

SHADOW REPORT **ON THE IMPLEMENTATION** **OF THE GENDER EQUALITY** **STRATEGY 2018/2019**



**SHADOW REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2018/2019**

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December, 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The national Gender Equality Strategy (2013–2020) is the first strategic document of its kind for advancing equal opportunities for women and men in the country, adopted in 2013 by the Assembly of RNM. The legal basis for adopting the strategy is Article 9, Paragraph 3 of the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men (LEOWM), which additionally defines the institutional structure responsible for its implementation. Along with national action plans and operational plans, the strategy aims to provide full equality between the genders at the horizontal level by introducing gender mainstreaming at the institutional level, but also at the sectoral level, through specific activities and measure for advancing equal opportunities.

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The Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2018 and 2019 is the 4th independent assessment to provide a comprehensive analysis of the level of completion of the measures and activities planned with the strategy, the National Action Plan 2018-2020 (NAPGE), as well as the Operational Plan for 2018/2019 with activities that are the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The methodology was developed as part of the project Gender Equality Council, funded by the European Union, and first applied in 2013. This year's report was prepared with a slight modification to the methodology in terms of data collection; however, the reporting is identical and allows for comparisons with previous shadow reports. The report was prepared as part of the project EU Advocacy for women's rights, supported by the foundation Kvinna till Kvinna.

AT A GLANCE

YEAR	2018 – 2019
NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES	113
Inclusion of NAPGE in OP 2018/2019 ¹	21 of 113 total in NAPGE, i.e., of 55 ² activities in NAPGE that are directly the responsibility of MLSP
Number of activities with potentially transformational impact	107
Level of completion in percentages ³	
Fully completed	25%
Significantly completed	18%
Partially completed	27%
Not started	26%
Timeliness	
Not started	26%
Delayed	34,5%
On schedule	34,5%

A positive development in the reporting period is that once again **state funds** are allocated annually for the implementation of the activities, but as in previous year, these funds are neither sufficient, nor is spending done transparently.

In 2018 and 2019, a total of 38,520 EUR were earmarked for the implementation of the Strategy through the national gender equality and non-discrimination program, i.e. 6150 EUR for 2018 and 32,370 EUR for 2019. On the other hand, donations in 2020 amounted to 215,933 EUR from UN Women and 150,000 EUR

1 Only the Operational Plan 2018/2019 of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

2 These include the activities from NAPGE 2018-2020 for 2018 and 2019 for which MLSP is directly responsible. The activities of SAB that are part of MLSP but are identified as an institution responsible for the implementation of NAPGE activities are not included. If we consider those too, the number of activities for which MLSP is responsible but are not included in its Operational Plan would be higher.

3 Percentages are rounded up.



from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These funds, however, are earmarked for specific activities from the Action Plan 2018-2020 and cannot be used for the implementation of other activities. Additionally, civil society organizations rarely receive financial support from the national budget and implement the activities from the NAPGE and the Strategy only if they get donations from other sources.

In 2018 and 2019, as in previous years, the implementation of the Action Plan is limited due to a lack of human and financial resources, limited capacities of the administration, inconsistencies between the strategic and operational documents, a lack of methodology for monitoring the implementation, weak inter-institutional coordination, as well as limited participation of the civil society sector in terms of material/financial support.

Inconsistencies remain between the planned activities under NAPGE and the OP and the recommendations from the previous Shadow Reports for 2014 and 2015 for harmonizing the activities have not been addressed. **Reporting on the implementation** of NAPGE does not follow the indicators foreseen in the Action Plan, which is an ongoing problem, and current reporting practices do not provide a clear and comprehensive overview of progress in gender equality in North Macedonia, nor the level of implementation of NAPGE.

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Cooperation between the institutions responsible for implementing the Strategy and the Action Plan is at an especially low level. This is evident in the inconsistencies in the responses provided by the institutions that refer to joint activities, as well as in the reports that are submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The responses and reports frequently contain contradictory information which is almost impossible to cross check due to a **lack of publicly available information**. An additional problem is that despite the legal obligation, many of the institutions do not submit their annual progress reports on gender equality to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. This is especially noticeable in the reporting from the municipalities: 40% of municipalities in 2018 and 34.5% of municipalities in 2019 did not submit a report at all. The situation is somewhat better, but nevertheless similar, with the state administration bodies – 25% and 23% failed to submit reports for 2018 and 2019, respectively. What is more, a significant number of these reports are empty submissions, fulfilling only technically the obligation to submit a report.



Cooperation with civil society organizations has improved, however, the involvement of civil society organizations in the implementation of NAPGE remains limited, above all due to limited material resources.

The key actors according to the LEOWM, i.e., the bodies responsible for implementing and monitoring the Strategy, and for recommending reforms for advancing gender equality, are operating on the basis of formally fulfilling their obligations. For example, the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (CEOWM) at the RNM Assembly holds public discussions on issues related to gender equality, but rarely submits initiatives and legislative amendments that would include the gender perspective in domestic legislation at the horizontal level. Similarly, the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities (IMG) holds sessions in which they review and discuss national documents in the area of gender equality, but no conclusions are adopted in these sessions, nor are they followed up with specific activities.

In 2018 and 2019, the total number of activities from the action plan that are fully completed are increased compared to previous years, but not significantly. Furthermore, 26% of the activities planned for 2018 and 2019 were not started yet in 2020. Considering the events and crises caused by COVID-19, as well as the time it takes to implement these activities, it is unlikely that activities that have not been started as well as those planned for 2020 will be completed.

Considering the level of completion of activities, we noted **greatest progress** in the areas of health and media.

Among the most positive developments in health are the following: the adoption of the new Law on Terminating a Pregnancy developed with a human rights-based approach, the continuous screening for malignant diseases, as well as the continuous trainings of medical personnel on gender-sensitive approaches in the work with their patients. Nevertheless, despite these positive developments, overall, there is a lack of effective implementation of the new law,⁴ and there is a lack of publicly available and accessible information on the implementation of the planned activities with measurable indicators for their successful implementation.

4 See: European Commission. 2020. "North Macedonia 2020 Report", pg 12. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf and HERAYouth (2020) Young People Want: Accessible and Affordable Modern Contraception. Public Policy Paper for Improving Access and Availability of Modern Contraception in the Republic of North Macedonia. Available at: <https://hera.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pozicijonen-dokument-HERAmladi-Kontracjepczija.pdf>

In Media, almost all activities that were the responsibility of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services were carried out. In fact, this is the only state administration body that has successfully completed the planned activities from the Action Plan ahead of schedule and, as a result, this area is where we note the greatest progress. Overall, however, there is still a need for significant further efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes and discriminatory content that are present in media. A great challenge in this area in the reporting period was the dissolution of the Commission for the Protection from Discrimination and the failure to appoint/form a new one. This left citizens without an effective and easily accessible mechanism for protection from discrimination that allowed them to easily file a complaint. The Council for Media Ethics (CME) continuously acts on submitted complaints, but its mandate limits it to an advisory function in cases when the journalistic code has been violated.

The areas with the **least progress** are gender-based violence (GBV) and the inclusion of women on the labor market.

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Even though the country has ratified the Istanbul Convention, domestic legislation is far from being harmonized with the Convention. The procedure for adopting the legal framework for protection from and combatting domestic violence and violence against women has been started, but this process is constantly delayed. In the meantime, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated data in the area, there is a lack of awareness of this type of violence among service providers, medical personnel and police officers, which would avoid the risk of double victimization, there is a lack of centers for victims of violence throughout the country,⁵ and there is also a lack of adequate judicial protection and adequate financial/material support for victims.⁶

The participation of women in the labor market is still significantly low, and the state programs for employment and self-employment do not reflect the needs of women. Not much has been done to protect from gender-based discrimination on the labor market, especially in judicial protection and the systemic collection of

5 European Commission. 2020. "North Macedonia 2020 Report". Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf

6 Only victims of domestic violence can currently receive one-time financial support of 15,000 denars according to the Law on Social Protection, while in terms of judicial protection the practice of removing the perpetrator of violence from the home of the victim is still not applied in practice as a protective and preventative measure.



data. What little there is in terms of research, campaigns, and support in reporting cases is above all thanks to civil society organizations that work in the areas of discrimination, gender, and workers' rights. Finally, little has been done to provide work-life balance, which could make it easier for women to participate in the labor market.

In the remaining areas such as education, politics, and institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality in the country, we note **limited progress**.

In education, once again the leading force for change and any reforms that are implemented that advance gender equality are thanks to civil society organizations. For example, the most important developments are in revisions to the content of textbooks and the soon to be introduced comprehensive sexual education. There remains the need to strengthen efforts to prevent bullying and sexual harassment in schools, as well as to build capacities and awareness among teaching and professional staff to fully integrate the gender perspective in their work. In politics, we note increased overt political will among politicians and elected officials, but this is not reflected in practice and gender equality is not prioritized in decision-making processes. Finally, the main mechanism for creating and implementing gender policies in the country, the Sector for Equal Opportunities at the MLSP continues to have a limited mandate and no jurisdiction over the implementation of the Strategy on part of other institutions in the state administration. Because of this, we recommend staying on course with plans to form a new government body for equal opportunity with a wider mandate for advancing the gender perspective in creating policies, budgets, and the implementation of strategic documents.



table 1.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS BY PLANNED ACTIVITY

The table below shows the activities from the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020 (NAPGE) planned for 2018 and 2019. It also shows the level of completion, along with the potential impact, timeliness, as well as the steps that need to be taken before the end of the current Action Plan and after the adoption of the new one.

	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
1	Methodology for strategic planning with gender mainstreaming			✓				✓		Delayed	Further work
2	Working meetings and trainings on the application of the methodology, changes in preparing budgets gender budgeting				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
3	Changes in preparing budgets for ULSG and organizing informational workshops				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
4	Forming working groups for GRB in all ULSG			✓			✓			Delayed	Further work
5	Guidebook for GRB				✓			✓		On schedule	Fully completed

7 According to the Shadow Report 2018/2019 authors.

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	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
6	Methodology for G-markers			✓				✓		Delayed	
7	Mentorship for strategic planning and budgeting in 2 pilot Ministries			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
8	Training for the implementation of the G-marker methodology				✓			✓		Delayed	Further work
9	Three thematic public hearings of Parliament's CEOWM and CFB			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
10	Printing and distribution of educational materials for GRB		✓						✓	On schedule	Continuous activity
11	Exchange of good practices in the region and EU countries in GRB			✓			✓			Delayed	Continuous activity
12	Certifying national trainers for GRB				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
13	Trainings for administration officials by trainers certified for GRB ⁸			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
14	Trainings for NGOs for monitoring local programs and budgets in 20 ULSG			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
15	Forming a working group for changes to the Law on Budgets			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
16	Submitting the draft Law				✓	✓				Not started	Further work

8 "The trainings are conducted by certified trainers, but not national trainers" (response from MLSP)

	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
17	Debates and consultations on the effects of LEOWM and recommendations for reforms			✓				✓		On schedule	Fully completed
18	Conducting an analysis on the efficiency of the gender machinery			✓				✓		On schedule	Fully completed
19	Conducting public hearings on the conclusions and recommendations from the analysis				✓			✓		On schedule	Fully completed
20	Forming a working group harmonizing the legislation with the LEOWM				✓			✓		On schedule	Fully completed
21	Plan for monitoring and evaluation of NAPGE 2018 - 2020				✓			✓		On schedule	Fully completed
22	Baseline indicators for progress in the implementation of NAPGE 2018-2020 and GES 2013-2020				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
23	Methodology for creating gender sensitive policies at the local level				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
24	Trainings for administration officials at the local level on the implementation of the methodology				✓	✓				Delayed	Further work

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	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
25	Mechanisms in the ULSG statutes			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
26	Protocol for communication and coordination between the AULSG and MLSP			✓		✓				Not started	Further work
27	Exchange of good practices in the region and EU countries on gender sensitive laws and policies			✓		✓				Delayed	Continuous activity
28	Unified tools for reporting on gender perspectives at the national and local level				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
29	Analysis of the functionality and efficiency of SEO				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
30	Public debates on the recommendations and conclusions from the analysis				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
31	Forming the working group for changes to the LEOWM				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
32	Thematic Government sessions on gender equality			✓		✓				Not started	Further work
33	Sessions on gender equality at the General Collegium of state secretaries of the government of RNM		✓			✓				Not started	Further work



	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
34	Thematic meetings on gender equality with local governments			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
35	Capacity building trainings for Members of Parliament			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
36	Periodic reports on E-modules uptake				✓			✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
37	Promotional activities for the E-modules		✓			✓				Not started	Assessed as unnecessary
38	Public debates on increasing the for elected officials of the underrepresented gender in the executive and legislative government			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
39	Gender disaggregated data on turnout in elections, candidate lists, and seats won				✓	✓				Delayed	Continuous activity
40	Analysis of the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the SEC's bylaws				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
41	Assessment of the participation of women in decision-making processes, the efficiency of the quotas, with recommendations				✓	✓				Delayed	
42	Informative brochures on various forms of violence against women and existing services for victims			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity

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	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
43	Studies on the opinions, stereotypes, and perceptions of gender discrimination and GBV				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
44	Public debates for presenting the findings of the analysis of the Criminal Code and other laws that need to be harmonized with the IC				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
45	Working group for preparing an Action Plan for the implementation of the IC				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
46	Plan for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
47	Working meetings on changes to the legal regulations and IC harmonization				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
48	Educational module for recognizing the various forms of violence against women in accordance with IC				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
49	Criteria for service providers for women victims of violence				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
50	Continuous trainings for all relevant state institutions				✓	✓				Not started	Further work



	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
51	Licensing service providers for specialized services for GBV			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
52	A model for monitoring and supervising the work of service providers			✓	✓					Not started	Further work
53	Module for service providers in crisis intervention, working with trauma and PTSD, psychosocial help and support, and FLA			✓	✓					Not started	Further work
54	Continuous trainings for service providers from specialized services			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
55	Model for multisector teams at the local level for responding in cases of GBV			✓				✓		Delayed	Further work
56	Forming multisector teams at the local level			✓				✓		Delayed	Further work
57	Trainings and meetings for the members of the multisector teams			✓				✓		On schedule	Fully completed
58	Conducting two studies on GBV in public spaces			✓				✓		On schedule	Fully completed
59	Harmonizing the approach to data collection in public institutions and the NGO sector			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work
60	Inclusion of last representative survey on GBV in the work of SSO			✓		✓				Delayed	Further work

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	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
61	Regular monitoring visits and supervision of the multisector teams at the local level				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
62	Conducting field work to promote the employment and self-employment measures				✓					No response EARM	
63	An assessment of the national context and addressing unpaid labor and the care economy				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
64	Media campaigns for the promotion of active measures for employment and self-employment for women		✓				✓			Delayed	Further work
65	Training for SLI on gender sensitivity and recognizing gender discrimination on the labor market				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
66	Regular reports from SLI on recorded cases of gender-based discrimination on the labor market				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
67	Campaigns for reporting gender-based discrimination on the labor market			✓		✓				Not started	Further work



	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
68	Assessment of the capacities of daycares, homes for the elderly and for persons with disabilities				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
69	Assessment of the effectiveness of flexible work schedules			✓			✓			Delayed	Further work
70	Consultations with unions and employers on gender mainstreaming in collective agreement negotiations				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
71	Consultations on introducing anti-discriminatory clauses on all bases for discrimination in the area of education			✓				✓		Delayed	Further work
72	Review and improving bylaws to introduce anti-discriminatory clauses				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
73	Protocols for responding to cases of GBV, harassment, and bullying in daycares and schools				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
74	Review of the programs for advising parents and students in elementary and high school education				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work



	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
75	Gender Equality Handbooks for psychologists for counselling in elementary and high school education				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
76	Analysis of curricula, programs, and textbooks from a gender perspective				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
77	Multisector working group for introducing Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE)			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
78	Developing draft systemic models for introducing CSE				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
79	Piloting draft models for CSE in elementary and high school education				✓		✓			On schedule	Continuous activity
80	Situation analysis of dropout/exclusion of girls from the educational process				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
81	Evaluation of measures for inclusion of girls in the educational process			✓			✓			Delayed	Further work
82	Plans for increased inclusion of girls in the educational process				✓		✓			Delayed	Further work
83	Review of programs for licensing educators, caretakers, and experts				✓	✓				Not started	Further work



	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
84	Training on gender equality for teachers and expert staff in elementary and high school education			✓	✓	✓				Not started	Further work
85	National campaign against GBV and bullying in schools			✓	✓	✓				Not started	Further work
86	Analysis and a plan for including girls in physical education			✓	✓	✓				Not started	Further work
87	Multisector team to assess the data in the health care system			✓	✓	✓				Not started	Further work
88	Comprehensive assessment of the quality of data in the health care system				✓			✓		Delayed	Further work
89	Review and improvement of forms in the health care system				✓			✓		Delayed	Further work
90	Public campaign for the promotion of health issues			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
91	Public debates on health issues relevant to gender equality			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
92	Educational material on gender equality in health			✓				✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
93	Training for health care workers on GBV				✓			✓		On schedule	Continuous activity

	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
94	Accreditation of "friendly" birthing houses, family OBGYNs offices, and family pediatricians				✓					No response	
95	Family planning trainings for healthcare workers				✓			✓		AQAHI	Continuous activity
96	Opening centres for victims of sexual violence that are available 24/7				✓			✓		On schedule	Further work
97	Specialized training for medical personnel on forms of GBV				✓			✓		Delayed	Further work
98	Analysis of the Law for terminating pregnancy and human rights	✓								No response ⁹	
99	Review of the forms on maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy and contraception				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
100	Screening for malignant neoplasms				✓			✓		On schedule	Continuous activity
101	Trainings for media workers on gender sensitive reporting			✓				✓		On schedule	Fully completed
102	Public debates with media workers on gender sensitive reporting		✓					✓		On schedule	Fully completed

⁹ This is because the analysis was planned for the old Law on Terminating a Pregnancy, introduced in 2013. Considering a new Law was adopted in 2019, the institutions concluded that an official analysis of the old law is unnecessary, considering the new law adopts a right-based approach. Even though this analysis was thus never conducted, civil society organizations that work in the area and participated in the working group that created the new progressive law conducted their own analysis on the effects of the restrictive abortion policies on human rights. For example, see: HERA. 2017.

""Documenting the effect of the regressive

	Abbreviated title of the activity	Potential Impact ⁷				Completion				Timeliness	Moving Forward
		None	Minor	Significant	Transformative	Not started	Partial	Significant	Completed		
103	Analysis of gender perspectives in TV programs			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
104	Content analysis of gender perspectives in print and social media			✓						Not started	
105	Periodic reports from the monitoring of media content				✓	✓				Not started	Further work
106	Trainings for MRT employees on gender equality			✓			✓			Delayed	Further work
107	Analysis of gender in media (public service)			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
108	Analysis of program documents in the public service			✓						Not started	
109	Media campaigns for raising public awareness				✓				✓	On schedule	Fully completed
110	Promotional activities for protection from discrimination			✓					✓	On schedule	Fully completed
111	Working group for gender equality within the Economic Chamber			✓			✓			Delayed	Further work
112	Promotional activities for gender responsible companies			✓		✓				Not started	Further work
113	Consultations on advancing gender perspectives in private companies			✓		✓				Not started	Further work



BACKGROUND



Introduction

The National Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020 (hereinafter Strategy) is the key strategic document that lays out the national priorities for achieving equal opportunities for women and men over an eight-year period. The adoption and implementation of the Strategy is an obligation for the country stipulated in the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (LEOWM).¹⁰ This law defines the institutional framework for promoting gender equality and prescribes the obligations for the continuous and systematic integration of gender equality in the policy-making processes at all levels and in various areas, as well as the development of special measures and programs to reduce the consequences of inequality.

The strategy contains a situation analysis as well as guidelines and measures for advancing gender equality in sector policies and programs for which there is an identified need to act in accordance with the principles of legality, publicity, transparency, responsibility, accountability, and inter-ministerial cooperation. The strategy foresees key horizontal issues such as gender mainstreaming, keeping gender disaggregated statistics, and developing harmonized indicators for measuring progress in gender equality, improving the legal and strengthening the institutional framework for gender equality. It also foresees vertical interventions in sector priority areas such as: healthcare, political and public life, media, economic empowerment, gender-based violence, education, international politics, gender-responsive budgeting, and peace and security.

