discussions to reform labour legislation to workers with children at home. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Amendment proposed to the Labour Code to allow employees to receive compensation from employers equal to the minimal hourly rate, flexible working hours, etc. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Obligation for enterprises and companies which have resumed operation since 17 April to ensure preventive/ anti-epidemiological measures inside organizations and ensure safe transfer of workers to and from their workplaces. (ILO)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	Support package for agro-food companies under preparation. (OECD)
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Deadlines for paying taxes and filing declarations extended.</p> <p>(2) SMEs in select sectors able to obtain loans with 6-month grace period and no interest during the first 2 years. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) SME loans for 3 years with no payment obligation for first 6 months to select companies including human health and social work sector which account for 8.4% of women's employment; 6.7% more than male counterparts.</p> <p>(4) Individuals and legal entities working in agricultural sector provided with loans (co-financing and/or loan/leasing interest rate subsidies). Agriculture accounts for 32% of women's employment as opposed to 26% of men's employment. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(5) Lump-sum financial support to select companies with 2-100 recruited permanent employees (February-April), plus other criteria.</p> <p>(6) One-time grant to companies with 2-100 employees (March-May) in the amount of the salary of every 5th employee.</p> <p>(7) Lump-sum support equal to 10% of turnover of the first quarter of 2020, but not more than double minimum wage size, to micro-enterprises (family businesses, physical entities who are not registered as individual entrepreneurs but are engaged in microbusiness). (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>Measures introduced to:</p> <p>(1) Mitigate liquidity risks,</p> <p>(2) Co-financing and refinancing, and</p> <p>(3) Interest rate subsidies for enterprises and loans readjustments. (OECD)</p>

<b>AZERBAIJAN</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 17 March 2020	
EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	AZN 2.5 billion (USD 1.5 billion, 3% of GDP) for a broad economic support package. (OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>April's economic support programme: support to affected businesses and individuals in the amount of AzN 3.3 billion (4.1% of GDP). Measures aimed at redressing damage to entrepreneurs and supporting incomes include: partial coverage of salaries; support to microentrepreneurs; temporary public jobs; subsistence and unemployment payments; pensions; targeted social assistance; energy and education subsidies; and allocation of additional funds to the Entrepreneurship Development Fund (IMF, OECD, CoE)</p> <p>All efforts and programmes addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 include a gender lens in order to target women. (OECD)</p>
SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) Additional lump-sum payment to low-income individuals who received social assistance under the relief package.</p> <p>(2) Targeted social assistance and payments. (IMF, OECD)</p> <p>(3) Number of families receiving targeted social assistance increased. (OECD, CoE)</p> <p>(4) Expanded coverage of the targeted state social assistance program, includes low-income families whose term for receiving targeted state social assistance during quarantine expired. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - Govt.)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Energy subsidies (2-months Increased volume of discounted electricity limit for the population) and education subsidies.</p> <p>(2) Education subsidies including covering tuition fees of students from vulnerable and low-income families, recipients of targeted state social assistance, where both parents (if there is a single parent, the same person) or legal representatives belong to select categories (persons with disabilities, registered as unemployed; labour pensioners by age; or recipients of age-related social benefits). (IMF, OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Assistance with utility bill payments, food assistance and hygiene kits to families hit the hardest mostly ones with many children which carries an additional burden for women, to women-headed households, Internally Displaced Populations, refugees, single elderly people, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - CoE)</p>
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) One-time extension of social assistance and unemployment insurance coverage for the unemployed and low-income people who lost earnings during quarantine. (IMF, CoE, ILO)</p> <p>(2) One-off payment in the amount of living wage for 2-months to people who have lost their jobs. (OECD, CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Continued insurance payments and stipends during quarantine for those whose unemployment insurance payments have expired but are not employed, and students who are in break from vocational training courses. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - CoE)</p> <p>(4) Lump-sum payment in the amount of the subsistence minimum to jobseekers registered with the State Employment Service, and creation of proactive appointment mechanism. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(5) Under the Unemployment Insurance Fund, families are being involved in self-employment programmes. (ILO)</p>

<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	(1) 50% of annual tuition fees of students from socially vulnerable families and scholarships for those who have had breaks in vocational training courses. (2) Simplification of the determination of targeted state social assistance. (3) Providing social services to homes of single people over 65 and to people with special needs in social service institutions and facilities. (ILO)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	Pensions assistance. (IMF)
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	(1) Partial coverage of salaries to assist individual entrepreneurs, business owners and micro-entrepreneurs. (IMF, OECD, CoE, ILO) (2) Creation of paid temporary public jobs. (IMF, CoE, ILO) (3) Job retention and wages for employees in public and private sectors. (OECD, CoE)
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	(1) Introduce legislative measures aimed at employers to prevent unjustified dismissals and layoffs of employees in the private sector - to protect workers, state announced that people forced to stay at home or not work at full capacity are able to receive a salary. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) Amendments to the law "On Social Insurance" that provide deductions in mandatory social insurance contributions, with privileges for business entities engaged in individual entrepreneurship under the conditions of COVID-19. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	(1) Financial and online support and compensation programme for damages caused to entrepreneurs and their employees (with select criteria) will be fully paid by the state to the enterprise. Includes financial support targeted to micro and private entrepreneurs. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) Additional measures to support SMEs in the acquisition of local products, goods and services in public procurement. (ILO)
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	(1) Additional funds to the Entrepreneurship Development Fund, and financing tools enhanced. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) Tax breaks/extensions in paying personal, MSME and corporate income tax for 2019 and reduced social security contributions - 75% exemption for income taxpayers and 50% exemption for taxpayers filing under simplified procedures. (3) Simplified tax exemptions for micro-enterprises. (IMF, OECD, CoE, ILO) (4) One-year tax exemptions on property and land taxes, particularly for entrepreneurs of 75% of the profit (income). (IMF, ILO) (5) Rental property tax in COVID-affected areas reduced from 14% to 7% (IMF) (6) Credit-guarantee support program for loans offered to businesses (including SMEs) operating in areas negatively affected by the pandemic. The program will also support entrepreneurs with the existing loan portfolios who work in COVID-19 affected sectors. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)



<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) Interest rate subsidies for selected new loans and existing loans</p> <p>(2) Improvement of credit guarantee instruments by the Mortgage and Credit Guarantee Fund. (OECD, CoE, ILO)</p> <p>(3) Exemption from VAT on food and medical related goods and other necessary products. (ILO)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>BELARUS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 28 February 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	BYN 5-6 billion (USD 2-2.5 billion, 3-4% of GDP) overall support package, both direct and indirect. (OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	An adopted decree introduced measures targeting most affected sectors, payment holidays and instalments, rent payment holidays and the possibility for municipal authorities to reduce property taxes. (OECD)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	Up to 12-months extended monthly social benefit support to families with many children. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Utility payments organized by postal workers at citizens' place of residence.</p> <p>(2) Delivery of medicines and food to older people in need and people with disabilities. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	Temporary unemployment benefits. (OECD)
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	<p>(1) People who work and pay fees to the Social Protection Fund (or such fees are paid by their employers) are eligible for sick-leave benefits during the period of self-isolation. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Employed citizens under a stay-at-home order covered by state social insurance shall be granted temporary disability leave (and paid leave) for the period of self-isolation. (ILO)</p>
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	<p>(1) Temporary sickness benefits for persons taking care of children if the latter were in contact with COVID-19. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Temporary incapacity benefits to persons responsible for children 10 years and below who go to kindergartens or school, if the latter were in contact with a COVID-19 patient. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	<p>(1) Price regulation for some essential products (food and sanitary items). (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Simplification of targeted social assistance provision. (ILO)</p>
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) Provision of pensions via home-delivery postal workers.</p> <p>(2) Pensioners can pay their communal services when they receive pensions and benefits. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>

LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	(1) Those working under self-quarantine are entitled to keep their jobs and receive at least 2/3 of their salary. (OECD) (2) Additional fees/monthly bonus for healthcare workers and staff of public social support institutions working with COVID-19 patients. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	n/a - no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	Subsidies granted to public sector organizations forced into part-time employment or left idle for a specified time. (IMF)
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	(1) Tax relief and tax deferral measures to support businesses. (IMF) (2) Additional financial support measures for enterprises. (ILO)
<b>Monetary policy/guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	National Bank measures include: (1) Credit holidays (on principal repayments and loans interest), (2) Capped interest fees, (3) Reduced policy rate, (4) Lowering the liquidity coverage ratio, and (5) Softening assets classification and credit risk requirements. (IMF, OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 5 March 2020	
EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	Entity governments allocated KM 50 million (0.15% of GDP) for COVID-19. (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	(1) FBiH announced KM 1 billion (3% of GDP) to support the economy, through: setting up a special fund to stabilize the economy and establishing a guarantee fund at the Development Bank to maintain and improve the liquidity of companies. (2) RS adopted a guarantee program to facilitate access to financial funds for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). (IMF)
SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	Financial assistance by local governments to elderly and families with low or no income. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	RS offering vouchers to citizens that can be used to co-finance accommodation costs of minimum of 3 nights stay. (OECD)

<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) RS planning to increase transfers to unemployment funds (KM 25 million, 0.08 % of GDP). (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Government aid for activation programs may be reallocated for immediate assistance to the unemployed.</p> <p>(3) Financial aid to unemployment benefits to support job retention and/or increase unemployment benefits. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	RS enables use of annual leave, paid leave and other labour rights. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) FBiH will cover minimum wages for all employees in the real sector (from March until 1 month after the end of the state of emergency).</p> <p>(2) RS will cover 1-months full salary contributions and minimal salary contributions for 1-month, in sectors closed by a government decision (with allocation of KM 53 million, 0.16% of GDP) (IMF, OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(3) Funds allocation to business entities and entrepreneurs for job retention where revenues have declined due to the pandemics, and have not reduced the number of employees. (ILO)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) State Decision made on Procedures of the Institutions of BiH to ensure the Protection of Life and Health of Employees. (ILO)</p> <p>(2) Labour protection measures to support parents, including single parent households, recommending employers to ensure that one working parent is enabled to stay at home with children under the age of 10, and proposing measures such as flexible working arrangements, telecommuting, reorganization of work into two shifts, reducing overall working hours and improving health and safety measures for employees at workplaces. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) RS adopted a guarantee program to facilitate access to financial funds for MSMEs, and includes business activities of women, and young entrepreneurs (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(2) Funds for entrepreneurs registered in the form of a basic occupation who do not have employees. (ILO)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) FBiH plans to subsidize contributions and taxes. RS postponed payments for business tax from end-March to end-June, and is speeding up tax and social security contribution refunds.</p> <p>(2) RS covering PIT (Principal, Interest &amp; Taxes) and social contributions of 44,000 employees in sectors closed by the government decision from March to May (with allocation of KM 50 million, 0.15% of GDP) (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(3) RS will cover 1-months taxes and contributions for businesses most affected (merchants, caterers, small entrepreneurs).</p> <p>(4) RS allocated loans to encourage agricultural output for small producers. (OECD, ILO)</p>

<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) F BiH Development Bank established a Stabilisation Fund and are establishing a guarantee fund to maintain and improve liquidity of companies.</p> <p>(2) Banking Agencies (F BiH and RS) announced a 6-month loan repayment moratorium for individuals and legal entities with repayment difficulties. (IMF, OECD)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GEORGIA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 26 February 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<p>(1) First lockdown fiscal response (24 June) - GEL 3.4 billion (approx. USD 1.1 billion) for social support, stimulating economic growth and strengthening the healthcare system.</p> <p>(2) Second lockdown fiscal response (28 November) - GEL 1.1 billion (USD 334 million, 2% of GDP). (IMF)</p>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>Expanded economic support programmes, such as Enterprise Georgia, social compensation packages and other measures launched to assist population (people and businesses). (IMF, OECD, CoE)</p> <p>Women represented in Anti-Crisis Plan. (CoE)</p> <p>Second set of measures includes 4-months support to individuals to end-February 2021 (GEL 545 million) and to businesses (GEL 515 million). (IMF)</p>
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) 6-months financial assistance starting from 21 Jan to: (a) low-income families with a social score of 65-100,000; and (b) families with children aged 3-16 with a social score above 100,000.</p> <p>(2) One-time financial support to all children under 18. (IMF)</p> <p>(3) Cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households. (ILO)</p> <p>(4) Recertification procedures postponed of Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) beneficiaries, simplified the TSA application and enrolment procedures.</p> <p>(5) Resolution introduced 3 monthly beneficial temporary cash transfers for families with the select rating scores, including for persons with severe disabilities and children with disabilities. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, other)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) House purchase support for refugees.</p> <p>(2) Increased benefits set-up for low-income families and vulnerable groups. (IMF)</p> <p>(3) Government will cover utility costs (electricity bills, sanitary services and gas and water bills) for 4 months for the vulnerable, and for most citizens until May. Programme extended to cover the winter (November to February 2021). (IMF, OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(4) Food and hygiene kits distributed to families hit hardest (mostly the ones with many children adding additional burden to women), to women-headed households, single parents, ethnic minorities, Roma settlements and other vulnerable groups. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) 12-months financial support for those who lost their jobs or are on unpaid leave during the pandemic - started Jul-Dec 2020 and extended to Jan-June 2021.</p> <p>(2) One-off assistance for self-employed persons who lost their jobs.</p> <p>(3) People once employed in the informal sector will receive a one-time assistance due to job loss. (IMF, OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - IMF, other)</p> <p>(4) Temporary unemployment assistance benefit for private sector formal wage workers.</p> <p>(5) Free continuing education courses for the unemployed. (ILO)</p>

<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	(1) Social compensation to women as income-earners, those rendered jobless and as parents of children with disabilities, families with 3+ children, amongst others. (OECD) (2) While developing support scheme for families, needs of women, as the ones often taking a largest load of care work, were taken into account. Therefore, the support packages were developed based on needs-based approach. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	(1) Food price subsidies on 9 basic food products for low-income families and vulnerable groups. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other) (2) Students from vulnerable families (with the social score below 150,000 will have one semester of their university tuition covered. (IMF) (3) Children living and working in the streets transferred to safe spaces. (OECD)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	(1) Pensions will increase by no less than the inflation rate (starting Jan 2021). (2) Up to 6-months targeted social assistance for persons with severe disabilities and children with disabilities. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	(1) Increased salaries for teachers and medical personnel. (2) State subsidies for employers to retain jobs and lump-sum payments for the self-employed. (3) Low earning salaries fully exempt from income tax for 6-months. (4) One-off payment to individuals employed in outlets or facilities whose operations will be suspended under the 2nd lockdown scheme. (IMF) (5) For 6-months, salaries up to a select amount will be fully exempt from income tax. (6) People employed in the informal sector or the self-employed will receive a one-time assistance. The decision to support non-formal employees was indirectly targeted to provide social assistance to women. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	To ensure occupational safety and health, an Order approved general recommendations for all business sectors. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	(1) Credit guarantee schemes, co-financing, and a micro-grant system to help businesses and entrepreneurs cope with the pandemic will continue into 2021. (2) Government to help negotiate postponements of bank payment payments to employees of businesses closed during Dec 2020 - Jan 2021. (3) 6-months income tax concession for 33,000 businesses from Dec 2020 to May 2021. (4) Property tax concession for the tourism sector in 2021. (IMF) (5) Women-run businesses targeted in small grants and economic programmes with some pre-conditions and application barriers removed to allow more women to apply. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - CoE)

<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Co-financing issued to family-owned, hotel SMEs (with property and income tax payments deferred for 4-months), and 80% of bank loan interests subsidised for small hotels, for 6 months.</p> <p>(2) VAT returns doubled for private sector businesses to supply working capital to pay wages.</p> <p>(3) For individual borrowers and SMEs, loan and lease payments deferred for 3-months. (IMF, OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(4) Changes to small business development grants: grant-cap was increased and the contribution amount by a beneficiary was reduced. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) National Bank introduced a new tool for liquidity management to support the financing of SMEs.</p> <p>(2) Measures announced to support capital and liquidity in the banking sector, including loan portfolio. (IMF)</p>
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 13 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	USD 10 billion (9% of GDP) for SMEs and households. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>Subsidized lending of KZT 1 trillion (1.5% of GDP) is being provided under the State Program "Economy of Simple Things," along with actions to help SMEs finance working capital (KZT 600 billion). KZT 1.8 trillion is allocated to support employment under an "Employment Roadmap" program, including some large-scale projects to modernize the transportation infrastructure. Some supportive measures (such as the Employment Roadmap and working capital support to SMEs) are expected to continue in 2021. (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>Currently, there are no measures that address the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women. (OECD)</p>
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	Families recipient of targeted social assistance provided transfers online for the first time. (ILO)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Subsidized mortgage program for households with a segment targeting youth. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) In-kind support in the form of free grocery packages/food baskets for most vulnerable including large low-income families with children receiving targeted social assistance, persons with disability, parents engaged in caring for a disabled child and other vulnerable families. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP - WB)</p> <p>(3) 2-months reimbursement of utilities expenses for some socially vulnerable groups of population.</p> <p>(4) Citizens who were transferred to remote work, may receive compensation for the electricity and telecommunications bills. In Almaty, residents can defer utilities payments, including elevator and waste disposal, for 2-month to end-2020 with no fines or penalties. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>

