

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

National Mechanisms for Gender Equality

in South-East
and Eastern Europe, Caucasus
and Central Asia

Regional Study



UNITED NATIONS

**STRENGTHENING NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR GENDER
EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

**National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in
South-East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia**

Regional Study

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UNITED NATIONS

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Abstract

This study provides an analytical overview of the development of national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women in countries in South-East and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

It provides a comprehensive description of the diverse types of mechanisms that have evolved over the past fifteen years, examines their mandates, roles and functions and the support and resources allocated to their work. In addition to taking stock of the institutional development in the region, the study provides an overview of the processes and instruments that have been employed by national mechanisms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, and looks at the coordination of activities and collaboration between mechanisms as well as with other stakeholders at the national and regional levels.

The study highlights key areas of success and identifies the constraints and challenges faced by national mechanisms which can hinder effective progress towards gender equality and need to be addressed by the countries under review. While significant progress in establishing new and diverse institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women has been made, considerable challenges remain in the areas of institutional mandates, portfolios, visibility, and capacities.

Introduction

This study was prepared within the framework of the project “Strengthening national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women”, implemented by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), through the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and in close partnership with the UN regional commissions.

For the purpose of this study, ‘national mechanisms for gender equality’ were defined to include those bodies and institutions within different branches of the State (legislative, executive and judicial) as well as independent, accountability and advisory bodies that, *together*, are recognized as ‘national mechanisms for gender equality’ by all stakeholders.

They may include, but are not be limited to:

- the national machinery for the advancement of women within Government (for example a ministry, department, or office. (See paragraph 201 of the Beijing Platform for Action)
- inter-ministerial bodies (task forces/working groups/commissions or similar arrangements)
- advisory/consultative bodies, with multi-stakeholder participation
- gender equality ombuds
- gender equality observatory
- parliamentary committee

The purpose of this regional study is to conduct an analysis of recent experiences of the national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the states which emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, with the exception of the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania¹) that have become members of the European Union since May 2004.² In addition to those countries, the study also covers several countries in South-East Europe.

For the purposes of this study the following geographical areas were identified:

¹ From here onwards, the listings of countries are given in alphabetical order.

² These states are subject of the similar report which focuses on national mechanisms of the EU member states.

- Eastern Europe, namely Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine;
- Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia);
- Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)
- South-East Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

All these countries have principal domains of diversity: from an economic perspective, they vary greatly in terms of national wealth, resources, and GNP per capita ranging from several hundred to thousands of US dollars. These countries provide home to more than 100 ethnicities and languages although Russian is commonly spoken in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The size of these countries also varies greatly: from the Russian Federation with a population of almost 142 million, to countries as small as Montenegro, with a population below 1 million inhabitants. The countries also vary to considerable extent with regard to political developments and advance of liberalisation and democratisation.

Despite the fact that many significant differences exist across this region, there are important similarities. Most obviously, in addition to their geographic proximity, the EECCA share a common historical and political legacy stemming from the past. The relatively recent experience of transition from centrally planned to market based economies and democracy shapes the institutional context in which national mechanisms for gender equality have been established and operate.

This study draws on a wide range of literature and national policy documents documenting the development of national mechanisms over the past fifteen years. Sources used include, among others, national responses to the periodic reviews of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000) which cover progress made in the structures and measures that countries have put in place to support the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Complementary information on national mechanisms was obtained from the responses to a questionnaire developed within the scope of the project.

Context

This part briefly introduces the contextual factors that are specific to the countries under review in the study and critical to the development of national mechanisms.

The period of centrally planned economy introduced fundamental changes to the status of women. The state during this period postulated that women and men should have equal rights, and that women should have equal access to education, employment and participation in social, cultural, and political activities. By the 1960s, the Soviet Government developed a comprehensive system which provided universal access to education, basic and maternal health care services, as well as workplace protection, including legal and material support to mothers. Women in the workplace had access to generous and comprehensive social welfare including up to 140 days of maternity leave at full pay, and one to three years of additional leave without pay. This system was complemented by the provision of various allowances, and an extensive state-run system of childcare support. Employer discrimination against pregnant and nursing women was prohibited, and mothers with small children had the right to work part-time. Because of such provisions, the women's education and workforce participation rates in the Soviet Union were the highest in the world.

From 1937, the Communist Party in the Soviet Union started to integrate quotas for women in elected bodies of power at all levels. At that time, the quota for the Supreme Soviet (equivalent to parliament) of the Soviet Union was 30 percent, and locally elected bodies up to 40 percent. In 1960, the proportion of women in representative bodies of power fluctuated from 27 percent in the Supreme Soviet, up to 41 percent in the district councils of the people's deputies. This proportion was maintained until 1989³.

However, genuine gender equality was never achieved and the significant gains during the centrally planned period did not prove to be sustainable. Women tended to concentrate in the state subsidized sectors of the economy such as health care, medicine, education, textile and food industries where average wages were below the overall national average. Women were noticeably underrepresented in leadership and top managerial positions. With a few exceptions, women were not appointed to top decision-making positions in government.

³ Dono Abdurazakova, Public Office: The Caucasus and Central Asia, in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*, Vol.II, Brill, 2003

Furthermore, these governments failed to promote an equal division of labour within the family, leaving women with the primary responsibility for household chores and for the care of family members.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and political, economic and social transition deeply affected women, men and communities in the region. The process of economic and political reforms, especially at their initial stage, was accompanied by high unemployment rates, impoverishment, and growing inequalities and social exclusion. Local armed conflicts in some parts of the region also had a tremendous impact on the lives of women and men.

Women's representation in political decision-making at all levels of central and local government sharply declined, following abolition, in 1989, of the quota system widely practiced by the countries of EECCA. In the mid-1990s, the average proportion of women in national elected bodies was below 8 percent.⁴ In some parts of the region, especially in Central Asia, more girls started to drop out of schools and less of them had access to higher education institutes than before. Economic security for women declined and violence against women, including physical abuse of women by their spouses, has become a more noticeable problem, with increased estimate numbers of women and girls becoming victims of forced marriages, bride kidnapping and trafficking.

Women who make up more than 50 percent of students at tertiary education level in the majority of the countries of the region do not have access to well-paid jobs and remain underrepresented in positions of power. The estimate gender wage gap is an average 30 percent in the region. Despite high participation rates of women in the labour market, there is a tendency for them to concentrate in low-paid and informal sectors of economy. Women's age for retirement remains unchanged in some of these countries, namely at 55, while for men, it is at 60 years. Thus, although women in the region live longer than men, they have a higher probability to find themselves in poverty at the end of their lives.

⁴ Calculated by the author based on statistics from the Inter-Parliamentary Union archive data base, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif251297.htm>, visited on 20 April 2010. The figure does not include Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro for which information was not available.

The creation of institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the region cannot be separated from the overall process of democratisation, state building and political reforms, which started with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The political regimes in some of the countries reviewed in this study are still evolving. In many of them, important attributes of democratic cultures such as political rights, civic liberties, freedom of press, participation, the independence of the judiciary, to mention a few, remain constrained. Together with weak civil society, corruption and lack of efficient accountability, both vertically and horizontally, these factors seriously affect progress towards gender equality in the region.

The regional context for national mechanisms is also deeply influenced by socio-cultural factors. While the previous regime did not formally discriminate against women in employment or education, real equality between men and women was never accepted by all cultures in those countries. When the previous system was officially withdrawn, the vacuum was quickly replaced by traditional patriarchal views and values. In fact, the dismantling of the USSR and the formation of national states resulted in unprecedented growth and revival of religious and customary practices with impact on the status, choices and opportunities for women, especially in rural areas. The effects have been particularly strong for women living in some countries in Caucasus and Central Asia. As a result of these processes, policies strongly reflect a paternalistic approach to women, emphasising their role in the family, motherhood, and social protection. Resources of the educational institutions, the media and other public forums are not used enough to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, thus the issue in many cases is absent from national policy dialogue.

Meanwhile the governments in this region have made international commitments by joining the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action and acceding to the principal international human rights instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified without reservations. Some countries in the region (but not all of them) ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW too. The governments report regularly to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and actively participated in Beijing+5, Beijing+10 and Beijing+15 review and appraisal processes, re-confirming commitments and obligations made internationally.

The national machineries of these countries have evolved and new specific mechanisms have emerged, adopting national plans of action and taking steps towards improving national legal frameworks within the context of the constitutional and legal reforms.

All constitutions adopted in the process of reforms, contain explicit provisions that prohibit discrimination and guarantee equal treatment regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, political convictions, individual and social status. They all state that fundamental human and civil rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed, according to the principles and standards of international law⁵. Moreover, these constitutions ensure individuals' right to vote and to be elected, their right to participate in decision-making, their right to employment, education and health care, and equality within the family. However, the challenge is to translate *de jure* equality into the *de facto* equality. At the same time, many of these countries still have constitutional provisions that aim to protect motherhood which translate into protectionist labour legislation specifically aimed at women. Even in cases where such legislation has been abolished, discrimination against women in the labour market because of their real or potential role as wife and mother is still extremely widespread.

The declarative nature of constitutional provisions does not automatically provide mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities for women in all areas of life, including participation at all levels and all areas of the decision-making process. Moreover, such provisions do little to counteract the pervasive traditional mindset in terms of gender roles that is the root of many gender-related inequalities and problems in the region. As a result of growing awareness and understanding of these connections, all countries in the region not only confirmed constitutional provisions for equality between the sexes (also declared under the previous regime), but in addition to that, many of them (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, but also Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine) have adopted stand-alone gender equality laws. The countries that did not yet formally pass gender equality legislation have made commitments, drafted new laws and initiated public discussions or parliamentary hearings (Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Uzbekistan). The adoption of gender equality bills can be considered as one of the newly emerged but important contextual features in the region, with implications for the status and role of the national mechanisms.

⁵ For more details, please check *Drafting Gender Aware Legislation: How to Promote and Protect Gender Equality in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States?* UNDP, Bratislava, 2003, pp.9-10

In addition to the specific laws on gender equality, equal rights and opportunities, other legislation related to the status of women have been drafted, passed and enacted in many countries of the region, such as anti-discrimination laws; laws aiming to address issues of reproductive rights, prevent domestic violence or combat trafficking in human beings. Considerable efforts have been invested to harmonize legal regulations with the requirements of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and European standards (especially evident in the South-Eastern European countries). It can be stated therefore that the past decade is marked by a significant progress in the majority of the countries reviewed in this study, in creating a legislative and policy frameworks to protect women's rights and advance gender equality,

In a number of the countries this process was accompanied by concrete policy measures. For instance, some countries in the region re-introduced quotas, either through legislation (Bosnia and Herzegovina, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), or through other policy decisions such as Presidential decrees (Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan) and are in the process of developing mechanisms for temporary special measures to achieve de facto equality (Ukraine). Due to these measures, women's representation in national assemblies has significantly increased to reach an average of 17 percent for the countries covered in this study⁶. Women are even better represented in elected bodies at local level. However, women's participation and representation in the top managerial positions in the executive (ministries and other policy making and policy implementing institutions) and judicial (courts, prosecutor and other law-enforcement agencies) areas, as well as institutions of finance, media, top decision making in science and education, and diplomacy, - remain low.

Other important contextual elements relevant to the development of national mechanisms are linked to the emergence and development of activities of civil society, non-governmental and grass-root groups which have proved to be an important avenue for women to articulate their agenda over last decades.

⁶ Calculated by the author based on the Inter-Parliamentary Union data base as of 28 February 2010, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif251297.htm>

In conclusion, it can be said that despite the signs of progress, the implementation of policies and commitments for women's empowerment remains an issue of concern. The lack of practical implementation mechanisms and monitoring towards achieving results oftentimes leaves good policies without impact on the lives of ordinary women and men.

This brief description of the context within which national mechanisms for gender equality have developed allows for taking a closer look at chronological developments considered in the next section.

Evolution trends

Within the ex-USSR, a Central Committee of Soviet Women (CCSW) established by the Communist Party in 1956 on the basis of the Anti-fascist Committee of Soviet Women (1941) was considered to be the key institute 'in charge of women' although its role was largely a representative one. It had the objective to propagate tasks and achievements of the state in liberating and emancipating women in the international arena. The CCSW was an active member of the Soviet Peace Fund and other similar institutions, and worked under the 'peace, solidarity and social progress' domain. It was engaged in activities such as publishing a 'Soviet Woman' journal translated into 10 international languages, participating in international fora and maintaining links with women's organizations in 120 countries. Similar structures were established across the EECCA region, such as the Union of Women's Association with its approximately two thousand units functioning under the leadership of the Communist Party all over former Yugoslavia in the 1950s and evolving into the Conference of the Social Activities of Women in 1961.

