



WIN

Analysis of local/regional/national employment policies addressing women

WIN

Improving the position of Women in the labour markets of peripheral INdustrial regions



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1. INTRODUCTION

This input paper provides a basic overview of the conceptual and practical knowledge on the main topic of the WIN project in order to facilitate a common understanding of local/regional/national employment policies addressing women among the project partners (PPs), associated partners (ASPs), and target groups on the position of female workers in peripheral industrial regions with a special focus on the Danube Region.

The Danube Region is considered an area with above-average gender inequalities in the employment sector. Unemployed women outnumber unemployed men, especially in highly industrialised peripheral regions. Economic activities in such regions are traditionally concentrated in mining, manufacturing and engineering, which have been predominantly male-dominated. Those traditional norms continue to shape narrow labour markets, which can reinforce gender stereotypes (e.g. men occupy high-skilled jobs, while women work in low-skilled jobs). The recent COVID-19 crisis has exposed and even exacerbated the problem of gender inequality in labour markets through the sudden increase in women's unpaid care work. The manifested problem of gender inequality and the resulting vulnerability of women in finding adequate and well-paid jobs appears to be a persistent and intractable problem that has not yet been effectively addressed by any country in the Danube Region.

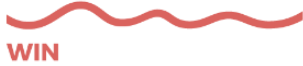
In this way, the WIN project aims to open up new employment opportunities for all women and remove cultural and institutional barriers that prevent women from realising their professional potential.



The WIN project targets women as a vulnerable group at risk of exclusion from the labour markets of small and medium-sized industrial towns and regions with a bad reputation. These are often referred to as "places that don't matter" or "left-behind" places and are often characterised by economic decline and out-migration. The project WIN leverages macro-regional policy frameworks and mechanisms to bridge this gap by addressing the place-specific challenges of peripheral industrial regions through people-centred solutions and strategies. The project aims to implement 7 pilot actions in different peripheral industrial regions by developing, testing and reflecting on the overarching concept of social innovation while enabling regional diversification.

The analysis in this document encompasses a detailed overview of policy frameworks and interventions at different spatial levels (local, regional and national) in partner countries to identify and present cultural and institutional enablers and barriers that prevent women from participating in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

It thereby aims to ensure knowledge exchange between stakeholders in partner countries (Slovenia, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungaria, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia and Bulgaria) and the wider Danube Region. In the partner countries, the focus is on a moderated peer-review of employment policies addressing women in peripheral industrial regions, while the focus in the Danube Region is on identifying and presenting concrete positive examples of women's integration into labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

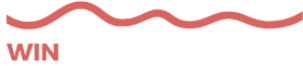


The examination of policy frameworks and interventions at different spatial levels (local /regional/national) aims at shedding light on cultural and institutional enablers and barriers that prevent women from participating in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

2. AIMS AND METHODS

The overall aim of this deliverable is to obtain a detailed overview of policy frameworks and interventions at different spatial levels in the partner countries and to identify and present cultural and institutional enablers and barriers that prevent women from participating in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions. The analysis thereby was not only aimed at providing an overview of existing policies but also to identify different national and regional approaches and to obtain a first-hand assessment of them via a regional perspective, through the project partners.

The results are based on a structured questionnaire prepared by MASS and UNIGRAZ (see Annexes 1-7). The document was shared with all PPs and the answers were jointly analysed by MASS and UNIGRAZ, forming the result section of this document. Additionally, UNIGRAZ conducted some background research on the PP data via web research, providing some additional information on the named projects and strategies, if this was deemed necessary. The survey took place between May and June 2024. Partners were asked to provide the necessary information or, if unsure, to forward the document to regional stakeholders (e.g. employment centres).



The questionnaire asks which/what policies/initiatives partners know and/or use in their region to foster labour market integration of women. The questions also addressed the different governance levels these policies come from, who the main target group is, and which/what main barrier this policy addresses. The questionnaire was kept broad, as it asked for policies/initiatives that benefit women, meaning that these policies/initiatives do not need to focus exclusively on them. Therefore, it also considers policies for other groups (e.g. for the youth), if they are - in practice - particularly relevant for women. The questionnaire asks both for policies and specific initiatives/programmes which the partners are familiar with.

3. RESULTS

The questionnaire yielded a rich selection of relevant strategies, programmes and initiatives targeting the employment situation of women. The main findings are summarised in the following sub-chapters, also providing an assessment of these policies across the different policy levels by taking into account the comments by the partnership via the relevant questions in the survey. The results are structured according to different policy levels and present the European intervention logic, from the setting of broad European objectives to local practical interventions.



3.1. EUROPEAN POLICIES

3.1.1 European Framework

The best known European policy named by almost all PPs is the [European Gender Equality Strategy](#) from 2020 (EU, COM 152), which sets out a range of policy objectives and actions, with the aim» to make significant progress by 2025 towards a gender equal Europe«. It is a follow-up of the Strategic Engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, which was the previous guiding framework of the European Commission.

The overall goal of the European Gender Equality Strategy is »a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our European society.« Key objectives and areas for action include ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; addressing the gender pay and pension gaps; closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

Since the launching of the strategy, various policy initiatives have been pursued linked to the overall goals of the strategy, among which are:

- The [Pay Transparency Directive](#) (2023) The new rules will help to ensure that the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, enshrined in the Treaty since 1957, finally becomes a reality on the ground.



- The European Commission adopted a [new EU-wide proposal for a directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence.](#)
- Another milestone achievement is the [Directive on gender balance in corporate boards](#), which seeks to improve the gender balance in corporate decision-making positions in the EU's largest listed companies.
- The new EU-wide [work-life balance rights](#) for parents and carers, as well as the [European Care Strategy](#), linked to new targets on early childhood education and care to enhance women's labour market participation (2022).
- The European Commission's [#EndGenderStereotypes](#) campaign in 2023, which aimed at tackling gender stereotypes affecting both men and women in different areas of life, including career choices, sharing care responsibilities and decision-making.
- In Autumn 2023, the Commission established an [EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence.](#)

The European Gender Equality Strategy offers a broad framework and guiding principles for the development of national policies and laws, which in most European countries have been translated into national action plans on Gender equality (including most project partners



such as Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Bulgaria - see section 3.2.1). The Gender Strategy is also mainstreamed in the EU external relations via the [EU Gender Action Plan \(GAP III\)](#), which is relevant to the interaction between the EU and non-EU countries and partners.

3.1.2. European Institutions

At least some partners have recognised [the European Institute for Gender Equality](#) (EIGE) as a relevant institution for monitoring and promoting gender equality issues within the EU. Founded in 2006, EIGE acts as an independent centre and the primary source of information on gender equality in the European Union. EIGE's unique expertise, research, data and tools help policymakers design measures that are inclusive, and transformative and promote gender equality in all areas of life.

EIGE's aims are, among others:

- Provide research, collect and analyse data on gender equality with an intersectional perspective;
- Develop methods to improve gender statistics and data collections;
- Measure the state of gender equality at both the EU and Member State levels;
- Develop methodological tools and provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in all EU and national policies



3.1.3. European Interventions

Partners were able to identify a range of European projects and interventions that addressed female participation in European labour markets. Most of the given examples aimed at providing women with additional skills and training, relevant to the job market. Many of these initiatives are related to digital skills (e.g. WOMEN4IT) and/or entrepreneurship (e.g. Women Tech EU Strategy). Spatial scope and funding sources of such interventions vary by a large margin, showing the different approaches in the field. Also, the target groups addressed are very diverse, covering school children (e.g. GirlsGoCircular), women with migration backgrounds (e.g. WOMEN4INTERGRATION), as well as NEETs (e.g. GAEEA).

European Interventions Spotlight

(1) Intervention title: WINnovators – Boosting entrepreneurial and STEM/STEAM capacity of young Women in higher education institutions for sustainable development and Innovation, Erasmus+

Source: <https://www.winnovators.eu/>

Target group: Young women from rural areas and students

General aims: Its main goal is to co-develop and implement innovative teaching and learning approaches to concrete policies for capacity building in the digital, entrepreneurial, STEM/STEAM innovation and sustainability fields, from which young women from rural areas and Higher Education students would benefit.

(2) Intervention title: EU CAP Network workshop 'Women-led innovations in agriculture and rural areas'

Source: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-workshop-women-led-innovations-agriculture-and-rural-areas_en



Target group: women in agriculture and rural areas; advisors, researchers, representatives from farmers associations, chambers of agriculture, industry, managing bodies, local authorities, press, etc. from across Europe;

General aims: to empower women in farming and rural areas by exchanging knowledge, identifying successful initiatives and projects led by female innovators, and networking

3.1.4. Assessment

Partners assessed existing European policies and interventions as rather comprehensive but generally questioned the effectiveness of the European framework. There is a perceived lack of concrete actions fostered by the European Union, for instance in the form of more funding, and incentives to foster institutional cooperation between companies, chambers, unions and state institutions in regard to women's employment. Also, stronger and more highlighted awareness campaigns were seen as important to achieve better results in communicating the importance of gender equality issues. An additional criticism was that the European legislation was not specific enough, and rather space-blind towards the concrete needs and challenges of (in this case) peripheral industrial regions.

3.2. NATIONAL POLICIES

3.2.1 National Policy Frameworks

In most WIN partner countries new action plans or strategies in regard to gender equality have existed since 2021. One such example is the Czech Republic's Gender Equality Strategy 2021 – 2030. An exception in this regard is Austria, where no comprehensive strategy was set



up. Most of these strategic documents do refer to the European Gender Equality Strategy, breaking down the goals on the European level to the national context. These national strategies or action plans differ in details and priorities, but they nevertheless focus not only on employment-related issues, such as pay gaps and labour market access + skills but also often have a wider scope on relevant social infrastructure provision (e.g. childcare, family allowances) and wider social aspects such as violence against women, stereotypes and health.

National Gender Equality Action Plans/Strategies

Country	Gender Equality Action Plan/Strategy
Slovenia	<u>The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2022-2030</u> <u>Family Policy Resolution 2018-2028</u>
Austria	
Czech Republic	<u>The Gender Equality Strategy 2021 – 2030</u>
Hungary	<u>Empowering women in family and society (2021-2030) Action Plan</u>
Bosnia and Hercegovina	<u>The Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027</u>
Serbia	<u>The Strategy for Gender Equality for the period from 2021 to 2030</u>
Bulgaria	<u>Strategy 2021-2030</u> <u>National Plan 2023-2024</u>

While the documents are quite extensive in their general analytical scope, only very few state concrete benchmarks or goals, often with unclear timelines and responsibilities, although most of the documents have identified a large group of relevant stakeholders, also incorporating NGOs.



3.2.2. National Strategies

The above-named national action plans or gender equality strategies (see table above) often refer to a range of other policies already existing in the national context, such as the Bulgarian Discrimination Act (2003), and the Slovenian National Social Welfare Program (2022-2030). Additionally, many countries possess specific labour market programmes targeting women, such as the Austrian Female Labour Market Programme and incentives fostering female entrepreneurship (e.g. in Serbia). On rare occasions, also national spatial development programmes address women as a specific target group (esp. in rural areas), as in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Strategic Plan of Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027).

National Strategy Spotlight

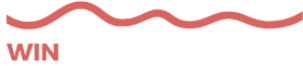
(1) Strategy title: The Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027

Source: [akcioni-plan-za-rodnu-ravnopravnosteng.pdf \(isbih.gov.ba\)](https://isbih.gov.ba/akcioni-plan-za-rodnu-ravnopravnosteng.pdf)

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): gender segregation and stereotypes, horizontal (differences in wages) and vertical segregation (division of positions between men and women), “glass ceiling” phenomenon, gender-based and sexual harassment

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): incentives and funding from the EU (IPA, CEDAW), from development agencies from the Embassies of Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and the UK (FIGAP), NGOs/all men and women residing in BiH

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Legislative and executive power at the state, entity and Brčko District levels, cantonal bodies and local self-government units, in



accordance with the departmental competences prescribed by the current legal regulations, as well as institutional mechanisms for gender equality, NGOs and academia.

3.2.3. National Interventions

The interventions on the national level named by the project partner have very different scopes and target groups. They fall broadly into three larger groups of activities:

- Awareness-raising of gender quality issues on a general level (e.g. equal pay), also addressing minority groups and NEETs in terms of labour market inclusion
- Training and skills development, predominantly with a focus on the digital sector
- Entrepreneurship and career development, with a focus on fostering female entrepreneurship in different contexts and age groups including networking and best practice exchange, as well as overcoming gender stereotypes in employment career choices, esp. in regard to STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics) professions.
- Awards/certificates programmes such as GEMA certificates for companies (IPES Institute, US Embassy) or AWE (Academy for Women Entrepreneurs), a certified educational project (initiated by the US government in 2019)

These initiatives are often fostered by state agencies, but Chambers of Commerce and NGOs also play an active role in these initiatives and programmes.



National Interventions Spotlight

(1) Intervention title: Association of Business Women in Serbia's annual awarding event **SUCCESS FLOWER**

Source: <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/en/2022/12/05/success-flower/>

Target group Recognizing and rewarding women entrepreneurs and encouraging them and the companies to hire other women

(2) Intervention title: Mompreneurs – Hungarian Entrepreneurial Mothers Community

Source: e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/mompreneurs.hu/>

Target group: Entrepreneurial mothers

General aims: Making personal or online contacts, sharing experiences, and helping to start a business on a national level.

3.1.4. Assessment

As an assessment, the partnership remarked mainly upon the issue of implementation. While most national legislation is comprehensive and analytically sound, implementations clearly lag behind the given ambitions. The strategies often fall far short of naming concrete timelines, benchmarks or responsible stakeholders. Nationally devised initiatives often are not well known on the regional level and vice versa. This might be linked to low awareness and promotion of nationally devised action plans and legislation, which is often due to the low cooperation between national institutions and ministries (vertical cooperation), as well as low cooperation between regional and national actors (horizontal cooperation).



3.3. LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICIES

3.3.1 Local and Regional Challenges

The results for this specific policy level underline the many challenges women face in the labour market of more industrialised regions. As for the named challenges in the survey, there is a high convergence across the regions. Named factors can be summarised as specific, industry-related, infrastructural, and general labour market barriers.

- The industry-related barriers are connected to the specific industrial past and present of the partner regions. These places often provide low employment opportunities for women as traditional industries were often male-dominated, creating also persistent gender roles, tying women to more domestic duties or relegating them to, often lower-paid, service and tourism sector jobs. While, especially in former socialistic countries, some industries had high shares of women employed (esp. textiles), these sectors were particularly hard hit by structural change and often did not require a higher skills set, thereby making it difficult to change to other industrial sectors. Interconnected to these industry-related barriers are skills gaps, as women in these regions often possess low skills, with jobs and education/training programmes in the past often focusing on men.
- Infrastructural barriers named are often related to missing childcare facilities and poor intra-regional transport services, prohibiting women from participating more actively in local and regional labour markets.



- General employment barriers include aspects, such as gender pay gaps, skills gaps (often related to the former types of barriers), inflexible working hours and arrangements (reluctance to grant teleworking) and low support for female entrepreneurship.

These factors re-enforce lower participation of women in local and regional labour markets, often in part-time arrangements and foster outmigration of better qualified women in some regions.

3.3.2. Local and Regional Policy Frameworks

There are hardly any specific local or regional employment strategies in the partner regions that would focus on the female labour market alone. In most of the partner countries female employment is only indirectly addressed in regional development strategies or in very broad terms in regional employment strategies, but in both cases without a specific focus. The only exception is the employment programme of the state of Styria (Austria), which explicitly aims for an increase in female labour market participation, which comes against the background of a severe lack of skilled workforce across most labour market sectors in the region.