<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Cash transfer measures being developed for individuals who have lost jobs as a result of COVID-19, financial support will be made equivalent to the minimum wage. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) State is financing an extension of the social safety net with unemployment subsidies and food baskets to low-income families and the most vulnerable. (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(3) Employees who lost jobs will be compensated at 40% of their former salaries for up to 6 months. (OECD)</p> <p>(4) State is expanding the list of citizens who are entitled for a new social payment in connection to loss of income. (ILO)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	Better access to paid leave for employees issued a temporary "certificate of incapacity for work" for the period of quarantine without visiting medical organizations. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	Families with 4 or more minor children or full-time students under 23 are eligible for a multi-child parenting State allowance regardless of their income. (ILO)
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	New measures being developed for vulnerable populations. (IMF)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	Increase in pension's indexing. (ILO)
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) State is financing an extension by providing wages beyond early October for vulnerable individuals and businesses. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Wage subsidies channelled through firms to employees of MSMEs to end of the pandemic. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Health workers (doctors, nurses, etc.) and police officers received bonuses. (ILO)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) "Enbek" (state program for developing productive employment and entrepreneurship) implemented, and includes an employment subsidy, youth apprenticeships, public works, short-term training courses, entrepreneurship training, microcredits and grants for entrepreneurs, and other types of support.</p> <p>(2) All enterprises, both state and private, should, if possible, switch to the remote work mode. (ILO)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Businesses with over 40% drop in turnover can claim cash support to cover up to 80% of their fixed costs; full compensation of fixed costs to businesses forced to close temporarily. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Increased government guarantees for SMEs. (ILO)</p>



<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Select enterprises and individual entrepreneurs are eligible for new tax incentives. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Credit support to SMEs - exemption from taxes and social payments from 1 April to 1 October 2020 for select sectors including wholesale and retail trade which represents 18% of women's employment, and 10.8% of men's employment. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Deferral of loan payments and new preferential loans for SMEs/individuals. (OECD)</p> <p>(4) 3-months exemption from any type of tax for companies/individual entrepreneurs. (ILO)</p> <p>(5) Soft loans for local businesses to protect jobs offered firstly to local producers to reduce dependency on imports and ensure food security. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>National Bank in supporting banks and the economy:</p> <p>(1) Lowered risk weights for SME and loans, and encouraged Banks and other lenders to grant up to 6- months loan repayment deferrals to eligible SME borrowers and to freeze their loan classifications at the pre-COVID-19 status,</p> <p>(2) Expanded the list of eligible collaterals,</p> <p>(3) Lowered capital conservation buffer, and</p> <p>(4) Reduced the liquidity coverage ratio requirement and granted liquidity support to sustain operations and shield employment. (IMF, OECD)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>KOSOVO*</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 13 March 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<p>(1) Fiscal package of EUR 180 million (2.5% of GDP) adopted for individuals, firms and municipalities. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) EUR 10.9 million allocated to implement the emergency support package. (OECD)</p>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	<p>A mid-year budget review process has been adopted and includes additional budget of EUR 365 million for a 'New Economic Recovery Program'.</p> <p>A new law on economic recovery been adopted by the government. (IMF)</p>
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) Doubling of all payments to social welfare recipients (April and May). (OECD)</p> <p>(2) 2-months worth early payment of social assistance benefits.</p> <p>(3) 3-months additional payment to all beneficiaries of social assistance who receive a monthly payment less than EUR 100 provided they are beneficiaries of only one scheme. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Payments to public utility companies suspended. (OECD)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	3-months monthly assistance to citizens who lost their jobs. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	Verification procedures for social assistance benefits suspended. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)

<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) Extended deadline to file and pay pension contributions. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Verification procedures for pension benefits suspended.</p> <p>(3) Early payment of pensions.</p> <p>(4) 3-months additional payment to all beneficiaries on pension schemes who receive a monthly payment less than EUR 100) provided they are beneficiaries of only one scheme. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) 2-month coverage of monthly salaries.</p> <p>(2) For the second half of 2020 and for 2021, wage subsidy for workers in pandemic-affected businesses and salary subsidy for new workers hired by businesses based on a plan that identifies sectors and categories of workers most in need. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, IMF)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Eligible firms to receive financial remuneration per month for each employee on their payroll (March and April).</p> <p>(2) Firms to receive financial remuneration for each new employee hired on a minimum 1-year contract during the crisis. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Early payment of farming grants and subsidies planned. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - OECD)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) 2-month subsidise up to 50% of rent costs offered to SMEs.</p> <p>(2) Micro-enterprises and self-employed workers can apply to receive credit guarantees.</p> <p>(3) Up to 3-years extension of tax payment deadlines for those unable to pay. (OECD)</p> <p>(4) Interest-free loans to publicly-owned enterprises facing financial difficulties – public sector employment represents 47.8% of women's employment, as opposed to 33.4% of men's employment. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	Central Bank suspended payments of loan instalments for businesses and individuals (mid-March to mid-August. (OECD)
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	
1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 18 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<p>(1) First anti-crisis plan economic package of USD 15 million adopted (0.2% of GDP)</p> <p>(2) Second and third packages adopted USD 540 million (7% of GDP). (IMF)</p> <p>(3) Adopted the Act on New Economic Freedom and Development to re-launch economic activity for around USD 400 million (5.2% of GDP) - (IMF, OECD)"</p>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	First package includes postponement of tax payments, time-bound exemptions of property and land taxes, and temporary price controls on 11 essential food items. Second package includes temporary tax exemptions for SMEs, support food security program to the vulnerable groups, and subsidized credit to banks to provide funding to SMEs through soft loans. (IMF)

SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	(1) Automatic extension of the standard 1-year enrolment term for beneficiaries of poverty-targeted cash transfer whose term was due to finish during quarantine. (2) Cash transfers to persons with disabilities prolonged automatically if their term finishes during quarantine. (3) Financial assistance to low-income families. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	(1) Deferral of utilities service charges and fees (electricity, water and gas) to January 2021. (2) Food and medical supplies to supplement cash transfers provided to low-income families with children, children and adults with disabilities. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	(1) Temporary price controls on 11 essential food items and food security program for vulnerable groups. (IMF) (2) Reduced social contributions. (OECD)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	For employment retention, Labour Code to be amended to prohibit dismissal of workers and employees, except for good reasons. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	(1) Postponement of tax payments for SMEs, time-bound exemptions of property and land taxes. (IMF) (2) Extended deadline to submit tax declarations and suspension of audits for all businesses. (3) Preferential financing for SMEs in export-oriented, processing and food security sectors. (OECD) (4) Supporting the productive sector to maintain their businesses in operation through measures such as deferral of tax, social insurance contribution payments. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (5) Postponement in submitting a single tax return for individuals and individual entrepreneurs to September. (ILO)

<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) National Bank lowered its liquidity ratio and removed necessary requirements, reduced the minimum threshold level for reserve requirements, and reduced risk-weights of some loans.</p> <p>(2) Introduced a temporary ban on bankruptcy procedures of businesses until January 2021. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Subsidized credit to banks to provide funding to SMEs through soft loans. (IMF)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOLDOVA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 7 March 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<p>Two 2020 State Budget Amendments includes:</p> <p>(1) LEU 2.1 billion (USD 120 million) to support the economy and businesses,</p> <p>(2) LEU 1.06 billion (USD 59 million) for social insurance which includes LEU 180 million (USD 10 million) for unemployment benefits</p> <p>(3) LEU 1.4 billion (USD 78 million) announced for healthcare measures (IMF, OECD)</p>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	Targeted fiscal and economic measures to support businesses and vulnerable households, such as expanding unemployment benefits and strengthening existing targeted social assistance, tax relief for sectors affected by state-imposed restrictions, delaying tax payment deadlines to mid-2020, suspending tax audits and other controls, and increasing state budget allocations to the budget emergency and health funds and to a mortgage guarantee program. (IMF)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	<p>(1) Increased social assistance during the state of emergency for vulnerable people and families with children. (CoE, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Double increase of child allowance for uninsured people. (ILO)</p>
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Mortgage guarantee program. (IMF)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Persons who have worked for at least nine months at one enterprise and have lost their jobs will be paid 60-80% of their final salary. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Volume of the unemployment fund expanded roughly six-fold. (IMF, OECD)</p> <p>(3) People not usually eligible for unemployment benefits (insured and uninsured people) have access to a grant up to a minimum salary/subsistence levels. Eligibility criteria for those registered as unemployed to claim unemployment benefits was widened to include returning migrants and the self-employed. (OECD, CoE, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	One time allowance to some categories of public sector employees who contracted the virus. (OECD)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	Strengthening existing targeted social assistance. (IMF)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021

LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Minimum income guaranteed for families with low revenues during state of emergency.</li> <li>(2) One time cash assistance to healthcare workers working directly with COVID-19. (OECD)</li> <li>(3) Salary increases for medical and social staff. (CoE)</li> <li>(4) Workers' salary paid in full through state budget in non-operational public units. (ILO)</li> </ul>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Government drafted amendment for Labour Code to institutionalize telework. (CoE)</li> <li>(2) State calls to arrange flexible hours, individual work time, working from home in agreement with the workers, registration of stoppage of the enterprise with payment of 2/3 of the basic income, paid regular vacations, also to comply fully with occupational safety and health measures (PPE etc.) as stipulated in the labour legislation. (ILO)</li> </ul>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) For businesses that have suspended their activities (fully or partially), state will help pay salaries by refunding up to 100% of personal income taxes, social and medical contributions. (OECD, ILO)</li> <li>(2) Subsidy mechanism established in order to support the entrepreneurial activity. (CoE)</li> </ul>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) A draft law approved to implement Interest Grant Program to support businesses/ entrepreneurs (includes grants for women entrepreneurs).</li> <li>(2) Assistance to entrepreneurs to overcome cash-flow problems with suspension of audits of individual financial statements for 2019 and postponement for payments of income tax and inspections. (OECD)</li> <li>(3) For loans contracted to pay salaries or for operating assets, the State will cover bank interests up to 3-months payroll. (OECD, ILO)</li> <li>(4) Delaying deadlines for taxes (by 6-months) and social insurance contributions. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</li> </ul>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>National Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Cut the base rate applied to the main short-term monetary policy operations.</li> <li>(2) Lowered the required reserve ratio in local currency and non-convertible currency.</li> <li>(3) Increased the required reserves ratio in freely convertible currencies.</li> <li>(4) Cut interest rates on overnight loans and deposits.</li> </ul> <p>Other measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(5) Increase of state budget allocations to the state emergency fund and to a mortgage guarantee program.</li> <li>(6) Decreased VAT for the food &amp; accommodation sector.</li> <li>(7) Revised VAT Refund Program. (OECD)</li> </ul>
<b>MONTENEGRO</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 17 March 2020	
EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(2) Second package approved on 24 April</li> <li>(3) EUR 1.22 billion over four years (EUR 281.2 million in 2020) third response package adopted 23 July. (IMF)</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	Business and employee support programme. (IMF)

SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	One-off financial assistance to social welfare beneficiaries. (IMF)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Doubling of electricity subsidies for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable households. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	(1) 6-months 70% subsidy of the gross minimum wage of newly employed workers in SMEs if workers left unemployed. (2) One-time financial assistance to all persons recorded as unemployed and who did not receive any compensation (financial or material security). (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - IMF)
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	(1) 2-months subsidies in Apr-May of 70% of the minimum wage for people who have to be self-isolated/quarantined. (IMF, OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) Extension of sick leave to 30 April 2020 by GPs – normally, a committee is required for this long extension. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	2-months subsidies of 70% of the minimum wage for employees who are unable to work due to childcare for children under 11. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	(1) During the closure of schools and kindergartens, one parent of a child not older than 11 is entitled to a paid leave from work. (OECD) (2) Subsidy for wages of employees on paid absence (Apr-May) of 70% of gross minimum wage for each employee who had to stay home as carer to a child under 11. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	Two one-off financial assistance payments to low-income pensioners, (2nd payment made under the third package). (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, OECD)
LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	(1) 2-months wage subsidies in Apr-May of 70% of the minimum wage for employees in sectors that are closed – extended for two additional months (Oct-Nov). (2) 50% wage subsidy of the minimum wage for employees in sectors at risk due to lock-downs. (3) 15% increase in the March wages of healthcare workers. (IMF, OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - OECD) (4) Salary subsidies for licenses paid in April/May with 70% of the basic salary for each employee caring for a minor under the age of 11 (men and women). (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	Energy firms will exempt the fixed portion of electricity bills for businesses that have stopped operating (IMF, ILO)

<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Support to the tourism sector (such as interest subsidies on loans and the reduction of VAT from 21% to 7% in the hospitality industry.</p> <p>(2) Interest subsidies introduced for the agriculture sector. (IMF)</p> <p>(3) Delay of tax payments and social security contributions. (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(4) 100% subsidy of taxes and contributions to the minimum wage for each registered employee in sectors that had to be closed.</p> <p>(5) Payments for the social insurance contributions of insured agricultural workers. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>(1) Creation of a new Investment Development Fund credit line credit line of EUR 120 million to improve the liquidity of entrepreneurs.</p> <p>(2) Central Bank introduced a 6-months moratorium from 22 Oct on loan repayments for borrowers facing difficulties (including citizens who lost their jobs after March 31 due to COVID-19) and for two priority sectors (tourism and agriculture, forestry, and fishing) with reduction of reserve requirement rate.</p> <p>(3) Central Banks Deposit Protection Fund increased its credit. (IMF, OECD, ILO)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NORTH MACEDONIA</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 26 February 2020</p>	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	EUR 550 million (5.5% of GDP) is the total economic assistance from all of measures taken by Government to address firms' liquidity problems, protect jobs and support the most vulnerable. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	Regulatory responses through 3 packages: first two sets of measures mitigated the impact of the health crisis on the economy and the population (implemented March and May). The third package concerns revitalization, economic recovery and stimulation of consumption and industry under three main pillars: encourage consumption of local goods/services; direct support for the economy; and aid for the agrarian sector. (OECD)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	Vulnerable households will receive financial support through existing social assistance schemes and cash vouchers for 2-months. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) 30-day valid payment cards to citizens from poorest and vulnerable households earning less than the minimum wage to boost local consumption and limit informal cash exchanges. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Support to vulnerable households with postponed rent of social housing. (OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(3) In-kind support to beneficiaries of means-tested programs (basic food and hygienic products) (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Those who lost their jobs will receive a monthly allowance of 50% of the average monthly net wage of the employee for the last 24 months.</p> <p>(2) Accelerated access to the social protection system for workers who lost their jobs or informal workers (who were part of the informal economy) for 2-months per household. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>



<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	<p>(1) The period of paid leave from work due to pregnancy, childbirth (maternity/paternity leave) and parenthood and adoption continues to flow and the salary compensation continues to be paid until the expiration of COVID-19 measures, 27 September. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(2) All chronically ill persons were released from work since the beginning of the pandemic until 27 September, unless they obtained a doctor's statement confirming they are at a heightened risk of going to work. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	<p>(1) Freezing of prices of basic necessity products (food products, medicines, and disinfection products). (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(2) Students will receive partial re-imbursement of university tuition fees and IT courses. (IMF)</p>
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) Subsidies on private sector wages and social security contributions for firms that maintain employment. (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(2) 4-month salaries support with subsidised contributions to employees of affected companies.</p> <p>(3) Tourism, transport and catering sector will subsidise contributions for employees up to 50% of the average salary paid in 2019, provided company does not reduce the number of employees below its number from February. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(4) All single parents or one parent of children until the age of 10 to perform their work duties from home or remotely until September. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) Employees are encouraged to work from home, if possible.</p> <p>(2) Release from work obligations of one parent of children up to 10, who are chronically ill.</p> <p>(3) Mandatory use of the first part of the annual leave (for 2020), i.e. mandatory completion of the annual leave from last year until May 2020. (ILO)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Support to agricultural M/SMEs will cover around 50,000 farmers. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) Existing Innovation and Technological Development Fund is supporting development of domestic start-up products and services. Textile industry assisted to create a sales digital platform. (OECD)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Postponement of income tax payments, loans at favourable terms and loan guarantees, and sector-specific support. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Development Bank issued interest-free loans to MSMEs, amount dependent on number of employees. (OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(3) Development Bank will offer a 30% grant (non-refundable) for companies run or founded by women or employ young people, are export-oriented or introduce innovation and digitalization in their operations. (OECD)</p>