With the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the beginning of the process of new state building, the 'old type' public organisations which used to report to the Central Committee of Soviet Women in Moscow were dissolved and the process of transforming them into new institutions within their independent states started.

As a result of the developments that took place during the 1990s, all countries in the region have set up, in one form or another, national mechanisms, transforming and designating existing or creating entirely new structures responsible for gender equality and the advancement of women (see Annex I). While this process is still on-going, at least three major trends in the evolvement of national mechanisms for gender equality and the advancement of women in the region can be distinguished:

(1) Establishment of new institutional frameworks with complex administrative structures that to a greater extent respond to the international requirements set by the Beijing Platform of Action. Most illustrative cases of this trend can be observed in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine;

(2) Establishment of women-specific institutions with a strong hierarchic structure and decentralized system in the form of stand-alone women's committees and councils first

observed in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and reported at the Beijing +5 reviews⁷.

(3) A still going-on process of re-organization of institutions.

With regard to the first trend, the emergence of new types of institutions and structures expand the traditional notion of a 'national machinery' as a sole entity to deal with the issues related to women, to create a system or network of 'national mechanisms' comprised of multiple entities across the executive, legislative and judicial powers, as well as civil society. The mandates of these institutions and structures complement and reinforce each other, to ensure a more comprehensive and holistic approach to implementing state policies for advancing gender equality. The following institutions listed below can be considered as being innovative for the region:

- Multi-stakeholder consultative bodies composed of the representatives of line ministries (at the level of a Deputy Minister in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, for example), academia, civil society and non-governmental organisations and chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister or other high ranking government official;
- Institutes of Ombuds (High Commissioners for human rights or human rights defenders) that emerged, with few exceptions, in all countries in the region. Only few are however specifically assigned to protect women's rights;
- Gender Focal Points (or coordinators) in line ministries, state administrative and local self-governing bodies (at the level of a Deputy Minister and a Deputy Governor in Ukraine);
- Gender equality directorates and units in key ministries and other government institutions;

⁷ UNDP Regional Bureau for Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. National machineries for gender equality and the advancement of women in transition countries. Report prepared for UN ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting Beijing +5. Geneva, 19-21 January 2000.

- Full-time Gender Advisers at key ministries (as is the case in Ukraine, where such advisers are appointed in the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence and others);
- Working groups for gender equality in the sectoral ministries including national statistical agency;
- Gender coordination groups in state administrative bodies, both at central and local level;
- Parliamentary committees and commissions in the legislative branch in the national assembly and at decentralized level;
- Gender resource centres supported by the province level administrative bodies (as for example in Ukraine), women's councils and women's groups at community level;
- Full-time deputy rectors in charge of women's issues in tertiary education – (as for example in Uzbekistan, where they are seen as part of the Women's Committee).

The emergence of these institutions, in their diversity and expansion, signals a growing understanding that a 'national mechanism' is the way to have a more capable, effective and efficient system to mainstream gender equality concerns across all sectors of society to achieve gender equality. From a chronological perspective, this major trend in the region - the emergence, expansion and diversification of institutions involved in the advancement of gender equality – is a relatively new phenomenon, observed over the past decade, and to a greater extent, since 2005. With some modifications and exceptions, this development can be observed in practically all countries of the region.

The second trend relates to the establishment of institutions in a form of all-republican Women's Committees and Councils. Such structures were set up in the early or mid-1990s and continue to operate, with some variations, in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Headed by a high-level woman such as a Deputy Prime Minister as in the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and extended to the grass-roots levels by Women's Councils

(Zhensoviety), these organisations deal primarily with the social protection of women, maternity and healthcare issues⁸.

The third major trend in the region points to the continued process of institution building. This can be observed to a greater or lesser extent in countries like Armenia, Georgia and the Russian Federation, where the previous structures were abolished as part of wider public sector reforms and the work towards establishing new structures is still underway. In Georgia, two structures have been established as national institutional instruments for the coordination of the state policy on gender equality: the Advisory Council for Gender Equality at the Parliament of Georgia and the State Commission on Gender Equality. They jointly developed a national strategy for gender equality, but the Commission ceased to exist a year after it was set up. An attempt to create another body – an Inter-governmental Commission for Developing the Gender Equality Policy of Georgia – also failed due to re-organization. At present, the Gender Equality Advisory Council is the only institutional mechanism in Georgia that coordinates the state policy on gender equality. The Council is led by a Deputy Chair of the Parliament of Georgia and is composed of parliamentarians and members of government, while non-governmental organisations and academia form the Expert Council. The Advisory Council cooperates with the institutions in the executive branch, especially in the social sector. The issue of establishing ‘a permanent institutional mechanism’ on gender equality is under consideration of the government, according to the response to the Beijing +15 questionnaire⁹.

Institutional development is largely determined by political will, and prevailing conceptual frameworks and approaches underlying top decision-making. From that perspective, the region can be characterized as being in the process of transition from a social welfare to a gender mainstreaming approach. State strategies and policies that consider women as ‘mothers’ and do not separate between ‘family’ and ‘children’ issues remain widespread, thus reinforcing traditional ideas about gender roles and women’s inferiority and vulnerability. At the same time, gender mainstreaming as a path to achieving gender

⁸ UNDP Regional Bureau for Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS. National machineries for gender equality and the advancement of women in transition countries. UNECE Regional Preparatory Meeting Beijing +5. Geneva, 19-21 January 2000.

⁹ Response of the Government of Georgia to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

equality as a normal requirement of modern nation state building and inclusion in the European and global integration process has become an officially adopted strategy in a group of countries, such as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Moldova, Ukraine, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia over past few years. Although the concept remains relatively new in the region, the trend is towards greater awareness, better understanding, knowledge and skills, manifested in policy documents, strategic plans, production of sex-disaggregated statistics; capacity building of policy-makers and civil servants; initiatives such as gender budgeting, and other practical steps. However, despite the signs of visible conceptual shift, there is still a long way to go to make gender mainstreaming serve as a comprehensive and common policy instrument. The overarching approach remains paternalistic and recognition of gender equality as a priority development issue is largely missing from the mainstream agenda.

Regardless of the new developments listed in this section, there are opinions expressed by some national experts and activists that in term of the definition provided by the Beijing Platform for Action which describes a national machinery for gender equality as *“the central policy-coordinating unit ...located at the highest possible level in the government and ... under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister. Its high status should be backed by adequate resources, competence and powers”*, it is currently non-existent in a number of countries. This concern primarily refers to the Russian Federation, but can also relate to Belarus, Armenia and Georgia. In other countries, the on-going process of re-organisation diminished powers or even dissolved already created institutions. For instance, in Ukraine, the Gender Equality Division within the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports in Ukraine was diminished to a unit within the Department of Family, Gender and Health policy. In Uzbekistan, the Women’s Committee chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister was supported by the Secretariat on Social Protection of the Family, Motherhood and Children in the Cabinet of Ministers. However, the recent abolition of this structure affected the ability of the Women’s Committee to exercise influence within the Government. Similar examples of such backlashes happening in recent years can be observed in Armenia, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. This allows the conclusion that despite the promising signs in the evolution of national mechanisms, **progress remains uneven and inconsistent across the region**, and the trends identified in this study need to be addressed in the process of national mechanism building.

Status of National Mechanisms

Types (diversity)

The previous section reviewed major trends in the evolution of the national mechanisms and pointed to a greater diversity of various types of institutions and structures that have emerged over the past decade in the region. This section proposes a closer examination of the different types of national mechanisms (see Annex II).

Women's organisations

To start with, the type of national machineries that focuses on women as a 'separate' issue often linked with 'family' and 'children' is explicit in the region. Stand-alone 'women's organisations', such as the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs (Azerbaijan), the National Commission on Women, Family and Demographic Policies (Kazakhstan), the Committee for Women's and Family Affairs (Tajikistan), the all-nation Women's Union (Turkmenistan), and the Women's Committee (Uzbekistan), are created as governmental structures within the Cabinet of Ministers (Azerbaijan, Tajikistan), or registered as non-governmental organizations (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan). Notwithstanding their status, these institutions are nominated as leading agencies in implementing the state policy on women. The uniqueness of these organisations is in securing - by way of special governmental decisions - of a 'mandatory' female Deputy head position within the state administrative system who simultaneously leads the respective branch of the women's organisation.

In Uzbekistan, the Women's Committee established in 1991 by the decision of the Government is registered as a non-governmental (or 'societal') organisation, but is considered as the leading agency to implement state policies on women. Chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister in charge of social protection of the family, motherhood and children, the Committee is designated to coordinate social partnership relations between governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Ministerial units

Alongside these explicit 'women's structures' that continue to operate predominantly in Central Asia, the most prevailing type of national mechanism in the region appears to be the so-called 'gender unit', office, sector, department or division in the departments of line ministries. In best cases, a Deputy Minister can be nominated to coordinate the gender

equality work in the respective sector, in addition to other responsibilities. In some countries, 'gender units' are complemented and reinforced by Gender Focal Points. These are established within the ministries, often at the level of a Deputy Minister. Gender working groups are initiated within the ministries and central and local administrative authorities with the purpose to facilitate implementation of state policies and programmes and to foster gender mainstreaming in their respective sectors. Ukraine illustrates this case in the EECCA. In fact, the country achieved significant improvements over recent years in establishing this mechanism with a great variety of new elements and structures across state bodies.

In Ukraine, a gender unit within the Ministry for the Family, Youth and Sports operates as a main leading agency in the government and is supported by an expanded mechanism which comprises Gender Focal Points at Deputy Minister or Deputy Governor level, made mandatory by the Gender equality law and other legislative and normative acts. Positions of gender advisers are introduced, at ministerial and administrative level. Often, these gender advisers, especially at local level, come from academia or universities, and contribute on a part-time or voluntary basis; at the same time however, full-time positions for gender advisers were recently introduced in the Ministries of the Interior, and Defence, and the TV State Committee. Generic terms of reference have been developed for the Gender Focal Points and Gender Advisers outlining the division of responsibilities. Gender coordination or working groups have been created at ministerial and administrative level, developing own sectoral and territorial plans in accordance with the State Programme for Gender Equality for 2008 – 2010. The latest element of the overall architecture that emerged in Ukraine were Gender Resource Centres created at province level with the support of the regional administration. They operate as information and training hubs.

In most cases, gender units are located within the ministries of labour and/or social policy/protection. From a conceptual perspective 'gender units' remain heavily linked with 'family', 'children' and 'population' issues, although in the South-East European countries a tendency is to have greater emphasis on 'gender equality' and 'equal rights and opportunities'. For example, in Serbia, the problems related to equal rights and opportunities are addressed through the establishment of the *Directorate for Gender Equality* in 2008, as a separate body within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a complex system is led by the *Gender Equality Agency* at the core of the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. In Montenegro, as of April 2009, a *Department for*

Gender Equality in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights was established as the national machinery for the achievement of gender equality, and in Albania, it is a *Directorate of Equal Opportunities* which is accommodated in the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. To compare with, a sector for population, gender and family in the Ministry for Labour and Social Protection is nominated as national machinery in Belarus. In Armenia, the Department of Women and Children Issues under the Ministry of Social Security shares the responsibilities of a national machinery with the Department of Protection of Maternal and Child Health of the Ministry of Health. In 2002, a Deputy Minister was appointed at the Ministry of Social Security to coordinate activities aimed at addressing women's issues. In Moldova, a gender unit with the Department on Equal Opportunities is also placed at the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Children. It is worth mentioning that despite the proliferation of various gender structures there is not a single case within the region of an attempt to create a stand-alone ministry with an explicit gender equality portfolio.

Parliamentary institutions

All countries in the region created parliamentary structures such as committees, sub-committees, commissions and sub-commissions which are considered either to be a full-fledged part of, or at least to be related to the national mechanisms. In some countries, these parliamentary entities have an explicit focus on gender equality, and in some they deal with 'women's issues' within the framework of wider portfolios. For the first group, Bosnia and Herzegovina serves as an example, with the *Commission for Gender Equality* that was set up in the National Assembly. In The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia there is a Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men in the National Assembly since 2006. In Serbia, the *Committee for Gender Equality* has been operating since 2001 as a permanent working body of the Parliament.

In Ukraine, a sub-committee on the provision of legal support on the rights of women, family and children works under the Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Verkhovna Rada (National Assembly). In addition the secretariats of all 27 parliamentary committees must have their own Gender Focal Points.

In the State Duma of the Russian Federation (lower chamber of the National Assembly), an Expert Council on gender equality has been working since 2008 under the Committee on Family, Women and Children. The Public Commission for Equal Rights and Opportunities for

Women and Men has been working with the Speaker of the Council of the Federation (upper chamber) since 1999.

In Kazakhstan, a group “Otbasy” (“Family”) created a Commission on Family Policy and Gender Equality with the leading party ‘Nur Otan’ that takes a gender perspective in reviewing and approving budgets at the national and local level.