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The Strategy is accompanied with National Action Plans for Gender Equality (NAPGE or Action Plans) with a duration of three years, which are in turn implemented at the annual level through Operational Plans (OP).

The National Action Plan, which is the subject of this report and which is the last plan for this eight-year strategy, was adopted for 2018-2020. Unlike previous years and on account of the NAPGE's delayed adoption, rather than three distinct Operational Plans for each of 2018, 2019, and 2020, a single Operational Plan was adopted for implementing the 2018 and 2019 NAPGE activities that are the

¹⁰ Article 19. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.



responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP). Some of the other institutions that were listed as responsible for the implementation of the Strategy have prepared Operational Plans for its implementation only for 2019; however, these also contain the NAPGE activities planned for 2018. Due to the crisis arising from the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, as well as the announcement of snap parliamentary elections, no institution has prepared an Operational Plan for the implementation of the Strategy for 2020.

The contents of the available Operational Plans for the period covered with NAPGE is not fully in line with the measures and activities laid out in the National Action Plan. In some cases, the Operational Plans include additional activities that widen the scope of NAPGE, while in other cases the NAPGE activities are not included in the Operational Plans. The following examples illustrate this problem: the Ministry of Interior (MOI) prepared and submitted an Operational Plan for 2019¹¹ which included 7 activities for the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan, of which only three are contained in NAPGE and for which the MLSP is listed as the responsible institution. On the other hand, the NAPGE activity for which MOI is responsible is not included in its Operational Plan. The situation is similar with the MLSP Operational Plan, where an entire Specific Objective includes activities from the Operational Plan for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention for 2019, but not the activities planned with NAPGE. Even though in this regard we note some improvement when compared to previous years, when it was more common to completely exclude activities from NAPGE in the Operational Plans, these inconsistencies between the Action Plan and the Operational Plans creates confusion both for the efficient implementation of the activities, but also for the process of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and NAPGE.

11 Ministry of Interior. December 2018. "2019 Operational Plan for the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020 and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020."



Institutional Context

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men defines the institutional framework and the obligations for the preparation and implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy.

Under the law, the draft Strategy is prepared by the **Ministry of Labor and Social Policy** in cooperation with all stakeholders responsible for its implementation and monitoring, while the **Government** proposes and submits it to the Assembly.¹² In addition to drafting the Strategy, the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy is also responsible for monitoring and coordinating its implementation and publishes annual reports on the activities and results. The **Sector for Equal Opportunities**, which is part of the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy, is responsible for creating the annual Operational Plans for the Strategy's implementation, collecting the reports on advancements in gender equality from the state administration bodies and units at the local level, coordinating the activities between MLSP and other bodies, and cooperation with civil society organizations.

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The Government forms an **Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (IMG)**, whose members include elected officials, state administration officials in management positions, representatives from civil society, employer associations, experts, representatives from local self-government, unions, and other actors.¹³ The Inter-Ministerial Group is responsible for, among other things, participating in the drafting of the Gender Equality Strategy by providing guidance and by monitoring periodic reports from the institutions. The work of the Inter-Ministerial Group is coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.¹⁴

The Units of Local Self-Government (ULSG) are also required to take part in drafting the Gender Equality Strategy in the section that refers to the units of local self-government. Along with the **State Administration Bodies (SAB)**, and in coordination with the MLSP, they are required to implement the Strategy in the

¹² Article 10 Paragraph 2. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.

¹³ Article 10 Paragraph 6. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.

¹⁴ Article 10 Paragraphs 8 and 9. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15



areas in which they work. ULSG and SAB are required to appoint **a coordinator and a deputy coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men**, to coordinate the responsibilities of the unit/body and to cooperate with the MLSP. The Units of Local Self-Government are also required to establish a **Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (CEO)** as a permanent body that participates in creating and adopting the Strategy for the development of gender equality in the ULSG.

The **Assembly** adopts the strategy, monitors its implementation, and cooperates with partners who work on this topic.¹⁵ The assembly also forms and defines the make up and responsibilities of the **Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (the Commission or CEOWM)** as a permanent working body within the Assembly.¹⁶ The Commission reviews the draft Gender Equality Strategy, cooperates with all partners in contributing proposals for advancing gender equality, as well as holds sessions and public debates in which, among other things, it reviews the status of the implementation of the Strategy's strategic objectives and priorities.

The **Standing Inquiry Commission for the Protection of Civil Rights and Freedoms** also functions as part of the Assembly, with a mandate that includes, among other things, providing proposals and opinions with regard to the implementation of the provisions of the Constitution, the laws, and other regulations that are of significance in the realization and protection of civil rights and freedoms, cooperating with domestic and international scientific and professional organizations in the field of protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens, taking into consideration citizen submissions, and following the implementation of ratified documents that regulate the protection of civil rights and freedoms.¹⁷ Even though this Commission is not part of the institutional instruments defined with the LEOWM, it is due to its own mandate that impacts the advancement of gender equality in the country and the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy.

¹⁵ Article 9 Paragraph 3. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.

¹⁶ Article 9 Paragraph 4. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*



Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy

The annual report on the activities and the progress achieved in establishing equal opportunities for women and men is prepared by the MLSP, based on reports received from all bodies of the state administration and the local self-government, in the format prescribed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. A recurring problem that we noted again in the reporting period in terms of the process of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy is that the format of the annual report does not follow the format of the National Action Plan, meaning that the reports are not published based on sector priorities and measures from the NAPGE, the level of completion of the activities, indicators, and results at the level of sector policy.

There were also delays in publishing and adopting these reports. There is some justification for this considering the country spent about a quarter of 2020 in a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which time binding deadlines were suspended. Furthermore, taking into consideration that the Assembly of RNM was dissolved in February 2020, the institution that is responsible for accepting and adopting the report in June had not yet been formed. At the time of writing, the Assembly has only adopted the Annual Report for 2018, but not for 2019. While the deadline for submitting the Annual Reports is June of the following year,¹⁸ the report for 2019 was published at the end of August 2020.

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Units of Local Self-Government

The MLSP Report on the Implementation of the Strategy for 2018 includes data for only 9 units of local self-government, including the municipalities of Bitola, Valandovo, Dojran, Ohrid, Probishtip, Strumica, Centar, Chair, and Shtip. In terms of the annual progress reports for 2018 on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, 32 municipalities failed to submit a report, i.e., almost 40% of the units of local self-government did not fulfill their legal obligation. Five of the municipalities that submitted the reports only formally

¹⁸ Article 12 Line 14. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.



fulfilled their obligation as they only submitted a blank report to the Ministry.¹⁹

For 2019, 53 municipalities submitted annual progress reports on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, which means that 34.5% of ULSG did not fulfill this obligation for 2019 as well. Even though there is slight improvement compared to 2018, this is nevertheless a high percentage of public institutions that did not fulfill their legal obligation to the state. This is indicative of both the complete sidelining of gender equality as a priority area in their work and the dysfunctionality of the state mechanisms for following the status of gender equality in the country.

Furthermore, equal opportunities coordinators at the local level are responsible for publishing the annual reports on their work on the municipal websites and submitting them to MLSP.²⁰ Publishing the reports on the ULSG's website is especially important for keeping the wider public informed and for the assessment of the progress in gender equality in each of the municipalities for all stakeholders, in an easy and accessible way. Accessibility also allows for a more comprehensive analysis that would result in a better assessment of the implementation of the LEOWM and the strategic documents, as well as more comprehensive and sustainable solutions from experts who work in the area of gender equality. The legal obligation for publishing the reports on the website of the municipalities is mainly unfulfilled. In 2018-2019, 69 municipalities did not publish their annual progress reports on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, which is 85% of the units of local self-government in the country. Only nine municipalities published their annual reports for 2018 on their website and only six municipalities published their reports for 2019. The municipalities that were most diligent in fulfilling this legal obligation are Shtip, Probishtip, Kochani, and Kratovo.

Contrary to this, the Association of Units of Local Self-Government (AULSG) has its own web platform for gender equality²¹ where they published the annual reports on AULSG's work in advancing gender equality, as well as other activities and strategic documents in this area. It is important to note that this platform is supported through international funding and regional projects for

19 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nsp>

20 "The Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men from Article 14 Paragraph (7) of this Law is obligated to submit at least once per year and by March 31st the latest for the previous year, a report to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, as well as to publish the report on the website of the unit of local self-government". Article 15. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15.

21 Available at <https://www.rob.zels.org.mk:3000/files>. Last accessed: July 2020



strengthening the capacities of municipal officials and local representatives in terms of promoting gender responsive policies. This means that if the local self government is not supported by international organizations and/or a supplemental budget for gender mainstreaming, gender equality as a goal is almost invisible in the activities and the policies of these institutions.

State Administration Bodies

When it comes to the state administration bodies (SAB), the annual report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy on the implementation of the strategy for 2018 presents the work in the area of gender equality for only 12 ministries, including 4 bodies under their jurisdiction, and 2 independent bodies or administrative organizations of the state administration. On the other hand, the report lists all the bodies that did not submit an annual progress report on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, including: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Ministry for Local Self-Government, the Bureau for the Development of Education, the Center for Professional Education and Training, the Secretariat for Legislation (blank report), the Commission for the Protection of the Right of Free Access to Public information (blank report), the Agency for Physical Planning (blank report), the Food and Veterinary Agency (blank report), the State Commission for Preventing Corruption (blank report), i.e., a total of 10 SAB out of 39 bodies for which the MLSP prepares a report.²²

In addition to this, eight ministries and one agency submitted budget initiatives or programs that contained a gender analysis for 2018.²³ According to the annual report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy on the implementation of the Strategy for 2018, only five bodies submitted gender budgeting reports in 2017, while four bodies had already completed their reports for 2018.²⁴

The situation with the state administration bodies is not much different in 2019. Thirty bodies submitted progress report on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, while nine did not: the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Ministry for Local Self-Government, the Employment Agency, the Bureau

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22 The number of SABs is calculated based on an official document received from the MLSP on freedom of information request with archive number 144672/2.

23 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodovaramnopravnost.nspix>

24 Ibid.

for the Development of Education, the Crises Management Center, the Center for Professional Education and Training, the Commission for the Protection of the Right of Free Access to Public information. Furthermore, three bodies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management did not provide activities and measures for advancing equal opportunities despite submitting their reports. The same is true with the reports from the Ministry of Transport and Communications, the Agency for Youth and Sports, the Secretariat for Legislation, the Commission for Relations with Religious Communities and Groups, the Protection and Rescue Directorate, the State Commission for Preventing Corruption, the Geological Survey, the Food and Veterinary Agency, and the State Industrial Property Office. This means that 12 of the 30 bodies that did submit their reports only fulfilled the minimum legal obligation to submit reports, which exposes a negative trend in terms of their obligation to actively undertake measures to advance gender equality and equal opportunities. In some of the reports from these bodies it is mentioned that despite collecting and keeping gender disaggregated data about their employees, they do not have the capacity and knowledge in this area to substantially implement activities for advancing gender equality.

Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

According to LEOWM, the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities (IMG) does not have a direct obligation to submit periodic reports on its work. Nevertheless, according to part 6 of the IMG's Rules of Procedure²⁵ - Informing the Public - it is emphasized that it is compulsory for the annual reports on the work of IMG to be published on the website of the Government and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and that the members of the group should make sure these reports are published on the website of the institutions or the organizations they represent.²⁶ This obligation is not fully implemented in practice. The website of the government of RNM does not publish the IMG's annual reports and the same is true for the website of the represented institutions or organizations. The MLSP website publishes

25 Government of the Republic of Macedonia. "Rules of Procedure for the Work of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men". http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/interesorska/delovnik_Interresorska_2017.pdf

26 *Ibid.*



a document²⁷ that contains information on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Group each year since 2017 and without following a discernible deadline. Even though this is progress compared to previous years when this information was not available at all, it is nevertheless not in line with the procedural obligation to make it available on all relevant sites. On the other hand, the information published on the website of MLSP is irregular and does not follow a schedule, which limits the timely and informed access to this data.

In 2018 the Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) was made up of 26 members, representatives from state institutions, units of local self-government, employer associations, independent experts.^{28,29} During this year, IMG held three sessions, reviewed 12 legislative documents and materials, and adopted a new Rules of Procedure for the period between 2018 and 2020. The documents that were reviewed as part of these sessions are strategic documents, legislation, and guidelines for advancing gender equality. The noteworthy among them include: the draft National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2018-2020, the Government Program for 2018, the draft Annual Report on Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in 2017 with recommendations for 2019, the draft Action Plan for Implementing the Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of RNM for 2018-2023, draft Methodology for assessing sector policies and assessing gender mainstreaming in policies, as well as a Guidebook for the application of gender-responsive budgeting, the draft Annual Report for SGE 2013-2020, the draft Action Plan for Resolution 1325, as well as the draft Social Protection Law. In addition to this, the sessions included reporting on a joint project by the MLSP and UN Women on gender-responsive budgeting, as well as an analysis of government strategic documents and initiatives that include gender mainstreaming. Four working groups were also formed to participate in the drafting of the documents that were reviewed in the sessions and in line with this, a number of activities took place including: participating in drafting the Action Plan for Implementing the Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

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27 MLSP, the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/inter-resorska-grupa-za-ednakvi-moznosti-na-zenite-i-mazite.nspix>

28 Government of the Republic of Macedonia. "Rules of Procedure for the Work of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men". http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/interresorska/delovnik_Interresorska_2017.pdf

29 Sector for Equal Opportunities, MLSP. "Information on the Work of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018 ". Available at: http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2019/Infor_InterResorska_2018.PDF



for RNM for 2018-2023, providing support to the represented ministries in developing gender budget initiatives as part of their responsibilities under NAPGE, participating in training for capacity building for the state administration in the process of gender mainstreaming in policy making and practice in the country, as well as participating in the regional conference on gender-responsive budgeting.³⁰

In 2019, IMG had 25 representatives among which 12 were from the state administration bodies. During that year, IMG held eight sessions and reviewed a total of 10 legislative acts and materials: the group's Annual Work Program for 2019, the Government Program for 2019, the draft Annual Report on Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in 2018 with recommendations for 2020, the draft Annual Report for GES 2013-2020, the Law on Public Employees, the Law on Administrative Officials, the draft Law on Primary Education, the draft Law on the Judicial Academy and Public Prosecutors, the draft Law on Foreign Affairs, and the draft Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. In addition to this, during some of the sessions the group discussed existing gender stereotypes in education and in educational and scientific materials and several conclusions were adopted during this debate that should result in relevant targeted activities. Finally, for the first time the group put out several press releases on ongoing societal problems such as gender-based violence and gender-based hate speech, as well as a call to the Assembly to urgently form the Commission for Preventing and Protecting from Discrimination. This year the document again lists activities that took place or in which IMG members of took part; however, these were the same activities from the previous year and there were no new activities that were initiated by the group.³¹

Unlike previous years, when the inclusion of the civil society sector in the work of IRG was limited, over the last two years the representatives from this sector have actively been taking part in the discussions during the sessions and have been providing their recommendations for the improved implementation of the Strategy and for advancing gender equality in the country. Furthermore, even though there are fewer in 2019, the documents

30 Sector for Equal Opportunities, MLSP. "Information on the Work of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2018 ". Available at: http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2019/Infor_InterResorska_2018.PDF

31 Sector for Equal Opportunities, MLSP. "Information on the Work of the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2019 ". Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/2020/2.9-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0.PDF>



reviewed have a wider range of topics and there is a clear attempt at gender mainstreaming in the country's policies. Nevertheless, IRG's documents reporting on their work make it evident that above all, no conclusions are adopted during these sessions; there is no instrument to follow the fulfillment of the obligations that arise from the sessions and there is no reporting on it of this type; where recommendations are given, it is unclear what comes next for those recommendations, while the recommendations themselves do not substantially address the problem. For example, during the discussions on the annual reports for the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020, both during 2018 and 2019, they provided only two completely identical recommendations: (1) That the report should be adopted by the Assembly by June latest, and (2) that the IRG members should submit their comments on the report in written form to the MLSP. It would seem that the more pressing problem of the format of the report itself, which does not follow the National Action Plan and the results and indicators contained in it, was not considered important enough to discuss.

Based on the available information about the work of the IRG, we can therefore conclude that the IRG sessions are often insufficiently effective. There is a need for following and timely reporting on activities that were undertaken and that came out of the recommendations provided during the session. There is also a need for visibility of the results, if any, that came out of the activities that the group undertook as part of its work. Finally, the reports on the work of IRG should be published, within a reasonable deadline, in line with their code of conduct, on the websites of all relevant institutions.

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Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

In 2018 the Commission held four sessions. In 2019, the Commission held eight sessions, of which one was not finished.³² All four sessions in 2018 were devoted to the following public hearings:³³

- Public hearing on the topic: The European Union's Progress Report on the Republic of Macedonia for 2018, with focus on gender equality

32 Assembly of RNM. Working bodies sessions – Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men <https://www.sobranie.mk/sednici-na-rabotni-tela.aspx?structuredid=020DDFF7-9CF1-4C1E-8476-4944986FC6A8>

33 Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2018-31.12.2018. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2X6Avl8>

- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: Changes and Amendments to the Law on Labor Relations
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: financing activities from the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: support in the implementation of social policies, measures and budget for single parent families.

In 2019, all seven sessions of the Commission were also public hearings, of which four held discussions on the implementation of strategic documents and adopting legislation, while the remainder were thematic discussions.³⁴

The 2019 sessions were the following:

- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2017
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: Annual Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2018
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: the role of women in rural areas and their challenges
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: Law on Preventing, Combating, and Protecting from Domestic Violence
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: the gender aspect of climate change
- ▶ Public hearing on the topic: hate speech directed at women in politics
- ▶ Public hearing on the draft Law for Amending the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

in addition to this, in 2019 the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men also held three workshops. One working meeting was held with the Commissions for Equal Opportunities from the units of local self-government, on the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its implementation at the local level. A workshop was also held with a private company at the request of that Organization, during which the discussion was about introducing the international partners with the equal opportunities for women in the business environment in the RNM Assembly. The final workshop was held in cooperation with the OSCE mission in Skopje on the topic of assessing gender sensitivity in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia. Other than the workshops, the Commission also held a panel discussion on improving access to damages for victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence with-

³⁴ Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2019-31.12.2019. Available at: <https://bit.ly/20ZdE6s>



in the framework of the Action on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking from the Horizontal Facility II.³⁵

Unlike previous years, it is evident that there is an improvement in the Commission's approach to the increased inclusion of more stakeholders in discussing the topics that are significant for advancing gender equality. This is further evident in the fact that all the sessions of the CEOWM were held in the form of public hearings and with attendance of representatives from the civil society sector. In fact, out of a total of four hearings in 2018, three were initiated by civil society organizations that work in the area and were accepted for hearings during the sessions of the Commission.³⁶

Nevertheless, the problem with the content of the public discussions remains because, exceptions aside, they are mainly thematic and do not directly involve reviewing legislation nor substantial changes that the Commission could recommend for improving gender equality under its mandate in the legislature. Like previous years, the sessions held by the other permanent working bodies, i.e., commissions, in the assembly were used to review and discuss laws and draft laws that despite containing no specific provisions for advancing gender equality have a different impact on the lives of women and men in the country. For example, in 2019 the Assembly's Commission for Labor and Social Policy reviewed laws, draft laws, and legal acts in 29 occasions and submitted 2 amendments to the Assembly. Almost all the documents reviewed have an impact on gender equality in the country, but they were not considered from this aspect and were not discussed in the CEOWM's sessions. CEOWM also did not submit a single amendment in 2019. The same was true in 2018, when no laws were reviewed, and no amendments were submitted by the Commission for Equal Opportunities.