<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	National Bank has: (1) Cut its policy rate twice, (2) Provided additional liquidity to the economy, (3) Revised its credit risk management to promote more favourable credit standards for affected companies and to ease standards for household, and (4) Corporate loan restructuring. (IMF, OECD) (5) All bankruptcy procedures frozen. (OECD)
<b>SERBIA</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 6 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	RSD 390 billion (7% of GDP) from first package of fiscal measures. (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	EUR 5.1 billion financial package to support the economy and EUR 200 million for infrastructure projects to mitigate risks on economic growth. (OECD)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	(1) Universal and one-off cash transfer to each citizen over 18, for - Financial Social Assistance - Caregiver Allowance - Child Allowance - Maternity leave benefit for child care. (IMF, OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) One-off payment to temporary benefit beneficiaries. (OECD) (3) 3-months extension for social assistance beneficiaries, child benefits, personal care benefits and compensations related to special care of the children whose entitlement expire on/after 15 March. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other) (4) Expansion of cash transfers allocated for beneficiaries who are carers, have children, or on maternity leave. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Most vulnerable women will receive assistance in hygiene packages and essential food products. (OECD)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	(1) New measures to stimulate youth employment and skills training, and motivate employers to hire them. (OECD) (2) All employees in the medium and large private enterprises whose work terminated from 15 March will be given 50% of their monthly wages, includes part-time employees with select criteria. (ILO)
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	(1) Government recommended that all employers give full compensation to employees in self-isolation or have contracted COVID-19 due to direct exposure to the virus at work. (OECD) (2) Remuneration of 100% salary during sick leave or being in self-isolation for medical staff, care workers, police and military infected by COVID-19 during their duty. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021

<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	One-off payment to all pensioners. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker)
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) 3-month wage subsidies, includes payment of minimum wages for all MSME employees and entrepreneurs and payment of 50% of the minimum wage for 3-months for employees in large enterprises and for employees who are currently not working. Further 2-month wage subsidies offered for SME employees. (IMF, OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) 10% wage increase for public healthcare sector, and public-sector health workers to receive a further one-off assistance by end-2020. (IMF)</p> <p>(3) 10% increase in salary of care workers (being in majority women) in nursing homes. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	Employer is obliged to allow all employees to work from home where working from home is feasible (in line with the general act of the employer and the labour contracts). Employers who are not in position to organize work from home for employees are required to organize the work in shifts, with as few workers gathering in the same premises as possible. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Serbian Innovation Fund introduced a special call for proposals for MSMEs to develop new products, technologies and prototypes (e.g. protective reusable masks, devices for disinfection).</p> <p>(2) Financial support for businesses to maintain employment with 60% coverage of the average monthly salary per worker, with an additional month of tax exemptions. (OECD)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) State guarantee schemes announced with new loans approved for small business owners, SMEs and agricultural enterprises from the Development Fund. (IMF, OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(2) 3-month deferment of labour taxes and social security contributions for all private companies, to be repaid in 24 instalments starting from 2021. (IMF, ILO)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>National Bank has:</p> <p>(1) Cut the key policy rate,</p> <p>(2) Narrowed the interest rate corridor,</p> <p>(3) Provided liquidity to banks,</p> <p>(4) Introduced a 3-months moratorium on all repayments under bank loans and financial leasing agreements, and</p> <p>(5) Introduced a new 2-month moratorium on liabilities repayment. (IMF)</p>

<b>TAJIKISTAN</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 1 May 2020	
EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	USD 189.5 million received under IMF Rapid Credit Facility instrument due to country's decline in revenues and higher spending. (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	President issued a decree on Countering the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19. (IMF) An Action Plan focusses on providing tax benefits to SMEs, postponing non-tax audits of businesses, providing food security and price stability of staple goods, ensuring timely delivery of social assistance, and supporting vulnerable segments of the population. (OECD)
SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	A supplementary temporary cash benefit to certain categories of beneficiaries on the payroll of the Targeted Social Assistance program. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	(1) Provision of free medical care to citizens placed under medical care and COVID-19 patients. (IMF)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	Better access to paid leave for employees issued a temporary “certificate of incapacity for work” for the period of quarantine without visiting medical organizations. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	(1) Measures taken to prevent price increases of consumer and medical products and of medicines. (ILO) (2) Spending to be increased on social protection of vulnerable segments of the population. (OECD)
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS & FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	(1) Preferential loans disbursed to food and medical supply producing companies through the Fund for State Support to Entrepreneurship. (2) Provision of grain, seed and fuel to farms to boost food security. (IMF)

<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	(under consideration, as at 15 June) Tax concessions to domestic producers and entrepreneurs, reduced non-tax audits, and increase the amount and length of loans extended with low interest rates for "production" businesses. (ILO)
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	National Bank has: (1) Relaxed requirements to ease banking pressures and maintain credit, and (2) Recommended to review loan terms to support borrowers facing temporary difficulties, and waive penalties for businesses and individuals facing hardships in loan repayments (May to October). (IMF)
<b>TURKEY</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 11 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	Initial response package of TL 100 billion of which TL 75 billion (USD 11.6 billion, 1.5% of GDP) for fiscal measures and TL 25 billion (USD 3.8 billion, 0.5% of GDP) for doubling the credit guarantee fund. As of early-Oct, it was estimated that the entire discretionary fiscal support package will amount to TL 573.7 billion (12.8% of GDP) in 2020. Of this, around TL 123 billion (2.7% of GDP) is in the form of 'on-budget' measures. (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	(1) "Economic Stability Shield Program" offers increased employment protection by loosening short-term work allowance rules and consists of a set of 21 measures. "Economic volume" of support to public reached TL 525 billion (11% of GDP), and their "material content" TL 240 billion (5% of GDP). Totality of measures taken so far (the aggregate face value of tax deferrals, loan postponements, additional subsidised credits and cash transfers) amounted to TL 260 billion. (OECD, ILO) (2) 3-phase Social Support Grant Program initiated (ILO)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	(1) Raising cash assistance to families in need, including an increase in the monthly amount transferred to Social Benevolent and Solidarity Associations to protect the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other) (2) Social aid introduced for families in need who are ineligible for previous aid programmes. (3) National Solidarity Fund to help citizens in difficulty launched inviting businesses and households to contribute. (OECD) (4) Cash transfers targeted for women are increased. (5) Conditional cash transfers increased by 29% for health, postnatal and pregnancy payments. (6) Cash transfers for new mothers increased. (7) Monthly transfers increased for women who recently lost their husbands. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)

<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	<p>(1) Easing of households' utility payments to local governments, including water bill debts of residences and businesses whose activities have been suspended. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(2) Student loan debts and rents in public residences deferred for 3-months, extendable for further 3-months. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(3) Secure places provided to homeless people to protect them from COVID-19. (ILO)</p>
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Additional social transfers to low-income families and workers losing their job without qualifying for short-term working arrangements or unemployment insurance.</p> <p>(2) Extensions on the short-time working scheme (to 31 Oct) and the unpaid leave scheme (to 17 Sept).</p> <p>(3) Floor of unemployment insurance compensation raised for workers granted unpaid leave. (OECD)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	Financial support will be provided to employees forced to take unpaid leave and could not benefit from short-time work from March. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	<p>(1) Allowances of social assistance and solidarity foundations increased, including accelerating support for farmers. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(2) Households in need ineligible for other programmes can apply for special support from the National Solidarity Fund. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Public banks introduced long-term credit mechanisms targeting the households with low monthly income. (ILO)</p> <p>(4) Individuals over 65 or those with chronic conditions exempt from tax payments until the end of COVID-19.</p> <p>(5) Social assistance for the elderly and disabled will be made for 3-months without seeking income criteria and severe disability. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) Raising monthly minimum pension assistance. (IMF, OECD, UN Women-UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(2) Pension benefits for June disbursed earlier.</p> <p>(3) Early payment of holiday bonus for retirees. (OECD)</p>
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) Wage payments for contracted teachers in state schools during the school closure period.</p> <p>(2) Healthcare employees will receive the maximum performance payments for 3-months.</p> <p>(3) Wages of workers of firms that reduced working hours or halted operations covered under the Short-term Work Allowance for up to 3-months, extended to 6-months. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB, other)</p> <p>(4) Workers who have paid social security premium for the last 60 days, and paid unemployment insurance premium for at least 450 days in the last 3-years can be granted a short-term work allowance.</p> <p>(5) Monthly minimum wage support offered to end-2020. (ILO)</p>

<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/ reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) A new law legalised unpaid leave arrangements with a fixed allowance to workers granted unpaid leave and employers prohibited from firing workers during validity of the law (to July 2021). (OECD)</p> <p>(2) New legislation passed authorizing President to take decision on the extension of the Short-term Work Allowance and extend the layoff-ban to minimize the effect of the pandemic on the labour market – short-term employment allowance extended to October.</p> <p>(3) State eased the application criteria for the Short-term Work Allowance (equivalent to 60% of a minimum wage) to protect employment and employers.</p> <p>(4) Ministerial guidance passed for all workplaces on occupation safety and health.</p> <p>(5) All public employees regardless of their employment situation are given the right to flexible work. (ILO)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Under the "Triple Protection Package" to support SMEs, firms producing disinfectants, medical masks and other protection material for health workers will receive a grant. (OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(2) Agency for SME support contracts will be extended for 4 months.</p> <p>(3) Compensatory working time increased from 2 to 4-months for the decrease or stop in working hours to increase employment sustainability.</p> <p>(4) Requirement of an employment contract for the last 120 days reduced to 60 days.</p> <p>(5) Requirement of 600 days of contribution reduced to 450 days.</p> <p>(6) Flexible working and remote-working encouraged for civil servants and private sector.</p> <p>(7) Layoffs are not allowed for the next 3-months. If needed, firms can force employers to take unpaid leave, in which case the worker will receive financial aid from the government. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(8) Grant programme for women cooperatives announced under the Cooperatives Support Programme. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Reduced/postponed taxes for affected industries and sectors for 3-months.</p> <p>(2) Extension of personal and corporate income tax filing deadlines. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) The Credit Guarantee Fund increased its limits for SME loans.</p> <p>(4) The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges announced that its 365 chambers will provide financial support to SMEs through banks.</p> <p>(5) Public sector subsidies to select businesses groups include: rent exemption; postponing interest and debt payments of eligible credits for a minimum of 3 months; and additional liquidity (up to 3 months' staff expenses) to enterprises paying salaries from public banks and preserving employment levels.</p> <p>(6) Enterprises discontinuing short-time working arrangements and unpaid furloughs, and returning to normal activity, will be exempt of employer and employee social security contributions for 3-months. (OECD, ILO)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>Central Bank:</p> <p>(1) Increased liquidity facilities,</p> <p>(2) Reduced reserve requirements,</p> <p>(3) Set-up a new TL lending facility for SMEs in the export sector, and</p> <p>(4) Broadened pool of assets as collateral in Central Bank transactions.</p> <p>Additionally,</p> <p>(5) Public banks granted firms affected by the crisis a 3-month moratorium on bank loan repayments, suspended debt enforcement and bankruptcy proceedings (except in alimony cases) have been suspended. (IMF, ILO)</p>

<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	
As of 22 Sept 2020, no diagnosed cases of COVID-19 reported	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	N/A - state budget spending being revised as of 10 September. On 22 May President signed a decree approving Preparedness and Response Plan to Acute Infectious Disease. (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	State budget will include an increase in health spending for preventing an outbreak and to provide support to businesses (possibly through tax relief, bank loans, and assistance in providing raw materials) affected by the containment measures. (IMF)
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Mobile vans of healthcare services visited remote and rural areas to provide medical masks and sanitary supplies at subsidized rates. (IMF)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	Financial support will be provided to employees forced to take unpaid leave and could not benefit from short-time work from March. (ILO)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	Bonus salary of 20, 15 and 10% for healthcare professionals working in the remote rural facilities, frontline facilities, and other rural facilities. (IMF)
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021

<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	Temporary suspension of loan repayments provided to businesses affected by the COVID containment measures. (IMF)
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>UKRAINE</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 3 March 2020	
<b>EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES</b>	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	A temporary stand-alone budgetary program created for UAH 65 billion (USD 2.4 billion), with additional sums directed for medical support and pension fund. (OECD) A further UAH 6 billion was added (2.6 billion in July and rest in December). (IMF)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	One-time additional cash transfer to current beneficiaries of child disability payments. (OECD, UN Women-UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	(1) Household utilities subsidies for vulnerable groups. (IMF) (2) Simplified requirements for enrolment (eligibility and access) to the Housing Utilities Subsidy program. (3) Moratorium on penalties and disconnection of consumers who are late on utility payments. (OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - OECD, WB) (4) Temporary relief for tenants from paying rent on property not used during quarantine. (5) Mortgage payments postponed. (OECD) (6) Web platform launched to coordinate provision of targeted in-kind social assistance and delivery of services to the elderly, poor and vulnerable (people with disabilities, single parents, internally displaced persons, etc.) based on the applications submitted online. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)



<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	<p>(1) Partial unemployment benefit introduced for workers employed by those enterprises that have reduced or completely stopped activities.</p> <p>(2) For those workers whose employment was terminated by resignation, the deferment of unemployment benefit lifted.</p> <p>(3) During quarantine, the unemployment benefit for persons without contributory record increased by 54%. (ILO)</p> <p>(4) Minimum unemployment benefit increased including for those whose employment history does not qualify them for a full benefit. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(5) Introducing legal grounds to claim unemployment benefits - Unemployment Social Insurance Fund has been increased to support this change.</p> <p>(6) Individual entrepreneurs who lost their income due to quarantine restrictions eligible for partial unemployment assistance. (OECD)</p> <p>(7) Key employment services moved e-platforms, with simplified administrative procedures - e-registration of unemployed, and e-enrolment in unemployment and part-time employment benefit programs. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	<p>(1) State insurance launched for medical professionals who become disabled as a result of COVID-19-related sickness. This insurance also covers the families of doctors and nurses who die as a result of COVID-19. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Social Insurance Fund to finance paid sick leaves and introduced temporary compensation for income losses of COVID-19 patients. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	<p>(1) Making private entrepreneurs eligible for the state support for children younger than 10. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Child care assistance for individual entrepreneurs and cash benefits. (OECD, UN Women-UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	n/a – no measures available from data sources up until 30 April 2021
<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	<p>(1) Price controls imposed. (OECD)</p> <p>(2) New legislation allows households to deduct the expense of COVID-19 medicine from the calculation of personal income tax.</p> <p>(3) Extended existing social entitlements for the period of the quarantine without the need to reapply, including unemployment. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<p>(1) One-off pension increase to low-income pensioners in April.</p> <p>(2) A regular monthly pension top-up for retirees aged 80+ years. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) All pensions will be incremented by 11%. (ILO)</p>
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<p>(1) Top-up of 300% of the salary for medical personnel working with COVID-19 patients. (IMF, ILO)</p> <p>(2) Employers compensated for wages paid to partially furloughed employees - SMEs will receive support at the amount of 1 minimal wage per employee. (IMF, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(3) Part-time employment status introduced for employees of SMEs during quarantine. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p> <p>(4) Eligibility requirements for the Guaranteed Minimum Income program relaxed. (OECD)</p>