3.3.3. Local and Regional Interventions

There are a few local interventions on local and regional levels that specifically address women's employment in the partner region, rather women are often addressed in connection to other target groups, e.g. the youth, parents, and NEETs. Such programmes are being provided by a range of actors, such as companies, business chambers and associations, as well as state actors.

Again, these activities fall roughly into three areas:

- Breaking gender stereotypes, especially among young girls by raising interest in ICT or STEM jobs (e.g. Styrian Girls Day or Trbovlje's S.O.S. school and robotics for youngsters)
- Foster female networking in business often with a focus on entrepreneurship (Meetings of Entrepreneurial Women of the Karlovy Vary Region)
- Other programmes often focus on (entrepreneurial) skills and training or the re-integration into the labour market ('Parents in Employment' project from Bulgaria).

Local/National Interventions Spotlight

(1) Intervention title: Iron Women Network (Iron Women – Frauen der Steirischen Eisenstrasse)

Source: e.g. <https://ironwomen.network/> (coming soon)

Target group: women living or moving/returning to the region Styrian Iron Route

General aims: Discussing and communicating female topics in a regional context (thus trying to shape and influence the environment for women in the region), empowerment, networking (motivating & rooting, business), and welcoming immigrating women.

**(2) Intervention title: Women's empowerment (Aspira Institute - NGO)****Source:** <https://aspira.si/en/projects/>**Target group:** Women of age 18+**General aims:** The purpose of the project is to empower women aged 18 and over from diverse backgrounds and environments, and to exchange best practices for women's empowerment among the partners.

3.1.4. Assessment

The availability of local/regional strategies, initiatives, support measures, and interventions to tackle the challenges women face with regard to employability is rather scarce across the partnership regions. Typically, these are a consequence of national efforts and to a certain degree locally driven initiatives by interested stakeholders. This is interconnected with a lack of targeted and coherent policies to promote women's employment. Most of the existing policies target the general population (or very broad sub-groups) and do not consider the specific needs and challenges faced by women – showing a general lack of political awareness of the topic on the local level. This is despite the fact that many specific regional needs can be identified across the partner regions, such as targeted approaches involving migrant women or women from minority backgrounds, revision of general mindsets towards the role of women in the region, the upgrading of social infrastructures relevant to women (childcare, public transport), targeted skills development, as well as networking between women and an increase in their general visibility in the labour market.



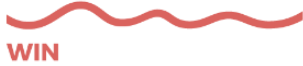
4. OUTLOOK

Women in industrial regions face specific challenges and barriers in regard to their employability, such as lack of skills and access to education. Not many jobs offer flexible working hours, remote working possibilities and parental leave policies. The shortage of childcare facilities such as nurseries and daycare centres are also a major obstacle for women to find adequate employment in the labour market.

This document has shown that, while there are policies, particularly at the European and national level, that target women's employment (and additional needs), tailor-made policies at the local level are difficult to find.

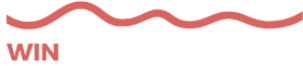
National initiatives very often are not well known on the regional level. It seems that this is due to the lack of awareness campaigns and promotions of national action plans and legislation. Also, national institutions are unaware of local initiatives. The cooperation between national institutions and regional actors is insufficient and it results in low awareness, confusion and insufficient support for women in the labour market.

It is clear that initiatives to support the female workforce are on the rise, particularly in the areas of digital skills training and the network for aspiring women entrepreneurs, but more action and investment are needed to create a strong, adequate and sustainable support network for women in the labour market.



Identified potential initiatives, projects and interventions that could be implemented:

- *Education and Skills: While vocational training programmes are available, there may be a need for greater emphasis on training tailored to local labour market needs, particularly in areas where there are skills shortages. In addition, efforts may be needed to increase women's participation in technical and scientific fields and to promote entrepreneurship among women.*
- *Childcare provision: While childcare provision is important for promoting female employment, there may be a need for additional investment in childcare services such as day care centres. This would help more women to participate fully in the labour market.*
- *Work-life balance: There may be a need for more support for working mothers, such as flexible working hours, teleworking opportunities and parental leave policies. This could help create a more supportive environment for women who wish to balance their professional and personal responsibilities.*
- *Gender equality advocacy: There may be a need for greater efforts to raise awareness of women's issues in the labour market and encourage the adoption of policies that promote gender equality. This could include regular meetings, seminars and public awareness campaigns.*
- *Economic development and job creation: There may be a need for greater investment in infrastructure projects, small business development and attracting new businesses to the region. This could help create more job opportunities for women in the particular region.*



- *Involvement of key stakeholders in the territory: There may be a need for proactive cooperation of all key stakeholders in the territories such as employers, NGOs, Associations, and public administration. This could help create a better support network for women.*
- *Closer cooperation between local and state administration: There may be a need for better and closer cooperation between local and state administrations This could help with developing strategies and policies that would be better targeted and specifically identify needs and objectives for the female workforce.*
- *Improvement of transport infrastructure: There may be a need for improvement of transport infrastructure from rural areas of the pilot regions. This could help with easier access to job opportunities and education.*
- *Coaching and mentoring: There may be a need for the involvement of coaches and mentors for women. This could help with better information and the creation of a comprehensive advisory network for women.*



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- **European Gender Equality Strategy:** <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>
- **Pay Transparency Directive:** https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L_.2023.132.01.0021.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A2023%3A132%3ATOC
- **New EU-wide proposal for a directive to combat violence against women and domestic violence:**
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022PC0105>
- **Directive on gender balance in corporate boards:** <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022L2381>
- **work-life balance rights:** <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en>
- **European Care Strategy:** https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5169
- **#EndGenderStereotypes:** https://end-gender-stereotypes.campaign.europa.eu/index_cs
- **EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence:**
<https://preventiongbv.eu/>
- **EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III):**
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184
- **the European Institute for Gender Equality:** <https://eige.europa.eu/>
- **WINnovators:** <https://www.winnovators.eu/>
- **EU CAP Network workshop 'Women-led innovations in agriculture and rural areas:**
https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-workshop-women-led-innovations-agriculture-and-rural-areas_en_
- **The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2022–2030:** <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO132>
- **Family Policy Resolution 2018-2028:** <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO118>
- **The Gender Equality Strategy 2021 – 2030:** <https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/gcfge/Gender-Equality-Strategy-2021-2030.pdf>
- **Empowering women in family and society (2021-2030) Action Plan:**
<https://kormany.hu/dokumentumtar/a-nok-szerepenek-erositese-a-csaladban-es-a-tarsadalomban-20212030-akcioterv>

- **The Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027:**
<https://isbih.gov.ba/uploads/dokumenti/akcioni-plan-za-rodnu-ravnopravnosteng.pdf>
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- **Strategy 2021-2030:** <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/41/test/strategy2021-2030.pdf>
- **National Plan 2023-2024:** <https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/41/test/strategy2021-2030.pdf>
- **Association of Business Women in Serbia's annual awarding event SUCCESS FLOWER:**
<https://poslovnezene.org.rs/en/2022/12/05/success-flower/>
- **Mompreneurs – Hungarian Entrepreneurial Mothers Community:**
<https://www.facebook.com/mompreneurs.hu/>
- **Iron Women Network (Iron Women – Frauen der Steirischen Eisenstrasse):**
<https://ironwomen.network/>
- **Women's empowerment (Aspira Institute - NGO):** <https://aspira.si/en/projects/>

ANNEXES

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- **Annex 6: Contribution from PP7 & PP8 MGK10 & ZZUP HBZ**
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- **Annex 8: Contribution from PP10 NMS**



Annex 1: Questionnaire

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OUTLINE

The analysis encompasses a detailed overview of policy frameworks and interventions at different spatial levels in partner countries to identify and present cultural and institutional enablers and barriers that prevent women from participating to labour markets of peripheral industrial regions.

GUIDELINES

We have prepared a template, and we would like to kindly ask you to fill in as much information as you can to ensure that the deliverable can be prepared in the best viable way, as our further project activities will be based on it. If unsure about the content, please share the template with a specialised stakeholder from your local WIN Innovation group (e.g. employment centre).

We are interested in which policies/initiatives you know and/or use in your region to foster labour market integration of women. We are also interested from which governance levels these policies come, who is the main target group and which main barrier this policy addresses. Please mind that we ask for policies/initiatives that benefit women, which means the policies/initiatives do not need to focus exclusively on them. Therefore, please also consider policies for other groups (e.g. for youth), if they are - in practice - especially relevant for women. We ask both for policies and specific initiatives/programmes with which you are familiar.

Fields can be deleted or added according to your needs, just keep in mind that our colleagues will process this questionnaire and it is therefore necessary to convey the most relevant information in a clear form.

Please fill in your responses and send them to korfova@mas-sokolovsko.eu by **May 24th at the latest**. Thank you for your cooperation.



THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

(Max.300 words)



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: text

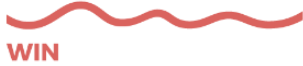
Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): text

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): text

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: text

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: text

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

(Max.250 words)

(2) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: text

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): text

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): text

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: text

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: text

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention: text

(Max.250 words)

(2) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: text

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention: text

(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?



EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking



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b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: general public

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention: text

(Max.250 words)



c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?



Annex 2: Contribution from PP2 PiNA

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

There are no ready-made and formal action plans specifically targeting the improvement of the position of women in the municipality of Trbovlje and Zasavje region. The municipality has already thought about the introduction and launching of a technological higher education/vocational program or school, also promoting young women in technological professions (according to the economic development of the region).

The regional development plan of the Zasavje region includes projects and partnerships indirectly targeting women. It focuses on the:

a) support for the transition from education to employment: strengthening mentoring programs for youth that are implemented together with companies, institutes, and NGOs; activities for the prevention of out-migration of highly skilled and educated (young) people; implementation of lifelong career orientation programs and implementation of active employment policy measures; establishing career guidance programs for young people and upgrading existing ones



b) strengthening competences for life and work: education, training, strengthening life skills, including digital ones; development of competencies for needs labor market; programs for social inclusion and multigenerational learning, social activation, integration, collaboration; programs for strengthening the professional and key competences of the employed and unemployed

c) support of social entrepreneurship: building a support environment for social economy

d) an innovative and competitive economy: reinforce entrepreneurial support environment; support the restructuring of companies/industry; better connecting of companies, entrepreneurs, and others; development of the tourism sector; development of circular economy.

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: There are no direct strategies or other strategic documents on the local/regional level

Source: e.g. /

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): /

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): /

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: /



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: MOST (Bridge)

Source: e.g. <https://zmst.si/projekt-most/>

Target group: the youth, including young women

General aims: The project MOST (Bridge; ESF and Ministry of Education), carried out by the Institute for Youth and Sports Trbovlje, aimed at strengthening the competences of young people for greater employability; enabling young people (including women) to contact employers for the purpose of expanding the social network; strengthening the youth sector with methods for working with young unemployed people.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: training programme for enhancing soft and specific skills for career and personal development, development of a tool for raising the employability of the target group, activities for connection of the target group with employers, execution of 10 projects by the target group.



(2) Intervention title: Women empowerment (Aspira Institute - NGO)

Source: <https://aspira.si/projekti/>, <https://aspira.si/en/projects/>

Target group: Women of age 18+

General aims: The purpose of the project is to empower women aged 18 and over from diverse backgrounds and environments, and to exchange best practices for women's empowerment among the partners.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: webinars for best practice exchange regarding the work with women over 18 yo; workshops for English conversation; Workshops "Singular, Dual, Plural," through which women discovered their potential, improved their communication, and developed an idea to enhance their (own) position in the community and bring it to fruition; formation of products for women's empowerment.

(3) Intervention title: S.O.S. school and robotics for youngsters

Source: <https://katapult.si/izobrazevanja>

Target group: primary school pupils (including girls)

General aims: The purpose of Katapult's educational events for pupils is to promote STEM and a hands on approach to STEM (specifically math, robotics, programming and mechanical engineering) among youngsters.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: presentations and workshops in local or regional schools and the business support ecosystem premises; presentations of Lili the robot.



(4) Intervention title: DEWESOFT's events for the promotion of STEM among young women

Source: /

Target group: Women of age 16-26

General aims: The purpose of the events or interventions are the promotion of STEM among young women (in highschoools and students).

Specific activities connected to the intervention: promotional events in schools and for students

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

Since the Zasavje region and the Municipality of Trbovlje do not have such comprehensive strategies, we find it necessary to address the issue and prepare measures during the project lifetime and also within our innovation group. The lack of such local policies can be understood as a result of the fact that Slovenia does not have regions (only statistical ones) and consequently of the understanding by local authorities that gender equality and the realm of women's employment are matters of national strategies or national legislation only. Through the IG, we will attempt to put the integration of women into the labor market and gender mainstreaming on their agenda.

The main issues Zasavje and Trbovlje are facing include the outmigration of young, skilled people; mismatched skills of young women and a lack of highly educated women in the fast-growing high-tech industry; a lack of comprehensive and continuous educational, training, and mentorship programs for skills development and self-employment of women; a lack of a connected and comprehensive support environment for women and their (self)employment; and a lack of intensive cooperation among all key stakeholders. The listed initiatives have attempted to tackle these issues, but not all of them have been continuous. Nevertheless, they will potentially serve as a starting point for preparing our pilots.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

The most relevant strategic document on the national level is the **Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2022–2030** (hereinafter: the Resolution), based on **The Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**. It determines the goals, measures and key policy holders for the realisation of equal opportunities for women and men in Slovenia. The Resolution takes into account the recommendations, strategic orientations, goals, measures and indicators defined in EU, international and national documents relevant to the implementation of the gender equality agenda. When determining the priority contents and areas, it mainly takes into account the EU guidelines defined in the **Strategy for Gender Equality 2020–2025**. To eliminate structural inequalities and achieve long-term changes, a **Gender Mainstreaming strategy** is used, which requires a systematic approach to the design, implementation and evaluation of regional policies.

Slovenia is among the countries that rank high in various gender equality indices. It is ranked 29th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index, prepared by the World Economic Forum, and the EIGE index places us 12th in the EU. However, EIGE's gender equality index for 2021 pointed out that Slovenia was the only country that fell in the ranking, ranking just below the average with 67.6 points. In 2022, the assessment hardly changed (67.5 points), but compared to 2021, Slovenia made the most progress in the field of work (+0.4).

Following these results, the Resolution defines 6 objectives (in each of the 6 thematic areas it covers), first one being “reducing the gender gap in all areas of social life, especially in employment, education, health and social status”. This objective directly addresses female unemployment in general and more specifically exclusion of older women and women from rural areas.

Other objectives cover different areas of gender equality and are just as crucial, especially those addressing care gap, stereotypes and discriminatory practices and unbalanced gender representation in decision-making positions (in economy and politics).



Some of the other documents that (mostly indirectly) address gender equality and employment:

- Slovenian Development Strategy 2030: inclusive labour market - promoting the increased inclusion of marginalised and underrepresented groups, equal opportunities and employment of both genders in non-typical vocations;
- Resolution on the National Social Welfare Program 2022-2030: reducing the risk of poverty (especially for older women) and risk of unemployment (general);
- Guidelines for the implementation of active employment policy measures 2021-2025: reducing unemployment (especially youth and older than 50, including women's entrepreneurship);
- Family Policy Resolution 2018-2028: focuses on female employment and addresses care gap.



