



# 2022 Annual Progress Report

On the implementation of the OSCE 2004 Action  
Plan on the Promotion of Gender Equality

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AI</b>	Artificial intelligence	<b>OMiK</b>	OSCE Mission in Kosovo
<b>ATU</b>	Action against Terrorism Unit	<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>BiH</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>OSR/CTHB</b>	Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
<b>CHANGE</b>	Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality	<b>P/CVERLT</b>	Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism
<b>CPC</b>	Conflict Prevention Centre	<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization	<b>RFoM</b>	Representative on Freedom of the Media
<b>DEIB</b>	Diversity Equity Inclusion (with a focus on Belonging)	<b>SALW</b>	Small arms and light weapons
<b>DHoM</b>	Deputy Head of Mission	<b>SEA</b>	Sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>DHR</b>	Department of Human Resources	<b>SEE</b>	South-Eastern Europe
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction	<b>SI</b>	Staff Instruction
<b>ExB</b>	Extra-budgetary	<b>SOP</b>	Standard operation procedure
<b>GAP</b>	Gender Action Plan	<b>SPMU</b>	Special Police Matters Unit
<b>GIP</b>	Gender Issues Programme	<b>TAHCLE</b>	Training against Hate Crime for Law Enforcement
<b>GRB</b>	Gender-responsive budgeting	<b>TNTD</b>	Transnational Threats Department
<b>GRL</b>	Gender-responsive leadership	<b>UB</b>	Unified Budget
<b>GWG</b>	Gender working group	<b>WAVE</b>	Women Against Violence Europe
<b>HCNM</b>	High Commissioner on National Minorities	<b>WIN</b>	WIN for Women and Men: Strengthening Comprehensive Security through Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality
<b>HoM</b>	Head of Mission	<b>WPON</b>	Serbian Women Police Officers Network
<b>ICAN</b>	Network of Women Peacebuilders	<b>WPS</b>	Women, Peace and Securit
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament		
<b>OCEEA</b>	Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities		
<b>ODIHR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights		

## Helga Maria Schmid

### OSCE Secretary General



Gender considerations are crucial for peace and stability, and they have become a fundamental part of the OSCE's work. Back in 2004, with the adoption of the Action Plan on Gender Equality, participating States pledged their active commitment to promoting gender equality, empowering women in politics and public life, combating all forms of violence against women, and advancing women's economic empowerment.

As the OSCE, and with important support from the Gender Unit, we have worked to bring this commitment to life. This report highlights some of the many projects implemented in 2022 that have made a tangible difference in the lives of people throughout the OSCE region.

2022 has been an exceptionally challenging year. The war against Ukraine, like every conflict, has exposed women and girls to increased risks of violence, including sexual violence, as well as the dangers of trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse. We are committed to supporting Ukrainian women and have mobilized substantial resources to support women-led organizations. These efforts will continue.

Through the Networking Platform for Women Leaders, including Peacebuilders and Mediators, which I launched in December 2021, we have been able to support and empower women peacebuilders from across the OSCE region as well as Afghanistan. This platform amplifies the voices of grassroots civil society activists who are at the forefront of much-needed peacebuilding efforts. In 2022, we not only provided regular networking opportunities for the participants, including a tailored mentorship program, but we also facilitated gatherings through which women from conflict-affected regions could share their experiences and learn from each other. Working closely with our international and civil society partners, we have also redoubled our efforts to support survivors of gender-based violence.

In 2022, we also promoted innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to address new and emerging threats head-on: we took a stand against online violence against women

in public spaces, and addressed the impact of artificial intelligence on women's freedom of expression. By promoting women's participation in the natural resource sector in Central Asia, we are forging a powerful link between women's economic empowerment, conflict prevention, disaster risk management and environmental protection. The potential for long-term transformation through this approach is immense.

Throughout the year, we also continued to make improvements within OSCE structures. I am proud that the number of women in contracted senior management positions in the Secretariat increased in 2022 and that we have parity in senior management. I remain fully committed to promoting the OSCE Gender Parity Strategy and to ensuring geographical diversity. Significant progress has also been made in promoting a safe and secure working environment through the implementation of the Staff Instruction on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse.

While these are important markers of progress, much work needs still to be done. As an organization, we continue to fall short of our goal of gender parity throughout our workforce. Part of the challenge is that in 2022, the number of female candidates nominated for seconded senior staff positions declined to 22 percent. I strongly urge participating States to nominate qualified women for these critical positions.

And when it comes to what we aim to achieve externally, we still have a long way to go. The UN reports that between 1992 and 2019, women made up an average of only 13 percent of negotiators, six percent of mediators, and six percent of signatories

in major peace processes worldwide. I am disheartened to see the continued absence of women at the negotiating table, and that equality remains a rare topic on the agendas of many high-level conferences.

As the OSCE, we remain steadfast in our commitment to the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. We will continue to add our unique value in promoting gender equality, empowering women and combating all forms of violence against women – across all OSCE Executive Structures and throughout the region.

In this regard, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the OSCE for their unwavering commitment to integrating a gender perspective into all our activities. In a tremendously challenging year, your dedication was key to making a lasting difference.

**Helga Maria Schmid**  
OSCE Secretary General

## Key Successes In 2022



OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid with mentors and mentees at the launch of the first OSCE Women's Peace Leadership Programme in Vienna, 17 October 2022. (OSCE/Luiza-Lucia Puiu)

### Placing the Women, Peace and Security agenda at the forefront

#### Building women's leadership in peace processes and conflict resolution through networking

Under the auspices of its Secretary General, Helga Maria Schmid, the OSCE launched several initiatives to promote women's leadership in peace and mediation efforts. Among the flagship activities features prominently the launch of the first OSCE Women Peace Leadership Programme, under the WIN (WIN for Women and Men: Strengthening Comprehensive Security through Innovating and Networking for Gender Equality)-supported Networking Platform for Women Leaders, including

Mediators and Peacebuilders, aimed at strengthening women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding, mediation, conflict resolution and negotiation processes at all levels.

#### Supporting the women of Ukraine in times of war

Despite the closure of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine and the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine following the outbreak of the war against the country in 2022, organization-wide resources were mobilized in support of Ukrainian women and girls who have been exposed to growing threats of violence and a high risk of trafficking. Through the WIN project, targeted support, including emergency cash assistance, was provided to women



peacebuilders and human rights defenders in Ukraine, including women-led organizations at the front line of providing lifesaving assistance to the population in need, as well as protecting survivors of gender-based violence.

### Empowering civil society to address violence against women in conflict

Civil society is a critical partner in fighting gender-based violence. In partnership with the WAVE (Women Against Violence Europe) network, the Gender Issues Programme (GIP), through the WIN project, launched a comprehensive toolkit on Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in war and post-war Settings. With the support of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the GIP also convened meetings between women human rights

activists from Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina, giving them an opportunity to exchange best practices and lessons learned on tools and mechanisms to effectively address violence against women and girls in conflict, including on such issues as accountability and the protection of survivors.

### Eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life

#### Fostering a 'gender-sensitive parliament' approach

In its ongoing direct support to national parliaments, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) trained parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in Tajikistan, North Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan, using a 'gender-sensitive parliaments' approach. The OSCE Missions to Skopje and to Montenegro supported

the adoption of gender-sensitive parliament action plans, institutionalizing tools and practices to foster gender equality within parliaments and in policymaking.

### Addressing the rise of online and physical violence against women journalists

The Mission to Skopje conducted a baseline survey on online harassment against women journalists, publishing *From Normalization to Self-Censorship – Analysis of Online Harassment of Women Journalists in North Macedonia*. It also produced a short documentary, *Dangerous Network*, screened at the Media Festival Skopje. The survey found that up to 81 per cent of women journalists in North Macedonia faced online harassment, a finding the Mission utilized to galvanize stakeholders to advocate for the adoption of long-awaited amendments to the country's Criminal Code. These were promptly passed, qualifying threats and attacks on journalists as attacks against officials performing tasks in the public interest.

### Protecting freedom of opinion and expression

The right to seek, receive and impart information is a fundamental pre-requisite for women's participation in political and public life. On World Press Freedom Day, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Teresa Ribeiro, launched a Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Gender Justice in co-operation with the United Nations and other free speech mandate holders, highlighting the links between gender equality and the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Spotlighting the challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI): A new project by the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM), the Spotlight Initiative on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression,

addressed the challenges posed by digital technologies to freedom of expression, on a background of amplified and targeted hate speech and disinformation, a shrinking space for pluralism, and user engagement being prioritized over diversity, accuracy and the public interest.

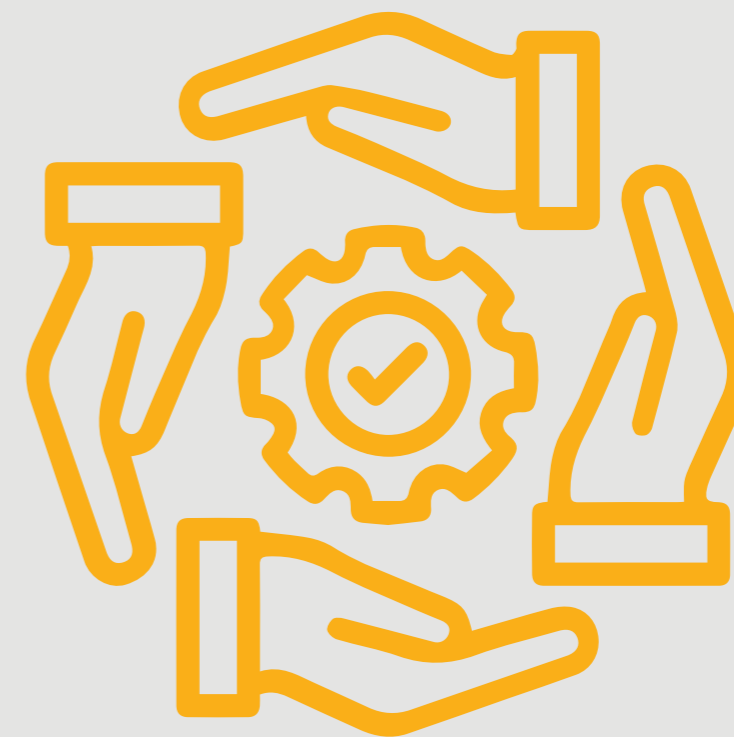
### Supporting women's economic empowerment

#### Closing the digital gap

In 2022, the OSCE supported women entrepreneurs, by building their skills to use digital tools critical to modern business processes, helping thereby reduce the gender digital gap. The Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan supported capacity-building of 150 women entrepreneurs in the Bukhara region on the use of digital business tools and helped create a professional network in the area. In Kazakhstan, in co-operation with the country's Ministry of Digital Development, the Programme Office in Astana mainstreamed gender into training courses on digitalization and automation in business processes. A series of seminars in rural areas resulted in new businesses being created by women in the Kyzylorda region, boosting the local economy and empowering the women in their communities.

#### Strengthening inter-sectional approaches for gender equality

Building on research it had undertaken on the participation of minority women in the economy, the **High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)**'s office developed a new set of **Recommendations and Explanatory Note on Socio-Economic Rights of National Minorities**, with gender systematically mainstreamed throughout. Opportunities and challenges were especially noted in the fields of education and employment. This new set of recommendations is expected to be launched in 2023.