<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/reinforcement</b>	<p>(1) Law governing unemployment benefits amended to introduce a new type of entitlement, so called furlough benefit related to a quarantine - set at 2/3 of the basic wage, but not exceeding the minimum wage. (IMF)</p> <p>(2) Quarantine related legal amendments and legislation passed - Labour Code of Ukraine - to regulate remote work, flexible schedule and salaries for business interruption periods. (OECD, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</p>
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<p>(1) Policies introduced to provide targeted support to SMEs.</p> <p>(2) Initiatives to assist businesses retain employees - SMEs forced to suspend activities during the quarantine can apply for a partial unemployment allowance programme - company receives 2/3 of the salary rate. (OECD)</p> <p>(3) Payment in the amount of the subsistence minimum provided to support children of individual entrepreneurs (single tax payers and paid a single social contribution) for the period of quarantine and for 1 month after the date of its abolition. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - other)</p> <p>(4) Eligible entrepreneurs can receive up to UAH 8,000 as a one-off state aid and a single tax holiday Dec 2020-May 2021. (IMF)</p>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<p>(1) Relief for taxpayers for the payment of social security contributions until May.</p> <p>(2) Independent entrepreneurs offered 2-months temporary relief from social security contributions and self-employed exempted from paying tax in May.</p> <p>(3) Fines for incomplete contributions and reporting suspended.</p> <p>(4) Employers affected by lockdowns can be reimbursed equivalent of an average monthly payment of the social security which they have been making on behalf of their employees in the 10 months of 2020.</p> <p>(5) Tax debts written off, and penalties charged on overdue taxes are forgiven if the principle is paid. (IMF, OECD)</p> <p>(6) Expansion of the government program on discounted bank interest rates for businesses.</p> <p>(7) SMEs can borrow up to USD 110,000 with no interest.</p> <p>(8) "Credit holiday" for SMEs.</p> <p>(9) Suspension of property tax payments for businesses.</p> <p>(10) Assistance to SMEs through a new government initiative. (OECD, ILO)</p> <p>(11) Suspended payments for leased premises by SMEs that the latter cannot use due to quarantine. (ILO)</p>
<b>Monetary policy/guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	<p>National Bank:</p> <p>(1) Eased monetary policy by cutting the key policy rate,</p> <p>(2) Provided banks with more liquidity management flexibility,</p> <p>(3) Lowered interest rates,</p> <p>(4) Modified calculation of reserve requirements, and</p> <p>(5) Offered additional capital buffers.</p> <p>Additionally,</p> <p>(6) Parliament adopted legislation releasing borrowers from obligations to pay a penalty fine, and increasing the thresholds for the simplified taxation regime. (IMF, OECD)</p>

<b>UZBEKISTAN</b> 1st confirmed COVID-19 case reported on 16 March 2020	
EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT RESPONSES	
<b>State fiscal assistance packages</b>	USD 1 billion (about 2% of GDP) allocated for an Anti-Crisis Fund. Also, Fund for Reconstruction and Development increased lending. (IMF, OECD)
<b>Socio-economic support policies and programmes</b>	Crisis response measures include expanded funding for healthcare, increase in the number of social benefit recipients (particularly families with children and low-income families), and support to businesses and infrastructure to sustain employment. (IMF, OECD) (2) Expansion of the Public Works Program (USD 21 million). (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES	
<b>Cash transfers</b>	(1) Increased number of low-income families receiving social benefits. (IMF, ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB) (2) Extension of the duration of the social allowances for low-income families that expire in March-June for 6 months (or until a child reaches age of 2 or 14, depending on social allowance). (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support</b>	Disposable facial masks, antiseptic sanitizers and antibacterial soap included in a list of 18 essentials (food/hygiene) products provided to beneficiaries of regular goods baskets - elderly (men over 60 years and women over 55) and people with disabilities including those who need outside care, do not have children (except for minors or children with disabilities), spouses and parents (with the exception of the elderly or disabled), or guardians, trustees, or persons entrusted by the court to provide care, and low-income families. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Unemployment benefit</b>	Simplified procedures to apply and access unemployment assistance benefits during the quarantine measures. (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Paid leave and sick leave</b>	(1) If a member of the healthcare or medical staff is infected with COVID-19 while dealing with patients, they receive a one-off compensation; if the infection results in severe health damage or death, then person or their family members receive compensation. (2) Sick leave for the duration of quarantine increased (from 60-80% of salary depending on employment history) to 100% of the salary for everyone and covers parents whose child is in quarantine (linked to unpaid care work, see column H). (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Unpaid care work</b>	(1) One-off compensation to carers of healthcare or medical staff who suffer severe health damage due to being infected with COVID-19 while dealing with patients (linked to Paid leave and sick leave, see column G). (2) To support the unpaid care work of working parents whose child is in quarantine (linked to Paid leave and sick leave, see column G), parents can apply for and benefit from sick leave for the duration of quarantine and receive 100 % of their salary (an increase of 20-40 %, based on employment history). (UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)
<b>Family, parental and childcare leave</b>	During closure of schools and kindergartens, a working parent (only one of the two) is granted paid leave (including those who have worked less than 6-months), without affecting the regular annual paid leave schedule. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)

<b>Other welfare benefits and assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Social safety net coverage expanded by 10%.</li> <li>(2) Child care benefits and material assistance extended for all beneficiaries. (OECD, ILO)</li> <li>(3) Possible amendments to simplify the application process and relax the income test to determine eligibility to family allowances. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</li> </ul>
<b>Pensions and disability benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) 100% temporary disability benefit for parents. (OECD, ILO)</li> <li>(2) Pensions are fully transferred to bank cards. (ILO)</li> </ul>
<b>LABOUR AND ECONOMIC, BUSINESS &amp; FISCAL STIMULUS MEASURES</b>	
<b>Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Prohibition of termination of the employment contract for an employee who is the parent (person, substitute, guardian, trustee) of a child under 14 who is COVID-19 infected or placed in quarantine.</li> <li>(2) Interest-free loans for the payment of wages to employees of business entities that have suspended their activities in quarantine. (ILO, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</li> <li>(3) Material incentives and salary supplement of 120% for health workers dealing with COVID-19.</li> <li>(4) Salary payments fully transferred to bank cards. (ILO)</li> </ul>
<b>Labour regulatory adjustment/ reinforcement</b>	New work arrangements allow transition of employees, especially pregnant women, elderly and people with disabilities or chronic diseases, to a distance-working method with flexible working hours. (ILO)
<b>Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, MSMEs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Public Works Fund to improve infrastructure and support employment.</li> <li>(2) State Fund for Entrepreneurship Support for job creations by businesses. (IMF, OECD, UN Women/UNDP Tracker - WB)</li> </ul>
<b>Other direct monetary assistance for MSMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/returns, loans, etc)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Assistance to affected businesses via interest subsidies; State Fund for Business Development Support will provide businesses with partial compensation for loan interest expenses and a guarantee of up to 50% of the loan amount.</li> <li>(2) Reduction of social contributions for individual entrepreneurs.</li> <li>(3) Moratorium on tax audits to end-2020.</li> <li>(4) Delaying tax declarations for 2019 income taxes and tax deferrals on land and property tax for most affected SMEs and individual entrepreneurs to October. (IMF, OECD, ILO)</li> </ul>
<b>Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses/liquidity support</b>	Central Bank measures include deferred loan payments for affected firms and reduced policy rate, extending maturities of loan repayments for affected sectors. (IMF, OECD) Central Bank did not change regulatory, capital or liquidity requirements. (OECD)

# ANNEX II. SNAPSHOT ANALYSIS

on policy measures taken by states that may be considered as gender-sensitive or gender responsive and/or inclusive of the leave no one behind principle

CATEGORY	Albania	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Georgia	Kazakhstan	Kosovo*	Kyrgyzstan	Moldova	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	Tajikistan	Turkey	Turkmenistan	Ukraine	Uzbekistan
Sub-category																		
<b>SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES</b>																		
Cash transfers																		
Housing relief/Utility and in-kind support																		
Unemployment benefit																		
Paid leave and sick leave																		
Unpaid care work																		
Family, parental and childcare leave																		
Other welfare benefits and assistance																		
Pensions and disability benefits																		
<b>LABOUR, BUSINESS &amp; ECONOMIC STIMULUS MEASURES</b>																		
Salary/wages support to employed and self-employed																		
Labour regulatory adjustment/ reinforcement																		
Subsidy and relevant support to businesses (including entrepreneurs, self-employed, M/SMEs)																		
Other direct monetary assistance for M/SMEs (includes rebate on social security contributions, tax deferrals/ returns, loans, etc)																		
Monetary policy/ guarantees for businesses / liquidity support																		

- measures that make specific reference to women (gender lens)
- measures that make specific reference to marginalized groups (inclusive of the Leave No One Behind principle)
- measures make no specific reference to both women and marginalized groups
- measures that make specific reference to both women and marginalized groups
- no measures recorded

\* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

# ANNEX III. SUBREGIONAL FACTSHEET: CENTRAL ASIA

## INTRODUCTION

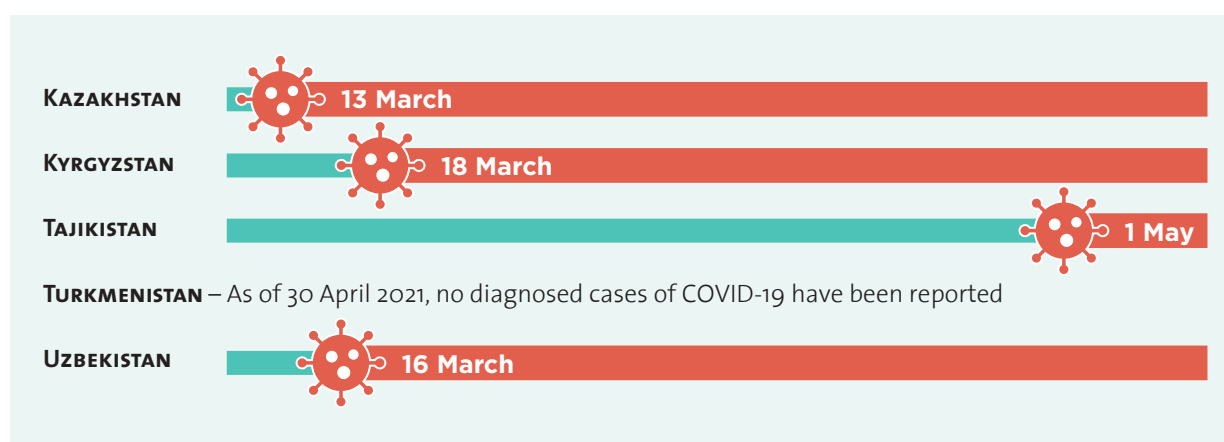
This factsheet draws on findings from the UN Women research study, ‘One Year of COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia’ and its multiple data sources.<sup>1</sup> This factsheet provides an overview of the policy measures that the governments of five Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – adopted in relation to social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business stimulus.

This factsheet highlights measures taken with a gender lens<sup>2</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.<sup>3</sup> By applying these perspectives, governments can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and

vulnerable groups while bolstering the fundamentals in ‘building back better’ after the pandemic.

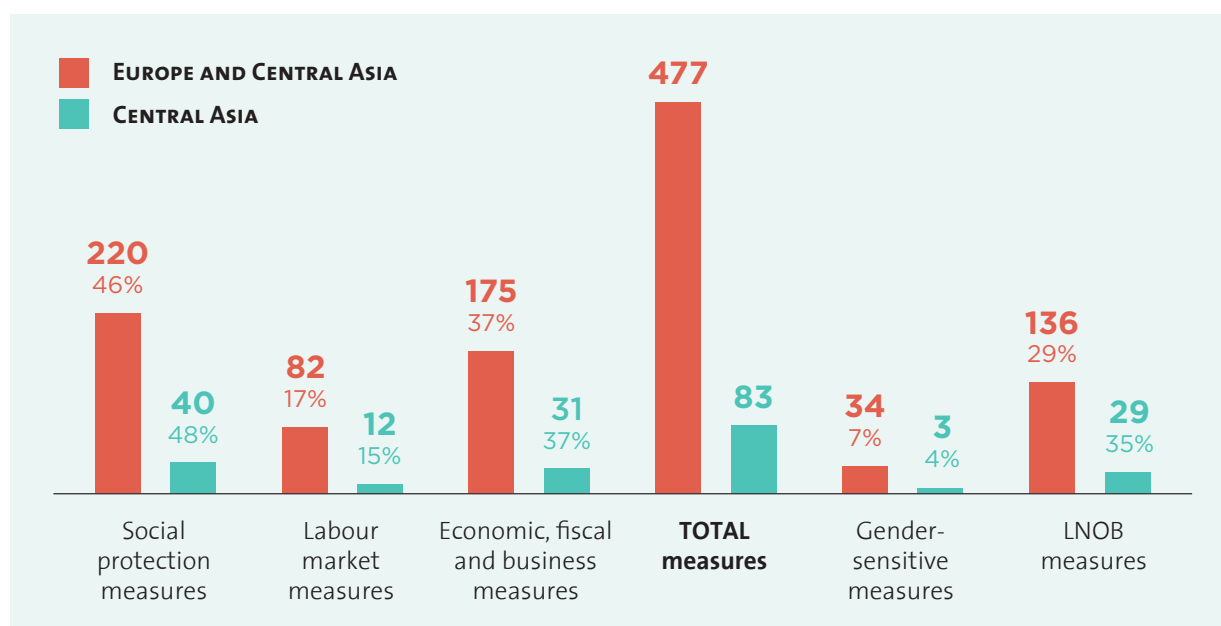
It is important to note that although the study applied a rigorous analysis, the underlying data “should be interpreted with caution.... there may be gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, overreporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures.”<sup>4</sup> It should also be noted that because the study took a broad approach that drew on multiple sources, some data points presented may differ from the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker of September 2020.

## TIMELINE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES



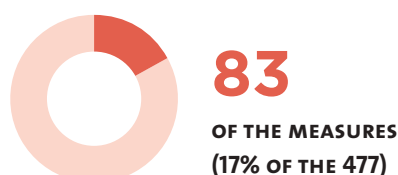
- 1 Secondary data was collected from six data sources: [Council of Europe: Promoting and protecting women's rights at national level](#); [International Monetary Fund Policy Tracker on Policy Responses to COVID-19](#); [ILO Country Policy Responses](#); [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development POLICY TRACKER: Tackling COVID-19 - Contributing to a global effort](#); [World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#); [UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)
- 2 A gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include explicit reference to “women” and “seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis.” (See [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological Note](#).)
- 3 The Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle’s methodology considers measures that directly address and make explicit reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups. LNOB is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals
- 4 [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

## HOW THE SUBREGION RESPONDED

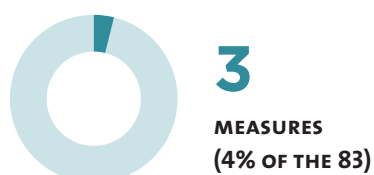


Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Kazakhstan	13 (45%)	5 (17%)	11 (38%)	29	1 (3%)	10 (35%)
Kyrgyzstan	7 (44%)	1 (6%)	8 (50%)	16	0 (0%)	5 (31%)
Tajikistan	5 (56%)	0 (0%)	4 (44%)	9	0 (0%)	2 (22%)
Turkmenistan	1 (33%)	1 (33%)	1 (34%)	3	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
Uzbekistan	14 (54%)	5 (19%)	7 (27%)	26	2 (8%)	11 (42%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40 (48%)</b>	<b>12 (15%)</b>	<b>31 (37%)</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>3 (4%)</b>	<b>29 (35%)</b>

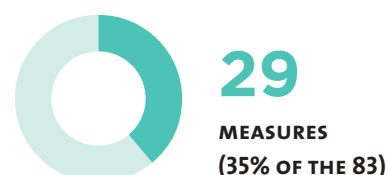
Of the 477 measures that were recorded in Europe and Central Asia to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic:



under the three categories were from the five countries in the Central Asia subregion;



can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women;



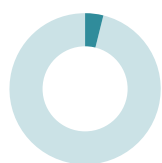
can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION



Of the 83 measures collected from all five Central Asia countries, **40 MEASURES (48 PER CENT)** fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**ONLY 1 OUT OF 40 SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES (3 PER CENT)** from one country can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Uzbekistan** was the only country that made explicit reference to women ("elderly women") as one of the beneficiaries of in-kind support.



**25 MEASURES (63 PER CENT)** from all five Central Asia countries can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.



### TOTAL SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES:

#### TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES:

7 measures across 4 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)



#### HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF, AND IN-KIND SUPPORT:

9 measures across 5 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)



#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS (SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE):

10 measures across 3 countries (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)



**UNPAID CARE WORK:** 3 measures across 2 countries (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)



#### OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS:

11 measures across 4 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)

	Social protection measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	<b>13</b> (45%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>8</b> (62%)
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	<b>7</b> (44%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>5</b> (71%)
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>	<b>5</b> (56%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>2</b> (40%)
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	<b>1</b> (33%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>1</b> (100%)
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>	<b>14</b> (54%)	<b>1</b> (7%)	<b>9</b> (64%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b> (48%)	<b>1</b> (3%)	<b>25</b> (63%)

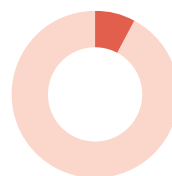


## LABOUR MARKET



The mapping collected 12 measures in the labour market category from four Central Asian countries. The measures adopted protect the jobs and incomes of employees and assist employers of businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also include labour policy and regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**ONLY 1 OUT OF 12 (8 PER CENT)** of the labour market measures from one country can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Uzbekistan** was the only country that made explicit reference to women (“pregnant women”) as one of the beneficiaries of labour regulatory adjustments on new work arrangements (distance-working with flexible working hours).



