



## Bringing equality into a public life: trends and perspectives for participation and decision making in a new development context:

Subregional consultation for Western Balkans and Turkey to prepare for CSW 65 session,

16 February 2021

### Recommendations Report

The general purpose of the consultations was to take stock of the progress in the Western Balkans and Turkey sub-region in terms of women's political participation and the elimination of violence, to discuss the main challenges and obstacles, and to make recommendations of actions to be undertaken to effect change. The participants shared the challenges and opportunities for achieving women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence in an inclusive participatory manner. Intergenerational and intersectional perspectives were also included in the discussion. The consultation included representatives from national gender equality mechanisms, parliaments, civil society, youth movements, and the gender research community. The list of participants is presented at Annex 1.

Some of the recommendations made during the consultation were highlighted by many participants and as such these recommendations shall be considered to have weight in the outcome of the consultation. These key recommendations, for instance, the need to create regional networks and communication platforms for women elected officials and/or women leaders to share their experiences, network, and develop gender equality policies together, surfaced as clear, key recommendations from the consultation. Another key recommendation was that governments should adopt gender quotas for all levels of government, including parliament, the Cabinet of Ministers, and local level municipal councils, that women officials should be given positions with significant authority, and that quota legislation should be fully implemented and enforced. An additional key recommendation was the need to provide young women and women from underrepresented groups with meaningful opportunities to engage in the political sphere to build skills and networks that would propel them into leadership positions today or in the future. A key recommendation was made to engage the media to provide balanced reporting on women candidates, disavow the use of bullying, hate speech, and stereotypes of women, and promote gender equality through programming to change social norms. Another key recommendation is that more needs to be done to stop violence against women politicians and women leaders. Other recommendations

were notable for their novel approach. These recommendations included providing young women with debate team skills to ready them for public discourse, enshrining a right to gender equal political participation in the Constitution, and that specific indicators for monitoring violence against women in politics be developed.

The following complete set of recommendations brought forth by participants during the consultation are framed around the key CSW themes posed during the consultation:

**To create a more inclusive and enabling environment in which all women could participate in public life it was recommended that:**

- Regional cooperation and collaboration should be promoted, including the development of regional networks and platforms to learn from each other and share experiences. It was noted that regional networks can leverage some of the similarities that exist in specific groupings of countries.
- Women and girls of all backgrounds, including Roma women, LGBTQI , women with disabilities, rural women, young women, and women from other underrepresented groups, be included and considered in political and public life, dialogues and networks, and that special measures be considered to advance their inclusion in decision making bodies.
- Intergenerational dialogue and inclusiveness be incorporated into all interventions as youth have an important role to play.
- Skills development and access to tools including Internet and connectivity should be considered since a large portions or groups of women remain disconnected from political life, because they do not have internet access or technological skills.
- To recognize that different barriers prevent women's political participation, including the barriers enforced by women's care and domestic burdens.
- There is a collective responsibility to address the reality that women with disabilities, in particular, are rarely seen in the political sphere and in public life. Legislation should be both created and implemented to enable access to public life for women with disabilities.
- Governments should advocate for women from underrepresented groups to motivate them to join political movements and increase their political participation.
- Men be included and engaged in creating a more inclusive and enabling environment so that all women can participate in public and political life.

**To fast-track progress and achieve equal power sharing between women and men it was recommended that:**

- Governments should implement quotas for women at all levels of government, including local government, parliaments, and Ministerial positions, to create conditions for full gender parity.
- Existing legislation on increasing women's participation needs to be fully implemented, and at times strengthened, to be effective. Adequate financing needs to be provided to ensure implementation.
- Enforcement mechanisms, including the refusal to register a political party list for an election, should be implemented or the subject of new legislation.