#### Promoting women's participation in disaster risk management

At a time of cascading crises, when women and girls face disproportionate economic and security impacts of both the crises and inadequate disaster response frameworks, the GIP worked extensively on gender-responsive and disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies and management.

#### Supporting women's leadership in energy and water management

The OSCE supported the engagement of women in natural resource management in Central Asia. It conducted the first mentoring programme for women employed in the renewable energy sector and supported networking among women working in the water sector, thereby empowering women professionals and addressing gender equality in traditionally male dominated fields.

#### Fostering a safe and inclusive working environment

##### Establishing internal frameworks for a workplace free from gender-based violence

In 2022, the OSCE introduced one important staff instruction, on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and revised another on sexual harassment. By defining sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence and by placing the victim at the centre of a gender-sensitive investigation process, these documents mark a significant advance in ensuring a safe and inclusive working environment for all staff.

##### Engaging men in workplace gender equality

The GIP produced and launched the first-ever guide for male OSCE staff on how to foster gender equality in the workplace, called *Engaging men in Gender Equality in the OSCE*.

## The way forward

### To strengthen the global partnership with international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector

As a global player in the promotion of gender equality, the OSCE is fully invested in partnership with other international actors. Having pledged to three Actions Coalitions at the 2021 **Generation Equality Forum** in Paris, and being a catalytic member of the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPSHA) Compact, the OSCE remains fully committed to take concrete actions across its mandate on gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, as well as Technology and Innovation.

Strong partnerships with civil society and academia remain vital to the OSCE's work, especially when exploring the intersections of gender and climate change, corruption, violent extremism and online violence.

#### To adapt responses to gender-based violence, countering online and new forms of violence

While violence against women is an ongoing phenomenon, new forms of violence have emerged calling for rethinking policy approaches and responses. The rise of the Internet, in particular is increasingly exposing women to online violence. Tailored action is needed to address specific and emerging forms of violence against women, with a focus on those that occur online.

#### To further empower women, including women refugees, through digital tools

The OSCE promotes the empowerment of women in the economic sphere, focusing on supporting women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas. It helps them build their skills using digital tools, critical to strengthen business processes and reduce the gender digital divide. Further engagement is needed to support Ukrainian women refugees and internally displaced people, providing digital literacy programmes and training for the creation and retention of jobs.

#### To increase nominations of female candidates to seconded OSCE posts

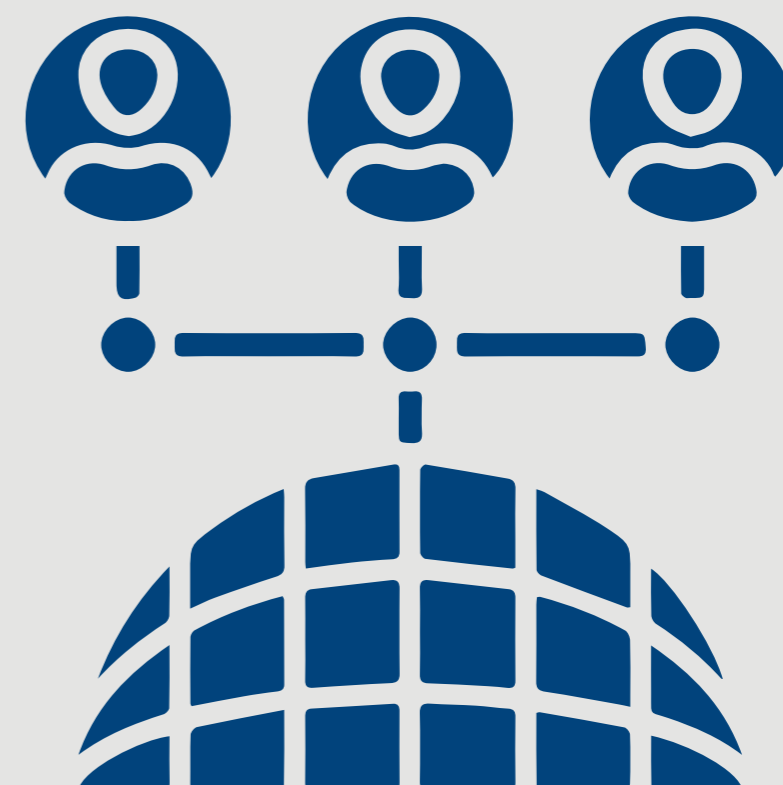
The OSCE took important steps to reach gender parity goals in staffing and to foster an inclusive and enabling work environment.


As a result, senior leadership positions held by women increased in contracted posts in 2022; however, the secondment of female candidates declined, with only 22 per cent being nominated in 2022 to senior staff fixed-term posts. Participating States are strongly encouraged to put forward qualified female candidates for seconded positions.

#### To strengthen the effective implementation of OSCE Staff instructions 32 and 21

Significant progress was made in promoting a safe working environment through the introduction of Staff Instruction 32 on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse – a first for the OSCE – and the revision of Staff Instruction 21 on sexual harassment, which puts the victim at the centre of a gender-sensitive complaint procedure. Promoting the implementation of these Staff Instructions, also through hiring and training investigators, remains paramount for the well-being and safety of all staff.

**To continue promoting gender-responsive leadership and in-house gender training for staff**, including by providing OSCE Senior Management with adequate training on gender-responsive leadership principles, preferably within the first year of their engagement. To address staff turnover, especially at field level, sufficient resources should be allocated to provide in-house training on gender mainstreaming to newly recruited staff members.





## Introduction

Gender equality represents a core value of the OSCE and one of its key priorities. The OSCE's **2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality<sup>1</sup>** (GAP) adopted by the Organization's participating States places gender equality at the centre of its comprehensive approach to security, crucial to maintaining peace and stability throughout the OSCE region. To achieve the Action Plan's objectives, the 2004 GAP provides a strong mandate to OSCE Institutions and field operations to promote gender equality within the Organization, mainstream gender in all OSCE policies, programmes and actions, and support OSCE participating States in their efforts to meet their commitments.

Promoting gender equality has taken on increased importance in the current political and economic context. Recent years have been marked by recurrent crises, from the COVID-19 pandemic to Russia's war against Ukraine, which resulted in an energy and food as well as a cost-of-living crisis affecting citizens across the OSCE region. Women in conflict and post-conflict settings are particularly affected, suffering job loss, curtailed access to education and economic opportunities, and a sharp increase in gender-based violence (GBV). Increased political and economic instability affecting OSCE countries has also rolled back the advancement of women's rights and gender equality of recent years, which calls for heightened efforts to prevent a further backslide on the achievements made.

In 2022, the promotion of gender equality was a key thematic focus of the OSCE, marked by strong co-ordination and joint

engagement across the Organization's executive structures and field operations and running through all its policies, programmes and initiatives.

The year was also marked by a significant strengthening of OSCE partnerships with other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, media, activists and human rights defenders. The Organization's continuous co-operation and engagement with a wide array of gender equality stakeholders – applying a whole-of-society approach – remains instrumental in fostering regional and global responses to address common challenges affecting the lives of citizens across the OSCE region. Such collaborations and exchanges are critical for the building of knowledge on emerging issues and for identifying strategic action and innovation to respond to emerging threats and challenges to gender equality and women's rights.

In line with the 2004 Action Plan on Gender Equality, this report highlights the progress made towards its implementation in 2022, highlighting key advances, emerging best practices, and notable impacts in advancing gender equality and women's rights at political, institutional and social levels across the participating States. The report also highlights key innovative and transformational approaches to gender equality, targeted activities supporting young women and addressing the specific challenges facing women and girls from ethnic and national minorities, and with disabilities, to ensure that women are not left behind.

<sup>1</sup> Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/04, 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

Chapter 1



Promoting gender equality in the OSCE

Increased gender parity and robust mechanisms for ensuring accountability for gender equality in recruitment, organizational leadership and management, and programmatic mainstreaming are reflected in the talent and commitment brought to bear on the innovation and reach of the OSCE’s work in ensuring comprehensive gender-responsive security within the scope of its mandate. As applied internally, the GAP targets increased gender parity at all staff levels, improved working environments through enhanced leadership, ethical standards and accountability and clearly defined mechanisms for advancing gender mainstreaming into programmatic activities.

1.1 Progress towards gender parity

Committed to promoting a professional, inclusive, equitable and safe working environment, the Secretariat’s Gender Parity Strategy, issued in 2019, aims to achieve gender parity across all staff categories by 2026. Casting beyond attracting and recruiting more women, the Strategy also addresses retention and advancement to enable a committed and engaged gender-diverse workforce.

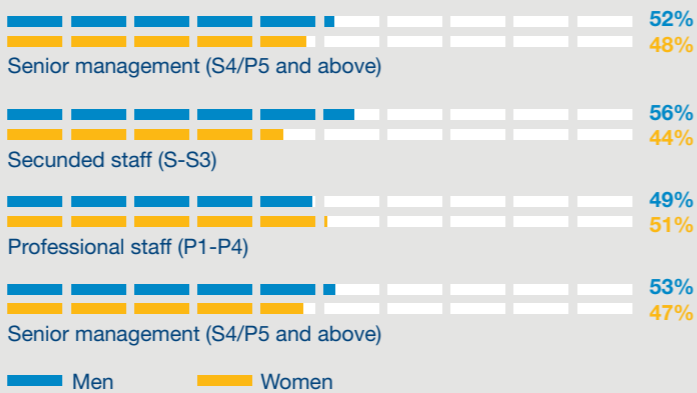


Table 1: Gender balance across all staff categories (as per 31 December 2022)

Over time, the implementation of the Gender Parity Strategy has resulted in a steady and significant increase in female staff across employment categories. In senior management positions, this marked rise in gender parity can be attributed to an increased number of women applying for contracted positions, representing 51 per cent in 2022 and coupled with a higher share of contracted vis-à-vis seconded senior management positions. Participating States have a significant role to play in advancing a greater number of women candidates for seconded positions. Therefore, the decrease in the number of women seconded to senior management fixed-term staff positions (S4 level, Deputy Head of Mission, Head of

Mission), from a high of 42 per cent in 2020 to 27 per cent in 2022, can be attributed to the low, albeit improving, nomination rates by participating States. Women constituted only 22 per cent of such nominations to senior management positions. Women comprised 42 per cent of all seconded nominations, compared to 31 per cent in 2021. Another barrier to gender parity in seconded positions that was identified is the absence of family-related benefits in secondment compensation packages, and the low number of participating States that offer them.

Outreach by the Department of Human Resources to women professionals in 2022



**Global Careers for Women**  
Two international virtual fairs targeting female professionals for management positions.



**Talent Acquisition Newsletter**  
Over 19,000 online subscribers (30 per cent more than in 2020). The Newsletter is tailored to cover those fields and levels in which women/men remain underrepresented.



**‘Brand Ambassadors’**  
Profiling the professional trajectories of four female directors on the OSCE website to attract potential candidates.



**Women Recruitment Bootcamps**  
Targeting over 20 potential female candidates from Central Asia with politico-military backgrounds at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy, OSCE Academy in Bishkek and Central European University.



**Webinars**  
Targeting female candidates for secondment in field operations, for example Women at the OSCE: Perspective of the Monitoring Officers and Women at the OSCE, a conversation with senior managers. These webinars were organized jointly by the GIP and the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.



**LinkedIn posts**  
Displaying content that showcases both men and women using gender neutral language, especially to attract women candidates to units in which their representation was particularly low.