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b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: The Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2022–2030

Source: <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=RES0132>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): gender inequality still deeply rooted in the economic, cultural, social and political system; persistent segregation of the labour market; the wage and pension gap; greater poverty of older women; social exclusion of women from rural areas; unequal distribution of caring and household responsibilities between the sexes (care gap), which negatively affects the position of women on the labour market; unbalanced gender representation in many areas; stereotypical beliefs;

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): EU funding, national funds, gender mainstreaming in national policies and measures, reducing pay gap and care gap, support environments, support for women's entrepreneurship and innovatorship (especially in traditionally male sectors STEM), education, improving work skill of most vulnerable groups of women, involvement in active employment policy programs and other programs

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Ministries (and other institutions and organisations that collaborate with ministries); Namely, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Ministry of Digital Transformation, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance, Employment Service of Slovenia, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Solidarity-Based Future, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, SPIRIT - The public agency of the Republic of Slovenia for the promotion of investments, entrepreneurship and internationalization, University of Ljubljana, educational institutions, other public institutions, providers of social welfare programs, other project and program implementers, NGOs, etc.

(2) Strategy title: Family Policy Resolution 2018-2028

Source: <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=RES0118>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): women are still ones that do more unpaid work and as a result, they face more obstacles to career development on the labor market; the care gap, which negatively affects the position of women on the labour market, stereotypical beliefs (employers generally do not see men as fathers, but only as workers without care-giving responsibilities, on the one hand we have women who face career obstacles and on the other hand men who face obstacles if they want to be active fathers);

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): To improve the policies enabling the entry into the labor market, additional incentives for employment and increasing the work activity of women, providing information on the possibilities of career counseling and other forms of assistance in entering the labor market

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Ministries (and other institutions and organisations that collaborate with ministries); Namely, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of the Economy, Tourism and Sport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Institute of Social Welfare of the Republic of Slovenia, Institute of Education of the Republic of Slovenia.
(Max.250 words)

(3) Strategy title: Resolution on the National Social Welfare Program 2022-2030

Source: <https://pisrs.si/pregledPredpisa?id=RES0137>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): greater poverty and social exclusion of older women and other vulnerable groups, social inequalities

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): adequate financial support, empowerment and inclusion of vulnerable groups in

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society, activities for connecting inactive individuals with the labor market, improving the employability of unemployed persons through the implementation of an active employment policy, improving the employability and opportunities of individuals on the labor market through lifelong learning, including training and further development

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; other implementers are subsequently determined in individual action plans;

(4) Strategy title: Guidelines for the implementation of active employment policy measures 2021-2025

Source:

<https://www.gov.si/teme/aktivna-politika-zaposlovanja/#:~:text=Aktivna%20politika%20zaposlovanja%20je%20nabor.pove%C4%8Danju%20konkuren%C4%8Dnosti%20ter%20pro%C5%BEnosti%20delodajalcev>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): unemployment and social exclusion vulnerable groups, social inequalities and barriers

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): women's entrepreneurship and self-employment, training and education, creation of new jobs, employment incentives, EU funding, national funds

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: GUIDE (Slovenian Chamber of Commerce, E+ programme)

Source: <https://guideproject.eu/sl/>

Target group: career counselors

General aims: The project's goal is to help career counselors move away from biases/traditional prejudices based on traditional roles that can limit choices. It aims to ensure that everyone can choose opportunities based on interest and ability, not on gender.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: preparation of digital tools for identifying stereotypes in career decisions; collecting good practices; preparation of digital tool for career decision-making styles; online training programme on gender sensitive career guidance and toolkit.

(2) Intervention title: Action plans for gender equality (FER Institute - NGO, CERV)

Source: <https://forumfer.org/projekti/akcijski-nacrti-za-enakost-spolov/>

Target group: municipalities (and other institutions)

General aims: Through the project, FER aims to implement a comprehensive process for adopting quality action plans in municipalities and other institutions.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: preparation of Action plans for gender equality in the Municipality of Škofja Loka, monitoring of the implementation of existing action plans of other municipalities in Slovenia, preparation of local measures and their implementation.



(3) Intervention title: programmes for the retraining of women into ICT professions of the (Ministry for Digital Transformation)

Source: <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-04-24-letosnji-mednarodni-dan-deklet-in-zensk-v-ikt-izpostavlja-vec-zenskega-voditeljstva-v-stem-poklicih/>

Target group: (young) women 18+

General aims: retrain and equip women to enter ICT professions

Specific activities connected to the intervention: trained more than 500 women over the age of 18 in the fields of cybersecurity, data analysis, IT support, IT project management, user experience design, and artificial intelligence

(4) Intervention title: Programmes for the development of digital skills and competences for children and youth (Ministry for Digital Transformation)

Source: <https://www.gov.si/novice/2024-04-24-letosnji-mednarodni-dan-deklet-in-zensk-v-ikt-izpostavlja-vec-zenskega-voditeljstva-v-stem-poklicih/>

Target group: children and youth, young women

General aims: The aim is to create a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages exploration and strives to build an inclusive and equal society, leading to more girls and women choosing to pursue educational and career paths in the ICT field.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: educational programmes, promotional activities, tenders.

**(5) Intervention title: Certificate GEMA (IPES Institute, US Embassy)**

Source: <https://ipes-si.org/projekti/>, <https://gema-certificate.com/>

Target group: socially responsible companies, institutions, other organizations

General aims: Striving for work environments where all employees will be equally valued and treated regardless of their gender. GEMA aims at facilitating companies, institutions and organizations to be completely free from their gender-based restraints and thus maximize business efficiency and economic profit. GEMA aims to create more sustainable and viable solutions, and it aims to optimize work processes through a gender perspective.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: It was established in 2018 as the first socially responsible certificate for companies and organizations in the field of gender equality, comprehensively addressing the organizational structure, culture, and work processes of individual companies. Each holder receives a personalized assessment of the current situation, which, based on in-depth analyses, transforms into a set of tailored measures. The GEMA certificate is based on ten sets of measures, including unbiased recruitment, compensation, and promotion; work-life balance; regulation of the gender pay gap; a mentoring system; effective mechanisms to prevent harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace; and the strengthening of an inclusive organizational culture at all levels of the organization.

(6) Intervention title: WISE 2024

Source: <https://asef.net/sl/event/projekt-wise-2024-slovenija-združuje-moci-za-enakost-spolov-v-stem-poklicih/>

Target group: (young) women, academia, STEM professionals, decision-makers

General aims: It aims at an effective implementation of best practices in gender equality in STEM professions

Specific activities connected to the intervention: A series of events and discussions will take place where the challenges and solutions will be highlighted in achieving gender equality in STEM professions and leadership positions. Implementation of good practices will be promoted.



(7) Intervention title: SparkDigiGirls (E+)

Source: <https://simbioza.eu/sparkdigigirls-opolnomocenje-kreativnosti-deklet-z-uporabo-digitalnih-tehnologij>

Target group: Girls 13-18 yo

General aims: Empowerment of girls' creativity through digital technologies, empower girls in STEM fields; empower girls to choose careers in STEM.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: the development of an on-line training programme which, based on analyses, will be fully tailored to the real needs of girls and empower them to increase interest in new and innovative digital technologies.

(8) Intervention title: Let's balance power dynamics between genders (Norway Grants)

Source: <http://uravnotezenost.enakostspolov.si/o-projektu>

Target group: women, general public

General aims: The project was aimed at raising awareness and strengthening knowledge about gender equality. The priority areas addressed by the project include balanced representation and participation of women and men in decision-making in economic and political spheres, as well as reconciling the professional and family or private lives of men and women.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: virtual museum of stereotypes, media campaign, videospot

**(9) Intervention title: TERA (Norway Grants)**

Source: <https://projekt-tera.si/>

Target group: women and men on the countryside, decision-makers and institutions

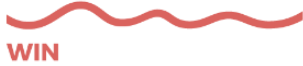
General aims: To sensitize individuals to recognize the issues and empower them with tools for transferring best practices and implementing a developed customized action program into practice. With pilot-established regional and local partnerships in Posavje and Pomurje, the project aims to improve the balance between professional and personal life in rural areas.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: training and informational programme on rights and duties of county women and men (eg. maternity leave) and how to balance professional and personal life, on stereotypical roles of women and men in the countryside, etc.; textbook; analysis of gender equality in the countryside (focusing on gender equality of women).

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

We have advanced legislation that establishes appropriate conditions for gender equality, promotes respect for human rights, and sanctions gender-based discrimination. However, inequality persists in various aspects of life. In private life, men are significantly less involved in childcare and household chores, while women are more vulnerable to domestic violence and similar issues. In public life, despite higher education, women hold fewer positions in economic and political decision-making, are more frequently employed on fixed-term contracts and part-time, receive lower wages, and are underrepresented in professions such as information and communication technologies and artificial intelligence.



The Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men mandates that all ministries appoint a coordinator responsible for integrating gender perspectives into measures and policies. Self-governing local communities (municipalities) are also obliged to promote equal opportunities and may appoint a coordinator. However, in practice, such opportunities are often not fulfilled, as is the case in Trbovlje. Despite Slovenia's advanced legislation and strategies, there is a lack of specific instruments (financial, strategic, specific local implementation plans etc.) to adapt them to regional needs. Adequate support and resources, including sufficient funding, training programmes, and infrastructure, are crucial for successful policy implementation, and their availability at the national level can greatly assist local efforts.

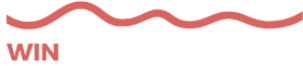
Moreover, effective coordination between national and local initiatives is lacking. National policies should facilitate the establishment of local structures supporting gender equality and women's employment and promote better cooperation between local and national levels. The lack of dialogue between national and local institutions has resulted in gaps in promoting gender mainstreaming and lack of information on the local level. But also, better promotion of relevant national policies should be implemented locally.

EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025: To achieve equal economic independence, the strategy addresses the gender pay gap and the barriers that cause it. With this aim, the EU adopted the **Directive on strengthening the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms.**



The EC encourages member states to adopt measures that will address vulnerable groups of women who are structurally underrepresented in the labour market due to circumstances that increase their vulnerability and marginalisation.

To eliminate inequality in the labour market, much attention is also given to the balance of professional and private life, especially in relation to the implementation of **the directive on work-life balance for parents and caregivers**, which encourages an equal sharing of responsibilities. The transposition of the directive into the national legal order means an important incentive and a greater possibility for sharing parental responsibilities. It will contribute to the prevention of gender stereotypes related to parental leave and in the long-term lead to more men being involved in caregiving.

The promotion of female entrepreneurship and innovation and the participation of women in traditionally male sectors and professions are also important here. Special attention is paid to ICT.

EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) is the fundamental political framework that promotes gender equality and empowerment.

It is based on five pillars, one of which is focused on economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls, gender equality in education, gender equality in participation and leadership and other areas. The second one focuses on common strategic vision and close cooperation with member states and partners at the regional and national level.

To ensure that no one is left behind, the action plan pays particular attention to women with disabilities or migrant backgrounds and discrimination based on age or sexual orientation.

Gender Mainstream has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures, and programmes. We mention this as a very important approach that aims to identify and address different challenges and needs of specific target groups (especially vulnerable ones).



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b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Women TechEU Initiative

Source: <https://womentecheuropa.eu/>

Target group: women leading deep tech startup companies from Europe

General aims: to create a more gender-balanced entrepreneurship ecosystem, to provide women in deep tech with more opportunities, resources, and support to thrive, to help paving the way for more women in deep tech innovation across Europe

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The project consortium is launching 4 calls for applications over the span of 2 years which, following a rigorous evaluation process, will result in a total of 160 beneficiaries. Each beneficiary will receive €75k grants (non-dilutive finance) as well as a personalised business development programme which includes mentoring, coaching and targeted training among other options.



(2) Intervention title: Girls Go Circular

Source: <https://eit-girlsgocircular.eu/>

Target group: young females 14-19 across the Europe

General aims: to empower girls aged 14-19 in Europe to develop their digital and entrepreneurial competencies while acquiring knowledge on the circular economy, to increase the number of women entering the digital skills market; the project supports Action 13 – Encourage women's participation in STEM of the European Commission's Digital Education Action Plan and empowers schoolgirls in European countries defined as modest and moderate innovators (according to the European Innovation Scoreboard) to become future leaders and entrepreneurs.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The online learning platform developed in the framework of the project – the "Circular Learning Space" – offers students the option of choosing between different learning modules on topics like e-waste, climate change, food, or robotics. These modules are based on a learning-by-doing approach, transferring knowledge and skills through an interactive, challenge-based structure. In three years, the Girls Go Circular initiative equipped +40,000 schoolgirls aged 14-19 across Europe with digital and entrepreneurial skills through an online learning programme about the circular economy.



(3) Intervention title: EU CAP Network workshop 'Women-led innovations in agriculture and rural areas'

Source: https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/events/eu-cap-network-workshop-women-led-innovations-agriculture-and-rural-areas_en

Target group: women in agriculture and rural areas; advisors, researchers, representatives from farmers associations, chambers of agriculture, industry, managing bodies, local authorities, press, etc. from across Europe;

General aims: to empower women in farming and rural areas by exchanging knowledge, identifying successful initiatives and projects led by female innovators, and networking

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Explore opportunities offered under different EU programmes to support women in agriculture and rural areas; Showcase innovative initiatives, businesses and start-ups led by women entrepreneurs in rural areas with a particular focus on innovative farming practices and farm diversification strategies; Promote women-friendly entrepreneurship ecosystems within local rural communities; Activate networking among workshop participants in order to support women-driven innovation and entrepreneurship in rural areas.



(4) Intervention title: Women Mentorship in Tech Programmes

Source: <https://eu4georgia.eu/the-eu-launched-groundbreaking-initiative-for-womens-empowerment-in-the-tech-industry/?fbclid=IwAR0PUB3GtleVSeWrHM5jWLiyyvL3BE3GIC1usrWAfRP7hrSD-ge-P1hWzGo>

Target group: general public, women and girls in Georgia

General aims: to enhance digital human capital in Georgia, specifically focusing on girls and women, to advance gender equality and bridge the skills gap in the ICT sector

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Project aims to engage 1100 beneficiaries and 320 mentors over the three seasons, promoting regional diversity by selecting at least one-third of participants from regions outside the capital. Five-month-long mentorship sessions will be organised in five key tech directions, including cybersecurity, front-end development, graphic design, digital marketing, and UX/UI design. The project's launch event covered various topics related to the project's objectives, including enhancing ICT proficiency, entrepreneurship skills, and career prospects for women in Georgia. The project emphasises both hard and soft skills development, empowering women to compete in local and international job markets.



(5) Intervention title: WOMEN4INTEGRATION

Source: <https://workisprogress.org/en/portfolio/women4integration/>

Target group: women of migrant background living in the suburbs of 4 European cities: San Siro (Milan, Italy), Raval (Barcelona, Spain), Rosengard (Malmö, Sweden) and East/Southeast Amsterdam (Netherlands)

General aims:

- Supporting the capacity of migrant women living in deprived areas of large European metropolises by encouraging their full integration in social life and gender equality, promoting a new model of interaction with local institutions and services.
- Identifying and enhancing the professional skills of migrant women and promoting their stable integration into the labor market.
- Designing a territorial approach that contributes to the integration of migrant women in disadvantaged neighborhoods by promoting the transfer of experiences, knowledge and practices with project partners.
- Improving the management capacity of local institutions and stakeholders on the issue of integration of migrant women through awareness-raising activities, dissemination of project results and sharing of experiences.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

- Empowerment paths aimed at improving self-esteem and stimulating awareness of the target's qualities, skills and competences.
- Multidisciplinary individual support: legal, psychological, social, linguistic / cultural.
- Orientation to local health, training / educational, social services, transport, sport and leisure, etc.
- Vocational training.
- Definition of professional projects.
- Paths of knowledge and orientation to the labor market, to the active search for work and support for placement.
- Visits to get to know the opportunities offered by the neighbourhood and the city.
- Activities of involvement, information and awareness of companies regarding migrant women, their resources and critical issues.
- Multidisciplinary, legal and diversity management support to companies, to facilitate the professional integration of the target.
- Experimentation of a people and territorial based approach, which directly involves the beneficiaries and the local organizations, considered resources in the promotion, design and implementation of the integration project.