**FOUR MEASURES (33 PER CENT)** from two countries (**Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan**) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

### TOTAL LABOUR MARKET MEASURES:



**SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED:** 8 measures across 3 countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)



**LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS:** 4 measures across 3 countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan)

	Labour market measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	<b>5</b> (17%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>2</b> (40%)
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	<b>1</b> (6%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	<b>1</b> (33%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>	<b>5</b> (19%)	<b>1</b> (20%)	<b>2</b> (40%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b> (15%)	<b>1</b> (8%)	<b>4</b> (33%)

## ECONOMIC, FISCAL AND BUSINESS

All five governments introduced emergency responses in the form of socio-economic support policies and programmes to address the economy and citizens' economic vulnerabilities. **No country** in the subregion explicitly referenced women in their COVID-19 emergency policy-level responses. From the LNOB principle, **Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan** referenced vulnerable households and groups in their emergency support policy-level responses.

**All countries** revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through COVID-19 anti-crisis funds, ranging from two per cent of GDP in **Uzbekistan** to 9 per cent in **Kazakhstan**.

Out of the 31 economic, fiscal and business measures collected for Central Asian countries, only one measure

offered support to the feminized sectors of the economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment compared to that of men). In **Kazakhstan**, the measure that explicitly offered credit support to SMEs included an exemption from taxes and social payments from 1 April to 1 October 2020 for select sectors, including the wholesale and retail trade sector, which represents 18 per cent of women's employment and 10.8 per cent of men's employment.

While business and entrepreneurship stimulus measures were recorded in all five Central Asian countries, analysis revealed that **no country** offered business stimulus measures that can be considered as being gender-sensitive in that they offer categorical reference to women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs.

	Economic, fiscal and business measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	<b>11</b> (38%)	<b>1</b> (3%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>KYRGYZSTAN</b>	<b>8</b> (50%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TAJIKISTAN</b>	<b>4</b> (44%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	<b>1</b> (34%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>UZBEKISTAN</b>	<b>7</b> (27%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b> (37%)	<b>1</b> (3%)	<b>0</b> (0%)

# SUBREGIONAL FACTSHEET:

## EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

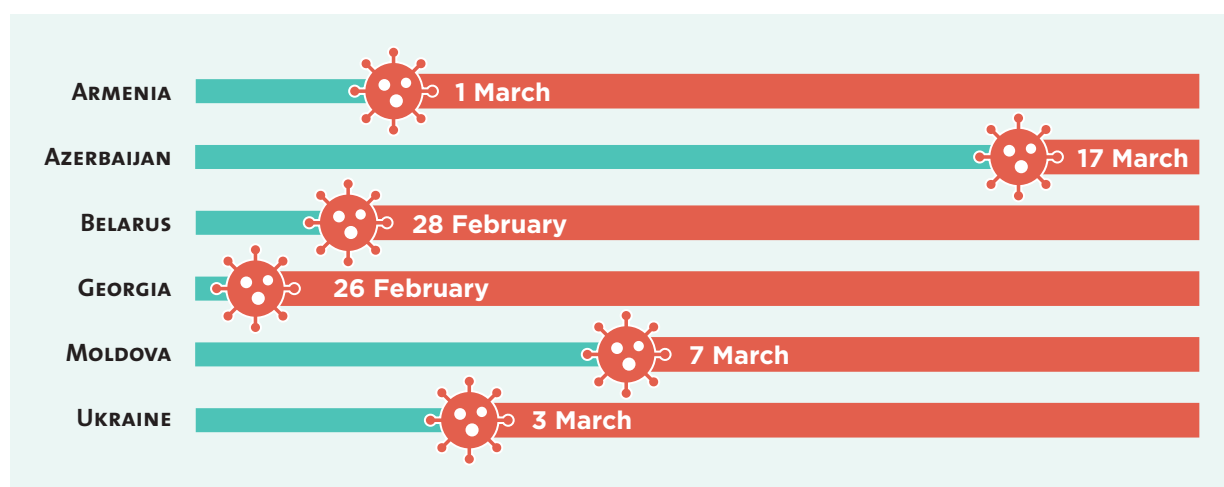
This factsheet draws on findings from the UN Women research study, 'One Year of COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia' and its multiple data sources.<sup>1</sup> This factsheet provides an overview of the policy measures that the governments of six Eastern Partnership countries – **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova** and **Ukraine** – adopted in relation to social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business stimulus.

This factsheet highlights measures taken with a gender lens<sup>2</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.<sup>3</sup> By applying these perspectives, governments can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that

the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and vulnerable groups while bolstering the fundamentals in 'building back better' after the pandemic.

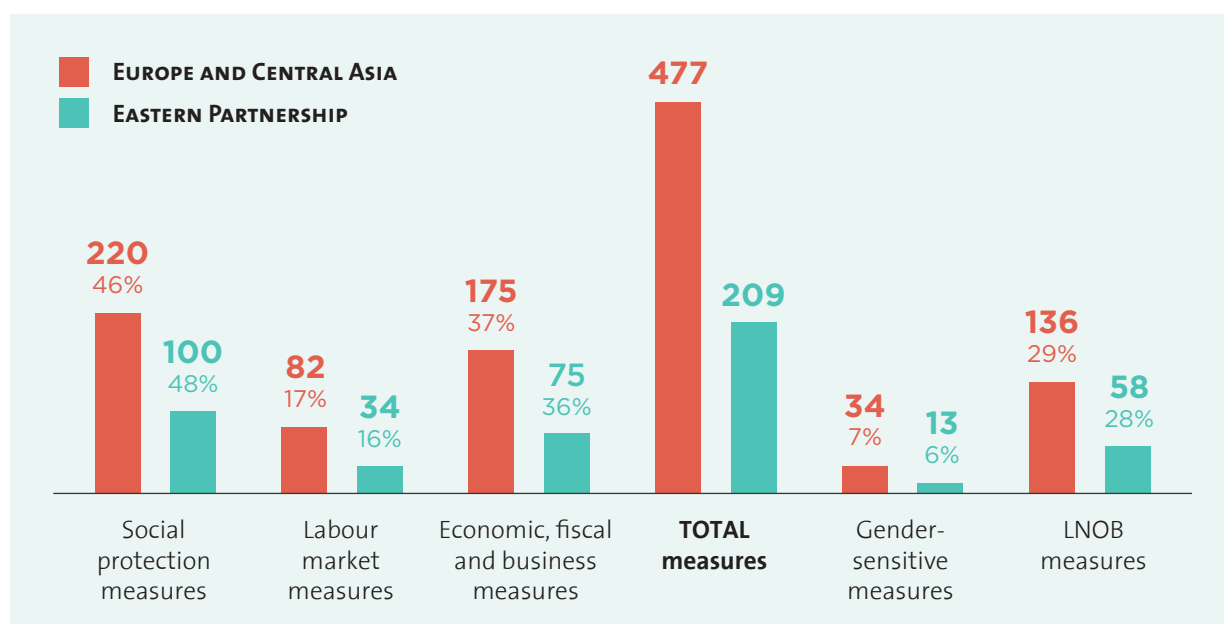
It is important to note that although the study applied a rigorous analysis, the underlying data "should be interpreted with caution... there may be gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, overreporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures."<sup>4</sup> It should also be noted that because the study took a broad approach that drew on multiple sources, some data points presented may differ from the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker of September 2020.

### TIMELINE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES



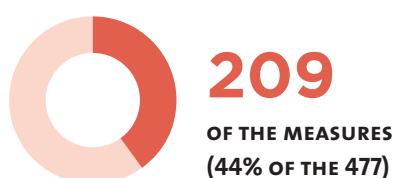
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- 4 [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

## HOW THE SUBREGION RESPONDED

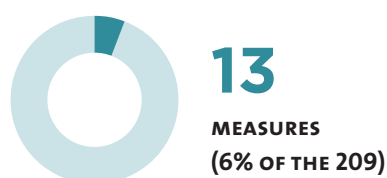


Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Armenia	19 (50%)	8 (21%)	11 (29%)	38	6 (16%)	14 (37%)
Azerbaijan	16 (50%)	5 (16%)	11 (34%)	32	1 (3%)	9 (28%)
Belarus	12 (55%)	2 (9%)	8 (36%)	22	0 (0%)	6 (27%)
Georgia	21 (54%)	7 (18%)	11 (28%)	39	5 (13%)	18 (46%)
Moldova	8 (30%)	6 (22%)	13 (48%)	27	1 (4%)	4 (15%)
Ukraine	24 (47%)	6 (12%)	21 (41%)	51	0 (0%)	7 (14%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 (48%)</b>	<b>34 (16%)</b>	<b>75 (36%)</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>13 (6%)</b>	<b>58 (28%)</b>

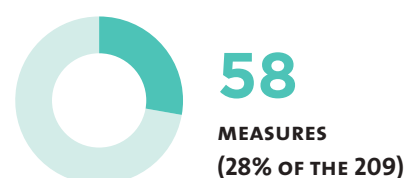
Of the 477 measures that were recorded in Europe and Central Asia to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic:



under the three categories were from the six countries in the Eastern Partnership subregion;



can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women;



can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION



Of the 209 measures collected for Eastern Partnership countries, **100 MEASURES (48 PER CENT)** fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**ONLY SIX OUT OF 100 SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES (6 PER CENT)** from three countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Armenia, Azerbaijan** and **Georgia** made explicit reference to women (“women,” “pregnant women,” and “women-headed households”) as beneficiaries of utility relief and/or in-kind support. **Armenia** included references to “women” and “single pregnant women” as recipients of unemployment-related, one-time financial assistance. **Georgia** explicitly mentioned “women” as income-earners as recipients of social compensation and schemes for the increased unpaid care work they have had to take on due to COVID-19.



**54 MEASURES (54 PER CENT)** from **all six Eastern Partnership countries** can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

### TOTAL SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES:



#### TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES:

15 measures across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)



#### HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF, AND IN-KIND SUPPORT:

19 measures across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)



#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS

**(SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE):** 35 measures across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)



#### UNPAID CARE WORK:

8 measures across four countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine)



#### OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS:

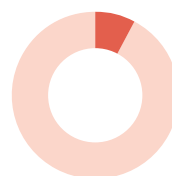
23 measures across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)

	Social protection measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
ARMENIA	19 (50%)	2 (16%)	12 (37%)
AZERBAIJAN	16 (50%)	1 (3%)	9 (28%)
BELARUS	12 (55%)	0 (0%)	6 (27%)
GEORGIA	21 (54%)	3 (13%)	17 (46%)
MOLDOVA	8 (30%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)
UKRAINE	24 (47%)	0 (0%)	7 (14%)
TOTAL	100 (48%)	6 (6%)	54 (54%)

## LABOUR MARKET

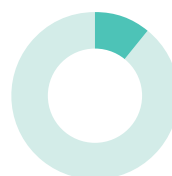


Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**ONLY THREE OUT OF 34 (9 PER CENT)** of the labour market measures from two countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Armenia** and **Georgia** were explicit in offering

direct labour market assistance for women with salary and wages support. Armenia referred to “pregnant women” and “women” workers and entrepreneurs working in Armenia’s predominantly women-employed sectors. Georgia referred to women in the informal sector as recipients of targeted financial support.



**ONLY FOUR MEASURES (12 PER CENT)** from three countries (**Armenia**, **Georgia** and **Moldova**) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

The mapping collected 34 measures in the labour market category from all six Eastern Partnership countries. The measures adopted protect the jobs and incomes of employees and assist employers of businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also include labour policy and regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

### TOTAL LABOUR MARKET MEASURES:



**SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED:** 24 measures across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)



**LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS:** 10 measures across five countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)

	Labour market measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
ARMENIA	8 (21%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)
AZERBAIJAN	5 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
BELARUS	2 (9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
GEORGIA	7 (18%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)
MOLDOVA	6 (22%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)
UKRAINE	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	34 (16%)	3 (9%)	4 (12%)

## ECONOMIC, FISCAL AND BUSINESS










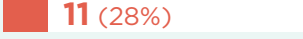


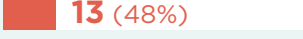



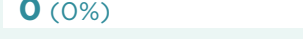
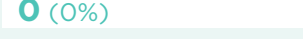



All six governments introduced emergency responses in the form of socio-economic support policies and programmes to address the economy and citizens' economic vulnerabilities. **Azerbaijan** and **Georgia** made explicit references to women. In Azerbaijan, all efforts and programmes addressing the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic include a gender lens in order to target women. Georgia's Anti-crisis Plan categorically indicates women. From the LNOB principle, only **Moldova** explicitly referenced vulnerable households in their emergency policy-level responses.

**All countries** revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through COVID-19 anti-crisis funds. The measures averaged two per cent of countries' GDP.

Out of the 75 economic, fiscal and business measures collected for Eastern Partnership countries, only two measures from **one country** offered support to the feminized sectors of the economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment compared to that of men). In **Armenia**, small- and

medium-sized enterprise loans were offered to select companies, including companies in the human health and social work sector, which account for 8.4 per cent of women's employment (this is 6.7 per cent more than men's employment in the same sectors). Armenia also provided loans to individuals and legal entities in the agricultural sector (the agricultural sector accounts for 32 per cent of women's employment compared to 26 per cent of men's employment).

While **business and entrepreneurship stimulus** measures were recorded in all six Eastern Partnership countries, analysis revealed that **two countries** offered business stimulus measures that can be considered as being gender-sensitive in that they offer categorical reference to women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs. Small grants and economic programmes in **Georgia** removed some pre-conditions and application barriers for "women-run businesses" in order to enable more women to apply. In **Moldova**, a draft law was approved to implement the Interest Grant Programme and support businesses that includes grants for women entrepreneurs.

	Economic, fiscal and business measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>ARMENIA</b>	 <b>11</b> (29%)	 <b>2</b> (18%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>AZERBAIJAN</b>	 <b>11</b> (34%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>BELARUS</b>	 <b>8</b> (36%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>GEORGIA</b>	 <b>11</b> (28%)	 <b>1</b> (9%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>MOLDOVA</b>	 <b>13</b> (48%)	 <b>1</b> (%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>UKRAINE</b>	 <b>21</b> (41%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 <b>75</b> (36%)	 <b>4</b> (6%)	 <b>0</b> (0%)

# SUBREGIONAL FACTSHEET:

## WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY

### INTRODUCTION

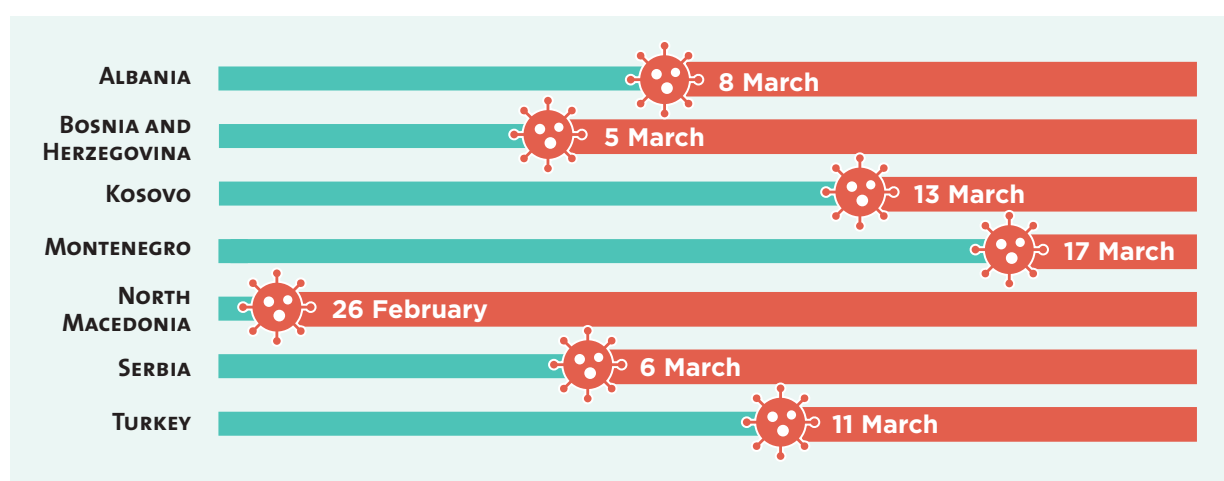
This factsheet draws on findings from the UN Women research study, 'One Year of COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia' and its multiple data sources.<sup>1</sup> This factsheet provides an overview of the policy measures that the governments of six Western Balkan countries - **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia** - and **Turkey** adopted in relation to social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business stimulus.