All this reveals the need for including gender mainstreaming at the horizontal level in all commissions of the RNM Assembly and in all draft laws and amendments, especially those through which gender equality can be advanced. It is therefore also necessary to expand the scope of topics and laws that are reviewed in the sessions held by the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

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³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2018-31.12.2018. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2X6Avl8>



The Standing Inquiry Committee for the Protection of Civil Freedoms and Rights

In 2018 the Standing Inquiry Committee Held three sessions of which two were public hearings.³⁷ During the closed session, the committee formed a working group for visiting penitentiary institutions, in order to determine the status of human rights and the conditions in which they function. The public hearings were on the following topics:

- ▶ The European Commission's Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia for 2018, with the focus on the section on human rights
- ▶ Food as a basic human right

In 2019 the Standing Inquiry Committee held six sessions of which two were public hearings.³⁸ In the closed sessions, the committee reviewed the annual reports on the work of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Acting on the Decisions of the European Court for Human Rights for 2018, the work of the Bureau for Representation of RNM before the ECHR in 2018, the work of the Commission for Protection from Discrimination for 2018. Among the other points in the agendas, they also reviewed a submission from an employee in a state institution for workplace harassment. The public hearings on the other hand were on the following topics:

- ▶ Protecting human rights – European Court of Human Rights judgements
- ▶ The status of human rights in penitentiary institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia

It is commendable that, for a change, this Commission holds sessions and public hearings on issues crucial to human rights, including gender equality. Nevertheless, there is a need to strengthen the gender aspect of the topics on discussion. Furthermore, the sessions that reviewed the annual reports of the bodies that perform duties of public interest should be open to the public and follow the format of public hearings. This especially refers to the reports from the Commission for Protection from Discrimination, which in the history of its existence has not publicly and availably published a single annual report on their work.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2019-31.12.2019. Available at: <https://bit.ly/20ZdE6s>



Budget for Implementing the Measures

The National Budget for 2018 allocated 380,000 denars, or 6,150 euros, for the Gender Equality Program, while the National Budget for 2019 allocated financial resources amounting to 2 million denars, or 32,370, for the Program for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination. Even though 2020 is not the subject of this report, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has informed us that the National Budget for this year for the Program for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination is 2,820,000 denars, or 45,624 euros. Furthermore, the Ministry also pointed out that this budget secured for the Program for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination is not only for activities towards the implementation of NAPGE 2018-2020, but also for multiple activities planned for the current year as part of that program.

The individual institutions responsible for implementing the Strategy and the Action Plan also have an obligation to include funds in their own budgets for carrying out the activities from these documents. In this regard, some of the responsible institutions reported the amounts from their budgets allocated for the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019.

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For its obligations arising from the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020, the MLSP secured 100% of funds in the National Budget, but a large percentage of the funds necessary for the implementation of the gender equality activities are implemented in cooperation with international partners and through donor funding, where some are managed by the MLSP, and some by the donors themselves. There is no information on how much was received in donor funding for 2018 and 2019, but for 2020 there were 13,339,660 denars (215,933 EUR) from UN Women and 150,000 EUR from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the implementation of multiple activities, including activities planned with the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020.

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (AAVMS) allocated 741,576 denars, or 12,000 EUR from their own budget for the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan in 2018, but 300,000 denars (4854 EUR) remained unused due to a failed procurement process. In 2019 they allocated 600,000 denars, or 9708 EUR, that were used in 2020.



The Association of the Units of Local Self-Government (AULSG) did not allocate any funds specifically for the implementation of the activities under NAPGE, but rather distributed the funds under various budget lines in trainings, meetings, etc.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) also did not have a special budget line for the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan 2018-2020 and the activities were conducted using funds from the budgets of the Bureau for the Development of Education and the Ministry.

The Ministry of Health (MH) allocated 670,000 (10,841 EUR) for the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan 2018-2020, while the Ministry of Economy (ME) allocated 5,092,460 denars, or 82,418 EUR.

According to the received responses, it is evident that even though funds are allocated for the gender equality program from the national budget, the amount is insufficient for the full implementation of the activities from the Action Plan and the Strategy.

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This is especially the case in 2018, when only 6150 euros were allocated for this purpose, barely enough for the implementation about ten activities, while NAPGE 2018 – 2020 has over 120 individual activities. It is therefore not surprising that the majority activities planned for 2018 were not carried out.

Furthermore, even though there is a significant increase in the budget allocated for the Gender Equality Program for 2019 and 2020, due to the COVID-19 crisis the funds from the Gender Equality Program were partially cut, which was met with objections from civil society organizations.

Finally, a significant number of responsible institutions depend on international investments and donations to fulfil their obligations and carry out the activities for advancing gender equality. These are important contributions without which there likely would be no activities to advance gender equality in the country and herein lies the main challenge. Without support from international organizations and other countries, it seems that the domestic state apparatus lacks the political will and capacity to implement gender mainstreaming at all levels.



Moving Forward

At the time of writing this report, a new Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, a new Gender Equality Strategy, and a new Action Plan for Gender Equality are all in the works. It is expected that these documents will be voted on and adopted with the newly formed Parliament for 2020-2024, meaning that we are in a period of significant long-term planning which will have an impact on advancing gender equality in the country.

Considering experiences thus far, it is important to consider the capacities of the Sector for Equal Opportunities at the MLSP and the other SAB and ULS responsible for the implementation of the Strategy in further planning. This will be useful for planning an adequate number of activities depending on the capacities of the sector and the institutions, which will allow for their timely and full implementation. This will also allow for substantial impact on advancing gender equality.

Furthermore, the new strategic documents should plan for the full implementation of the activities in the short and the long term. This type of planning should measure and assess the success of the implementation of the activities and based on those results, define the dynamics for the implementation of all measures gradually and in detail.

It is also necessary to improve upon the reporting from the institutions, i.e., there is a need to change the format of the annual reports so that they follow indicators and activities from the strategic documents, which will allow for adequate monitoring of the success of the implementation of these documents.

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Methodology

The Shadow Report is an attempt on part of civil society working on the promotion and advancement of gender equality to provide input in the assessment of the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy. Its goal is to provide an independent assessment of the country's efforts to promote gender equality and carry out adequate measures to achieve this goal. This Shadow Report is the fourth of its kind that provides an assessment of the implementation of the LEOWM in the strategic documents, as well as progress in gender equality in the country. The methodology, which is fully presented in Annex 1, was developed

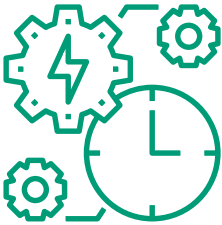


within the project Gender Equality Council funded by the European Union and first implemented in 2013. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the methodology for the current report underwent partial changes in data collection methods.

The Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2018 and 2019 was produced as part of the project EU Advocacy for women's rights, supported by the Kvinna till Kvinna foundation.

The report is based on the analysis of relevant documents – LEOWM, the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020, NAPGE 2018-2020, annual Operational Plans, Annual Reports from all relevant institutions (ULS, SAB, the Assembly with its Commissions, the Government), relevant reports from civil society organizations working on gender equality, as well as information available on the web pages of all institutions. Due to the ongoing epidemiological crisis, rather than direct interviews with the representatives from the responsible institutions that are in positions relevant to the implementation of LEOWM and the strategic documents, we prepared questionnaires that were submitted electronically to all institutions included in the Action Plan. The recommendations contained in this report were drafted based on an analysis of the received responses and the assessment of the level of implementation of the strategic documents that are the subject of this report.





IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES



The Gender Equality Strategy has three strategic goals and 12 specific strategic objectives. The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018 – 2020 (NAPGE) contains 9 specific objectives within the three strategic goals of the Strategy. This report follows the NAPGE and reviews all nine specific objectives and their activities planned for the period 2018 – 2019. In addition, the report reviews the Operational Plan for implementing activities from NAPGE for 2018 and 2019, which is under the jurisdiction of the MLSP.³⁹

This report notes the increase of the total number of activities (113) compared to the previous shadow reports for 2013, 2014, and 2015, but this is above all because the report refers to activities over two years. At the same time, NAPGE contains activities that extend over the entire duration of the action plan, so activities are more frequently extended over multiple years rather than a single year. The report reviews 25 activities planned for 2018, 20 activities planned for 2019, 15 activities planned for the period 2018 – 2019, 44 activities for the period 2018-2020, and 9 activities for the period 2019-2020.⁴⁰

Even though the number of planned activities for the period covered with the NAPGE is lower compared to the number of activities in previous action plans, the number of implemented activities is increased, which indicates that if the measures in the strategic documents are planned taking into consideration the material and human capacities of the institutions, there is an increased likelihood that they will be fulfilled. On the other hand, even though the implementation of the activities of the action plan is improved compared to previous years, it is far from reflecting progress in terms of gender equality in the country. Namely, 48% of the planned activities are significantly or fully implemented, while only 25% are fully implemented.

The report provides a complete overview of the completion of the activities, their potential impact, as well as the level of implementation (timeliness). The methodology used to assess potential impact and the level of completion of the activities is described below. Additionally, we provide recommendations for expanding and improving the implementation of the strategy and of the NAPGE.

³⁹ Due to either the inaccessibility or the lack of Operational Plans from all the responsible institutions involved in NAPGE, this report only considered the MLSP's Operational Plan, which is also the most comprehensive of the OPs since this Ministry has the biggest role in implementing the activities from the Action Plan.

⁴⁰ The NAPGE activities planned only for 2020 are not covered with this report.

Potential impact: the four qualitative indicators for assessing the planned results and the potential impact on reducing gender equality in society are the following:

- ▶ **no impact**, i.e., the activity did/does not have an impact on improving the status quo in gender equality;
- ▶ **minor impact**, i.e., the activity had little impact on improving gender equality;
- ▶ **significant impact** – the activity contributes to improving gender equality; and
- ▶ **transformative impact** – the activity contributes towards systemic and societal changes, contributes to changing existing power relations and substantially impacts the advancement of gender equality.

The assessment provided in the tables on the listed indicators is based on the opinions of the authors and reveals the extent to which the foreseen result can potentially be transformative for gender equality in the country if the measure is implemented. Here the assessment is made based on how it is planned and not how it is implemented in practice. On the other hand, we also showed the assessment of its potential impact provided by various institutions that gave their answers on this question in the submitted questionnaires. This allows for comparing the opinions of the representatives from the institutions on the impact of certain activities compared to the opinion of the authors.⁴¹

Level of completion of the activities and the planned time frame (timeliness) – these two indicators measure the implementation of the activities in line with the planned timeframe provided in NAPGE:

- ▶ **For the level of completion**, we use four indicators:
 - ▶ not started,
 - ▶ partially implemented,
 - ▶ significantly implemented, and
 - ▶ fully completed.

For measuring the timeliness of the implementation of the activities, we use three indicators:

⁴¹ It is important to note, however, that the opinions of the representatives from the institutions was often not on the potential impact of activities, but on the impact that the activities, if implemented, had according to them.



- ▶ not started,
- ▶ delayed, and
- ▶ on schedule.

All the activities that were supposed to be completed in 2018 and 2019, but that are not fully implemented, will be considered as delayed. For those activities where there is multiyear implementation, and above all for activities planned for all of 2018-2020, we have considered the level of completion of the activities in terms of the planned timeline and thus estimated its timeliness.⁴²

Recommendations/Moving Forward: this is closely related to the indicator on the level of completion and indicates whether and what type of measures should be taken for the planned activity to have an impact in achieving the foreseen results. It is important to note that when the report recommends that “no further activities needed,” it means that the activity is fully completed.

Inclusion in the Operational Plan: this indicator measures the synchronization between the two documents: NAPGE 2018-2020 and MLSP's OP 2018/2019. The indicator has partial limitations considering that it assesses the Operational Plan of only one institution.

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⁴² For example, if an activity that was expected to be implemented in 2018-2020 is not started or only partially implemented, rather than significantly or fully, the likelihood that it will be implemented is minor, so the activity is categorized as delayed. There is a risk that this categorization does not reflect the actual situation, but it is the optimal solution considering we are not in the position to foresee/ know whether the activities that were not started in the reported period will only be started in 2020, or whether there is a chance the activities will be fully implemented despite their delayed start or partial implementation.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

Establishing an effective and efficient system for achieving gender equality through functional support mechanisms at the national and local level, harmonized indicators for measuring progress in gender equality, and available gender disaggregated statistics

Specific Strategic Objective 1.1.: Secured systemic support for gender mainstreaming in policy making and financial instruments, in line with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

SO 1, SSO 1.1. Result according to NAPGE: Application of gender-responsive budgeting in policy making and programming

Description		Application of gender-responsive budgeting in policy making and programming
Responsible institutions		MLSP; GS; AULSG; CEOWM;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Minor to Significant
Level of completion		
1	Preparing a Methodology for changing and amending the Methodology for strategic planning and gender mainstreaming	Significantly implemented
2	Organizing technical working meetings and trainings on the application of the methodology for strategic planning Organizing technical working meetings on the changes to the instructions for preparing budgets and including entry points for gender budgeting	Partially implemented
3	Changes to the instructions for preparing budgets for ULSG and organizing informational workshops for their application	Partially implemented
4	Forming working groups for gender-responsive budgeting in all ULSG	Partially implemented



5	Preparing a Guidebook for the procedures and the approach to applying gender-responsive budgeting	Fully completed
6	Developing a methodology for G-markers in line with the recommendations from the Twinning project for gender equality	Significantly implemented
7	Continued mentorship for 2 pilot ministries on systemic gender mainstreaming in strategic planning and budgeting	Fully completed
8	Training for state officials from the pilot ministries for the implementation of the G-marker methodology	Significantly implemented
9	Organizing 3 thematic public hearings and identifying relevant issues from a gender perspective by the Commission for equal opportunities for women and men and the Commission for financing and budget, within the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia	Significantly implemented
10	Printing and distribution of educational materials for gender-responsive budgeting	Fully completed
11	Exchange of good practices in the region and EU countries in the area of gender-responsive budgeting	Partially implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Yes, partially
Recommendations		Further efforts are necessary

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The activities in this area have the goal of systematizing the application of gender-responsive budgeting in the strategic planning processes in all state administration bodies and units of local self-government. To measure success in terms of this result, NAPGE 2018-2020 foresees 20 state administration bodies having drafted a gender budgeting statement for one of their programs, fifteen (15) new municipalities having adopted the concept of gender-responsive budgeting in creating local policies and programs, and 80% of included ministries and agencies with gender-responsive initiatives having trained representatives on the methodology for gender-responsive budgeting and applying the methodology for G- markers, with at least one ministry having applied G-markers for assessing their programs from a gender perspective.



Implemented activities and their impact

In March 2018, the RNM Government adopted the Methodology for changing and amending the Methodology for strategic planning and preparing the Annual Program for the Government's work. In July 2018, two new guidelines were adopted: guidelines for the ministries and other state administration bodies for the process of preparing the strategic plan and the annual work plan, and Guidelines for the ministries and other state administration bodies for the process of following, assessing, and reporting the implementation of the strategic plan and the annual work plan. With these bylaws, the gender perspective is included in the process of strategic planning, which contributes to the systematic inclusion of equal opportunities for women and men in the process of creating, implementing, and following policies and budgets.⁴³

The methodology prescribes a special section in the structure and contents of the strategic plans that refers to the principle of equal opportunities for women and men. Furthermore, among the quantitative and/or qualitative indicators identified for measuring and following the achievement of objectives and results of the programs, at least one gender sensitive indicator should be identified.⁴⁴ In the Annual Progress Report on Gender Equality by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy for 2018 it is additionally indicated that the assessment of the effectiveness of this activity will be provided in the following report, i.e., the report for 2019.

The 2019 report on the other hand, only states that an analysis has been conducted of the draft strategic plans of the state administration bodies with the goal of comparing their compliance and their inclusion of the new methodology which includes a gender dimension.⁴⁵ The results of the analysis are not explicitly stated, but the report claims that the RNM Government has tasked the ministries and the other SAB with harmonizing the draft strategic plans for 2020-2022 with the concluding findings and recommendations contained in the report from the analysis of their previous draft strategic plans. Even though the report from this

43 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

44 *Ibid.*

45 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



analysis (which was drafted in 2020) is not publicly available, there is an implicit indication that despite the changed methodology for strategic planning, the state administration bodies did not include gender mainstreaming in their strategic programs. Furthermore, even though it is adopted, the guidance for the bodies in the process of following, assessing, and reporting the implementation of the strategic plan and the annual work plan is not mentioned at all in the last annual report of MLSP. There was also no detailed reporting of the methodological indicators for the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the strategic planning of SAB even though according to the methodology there should be at least one gender sensitive indicator. This makes it even more challenging to assess the actual effect of this measure and to what extent strategic planning and programming within institutions is gender mainstreamed.

For the duration of 2018, a total of nine one-day trainings were held for increasing the capacities for strategic planning, in which 38 institutions and 251 administrative officials from SABs took part.⁴⁶ In 2019 on the other hand, a total of 11 trainings were held on gender equality and strategic planning, in which 200 representatives from SABs took part.⁴⁷ As for the ULSG, a working group for gender equality was formed in which coordinators for equal opportunities from the municipalities are members. Additionally, a total of 65 representatives from the new municipal administrations and councils were trained in gender equality and gender responsive budgeting through the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government.⁴⁸

In 2018 a Handbook was also developed outlining the steps and approaches for gender-responsive budgeting. Eight ministries and one agency, i.e., 9 SABs, submitted budget initiatives or programs that contained a gender analysis.⁴⁹ According to the annual progress report of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy on gender equality for 2018, only five of bodies from 2018 had also submitted

46 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

47 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

48 *Ibid.*

49 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



gender budget reports for the previous year (2017), while four bodies had completed their reports for 2018.⁵⁰ In addition, as part of the project for gender-responsive budgeting supported by UN women, 35 representatives from ULSG were trained to prepare annual gender budget reports.⁵¹ Nevertheless, there are no data on how many municipalities managed to submit gender budget reports, nor how many municipalities included the concept of gender-responsive budgeting in their programs.

There is no further information on how many gender budget initiatives were submitted by SABs and ULSGs in 2019. Furthermore, in the MLSP report for that year, there is no information on how many SABs and ULSGs submitted or prepared annual reports for gender-responsive budgeting. In fact, the only thing MLSP reports in 2019 in the area of gender-responsive budgeting in programming and policy making, is the continuation of the cooperation with UN women for the systemic integration of the gender perspective in strategic planning and programming in government institutions, as well as plans to form a training centre for gender responsive budgeting and gender policies in the country, with the potential for it to grow into a resource center at the regional level.⁵²

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Conclusion and recommendations

Based on what was implemented in the two reporting years (2018/2019), we can conclude that including and advancing the gender perspective, including gender-responsive budgeting, in the programs and other strategic documents in state institutions is not sufficiently developed. The methodological aspect with the guidelines for this approach is significantly developed for use and a good number of institutional representatives are trained annually, but the planned indicators are not fully accomplished.

The representatives from the institutions who gave their opinion on the potential impact of these activities assessed them as significant in the best case. Their opinions partially refer to what has already been achieved as an impact of the

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodovaramnopravnost.nspix>



activity, rather than its potential impact, and therefore it is even more clear that these measures do not give the desired results in practice.

We therefore recommend an analysis of the needs of the institutions, as well as the reasons why they still lack the capacity and fail to include the gender perspective in their program objectives and activities even though, according to provided information, the methods, and tools for achieving these objectives are available. Furthermore, we recommend continuing the ongoing building capacities of the institutions, but with greater focus on the units of local self-government even beyond the conducted analysis to identify challenges to date in terms of adopting and applying the knowledge in the area of gender equality and strategic planning.

SO 1, SSO 1.1. Result according to NAPGE: Advanced the gender perspective in state fiscal instruments and policies; and Strengthened coordinative and supervisory function of the gender equality mechanisms

Description		Result according to NAPGE: Advanced the gender perspective in state fiscal instruments and policies; and Strengthened coordinative and supervisory function of the gender equality mechanisms (SEO and coordinators, Inter-Ministerial Group, and CEO)
Responsible institutions		MLSP; FM;
Potential impact according to the authors		Significant
Potential impact according to the institutions		Minor ⁵³
Level of completion		
1	1. Certifying national trainers for gender-responsive budgeting from key stakeholders in MLSP and MF by the UN Women Training Center	Not started
2	2. Organizing trainings for administration employees by trainers certified for gender-responsive budgeting from MLSP and MF	Significantly implemented

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⁵³ This is the average response. In the questionnaires, three activities were assessed as having no impact, and two as having significant impact.