1.2 Recruitment practices

As part of its efforts to achieve gender parity in recruitment processes, the **Department of Human Resources** (DHR) initiated a series of activities in 2022 to encourage more women applicants:

- vacancy notices that equally appeal to male and female candidates;
- unnecessary requirements eliminated from vacancy notices that discourage female applicants;
- vacancy notices to purposely encourage applicants from the underrepresented sex;
- deadlines extended in cases when fewer than a minimum of 20 per cent of one gender had submitted applications; and
- written justifications required from hiring managers when shortlists were not gender-balanced.

The Department also added to the recruitment process for senior management positions that candidates’ capacity to approach gender parity needed to be assessed and introduced **gender-responsive performance indicators**.

1.3 Leadership and people management

The OSCE strives to provide a gender-equal working environment

The **Gender Responsive Leadership** (GRL) Programme equips senior staff with the skills needed to actively create a gender-sensitive management culture. Run in partnership with the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the GRL programme accompanied 15 senior leaders, women and men, over the course of 18 weeks to explore effective ways to achieve an inclusive and enabling working environment.

Participants reported changes in attitudes and behaviours towards gender issues and increased confidence in addressing misbehaviour, micro-aggression and everyday manifestations of sexism effectively and professionally. Taking it to the next level, several participating managers obtained an additional certificate of competence by developing concrete action plans, which they presented to the course director, DHR and their peers. Participants also presented unique, creative and inspiring leadership approaches coupled with an unwavering commitment to gender equality in action. Developed in response to women’s feedback concerning a lack of opportunities for professional development and limited access to professional networks, the **Mentoring Programme for Women** continued into 2022, matching 50 women as mentees with mentors (including 14 male mentors) from across the OSCE’s executive structures.

1.4 Standards of conduct, ethics and professional working environment

Key internal policy changes were enacted in 2022 to foster a safe, equitable and inclusive professional working environment. The promulgation of one new and **one revised Staff Instruction** (SI) strengthened the Organization’s internal mechanisms to protect workers, facilitate reporting and improve the handling of complaints.

In June 2022, the OSCE adopted its first-ever SI on the **Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**, which prohibits all OSCE officials and non-OSCE staff from engaging in or facilitating SEA at all times, whether on duty or off. SI 32 covers prevention, including screening before hiring, reporting, investigation, protection and disciplinary procedures, reflecting a top organizational priority to establish an organizational culture imbued with integrity, respect and free of any form of GBV.

The revised SI 21 on **Sexual Harassment** incorporates international best practice, which defines and addresses it as a form of gender-based violence. The revision places the victim at the centre of a gender-sensitive complaint procedure. Other key changes to SI 21 include:

- Whistleblowing protection for bystander and witness reporting to promote the culture of workplace reporting.
- Shifting burden of proof from the complainant to the alleged offender to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that their claim is true.
- Eliminating statutes of limitations, recognizing that survivors are often traumatized for a considerable period of time.
- Prompt case processing within established time limits.
- Independent investigations removed from institutional power structures and the existing chain of command.
- Competence to address the claims of non-staff personnel.

Several online sessions reaching over 500 staff covered the OSCE’s ethical guidelines and revised SIs, raising awareness on the Organization’s duty of care, staff safeguarding and its zero tolerance policies on harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation and sexual exploitation and abuse. Increased attention is needed to fill ethics advisor vacancies in executive structures.

1.5 Internal mechanisms for advancing gender equality and mainstreaming

The OSCE has developed diverse mechanisms and tools to build staff capacity to effectively mainstream gender into programmes, including the creation of tailored action plans, gender working groups, toolkits, guidance materials and training courses.

As of the end of 2021, all OSCE executive structures and field operations have adopted individual **gender equality action plans** to serve as their internal roadmap for advancing gender equality. Most of the OSCE structures maintain **Gender Working Groups** (GWGs) that perform a variety of functions to foster gender mainstreaming.

Gender mainstreaming Levels across all projects (UB and ExB 2018-2022)

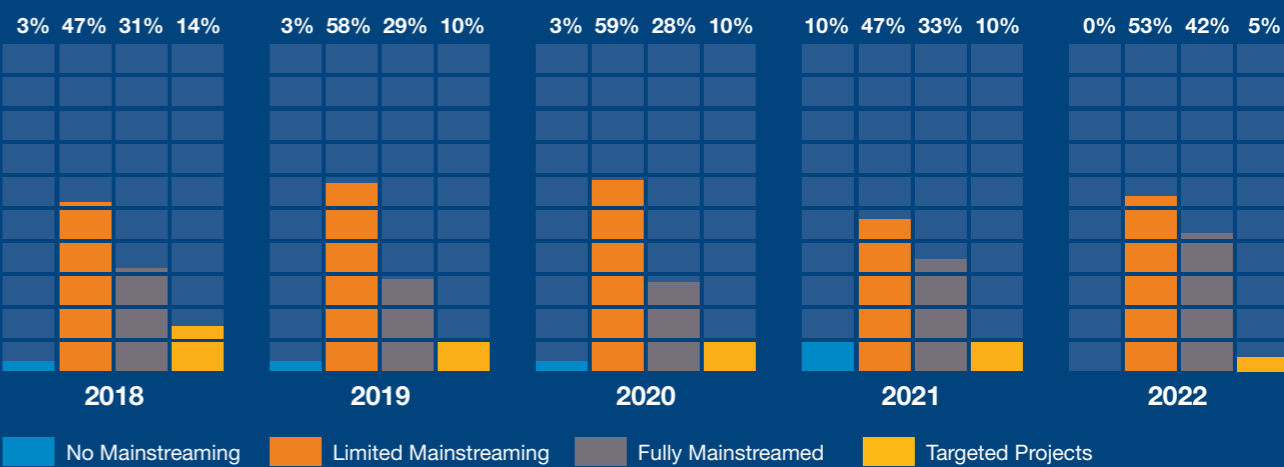


Table 2: Gender Mainstreaming levels across all projects (UB and ExB 2018–2022)

# Engaging Men in Gender Equality

## Engaging Men in Gender Equality at the OSCE: A Toolkit for OSCE Staff



The GIP's WIN Project launched the first-ever guide for male staff to foster gender equality in the workplace, under the title Engaging men in Gender Equality in the OSCE: A Toolkit for OSCE Staff. GIP also developed strategic guidance to unify strategies on preventing and combating violence against women and girls across OSCE executive structures.

Based on interviews, an online survey and strategy development and validation workshops, the guidance builds on identified strengths and addresses existing challenges for consolidating the OSCE's widespread engagement on GBV prevention and response.

On International Men's Day, the Mission to Skopje organized the event Promoting Positive Masculinity in advancing gender equality and addressing men's mental health.

The Secretariat held a series of **Diversity Equity Inclusion (with a focus on Belonging)** (DEIB) events on World Afro Day, World Menopause Day, World Gynaecologic Oncology Day, and World AIDS Day. A DEIB hub was created to access information on these campaigns at any time, and designed as a space for cultural sharing, storytelling and awareness-raising, where honest conversations on such issues as code switching and suicide have taken place.

A DEIB concept paper lays the groundwork for a forthcoming DEIB strategy.

## Training

Training courses, programmes and campaigns on gender equality complemented internal regulatory advances. Through the **WIN Project**, the GIP developed **12 innovative training courses** and prepared OSCE staff as trainers on topics such as core gender equality

concepts and their integration into the work sphere, as well as on female security awareness.

To improve and increase substantive gender programming, **ODIHR** continued its Gender Matters! Online briefings, reaching more than 120 OSCE staff and mission members across OSCE executive structures. It also introduced a unique, OSCE-specific two-month **Course on Gender Equality in Politics** for staff from eight OSCE field operations, covering women's political participation, gender-sensitive democratic institutions and gender-responsive governance.

The overwhelming majority of participants (93 per cent) reported improved programming practices and sharing new skills with colleagues.

## Chapter 2



## Promoting gender equality in participating States

One pillar of the OSCE GAP aims to promote gender equality in participating States. This is accomplished through the application of gender mainstreaming through all substantive lines of work, including: fostering non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks, preventing and combating violence against women and girls, ensuring equal opportunity for women's participation in political and public life, encouraging women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction, and promoting equal opportunity for women in the economic sphere.

### 2.1 Ensuring non-discriminatory legal and policy frameworks

The OSCE works with governmental authorities at national and local levels to develop and strengthen laws and policies to combat discrimination and to ensure legal and de facto gender equality.

In fulfilling its legislative review mandate, **ODIHR** specifically addressed gender and diversity considerations in 18 out of 19 legal reviews and one legal assessment performed in 2022, thus ensuring legislation free from direct and indirect discrimination. Following the issuance of its legal opinion on the draft amendments to the Law on Security Service of Ukraine, several of the gender- and diversity-related recommendations were incorporated into the law when adopted on the first reading. Recommendations included: the establishment of effective safeguards and disciplinary mechanisms to prohibit, prevent, detect and respond to human rights violations, including sexual, gender and other forms of violence and discrimination (within the institution but also in service delivery),

adequate protection to whistle-blowers and a commitment to report on equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

**The Programme Office in Dushanbe** supported the national Working Group on the Improvement of Legal Acts to Eliminate Gender Stereotypes, Protection of Women's Rights, and Prevention of Violence in the Family, which developed concrete proposals for amendments to legislation on domestic violence, equal opportunities, discrimination, civil status and education; all were submitted to the Executive Office of the President. At the local level, the **Mission to Montenegro's** efforts resulted in **Local Action Plans for Gender Equality** in two municipalities.



Central Asia regional conference on strengthening co-operation among human rights and women's organizations providing support to survivors of gender based violence, in Dushanbe, 19 May 2022. (OSCE)

## 2.2 Preventing and combating violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is both a cause and a consequence of deeply entrenched gender inequalities. The OSCE's engagement on combating violence against women and girls takes diverse forms across various sectors: building the capacity of relevant actors, ensuring effective interagency co-ordination, supporting the development of local and national policies and response mechanisms, conducting awareness-raising campaigns and applying intersectional approaches, including involving youth.

### Increased support and resources for multi-sectoral services to victims/survivors

The multi-annual, multi-donor **WIN Project** enabled an exchange of close to 100 service

providers across 11 countries to validate the mapping of women's resource centres for GBV survivors and learn about good practices.

Because economic dependence on the perpetrator often precludes domestic violence victims from escaping violence, the **Programme Office in Dushanbe** supported 114 vocational and training courses to foster the victims' economic resilience. Targeting remote villages, the courses, offered through Women's Resource Centres in Tajikistan, covered sewing, embroidery, weaving, bakery, cooking, the preparation of delicatessen and computer literacy. The **Mission in Kosovo** (OMiK) produced a **Guide for Centres of Social Work**, emphasizing access to affordable social housing for victims and their full economic integration into the labour market.

The **Mission to BiH's** ongoing interventions with cantonal-level actors removed obstacles preventing GBV victims from accessing services. This resulted in the adoption of a new Law on Social Protection in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton that recognizes GBV victims as a beneficiary category, regulates financial support by the Canton for a safe house in Mostar in the absence of other sustainable financing, and the development of a co-ordination protocol for the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Co-ordination Body for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

The **Mission to Montenegro's** ongoing **capacity-building support to three shelters** resulted in both an expansion of their intake capacities and their licensing agreements being extended by the authorities.