This factsheet highlights measures taken with a gender lens<sup>3</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.<sup>4</sup> By applying these perspectives, governments can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that

the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and vulnerable groups while bolstering the fundamentals in 'building back better' after the pandemic.

It is important to note that although the study applied a rigorous analysis, the underlying data "should be interpreted with caution... there may be gaps or biases due to a lack of available information, underreporting of measures being announced, overreporting of measures that have been suspended, or the lack of data on the gender components of existing measures."<sup>5</sup> It should also be noted that because the study took a broad approach that drew on multiple sources, some data points presented may differ from the UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker of September 2020.

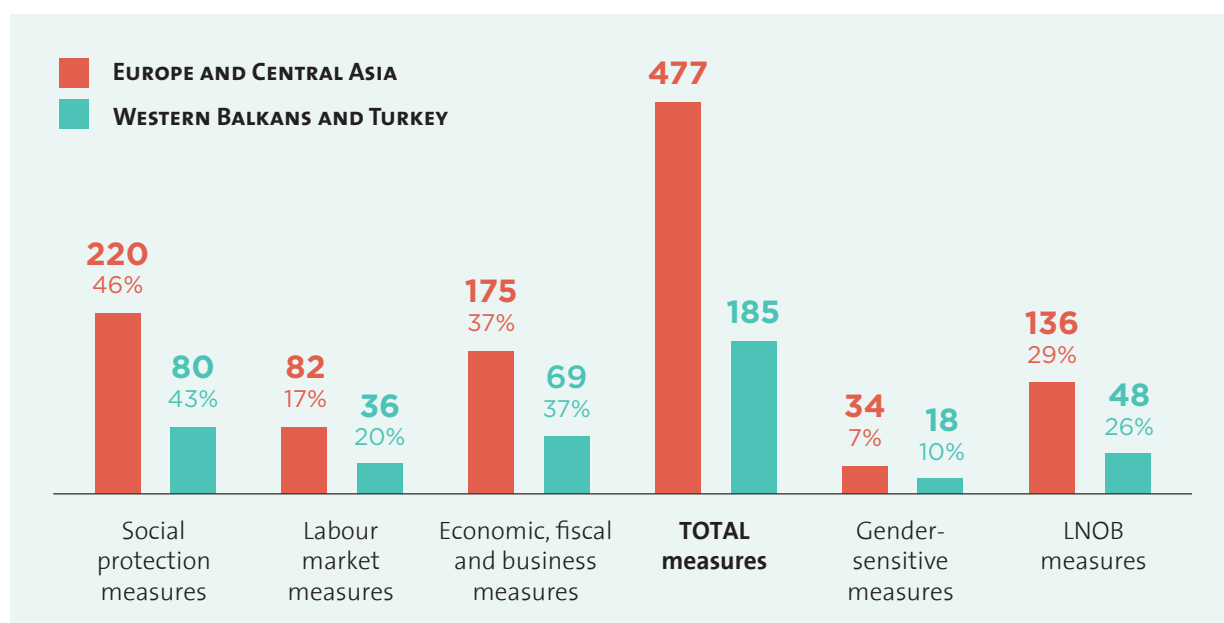
### TIMELINE OF 1<sup>ST</sup> CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN WESTER BALKAN COUNTRIES AND TURKEY



- 1 Secondary data was collected from six data sources: [Council of Europe: Promoting and protecting women's rights at national level](#); [International Monetary Fund Policy Tracker on Policy Responses to COVID-19](#); [ILO Country Policy Responses](#); [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development POLICY TRACKER: Tackling COVID-19 - Contributing to a global effort](#); [World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#); [UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)
- 2 All references to Kosovo are made in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).
- 3 A gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include explicit reference to "women" and "seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis." (See [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological Note](#).)
- 4 The Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle's methodology considers measures that directly address and make explicit reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups. LNOB is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals
- 5 [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#)

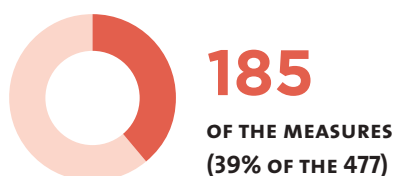


## HOW THE SUBREGION RESPONDED

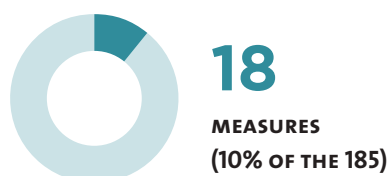


Country/Territory	Social protection measures	Labour market measures	Economic, fiscal and business measures	TOTAL measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
Albania	12 (55%)	4 (18%)	6 (27%)	22	4 (27%)	8 (36%)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6 (32%)	5 (26%)	8 (42%)	19	1 (5%)	2 (11%)
Kosovo	10 (50%)	2 (10%)	8 (40%)	20	1 (5%)	5 (25%)
Montenegro	10 (43%)	4 (17%)	9 (39%)	23	1 (4%)	7 (30%)
North Macedonia	10 (37%)	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	27	2 (7%)	9 (33%)
Serbia	10 (44%)	4 (17%)	9 (39%)	23	4 (17%)	5 (22%)
Turkey	22 (43%)	10 (20%)	19 (37%)	51	5 (10%)	12 (24%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80 (43%)</b>	<b>36 (20%)</b>	<b>69 (37%)</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>18 (10%)</b>	<b>48 (26%)</b>

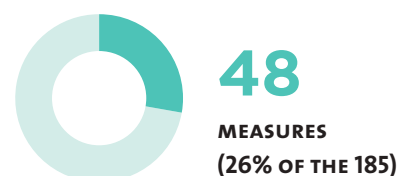
Of the 477 measures that were recorded in Europe and Central Asia to address the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic:



under the three categories were from the six Western Balkan countries and Turkey;



can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they specifically reference women;



can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they specifically reference vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION



Of the 185 measures collected for the Western Balkan countries and Turkey, **80 MEASURES (43 PER CENT)** fall under the social protection category in that they provide social assistance, social insurance and welfare benefits to all citizens or members of an age group.

Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**15 OUT OF 80 OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES (19 PER CENT)** from four countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey** made explicit reference to “women” as one of the beneficiaries of some form of social protection support (cash transfers, utility relief, in-kind support, unemployment benefits and paid sick leave). Eight of these measures (67 per cent) mentioned “women heads of families,” “pregnant women,” “new mothers,” and “widowed women” as recipients of cash transfers.



**43 MEASURES (54 PER CENT)** from all six Western Balkan countries and Turkey can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.



### TOTAL SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES:

#### TARGETED CASH TRANSFERS SCHEMES:

19 measures across seven countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)



#### HOUSING AND UTILITY RELIEF, AND IN-KIND SUPPORT:

14 measures across seven countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)



#### UNEMPLOYMENT AND LEAVE BENEFITS (SICK, PAID AND FAMILY, PARENTAL AND CHILDCARE LEAVE):

27 measures across seven countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)



**UNPAID CARE WORK:** 1 measure in one country (Montenegro)



#### OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING PENSION AND DISABILITY BENEFITS:

19 measures across six countries (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)

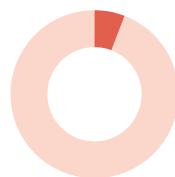
	Social protection measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
ALBANIA	12 (55%)	4 (33%)	8 (67%)
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	6 (32%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)
KOSOVO	10 (50%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)
MONTENEGRO	10 (43%)	0 (0%)	6 (60%)
NORTH MACEDONIA	10 (37%)	1 (10%)	7 (70%)
SERBIA	10 (44%)	3 (30%)	5 (50%)
TURKEY	22 (43%)	4 (10%)	12 (26%)
TOTAL	80 (43%)	12 (15%)	43 (54%)

## LABOUR MARKET



The mapping collected 36 measures in the labour market category from all six Western Balkan countries and Turkey. The measures adopted protect the jobs and incomes of employees and assist employers of businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate the risks of contract termination, including with state support for the payment of wages. Policy responses under this dimension also included labour policy and regulation adjustments and/or reinforcements.

Findings from a gender lens and the LNOB principle show that:



**ONLY TWO OUT OF 36 (6 PER CENT)** of the labour market measures from two countries can be classified as being gender-sensitive. **Montenegro** and **Serbia** made explicit reference

to women in offering direct labour market assistance in the form of salary support through subsidies for women caring for a minor (Montenegro) and salary increases for predominantly women care workers in nursing homes (Serbia).



**ONLY FIVE MEASURES (14 PER CENT)** from five countries (**Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia** and **Serbia**) can be classified as being inclusive of

the LNOB principle in that they include assistance and benefits to varying degrees to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups..

### TOTAL LABOUR MARKET MEASURES:



**SALARY/WAGES SUPPORT TO EMPLOYED AND SELF-EMPLOYED:** 24 measures across seven countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)



**LABOUR POLICY/REGULATORY ADJUSTMENTS AND/OR REINFORCEMENTS:** 12 measures across five countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey)

	Labour market measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
ALBANIA	4 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	5 (26%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)
KOSOVO	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)
MONTENEGRO	4 (17%)	1 (25%)	1 (25%)
NORTH MACEDONIA	7 (26%)	0 (0%)	2 (29%)
SERBIA	4 (17%)	1 (25%)	0 (0%)
TURKEY	10 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
TOTAL	36 (20%)	2 (6%)	5 (14%)

## ECONOMIC, FISCAL AND BUSINESS

All seven governments introduced emergency responses in the form of socio-economic support policies and programmes to address the economy and citizens' economic vulnerabilities. From a gender lens and the LNOB principle, only **Albania** explicitly referenced women and vulnerable households.

All countries revised their national budgets to offer state fiscal assistance packages, including through COVID-19 anti-crisis funds. The measures ranged from 0.15 per cent of GDP in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** to 7 per cent in **Serbia**.

Out of the 69 economic, fiscal and business measures collected for the six Western Balkan countries and Turkey, **one country** offered support to the feminized sectors of the economy (i.e. sectors that absorb a higher proportion of women's employment compared to that of men). In **Kosovo**, interest-free loans were provided

to publicly-owned enterprises facing financial difficulties due to the pandemic (public-sector employment represents 47.8 per cent of women's employment and 33.4 per cent of men's employment).

While **business and entrepreneurship stimulus** measures were recorded in all Western Balkan countries and Turkey, **three countries** offered measures that can be considered as being gender-sensitive in that they made categorical references to women-run businesses and/or women as entrepreneurs. Republika Srpska of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** adopted a programme to facilitate access to financial funds for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises that includes business activities of women and young entrepreneurs. In **North Macedonia**, companies run or founded by women were offered a 30 per cent grant. In **Turkey**, a grant programme was announced for women cooperatives.

	Economic, fiscal and business measures	Gender-sensitive measures	LNOB measures
<b>ALBANIA</b>	6 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</b>	8 (42%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)
<b>KOSOVO</b>	8 (40%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)
<b>MONTENEGRO</b>	9 (39%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>NORTH MACEDONIA</b>	10 (37%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)
<b>SERBIA</b>	9 (39%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>TURKEY</b>	19 (37%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	69 (37%)	4 (6%)	0 (0%)

## ANNEX IV. IMPROVING EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR WOMEN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS



UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov

### Summary

It has been over a year and a half since the COVID-19 outbreak triggered significant social and economic disruptions. Governments introduced and reintroduced lockdown measures and other restrictions to curb the pandemic's spread, triggering a significant socio-economic crisis that has had disproportionately negative effects on women, particularly those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent under-investment in gender equality and women's empowerment had hindered women's gender-equal development. As the pandemic continues, its socio-economic fallout and related challenges to countries' social

protection systems will further shift gender dynamics and hamper efforts to expand inclusivity, eradicate poverty and increase women's economic autonomy. This will ultimately render women, children and disadvantaged groups even more exposed to deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities. The pandemic will leave many women with long-term socio-economic scarring in its wake.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social protection landscape has particularly affected the rights and needs of women and vulnerable groups, particularly those who already had less access to social protection before the pandemic, such as informal



women workers who lack access to basic social protections (e.g. pension schemes, health care plans and unemployment insurance). The gendered responses in the Europe and Central Asia region have so far has been inadequate to address the disproportionate impacts on these groups.

A UN Women analysis of the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on gender equality in the Europe and Central Asia region<sup>1</sup> found that “the more acute economic impacts of the pandemic on women reflect long-standing gender disparities in access to economic resources and opportunities across the [Europe and Central Asia] region.”<sup>2</sup> The analysis recommended that countries prioritize women's access to decent work and economic empowerment as the pandemic continues and into the recovery period.

Along with emergency support, countries should prioritize delivering targeted assistance to persons who face heightened protection risks and ensuring that national social protection policies are based on multi-factor vulnerability assessments with “deeper thinking about

who was in pre-existing situations of vulnerability and who has been pushed into such situations.”<sup>3</sup> This will ensure that women and other vulnerable groups are protected against the risks and needs associated with illness, unemployment, maternity, parental and other care responsibilities, disability, old age, housing and social exclusion.<sup>4</sup>

In order to help Europe and Central Asia Member States build more inclusive social protection landscapes, this brief provides specific recommendations on how to address social protection gaps and how to improve emergency responses in support of women and other vulnerable groups. In the long term, greater gender responsiveness in policymaking leads to more expansive and inclusive social protection systems and labour measures, which are crucial for women and girls to ‘weather the crisis, bounce back and rebuild’.<sup>5</sup>

This brief complements a separate policy brief on improving emergency responses and promoting more inclusive labour markets and business measures.

## The Impacts and Gender Dimensions of COVID-19 on Social Protection Systems

Only 29 per cent of the global population receives comprehensive social protection coverage,<sup>6</sup> while 45 per cent receives access to only one form of benefit. More than 50 per cent (4 billion people) have no access to any type of social protection benefit.<sup>7</sup> According to the World Bank, well-designed social protection programmes are cost-effective, costing countries on average only 1.5 per cent of GDP.<sup>8</sup> The development of

social protection systems must be linked to a conducive macroeconomic framework for maximum impact, including labour market, fiscal and monetary policies.

In the Europe and Central Asia region, while many countries have established **legal social protection entitlements**, gaps in coverage and benefit levels often prevent the entitlements from adequately guaranteeing income security.<sup>9</sup> Further, in some countries

1 Countries in the region include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo (All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999))

2 UN Women (2021) [Assessing the Lights and Shadows of COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Pandemic-related Impacts on Women and Girls in Europe and Central Asia](#)

3 Ibid.

4 UN (2021) [COVID-19 and Social Protection in Europe and Central Asia](#)

5 UN Women (2020) [From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)

6 UN DESA (2018) [Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection: Reporting on the World Situation 2018](#)

7 ILO (2019) [Countries Urged to Act on Universal Social Protection](#)

8 UN (2020) [Policy Brief: The impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)

9 Oxfam (2020) [Shelter from the Storm: The Global Need for Universal Social Protection in Times of COVID-19](#)

(particularly in parts of Central Asia), legal coverage remains limited and “only a minority of the population has access to social protection schemes anchored in national legislation,”<sup>10</sup> with such systems often facing the “challenges of fragmentation and low levels of public social spending.”<sup>11</sup>

**Cash transfers** are the most widely used part of government fiscal packages for social assistance intervention to poverty and vulnerability in the region. Transferring cash directly to the poorest households supports income, consumption and human capital development and has wider empowerment benefits because recipients are able to choose and prioritize their own expenditures.<sup>12</sup> Analysis by Oxfam and Development Pathways of 126 low- and middle-income countries between April and September 2020 found that “75 per cent of the countries investigated had introduced cash-based emergency social protection through a ‘horizontal’ expansion of their social protection programmes (i.e. reaching more people), or by a ‘vertical’ expansion (i.e. increasing the value of the benefits).”<sup>13</sup> In designing and extending vertically and horizontally inclusive cash-based transfers to women and vulnerable groups, countries can promote gender equality, eradicate poverty, facilitate access to health care and education, and achieve decent work for all.