- Definition of a methodological toolkit that will suggest recommendations and working methodologies to all organizations and institutions engaged in activities of social and economic integration of migrant women.

c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

Existing European policies and initiatives are of course overall important and helpful and bring positive outcomes. However, we need to take into account that certain smaller regions and countries, such as Slovenia, might be facing very specific challenges and circumstances and require adjusted approaches. For instance, the EU directive on equal pay requires that companies report on the pay gap between women and men in their organisation, which should allow a better understanding of the extent of the pay gap. Employers with more than 250 employees will have to report to the competent national authority annually, while smaller employers will have this duty every three years. This obligation does not apply to employers with fewer than 100 employees. Most companies in Slovenia employ less than 250 workers, which means that according to the Directive, most companies will not be obliged to report regularly. In the case of Slovenia, it makes sense to extend the obligation of regular reporting also to employers who employ less than 250 workers, for example to all employers who employ more than 50 workers.

In Trbovlje specifically, there is an out-migration trend. This trend is driven by more favourable working conditions and job opportunities outside the region. Policies should also incorporate the prevention of out migration and depopulation of small industrial towns by creating programmes and starting initiatives that would allow and motivate women (especially young women in this case) to develop professionally in their local area and adjust their skills to the economy trends of the region, as well as support micro and small companies in the local area to become employers.



Annex 3: Contribution from PP4 VESTE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

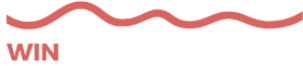
LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

The mining and (steel) processing industry as the economical backbone of the region has historically resulted in a very male-dominated society – in regard to the region's culture, networks and decision making as well as to the labour market. Gender roles are very traditional favouring men in many aspects. In such an environment it is difficult for women in industry and other branches to make career and reach higher positions.

The female employment rate is, due to a bundle of historically grown factors, lower than the Styrian and Austrian average, although the gap to men has narrowed over the last ten years. The part-time employment rate is just over 50%. The integration of women into male-dominated companies such as voestalpine has slowly begun to take effect - although it is still far from being fully utilised; the University of Leoben has the highest proportion of women among technical universities in Austria with 27% of scientific staff. The picture outside the central region is different: women are often employed in the low-wage sectors of the service and tourism industries, with a high proportion of part-time employment. The peripheral municipalities of the LAG Styrian Iron Road have an above-average low female employment rate. Both the lack of jobs and traditional patterns of the mining region have an impact here.



Not finding adequate opportunities in the region, women are the main drivers of the ongoing outmigration. Research shows that women have a higher willingness to be mobile at an earlier stage than men. In the age group 15-29, numerous women have decided to leave the region in the past decade. For every 100 men in this age group there were only 87 women in 2019! Similarly, the proportion of women up to 45 years is below average.

At 6.2 % (women: 5,7 %, men: 6,6 %), unemployment in the district of Leoben is in line with the Styrian average, as is youth unemployment at 5 % (February 2024). Currently staff is still being sought in all sectors. Most vacancies continue to come from industry and commerce, followed by the service sector, trade, administration, office and healthcare. Source: [Die aktuelle Arbeitsmarktlage mit Ende März 2024 im Bezirk Leoben \(ams.at\)](#)

To fulfill the needs for a skilled workforce in the regional industry, it is essential to attract more women to work in industry. Work in mining and steel industry along the Styrian Iron Road used to be very "men-dominated" in the past centuries, and the image of "It's a man's work" is still in the back of the mind of many women. Therefore many women a) don't qualify themselves for technical jobs in their education/apprenticeship or b) don't opt for a career in industry. Higher female labour force participation through better opportunities and framework conditions for women holds substantial potential in this context.

Measures that ensure an appropriate (living) environment for women as a key pillar of the region must therefore be at the centre of efforts to strengthen the location and its competitiveness (not least in the national/European competition for skilled workers). Available employees are becoming a decisive location factor and expect an appropriate living environment.

(Max.300 words)



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: Styria 2030 labour market policy strategy / Arbeitsmarktpolitische Strategie 2030

Source: e.g.

https://www.news.steiermark.at/cms/dokumente/12901191_154271055/1293f67e/Arbeitsmarktpolitische%20Strategie%202030_Web.pdf

- Chapter 1.1: Increase the employment rate of women
- Measures to improve the compatibility of work and family life, reduce gender stereotypes and provide targeted support when returning to work make a significant contribution to increasing labour market participation and fairer opportunities for women and men to develop their careers and secure their livelihoods. Important fields of action in this regard are the dismantling of traditional role models when choosing a career and arousing interest in STEM professions. Adequate, affordable and flexible childcare options across the board are a prerequisite for a higher labour market participation of women.

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Girls´ Day Styria (“Girls´ Day Steiermark”)

Source: e.g. <https://girlsday.berufsorientierung.at/>

Target group: girls (age 13/14)

General aims: career guiding - motivate girls to do an apprenticeship/ take a career in STEM professions

Specific activities connected to the intervention: 153 Styrian companies open their doors and provide an insight into the world of technology, crafts and science. In addition, also “online adventures” [\(Girls´ Day – Das Online-Abenteuer - Girls´ Day Steiermark \(berufsorientierung.at\)\)](#)

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: Iron Women Network (Iron Women – Frauen der Steirischen Eisenstrasse)

Source: e.g. <https://ironwomen.network/> (coming soon)

Target group: women living or moving/returning to region Styrian Iron Route

General aims: Discussing and communicating female topics in regional context (thus trying to shape and influence the environment for women in the region), empowerment, networking (motivating & rooting, business), welcoming immigrating women

Specific activities connected to the intervention: (foreseen): regular welcome activities, use of cultural means for communicating female topics, business networking...

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

- Child care is essential for higher employment rates of women
- Difficult to reach & address immigrated women
- Mindsets in the male-dominated region “Steirische Eisenstrasse” have to be changed step by step



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

Challenges for equality in the Austrian labour market

Equality between women and men on the Austrian labour market still requires great efforts, despite the many measures that have already been successfully implemented and improvements that have been achieved. This is because women are still clearly disadvantaged in many areas of the labour market:

- Austria is one of the EU countries with the largest gender pay gap.
- The increasing labour market participation of women in recent years has also been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of women working part-time. Part-time employment can jeopardise women's economic independence and financial security both during their working lives and in retirement.
- Unpaid care and nursing work in the family sphere is largely carried out by women, who are confronted with the effects of the associated career interruptions on their careers and incomes.
- The Austrian labour market is divided along gender lines: Women work predominantly in lower-paid jobs in the service sector, such as in retail or in the health and social services sector.
- Women are still underrepresented in management positions in business, science and research, politics and the public sector in Austria.



WIN

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: The AMS's labour market policy programme for women - „Das arbeitsmarktpolitische Frauenprogramm des AMS“ (AMS = Arbeitsmarktservice / Austrian Labour market service)

Source: e.g. <https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende/frauen/gleichstellung-frauen-arbeitswelt>, <https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende/frauen>

The AMS's labour market policy programme for women

The AMS has long recognised the imbalance in the Austrian labour market. That is why many of the AMS's labour market policy measures are aimed at improving the situation for women on the labour market. Women face different challenges on the labour market than men. The AMS's labour market policy programme for women is designed to compensate for these imbalances. Despite an increasing employment rate, women are still in a significantly worse position on the labour market than men. The AMS women's programme provides targeted measures to promote women in order to compensate for the disadvantages in the world of work.

Women are disadvantaged in the labour market:

- This is particularly true in terms of income, sectors, part-time work and management positions. In addition, women carry out two thirds of unpaid work, which includes childcare, housework and caring for dependent adults.

The gender pay gap in Austria is very high:

- Women's earnings are on average 18.8 per cent lower than men's. Compared to other EU countries, this gender pay gap is very high.

The advancement of women requires tailor-made programmes:

- To compensate for inequalities in the labour market, the AMS provides more support for unemployed women. The AMS has also developed a targeted labour market policy programme for women.


WIN

Gender budgeting at the AMS

- In addition to the women-specific approach to counselling and services for female customers, the AMS also pursues its gender equality policy goal by disproportionately supporting unemployed women.
- The AMS's gender budgeting target states that four per cent more funding should be distributed to women each year than the proportion of women in the annual unemployment rate.

(Max.250 words)



WIN

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Women in technical professions („FiT – Frauen in Handwerk und Technik“)

Source: e.g. [FiT » Frauen in Handwerk und Technik | AMS](#)

Target group: The FiT programme is open to all women who have registered with the AMS as unemployed or looking for work, regardless of previous education and qualification level.

General aims: motivate women to work in or qualify for technical professions

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

- Annual FiT-Powerweek FiT: https://www.bildung-stmk.gv.at/dam/jcr:a01413f8-9b95-4e02-9523-7a0735bda965/AMS-BerufsInfoZentren_FiT%20Powerwoche_4.-8.M%C3%A4rz%202024.pdf
- Video portraits of women in technical professions
- FiT info-film advice
- financial support for training programmes etc

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: Women's career centre - Individual career orientation and career planning for women
("Frauenberufszentrum: Individuelle Berufsorientierung und Karriereplanung für Frauen")

Source: e.g. <https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende/frauen/frauenberufszentrum>

Target group: Unemployed women receive support in all matters relating to their professional future.

General aims: The Women's Career Centre is an **Austria-wide counselling and career guidance service** that has been specially developed for women looking for work. It enables them to work individually and tailor-made on their professional career to improve their chances on the labour market. The starting point is the formally and informally acquired skills, which are analysed. Based on this, a customised career plan is developed

Location: You find Women's career centres all over Austria – one is based in Leoben / Steirische Eisenstrasse

<https://www.ams.at/arbeitsuchende/karenz-und-wiedereinstieg/adressen-fuer-frauen>

Specific activities connected to the intervention: In the Women's Career Centre, you will receive support with all matters relating to your professional future. The services on offer include professional orientation, skills assessment, career planning, training and support in finding a job or internship.

(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

There is an awareness of the challenges in Austria, and initiatives have started on different levels. Nevertheless, **change processes** are slow and they need to be supported and **should be reinforced at regional level**.



EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking



WIN

b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: text

Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Target group: general public

General aims: text

Specific activities connected to the intervention: text

(Max.250 words)



c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?



Annex 4: Contribution from PP5 MASS

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

On a regional level, we have not identified any policies regarding our topic. In our territory, unemployment between men and women is more or less balanced. However, we have identified barriers such as unequal pay between men and women for the same work, limited possibility to work from home, especially in public administration, unequal employment opportunities in many industries (for example there is no representation of women in senior management positions at our two largest employers - with one exception and that is the HR Director) inflexible working hours in public administration sector for many positions (working hours on office days end after schools and nurseries close), the focus of our local industry is mainly male dominated in general (coal and chemical)

(Max.300 words)



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: no policies identified

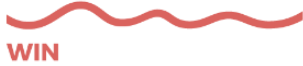
Source: e.g. www.xyz.xx

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): text

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): text

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: text

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

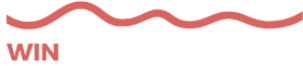
(1) Intervention title: Meetings of Entrepreneurial Women of the Karlovy Vary Region

Source: e.g. <https://www.inion.cz/event/setkani-podnikavych-zen-karlovarskeho-kraje-2>

Target group: especially aspiring female entrepreneurs

General aims: networking and skills-building seminars

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Regular meetings combined with professional seminars to develop skills they can use in their business. Women can network with each other to exchange experiences and initiate possible cooperation. This activity is organized in cooperation with CzechInvest and KARP (Business Development Agency of Karlovy Vary Region). They are also able to recommend an expert in various sectors.



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

As we have no existing policies in our region and very limited initiatives it is crucial to address this issue. Our region is also well known for the low quality of education from primary schools. A similar initiative as INION has would be very helpful for employed and unemployed women, e.g. networking meetings, attend seminars, receive advice, coaching and mentoring, and empower each other.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

The only policy that we were able to identify that has support for women in the labour market built into itself is The Gender Equality Strategy 2021 – 2030 prepared for the Government Office of the Czech Republic. It incorporates among other things gender equality in the labour market and in business, reconciling work, private and family life, and equality in education from childhood to lifelong education. And also, the education of teachers and career advisors to be able to support equality. It emphasizes the importance of the availability of childcare and the encouragement of men to care for a child to the same extent as a woman. It addresses the pay differences and then the pensions. And of course, it places great emphasis on the need to adapt and create new legislation. However, unfortunately, not many institutions know about this strategy or work with it. For example, the Labour office and just the local one. It has no impact on our local and regional policymaking.



WIN

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: the Gender Equality Strategy 2021 – 2030

Source: e.g. https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/Aktuality/Strategie_rovnosti_zen_a_muzu.pdf

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): stereotypes, customs, legislation, education, lack of nurseries, lack of awareness of society, inflexibility of employers

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): pressure from the EU, funding from the EU, strong influential women

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: All ministries, especially, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Trade, also Czech Statistical Office, State Office of Labour Inspection, Municipalities and NGOs (unspecified)

(Max.250 words)



WIN

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE for short)

Source: e.g. <https://bpwcr.cz/akademie-awe/>

Target group: aspiring entrepreneurs or women with a business idea,

General aims: a certified educational project initiated in 2019 by the US government

Specific activities connected to the intervention: certified education, mentoring, coaching and networking

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: Annual Equal Pay Day conferences

Source: e.g. <https://www.equalpayday.cz/en/home/>

Target group: politicians, employers, businesswomen, aspiring entrepreneurs, general public

General aims: to strengthen the economic security of women by provoking a professional discussion of companies and the public about the causes of the still high wage inequality. By sharing good practice and presenting female role models, it supports the equal status of women at work and in society.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: discussions, workshops, networking, mentoring, raising awareness of the gender pay gap, educating

(Max.250 words)

(3) Intervention title: Equal Pay

Source: e.g. <https://rovnaodmena.cz/tym-projektu/>

Target group: employers, employees, public sector, general public

General aims: to raise awareness about the gender pay gap in the Czech Republic and inform employers and employees how to identify this issue and how to prevent this. It also offers the target groups smart tools. It is an intervention from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which dedicated a whole team to this topic.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: discussions, workshops, networking, mentoring, publishing, best practice exchange from abroad, providing smart tools to the target groups, educating, Equal Remuneration Checks, Equal Remuneration Analyses, Implementation of the Equal Remuneration Action Plan

(Max.250 words)



(4) Intervention title: Gender Studies o.p.s.

