

COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Sweden
Sverige



COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



UN WOMEN, 2021



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AGE BiH	Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BD BiH	Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BDPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CARDS	EU Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization
CEDAW	UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEST	Centers for judicial and prosecutorial training
CoE	Council of Europe
DV	Domestic violence
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EL BiH	Election Law of BiH
EU	European Union
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FIGAP	Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of GAP
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-based violence
GC FBiH	Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GC RS	Gender Center of the Republika Srpska
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
GTG	Gender Theme Group of the United Nations
IfS	EU Instrument for Stability
IPA	EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
Istanbul Convention	The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
LAF	EU Local Administration Facility
LGAP	Local Gender Action Plan
LPDV BD	BD BiH Law on Protection from Domestic Violence

LPDV FBiH	FBiH Law on Protection from Domestic Violence
LPDV RS	RS Law on Protection from Domestic Violence
LoGE	Law on Gender Equality
LoPD	Law on Prohibition of Discrimination
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoHRR BiH	Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina
NARS	National Assembly of the Republika Srpska
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA BiH	Parliamentary Assembly of BiH
P/CVE	Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism
PFBiH	Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
RIA	Rapid Integrated Assessment
RS	Republika Srpska
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TAIEX	EU Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, Security
UN Women	United Nations for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence against women

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was produced by UN Women in its capacity as the co-chair of the United Nations Gender Theme Group (GTG) in Bosnia and Herzegovina aiming to strengthen national understanding and data on the advancement of international, regional, and national commitments towards GEWE and to serve as a source for evidence-driven advocacy and programming for national stakeholders, international development partners, and the UN System to advance the gains and overcome bottlenecks at the national, regional and global level. The document was drawn up with the active engagement of governmental and non-governmental counterparts and should serve as a valuable tool in the national SDG monitoring processes.

UN Women acknowledges with appreciation the work of the participants in the Beijing +25 consultative working groups and their contributions to this publication, namely: Maksuma Topalović (Alternative Kakanj), Dragana Đurić (Women's Forum Bratunac), Dragiša Andrić (Regional Association of Prisoners of War Višegrad), Željana Pjevalica (Women's Association "Priroda" Bratunac), Nada Marković (Women's Association "Maja" Kravica), Mirsada Sijerčić (Women's Association "Goraždanke" Goražde), Esmā Drkenda (Women's Association "Seka" Goražde), Mevlida Mehanović (Association of Women Returnees "Podrinjka" Srebrenica), Fatima Čajlaković-Mešanović (Medica Zenica), Aida Cacan (Network of Women Police Officers Sarajevo), Nermina Voloder (Westminster Foundation for Democracy), Anida Šabanović (Foreign Policy Initiative), Amra Bećirović (Center for Women's Rights Zenica), Bosa Miletić (Women's Association "Most" Višegrad), Irena Orozović (Association Pontanima), Vinka Berjan (Association "Naša budućnost" East Ilidža), Rajka Simanić (Women's Association East Ilidža), Bosa Kalinić (Center for Social Work East Ilidža), Amina Mašić (TPO Foundation Sarajevo), Vitomir Mitrić (Forum Theater East Sarajevo), Vildana Džekman (CURE Foundation Sarajevo), Maida Zagorac (Sarajevo Open Center), Goran Bubalo (Network for Building Peace), Dajana Čelebić (Association for Democratic Initiatives Sarajevo), Dijana Tadić (Women BiH Mostar), Ifeta Česir-Škoro and Hikmeta Rizvanović (Citizens' Initiative Mostar), Jasminka Drino Kirlić (Youth Center Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje), Jelena Krešić (Agency for Local Democracy Mostar), Marija Beljo (Association for Civil Initiatives "Glas" Prozor), Rebeka Kotlo (Center for Human Rights Mostar), Indira Mehić-Čejvan (Association of Social Workers of Central Bosnia Canton Jajce), Marija Babić and Vera Bošković (Association of Women with Disabilities "Nika" Banja Luka), Amila Behremović (Center for Building Peace Sanski Most), Slavka Vasiljević (Association "Žena i porodica" Gradiška), Senija Senka Jakupović (Association "Dijakom" Sanski Most), Jovanka Popović (Women's Association Derventa), Danka Zelić (Women's Association Grahovo), Nataša Đorđić (Association Topeer Doboj), Fatima Midžić (Association "Donna" Bihać), Enisa Raković (Association "Glas žene" Bihać), Nada Golubović (Foundation United Women Banja Luka), Sanja Sumonja (Network of Women Police Officers Banja Luka), Janja Geljić (HKUD "Napredak" Brčko), Branislava Narančić ("Kolo srpskih sestara"), Danijela Kaloci (Association "Vive žene" Tuzla), Amela Pozderović (Association "Ženska vizija" Tuzla), Dragana Petrić (Foundation "Lara" Bijeljina), Tatjana Ristić (Association "Gender" Brčko), Ena Džambić (Humanitarian Organization "Horizons" Tuzla), Nedžada Avdić (activist from Tuzla), Munevera Kaloper (Association of Bosniak Women Brčko), Larisa Bajrić and Fikreta Hasanović (Information Center for Persons with Disabilities "Lotos" Tuzla), Mirna Milanović (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Bijeljina), Mersiha Jogunčić ("Naša budućnost" Gračanica), Esad Bećirović (Center for Development of Civil Society Doboj).

UN Women acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of partners: Johan Norqvist (Swedish Embassy), Almir Tanović (Swiss Embassy), Samra Filipović-Hadžiabdić (AGE BiH), Kika Babić-Svetlin (AGE BiH), Mirjana Lukač (Gender Center RS), Jelena Milinović (Gender Center RS), Ana Vuković (Gender Center FBiH), Lejla Hodović (Gender Center FBiH).

The following representatives of the United Nations entities were also involved in the consultations and gave significant contribution to this publication: Nera Monir-Divan (UNDP), Armin Sirčo (UNDP), Aynabat Annamuhamedova (UNFPA), Samid Šarenkapić (UNFPA), Lejla Tanović (ILO), Lejla Kablar-Sarajlić (IOM), Alwin Nijholt (UNICEF), Mario Tokić (UNICEF), Ljiljana Kokotović (UNHCR), Gregory Doane (UNHCR), Kristoph Herbst (RCO), Aris Seferović (RCO), Ardanela Ridžalović (UNV), Vlado Pijunović (FAO), Siniša Sešum (UNESCO), Amna Muharemović (UN Women), Irma Zulić (UN Women), Fedra Idžaković (UN Women) and Nađa Hasanović (UN Women).

UN Women also acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of Masha Durkalić (UN Women) and Mariña Barreiro (international consultant), and especially Edita Miftari (UN Women) who had the primary responsibility for developing and finalizing this publication.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAP OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	9
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE: QUICK FACTS	10
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS	11
I. INTRODUCTION	14
A Background and justification	15
B Goal and objectives	15
C Methodology and structure	15
II. CONTEXT	17
A The state of human rights	18
B Gender in current political situation and trends	21
C Progress towards the 2030 Agenda	21
D Development partners	23
III. POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK	27
A International and regional commitments to gender equality	28
B Legal framework for gender equality	28
C Strategic approach to gender equality	30
D Gender institutional framework	33

IV. GENDER ANALYSIS BY THEME	35
A Gender equality, governance, political participation, public life, and decision making	36
B Gender equality and economic environment	40
C Gender equality, health, and social protection	46
D Gender equality and education	53
E Gender equality and civic participation	56
F Gender equality and human security	58
V. CONCLUSION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	64
ANNEX 1 - Consultative Survey for development of BiH Country Gender Equality Profile	69
ANNEX 2 - Consultative Survey Findings	73
REFERENCES	79

MAP OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in South-Eastern Europe, in the western part of the Balkan peninsula bordering the Adriatic Sea, Croatia to the north, west, and south, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the southeast. It has a diverse ethnic population of an estimated 3.3 million.¹ Sarajevo is the capital city.



Bosnia and Herzegovina is a compound state, which in line with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH, consists of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51 percent of the territory) and the Republika Srpska (49 percent of the territory), and Brčko District. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of ten cantons² (which consist of 79 cities/municipalities). Republika Srpska is entirely centralized with 66 cities/municipalities.

¹ The World Bank. World Development Indicators (2018). Custom data on Bosnia and Herzegovina acquired via website: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/BA> [Retrieved on 6 September 2019]

² Una-Sana Canton, Posavina Canton, Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Bosnian Podrinje Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, West Herzegovina Canton, Sarajevo Canton, and Canton 10.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE:

QUICK FACTS

* All data acquired via The World Bank website.³

The number in superscript indicates the most recent year of the most recent value.

Population, total: 3,323,929²⁰¹⁸

Population, female (percent of total population): 50.9²⁰¹⁸

Population, male (percent of total population): 49.1²⁰¹⁸

Population growth (annual percent): -0.827²⁰¹⁸

Life expectancy at birth, female (years): 79.7²⁰²⁰

Life expectancy at birth, male (years): 74.8²⁰²⁰

Population ages 65 and above (percent of total population): 17.9²⁰²⁰

Contraceptive prevalence, any methods (percent of women ages 15-49): 45.8²⁰²⁰

Fertility rate, total (births per woman): 1.39²⁰²⁰

Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15-19): 11²⁰²⁰

Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births): 11²⁰¹⁵

Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births): 4.9²⁰¹⁷

Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (percent of population): 16.9²⁰¹⁵

GDP (current US\$): 19,781,776.10²⁰¹⁸

GDP growth (annual percent): 3.1²⁰¹⁸

Unemployment, total (percent of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate): 20.8²⁰¹⁸

Unemployment, female (percent of female labor force) (modeled ILO estimate): 23.9²⁰¹⁸

Unemployment, male (percent of male labor force) (modeled ILO estimate): 18.9²⁰¹⁸

Agricultural land (percent of land area): 43.1²⁰¹⁶

Literacy rate, adult total (percent of people ages 15 and above): 97²⁰¹³

Literacy rate, adult female (percent of females ages 15 and above): 95²⁰¹³

Literacy rate, adult male (percent of males ages 15 and above): 99²⁰¹³

Labor force participation rate, total (percent of total population ages 15+) (ILO estimate): 47²⁰¹⁸

Labor force participation rate, female (percent of female population ages 15+) (ILO estimate): 36²⁰¹⁸

Labor force participation rate, male (percent of male population ages 15+) (ILO estimate): 59²⁰¹⁸

Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (percent) (ILO estimate): 61²⁰¹⁸

Employment in agriculture (percent of total employment) (ILO estimate): 17²⁰¹⁸ (M 16; F 17)

Human Development Index value and ranking: 0.768; 77 out of 188 countries⁴

Gender Development Index (GDI): 0.924⁵

³ The World Bank. World Development Indicators. Custom data on Bosnia and Herzegovina acquired via website: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/demographic-dividend/BA> [Retrieved on 13 October 2020]

⁴ United Nations Development Program. Human Development Indicators 2018. Custom data acquired via website: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BIH#> [Retrieved on 13 October 2020]

⁵ Ibid.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified a number of international commitments on gender equality, including the UN (CEDAW) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1980), later reinforced by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), committing participating states to take steps towards achieving gender equality. BiH is amongst the first countries in Europe (2013) to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). However, the BiH legal framework may still be interpreted as gender-blind as most laws, including the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, do not include specific provisions on gender equality nor do they actively promote gender equality in private and public life. The legal system in BiH remains challenging and continues to provide opportunities for gender-based discrimination due to the lack of harmonization of laws across political entities, their inconsistent implementation, as well as lack of effective monitoring.⁶ On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant efforts to harmonize its legislative framework with international standards and commitments and has adopted two pieces of key legislation: the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination.

The Law on Gender Equality adopted in 2003⁷ specifically addresses education, employment, labor and access to resources, equal representation, social protection, healthcare, culture and sports, public life, and media. The Law on Gender Equality also provides the framework for the gender institutional mechanisms in charge of implementing and overseeing the implementation of the Law.

The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination was adopted in 2009 and amended in 2016 and its main goal is to strengthen BiH mechanisms to fight discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sex.

The gender equality framework is of equal relevance and includes the Gender Action Plan (2018-2022), the Action Plan for the implementation of the Security

Council Resolution 1325 (2018-2022), and the framework strategy for the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2015-2018) among others.

Despite a carefully designed legal, strategic, and institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality, women in BiH still face many challenges and obstacles in achieving full equality in all areas of life.

Major challenges to **achieving gender equality in political participation and decision-making** in BiH pertain to *traditional gender roles*, i.e. cultural factors which include beliefs about appropriate gender roles in relation to political participation and decision-making, resulting in the popular opinion that men are more fit for leadership roles while women are more suitable for roles in private life. A *hostile political environment preventing women from taking more active roles* is another challenge as women in politics in BiH experience discrimination, having to overcome various obstacles in accessing decision-making positions, and highly prevalent gender-based violence in political processes. *Multi-layered exclusion of women from major decision-making processes* is manifested through gender-blind party regulations, unequal access to and allocation of party resources, a party culture that perpetuates gender-based stereotypes and double standards, as well as the lack of political will to harmonize the legislation and ensure more women in the executive government branch. Additionally, *lack of economic independence and care services* restricts women from making their own decisions about their active roles in politics and decision-making. Finally, the *biased and sensationalistic portrayal of women and girls in the media* further reinforces the existing traditional gender roles and stereotypes as media outlets in BiH rarely place women in the center of news reports about political processes.

When it comes to achieving **gender equality in the economic environment** in BiH, major challenges pertain to *gender-based discrimination in employment*

⁶ USAID. MEASURE BiH – Gender Analysis Report for BiH (2016). Pg. 10.

⁷ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 16/03.

and the labor market, as well as sexual harassment and mobbing at work. Women still experience discrimination in hiring procedures, promotion, and termination of employment, as they are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work than men. In addition, *the burden of unpaid domestic work and lack of accessible care services* restricts women from taking up paid jobs, pursuing advanced education and skills training, and participating in public life. Despite the law provisions that prohibit it, *gender pay gap persists*. According to the 2015 World Bank Survey, hourly pay is around 9 percent higher in favor of men in BiH. *Occupational segregation by gender* is another challenge in this area, as most women are employed in the service sector and are overrepresented in sectors such as education, health care, and social work activities, typically considered to be “female occupations”, which allows gender stereotypes to further exclude women from occupations traditionally perceived as male. Finally, *women in rural and remote areas are more vulnerable to poverty* as they suffer most from the lack of access to and control over productive resources such as land, property, financial resources, education, marketable skills, and access to information and modern technology.

Achieving **gender equality in social protection and healthcare** has its own challenges, mostly referring to *underfunded specialized services for victims of gender-based violence* and domestic violence, specifically shelters for women victims of domestic violence as funding of these services is still not regulated equally across the country, and the rape crisis centers have not yet been established. A unique data collection method for VAW including domestic violence and intimate partner violence cases is still to be developed and more training is needed to ensure police officers are sensitized enough to deal with survivors⁸. Even though BiH still has not adopted a framework legislation to recognize CRSV survivors as war victims, recent legislative amendments at the entity level enable the CRSV survivors to have a more equal access to services and overall rights. Women survivors of CRSV still do not receive adequate social support and benefits, and when they pursue reparations through court cases, they are faced with stigma in their communities, ineffective witness protection, delays in accessing justice, and low

conviction rates. In addition, financial compensations for survivors of sexual violence do not come through because the perpetrators do not make the required payments. *Access to social protection and healthcare for persons with disabilities remains challenging and difficult*, and women and girls with disabilities are facing multiple discrimination as there is little understanding for their specific needs. *Regarding sexual and reproductive health rights, there have been no major improvements*, especially when it comes to pregnancy, prenatal and postnatal care, which is particularly the case with women in rural areas and women who are members of ethnic minorities such as Roma women. Adoption of the BiH Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy in 2012 unfortunately did not translate into a coherent countrywide family planning policy. Additionally, in vitro insemination is regulated differently in the entities and Brčko District and there is no umbrella law at the state level.

Major challenges to achieving **gender equality in education** pertain to *gender stereotypes* that contribute intensified stereotyping of gender roles in all areas of society, normalizing gender-based violence and further perpetuating gender inequality. Occupational segregation by gender is still a significant challenge. In addition, almost three percent of the BiH population is *illiterate*, and this figure rises to almost five percent when it comes to women over 10 years of age; 15 percent for women in the age group 60-70; and 49 percent for women in the age group over 70. Illiteracy rate is higher among marginalized women- women in rural communities, Roma women, and women with disabilities. The *gender gap among marginalized Roma* is also persistent as Roma women still have a lower level of education compared to Roma men, and women in general, while only 4.5 percent of Roma girls complete secondary education. Early marriage incidence for marginalized Roma women is persistent as well.

Achieving **gender equality in civic participation** has its own challenges as cooperation and networking remain one of the main weaknesses of the civil society in BiH, mainly because many CSOs compete for the same financial resources in the form of grants and donations. Women's organizations network and cooperate

⁸ Survivor is understood in the context of this report as an individual who is being targeted for abuse. As most of the related crimes committed are based on power struggles, the shift in terminology from victim to survivor is motivated by the fact that the term survivor denotes a sense of newfound power and strength in recovery. In BiH legislation they are referred to as “victims” both in the context of Violence against Women including Domestic Violence and of Conflict Related Sexual Violence. In the context of this document we will use the word “victim” just when describing a legal category contained in the legal framework.

much easier but their *human rights defenders* are often faced with *gendered threats*, especially when they work on women's rights issues, such as with survivors of violence, women survivors of war, or testimonies in war crime cases. Women human rights defenders are more exposed to sexualized defamation campaigns, direct and indirect threats to family members, threats of sexual assault, and receiving explicit messages or images. *LGBTI activists are especially vulnerable and exposed to threats and violence.* At least eight cases of violence against LGBTI activists were recorded in 2017, and although the LGBTI activism in BiH has been quite visible in the past decade, the first Pride March in BiH took place only in September 2019 due to major security threats in previous years and lack of support from the government.

When it comes to achieving **gender equality in the context of human security**, identified challenges include obstacles for women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in receiving reparations. Women survivors are redirected to civil lawsuits, which places additional financial burden on the survivors, and they often give up on their right to compensation which is subject to the statute of limitations and may only be directed towards the perpetrators. When seeking compensation in civil courts, survivors must assume the burden of proof, hire a lawyer, and cover the court expenses. Moreover, *the lack of a gendered approach*

to P/CVE diminishes the effectiveness of its strategies. In fact, BiH policies in the area of security are not gender mainstreamed and those on P/CVE are no exception. This affects efficiency and effectiveness of those policies in the programs as they do not foresee the role of women in violent extremism, both as drivers and as agents to counter-act it. Regarding natural disasters, the gender institutional mechanisms responded to the floods in May 2014 by highlighting the complexity and the nature of different consequences that floods had on men and women, and boys and girls addressing this issue through development of specific measures and policies. However, these responses were *ad hoc* and remedial instead of precautionary, and *gender should be considered in all interventions for prevention and elimination of consequences of natural disasters.* Refugee crisis is another serious security challenge which is significantly gendered as women and children are often targets of physical and psychological violence, forced prostitution, human trafficking, and often go missing during their transfer. There is a lack of systemic protection for migrant women and children, particularly in their access to education and healthcare. Finally, *the impact of the COVID-19 crisis has deepened the already existing gaps in gender equality* as the measures imposed were gender-blind, increasing the already existing gender inequalities, thus stalling the progress to social cohesion.

1.

INTRODUCTION



A. Background and justification

The UN in BiH has begun preparation and formulation of the next United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Bosnia and Herzegovina (previously known as United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF) as the next partnership strategy between the BiH authorities and the UN in BiH towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in BiH. The next UNSDCF will cover the period 2021-2025 and will be prepared in close partnership with the BiH authorities, international partners, private sector, civil society organizations, and other relevant stakeholders in BiH. In line with the standard UN planning procedures, this involves the preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) as an integral and critical part of the UN planning process. The main objective of the Common Country Assessment is to analyze the overall context of BiH and provide the analytical baseline for discussion about the next UNSDCF priorities in BiH.

In order to inform and support the preparation of the Common Country Assessment and subsequently UNSDCF 2021-2025, the UN Women Country Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated the development of the BiH Country Gender Equality Profile based on the UN Women Guidance Note for Developing Country Gender Equality Profiles from 2018. This Country Gender Equality Profile is the result of the all-encompassing sectoral gender analysis and consultations with relevant stakeholders. It has provided reliable gender-sensitive information for the Common Country Assessment recommendations on the UN programming, budgeting, and decision-making purposes. The content of the Country Gender Equality Profile follows the structure of the Synthesis report to inform the SDG framework, i.e. its four strategic focus areas that respond to country's needs and make use of the UN's comparative advantages: (1) Smart Growth, (2) New Social Contract, (3) Human Capital for 21st Century, and (4) Good Governance.

B. Goal and objectives

The Country Gender Equality Profile will serve as an analytical and operational document, including an overview of opportunities to address the gaps identified through desk review and analysis. The Country

Gender Equality Profile provides a detailed assessment of the key challenges for gender equality in the context of sustainable development in BiH, identifying gender discrepancies in the enjoyment of social and economic rights, cultural and political rights, and analyzing the underlining root causes of the identified challenges. The Country Gender Equality Profile also identifies gaps in research and data concerning gender equality in BiH, emphasizing the need for statistical data in addressing additional issues and analyzing raw data.

The Country Gender Equality Profile assesses the effects of identified challenges on women and men, particularly vulnerable groups such as girls and young women, women with disabilities, Roma women, women living in rural and remote areas, single mothers, migrant and refugee women, women victims of violence, etc.

C. Methodology and structure

This Country Gender Equality Profile is based on an in-depth secondary data analysis/desk review of information collected by the government statistical agencies and other departments, the existing reports, studies, and comprehensive gender analyses of Bosnia and Herzegovina in different areas, the legislative, policy, institutional and operational framework for gender equality in BiH, the notes from the consultative meetings with civil society in the process of reporting on Beijing +25, as well as other documents and reports, including those submitted to international bodies. The gaps recognized and defined in the secondary data analysis were addressed in consultative meetings held with the relevant stakeholders in order to discuss the relevant issues and data they cover in their everyday work as well as to identify priorities in the area of gender equality for the country and the UN focus for the forthcoming period.

Consultations have been conducted with 15 partners from the UN, government, and international partners. Ten meetings were organized with various UN entities in the country, namely RCO, UNFPA, ILO, UNDP, IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNV, FAO, and UNESCO. Three meetings were organized with gender institutional mechanisms, namely Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Gender Center of the Republika Srpska. Additional two meetings were organized with international partners, namely the representatives of the Embassy of Sweden in Bosnia

and Herzegovina and the Swiss Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consultations with civil society were conducted with 60 civil society organizations as part of the Beijing +25 reporting process. The consultations were held in July and August 2019 and were focused on identifying areas that the UN Agencies should prioritize in BiH from the perspective of gender equality, the challenges and obstacles to achieving gender equality in BiH which should be addressed by the UN Agencies, as well as the strategies that the UN Agencies should pursue in their work to achieve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Consultative Survey (see Annex 1) was sent out to 310 stakeholders, including the government bodies, UN agencies, bilateral donors, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, media, and individual experts. In total, 106 stakeholders, or 34.2 percent responded, with 33 percent of responses from civil society organizations and 29.2 percent from the government authorities. The UN was represented with 11.3 percent, while media, private sector, academia, international organizations, and bilateral donors were each represented by 1 to 4 percent each. The survey was available online for two weeks in August 2019 and was focused on identifying priority areas, challenges/obstacles, and strategies previously explored through consultative meetings, as well as pinpointing needs for the development of capacities to implement legislation, policy, and measures to achieve gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The CGEP was validated by the UN Gender Theme Group on two occasions in 2019. During 2020, the CGEP was updated to include the key findings identified in the process of Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁹ and the UN Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Crisis¹⁰, and to respond to the Concluding Observation of the CEDAW Committee on the Sixth Periodic Review¹¹.

The present report starts with the summary of the context in which the Country Gender Equality Profile is developed, analyzing the current state of human rights, the situation regarding gender in the current political setup, the achievements on the 2030 Agenda to date, and the importance of developing partner support. The report further analyses the policy and legal framework that applies to BiH, focusing on the international commitments to gender equality, the legislation, and the strategies that the local institutions have adopted as well as the existing gender institutional mechanisms. In Section IV the report analyses the situation regarding gender equality in BiH in several thematic areas, to wit: Governance, political participation, and decision-making; economic environment; healthcare and social protection; education; civic participation; and human security. Finally, the report in its conclusions addresses the remaining challenges and the opportunities related to gender equality in BiH in the context of the sustainable development agenda.

