



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO MONTENEGRO

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025
Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP
MONTENEGRO

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

The legislation framework for gender equality in Montenegro is in place, with international agreements and generally accepted rules of international law mostly integrated into the national laws. However, as highlighted in the EU Annual Report on Montenegro, women in Montenegro continue to experience strong inequality in participating in political, economic and social life.

Gender-based violence and violence against children remain a serious matter of concern. The definitions of gender-based violence and domestic violence across legislation need to be further aligned with the Istanbul Convention and the GREVIO recommendations. Sexual harassment is still a topic to be fully addressed and harmonised in the legislation. Sexual and reproductive health is not yet part of the education system and access to appropriate health care services is a concern particularly for women with disabilities, transsexual persons as well as women and girls of Roma origins /other minority groups.

The Gender Equality Index for Montenegro (55) release in 2020 showed a gender gap of 12 points below the EU-28 average (67,4) mostly relating to insufficient political and social participation of women, economic inequality and unequal division of responsibilities. Parliamentary elections of August 2020 highlighted the persistent inequality of women in politics with a proportion of seats held by women smaller than in the previous elections, resulting in a significant under-representation of women and women from ethnic minorities in parliamentary parties and working bodies (21%). The average scores indicate the need to target administrative capacities, improve legal and institutional mechanisms, regulations, and policies (particularly in the areas of labour inclusion, doing business, access to credit/productive assets, and protection from violence) to tackle the determinants of gender inequalities.

In all areas, the political and institutional framework is deemed insufficiently prepared to address multiple forms of discrimination and, more particularly, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which severely impacted the situations and rights of women and girls in Montenegro. Gender mainstreaming, coordination and interoperability among public authorities must be maximised both at national and municipal levels. Preliminary research showed that only 26.8% of public policies include gender equality, while others completely lack this aspect. Resources and capacities for an effective coordination, implementation and monitoring of gender policies and mainstreaming are insufficient.

Women are less active in the labour market than men. Share of women in the total number of employed is smaller than men. The UNDP report on gender impact of Covid 19 in addition suggests that women's jobs suffered more than men's during the pandemic.¹ The last labour market survey revealed gender segregation in the labour market. The horizontal segregation in professions reveals a vertical pay inequality, as the concentration of women in stereotypical 'female' occupations which are lower paid creates a pay gap with the 'male' occupations in higher paid jobs. Gender inequality is bigger in the financial resources than in the general economic situation of women and men². Women are owners of 21.8% of SMEs in Montenegro, and data on women in management boards is not yet available. The Montenegro enterprise survey (World Bank 2020) shows that there is a gender gap in female participation in top management and in firm ownership. The Enterprise survey also shows excessive reliance on internal funds (71% of firms have used this source of firms financing) indicating potentially inefficient financial intermediation. Firms that are managed by women identify in greater percentage access to finance as a major constraint to them doing business than firms that are managed by men (13.3%, as compared to 9.9% of firms managed by men).³ The biggest inequality remains to be observed in the area of property ownership where women are owners of only 4% of houses and 8% of land,

¹ Miloš Vuković (2020) Contribution of women to the Montenegrin economy: Unpaid care work in the times of Covid 19, UNDP

² Indeks rodne ravnopravnosti,

https://www.me.undp.org/content/montenegro/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/GEI2019.html

³ World Bank (2020) Enterprise survey 2019: Montenegro country report, available online:

<https://www.enterprisesurveys.org/content/dam/enterprisesurveys/documents/country-profiles/Montenegro-2019.pdf>

although in terms of weekend houses this percentage is higher (14% of weekend houses are owned by women).⁴

Gender perspective of climate change in Montenegro is under explored. There is a comprehensive framework for gender equality and one for climate change but the intersection of the two is still lacking in government actions and in civil society work. The same can be observed in the field of women and STEM, as gender policy documents overlooked STEM, while innovation, technology, science, research and development, digitalization and other relevant documents lack gender perspective (RCC,2021). Considering that EU supports the Common Regional Agenda 2021-2024 the issue of gender equality should be addressed in the Common Regional Market Action Plan which aims to establish free movement of goods, capital, people and services all the way through the region, with the inclusion of their joint approach in the aspects of regional digital area, regional investment area, regional trade area and regional industrial and innovation area, closely associating the WB6 with the EU Single Market.

This Country-Level Implementation Plan for Montenegro is based on a series of consultations undertaken by EUDEL in 2021 with EU Member States, International Organisations, and national civil society organisations (CSOs). The challenge faced by national policy makers in addressing gender gaps and inequalities in Montenegro has been characterised as being mostly related to:

- the complexity and inter-connectedness of the scope and range of policy intervention, more particularly in the context of the COVID-19 crisis that particularly affected women and girls in situation of precarity and vulnerability
- the lack of inter-institutional coordination
- the lack of coherence and enforcement of the legal/regulatory framework in all sectors
- the gap of gender disaggregated statistics to support evidence-based policy making
- the inherent and pervasive structural inequalities in Montenegrin society which remains patriarchal, with strong impact of customary norms and stereotypes.