Source: e.g. <https://genderstudies.cz/>

Target group: politicians, employers, businesswomen, aspiring entrepreneurs, general public

General aims: Gender Studies, o.p.s. is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that serves primarily as an information, consultation and education center on issues of gender relations and their position in society.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: motivating children and young people to choose a career regardless of gender and gender stereotypes, motivate women and men to challenge discrimination and restrictions based on gender or age, run a legal advice centre for cases of gender and/or age discrimination, have a public feminist and gender library, train employers on how they can ensure equal opportunities for their male and female employees carry out gender audits in companies, organisations and institutions, organise professional conferences, publish professional publications, publishing the e-newsletter Equal Opportunities in Context, open social debates on topics related to equal opportunities for women and men, gender and feminism, run public awareness campaigns, make statements to the media, run the opinion platform FEMINISMUS.CZ, are on the Government Council for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, influencing changes at the highest level

(Max.250 words)

(5) Intervention title: Call “Strengthening the competences of disadvantaged women in the labour market and in entrepreneurship” from the Operational Programme Employment Plus

Source: e.g. <https://www.esfcr.cz/vyzva-037-opz-plus>

Target group: Business corporations, SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP, Non-governmental non-profit organisations, Professional and business associations, Consulting institutions, Educational institutions, Public research institutions

General aims: Improving the employment situation of women aged 50 and over, retaining them in the labour market and preventing them from leaving the labour market
Stabilizing and developing the entrepreneurial activities of women aged 50 and over to prevent the risk of poverty in retirement age.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: calls for financial support for projects supporting the women over 50 years of age in the labour market with allocation of 50 mil. CZK

NOTE: no project was supported in the Karlovy Vary Region

(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

We have almost nonexistent policies. The biggest help would be an information awareness campaign about the initiatives and programs, so the general public would be more interested in the topic, initiate the discussion, and push the authorities to act. It would help if one institution would have a whole department that would prepare strategies and action plans, and which would be able to bring all ministries together and would initiate the inter-ministerial cooperation (similar to the one we have for the coal phaseout). The main reason the national policy is not used is the lack of cooperation between the institutions and the lack of information.

EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

We are aware of The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 on which our Czech Gender Equality Strategy 2021 - 2030 is based. However, as I mentioned above our local/regional level does not work even with our national policy.



b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Equal Pay Day

Source: e.g. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/equal-pay-day_en

Target group: general public

General aims: raise the awareness of the gender pay gap

Specific activities connected to the intervention: awareness-raising activities such as conferences, debates, discussions, and campaigns in 12 EU countries

(Max.250 words)



c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

The existing European policies and initiatives are not sufficient enough. There is a need for legislation changes and more awareness-raising campaigns. A strong leader who would bring all the member states together. Unified European legislation that would be enforceable. Unified EU fund specified on this topic.



Annex 5: Contribution from PP6 CTRIA

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

There are no specific employment strategies at municipal level in our case. The narrowest territorial unit for which this type of document is available is the county level. All three municipalities of the Hungarian pilot are located in Komárom-Esztergom County. At county level there is the so-called county employment pact. The pact aims at employment-economic development cooperation and the implementation of labour market programmes to support the employment of target groups. A consortium consisting of the Komárom-Esztergom County Municipality, the Komárom-Esztergom County Government Office and the Komárom-Esztergom County Territorial Development Ltd. is responsible for the development and implementation of the Pact. Within this framework, a situation analysis document and a medium-term employment strategy for the county (2022-2027) have been prepared. The above document can be considered as the current development document.

Overall, neither this document nor any of the initiatives currently available specifically identify plans, objectives or programmes for the female workforce. This may be due to the fact that, based on employment data, the employment rate and situation of women does not show a significant difference compared to men.

(Max.300 words)



WIN

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: Medium-term employment strategy of Komárom-Esztergom county 2022-2027

Source: e.g.

<https://www.kempaktum.hu/docs/strategiai-dokumentumok/megyei-strategia-akcioterv/>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): The demographic outlook of the county confirms the trend that the population cannot be maintained by natural reproduction, compared to the demographic factors of previous decades. From a labour market perspective, it is important to note that there has been a marked increase in the number of foreigners and guest workers working in the county, i.e. this has become a massive response to labour shortages. In terms of educational attainment, the county remains below the national average in terms of both higher education attainment and the number of graduates, which is not encouraged by the high number of unskilled workers employed by the companies operating. On a positive note, the number of economically active people has increased in recent years and the unemployment rate is also considered low and below the national average. However, the biggest problem remains the number of long-term job seekers, with 30.0% of the registered unemployed. It is worrying that the number and proportion of jobseekers registered for more than two years is steadily increasing

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment):

The strategy sets out three main directions for development:

- Strengthening the employment potential of enterprises
- Mobilising the labour reserve
- Strengthening adaptability

All three are relevant to the project, of course, but it is the second point that is most important. Mobilising labour reserves is further divided into three areas of intervention:

- Reintegration of people excluded from the labour market
- Developing workers who are excluded from the labour market
- Support for self-employment

In the project perspective, the Hungarian pilot activities will mainly focus on the reintegration of marginalised groups into the labour market and on self-employment among female workers.

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation:

- Komárom-Esztergom County Municipality
- Komárom-Esztergom County Government Office
- Komárom-Esztergom County Territorial Development Ltd.

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Mompreneurs – Hungarian Entrepreneurial Mothers Community
Komárom-Esztergom County Regional Group

Source: e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/964755653720827/>

Target group: Entrepreneurial mothers in Komárom-Esztergom County

General aims: Making personal or online contacts, sharing experiences, helping to start a business.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The group was created in 2019. At first it was online, but when it grew, there was a demand for face-to-face meetings, and this started to organise meetings and workshops. These meetings and workshops are organised on demand and not at a predetermined time interval.

(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

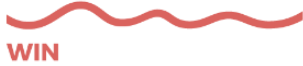
How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

In our opinion, the development strategy available at county level in the field of employment is based on a thorough analysis of the situation and well defines the necessary development directions. In addition, it does not contain any specific dedicated development orientations or planned actions for the situation of women on the labour market. The reason for this is that there is no significant difference between the proportion of women and men in the labour market. The large number of assembly and manufacturing plants in the county can absorb almost all the low-skilled labour force, whether women or men.

A bigger problem is women from the Roma minority, where there are cultural roots of women at home raising children and becoming mothers at a very young age. A significant number of these women are not present in the labour market.

Another problem is that it is much more difficult for women to get into higher-ranking, managerial positions than men. This is more pronounced in the manufacturing sector, while the situation is more balanced in education and administration, but it should be noted that this problem is also present in the health sector, where the proportion of women workers is particularly high.

These are the sub-areas where the project can bring about improvements and are not reflected in the current strategy document. In particular in the area of female self-employment and business start-ups.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

At national level, it was extremely difficult to find relevant documents. Using search engines, almost no results were obtained. Surprisingly, no national gender equality strategy could be found. A keyword search in the document repository of the government website resulted in the document "Empowering women in family and society (2021-2030) Action Plan". The document itself raises many aspects, but it is telling that there are no responsibilities or deadlines for implementation and that the situation analysis accounts for two-thirds of the document. Despite this, there is much useful information and good insight in the Action Plan.



WIN

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: Empowering women in family and society (2021-2030) Action Plan

Source: e.g.

<https://kormany.hu/dokumentumtar/a-nok-szerepenek-erositese-a-csaladban-es-a-tarsadalomban-20212030-akcioterv>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills):

The document looks at the situation of women from the following perspectives:

- Demographic characteristics
- Employment, labour market
- Demography, employment, labour market
- Reducing the gender pay gap
- Family allowances, childcare
- Programmes to increase further labour market opportunities
- Women's health and pregnancy
- Violence against women and relationship violence

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment):

Specific strategic objectives in the document to strengthen the role of women:

- Support the reconciliation of family life and work;
- Supporting women's participation in areas where it is currently low;
- Ensuring equal economic, health and social protection for women and men, and their participation in the labour market.



Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: The document was produced by the Ministry of Culture and Innovation. The organisations responsible for the implementation of this task have not been designated.

(Max.250 words)

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Mompreneurs – Hungarian Entrepreneurial Mothers Community

Source: e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/mompreneurs.hu/>

Target group: Entrepreneurial mothers

General aims: Making personal or online contacts, sharing experiences, helping to start a business on national level.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The group was created in 2017. At first it was online, but when it grew, there was a demand for face-to-face meetings, and this started to organise meetings and workshops. These meetings and workshops are organised on demand and not at a predetermined time interval.

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: Roma Women's Network

Source: e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090562878075>

Target group: Basically, women from the Roma minority. Often they are women in public life.

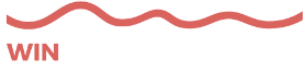
General aims: They stand up for and speak out on issues affecting Roma women, such as discrimination, segregation, inequality, and breaking down prejudices. Their mission is to promote the Roma women's perspective in social issues and to represent the interests of Roma women.

Their aim is:

- To strengthen the identity and self-confidence of Roma women;
- To reduce the disadvantages faced by Roma women;
- To promote gender equality - including in decision-making;
- Sensitising the majority society.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: discussions, workshops, networking, mentoring.

(Max.250 words)



(3) Intervention title: Association of Hungarian Women

Source: e.g. <http://nokszovetsege.hu>

Target group: Women in Hungary.

General aims: The Hungarian Women's Association is a social organisation independent of political parties. It has been active in the protection of women's rights and interests since 1989. The Association acts as a link between the issues raised by women and the decision-makers. It opposes any social manifestation which, overtly or covertly, hinders women's professional or public roles.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: discussions, workshops, networking, trainings,

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

There are not many documents at national level that reflect the situation of women in the labour market. What can be said is that, as at the county level, the main problem is not the level of employment or the unemployment rate. Career opportunities are quite different from those for men. Women traditionally have a higher proportion of unpaid work, such as housework and caring for children, relatives and the sick. Women are more likely to leave the labour market temporarily than men. Such career interruptions not only affect hourly wages, but also future earnings and pensions.

The document found sheds a great deal of light on this, and the analysis of the situation is quite extensive. The directions for improvement identified also seem largely appropriate, but unfortunately there are no responsibilities or resources allocated for their implementation.

Nor is there a huge potential for other initiatives and programmes. No programmes at national level have been identified, and the main actors are civil society and voluntary organisations.



EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

The strategy we know at EU level is The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which provides a framework for the European Commission's work on gender equality and sets out the policy objectives and key actions for the period 2020-2025. In Hungary, the document does not have a clear impact at national or regional level, although the national Empowering women in family and society (2021-2030) Action Plan, discussed in the previous section, sets out similar principles and values in many respects.



WIN

b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Source: e.g. <https://eige.europa.eu>

Target group: policymakers

General aims: It is an independent centre and the primary source for information on gender equality in the European Union. EIGE's unique expert knowledge, research, data and tools help policy makers design measures that are inclusive, transformative and promote gender equality in all areas of life.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

- Provide research, collect and analyse data on gender equality with an intersectional perspective;
- Develop methods to improve gender statistics and data collections;
- Measure the state of gender equality both at EU and Member State levels;
- Develop methodological tools and provide technical support for gender mainstreaming in all EU and national policies;

(Max.250 words)

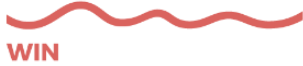


c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

Although gender equality is a high priority at EU level, its effectiveness is highly questionable. According to the European Commission Communication, no Member State has achieved full gender equality and progress is slow. Member states scored an average of 67.4 out of 100 on the EU's 2019 Gender Equality Index, and the score has improved by just 5.4 points since 2005. It is clear that implementation in practice is far from perfect, but this could only be improved at Member State level.

Institutions at Member State level, such as the European Institute for Gender Equality mentioned as an intervention above, could help to make progress. Of course, only if they have sufficient leverage to influence decision-makers.



Annex 6: Contribution from PP7 & PP8 MGK10 & ZZUP HBZ

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

In Canton 10 of the Federation of BiH, the main barriers to women's employment are often associated with traditional gender roles and societal expectations, which simultaneously limit women's access to education and employment opportunities. Additionally, factors such as the lack of accessible childcare facilities and transportation infrastructure can make it difficult for women to work away from home. In some places, there are also cultural barriers and workplace discrimination that prevent women from advancing in their careers.

Regarding local and regional policies, the challenges we face include an insufficient number of targeted initiatives to support women's employment, limited collaboration between government agencies, businesses, and civil society organisations to address gender disparities in the labour market. Additionally, there are gaps in vocational training programs that do not equip women with the skills needed for highly sought-after industries, further complicating their employment prospects.



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: The Development Strategy of Canton 10

Source: [Strategija-razvoja-HBZ-2021-2027-Prijedlog-310522021-FINAL-kraca-verzija-za-Skupstinu-objava-2.pdf \(vladahbz.com\)](https://vladahbz.com/Strategija-razvoja-HBZ-2021-2027-Prijedlog-310522021-FINAL-kraca-verzija-za-Skupstinu-objava-2.pdf)

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): Absence of systematic coordination of civil society organizations and the Government, poor records, incomplete implementation of laws in the field of education, lack of by-laws in adult education, poor coordination of teaching practices with the requirements of the labour market, insufficient vertical and horizontal coordination of sectoral bodies, insufficient level of rule of law, insufficient use of EU and other international funds for development, unsatisfactory exchange of data and insufficiently fast flow of information within public administration bodies / the inhabitants of Canton 10

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): EU candidate status, 2030 Agenda, supporting the development of business infrastructure, improving the competitiveness of agriculture, encouraging sustainable rural tourism, improvement of the educational system and the health and social protection system, development of modern infrastructure, preservation and sustainable use of natural resources, the application of an integral approach to development and risk management

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: The Government of Canton 10, relevant ministries within the cantonal government (Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Spatial Planning, etc.), municipalities within Canton 10, and NGOs



(2) Strategy title: The Employment Strategy of the Federation of BiH for 2023-2030

Source: <https://fzzpr.gov.ba/files/Strategije/Strategija-zaposljavanja-u-FBiH-2023-2030.pdf>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): population aging and emigration, problems in the transition from education to work due to insufficient alignment between education outcomes and labour market requirements, employment in the informal economy, limitations in capital development and access to financial and non-financial support for companies / everyone living in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): EU candidate status, support from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), increase in personal employability and alignment of skills with the requirements of the labour market, promotion of the capacity of companies in the private sector to create formal jobs, more effective labour market policies ensuring the inclusion of persons in disadvantageous positions, strengthening labour market management and increase in the capacity for policy implementation

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Federal and cantonal ministries and institutions are responsible for implementing the policies and measures outlined in the Employment Strategy. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is tasked with coordinating the general implementation of the Strategy at both the federal and cantonal levels and monitoring its progress

(3) Strategy title: The Strategy for the Advancement of Rights and Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2016-2021

Source: [Strategija za unapređenje prava i položaja osoba s invaliditetom u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine \(2016.-2021.\) \(fond.ba\)](#)

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): discriminatory legal provisions or lack of legal protection, stereotypes, lack of skills or access to education, rigid gender norms / persons with disabilities in the Federation of BiH, with special emphasis on children with developmental disabilities, young people with disabilities, people with disabilities who face multiple discrimination (e.g. women and girls), people with disabilities of older age, persons with severe disabilities

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): The United Nation, the European Union, the European Commission, NGOs, funding from relevant ministries and institutions as well as donor and development programmes (IPA), multisectoral implementation of activities, and raising of public awareness. In addition: the enhancement of the legal framework, improvement of accessibility of public spaces for people with disabilities, social inclusion, and capacity building of organisations.

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Competent legislative and executive bodies of the federal and cantonal authorities, competent federal and cantonal institutions, the Organisation of People with Disabilities, and an interdepartmental and intersectoral Coordination Body of the Government of the Federation of BiH.



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Small Business Development Programme of Canton 10 through Interest Subsidy in 2023

Source: javni-poziv-za-prijavu-na-Program-razvoja-malog-gospodarstva-u-Hercegbosanskoj-zupaniji-putem-subvencije-kamate-u-2023.-godini.pdf (vladahbz.com)

Target group: Small business entities in Herceg-Bosnia County, including natural and legal persons engaged in activities permitted by Law.