⁹ UN Women, Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2020

¹⁰ UN in BiH, Socio- Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo, 2020

¹¹ CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, C/CO/BiH/6, 2019

2. CONTEXT



A. The state of human rights

Major human rights challenges

Bosnia and Herzegovina made limited progress in recent years towards addressing long-standing human rights issues. One of the major issues pertains to **constitutional discrimination against ethnic minorities** that do not identify as one of the three constituent peoples, namely Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. Despite multiple rulings of the Bosnian Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights that the Constitution discriminates against the said minorities, there was no progress towards amending it to allow ethnic minorities to run for the presidency in the last general elections that took place in 2018.

The Regional Roma Survey published by the United Nations Development Program in 2018¹² showed that **Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina** continue to face significant difficulties accessing and enjoying health care, education, housing, and employment, with minor improvements in living standards. Many Roma lack identification documents necessary to access services.¹³

In 2018, civil society groups reported intensified state efforts to discourage **public protests** by issuing fines for public disorder, making it increasingly difficult and slow to obtain necessary permits, restricting protests to specific and less central areas, and over-policing peaceful events.¹⁴ Politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina still do not publicly discuss **LGBTI rights and concerns**, police often dismiss hate crimes against LGBTI people, and acquiring permits for LGBTI events and peaceful gatherings was significantly more difficult in 2018 than in previous years.¹⁵ The first Bosnian and Herzegovinian LGBTI Pride March took place on 9 September 2019 in

Sarajevo, making Sarajevo the last European capital to hold such an event.

Journalists continued to face threats and interference in their work. Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalists' association *BH Novinari* registered 41 violations of journalists' rights, including three verbal threats, eight instances of political pressure, six physical assaults, and five death threats.¹⁶ Some cases were investigated by police and handed over to the Prosecutor's Office, but no one was convicted for the attacks on journalists at the time of writing.

The numbers of **asylum seekers and migrants entering the country** increased significantly in 2019. Between January and August 2019, the state Service for Foreigners' Affairs registered 18,071 new asylum seekers, 5,000 more than the same period last year. In the first half of 2019, 17,165 people indicated an intention to seek asylum. Only 426 people actually applied during the same period.¹⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina has failed to provide adequate shelter, food, and access to medical assistance to the new arrivals as there was one state-managed asylum center and six temporary accommodation centers with total capacity of around 4,000 people, an improvement compared to 2018, but still leaving thousands unable to access shelter and basic services.¹⁸

Women at risk of being left behind

Measures that Bosnia and Herzegovina took to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are focused on the following specific groups identified as key groups at risk of being left behind: **(1) women living in remote and rural areas, (2) women with disabilities, and (3)**

¹² United Nations Development Program. Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets. Available at: <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/regional-roma-survey-2017-country-fact-sheets.html>

¹³ Human Rights Watch. World Report 2019: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Events of 2018. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/bosnia-and-herzegovina> [Retrieved on 8 October 2020]

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.¹⁹ The most significant challenges these groups are facing pertain to economic gender inequalities²⁰ and gender-specific patterns of upbringing practices, traditional and patriarchal values.

The needs of the said marginalized groups are somewhat recognized in Bosnia and Herzegovina key strategic documents on gender equality (such as GAP BiH) and continuous efforts have been made towards the advancement of human rights and raising awareness of the rights of said groups. For example, by adopting amendments to the Law on Protection against Discrimination in 2016,²¹ BiH enhanced its legislative framework by prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics. In 2016 and 2017, an initiative was implemented to harmonize provisions of the Criminal Code of the Republika Srpska with international legal standards that regulate the acknowledgment, exercise, and protection of rights of LGBTI. A new Criminal Code of the RS²² was harmonized with all aspects as requested. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Law on amendments of the Criminal Code of the FBiH²³ in 2016 thus criminalizing hate crime. Also, 2016-2021 Strategy for advancement of rights and status of persons with disabilities in the FBiH²⁴ was adopted in 2016 focusing on vulnerable groups and those potentially facing multiple discrimination, such as women with disabilities. This Strategy foresees introduction of prevention programs regarding domestic violence against persons with disabilities.

Other barriers for women include inefficient mechanisms and response to violence against women,²⁵ as well as low participation of women in decision-making positions in public and political life.

Women at risk of poverty and/or exclusion

While women are not considered an AROPE (At Risk of Poverty and/or Exclusion) group per se, gender issues remain relevant in some areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, women are around a third less likely to participate in the **labor force** than men and this is the case for all ages;²⁶ while the labor force participation of marginalized Roma women was only 13 percent, versus 39 percent among their male counterparts.²⁷ Gender stereotypes remain present in **education** and contribute to intensifying stereotyping gender roles in all areas of society, but also normalize gender-based violence and further perpetuate gender inequality. **Gender gap** exists at most levels of education, age groups, occupations, and industries. Controlling for observable characteristic differences between males and females reduces the wage gap by only around a quarter.²⁸ In addition, women are much less likely to have a bank account at a formal financial institution (48 percent compared to 67 percent for men) and may find it difficult to access loans due to low property ownership rates, which reduces potential collateral (74 percent of dwelling properties are owned only by men), potentially stifling female entrepreneurship.²⁹

Violence against Women

Violence against Women (VAW) is highly prevalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as shown by the first nationwide multiple-stakeholder survey on violence against women, coordinated by the Gender Equality Agency

¹⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process* (2019). Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf?la=en&vs=4937 Pg. 14-16.

²⁰ Specially in terms of employment and access to economic resources, family planning, unpaid work, family care, property ownership, pay gap, limiting elements for the development of women entrepreneurship, etc.

²¹ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol 66/16.

²² Official Gazette of RS, Vol 64/17.

²³ Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol 46/16.

²⁴ 84. Session of the FBiH Government on 23 December 2016.

²⁵ Pertaining mostly to domestic violence, as other forms of violence remain unaddressed, i.e. there is no official data on violence against women from persons other than an intimate partner as per SDG indicator 5.2.2

²⁶ United Nations. SDG Diagnostics Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pg. 2.

²⁷ United Nations Development Program. Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets. Pg. 2.

²⁸ United Nations. SDG Diagnostics Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pg. 2.

²⁹ Ibid.

of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013.³⁰ According to this survey, 47.2 percent of women surveyed experienced some form of violence at some point in their lives after turning 15, and violence was perpetrated by the person from their immediate surroundings (current or ex-partner, family or household member, friend, colleague, etc.). Most women experienced psychological violence (41.9 percent), followed by physical (24.3 percent), sexual (6 percent) and economic (4.8 percent) violence. Violence most often occurred in partner relationships (in 39 percent of surveyed women, by a former or a current partner), which shows that the private sphere is where most of violence against women takes place.³¹

A more recent OSCE-led survey on violence against women from 2019 shows that 48 percent of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have experienced some form of abuse, including intimate partner violence, non-partner violence, stalking and sexual harassment, since the age of 15.³² The rate of partner violence is at 35 percent.³³ The most common psychological consequence of violence against women is fear, reported by 55 percent of women survivors of current partner violence and 70 percent of survivors of previous partner violence.³⁴ Despite this, 84 percent of women do not report violence to the police, and when asked why 38 percent said that it was too minor and that they considered it to be a family matter (33%).³⁵

A study on violence against women in politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2019 found that 60.2 percent of respondents have experienced some form of violence during their engagement in politics, and that 45.8 percent have experienced violence just because they are women.³⁶ Women who have experienced violence in politics are facing multiple obstacles in their quest for justice which include secondary victimization, resistance by law enforcement officers, as well as inadequate legal protection or access to integrated

protection services, which is also characteristic of the obstacles faced by victims of other forms of violence against women.³⁷

This data suggests that violence against women is still not taken seriously and that at least some forms of it are tolerated and perceived as a private matter. Many women respondents in the said studies indicated that there was significant distrust towards institutions, particularly the police and social work centers, which they said would blame them or side with the perpetrator.

Data gaps

Gender data gaps are evident in all aspects of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina and one of the BiH priorities in the next five years will be to develop unique methodologies for collecting data in priority areas according to the GAP.³⁸ Another priority is the development of the Gender Equality Index for BiH, a composite indicator that points to the state of gender equality in the country that will consist of six domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power and health.³⁹ This index will enable the monitoring of gender equality in BiH, and comparison with other countries. The current obstacle to development of the Gender Equality Index in BiH is the lack of research implementation that is essential for the development of certain indicators needed to calculate domains within the Index, and hence the overall result of the Index.

As the CEDAW Committee rightfully recommended, BiH needs to establish a consolidated system for data collection, analysis, and dissemination of that data, which must be disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, location, and socioeconomic status⁴⁰.

³⁰ Babović, Marija; Pavlović, Olivera; Ginić, Katarina; Karađinović, Nina; Filipović-Hadžiabdić, Samra (ed.). *Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA, 2013.

³¹ Ibid. Pg. 53.

³² OSCE. *Well-Being and Safety of Women – Bosnia and Herzegovina Results Report* (2019). Pg. iii.

³³ Ibid. Pg. 25.

³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 73

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Miftari, Edita. *Violence Against Women in Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina* Westminster Foundation for Democracy, 2019. Pg. 24.

³⁷ Ibid. Pg. 44.

³⁸ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process* 2019. Pg. 68.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, C/CO/BiH/6, 2019

B. Gender in current political situation and trends

Women remain excluded from major political processes, which has been the trend since the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace that also characterizes the current process of the European integrations. There were no women included in the process of signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union in 2015, which did not demonstrate the willingness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to respect gender equality as an inseparable part of the EU integration process and all crucial reform processes that are part of it. Women are represented in diplomacy with 23 percent of female ambassadors, 17 percent of female general consuls, and 40 percent of permanent female mission leaders.⁴¹ Women make up 34 percent of negotiating delegations for the conclusion of international documents on police cooperation, readmission, protection of classified information, protection and rescue.⁴² There is at least one woman within each negotiating delegation, and in the agreements/protocols on readmission there is equal representation.⁴³ The complexity of the political and electoral system further complicates the involvement of women in these processes, as men are well versed in the political games that come with political participation, and women are only marginally present in these processes. It is still expected for men to have more political power, which seriously damages the participation and representation of women in the political processes and perpetuates stereotypes about their involvement in the public life. The representation of marginalized women, such as Roma women, women from rural areas or women with disabilities, is an even bigger challenge, as their presence in governance, decision making, and public life remains very limited, due to the multiple discrimination they are exposed to.

C. Progress towards the 2030 Agenda

In 2016, the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina started the Imagine 2030 initiative which included broad stakeholder citizen focused consultations on Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Agenda 2030 was officially launched in 2017.

Since 2017, the United Nations Imagine 2030 consultation process informed and engaged over 3,000 people and continues to be the main force of advocacy and engagement in the country.⁴⁴ Most of 2018 was devoted to further broad stakeholder consultation and analytical and technical work (Rapid Integrated Assessment, Dashboards, Complexity Analysis, etc.) aimed at development of two key documents, namely the first Voluntary Review and the SDG Framework. The latter is a key document that defines Vision 2030 for the country as well as the development of pathways and accelerators for development that, in turn, inform all key strategic planning processes in the country at the state, entity and Brčko District level. The SDG Framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina is being developed to allow for its proper integration into the strategic planning processes initiated by different levels of government.

In order to identify detailed linkages between the key 69 strategies and action plans in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the extent of alignment with the SDGs at the SDG target and indicator level, the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina has initiated the process of Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) which mapped the existing policy landscape across different levels of governance and provided a basis from which to guide the provisions regarding vertical and horizontal policy integration and coherence.⁴⁵ The Assessment provided comments and recommendations on the measures required to guide the incorporation of the SDGs adapted

⁴¹ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 26.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Voluntary Review of Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019). Pg. 8.

⁴⁵ Implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Rapid Integrated Assessment of key Strategic Documents (2018)

for Bosnia and Herzegovina into government policy at all administrative levels and for informing international partners supporting the implementation of reforms and SDGs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among other findings, the RIA showed there is high level of match between some SDG 5 targets and referent across strategic documents, however not present at Cantonal and barely present at FBiH levels. Overall, SDG 5 on Gender Equality is mentioned in 16 out of 69 strategies.⁴⁶ The assessment revealed 90 percent coverage of SDG “means of implementation” (Mol) in the current strategic development setup in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁷

SDG 5 on Gender Equality

Priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the coming five years through laws, policies and programs include: (1) ending violence against women and girls (target 5.2), (2) poverty eradication, agricultural productivity and food security (targets 5.4, 5.A), (3) access to affordable quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (target 5.6), (4) women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises (target 5.7), (5) gender-responsive social protection (target 5.4), (6) gender-responsive budgeting (target 5.A, 5.C). These priorities are addressed and integrated in the 2018-2022 Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina,⁴⁸ IGAP II 2018-2021 (Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and underlined in the national Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action within the Beijing +25 process.⁴⁹

Although there is no specific national plan/strategy for the SDG implementation, the above listed priorities are part of the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a comprehensive medium-term strategy for gender equality and empowerment of women. Bosnia and Herzegovina has not defined national

indicators for monitoring progress towards the SDGs, thus there are no activities on strategic data collection for the SDG 5. The Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina has reviewed the state of availability of data for SDG indicators, and out of the 14 indicators for the SDG 5 none are available in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are in total 5 available gender sensitive SDG indicators for Bosnia and Herzegovina, pertaining to the SDGs 1, 4, 8, 10 and 16.⁵⁰

Indicator 1.2.1: Proportion of the population living below the national poverty line by gender and age

Indicator 4.2.2: Participation rate in organized learning (by year before the official primary entry age) by gender

Indicator 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the past 12 months, by gender

Indicator 8.5.2: Unemployment rate, by gender, age, and persons with disabilities, (excluding persons with disabilities)

Indicator 10.2.1: Proportion of people living below 50 percent of median income, by gender, age, and persons with disabilities

Indicator 16.1.1: Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by gender and age.

In this regard, the country announced a project⁵¹ that is to transform the Agenda 2030 into concrete activities for SDG and engagement of the private sector, and develop a group of national indicators in order to monitor the progress made according to the SDG agenda. These indicators will build on the existing monitoring methods used by the statistical institutes, to comply with the set of global indicators. The government is planning to generate 32 SDG indicators from the MICS research.⁵²

⁴⁶ Ibid. Pg. 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

⁴⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 18-22.

⁵⁰ Ibid. Pg. 69

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

D. Development partners

Bosnia and Herzegovina has received substantial international support since the end of the 1992-1995 war and signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement; a donors' conference attended by representatives from fifty countries and twenty-seven international organizations subsequently pledged USD 5,1 billion, an amount that was committed and disbursed between 1996 and 1999. The conferences were held annually in the mentioned period raising the total of \$3 billion to finance reconstruction projects.⁵³ However, the actual amount of financial assistance that BiH received in the post Dayton period will most likely remain unknown as there is no data on donations that were given through unofficial channels.⁵⁴ More than 200 international organizations took part in the BiH reconstruction programs, including UN agencies (such as UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDP), International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and various other international organizations.⁵⁵

Nowadays, the UN and its partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: 17 interconnected and ambitious Goals which address the major development challenges faced by people in BiH and around the world.

The work of the UN in BiH has been guided through the 2015-2020 UNDAF (UN Development Assistance Framework), endorsed by the BiH Council of Ministers on 14 May 2015 and officially signed on 15 June 2015. Thirteen outcomes have been agreed within the 2015-2020 UNDAF, in four strategic focus areas that respond to country needs and make use of the UN's comparative advantages: Rule of Law and Human Security, Sustainable and Equitable Development and Employment, Social Inclusion (education, social protection, child protection, and health), and Empowerment of Women. UN is currently working on the preparation process for the next 5-year program document for BiH: the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (Cooperation Framework), 2021-2025.

Strategic partnerships with AGE BiH, the BHAS, and different government structures have been crucial for the work of the UN in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women in BiH. For example, over the course of the UNDAF implementation, UN has played an important role in helping the authorities at different levels in BiH to identify strategic issues, ensure commitment and achievement of normative standards (through programming and implementation) and design and promulgate laws and policies at different levels fostering gender equality. The priorities have been on the highly relevant areas of normative standards, GRB, Eliminating Violence Against Women, Governance, and Women in Leadership. UN has displayed comparative advantages through effective use of its experts and expertise, application of normative standards and targeted assistance that contributed to a steady progression toward more profound gender mainstreaming⁵⁶. In a challenging political set-up in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN has been successful in contributing to more active women's leadership and participation in the political life of the country. This has been achieved through assistance to create an enabling environment for more women to be elected at all governance levels, in all spheres of decision-making process in the country. Also, at the systemic level, the UN has contributed to more gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) processes. The line ministries in the Federation of BiH have thus been mandated to include specific gender indicators. The Budget Management Information System (BMIS) has also been updated to incorporate gender indicators. Also, the capacities of the authorities from other structures have been strengthened to understand and apply GRB.

European Union

The European Union is the single largest provider of funds and financial assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 1996, the EU has invested more than 3.5 billion Euros in reconstruction, public administration reform, rule of law, sustainable economy, agriculture

⁵³ Žeravčić, Goran. Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. EPRD Office for Economic Policy and Regional Development Ltd. (EPRD), 2016. Available at: <http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Mapping-study-of-CSOs-in-BiH.pdf> Pg. 44.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ UN, UNDAF BiH 2015-2019 Final Evaluation Report, 2020, available at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7887> [retrieved on 29 October 2020]

and other key areas in BiH.⁵⁷ The EU uses a variety of financial instruments, the most comprehensive one being the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance or IPA. These funds represent an investment in the political and economic reforms, preparing the enlargement countries for the rights and obligations that come with EU membership, and simultaneously providing their citizens with better opportunities for development of standards equal to the ones enjoyed by citizens of the EU. Besides IPA, the EU also uses other instruments and programs such as EIDHR (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights), CARDS (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization) and other EU instruments open for BiH, such as TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument), P2P (People 2 People Program), LAF (Local Administration Facility), and IFS (Instrument for Stability).⁵⁸

Bilateral IPA II allocations in the period 2014-2017 amounted to 237.2 million EUR [including funds for the Civil Society Facility (9.1 million EUR), Regional Housing Program (10 million EUR) and special measures following 2014 floods (51 million EUR)].⁵⁹ The priority sectors for funding in this period were democracy and governance; rule of law and fundamental rights; competitiveness and innovation; education, employment and social policies; and transport.⁶⁰ In the period 2018-2020, an indicative allocation of 314.9 million EUR has been earmarked for Bosnia and Herzegovina with benefits for two new sectors: environment, climate action and energy; and agriculture and rural development. Under the Annual Action Program for BiH for the year 2018, the EU Gender Equality Facility Action has been established, aiming at strengthening the effective implementation of domestic and international legal frameworks concerning gender equality and women's rights, as well as supporting the country in aligning to the EU gender equality acquis in the pre-accession perspective.⁶¹ The EU Gender Equality Facility is being implemented by UN Women from 2020 to 2022 and is

situated within the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a monitoring matrix reporting to UN Women.⁶² The total amount allocated for this Action was 550,000 EUR, including 10% co-financing by UN Women.⁶³

The EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed to monitoring of the effective implementation of the Gender Equality Law and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, increasing participation of women in politics and public life and implementation of the special measure set out in the gender equality law of having at least 40% of representation of each gender in legislative, executive and judicial authorities at all levels, conducting gender impact assessments of policy and legislative processes, reducing gender pay gap, harmonizing maternity, paternity and family law across the country, improving data collection to enable the development of sound policies targeting key gender gaps, providing and publishing relevant data on violence against women and addressing it, harmonization of the legislation with the Istanbul Convention, working on the effective implementation of the legislation related to the prevention of violence against women, working on the establishment of departments specialized for violence against women in police and public sector, ensuring access to free legal aid and court representation, improving general system of response and victims support at all levels, as well as ensuring adequate funding for shelters for women victims of violence.

Sweden

As one of the largest bilateral donors to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden is focusing its cooperation and development program first and foremost on democracy, human rights, and gender equality, with emphasis on the justice sector and local administration. Other priorities include economic development, rural

⁵⁷ Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina & European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. EU Projects in BiH. Available at: https://europa.ba/?page_id=558 [Retrieved on 20 August 2019]

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ European Commission. EU Neighborhood Policy - Bosnia and Herzegovina: financial assistance under Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II (IPA II). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/bosnia-herzegovina_en [Retrieved on 20 August 2019]

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ European Commission. Instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA II) 2014-2020; Bosnia and Herzegovina: EU Gender Equality Facility. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/ipa_2018_41501_ad6_bih_eu_gender_equality_facility.pdf Pg. 1.

⁶² Ibid. Pg. 12.

⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 2.

development, and sustainable infrastructure. Sweden cooperates with Bosnian and Herzegovinian partners and other donor countries to increase the efficiency of the development projects and to maximize the impact on the development of BiH. According to the Evaluation of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's (Sida), Support to Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden's support can be divided into three phases: (1) humanitarian support during the war followed by recovery and reconstruction in the immediate post war years, including support to implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords; (2) broader based development and state building support from 2000 onwards; and (3) from 2011 to the present, a significant focus on the European Union (EU) accession agenda.⁶⁴ The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment has been a major theme with a substantial focus on gender equality, women's empowerment and countering violence against women. Sweden's support to gender equality and women's empowerment has been a long-running feature of its engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has worked at various levels, including government. The support largely delivered through Swedish framework NGOs has helped institutionalize gender equality. In terms of minorities and other vulnerable groups, Sida has supported efforts to improve the status of Roma and LGBTI persons.

Sweden's engagement has increased over time from around USD 1.5 million in 1992 to USD 18 million in 1994, and around USD 25 million per year between 1998 and 2003 to around USD 45 million in 2005 before reducing again from 2008.⁶⁵ By the mid-2000s, Sweden was the largest bilateral donor of development assistance. The current Regional Strategy for Eastern Europe, Western Balkans & Turkey, launched in 2014, is focused on the EU Stabilization and Association Process objectives (and the Copenhagen Criteria) and the priority areas for the Western Balkans which include (a) enhanced economic integration, (b) democracy, human rights and rule of law (strengthened public administration

and judicial systems; human rights and democratic influence; civil society, democratic accountability, elections, independent media, gender equality, trust and reconciliation), (c) environment.⁶⁶ Sida's portfolio in Bosnia and Herzegovina maintains the comprehensive approach from its predecessor with a number of governance interventions implemented jointly with other bilateral donors, e.g. US Agency International Development (USAID) and Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC). For example, in late 2017 SIDA funded Women in Elections project, implemented by UNDP in cooperation with UN Women, aimed at strengthening women's leadership and participation in political life - by proposing structural adjustments to accommodate greater numbers of women in politics, and nourishing the next generation of women leaders in communities through tailored networking and capacity building initiatives. Support continues to be provided via Swedish framework NGOs, focusing also on gender and women's empowerment. The support to gender equality has contributed to strengthening the institutional basis for promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and action against violence against women through government action plans on gender and UNSCR 1325.⁶⁷ This has been substantially backed up through partnerships with civil society that are increasingly becoming more advocacy focused.

Switzerland

Switzerland is another important development partner for Bosnia and Herzegovina, a priority country for Switzerland's cooperation program in Eastern Europe. Switzerland's cooperation aims to ensure political stability in the country and implementation of much-needed structural economic and political reforms at the national level. Switzerland has officially contributed over one billion BAM to Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996 through local and regional development projects

⁶⁴ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. Evaluation of Sida's Support to Peacebuilding in Conflict and Post-Conflict Contexts: Bosnia and Herzegovina country report (2019). Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/eva2019_2_62211en.pdf Pg. vii.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Pg. 15.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 22.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Pg. 45.

and contributions to multilateral programs.⁶⁸ The co-operation office in Sarajevo also implements projects of the State Secretariat for Migration as part of the bilateral migration partnership between Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Swiss Cooperation Strategy 2017 – 2020 is fully aligned with both the Federal Dispatch on International Cooperation, and the respective strategies, plans and policies of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With regards to its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, there are many direct references to goals and objectives, as for example Objective 1.4 (equal right to economic resources and basic services for all), Objective 4.4 (provision of relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship), Objective 10.2 (social, economic and political inclusion of all), and Objective 16.3 (rule of law and equal access to justice for all)⁶⁹. Through its focused domains of intervention, the Swiss Cooperation Program addresses the broad population of Bosnia and Herzegovina while paying particular attention to marginalized groups and persons at risk of exclusion, including young and elderly people, children, women, people with disabilities, and Roma.⁷⁰ Good Governance and Gender Equality remain transversal

themes of the whole Swiss Cooperation Program,⁷¹ working on equal opportunities for all through a particular focus on men and boys to promote gender equality, and building gender equality into everything and everyone involved.