Among EU Member States, there is a broad range of experience and lessons drawing from approaches to gender issues. Gender budgeting has emerged as one of the critical pillars of efforts to assess budgetary impacts on women and girls and to advance gender equality in Montenegro (fiscal policies; accountability systems for public spending on gender-focused initiatives; incorporating relevant line ministries into gender budgeting processes and institutionalizing tools such as gender budget statements and reviews; and incorporating gender budgeting at the level of sub-national entities). The collection and dissemination of robust and consistent sex-disaggregated economic and social data to inform and support evidence-based policy making has also been identified as a significant challenge. Collaboration with the civil society must also be performed early enough in the policy making and legislative cycle to influence policy design, identify evidence of potential gender-blindness and undesirable impacts of policies/laws on gender equality, and contribute to increase accountability and quality governance. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of political will and the need for strengthening inclusive policy making processes to allow a better integration of gender considerations into the policy cycle.

The Gender Equality Profile of Montenegro, updated in June 2021, further identified opportunities and recommendations for EU's support to gender equality in targeted priority sectors. This includes capacity building within institutions, further development of the legal framework fully aligned with the Istanbul and CEDAW convention, strengthening capacities of service providers, improve women's position in the labour market, improve the lists of indicators for monitoring progress and raise public awareness.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality in Montenegro 2021-2025 (to be adopted soon) aims to achieve gender equality in Montenegro by 2025. The operative goals are to improve the implementation of the existing normative framework regarding gender equality policy and protection against gender-based discrimination, as well as to improve education, culture and media policies in order to reduce the level of stereotypes and prejudices towards women and persons of different gender identities. The final operative goal is to increase the level of participation of women and people of different gender identities

⁴ PAPP 2017-2021, Ministarstvo za ljudska i manjinska prava

in areas that provide access to natural and social resources. The actions foreseen in the CLIP can help provide renewed momentum to the gender equality agenda in Montenegro, catalysing attention and resources on the selected thematic areas.

The Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy in Montenegro 2021-2025 (to be adopted soon) aims to build favourable environment for sustainable development of women's entrepreneurship; to ensure better access to finance and strengthened competitiveness of women's business as well as to advocate for the interest and better positioning of women entrepreneurs. The actions foreseen in the CLIP can support the agenda for development of women's entrepreneurship in the Covid - 19 economic recovery, in green and the circular economy, as well as in digitalization.

The new Strategy for Public procurement and public-private dialogue 2021-2025 (to be adopted soon) aims to provide access to markets of women led SMEs including guidelines for implementing social criteria, catalogue of measures for balancing work and life, training for tenderers and training for public procurement officers to enforce social criteria in tendering procedures. The actions foreseen in the CLIP will support these activities as they are in accordance with the Public Procurement Directive from 2014.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

The overall objectives of EU action for gender equality and women's empowerment in Montenegro is to support the government to comply with national and international gender equality commitments and the EU Gender Equality Acquis. The EU will provide support to the following thematic areas of the new EU Gender Action Plan III for 2021-2025 (GAP III) through political dialogue and targeted actions:

GAP III Intervention Area	GAP III Specific Thematic Objectives
A. Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence	1. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online through legislation and effective enforcement 3. Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, who experience gender-based violence have increased access to essential services 4. The right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, free from discrimination, coercion and violence is promoted and better protected 5. Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity trafficked for all forms of exploitation and abuse have improved access to adequate and quality services for socio-economic integration and psycho-social support 7. Women's rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence 8. Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices are increasingly collected and used to inform laws, policies and programmes
B. Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights	10. Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information, and education on sexual and reproductive rights
C. Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women	1: Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems 3. Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources 4. Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy 5. Improved access for women in all their diversity to managerial and leadership roles in social and economic sectors and fora

	6. Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys
D. Promoting equal participation and leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling conditions created for equal participation of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, in decision-making 2. Women and girls, in all their diversity, have improved access to justice to safeguard their civil and political rights 4. Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviors promoting equal participation and leadership fostered at community and individual levels – through civic education, media, education and culture at all levels 5. Improved systems for collecting quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on women’s political participation and leadership
F. Climate change and environment and Digitalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Strategies and agreements on climate mitigation, adaptation, disaster risk reduction and sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity are more gender-responsive at local, national, regional and international level 4. Women and men in all their diversity, increasingly participate in and have improved access to jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities and alternative livelihoods in the green economy and the circular economy

The CLIP and proposed actions have been identified with a view to providing continuity of EU support, building on lessons learned. The CLIP builds upon the overall and specific objectives outlined in the IPA III Programming Framework 2021-2027 and in the Montenegro’s Strategic Response providing a set of priority actions for the implementation of programmes in the following thematic windows: Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy; Good governance and acquis alignment; Sustainable connectivity and green agenda; Competitiveness and inclusive growth; and Territorial and cross-border cooperation. Priorities in relation to the programming period 2021-2024 will in particular focus on Administrative capacity and acquis alignment, Public Administration Reform, Environment, Transport and Agriculture. Strengthening administrative capacities is defined by the Government as a thematic priority of overall importance for strengthening Montenegro’s capacities in the negotiating process in all sectors, with public administration reform as key in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. With the CLIP, special attention will be given to ensure an effective integration of gender equality and equal opportunities in the implementation of the national Public Administration Reform Strategy.