3	3. Organizing trainings to support NGOs in analyzing and monitoring local programs and budgets from a gender perspective in 20 ULSG	Not started
4	4. Forming a working group and preparing a draft Law for Changing and Amending the Law on Budgets, with the goal of advancing the gender perspective	Fully implemented
5	5. Submitting for adoption the draft Law on Changing and Amending the Law on Budgets	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Yes, partially
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this area have the goal of advancing gender mainstreaming in the state fiscal instruments and policies, as well as strengthening the capacities of the national gender machinery, the Sector for Equal Opportunities within the MLSP, the coordinators for equal opportunities, the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory group, and the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. In terms of measuring success, NAPGE 2018-2020 foresees provisions for the integration of gender mainstreaming in draft budget laws for 2019 and 2020.

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2018 and 2019, the trainings for administrative employees were started. However, despite the plan to have these trainings conducted by national certified trainers for gender responsive budgeting from the MLSP and the MF, they were conducted by international certified trainers. The certification of national trainers from the relevant ministries has not been started and this is perhaps due to the fact that the grant with UN Women, which is the main financial resource for this activity, was only signed at the end of 2019, and the establishment of the training centre for gender responsive budgeting and policies has still not been started. On the other hand, in 2018 a working group was formed for drafting a Law for Changing and Amending the Law on Budgets, with the goal of advancing the gender perspective; however, this law has still not been submitted in a draft version and has not entered parliamentary procedure. Both reports from the



MLSP on the progress and advancement of gender equality for 2018 and 2019 briefly state that the Law on Budgets is in a final phase.

Conclusions and recommendations

Considering that the key indicator for measuring success in this block of activities is the inclusion of provisions for integrating gender mainstreaming in the draft laws for budgets for 2019 and 2020, it can safely be concluded that the desired result has not been achieved. Two years of work have gone into changing the law on budgets to include the gender perspective, and yet even though this law was changed in 2019, those changes did not involve including provisions on gender budget implications and the full integration of a gender-responsive approach to budgeting. There are evident shortcomings in the work of the formed group that is drafting the new recommendations for this law. Since the law is currently in its final phase, what remains is to assess its contents and quality from the aspect of the inclusion of gender mainstreaming.

At the same time, certifying national trainers for gender responsive budgeting is exceptionally important for guaranteeing not only the implementation of the strategic activities and the existing laws, but also of the Law on Budgets itself which is yet to be adopted, through specialized trainings of the administration. Therefore, delaying this activity has a negative impact on the opportunity to put into practice the obligations that arise from the legislation. As a result, we recommend that the time frame be respected and that there is sufficient coverage of certified trainers that will be able provide high quality and pragmatic transfer of knowledge in the area of gender-responsive budgeting, with the goal of advancing this tool in fiscal instruments and policies in the country.



Specific Strategic Objective 1.2. Strengthened and effective functionality of the gender equality mechanisms, in line with the LEOWM provisions

SO.1, SS0 1.2. Result according to NAPGE: Advanced the gender perspective in the legislation

Description		Advanced the gender perspective in the legislation, in line with the provisions from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
Responsible institutions		MLSP, AULSG, SAB
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Significant
Level of completion		
1	Organizing debates and consultations on the effects of the five-year implementation of LEOWM and recommendations for reforms	Fully completed
2	Conducting an analysis on the efficiency of the gender machinery established in line with the LEOWM and changing and amending the LEOWM in line with the conclusions and recommendations from the analysis	Fully completed
3	Conducting public hearings on the conclusions and recommendations from the analysis of the efficiency of the gender machinery	Fully completed
4	Forming a working group for preparing recommendations for changes to the legislation and their harmonization with the LEOWM	Fully completed
5	Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan for the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2018 – 2020	Fully completed
6	Developing baseline indicators for the improved monitoring of the progress of implementation of National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020 and the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020	Not started



7	Developing a methodology for creating gender sensitive policies/programs at the local level	Not started
8	Conducting trainings for administration officials at the local level on the application of the methodology for creating gender sensitive policies and programs	Partially implemented
9	Establishing mechanisms and tools for gender mainstreaming in the ULSG statutes	Partially implemented
10	Developing a protocol for communicating and coordinating gender equality related activities between the AULSG and MLSP	Not started
11	Exchange of good practices in the region and EU countries on gender sensitive laws and policies	Partially implemented
12	Developing unified tools for quality planning and reporting on gender perspectives at the national and local level	Fully completed
13	Analysis of the functionality and efficiency of SEO with the goal of improving its status as a main coordinative mechanism for gender equality at the national level	Fully completed
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities in this area have the goal of advancing the gender perspective in legislation, especially in the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. In order to assess the results as achieved, NAPGE foresees a changed and amended LEOWM, at least three laws harmonized with the changed and amended LEOWM, and adopted bylaws that arise from the amended LEOWM. Furthermore, 70% of the ministries and 60% of the municipalities should have representatives trained in the methodology for gender sensitive policy making and programming.



Implemented activities and their impact

In 2018, the debate on the functionality of the national gender machinery and the effects of the implementation of the law for equal opportunities (LEOWM) gained prominence among organizations that work in the area of gender equality and the responsible institutions. In 2019, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies, in cooperation with the civil society sector, conducted two analyses that resulted in reports on the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities at the local and at the national level.⁵⁴ Furthermore, during this time, the civil society organizations that work in this area prepared analyses on the functioning of the gender equality machinery, as well as recommendations for reforms.⁵⁵ Based on these debates and analyses, a working group was formed for changing the Law on Equal Opportunities.

In the reporting period, the MLSP developed a monitoring and evaluation plan for NAPGE 2018-2020 and initiated the evaluation procedure. On the other hand, the baseline indicators that would improve the monitoring of progress in the implementation of NAPGE and the Strategy have yet to be developed; however, it is expected that this activity will be completed by the end of 2020 and that the indicators will be adopted with the new Gender Equality Strategy.

In terms of the status of advancing gender equality at the local level, there are several shortcomings and inconsistencies in the implementation of the activities under NAPGE. Namely, the development of the methodology for creating gender sensitive policies at the local level has not been started. On the other hand, the Association of Units of Local Self-Government is in the phase of conducting trainings for administrative officials for the implementation of creating gender sensitive policies, but these trainings are likely not going according to plan, i.e., do not refer to the unified methodology for implementing these policies. This reveals the substantial misalignment in the coordination between the activities that are thematically connected and that are under the jurisdiction of MLSP and AULSG respectively. This is a problem that has been recognized before, hence the recognized need to develop a protocol for communication and coordination of activities in the area of gender equality between AULSG and MLSP. However, in the reporting period 2018/2019, this protocol has not been developed.

⁵⁴ Available here: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

⁵⁵ See: Akcija Zdruzenska. (2019) Recommended Reforms to the National Gender Equality Machinery in Macedonia. Skopje. Available here: <https://bit.ly/3ciGuTH>



Conclusion and recommendations

In terms of the activities in this group, it is evident that things are largely moving in the direction of achieving the result of an advanced legal framework for gender equality. At the same time, we note great delays in the activities, as the amendments to LEOWM have not entered parliamentary procedure and therefore the harmonization with other laws and legal acts in compliance with this law is yet to start.

On the other hand, when it comes to the planned activities for advancing gender equality at the local level, we note delays and lack of coordination between institutions. These delays can partially be justified with the fact that the adoption of the action plan was delayed in 2018, so therefore the activities were delayed as well. Nevertheless, even in these situations, the complete lack of implementation of certain activities should not be acceptable. We therefore recommend timely planning in the implementation of the measures, as well as strengthened and improved coordination between the institutions through the urgent development and adoption of the planned protocol for coordination and communication between MLSP and AULSG. Furthermore, improving the coordination is also necessary between other institutions responsible for implementing the strategy. If it is determined that these protocols are successful and truly improve communication and coordination on joint activities, we recommend the iteration of this activity and that moving forward these protocols are developed for multiple institutions.

Finally, we should note that this part of the activities was not included in the MLSP's Operational Plan 2018/2019 even though, apart from two, the activities are fully under the jurisdiction of the MLSP. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the majority of the activities for achieving this result are fully or partially implemented and only three have not been started at all. This indicates inefficient and inconsistent planning in the Operational Plan vis-a-vis the Action Plan, which itself can lead to the ineffective implementation of the activities and by extension, the strategy itself.

SO.1, SS0.1.2. Result according to NAPGE: Strengthened mechanisms and status of the Sector for Equal Opportunities

Description		Strengthened mechanisms and status of the Sector for Equal Opportunities (SEO) for horizontal jurisdiction in implementing gender equality policies
Responsible institutions		MLSP, GS
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Significant
Level of completion		
1	Organizing public debates on the recommendations and conclusions from the analysis of the efficiency of SEO as the main coordinating mechanism for gender equality at the national level	Fully completed
2	Forming a working group for preparing a draft Law for Changing and Amending the LEOWM with the goal of advancing the status of SEO as the main coordinating mechanism for gender equality	Fully completed
3	Organizing thematic sessions on gender equality of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia ⁵⁶	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this group based on the provided result or closely related to the previous result and block of activities and refer to the strengthening of the national machinery for gender equality and the status of the Sector for Equal Opportunities at MLSP. In terms of measuring the achievement of this result, there are intended changes to the LEOWM that would give greater powers to SEO as the key coordinating mechanism for gender equality, as well as form a new government institution for advancing gender equality by end of 2020.

⁵⁶ The Action Plan contains the old name of the country since it was adopted before the name change. The activities are provided identical to those in the NAPGE.

Implemented activities and their impact

As mentioned in the previous section of the report, in the period 2018/2019 there were analyses of the effects of the implementation of the LEOWM, as well as an analysis of the national gender equality machinery, including its main coordinating body – the Sector for Equal Opportunities. These analyses sparked public debates and a working group was formed made up of gender equality experts to prepare a draft Law for Changing and Amending the LEOWM, which is currently in its final phase of producing the new draft law.

Conclusion and recommendations

Even though the planned activities for changing the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men are currently implemented on schedule according to the Action Plan, it should be noted that the problem with the capacities of the Sector for Equal Opportunities, and the national gender equality machinery overall, is not new and has been the subject of debates in previous years. The Sector for Equal Opportunity at the MLSP is positioned very low as an institutional mechanism in the organizational structure of the Ministry and has no authority to control the implementation of the Strategy on part of the other bodies and institutions in the state administration. As a result, the previous government program for 2017-2020⁵⁷ included a plan to form a new government body for gender equality that will have a wider mandate to advance the gender perspective in policy making and budgets and in the implementation of strategic documents. Due to the snap parliamentary elections, this activity was not completed during the mandate of the previous government but was transferred and promoted in the election program of the governing coalition for 2020 and then again made it into the new government's program after the elections.

Moving forward, we recommend the urgent establishment of the new government level body with increased jurisdictions to ensure more effective implementation of the new Gender Equality Strategy starting in 2021.

SO.1, SSO.1.2. Result according to NAPGE: Improved gender sensitivity among policy and decision makers

⁵⁷ Government of RM. Government Work Program 2017-2020. Available here: https://vlada.mk/sites/default/files/programa/2017-2020/Programa_Vlada_2017-2020_MKD.pdf

Description		Improved gender sensitivity among policy and decision makers
	Responsible institutions	MLSP; AULSG; MISA;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Significant
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Minor
Level of completion		
1	1. Organizing continuous thematic sessions on gender equality at the General Collegium of state secretaries of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia	Not started
2	2. Organizing thematic meetings on gender equality by mayors, municipal secretaries, presidents, and members of the municipal councils	Partially implemented
3	3. Organizing capacity building trainings for Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia ⁵⁸ on gender equality issues	Partially implemented
4	4. Preparing periodic reports on the uptake of E-modules among state officials	Significantly implemented
5	5. Organizing promotional activities for the E-modules for mayors and municipal secretaries	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		
Recommendations		No

According to NAPGE, this group of activities will be deemed successful if at least one thematic session on gender equality is held by the Government and the general collegium of state secretaries, and if at least 30% of the total number of state officials within the SAB have successfully completed the E-modules for gender equality up to the end of 2020.

⁵⁸ See footnote 53.

Implemented activities and their impact

The E-modules for raising awareness and advancing knowledge on gender equality among state officials, which were tested as far back as 2015 by the Ministry for Information Society and Administration (MISA), were finally put to use in 2018. The electronic trainings have two levels (basic and advanced) and are already obligatory for administrative officials at the level of SABs, but also for municipal officials. In 2018, a total of 1583 users had completed the training at the basic level and 1584 officials had completed the training at the advanced level. During this time, the training was still followed by 8120 users at the basic level and 7175 users at the advanced level, meaning a total of 15,295 officials were in the process of following these modules.⁵⁹ In 2019, 206 institutions and 53 units of local self government were registered for the trainings.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note that for 2019 the numbers for the fully trained officials and the officials that are still following the trainings are identical with the numbers provided for 2018 in the MLSP Annual Report. This indicates shortcomings in the recording of data and reporting on the coverage of the modules which are compulsory for state officials, and which have been in the making for a very long time. The MISA is preparing periodic reports on the coverage of state officials that completed or are following the e-modules, but these reports are not publicly available. We are therefore unable to compare the information and determine the exact number of officials that completed the training, considering that there is an obvious error in the reporting to or from the MLSP.

In terms of the activity to promote the E-modules to the mayors and the municipal secretaries, the MLSP pointed out that this activity will not be carried out because the modules are compulsory for municipal officials as well, so rather than promote them, what remains is to directly implement them.

The trainings to strengthen the capacities for gender equality of the Members of Parliament are also implemented with great delays. These delays in fact have a

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59 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

60 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



great impact on the quality of the implementation of the activity. Considering that the RNM Assembly was dissolved at the beginning of 2020, and then newly formed in August, there is undoubtedly a gap between those MPs who were already part of the previous cohort, completed the trainings and were elected again, and those who are in the Assembly for the very first time.

The Government and the General Collegium of state secretaries held none of the three planned thematic sessions on issues relevant to gender equality. This indicator from NAPGE has therefore not been fulfilled, and the related result has not been achieved.

Conclusion and recommendations

As noted in the previous Shadow Report, the electronic trainings were planned for as early as 2015, but the testing alone to determine the compatibility with the e-learning system took much longer than planned. The E-trainings first started in 2018, and their impact is still not apparent. In this case, there is a need to re-evaluate the knowledge of the administrative officials in terms of the planned material for building capacities to avoid the risk of using outdated materials.

Furthermore, the coverage of state officials is problematic, considering the reporting error in the number of officials that were trained annually. Moving forward, precise and regular publishing of the periodic reports from MISA on coverage of trained state officials is paramount and will lower the risk of further reporting errors in the annual reports on the implementation of the strategy.

Due to the gap resulting from the delayed trainings for the members of the RNM Parliament, there is a need to re-evaluate the methodology based on which the trainings are conducted. Namely, there should be a knowledge assessment of those participants who have already completed a certain level of training, as well as of those who were not part of the trainings at all, and based on this assessment, new groups and levels should be formed for following these trainings.

The activities that involve thematic hearings and sessions on gender equality have practically not been started, and their impact has been assessed by the competent institutions as minor at best. We therefore recommend a re-evaluation of the necessity of these activities and based on this to either ensure the urgent completion of these activities or cancel them altogether.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

Improving the level of gender equality in priority thematic areas

Specific Strategic Objective 2.1: Advancing gender equality in the decision-making processes

SO.2, SS0. 2.1, Резултат според НПАРЕ: Зголемено учество на жените во органите на изборната администрација и процесите на одлучување

Description		Increased participation of women in the bodies of the electoral administration and decision-making processes at the local and national level
Responsible institutions		MLSP, SEC
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Minor
Level of completion		
1	1. Organizing public debates on increasing the quota to 50% for elected officials of the underrepresented gender in the executive and legislative government	Partially implemented
2	2. Collecting and publishing statistically disaggregated data on turn out in elections, candidate lists, and seats won at the national and local level	Partially implemented
3	3. Conducting an analysis of the inclusion of gender perspectives in the SEC's bylaws	Not started
4	4. Conducting an assessment of the participation of women in decision-making processes at the local and national level, the efficiency of the quotas, with recommendations	Partially implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Partial
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities in this group have the goal of increasing the participation of women in positions of power in decision-making processes. The indicator for success for the implementation of these activities is the adoption of legislation that will include a 50:50 quota for the participation of women and men in the bodies of the electoral administration and the decision-making processes at the national and local level by 2020.

Implemented activities and their impact

The main activity from NAPGE for achieving the desired result is forming a working group for changing and amending the Electoral Code in the direction of achieving full equality in the process of submitting candidate lists and holding elections in the country, at the national and at the local level. This activity, however, is planned for 2020 according to the Action Plan and is therefore not subject to this report.

In terms of what has been implemented thus far, it is evident that no single activity has been fully implemented or is close to achieving the desired result. Immediately before the snap parliamentary elections in RNM in July 2020, there was a more prominent public debate about guaranteed equal participation of women and men in candidate lists in elections. In fact, the governing coalition ran its political campaign with 50/50 participation and for the first time came out with lists with two list leaders, a man and a woman, in each electoral unit. What is more, in its program the coalition promised 50/50 participation in the electoral lists for the local self-government councils and the electoral lists for the assembly. They also noted in their program that if elected, their government would ensure 40% participation of women in all executive positions appointed by the government.⁶¹ Nevertheless, neither Parliament nor the executive Government has achieved the desired and promised participation of women. At present, 39% of Parliament is made up of women⁶² and 25% of the ministerial positions in the Government are held by women.⁶³ This indicates that despite commitments to gender equality in election campaigns, gender equality and gender parity in decision-making positions are not a priority at the negotiating table when political parties are trying to form a governing coalition.

61 Reactor – Research in Action. (2020) Overview of the Gender Aspect in the Political Parties' Programs and Electoral Lists in the 2020 Snap Parliamentary Elections. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2EQj9mB>

62 Parline database on national parliaments. Available at: <https://data.ipu.org>

63 Calculated based on information available on the Government of RNM: <https://vlada.mk/ministerstva>



Keeping and publishing statistically disaggregated data on voter turnout in elections, candidate lists, and seats won at the national and local level is only partially implemented. The national elections allowed us insight into the process of data collection that is under the jurisdiction of the State Electoral Commission (SEC). The submitted candidate list by electoral units that were published by SEC were not gender disaggregated, but the simulated data presented as statistical reports contained information about the gender representation of the candidates. Other than this, neither the data on voter turnout, nor the data of seats won was gender disaggregated.⁶⁴

Conclusion and recommendations

Public debates and political promises from the parties on full gender equality between men and women in the decision-making processes have no effects if what is debated as necessary for achieving gender equality is not applied in practice. Even though the changes to the Electoral Code were planned for 2020 according to NAPGE, in their campaigns the political parties made public commitments to full gender equality during and after the elections. Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the elections, women make up only 20% of the leadership positions in the executive government. This indicates that without political will, the changes to the legislation will not alone lead to an improved status of women in these structures. Political will is especially important considering that the changes to the Electoral Code will not necessarily guarantee equal entry to women and men in Parliament and in other decision-making positions, but rather equal opportunity for entry through 50/50 participation in candidate lists in elections. Therefore, we recommend adopting legislation that will secure de facto equal participation for women and men in decision-making processes and participation in leadership positions.

Keeping gender disaggregated data on voter turnout, candidate lists, as well as seats won is a basic and essential tool for evidence-based policy making. Parallel to this, the analyses of gender mainstreaming in legislative acts that refer to the electoral processes and the participation of women in the decision-making process at the local and national level are exceptionally important if the efforts for the equal participation of men and women in decision-making processes are sincere commitments on part of the authorities. We therefore recommend that

⁶⁴ The data on seats won included the full names of the elected MPs, but there was no adequate gender marker. In practice this allowed for a manual (but not entirely precise) count, which does not, however, satisfy the criteria for keeping and publishing gender disaggregated data.

these activities are given priority and that their implementation is completed as soon as possible.