Through its engagement at the municipal level, **OMiK** supported a series of roundtable meetings at the municipal level with stakeholders across sectors, including centres for social work, community safety forums, gender equality advocates and victim advocates, resulting in Memorandums of Understanding signed between the authorities and CSO service providers and fostering local co-ordination mechanisms. **OMiK** also held five local workshops on improving the response of health care providers to domestic violence cases, touching upon emergency response, sexual and reproductive health and psychiatry.

At the local level, the **Programme Office in Bishkek** supported Women Initiative Groups (WIGs), building their knowledge on domestic violence prevention and response, relevant legislation and the capacity to design projects and secure funding. The capacity-building support enabled WIGs to enhance the informal co-operation with Mobile Police Reception units, enabling joint violence prevention measures.

## Combating human trafficking

The **Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** (OSR/CTHB) published the policy brief **Discouraging the demand that fosters trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation**. Paying attention to age and gender dynamics, the brief focuses on interventions to curb demand. To support implementation of the recommendations set out in the publication **Applying gender-sensitive approaches in combating trafficking in human beings**, the OSR/CTHB held seven peer-to-peer meetings with experts from offices of national anti-trafficking co-ordinators, the criminal justice system, service providers and academia. Its impact can be seen, for example, in the newly adopted Italian anti-trafficking national action plan (2022–2025), which contains extensive references to gender-sensitive approaches.

The **Programme Office in Bishkek** hosted the second **OSCE National Simulation Exercise on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings**, working in close co-operation with the Kyrgyz Cabinet of Ministers, relevant line ministries, the Prosecutor General's Office, CSOs and experts. Using actors, the simulation prepared frontline responders to recreate realistic scenarios related to labour and sexual exploitation, including that of minors.



# 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence



The OSCE engages in the global **16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence** (GBV) across all its executive structures and field operations, across various different media, including publications, events, social media and television.

The **Programme Office in Dushanbe** supported the development of a bot for the social networking app Telegram, named You are not alone, in the Tajik language, to assist survivors and witnesses of domestic violence throughout Tajikistan to recognize signs of domestic violence and to direct them on how to contact emergency services and navigate to the nearest of 14 OSCE-supported Women's Resource Centres, which provide free psychosocial counseling and legal advice for women at risk.

The **Programme Office in Astana** launched a regional high-level, multi-stakeholder dialogue that raised the visibility of International Labour Organization Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, with a view towards Kazakhstan's accession to the Convention.

Focusing on youth perspectives, the **Presence in Albania** organized the painting of a series of murals in Saranda. Building bridges between young artists, designers



Youth activists, community team for prevention of GBV and schools marking 16 days of activism in Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, 29 November 2022. (OSCE/Sanja Krnjajic)

In 2022 the **OSCE Secretariat's GIP** marked the 16 Days with the campaign **End it Now**, focused on addressing GBV in conflict and post-conflict areas. Launched by the Secretary General on 24 November and followed by a joint press release with the Chairperson-in-Office and ODIHR, the campaign put the spotlight on the critical role that women-led organizations play on the ground in supporting survivors of GBV in conflict and post-conflict settings. The extensive social media campaign reached 1.2 million viewers across all networks. In addition, two events highlighted a harassment-free work culture and the

OSCE's strategic approach to combating Violence Against Women and Girls involving more than 300 participants.

**OMiK** held a theatre workshop in an art gallery and launched a set of stickers for the smart phone app Viber in Albanian and Serbian to raise awareness on preventing and combating GBV. It also held a series of events for secondary school students in several municipalities across the country. Using a train-the-trainer approach, the series concluded with three information sessions on sexual violence and harassment events in three localities, moderated by a pool of students previously trained on the issue.

and local CSOs, the murals reached all community members. Each mural contained written and visual messages, their reach extended through leaflets, a video, and social media and television coverage.

As part of its work with youth on gender, the **Mission to BiH** involved more than 300 students as well as young activists from three municipalities in the Central Bosnia region to create and hold 35 different gender- and youth-related activities. Over 650 persons participated in an interactive theatre play

and other activities against gender-based violence. **The Mission to Serbia** partnered with the Youth Association of Serbia to heighten youth awareness on gender.

The **Mission to Montenegro** produced a **television programme** on violence against women that aired nationally during prime time, bringing together relevant representatives of state institutions and CSOs to discuss the institutional response to the issue.



OSCE-supported mural against women violence, inaugurated in Saranda, 8 December 2023 (OSCE/Joana Karapataqi)

The **Mission to Serbia**, in co-operation with the **Centre for Protection of Centre for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking**, organized a series of training sessions for the staff of local social protection centres and shelters for the elderly, and for children in six cities, covering the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for victim identification and interviewing, as well as the consequences of being trafficked. The Mission also held a capacity-building event for **Municipal Safety Councils** to address human trafficking, migrant smuggling and domestic violence, involving staff from health and social welfare centres, schools and local migrant reception centres. The **Mission in Kosovo** organized training courses on how to implement revised SOPs in practical terms when working with trafficking victims, highlighting updates to Kosovo's<sup>2</sup> legal framework. The courses involved the Kosovo Police Directorate for Investigation of Trafficking in Human Beings, the Victims'

Advocacy and Assistance Office within the Chief Prosecutor's Office, and other relevant institutions.

### Strengthening justice-sector responses to violence against women and girls

Under the umbrella of the WIN Project and a joint ExB project initiated by the Transnational Threats Department and Special Police Matters Unit (TNTD/SPMU), national police training curricula on GBV were reviewed in countries of South-Eastern Europe, accompanied by a series of national workshops aimed at ensuring effective capacity-building of law enforcement officials on the issue of violence against women and girls.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

## Women in the judiciary



The **Mission to Skopje** produced a baseline study that brought an international perspective to addressing gender and diversity considerations in the justice system and women in the judiciary: **Gender and diversity in the judiciary, North Macedonia**. The **Mission to Montenegro** released its interim trial monitoring report to discuss unconscious gender bias in the courtroom.

The **Capitalizing on the Human Dimension Mandate to Advance Gender Equality (CHANGE) project** organized a study visit for female justice sector representatives from Uzbekistan to North Macedonia. Thirteen participants from both countries deepened their understanding of the value of integrating gender and diversity considerations into the justice sector. At the event, they expressed their readiness to mainstream gender into their respective justice sectors and to establish a domestic association for women judges in Uzbekistan.

**OMiK** organized a broad variety of activities, from high-level to local events, to strengthen stakeholder response to domestic violence. It held training courses for the Kosovo Police on how to conduct **risk assessments** and develop safety planning for victims. The Mission also organized five workshops for new police cadets on applicable legislation, protection and emergency barring orders and interview techniques to prevent re-traumatization, and had a pocket guide printed on newly-adopted SOPs.

Using its Handbook on Police Procedures in Cases of GBV and Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, published in 2021, the **Mission to Skopje** arranged two workshops to familiarize participants with legislative changes and how to conduct **risk assessments** and avoid re-victimization.

The **Programme Office in Bishkek** trained police officers on **investigative techniques in domestic violence cases**, including on the use of DNA analysis, ballistics and scent evidence. It also analysed the capacity of state agencies in charge of implementing **perpetrator programmes**.

The OSCE's **TNTD Border Security and Management Unit**, in partnership with the **UN Office on Drugs and Crime** and with support from the **OSCE Mission to BiH**, organized a regional training event on gender mainstreaming in border and law enforcement agencies from BiH, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The **Mission to BiH** supported the Republika Srpska Ministry of Internal Affairs

and the Police Academy to develop a manual on processing domestic violence cases and co-organized a series of specialized training sessions for police officers and crime inspectors.

As part of its efforts to address sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination in places of deprivation of liberty, **ODIHR** held three training sessions for penitentiary institution staff and members of monitoring and oversight bodies.

The Programme Office in Bishkek supported a monitoring programme on the needs and human rights situation of women in detention in Kyrgyzstan's Osh and Batken regions, revealing discriminatory practices and the lack of gynaecological services.

In addition to documenting the violations and presenting them to the correctional administration, the Office helped disseminate hygienic supplies to the detained women.



## ALBANIA Innovative and youth approaches to GBV awareness

The **OSCE Presence in Albania** produced **five podcasts** to raise awareness on the gendered dimensions of violence. The podcasts, called **Gender Equality Dialogues**, feature high-level officials, activists, journalists and one ambassador, and address the issue comprehensively through discussions on media, politics, sociology, justice, activism and local support systems, focused on providing solutions. Published widely on social media, the podcasts received over 550.000 impressions.

Another activity, the Youth Talk **Young people stand against Gender-Based Violence** engaged high school and university students from Saranda, as well as activists and representatives from the media, civil society and local authorities on the role of youth and civil society in preventing and combating GBV.



Women's NGO representatives participating in the Conference on Preventing and responding to gender-based violence during war and in post-war settings, held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 8 November 2022. (OSCE)

### Violence against women in conflict

The OSCE-supported Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) – a network of over 160 European women's NGOs working towards the prevention and protection of women and children from violence – to develop a toolkit on **Preventing and responding to gender-based violence during war and in post-war settings** for women's NGOs. The toolkit was launched during a regional event in Tbilisi, providing an opportunity for participants to discuss the role of CSOs in addressing the consequences of conflict.

On **International Women's Day**, the **RFoM** published guidance on the **protection of women journalists in conflict settings**. It underscored the ways in which crises perpetuate and amplify existing societal discrimination and historic marginalization and, putting a spotlight on events in recent years, focused on **content governance in times of crisis**, whether caused by conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change.

## Helga Maria Schmid



**@HelgaSchmid\_SG** Mar 8, 2022

Women continue to dedicate their lives to advancing peace, human rights & multilateralism.

In these dark times for Europe, honoring their contribution is more important than ever.

Glad to be part of #Women4Multilateralism  
<https://women4multilateralism.org>  
#InternationalWomensDay



## Violence against women in the public sphere

Women in the public sphere are targets of violence not only for their political views but also to prevent current and aspiring women politicians from engaging in politics and decision-making altogether. In response to increases in violence against women in politics, ODIHR developed a toolkit on Addressing Violence against Women in Politics in the OSCE Region, which provides recommendations for legislators, governments, parliaments and political parties, as well as guidance for civil society and women politicians affected by violence. It also offers examples of promising practices on preventing violence against women in politics from a variety of participating States.

In co-operation with **ODIHR**, the **Programme Office in Bishkek** held two round tables to present the findings of its study on **violence against women in national politics** to a wide range of national-level stakeholders.

Given ongoing and increasing **online and physical violence against women journalists**, OSCE executive structures and field operations undertook several activities on the issue. The **Mission to Serbia** supported the participation of three prominent Serbian journalists and media experts at the fourth international journalism festival **Fažana Media Fest: Women in the Media** to promote the safety of women journalists. One of them moderated a panel discussion on The Media against Women, while the two others took part in panel discussions on attacks against women journalists, their socio-economic status and the portrayal of women in the media.

Collaborating with the Platform for Investigative Journalism and Analyses, the **Mission to Skopje** conducted a country-wide baseline survey on **online harassment against women journalists**, resulting in the publication of the report **From Normalization to Self-Censorship–**

## Analysis of Online Harassment of Women Journalists in North Macedonia.

The Mission also produced a short documentary film on the experiences of women media workers facing online harassment, *Dangerous Network*, screened in September 2022 at the Media Festival Skopje.