- Political parties can do more to support women's political participation.
- Include provisions in law that require all government entities to integrate gender mainstreaming in their policies.
- Local level women leaders should be supported and encouraged in order to bolster their political mobility so they run later in parliamentary elections.
- Women leaders should be promoted as role models as a way to inspire more women and girls in politics.
- Support and capacity building be provided to women politicians, including in the parliament, to build their skills.
- Law and policies aren't the only solutions for change and that informal relationships such as mentoring and networking should also be implemented.
- Provide support to political parties to work with their female members by linking gender equality professionals and political parties.
- A regional network of women politicians be created.
- Elected women should create conditions that support other women to enter public and political life.
- Equal representation of all citizens should become a right that is enshrined in law or the constitution.

**To secure women's civil society activism for national and global transformative change on gender equality it was recommended that:**

- Strengthen the partnership between civil society and women in politics.
- Civil society organizations that work with women in politics should be supported.
- Civil society work towards preventing stereotypes and discrimination against women in politics.

**To ensure funding to support women in public life to have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making it was recommended that:**

- Women candidates' inclusion in financial and legislative support systems be guaranteed and that they be given equal access to political finance.
- Financing for the campaigns of women politicians be supported through legislative provisions.
- Civil society play an integral role in supporting the capacity and funding of women candidates in fundraising opportunities.
- Investing in resources, fair budget allocation, and gender responsive budgeting be implemented.
- Gender-based budgeting could be implemented at the local level where line budgets are adopted and implemented.

**To overcome structural obstacles and discriminatory norms about gender roles that constrain women in public life it was recommended that:**

- The media have an important and unique role in increasing the visibility of women, as they create the perceptions of what models of masculinity and femininity are considered acceptable in society on a daily basis.

- Media can play a role in portraying women leaders fairly, demonstrating equality in gender roles through programming, and give women candidates equal space in the media.
- A global campaign to raise awareness on women's status and the importance of giving power to women be implemented.
- Debate skills be fostered among women, especially young women.
- Governments collect and provide gender disaggregated data.

**To eliminate violence against women in public and political life that deliberately perpetrated to threaten women's participation it was recommended that:**

- Violence against women in politics needs to be recognized as a distinct form of gender-based violence that intends to prevent women from being heard in the public sphere.
- More be done to stop the targeting of women leaders with online abuse and cyberbullying.
- Stereotypes presented in the media that bully women, including in news programming, and use of hate speech should cease.
- Civil society organizations have a crucial role to play in monitoring elections, parliament, and other public spaces regarding violence against women.
- Indicators for monitoring violence against women in politics should be developed.
- Services and effective remedies to make perpetrators accountable need to be made available for victims of violence against women in politics.

## Annex 1

### List of participants

	Name	Position
<b>Albania</b>		
1	Ms. Bardhylka Kospiri	Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection
2	Ms. Eglantina Gjermeni	Member of Parliament, Chair of sub-parliamentary committee on GE and EVAW
3	Ms. Edlira Çepani	Executive Director “Women in Decision Making Network”
4	Ms. Aurela Bozo	Executive Director “Center for Legal Civic Initiatives”
5	Ms. Aurela Anastas	Expert
6	Ms. Brikena Puka	Executive Director “Psycho-social center Vatra”, Vlore
7	Ms. Lorina Misku	From Prime Minister’s Office
8	Ms. Brunilda Dervishaj	From MHSP-Gender Unit
9	Ms. Romina Kuko	Deputy Minister of Interior
10	Ms. Alida Mici	
11	Ms. Bajana Cevoli	Executive Director “Women, Peace, Security”
12	Ms. Marianna Meshi	Executive Director “Different and Equal” (reintegration services for survivors of trafficking, exploitation and abuse)
13	Ms. Fiona McCluney	UN Resident Coordinator in Albania
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>		
14	Ms. Samra Filipovic-Hadziabdic	Director, Agency for Gender Equality
15	Alma Kratina	The FBiH Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality
16	Adnan Kadribasic	Independent expert
17	Jadranka Miličević	The CURE Foundation and Women’s Network of BiH (feminist-activist organization for the equality of sexes and genders pleading for positive social changes)
18	Frašto vedrana	The CURE Foundation and Women’s Network of BiH
<b>North Macedonia</b>		
19	Ms. Gjulten Mustafafova	Head of Sector for Equal Opportunities at the MSLP
20	Ms. Elena Grozdanova	State Advisor for Gender Equality
21	Ms. Andrijana Velevska	State Advisor for rural development, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
22	Ms. Strasho Stojchevski	Ministry of Defense
23	Ms. Marina Nacka	Associate Professor, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food
24	Ms. Daniela Dimitrievska Heaslet	Macedonian Women’s Lobby (unites a multi-ethnic, cross-party and interfaith coalition of women representing CSOs, political parties, the Parliament, local authorities, trade union, media, as well as individual committed to improving the position of women)
25	Ms. Maja Atanasova	MYLA (Macedonian Young Lawyers Association)
26	Ms. Elena Kochoska	Polio Plus (organization of persons with disabilities)
27	Ms. Elena Petrovska	
<b>Serbia</b>		
28	Ms. Kosana Beker	Women’s Rights Organization FemPlatz (Gender-Based Violence Prevention Network)
29	Ms. Gordana Rajkov	Center for Independent Living of people living with disabilities
30	Ms. Biljana Stepanov	Center for Support of Women Kikinda (working on prevention of violence against women)