General aims: Increase in the number of employed persons in the small economy of the Herceg-Bosnian County, increase in the number of registered business entities, and increase in export value by up to 5%.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Organization of a public call for applications for the Small Business Development Program, assessment of the state and trends in the small economy of the Herceg-Bosnian County, definition of goals and measures of small business development, ensuring of credit potential, defining user conditions, monitoring, and promotion.

(2) Intervention title: Support Programme for the Establishing of Companies in Canton 10

Source: [Javni-poziv-za-Program-podrske-osnivanju-poduzeca-u-HBZ.pdf \(vladahbz.com\)](#)

Target group: Potential entrepreneurs who want to start their business within the County. These can be natural or legal persons who plan to perform economic activity within the defined sectors and areas of activity specified in the support program.

General aims: Increase in the number of loan subjects, support for beginners to start an independent business, and employment incentives.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Organisation of information and promotion campaigns, providing educational programmes, workshops and individual counselling to entrepreneurs, providing assistance in the development of business plans, marketing strategies, administrative procedures and other technical aspects of starting and running a business, connecting with resources, financial support, monitoring and evaluation.



(3) Intervention title: Decision No. 01-02-460-1/23 which agreed on future cooperation between the Government of Canton 10 and the "LINNOVATE - Business Park"

Source: <https://linnovate.org/>

Target group: All individuals, including women, who want to turn their business ideas into reality, as well as those who have already developed their business, but want to improve it.

General aims: The development of entrepreneurship established for the purpose of stimulating an improved economy that will contribute to economic development.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Working environment available through the incubation process, business consulting, and individual work on business improvement. Educational centre for the introduction and improvement of business and technical knowledge and skills in formal and informal education. Financing support of new and existing companies through various grants and mediation in finding necessary investments. Support for the improvement of sales and promotion through connection and networking with business partners and the diaspora.

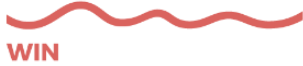
(4) Intervention title: Employment, self-employment, and training co-financing programmes of the Federal Employment Office

Source: [FZZZ](#)

Target group: youth, women, former soldiers, persons up to 35 years of age without work experience, people over 40 years old, long-term unemployed persons, persons with lower qualifications and without qualifications

General aims: Employment of at least 5000 persons from the register of unemployed in the Federation of BiH with special social and gender sensitivity, in order to prevent long-term employment, preserve and improve work skills, and create conditions for strengthening the competitiveness of youth without work experience through the gaining of first work experience.

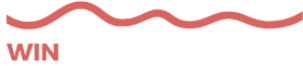
Specific activities connected to the intervention: The programmes of the Federal Employment Office include 10 employment, 5 self-employment and 2 training co-financing programmes. The programmes are implemented via the cantonal employment offices, through public calls and for a duration of 6 or 12 months. The programmes encompass the co-financing of contribution costs.



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

On the local level, we believe that there is an insufficient number of initiatives and support programmes for the development of women's entrepreneurship in general. Programmes that would provide free or affordable training and education for women to acquire skills needed for employment in sought-after industries would also be beneficial. An issue is also the lack of a functional and active Chamber of Commerce and/or Crafts in Canton 10. There are many more initiatives and projects on the federal level, as well as campaigns promoting awareness of the importance of gender equality in employment and the work environment, but they do not reach the local level. In addition, initiatives focusing on ensuring access to affordable childcare services, as well as improving public transportation infrastructure to facilitate women's access to work would also improve the accessibility of the labour market for women.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

The most current policy that influences female employment on the national level is the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023-2027 and is brought by the authorised institution, the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH. It is based on the Law on Gender Equality, which was adopted in 2010. The Agency for Gender Equality has issued several strategies for the promotion and implementation of gender equality since 2014. The mentioned action plan principally covers the creation, implementation and monitoring of a programme of measures to improve gender equality in priority areas, including the area of work, employment and access to economic resources. In addition, it foresees the building and strengthening of systems, mechanisms and instruments for achieving gender equality, as well as establishing and strengthening collaboration and partnership. Despite the existence of laws and regulations against gender discrimination, and the fact that labour legislation is highly harmonised with domestic and international standards for gender equality, at work or during employment, women often face inconsistencies and irregularities that complicate the implementation of these laws. In other words, there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. Also, the existing policies on the national level do not reach the local level and its final beneficiaries. Local action plans based on the mentioned national action plan exist only in 14 of 142 municipalities in BiH. The only other strategic document on the national level that mentions gender equality in employment is the Strategic Plan of Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027. The majority of policies/initiatives are brought on the federal (regional) level.



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: The Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 – 2027

Source: [GAP-BiH-2023-2027-Hrvatski-jezik.pdf \(sogfbih.ba\)](https://sogfbih.ba/GAP-BiH-2023-2027-Hrvatski-jezik.pdf)

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): gender segregation and stereotypes, horizontal (differences in wages) and vertical segregation (division of positions between men and women), “glass ceiling” phenomenon, gender-based and sexual harassment

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): incentives and funding from the EU (IPA, CEDAW), from development agencies from the Embassies of Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and the UK (FIGAP), NGOs/all men and women residing in BiH

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Legislative and executive power at the state, entity and Brčko District levels, cantonal bodies and local self-government units, in accordance with the departmental competences prescribed by the current legal regulations, as well as institutional mechanisms for gender equality, NGOs and academia.



(2) Strategy title: The Strategic Plan of Rural Development of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2023 - 2027

Source: [default.aspx \(vijeceministara.gov.ba\)](http://default.aspx(vijeceministara.gov.ba))

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (i.e. legislation, stereotypes, skills): Insufficient and uneven financial support for structural and rural development measures, non-adherence to goals set in strategic documents, lack of political consensus, women are significantly less registered as owners of property that represents a source of economic power (FAO and GIZ)

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (i.e. extra funding, innovation, empowerment): European integration, incentives and funding from the EU (IPA, IPARD), alignment with EU policies / individuals and legal entities registered in RPG/RG, rural population with a focus on youth and women (CEDAW)

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Competent institutions from the agriculture, food industry, and rural development sectors at all levels of government in BiH.



WIN

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Generation Equality Campaign on Care Economy in BiH 2023

Source: [Publikacija BHS \(unwomen.org\)](http://Publikacija BHS (unwomen.org))

Target group: male and female residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina

General aims: to increase the understanding of BiH citizens about care economy, paid and unpaid work, the disparity in care responsibility between men and women, family and society, and to encourage a positive change in public attitudes that will contribute gender equality and the economic empowerment of women

Specific activities connected to the intervention: awareness-raising campaign "Nemam ti kad" / "I don't have the time", formation of a coalition for economic justice and rights, organisation of events, collaboration with influencers, media, video and social media content creation

(2) Intervention title: Training of Unemployed Mothers for the Labour Market

Source: [UNFPA Bosnia and Herzegovina | Završen projekt osposobljavanja za tržište rada, 29 majki steklo radno iskustvo](#)

Target group: unemployed mother of pre-school children

General aims: solving the employment problems faced by unemployed women in BiH, especially women with pre-school children

Specific activities connected to the intervention: A comprehensive three-month training programme in collaboration with the company dmBiH in a selection of their stores, with the possibility of permanent employment. The women signed a regular employment contract and the programme also included cost reimbursement for each child enrolled in preschool education or extended stay for the duration of the project. This initiative was organised by UNPFA, the Government of the Czech Republic, dm drogerie markt BiH and the Mozaik Foundation.



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

The existing policies on the national level are well-developed and promising, but their implementation faces difficulties that may be related to Bosnia and Herzegovina's complex political structure. There are significantly more policies and initiatives on the regional (federal) level than on the national level. Thus, the initiatives on the national level are primarily organised by foreign organisations. We also noticed a problem in the visibility and reach of initiatives on the national level, i.e. one has to actively search for them (or a particular target group, issue, etc.) in order to know about their existence, at least from the level of our County. On the other hand, maybe the problem lies also in the lack of knowledge/visibility of available partners for the implementation initiatives that would foster female employment in our County. We believe that a better collaboration between institutions on all levels would be beneficial in this case.

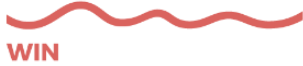


EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

We are aware that the Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been developed in accordance with European Gender Equality Strategy, as well as the Law on Gender Equality of BiH. In principle, this policy is relevant in our local and regional policymaking, however, not all of its parts in equal measure. Some parts are being implemented more efficiently (e.g. the categorical designation of women in statistical data) than others (e.g. the creation of a local Gender Action Plan). In addition, the strategy Europe 2020 has been used in the development of the Employment Strategy of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2021-2027. This strategy specifies dealing with issues such as: the lack of a formally established labour market information system, career guidance as part of the education system, unharmonized management practices of the Federal Employment Office and cantonal employment offices with EU standards, etc. The results of this strategy are yet to be seen.



b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: The Gaea Project – Granting Access to Employment & Entrepreneurship in Agriculture for Women

Source: [Home | Gaeaproject \(gaeaeuproject.com\)](https://gaeaproject.com)

Target group: women in NEET situation and/or migrant background

General aims: GAEA aims to inspire, mentor, nurture, empower, and train women to perceive entrepreneurship as a valid career choice, while also innovating, protecting the environment, generating sustainable growth and employment in rural areas across EU countries-

Specific activities connected to the intervention: a holistic training model based on the needs and competences of the target group, innovative and multidisciplinary training, development of mobile app and digital platform, bootcamp courses, formation of communities on the national level, extending the dialogue to the European level



(2) Intervention title: Women4IT – Empowering Young Women with Digital Skills

Source: [Women4IT - Empowering young women with digital skills](#)

Target group: vulnerable girls and young women in 7 EU countries

General aims: Women4IT aims at raising awareness about digital skills and the gender gap, and at promoting concrete, innovative partnerships and solutions to increase the numbers of EU vulnerable girls and young women into the digital agenda.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: awareness-raising campaigns, skills assessment, innovative partnerships with employers, development of a new online employability profiling tool, training and employment guidance in digital jobs

c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

The existing EU policies and initiatives are extensive and promising, but there is always room for improvement and growth. We are hopeful that the candidate status of Bosnia and Herzegovina will bring about positive changes with the implementation of the steps specified in the Commission's October 2022 communication and thus further the implementation of policies and initiatives that would consequently also foster female employment. A better collaboration between institutions on all levels and the training of their employees seems crucial for the realisation of these endeavours.



Annex 7: Contribution from PP9 ABW

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

According to publicly available research from 2022, (provided by Statistical Office of the RS) <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2024/Pdf/G20246004.pdf> there is a percentage difference between the business-active female and male population who perform a profession, with 57,9% of professionally active men out of all active population in the country and 43,2% women. According to the Monthly Statistical Bulletin of Unemployment and Employment in the Republic of Serbia, issued by the National Employment Service RS – NES, in April 2024 there were 8.358 unemployed women out of a total of 15.098 unemployed persons in the Macva region of Western Serbia. Most of these unemployed women were aged 40 and above. In the same month, the City of Loznica reported 2.022 unemployed women out of a total of 3.725 unemployed persons.

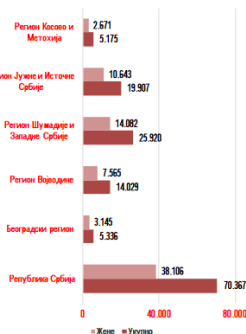
<https://nsz.gov.rs/filemanager/Files/Dokumenta/Statisti%C4%8Dki%20bileni/2024/Bilten%20NSZ%20APRIL%202024.pdf>

Г8 | НЕЗАПОСЛЕНА ЛИЦА ПРЕМА СТАРОСТИ И ПОЛУ НА КРАЈУ АПРИЛА 2024. ГОДИНЕ

№ п/п	Область/Регион	Учуго		15-19		20-24		25-29		30-34		35-38		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-65	
		Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене	Total	Жене
1	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
2	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
3	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
4	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
5	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
6	Белгородская область	41 740	26 046	522	229	1 640	901	3 172	2 805	3 079	1 865	3 873	2 993	4 634	3 047	5 117	3 383	5 728	3 655	6 754	4 193	7 272	4 124
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UNEMPLOYED PERSONS BY AGE AND SEX IN THE END OF APRIL 2024

Chart No. 16 - *Unemployed up to 30 years of age by regions*



This data indicates some gender related problems in regards to employment opportunities in the city of Loznica and its region. Although the local self-government in Loznica fully meets European standards concerning the structure of employees (considering the total number of inhabitants, the number of employees in the administration is less than 4 per thousand, and the representation of women in responsible positions is higher than the 30 percent established by law), gender related problems have to be addressed. Out of a total 176 employees in the city administration, 114 are women (managers in the fields of culture, tourism, employment, judiciary, education, in responsible positions in the city administration). Although Loznica has great potential, there are some problems to be addressed - sources of financing for start-up businesses; lack of skilled labour and differences in job opportunities for women from marginalized groups; lack of awareness about entrepreneurship and the private sector among population. Most women in Loznica were employed in ex-industrial giant - the Viskoza factory and are now trying to find a new field of activity in tourism and handicrafts. Both the City of Loznica and the Tourism Organisation of Loznica have already invested in promoting this category of women, while giving young people the chance to develop in creative sectors. More and more women in the Loznica region are choosing entrepreneurship, including ones involved in tourism and hospitality. Often this is rural tourism and more of them are registering farm households, opening ethno- villages and engaging in glamping. Some of the major problems that women are facing are financing, lack of education for particular jobs, as well as unemployment. Although there is no specific policy related to the topic, Employment strategies in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2026 apply to Loznica and the region. The strategies, coordinated by Serbian National Employment Service, include hard-to-employ individuals, young people under the age of 30 without work experience, as well as women, especially those from less developed and devastated areas.



The City of Loznica will support the empowerment of women in the local labour market through the project WIN. In cooperation with the Tourism Organization of Loznica, the City of Loznica will provide facilities for organizing meetings/seminars and access to a database of rural women who want to transform themselves from farmers to entrepreneurs and thus significantly improve their status in the labour market.

Some of the problems that women face are fixed working hours, usually from 9 am to 5 pm, as well as lack of possibility to work from home, financing and lack of formal and informal education.

(Max.300 words)

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title:

The Employment strategies in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2026, Action plan for the period from 2024 to 2026.

The Gender Equality Strategy for the period from 2021 to 2030 adopted by the Serbian Government the aim of which is overcoming the gender gap and achieving gender equality, as a precondition for development of society

Source: www.nsz.gov.rs (NES / National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia)
<https://srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/179692/2021-2030-gender-equality-strategy-adopted.php>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): Within the framework of certain measures, the categories of the less employable are defined persons who are included in the measure, and in the measures within which they are not defined categories, priority for inclusion is given to unemployed persons from the following category:
- persons without primary education and completed high school;



- young people up to 30 years of age without work experience;
- women, especially women from less developed and devastated areas;
- persons with disabilities;
- Roma men and women;
- beneficiaries of cash social assistance and other social services protection;
- persons aged 50 and above;
- long-term unemployed persons who have been looking for a job for longer than 12 months, especially unemployed persons who have been looking for a job for longer than 18 months;
- single parents;
- spouses from a family where both spouses are unemployed.

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): Through this strategy Serbian National Employment Service enables women to find job by:

- Defining professional goals in accordance with the situation on the labour market;
- Defining occupations in which the person will mediate;
- Defining the activities that the person will undertake;
- Defining the measures in which the person will be included.