Specific Strategic Objective 2.2: Raised public awareness, changed legal regulation, and strengthened capacities of professionals who work with women victims of violence and gender-based violence

Result according to NAPGE: Raised public awareness for recognizing various forms of violence against women

Description		Raised public awareness for recognizing various forms of violence against women
	Responsible institutions	MLSP
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Significant
Level of completion		
1	2. Organizing continuous workshops with journalists and media workers on improving reporting in cases of violence against women and gender-based violence	Significantly implemented
2	Организирање континуирани работилници со новинари и медиумски работници за подобрување на начинот на известување на случаи на насилство врз жени и родово-базираното насилство	Activity deleted due to the mistaken appointment of MES as the responsible institution ⁶⁵
5	3. Conducting studies on the opinions, stereotypes, and perceptions of gender discrimination and GBV	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No (the OP 2018/2019 for the Strategy foresees the implementation of another Operational Plan)
Recommendations		Further work needed

These activities have the goal of raising public awareness on the various forms of violence against women. According to NAPGE, the indicator for their success

⁶⁵ MES has no legal basis for conducting workshops with journalists and the MLSP was notified of this with memo No. 08-1743/2 from 13.02.2018.

is an increased number of reported cases of gender-based violence by at least 20% annually, as well as an increased number of reports in media about cases of violence against women and gender-based violence.

Implemented activities and their impact

During 2018/2019, MLSP prepared informative brochures on various forms of violence against women and the existing services for victims, which will additionally be translated in the languages of the ethnic communities in 2020, as well as adapted for women with various disabilities. The brochures are still not publicly distributed given that they are not yet finalized. We are therefore unable to review their impact in terms of raising public awareness on the various forms of gender-based violence (GBV). Similarly, the study of the opinions, stereotypes, and perceptions on gender-based discrimination and GBV by the MLSP has also not been conducted, so there is currently no impact in developing and advancing awareness on all forms of gender-based violence.

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On the other hand, if we consider the indicator of increased number of reports of gender-based violence, the statistics reveal the following: according to the annual report of MLSP, in 2018 there were 1006 cases of domestic violence, which is an increase of 11% of reported cases.⁶⁶ There is no information on how many of these cases were violence against women. In the first nine months of 2019, there were 709 criminal acts related to domestic violence, among which the victim was a woman in 610 cases.⁶⁷ If we look five years back (from 2014 to 2018), the number of reported cases of violence shows no significant differences and on average amounts to 1062. We can therefore conclude that if the indicator for increasing awareness of gender-based violence is an increased number of reported cases, then the statistics reveal that awareness has not been raised.

It should also be noted that these numbers still only refer to reported cases of domestic violence and not to all reported cases of gender-based violence. Despite the obligation that arises from the Istanbul Convention to keep statistics on all

⁶⁶ MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

⁶⁷ MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



forms of gender-based violence, RNM has still not harmonized the domestic system for data collection with the criteria imposed with the international agreement.

In terms of increasing the number of reports in media on cases of violence against women and gender-based violence, it should be noted that the indicator itself does not necessarily indicate raised awareness or encourages the raising of awareness among citizens on gender-based violence. Namely, in the reporting period and especially with the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, there is a visible increase in the number of news reports on crimes related to gender-based violence. However, these news reports most often have a sensationalist approach and use the crimes as clickbait. At the same time, the reporting is often unethical and resorts to double victimization of the victims of violence. Based on experiences thus far, the increase in media reports alone on cases of gender-based violence does not necessarily lead to sensitizing the population, but rather reproduces violence.

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Conclusion and recommendations

Raising awareness on various forms of gender-based violence, as well as how widespread it is in our country is key to above all recognizing violence, so that it may be reported and sanctioned. Brochures alone will not contribute to increasing public awareness but are a step forward towards advancing gender equality in this aspect. This could additionally have an impact if the brochures are disseminated in a strategic way, making sure to reach those most affected. We therefore recommend that a communication plan for dissemination is developed, to complement the finalization of the brochure and to ensure a well thought-out dissemination of the information reaches the most affected stakeholders and citizens.

Considering the way that the media reports cases of gender-based violence, there is a need to rethink the indicator for measuring the increased awareness of GPV through media reports. In this context, it is much more important how these are being reported rather than how many there are. Therefore, in addition to increasing the percentage of published reports in the media on cases of GBV, there is a need for a qualitative description of how these are being reported. In order for the media reports to truly contribute to increasing awareness about the forms of GBV, they must be ethical, backed up with solid knowledge in the area of gender-based violence, and especially careful to avoid double victimization.



S0.2, SS0.2.2, Result according to NAPGE: National legislation is harmonized with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention

Description		National legislation is harmonized with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention
	Responsible institutions	MLSP;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Significant
Level of completion		
1	Organizing public debates for presenting the findings of the analysis of the Criminal Code and other laws that need to be harmonized with recommendations from the Istanbul Convention	Fully completed
2	Forming a working group for preparing an Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention	Fully completed
3	Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan for the implementation of the Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention, with included mechanisms for monitoring and reporting	Not started
4	Organizing working meetings and consultations on changes to the legal regulations in order to harmonize them with the recommendations from the Istanbul Convention	Fully completed
5	Developing an educational module for trainings for professionals from relevant institutions for recognizing the various forms of violence against women in line with the Istanbul Convention	Partially implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No (the OP 2018/2019 for the Strategy foresees the implementation of the Operational Plan for the Istanbul Convention)
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this group have the goal of fully harmonizing the provisions of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence⁶⁸ with the domestic legislation. The indicators contained in the NAPGE include: adopted Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, with a developed monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and at least three (3) changed and amended laws in accordance with the recommendations from the Istanbul Convention.

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2018, the civil society sector with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the domestic institutions published and promoted in analysis of the cases of femicides in the country.⁶⁹ The analysis also provides a review of national legislation, including the Criminal Code, and international legislation and emphasizes the need of harmonizing domestic legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.⁷⁰ Based on the public debates and analyses, a working group was also formed during this time to draft an Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which was adopted in the second half of 2018, with a planned duration up to 2023. The Action Plan foresees the adoption of a new law on gender-based violence and changes and amendments to the Criminal Code to include a definition of gender-based violence, as well as criminalization of all forms of gender-based violence.⁷¹

Harmonizing national laws with the provisions of the Convention began with the identification of the laws that already regulate certain forms of violence or services that are of importance to victims of violence. In addition to these laws, the Action Plan for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention also identified other laws whose provisions could contribute to the advancement of equality

68 Council of Europe. (2011) Convention of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Available here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

69 National Network on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. (2018) Analysis of Cases of Femicide – Murders of Women in the Republic of Macedonia. Available at: http://www.glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Femicidi-mk.final_.pdf

70 Full name: Council of Europe's Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

71 MLSP. (2018) Action Plan for the Implementation of Convention of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2023. Available here: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



between women and men as well as prevent gender-based violence, such as laws in the areas of education, health, labor relations, the work of the local self-government, etc.⁷² Even though this process of reviewing the laws that need changes has started and is ongoing, the process of harmonizing the laws in parliamentary procedure is only in the early phase and the largest portion of the laws recognized and planned for harmonization with the Istanbul Convention have not been changed in this direction. Furthermore, there is thus far no monitoring mechanism that will continually supply information on progress in harmonizing the legislation.

At present, the module for training professional workers from the relevant institutions in recognizing various forms of violence against women in accordance with the Istanbul Convention is in development. This module is implemented by MLSP through a project financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. It was expected to be fully ready in 2018, but the grant agreement for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention was only signed in 2019.⁷³

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Conclusion and recommendations

The activities for harmonizing domestic legislation with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention are ongoing, but in many cases, we noted delays. According to the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention, the harmonization of the domestic legislation with the provisions of the Convention is planned to be completed by 2019 at the latest for the majority of the laws, with the exception of four that are planned for 2020 and 2021.⁷⁴ This delay can be devastating for victims of gender-based violence, considering that even after changes have been made to the domestic legislation, it will take a long time for the actual implementation of the laws in practice, especially on part of the judiciary. There is therefore a need to guarantee the completion of these basic measures for protection from GBV so that the work can continue towards the substantial application of the legal measures and regulations.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Responses from the MLSP and the Annual Report of the Ministry for 2019, available here: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nsp>

⁷⁴ With the exception of the Law on Labor Relations (planned for 2020), The Law on the Protection of Patients' Rights (planned for 2020), the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance (planned for 2021), and a new Law on Gender-Based Violence (planned for 2020).



The delays in the important trainings for sensitizing key stakeholders in recognizing all forms of gender-based violence are also worrisome. This depends above all on the financial capacities of the responsible ministry, so we therefore recommend allocating sufficient funds to the ministry and the responsible bodies to ensure and guarantee the implementation of this measure. There is a need to recognize the importance of having the capacities to combat this phenomenon which limits and minimizes overall societal progress and has a fatal effect on victims of violence. Therefore, delays or failure to implement activities that have the goal of combating gender-based violence should be unacceptable.

50.2, SS0. 2.2, Result according to NAPGE: Strengthened capacities for responding to cases of violence against women

Responsible institutions		Strengthened capacities of the professional structures in institutions for responding to cases of violence against women
Responsible institutions		ISW; MLSP; MH; MI;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Significant ⁷⁵
Level of completion		
1	Developing criteria for professionals who provide services for women victims of violence as part of specialized services for all forms of gender-based violence	Fully completed
2	Organizing continuous trainings for all professionals in relevant state institutions	Not started
3	Licensing service providers for specialized services for gender-based violence, as part of the existing system for licensing professionals in the social protection system	Partially started

⁷⁵ For the most part the activities are described by the institutions as having no impact, as they are either not implemented or are in early phases. Those that are in process or completed are recognized as significant.



4	Developing a model for monitoring and supervising the work of service providers in specialized services for gender-based violence	Not started
5	Developing a training module for service providers in specialized services for gender-based violence that also include topics of crisis intervention, working with trauma and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), psychosocial help and support, and free legal aid	Not started
6	Providing continuous trainings for service providers from specialized services for gender-based violence	Partially implemented
7	Developing a model for forming multisector teams at the local level for responding to reports of cases of various forms of violence	Significantly implemented
8	Forming multisector teams at the local level for responding to reports of cases of various forms of violence, based on the conducted assessment of the functionality of the existing teams (for domestic violence)	Significantly implemented
9	Reforming/ harmonizing the approach to data collection system/approach in public institutions and the NGO sector	Fully completed
10	Conducting two studies on GBV in public spaces	Fully completed
11	11. Reforming/ harmonizing the approach to data collection system/approach in public institutions and the NGO sector	Not started – до делумно е спроведено
12	Taking over the database from the last representative survey on GBV and its inclusion in the work of SSO	Partially implemented
13	Regular monitoring visits and supervision of the multisector teams at the local level to evaluate their work and efficiency	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No (the OP 2018/2019 for the Strategy foresees the implementation of another Operational Plan)
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this group have the goal of strengthening institutional mechanisms and capacities for addressing gender-based violence, above all in terms of conducting the procedure. NAPGE foresees the achievement of the following indicators: by end 2020 have opened 10 new shelters and support centers for victims of GBD, have trained 80% of the professional workers (service providers) from state institutions and the civil society sector on recognizing various forms of violence against women, have established a system of licensing service providers for specialized services for GBV, and have established multisector teams in at least 30 municipalities that respond based on the planned model for reporting cases of various forms of violence.

Implemented activities and their impact

During 2018/2019, the Institute for Social Work (ISW), through the MLSP, developed and distributed standards and procedures for specialized services for all forms of gender-based violence. Additionally, over the past year preparations were made and a new process was introduced for the centres for social work based on “following a case.”⁷⁶ Thus far there has not been a study on the application of these standards and procedures, while the ISW has indicated that, for the time being, there is only the baseline which will be used to assess impact down the line.

Towards the end of 2019, the Institute licensed service providers, while the licensing of professional workers has still not been started. Additionally, the development of a model for following and supervising the work of service providers in specialized services for GBV has also not been started. Similarly, the educational module for trainings for service providers has not been developed because the plan is for the trainings to be developed and conducted by external experts in cooperation with the MLSP. The procedure to select external experts on part the MLSP for conducting the trainings of service providers is currently ongoing. It is interesting to note that the implementation of the trainings as an activity were assessed by the competent institutions as “partially implemented,” even though the search is still on for experts for the trainings and the training of this type has not been conducted thus far. Based on this, the level of completion refers to the start of the procedure for organizing the trainings, and not for the level of completion of the trainings themselves.

⁷⁶ Response from ISW.



We have a similar pattern with the measures for forming the multisector groups at the level of municipalities/local level that will be responsible for acting on reports of cases of various forms of violence. Namely, the multisector groups are not yet formed, so it is hard to imagine that they would have started fulfilling their obligations. On the other hand, in the responses received from the responsible institutions it is claimed that the trainings and the ongoing meetings of the members of the multisector teams on reported cases of various forms of violence in the municipalities are fully completed.

The continuous trainings planned for all professional workers from relevant state institutions were expected to be a joint activity with the trainings for recognizing GBV under the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, through the already mentioned project with the MFA of the Netherlands.

Harmonizing the system/approach for data collection in public institutions and the NGO sector has been partially completed at the MLSP but has not been started at the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, an ongoing activity is the takeover of the database from the last representative survey on GBV and including a violence survey in the program of the work of the State Statistical Office. The survey on violence by SSO within IPA 2017 is expected to be conducted by end of 2020 and for the data to be published in 2021.

The MLSP has not conducted research on GBV and public spaces, but two scoping studies on violence in public spaces have been conducted by the civil society sector: one for Skopje⁷⁷ and one for Tetovo.⁷⁸

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Conclusion and recommendations

The activities planned for building and strengthening the capacities of the responsible institutions in terms of an adequate institutional reaction to cases of gender-based violence are at best in the implementation phase. Most of the responses about these activities are inconsistent and do not reflect the real situation. It is therefore difficult to even assess to what extent the activities are actually implemented, and it is even more difficult to assess to what extent the foreseen indicators are achieved.

⁷⁷ Reactor – Research in Action (2020) *Gender-Based Violence in Public Spaces in Skopje*. ISBN: 978-608-4684-34-3.

⁷⁸ Cvetkovikj I., Drndarevska D., and Kocevskaja J. 2019. *Scoping Study on Gender-Based Violence on Women and Girls in Public Spaces in the Municipality of Tetovo*. Skopje: Coalition Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities. ISBN 978-608-4803-11-9



The activity for conducting two studies on gender-based violence in public spaces was completed; however, this was implemented by civil society organizations and not the responsible ministry.

Unfortunately, we must conclude that there is a need for further efforts to achieve this result. Furthermore, there is a need for greater cooperation and coordination both between the institutions themselves, and between institutions and the civil society sector. Once again it is evident is that there is a problem in the communication between institutions that are responsible for closely related activities and who should be working jointly on their implementation. Furthermore, as previously noted, national plans should not contain activities planned by international donors that are meant to be implemented by civil society organizations in the country. It should be clear when an activity from the Action Plan is to be implemented by a civil society organization, with adequate compensation for their work; or if certain donors are interested in supporting an activity, it should be elaborated how this activity is to be carried out.

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Specific Strategic Objective 2.3: Improving policies and measures to overcome the barriers to increased women's employment

Result according to NAPGE: Improved policies and measures for increasing women's employment

Description		Improved policies and measures for increasing women's employment
Responsible institutions		EARNM; MLSP; ME; SLI;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Significant ⁷⁹
Level of completion		
1	Conducting field work (public debates, informational sessions) with women in urban and rural municipalities to promote the employment and self-employment measures	Partially implemented ⁸⁰

79 For the most part the activities are described by the institutions as having no impact, as they are either not implemented or are in early phases. Those that are in process or completed are recognized as significant.

80 The Employment Agency did not provide a response to this question. The assessment of the level of implementation is based on available information for 2018 from the MLSP's Annual Report.



2	A road map to assess the national context and address unpaid labor and the care economy as one of the key factors in the exclusion of women from the labor market	Partially implemented
3	Conducting focused media campaigns for the promotion of active measures for employment and self-employment for women	Partially implemented
4	Conducting trainings on gender sensitivity and recognizing gender discrimination on the labor market for representatives from the State Labor Inspectorate	Partially implemented
5	Publishing regular reports on recorded cases of gender-based discrimination on the labor market by the labor inspection, published on the MLSP website	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Partially yes
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities in this part aim to advance policies and measures for increasing employment among women. The indicators under NAPGE foresee at least a 10% increase in the number of women who have used the measures for employment and self-employment in at least 40 municipalities that implement activities for the promotion of the measures for employment and self-employment among women.

Implemented activities and their impact

According to the MLSP's annual report for 2018, the RNM Employment Agency completed its planned activities for the year for promoting the active programs and measures for employment and labor market services. The employment centres held information sessions for encouraging the uptake of employment and self-employment measures at the national level, with the largest number of women participants on the territory of Skopje (2176). There is no information on the total number of participants, so this number cannot be compared in terms of gender participation in these sessions.



The numbers for the users of the measures are provided as gender disaggregated. In 2018, out of the total number of participants in the active programs and measures for employment, 56% were women, while out of the total number of services for employment 49% were accessed by women.⁸¹ For 2019, the Employment Agency did not submit a report to the ministry, and the Agency for Access to Public Information did not respond to our request for information. Even though data for 2019 is not available, comparing the data from previous years reveals that the targets were not achieved for increasing the number of women who use the employment and self-employment measures.⁸²

Furthermore, the available data for only the self-employment program provide a more worrisome picture. In 2018, only 36.42% of the registered participants for using the self-employment measures were women. Additionally, out of 1060 individuals who registered their own business, only 35% are women, or 375 individuals. The budget implications here are that the Agency invested significantly more funds to train men than women, and significantly more for developing business plans for men compared to women.⁸³

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The MLSP's assessment of the national context and addressing unpaid labor and the economy of care, as one of the key factors for the exclusion of women from the labour market, is ongoing, but there is no additional information about this activity even though the deadline for its completion is end of 2020.

In 2019, the ministry of economy (ME) started the implementation of focused media campaigns for the promotion of active employment and self-employment measures for women. This activity was not fully completed, and while a total of

81 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

82 In 2017, of the total number of participants in the active employment programs and measures, 50% were women, and out of the total number of employment services, 46% were women. In 2015, of the total number of participants in the active employment programs and measures, 50% were women, and out of the total number of employment services, 45% were women. In 2014, of the total number of participants in the active employment programs and measures, 43% were women, and out of the total number of employment services, 43% were women. Source: MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

83 In 2018, 1,988,000 denars were spent on trainings for women, and 3,328,500 denars on trainings for men. In percentages, 37.39% of the total budget for trainings were used for women, and 62.61% for men. Of the funds for developing business plans, women received 5,359,200 denars, and men 9,187,200 denars, which in percentages amounts to 36.84%. Source: MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



5,092,460 denars were allocated for it, it is unclear why the activity was not fully implemented. According to the assessment of this Ministry, the activity had significant impact on advancing policies and measures for increasing employment among women. Additionally, ME subsidizes companies owned and led by women. In 2018 a total of 2 million denars were allocated for this purpose, while in 2019 this number was 2.5 million denars. The funds were almost fully used, and funding was approved for a total of 37 applicants for both years.⁸⁴

Conclusion and recommendations

The planned measures for increasing employment among women practically had no results during 2018 and 2019. The percentage of women users of the employment programs shows insignificant variations over the last five years. Furthermore, even though overall the programs and measures for employment were used by somewhat more women than men, measures such as taking part in trainings or registering a company, the uptake was significantly higher for men. In supporting self-employment, the country invests significantly more for men than for women, while the funds for supporting female entrepreneurship from the Ministry of Economy for both years together (2018-2019) are nowhere near the amount that was used to support men's businesses in 2018 through the Employment Agency. Furthermore, it is unclear why the funds for implementing a media campaign for the promotion of active measures for employment and self-employment for women by the ME are higher than the annual subsidies from this Ministry for women's entrepreneurship.

Considering the low uptake of the measures and support for starting a business among women, it is important to review the investment of state funds that women have been using at considerably lower levels for years. With this in mind, it is important to consider existing good practices with successful examples from other countries, where specific self-employment measures are tailored to the needs of women and thereby more likely to be used.