The Mission to Skopje used the survey findings – up to 81 per cent of women journalists reported that they faced online harassment – to initiate a meaningful dialogue between journalists, representatives of the criminal justice sector, the Commission for Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination, as well as media associations, and to advocate for the adoption of long-awaited amendments to the country's Criminal Code. Amendments to the Code were subsequently passed, qualifying threats and attacks on journalists as attacks on officials performing public-interest tasks.

## 2.3 Ensuring equal opportunity for women to participate in political and public life

The OSCE strengthens women's participation in political and public life at local, national and regional levels by fostering gender-sensitive parliaments and judiciaries, building women's leadership skills, facilitating the creation of national and regional platforms for networking, and bringing youth and other diversity perspectives to the fore. It brings a gender perspective to the work of parliaments and local governments, as well as to elections, media engagement and activism.

## Fostering women's political participation at national and local levels

The OSCE's wide-ranging engagement on women's political participation included the publication of resource material for stakeholders on how to perform gender parliamentary audits and training activities

and support the promotion of gender-sensitive parliaments. The Organization also supported women's cross-party networking platforms and capacity-building for women political leaders and strengthened the capacity of women working at the municipal level.

In collaboration with the **OSCE Parliamentary Assembly**, ODIHR published **Participatory Gender Audits of Parliaments: A Step-by-Step Guidance Document**, designed to support the full implementation of participatory gender audits of parliaments across the OSCE region, as well as **Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament: A Guide for Parliaments in the OSCE Region**, a compilation of experiences and good practices from 46 national parliaments on mainstreaming gender into parliamentary representation, law-making processes and oversight mechanisms. **ODIHR** also finalized the gender audit of the Parliament of Malta.

Marking the 10th anniversary of the global 'gender-sensitive parliaments' agenda introduced in 2012 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, **ODIHR** provided direct support to national parliaments, promoting the 'gender-sensitive parliaments' approach and training parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in Tajikistan, North Macedonia and Kyrgyzstan, increasing their skills and knowledge on gender equality.

The **Mission to Skopje** supported the adoption of the **Action Plan for Advancing Gender Sensitivity in the Assembly of North Macedonia 2022–2024**, which focuses on measures to increase women's representation, the institutionalization of measures for gender-sensitive legislation and oversight, continuous professional development for Members of Parliament (MPs) and the gender mainstreaming of parliamentary procedures and policies. Key outcomes include the creation of a new gender advisor post and a working group to monitor implementation.

Following the **Gender Equality Committee of Montenegrin Parliament's adoption of the Action Plan for a Gender-responsive Parliament 2022–2024**, prepared with the support of the Mission to Montenegro, the Plan's implementation resulted in guidance being published on the conduct of ex-post gender impact assessments (GIAs) of legislation, an internal instruction on the safe reporting of discrimination and sexual harassment, and the publication of the brochure *Welcome Booklet to a Gender-sensitive Parliament*.

## Margarita Spasova

Advocacy Officer  
Ekaterina Karavelova Foundation



"[The] ODIHR Advocacy School on Gender and Politics helped me build knowledge on mechanisms for improving gender equality in politics and apply it in my organization's work with political parties aimed at advancing women's participation in decision-making in Bulgaria."

In co-operation with **ODIHR**, the **Mission to BiH** conducted a comprehensive assessment of gender equality in the political life of BiH, involving representatives of legislative and executive structures, members of the largest and most influential political parties, academia and CSOs. The resulting strategic recommendations will be integrated into the new **Gender Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023–2027**.

Field missions across South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and ODIHR jointly organized a **Regional Conference of Women Parliamentarians**, hosted by the Albanian Parliament in Tirana with the participation of women MPs from throughout the region, experts and guest parliamentarians from Finland and Slovenia. The meeting offered a forum for fostering women's empowerment in politics and strengthening both cross-party and regional co-operation among women MPs.

To build cross-party alliances and strengthen the capacities for networking and media communication and outreach of the **Alliance of Women Parliamentarians**, the **Presence in Albania** held a team building event and planning meeting that resulted in an action plan to foster a gender-sensitive Parliamentary Assembly.

In its second **Forum on the Role of Women Parliamentarians in the Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan**, the **Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** included a session on the role of women MPs in implementing climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes. The Forum serves as a platform for effective national and regional co-operation among women parliamentarians.

The **Mission to Serbia** held a seminar for newly elected and experienced women MPs on policies affecting women, including GBV, economic support measures for new mothers and gender-responsive budgeting

(GRB). The event served as a forum for cross-party exchange and gave impetus to the subsequent re-establishment of the **Women's Parliamentary Network**. **OMiK** supported a round table for women Committee Chairmen of the Assembly of Kosovo and the Women's Caucus to discuss implementation of the Law on Protection of Breastfeeding.

The **Presence in Albania** supported the third edition of the **Women's Municipal Excellence Programme**, providing capacity building to women municipal councillors with the aim of bringing gender-sensitive policy change to local communities. **OMiK** supported a **Political Academy for Local Women Politicians** and a two-day pilot programme, targeting male municipal directors on gendered perspectives to local governance. Putting gender-sensitive approaches into action, the **Mission to Skopje** provided women municipal councillors with accommodation for their families or children to enable them to attend Dialogue Facilitation Workshops for mayors, municipal council members and administrative staff. The five workshops offered training in communications, negotiations and leadership skills.

## Elections

**ODIHR** employed multiple – and many innovative – methods to mainstream gender into election programming. Illustrating its commitment, ODIHR dedicated the **2022 ODIHR Election Seminar** to the **Participation of Women in Elections**. An update to its **Handbook on Observing and Promoting Women's Electoral Participation** incorporated a chapter on **violence against women in elections** into the methodology to assess instances of violence against women voters, candidates and election administrators.

In co-operation with the **Presence in Albania** and the **Mission to Montenegro**,

**ODIHR** conducted gender audits of election administration activities in both countries, analysing the extent to which gender issues are considered by the Central Election Commissions in their policies and activities.

At the intersection of violence and harassment at work and elections, the **Mission to Skopje** supported the enactment of the **Procedure against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace of the State Election Commission in North Macedonia**.

ODIHR's CHANGE project aims to increase the understanding of good practices in mainstreaming gender in election monitoring. To foster this, ODIHR held three consultative meetings on gender-related electoral recommendations with election stakeholders in Georgia, North Macedonia and Uzbekistan.

## Media

The right to seek, receive and impart information is a pre-requisite for women's participation in political and public life. In collaboration with the UN and regional free speech mandate holders,<sup>3</sup> the **RFoM** launched a **Joint Declaration on Freedom of Expression and Gender Justice** on World Press Freedom Day, which highlighted how gender equality and the right to freedom of opinion and expression are mutually reinforcing, reflecting the strength of democratic societies. The Joint Declaration provides recommendations to states, companies, especially internet intermediaries and social media platforms, traditional media and the general public.

Through the project **Spotlight Initiative on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression**, the **RFoM** addressed the challenges to freedom of expression posed by digital technologies, such as AI, including

the consequences automated tools may have for the equal participation of women in the public sphere, in light of targeted hatred and disinformation being amplified, the shrinking space for pluralism and the prioritization of user engagement over diversity, accuracy and public interest. The **RFoM** also continued its work to improve the **safety of female journalists online** across the region.

The **Mission to Montenegro** published a **Handbook on media reporting on gender-based violence against women** for media professionals, detailing how reporting content can significantly impact survivors' lives, influence public opinion and policy makers, shed light on root causes, promote positive social and gender norms and mitigate risk.

The **Programme Office in Astana** organized training seminars for journalists, bloggers and CSOs on how to cover gender-sensitive issues in the media and combat gender stereotypes. The **Presence in Albania** issued comments on the amendments to the country's draft Broadcast Code, which resulted in provisions that for the first time prohibit broadcasting content that incites violence or hatred on the basis of gender or sexual orientation by providers of audiovisual media services and video distribution platforms.

Aiming to diversify gender equality discourse and engage younger audiences, the **Mission to Serbia**, in co-operation with Deutsche Welle Academy, organized a panel at the regional youth and media conference **Brave New Media Forum** to discuss the concept of **toxic masculinity**. Young activists, musicians and social media influencers from the region discussed stereotypical male attitudes and behaviours and their negative impact on men, women and society in general.

<sup>3</sup> The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Organization of American States Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information.



WIN Implementing Partner's Women's Peace Dialogue Platform meeting, 9 November 2022 (OSCE/Maaike van Adrichem)

## SPOTLIGHT

# Actions in Ukraine

Russia's war against Ukraine has had a disproportionate and devastating effect on the safety, security and well-being of Ukrainian women and children, including higher risks of trafficking and sexual violence.

Women's CSOs have been at the forefront of the humanitarian response and conflict resolution efforts, as well as supporting survivors of GBV. In response to the impact of the conflict, the OSCE mobilized resources to address the most urgent needs on the ground, including protecting women and girls and supporting women-led organizations.

On 1 November 2022, the wholly-donor funded Kyiv-based Support Programme for Ukraine (SPU) was launched across all three OSCE dimensions. The overall objective of the SPU is to help enhance comprehensive security in Ukraine and the implementation of OSCE commitments in all three dimensions based on the mandates of relevant executive structures, building on past work and helping to mitigate the increased risk to the civilian population due to the war against Ukraine. Within the framework of the **OSCE Networking Platform on Women Leaders, including Peacebuilders and Mediators** supported by the WIN Project, the OSCE Secretary General convened two special meetings with Ukrainian women leaders, peacebuilders and human rights defenders, to hear their perspectives and identify recommendations for concrete responses to meeting the needs of women and girls affected by the war.

Through the **Regional Women's Peace Dialogue Platform**, the Gender Issues Programme (GIP) **in the Office of the Secretary General** under the **WIN Project** provided emergency cash assistance to meet the humanitarian needs of three Ukrainian NGOs operating on frontline areas inside Ukraine. Moreover, in partnership with the **Women's Information and Consultative Centre** and the **Network of Women Peacebuilders**, the **GIP/WIN Project** supported the Ukrainian authorities in the **revision of Ukraine's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**.

To address the international and domestic reports on sexual violence against women, including the use of rape as a weapon of war, the GIP/WIN Project **organized two exchanges between activists from Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina** to exchange best practices in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.

The meetings resulted in a set of concrete recommendations for the OSCE and participating States on effective measures for

survivors related to their protection, access to justice and reparations, and accountability.

To assess the needs of Ukrainian women and girls, the Senior Advisor on Gender Issues undertook country visits in 2022 to Poland together with the Special Representative of the OSCE CIO in Office on Youth and Security, and to Romania with the Special Representative of the OSCE CIO Gender.

In an immediate response to the ensuing humanitarian crisis resulting from the war against Ukraine, the **OSR/CTHB** developed recommendations on the prevention of human trafficking amid mass migration flows. As the majority of Ukrainian refugees are women and children, the recommendations list specific measures to address the risks of violence against and exploitation of women and girls. Through a large-scale ExB project, the **OSR/CTHB** has helped host countries to implement these recommendations.

In response to continued reports of human trafficking of refugees, **ODIHR** launched a survey on **safety and security issues of women refugees fleeing Ukraine**, collecting empirical data to ensure that their voices are reflected in policies and responses designed to address their vulnerabilities to trafficking. Covering topics such as assistance received, experience at border crossings and in destination countries, as well as refugee rights, the survey received responses from 980 Ukrainian women refugees. It provides insights into the lived experiences, concerns and challenges that the women face when leaving their country.