Many women and vulnerable groups work in temporary or precarious positions, are self-employed or are employed in **informal employment sectors**, predominantly as domestic or family workers (25.1 per cent of total employment in Europe and Central Asia, although this figure varies widely across countries within the region). However, most social protection systems tend to focus on those who are formally employed – a major shortcoming that leaves many without access to social protection and income security and places them at a higher risk of severe health and economic consequences.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented job losses in the **‘feminized’ sectors of the labour market** (including tourism, retail, food and accommodation). Because workers in these sectors are less likely to be able to work from home and generally have limited or no access to social protection safety nets, they have been unable to support themselves or their families.<sup>14</sup>

Pandemic responses, particularly mandated closures of schools, health services and social spaces, have led to unprecedented (and disproportionate) growth in women’s **unpaid care and household work burdens**.<sup>15</sup> Much of this increase stems from increased care obligations for school-aged children, people suffering from the virus and the heightened care needs of older persons, the disabled and other vulnerable family members. Although feminist activists and scholars have long recognized the interrelationships among gender, unpaid work and paid employment, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed to the world the significance of care work to social and economic life. However, mainstream social protection measures typically overlook women’s unpaid care and domestic work.<sup>16</sup>

Across the globe, more women than men reported increases in the time they spend on household chores and unpaid care work. Many women reported that these increases were in addition to – and often had to be balanced with – their time spent in paid employment. The situation in the Europe and Central Asia region reflects this global trend; 70 per cent of women reported that since the start of the crisis, they have spent additional time on at least one unpaid domestic chore compared to only 59 per cent of men.<sup>17</sup> The highest burdens were reported by women in Albania (72 per cent compared to 61 per cent for men) and Georgia (62 per cent compared to 43 per cent), which had early school closures, and in Kyrgyzstan (67 per cent versus 26 per cent).<sup>18</sup>

10 UN DESA (2018) [Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection: Reporting on the World Situation 2018](#)

11 UN (2020) [COVID-19 and Social Protection in Europe and Central Asia](#)

12 Holmes, R., Jones, N., Vargas, R and Veras, F. (2010) [Cash Transfers and Gendered Risks and Vulnerabilities: Lessons from Latin America](#)

13 Oxfam (2020) [Shelter from the storm: The global need for Universal Social Protection in Times of COVID-19](#)

14 Principles for Responsible Investment (2020) [Theme 1: Protecting Workers’ Rights Through The COVID-19 Crisis](#)

15 UN (2020) [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)

16 Ibid.

17 UN Women (2020) [Women at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response in Europe and Central Asia](#)

18 Ibid.

The COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the importance of extending gender-inclusive social protection schemes in order to ease social exclusion and to safeguard minimum income security coverage for all workers, whether paid or unpaid. The pandemic has also added a new social protection group of temporary beneficiaries who, prior to the pandemic, were either uncovered or ineligible for any form of social protection or social insurance. Many of these new beneficiaries are day labourers and informal workers who lost their jobs and livelihoods during the crisis.

**Pension coverage** figures suggest that in the Europe and Central Asia region, 5 per cent of people above retirement age do not receive an old-age pension. There are wide variations between social groups and countries (for example, the percentage is twice as high in Central Asia).<sup>19</sup>

Before the pandemic, many countries made progress in establishing comprehensive social protection systems

such that older persons could “rely on pensions to partly meet their needs.”<sup>20</sup> However, pension coverage remained lower for women than men.<sup>21</sup> According to analysis by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “on top of often having worked in lower-paying jobs, older women are more likely to have worked part-time and are more likely to have taken time out of employment for care reasons. As a result, women more often face difficulties in meeting pension contribution requirements, and more often receive only minimum pension payments.”<sup>22</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic’s acceleration of digitalization has highlighted the need for greater and more direct support for women’s and vulnerable groups’ access to social protection benefits through **digital payment infrastructures**. More innovative support for digital literacy and expansion is needed in order to facilitate online application and access to social assistance schemes and benefits; expanding access and use of online banking is particularly important in this regard.

## How Governments in the Region Have Responded to the Pandemic’s Disproportionate Impacts on Social Protection Schemes for Women and Vulnerable Groups

The UN Women research study, ‘**ONE YEAR OF COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia**’, uses a gender lens<sup>23</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle<sup>24</sup> to analyse government measures introduced or adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis frames the measures under three broad categories: social protection, labour market and economic, fiscal and business stimulus.

Governments that incorporate a gender lens and the LNOB principle into their response measures can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and vulnerable groups. Doing so will also simultaneously bolster the fundamentals of ‘building back better’ after the pandemic.

Of the 477 measures recorded across these categories from multiple sources,<sup>25</sup> 220 measures (46 per cent)

19 UN (2020) COVID-19 and Social Protection in Europe and Central Asia. <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?id=56790>

20 UN DESA (2018) [Promoting Inclusion through Social Protection: Reporting on the World Situation 2018](#)

21 Ibid.

22 OECD (2020) [Women At The Core Of The Fight Against COVID-19 Crisis](#) (version 1 April 2020)

23 A gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include explicit reference to “women” and “seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis.” (See [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#).)

24 The Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle’s methodology considers measures that directly address and make explicit reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups

25 [Council of Europe: Promoting and protecting women’s rights at national level](#); [International Monetary Fund Policy Tracker on Policy Responses to COVID-19](#); [ILO Country Policy Responses](#); [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development POLICY TRACKER: Tackling COVID-19 - Contributing to a global effort](#); [World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#); [UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)



were introduced or adapted on social protection. Of these social protection measures, only 17 measures (8 per cent) can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they make specific reference to women, while 121 (55 per cent) can be classified as being inclusive of the

LNOB principle in that they make specific reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by region and subregion, these social protection measures can be summarized as:

### Social protection gender-sensitive and LNOB measures introduced by governments to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19

By Region and Subregion	TOTAL Measures (social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business)	Social protection measures	Gender-sensitive social protection measures	LNOB social protection measures
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>220 (46%)</b>	<b>17 (8%)</b>	<b>121 (55%)</b>
Central Asia	83	40 (48%)	1 (3%)	25 (63%)
Eastern Partnership	209	100 (48%)	6 (6%)	54 (54%)
Western Balkans and Turkey	185	80 (43%)	10 (15%)	42 (54%)

Source: UN Women (2021) ONE YEAR OF COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia

Only six targeted cash transfer schemes (3 per cent of 220 social protection measures) expressly cited support to women. Similarly, only six housing relief/utility and in-kind support measures (3 per cent of the 220) referenced women. **Albania** doubled several existing social protection schemes, including to parents of two or more children in which women were the primary recipients, and to economic aid recipients (with reference to “women heads of families”). In expanding housing assistance and in-kind support, Albania specifically referenced women as comprising a considerable number of beneficiaries. **Armenia** introduced new measures to assist pregnant women in hardship and for vulnerable and socially marginalized groups to pay for utility bills. In **Azerbaijan**, support measures referenced the hardest-hit families (which added an additional burden for women) and women-headed households. Support included help with utility bill payment, food assistance and hygiene kits. Georgia, also acknowledging the pandemic’s additional care burden on families, distributed food and hygiene kits to women with many children and women-headed households. Serbia introduced universal and one-off cash transfers to women for maternity leave and child

care and provided hygiene packages and essential foods to the most vulnerable women. **Turkey** increased cash transfers for women, new mothers, postnatal and pregnant women and women who recently lost their husbands. **Uzbekistan’s** in-kind assistance targeted women over 55 years old.

Four countries introduced five measures related to unemployment and leave benefits, each citing “women” among target beneficiaries. Under its economic aid scheme, **Albania** doubled payments to women recipients of existing unemployment benefits. In **Armenia**, beneficiaries of one-time financial assistance included unemployed women, women whose husbands lost their jobs and unemployed single pregnant women. **North Macedonia** expanded paid maternity and pregnancy leave and salary compensation; these changes are slated to continue through to the end of pandemic measures. **Georgia** was the only country whose responses cited women’s increased load of care work in support packages for families. In addition, Georgia’s social compensation included women as income-earners that were rendered jobless, as parents of children with disabilities and families with three or more children.

The starkly low number of measures deemed gender-sensitive or in line with the LNOB principle underscores that the gender responsiveness of actions remains grossly insufficient and that not nearly enough has been done to mitigate pandemic's impacts on women and vulnerable groups.

In order to address the gender-disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on social protection and income security, this brief puts forward the case for additional social protection interventions that are designed with both a gendered lens and the LNOB principle.

## Recommendations to Improve the Emergency Response and Build More Inclusive Social Protection Systems

### Immediate responses

- 1. Institute greater and more creative support for access to cash transfers, unemployment compensation and other social protection measures, especially for women and vulnerable groups who do not have access to banking (particularly online banking) or the digital literacy to apply for and access provisions online.**

Although a digital payment infrastructure is quicker and safer (especially during periods of lockdown), it nonetheless excludes the most vulnerable individuals and households. To avoid these unintentional consequences, complementary systems must be in place. Figures indicate that for the Europe and Central Asia region, women comprise almost 60 per cent of those who do not have access to a bank account.<sup>26</sup> Globally, only 69 per cent of adults have a digital bank account; only 30 per cent have received wages or government payments directly to such an account.<sup>27</sup>

- 2. Ensure that cash transfers remain unconditional. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis and future emergencies, it is important to avoid tying cash transfers to conditionalities that add to women's unpaid care burdens (for example, when women have additional care burdens due to closed schools, school attendance or training attendance requirements).**

A transformative approach should be adopted to ensure that cash transfer programmes are unconditional, supportive of women's unpaid care burdens and facilitate women's and vulnerable groups' empowerment – that programmes are designed to consider them as more than merely social protection recipients.

- 3. Expand coverage of social assistance payments with sustained financial resources from the government in order to guarantee social security, including for new and temporary beneficiaries that are revealed by emergencies.**

In expanding coverage of social assistance payments, Governments should prioritize ongoing analysis and assessment of social protection benefits, including analysis of whom the benefits are reaching. Programmes should ensure that coverage extends to individuals and vulnerable groups, including new and temporary beneficiaries who were either not covered or ineligible for social protection or social insurance and those that the crisis pushed into poverty or difficulties.

Gender analyses, vulnerability assessments and a continued commitment to collecting disaggregated data will help governments better understand the factors that lead social protection schemes to exclude women and vulnerable groups. Such analyses will also highlight how existing social protection schemes disadvantage women and will further reveal the differential gender and intersectional impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

- 4. Ensure that unemployment benefits and income security schemes consider the constraints faced by women and vulnerable groups that work in the informal sectors or are self-employed as entrepreneurs.**

Governments should specifically target sectors in which women are over-represented and have been most affected by the pandemic (e.g. tourism, hospitality, food, retail and other feminized sectors of the labour market).<sup>28</sup> Direct support and income replacement measures are crucial for informal

26 Demirguc-Kunt, A. and Muller, A. (2019) [Financial Inclusion in Europe and Central Asia — The Way Forward?](#)

27 World Bank, [The Global Findex Database 2017](#)

28 UN Women (2020) [Gender Equality and the COVID-19 Outbreak: Key Messages and Advocacy Points from the Europe and Central Asia Regional Issue-Based Coalition on Gender](#)

workers, workers in precarious and temporary jobs, domestic and migrant workers and employees of women-led businesses.

**5. Formally recognize unpaid domestic and care work as real and critical work that contributes to social and economic life.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp relief and reinforced the immense value of unpaid work. Governments' continued reliance on women's and vulnerable groups' unpaid labour to shore up social protection and public service provision gaps cannot continue; it is creating long-term costs and risks for such people. Governments must recognize the inherent value of unpaid care and domestic work by implementing social protection interventions that support women's health and socio-economic well-being throughout their lives.

**Medium- to longer-term responses**

**1. Commit to strengthening and investing in universal, gender-responsive social protection systems that support women and vulnerable groups' recovery and resilience to future emergencies and shocks.**

The severity of the COVID-19 health and socio-economic crisis shows that procrastinating and muddling through reforms exacerbates pre-existing inequalities; doing so at the national, regional and global levels is no longer an option. Building more resilient health and social protection systems requires greater and more sustained increases in public funding and a more globally coordinated approach. Such an approach must include investments in the care economy sufficient to provide affordable and quality child- sick- and eldercare. These investments will create jobs and will increase women and vulnerable people's ability to (re)enter the labour market.

**2. Link universal social protection systems to a conducive macroeconomic framework including fiscal and monetary policies that promote full and decent employment, which will support programme sustainability.**

Adequate financing of social protection systems, even during periods of economic downturn, is essential to long-term programme sustainability. Cuts in public spending and privatization, especially on health care, weakens the capacity of systems to respond in times of crisis.<sup>29</sup>

A universal right to social protection must be built into regional frameworks and national policies and laws. These must include social protection floors (nationally defined basic social security guarantees)<sup>30</sup> that prevent or alleviate women's poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. At a minimum, these guarantees should ensure that all those in need have access to essential social protection schemes and basic income security throughout their lives. Countries should work to align their social protection floors with the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>31</sup>

**3. National governments must involve and collaborate with local governments and non-state organizations, including women's organizations, in all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating social protection systems and provisions.**

Local governments and non-state organizations are often in a good position to assess the unmet needs of women and harder to reach groups and to deliver direct assistance to those that need it most. Governments should directly engage with women and vulnerable groups in order to understand their needs and what they would like from an effective and universal social protection system.<sup>32</sup>

**4. Undertake gender-responsive assessments and evaluations of current social protection programmes and systems.**

Applying a gender lens and vulnerability analyses in designing fiscal stimulus packages and social assistance programmes is vital to building more prosperous, equal, inclusive and resilient societies for all citizens.<sup>33</sup> Governments should adopt effective monitoring and complaints mechanisms, including participatory social audits.

29 UN (2020) [COVID-19 and Social Protection in Europe and Central Asia](#)

30 ILO. [22. Social Protection Floor](#)

31 ILO (2019) [Social Protection: Countries Urged to Act on Universal Social Protection](#)

32 Gerard, F., Imbert, C. and Orkin, K. (2020) [Social Protection Response to the COVID-19 Crisis: Options for Developing Countries](#)

33 UN Women (2020) [Gender Equality and the COVID-19 Outbreak: Key Messages and Advocacy Points from the Europe and Central Asia Regional Issue-Based Coalition on Gender](#)



# IMPROVING EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND BUILDING MORE INCLUSIVE LABOUR MARKETS AND BUSINESS MEASURES FOR WOMEN AND VULNERABLE GROUPS



UN Women/ Rena Effendi

## Summary

It has been over a year and a half since the COVID-19 outbreak triggered significant social and economic disruptions and placed extreme pressure on households and businesses.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent under-investment in gender equality and women's empowerment had hindered women's gender-equal development. As the pandemic continues, its economic fallout will further shift gender dynamics and hamper efforts to expand inclusivity, eradicate poverty and increase women's economic autonomy. This will ultimately render women, children and disadvantaged groups (particularly those who face multiple

and intersecting forms of discrimination) even more exposed to deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and pre-existing vulnerabilities. The pandemic will leave many women with long-term socio-economic scarring in its wake.

The pandemic also triggered a major labour market crisis that has had disproportionately negative effects on women. The pandemic's impacts on women in the labour market have rolled back progress, particularly for women and vulnerable groups at the greatest risk of joblessness, poverty and increased inequality. Thus far, the response in Europe and Central Asia countries has been inadequate.

A UN Women analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality in the Europe and Central Asia region<sup>1</sup> found that “the more acute economic impacts of the pandemic on women reflect long-standing gender disparities in access to economic resources and opportunities across the [Europe and Central Asia] region.”<sup>2</sup> The analysis recommended that countries prioritize women’s access to decent work and economic empowerment as the pandemic continues and into the recovery period.

Government fiscal support for businesses has been through employment retention schemes (including reduced hours or shorter working week schemes and offering wage subsidies). These have provided income support and employment services for workers with the intention of trying to ensure continuity and limit job losses. Business support has also included tax breaks/reliefs and deferrals; loans and loan guarantees and investment in firms to help keep them afloat.

Along with emergency support for women entrepreneurs and women owners of businesses, longer-term measures are needed to remove barriers to their work.

Support should also be given to young women (especially those who are neither educated nor economically active) to empower them to find decent, skilled work, set-up enterprises and prevent them from falling further behind.<sup>3</sup> Although governments in Europe and Central Asia have introduced or expanded a range of labour and business market measures since the start of the pandemic, these efforts have been insufficient to address the distinct gendered impacts on women’s economic security.

This brief provides specific recommendations on how countries in the Europe and Central Asia region can improve their emergency response in order to help address these shortcomings, to increase gender responsiveness in policymaking and to build more inclusive labour markets and business measures. Doing so facilitates sustainable, long-term change that is crucial for women and girls to ‘weather the crisis, bounce back and rebuild’.<sup>4</sup>

This brief complements a separate policy brief on improving emergency responses and building more inclusive social protection systems.

## The Impacts and Gender Dimensions of COVID-19 on the Labour Market

The **‘feminized sectors’ of the labour market** are typically characterized by low pay, precarious employment, poor working conditions and limited employment rights. Areas such as tourism, retail and food, domestic workers and accommodation have been hardest hit during the pandemic because the nature of the employment makes it less likely that they are able to work from home.