A Committee on Youth, Gender Policy and Sports was established in 2007 under the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan. In recent years, at least two parliamentary committees in Uzbekistan, on labour and social protection, and on democratic institutes, self-governance and NGOs, have become more involved in the process of monitoring the status of women, especially in implementing the commitments under the CEDAW Convention. There is also the unique case of Georgia where the Advisory Council on Gender Equality created within parliament is designated to act as the national machinery.

Institutes of Ombuds

Offices of Ombuds (alternatively High Commissioners or Authorized Representatives) represent a new type of institution that emerged in the region over the past decades. These institutes are created in almost all countries in the region, either as fully independent bodies or under the auspices of parliament (as in Uzbekistan, for instance). They have the objective to promote and protect human rights and freedoms. In most countries they are considered as part of the national mechanisms, and in responses to the questionnaire, several governments (for example Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan) pointed to particularly ‘good cooperation’ on human rights established with the offices of Ombuds. The practice of establishing an ombud who deals specifically with gender-based discrimination and the violation of women’s rights has not been observed in the region, although some countries address this by appointing specialized staff within the existing Ombud institutes on human rights, at the level of a Deputy Ombud. This was the case in Serbia when the post was introduced in 2008 with the objective to deal specifically with issues pertaining to equal rights and opportunities.

Not all offices of Ombuds in the region explicitly list women’s rights and gender-based discrimination among their priorities and/or make specific efforts to address flagrant violations in this area in their practice. This happens even in the case when the institute of the Ombud is granted by the law the specific mandate and substantial authority to address gender-based discrimination (for example in Ukraine). The potential of these institutes to

combat gender-based discrimination and protect women's rights is not yet fully used in the region.

Inter-Agency Councils

Inter-agency councils (or boards) have become an integrated part of national mechanisms in the region. These bodies are created on a permanent or ad hoc basis with the objective to provide policy advice, ensure coordination and/or monitor the implementation of state policies to improve the status of women and to advance gender equality. These councils or boards can be specifically on gender matters, or may include gender equality issues as part of wider portfolios (for example the Inter-Agency Council for Gender Equality, Demographic Development and Trafficking in Human Beings in Ukraine).

The councils/boards are usually composed of representatives of ministries, at the level of a Deputy Minister (ministerial Gender Focal Points), but also include national experts, academicians, representatives of civil society, non-governmental and international organisations. They meet regularly and in some cases are chaired by a senior government official (for example by a Deputy Prime Minister in the Republic of Moldova).

In the Russian Federation, the Inter-Agency Commission for Equality between Women and Men established in 2006 is composed of representatives of federal and regional governments, civil society and academia. Its mandate focuses on coordination of efforts to improve the legislation for equal rights and opportunities, gender examination or expertise of legislative and normative acts, and integration of gender approaches (gender mainstreaming) at executive level. In Serbia, the Gender Equality Council under the Government of Serbia is composed of representatives of the state administration, academia, civil sector, and local governing bodies.

The work of the councils is usually supported by working groups of a more technical nature who meet on more frequent basis. The secretarial support is provided by the institutions specifically designated for this purpose. In Kyrgyzstan, a Secretariat in the President's Administration was set up in 2001 to assist a high-level National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development, in place since the 1990s. The Secretariat has since been dissolved and was replaced by the Department of Economic and Social Policies of the President's Administration.

Alongside these groups which are often seen as a critical part of the national mechanisms, a number of inter-ministerial thematic task forces are operating in some countries in the region, on a more *ad hoc* basis. Their appearance is linked with the implementation of specific areas for gender equality which require specific support. For instance, in Albania, an Inter-ministerial Task Group acts as an advisory group for strengthening the collection, analysis and use of gender-sensitive statistics and for developing gender indicators. In other countries, similar groups are created around issues related to the national reporting on and monitoring of the implementation international commitments (CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action).

Decentralised institutions

There has been progress towards decentralising gender mainstreaming mechanisms in this region. In almost all countries the national mechanisms have structures at central, usually ministerial and local levels (within the province, township and district branches), extending the system both vertically (top-down) and horizontally. The types of institutional mechanisms in most advanced cases usually include both executive and legislative branches, set up at province and municipal level. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is gender equality commissions/boards within cantonal assemblies and municipal councils, and in the executive mechanisms, gender equality centres and commissions for gender equality at municipal level or within the Mayor's office.

Another example is the Women's Committee in Uzbekistan, which is based on vertical and horizontal structures through a system of mandatory nomination of a female deputy across all administrative bodies at regional, district and township levels dealing with women's issues. Through this system, nearly 400 women have access to decision-making, at the same time performing the function of a head of the Women's Committee branch. This structure goes down to the grass-roots where 10.000 positions of women's advisers have been created at the local community level. The system was recently expanded to include full time positions of Deputy Rectors in charge of 'women's issues' at all higher education institutes and universities. Decentralized institutions have also been established in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Ukraine. In some countries, the system goes down to the local community level. In Kyrgyzstan, in all provinces of the country regional, district and township advisory boards have been set up on women, family and gender development issues. These advisory boards have consultative status. They bring together representatives of government agencies and civil society groups. A system of gender focal points to

coordinate the implementation of the National plan of action has been introduced in all administrative and local bodies at the level of the Deputy Head of the administration. This is similar to the extensive decentralised systems created in many other countries in Central Asia, but also in South-East European countries.

Gender Focal Points

The emergence of gender focal points and coordinators in central and decentralised institutions is a new phenomenon in the region. To facilitate gender mainstreaming both at the central and local levels, a network of gender focal points was created in Albania and trained between 2005 and 2008 at 14 ministries, 12 prefectures and 65 municipalities. The approval of the Law “On Gender Equity in the society” in 2008, opened new prospects for the institutionalisation and further definition of roles and functions of gender equality experts and gender focal points at ministerial or local administration level. In contrast to the recent past, when gender focal points were carrying out their ‘gender’ job as an ‘add-on’ to their primary responsibilities, the new gender equality experts have full-time functional duty on gender equality and domestic violence issues. Specific terms of reference for these experts at central and local level (municipalities) have been drafted by the national machinery in close consultation with other stakeholders.

Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focal points for gender equality have been established within line ministries, but also at central and local levels of governing bodies. Remarkably, gender focal points operate in the policy areas that until recently were considered to be gender-neutral (Foreign Affairs, Defence, Security, Justice, Finance, Civil Affairs, Communications and Transport). Posts for gender focal points have also been established at the Border Police, State Investigation and Protection Agency; the Directorate for European Integration, the Agency for Work and Employment and others. Training courses were organized by the Agency for Gender Equality on national and international legal frameworks for gender equality, domestic violence, gender mainstreaming, gender sensitive budgeting and other relevant topics for newly appointed gender focal points and other staff. A legal framework regulating the system of gender focal points has for example been created in the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.

Summarizing this brief overview, it can be said that various type of institutional mechanisms for gender equality have emerged and are progressively expanding in the region. There are, however, still some areas that need to be addressed. For instance, the tendency for the existing institutions is to concentrate in the legislative and executive branches while the

judicial area critical for addressing gender-based discrimination remains less involved in the process. Meanwhile, international experience has been gathered in this area with some countries having created gender-specific observatories and other relevant structures. These recent experiences should be reviewed and assessed for possible replication in the region.

Mandates/Roles/Functions

The Beijing Platform for Action notes that the tasks of a national machinery are “to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas”¹⁰. From that perspective, national machineries are more than just agencies for the implementation of specific policies for the advancement of women.

In practice, this can be translated into the following actions:

- initiating or recommending legislation and policies, to create a comprehensive legal base for the equality of women and men;
- monitoring their implementation;
- promoting gender mainstreaming in programmes and policies;
- undertaking advocacy for equality;
- ensuring the advancement of women, their capacity-building and their equal access to all areas and sectors;
- developing reliable statistics and other monitoring instruments and evaluation methods;
- conducting periodic assessment in identifying stereotypes and inequalities; and
- involving in this action the population at large, including the media, non-governmental organisations, political party platforms and executive action.

¹⁰ The Beijing Platform of Action, Section H, para.201

Ideally, the national mechanisms are seen as coordinating and monitoring bodies for developing, implementing and evaluating policies and strategies for gender equality. They may also act as a ‘think-tank’, catalyst and resource for gender mainstreaming. In reality, however, there is a great degree of diversity in the mandates of existing gender equality institutions, and in what is seen as a major mission for them.

In many of the countries under review in this study, the mandates of national machineries and mechanisms are defined broadly, to include policy advice to the government in areas such as advocacy, capacity building and implementation of state programmes. Content-wise, the mandates largely vary, depending on the state attitudes and prevailing approaches in policies. Geographic proximity to the European Union pre-determines a more explicit focus on women’s rights, protection against and prevention of all forms of discrimination and the establishment of equal rights and opportunities. There is a tendency to achieve a greater conceptual clarity by placing human rights and gender mainstreaming frameworks into the centre of their work. For instance, in Montenegro, the mandate clearly states that the “Committee monitors and promotes human rights and freedoms related to gender equality guaranteed by the Constitution” and performs other mandates. At the same time, the focus in developing and implementing state programmes on family, women and children, working with women on women’s issues are highlighted among the priorities in the mandates of the National Commission for Family and Women’s Affairs in Kazakhstan¹¹, the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan¹² and the national machinery of Belarus.

Thus, content wise, the transition from a ‘women’ to a ‘gender’ approach observed in the region is reflected in the institutional mandates. With the conceptual approaches being not well defined, the gender machineries in the region however have a number of common areas, where their roles and responsibilities seem to be similar:

- Policy advice (often in the areas which are traditionally perceived as being related to the status of women, including education, health, social policies and employment, entrepreneurship and decision-making processes;

¹¹ UNDP Kazakhstan. Gender Equality and the Status of Women in Kazakhstan. Almaty, 2005. p.53

¹² The response of the Government of Uzbekistan to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

- Preparation of the national action plans for the promotion of gender equality;
- Coordination and monitoring the implementation of the national action plans;
- Evaluation of legislation from gender perspective;
- Monitoring the implementation of the gender equality laws, CEDAW Convention, other international treaties;
- Coordination with all governmental and non-governmental organisations working on gender issues;

In the majority of the countries, the mandates, and subsequently, the roles and responsibilities of national mechanisms derive from the above. In some cases, the mandate includes capacity building and the provision of training (Bosnia and Herzegovina); and advocacy and information dissemination (Ukraine). Some countries, such as Albania, prioritise research on different aspects of gender equality, as well as capacity-building to meet obligations coming from the membership in the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

The national mechanisms' mandates assign to each of their structural elements particular functions, with an effort to avoid duplication and to ensure complementarities and a clear division of responsibilities. For instance, the National Assembly of Belarus addresses "legislation in the social area, including the status of women"¹³, while members of the government and specialists based in the ministry designated as a national machinery, ensure implementation of legislation and other policies aiming to improve the status of women and guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities.¹⁴

For institutes in the legislative branch, an important aspect of their mandates is linked to the evaluation of legislation to ensure compliance with international gender equality norms and standards. This exercise of examining newly drafted and/or already existing legislation from

¹³ The response of the Government of Belarus to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

¹⁴ Ibid.

a gender equality perspective, also referred to as ‘gender expertise’ was first introduced in the region by non-governmental organisations in the mid-1990s. It has since become an important component of institutional mandates in a number of countries in the region (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine) and has been integrated in gender equality legislation. The introduction of gender expertise of legislation results, as in Ukraine, in the development of specific procedures by the Council of Ministers and review of the Family Code and other legislative acts by the Ministry of Justice.

An important aspect of the mandates is the recognition of the role of local administrative bodies in improving the status of women and abolishing gender-based discrimination. In Belarus, “the state social policy is implemented by local bodies on labour, employment and social protection” contributing to the realisation of the state policies and programmes in the areas of “social issues of women, family and children, women’s employment, health protection, and insurance of reproductive rights”.¹⁵

The expansion of national mechanisms places considerable challenges on the roles and responsibilities of new actors in gender mainstreaming. The issue is being addressed by designing standard terms of reference and making them mandatory but there is still a lack of clarity, as reviews demonstrate in Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and other parts of the region. The introduction of Gender Focal Points or coordinators is particularly illustrative in this regard, with the new gender mainstreaming responsibilities seen as ‘add-ons’ by other officials. Gender mainstreaming obligations are thus often seen as being the responsibility of gender advisers only, further marginalizing the issue.