**ODIHR** formed an extensive **co-ordination platform** for CSOs working with refugees from Ukraine. Monthly meetings provide an opportunity for participants to share programmatic updates, exchange news and discuss emerging topics related to human trafficking, filling an information-sharing gap among the multitude of agencies operating in response to the crisis.

## 2.4 Strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction

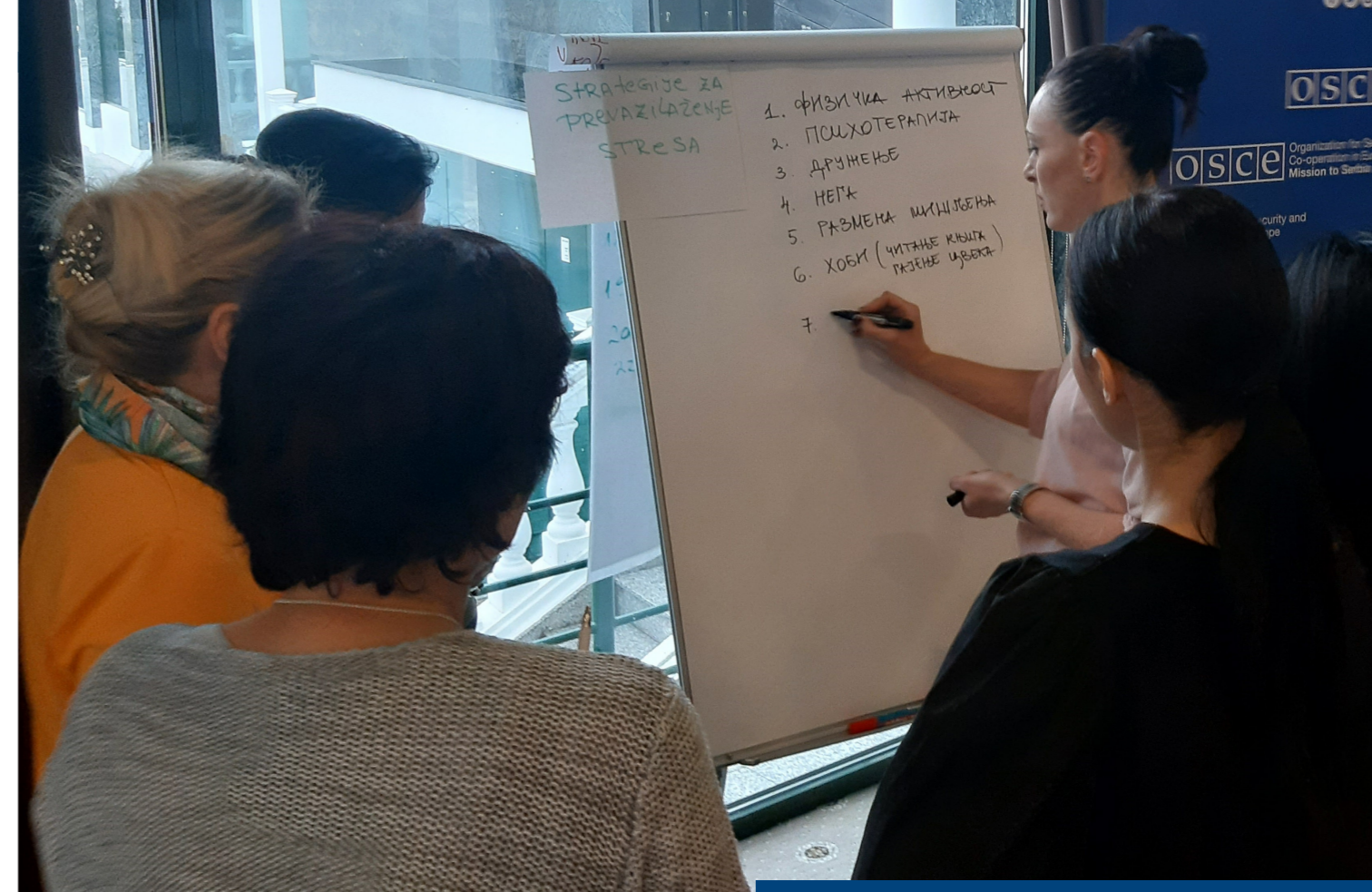
Sustainable security demands that women participate and play an integral role in decision-making processes at all levels. The OSCE maintains a strong commitment to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, including through the development of national action plans, integrating women into security sector institutions and strengthening the role of women in peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. In the face of the current crisis in Europe, the Organization's pivot to the situation in Ukraine and other participating States has ensured gender mainstreaming throughout its multi-level response.

### Peacebuilding

In co-operation with the **Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC)**, the **Mission to Moldova** trained women negotiators on both sides of the **Joint Expert Working Groups of the Transnistria Settlement Process** on communication, conflict analysis, integrative bargaining, interest-based negotiations and gender-based conflict analysis. The three-day workshop expanded the scope of potential positive outcomes for a wider segment of the population by including women's perspectives and fostered the building of consensus and partnerships across the dividing lines. "For the first time, I see the person behind the opposing party. I am curious to seek out more opportunities for co-operation," one participant said.

Responding to the influx of refugees into Moldova, the **Mission to Moldova** initiated the project Protecting refugees and host communities from gender-based violence on both banks of the Dniester/Nistru River.

School police officers learn about drug abuse prevention, 12 December 2022, (OSCE/Milan Obradović)



Participants of the seminar aimed at empowering women working in Serbian prisons, Vrnjačka Banja, 24-25 November 2022 (OSCE/Bratislav Redzic)

### OSCE support to National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

The **Mission to Serbia** supported the country's Commissioner for Protection of Equality to present the findings of its independent monitoring of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) (2017–2020) to line ministries and CSOs, as well as an expert panel to develop key recommendations for the upcoming NAP. It also gave support to the think tank **Public Policy Research Centre** to develop a policy brief on **Exploring the nexus between WPS and climate change**, recommending that it be incorporated into Serbia's upcoming NAP.

Collaborating with other OSCE structures, the **Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** supported discussions that led in 2022 to the endorsement of the **NAP on WPS** and strategies for its implementation. The **Programme Office in Bishkek** organized

a practical two-day course to strengthen the capacity of an inter-agency working group responsible for implementing the **Kyrgyz 1325 NAP**, covering key gender equality principles, monitoring and evaluation, and terms of reference for gender focal points in the respective agencies. It also supported **localization of the NAP** through the adoption of a joint action plan by local self-government authorities and CSOs through the WIG in Blagoveshenka village, Jalal-Abad province.

### Women in security sector institutions

The OSCE has engaged widely to **support increased recruitment and retention of women in security sector institutions**. Working since 2020 with the country's Police Directorate and Police Academy, the **Mission to Montenegro** supported a public information campaign to attract young women applicants to a career in the police. As a result, after two years the number of female cadets rose to 40 per cent from 28



Participants at the launch event of the new OSCE policy brief on Linkages between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism, 9 September 2022. (OSCE/Micky Kroell)

per cent. The number of serving female officers, however, has risen only slightly from 12.5 per cent to 13 per cent in 2022.

The **Mission to Serbia** supported the newly established **Serbian Women Police Officers Network** (WPON) to organize a regional conference to discuss challenges and professional opportunities and exchange best practices among women police networks from countries across the region, the first of its kind. The **Programme Office in Dushanbe** helped develop the **Association of Women Police (AWP)**, as well as the charter of the Women's Union in the Police and an associated Action Plan for 2023–2025, both approved by Tajikistan's Ministry of Internal Affairs. In Kosovo, **OMiK** supported a workshop for the AWP.

The **Mission to Serbia** held a seminar for women working on all levels of correctional services, covering gender roles, communication skills in challenging contexts and strategies for coping with the daily stress and pressure of the profession. **OMiK** supported the **Annual Assembly of the Women's Association of the Kosovo Correctional Service**, during which the Association adopted its Strategic Plan. The OSCE's **Border Security and Management Unit** published a revised version of the Self-Assessment Tool for Nations to Increase Preparedness for Cross-

Border Implications of Crises, mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout.

### Cyber/ICT security and small arms and light weapons

The **Presence in Albania**, with the support of the **CPC**, developed a comprehensive gender strategy on **small arms and light weapons (SALW) and stockpiles of conventional ammunition**. Through its comprehensive gender mainstreaming, including by developing gender-sensitive SOPs, training manuals, terms of reference and procurement processes, the **Mission to Skopje** increased the participation of women in the SALW project, resulting in the highest number of women representatives at a SALW meeting in Vienna.

### Cyber/ICT security

The **Programme Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** implemented a comprehensive cyber/ICT security programme for 40 women from the civil service sector in Uzbekistan between September and November 2022, to **bridge the gender gap in cyber/ICT security**. Sessions covered enterprise security, cyber hygiene and a tailored module for ICT specialists, improving participants' knowledge and skills to address digital risks and online threats.

### Preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism

The OSCE's advances into emerging work areas, include exploring the linkages between violent misogyny and violent extremism. As part of the **WIN Project**, the **GIP**, together with the **TNTD's Action against Terrorism Unit** (TNTD/ATU), conducted a range of activities across regions to bring a gender perspective to preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (P/CVERLT). This included the joint policy brief **The linkages between violent misogyny and violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, and the creation of two regional networks for female practitioners in P/CVERLT in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia**.

**GIP and TNTD/ATU** also strengthened the capacity of government, CSOs and media actors in **North Macedonia** on including a gender perspective in P/CVERLT programmes. Similarly, the **Mission to BiH** and **Programme Office in Bishkek** supported mainstreaming a gender perspective and gender responsiveness into national P/CVERLT strategies. The **Missions**

**in BiH and Serbia** joined forces to conduct trainings for local multi-sectoral teams to manage the **reintegration, rehabilitation and resocialization of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) and their families**, particularly women and children.





Participants of the Eighth edition of the OSCE Dialogue Academy for Young Women during a visit to the OSCE offices in Vienna, Austria, 23 September 2022. (OSCE/Fitim Xharra)

## Supporting Women's Leadership through Networking

The Networking Platform on Women Leaders, including Peacebuilders and Mediators

In 2022, OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid launched the first **Women's Peace Leadership Programme** to support women from across the OSCE region plus Afghanistan to play an active role in peacebuilding, mediation and negotiation processes. This innovative flagship initiative, implemented by the GIP and supported through the WIN project, brought together internationally renowned peace mediators and conflict resolution experts for a unique one-year programme of mentorship and

capacity-building benefitting 12 mentees from the OSCE region and Afghanistan.

Recognizing the strategic role women play in water management and the clear linkages between water and conflict prevention, the **GIP** organized in co-operation with the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) a high-level event with water diplomacy experts and women mediators, including the Women in Water Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, to discuss **women's meaningful participation in natural resource management and leadership**.

In collaboration with the **Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition**, the OCEEA established the first mentoring programme to support Central Asian women employed in the renewable energy sector. Focused on both energy security

and sustainability, the programme brings women and women's perspectives to a male dominated industry and has resulted in the creation of a network to foster interconnections and knowledge transfer. In 2022, 70 per cent of selected candidates to enter the German Kazakh University's graduate programme for Central Asia on Strategic Management of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency were women, a first for the programme.