Switzerland maintains its focus on the local level, explores the relations between local governments and local assemblies, and advocates for empowerment of all citizens through participatory approach to address the low level of participation in general. In this context, particular focus is on improving the democratic capacities of young women and men, to provide them with more and better opportunities and perspectives.⁷² Additionally, new opportunities on the labor market, especially jobs for women, are promoted through projects on economic development in high potential value chains. These interventions are reinforced by targeted support to the development of a stronger entrepreneurship ecosystem that promotes the creation of more and decent jobs.⁷³ Providing more and better economic opportunities and perspectives to all, especially young women and men in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is one of the main goals of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy.

⁶⁸ Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA. Bilateral relations Switzerland–Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/representations-and-travel-advice/bosnia-and-herzegovina/switzerland-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html> [Retrieved on 20 August 2019]

⁶⁹ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Swiss Cooperation Strategy Bosnia and Herzegovina 2017-2020. Available at: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/bosnia-herzegovina/en/CS_BiH_ENG.pdf Pg. 15.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid. Pg. 29.

⁷² Ibid. Pg. 21.

⁷³ Ibid. Pg. 23.

3.

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK



A. International and regional commitments to gender equality

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified or inherited a number of international commitments on gender equality, including the UN (CEDAW) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1980) and its Optional Protocol, which was later reinforced by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), committing participating states to take steps towards achieving gender equality. The CEDAW commitments and recommendations of the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, as well as other UN recommendations on women's human rights and gender equality are included in the priorities of the third Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2022⁷⁴ and the third Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" for the period 2018-2022⁷⁵.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is amongst the first countries in Europe (2013) to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). Towards the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina enacted the 2015 Framework Strategy for the implementation of Istanbul Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015-2018.⁷⁶

Bosnia and Herzegovina is regularly reporting on its progress towards international bodies for gender equality and advancement of women's human rights, examples include submitting the Sixth Periodic Report under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2017, Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process in 2019, and the GREVIO report in line with the article 68 of the Istanbul Convention in 2020. Civil society in BiH is closely following all reporting processes and is submitting alternative reports accordingly. More than 20 BiH civil society organizations have drafted the Alternative CEDAW Report in 2016 and the Alternative GREVIO report in 2019.

Among the main recommendations issued by the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, including the UPR and the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee, BiH should focus on advancing gender equality through:

- Strengthening the protection of the rights of women, notably by ensuring the implementation of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination and the Law on Gender Equality. Additionally, BiH should elaborate a countrywide anti-discrimination strategy and ensure full implementation of the Gender Action Plan 2018-2022;
- Adopting labor strategies, including family strategies, with an aim to achieving gender equality in the labor market, and adequate work-life balance for both men and women, thus closing the gender wage gap and ensuring access to the necessary social and health-care services for all;
- Adopting amendments to all governments' laws to guarantee the minimal representation threshold of 40 % of women in executive governments and ministerial positions;
- Strengthening referral mechanisms for efficient response to cases of sexual violence and violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention.

B. Legal framework for gender equality

Bosnia and Herzegovina's legal framework may still be interpreted as gender-blind as most laws, including the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, do not include specific provisions on gender equality nor do they actively promote gender equality in private and public life. The legal system in BiH remains challenging and continues to provide opportunities for gender based discrimination due to the lack of harmonization of laws across political entities, their inconsistent implementation, as well as lack of effective monitoring.⁷⁷ However, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant efforts to

⁷⁴ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

⁷⁵ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 1/19.

⁷⁶ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 75/15.

⁷⁷ USAID. MEASURE BiH – Gender Analysis Report for BiH (2016). Pg. 10.

harmonize its legislative framework with international standards and commitments.

The Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted in 2003⁷⁸ and amended in 2009⁷⁹ with improved definitions and implementation provisions. Consolidated text was published in 2010.⁸⁰ The Law on Gender Equality specifically addresses education, employment, labor and access to resources, equal representation, social protection, healthcare, culture and sports, public life, and media. The Law on Gender Equality also provides the framework for the gender institutional mechanisms that implement the Law and monitor its implementation. The Law mandates that equal representation of men and women exists when one sex is represented with at least 40 percent in the public sector bodies at all levels of authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina (state, entity, cantonal and municipal levels). This provision applies to legislative, executive, and judicial branches, political parties, legal persons with public authorities and others that work under the auspices of the state, entities, cantons, cities, and municipalities. It also applies to appointments to delegations and international organizations or bodies. Up to date, the most important legal harmonization with the respective provision was done in 2013 when the Election Law of BiH was amended to include the definition of gender equal representation that exists only when one of the genders is represented with minimum 40 percent of the total number of candidates on each candidates' list.⁸¹

Victims of discrimination may seek judicial protection in accordance with the existing procedures. Special proceedings for protection from discrimination are

possible in compliance with the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁸² The Law was amended in 2016,⁸³ extending the list of discrimination grounds to explicitly include age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and sexual characteristics, and additionally defining severe forms of discrimination and introducing multiple, repeated and prolonged forms of discrimination. The definition of victimization was also amended so that inciting to discrimination is now considered a form of discrimination and a more direct emphasis was put on the obligation of the Ombudsman Institution to promote the Law and inform the public on its scope. The status of the victim of discrimination was advanced in the context of effective use of protection mechanisms, particularly the court proceedings for the protection against discrimination. This advancement, among others, pertains to deadlines for filing a lawsuit for protection against discrimination which have been extended.⁸⁴ Other novelties pertain to jurisdiction⁸⁵ and improvements with regards to collective lawsuits⁸⁶, including the introduction of the situation testing or a possibility for a witness to be the person knowingly exposed to discrimination in order to verify the application of the rule on prohibition of discrimination.

Laws on Protection from Domestic Violence were adopted in the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2012⁸⁷ and 2013⁸⁸ respectively, and later amended to be more in compliance with the Istanbul Convention. The two laws replicate the definitions and elements of violence from the mentioned framework, whereby domestic violence includes physical, psychological, or sexual pain and suffering, as well as economic damages against a family member.

⁷⁸ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 16/03.

⁷⁹ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 102/09.

⁸⁰ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 32/10.

⁸¹ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 18/13.

⁸² Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 59/09.

⁸³ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 66/16.

⁸⁴ The deadlines were too short before (subjective deadline of three months and objective deadline of one year) and as such did not provide for adequate protection of victims of discrimination. The deadline for filing a lawsuit is now three years as of the day of finding about violation of a right, and no longer than five years as of the day a violation was committed. In case of a continued discrimination, the deadline is counted as of the day of the latest action, while in cases of systemic discrimination the deadline does not exist.

⁸⁵ Besides the court with general jurisdiction, the jurisdiction for lawsuits now lies with the court in the plaintiff's permanent or temporary place of residence and the court in the place where the damage was incurred, or the action of discrimination committed. This provision eliminates potential technical and financial obstacles in terms of access to court which is particularly important to persons from socially vulnerable and marginalized groups.

⁸⁶ Refers to the situation regarding collective lawsuits by associations and organizations in charge of protecting human rights or rights of one particular group, therefore an unspecific and arbitrary criterion of having a justified interest is eliminated as it limited the scope of collective lawsuits.

⁸⁷ Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 102/12, 108/13 and 82/15.

⁸⁸ Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 102/12

Brčko District BiH adopted the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence in 2018⁸⁹ including all required rulebooks, closing the legislation gap on protection against domestic violence on the territory of the whole country.

Another advancement pertains to the Law on Development Planning and Development Management in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁹⁰ adopted towards advancing and maintaining the efficient system of development planning which contributes to a sustainable socio-economic growth and development in FBiH, as one of the basic principles in establishing and functioning of a harmonized system of development planning is the recognition of gender equality. By enacting the new Labor Law,⁹¹ the Federation BiH made significant progress in terms of parental leave. The possibility for a father to use parental leave contributes to the advancement and promotion of fatherhood role as one of the factors of increased gender equality in the fields of labor and economic relations. The new Labor Law was also adopted in the RS⁹², maintaining and improving the standards of gender equality and protection against discrimination and violence. The new Criminal Code of the RS⁹³ was also adopted. Harmonized with the standards of Istanbul Convention, it includes three new criminal offences, to wit: female genital mutilation, stalking and sexual harassment. These offences have not yet been introduced in the Criminal Code of the FBiH.

However, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the measures (including by-laws) taken by the BiH governments to alleviate the consequences on public health negatively affected gender equality. The measures lacked proper analysis of their potential impact on different groups of the population depending on their gender, age, ethnicity, migrant status, or any other determined characteristic. In particular, the measures did not take into account the specific needs of people in the situation of vulnerability, even before the outset of the pandemic. Consequently, the measures that were finally adopted lacked any gender and intersectionality

awareness, which means that they were not mindful of their multifaceted impact on women and other vulnerable groups in the situation of vulnerability. By doing so, the governments on different levels have failed to see how women, especially those from vulnerable categories, were being affected, which deepened the existing gender inequality in the society. Moreover, the governments did not take into account the groups who are most at risk, such as survivors of VAW, survivors or potential targets of trafficking in human beings, and women working in the grey economy, such as most paid caregivers. Consideration was neither given to those providing social services to some of these groups, such as workers of Safe Houses. The consequences are analyzed in detail in the Section IV below.

C. Strategic approach to gender equality

The Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a comprehensive medium-term strategy for gender equality and empowerment of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This strategy is based on the national legal framework for gender equality and the binding and recommended international documents, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN, CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and others. The goal of the GAP is to guide ministries and other institutions in mainstreaming gender equality principles in their work in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. The BiH institutions are expected to adopt annual operation plans to enable systematic and coordinated action in the process of mainstreaming gender into the work of institutions based on the GAP.

The first GAP that was implemented in the period of 2006-2011 was followed by the second GAP for the period of 2013-2017⁹⁴ which covered similar areas as the first GAP and placed significant focus on strengthening gender institutional mechanisms, as well as monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GAP. The

⁸⁹ Official Gazette of BD BiH, Vol. 7/18.

⁹⁰ Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 32/17.

⁹¹ Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 26/16 and 89/18.

⁹² Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 1/16 and 66/18.

⁹³ Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 64/17.

⁹⁴ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 98/13.

third and current GAP was adopted for the period of 2018-2022⁹⁵ as a document detailing strategic goals, programs and measures towards gender equality in all spheres of social life and labor with three strategic goals: (1) developing, implementing and monitoring programs for advancement of gender equality in government institutions, in accordance with priority areas, (2) establishing and strengthening the system, mechanisms and instruments for achieving gender equality, and (3) establishing and strengthening cooperation and partnerships.⁹⁶

In July 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the first country in the region with an Action Plan (AP) for Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security”, followed by the second Action Plan for the period of 2014-2017.⁹⁷ The third Action Plan for implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in BiH for the period 2018-2022⁹⁸ was adopted in 2018 with the aim of consistent, high quality, and effective implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in BiH, and it was developed in consultation with the non-governmental organizations. The strategic objectives of the Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 (2018-2022) are as follow: (1) Increased participation of women in the military, police and peacekeeping missions, including participation in decision-making places, (2) Increased human security through the prism of gender equality, and (3) Improved conditions and access to the implementation of the Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.⁹⁹

Towards the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina enacted the 2015 Framework Strategy for the implementation of Istanbul Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2015-2018.¹⁰⁰ The final report on the implementation of the framework strategy has noted the progress in the realization of goals and measures, with the challenge being that the Republika Srpska Government did not accept its implementation.¹⁰¹ For the said reason, the coordination body for the Strategy implementation has not been established which is why this role is taken by the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the Framework strategy is not accepted in Republika Srpska, the implementation of the Istanbul Convention is not at jeopardy: the new Criminal Code of RS is harmonized with the standards of the Convention, the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence is also harmonized, Strategy for Prevention of Domestic Violence¹⁰² in RS is adopted and implemented (2014-2019)¹⁰³ as well as a special Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Republika Srpska for the period 2019-2020.

Gender Centers of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina coordinate the sector strategies and action plans at the entity level, pertaining to: domestic violence, advancement of women in rural areas, introduction of gender responsive budgeting and response to natural disasters. Some of the priorities¹⁰⁴ for accelerating progress for

⁹⁵ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

⁹⁶ GAP BiH 2018-2022. Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

⁹⁷ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/14.

⁹⁸ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

⁹⁹ AP BiH UNSCR 1325 2018-2022. Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 89/18.

¹⁰⁰ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 75/15.

¹⁰¹ Government of Republika Srpska does not recognize and does not accept the implementation of the Framework Strategy of BiH for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (2015-2018), in line with the Conclusion of the RS Government No. 04/012-2-1674/15 dated 3 August 2015.

¹⁰² Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 102/12, 108/13 and 82/15.

¹⁰³ Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 63/14.

¹⁰⁴ The overall national strategic framework relevant to said priorities includes: Framework Strategy for the Implementation of the Convention on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2018, FBIH 2013-2017 Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (extended to 2020), 2014-2019 Strategy for Combating Domestic Violence in the RS, 2018-2020 Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for prevention and elimination of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019-2020 Action Plan for implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Republika Srpska, 2016-2020 Strategic plan of agricultural and rural areas development in Republika Srpska, 2019-2020 Action Plan for enhancement of the position of rural women in Republika Srpska, 2019-2029 Strategy for advancement of sexual and reproductive health in Republika Srpska, 2018-2020 Action Plan for development of women's entrepreneurship in Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018-2022 Strategy for development of women's entrepreneurship in Republika Srpska, 2016-2020 Strategy for development of small and medium enterprises in Republika Srpska. Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 18-22.

women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programs include equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice; eliminating violence against women and girls; right to work and rights at work; women's entrepreneurship and women's enterprises; and, gender-responsive budgeting.

Local strategies

In accordance with the Law on Gender Equality, many local self-governance units are adopting local gender action plans (LGAP) which operationalize the GAP's high-level priorities, bearing in mind local circumstances and competence of local self-governance units. However, the first local 3-5 year policies for women's empowerment developed by the municipalities were only the first step in changing the mindset of local authorities, and were often of lower quality due to low capacities for gender analysis and limited sources of sex-disaggregated, statistically representative data. Increasingly, and with guidance from the entity gender centers, the quality of data available for gender analysis is improving, as is the quality of gender analyses and policies themselves.¹⁰⁵

As of 2012, civil society organizations and gender institutional mechanisms have been developing municipal plans for localization of the UNSCR 1325 Action Plan that go beyond the traditional concept of security and include soft dimensions of security. Such local documents should, in the future, aim to identify communities where any form of radicalization may contribute to gender inequalities. They should also focus more on identifying the needs of men, in particular young men.¹⁰⁶

Financing landscape and opportunities

The Financial Mechanism for the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan (FIGAP) is the Program for financing the implementation of the BiH GAP and has been implemented with extensions from 2010 to 2016. FIGAP was developed in response to the clearly expressed need of BiH gender institutional mechanisms to build their own capacities, as well as the capacities of other governmental institutions and civil society organizations to implement the GAP and other gender-responsive policies.¹⁰⁷ Three international donors (Swedish Sida, Austrian ADA and Swiss SDC) allocated financial resources for the FIGAP program in the total amount of EUR 2.8 million.¹⁰⁸ Over 60 projects were implemented by institutions and around 80 projects were implemented by civil society organizations across Bosnia and Herzegovina with the support of the FIGAP Program funds.¹⁰⁹

Following the Final Evaluation Report of the FIGAP Program, which confirmed that the funds were spent effectively and efficiently, some donors expressed their readiness to continue their support. Thus, in 2018, a special agreement was signed between the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sida, called FIGAP II Program (2018-2021) with the purpose of supporting the implementation of the GAP BiH 2018-2022.¹¹⁰ The goal of the Program is improvement of socio-economic conditions and equal opportunities for women and men, and girls and boys through public decisions (policies, budgets and service provision), in line with the FIGAP Proposal.

The percentage of the national budget at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is annually invested in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment

¹⁰⁵ USAID. MEASURE BiH – Gender Analysis Report for BiH (2016). Pg. 20.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. Pg. 21.

¹⁰⁷ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019).

¹⁰⁸ The FIGAP program was focused on achieving four expected results: (1) Strengthened material and human resources of gender institutional mechanisms needed to carry out mandates and legal competencies; (2) Strengthened government institutions for the implementation of the GAP activities of priority areas within their jurisdiction (allocation of funds to competent institutions); (3) Strengthened partnerships between non-institutional and institutional partners for the implementation of gender equality standards, with focus on end-users (grants to non-governmental organizations); (4) Improved mechanisms for monitoring progress in achieving gender equality in BiH according to international and domestic obligations.

¹⁰⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 49.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. Pg. 48.

of women is 0.05 percent.¹¹¹ This share is intended financing the work of the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and includes grants to non-governmental organizations in the field of gender equality. Situation is similar at the entity level, whereby in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina it is estimated that about 0.05 percent of the total FBiH budget is allocated for the promotion of gender equality, while in the Republika Srpska this percentage is approximately 0.04 percent.¹¹²

D. Gender institutional framework

The network of institutional mechanisms for gender issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes legislative and executive authorities at all levels. Commissions/committees for gender equality have been established at all levels within the legislative authorities. There is a Gender Equality Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the state level, and at the entity level, the Gender Equality Committee of the House of Peoples and the Gender Equality Commission of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament, and the Committee for Equal Opportunities of the National Assembly of the RS. The gender equality committees of the cantonal assemblies in the FBiH have also been established. The commissions within municipal councils/assemblies operate in almost all municipalities in BiH at the local level.¹¹³

Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina operates within the executive branch of BiH¹¹⁴. At the entity level are the Gender Centers established earlier, to wit the Gender Center of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹¹⁵ and the Gender Center of the Republika Srpska¹¹⁶. The institutions for gender

equality have not been established within the executive branch at the cantonal level in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Commissions for gender equality have been established within the offices of several mayors. However, the work of these committees/ commissions at the lower level of both legislative and executive authorities is not uniform, and many commissions do not work adequately or continuously. All institutional mechanisms have a precisely defined mandate. Mandates of the three mentioned institutional mechanisms are defined under the Law on Gender Equality and the decision establishing these institutions, which shows government's commitment towards achieving gender equality and inclusion of gender issues in all areas of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The three gender institutional mechanisms are key drivers of initiatives, policy makers and proponents of measures for the introduction and implementation of the principles of gender equality, including oversight of these processes, enjoying independence guarantees in accordance with the institutional form of establishment.¹¹⁷

According to the Law on Gender Equality, all policies in the process of development at any government level should be sent to gender institutional mechanisms for comments. Since the lower level gender institutional mechanisms are generally underdeveloped, the Gender Equality Agency and the entity-level Gender Centers are the primary expert bodies for gender mainstreaming.¹¹⁸

Gender mainstreaming in the legislative and strategic framework has been an ongoing activity of gender institutional mechanisms ever since their establishment, and so the achievements reached in this regard in the reporting period are the result of a several years long strategic approach to the gender mainstreaming at all levels in BiH.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid. Pg. 62.

¹¹⁴ Official Gazette of BiH, Vol. 12/04.

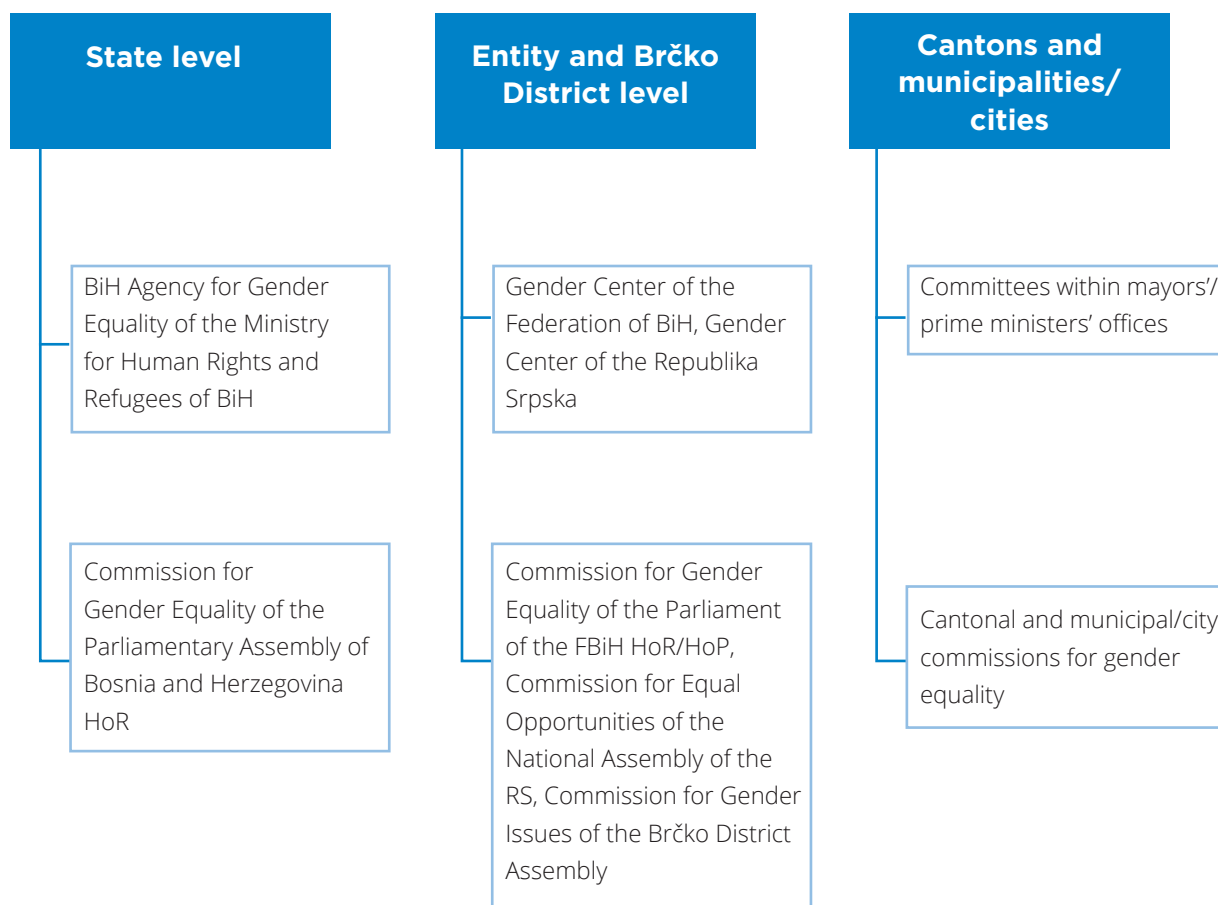
¹¹⁵ Official Gazette of FBiH, Vol. 53/00 and 64/05.

¹¹⁶ Official Gazette of RS, Vol. 31/02, 63/05 and 33/09.

¹¹⁷ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 62.

¹¹⁸ USAID. MEASURE BiH – Gender Analysis Report for BiH (2016). Pg. 26.

¹¹⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019).



4.

GENDER ANALYSIS BY THEME



A. Gender equality, governance, political participation, public life, and decision-making

The presence of women in governance, decision-making, and public life is still an area with a wide gender gap, despite the bulk of work done on the political empowerment of women and amendments to the legislation whose aim was to encourage women to take up political and decision-making positions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, the effects of patriarchal upbringing affect the roles in which women and men are placed from the start, which usually reflects the notion that men are more fit for leadership roles and that women are more suitable for roles in private life. A research conducted in Republika Srpska has shown that 31.6 percent of grown women and 39.1 percent of grown men think that men are more suitable for public and women for private activities.¹²⁰

According to stakeholders consulted in the process of the Country Gender Equality Profile development, participation in public and political life, and in the decision-making is considered one of the top three areas in gender equality work that UN Agencies should prioritize in Bosnia and Herzegovina (67 percent). Low level of women's participation in the decision-making processes is considered one of the top three challenges/obstacles in achieving gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that should be addressed by the UN (39.6 percent).¹²¹

Legal framework for ensuring gender equality in political participation and decision making

Despite the fact that the legal framework is set up to include women in the decision-making processes, in practice women remain underrepresented both in

decision-making positions and in the main bodies of political parties. For example, although the Law on Gender Equality¹²² prescribes the 40 percent threshold for the underrepresented sex in all government bodies (legislative, executive and judiciary) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the Election Law of BiH¹²³ obliges political parties to include 40 percent of women on their electoral lists, women make up around 20% in all legislative and executive bodies¹²⁴.