There is a need for further efforts in this area, considering that women still make up 62% of the total economically inactive population in the country. The factors that push women out of the labor market are the persisting gender stereotypes

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84 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



and discrimination based on gender in the workplace, as well as in hiring. It is therefore exceptionally important to urgently implement the activities for sensitizing the State Labor Inspectorate on gender-based discrimination on the labor market. It is equally important to transparently and regularly publish the reports from the labor inspectorate on recorded cases of gender-based discrimination, with the goal of active and informed inclusion of all stakeholders in the advancement of gender equality on the labor market.

SO 2, SSO 2.3, Result according to NAPGE: Decreased discrimination on the labor market

Description		Decreased gender-based discrimination on the labor market
Responsible institutions		MLSP; NGO;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		None ⁸⁵
Level of completion		
1	Organizing media campaigns to promote reporting gender-based discrimination on the labor market	Not started (од страна на МТСП)
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Yes
Recommendations		Further work needed

This activity has the goal of decreasing discrimination based on sex/gender in the labor market and the indicator for its success are annual numbers of reported cases of discrimination of women on the labor market that were acted upon, decided upon, and cases in which discrimination was determined and damages were paid.

Implemented activities and their impact

Even though the Ministry of Labour and social policy has not started the implementation of this activity, a number of organizations in the civil society sector have been working in the area of advancing women workers' rights, promoting active reporting of cases of gender-based discrimination, and some also provide

85 This response is due to the fact that MLSP has not started the activity.



free legal aid for support in the process of reporting these cases. Organizations such as Reactor – Research in Action, Glasen Tekstilec, and the Helsinki Committee implement both joint and individual projects on the national and the regional level for advancing workers' rights and decreasing discrimination in the workplace.

In terms of the indicator and the number of reported cases, it should be noted that the state institutions do not publish statistics on gender-based discrimination in the area of labor relations. The ombudsman collects data by area, and discrimination, i.e., non-discrimination and adequate and fair representation, and labor relations are categorized as two different areas, so there is no gender disaggregated data nor cross referencing of the areas (such as discrimination in labor relations). In terms of just the areas individually, in 2018 there were 77 submissions for discrimination and 335 submissions in the area of labor relations, which is about 12% of the total number of submissions. In 2019, there were 60 submissions based on discrimination and 282 submissions in labor relations, about 10% of the total number of submissions for the year.

The State Labor Inspectorate publishes reports based on the type of violation, such as termination, violation of measures, overtime work, but not based on discrimination.

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Similarly, the civil courts do not collect separate statistics for discrimination procedures, except for the court in Skopje, which records the procedures on discrimination in the area of labor disputes and property disputes. Even though the data is disaggregated based on type of discrimination, it is unclear what type of dispute the basis is filed under. For example, in 2019 the civil court in Skopje acted on a total of 6 cases of discrimination, of which two were in labor disputes and four were in property disputes. One of these cases was based on gender; however, it is unclear whether this case was among the labor or the property disputes.⁸⁶ This information does not exist for 2018.

In 2018, the Commission for Protection from Discrimination recorded the submissions on discrimination based on basis and area, but again there is no cross referencing of the data in terms of how many of the submissions of discrimination based on gender were from the area of labor relations. For that year, out of a total of 132 submissions to the Commission, 9% were based on

⁸⁶ Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Macedonia. (2019) Annual Discrimination Newsletter. <https://mhc.org.mk/reports/godishen-informator-za-diskriminaczi%20d1%98a-za-2019-godina/>



gender and 49% were from the area of labor relations.⁸⁷ The Commission for the Protection from Discrimination was dissolved in 2019 with no accountability and with no data for that year.

Starting in 2020, organizations from the civil society sector collect and publish data in a way that is closer to what the indicator requests – gender-based discrimination in the workplace. However, there are no cross-referenced data on gender-based discrimination in the workplace for the reporting period.

Conclusion and recommendations

There is noticeable progress in terms of promoting the rights of women workers and organizing campaigns for reporting gender-based discrimination, but only on part of the civil society sector. Furthermore, collecting and publishing data on this type of discrimination remains limited on part of the majority of actors in this area. The civil society organizations process gender disaggregated data as part of their projects and based on what was reported to them. The state institutions who are responsible for keeping gender disaggregated data on the submissions from their areas keep arbitrary data that is not easily accessible. There is a need for synchronized and standardized data collection on part of the state institutions, which should take into account multidimensional factors in order to determine gender-based discrimination in the workplace. There is also a need to regularly publish this type of information.

SO 2, SSO 2.3, Result according to NAPGE: Improved work-life balance

Description		Improved work-life balance
Responsible institutions		MLSP;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Significant
Level of completion		
1	1. Conducting a capacity assessment of daycares, nursing homes and centers for persons with disabilities, and an assessment of the need for opening new ones	Fully completed

87 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Macedonia. (2018) Annual Discrimination Newsletter. <https://mhc.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Godisen-izvestaj-2018-III-1.pdf>



2	Assessment of the effectiveness and the efficiency of flexible work schedules	Partially implemented
3	Organizing public debates and consultations with unions and employers on gender mainstreaming and the different implications for men and women in collective agreement negotiations	Partially implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Only one activity
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities that aim to improve work life balance are assessed through the increased number of childcare facilities, the number of institutions for care of the elderly, and the number of institutions for the care of individuals with disabilities, by the end of 2020. Additionally, it is expected that flexible work arrangements will be integrated in legal regulations.

Implemented activities and their impact

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According to SSO, by the end of September 2019 the total number of childcare facilities – daycares and early childhood development centers – in the country was 103.⁸⁸ It is important to note that this number does not reflect the situation on the ground, considering that it groups together multiple daycares that are part of the same administrative unit (including so-called 'clone-daycares' which are not counted as separate entities in SSO methodology), but not the total number of facilities, which is significantly higher. For example, in the period between May 2017 and May 2019, a total of 31 new daycares/early childhood education centers were opened in the country,⁸⁹ but according to the data provided by the SSO there is no increase in the number of daycares in the period between 2018 and 2019. For the most part, these new facilities are built under a multiyear project for increasing daycare capacities with financing from the World Bank, which has a target of creating 7500 new spots for preschool childcare by 2024.⁹⁰ The coverage

88 See table - State Statistical Office (2019) "Institutions for child care and education – kindergartens/ centres for early childhood development in 2019". Available at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSooptenie.aspx?rbrtxt=25>

89 MLSP. (2019) "We continue to invest in daycares – Kochani, Negotino, Kisela Voda, and Kavadarci get a grant from the World Bank for new facilities". Available at: <https://bit.ly/37ZWIXT>

90 *Ibid.*

of the daycare capacities in 2019 noted an increase of 7.4% compared to 2017,⁹¹ which is a more realistic indicator of the capacities of the childcare institutions for preschoolers. Furthermore, it is important to note that coverage has primarily been increased in rural areas (80% of new daycares are built in rural areas),⁹² providing solutions to the work-life balance problem where they are needed most.

In 2018 there were 30 institutions for residential care for the elderly and three institutions for individuals with disabilities.⁹³ Compared to 2017, the only change is in the number of institutions for the elderly, which increased by one. The data for 2019 is not yet available. NAPGE foresees an increase of the number of homes for the elderly by at least 15% and the number of institutions for individuals with disabilities by 10%.

The discussions with unions and employers for reviewing the gender perspective in collective agreements have only just begun, but there is no publicly available information about the contents or conclusions from these consultations. The goal of these discussions was to include the concept of flexible work arrangements in the legislation and in collective agreements. At the same time, the new draft law on Labour relations is in its final version and already includes the concept of flexible work arrangements. It is expected to be adopted in January 2021.

Conclusion and recommendations

All activities in this group planned for 2018/2019 are either in the process of being implemented or are completed. It is exceptionally important to continue investing in improving the capacities of the existing and opening new facilities for childcare, considering the established correlation between number of daycares and the employment rates for women. Namely, where more childcare facilities are available, women's employment rates are higher,⁹⁴ meaning that increasing the number of daycares and improving the conditions for childcare directly improves work-balance.

91 Calculations based on the data from SSO "Institutions for child care and education – kindergartens/ centres for early childhood development in 2019" available at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSooopstenie.aspx?rbrtxt=25> and SSO "Institutions for child care and education – kindergartens/ centres for early childhood development in 2017" available at: <http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPublikacija.aspx?id=21&rbr=716>

92 MLSP. (2018) "By the end of the year, we will open 24 new daycares, provide care for children in rural areas, and the educators are getting a raise". Available at: <https://bit.ly/3aUXbfS>

93 State Statistical Office (2018) "Institutions and Rights to Social Welfare for Juvenile and Adult Recipients, 2018". Available at:

94 Reactor – Research in Action. (2019) Infographic: "A March 8th Reminder". Available at: <https://bit.ly/34YwRxJ>

In addition to this, it is important to include measurable indicators with clearly defined baselines in the development of indicators for the new Action Plan for gender equality. The indicator for increasing the capacities of the daycares from the current action plan is only the percentage of the number of facilities with no baseline. This does not take into account the methods used to calculate the number of facilities in the country and their capacities comparatively over the years. The indicator should capture the essence of the activity and the related result – an increased number of children enrolled in daycares which will result in better work life balance for their parents and which in turn will contribute to reducing gender inequalities in this regard.

Furthermore, activities such as consultations with stakeholders or analyses that should lead to the achievement of the result, should be fully implemented on time, otherwise the need for their implementation becomes outdated. For example, the consultations with employers and representatives from the unions have only just started, which is also the case with the assessment of the effectiveness and the efficacy of introducing flexible working arrangements, while the legal provisions for flexible working arrangements have nearly been integrated. In any case, the fulfillment of this indicator is a positive aspect, but the untimely implementation of the activities is a waste of resources.

Additionally, the activities that are listed above and that are only partially implemented are not even included in MLSP's Operational Plan, which to a certain extent is indicative of the intent to implement them at all.



Specific Strategic Objective 2.4.: Area – Education

Result according to NAPGE: Gender-sensitive laws and policies in the educational process

Description		Improved gender-sensitive laws and policies in the educational process
Responsible institutions		MES; BDE;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		Minor to Significant
Level of completion		
1	Organizing public debates and consultations with various stakeholders on the opportunities for introducing anti-discriminatory clauses on all bases for discrimination (including gender, gender identity, sexual orientation) in the Law on Elementary School, the Law on Secondary (High) School, the Child Protection Law, the Law on Textbooks in Elementary and High School, and the Law on Higher Education	Significantly implemented
2	Review of bylaws to introduce anti-discriminatory clauses and gender equality and/or improving existing bylaws: Methodology for assessing and producing textbooks, concept for developing textbooks, guidebooks for state university publishers	Partially implemented
3	Developing protocols for responding to cases of gender-based violence, harassment, and bullying in daycares, schools, including violence based on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity	Fully completed



4	Review of the programs for counselling parents and pupils in elementary and high school education for responding in cases of gender-based violence, harassment, and bullying, including on the basis gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity)	Partially implemented
5	Developing gender equality handbooks for psychologists for guidance and career counselling in elementary and high school education	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this group have the goal of changing laws and policies in education so that they include the gender perspective. The indicators for the success of these activities under NAPGE are the following: at least three laws and by-laws in the area of education contain anti-discriminatory clauses on all bases, at least 50% of educational institutions have developed internal policies for gender equality and non-discrimination, and at least 50% of daycares have established and apply protocols for gender-based violence and harassment.

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Implemented activities and their impact

A new Law on Higher Education was adopted in 2018. Article 3 of this law contains the anti-discrimination clause and respecting human rights and freedoms as critical within the higher education process. In July 2019, the assembly held a public hearing on the text of the draft Law for Elementary Education, which was then adopted by Parliament. The implementation of the new law started in the 2019/2020 school year. A special provision/anti-discriminatory clauses were added to this law, to include all bases for discrimination including gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, while the law also provides for affirmative measures for overcoming discriminatory practices in the educational process.⁹⁵ The BDE reports that bylaws and conceptual documents are currently being drafted based on the new Law on Elementary Education.

⁹⁵ MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

In its progress report on gender equality submitted to the MLSP, the Ministry of Education and Science reports that changes have also been made to the Law on Textbooks for Elementary and High School Education, but there is no elaboration on what these changes look like. The review of this law also does not indicate the explicit emphasis of including the gender perspective in the textbooks.⁹⁶

In 2019, a draft version of the new concept for textbooks and the Methodology for appraising the textbook was prepared, where it is indicated that no textbook may contain stereotypes of various societal groups and should not incite prejudice on any basis, including gender and gender identity. The methodology also indicates that the contents should include texts and illustrations that provide equal representation and treatment of women and men.⁹⁷

Conclusion and recommendations

The procedures to change and amend legislation in the area of education in order to include the gender perspective is started. Other than the changes to the Law on Higher Education and the Law on Elementary Education, there is a need for changes in the other laws and legal acts in this area. Furthermore, there is lack of information upon which we can determine the fulfillment of the criteria, i.e., the indicators for this area, especially with regards to the protocols for acting in cases of gender-based violence and harassment in daycares, as well as the internal policies for gender equality and non-discrimination in educational institutions.

Little has been done in terms of informing and sensitizing parents and staff on cases of gender-based violence, harassment, and bullying, including violence based on gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity, as well as gender stereotypes that persist in career choice. There remains the need for the timely and efficient implementation of these activities in order to eliminate the factors that most frequently contribute to gender-based violence, as well as to overcome the toxic culture of gender stereotypes which, if left unaddressed, could have a negative impact on the lives of students.

96 Law on Textbooks in Elementary and High School Education. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 98/08, 99/09, 83/10, 36/11, 135/11, 46/12 24/13, 120/13, 29/14, 146/15, 217/15, 30/16 and 21/18.

97 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



SO 2. SSO 2.4. Results according to NAPGE: Improved educational content and textbooks from the aspect of gender equality

Description		Improved educational content and textbooks from the aspect of gender equality and Introduced Comprehensive Sexual Education
	Responsible institutions	MES;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Minor
Level of completion		
1	1. Analysis of curricula, programs, and textbooks from a gender perspective	Further work needed
2	2. Forming a multisector working group for introducing Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) in the educational process	Fully completed
3	3. Developing draft systemic models for introducing CSE in elementary and high school education	Fully completed
4	4. Piloting draft models for introducing CSE in several elementary and high schools	Further work needed
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities in this group, which have the goal of transforming learning tools, materials, and programs from sexist or gender blind to gender sensitive, are assessed through the fulfillment of the following indicators: 90% of revised curricula, textbooks and plans are gender sensitive and do not contain discrimination on any basis, including gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity; 70% of daycares apply gender sensitive programs; and a developed and adopted systemic model for including comprehensive sexual education in the educational process.



Implemented activities and their impact

During 2018/2019, at the request of the Pedagogical Service, the Bureau for the Development of Education submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science an analysis of the contents of 15 textbooks from the aspect of gender equality and non-discrimination, of which seven were from elementary and eight were from high school education.⁹⁸ Taking into consideration the analysis, the Pedagogical Service began the process of revising textbooks that are outdated and contain stereotypes, prejudices, and stigmatization. In the reporting period, only one textbook was subject to revision from this aspect on part of the pedagogical service. The textbook in question was used to teach Ethics in third year of high school, by the author Kiril Temkov, and the Commission for revising the textbook, at the recommendation of national bodies for the protection from discrimination, proposed the removal of all discriminatory contents in the textbook. The Pedagogical Service made corrections to the textbook; however, the revised textbook has not been published in physical form and can only be accessed online at ucebnici.mon.gov.mk.⁹⁹

In 2018 and 2019, the Bureau for the Development of Education revised part of the curricula for civic education. At present, the gender perspective is also included in the new curricula for the subject Civic Education for 8th and 9th grade, as well as Civic Education for first year of high school in four-year vocational education. The approval of a textbook for Civic Education for the first year of vocational high school education is currently underway.¹⁰⁰

In coordination with MLSP, a working group has been formed to analyze the contents of curricula and textbooks in higher education from the aspect of advancing equal opportunities for women and men.

Furthermore, in 2018 a multisector expert working group was formed with the task of proposing a model for the implementation of comprehensive sexual education in the country, as part of the formal elementary education system. In the period between March 2018 and November 2018, the working group had

98 MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2019." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid*



numerous meetings during which they discussed the opportunities and the limitations related to introducing comprehensive sexual education (CSE) in the formal educational system in the country. The group is working in the direction of implementing the sensitive and comprehensive curriculum in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights, starting in preschool up to the end of high school. In the group, in addition to government bodies and advisors, we have the civil society sector that has been advocating for CSE in the educational system since 2009. The civil society sector has developed handbooks for teachers, a curriculum for informal CSE, as well as models for piloting CSE informal education. In 2009, the government adopted a decision on introducing a pilot program for comprehensive sexual education in the ninth grade of elementary education, which is expected to start in 2021 once all planned steps have been completed: the creation of materials for training the teachers, training of the teachers, and the development and piloting of instruments for evaluating the pilot program.

Furthermore, civil society organizations that work in this area conducted a study in 2019 on the attitudes of both parents and teaching staff on the need to include CSE formal education. The study showed that a high percentage of parents, between 82% and 96% believe that young people should be learning the topics that are included in comprehensive sexual education.¹⁰¹ Similarly, 89-99% of teachers agree that the curricula should be updated to include with topics from CSE.¹⁰² These is exceptionally important information that indicates both parents and teachers are ready and do not represent an obstacle to introducing formal comprehensive sexual education, and that all that is necessary is the political will to enact this aspect of gender equality in the educational process.

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Conclusion and recommendations

The analysis of textbooks, curricula, and programs from a gender perspective has been started by the MES and the BDE in cooperation with the civil society sector and independent experts and is still ongoing. At the same time, draft systemic models for introducing comprehensive sexual education in elementary and high school have been prepared and it is expected for CSE to be piloted for the first time in 2021, considering the Government adopted a decision on this in the

101 Nikolina Kenig (2019) Teachers' Attitudes on the Introduction of Comprehensive Sexual Education in Schools. HERA, Skopje. Available at: https://hera.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SSO-istrazhuvanje-so-nastavnici_mk_web.pdf

102 *Ibid.*

second half of 2019. What remains is to follow the introduction of CSE considering that two new factor came into play in 2020 that could have an impact on the implementation of the decision. In August, the new composition of the Government was introduced, and the minister appointed to lead the MES is someone who has made great efforts in the past to introduce CSE. In addition to this, the country was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a huge impact on the already fragile educational system. All the resources in this system were re-directed towards dealing with the crisis and seeking out new solutions to provide an adequate education, so it is possible that those responsible for implementing this activity have been functioning with limited capacities.

S02. S50 2.4. Results according to NAPGE: Improved access to education for girls

Description		Improved access to education for girls
	Responsible institutions	MES;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Minor
Level of completion		
1	Situation analysis of dropout/exclusion of girls from the educational process	Partially implemented
2	Evaluation of the effects of the existing measures for increased inclusion of girls in the educational process	Partially implemented
3	Preparing a plan for improving the inclusion of girls in the educational process in line with the conducted analysis and evaluation	Partially implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activities in this group have the goal of improving accessibility of education for girls who are most impacted by being excluded from it. To achieve this result, NAPGE foresees two indicators, but only one of these refers to the entire period of the action plan, i.e., 2018-2020: that 90% of girls in the country are included in the educational process by 2020. The other indicator refers to improving the school infrastructure from the aspect of gender sensitivity, but this is only planned to be implemented for 2020.



ACTIVITIES, THEIR IMPACT, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹⁰³

During 2018 and 2019, no information was published on activities that would contribute to the achievement of this result. The only information that is available is the response we received from the Ministry of Education and Science itself, informing us that they have partially conducted analyses of the status of exclusion/dropping out of girls in the educational process. The same is true for the evaluation of the impact of the existing measures for increased inclusion of girls in the educational process, and the development of a plan for improving the inclusion of girls in the educational process.

The state statistical office collects data on the number of boys and girls in elementary and high school education and for 2018/2019 they note no changes in the gender make up of the students—even though this is not compared in terms of the gender makeup of the population of that age group in the country. Furthermore, the MLSP report for 2018 points out that there is a noticeable drop in the number of girls that continue from elementary into high school education. ¹⁰⁴ This is especially worrisome, and it is the reason the activities planned in this group exist in the first place. Failing to implement the activities contributes to deepening this gap and is a violation of the right of the child to education. As a result, there is a need to urgently act based on the adopted plan and to implement the measures to address this problem.