Overall, despite positive signs in formulating and implementing the mandates of national mechanisms and defining their roles and responsibilities, the challenges remain considerable. First and foremost, all mandates in the region fail to assign sufficient powers and authority to national machineries and mechanisms to enable them to effectively perform their tasks. Focus on women, family and children issues marginalizes the involved structures from the mainstream, leaving little opportunity for the national machineries to

¹⁵ Ibid.

exercise clout and to coordinate critical actors beyond the 'social sector', such as financial and macroeconomic institutions. Monitoring functions are not always explicitly articulated. The division of labour and responsibilities between the various actors in the national mechanism structures is also not clearly defined.

Despite considerable efforts applied over recent years, also with the help of the donor community, for the state policies to become more aware of the CEDAW Convention, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments, this did not translate explicitly into the national mechanisms' mandates, roles and functions. As a result, the national mechanisms tend to stay in the margins, concentrating on the implementation rather than the policy making level, with heavy emphasis on activities rather than strategic results and impact. Research and capacity building remain on the periphery of their work. There is a lack of advocacy to address gender bias and stereotypes prevailing in state institutions and in society, a lack of strategic partnership with critical actors, including the media and civil society. A further challenge is weak monitoring and evaluation capacities.

Vaguely formulated mandates minimize the role the national mechanisms can take in policy-making and reduce the influence they may exert within the government to achieve a more profound impact. The issue of the mandate of national mechanisms is closely linked with other critical aspects, such as the location of national mechanisms, which is reviewed in the next section.

Structure/Location (support)

The location of the national mechanisms is critical as it pre-determines their visibility, their level of authority, power and influence. According to the Beijing Platform for Action, "*a national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy-coordinating unit inside government*"¹⁶, and the necessary conditions for its effective functioning include "*location at the highest possible level in the Government*", which can provide the "*opportunity to influence development of all government policies*"¹⁷.

¹⁶ The Beijing Platform of Action, Section H, para.201

¹⁷ Ibid.

In the countries covered in this study, the location of leading agencies of the national mechanisms in the social sector remains common. This seriously limits the opportunities for gender mainstreaming by focusing on ‘improving the status of women’ and social welfare aspects. Support for women in such governments is viewed as support for their role as mothers and housewives — a welfare and women-in-development approach.

There are, however, some signs of overcoming the stereotype of ‘women’ being synonym for ‘social’, with the gender budgeting initiatives involving a greater number of stakeholders from mainstream sectors such as finance or economics, or introducing the positions of gender advisers in law-enforcement agencies. However, these initiatives remain individual and fragmented in the region as a whole. The need for a strong powerful institute to lead mainstreaming of gender equality concerns into areas beyond the social, health and welfare policies remains acute in all countries.

As was described in the section of this study dedicated to the different types of national mechanisms, the leading agencies are usually located within the executive branch, at ministerial level. This location provides them with the powers to initiate a proposal or revision of laws or regulations through a Council of Ministers, and greater access to decision-making and financial resources. But location on its own is not sufficient and other dimensions need to be taken into account to exert actual impact. In reality, the fact that the core institutes of national mechanisms (gender units) are located in a social ministry oriented towards welfare activities, such as the ministries of social affairs, social protection, labour, health, family, children and youth, challenges the expectations to integrate gender equality considerations in the country’s mainstream development policies and programmes and weakens their ability to influence key policy-making areas, especially the economy, public finance, agriculture and other critical areas. Moreover, such location further supports a bias that gender equality is an issue related solely to women and the family, without any relevance to other sectors of the economy and governance.

In order to emphasize the importance of the national mechanisms, some countries moved the national machineries from ministerial status to the patronage of the President’s Office (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) as is the case, for instance, of the National Commission on Family Affairs and Gender Policy. This new development can be interpreted as a sign of a new role

expected from these types of institutions as being oriented more towards policy development rather than implementation¹⁸.

In some cases, despite a high level location of the national machineries concerns about clarity of status remain. For instance, in Uzbekistan, the Women's Committee is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister but is defined in its mandate as a 'societal' organisation and is registered as an NGO. Recognized as a legitimate institute to implement state policies on women, and based on an extensive structure, the Committee has limited power and influence within the state mechanism.

In the region, the issue of location of the national mechanisms points to the need for continuous awareness raising on gender equality, mainstreaming and human rights among policy-makers and other relevant actors and stakeholders, to achieve greater conceptual clarity and profound understanding of these approaches that remain relatively new in the region. Gender equality needs to be internalized, to be accepted as a stand-alone development goal and an important factor, a pre-requisite for the process of building good governance and democratization in the region, and achieve socio-economic stability and sustainable growth.

This brief overview underlines the critical importance of the national mechanisms to be in the centre of the mainstream and shows how much needs to be done in order to make these institutions more effective and efficient, to be able to exert influence within the governments' structures and achieve a profound impact in advancing gender equality.

Resources

Another critical condition for effective functioning of the national mechanisms is the availability of sufficient resources, both financial and human.

In general, the information on financial resources allocated to the national machineries and mechanisms from the state budget, is very limited in the region. Only two governments

¹⁸ UNDP Kazakhstan. Gender Equality and the Status of Women in Kazakhstan. Almaty 2005, p.9

mentioned concrete figures in responding to the Beijing +15 questionnaire. To implement the current National Action Plan, the government of Kazakhstan allocated 68,4 million KZT (approximately, 461 000 USD) from the state budget¹⁹. In addition to that, 20 billion KZT were foreseen for 2009-2011 state budget for measures to protect motherhood and childhood. It was not possible to obtain relative numbers which could help to assess the proportion in the state budget. In Azerbaijan, the government allocated 120 000 USD in 2008 and 600 000 USD in 2009 for activities in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, from the state budget²⁰. Again, this information does not provide any comparative numbers to allow assessments and conclusions. According to estimates of independent experts in this field, there is a lack of resources and no budget lines for gender equality initiatives in the government programmes in many countries in this region and strong reliance and dependence on donor funding in some of them.

In terms of **human resources**, the national machineries and mechanisms are often seriously **understaffed**. For example, the Gender Equality Unit at the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports in Ukraine employs only two people – the Head of the unit, and one specialist. Gender focal points at Deputy Minister and Deputy Governor level, gender advisers in ministries and government offices, members of the Gender working group and Gender coordinating groups have multiple responsibilities and are often only part-time involved in work on gender issues. A progress towards relocating resources in the field has been made by appointing gender advisers to work full time in line ministries in Ukraine, such as the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior and the State TV and Radio Broadcast Committee.

In Belarus, four people work in the sector for population, gender and family in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection: the Head of the sector, a consultant and specialists. In Montenegro, where the mechanism is also financed by the state budget, the Committee has a Chair and ten members, four men and six women.

The tendency however is to assign **mostly women to deal with the gender equality issues**. In the countries where national machineries work under a 'women's committee' framework, it is entirely women employed as staff, further adding to the existing professional segregation in the labour force. But even in the countries with more gender-sensitive

¹⁹ The response of the Government of Kazakhstan to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

²⁰ The response of the Government of Azerbaijan to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

mechanisms, very few men are involved in the work, thus maintaining the stereotype that 'gender' is about 'women', and that women only should deal with these issues. For instance, in Albania, the recruitment practice assumed that only young women could be appropriate candidates to fill the system of gender officers at all ministries and state agencies²¹.

Another issue when it comes to human resources is professional capacities and qualifications which vary considerably. Very few women and men employed by the national mechanisms full time have professional knowledge, competence and expertise in gender and development issues. Where such expertise is available, there is a tendency to concentrate these specialists in technical rather than decision-making positions.

It must be acknowledged that over the last years, the number of people working for national mechanism structures has increased in some countries, such as Uzbekistan. However, interviewees from national mechanisms pointed to high rotation, low gender sensitivity, lack of overall competence, technical expertise and capacity for analytical work in the field of gender equality. Changes in leadership and organizational change further weakens institutional capacity. In countries undergoing swift management changes, frequent restructuring of the governments often interrupt the work of mechanisms, especially if they are marginalized and their functions not seen as a priority.

Capacity building, coaching and training of civil servants in gender-related areas has not yet become institutionalized. Usually, 'gender' training remains an *ad hoc* arrangement which takes place when the financial support and technical assistance from donors becomes available. Such training is usually conducted at gender-sensitisation or awareness-raising level, while building skills on 'how-to-do' gender mainstreaming and getting familiar with the basics of gender analysis remains out of scope. A systematic and systemic approach which is sustainable and targets various categories of government officials and civil servants remains to be developed.

There has been an effort in recent years to institutionalize gender equality and mainstreaming training through the introduction of short-term courses for civil servants at high-profile academies of state building and public administration and other civil service institutes, as was for example the case in Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and

²¹ The response of the Government of Albania to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

Ukraine. The courses delivered first as a pilot, introduced gender as a human development concept, or human rights framework; providing cases of international practice in gender budgeting, gender statistics, tools and instruments for gender mainstreaming. It is difficult to assess, however, the actual impact that these short-term courses have on government officials who have to undergo regular – every three to five years – training at such academies in order to pursue their professional career (see Box 1).

At the same time, fundamental research and gender studies have developed in the region, with gender equality courses being actively introduced in tertiary education. According to expert estimates, more than 60 universities and higher education institutes in EECCA have introduced, in various forms, gender equality as a stand-alone or part of an inter-disciplinary course (sociology, philosophy, economics, journalism, etc). Optional courses delivered at higher education institutes may include, as for instance in Belarus, ‘Women and men in modern history and contemporary world’, ‘Gender aspects of human rights’, ‘The fundamental principles of gender studies’ and other related topics.

Gender aspects are included into training courses for teachers, education specialists and management of education institutions. Textbooks and methodological handbooks have been developed in almost every country, and several academic centres in the region have graduate and post-graduate opportunities in gender related disciplines. The major problems are seen in the lack of demand for gender related knowledge and expertise in the labour market, and lack of prestige for gender related professions - while the national mechanisms are in desperate need of professionals in gender mainstreaming. Research generated in the region on gender issues often lacks clear links with policy analysis and policy instruments, both with regard to legislation and budgets.

Box 1: Gender Training for Civil Servants

Empirical Evidence from Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)

In a number of countries, such as Armenia, Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, gender training marks its first steps while in others – Republic of Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Ukraine – it has already been a practice for years. Regular efforts to adjust international experiences in this field to the domestic needs of raising awareness of government officials and civil servants have spread over various sectors and countries in the region. In general, gender trainings focus on gender sensitization of economic and social policies, including theoretical and applied aspects of gender mainstreaming, basic concepts of gender analysis, gender statistics, gender budgeting, and other related topics. The national mechanisms in the region have played a catalytic role in this process with the support of academia, civil society groups and international agencies.

In the Russian Federation, the State Academy for Public Administration under the patronage of the President of the Russian Federation has been a case in point. Gender training started there in 2002 with a training of trainers and a review of the programmes supported by the national machinery in cooperation with UNDP. In the next year, a new course on “Gender Mainstreaming of the State Governance” for civil servants was introduced to specifically meet the needs of civil servants from a practical perspective and make them aware of the issues related to the international women’s movement, gender equality concepts, implications of ratifying the CEDAW Convention, gender-sensitive policy planning to reflect the different needs of women and men in decision-making and government budgets. The course started as a pilot project and is now delivered on a regular basis. Hundreds of civil servants from various parts of the Russian Federation have taken it. In addition to the specific course, the process of mainstreaming gender perspectives into all programmes of the Academy was initiated, and now at least 21 disciplines have a gender component. The challenge now is to make the course a mandatory part of the training programmes for civil servants.

This experience has spilled over to some countries in this region, namely in Belarus, and Tajikistan through cooperation among trainers and other sub-regional initiatives. Gender education and training of civil servants is being addressed in other countries, such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan where it takes the form of either a gender-specific course or a series of lectures within a broader human development and human rights framework.

Although there are a number of challenges for those countries, a major issue to promote gender mainstreaming is to shift gender training from optional and one-time initiative into a regular system of education for policy-makers.

Main areas of focus/Issues

Issues mentioned in the earlier sections, such as the predominant focus on women, rather than on gender and development and gender mainstreaming approaches, to a large extent predetermine the main areas of focus national mechanisms are involved in. Critical issues (as well as the ability of national mechanisms to respond to them) vary across the region due to the diverse contexts in the countries, but in the majority the national mechanisms concentrate on the following common areas:

- Drafting and implementing national action plans and state programmes towards improving the status of women and promoting gender equality;
- Advocacy in gender equality, women and family related issues, manifested at celebrations of International Women's Day (8 March) as a legacy of the past, but also covering the CEDAW Convention, the campaign '16 days of activism to eradicate violence against women', and other topics;
- Capacity building and training (often with technical assistance provided by donors) provided to the staff of gender equality institutions, but also capacity building and training organized by the national mechanisms to the broader groups of civil servants, pertaining to gender sensitisation, the CEDAW Convention, domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other issues.