Even if the electoral party list must contain at least one candidate of the less represented sex among the first two candidates, two candidates of less represented sex among the top five candidates, and so forth, political parties' policies are not harmonized with the Law on Gender Equality. Additionally, even if women are active within their own political parties, they are not equally represented in their parties' main decision-making bodies.¹²⁵ Leadership of political parties rarely includes or involves women, and there is not a single political party in the country with a female president. Because women are excluded from decision-making processes within the parties, they have limited opportunities to improve their political skills, and gain access to financing which would enable them to run their own campaigns. Women's associations within the parties have no influence and their work revolves around the issues considered to be "female". Only around 10% of women are electoral lists leaders, they are usually positioned second, while men continue to dominate compensatory lists.¹²⁶

Moreover, the complexity of the political and electoral system further complicates women's involvement in decision-making, as traditionally men are well versed in the political strategies of BiH while women are only marginally present in these processes. It is still expected for men to have more political power, which seriously undermines the participation and representation of women in the political processes and perpetuates stereotypes about their involvement in public life.

Finally, the amendments to the Election Law of BiH, introducing equal gender representation on candidate

¹²⁰ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process 2019. Pg. 9.

¹²¹ See Annex 2.

¹²² Official Gazette of BiH, 16/03, 102/09 Consolidated Text 32/10.

¹²³ Official Gazette of BiH, 23/01, 7/02, 9/02, 20/02, 25/02, 4/04, 20/04, 25/05 52/05, 65/05, 77/05, 11/06, 24/06, 32/07, 33/08, 32/10, 18/13, 7/14 and 31/16.

¹²⁴ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 24.

¹²⁵ Ibid, Pg. 52

¹²⁶ Ibid. Farzani, Pg. 52.

lists (50 percent of both genders) were drafted in 2016 but were not adopted.¹²⁷ Similar efforts were made to amend the Law on the Council of Ministers of BiH and introduce the 40 percent gender quota. The law was not adopted by the parliament even though it was passed in the first reading.¹²⁸

Overview of current trends in political participation and decision-making

Women remain excluded from major political processes, which has been the trend since the signing of the Dayton agreement that also characterizes the current process of the European integrations. The process of signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union in 2015 did not include women in the decision-making processes¹²⁹, which demonstrates the lack of political will to respect gender equality as an inseparable part of the EU integration process and all crucial reform processes that are a part of it. Women are represented in diplomacy with 23 percent of female ambassadors, 17 percent of female general consuls, and 40 percent of permanent female mission leaders.¹³⁰ Women make up 34 percent of negotiating delegations for the conclusion of international documents on police cooperation, readmission, protection of classified information, protection and rescue.¹³¹ There is at least one woman within each negotiating delegation, and there is equal representation in the agreements/protocols on readmission.¹³² The representation of marginalized women is an even bigger challenge, as their presence in governance, decision-making and public life remains

very limited, due to the double discrimination they are exposed to.

In the 2016 local elections, although women voted in equal proportion as men and they made up to 41 percent of candidates for the local councils, only 18.2 percent were elected.¹³³ Most women were elected in the West Herzegovina Canton (30.4 percent), and the lowest percentage was in Canton 10 (4 percent).¹³⁴ Out of 140 elected mayors, only 6 were women (one in the FBiH and five in the RS),¹³⁵ which is not surprising considering that there were only 26 women candidates. The trend of women not running for mayoral positions continues in 2020 as only 29 women were candidates for 2020 Local Elections, i.e. 6.8 percent of the total number of candidates.

A survey conducted by USAID in 19 municipalities during the 2016 elections showed that 57.6 percent of female voters voted for female candidates, and women with higher education were more inclined to vote for female candidates.¹³⁶

No woman has ever been elected as the member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though there were female candidates in the 2010 and 2014 general elections.¹³⁷ Women were also never elected as chair or deputy chair of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹³⁸ At entity level, in the 2014-2018 mandate, a woman became a vice president of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and another woman became prime minister of the Republika Srpska.¹³⁹ There are 25 percent of women in the RS government, and there has been an increase of 25 percent of female ministers in the government of the FBiH since the last parliamentary elections, but there has been a decrease in the representation of women

¹²⁷ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 23-24

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid. Pg. 49.

¹³⁰ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 26.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 50.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Pg. 53.

¹³⁷ Ibid. Pg. 54.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

in cantonal ministerial positions.¹⁴⁰ In the 2018 General Elections, Željka Cvijanović was elected president of the Republika Srpska, being a second women ever to hold this position after Biljana Plavšić in the 1996-1998 mandate.

Results of the October 2018 general elections in BiH again resulted in insufficient representation of women. At the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the House of Representatives, out of 42 representatives only 11 are women (26 percent) and in the House of Peoples out of 15 just 3 are women (20 percent); at the level of the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament, out of 98 representatives only 25 are women (25.5 percent); and at the level of the National Assembly of the RS out of 83 representatives only 14 are women (16.8 percent).¹⁴¹

Even though they represent an equal part of the electorate, women continue to be ignored as a constituency, which requires attention. Women vote in equal proportion to men, as shown by the data of the 2018 general election –50.1 percent of voters were women and 27.41 percent of women were elected in those elections.

Representation of women at different levels of the judiciary is significantly better compared to the executive and legislative branches, at times reaching parity with their male counterparts. Participation of women in local courts and the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council is just over 60 percent.¹⁴² Women account for 40 percent of the highest positions in courts, including judges and court presidents, 16.6 percent in prosecutor's

offices, and comprise up to 80 percent of presidents of cantonal courts and 33 percent of chief prosecutors.¹⁴³ The situation is different when it comes to representation of women in police and security agencies. Here, women usually work at lower administrative positions, and not many of them hold higher ranks within police structures.¹⁴⁴ Women make up 7.5 percent of the police forces, mainly in positions of police and senior police officers, inspectors, junior and senior inspectors.¹⁴⁵ In the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, women make up only 5 percent of personnel at senior positions, in the State Investigation and Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SIPA) women make up 14.52 percent of police officers and junior inspectors, while their presence is the lowest in the Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where they make up 4.8 percent of police officers and junior inspectors.¹⁴⁶ Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RS has 7.8 percent of women as police officers, inspectors and senior inspectors, while more women work at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the FBiH (46.06 percent), but mostly on low-level positions.¹⁴⁷ In the Ministry of Defense women are represented by 22% of the workforce, but again at lower level administrative positions. In the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina only 2.5 percent of women work in managerial positions.¹⁴⁸ The Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina employs 47 percent of women and has thereby met the legal requirement of hiring at least 40 percent of underrepresented sex.¹⁴⁹ More women are deployed in peacekeeping missions. According to the data of the Ministry of Security of BiH, the number of women in peacekeeping missions increased from 16 percent in 2009 to 30 percent in 2016.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁰ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 25.

¹⁴¹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process, 2019. Pg. 9.

¹⁴² Ibid. Pg. 55.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Pg. 57.

¹⁴⁵ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 25.

¹⁴⁶ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 57.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. Pg. 58.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 9.

Progress has been made in terms of introducing gender equality into the work of relevant defense and security institutions, with trainings on gender equality now included in regular training programs, gender focal points appointed in all defense and security institutions, and sex disaggregated databases further improved and regularly updated.¹⁵¹

In public institutions in BiH there are 3,889 civil servants, out of which 53 percent are women.¹⁵² In the institutions of the FBiH there are 53 percent of female employees, and in the institutions of the RS they comprise 60 percent, however mostly men hold the managerial positions in both entities with up to 59 percent of those positions.¹⁵³ The participation of women in the police, military and peacekeeping missions has been improved. In the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the minister and three heads of departments are women.

Instructions on using gender sensitive language in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, proposed by the Commission for Gender Equality of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014, were adopted in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. Progress was also made with the formation of the Women's Caucus in the FBiH Parliament, the first inter-party caucus in BiH, which works on developing and adopting measures and overseeing legislation in all areas of interest for women.¹⁵⁴

However, these improvements are not as common as they should be, as majority of institutions, especially in the cantons, do not include the gender perspective in their work and/or planning. For example, the Alternative CEDAW Report for 2016 refers to a research study that showed that half of municipalities/towns in BiH demonstrated no understanding, capacity, or willingness

to take the necessary measures to advance gender equality.¹⁵⁵

Public life: the portrayal of women and girls in media

Many journalists are insensitive to gender equality in their reporting. In BiH, women are rarely the subject of central news, especially with regards to key focus areas such as politics, economics, and government, which are reserved for men. Stereotyping and unbalanced reporting from a gender perspective contribute to unequal gender power relations. Moreover, most media translate the dominant gender stereotypes on women in elections and women receive less attention than men. A tailored study of the portrayal of women in the 2018 elections showed that women candidates appeared in only 3% of media reports analyses while only three women appeared as political commentators/experts.¹⁵⁶

Additionally, reporting on VAW remains sensationalistic, and it is discussed only sporadically when marking important dates such as the International Day against VAW. Still nowadays the main cause of the sensationalistic and biased reporting against women and girls is rooted in outdated editorial policies, as presented by the AGE BiH¹⁵⁷.

The AGE BiH called on the media to develop measures to prevent using gender stereotypes and prejudices in their reporting, and to strive for a more balanced representation of women in the media. At the proposal of the MHRR BiH, in 2017, the BiH Council of Ministers adopted the 2016-2019 Action Plan for Trainings in Human Rights for Journalists and Media Professionals.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 9.

¹⁵² Ibid. Pg. 25.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. Pg. 24.

¹⁵⁵ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 64.

¹⁵⁶ Kadribasic et al, Baseline Study on Barriers to Political Participation of Women, UN Women and UNDP, 2020, available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/baseline-study-on-barriers-to-political-participation-of-women-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina> [Retrieved on 8 October 2020]

¹⁵⁷ <https://arsbih.gov.ba/preporuka-medijima/>

The AP outlines concrete measures to improve the access for marginalized and minority groups and their presentation in the media, including the development of guidelines for media coverage from the perspective of protection and promotion of human rights, including gender equality. Finally, several initiatives of capacity building for journalists and editors on gender sensitive reporting were carried out by national media broadcasters with the support of international partners, including on topics such as VAW or gender and natural disasters response¹⁵⁸.

Summary of challenges related to achieving gender equality in political participation and decision making

1. *Traditional gender roles*: Refers to cultural factors which include beliefs about appropriate gender roles in relation to political participation and decision-making, resulting in a popular view that men are more fit for leadership roles and that women are more suitable for roles in private life.
2. *Hostile political environment for women to take more active roles*: Besides the evident discrimination against women in politics reflected in various obstacles they have to overcome to access decision-making positions, women in politics also experience high levels of gender-based violence.¹⁵⁹
3. *Exclusion of women from major decision-making processes*: Refers to multi-layered issue of excluding women manifested through gender-blind party regulations, unequal access to and allocation of party resources, overall party culture that perpetuates gender-based stereotypes and double

standards, as well as lack of political will to amend legislation to ensure more women in executive government branch.

4. *Economic dependence*: Lack of economic independence restricts women from making their own decisions regarding their active roles in politics and decision-making. This tendency has been gaining incidence with the re-traditionalization of the BiH society after the war and the higher influence of conservative values.¹⁶⁰
5. *Biased portray of women and girls in the media*: sensationalistic and biased reporting against women and girls is widespread in all media outlets in BiH, as is the absence of women as the center of news pieces when reporting about political processes.

B. Gender equality and economic environment

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a strong legal framework when it comes to labor policies, which are regulated under the entity and Brčko District laws. All labor laws prohibit discrimination on a variety of grounds, gender included, and prescribe sanctions if these provisions are violated. As regards the gender dimension of labor, the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination reinforce the notion that discrimination based on gender is prohibited by guaranteeing equal opportunities and treatment for men and women in all spheres of society.¹⁶¹ However, despite the adequate legal framework, the status of women in the labor market is still inadequate, and far from equal, which is reflected in the high unemployment rate, large reliance on women in the care economy, and overly present patriarchal social norms. All of these factors hinder the full presence of women

¹⁵⁸ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/64/national-reviews/bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf?la=en&vs=4937 Pg. 41-43

¹⁵⁹ A recent study showed that 45.8 percent of women in politics have experienced violence just because they are women. [Miftari, Edita. Violence Against Women in Politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Westminster Democratic Foundation 2019. Pg. 24.]

¹⁶⁰ In today's BiH the trust relies not on the state or state institutions but on the ethno-political parties and the religious groups. According to a survey published by the Sarajevo-based think tank Analitika in 2014, governmental and parliamentary bodies enjoy significantly less trust (between 22.1% and 25.7%) than do religious institutions (+50%) available at https://www.analitika.ba/sites/default/files/publikacije/povjerenje_fact_sheet_english.pdf [Retrieved 8 October 2020]

¹⁶¹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 25.

in the labor market, but also limit their entrepreneurial potential and choices when it comes to the type of work they would like to pursue, forcing them to look for work in the shadow economy.

According to the stakeholders consulted in the process of the Country Gender Equality Profile development, economic empowerment, access to resources, and employment is considered one of the top three areas of gender equality work that the UN Agencies should prioritize in Bosnia and Herzegovina (62.2 percent). Economic gender inequality (30.2 percent) is considered the fourth major challenge/obstacle in achieving gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina that should be addressed by the UN.¹⁶²

Women's participation in the labor market

In 2016, women accounted for 51.5 percent of the working age population; for 35.9 percent of the total number of employed persons, and for 61.5 percent of the inactive population.¹⁶³ According to the annual Labor Force Survey conducted among 10,647 households in 2018, women have a lower employment rate than men (25 percent compared to 44.1 percent), and a higher unemployment rate (20.3 percent compared to 17.2 percent).¹⁶⁴ The latest number of registered unemployed persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina from June 2019 was 405,476, and women made up 56.9 percent of this figure (230,548).¹⁶⁵ Most unemployed women had secondary education, followed by unskilled women, and finally, those skilled and highly skilled.¹⁶⁶ The gender gap in unemployment in 2018 decreased to 3.1 percent, compared to 4.2 percent in 2017 and

7.5 percent in 2016,¹⁶⁷ but compared to other countries in the region, Bosnia and Herzegovina has the lowest percentage of women's participation in the total number of persons registered on the labor market.¹⁶⁸

There is a gap between marginalized Roma and neighboring non-Roma in terms of human capabilities and material wellbeing. The gap is almost triple for young people – only 14 percent of Roma aged 18-24 are in employment, education or training, compared to 41 percent of non-Roma, and the gender gap remains significant – while women in both groups are less likely to be employed, marginalized Roma women have one of the lowest employment rates in the Western Balkans region: only 4 percent were employed in 2017 (versus 19 percent among marginalized Roma men).¹⁶⁹ In 2017, the labor force participation of marginalized Roma women was only 13 percent, versus 39 percent among their male counterparts; this gap is also present among neighboring non-Roma, though it is smaller.¹⁷⁰ A gender gap also exists among marginalized Roma youth, with females being more likely to be NEET (not in employment, education or training). However, while NEET rates remained high and relatively stable for young marginalized Roma women (92 percent in 2011 and 93 percent in 2017), there was a significant increase for young marginalized Roma men (from 71 percent in 2011 to 81 percent in 2017).¹⁷¹

Women are much more present in the labor sphere than before, but they still tend to choose jobs in the care or service industry, following the stereotype of “male” and “female” jobs. They are much more vulnerable to choosing to work in the informal sector. Women will wait much longer to get their first job, as they enter an already established context of pre-assigned occupations. Most women are employed in the service sector (66.2 percent, compared to 43.8

¹⁶² See Annex 2.

¹⁶³ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 29.

¹⁶⁴ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Labor Force Survey 2018. Available at: http://www.bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Biltenei/2018/LAB_00_2018_Y1_0_BS.pdf

¹⁶⁵ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Demography and Social Statistics – Registered Unemployment in June 2019. Published on 20 August 2019. Available at: http://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2019/LAB_03_2019_06_0_BS.pdf Pg. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Labor Force Survey 2018. Pg. 27.

¹⁶⁸ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 29.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Development Program. *Regional Roma Survey 2017*: Country fact sheets. Pg. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Pg. 2.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

percent of men), followed by agriculture (16 percent, compared to 15.5 percent of men) and industry (17.8 percent, compared to 40.7 percent of men),¹⁷² while being overrepresented in sectors such as education (67.6 percent) and health and social work activities (71 percent),¹⁷³ typically considered to be “female occupations”, which allows gender stereotypes to further exclude women from occupations traditionally perceived as male (manufacturing, construction, mining, transportation, etc.).¹⁷⁴ At the same time, they face the glass-ceiling phenomenon, and are unable to move forward in their careers above a certain point, which limits their potential for professional growth and decision-making. According to the first Survey on the number of women and men in management structures (administrative and supervisory/executive boards) of enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina (conducted by the Gender Equality Agency of BiH and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH in May 2014), only 15.7 percent of women were observed in these positions,¹⁷⁵ 15.1 percent of women were members of private sector boards, while only 12.5 percent were presidents of such boards.¹⁷⁶

Gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the labor market

A recent study has shown that gender-based discrimination in hiring still exists, as women are being asked questions pertaining to family planning, marital status and family status during job interviews, while job

advertisements sometimes openly discriminate against women applicants by requiring applicants to attach their photos to their applications.¹⁷⁷ Such practices indicate that physical appearance will be evaluated as a condition of employment which is inappropriate, degrading, and it constitutes indirect discrimination against potential candidates.¹⁷⁸ Although the laws prohibit this behavior, it is still very much present among the employers, as well as the practice of termination of employment contracts with pregnant women in order to avoid maternity leave-related payments and legal obligations.¹⁷⁹ Labor laws include provisions on usage of both maternity and paternity leave, which can act as additional protection from using pregnancy and family planning by employers as a reason to limit the employment of women in any way.¹⁸⁰ However, no data is available on how much fathers use paternity leave,¹⁸¹ while maternity leave is not regulated equally state-wide. This is particularly the problem in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where maternity leave pay is largely unregulated in the 10 cantons, with some cantons offering full remuneration during maternity leave, and others offering none.¹⁸² Additional inequality is reflected in the fact that while women employed in the public sector receive 100 percent of their salary during maternity leave, women working in the real and private sector are paid 50 to 90 percent of their salaries.¹⁸³ This puts self-employed women and single women in a particularly hard position as they face additional financial challenges to provide for themselves. The gender pay gap exists despite the law provisions that prohibit it, and persists regardless of the level of person's qualification, education, and age. According to the 2015 World Bank Survey, hourly pay is around 9 percent higher in favor of men.¹⁸⁴ Average monthly

¹⁷² Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Labor Force Survey 2018. Pg. 49.

¹⁷³ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 30.

¹⁷⁶ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Glass Ceiling in the Labor Market in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Available at: <https://arsbih.gov.ba/stakleni-krov-na-trzistu-rada/> [Retrieved on 20 August 2019].

¹⁷⁷ Gačanica, Lejla. *Gender-Based Discrimination and Labor in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Banja Luka: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka, 2019. Pg. 41.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 29.

¹⁸⁰ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 32.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. Pg. 29.

¹⁸² The Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman/Ombudsmen of BiH. Special report on protection of mothers and motherhood in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014). Available at: https://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba/documents/obudsmen_doc2015102111102085bos.pdf Pg. 21.

¹⁸³ Voluntary Review of Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina UN, 2019. Pg. 61.

¹⁸⁴ The World Bank, Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, FBiH Institute for Statistics and RS Institute for Statistics. *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender Disparities in Endowments, Access to Economic Opportunities and Agency*, 2015. Pg. 52.

paid off net earnings per person in employment in legal entities was 910 KM in June 2019,¹⁸⁵ however there is no official data segregated by gender in this regard.

Various incentives and programs aimed at increasing the employment of women are implemented throughout the country. Under the 2018 Work Program of the Employment Office of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, women are identified as a target group of all individual programs for co-financing employment, self-employment and preparation for work.¹⁸⁶ Women continue to perform their roles at home as well, and are burdened with unpaid domestic work. Their primary roles as caretakers of children and elderly go along with their regular employment and presence in the labor market. With pressures to obtain and keep employment, while not being granted adequate benefits during maternity leave, and inequality in the private sphere where men are still not encouraged to take up household chores, women often opt for part-time jobs or decide to leave the labor market. Self-employment is rarely taken up by women, regardless of a number of programs which now promote entrepreneurship, especially for women – in 2018, only 3.6 percent of women were self-employed, compared to 8.6 percent of men.¹⁸⁷ This is likely the result of women not owning property, and thereby not being decisive enough about investing in financial independence.¹⁸⁸ Monitoring and evaluation of women entrepreneurship needs to be advanced, while programs supporting entrepreneurship need to be tailored to women's needs, especially in rural areas.¹⁸⁹

Additional challenge to women's advancement in the labor market pertains to sexual harassment at work. A recent study suggests that this form of discrimination is

not only present, but is commonplace.¹⁹⁰ The respective study shows that women are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work than men as, compared to 21.2 percent of men, 37.5 percent of women had experienced at least one form of sexual harassment, and nearly every fifth (18 percent) has been subjected to sexual harassment more than once (compared to 11.2 percent of men).¹⁹¹ When it comes to specific forms of sexual harassment that occur in the workplace, results of the mentioned study show that women are subjected to sexual gestures, jokes or sounds significantly more often than men: 36.4 percent of women compared to 19.2 percent of men experienced this form of sexual harassment. Perpetrators of sexual harassment against women are usually men (85.1 percent), supervisors or persons working in higher positions (69.6 percent), while 39.2 percent of perpetrators work in positions that are at the same level as their victims'.¹⁹²

Because of these practices, economic gender inequalities remain stable regardless of generations, and stand for one of the most significant fields of gender inequalities, despite the number of implemented employment policies and economic empowerment measures.

Rural areas and infrastructure

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the most rural countries in Europe, with 57 percent of total population being rural.¹⁹³ Wide differences between the urban and the rural population are reflected in the poverty rate – 11.3 percent for the urban population and 20.5 percent for the rural population.¹⁹⁴ Women account for just over half of the rural population and actively

¹⁸⁵ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Demography and Social Statistics – Average monthly paid off net earnings of persons in employment June 2019. Published on 16 August 2019. Available at: http://www.bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopštenja/2019/LAB_04_2019_06_0_BS.pdf Pg. 1.

¹⁸⁶ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 27.

¹⁸⁷ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Labor Force Survey 2018. Pg. 98.

¹⁸⁸ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 8.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Pg. 28-29.

¹⁹⁰ Gačanica, Lejla. *Gender-Based Discrimination and Labor in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Banja Luka: Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka, 2019. Pg. 51.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. Pg. 52.

¹⁹² Ibid. Pg. 53.

¹⁹³ The World Bank. Rural population (percent of total population). World Bank staff estimates based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision. <http://bit.ly/2ZcNW11>

¹⁹⁴ Voluntary Review of Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2019. Pg. 38.

contribute to the development of the rural society¹⁹⁵ Around 1,000 legal entities and around 360,000 rural households in the country are involved in agricultural production, while out of 15.7 percent of people employed in agriculture, 38 percent are women.¹⁹⁶

Almost all housing units in the country are connected to electricity and water supply¹⁹⁷, and wood and coal are the primary source of heating.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, 2,600 households are not connected to the electrical grid, there is a lack of access to safe drinking water, and outside toilets are still used in some households.¹⁹⁹ Remote areas are often not well connected to urban centers where a variety of public services are available. This affects rural populations' quality of life, as more than half of the people residing in rural areas live at least three kilometers from the nearest hospital, clinic, bank or post office.²⁰⁰ The infrastructure challenges related to gender mostly relate to women living in rural areas, and are reflected in poor access to various services, especially health care, while also facing limited employment opportunities, coupled with financial insecurity and dependence. The UNW BiH Gender Brief states that, within the context of rural development, "women suffer most from the lack of access to and control over productive resources such as land, property, financial resources, education, marketable skills and access to information and modern technology."²⁰¹ This renders women more vulnerable to poverty, because unlike men, they lack ownership of land, developed skills as well as financial stability. This lack of infrastructure in terms of availability of public services due to remoteness of rural areas is mostly reflected in the

poor quality of health care available to women living in rural areas. The complicated and non-harmonized health care system in the country renders health services inadequate, inefficient, and costly, while doctors are often reluctant to visit local clinics.²⁰²

Seventy percent of men were landowners in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 2013, and since then, a small increase of 2 percent in the share of women owners has been recorded.²⁰³ There has been a rise in registration of agricultural homesteads, which also encourages women to tap onto the potential of incentives and/or programs related to rural farming and/or tourism potentials.²⁰⁴ At the same time, women have a large role in the development of rural societies. Often invisible and marginalized, more than a third of them describe themselves as housewives.²⁰⁵ However, the number of households headed by women has increased to one in four.²⁰⁶ These circumstances expose women more to poverty, as men in rural communities are more than twice as likely to have a job, as compared to women in these communities.²⁰⁷ It is also not uncommon for women in rural communities to perform unpaid or poorly paid labor in agriculture, all while performing housework and caring for the family members. Legislation regarding ownership of commercial and non-commercial holdings should be improved to enable reliefs for women.²⁰⁸

Rural issues are reflected in policies related to agriculture, but assessments and analysis on the gender impact is rarely provided. Policies are not sufficiently harmonized between the two entities of Bosnia and

¹⁹⁵ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 34.