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502. SSO 2.4. Result according to NAPGE: Gender sensitive and trained staff

Description		Gender sensitive and trained staff in educational and early childhood education institutions
	Responsible institutions	BDE; MLSP;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Noma
Level of completion		
1	Reviewing programs and contents for licensing educators, caretakers, and experts with improved contents for gender equality	Not started

¹⁰³ Since there was limited information available, all comments are provided under the same heading.

¹⁰⁴ MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



2	Conducting trainings on gender equality for teachers and expert staff in elementary and high school education	Not started
	In Operational Plan 2018/2019	Yes
	Recommendations	Further work needed

The activities in this group have the goal of sensitizing the educational staff in the educational process by building capacities for gender equality. The objective is for 70% of schools and centres for social work to have trained staff on gender and gender equality by the end of 2019, which is the deadline for completing the activity of conducting accredited training.

Implemented activities and their impact

According to the responses from the institutions, none of the activities have been started. Nevertheless, MLSP notes even though there has been no revision of these programs, certified trainers from the Sector for Equal Opportunities have been conducting the trainings for educators, caretakers, and professional associates. At the same time, the Bureau for the Development of Education has submitted general comments in the responses to the questionnaires, where they point out that more than 350 teachers from all elementary schools were trained on the new curriculum on Civic Education for 8th and 9th grade, which is relevant considering the gender aspect of these programs.

Conclusion and recommendations

The activities in this part have not been meaningfully implemented in the reporting period. There is a need for full and accelerated implementation of the activities, as well as increased coordination between the different institutions, which according to the NAPGE should be working jointly. This is a problem that is been noted before and that is a constant throughout the report.

502. SSO 2.4. Results according to NAPGE: Raised public awareness on gender-based bullying and violence in schools

Description		Raised public awareness on gender-based bullying and violence in schools
Responsible institutions		MES;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		None
Level of completion		
1	Organizing a national campaign against gender-based violence and bullying in schools	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

This activity aims to contribute to increasing overall awareness of gender-based violence (harassment and bullying) in schools through a public awareness campaign at the national level. The indicator for the successful implementation of the activity is the number of implemented promotional and educational events and materials that contain messages for increasing awareness of gender-based bullying and violence in schools.

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IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES, THEIR IMPACT, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹⁰⁵

The campaign to raise citizen awareness on gender-based violence in schools has not been started by the MES, even though the deadline for completing this activity was the end of 2019. This topic is mainly covered about by the civil society sector and in the reporting period a comprehensive Handbook was prepared for preventing and intervening in cases of violence, abuse, and neglect in schools.¹⁰⁶ This Handbook is also used by the Department of Social Services as a brochure for teachers and students,¹⁰⁷ but not for the general public.

¹⁰⁵ Since the activity was not implemented and there was no additional information available, all comments are provided under the same heading.

¹⁰⁶ HERA (2018) *Practical Handbook for Preventing and Intervening in Cases of Violence, Abuse, and Neglect in Schools*. Available at: <https://hera.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/priracnik-nastavnici-print.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ DSS. *Peer Violence, You too Can Stop Violence between Children*. Available at: <http://zsd.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Brosura-vrsnicko-nasilstvo-2019.pdf>



There is a need to devote more attention and time to this topic which is increasingly getting public attention. Gender stereotypes and social inequality are reflected in education from the earliest ages and are then reproduced over the child's development and their lives as adults. In addition to peer violence in schools, there is a need to widen the scope of the conversation to include this type of violence between students outside of schools as well, especially in online spaces. Disturbing events such as "Public Room" group¹⁰⁸ are serious forms of gender-based violence and a threat to the lives of girls, so there is an urgent need to address these challenges among students.

S02. SSO 2.4. Results according to NAPGE: Improved access to physical activity for girls in physical education classes

Description		Results according to NAPGE: Improved access to physical activity for girls in physical education classes
Responsible institutions		MES;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		No response
Level of completion		
1	Analysis of the current situation of low percentage of girls included in physical education, and a plan for including a greater number of girls in physical education	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

The activity aims to increase the participation of girls in physical education classes. The indicators for this activity were the involvement of girls and boys equally in activities offered in physical education classes, as well as an implemented plan to include a larger number of girls in physical education classes.

¹⁰⁸ „Public Room“ was a closed but easily accessible social media group in which mainly men and boys were members, and which was used to share private photos of girls, most often schoolmates, without their permission, with the goal of ridiculing and debasing their bodies and persons.



IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES, THEIR IMPACT, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹⁰⁹

The deadline for this activity is end of 2020, but it was still not started in 2019. There is a need to conduct an analysis and based on that analysis create a plan for addressing the problem with the perception and implementation of physical education classes as typically “male” classes. Considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transfer of classes online, there is no exceptional urgency in the completion of this activity from NAPGE; however, this time can be used to respond to and resolve the problem as soon as students are back in school. Furthermore, at a time when students are most likely to follow classes online from their homes, it could be useful to conduct telephone or online interviews with girls to ensure their input for this analysis.

Specific Strategic Objective 2.5: Area Health

Results according to NAPGE: Integrated system of data collection on gender-based violence

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Description		Improved methodology for collecting, following, and analyzing data to improve health statistics from a gender perspective (Integrated system of data collection for gender-based violence)
Responsible institutions		MH;
Potential impact according to the authors		Transformative
Potential impact according to the institutions		No response
Level of completion		
1	Multisector team to conduct an assessment of the data that is collected, followed, and analyzed in the health care system from a gender perspective	Not started
2	Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the quality of data that is collected, followed, and analyzed in the health care system from a gender perspective	Significantly implemented

¹⁰⁹ Since the activity was not implemented and there was no additional information available, all comments are provided under the same heading.

3	Review and improvement of the existing forms for collecting data in the health care system that are relevant to gender issues	Significantly implemented
	In Operational Plan 2018/2019	No
	Recommendations	Further work needed

The activities have the goal of improving the way in which data is collected, followed, and analyzed in health statistics from a gender perspective, including the systemic collection of data on gender-based violence. The indicators under NAPGE are the following: number of revised and approved forms for collecting data from a gender perspective by the MH, and available annual reports on gender-based violence.

Implemented activities and their impact

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The annual reports that the Ministry of Health (MH) submitted to the MLSP on progress in gender equality do not provide an overview of the activities to keep and analyze data in the health care system. In the 2015 Shadow Report we noted that gender disaggregated data are collected through the Department for Electronic Health, i.e., the platform "My Appointment."

In terms of collecting and keeping data on victims of gender-based violence, the MH has put together standard operating procedures for providing comprehensive and multisector responses in the Referral Centers for Victims of Sexual Violence.¹¹⁰ The SOPs provide guidance for documenting cases, but the procedure for documenting includes above all the ethical aspect of collecting data, but not processing and analysis of data.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the response from the MH on the first activity, forming a multisector team for implementing the assessment of data that is collected, followed, and analyzed in the health care system from a gender perspective, is that it has not been started. Yet the second activity, which is planned to be implemented by the multisector team, has been significantly implemented. This is another example in the responses from the institutions where we note inconsistencies in the implementation of the activities without any attempt from the institution in question to provide an explanation for them.

¹¹⁰ Available here: <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SOP-za-obezbeduvane-na-seopfaten-i-multisektorski-odgovor-vo-TSentri-za-upatuvane-na-zhrtvi-na-seksualno-nasilstvo.pdf>



Conclusion and recommendations

Even though the response from the Ministry of Health indicates that the activities from this group are significantly implemented, there are no publicly available reports or press releases that could confirm these claims or that would provide more information on the implementation of the activity. What is known so far is that the MH keeps gender disaggregated statistics on patients through the Department for Electronic Health, and that there is a special protocol for conduct with victims of gender-based violence, which includes a brief description of the documenting of cases. We can conclude based on the available information that neither the result nor the indicators have been achieved. There is a need for increased efforts in terms of full implementation of the activities, as well as regular reporting on the implemented activities by the Ministry.

SO 2, SSO 2.5, Results according to NAPGE: Raised public awareness on the promotion of health topics relevant for gender equality

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Description		Raised public awareness on the promotion of health topics relevant for gender equality
	Responsible institutions	MH;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	No response
Level of completion		
1	Organizing a public campaign for the promotion of health issues that are relevant to gender equality	Significantly implemented
2	Organizing public debates for the promotion of health issues that are relevant to gender equality at the national and local level	Significantly implemented
3	Creating and printing educational material on topics that are relevant to gender equality in health	Significantly implemented
4	Organizing annual trainings for health care workers on recognizing and acting on gender-based violence	Significantly implemented
	In Operational Plan 2018/2019	No
	Recommendations	Further efforts needed despite timely implementation of activities

These activities aim to raise awareness among citizens about the various health challenges that women and men face. The indicators for these activities under the NAPGE are the following: by end of 2020, at least 200 health workers are trained in GBV and almost all educational events and materials produced by the MH and the IPH have a gender perspective and gender sensitive messaging.

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2018/2019 there was a public debate promotion for the promotion of health issues that are relevant to gender equality at the national and local level. Despite this, the activity was assessed as significantly fulfilled by the Ministry.

The MLSP's progress report on gender equality notes in the area of healthcare that campaigns were organized for raising public awareness and for advancing the health of "the sex."¹¹¹ Furthermore, the report notes that a gender sensitivity training was conducted for health care services providers. There is no data on how many health workers were included in these trainings and whether these trainings included recognizing gender-based violence.¹¹²

Conclusion and recommendations

As in the previous case, the Ministry of Health has not provided sufficient information to allow an assessment of the impact of the activities for this specific result. The activities for increasing public awareness on the role of access to quality healthcare in advancing gender equality are marked as significantly implemented. This would indicate that their implementation is timely, considering the deadline for implementation is end of 2020; however, the available information reveals that only one public debate to inform the public and one training on gender sensitization of healthcare providers were carried out in the reporting period. Due to the challenges the healthcare system was faced with during the COVID-a9 pandemic, almost all healthcare resources in the country were directed to dealing with the virus, leading to the conclusion that the delayed activities from 2018 and 2019 would not have been implemented in the final year of implementation.

Moving forward, the reporting format for the conducted activities by the Ministry of Health should be improved. It should reflect the actual status and level of completion of a certain activity and take into account the indicators for measuring

¹¹¹ This is a direct quote from the report.

¹¹² MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>



success in implementing the activities. For example, for the activities in this group, the Ministry should publish data not only on how many trainings were held, but also how many healthcare workers were trained to recognize gender-based violence. A similar approach should be taken with public events that have a gender element, i.e., that aim to raise public awareness the advancement of gender equality and the healthcare system.

SO 2, SSO 2.5. Result according to NAPGE: Improved universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and reproductive rights

Description		Improved access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and reproductive rights
	Responsible institutions	MH; AQAH; CFM;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	No response
Level of completion		
1	Developing standards and criteria for accreditation of mother- and baby-friendly birthing centers, family OBGYNs offices, and family pediatricians	No response
2	Family planning trainings for family doctors, OBGYNs, nurses, and rural doctors	Significantly implemented
3	Opening centres for victims of sexual violence that are available 24/7	Significantly implemented
4	Specialized training for medical personnel on forms of gender-based violence	Significantly implemented
5	Analysis of the applicability of human rights in the Law for terminating pregnancy	No response ¹¹³

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¹¹³ This is because the analysis was planned for the old Law on Terminating a Pregnancy, introduced in 2013. Considering a new Law was adopted in 2019, the institutions concluded that an official analysis of the old law is unnecessary, considering the new law adopts a right-based approach. Even though this analysis was thus never conducted, civil society organizations that work in the area and participated in the working group that created the new progressive law conducted their own analysis on the effects of the restrictive abortion policies on human rights. For example, see: HERA. 2017. "Documenting the effect of the regressive Macedonian legislation and restrictive abortion policies on human rights: key findings and recommendations". Available at: <https://hera.org.mk/istrazhvanje-dokumentiranje-efekt/>

6	Review of the forms for data collection on maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, and contraception	Not started
7	Screening for malignant neoplasms (breast cancer, cervical cancer, colon cancer, and prostate cancer)	Significantly implemented
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further efforts needed

The activities in this group have the objective to improve access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and reproductive rights. The indicators for measuring the success of these activities are the following: at least one contraceptive is included in the positive list of medications, the revised Law on Terminating a Pregnancy is in line with human rights and public health standards and has been adopted, three centres for victims of sexual violence are opened and functional by end of 2020, at least 500 health workers are trained in family planning by end of 2020, and data is collected on mortality rates for cervical cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and colon cancer.

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2019, the new Law on Terminating a Pregnancy, which is in line with the standards from the Istanbul convention and which considers the reproductive and mental health of women, was adopted. Its adoption checks off the NAPGE indicator of an adopted revised Law on Terminating a Pregnancy in line with human rights and public health standards. Despite its adoption, its effective implementation will require satisfactory access to medical procedures, contraceptives, and information on sexual and reproductive health.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, even though one of the indicators in 2018 is the placing of at least one contraceptive on the positive list of medications, this has thus far not been made possible.¹¹⁵

The Center for Family Medicine (CFM) informs that four workshops were conducted in 2018, which were attended by 63 general practitioners and specialists in

¹¹⁴ European Commission (2020) Country Report North Macedonia. pg 12. Available here: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf

¹¹⁵ HERAYouth (2020) Young People Want: Accessible and Affordable Modern Contraception. Public Policy Paper for Improving Access and Availability of Modern Contraception in the Republic of North Macedonia. Available at: <https://hera.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pozicijonen-dokument-HERAmladi-Kontraczepcija.pdf>

family medicine, as well as 4 nurses. In 2019, there were six workshops that were attended by 106 doctors and 20 nurses who work with family doctors. Some of the workshops were also attended by social workers, which allowed for multisector exchange of experiences and information. Through the program for active healthcare for mothers and children, patronage nurses get regular trainings in family planning. At the same time, clinical guidelines were prepared for family planning, antenatal care, for intrapartum and postpartum care, care for newborn health, gynecological care, infertility, safe abortion, and breastfeeding.¹¹⁶

According to the MLSP report for 2018, there are also continuous trainings of trainers on the methodology from the World Health Organization (WHO) for OBGYNs working in the birthing centres for conducting expert review of maternal morbidity and mortality, with the goal of systematically improving the quality of healthcare during pregnancy, in birth, and in the postnatal period.¹¹⁷

In 2018/2019, three centres for victims of sexual violence were opened that are available 24/7 at the University Clinic for Gynecology and Obstetrics in Skopje, the Clinical Hospital in Tetovo, and the General Hospital in Kumanovo. Furthermore, according to the MLSP reports for 2018 and 2019, the screening for malignant neoplasms is continuous and ongoing.

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Conclusion and recommendations

Unlike the activities for improving the collection of gender-based statistics in the health care system and for raising awareness on the different needs of women and men in terms of their health, this set of activities for improving access to sexual reproductive health have been implemented more substantially, while access to data is also made easier. The activities will have a positive impact if they are continuously implemented moving forward. Additionally, the Centre for Family Medicine noted that there is a need for multisector workshops that would improve communication between all sectors that are included in recognizing and supporting victims of gender-based violence.

¹¹⁶ MLSP. "Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018." Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nsp>

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

Fostering/Building a culture of equal opportunities and promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination based on gender

Specific Strategic Objective 3.1 Improving the culture of gender-sensitive reporting in the media

Results according to NAPGE: Improved capacities of media workers on gender issues and gender sensitive reporting

Description		Gender sensitive reporting in the media
Responsible institutions		AAVMS; NGOs; CME;
Potential impact according to the authors		Significant
Potential impact according to the institutions		Minor
Level of completion		
1	Organizing trainings for media workers on key concepts of gender equality and gender sensitive reporting	Fully completed
2	Organizing public debates with media workers and other stakeholders on topics related to gender equality and gender sensitive reporting	Fully completed
3	Analysis of gender and gender perspectives in television programs aired on the television stations with national coverage	Fully completed
4	Content analysis of gender and gender perspectives in print and social media	Not started
5	Periodic reports from the monitoring of media content with discriminatory speech and hate speech based on gender and sex	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further efforts needed

The activities in this area have the goal of strengthening the capacities of journalists and media workers in terms of gender-sensitive reporting. The indicators for measuring the implemented according to the NAPGE are the following: number



of gender sensitive content in media, and the number of media content with discriminatory speech and hate speech based on gender and sex. .

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2019, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual and Media Services (AAVMS) conducted all the planned trainings for media workers on key concepts of gender equality and gender sensitive reporting. In February 2018, the Agency also conducted basic trainings on gender sensitization for almost all its employees.¹¹⁸ In addition to this, in 2019 the agency conducted advanced trainings on gender-responsive budgeting for its professional employees.¹¹⁹

In 2018, AAVMS analyzed the morning/noon shows on national television. The analysis showed that despite gender parity in the news teams, gender topics were infrequent in the analyzed shows. When the gender perspective was included in the TV show, the approach varied—some programs treated gender issues from a conservative and patriarchal standpoint, while others had an affirmative approach to gender equality.¹²⁰ In March 2018, the publication “Gender in Television: a Collection of Annual Reports on the Treatment of Gender Issues and the Representation of Men and Women in National TV Stations (2012-2016), with Comparative Indicators” was published, as was the analysis “Gender on TV in 2018: in front of the Screen and behind it.” The analyses show that in the audiovisual media industry women are rarely media owners and directors; there are more men than women head producers; there are always more women than men among journalists; that men dominate in technical staff (engineers and technical workers) and production staff (directors, photography, editors, etc), while women are more numerous in marketing and other (support) staff.¹²¹

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¹¹⁸ AAVMS (2019) *Annual Progress Report of the SAB on the Status of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in 2018*. Available here: <https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Godisen-izvestaj-na-organite-na-drzavnata-uprava-za-napredokot-na-sostojbata-na-ednakvite-moznosti-za-zenite-i-mazite-za-2019.pdf>

¹¹⁹ AAVMS (2020) *Annual Progress Report of the SAB on the Status of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in 2019*. Available here: <https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Godisen-izvestaj-ednakvi-moznosti-za-zenite-i-mazite-za-2019.pdf>

¹²⁰ MLSP. “Annual Report on the Activities and Progress in Establishing Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2018.” Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/rodova-ramnopravnost.nspix>

¹²¹ *Ibid.*



Periodic reports from the monitoring of media content with discriminatory speech and hate speech based on gender and sex were not published in the reporting period, as the responsible (non-governmental) body for this activity, the Council for Media Ethics, neither received donations nor had their own resources to carry out these activities.

Conclusion and recommendations

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual and Media Services fully implemented the activities in their jurisdiction planned with the NAPGE, which is a positive development, and compared to all other bodies responsible for implementing the GES, this is the only institution that managed to implement all its activities. Going forward, we recommend that in addition to reporting on activities, they should also report on indicators under NAPGE, which in this case means providing a summary of the number of gender sensitive content in media through the analyses conducted by the Agency.

In terms of publishing periodic reports from monitoring media content for discriminatory speech and hate speech based on gender and sex, there is a need to address the underlying reasons for failing to implement this important activity. We recommend avoiding the assignment of a certain activity to a non-profit body without securing adequate funding for implementing the activity. We therefore recommend that going forward the budget for implementing the strategy should take into account these cases as well and allocate adequate funds for their implementation.



S03. SSO 3.1. Result according to NAPGE: Improved the gender dimension in the policy and programming of the public broadcasting system

Description		The gender dimension is included in the policy and programming of the public broadcasting system
	Responsible institutions	MRT; AAVMS; NGOs;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Significant
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Minor
Level of completion		
1	Organizing continuous trainings for member of the programming council, the directors, the producers of program services, and other MRT employees on key concepts of gender equality and gender sensitive reporting	Partially implemented
2	Analysis of gender in media (public service)	Fully completed
3	Analysis of program documents in the public service	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		No
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities in this group lead to a specific result, to strengthen the capacities, policies, and programs of the broadcasting service by taking into account the gender perspective. The indicator according to NAPGE is the number of gender sensitive contents in the public service at the annual level.