The issues that national mechanisms address in their activities are those that are identified as priority areas in the national gender equality strategies, programmes and action plans, and are related to critical development issues at the national level. For instance, in the Russian Federation (as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan) where declining fertility rates and depopulation became issues of national concern, the National Action Plans dedicates specific attention to demographic development, safe motherhood, prevention of female and infant morbidity, and the prevention of domestic violence. As national action plans predominantly focus on women and do not address men's roles, there is a lack of a comprehensive strategy for promoting gender equality.

Most of the countries covered in this study address the following issues in their activities:

- economic empowerment of women, by addressing women's unemployment, professional re-training and job creation, development of women's entrepreneurship, addressing the needs of rural women, through targeting women farmers and supporting micro-credit programmes;
- social protection, health, family;
- reproductive health, especially acute in the countries with demographic issues, such as those in EECCA;
- needs of disabled women and needs of women from minority groups such as Roma, which is particularly an issue in South-East Europe;
- violence against women, mostly domestic violence;
- trafficking in human beings and migration;
- issues related to women's representation in power and decision-making: advocacy initiatives, leadership training.

Issues related to employment and women's economic status are of particular concern for a number of countries in the region, especially in Central Asia. These include issues related to women's access to land and to micro credit, the development of farms, which often are registered in men's names, and job creation specifically for women.

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, for example, aimed to assist women migrants returning home as a result of the global economic crisis, by creating jobs and opportunities for self-employment, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Chamber of Commerce. Job creation programmes were developed in every province, district and municipality, with training courses and improved access to micro-credit. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, up to 60,000 jobs were created in 2006 in close cooperation with the Women's Committee, with half of them 'home based', specifically for women living in rural areas. In 2008, this form of employment was formalized, so that women working at home can be socially protected. The Women's Committee is also engaged in organizing trade fairs helping women to market their products and services, and providing support to 'rehabilitation centres' created in every province

where women can get professional help and advice in preparing and running their business activities.

In Azerbaijan, the National Foundation to Support Entrepreneurship has expanded the sources of financing to women entrepreneurs since 2007. The mechanisms of credit lines on financing small and medium enterprises established together with international and regional financial institutions created wider opportunities for women starting businesses. In addition, consultations, information services and other help were provided. Within the framework of the State Programme “On social-economic development of the regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (2004-2008) approved by Presidential Decree in February 2004, a Business Training Centre was established to provide entrepreneurs with consultation, information, marketing and training services. Regional departments have been established in several regions of the country. In 2005, the Association of Women Entrepreneurs was established in order to actively deal with all the problems of women entrepreneurs. 47 percent of women are engaged in agriculture, and the Government pays significant attention to this sphere. The Government has abolished all taxes in agriculture excluding land tax and has allocated a special budget for the support of rural areas. For this purpose, about 100 million USD are allocated from the state budget annually. Furthermore, the Government of Azerbaijan established a company “Agro Leasing” that provides support to women who are willing to start their own business.

While the economic empowerment of women is critical, and the involvement of national mechanisms in relevant programmes and initiatives can be recommended, the concern at this stage may arise from greater emphasis on ‘traditional’ forms of women’s engagement which are common for the pursued ‘home-based’ jobs. They are often limited to sewing, rug weaving and other handicraft production. Jobs based at home may be favoured by many target beneficiaries as they help women to combine income generation with their domestic chores and responsibilities. However, from a longer-term and strategic perspective, if the gender division of labour at the household level is not addressed, unpaid care work will remain women’s responsibility and will not be challenged, thus maintaining the current status-quo. In this regard, special interventions such as in Serbia where a national strategy is designed to facilitate women’s access to and participation in information and communication technologies (ICTs), or similar efforts in Turkmenistan aiming to train women in computer skills, are promising practices in the region in addressing women’s strategic needs.

For countries in Eastern Europe economic empowerment is also essential. In Belarus, the work is focused on the status of women in the labour market. Therefore, women's unemployment, and measures to address gender-based discrimination are among the priorities for the national mechanism. The interventions are addressed as a separate issue but also mainstreamed into the activities across various sectors.

To conclude, in the majority of the countries in the region the focus areas are women-specific rather than on gender mainstreaming. The national mechanisms are expected to play a leading role in initiating, coordinating and implementing policies, programmes and projects, aiming to improve the status of women, by working for 'women with women', but at the same time, their role and participation in the national mainstream strategies and programmes remains limited, which is intrinsically linked with their mandates, roles, functions, location and abilities to influence the political culture and organisational environment in which they operate.

Processes

As was concluded in the previous section, the national mechanisms remain adherent to the specific themes and policies, rather than leading the mainstreaming process across government activities.

The cases of introducing gender mainstreaming processes are still rare in the region, but are emerging and expanding. In several countries in the region (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine) the examination of existing and drafted legislation to ensure that it does not contain provisions of direct or indirect gender-based discrimination, has been institutionalized by law and made mandatory. The process started in Ukraine by the Ministry of Justice with the review of the Law on Military Service and other legislative acts and recommendations submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers. In Kyrgyzstan, a gender-focused examination of all normative acts has been made mandatory²² and carried out by the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. In Kazakhstan, a guiding manual for gender expertise of legislative and normative acts is developed. Improving legislative frameworks has become an important process to illustrate the national mechanisms' activities.

²² Decree of the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan N 24 of 5 February 2007

Another strategic and critical area for gender mainstreaming is the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of sex-disaggregated data (gender statistics). The practice of using sex-disaggregated statistical information is becoming more common in the countries of the region, and efforts are being made to identify and develop new indicators. In several countries, data from time use surveys is now available (Armenia); indicators on violence against women obtained through representative surveys (Serbia, Ukraine), and other important statistics are being collected on a regular basis. Almost all countries produced collections of gender statistics, and some produce them on a regular basis, with the funding made available for this purpose from the state budget (Serbia, Ukraine). In Serbia, the Government issued a Strategy for Development of Official Statistics, for the period 2009 – 2012, allowing the Directorate for Gender Equality to underline the importance of gender-sensitive statistics in population and demography, labour market, income and earnings, education, culture, social protection, criminology and other critical areas, thus laying grounds for efficient use of gender-sensitive data and indicators for policy formulation and planning. In Albania, as was stated earlier, an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Statistics has been created, to promote their collection, analysis and use.

Examples of wider use of gender statistics include Kyrgyzstan where the National Statistical Committee developed gender-sensitive indicators to monitor and evaluate the national Country Development Strategy, and to monitor the Millennium Development Goals. Information and data are presented in the publication “Women and men of Kyrgyzstan”. Similar work is conducted in other states across the whole region, and the national mechanisms have played a significant role to initiate the process and make it irreversible.

These two areas briefly described above – gender expertise of legislation and gender statistics – illustrate how gender mainstreaming is progressing with the efforts of the national mechanisms.

There are at least two areas which require particular attention when reviewing the processes which involve national mechanisms. This concerns the process of identifying priorities and main areas of intervention for national strategies, programmes and action plans, and the process of monitoring and evaluation.

In terms of these last two important dimensions of processes, both prioritization and monitoring may take different forms and be either a result of a participatory process, with the involvement of civil society and a broad range of other stakeholders, or, as in the case of

Uzbekistan, rely on specific recommendations, such as Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee after review of State parties reports under article 18 of the Convention.

The problem is that prioritization is not always done in a participatory manner, and often lacks a strategic approach. Programmes and projects tend to focus on short-term interventions with immediate effect, rather than to invest in longer-term objectives. On the other hand, monitoring and evaluation to a large extent have not become part of the management practice. Reporting tends to highlight activities rather than analyze actual results and impact. An analytical approach, benchmark indicators and other important elements of these processes are largely missing in practice in favour of political agendas.

Instruments (Policies/Strategies/National Action Plans)

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, national action plans have become important policy instruments in advancing the gender equality agenda in the region. National action plans were adopted in all countries in the region soon after the Beijing conference but varied considerably in terms of duration, allocated funding and level of their approval.

In many of the countries covered in this study, state policies on gender equality and the improvement of women's status exist as national strategies and state programmes. National action plans are formulated with short to mid-term objectives, activities and relevant responsible parties. Some action plans include only ministries, province administration and local self-governing institutions, while others include also the civil society sector in recognition of the importance of this player in achieving gender equality goals. At the time of writing, many of the countries in the region have their third national action plans approved and being implemented, and plan next steps. Little or no information is available on any comprehensive assessments or evaluation, by the government or independently, on the actual results, achievements and impact of the national action plans that have been implemented.

The national action plans may have different forms and formats. Sometimes they are approved at ministerial level, and sometimes at a higher level, by the Prime Minister or President. In Belarus, the National Plan for Gender Equality, 2008-2010, was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers in 2008. In Kyrgyzstan, the National Action Plan for 2007-2010 was approved by the Decree of the President of 20 August 2007, N 369, as a fundamental document which defines the state policy on gender equality, its objectives, principles, main

directives and priorities within the framework of the national Country Development Strategy for 2009-2011. The National Action Plan envisages a range of measures in all strategic areas, including improving the institutional mechanisms for gender equality, achieving a balanced representation and participation between women and men at all levels of decision-making, the socio-economic status of women, addressing gender aspects of health, education, culture, eliminating violence, and raising awareness.

In Kazakhstan, the Strategy for Gender Equality, 2006-2016, was approved by the Decree of the President²³. It identifies the main tasks as balanced representation of women and men in positions of power, equal opportunities for economic independence, access to entrepreneurship, professional growth, equal rights and responsibilities in the family and freedom from violence. The Strategy contains a set of indicators developed in accordance with international requirements, to monitor its implementation. Based on the Strategy, a Plan of Action was approved by the Government's resolution, for 2005-2008, with 45 activities. Within the framework of the action plan, a national network of schools for women's leadership was created, with 36 civil society groups from all parts of the country. A new Labour Code entered into force in 2007. It contains provisions for women with family responsibilities. In addition to the action plan, a state programme on health sector development for 2005-2010 is being realized which envisages a range of measures to improve women's and children's health.

Within the framework of the action plan to improve the system of labour and employment (2008-2010) and to implement the Law on labour and targeted social assistance, adopted in 2009, specific measures are underway that aim at helping unemployed women to undergo professional re-orientation courses, and to find jobs. High rates of economic growth allowed for more comprehensive social support measures to families with children (one-time help at child birth; subsidy until 12 months and subsidy for families with low incomes until their child reaches 18 years). In addition to that, in accordance with anti-crisis measures, the government allocated 240 billion KZT to support small and medium entrepreneurship where a possibility for a women specific programme is being considered. To further implement the state strategy, a new action plan for 2009-2011 was approved by the resolution of the Government of Kazakhstan on 15 January 2009.

²³ The Decree of the President of Kazakhstan N 1667 of 29 November 2005

In 2006, the National Strategy for Equal Rights and Opportunities was approved at inter-agency level in the Russian Federation (Gender Strategy of the Russian Federation). It aims to achieve gender equality by mainstreaming gender concerns in the system of state governance, legislation, education, and other fields. Its main directives include the achievement of gender equality in the political sphere, parity in governing bodies at all levels, the elimination of gender inequality in the economic status of women and men, the eradication of discrimination in the economic sphere, women's employment, actions to reduce violence, and the development of services to help victims of violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking.

In Serbia, the National Strategy for the Improvement of Women's Status and Advancement of Gender Equality (2009-2015) covers areas from women's participation in decision making, economic empowerment, education, and health, to violence against women, media and social awareness. The Strategy also regulates the screening of mechanisms which is mandatory for monitoring and reporting procedures. This means that the Government was recognized to be the national top-level coordination mechanism, being the holder of the most important executive authority in the country. The members of the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality and the representatives of the Council for Gender Equality of the Government are seen as part of the national coordinating system for the implementation of the national action plan.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted two important documents that refer to gender equality: first, a Gender Action Plan (GAP) in 2006, and second, a Framework Plan of Activities for Implementation of Concluding Remarks of the UN Committee 2008-2010. The latter obligates the Gender Equality Agency to implement recommendations of the CEDAW Committee related to the update of statistics, changes and harmonization of existing legislation with the Law on Gender Equality, and the preparation of a programme for the reduction in women's unemployment.

In addition to the state strategies, programmes and national action plans specifically on gender equality, the governments also adopted 'thematic' strategies dealing with prevention of domestic violence; trafficking in human beings and other areas identified as 'critical'.

The implementation of national action plans is usually funded by the state budget, but also by local budgets and other sources. The State Programme for Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukraine until 2010 requires each ministry to develop its own sectoral or ministerial plan,

including budgetary allocations, in compliance with national programme directives. The same requirement concerns every province or region in the country.

To summarize, national action plans have become critical policy instruments in the region to strengthen the state commitments and mobilize public support. In a number of cases, national action plans are complemented by longer-term strategies and programmes that outline the governments' long-term vision to overcome gender inequalities and improve the status of women.