¹⁹⁶ Voluntary Review of Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019). Pg. 40.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 38.

¹⁹⁸ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 34.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid. Pg. 35

²⁰³ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 37.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 35.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 24-25.

Herzegovina,²⁰⁹ including the Strategic Plan for Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2018-2021).²¹⁰ Some advancement has been made in this area on the entity level. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Rural Development Program (2016-2020) envisages affirmative measures targeted at rural women, which includes special methods for ranking female applicants for projects.²¹¹ In the Republika Srpska, the Strategic Plan for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (2016-2020) includes the right of women to own property, access economic resources and inclusion of women in decision-making processes on rural development,²¹² and the new Action Plan 2019-2020 was also adopted for enhancement of the position of rural women in the RS.²¹³ The previous Action Plan for the 2009-2015 period, which also envisaged special measures aimed at improving the economic position of women in rural communities, yielded results – an increase in the percentage of female-headed farming households, from 12.5 percent in 2011 (the first year of the implementation), then 14 percent in 2015 (at the end of the implementation of the Action Plan), up to 22.7 percent in 2017.²¹⁴ The Register of agricultural holdings in the FBiH was established within the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry, with forms tailored to present gender statistics, which has improved the collection of gender disaggregated data in the existing statistical system in the FBiH that otherwise does not offer clearly categorized information about urban and rural areas.²¹⁵ The Action Plans for Employment in the Republika Srpska, implemented each year, include women from rural areas as a specific target group.²¹⁶ There is progress when it comes to raising public awareness with the campaign “EQUALLY! for women in the rural areas” implemented in the Republika Srpska annually on the International Day of Women in Rural

Areas (15 October), and there is also increasing activity in advancing the knowledge of women about possible opportunities when it comes to rural development through trainings, workshops, fairs, etc.²¹⁷

Creating a comprehensive strategy to combat poverty would reduce the chances of marginalized women, such as rural women, Roma women, and women with disabilities, becoming more vulnerable because they do not have equal access to infrastructure that enables decent living conditions (such as water, electricity, sanitation) and because they experience difficulties in access and transportation, as well as hardships in terms of remoteness of required services.

The impact of COVID-19 on gender equality in the economic environment

The pandemic as an emergency has further deepened the prevailing gender inequalities and the issue of feminization of poverty in BiH. Consequently, the capacity of vulnerable groups of women to absorb shocks caused by the economic downturn of COVID-19 crisis is less in comparison to men in BiH. According to the data gathered in the *UN Women BiH Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina* women²¹⁸ felt more the economic impacts as they are often not employed, or are employed part-time or in the informal sector. Indeed, according to the RGA men were more likely than women to report that their paid work did not change, whereas women were more likely to lose their jobs. Additionally, the UNDP Report *Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19*²¹⁹ in BiH showed that business

²⁰⁹ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 36.

²¹⁰ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 36.

²¹¹ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 36.

²¹² Ibid. Pg. 36.

²¹³ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 18.

²¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 28.

²¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 14.

²¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 27.

²¹⁷ Ibid. Pg. 14.

²¹⁸ UN Women, Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2020

²¹⁹ *Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. UNDP, 2020, available at: https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/UNDP_COVID-19_Economic_Impact_Assessment_BiH_Report_2020-05-28.pdf

owned by women, on average, have declared significantly higher turnover drops and that the number of business that employed mostly women had to be closed during the pandemic was more than double in comparison to those business employing mostly men workers.

Moreover, due to the restrictive measures imposed by the governments, including the closure of kindergartens and schools, the increased demand for unpaid care work deepened the already existing gender inequalities in the division of household chores. Women's unpaid domestic and care work has long been recognized as a driver of gender inequalities, and has a direct link to wage inequalities, lower income, poorer education outcomes and physical and mental health stressors experienced by women²²⁰.

Summary of challenges to achieving gender equality in the economic environment

1. *Gender-based discrimination in employment and labor market, and sexual harassment and mobbing at work:* Women still experience discrimination in hiring procedures, promotion, and termination of employment, as they are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work than men.
2. *Burden of unpaid domestic work:* It restricts women from taking up paid jobs, undertaking advanced education and skills training, and participating in public life. Public services that could help lessen the burden of unpaid work, for example by ensuring enough empty slots in public kindergartens, are insufficient.
3. *Gender pay gap:* Despite the legal provisions that prohibit it, gender pay gap persists. A 2015 World Bank Survey quotes hourly pay is around 9 percent higher in favor of men.
4. *Occupational segregation by gender:* Most women are employed in the service sector and are over-represented in sectors such as education, health

care and social work activities, typically considered to be "female occupations", which allows gender stereotypes to further exclude women from occupations traditionally observed as male.

5. *Vulnerability to poverty in rural and remote areas:* Women suffer most from the lack of access to and control over productive resources such as land, property, financial resources, education, marketable skills and access to information and modern technology. Lack of infrastructure in terms of availability of public services is mostly reflected in the poor quality of health care available to women living in rural areas.

C. Gender equality, health, and social protection

The position of women when it comes to social services has been challenging for a number of years due to the complicated administrative structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which makes it harder for women to access social services and renders them dependent on their place of residence in the country. More than 500,000 citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have proper health insurance, and more than two thirds of this number live in the Federation of BiH.²²¹ Obtaining adequate and reliable health care is one of the main problems in this regard, considering the non-harmonized regulations throughout the country. Marginalized women, such as Roma women, women with disabilities and women living in rural communities, face even more difficulties, coupled with stigma and discrimination. Obtaining health insurance in most cases is done either through employment, or registration on employment bureaus, which not all women are in the position to achieve. Internally displaced and returnee women face problems if they are living outside of the entity they are registered in, as they may lose rights acquired in the places of displacement.²²² Preventative health care remains a challenge and is harder to acquire for marginalized and poor women, and women who live in rural communities, away from major health centers.

²²⁰ UN Women, *Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, 2020

²²¹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 45.

²²² Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 35.

Violence against Women

Violence against women has a high prevalence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as shown by the first nationwide multi-stakeholder survey on violence against women, coordinated by the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013.²²³ According to this survey, 47.2 percent of women surveyed experienced some form of violence at some point in their lives after turning 15, and that violence was perpetrated by the person from their immediate surroundings (current or ex-partner, family or household member, friend, colleague, etc.). Most women experienced psychological violence (41.9 percent), followed by physical (24.3 percent), sexual (6 percent) and economic (4.8 percent) violence. Violence most often occurred in partner relationships (in 39 percent of surveyed women, by a former or a current partner), which shows that the private sphere is where most of gender-based violence takes place.²²⁴ The research also points out that younger women are more at risk of violence, as well as women in rural communities, while women of ill-health and with disabilities have the same prevalence rates of violence as all other women.²²⁵ Even though they experienced various forms of violence, 58 percent of women did not categorize it as violence, which points to a larger problem of the lack of awareness about what violence is, connected with a low percentage (17 percent) of women who attempt to seek escape from such a situation.²²⁶

A more recent OSCE-led survey on violence against women from 2019 shows that 48 percent of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have experienced some form of abuse, including intimate partner violence,

non-partner violence, stalking and sexual harassment, since the age of 15.²²⁷ The rate of partner violence is at 35 percent.²²⁸ The most common psychological consequence of violence against women is fear, reported by 55 percent of women survivors of current partner violence and 70 percent of survivors of previous partner violence.²²⁹ Despite this, 84 percent of women do not report violence to the police, and when asked why 38 percent said that it was too minor and that they considered it to be a family matter (33%).²³⁰

Over the years, a lot of effort has been invested in creating a comprehensive framework for prevention and elimination of domestic violence. Both entities and Brčko District have laws on the protection from domestic violence which prescribe extensive protective measures for survivors, while at the same time foreseeing mandatory rehabilitation and psychological treatment for perpetrators.²³¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina was the 6th country to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) in November 2013, which entered into force in August 2014,²³² thereby accepting the obligation to take all disposable measure to prevent violence, protect survivors and punish perpetrators. A specific legal framework for the prevention and elimination of domestic violence was adopted, along with new institutional and organizational arrangements, which ensured a multidisciplinary approach to the protection of survivors of violence and punishment of perpetrators.²³³ The Strategy for preventing and combating domestic violence (2013-2017) was adopted by the FBiH government, while the Republika Srpska has the Strategy for combat domestic violence in the RS (2014-2019).²³⁴

²²³ Babović, Marija; Pavlović, Olivera; Ginić, Katarina; Karađinović, Nina; Filipović-Hadžiabdić, Samra (ed.). Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2013.

²²⁴ Ibid. Pg. 53.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid. Pg. 20.

²²⁷ OSCE. Well-Being and Safety of Women – Bosnia and Herzegovina Results Report, 2019. Pg. iii.

²²⁸ Ibid. Pg. 25.

²²⁹ Ibid. Pg. 73.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 18.

²³² Council of Europe. Chart of signatures and ratifications of Treaty 210 – Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Status as of 06/06/2019. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures>

²³³ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 11.

²³⁴ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 19.

Multi-sectoral services have been strengthened by establishing 27 functional local multisectoral teams with 292 representatives of the first responders' institutions, and 32 local policies for combating domestic violence were developed and adopted. Capacities for multi-sectoral response were enhanced by training and educating 988 professionals. With regards to prevention, 6105 high school students (52 percent were young men) have increased their knowledge and capacities to prevent violence against women and domestic violence and 25 percent of the young men and boys trained do not perceive domestic violence as a private matter. Also, 51 representatives of religious communities raised their capacities to prevent domestic violence, and 270 media professionals have increased their capacities for ethical and gender responsive reporting.²³⁵ Additionally, 389²³⁶ first line responders from both medical and psycho-social support have been capacitated to provide proper support to survivors of violence across BiH.

Specialized services for survivors of violence against women

Services assisting survivors to escape violence are being strengthened, and public awareness of the matter has much improved since 2013 through various public campaigns and the work of the Gender Centers in the FBiH and the RS. Women have on their disposal a variety of social services to help them escape violence, including SOS phones, safe houses, psychological help,

and support within the community. It is estimated that 27 million BAM is spent annually for general domestic violence response services, while the annual cost of specialized services (shelters, SOS phone lines, free legal aid, psychological assistance) is estimated at 1.5 million BAM.²³⁷ Total indicative annual cost of domestic violence on the economy of BiH is estimated at 65 million BAM.²³⁸ However, survivors of domestic violence often invest their own money in obtaining various services in response to domestic violence (healthcare, medication, transport, etc.), as they are not free, and as support is not equally provided throughout the state. Survivors of domestic violence often cancel legal procedures, such as divorce, because of costs.²³⁹ Because of the widespread costs, civil society organizations are dependent on donor support, and their activities and abilities to provide long term support to survivors of domestic violence are often endangered. The most blatant example of this is the situation with shelters in the Federation of BiH.

There are eight²⁴⁰ specialized women's shelters with 174 bed-spaces available, all established and run by non-governmental non-profit organizations. Five shelters are located in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their total capacity is 119 bed-spaces.²⁴¹ Three shelters are located in the Republika Srpska and their total capacity is 55 bed-spaces.²⁴² Additionally, some municipalities in the FBiH have apartments to help accommodate survivors of domestic violence.²⁴³ In order to meet the standards of the Istanbul Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs additional 166 bed-spaces in specialized women's shelters across the country.

²³⁵ UN Women CO Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with institutional mechanisms and civil society organizations worked on establishing multisectoral response to violence against women, enhancement of services to support survivors and work with perpetrators. Presented data are results achieved within implementation of the two projects: "Standards and Engagements for Ending Violence Against Women and Domestic violence in BiH" funded by Sweden and "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds" funded by European Union in period from 2016-2019.

²³⁶ UNFPA BiH in cooperation with the FBiH Ministry of Health have been working on developing SOPs for service provisions to survivors of violence in the following communities Una Sana Canton: (Sanski Most, Bihać, Cazin, Velika Kladuša, Ključ, Bosanska Krupa), Sarajevo Canton: (Stari Grad, Centar, Novo Sarajevo, Novi Grad, Ilidža, Hadžići, Vogosća, Ilijaš, Trnovo), Zenica-Doboj Canton: (Tešanj, Zavidovići, Žepče, Zenica, Kakanj, Visoko), Tuzla: (Srebrenik, Gradačac, Gračanica, Tuzla, Živinice, Banovići, Lukavac).

²³⁷ Halilović, Majda; Serdarević, Nino; Hujć, Faruk; *Analysis of the cost of domestic violence: estimating the cost of multi-sectoral response at the local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 51.

²³⁸ Ibid. Pg. 13.

²³⁹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 20.

²⁴⁰ Another shelter for women is available in Međugorje (capacity of 20 bed-spaces), provided by a Christian-based organization, but this is not a specialized shelter for women victims of violence as it also offers services in addiction treatment and to pregnant women in need.

²⁴¹ Sarajevo (25), Tuzla (15), Zenica (25), Mostar (28) and Bihać (26).

²⁴² Banja Luka (24), Bijeljina (15) and Modriča (16).

²⁴³ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 22.

The most significant challenge facing women's shelters in Bosnia and Herzegovina pertains to funding. According to the entity laws on the protection from domestic violence, the funds for the work of women's shelters are allocated from the entity and cantonal/municipal government budgets. More specifically, 70 percent of the total costs is covered by the entity governments and the remaining 30 percent is covered by the cantonal budgets in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and municipal governments' budgets in the Republika Srpska.²⁴⁴ In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, only the Sarajevo shelter receives consistent government funding, while other shelters such as the ones in Tuzla and Zenica receive only 10 to 15 percent of its financing from the entity government while cantonal funding remains inconsistent.²⁴⁵ Drafting of a bylaw which will regulate criteria for financing of shelters for victims of domestic violence in the FBiH is currently underway.²⁴⁶

There are two SOS helplines in Bosnia and Herzegovina covering the two entities, and are operated by trained volunteers from women's shelters.²⁴⁷ Costs for the short codes 1265 and 1264 are covered by the two entities' gender centers, compensation for operators' work is provided by non-governmental organizations, calls are free of charge and the SOS helplines are monitored 24 hours.²⁴⁸ The number of calls to the SOS helpline in the RS was 10,604 over the period 2014-2016, while 5,642 calls were made in the FBiH.²⁴⁹

Gaps are also present in data collection about the reports of violence made to the police, in both entities, which makes police assessment difficult.²⁵⁰ Survivors of violence continue to point out that the police is

not sensitized enough to the topic when it comes to processing the cases, and there is often delay in registering them.²⁵¹ Training on laws and mechanisms that deal with domestic violence has become part of the trainings provided by the Centers for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of the FBiH and the RS, while special modules have also been created for trainings in the police academies of the FBiH and the RS.²⁵² A unique method for collection of data on domestic violence cases is yet to be developed. An electronic database of cases of domestic violence was developed in the FBiH, and it contains the number of reported cases, protective measures, survivors accommodated to shelters, number of calls to SOS telephone 1265, etc.²⁵³

The impact of COVID-19 on VAW

Some of the measures imposed by the governments in BiH to control the spread of COVID-19 included, among others, curfew, prohibition of movement for certain groups of people, and social isolation. These measures promoted by the slogan "Stay home, stay safe" did not take into account that home is not a safe place for everyone, especially not for women and girls survivors of VAW. As the data showed during the outbreak of the pandemic, VAW and particularly domestic violence have increased, which is also demonstrated by the increase in the number of calls to SOS helplines for survivors of DV in the FBiH and the RS.²⁵⁴ The already stretched social protection system did not respond properly to the mentioned demands, nor were the safe houses properly funded and equipped to respond to the pandemic.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁴ M. Halilović, *Analysis of the cost of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, UN Women, 2019, p. 53.

²⁴⁵ K. Delbyk, *Mapping of Policies and Legislation on Violence against Women and the Istanbul Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, European Women's Lobby, 2019, pp. 11-12.

²⁴⁶ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 19.

²⁴⁷ M. Halilović, *Analysis of the cost of domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, UN Women, 2019, p. 53.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 22.

²⁵⁰ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 21.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 21.

²⁵³ Ibid. Pg. 20.

²⁵⁴ UN Women, *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women and Girls and COVID-19*, 2020

²⁵⁵ OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina *COVID-19 Crisis Response: A Gender and Diversity Analysis*, 2020

The status of conflict-related sexual violence survivors

Access to tailor made social protection services is of crucial importance for survivors of CRSV, as they often lack social support systems due to the stigmatization and social rejection from their own communities. Up to this day, there is no reliable data on the number of women and men who suffered sexual violence during the 1990s war, due to political conflicts within the country that hinder the implementation of such research. The number of women raped during the war is estimated to range from 20,000 to 50,000.²⁵⁶ War rape survivors suffered serious trauma, which has made their social functioning difficult, as most of them deal with a variety of physical and mental health problems. It should be noted that the male survivors of CRSV are also stigmatized in their communities as a result of patriarchal norms which punish additionally those who “offend” the ideal of masculinity.

Even though BiH still did not adopt the framework legislation to recognize CRSV survivors as war victims, the recent legislative amendments at the entity level now enable CRSV survivors to enjoy a more equal access to services and overall rights. Indeed, several authorities have taken positive steps to improve the access of CRSV survivors to healthcare and health insurance, psychosocial, legal, and financial support and to enhance the quality of these services. In 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted amendments to the Criminal Law of BiH defining rape and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes against civilian population or crimes against humanity.²⁵⁷ Specifically, the FBiH MoLSP has ensured the implementation of the special category of civilian victims of war to include the registration of survivors of CRSV who have not claimed their rights until today²⁵⁸. The new administrative mechanism to facilitate identification of survivors of war-related sexual abuse and

rape, the Commission for Issuing Expert Opinion to Determine the Status of Special Category of Civilian War Victims, is in charge of granting the status. Additionally, the FBiH MoH has adopted a series of local level protocols within public health centers that clearly define procedures, services, and further referral mechanisms for survivors of CRSV. Complementary, horizontal linkages have been established between the health-care system (health centers) and social welfare system (SWC, the Commission that expedites the granting of the status of CRSV), increasing the number of claims for CRSV accessing their rights. Along the same line in the RS is the adoption of the new Law on Civilian Victims of War that foresees new provisions simplifying the procedure for the submission of claims for the granting of the CRSV status and enables easier access to socio-economic rights.

Despite this, women who pursue reparation through court cases are faced with discrimination by the judicial institutions, while suffering additionally ineffective witness protection, delays in accessing justice and low conviction rates,²⁵⁹ with the financial compensations for survivors of sexual violence, ordered by the court, not coming through because the perpetrators are not making the required payments.²⁶⁰ Women who survived rape during the war are treated differently in both entities and the Brčko District, on the grounds of their legal status which determines the compensation that they are entitled to (monthly allowance, health care, rehabilitation, psychological support, etc.).²⁶¹ The Federation of BiH recognizes war rape survivors as a special category of civilian victims, which entitles them to monthly cash payments, healthcare, psychological support, coverage of treatment costs, purchase of orthopedic supplies, access to professional rehabilitation services, and retraining and assistance qualifications.²⁶² Because of the difference in the treatment and the insufficient assistance of support mechanisms, a number of women's organizations throughout the country still assist survivors of rape during the war in instigating court proceedings and obtaining support from the

²⁵⁶ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 14.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/2020/487) issued on 03 June 2020.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. Pg. 15.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. Pg. 1.

²⁶¹ Ibid. Pg. 15.

²⁶² Ibid.

state.²⁶³ A lot of work still needs to be done to ensure that all war rape survivors get justice and receive adequate support to continue with their lives despite the trauma.

Access to social protection and healthcare for women and girls living with disabilities

BiH social protection system is characterized by inefficiency and inconsistencies across the country as well as among categories of citizens in need. The excessive spending on war-related beneficiaries hampers the possibility to adequately provide social assistance to the most vulnerable, especially persons with disabilities that are non-war related²⁶⁴. These challenges are considerable for women and girls with disabilities as they suffer discrimination due to how their identities intersect. They are often not considered to be equal members of society, and in line with this sentiment, there is not a lot of understanding for the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities. They are often excluded from social activities, education and/or employment, making them vulnerable to poverty and abuse.

The lack of a framework law on disabilities as well as non-harmonized laws and the inexistence of a transparent registry creates a situation where persons with disabilities have different benefits depending on the cause of the disability and the place of residence. Finally, the Commissions that assess the situation of persons with disabilities systematically downgrade levels of disabilities to minimize their entitlements and benefits, making women with disabilities particularly vulnerable to this discriminatory practice.

The data from the 2013 census states that 4.5 percent of women in BiH live with some form of disability, but the Disability Policy of BiH estimates the number to be at least twice as high, while every second family has a member with a disability.²⁶⁵ Adequate social support is therefore crucial to provide equal opportunities to people with disabilities, including women. One step was made through the FBiH Strategy for Advancement of Rights and Status of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2021), which foresees a measure for the strengthening of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of women with disabilities.²⁶⁶ But the predominant way the state relates to people with disabilities is through charitable acts based on a medical approach.²⁶⁷ This approach dehumanizes people with disabilities, women included, as it further perpetuates the idea that they are helpless members of society who can neither contribute to social nor their own personal development.

The area of healthcare is particularly challenging for women with disabilities, as health professionals are rarely educated on how to provide care to them, and they cannot always receive proper medical examinations, due to the lack of the necessary equipment (such as the lack of special gynecological tables). Women with disabilities who live in rural areas face even greater difficulties in acquiring proper medical care, as health centers are located in the city, and proper transport is not available²⁶⁸ (in some areas, emergency medical assistance is as far as 60 kilometers away²⁶⁹). Furthermore, their sexuality is ignored because of the common misconception that women with disabilities do not have sexual lives and/or are unable or should not have children, as they would not be able to care for them properly. These notions undermine the rights of women with disabilities to sexual and reproductive health, which can increase their vulnerability that has already resulted in serious institutional neglect.²⁷⁰

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ OSCE, The Right to Social Protection in BiH- Concerns on Adequacy and Equality, 2012 Pg. 13

²⁶⁵ Bari, Farzana; Kovac, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of plan and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 31.

²⁶⁶ Ibid. Pg. 38.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 31.

²⁷⁰ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 38.

Sexual and reproductive health

Sexual and reproductive health for all women needs to be improved, especially when it comes to pregnancy, prenatal and postnatal care. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a developed country when availability of services provided to pregnant women is concerned, but these services are not provided equally throughout the state, and very much differ in the quality of treatment. Thirteen percent of women do not receive any prenatal care, compared to more than 21 percent of Roma women,²⁷¹ while 84 percent of mothers (94 percent in the Republika Srpska and 79 percent in the Federation of BiH) had four or more visits related to prenatal care, which medical doctors provide in most cases.²⁷² There has been a decline in fertility in the past 20 years, but infant mortality is significantly reduced and is lower than the average in the region.²⁷³

Reproductive Health and Rights Policy was adopted in 2012 but it has not translated into a coherent family planning policy. When it comes to the use of contraception, data indicates that almost all women aged 15-49 know about at least one method of contraception, and about half of young people use some form of contraception (50 percent in Sarajevo and 40 percent in Banja Luka).²⁷⁴ Contraception is used by 43.3 percent of women who are either married or in some sort of partnership, with 33.3 percent using traditional methods compared to 10 percent of women using modern methods.²⁷⁵ It is estimated that 49 percent of women (or their partners) use some form of contraception.²⁷⁶ Use of contraception is highest among women with higher education (55 percent).²⁷⁷ Family planning is not

equally distributed between women and men in partnerships and a small number of women make use of family planning consultations.²⁷⁸ This is not surprising, as sexual education is not part of school curriculums, with education on health being limited as well (an elective course 'Healthy Lifestyles' is available in a few elementary schools²⁷⁹).