Implemented activities and their impact

In 2018 and 2019, MRT conducted a number of trainings for members of the program council, directors, producers of program services, journalists, as well as other MRT employees, which included topics on gender sensitization and gender-responsive reporting and programming, even though these trainings were not specifically intended for the advancement of gender equality in media work.

Furthermore, the Agency for Audiovisual and Media Services in 2019 conducted an analysis on the representation of men and women in children's programs in

the country that are broadcast on the two channels of the public broadcasting service (MRT1 and MRT2 – in Albanian) and the television channels with national coverage (TV Alfa, TV Kanal 5, TV Sitel, TV Telma, and TV Alsat M – in Albanian). The analysis included 520 shows from both domestic and foreign productions, with the duration of over 200 hours, and included a quantitative as well as qualitative discourse analysis of the programs.

Conclusion and recommendations

The activities for advancing the gender perspective in programs and policies of the public media services are continuous, relatively timely, but not entirely according to what is planned in the Action Plan. For example, the Action Plan foresees that the trainings for employees and decision-makers in the public broadcasting service should be focused on the topic of gender in media, which is a topic with a fairly wide scope of theory and examples. It is important that it is included as part of other trainings that are conducted by MRT, but it should be assessed whether this is sufficient, and if it is not, greater attention should directly be placed on knowledge and experiences in the area of media work and its role in advancing or setting back gender equality.

The activity for conducting a gender analysis in the media is intended to cover more programs than only those intended for children. Nevertheless, considering that AAVMS constantly has activities for analyzing media content from a gender perspective, the decision to focus only on children's programming could be good since focusing on only one part of the topic may contribute to more comprehensive and in-depth findings. The analysis of the program documentation from the public service is intended to be carried out by the civil society sector, but this activity was not carried out in 2018 or 2019. In this case, it is again important to note that in planning state strategic documents, activities must be planned according to what is possible for their implementation and in line with the national determined needs for advancing gender equality. Furthermore, the planning should also include earmarking funds for the implementation of the activity, especially when the expectation is for civil society organizations to the work.



S03. SSO 3.1. Result according to NAPGE: Raised public awareness on the existence of gender discrimination in the media

Description		Raised public awareness on the existence of gender discrimination in the media
	Responsible institutions	AAVMS; CME; CPD;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	Minor
Level of completion		
1	Organizing media campaigns for raising public awareness on sexist and gender discriminatory content in media	Fully completed
2	Bodies responsible for acting on citizen discrimination complaints conducting promotional activities	Fully completed
	In Operational Plan 2018/2019	No
	Recommendations	No further activities necessary (see conclusion and recommendations)

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Activities in this area – raising public awareness on the existence of gender discrimination in media – are measured based on the number of complaints for gender discrimination in media content to the responsible institutions that can act on these submissions.

Implemented activities and their effect

The two activities in this group are fully implemented by the Agency for Audiovisual and Media Services. Implementing promotional activities by the bodies responsible for acting on citizen discrimination complaints is an activity that is also the responsibility of the Commission for (Preventing and) Protecting from Discrimination (CPD), as well as the Council for Media Ethics (CME).

CPD has been inoperative since mid 2019 and the information on its work is not and has never been publicly available, so information from the Commission on the implementation of the activity is unavailable.

As part of its projects, the CME organizes events that constantly appeal to the public to react in cases of unprofessional and unethical reporting, as well as

discrimination on any basis. Furthermore, CME formed the network against hate speech and media, which is also used to appeal to the public for reports of discriminatory content and to the media for professional and inclusive reporting. Through its work, the Council acts on all complaints from citizens in cases of unethical reporting, including discrimination based on gender. All decisions by the Council are published on their website.¹²² In 2018 they decided on 62 cases, and in 2019 they decided on 76 cases.¹²³ However, this is the total number of cases in which the Council acted on complaints, not just the ones that involved discrimination based on gender. This would require special reports, which as mentioned earlier are planned under NAPGE; however, the state has not allocated funds for them.

Conclusion and recommendations

The activities in this part are implemented fully and on time. Because of this, the table above has the recommendation that no further activities are necessary. As explained earlier in the report, this designation is based purely on the level of implementation of activities and does not necessarily mean that there is no actual need for further similar activities for achieving the desired result. On the contrary, these should be continuous activities and there is a need for constant work in this area, as well as on general media literacy of the population against unethical and sensationalist reports.

Furthermore, all bodies/stakeholders should be activated in raising public awareness, especially those to which citizens can submit complaints. The Commission for (Preventing and) Protection from Discrimination has the key role here, because according to the new Anti-Discrimination Law it has greater competencies and can itself act in an official capacity. Unlike this Commission, the Council for Media Ethics is an advisory body and can only point to discriminatory content, but its decisions are not enforceable over offenders.

¹²² Decisions on complaints submitted to the Council for Media Ethics of Macedonia. Available at: <https://www.semm.mk/komisija-za-zalbi-4/arhiva-odluke-i-mislenja>

¹²³ These numbers are based on a manual count by the authors of this report, extracted from available decisions published on the CME website.



Specific Strategic Objectives 3.2: Established coordination (cooperation) between the public, private, and civil society sector in the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men

Result according to NAPGE: Improved mechanisms for gender equality in the private sector

Description		Improved mechanisms for gender equality in the private sector
	Responsible institutions	MLSP;
	Potential impact according to the authors	Transformative
	Potential impact according to the institutions	None – Minor
Level of completion		
1	Forming a working group for gender equality within the Macedonian Economic Chamber, with representatives from the association of employers, the relevant ministries, and non-governmental organizations	Partially implemented
2	Private businesses conducting promotional activities for advancing gender equality and demonstrating gender responsible companies	Not started
3	Organizing consultations and working meetings for advancing gender perspectives in private businesses	Not started
In Operational Plan 2018/2019		Yes
Recommendations		Further work needed

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The activities that are expected to lead to improved mechanisms for gender equality in the private sector foresee at least 60% of private enterprises with over 50 employees to have appointed gender equality coordinators by 2020.



IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES
AND THEIR EFFECT, CONCLUSION
AND RECOMMENDATIONS¹²⁴

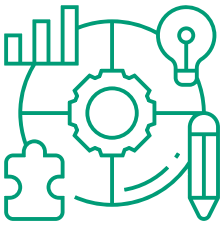
Implementation and completion in this group of activities is limited. In 2018-2019 a special working group for gender equality was not formed in the Economic Chamber with representatives from the associations of employers, relevant ministries, and civil society organizations. Nevertheless, the MLSP reported that issues that were intended to be covered by this group were discussed at the level of other working groups and government bodies for gender issues.

The indicator for appointing gender equality coordinators in at least 60% of the large private enterprises in the country is unattainable in the near term. On the other hand, it is a very necessary indicator that needs to be fulfilled. The economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic led to backsliding in workers' rights and increased the gender gaps in the labor market. The private sector, which is not tailored to the needs of women and men additionally discriminates and pushes out women from economic activity and emancipation.

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¹²⁴ Since most of the activities were not implemented and there was no additional information available, all comments are provided under the same heading.





NATIONAL CONTEXT



This part of the report provides a summary of the analysis of the planned and implemented activities for 2018 and 2019, as well as recommendations for the successful implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and the Action Plan 2018-2020 (NAPGE) going forward. These recommendations should also be taken into account in the development of the new Gender Equality Strategy and the next Action Plan, the implementation of which is expected to start in 2021.

In 2018 and 2019, as well as in previous years, the implementation of the Action Plan is limited due to a lack of human and financial resources, limited capacities of the administration, lack of harmonization between the strategic and operational documents, the lack of methodology for monitoring the implementation, weak interinstitutional coordination, as well as limited participation of the civil society sector due to material/financial conditions.

A positive development in the reporting period is that once again funds were allocated for implementing the gender equality program, which also includes the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan and the Strategy. In 2018, 380,000 denars or 6150 euros were allocated for the gender equality and non-discrimination program, while the 2019 national budget allocated 2 million denars or 32,370 euros for the gender equality and non-discrimination program. The state administration bodies and the units for local self-government additionally allocate funds from their own budgets for implementing activities from the action plan that are in their jurisdiction. Civil society organizations rarely receive financial support from the national budget and implement the activities from the NAPGE and the Strategy only if they get donations from other sources. Overall, these funds are insufficient for the implementation of activities.

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Inconsistencies remain between the planned activities under NAPGE and the OP, so the recommendations from the previous Shadow Reports for 2014 and 2015 for harmonizing the activities have not been addressed.

Reporting on the implementation of NAPGE does not follow the indicators foreseen in the Action Plan, which is an ongoing problem. The reporting as it is does not provide a clear and comprehensive overview of progress in gender equality in North Macedonia, nor the level of implementation of NAPGE.

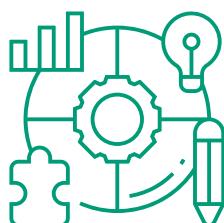
Cooperation between the institutions responsible for implementing the Strategy and the Action Plan is at an especially low level. This is evident in the inconsistencies in the responses provided by the institutions that refer to joint activities, as well



as in the reports that are submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The responses and reports frequently contain contradictory information which is almost impossible to cross check since there is no publicly available information.

Cooperation with civil society organizations has improved, mainly through the Platform for Gender Equality and the Council for Cooperation with the Civil Society Sector of the Government of RNM formed in 2016. However, the involvement of civil society organizations in the implementation of NAPGE is limited because of limited resources. Namely, even though civil society organizations are frequently invited to participate in working groups for the implementation of the strategic plans and activities, they rarely get financial support for their contribution and expertise in the area.

Finally, even though this report only refers to the activities planned for 2018 and 2019, they must be considered in the wider context of NAPGE, which foresees that activities are implemented up to the end of 2020. A significant part of the activities extend over multiple years for their implementation, so it is common for those that have a deadline up to the end of 2020 to be delayed until the very end. There are no precise plans for these activities to be started in a timely fashion, which would give some sort of guarantee that they will be implemented. In the first quarter of 2020 the country was caught up in a crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the situation was getting more serious. Almost all state resources were pulled to dealing with it and lessen the blow of the looming economic and health crisis, so we can assume that the majority of the activities that were not started by the beginning of 2020 will likely not be completed.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from the Shadow Report for 2015 were not fully taken into account for 2018 and 2019, so some of the recommendations for the reporting period are similar to those from our previous reports.

1. Strengthening the financial, human, and technical capacities of all stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality

The implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and NAPGE is only possible if sufficient funds are allocated to conducting the activities from NAPGE and the OP. Furthermore, strengthening the capacities of the employees in the Sector for Equal Opportunities, the state administration bodies, as well as the units of local self-government are key to the successful implementation of the Strategy and NAPGE. Additionally, there is a need for increased coordination between the institutions that are responsible for implementing the strategy and the equal opportunities coordinators from every institution at the national and local level.

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2. Prioritizing and sequencing activities from the Action Plans in the implementation of the Strategy

The implementation of the activities from the National Action Plans should be synchronized and complementary, which is especially true for the related and mutually dependent activities. This would help avoid the problem of unsynchronized implementation, which poses a risk to the successful implementation of the activity, as well as the expected result.

3. Timely development and application of the methodology for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy

Measuring progress in the implementation of the strategy and NAPGE is again limited in 2018/2019 and even though the methodology is currently being developed, it is neither complete nor available. Considering the status of the methodology, we recommend using the the format of NAPGE to monitor the progress in gender equality. This format, in line with sector priorities, will review planned activities, planned and spent funds, indicators for success, and will formulate next steps. This methodology will need to be available before adopting the new strategy and NAPGE. In addition to the format for following the activities, the methodology should also determine the human resources for monitoring the

strategic documents. In this sense, one way in which this can be done is through regular meetings of the working groups that are participating in the creation of the new national strategy and action plan beyond the adoption of these documents, with the goal of monitoring the process of their implementation, which is a practice for some of the country's other action plans.

4. Proactive and systematised publication of data

The proactive release of precise data that is publicly and readily available will ensure that all stakeholders in the implementation or monitoring of the implementation of the strategy will have insight into the process and progress in the implementation of the planned measures. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy publishes its annual progress report on the status of equal opportunities for women and men, which is supposed to contain all information supplied from other responsible institutions on the activities that they have undertaken in this area. However, these annual reports are not comprehensive and contain only as much information as the state bodies and municipalities have submitted. There is a need for more frequent reporting from the other institutions, with stricter criteria for what is acceptable. Furthermore, we recommend that all reports submitted from the institutions and organizations (SAB, ULSG, NGOs) should be published on a single website regardless of whether this is the website of MLSP or another body that will monitor the process of advancing gender equality in the country.

5. Harmonization of the operational plans with the national action plan

In 2018-2019 we once again note inconsistencies between NAPGE and OP in the implementation of the activities on part of MLSP, which further complicates the implementation of the Strategy. Some of the activities that are planned with the OP are not planned in the NAPGE at all, and activities from NAPGE are not planned with the OP. In developing the new Action Plan starting in 2021, we recommend including realistic activities and measures that can be implemented in a timely fashion through coordinated operational plans for each year.

6. Compensating the participation of the civil society sector in the creation of strategic and operational documents, as well as in the implementation of the strategy

The recommendations for greater involvement of the civil society sector in creating the strategic documents and implementing the Strategy and the Action Plan, which were noted in the previous Shadow Report, have been taken into account.

Through the Council for Cooperation between the Government and the civil society sector, as well as the Gender Equality Platform, civil society organizations that work on advancing gender equality in the country have been invited to actively participate in many activities, working groups for legislation, developing action plans and consultations in the area of gender equality. Nevertheless, there is still insufficient funding allocated for this purpose, even though the Law on Associations and Foundations¹²⁵ stipulates that civil society organizations can accept funds from the state budget and the municipal budgets. There is a need to increase the budget planned for cooperation with civil society organizations, especially for activities that are intended to be conducted by these organizations, in order to secure the financial stability of the organizations, to fairly compensate their labor, and finally to guarantee that the obligations are fulfilled. .

¹²⁵ Law on Associations and Foundations. „Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia“ No. 52/10, 135/11 и 55/16.



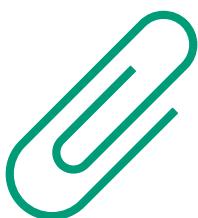
ABBREVIATIONS



Strategy or GES	Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020
NAPGE or Action Plan	National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020
OP	Operational Plan
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MF	Ministry of Finance
AULSG	Association of Units of Local-Self Government
LEOWM	Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
SEO	Sector for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
SSO	State Statistical Office
MISA	Ministry of Information Society and Administration
SEC	State Electoral Commission
AAVMS	Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services
MES	Ministry for Education and Science
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MH	Ministry of Health
MI	Ministry of Interior
ISW	Institute for Social Work
EARNM	Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia
ULSG	Units of Local Self-Government
MLSG	Ministry for Local Self-Government
AESRNM	Agency for Entrepreneurship Support of the Republic of North Macedonia
ME	Ministry of Economy
SLI	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy – State Labor Inspectorate
BDE	Ministry for Education and Science – Bureau for the Development of Education
IPH	Institute for Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia
CPH	Centers of Public Health
DEH	Ministry of Health – Department of Electronic Health
EI	Epidemiology Institute
CFM	Center for Family Medicine

AQAH	Agency for Quality and Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions
AFD	Association of Family Doctors
AFO	Association of Family OBGYNs
CME	Council for Media Ethics of the Republic of North Macedonia
CPD	Commission for the Protection from Discrimination
CEOWM	Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
CFB	Commission for Financing and Budget
MRT	Macedonian Radio Television
SAB	State Administration Bodies
GS	General Secretariat of the Government of RNM
CVET	Center for Vocational Education and Training
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
OP	Operational Plan
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WHO	World Health Organization
CSE	Comprehensive Sexual Education





ANNEX I



ORGANIZATION AND METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCHING/EDITING THE SHADOW REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR 2018 AND 2019

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men provides the basic principles for establishing gender equality in all areas of social life. In identifying its goals, LEOWM defines the obligations of all entities in the public and private sectors to ensure equal opportunities, as well as the obligation to eliminate obstacles and create conditions for the achievement of full equality between women and men. Furthermore, LEOWM defines measures and mechanisms for improving equal opportunities at the national and local level, regulates the procedure for legal protection in case of violations of the right to equal treatment of women and men, and prescribes punitive measures in case of non-compliance.

In accordance with the LEOWM, the Assembly adopted the Gender Equality Strategy in 2013, along with a National Action Plan for a period of three years. There was no Action Plan for 2016 and 2017, with the second Action Plan adopted for a period of three years – 2018 to 2020. The Operational Plan on the other hand was adopted for two years – 2018 and 2019 – since its adoption was delayed until the spring. Six years have now passed since the adoption of the Strategy and this Shadow Report aims to provide an independent assessment of the level of implementation of the Strategy, focusing on the last two years for which there is an Action Plan and an Operational Plan (2018/2019). The report builds on the findings of the Shadow Report for 2015 and 2014 and provides an overview of the progress achieved in the implementation of the planned measures, the implementation timeframe, as well as the impact of these measures. The report includes the opinions of various stakeholders (responsible institutions and civil society organizations through their publications) and provides recommendations for future activities that should be implemented in the following year or incorporated in the next strategy.



Description of research instruments used in the report

1. Analysis of Materials and Documents

The report includes an analysis of relevant materials and documents: The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men,¹²⁶ the Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020,¹²⁷ the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018 - 2020,¹²⁸ annual Operational Plans from the institutions that have them and are publicly available, with a focus on the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy's Operational Plan for 2018/2019,¹²⁹ the annual progress reports for 2018¹³⁰ and 2019¹³¹ on the status of equal opportunities for women and men from all relevant institutions – units of local self-government, state administration bodies, and the Inter-Ministerial Consultative and Advisory Group for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; the annual reports on the work of the Assembly for 2018 and 2019¹³² with the Commissions in its mandate, with a focus on the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Standing Inquiry Commission for the Protection of Civil Rights and Freedoms, as well as relevant reports resulting from the work of the civil society sector in the area of gender equality and information available on the websites of all institutions relevant to progress in gender equality in the country.

2. Questionnaires and Freedom of Information requests to the responsible institutions

Due to the public health crisis arising from COVID-19 and the global pandemic announced on March 11th, there was no opportunity to conduct interviews and consultations with representatives from the responsible institutions. As a result, in the period between March and June 2020 we sent requests in writing to all

¹²⁶ Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No 6/12, 30/13, 166/14 and 150/15

¹²⁷ Government of the RM, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Gender Equality Strategy 2013-2020. Available at: <http://morm.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Strategija-2013-2020.pdf>

¹²⁸ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018-2020. Available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/dokumenti.nspix>

¹²⁹ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Operational Plan of the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy for 2018-2019 for the Implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality Available here: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/dokumenti.nspix>

¹³⁰ Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2018-31.12.2018. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2X6Avl8>

¹³¹ Those that were available and/or provided.

¹³² Report on the Work of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 01.01.2019-31.12.2019. Available at: <https://bit.ly/20ZdE6s>



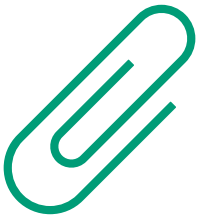
institutions involved in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan, along with questionnaires. A total of 16 structured questionnaires were submitted to the following institutions: The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the Council for Media Ethics, the Institute for Social Work, the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for the Development of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the State Electoral Commission, the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Economy, the Agency for Quality and Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions, the Center for Family Medicine, the General Secretariat of the government of RNM, and the Macedonian Radio Television.

The questionnaires contained over 230 questions related specifically to every activity under NAPGE 2018-2020, its level of completion, an opinion on the potential impact of the activity, as well as allocated budgets for implementing the activities and the measures from the Gender Equality Strategy. The questionnaires were fully or partially (but acceptably)¹³³ filled out by all institutions to which they were submitted apart from two – the Employment Agency of RNM and the Agency for Quality and Accreditation of Healthcare Institutions, meaning that 87% of the institutions provided adequate responses to our request.

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¹³³ The questions that were sometimes left unanswered were about the potential impact of the activity, which did not bring into question the completion of the activities.





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