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: Serbian National Employment Service; Coordination Body for Gender Equality

(Max.250 words)

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.



(1) Intervention title: Local and regional events and conferences about women entrepreneurship, regular meetings of Association of business women Kreativna vizija, Loznica, implementing projects aiming at education and training of women and other population at the labour market.

Source: <https://www.kreativnavizija.org.rs>

Target group: Unemployed women

General aims: Empowering women who want to start their own business

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Regional conference addressing the current state and perspective of women's entrepreneurship, financing and creating a favourable business environment - key challenges for the economic sustainability of women's companies, self-employment - a response to the economic crisis and changes in the labour market, improving the business of small and medium-sized enterprises owned by women at the local community level, professional training and connecting female entrepreneurs with similar networks in Serbia, the region and Europe. Meetings and professional seminars to develop skills women can use in their business. The goal is networking with each other in order to exchange experiences and initiate possible cooperation. This activity is by The Association of business women Kreativna vizija, Loznica. They are also able to recommend an expert in various sectors.

(Max. 250 words)

(2) Intervention title: Bridging the gender and age gap on the labour market through capacity building and promotion of new job opportunities in cross border region – CBC job gender and age equalizer from *Cross-border Cooperation Programme* for Serbia and North Macedonia. The consortium implementing the project consists of 4 partners from Serbia and North Macedonia: Association of Business Women in Serbia (Serbia) – coordinator, MIR Foundation (North Macedonia), Association of Business Women Vranje (Serbia), Association Pravedni i profesionalni (North Macedonia).

Source: <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/2023/10/01/prevazilazenje-rodnog-i-generacijskog-jaza-na-trzistu-rada-kroz-izgradnju-kapaciteta-i-promociju-novih-poslovnih-mogucnosti-u-prekogranicnom-regionu-cbc-poslovni-rodni-i-starosni-ekvilajzer/>

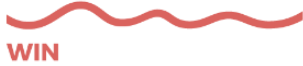
Target group: Women from marginalized groups

General aims: The main goal is to increase the participation of women, young and vulnerable groups of women in the labor market through the introduction of innovative pilot support measures. Strategic goals include: professional training of women and young people and improvement of their (self) employment opportunities in well-paid "male" work sectors; establishment of partnerships for replication and further development of pilot support measures; increased visibility and awareness in local communities about the benefits of pilot measures.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

- organization of trainings on gender stereotypes;
- organization of trainings on professions in "male" activities, including ICT, metal processing and construction;
- visits to employers;
- organization of the mentoring program;
- conclusion of public-private partnerships;
- conducting an awareness raising campaign against gender stereotypes;
- creation of documents with recommendations for further development;
- organization of visibility and cross-border networking.

(Max.250 words)



(3) Intervention title: WINnovators – Boosting entrepreneurial and STEM/STEAM capacity of young Women in higher education institutions for sustainable development and Innovation, Erasmus+

Source: <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/2022/03/01/projekat-winnovators/>

Target group: Young women from rural areas and students

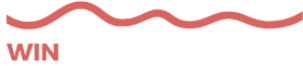
General aims: The main goal of the WINnovators project is the joint development and implementation of innovative approaches to teaching and learning, as well as concrete policies for capacity building in digital, entrepreneurial, STEM/STEAM innovation and sustainability fields, which would benefit young women from rural areas and students.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

Promoting digital, entrepreneurial, STEM/STEAM innovation and sustainability skills among young women from rural areas. This will be done by proposing new training practices and providing opportunities for the development of entrepreneurial ideas, thus overcoming the bias against female entrepreneurship. Developing new approaches to teaching and training in higher education institutions that will build the necessary skills among students, for example by engaging students and young women from rural areas, as external non-formal learners, in capacity building activities that will benefit their local communities. Developing capacity building practices in teamwork across partner countries.

Developing the skills of young women and the capacity of students and teachers of higher education to become agents of change, by developing gamified e-training and e-modules.

(Max. 250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

The existing policy, The Strategy for Gender Equality is a big step forward on a national level, which impacts target region as well. What we find missing are more local, regionally adapted policies and strategies. The Tourism Organization of Loznica, the City of Loznica are doing good work in improving opportunities for women employment, and The Association of business women Kreativna vizija, Loznica is also doing different initiatives to empower women. Many other factors such as non-flexible working hours and childcare, lack of formal and informal education play big role regarding gender gap.

Economic empowerment of women in Serbia should be achieved through two specific key avenues: employability and entrepreneurship. ABW Serbia and its national and local partners use an ecosystem approach to simultaneously increase work and entrepreneurship readiness among women, specifically marginalized women, while building innovative partnerships to improve access to finance for women-led businesses and increasing the public commitment among Serbian companies about the benefits to approaching employment and gender with an inclusivity lens. However, there is still a gap in the programs that would enhance women's employability through improved employment skills in particular in the underprivileged areas and target groups of women. Therefore, suggested policy instruments that are lacking includes: 1) In-person training of marginalized women in skill sets identified as needed by SMEs 2) In-person training of women in skill sets needed in the IT sector 3) Organization of Meet Your New Employer Job Fairs 4) Development of a web-based e-Learning-Internship-Mentoring Platform 5) Research on Employers' Needs for subsidy support for employment of marginalized group of women.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

Although the importance of awareness of gender inequality in our region is recognized, we still have a long way to go. In Serbia there is a policy specifically related to the topic - The Strategy for Gender Equality, establishes comprehensive measures for the promotion of gender equality as a factor that encourages the development of society in the Republic of Serbia. There are also Employment strategies in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2021 to 2026, coordinated by Serbian National Employment Service, which includes hard-to-employ individuals, young people under the age of 30 without work experience, as well as women, especially women from less developed and devastated areas.

In the last ten years there have been significant developments and progress when it comes to institutions and laws that regulate this issue. The Coordinating Body for Gender Equality was established, as was the office of The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. The successful work of these institutions led to the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality.

Some specific programs in Serbia:

- Moja prva plata; (My First Salary): This program, initiated by the Government of Serbia, aims to provide incentives for employers to hire young people who have just graduated from secondary or tertiary education. While not exclusively for women, it benefits them significantly, especially those entering the job market for the first time.
- Podsticaj za samozapošljavanje; (Incentive for Self-Employment): This program, also implemented by the Government of Serbia, provides financial incentives and support for individuals, including women, who want to start their own businesses. It offers subsidies for initial costs and training to help individuals establish and manage their businesses effectively.
- The Ministry of Economy has issued a public call for several years for the allocation of grants under the program to encourage the development of entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship and financial support for business beginners and young people

According to the Labor Force Survey of The Statistical Office of Serbia, the top employment of women is 43.2 percent, which is 14.7 percent less than the employment rate of men (57.9 percent),



while women were paid less than men by 8.8 percent. This data ranks Serbia among the countries with the lowest wage gap in Europe. However, if earnings are looked at by level of education or occupation, the differences in earnings between women and men are significantly larger than the average wage gap, most often in favour of men. Women do not fare any better when they retire, because, on average, they receive a pension that is 17 percent lower than the average pension of men.

Some of the problems that women face are fixed working hours, usually from 9 am to 5 pm (working hours end after schools and nurseries close), lack of possibility to work from home, expensive day care for children. Some of the sectors are mainly male dominated, such as agriculture (around 3.3 percent men, and 1.6 percent women employed), or construction sector (around 9.6 percent men and 1.1 percent women) and industry sector (33.7 percent men and 23.7 women).



b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: The Strategy for Gender Equality for the period from 2021 to 2030

Source:

<https://rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs/sr/dokumenti/strategije-i-akcioni-planovi/nacionalna-strategija-za-rodnu-ravnopravnost-za-period-2021>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills):

- Access to justice for women from vulnerable groups
- The gender gap is still present in political life, especially in political parties, access to leadership positions in institutions, public institutions, the highest positions in local governmental units (LGUs) and local communities. Stereotypes and prejudices still exist, leading to women's political engagement being reduced to areas and issues traditionally considered women's issues. The equal participation of women in political and public life is essential for achieving the COR - Agenda 2030, especially goal 5. As the gender gap in this area of life is reduced, and in this area of life this representation in assemblies at the national, provincial and local level 650, there are still fewer women among decision makers (UN: indicator 5.5.1). The biggest gender gap is in the highest positions in LGUs and local communities.
- The representation of women in executive bodies has increased, but the gender gap is evident in management positions, and gender stereotypes are recognizable by the gender imbalanced composition of departments responsible for areas that are not traditionally considered women's jobs.
- Protection of sexual and reproductive health.
- Social protection
- Policies for reconciling professional and family life are key to achieving gender equality and are included in EU policies that promote women's participation in employment and men's participation in family life. The European Institute for Gender Equality 363 points to



practices that enabled a step forward in the direction of harmonizing business, family and private life.

- The gender gap in the economy in the Republic of Serbia is visible through the unequal position of women and men on the labour market, differences in wages, pensions and general income, differences in entrepreneurial employment and access. participation in the informal economy, differences in ownership of real estate and land, as well as participation in decision-making in the economy. In each of these observed elements, women are still in a far less favorable position, while in groups among women there is a particular feeling³⁶⁸ of a group of women whose economic situation is your problem.

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): The goals of the Strategy are harmonized with the goals and measures included in other national strategic documents, primarily in the area of law and the promotion of human rights, as well as in other areas covered by this strategic document.

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: All ministries, especially, Ministry of Economy of Republic of Serbia, Serbian National Employment Service, The Coordination Body for Gender Equality, The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality.

c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: The National Employment Service (NSZ) announce public calls every year for the allocation of national government funds to encourage the employment of hard-to-employ categories. 2024 calls are the following:

- Public call for participation in financing training measures at the request of employers
- Public call for participation in financing training measures for employer needs for employees i
- Public call for the implementation of internship measures for young people with secondary education
- Public call for the implementation of internship measures for young people with higher education
- Public call for the implementation of practical knowledge acquisition measures
- Public call for the implementation of professional practice measures
- Public call for the implementation of work activation measures for persons with disabilities
- Public call for reimbursement of support costs for persons with disabilities employed under special conditions
- Public call for wage subsidies for persons with disabilities without work experience
- Public call for unemployed persons for the allocation of self-employment subsidies
- Public call for unemployed persons of Roma nationality for the allocation of self-employment subsidies
- Public call for employers for the allocation of subsidies for the employment of unemployed persons from the category of hard-to-employ individuals

Source: <https://www.nsz.gov.rs/sadrzaji/nzs-konkursi/10>

Target group hard-to-employ and other categories of population, e.g. women, young people, vulnerable groups (such as women 45+, marginalized groups, Roma and other population, persons with disabilities, individuals with lower levels of education),

General aims: Motivating employers to engage persons from the hart-to-employ categories, enabling work practices or additional education to these population, women among them.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: motivating, encouraging, educating, mentoring, raising awareness

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: Association of Business Women in Serbia implemented more than 170 projects so far across the country. At this moment 5 EU projects are ongoing and the main goal is to help women to be competitive in the labour market. Some of them are as follows:

- Improving the position of women in the labor market in peripheral industrial regions – WIN (Interreg Danube Region)
- WE. Circular/ Boosting digital and industrial capacity for sustainable circular transition of women entrepreneurs in the Danube Region (Interreg Danube Region)
- CBC job gender and age equalizer - Bridging the gender and age gap on the labour market through capacity building and promotion of new job opportunities in cross border region (IPA II CBC Serbia – North Macedonia)
- WINNOVATORS - Boosting entrepreneurial and STEM/STEAM capacity of young Women in higher education institutions for sustainable development and Innovation (Erasmus+)
- St(r)e(a)m IT/Streaming girls and women into steam education, innovation and research (Horizon Widera)
- Four“E” - EDUCATE, EMPLOY and ELIMINATE gender-based stereotypes through training, awareness campaign and building partnerships to ENHANCE economic position of vulnerable groups of women (UN Women)
- Integration of Roma Women and Other Marginalized Female Groups in “New Normal” on the Labor Market – New Employment Perspectives (GIZ)
- Strengthening capacities of women entrepreneurs for digitalization of business processes and provision of advisory and technical support for market launch of rebranded traditional food products from Southwestern Serbia (GIZ)

Source: <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/en/category/projects/>

Target group Women in the labour market, business women, vulnerable groups of women (Roma population, rural women, aged 45 and above, young girls, etc.) More than 8.500 women participated in the courses, workshops, trainings and other events.

General aims: aiming to support women at the labour market, motivate them to start their own businesses, or educate and empower them to be more competitive at the labour market, through (informal) trainings, workshops, webinars, courses on online platforms, etc.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: networking, mentoring, raising awareness

(Max.250 words)



(3) Intervention title: Association of Business Women in Serbia's annual awarding event
SUCCESS FLOWER

Source: <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/en/2022/12/05/success-flower/>

Target group Recognizing and rewarding women entrepreneurs and encouraging them and the companies to hire other women

General aims: Rewarding the best female entrepreneurs and thus setting an example for others and rewarding the most gender-sensitive companies. All interested entrepreneurs and companies in Serbia can apply for one of three categories:

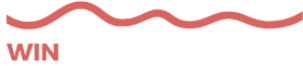
- EXPORT-ORIENTED COMPANY
- SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MODEL
- SPECIAL AWARDS

More than 550 women have been promoted at this event in the last 17 years.

Recognition is also given to large companies that implement the 5th United Nations Principle for the Empowerment of Women and have provided the best model for including women in supply chains, in the category of:

- THE MOST GENDER SENSITIVE COMPANY

Specific activities connected to the intervention: networking, mentoring, raising awareness
(Max.250 words)



(4) Intervention title: International girls in ICT Day, Association of Business Women in Serbia

Source: e.g. <https://poslovnezene.org.rs/en/2022/12/05/international-girls-in-ict-day/>

Target group: girls, students, aspiring entrepreneurs

General aims: Female students of the final grades of primary schools participate in visits to ICT and women owned companies. Women managers and owners of the small, medium and large companies host them. The aim of these events is to empower and inspire girls to consider various possibilities in the field of information and communication technologies as an option when choosing future professions. Also, they participate in competition which ABW Serbia organizes, Catch the Idea, selection of the best videos recorded by mobile phones, with different themes. More than 11.000 girls participated in the last 14 years in these events organized by ABW.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: discussions, workshops, motivating, networking, competition, mentoring, awarding, help in choosing a profession

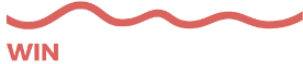
(Max.250 words)



d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

We have existing policies - The Strategy for Gender Equality for the period from 2021 to 2030, which is a huge step forward. The biggest help would be trying to design and organize some information awareness campaigns about the existing policy, initiatives and programs, so the general public would be more interested in the topic, initiate the discussion, and push the authorities to act. Making people interested in this very important topic would help to improve general picture on this subject. In Serbia we also have a few institutions that have whole departments (The Coordination Body for Gender Equality, The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality) that are preparing strategies and action plans, and which aspire to bring all ministries together and are often initiating the inter-ministerial cooperation. The main reason the national policy is not using its full potential yet is the lack of cooperation between the institutions and the lack of information, especially the awareness among population.



EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

We are aware of the The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. The Strategy for Gender Equality relies on this convention.