There is no regulation of in vitro insemination (herein-after IVF) at the state level and it is regulated differently in both entities and Brčko District. The number of financed attempts is limited, depending on availability of funds and health insurance. Health Insurance Fund in the RS funds two artificial insemination procedures since 2012 for women under the age of 42,²⁸⁰ while Federation of BiH offers co-funding for two procedures, but only for women under 37 and depending on the financial resources of the canton where the couple resides.²⁸¹ The FBiH Solidarity Fund finances one IVF attempt for couples with disabilities.²⁸² The procedures of IVF are not available to women who are not married, which discriminates both against single heterosexual women, but also against LBT women. There are no laws which regulate embryo and egg-cell freezing and transfer, nor the establishment of sperm banks.²⁸³

The impact of COVID-19 in access to social protection

Regarding access to social protection, one of the GAP BiH priorities states the need to improve the situation vis-à-vis gender equality in social welfare,²⁸⁴ however the situation remains bleak until today. Most social

²⁷¹ Ibid. Pg. 46.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 34.

²⁷⁴ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BIH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 17 and 47.

²⁷⁵ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 33.

²⁷⁶ Ibid. Pg. 33-34.

²⁷⁷ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BIH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 17 and 47.

²⁷⁸ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 34.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BIH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 30.

²⁸⁴ GAP BiH 1.6.6. "Providing support to programs intended to multiple marginalized groups exposed to the risk of poverty and isolation, which are usually made of women, in order to support their inclusion in labor market and exercising of rights to social protection".

protection beneficiaries are women,²⁸⁵ yet women's pensions are significantly lower due to lesser contributions during their working lives, which are often interrupted by caring for relatives and children. The COVID-19 crisis has put the already stretched social welfare system at risk of collapse and has shown a lack of preparedness for emergency situations.

It needs to be noted that even though there were no cuts in social assistance cash benefits as part of budget re-balancing due to COVID-19, budget cuts were recorded in the social protection sector at all levels (e.g. at the level of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, as well as the cantonal and local levels). The budget cuts were mainly related to either decrease or removal of initially planned budgets for development projects, grants for NGO sector for provision of social services or funds that were allocated for employment of new social service workforce (e.g. Sarajevo Cantonal Social Work Centre). This had direct effects on those most dependent on, both NGO and public sector social services.²⁸⁶

Summary of challenges in achieving gender equality in social protection and healthcare

1. *Specialized services for survivors of violence against women and domestic violence are underfunded and unique method of data collection still needs to be developed:* Funding shelters for women survivors of domestic violence is still not regulated equally across the country and rape crisis centers have not yet been established. Survivors often have to bear the costs of psychosocial, legal, and other services they need and still have to deal with insensitive public officials, including the police. The already stretched protection system was put at a stake by the COVID-19 crisis, which has affected those most dependent on it, including survivors of VAW.

2. *Survivors of sexual violence still don't have access to quality social services and experience stigmatization in their local communities:* ineffective witness protection, delays in accessing justice and low conviction rates, and inadequate financial compensations are still the common practice, in spite of some positive steps undertaken by the authorities in the recent years. Survivors still endure economic hardship and social rejection.
3. *Access to social protection and healthcare for persons living with disabilities remains challenging and difficult:* The predominant way the state relates to people with disabilities is through charitable acts based on a medical approach, which dehumanizes people with disabilities, women included. In addition, women and girls with disabilities face multiple discrimination and there is little understanding for their specific needs.
4. *Sexual and reproductive health needs major improvements:* Sexual and reproductive health for all women needs to be improved, especially when it comes to pregnancy, prenatal and postnatal care. Reproductive Health and Rights Policy was adopted in 2012 but it has not translated into a coherent family planning policy, as is the case with IVF which is regulated differently in the entities and BD.

D. Gender equality and education

Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is regulated on the level of the entities and Brčko District. Education is guaranteed as a right to all citizens and primary education is obligatory. Despite the principal accessibility of education, according to the 2013 census, 2.82 percent of the population is illiterate, and this figure rises to 4.76 percent when it comes to women over 10 years of age.²⁸⁷ The numbers rise when it comes to older women –

²⁸⁵ Malkić, A. and Hadžiristić, T. Intersecting Inequalities in Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Analitika – Center for Social Research, 2016, available at: https://www.analitika.ba/sites/default/files/inequality_eng_-_izvjestaj_3003.pdf [accessed on 10 October 2020]

²⁸⁶ Socio-economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN BiH, 2020

²⁸⁷ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 27.

in the age group 60-70, 15.03 percent women are illiterate women, while in the age group over 70, there is 49.1 percent of illiterate women.²⁸⁸ Predictably, the rate of illiteracy is higher among marginalized women - women in rural communities, Roma women and women with disabilities.²⁸⁹

Gender parity has been achieved in primary and secondary education, while women exceed men in higher education.²⁹⁰ The number of women with titles of master and doctors of science has increased, and is higher than the number of men.²⁹¹ In the school year 2015/2016, 54.20 percent of female university students enrolled in higher education and 58.73 percent of girls were graduates; 59.58 percent of women held Masters of Science and specialist titles and 51.55 percent titles of Doctors of Science.²⁹² Data also shows that the percentage of women who received the title of Doctor of Science increased by 13.3 percent.²⁹³

Gender stereotypes in education

Gender stereotypes remain present in education and contribute to intensifying stereotyping gender roles in all areas of society, but also normalize violence against women and further perpetuate gender inequality. For this process to be averted, education should not include gender stereotypes, but content which will highlight the importance of gender equality and respect of human rights. The Istanbul Convention asks for the removal of gender stereotypes from curricula

in order to promote respect and non-violent conflict resolution in relationships, while the Law on Gender Equality of BiH calls upon all relevant stakeholders to eliminate those parts of the curricula which promote gender stereotypes and result in gender inequality, as well as to include content that will promote gender equality.²⁹⁴ This requires work on many fronts: schools and other educational institutions, ministries of education, gender institutions and other civil society stakeholders, in order to promote a narrative of gender equality and zero tolerance towards violence against women. Media has additional responsibility, as the Law on Gender Equality also calls upon the duty of media to develop programs which will promote gender equality.²⁹⁵ Governments of both entities have adopted decisions and recommendations which relate to this issue²⁹⁶, but despite these provisions, gender stereotypes remain present in school textbooks.

Women represent the majority of the workforce in traditionally “female” occupations – in healthcare (pharmacy, dentistry, medicine), language studies, and predominantly, the teaching staff at all levels of education (except at universities)²⁹⁷. Only 10 percent of women are educated in mechanical and electrical engineering.²⁹⁸ Law, economic sciences, architecture and biotechnology have approximately the same number of men and women.²⁹⁹ Unfortunately, women do not have a guaranteed place on the labor market because of their high education qualifications, as jobs are still being perceived as male and female, and occupational profiling results in highly qualified women not being treated the same way as highly qualified men.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 30.

²⁹⁰ Ibid

²⁹¹ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 2017. Pg. 27.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 18.

²⁹⁵ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 17.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 17-18.

²⁹⁷ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 27.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

However, segmentation in academic disciplines is still obvious, with women mostly choosing social sciences and humanities, as opposed to natural sciences.³⁰⁰ More steps need to be taken to equalize the status of men and women in science. Strategy of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH for development of science in BiH (2017-2022) prescribes the development of a gender equality policy in research institutions, which would pay special attention to areas where women are underrepresented (for example, decision-making positions in research institutions).³⁰¹ The Science and Technology Development Strategy (2012-2016) of the Republika Srpska also highlights the need for greater participation of women in the research and development sector.³⁰²

Roma women and men in education

Roma women and men continue to be one of the most affected groups when it comes to education, because of their marginalized position in society and lack of opportunities for inclusion. Roma women still have a lower level of education in relation to Roma men, and women in general.³⁰³ The attendance rate of Roma in elementary schools is approximately equal (70.9 percent for boys and 67.8 percent for girls), and secondary education rate has risen to 18 percent for girls and 26.6 percent for boys.³⁰⁴ Despite the rise of percentages, a significant gender gap remains among marginalized Roma: only 37 percent of young marginalized Roma women aged 18-21 had completed compulsory education compared to 50 percent of young marginalized Roma men.³⁰⁵ This contrasts with their neighboring non-Roma counterparts, among which the gender gap is neither statistically significant nor significant in magnitude. Only 4.5 percent of Roma

girls complete secondary school, (compared to 9.2 percent of Roma boys).³⁰⁶ In addition, early marriage incidence for marginalized Roma women is persistent. Twenty-seven percent of marginalized Roma women aged 20-49 years in Bosnia and Herzegovina reported to have been married before they were 18 years old compared to 11 percent of neighboring non-Roma women.³⁰⁷

The impact of COVID-19 in education

The COVID-19 crisis and the measures undertaken by the governments to counteract the spread of the virus included the closure of kindergartens and schools and the introduction of an online home-schooling system that would remain in use for the following several months. That has produced a negative short-term effect on education as it amplified the structural problems related to unequal access to digital resources. According to UNICEF's U-report in BiH, 35% of young people faced difficulties with access due to the lack

of devices and internet, but also because they had to share devices with other household members and did not have appropriate space for learning. These problems are critical for children in vulnerable groups such as low income families, Roma and youth with disabilities who require intensive teaching support, and even more for girls from those groups due to further discrimination based on how their identities intersect. For example, the percentage of school dropouts is higher among Roma girls as mentioned before due to patriarchal norms and forced marriages, so the crisis has a deeper effect on their learning outcomes, as compared to Roma boys.

³⁰⁰ Bari, Farzana; Kovač, Vanja. *Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation*. Sarajevo: UN Women CO in BiH, 2019. Pg. 30.

³⁰¹ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016, 2017. Pg. 18.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid. Pg. 28.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ United Nations Development Program, *Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets*. Pg. 2.

³⁰⁶ Sixth Bosnia and Herzegovina Periodic Report on Implementing the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2013-2016 (2017). Pg. 29.

³⁰⁷ United Nations Development Program, *Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets*. Pg. 1.

Summary of challenges in achieving gender equality in education

1. *Significantly high illiteracy rates:* Almost three percent of the BiH population is illiterate, and this figure rises to almost five percent when it comes to women over 10 years of age, 15 percent for women in the age group 60-70, and 49 percent for women in the age group over 70. Rate of illiteracy is higher among marginalized women - women in rural communities, Roma women and women with disabilities.
2. *Gender stereotypes in education:* These contribute to intensifying stereotyping gender roles in all areas of society, normalize violence against women and further perpetuate gender inequality. Occupational segregation by gender is still a significant challenge.
3. *Gender gap among marginalized Roma:* Roma women still have a lower level of education in relation to Roma men, and women in general. Only 4.5 percent of Roma girls complete secondary school, and early marriage incidence for marginalized Roma women is persistent.

E. Gender equality and civic participation

The statutory and legal framework for establishment and operations of civil society organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided for in the laws on associations and foundations at the state³⁰⁸, entity³⁰⁹, and the Brčko District level³¹⁰ as well as a range of other acts that regulate the operation of legal entities in BiH,

including civil society organizations (labor laws, tax and accounting regulations, etc.). With regards to freedom of association, the current legal framework in BiH is modern and in line with the European standards in this area.³¹¹

In 2016, there were 22,601 associations and foundations registered in 17 out of total 18 registry offices in BiH.³¹² According to the registries, the biggest number of associations and foundations is registered in the District Court in Banja Luka (3,062 or 13.55 percent), while the least of them are registered at the Ministry of Justice, Governance and Labor Relations of the Podrinje Canton (207 or 0.92 percent).³¹³ Civil society in BiH is dominated by organizations active in the field of sport and recreation (6,511 or 28.81 percent) and in promotion of socio-economic rights of specific social groups (4,871 or 21.55 percent), out of which 464 organizations work on promotion and protection of interests of women.³¹⁴ CSOs' share in the BiH GDP was 0.62 percent in 2013 and 0.68 percent in 2014, which comes to the figure of 120 million BAM or approximately 60 million EUR.³¹⁵

Women's organizations and networks

Cooperation and networking is one of the main weaknesses of the civil society in BiH, mostly because many CSOs compete for the same financial resources in the form of grants and donations. There are around 30 active networks of civil society organizations in BiH of which only four to five networks have existed for more than 10 years.³¹⁶ The networking of civil society organizations is mostly the result of different project activities and such networks are active during the project implementation and while indirect source of funding is available. The Mapping Study of CSOs in BiH³¹⁷ shows that women's organizations network and

³⁰⁸ Official Gazette BiH, Vol. 76/11.

³⁰⁹ Official Gazette FBiH, Vol. 45/02; Official Gazette RS, Vol. 52/01 and 42/05.

³¹⁰ Official Gazette BD BiH, Vol. 12/02 and 19/07.

³¹¹ Žeravčić, Goran. *Mapping Study of CSOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. EPRD Office for Economic Policy and Regional Development Ltd. (EPRD), 2016. Pg. 18.

³¹² Ibid. Pg. 49.

³¹³ Ibid. Pg. 50.

³¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 52.

³¹⁵ Ibid. Pg. 53.

³¹⁶ Ibid. Pg. 6.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

cooperate much easier, such as Women's Network or Safe Network that were born out of the genuine conviction of their members about the need for a permanent mechanism of cooperation, harmonization of a unified platform of action, coordination of activities and unified approach towards the government institutions.³¹⁸

Women's Network BiH is the largest network of civil society organizations and individuals that work on women's rights, gender equality, and anti-discrimination. It was established as an informal network in 2009 and was officially registered in 2014. The Network was initiated during the PitchWise Festival of Women's Art and Activism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which took place in September 2019 for the 14th time.³¹⁹ The Women's Network promotes application of good feminist practices and measures in situations in which human rights, especially women's human rights are being threatened or violated.³²⁰

Safe Network was founded in 2001 as an informal network of 32 civil society organizations and government institutions from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina that deal with violence against women.³²¹ Due to different issues within the initial setup of the Network, it was reactivated in 2011 when the Cooperation Agreement was signed by seven civil society organizations in order to establish an institutional framework for the work of CSOs dealing with domestic violence, as well as an organized pursuit of systematic solutions in fight against domestic violence.³²²

Security threats for women human rights defenders

The security risks facing women human rights defenders in Bosnia and Herzegovina are recognized by the authorities and predominantly among the civil society

organizations working in the field of prevention of violence against women. According to a local CSO, most of the threats to human rights defenders in BiH had a gendered connotation, most often because those affected were working on women's rights issues, such as with survivors of violence, women survivors of war, or testimonies in cases of war crimes.³²³ Unlike their male counterparts, women who are human rights defenders are exposed to specific threats, including but not limited to sexualized defamation campaigns, direct and indirect threats to family members, threats of sexual assault, and the receipt of explicit messages or images.³²⁴ LGBTI activists are especially vulnerable and exposed to threats and violence, and at least eight cases of violence against LGBTI activists were recorded in 2017 by the leading LGBTI organization in BiH.³²⁵ The same organization documented 83 cases of hate speech and incitement to hatred and violence in 2017, as well as 31 cases of criminal offences and incidents motivated by prejudice on the grounds of sexual orientation and/or gender identity.³²⁶

Multiple attacks on LGBTI activists over the years have significantly discouraged the LGBTI community and LGBTI human rights defenders from organizing a pride parade – an annual protest march which has taken place in all European countries, including the BiH's neighboring states. Nevertheless, the first Pride March in Bosnia and Herzegovina was announced in April 2019 to take place in September 2019 by a group of activists from all over the country (Prijeedor, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Bijeljina, Tuzla), among which many were women. The Pride March announcement encountered a lot of disapproval by various groups including representatives of some political parties and war veterans, requesting the ban of the announced event, directly inciting violation of the right to assembly which is a constitutional human right in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hate speech and incitement to violence and discrimination against LGBTI people dominated social networks and web portals in the period of six

³¹⁸ Ibid. Pg. 6.

³¹⁹ Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina. About us. Available at: <http://zenskamreza.ba/en/about-us/> [Retrieved on 8 October 2020]

³²⁰ Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Platform (2009). Available at: http://www.fondacijacure.org/Platforma_Zenska_mreza_BiH_2009.pdf Pg. 4.

³²¹ Safe Network. About us. Available at: <http://www.sigurnamreza.ba/stranica/sigurna-mreza> [Retrieved on 8 October 2020]

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Tadić, Stana; Anđelković, Violeta; Vrbaški, Sofija. Women's Rights in Western Balkans. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, 2018. Pg. 43.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Sarajevo Open Center. Pink Report 2018. Pg. 24.

³²⁶ Ibid.

months from the announcement of the first BiH Pride March, and multiple hate crimes against LGBTI were recorded in the same period. On the other side, support was provided by international organizations, foreign embassies, civil society organizations, some political parties, and public figures. The first BiH Pride March took place in September 2019 under heavy police and private security, and was attended by around 3,000 people, and no incidents were recorded during or after the March. The Second Pride March was announced to take place on 23 August, but due to the COVID-19 crisis adjustments had to be made to comply with the government measures and avoid the spread of the virus. The Second Pride March was held in the form of online events and a “car march” on the same date³²⁷.

Summary of challenges in achieving gender equality in civic participation

1. *Competitive environment for civil society:* Although women's organizations network and cooperate much easier, cooperation and networking remains one of the main weaknesses of the civil society in BiH, mostly as many are competing for the same financial resources in the form of grants and donations.
2. *Gendered threats to human rights defenders represent a significant security issue:* Human rights defenders are most often threatened because they work on women's rights issues, such as with survivors of violence, women survivors of war, or testimonies in war crime cases. They are more exposed to sexualized defamation campaigns, direct and indirect threats to family members, threats of sexual assault, and the receipt of explicit messages or images.
3. *LGBTI activists are especially vulnerable and exposed to threats and violence:* At least eight cases of violence against LGBTI activists were recorded in

2017, and although LGBTI activism in BiH has been quite visible in the past decade, the first Pride March in BiH took place only in September 2019 due to major security threats in previous years and lack of support by the government.

F. Gender equality and human security

Human security is the right of all people regardless of sex, gender, ethnicity, religion and other axes of oppression, and it relates not only to personal and community safety during times of violence, war and conflict, but also includes access to food, education, health care, economic and environmental security, and political representation.³²⁸ There is a growing global recognition that gender equality is a major prerequisite for achieving human security. In that regard, the UN Security Council adopted the first UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” in 2000 emphasizing the importance of the role and equal participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in building sustainable peace, and calling upon member states to ensure a greater presence of women in decision making at all levels.³²⁹ Ensuring presence of women is a prerequisite for better inclusion of gender equality perspective in the sectors of defense and security and for improved protection of and compliance with human rights of women and girls both in armed conflicts and in peace and security building processes.³³⁰

UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The first Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2010-2013 was adopted in 2010.³³¹ This was the first Action

³²⁷ <https://povorkaponosa.ba/o-bh-povorci-ponosa-2/> [retrieved on 14 October 2020]

³²⁸ UNDP Human Development Report Office. Human Security: A Thematic Guidance Note for Regional and National Human Development Report Teams (n.d.). Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/human_security_guidance_note_r-nhdrs.pdf Pg. 2.

³²⁹ UN Security Council. Resolution 1325 (2000) adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000. Available at: [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325(2000))

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Official Gazette BiH, Vol. 92/10.

Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the region of Southeast Europe and has served as an example to other countries in the region for development of other UNSCR 1325 action plans.³³² In order to implement and monitor the implementation of the Action Plan, a Coordination Board was established consisting of representatives from 11 institutions from the defense and security sector and one representative from the civil society.³³³ The second Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in BiH for the period 2014-2017 was adopted in 2014³³⁴ which was based on the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation of the previous AP UNSCR 1325 that showed all the positive aspects as well as challenges in regard to its implementation and coordination.³³⁵ The Coordination Board was reappointed and included additional representatives from several new institutions consisting now of 19 institutions and agencies at the state and entity levels, and one representative and her deputy from the NGO sector.³³⁶ The Gender Center RS had partially participated in the work of the Coordination Board since the RS Government submitted a decision relieving the representative of the Gender Center RS of her at the end of 2017,³³⁷ therefore omitting to appoint a new Board member for development of the third Action Plan.³³⁸

The third Action Plan for implementation of the UNSCR 1325 for the period 2018-2022³³⁹ was developed in consultation with the civil society and relies on the structure of the previous Action Plan. It was adopted in 2018 with the aim of consistent, high-quality and effective implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in BiH.³⁴⁰

The Coordination Board now consists of representatives of 13 institutions at the level of BiH, three federal institutions and two civil society organizations.³⁴¹ The strategic objectives of the current Action Plan for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 2018-2022 are: (1) Increased participation of women in the military, police and peacekeeping missions, including participation in decision-making places, (2) Increased human security through the prism of gender equality, and (3) Improved conditions and access to the implementation of the AP UNSCR 1325.³⁴²

Another strategic objective to increase human security through gender perspective refers to direct or indirect consequences of war in BiH (the status of survivors of sexual violence and other forms of suffering during the war, hazard from mined areas and human trafficking) as well as recognition of new security threats and challenges on a global level which have a direct or indirect effect on BiH and the region (natural disasters, refugee crisis, violent extremism etc.).³⁴³ Additionally, in the Action Plan several UN Resolutions are established as legal framework of international commitments when it comes to conflict related sexual violence, including UN Resolution 1820 (2008), UN Resolution 1888 (2009), UN Resolution 1960 (2010) and UN Resolution 2106 (2013).

The introduction of human security concept as one of the three strategic goals of the Action Plan for implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina also enabled local level governments to develop initiative aimed at improving daily security of

³³² Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022 (2018). Available at: <https://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Akcioni-plan-ENG-KB-14.01.pdf> Pg. 5.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Official Gazette BiH, Vol. 89/14.

³³⁵ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022 (2018). Pg. 5.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Official Gazette RS, Vol. 53/17.

³³⁸ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 51.

³³⁹ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022, 2018. Pg. 6.

³⁴⁰ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process*, 2019. Pg. 51.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022, 2018. Pg. 6.

³⁴³ Ibid. Pg. 14-15.

citizens with consideration of various positions, needs and interests of men and women. A few local governments have developed and adopted Local Action Plans for implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Legal and political consequences of dealing with the past: the situation of conflict related sexual violence survivors

Role of women in P/CVE

Terrorism and violent extremism are gendered phenomena as men and women experience them differently. While mostly men are perpetrators of violent extremism it is relevant to recognize the role of women within violent extremist organizations³⁴⁴. Thus, for authorities to properly work on prevention and countering violent extremism (CVE) it is key they are aware of the gender component of this global issue. According to the last data available in 2015 in Syria and Iraq there were 56 BiH women as part of the foreign fighters' contingent coming from BiH (out of a total of 147).³⁴⁵

According to the UN Prevent Violent Extremism Plan of Action, balanced and well-structured violent extremism and terrorism prevention requires action in the priority areas of conflict prevention, good governance, engaging communities, empowering youth, gender equality, education, and strategic communication.³⁴⁶ P/CVE approaches aimed at addressing the underlying causes of violence must be gender sensitive. Moreover, they should prioritize the meaningful inclusion of key stakeholders, particularly women, in their development and implementation. Additionally, women are well positioned to perceive negative trends in their communities, because their rights and physical integrity are often the first targets of violent extremist ideologies.³⁴⁷ To ensure a gender-sensitive P/CVE strategy, an adequate representation of women in the security sector and as decision-makers of security policies and programs needs to be guaranteed.

When it comes to the support for the survivors of conflict related sexual violence and other forms of suffering during the war, BiH focuses on improving the legal framework and mechanisms for survivors' rights and the availability of compensations and benefits.³⁴⁸ The survivors face many obstacles in receiving reparations for the damage they suffered, as courts and prosecutor's offices generally redirect the victims to civil lawsuits, as opposed to having their damages compensated in criminal proceedings which would be in line with the existing legal grounds.³⁴⁹ As a consequence of these obstacles and the additional financial burden imposed on them, survivors most often give up on their right to compensation.³⁵⁰ The compensation requests for non-material damages are subject to the statute of limitations, and such requests may only be directed towards the perpetrators, and not the country or entities, thus eliminating the subsidiary responsibility of the country to compensate the damages.³⁵¹ When seeking compensation in civil courts, the victims must assume the burden of proof, hire a lawyer and are held accountable for court expenses.

However, in a recent development, the UN Committee Against Torture has ruled that Bosnia and Herzegovina must pay compensation to a survivor of conflict related sexual violence and provide her with appropriate and free medical and psychological help as soon as possible.³⁵² The said survivor was represented by the TRIAL International when she filed the petition against BiH to the UNCAT in 2017 claiming country's failure to meet the obligations from the UN Convention Against Torture and ensure her right to adequate and just compensation, and full rehabilitation. The Committee

³⁴⁴ OSCE, *Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to terrorism*, Vienna, 2019

³⁴⁵ Azinovic, V i Jusic, M., *Novi zov rata u Siriji i bosanskohercegovački kontingent stranih boraca*, Atlantic Initiative, 2016

³⁴⁶ Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General (United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/70/674).