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment

There is one targeted action: “Communicating gender equality”, implemented by UNDP with EU funding of 200,000 EUR, and duration from February 2021 to July 2022. The project will assist Ministry of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media, PR Bureau of the Government, Agency for electronic Media, Ombudsman Institution and Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights-Department for Gender Equality, media to develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming. It will also introduce mandatory accredited training programme on communication and gender equality in partnership with Human Resource Management Agency and PR Bureau of the Government. The aim is also to review and amend regulations and normative framework on communication in institutions and media in regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming principles.

There are two more targeted actions, one national and one regional, and both are focused on the response against gender-based violence (GAP III Area A.) “Health has gender”, supported through EIDHR with EU funding of 150,000 EUR and implemented by SOS Podgorica, with the duration from December 2019 to December 2021. Its main objectives are the improved implementation of the strategic and legislative framework in the area of domestic violence in the health care system, with the active participation of CSOs in law and public policy making. It also aims to strengthen the strategic partnership and cross-sectoral cooperation between CSOs and health institutions and improve

institutional mechanisms in the health care system for the protection of victims of domestic violence. Ultimately, the conditions for systemic education and professional development of employees in the health sector will be created.

The regional targeted action: "*Ending violence against women in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey: implementing norms, changing minds*", has a duration from December 2019 to July 2023 and it is implemented by UN Women. EU funding for Montenegro is 562,000 EUR. Around 60% of funding goes to support for women CSOs, which provide services to children and women victims of violence through sub-granting. The project provides technical assistance to civil society organizations and governments to review and reform laws, policies, and legislation in line with CEDAW and Istanbul Convention, with a particular focus on provision of minimum specialized support services. In Montenegro, CSOs who need to support in obtaining the licence for offering specialised services are in focus. Marginalised women will be in special focus due to exacerbated vulnerabilities caused by COVID-19. Women CSOs capacities will be improved in the area of implementation and monitoring of national policies on gender equality, ending violence against women, and women's rights. They will engage in advocating for local and national governments' accountability on CEDAW Recommendations and Istanbul Convention implementation. This support includes capacity building of CSOs to prepare CEDAW and /or Istanbul Convention Shadow Reports and/or other similar monitoring and alternative reports, where needed.

There are several important regional EU Funded actions in which Women's Rights Center participates as an implementing partner: "Furthering Gender Equality through the EU Accession Process with the aim to enhance regional cooperation to strengthen participatory democracies and an inclusive, gender sensitive EU approximation process", "Empowering CSOs in combatting discrimination and furthering women's labour rights aimed to empower diverse civil society organizations (CSOs) in south East Europe (SEE) to effectively hold relevant institutions accountable for implementing anti-discrimination legislation related to women's labour rights", "Balkans ACT (Action Against Trafficking) Now! BAN IIP". There is an initiative funded by the Austrian Development Agency, in partnership with Women's Rights Centre, which aims to improve quality of rehabilitation and integration services for survivors of gender based violence. Estimated project results are the following: 1) Women supported in leaving violent environments and becoming more autonomous, 2) Quality evidence-based proposals for secondary legislation and programs for assisting survivors put forth, 3) Improved skills of service providers towards increased safety/security of survivors, 4) Strengthened and formalised regional network for addressing violence against women in line with EU standards.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

Dialogue on gender equality and women's rights will continue to take place in various formal and informal settings. The Accession process is the key channel for continuous political and policy dialogue to promote and monitor progress on gender equality towards a full alignment with the EU gender equality and non-discrimination acquis in the key priority sectors, including the Judiciary and Human Rights (Chapter 23), Social policy and Employment (Chapter 19), Public Procurement (chapter 5) Information society and Media (Chapter 10), Transport policy (Chapter 14) and Environment and climate change (Chapter 27), Agriculture and rural development (Chapter 11). Gender equality issues are placed systematically on the agenda of EU-Government dialogue and other regular coordination meetings with ministries and other national institutions including the Ombudsman Office.

Effective dialogue for gender equality will also be established through the participation in existing gender coordination mechanisms at country level, the use and update of EU country reports, gender profile, EU joint public statements on gender equality, the publication of articles in local and social media. International organisations and CSOs will be associated to the implementation review (update) of the CLIP in 2023. Implementation and assessment of programmes and projects will also contribute to promote and exchange views among stakeholders and advance on gender equality in Montenegro, e.g. supporting the mainstreaming of gender at all levels and in all sectors.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

The EU Delegation in Montenegro will define a communication/public diplomacy activity plan in 2021 in cooperation with EU Member States and other stakeholders, including meetings with public figures, public talks and outreach materials online (website, social media) featuring women empowerment and gender equality. The EU Delegation to Montenegro will also organise or complement partners communication and outreach events to mark the International Women's Day on 8 March and 16 Days of Activism starting on 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women).

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

Montenegro has no technical facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation. Gender country profile was updated from the national IPA envelope and "Communicating gender equality" project implemented by UNDP, as mentioned above.

Date: 29/07/2021

Signature by Head of Delegation: 