However, there is much that needs to be done to make these instruments effective policy tools, with more realistic and feasible targets and results, supported by measurable indicators of success and adequate funding. In practice, these plans are often marginalized from mainstream national programmes, are seriously under-funded, and their implementation is problematic.

In most of the countries covered in this study, national mechanisms have been seen as main coordinating and monitoring bodies of the national action plans, but lack of sufficient authority prevents them from effectively and efficiently performing this role. Monitoring implementation and evaluation of the national action plans is an issue. Agreed indicators to measure progress towards gender equality are missing. Coordination and collaboration both between the national mechanisms and with various stakeholders is also critical for the successful implementation of the national action plans.

Coordination/Collaboration

...between mechanisms

In all countries of the region, coordination and collaboration between various actors of national mechanisms and other parts of government have become intrinsic part of the system to mobilize efforts in the implementation of the national action plans. In Azerbaijan, since the establishment the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs, a Coordination Council was formed, consisting of representatives (gender focal points) from all government agencies, the offices of Ombuds, the media, women's groups, and civil society. The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan works in close cooperation with the parliamentary commissions, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Chamber of Commerce, the Office of Ombuds, the National Association of Non-government Organizations (NANNOUZ), and other civil society organizations established under its auspices. In some countries, these forms of cooperation and collaboration are formalized, as in the case of Kyrgyzstan where by

the Decree of the President issued in 2006, the status of the National Council for women, family and gender development was upgraded, and its powers and composition expanded to include members of the government and to ensure greater representation of civil society groups.

Another example is the Inter-Agency Committee (council or board) on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development and Human Trafficking Prevention in Ukraine, which was established by the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers in 2007. By the same resolution, the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports was designated as a Chair of the Committee. The main purpose of the Inter-Agency Committee is to act as a high-level coordination body to monitor the implementation of the state policies and programmes in the area of gender equality, demographic development and trafficking in human beings, including the implementation of the State Programme on Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukraine until 2010. The majority of ministries are members of the Inter-Agency Committee. Furthermore the Committee includes experts, academics, practitioners, representatives of civil society and international organizations. Similar coordinating councils have been formed in most provinces under the regional administration.

Coordinating bodies similar to those described above have been formed in all countries covered in this study. The issue is how frequently they meet, at what level, how the meeting agenda is formed, and what follow-up is ensured. Many stakeholders raised concerns about lack of coordination and insufficient collaboration between various parts of national mechanisms and between them and other agencies and sectors of the government. This lack of coordination and collaboration prevents effective and efficient implementation of the state programmes despite the presence of formal coordinating bodies. The meetings of these coordinating bodies are reported to be irregular in many countries. Even when these meetings take place, they often do not result in increased synergies, common strategies of action, and at the end improved coordination. Very specific areas such as trafficking on human beings form an exception, which may be due to the higher priority attached to this issue in government policies over the last years. In terms of the implementation of national action plans, the review often takes a formal approach. Another observation that was made concerns the emphasis on activities and events rather than the assessment and achievement of longer-term results.

The review of coordination and collaboration between the national mechanisms and other structures will not be complete without looking into collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders such as civil society, media, academia and international community.

...with other stakeholders

With respect to coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders, the process and the outcomes highly depend on the overall context and the state of democratic reforms in the country. Although civil society and especially women NGOs have strived continuously over the last decade to promote gender equality, the process is still under development in the region. A dialogue on major issues of public concern is away from regular and can be difficult to start in some of those countries. At the same time, mostly in the Eastern European countries, the cooperation between state and civil society has been significantly improved and strengthened in recent years, to become an important factor in the overall progress towards equality. The national mechanism structures regularly collaborated with NGOs in drafting laws and strategies, organizing joint activities and exchanging information.

In Albania, legislation “On measures against violence in family relations”²⁴ was in fact a civil society initiative drafted by a group of NGOs, with a petition which gathered 20,000 signatures demanding the Law to be adopted by Parliament. Similarly, legislation “On Gender Equity in the Society”²⁵, initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities was widely consulted with NGOs and activist groups. During debates in Parliament, a civil society group lobbied through a petition for the approval of the gender equity law and acceptance of quotas.

Civil society in EECCA is represented by various groups, often created under the auspices or with participation of government agencies. These are so-called ‘societal’, ‘mass’ organizations or ‘GONGOs’ (‘government organized NGOs’), established to raise funds, and/or implement charitable, social welfare, educational or public awareness programmes in a variety of fields. As an alternative to them, a new type of non-profit, or non-governmental and non-commercial organisations (NGO community) emerged and began to develop with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Concerns over the role of NGOs in ‘colour revolutions’ in Central Asia and Eastern Europe had prompted some governments to

²⁴ Law No. 9669, dated December 18th, 2006

²⁵ Law No. 9970, dated July 24th, 2008

launch an investigation of NGOs, especially those in receipt of foreign funding. Therefore, over recent years, many of civil society groups have experienced intensive pressure which has brought many of them to closure if they were unable to pass new registration. As a consequence, the degree and quality of collaboration of the national mechanisms with the NGOs was inevitably affected.

There are some examples of good practices, however, that demonstrate attempts to build trust and partnership between national mechanisms and civil society groups. This includes a Forum of Women in Kazakhstan, which meets every three years, and a Civic Forum, which brings together government agencies, civil society and international organisations every two years. The National Commission *“collaborates closely with all civil society organisations that are engaged in issues related to family, women, children and achievement of gender equality”*.²⁶ In recognition of their contribution, 54 leaders of civil society groups have been given government awards in occasion of the 10th anniversary of the National Commission. In the Russian Federation, for better coordination between federal power and civil society, a Coordination Board on gender issues was set up.

Overall, there are signs of a greater cooperation and partnerships between national mechanisms and NGOs horizontally and vertically, which manifests itself in joint actions, campaigns, round tables, conferences and other initiatives, both at federal and local levels.

In conclusion to this section, it is also essential to mention an entirely new form of cooperation between national mechanisms observed over past years. With the support of the international donor community and development agencies, new regional and sub-regional meetings, seminars, exchanges of experience and joint initiatives emerged in a collaborative effort. A case in point is the Gender and Economic initiative in Central Asia which brings together, with the support of the UN ECE, national machineries and other key actors in an effort to further advance gender mainstreaming and explore areas of mutual interest such as gender budgeting initiatives, encouraging learning from international experience and cross-country cooperation.

²⁶ National Response of Kazakhstan to the Beijing +15 questionnaire

Key areas of success

Since the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, a qualitative change has been taking place across the region in moving ahead the gender equality agenda. The key areas of success have been the areas where political will and determination met human and financial resources, well-developed and implemented strategies and support and involvement of multiple stakeholders, including academia, the expert community, the media, NGOs and grass-roots organisations. The success stories in the region vary from the legislative initiatives leading to enacted gender equality laws, to local initiatives that improved the status and well-being of women and men at the community level.

In the view of many stakeholders, the areas where the national mechanisms have been most effective are:

- legal reform and development of sector strategies and action plans;
- work on the elimination of stereotypes in both private and public life through education/training and awareness raising.

Indeed, most of the countries in the region now have stand-alone gender equality laws and institutional structures in place, as well as growing levels of awareness, and expanding networks of national experts. Key success stories include advocacy and information campaigns carried out to eradicate patriarchal stereotypes on the role of women in society and the family, targeting government officials, law-enforcement bodies, media, leadership of youth and religious organisations, with active participation of state agencies and NGOs. Within these campaigns, mobile theatres, radio and TV stations, and other means were engaged, with talk-shows, round tables, and other events. Numerous trainings were held, and networks of activists and volunteers were created to support local initiatives; publications were released, and in cooperation with NGOs, sets of informational and methodological resources for civil servants and government officials in gender mainstreaming produced.

A set of success stories are related to the national mechanism structures working at local level. In Ukraine, in Vinnitsia province, for example, the state administration and civil society groups effectively cooperated to develop a comprehensive strategy and plan of action and achieved visible results in creating a gender sensitive culture at the work place and in the family in their province. Vinnitsia has been the first province administration in Ukraine to

adopt a decision on mandatory gender impact assessment of all programmes, projects and actions proposed by the province administration. The overall information space seriously changed, due to numerous trainings provided to journalists, TV programmes on gender issues, and other advocacy initiatives. The province administration and its Gender Focal Point place strong emphasis on the issues related to health protection, and safe motherhood. A Centre for Mother and Children, set up in June 2008, represents a new type of setting for women suffering from violence at home. The Centre acts as a shelter, providing protected accommodation for women.

Another success story is from Kherson province which was the first to introduce **gender budgeting** in Ukraine. A 'Gender Portrait' – a gender analysis of the province and the fifty four mainstream programmes carried out by the province administration - was developed with the support of UNDP/EU Equal opportunities and women's rights programme, and has become an example followed throughout the country. The composition of the province councils was balanced to integrate more women. These stories are illustrative but by all means not exhaustive.

Other best practices in the region relate to mainstreaming gender concerns into national strategies and programmes. In Azerbaijan, for example, the success story is linked with the Second phase of the State Programme on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development for 2008-2015, which fully incorporates a gender component, with a gender expert joining the staff of the Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development Secretariat. In Uzbekistan, it is a national *Social Welfare Improvement Strategy* which aims to reduce poverty and improve well-being of population which includes a chapter in support of women.

These and other success stories could serve as an excellent source for awareness raising and better knowledge of gender issues within the countries, but also region-wide, providing necessary argumentation for mobilizing resources and political will for gender mainstreaming.

Gaps and challenges

Gaps and challenges in relation to the national mechanisms' mandates, status, functions, roles and responsibilities have been described in the relevant sections, but in conclusion it can be stated that they usually arise where political will to progress is missing, where data and indicators to monitor progress on gender equality is lacking, where funding is scarce, cooperation with civil society is weak, and where engagement of various stakeholders is insufficient.

One of the major gaps and challenges in the region in relation to the national mechanisms is in the area of institutionalization of gender mainstreaming, and providing incentives for key actors to actually apply the strategy in practice. With the new structures, and systems of Gender Focal Points appointed in the ministries and administrative bodies, gender mainstreaming has a tendency to be treated as a marginal issue. The newly appointed gender focal points often consider their function as an 'add-on' responsibility and despite numerous trainings and study tours, often see it as an issue of low priority. Accountability issues, especially at high level, remain outside the discourse. Gender focal points often have to limit their mainstreaming efforts to the issues within their own portfolio, unable to influence other areas within a Ministry's scope. Other decision-makers continue to consider 'gender' as irrelevant for their work. Motivation and high-level performance remain challenging. Knowledge and skills for gender mainstreaming also remain a challenge, as there is no systematic way to train actors involved in the national mechanisms on these issues, and standards for such trainings are missing.

In this regard, national machineries should attach higher priority to developing standards for gender mainstreaming in the work of national mechanisms and all state institutes, providing them with knowledge, expertise and tools adapted to the local context, to effectively mainstream gender perspectives.

Another critical challenge that remains in the region concerns the national mechanisms' legitimacy. With the proliferation of gender equality laws, national mechanisms receive a fundamental legitimacy for their existence and the level of support is higher than ever before due to the designated government institutions. Responsibilities for gender mainstreaming are prescribed legally as well as the protection of the rights of individuals against gender-based discrimination. However, not all laws have legal provisions for institutionalising gender equality mechanisms, and in some countries they continue to

operate on the basis of normative acts, such as decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers or the decrees of the Presidents.²⁷

Despite progress made, the national machineries and mechanisms lack sufficient authority, institutional status and decision-making power, to coordinate the governments' activities effectively and efficiently in promoting gender equality. The national mechanisms also need considerable financial and human resources, as well as substantial and continuous capacity building of their staff, at central and local level, to gain greater conceptual clarity, knowledge and skills to implement a consistent gender equality policy and strategies across all policy areas.

Organisational practice with regard to gender mainstreaming is lacking expertise, and comprehensive, systemic monitoring and evaluation. Conducting assessments of national mechanisms, as well as national programmes and plans of action for gender equality on a regular basis, is yet to become a common practice. Few studies are available on this subject, besides the regional reviews conducted by UNECE in the process of Beijing + 5, Beijing + 10 and Beijing + 15. At country level, the recently conducted *Review of institutional mechanisms for gender equality in Kyrgyzstan*²⁸ can be mentioned as one of the exceptional examples of a dedicated review of existing national mechanisms. Otherwise, the overall situation is marked by a lack of analysis of the lessons learnt²⁹.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the overall progress in establishing effective and efficient public institutions for gender equality in the countries reviewed in this study is mixed and does not always demonstrate persistent and systematic effort. The political will and commitment at the highest levels to advance and promote women may exist in the countries of the region, but does not always translate into action. For various reasons, the actual integration of gender perspectives at mainstream political and economic decision-

²⁷ For example, a sector on gender issues in the Department of social development under the Government of Kyrgyzstan is established by the decision of the Prime-Minister dated 25 December 2008 № 487

²⁸ From October 2008 to July 2009 the Government of Kyrgyzstan, with the support of UNDP Democratic Governance programme, conducted a review of the status of national mechanism. At the time of writing, the results of the analysis are finalized by the team of authors comprised of 5 experts.