Many women and vulnerable groups have been unable to support themselves or their families due to unprecedented job losses, reductions in working hours

and the need to give up paid work in order to care for children that are out of school or to care for sick family members. These issues have been exacerbated by generally low savings, large debt and limited or no access to social protection safety nets.<sup>5</sup>

The World Bank estimates that in the Europe and Central Asia region, an additional six million people may slip into poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup> This has a particular impact in Central Asian countries, such as Tajikistan, that rely on remittances for income.<sup>7</sup>

1 Countries in the region include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Turkey, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo (All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999))

2 UN Women (2021) [Assessing the Lights and Shadows of COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Pandemic-related Impacts on Women and Girls in Europe and Central Asia](#)

3 Ibid.

4 UN Women (2020) [From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19](#)

5 Principles for Responsible Investment (2020) [Theme 1: Protecting Workers’ Rights Through The COVID-19 Crisis](#)

6 World Bank (2020) [Fighting Poverty in Europe and Central Asia](#)

7 UNDP (2020) [COVID-19 and Central Asia: Socioeconomic Impacts and Key Policy Considerations for Recovery](#)

Activists and women's organizations in the region have long advocated for strong, gender-focused planning and policy initiatives and data that is disaggregated by multiple dimensions of inequality. Such efforts will be pivotal to ensuring that women's labour market and economic interests are given a high priority in both short- and long-term pandemic responses.

Immediate government measures should include support to address lost income and to reconcile pandemic-related increases in unpaid care work with reductions in paid employment. Long-term recovery and resilience planning and policies should include job creation, equitable wage setting and the revaluation of care work.

Pandemic responses, particularly mandated closures of schools, health services and social spaces, have led to unprecedented (and disproportionate) growth in women's **unpaid care and household work burdens**.<sup>8</sup> Much of this increase stems from increased care obligations for school-aged children, people suffering from the virus and the heightened care needs of older persons, the disabled and other vulnerable family members. Although feminist activists and scholars have long recognized the interrelationships among gender, unpaid work and paid employment, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed to the world the significance of care work to social and economic life.

Across the globe, more women than men reported increases in the time they spend on household chores and unpaid care work. Many women reported that these increases were in addition to – and often had to be balanced with – their time spent in paid employment. The situation in the Europe and Central Asia region reflects this global trend; 70 per cent of women reported that since the start of the crisis, they have spent additional time on at least one unpaid domestic chore compared to only 59 per cent of men.<sup>9</sup> The highest burdens were reported by women in Albania (72 per cent compared to 61 per cent for men) and Georgia

(62 per cent compared to 43 per cent), which had early school closures, and in Kyrgyzstan (67 per cent versus 26 per cent).<sup>10</sup>

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed and reinforced the importance of reducing, redistributing and revaluing unpaid work in order to increase women's labour market participation and expand their social and economic empowerment.

Women have been losing **paid employment** at a greater rate than men since the start of the pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis.<sup>11</sup> Data for Europe and Central Asia indicate that women are reporting a greater number of job losses than men are.<sup>12</sup> Women's working hours were also more likely to have decreased, with over 40 per cent of women in the region reporting having done less paid work during the early months of the pandemic. The highest gender gap in relation to decreased working hours was in Azerbaijan.

In some countries, millions of migrant workers who lost their informal-sector jobs left cities and returned to rural areas. This shift adversely affected both workers and their families who were reliant on the remittances. The pandemic drastically affected geographic areas where women comprise most informal-sector workers as farm workers, market traders or street vendors. For those who relied on public spaces and social interactions to earn money, COVID-19 severely limited their livelihood opportunities. Government income replacement measures have been essential for such workers' survival.

**Self-employed women and women's micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)** have suffered dramatically. These enterprises have closed more frequently due to women's reduced access to capital, lack of business networks and the burden of women taking on additional unpaid work at home. Figures indicate that 25 per cent of self-employed women in the region have lost their incomes during the pandemic, compared to 21 per cent of self-employed

8 UN (2020) [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#)

9 UN Women (2020) [Women at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response in Europe and Central Asia](#)

10 Ibid.

11 ILO (2020) [A Gender-responsive Employment Recovery: Building Back Fairer](#)

12 26 per cent of women versus 22 per cent of men in Kazakhstan; 19 per cent of women versus 14 per cent of men in Turkey; and 13 per cent of women versus 8 per cent of men in Bosnia and Herzegovina. See UN Women (2020) [Women at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response in Europe and Central Asia](#).



men.<sup>13</sup> Losses have particularly affected self-employed women in Kazakhstan (81 per cent), Azerbaijan (80 per cent), Turkey (82 per cent), Kosovo (78 per cent) and Kyrgyzstan (77 per cent).

Women-owned businesses are often reliant on self-financing; women experience gender discrimination in access to funding. For example, the Government of Albania took broad measures to provide economic support to different groups. However, these schemes excluded many female heads-of-households and rural women, as almost 90 per cent of rural family businesses are registered in men's names.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, more targeted and innovative support is required for women's enterprises and the self-employed.

Social distancing requirements and the closure of education and childcare institutions have led to an unprecedented shift to **flexibility in working**

**arrangements**, especially to working from home. Such measures were discussed over changing arrangements during the pandemic and in moving forward as ways to increase the family-friendliness of working arrangements and to support women's empowerment. However, the implementation of these arrangements has been slow and inconsistent. The option to work from home has become a reality for almost half of women and a quarter of men in the region.<sup>15</sup> However, few people in low-paid and informal jobs have been able to take advantage of this new arrangement; it has been mostly used by men and women working in white-collar and high-skilled occupations and living in urban settings. Factors such as poor digital infrastructure, limited digital skills and a simple lack of space have created practical obstacles to working from home for many women, particularly those from vulnerable groups.

## How Governments in the Region Have Responded to COVID-19's Disproportionate Economic Fallout on Women and Vulnerable Groups

The UN Women research study, **'ONE YEAR OF COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia'**, uses a gender lens<sup>16</sup> and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle<sup>17</sup> to analyse government measures introduced or adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis frames the measures under three broad categories: social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business stimulus.

Governments that incorporate a gender lens and the LNOB principle into their response measures can mitigate the adverse and disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on women and vulnerable groups. Doing so will also simultaneously

bolster the fundamentals of 'building back better' after the pandemic.

Of the 477 measures recorded across these categories from multiple sources,<sup>18</sup> 82 (17 per cent) were introduced or adapted to the labour market. Of these labour market measures, only 6 (7 per cent) can be classified as being gender-sensitive in that they make specific reference to women, while 16 per cent (or 13 measures) can be classified as being inclusive of the LNOB principle in that they make specific reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups.

Presented by region and subregion, these labour market measures can be summarized as:

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> UN Women (2020) [Across Europe and Central Asia, Women Confront Economic Impacts of the Pandemic](#)

<sup>15</sup> UN Women (2020) [Women at the Forefront of COVID-19 Response in Europe and Central Asia](#)

<sup>16</sup> A gender lens methodology considers measures to be gender-sensitive if they include explicit reference to "women" and "seek to directly address the risks and challenges that women and girls face during the COVID-19 crisis." (See [COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Methodological note](#).)

<sup>17</sup> The Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle's methodology considers measures that directly address and make explicit reference to vulnerable and marginalized households and groups

<sup>18</sup> [Council of Europe: Promoting and protecting women's rights at national level](#); [International Monetary Fund Policy Tracker on Policy Responses to COVID-19](#); [ILO Country Policy Responses](#); [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development POLICY TRACKER: Tackling COVID-19 - Contributing to a global effort](#); [World Bank Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures](#); [UNDP-UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker](#)

## Labour market gender-sensitive and LNOB measures introduced by governments to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19

By Region and Subregion	TOTAL Measures (social protection, labour market, and economic, fiscal and business)	Labour market measures	Gender-sensitive labour market measures	LNOB labour market measures
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>82 (17%)</b>	<b>6 (7%)</b>	<b>13 (16%)</b>
Central Asia	83	12 (15%)	1 (8%)	4 (33%)
Eastern Partnership	209	34 (16%)	3 (9%)	4 (12%)
Western Balkans and Turkey	185	36 (20%)	2 (6%)	5 (14%)

Source: UN Women (2021) ONE YEAR OF COVID-19: A Gender Analysis of Emergency COVID-19 Socio-Economic Policy Responses Adopted in Europe and Central Asia

In analysing measures under the ‘salary/wage support to the employed and self-employed’ subcategory of the ‘labour, business and economic stimulus measures’ category, the study found that only 5 out of 82 (6 per cent) of labour market responses cited wages support to employed “women” and self-employed “women.” Only one measure under the ‘labour regulatory adjustments and reinforcements’ subcategory explicitly referenced women.

**Armenia’s** responses introduced financial assistance for pregnant women working in the hospitality, tourism and retail sector and offered lump-sum payments (set at the minimum wage) to sectors where a large number of women are in formal employment. **Georgia** introduced one-time assistance to the self-employed and to people employed in the informal sector. This decision to support informal-sector employees was reported as indirectly targeted to provide social

assistance to women. **Montenegro** provided salary subsidies for women (and men) employees caring for a minor under the age of 11. **Serbia** offered a 10 per cent increase in salary to care workers in nursing homes and reported this as a sector that represents a larger number of women workers. **Uzbekistan’s** labour adjustments introduced new work arrangements, allowing employees to benefit from remote and flexible work arrangements (the measure particularly referred to pregnant women as beneficiaries).

The starkly low number of measures deemed gender-sensitive or in line with the LNOB principle underscores that the response remains grossly insufficient and that not nearly enough has been done to mitigate the pandemic’s impacts on women and vulnerable groups. This brief puts forward the case for additional labour market interventions that are designed with both a gendered lens and the LNOB principle.

## Recommendations to Improve the Emergency Response and Build More Inclusive Labour Markets

### Immediate responses

#### 1. Maintain the momentum of emergency and immediate labour market interventions and implement new and practical schemes that reach beyond formal employment

Immediate labour market policy interventions have focused on supporting businesses and workplace safety and on preventing social hardship.

Many of the interventions have taken the form of job retention schemes, offering support in salary and wages to employed and self-employed persons and to business owners. These schemes have prevented surges in unemployment and mitigated financial hardships for those working reduced hours; it is important that they are not downscaled prematurely or too quickly during emergencies and crises.



Further, governments need to reach beyond formal employment to ensure they are helping women and vulnerable groups in all spheres of work. This includes those in informal and precarious employment, many of whom are migrant women who do not benefit from labour regulations or protections and are not covered by job retention schemes

## **2. Provide more specific and targeted support for women's MSMEs**

Measures to support women's MSMEs should include easing tax burdens and providing targeted grants, stimulus funding and subsidized and state-backed loans. Universal monetary disbursements related to paid care leave and additional family-related benefits can help ensure family income security for self-employed women and women-led enterprises. Moreover, labour market policies should be revised to ensure protection for formal and informal employment, including women's entrepreneurship and unpaid work.

As part of targeted support, governments, businesses, trade unions and individuals must collaborate in the engagement and economic development of women entrepreneurs and business owners, including those from vulnerable populations.

## **3. Offer flexible working arrangements, including parental leave for both women and men**

Flexible working arrangements, including parental leave, must be made available for both women and men. All workers must be able to access such working arrangements without losing pay or hindering their career or job progression. The relaxation of existing labour restrictions around home office working conditions and occupational health and safety requirements need more formal and expansive regulatory frameworks.

## **4. Target and expand digital support and resources for women and vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion**

Information and communications technology solutions should be used to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and to expand women's access to new business opportunities. The

expanded use of online tools can enable women to manage their own businesses. In addition, support, training and resources for information and communications technologies must be offered to help empower women to manage their own finances and increase their access to (and the availability of) banking services through mobile banking.

## **5. Integrate gender analysis, gender and intersectional data and rapid assessment data into pandemic responses and policies**

Gaps in data availability have left many questions unanswered regarding the pandemic's impact on various groups of people unanswered. Filling these gaps is particularly important given that women and vulnerable groups have been uniquely affected during the crisis, particularly women-led MSMEs or MSMEs and sectors dominated by women.

### **Medium- to longer-term responses**

#### **1. Focus on improving women's access to decent employment**

Improving women's access to decent employment must be accompanied by gender-responsive budgeting and fiscal measures to support implementation. This involves a commitment to building capacities and investing in gender-responsive policymaking, including inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to strengthen labour-related measures in emergencies and planning for future crises. Labour and employment laws and policies should be revised to protect all types of employment, including entrepreneurship and unpaid work. A gender perspective should be applied across all policy, decision-making and longer-term planning to counter deeply ingrained gender-based discrimination. Essential to these changes are improved national data disaggregated by gender and other dimensions of inequality.

#### **2. Commit to strengthening the 'real economy', including urgent investment in the care economy<sup>19</sup>**

Public investments are important in the 'triple dividend' they promise: job creation, enabling women to (re)enter the labour market, and strengthening

<sup>19</sup> See [UNECE - UN Women series: Rethinking Care Economy and Empowering Women for Building Back Better](#)

the capabilities of children and care-dependent adults. By valuing and supporting care work, public investments have the potential to create decent and greener jobs (especially when accompanied by improved pay and working conditions), which will reduce unemployment and redress deeply embedded gender inequalities.<sup>20</sup>

For example, a UN Women study examined the employment-generating and fiscal effects of investing in universal childcare in the Republic of North Macedonia.<sup>21</sup> The study calculated the total annual costs of investing in childcare services that would increase the enrolment (coverage) rate of the children in formal childcare services to different target levels. Example benefits of investing in the care economy: “The employment rate of women would increase by between 2.6 and 6.2 percentage points. In the high-quality universal scenario, the gender employment gap would be reduced by more than a fifth from 20.2 per cent to 15.8 per cent (among 15-64 age group) ... With increased employment and earnings come increased fiscal revenue from income tax, social security contributions and expenditure (consumption) taxes, which would almost halve the net annual funding requirement of the investment.” Under the “scenario of universal enrolment and high-quality provision, the annual net funding requirement is 1.6 per cent of GDP for a gross investment of 3.2 per cent of GDP.”

### **3. Reduce, recognize, and redistribute women’s disproportionate responsibilities for unpaid work**

Few approaches have been directed at supporting unpaid workers and paid workers who are juggling home care needs. Community groups, media and public campaigns can do more to promote the equitable distribution of care and domestic work between men and women and to encourage fathers to undertake their fair share of childcare. Both paid and unpaid care workers must be recognized as essential workers.

### **4. Remove barriers that thwart women’s job protection and their access to unemployment, social benefits and basic services**

Occupational segregation and barriers, such as lack of access to land, capital, financial resources and technology, make it more difficult for women to gain equal footing with men in labour and business markets. Gender inequality is compounded by legal barriers and gender differences in labour laws, such as those that prevent women from working in specific jobs, or lack of laws, such as those that protect against sexual harassment.

Extending support to informal workers (including migrants), in which women comprise the majority of workers, is essential to improving their well-being. Expanded access to affordable and quality public childcare services will allow more women and vulnerable groups to participate in the labour force.

Bridging the gender pay gap is also urgent; laws and policies should guarantee equal pay for work of equal value.

### **5. Develop policies to protect employment and to offer job training, education and apprenticeships to women, informal workers and small business entrepreneurs that have been most impacted by COVID-19**

Targeted fiscal support could help speed up the recovery in the feminized sectors of tourism, hospitality, and food. This could take the form of medium-term tax cuts or extended credit from banks.<sup>22</sup> Micro-finance institutions also have an important and creative role to play and could offer bridging funds and appropriate financial instruments to support self-employed women and small business owners. Governments, businesses, trade unions and individuals need to be involved in supporting the economic development, education, training and engagement of women entrepreneurs and business owners.

20 UN Women (2020) [COVID-19 and the Care Economy: Immediate Action and Structural Transformation for a Gender-responsive Recovery](#)

21 UN Women (2020) [Investing in Free Universal Childcare in the Republic of North Macedonia: Analysis of Costs, Short-term Employment Effects and Fiscal Revenue](#)

22 UN Women (2020) [Addressing the Economic Fallout of COVID-19: Pathways and Policy Options For A Gender-Responsive Recovery](#)

## **6. Develop information and communications technology solutions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment**

Ensuring equal access to new business and training programmes (including opportunities for women to become entrepreneurs and investors in the new digital economy and in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields) will promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Increased connectivity and access to technologies can help improve women and girls' access to health, education, financial and other public services, as well as their participation in decision-making, which can transform their lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how essential digital tools are for many people, businesses and workers. Those excluded from the digital world are at risk of being left behind through limited digital access and digital illiteracy.

**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 ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; and women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, as well as benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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