Twenty-four young women from Kosovo and Serbia participated in the **OSCE's Eighth Dialogue Academy for Young Women**, organized by the **Mission to Serbia and the Mission in Kosovo**. The intensive 10-day leadership development programme focused on confidence-building and networking. The Dialogue Academy aims

to strengthen the women's capacities in the areas of gender equality, politics, negotiation and mediation. Through thought-provoking discussions with distinguished lecturers and guests from diverse fields, representing the world of politics, civil society, activism, diplomacy, business and the media from Western Balkan countries and beyond, the Dialogue Academy advances democratic political education and builds the skills of young women of both Serbia's and Kosovo's societies.

As part of the **WIN Project**, the GIP together with the **TNTD/ATU** created two **regional networks for female practitioners in P/CVERLT in South-Eastern Europe and Central Asia**.



Young women visiting the renewable energy polygon of Nazarbayev University, Nur Sultan, 14 July 2022. (OSCE/Giulia Manconi)

## 2.5 Promoting equal opportunities for women in the economic sphere

The OSCE works to advance women's skill development and access to employment opportunities, financial credit and property. At the same time, much of its work to advance women's economic opportunities significantly overlaps with other fields, including natural resource management, climate change, workplace and domestic violence, conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and anti-corruption. With its comprehensive approach, the OSCE forges new programmes in fields that have heretofore been characterized by both the absence of a gender lens and low levels of women's participation.

### Supporting women's equal access to economic opportunities

**OMiK** organized a series of workshops on **women's access to property rights in Kosovo**, where formal rights have not yet translated into practice. It also organized a series of consultations on promoting **equal access to employment for women returnees**.

The **Programme Office in Bishkek** conducted a study on the discrepancies between educational achievement and earnings in the labour market in the Kyrgyz Republic, with particular attention to gender and generational differences, under the title of **The Impact of Job-Education Mismatch on Earnings: Empirical Evidence from Kyrgyzstan with Focus on Generation and Gender Difference**.

In light of the obligations imposed on trade unions by the Law on Gender Equality and findings by the CSO FemPlatz on the position of women in Serbian trade unions, the **Mission to Serbia** supported the development of **Guidelines for Gender Equality Policies in Trade Unions**, containing model action plans and reporting templates. It also organized an online

conference to present the Guidelines to trade union representatives.

The **RFoM** framed its work on violence against women journalists as **violence in the workplace**, highlighting the **precarious working conditions** that mark contemporary journalism as a profession. The office's approach also underscores the impact of violence on media freedom and, more broadly, to access to pluralistic and independent information.

### Fostering women's economic opportunities and support to women entrepreneurs

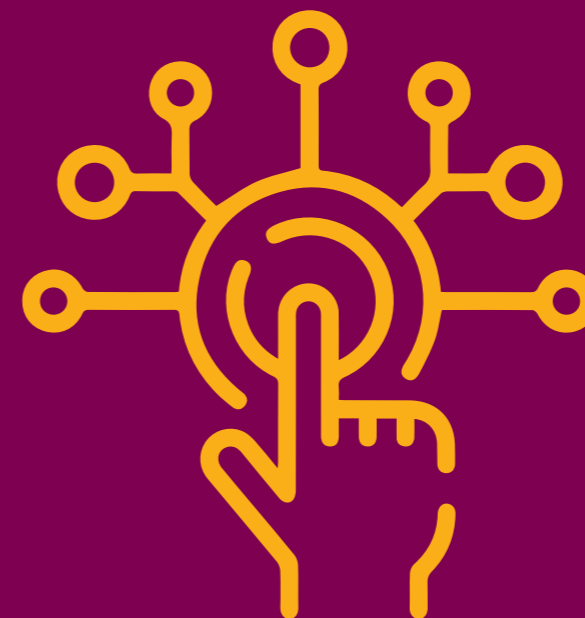
The **Mission to Serbia** undertook a situational assessment of women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, analysing existing support to women entrepreneurs and mapping new forms of co-operation. The findings and recommendations were published in the study **Support to Women Entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 Pandemic**. The **Mission to Montenegro** produced a **television show**, aired nationally during prime time, on the **economic status of women in Montenegro**, in which representatives of state institutions and CSOs discussed opportunities for women's economic empowerment and financial independence.

The **Mission to BiH**, in co-operation with the Women Business Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, trained women entrepreneurs on how to best use social media marketing to enhance their small businesses, ranging from the sale of handmade and food items to tourism. Bringing together women from both entities in the country, the training allowed participants to exchange their experiences and expand their business networks.

# DIGITALIZATION

## Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Threats!

Closing the digital divide, combating online violence and leveraging the use of technology to empower women economically have been among the key OSCE priorities in 2022.



Through the WIN Project, the GIP convened the first expert meeting on digitalisation opportunities for women and girls affected by the conflict in Ukraine. The meeting resulted in concrete recommendations for devising programmes and actions to support access to the labour market for women in Ukraine and abroad.

### Combating violence and exploitation through technology

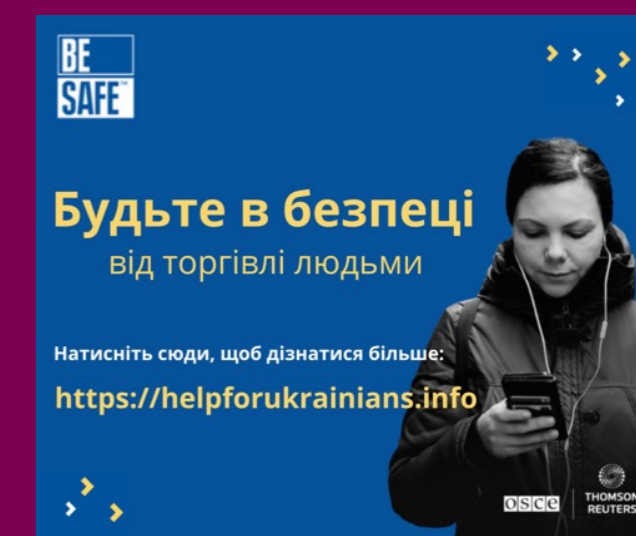
Over the past decade, technology has become a significant facilitator of human trafficking, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation, which disproportionately affects women and girls. Yet, policy action to curb the misuse of technology has been slow and fragmented. The OSR/CTHB's report **Policy responses to technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings** analyses legislative and policy approaches by governments, CSOs and the private sector to technology-facilitated trafficking. **In its efforts to prevent and combat the trafficking of Ukrainian refugees**, the OSR/CTHB focused its attention onto the risks posed in virtual spaces as social media is often used by traffickers to identify and contact refugees using the pretext of assistance.

The **Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** supported capacity-building programmes for 150 women entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan's Bukhara region on the use of digital tools in business processes. The initiative not only helped reduce the gender digital divide and increase employment opportunities in rural areas, it also gave women entrepreneurs an opportunity to showcase their products and services, allowing them to share their professional experience and establish networks.

Tackling the gender digital divide and empowering women and girls to participate in the digital economy were at the heart of the Programme **Office in Astana's** efforts in 2022 to ensure gender parity and mainstreaming when providing training on digitalization and automation in business processes, an initiative that took place in co-operation with Kazakhstan's Ministry of Digital Development. A series of seminars on economic empowerment for women in rural areas encouraged entrepreneurship among women of the Kyzylorda region and helped promote women's increased financial literacy and economic independence, which in turn led to the creation of new businesses, boosting the local economy.



Participants during the event aimed at fostering young women's participation in the renewable energy sector, Nur Sultan, 14 July 2022 (OSCE/Giulia Manconi)



OSCE and Thomson Reuters "Be Safe" campaign

Several field missions focused on the strengthening of women's economic opportunities in rural areas through entrepreneurship. The **Mission to Montenegro** supported exploratory research on rural women's opportunities for entrepreneurship and found barriers in the form of knowledge gaps, disproportionate burden in unpaid care and domestic work, as well as a lack of social capital, access to household budgets and ownership, and control over agricultural holdings.

The **Programme Office in Bishkek** made training available on business planning and marketing to women from the Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul and Jalal-Abad provinces. Selected businesses run by women entrepreneurs received in-kind support in the form of equipment, with the result that these entrepreneurs created additional jobs in their communities and employed other local women.

Fostering the reintegration of women repatriated from conflict zones, the **Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan** and the NGO Barqaror Hayot opened a production-and-training centre/bakery in Termez. By building professional skills that will open the door to future employment opportunities, the project aims to help women be less vulnerable and strengthen their resistance to violent extremism. Through the Gharm Aarhus Centre, the **Programme Office in**

**Dushanbe** supported the establishment of a group of women tailors, building skills to develop environmentally friendly products and promote green initiatives in rural areas.

### Natural resource management and climate change

Economic opportunity is often tied to ownership, control and decision-making over natural resources. Natural resource management and underlying governance issues have critical implications for environmental protection and climate change and frequently present a source of conflict. OSCE programming operates at this intersection, where women's low participation in natural resource management and climate change impedes their economic opportunities and restricts their voice in decision-making on issues that are essential to their lives and, moreover, the planet. Women's involvement and a gender lens applied in these domains are even more important as they both are distinctly and disproportionately affected by climate change, violent conflict and extremism.

Together with the Institute for Teaching and Port Research of the Normandy Business School and the Port of Le Havre, the **OCEEA** established the first-ever **Women in Port Management Training**, which empowered 14 women professionals from Caspian and Black Sea ports. As a result of the training and individual coaching sessions, the women gained self-confidence, boosted their leadership skills and strengthened their professional networks.

The **Mission to BiH** publicly supported **two young women lawyers and environmental activists working at Aarhus Centre Sarajevo** who received a series of legal threats, insults and verbal attacks after speaking out against the potential negative environmental impact of hydropower plants in their local communities. The young women successfully completed the Mission's Environmental Legal Clinics

Programme for university law students, which is implemented together with the Aarhus Centres. The Mission will continue to support young women and men in pursuing careers in the environmental sector while also standing behind female environmental defenders in the face of threats and pressure.

### Disaster risk reduction

To discuss the results of a comprehensive desk study, the **GIP** held a high-level conference on **Gender-responsive and Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction policies and management**, offering a forum in which experts and practitioners exchanged good practices for inclusive DRR management and policies. The **Mission to Serbia** published the study *Gender-responsive Disaster Risk Reduction Practices in Europe* to assist the country's authorities in strengthening community resilience by integrating a gender perspective into disaster risk management that adopts a whole-of-society approach.

In Tajikistan, interactive table-top exercises on **local disaster management** organized by the **Programme Office in Dushanbe** revealed the need for the integration of an advanced gender-sensitive methodology. The Office also supported the development of a psychological unit to undertake initiatives that provide emergency assistance to victims and relatives of victims in disaster contexts. The **OSCE Asian Partnership for Co-operation Group** together with Thailand organized an event on *Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives and Empowering Women in Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Responses*, aimed at promoting gender responsive and inclusive DRR and emergency response policies at all levels.

### Gender equality and anti-corruption

In co-operation with the **GIP**, the **Presence in Albania** held a round table – the first of its kind – on mainstreaming gender in the national anti-corruption policy. Involving

anti-corruption focal points from line ministries, the Anti-Corruption Department of Albania's Ministry of Justice and the National Anti-corruption Co-ordinator, the round table explored the integration of gender considerations and the development of gender-sensitive indicators into a new draft anti-corruption strategy. The draft document commits to adopting new institutional mechanisms to address the impact of corruption on women's rights.