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. Pg. 17.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid. Pg. 20.

³⁵² TRIAL International. Press release: BiH fails to implement obligations from the UN Convention against Torture. Published on 29 August 2019, available at: <https://trial.ba/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/TRIAL-International-Prva-odluka-protiv-BiH-pred-UN-komitom-QBJAVA-290819-1.pdf>

also decided that an official apology should be publicly made to the said survivor, and that BiH must set up an efficient system of reparations at the state level in order to “provide all forms of redress to victims of war crimes, including sexual violence”.³⁵³ The decision was rendered in August 2019 and was made public by the TRIAL International.

With regards to criminal proceedings, there has been a significant increase in the number of finalized cases involving criminal offences with elements of sexual violence committed during the war; in 2011, 13 persons were prosecuted and this number rose to 22 in 2016, and 46 in 2017.³⁵⁴ Since the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina started its work in 2002 and until the end of 2016, proceedings against the total of 70 persons were finalized before this Court (67 men and three women) for criminal offences of war crimes with elements of sexual violence committed against women – out of this total number, 53 persons (51 men and two women) were convicted and 17 persons (16 men and one woman) were acquitted of all charges.³⁵⁵ The convicted persons were sentenced to prison in the total duration of 695 years.³⁵⁶

Finally, the potential of further deepening the fractures of social cohesion arises from the spreading of toxic nationalistic rhetoric which politicizes the role of the survivors of conflict related sexual violence for advancing political agenda.

Natural disasters

Regarding the current security threats and challenges, one of the biggest issues that BiH has faced in the recent period were the floods of May 2014 when certain parts of the country suffered significant damage. Gender institutional mechanisms responded by highlighting the complex and multifaceted impact

that floods had on men and women, and boys and girls, and underlined that the gender aspect should be taken into account when planning and conducting interventions for prevention and elimination of consequences of disasters.³⁵⁷ Upon the initiative of the Gender Equality Agency of BiH, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH allocated 15,000 EUR from the FIGAP Program to help women, children and elderly in municipalities of BiH that were most affected by floods.³⁵⁸ This was followed by the development of the entity Action Plans for gender equality in disasters in order to implement specific programs and measures towards rectifying the consequences of natural disasters on women and men.³⁵⁹ During the implementation of the mentioned Action Plans, entity Gender Centers closely cooperated with the relevant institutions in coordinating the aid to vulnerable population, as well as with women's associations and local gender equality committees.³⁶⁰ Additionally, the Gender Center of the FBiH supported the preparation of the analysis “In the aftermath of floods–Gender analysis in the Federation of BiH” and requested that the involvement of women be one of the criteria for allocation of financial aid from the FBiH Government Fund for aid and recovery

from floods, and also developed the FBiH Government Guidelines for interventions in natural disasters in order to ensure that future interventions are as gender sensitive as possible.³⁶¹

Similarly, the aid packages deployed by the UN as the leading donor recognized the specific vulnerabilities of women in the occurrence of natural disasters such as the above mentioned 2014 floods, and thus the programs targeted them specifically. For example, in the housing sector priority was given to single headed parents, which are mainly women and out of 1,500 reconstructed homes so far, 31% were female-headed households. In cooperation with the IOM, psychosocial counselling was provided through the social work centers with 58% of female beneficiaries. In the context

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2018-2022 (2018). Pg. 18.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Progress report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (2019). Pg. 17.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

of recovery of livelihoods, 56 SMEs that were flooded received financial grants in total amount of 3 million BAM. Thus, 1,861 jobs were preserved, and the selection criteria incorporated a strong gender component whereby the enterprises employing 30-60% of women were awarded the maximum scores. In terms of agricultural recovery, 5 million BAM were distributed for greenhouses, seeds for vegetables and fruits targeting 200 socially disadvantaged farmers, as well as 500 farmers from the flooded municipalities. Additionally, two fully equipped mobile health units were set up to secure access to obstetrics/maternal care for pregnant and delivering women, while medical equipment for seventeen health centers was procured to address female reproductive health issues and a number of emergency products which served women in particular. The total of 132 public institutions including one-stop-shops were reconstructed thus recovering a significant number of public jobs predominantly performed by women and normalizing access to services and other structures important for everyday lives (schools, health, social work centers). Finally, the reconstruction of schools in rural areas has ensured access to education for almost 5,000 girls³⁶².

Refugee crisis as a security challenge for BiH

Additional challenge to human security in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the current refugee crisis which poses a serious security challenge for BiH, but more importantly, it poses a human security threat as women and children refugees are often targets of physical and psychological violence, forced prostitution, human trafficking, while making the highest percentage of those who went missing in the course of their transfer.³⁶³

When refugees from Syria started arriving in 2015, the Gender Equality Agency of BiH highlighted the special needs and vulnerability of women and children in migrations, underlining the importance of targeted actions and measures to provide them protection and integrate them in the society. Coordination Board for

monitoring of the implementation of AP UNSCR 1325 started collecting aid from institutions and distributed the aid to Syrian refugees in the territory of the RS.³⁶⁴ Through this action, the Coordination Board recognized the migrant crisis as a new security challenge, especially for women and children, emphasizing that this issue should be given particular attention in the policy-making and measures for implementation of UNSCR 1325. Certain areas in BiH are particularly affected by the migrant crisis (Bihać area) and attention is given to many women by the international organizations, mainly IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA.

Despite these efforts, a systemic protection is needed for children and women, particularly in their access to education and health care. There are cases of violence against migrant women especially girls, as well as the cases of trafficking in women for prostitution.

The impact of the COVID-19 on gender equality in the context of human security

In March 2020, with the declaration by the WHO of COVID-19 as a pandemic, authorities in BiH started taking measures to contain it by imposing various restrictions, including: closures of kindergartens and schools as well as non-crucial business services; limitations on public services; gatherings; movements; curfews; and mandatory quarantine for the infected and international travelers.

The impact of both the pandemic and the measures to counteract it have deepened the already existing gender gaps rooted in the patriarchal society. The burden of the COVID-19 situation has been particularly hard on women, especially with respect to their economic status, their access to socio-economic rights and their right to live free of violence.

As mentioned above, economic impacts are felt especially by women who generally earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs and are more likely to be employed in

³⁶² Consultancy Report on Technical Support on Gender Mainstreaming in Recovery Program Design and Implementation, UNDP, UN Women, 2015

³⁶³ Ibid. Pg. 18.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

the informal sector.³⁶⁵ Therefore, their capacity to absorb economic shocks such as the one created by the COVID-19 crisis is less than that of men. Additionally, the increased demand for unpaid care work deepened the already existing gender inequalities in the division of household unpaid chores. Women's unpaid domestic and care work has long been recognized as a driver of gender inequalities, and has a direct link to wage inequalities, lower income, poorer education outcomes and physical and mental health stressors experienced by women

Secondly, health and social services saw how the resources were redistributed and/or reduced affecting primarily women. For example, women's sexual and reproductive rights were affected, as at the start of the pandemic prenatal, perinatal, and postpartum services were significantly reduced or inexistent. Also, the fact that the social work centers reduced the number of personnel and working hours affected those who are more dependent on the social welfare system, mostly women.

Finally, VAW has increased exponentially as security, health and financial concerns created tensions and strains which became more accentuated by the cramped and confined living conditions of lockdown.

Summary of challenges in achieving gender equality in the context of human security

1. *Victims of conflict related sexual violence face many obstacles in receiving reparations:* Victims are being redirected to civil lawsuits, additional financial burden is imposed on the survivors, and they often give up on their right to compensation which is subject to the statute of limitations and may only be directed towards the perpetrators. When seeking
2. *The lack of a gendered approach to P/CVE diminishes the effectiveness of its strategies:* BiH hasn't achieved yet an adequate representation of women in the security sector among decision-makers, nor has it mainstreamed gender in the security policies and programs, including those on P/CVE. This affects the efficiency and effectiveness of those policies in programs as they do not foresee the role of women in violent extremism, both as drivers and as agents to counter-act it.
3. *Gender should be considered in interventions for prevention and elimination of consequences of disasters:* Although the gender institutional mechanisms reacted to the floods in May 2014 by pointing out the complex and multifaceted consequences of floods on men and women, and boys and girls, and addressed this issue by developing specific measures and policies, these responses were ad hoc and remedial instead of precautionary.
4. *Refugee crisis poses a serious security challenge:* The challenge is significantly gendered as women and children are often targets of physical and psychological violence, forced prostitution, human trafficking, and often go missing during their transfer. There is no public systemic protection for women and children, particularly in terms of their access to education and health care, and those gaps are being covered by humanitarian aid.
5. *The impact of the COVID-19 crisis has deepened the already existing gaps in gender equality:* the government management of the crisis included measures that in most cases were gender blinded, increasing the already existing gender inequalities, and thus, withholding the progress to social cohesion.

³⁶⁵ Policy brief: *The impact of COVID-19 on women*. United Nations, 2020, available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Retrieved on 8 October 2020]

5.

CONCLUSION:
CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES



The present Country Gender Equality Profile is a result of an all-encompassing sectorial gender analysis and consultations with the relevant stakeholders held in person, including 15 partners from the UN, government and international partners, and through an online consultative survey (see Annex 1). The CGEP was validated on two occasions during 2019 and updated in line with the Rapid Gender Assessment of the impact of COVID-19 and the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee during 2020 and finally validated. Consequently, in the process of CGEP development, reliable gender-sensitive information was continuously provided to produce the Common Country Assessment recommendations on UN programming, budgeting, and decision-making processes. It has contributed to the preparation and formulation of the next UNSDCF for BiH, the upcoming new partnership between the UN and BiH towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This is an analytical and operational document that provides good assessment of the key challenges for gender equality in the context of sustainable development in BiH and explores the existing opportunities to address the gaps identified in all the thematic areas analyzed in this report. Additionally, and due to the impact of COVID-19 crisis on gender equality in the different thematic areas assessed above, the CGEP has been updated following the findings of the Rapid Gender Assessment³⁶⁶ as well as the UN Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Crisis.³⁶⁷ All the provided measures and opportunities for BiH authorities to undertake in cooperation with the UN are based on the key findings of this document and the relevant recommendations issued by the CEDAW Committee in the last reporting cycle (2013-2017)³⁶⁸. These are focused on the thematic areas of political participation, public life, and decision-making; economic environment; protection against VAW; education and gender responsible data collection. They are divided into short term and medium to long-term measures that should assist the authorities with clear guidelines on the priorities and implementation time frame. Cooperation between BiH authorities and the UN will be based on two key principles: 1) inclusion and equity to “leave no-one behind” and 2) implementation of human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women. Finally, the UN system will

continue supporting the authorities in BiH to meet their international commitments by addressing gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks and building capacities for gender analysis and gender-responsive programming.

Achieving gender equality in political participation, public life, and decision-making

According to the stakeholders consulted in the process of the Country Gender Equality Profile development, participation in public and political life, and in decision-making is considered to be one of the top three areas in gender equality work that UN Agencies should prioritize in BiH. At the same time, the low level of women's participation in decision-making processes is considered to be one of the top three challenges/obstacles in achieving gender equality in BiH that should be addressed by the UN (see Annex 2).

In relation to target 5.5 of the SDGs, BiH has the following opportunities to take action, in cooperation with the UN:

Medium-long term measures/opportunities:

- To ensure that the 40% quota for women candidates is respected and guaranteed, amendments to the Election Law of BiH should be adopted. Those amendments should include, among others, the replacement of the open list system with a zipper system for the nomination of the candidates from both sexes on electoral lists of political parties. Additionally, amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministries of BiH should be introduced to ensure a parallel 40% quota for the representation of either sex in the higher executive power of the State.
- In order to ensure higher participation of women within their political parties and change gender-blind party regulation, including discriminatory allocation of resources, capacity building programs for the empowerment of women in politics, in

³⁶⁶ UN Women, *Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, 2020

³⁶⁷ UN in BiH, *Socio- Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo, 2020

³⁶⁸ CEDAW/C/BiH/CO/6, November 2019

particular vulnerable groups of women, should be organized by AGE BiH and the Entity Gender Centers. Additionally, this should be extended to the leadership of political parties to ensure a positive and encouraging political environment for women to take more active roles.

- To overcome traditional gender roles in society in relation to political participation and decision-making fact-based campaigns should be organized by AGE BiH and the Entity Gender Centers. Media outlets should also be directly targeted, to ensure their reporting emphasizes the role of women as decision-makers.

Fostering gender equality in the economic environment

According to the stakeholders consulted, one of the top three areas that the UN should prioritize in BiH to achieve gender equality is economic empowerment, access to resources, and employment of women (see Annex 2).

With reference to target 8.5 of the SDGs, BiH has the following opportunities to take action, in cooperation with the UN:

Short-term measures/opportunities:

- In order to overcome the existing gender-based discrimination in employment, effective sanctions against employers who do not comply with their obligation to contribute to the pension fund and the social security system of their female employees should be adopted by the FBiH Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, and the RS Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. Additionally, ministries of social protection at the entity and cantonal level need to harmonize regulations on maternity benefits to ensure equal rights and remuneration across the country, as well as to promote the use of paternity

leave to have a more balanced division of unpaid work.

Medium and long-term measures/opportunities:

- In order to reduce the gender wage gap, the Council of Ministers of BiH needs to adopt labor strategies, including family planning strategies, and thus facilitate gender equality in the labor market and adequate work-life balance for both men and women, ensuring access to the necessary social and health-care services for all;
- In order to overcome occupational segregation by gender, the Council of Ministers of BiH, led by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the entity ministries of labor should ensure that the gender perspective is introduced in the diverse employment strategies³⁶⁹, starting by calling for public consultations and the development of guidelines to reduce the mentioned segregation, which could include integrating a system of incentives for employers in traditionally male- dominated fields of employment. The cooperation between the BiH authorities and the UN is expected to make specific and value added contributions for a more dynamic economy, and more widely shared prosperity, especially for women.
- In order to ensure economic reactivation of the long term unemployed women, a more strategic approach for the implementation of the existing employment related strategies³⁷⁰ and the continuation and renewal of the already expired ones should be supported by the entities governments. The UN will continue promoting the implementation of strategies and policies for a more inclusive economic growth.
- In order to ensure BiH authorities can properly measure the existing gender pay gap to develop economic and financial plans accordingly, the AGE BiH, and Entity Gender Centers in cooperation with Entity Ministries of Labor, should undertake a comprehensive study of the root causes of the existing gap and develop measures to close it.

³⁶⁹ That should include the Strategy for Employment of the RS 2018-2020 and the Strategy for Development of the FBiH 2021-2027.

³⁷⁰ Including the Action Plan for development of women's entrepreneurship in Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018-2022 Strategy for development of women's entrepreneurship in Republika Srpska, 2016-2020 Strategy for development of small and medium enterprises in Republika Srpska.

Ensuring protection from violence against women

According to the stakeholders consulted, inadequate response of institutions to violence against women is the first challenge that BiH should address in cooperation with the UN to achieve gender equality (See Annex 2).

In line with target 5.2 of the SDGs, BiH has the following opportunities to take action, in cooperation with the UN:

Short-term measures/opportunities:

- In order to ensure that specialized services for survivors of violence against women are available for all women, the entity governments should ensure availability of funds to cover free legal aid, access to shelters, psychosocial support and medical treatment as well as the SOS phone for reporting. This should include funds not only for public services but also for civil society organizations that are providing such services to survivors, including safe houses.
- In order to ensure that all institutions with protection responsibilities have access to the data they need, the BiH CoM and the entity governments (entity ministries of the interior and ministries of justice, including the RS Ministry of Youth, Family and Sport) need to establish a uniform data collection system on all forms of violence against women as well as the institutional response to the cases of violence. The data collected should be disaggregated by age, ethnicity, disability, type of violence, relationship between perpetrator and victim, protection order issued, type of penalty, etc.
- In order to ensure that the existing training programs are effective when it comes to the application of legislation criminalizing all forms of violence against women and that gender-sensitive investigation and interrogation methods are properly used, the entity ministries of the interior as well as the cantonal MoIs in the FBiH, and the entity centers for judicial and prosecutorial training (CEST by its acronym in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian)

should carry out an assessment of the impact of the capacity building provided to the judiciary and the police. Additionally, the entity CESTs should organize a comparative study on the adequacy of punishments against perpetrators and effectiveness of prosecution and investigation.

Attaining gender equality in education

According to the stakeholders surveyed for this report, attaining a quality and inclusive education system should be one of the priorities of the BiH and the UN (See Annex 2).

In accordance with target 4.1 of the SDGs BiH has the following opportunities to take action, in cooperation with the UN:

Short-term measures/opportunities:

- In order to overcome the gap in access to online education, the FBiH and the RS Governments should invest in digital connectivity for every child and increase the quality of e-learning, emphasizing the needs of most vulnerable girls, especially girls with disabilities, and Roma girls.
- To ensure a better representation of women in science and research institutions, especially in decision-making position, the BiH Strategy of the Ministry of Civil Affairs for development of science (2017-2022) should be thoroughly implemented.

Medium and long-term measures/opportunities:

- To eliminate discriminatory gender stereotypes, the FBiH Ministry of Education and Science and the RS Ministry of Education and Culture should review schoolbooks. At the same time, they should organize continuous promotional activities to encourage girls to pursue educational paths which have generally been male dominated.
- In order to ensure the full participation in the education system of the girls in the situation of vulnerability, such as Roma girls, girls with disabilities, victims of VAW and trafficking in human beings,

the FBiH Ministry of Education and Science and the RS Ministry of Education and Culture should organize a gender analysis of the existing barriers they are facing in the current system.

Advancing gender equality through gender responsible data collection

Considering that one of the key findings arising from this report is the lack of gender responsible statistics, analysis, and research in all social areas, it is worth presenting one extra key opportunity for BiH to undertake in cooperation with the UN:

Short-term measures/opportunities:

- To ensure the translation of the Agenda 2030 into concrete activities for SDG and engagement of the private sectors, the BiH Government has developed a group of national indicators to monitor the progress regarding SDG implementation. The UN should support the statistical institutions in BiH to strengthen data collection, monitoring, and reporting on the relevant SDGs, with a focus on addressing critical data gaps and leveraging qualitative data, from civil society organizations and the Human Rights Institutions in BiH.

- In order to ensure that BiH aligns with the EU Gender Equality acquis, the UN should support BiH institutions to increase the availability and strengthen their capacity to use gender indicators and statistics for monitoring of SDG, GAP, UNSCR 1325 Action Plan and the Framework for implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The UN should work with the statistical bodies of the authorities in BiH to strengthen the quality and availability of data for effective policymaking and program implementation.
- In order to ensure the availability and use of data on the status of women and men in BiH, in line with Eurostat guidance, the BHAS, the RS Office for Statistics and the FBiH Bureau for Statistics should engage in a mapping exercise of available gender statistics and promotion of the report Women and Men in BiH.

Medium-term measures/opportunities:

- In order to monitor the impact of laws, policies and action plans at all levels of government, the BHAS in cooperation with AGE BiH should work on the development of a Gender Equality Index that will assess the situation of women and progress towards the realization of gender equality in all areas of life.

Annex 1

CONSULTATIVE SURVEY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF BiH COUNTRY GENDER EQUALITY PROFILE



Note: The Survey was available in BCS and English.

Introduction

UN Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently producing a Country Gender Equality Profile (CGEP) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the goal of informing and supporting the preparation of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and subsequently United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025, also known as United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). CGEP will follow the existing BiH Sustainable Development Goals Framework, serve as an all-encompassing analytical and operational document of the UN Country Team in BiH, include situational analysis of identified priority areas in regard to gender equality in BiH, and provide concrete suggestions and recommendations to address the gaps identified in the process.

In order to provide an all-encompassing analysis of the state of gender equality in BiH and identify priority areas of the UN Country Team in BiH in regard to gender equality, UN Women CO BiH has developed a CGEP methodology that includes a series of consultations with national and international partners, UN Country Team agencies and civil society organizations, as well as a questionnaire intended for the respective stakeholders, but also other interested parties within the government of BiH, civil society, international organizations, media, academia, and private sector. The purpose of this online survey is to collect information that will be used for development of the CGEP. Your answers will inform the consultant's recommendations on the priorities, challenges and possible strategies for advancement of gender equality in BiH, as well as on directions of the UN Country Team programming in the following years in regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

We estimate that you would need five minutes to complete the survey. If you require additional information, please contact the consultant.

Thank you for your participation.

Questions

(1) Which of the following best describes your organization?

- Government
- Bilateral donor
- United Nations entity
- Civil society organization or NGO
- Private sector
- Academia
- Media
- Individual expert
- Other

(1A) You have selected "other" as a response to the previous questions, please elaborate.

(1B) What is the exact name of your organization?

(2) Overall, how familiar are you with the work to achieve gender equality in BiH?

- Very familiar
- Familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not at all familiar

(3) In the past 12 months, how frequently have you conducted activities to achieve gender equality in BiH?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Not at all

(4) How effective would you say are the existing legislation, policy, and measures to achieve gender equality in BiH?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Not very effective
- Not effective at all
- Unable to say

(5) Where do you think the capacities to implement legislation, policy, and measures to achieve gender equality are most needed in BiH?

- Local governments
- Cantonal ministries
- Entity and state ministries
- Judiciary (courts and prosecutors)
- Police
- Administrative and other service providers
- Gender institutional mechanisms
- Ombudsmen
- Other

(5A) You have selected “other” as a response to the previous questions, please elaborate.

(6) In the past 12 months, how frequently have you interacted with UN Agencies in BiH?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Several times a year
- Once a year
- Not at all

(7) To what extent do you think the UN Agencies are contributing to achieving gender equality in BiH?

- They significantly contribute
- They contribute
- They do not contribute a lot
- They do not contribute at all
- Unable to say

(8) Select the top three areas UN Agencies should prioritize in BiH from the perspective of gender equality.

- Population migration
- Human security
- Participation in public and political life, and in decision-making
- Gender responsible budgeting

- Work with men and boys
- Use of information and communication technology
- Quality and inclusive education
- Climate change and environmental protection
- Economic empowerment, access to resources, and employment
- Universal health care and social protection
- Sexual and reproductive health

(9) Select top three challenges/obstacles in achieving gender equality in BiH that should be addressed by the UN Agencies.

- Multiple discrimination
- Gender based violence
- Inadequate response of institutions to gender-based violence and discrimination
- Economic gender inequality
- Gender stereotypes in education and media
- Low level of women's participation in decision making processes
- Lack of gender sensitive indicators needed for progress monitoring
- Traditional gender roles and social expectations
- Lack of political will to work on achieving gender equality
- Inadequate legislation and policy framework for achievement of gender equality
- Inadequate implementation of legislation and policy for achievement of gender equality due to weak understanding of the framework and/or lack of capacities
- Lack of official gender sensitive data and gender disaggregated data

(10) Select the top three strategies UN Agencies should pursue in their work to achieve gender equality in BiH.

- Gender mainstreaming into all aspect of UN work in BiH
- Supporting co-ordination and networking
- Support to research to provide policy analysis, advice, and recommendations
- Support to local institutions and local communities
- Advocacy and campaigns
- Supporting civil society organizations that work on achieving gender equality
- Supporting monitoring by all actors of the implementation of legislation and policies
- Supporting monitoring by international human rights bodies of the implementation of international norms and standards (including CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention) in BiH
- Providing technical support, including financial support and capacity development opportunities for national, entity and local institutions and experts

(11) Please add any recommendations you would have for UN Agencies' work in the area of advancing and achieving gender equality in BiH.

Thank you for the time you took to complete the survey. If you think your colleagues would be interested in completing this survey, please forward them the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/UNCGEPBiH>. To confirm and submit your response, please click "submit".