²⁹ Publications such as **Гендерное равенство в современном мире. Роль национальных механизмов** / Отв. ред и сост. О.А.Воронина. — М.: МАКС Пресс, 2008. — 772 с. — focus more on international examples and cases rather than the regional ones.

making levels is not happening, or coming up against tough resistance. There is a marginalisation of national machineries and mechanisms within government structures, unclear mandates, under-financing, inadequate staffing and lack of power and information which undermine their effectiveness, efficiency and impact in promoting gender equality. In all countries of the region, fundamental improvements are still needed.

Potential and opportunities

The previous section pointed to considerable challenges for national mechanisms for gender equality in the region. How can these challenges be turned into opportunities? The review and analysis of formal responses to the Beijing +15 questionnaire, as well as other sources, provide indications of what can be done in order to address the challenges and to make the specialised institutions effective and efficient mechanisms for advancing gender equality in the region.

Individual country plans underline the critical importance of one major area common for the whole region - addressing public awareness in the region, challenging overall perceptions of women's position and role, and providing greater understanding and clarity of gender equality concepts and approaches, as a pre-requisite for development which is sustainable, human and connected to growth and good governance.

Linked with that is another wide area, which involves further developing and improving **effective institutional arrangements** to address gender equality issues. The analysis of current institutional mechanisms in the region shows that they either heavily belong to the 'old' type of institutions, or there is a search for new arrangements that did not establish themselves as yet as effective and efficient bodies. These new structures require clear mandates, visible locations and strategic roles. They need guidance and knowledge of new experiences and examples of international best practices to be able to lead effectively in the gender equality direction. While it is clear that there is no recipe or 'one size fits all' solution, applying a common approach, such as the CEDAW Convention's rights-based approach to gender equality, can help to save considerable resources and efforts, and provide guidance in creating a new type of institution with sufficient powers to lead state institutions and the society to gender equality. These public agencies must be able to coordinate and oversee/supervise the actions by various structures of national mechanisms, to make policy recommendations and to pursue a policy of developing social partnership between the government(s), NGOs, and international organisations.

The challenge remains to address **material and human resources** of existing institutional mechanisms which are, with few exceptions, insufficient for ensuring greater competence and implementing the range of tasks they are entrusted with. This is of a particular importance in view of the effects of the world economic crisis. A thorough formulation of relevant arguments based on connections between gender equality and just, fair and

effective development, with quality of life for women and men, might be helpful in addressing this challenge.

With new types of policy instruments emerged over last years, it might be relevant to equip national mechanisms not only with practical skills for gender mainstreaming but also to consider **gender budgeting** as an important potential area which may presume greater levels of authorities and scope of portfolios. This will require awareness raising (already on-going in the region), securing political commitment and gender mainstreaming of budgetary process, creating the avenue for departing from the 'women and family' approach remaining so strong in the region, to become a truly gender-based one.

Another potential to overcome the "women's trap" is for the institutional mechanisms in the region to analyze **the status of men**, and to link them with the promotion of gender equality. This region, more than anywhere else, presents the case of gender inequality costs borne by transition societies. Within this framework, it is important to realistically assess the functions of national mechanisms in the region in the light of the actual situation with regard to both sexes, with evaluating capacities *to demonstrate convincingly the importance of gender to design efficient, transparent and inclusive national policies and programmes*. This might be the way to overcome the current marginalization of women, as well as of mechanisms dedicated to gender equality, continued under-funding, tokenism, and competition with men, and to facilitate adequate integration of gender equality into a country's mainstream political and economic goals.

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Annex I: Table of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Albania						
Directorate of Policies on Equal Opportunities						
<p>Within the other ministerial structure – the Directorate of General Policies. The Directorate is divided in two sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector on Gender Equity • Sector on Combating Domestic Violence. 	<p>Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MOLSAEO)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to “<i>formulate and develop policies to encourage equality in fields such as gender equity, equality / inequality in abilities, problems of ethnic, ethno – cultural and linguistic minorities, age disparities, racial disparities, etc</i>”. More concretely on gender equity, the Directorate aims to “<i>foster gender equity in the country as well as wide participation of women in the economic, political and cultural life of the country</i>”. • Authority, responsible for formulating and implementing the implementation of gender legislation; • Ensures implementation and monitoring of the national strategy and plan of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafts policies on equal opportunities; • Proposes research and analysis initiatives; • Drafts legal acts for achieving gender balance in different areas; • Supervises the implementation of international agreements; • Cooperates with non – profit organisations; • Coordinates the work for preparing National Programmes on Equal Opportunities. 	<p>The Directorate of Policies on Equal Opportunities created after the modifications brought by Law no. 9198, dated 01.07.2004 “On gender equality in society”.</p>	<p>Gender Equality sector employs 3 specialists</p>	<p>The National Strategy on Gender Equity and Domestic Violence (2007 – 2010): support to vulnerable groups and women in poverty; employment; empowerment of rural women; gender budgeting; health & family planning</p>
National Council for Gender equality						
<p>National Council is chaired by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; The Council is composed of nine deputy ministers and three representatives of civil society, and is convened not less than twice a year.</p>	<p>Executive Branch, under the Council of Ministers which approves the national strategy and the action plan for gender equity and has the obligation to assess the impact of the proposed laws to the Parliament.</p>	<p>A consultative body on gender policies. The duties are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to formulate states policies and programmes on gender equality; • to ensure gender mainstreaming in all areas, especially in political, social, economic and cultural; • to identify gender priorities in sectors and provide recommendations to the Government; • - accepts the ministerial annual reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming • Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out • Coordinate activities and foster collaboration 		<p>Not reported</p>	
Inter-ministerial Task Force for statistics and gender indicators in monitoring						
<p>Based to the Article 13 of the Law No. 9970, dated July 24th , 2008 “On</p>	<p>Inter-Agency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of qualitative and quantitative indicators for monitoring 	<p>- provision of training to the specialists of the statistical offices and focal points in line ministries in gender</p>		<p>Not reported</p>	

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Albania						
Gender Equity in Society”; Composed of representatives of all line ministries and other central institutions.		<p>gender equity in all areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing (qualitative and quantitative) data to identify gaps and needs; • Analysis of legislation on statistics and recommendations for its improvement; • Gender mainstreaming of monitoring; • Capacity building for collecting, processing and analyses of gender statistics and indicators; • Providing interdepartmental cooperation to ensure the collecting, processing and analyses of gender statistics and indicators as well as their publication. 	<p>statistics;</p> <p>- preparation of annual publication on gender statistics in cooperation with INSTAT.</p>			
Armenia						
Women’s Issues Division within the Department of Women, Family and Children (within the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues)						
Division/Unit/ within another body	Executive branch; Ministry of Labor and Social Issues	Implementation of state policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement NAP • Coordinate activities and foster collaboration 	- Availability of the National advisory Council on Gender	Not reported	The National Programme and Action Plan 2004-2010 on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in Society

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Azerbaijan						
The State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs						
Stand-alone organization with the ministerial status and decentralized structures	Within the executive branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement state policies towards women, family and children; - Address needs of women & children - refugees, IDPs & poor families; - Coordination of executive bodies; - Promote women's employment and economic empowerment 	Advocacy, awareness-raising; implementing and coordinating roles	Availability of : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordination Council and GFP system at ministerial level; - Deputy Heads of administrative bodies at province level - cooperation with Ombud Office 	120 000 (one hundred twenty thousand) USD in 2008 and 600 000 (six hundred thousand) USD in 2009	A National Action Plan on Family and Women's Issues (2008-2012) is underway, with focus on two areas: family (demographic problems, family planning, reproductive health) and women (women's participation in decision-making, political, economic and social life)
Belarus						
The Sector for population, gender and family policy in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection						
The sector within the Division of labour and population issues	Executive Branch, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Ensure participation in formulation and implementation of policies aiming to improve the status of women, guarantee equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men, improvement of legislative base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate and implement state family and gender policy • Improve quality of family life • Monitor implementation of legislation • Ensure coordination with state governing bodies & civil society • Monitor the compliance with the UN conventions and ensure national reporting 		4 staff members	
The National Council on Gender Policy under the Council of Ministers						
Inter-ministerial /Inter-agency body composed of representatives of line ministries, state agencies, academia and civil society	Council of Ministers	consultative status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote legislation • Promote and monitor implementation of the NAP 		Not reported	The National Action Plan to Ensure Gender Equality for 2008-2010 (3d NAP).

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Bosnia and Herzegovina					
The State Gender Equality Agency					
An umbrella institution under the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees	Executive Branch Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees	Work approach Established by the Law on Gender Equality (OG 56/03) in 2004 at the state level, to mainstream gender equality initiatives in public and private affairs across the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the NAP; • Monitoring the implementation of the NAP and coordinating; • Reporting; • Evaluating laws and bylaws in order to monitor their impact on gender equality and balanced representation of sexes; • Preparing methodology for the evaluation of state policy and state programs related to gender equality 	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender Action Plan, 2006 -2011, adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2006 and Strategy for prevention and combating domestic violence, 2009 -2011. - The main strategic objectives of the NAP: “Harmonization of legislation in each field with domestic and inter-national legal standards for gender equity and equality; Advancement of databases, research and socio-economic analysis of the gender equality situation in all GAP areas; - Education and raising awareness of public on the need to introduce gender equality in all fields of life and work; - Building capacities and encouraging an active cooperation and participatory approach of all institutional and non-institutional partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. <p>The NAP consists of 15 areas as follows: 1) European integrations in light of gender equality, 2) Cooperation and capacity-building, 3) Macroeconomic and development strategies, 4) Gender-sensitive budgets, 5) Political life and decision-making, 6) Employment and labour market, 7) Social inclusion, 8) Gender sensitive media, 9) Lifelong education, 10) Health, prevention and protection, 11) Domestic violence, gender-based violence, harassment, sexual harassment and human trafficking, 12) The role of men, 13) Reconciliation of professional and family life, 14) Gender and sustainable environment, and 15) Information and communication technologies.</p>

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Bosnia and Herzegovina					
Gender Centers					
The Gender Centre of Federation BiH (at entity level, established by the Decision of the Government of the FBiH in 2000) and Gender Centre of Republika Srpska (at entity level, established by the Decision of the Government of the RS in 2001).	Executive Branch	Work approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotes and monitor gender mainstreaming; - Conducts capacity-building (tools and trainings); - Strengthens local, municipal, provincial sectors; - Monitors the status of women and implementation of state policies; - Participates in formulating policy measures; - Coordinates national reporting to CEDAW and other international treaties. 		It has the support of the Monitoring and Evaluation System of the National Plan of Policies for Women, created to establish a trustworthy and less bureaucratic information system.
Gender Equality Commissions					
Committee/Commission working group within the municipal assemblies or councils or the Mayor's office	Municipal level	Monitoring, reporting and co-ordination on gender issues at the local level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out • Develop strategic and action plans 	Not reported	The Working Group for proposal preparation for the implementation of the actions of the chapter of dealing with racism, sexism and lesbophobia of the PNPM II, with the participation of civil society and some federal government bodies. The Committee is supported by the system of monitoring and evaluation of the PNPM, created with the objective to establish a more reliable and less bureaucratic flow of information, on how to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data and systematic production of material to subsidize the accompaniment of the implementation of the plan. This tool is essential in providing the necessary support to the decision-making process, as well as to ensure the transparency of the implementation of actions and results achieved.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Georgia					
Gender Equality Advisory Council					
Gender Equality Advisory Council at the Parliament of Georgia (No. 105/3 of 27 October 2004) is chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Georgia and is composed of the parliamentarians, members of the Government, women's NGOs, experts and academicians. Its work is supported by the Task Force against domestic violence under the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia.	Legislative Branch	Bring gender issues in centre of policy-making Coordinate the state policy on gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - improve legislative framework, by developing a stand-alone Gender equality law - develop policy documents as national strategies and programmes 	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Strategy of gender equality (State Concept on Gender Equality, Action Plan for implementation of Gender Policy in Georgia (2007-2009) and Recommendations - National Plan of Action against Domestic Violence (2007)
Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Republic of Moldova					
The Department on Equal Opportunities (DEO)					
The Department on Equal Opportunity and Prevention of Violence (DEO) within the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child (since 2007)	Executive Branch, Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Children	Work approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/implement national action plans • Acts as a Secretariat to the Committee on Gender Equality • Gender Mainstreaming of Ministerial sectors • Capacity building 	The DEO employs five full time staff members through the state budget. However, no special funds are allocated for the DEO activities. Activities of the NAP funded through the sectoral plans, which have financial support from the state budget via MTEF	Gender Resource Center /Library was created within the MSPFC as well as e-resource on gender equality was developed on the website of the Ministry http://mpsfc.gov.md/md/egalitateagen/