The development of the Strategy is supported through the project "Key steps to gender equality – Phase 2", which the development of the Strategy and the Action Plan for its implementation is supported through the project "Key steps towards gender equality (phase 2)", implemented by the Agency of the United Nations for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in cooperation with the Coordinating Body for Gender Equality, with the financial support of the EU which started after successful implementation and finalization of the first phase of the project, in the scope of the 2019 IPA Programme and in line with the financial agreement between the Republic of Serbia and the European Commission, EUR 2 million of funds have been approved for the continuation of the project "Key Steps towards Gender Equality" which is implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – UN Women in cooperation with national institutions. In line with the activities and results of the first phase of the project, having regard to priorities of the Government of RS in the domains of gender equality and European integration process, the new phase of the project shall involve the following:

Result 1: Further strengthening of mechanisms for gender equality, support for preparation and implementation of policies in the area of gender equality

Result 2: Support for the Ministry of European Integration in the process of gender mainstreaming of programme documents and meeting horizontal requirements for implementation of the cohesion policy

Through Result 2, the project will be supported by the Ministry of European Integration and national institutions involved in EU funds management, in implementing activities provided for in Action Plan for Chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments. Activities in Result 2 will focus on the development and implementation of programmes for building capacities in the



areas of gender equality, non-discrimination and status of persons with disabilities in relation to programming, monitoring and implementation of EU funds and technical assistance for establishing the system for integration of gender equality principles, antidiscrimination and accessibility in structural and investment EU funds.

We are also aware of The three-year regional programme 'EU 4 Gender Equality: Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence' (EU4GE), funded by the European Union and implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA, strengthens women's and men's equal rights and opportunities by shifting social perceptions, challenging gender stereotypes, and increasing men's participation in unpaid domestic and care work.

There is also The EU Gender Equality Strategy (2020 – 2025) delivers on the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. The Strategy presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by 2025 **towards a gender-equal Europe**. The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are **free** to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to **thrive**, and can equally participate in and **lead** our European society.



b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: WINnovators – Boosting entrepreneurial and STEM/STEAM capacity of young Women in higher education institutions for sustainable development and Innovation, Erasmus+

Source: <https://www.winnovators.eu/>

Target group: Young women from rural areas and students

General aims: Its main goal is to co-develop and implement innovative teaching and learning approaches to concrete policies for capacity building in the digital, entrepreneurial, STEM/STEAM innovation and sustainability fields, from which young women from rural areas and Higher Education students would benefit.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

- Developing capacity building practices in teamwork across Partner countries.
- Developing young women's skills and the capacity of HEI students and educators to become change agents, by developing gamified e-trainings and e-modules.
- Building a WINnovators Community, mediated by the interactive working space for teamwork and supported by social media.
- Organising an international online policy seminar involving policy makers from all Partner countries, who will contribute to the creation of policy guidelines raising awareness and fostering gender-sensitive education at a European level.

(Max.250 words)



(2) Intervention title: UN Global Compact – 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For women's equality the Goal 5 is important, also Gender equality and Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

Source: <https://unglobalcompact.org/sdgs/about>
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>
<https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/womens-principles>

Target group: Women, female workforce

General aims: Over 3,000 other business leaders around the world adopted the Women's Empowerment Principles, used for empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and community. The Principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. These principles are the result of collaboration between the UN Global Compact and UN Women. There are seven principles, as follows:

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination

Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women

Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Specific activities connected to the intervention: inform stakeholders, including governments, as they engage with business.

(3) Intervention title: Bridging the gender and age gap in the labor market through capacity building and promotion of new opportunities for employment in the cross-border region - CBC Gender and Age Equalization

Source: <https://cbibplus.eu/projects/bridging-the-gender-and-age-gap-on-the-labour-market-through-capacity-building-and-promotion-of-new-job-opportunities-in-cross-border-region-cbc-job-gender-and-age-equalizer/>

Target group: women, young people and vulnerable groups of women

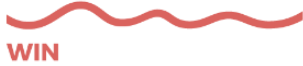
General aims: Skills improvement and creation of employment opportunities in perspective sectors. Specific objectives: 1) Upskilled women, young people and vulnerable groups of women and enhanced opportunities for their (self) employment in the well-paid, male dominated sectors; 2) Established partnerships for replication and scaling up of the pilot support measures; and 3) Increased visibility and awareness in the local communities on the benefits from the piloted measures.

Specific activities connected to the intervention:

Project activities:

- Activity 1 – Organizing Training about gender stereotypes;
- Activity 2 – Organizing Training about occupations in male dominated sectors including ICT, metal processing and construction;
- Activity 3 – Implementing field visit to employers;
- Activity 4 – Organizing Mentoring Program;
- Activity 5 – Establishing private-public partnerships;
- Activity 6 -Raising awareness campaign against gender stereotypes;
- Activity 7 – Creating policy recommendations documents
- Activity 8 – Organizing Visibility and cross-border networking.

(Max.250 words)



c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

The existing European policies and initiatives are comprehensive, but there is a need for better understanding of the problem, legislation changes and more awareness-raising campaigns. A strong leader and a leading institution that would bring all the member states together might be the way to popularize and raise this subject to masses of people. Unified European legislation that would be closer to the companies and people in order for the policies, initiatives and projects to take its full potential. Unified EU fund specified on this topic. According to the EU Progress report of Serbia for 2023, Serbia is moderately prepared in the area of social policy and employment. Since Serbia is facing with the lack of the profiles in certain sectors, then, specific programs which will address training of the lacking profiles (male and female) should be launched while gender sensitive active labour market measures should enhance employability of women in these sectors which (according to the National Employment Office) include: economy, law and administration, trade, catering and tourism, geodesy and construction, mechanical engineering, and metal processing.



Annex 8: Contribution from PP10 NMS

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the local and regional context please use the following comment box to briefly indicate the main barriers for female employment in your area and related challenges in regard to your local/regional policies (e.g. missing policy focus, low cooperation with companies, skill sets...)

The barriers to female employment in different regions of Bulgaria are diverse and complex, with both general trends and specific regional characteristics being observed.

Common barriers include unequal distribution of childcare and family responsibilities, unequal pay, lack of education and training, and insufficient support for entrepreneurship. Women spend on average more than twice as much time on unpaid domestic work and care compared to men. This limits their opportunities for professional development and career advancement. Societal norms may still influence the types of jobs considered suitable for women, thereby limiting their career choices and progression.

In the particular region, women are often employed part-time or on temporary contracts, which limits their income and social security. The region's industrial history and underdeveloped infrastructure also contribute to fewer opportunities for women, especially in sectors like services and technology, and a lack of childcare facilities and transportation further hinders their participation in the workforce. There is a significant



mismatch between the skills possessed by the local workforce and the needs of emerging industries. This mismatch is a barrier to female employment, as many women may lack the specific technical skills required for available jobs in sectors like ICT and advanced manufacturing.

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies that you know in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: Local policies may not adequately address the unique challenges faced by women in the region. There is a lack of focused local policies to enhance female participation in the labour market, such as incentives for businesses to hire women, support for entrepreneurship, and robust training programs tailored for women.

Source: e.g.

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills):

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment):

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation:

(Max.250 words)



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about and are active in your municipality/region regarding women employment in the boxes below.

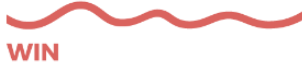
(1) Intervention title: “Parents in Employment” Project

Source: e.g. <https://www.az.government.bg/pages/roditeli-v-zaetost-2-0/>

Target group: Parents of children aged 0 to 4 years not enrolled in a nursery/preschool, who are employed or self-employed/self-employed, but currently care for their children and have not returned to work

General aims: The project aims to ensure a better work-life balance for single parents, parents with many children and those with young children by providing childcare opportunities and services to facilitate access to employment.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: Provision of care for children from 0 to 4 years of age incl., not attending nurseries, institutions and pre-school groups, to employed and unemployed parents.



(2) Intervention title: "Ready for Work" Project

Source: e.g. <https://www.az.government.bg/pages/gotovi-za-rabota/>

Target group: Young people

General aims: The main objective of the initiative is to attract and motivate young people to become active on the labour market - in particular economically inactive young people up to the age of 29, who are neither in education or training, nor in employment and are not registered as unemployed persons in the Labour Office Directorates, as well as to improve their job opportunities and their labour market realization.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The project is implemented within the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development".

N.B. The majority of initiatives and projects are not specifically directed at women and/or the employment challenges they face.



WIN

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments for your municipality/regions to foster female employment (e.g. education + skills, childcare provision...)?

Availability of local initiatives, support measures and interventions to tackle the challenges women face with regard to employability are rather scarce. Typically, these are a consequence of national efforts that to a certain degree extends to local environments. Lack of targeted policies to promote women's employment: many existing policies target general population groups and do not take into account the specific needs and challenges faced by women.

Comprehensive research and data analysis demonstrates that in fact there are gaps in existing policies and initiatives that could be addressed to promote female employment more effectively.

Here are some potential initiatives, projects and interventions that could be implemented:

- Education and Skills. While vocational training programmes are available, there may be a need for greater emphasis on training tailored to local labour market needs, particularly in areas where there are skills shortages. In addition, efforts may be needed to increase women's participation in technical and scientific fields, and to promote entrepreneurship among women.
- Childcare provision. While childcare provision is important for promoting female employment, there may be a need for additional investment in childcare services such as day-care centres. This would help more women to participate fully in the labour market.
- Work-life balance. There may be a need for more support for working mothers, such as flexible work schedules, teleworking opportunities and parental leave policies. This could help create a more supportive environment for women who wish to balance their professional and personal responsibilities.



- Gender equality advocacy: There may be a need for greater efforts to raise awareness of women's issues in the labour market and encourage the adoption of policies that promote gender equality. This could include regular meetings, seminars and public awareness campaigns.
- Economic development and job creation: There may be a need for greater investment in infrastructure projects, small business development and attracting new businesses to the region. This could help create more job opportunities for women in the particular region.

In terms of local/regional policies, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach. For example, implementing measures to promote equal pay, such as wage transparency and sanctions for discrimination, can help to reduce the gender pay gap. Improving family support services, such as childcare and elderly care, can ease the burden on working women. In addition, providing education and training opportunities tailored to women's needs can improve their skills and employment prospects. Finally, ensuring that women are strongly represented in decision-making processes can ensure that policies and initiatives address women's specific needs and interests.



NATIONAL LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the national context please use the following box to indicate policies for female employment from national level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

At the national level, Bulgaria has several policies and initiatives aimed at promoting women's employment. These national policies and initiatives can be linked to local or regional policy development through their inclusion in regional employment development plans, regional development strategies and local development programmes. For example, regional employment services can use funds from the Human Resources Development Operational Programme to organise local employment initiatives tailored to the needs of the regional labour market. In addition, local authorities can cooperate with employers to create a favourable environment for women who want to balance work and private life, such as by providing day-care services or flexible work schedules.

The National Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality has been developed to implement the National Strategy for 2021-2030, in accordance with the provisions of the Act on Equality between Women and Men. The Act establishes a legal framework for the consistent and coordinated implementation of public policy in this area. This National Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2023-2024 follows the principles, objectives and priorities of the new National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men 2021-2030.



WIN

b. Policy framework (strategic documents)

Please describe shortly the main policies/initiatives from national level that influence female employment in your region in the boxes below.

(1) Strategy title: Protection against discrimination act

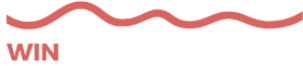
This act prohibits discrimination based on gender in all areas of life, including employment. It is the foundation for ensuring equal opportunities for women in the workplace and influences local policymaking by setting a legal framework for fair practices in hiring, promotion, and working conditions.

Source: e.g. <https://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135472223>

Cultural and/or institutional barriers addressed/target group (ie legislation, stereotypes, skills): Cultural barriers addressed: Gender stereotypes. Discriminatory attitudes.
Institutional barriers addressed: Discriminatory practices. Unequal pay

Cultural and/or institutional enablers addressed/target group (ie extra funding, innovation, empowerment): The Protection against Discrimination Act (2003) in Bulgaria does not explicitly mention cultural or institutional enablers as target groups for extra funding, innovation, or empowerment. The Act focuses on establishing a legal framework for preventing and combating discrimination. While the Protection against Discrimination Act does not directly provide financial incentives or promote specific innovations for women's employment, it creates a legal foundation for equal opportunities and empowers women to seek redress in case of discrimination.

Cultural or institutional organisations responsible for implementation: The law is enforced by the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD). An independent specialized state body responsible for preventing and protecting against discrimination. In addition, other organisations also play role in its implementation, such as: NGOs, trade unions, employers.



c. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on national level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: Regional Employment Programmes

Source: e.g. <https://www.az.government.bg/pages/regionalni-programi/>

Target group: The programmes are open to both men and women, but can help improve access to employment for women living in regions with high unemployment rates.

General aims: The main objective of the regional programmes is to increase employment, reduce unemployment and improve the quality of the workforce in the regions.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: The programmes provide subsidised employment to unemployed persons from the target groups.

d. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing national policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments from national level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason national policies are not being used in your municipality/region?



National policies, while well-intentioned, often fall short in addressing the specific challenges faced by women in the workforce. Legislation like the Protection against Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men establish important legal frameworks and general measures, but they lack targeted provisions for issues like unequal caregiving burdens, gender pay gaps, and limited access to training and entrepreneurial support.

Furthermore, the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development” offers valuable funding for employment initiatives, but its impact is often limited by the challenges of reaching women in all regions. The effectiveness of these policies is further affected by coordination difficulties among different government bodies and agencies, creating inconsistencies and hindering a unified strategic approach.

Although national policies lay a foundation, their successful implementation often depends on the capacity and resources of local and regional authorities. In the targeted region, there may be local initiatives in place, but information about them is scarce and difficult to access. This highlights a need for better communication and coordination between national and local levels, as well as greater transparency regarding available support for women.

While the situation presents challenges, it also reveals opportunities for improvement. By refining national policies to be more gender-responsive, increasing funding for relevant programmes, and strengthening coordination between different levels of government, Bulgaria can create a more supportive environment for women’s employment.

Additionally, empowering local authorities and improving information dissemination can ensure that women in all regions have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive in the workforce.

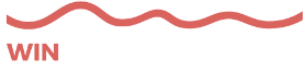


EUROPEAN LEVEL

a. General frame

For a better understanding of the European context please use the following box to indicate any European policies/strategies for female employment level that you know. Please indicate if and how these policies are relevant to your local or regional policymaking

The European Gender Equality Strategy offers a broad framework and guiding principles for the development of national policies and laws. This framework indirectly influences local initiatives, but more targeted actions are needed to truly promote female employment and empower women at the community level. For example, raising awareness of gender equality issues and the rights of working parents could help combat stereotypes and foster a more inclusive work environment, thereby aligning with the goals of the EU strategy.



b. Intervention (initiative/program/project)

Please describe shortly the main interventions (e.g. initiatives, projects, etc.) that you know about on European level regarding women employment (regardless if they are used in your region or not) in the boxes below.

(1) Intervention title: European Institute for Gender Equality

Source: e.g. <https://eige.europa.eu/>

Target group: General public

General aims: An agency which provides research, data, and expertise on gender equality issues to inform policymaking at both the European and national levels.

Specific activities connected to the intervention: research, data, good practice examples.

c. Your opinion – Assessment – Missing instruments

How do you assess the existing European policies and initiatives for your work? Are they helpful? Are you missing any specific policy instruments European level that would foster female employment or is there a specific reason European policies are not being used in your municipality/region?

It is important to note that the effectiveness of these initiatives can vary depending on their implementation, funding and the commitment of the stakeholders involved. While EU initiatives are comprehensive, their effectiveness at the local level is not well evidenced. For instance, strengthening partnerships between local governments, businesses, and educational institutions to better align training programmes with market needs and enhance employment opportunities for women could be a step forward.