Annex 2

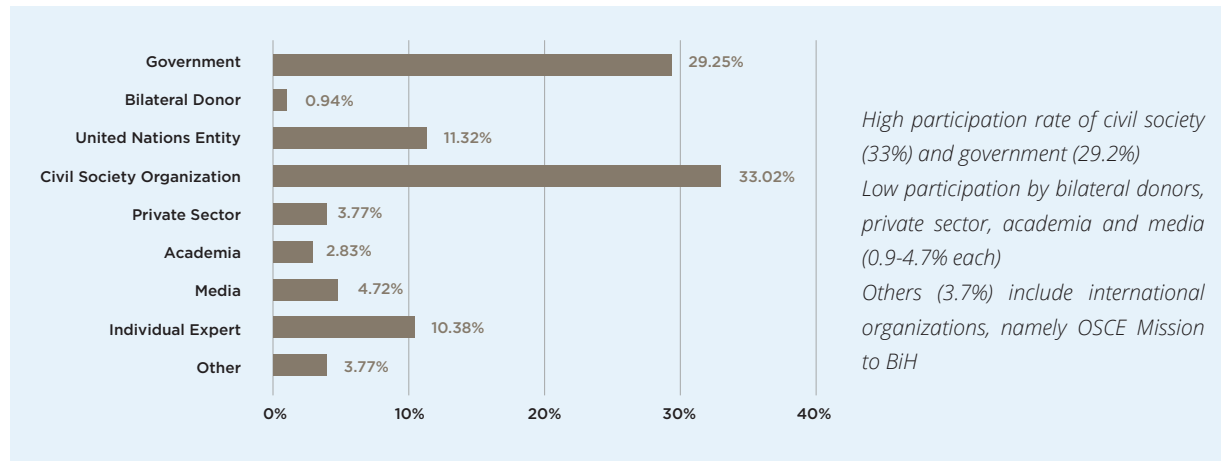
CONSULTATIVE

SURVEY FINDINGS

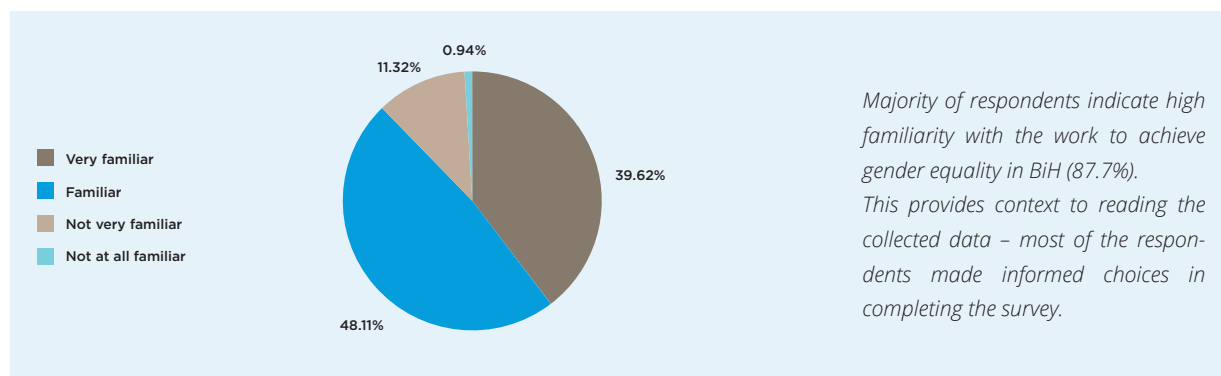


The Consultative Survey (see Annex 1) was sent out to 310 stakeholders, including government, UN agencies, bilateral donors, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, media, and individual experts. In total 106 stakeholders or 34.2 percent responded.

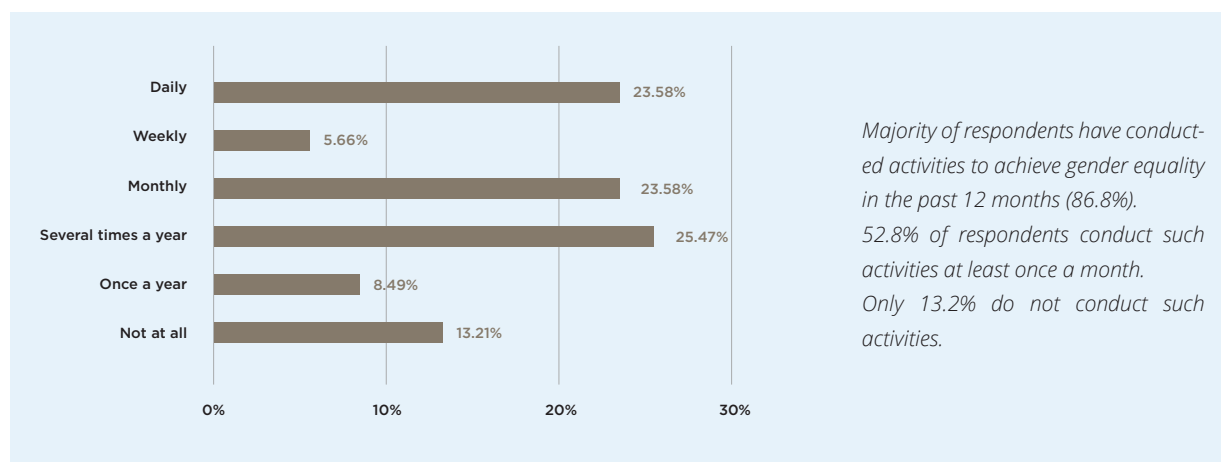
Question 1: Which of the following best describes your organization?



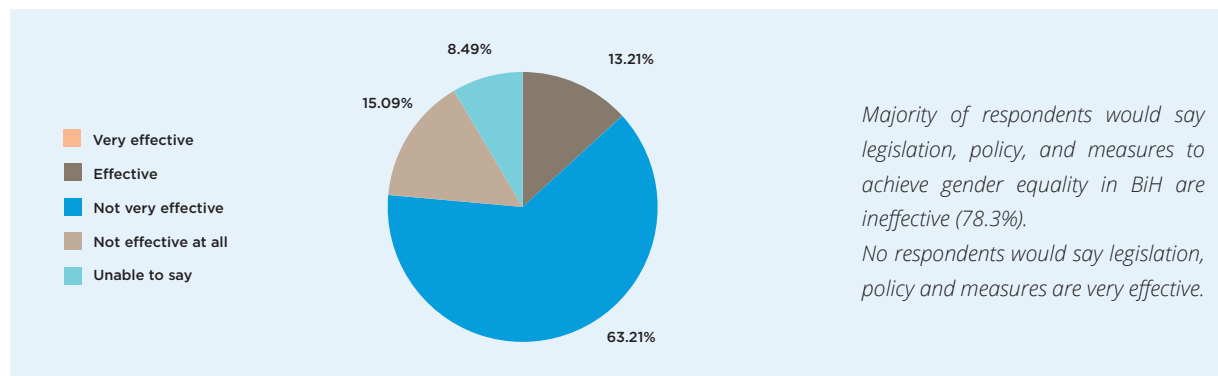
Question 2: Overall, how familiar are you with the work to achieve gender equality in BiH?



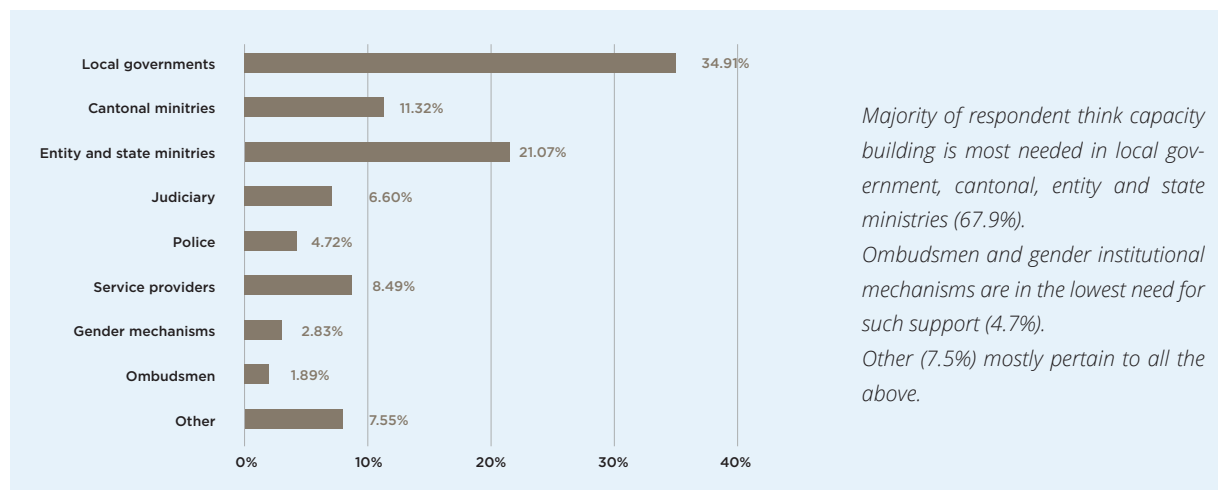
Question 3: In the past 12 months, how frequently have you conducted activities to achieve gender equality in BiH?



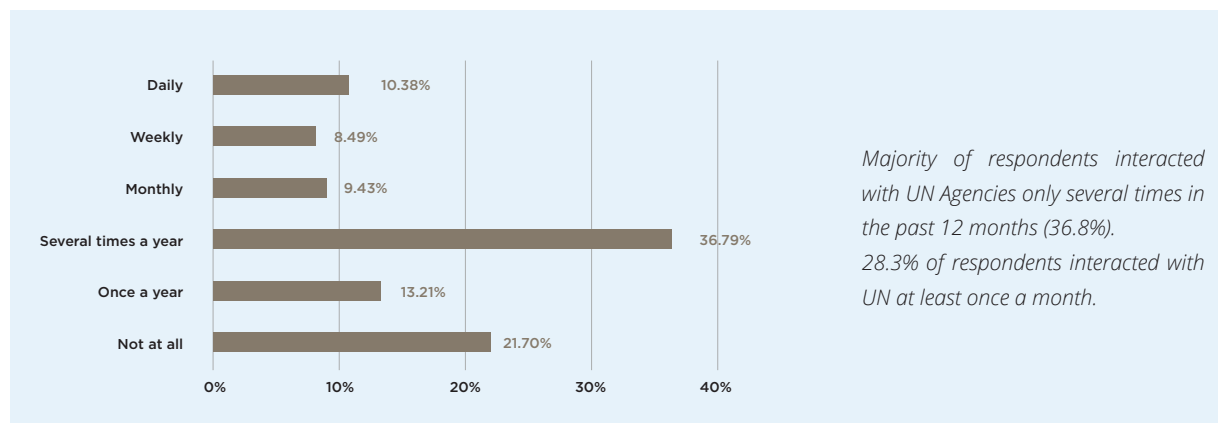
Question 4: How effective would you say are the existing legislation, policy, and measures to achieve gender equality in BiH?



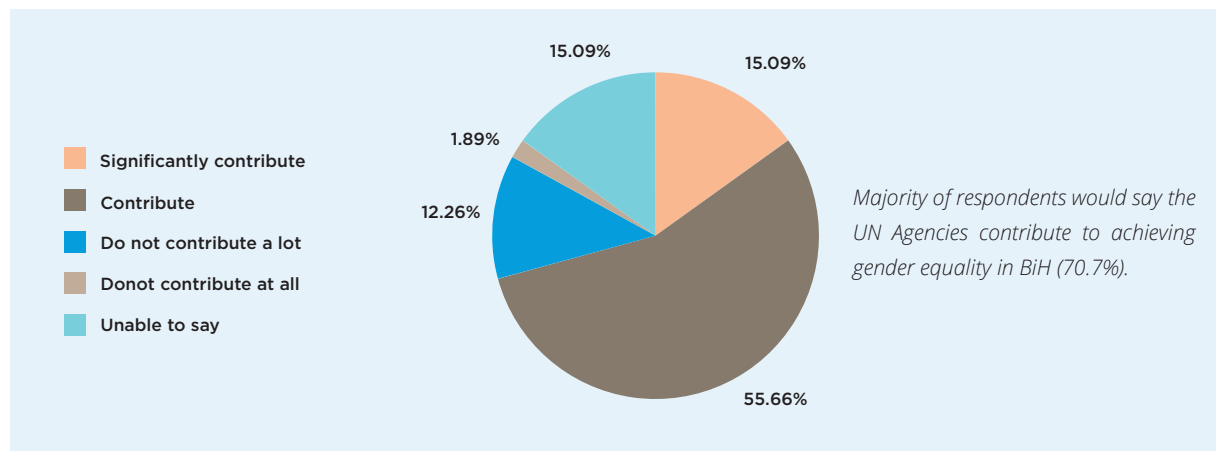
Question 5: Where do you think the capacities to implement legislation, policy, and measures to achieve gender equality are most needed in BiH?



Question 6: In the past 12 months, how frequently have you interacted with UN Agencies in BiH?

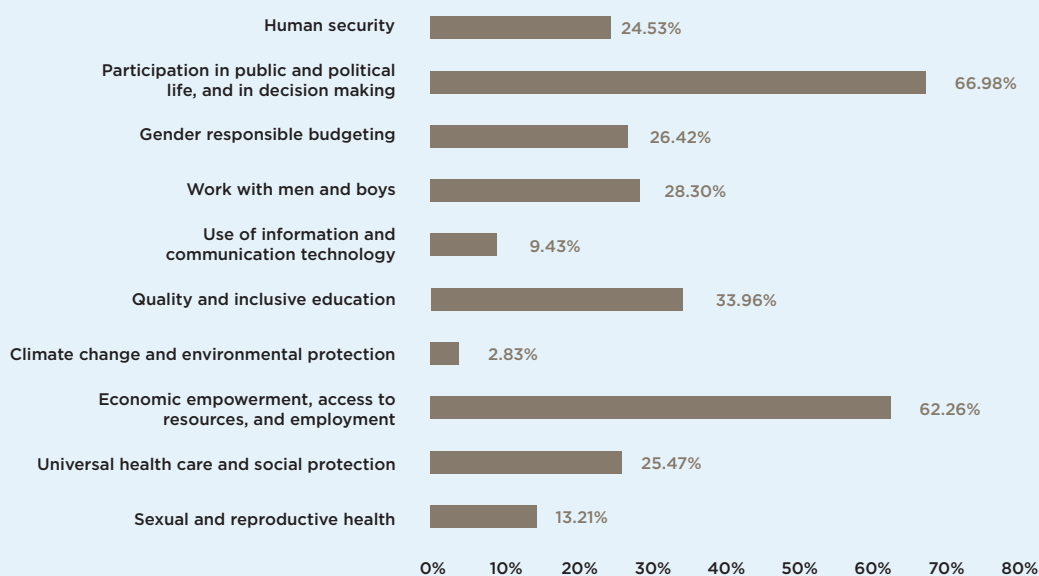


Question 7: To what extent do you think the UN Agencies are contributing to achieving gender equality in BiH?



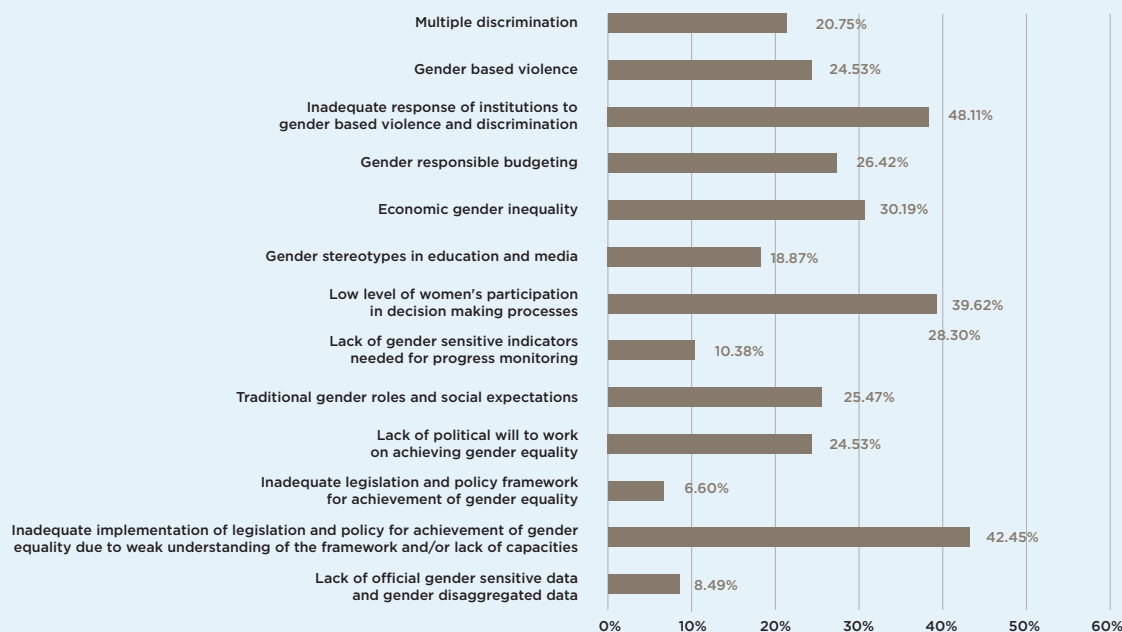
Question 8: Select the top three areas UN Agencies should prioritize in BiH from the perspective of gender equality.

The top three areas UN Agencies should prioritize in BiH from the perspective of gender equality are as follows: (1) Participation in public and political life, and in decision making (67%), (2) Economic empowerment, access to resources, and employment (62.2%), (3) Quality and inclusive education (33.9%).



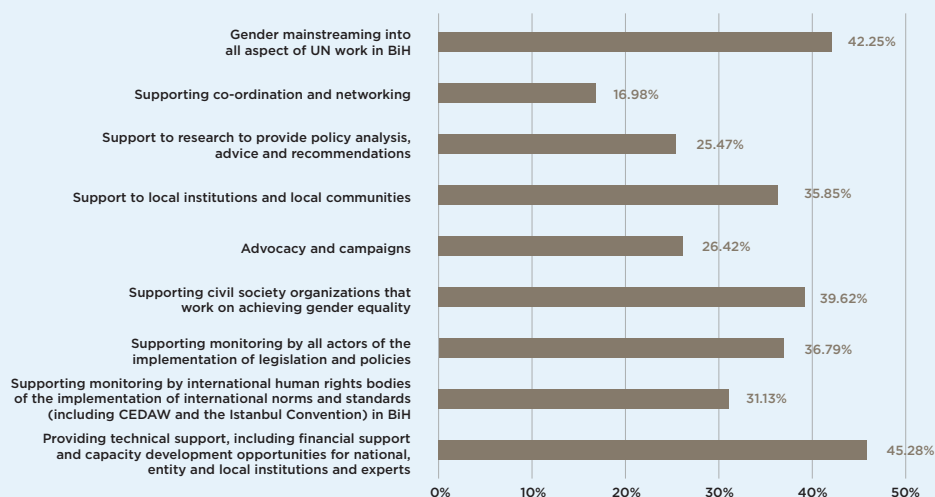
Question 9: Select top three challenges/obstacles in achieving gender equality in BiH that should be addressed by the UN Agencies.

The top three challenges/obstacles in achieving gender equality in BiH that should be addressed by the UN Agencies are as follows: (1) Inadequate response of institutions to gender based violence and discrimination (48.1%), (2) Inadequate implementation of legislation and policy for achievement of gender equality due to weak understanding of the framework and/or lack of capacities (42.4%), (3) Low level of women's participation in decision making processes (39.6%).



Question 10: Select the top three strategies UN Agencies should pursue in their work to achieve gender equality in BiH.

The top three strategies UN Agencies should pursue in their work to achieve gender equality in BiH are as follows: (1) Providing technical support, including financial support and capacity development opportunities for national, entity and local institutions and experts (45.3%), (2) Gender mainstreaming into all aspect of UN work in BiH (42.4%), (3) Supporting civil society organizations that work on achieving gender equality (39.6%).



Question 11: Please add any recommendations you would have for UN Agencies' work in the area of advancing and achieving gender equality in BiH. *[interpretive summary]*

Respondents' additional recommendations varied from providing lists of areas where more focus is needed, over underlining choices they were offered in previous questions, to identifying new challenges and providing more detailed solutions. Many respondents emphasize the importance of focusing on local level, from supporting and capacity building of local institutions to financially supporting civil society organizations. Significant part of respondents highlights that more work in the sector of education should be done, especially in early education to effectively fight gender stereotypes, negative norms, and patriarchal upbringing. Involving more men, youth, marginalized groups, especially rural women, and women in poverty, but also academic community and religious leaders are additional recommendation for the UN Agencies. Regarding equal political participation, more direct support for women to access leadership positions is needed, while some respondents believe working with political parties on changing party culture is of great importance. Collaborating with media is considered a great opportunity that is not being fully utilized. Quality and long-term awareness raising campaigns are another recommendation for advancement of gender equality in BiH. Some respondents emphasize the need for tightening and applying of sanctions against violators of key laws related to gender equality and gender-based violence. Finally, specific recommendations for the UN include introducing and developing gender action plans for each UN agency, strengthening their coordination on gender equality related activities, increasing visibility of such activities and introducing more complex training opportunities on gender mainstreaming for the UN staff.

References



UN, Agenda 2030, and SDG

UN Women Guidance Note on Country Gender Equality Profiles, 2018 (available)

UN Women Gender Brief Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gender equality state of play and recommendations for BiH GAP and EU GAP implementation, 2019 (available)

Voluntary Review on Implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019 (available for internal use only)

Gender Scorecard UNDAF Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016 (available)

Rapid Integrated Assessment of Key Strategic Documents – Implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018 (available)

SDG Framework Synthesis Report BiH, 2019 (report not yet available, only the Framework content)

2019 Common Country Assessment Terms of Reference for International Consultant (available)

One United Nations Programme and Common Budgetary Framework Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2019: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (available)

Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2018 (available)

Beijing Declaration and PfA

Progress Report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Beijing +25 process, 2019 (available)

Integrated notes from consultative meetings with civil society organizations in BiH within the Beijing +25 process (available)

UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA Bosnia and Herzegovina, Babović, Marija; Pavlović, Olivera; Ginić, Katarina; Karadinović, Nina; Filipović-Hadžiabdić, Samra (ed.). Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2013

UN Women, Haarr, Robin, Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2020.

United Nations Policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women, Sarajevo, 2020.

UNDP, UN Women Consultancy Report on Technical Support on Gender Mainstreaming in Recovery Programme Design and Implementation, Sarajevo, 2015.

United Nations General Assembly Seventieth Session, A/70/674 Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General.

United Nations, Socio-economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 2020

UN Women, *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women and Girls and COVID-19*, 2020

UNDP, *Socio- Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo, 2020

UN Women and UNDP, Kadribasic et al, *Baseline Study on Barriers to Political Participation of Women*, Sarajevo, 2020

CEDAW

CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, C/CO/BiH/6, 2019

Sixth periodic report on implementation of CEDAW submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina under Article 18 of the Convention, 2018 (available)

Alternative CEDAW Report: Report of civil society organizations on the implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013-2017, 2016 (available)

Lists of issues submitted to the UN CEDAW Committee:

Coalition of civil society organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Written information for the adoption of the list of issues by the CEDAW Committee, 2019 (available)

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – The impacts of economic reforms on gender equality and the situation of women migrant and asylum-seekers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019 (available)

The Advocates for Human Rights – Bosnia and Herzegovina's compliance with CEDAW, suggested list of issues relating to domestic violence, 2019 (available)

Center for Economic and Rural Development submission, 2019 (available)

Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Ending Family Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina – challenging physical punishment of girls and boys, 2019 (available)

European Integrations

Information requested by the European Commission to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the preparation of the Opinion on the application of Bosnia and Herzegovina for membership of the European Union: Political Criteria (available)

Commission Staff Working Document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2018 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy, 2018 (available)

Women's perspectives: Alternative responses to the European Commission Questionnaire by the Rights for All, 2017 (available)

The Initiative for Monitoring of the European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2019 Alternative Report on the Application of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the European Union Membership: Political Criteria, 2019 (available)

The Initiative for Monitoring of the European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 Alternative Analytical Report on the Application of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the European Union Membership: Political Criteria, 2018 (available)

European Commission Gender Country Profile for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014 (available)

Other documents

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka Report on Gender-based Discrimination and Labor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2019 (available)

USAID Gender Analysis Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016 (available)

OSCE, The Right to Social Protection in BiH- Concerns on Adequacy and Equality, Sarajevo, 2012

OSCE, Understanding the Role of Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to terrorism, Vienna, 2019

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina *COVID-19 Crisis Response: A Gender and Diversity Analysis*, 2020

Azinovic, V i Jusic, M., Novi zov rata u Siriji i bosanskohercegovački kontingent stranih boraca, Atlantic Initiative, 2016.

Malkić, A. and Hadžiristić, T. *Intersecting Inequalities in Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Analitika – Center for Social Research, 2016

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; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and 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.



Zmaja od Bosne bb
71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

www.unwomen.org
www.facebook.com/unwomenbih
www.twitter.com/unwomenbih
www.instagram.com/unwomenbih