31	Ms. Biljana Maletin	Gender Expert, Women's Platform for Development (represents women engaged in public work from various institutions, parliaments, the academic community, civil society, private sector, political parties, unions and media)
<b>Kosovo (All references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999))</b>		
32	Ms. Edi Gusia	Chief Executive of the Agency for Gender Equality Prime Minister's Office, Kosovo
33	Ms. Edita Tahiri	Chair, Regional Women's Lobby in Southeast Europe
34	Mr. Kadri Gashi	Executive Director, SIT - Center for Counselling, Social Services and Research (health and social welfare)
35	Ms. Shpresa Agushi	Executive Director of Network for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women's Organizations in Kosovo
36	Ms. Elvana Shala	Ambassador of Goodwill for Kosovo
<b>Montenegro</b>		
37	Ms. Biljana Pejovic	Head of the Department for Gender Equality, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights
38	Biljana Martinic	Academy of Leadership
39	Jelena Radenovic	Womens Leadership Academy
<b>Turkey</b>		
40	Ms. Fatma Aksal	MP, Head of Committee of Equal Opportunity for Women & Men of Grand National Assembly
41	Mr. Onur Dinçer	Expert (observer)
42	Mr. Sahin Metin	Expert (observer)
43	Ms. Şehnaz Kıymaz Bahçeci	Executive Board Member and Chair of Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways (WWHR-New Ways)
44	Ms. İlayda Eskitaşçıoğlu	Founder of We Need to Talk, Young Leader for the SDGs endorsed by the United Nations
45	Ms. Selin Özünaldım	Youngest HeForShe representative, founder of Girl Up Istanbul and Girls Who Code TR, GR task force
46	Ms. Selma Acuner	Turkey Representative, European Women's Lobby (the umbrella organization of women's associations in the European Union)
<b>UN Women</b>		
47	Alia El-Yassir	Regional Director, Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECA RO)
48	Michele Ribotta	UN Women Representative, Albania
49	Estela Bulku	Programme Specialist, Albania
50	Yllka Parllaku	Communications Specialist, Albania
51	Duygu Arig	Project Coordinator, Turkey
52	Jelena Sekulic Nedeljkovic	Project Officer, Serbia
53	Natalija Ostojic	Technical Project Analyst, Serbia
54	Vesna Ivanovikj	Head of office, North Macedonia
55	Ivona Paunovich Bishevac	Programme Analyst, North Macedonia
56	Nargis Azizova	Programme Specialist, ECA RO
57	Rachel Weston Eschenbacher	Policy Specialist, ECA RO
58	Gulistan Akyildiz	Programme Associate, ECA RO

59	Niusha Khanmohammadi	Women, Peace, Security, and Humanitarian Specialist, ECA RO
60	Rami Jarrar	ICT Consultant, ECA RO
61	Mehmet Kara	IT Specialist, ECA RO
62	Ayca Atabey	Gender-Responsive Resilience and Recovery Specialist, ECA RO
63	Afra Goncuoglu	Programme Intern, ECA RO