After developing a gender-specific anti-corruption toolkit in 2021, the **Mission to Serbia** assisted the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption to conduct a preliminary assessment of the impact of the implementation of the gender-related measures set forth in the toolkit. The assessment found that the toolkit contributed to filling the gender gap in existing anti-corruption activities, and that addressing gender concerns increased the transparency of the Agency's work. The **Mission to Skopje**, after having conducted research on gender and corruption in 2021, produced the report **Sexual extortion as an act of corruption: Legal and institutional response**, recommending the **criminalization of sexual extortion**.



## 2.6 Building national mechanisms for the advancement of women

States' obligations to ensure gender equality require specialized institutions, often referred to as gender machinery, and the application of tools, including GRB and GIAs. The OSCE supports the application of the respective legal frameworks and tools, as well as building the capacity of national actors to ensure they are applied most effectively.

**ODIHR** supported the Ukrainian **Commissioner on Gender Equality Policy** to build the capacity of newly appointed gender advisors in regional (oblast) administrations and at the national level, and assisted the Secretariat of the Gender Advisors Network with the development of the **Handbook for Gender Advisors in Ukraine**.

The **Mission to BiH** supported cantonal-level gender machinery processes that resulted in the adoption of the Una-Sana Canton Gender Action Plan 2022–2025 and a decision by the **Brčko District Assembly Committees on Gender Equality and Human Rights** to form an institutional mechanism to respond to sexual harassment. The **Mission to Skopje** provided technical assistance in developing

the **Strategy on Equality and Non-discrimination in North Macedonia** and the drafting of the **Rulebook on gender mainstreaming for the new Law on Gender Equality**. The latter applies the concept of intersectionality and establishes new gender equality mechanisms, including a Secretariat for Gender Equality, a Resource Centre on GRB and a Council on Gender Equality. The GIAs were used to assess two laws in 2022: the Law on Central Registry of the Population and the Law on Protection of Whistle-blowers.

After a baseline assessment found that only three per cent of Montenegro's total State budget was gender-sensitive, the **Mission to Montenegro** introduced GRB to the Ministry of Finance, other ministries, and to parliamentary staff while preparations for the passing of the 2023 Law on Budget were ongoing. Strengthening civil servants' skills in analysing expenditures, income, beneficiaries, costs and benefits, and cost-effectiveness from a gender perspective, the initiative emphasized the equal representation of both women's and men's needs in the budget. Two publications, the **Methodology for Gender Budget Impact Assessment** and the **Methodology for Gender Fiscal Reporting**, will support the ongoing implementation of public policies with trackable financial allocations.



## Intersectional Approaches to Gender Equality

Across its programmes, the OSCE applies both diversity and gender perspectives. In addition to mainstreaming intersectional approaches, the Organization develops targeted programmes focusing on youth, national minorities, women and girls with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.

In North Macedonia, the **Mission to Skopje** organized the **Intersectional Gender Analysis of Conflict Workshop**, the first of its kind undertaken by OSCE field operations in the SEE region. Focused on analysing conflicts and operational contexts from an intersectional and gender perspective, the event shed light on how gendered power dynamics, attitudes and behaviours influence conflict. The workshop further examined national, ethnic, gender and class identity representations within the region and explored the intersections between peace, security and gender.

The **High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM)** and the **GIP**, under the **WIN Project**, commissioned a **study on the situation of national minority women in the OSCE region**. Conducting field research in four countries (Estonia, Kyrgyzstan,

Montenegro and Georgia), the study covered the participation of minority women in public life, their access to economic and social rights, and their participation in peace and security. It builds on a pilot of the same methodology used for a similar initiative in Ukraine. Upon completion of the research, which took place between 2021 and 2022, the HCNM, together with the GIP, hosted an event for minority women who were invited to share their expertise and discuss about the challenges they faced, as well as share good practices to support the exercise of their rights to provide guidance for the future development of policy advice in this field.

**ODIHR's I-CHANGE Self-Advocacy Capacity Building Training for Roma Girls, Women, and Feminist Activists (CHANGE project)** empowered women from under-represented groups in Poland and North Macedonia to find their voices and advocate for their rights and the rights of other women, fostering their equal participation in public life. Marking the month of Roma Women Activism (8 March–8 April), the **Mission to BiH**, in partnership with the **Roma Women network Success**, supported promotional activities and meetings with relevant stakeholders to advocate for an increased inclusion of Roma women and youth in decision-making bodies at state and entity levels. Following these events, the new convocation of the State-level Roma Advisory Board within the BiH Council of Ministers included young Roma activists as members.

The **Mission to Skopje** published **Preventing Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities**, the first study of its kind in North Macedonia, which examines the legal framework and effectiveness of protection mechanisms. In Kosovo, **OMiK** held a workshop on **preventing early or forced marriages** among vulnerable groups, specifically targeting Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

# Meet our Gender Equality Champions of 2022

The Gender Issues Programme administers the annual Gender Champion Awards, established by the Secretary General in 2018, which recognize outstanding.



Winners of the OSCE Gender Equality Champion awards in 2021, Vienna, 21 July 2022. From left to right: Elmaja Bavcic (awarded in the gender focal point category); OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid; Kalys Khasanova (project category); and Valiant Richey (leadership category). (OSCE/Micky Kroell)



Oleksandr Vodyannikov, Winner of the OSCE Gender Equality Champion 2021 award in the staff category speaks with Ukrainian journalist, lawyer and gender activist Larysa Denysenko at the Great Dialogue on the Idea of Constitutionalism and Women's Rights in Kyiv, 20 December, 2021. (OSCE).



## Valiant Richey

Leadership Category

Valiant Richey was the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings from September 2019 to April 2023. He represented the OSCE at the political level on anti-trafficking issues, and assisted the 57 OSCE participating States in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking strategies and initiatives.

Before joining the OSCE, Val worked for thirteen years as a prosecutor in Seattle handling sexual assault, child exploitation and human trafficking cases.



## Elmaja Bavčić

Gender Focal Point Category

Elmaja Bavcic is a gender equality professional with 15 years of experience focused on gender equality, including women and conflict, gender based violence and post conflict education. She has expertise in public policy research and policy dialogue gained through work in local and international NGOs and international organizations. Elmaja is passionate about initiatives striving to promote human rights and equal opportunities for all, and her activism is known in her local community where she on several occasions served as board member and advisor to number of local initiatives, supporting gender equality movement across the BiH and region. She holds MA in Gender Studies and is an author of number of articles on gender equality and peace building in BiH. Elmaja worked at the Mission to BiH from 2015 and was heading Gender and Youth Unit of the Mission, thus spearheading Missions gender mainstreaming activities and work on violence against women. Today, Elmaja works as the Advisor on Gender Equality in the OSCE Secretariat.



## Oleksandr Vodyannikov

Staff Category

Oleksandr Vodiannikov, PhD, LL.M., during 18 years of work for the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU), planned, designed, and implemented over 85 projects in diverse areas of the rule of law and human rights. He represented the PCU in various advisory bodies to further OSCE commitments in Ukraine.

As a member of the Judicial Reform Council (2014-2019), he co-authored the new version of the Law on the Constitutional Court (CCU), and contributed to the 2015-2016 judicial reform.

As a consultant to the Constitutional Commission (2015-2019), he contributed to developing and designing Ukraine's constitutional reform of 2016, specifically the part related to the CCU and constitutional complaint model. Oleksandr has unique legal expertise and recognized competence among the legal community, and governmental stakeholders.

He worked on a programme to promote constitutional complaint as a tool for resolving gender-related discrimination concerns, designed, and delivered several training courses on gender equality, non-discrimination, constitutional complaint, legal issues related to war, etc.

He also authored the manual Gender Equality: Theory and Practice in Comparative Constitutional Law as well as a guidebook on gender analysis in constitutional proceedings featuring international best practices.



## Best Initiative/Project

The OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek's team supporting small and medium-sized enterprises.

Team of the Programme Office in Bishkek supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, OSCE Gender Equality Champion, Project Category

Two years into their project to support women's economic empowerment, a team of five people at the Programme Office in Bishkek lead by Kalys Khasanova was recognized for their efforts to support women's economic empowerment.

Kalys and her team launched the Women's Economic Empowerment Component (WEEC) of the Office's programme in Batken in 2020. The Programme offers threefold support to women-beneficiaries: conducting workshop on business plan development, marketing and financial literacy, providing in-kind grants of equipment and providing mentorship and support during business plan implementation.

## A woman-entrepreneur developing first lavender farm in Kyrgyzstan



Aisuluu Duishebaeva develops first lavender farm in Kyrgyzstan, 27 July 2022. (OSCE/Kunduz Rysbek)

Aisuluu Duishebaeva, a story of a woman who developed her own business. Winner of an in-kind grant from the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, supporting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises across Kyrgyzstan.

The women's entrepreneurship support project developed by the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, has won the 2022 OSCE Gender Champion Award in the Best Initiative category.



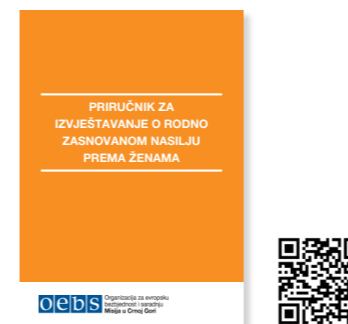
### **OSCE Policy Brief (2022)**

Linkages between Violent Misogyny and Violent Extremism



### **ODIHR (2022)**

Addressing Violence against Women in Politics In the OSCE Region: Toolkit



### **OSCE (2022)**

Handbook for reporting on gender-based violence against women



### **OSCE (2022)**

Participatory Gender Audits of Parliaments: A Step-by-Step Guidance Document



### **OSCE Academy in Bishkek (2022)**

The Impact of Job-Education Mismatch on Earnings



### **OSCE (2022)**

Engaging Men in Gender Equality at the OSCE: A Toolkit for OSCE Staff



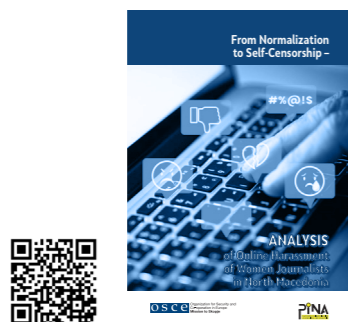
### **Disaster Protection for All**

A Gender Responsive and Disability Inclusive Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction



### **OSCE (2022)**

Support to Women Entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 Pandemic



### **From Normalization to Self-Censorship**

Analysis of Online Harassment of Women Journalists in North Macedonia



### **OSCE (2022)**

Gender and diversity in the judiciary, North Macedonia



### **OSCE (2022)**

Toolkit: Preventing and responding to gender-based violence during the war and in post-war settings



### **OSCE (2022)**

Sexual extortion as an act of corruption: Legal and institutional response



### **OSCE (2022)**

Gender-Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction practices in Europe



### **OSCE (2022)**

Guidelines for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Trade Unions



### **OSCE (2022)**

Policy responses to technology-facilitated trafficking in human beings: Analysis of current approaches and considerations for moving forward



### **OSCE (2022)**

Violence against women in politics in the Kyrgyz Republic: Results of study

**OSCE Secretariat**

Office of the Secretary General  
Gender Issues Programme  
Wallnerstrasse 6  
1010 Vienna, Austria

Email: [equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/gender](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/gender)

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