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Republic of Moldova						
The Committee for Gender Equality						
Inter-ministerial body led by the Vice Prime Minister and composed of representatives of line ministries at the level of Deputy Minister. Meets on quarterly basis. The Committee relies on its work on gender units created within the ministries and introduction of the Gender Focal Points at Deputy Minister level.	Executive Branch	Main policy coordination body established by the Resolution of the Government #485 (2007). The members of the CGE have mandate to propose policy initiatives, monitor and evaluate implementation of Gender Equality Law in their respective areas, inform the public about the progress.	- Monitor and evaluate implementation of Gender Equality Law and National Strategy and Action Plan	The Gender Equality Law	No special support for the implementation of the Gender Equality Law and National Action Plan from the state budget.	The Parliament is responsible for mainstreaming gender into the legislative initiatives, monitoring of the implementation of gender equality principles, and examines reports of the executive branch institutions and the Office of the Ombud.
Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Notes	
Montenegro						
The Department for Gender Equality within the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights						
Established by the Law on Gender Equality. By the same law, all ministries and state administration are responsible for appointing coordinators for gender equality who closely work with the Gender Equality Office, and participate in the preparation and implementation of the Action Plan.	Executive Branch	Coordination; preparation of action plans; Monitoring; Research; National reporting;	- Capacity building; - Awareness raising; - Acts as a body which receives and investigates complaints of citizens about direct or indirect discrimination based on sex, and informs the Human Rights Ombudsman accordingly.		<p>The Department for Gender Equality is established by the Decision of the Government of Montenegro on 27th of March 2003.</p> <p>The work of the Department is reinforced by the Committee for Gender Equality in the Parliament and the system of Gender Focal Points at municipal and local community level.</p> <p>The Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality has been adopted in July 2008 (for the period 2008-2012), which represents the framework for the implementation of the gender equality policy and activism of Gender Equality Office and other state administration bodies.</p>	

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Kazakhstan						
The National Commission on Women, Family and Demography under the President's Administration						
Stand-alone institution, based on wide network of the representatives of the National Commission throughout the country at province, district and township level. Also supported by the system of Gender Focal Points, Expert Council and the Ombud on Human Rights (a proposal on creating a separate Ombud on gender is under consideration)	The Secretariat of the National Commission has been moved from the Office of the Prime-Minister to the Administration of President.	Advice and recommendations for the state policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Promote legislation (2) Promote, develop and update public policies (3) Develop strategic action plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming • Develop and improve research and statistic data collection • Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings) • Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out • Coordinate activities and foster collaboration 	The Head of the Commission reports directly to the President; Commission on Family Policies and Gender Equality issues under the Social Council Fraction of the National Democratic Party "Nur Otan" (in parliament); Forum of Women convened every 3 years	2008 – 2005 650,5 mln KZT; 2009-2011 – 20 bln KZT	State Strategy for Gender Equality, 2006-2016, approved by the President 29 November 2005
Kyrgyzstan						
National Council on Women, Family and Gender Development Issues						
Inter-agency body supported by the Sector on Gender Issues (established by Res. N 487 of the Prime Minister on 25 Dec. 2008) in the Department of Social Development in the Apparatus of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. It works closely with the ministerial Gender Focal Points, Gender Coordination Councils at province, district & township levels and the Committee on Youth, Gender, Physical Culture & Sports Policies under the National Assembly of Kyrgyzstan.	Administration within the Presidency of Kyrgyzstan	By the Decree of the President of 13 February 2006 N 64, the National Council is composed of the senior management of ministerial and state agencies staff, representatives of legislative and judicial branches and civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advisory role ; • Develop policy recommendations to the President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan • Coordinating and promoting action to achieve gender equality • Monitoring implementation of gender policies 		Not reported	National Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2007-2010

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
The Russian Federation						
The Inter-Agency Commission for Ensuring Equality for Men and Women						
Established in 2006) at federal level, the Commission is composed of the representatives of federal ministries, state agencies and bodies of federal entities of the Russian Federation, as well as civil society and academic groups.	Executive branch	-Implementation of state policies in the area of equal rights for women and men -Mainstreaming gender into activities of the executive power institutions at all levels, etc.			Not reported	National Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for women and men in the Russian Federation (Gender strategy) adopted in 2006, is underway
The Committee on Family, Women and Children Issues						
The Committee is formed within the State Duma (Chamber of the Federal Assembly, the Parliament) of the Russian Federation Since 2008, the Committee is reinforced by the Expert Council on Gender Equality which gathers under the auspices of the Committee..	Legislative Branch	Coordination of work to improve the legislative base of the Russian Federation in the area of equal rights and opportunities; Gender examination of laws and other normative acts;	The Public Commission for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men	under the Chair (Speaker) of the Council of Federation (Upper Chamber) of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (1999)	Not reported	Coordination Council on Gender Issues is created for coordinating interaction between the federal bodies of the Russian Federation and civil society organizations, expected to develop coordinated approach to address priority issues related to the status of women.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Serbia						
The Directorate for Gender Equality						
<p>The Sector for Gender Equality in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy established in 2007, was upgraded into Directorate in 2008, as ‘a separate body within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy’.</p> <p>The Directorate works closely with the Gender Equality Council.</p>	Executive Branch: within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	Conduct analysis and suggest measures to the Government, draft laws and other regulations with the aim to advance women’s position and promotion of gender equality as well as equal opportunity policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - administers initiatives and activities in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as national strategies and programmes; - gender mainstreaming across all operating areas; - ensures compliance with the UN CEDAW recommendations; - capacity building government officials in gender mainstreaming and advisory services - Develop and improve research and statistic data collection 	.	More than 3 million USD - grant of Government of Norway for implementing <i>Combating Sexual Harassment & Gender-Based Violence</i> , implemented by the Directorate for Gender Equality and UNDP for 2009- 2011. Other figures not reported	
Gender Equality Council (Board) of the Government of Serbia						
Inter-agency body composed of representatives (gender focal points) of key line ministries, state administration, academic circles & civil sector, the Secretariats for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality & Institutes for Gender Equality set up at province level, local-level mechanisms for gender equality. Works closely with the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality and the Deputy Ombud in charge of equal rights and opportunities.	Executive Branch, Administration Department	Policy and decision making in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main executing agency for the state policy and national action plan • Coordinates activities and fosters collaboration 		Not reported	<p>National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Enhancing Gender Equality (2009-2015)</p> <p>Strategy for Development of Official Statistics of the Republic of Serbia (2009 – 2012)</p>

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Tajikistan					
The Committee on Women and the Family					
Stand alone organization in the Government, established in 1991, headed by a Deputy Prime Minister. There is a Gender sector within the Committee's structure. There are branches of the Committee at all levels of administrative authorities.	Executive Branch	Advancing, implementing and coordinating Government policies and plans towards improving the status of women and protecting family, motherhood and childhood.	Advise on the development of all government policies on gender equality; Coordinate across ministries at the national, regional and local level; Draft, review and monitor legislation and its imp Develops and implements socio-economic programmes for improving the status of women, ensure her social protection, realization of her right to work and have access to health service;	In 2008, the Committee's staff was increased to include 19 people.. Subsequently, the Sector for Gender issues staff increased from 2 to 4 people.	The Committee works closely with the Committee on Family, Health, Social Protection and Environment Affairs in the Parliament of the country. Similar structures are set up in legislative branch throughout the country at all levels. Also, specialized units dealing with women, family and children issues exist in ministries and state agencies of social sector (labour, social protection, health, etc), as well as gender focal points. The Committee ensures coordination in implementing the State Programme "Main Principles of the State Policy on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, 2001-2010"

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Tajikistan					
The Coordination Council of the Government					
Inter-Agency body, established in 2004 by the decision of the Prime Minister, meets on quarterly basis. Headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, and composed of the government officials and civil society sector	Executive Branch	Coordination and cooperation in the area of advancing women's rights; monitoring of the National programmes and plans	Gender Mainstreaming of state policies, strategies and programmes, with focus on land and agrarian reforms and economic empowerment of women; Gender expertise of existing legislation (Land Code)	Not reported	A network of gender specialists and focal points set up by the Committee on Women and the Family to back-stop the Coordination Council. The Coordination Council is also supported by the Information and consultative centers at district level.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia						
The Department for Equal Opportunities within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy						
Established by the Law on Equal Opportunities (2006) and amendments made to it in 2008.	Located within the executive branch. The main operational body is a Sector for Equal Opportunities. It works in collaboration with the Gender Focal Points appointed at key line ministries (Finance, Economy, Transport and Communications, Interior, Defense, etc) in compliance with the Law, and Gender statistics unit within the State Statistics Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building; - Provision of services to the victims of trafficking in human beings; - Provision of services to the victims of family violence; - Improvement of legal frameworks; - Advocacy and awareness raising; - Research 	Monitoring the enforcement of the Law; Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national action plans; Training; Research; National reporting; Coordination	Associations of citizens and trade-unions are mentioned as significant partners in promoting gender equality in Macedonia. The trade-unions have specific sections to work with women.	Financial resources not reported	The Department works in close collaboration with the Social Work Centers and the Office of the National Referral Mechanism for the victims of the trafficking in human beings, especially women and children which functions in the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy since 2005.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia						
The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men						
The Commission is composed of MPs. External experts and NGOs can also participate. Similar commissions for equal opportunities for women and men are established in 79 local self-governing bodies.	The Commission is located within the legislative branch, operating in the national assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. It is reinforced by 79 local commissions and 79 coordinators	Monitoring legal regulations from gender perspective. For local commissions, - gender mainstreaming of local policies	For local commissions - drafting and implementing local action plans. Coordinators' main responsibility is to assist the commissions and to ensure sustainability of the process.	As above	Not reported	Seventy nine coordinators in the local self-government units have the status of civil servants, responsible for the promotion of gender equality and establishment of equal opportunities for women and men at local level.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Turkmenistan					
The Women's Union					
Stand-alone body set up in 1994 as a 'societal' organization, with more than one million women-members (the biggest 'mass organization' in the country) and branches throughout the country at all administrative levels.		Support and implement state policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - economic empowerment of women - support to rural women - education and training to women - support to creation and expansion of a network of women's groups - gender mainstreaming 	Not reported	National Action Plan for 2005-2010 defines strategy and priority areas for the state policy of Turkmenistan. It aims to address 'equal rights and opportunities for women and men of Turkmenistan, in compliance with the Constitution'.

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Ukraine						
Gender Equality Unit						
The Gender Equality Unit is a structure within the Department of Demography, Family and Human Trafficking	Executive Branch, the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports	The Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports is designated as a coordinating, monitoring, and implementing the state policies in the area of equal rights and opportunities– as per respective Decree of the President of Ukraine and the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To act as a central body of the executive powers on issues of equal rights and opportunities, in compliance with the Law; -Conduct information & public awareness raising through the mass-media on gender equality and gender-based discrimination; -Develop national action plans and review the results of state programmes from gender equality perspective; -Exercise control over achieving gender balance at central and local levels; -Develop approaches across all areas of society to ensure equal rights and opportunities (gender mainstreaming); -Organize capacity-building and training of government officials and civil servants; - - Cooperate with other respective central bodies of the executive powers to conduct analytical research & studies of gender issues; -Ensure monitoring for achieving equal rights and opportunities; -Cooperate with international organizations to ensure compliance with international norms and standards 	The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2005) mentions the ‘authorized central body of the executive branch on the issues of guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for women and men’. By the following decrees and decisions of the President and the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports was designated to perform this role.	50,000 UAH (equivalent of 6,500 USD) from the state budget annually; Two people form the staff of the Gender Equality Unit at the central level; The Ministerial staff is also represented at province level in the Governors’ offices.	

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Ukraine						
The Inter-Agency Council on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development and Human Trafficking Prevention						
Inter-agency body, meets on quarterly basis. Chaired by the Ministry for Family, Youth and Sports, is composed of representatives of line ministries (including the Ministry of Interior; Defense; Justice; and others) and administrative bodies- gender focal points and gender advisers; academicians, and civil society groups.	Executive Branch, under the Cabinet of Ministers	Main coordinating body to monitor implementation of the state policies on gender equality, demographic development and trafficking in human beings, including implementation of the State Programme on Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukraine until 2010.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensures unified approach in implementing state policies to achieve gender equality; - Adopts national action plans; develops other specialized programmes and ensures their implementation; - provides guidelines and coordinates ministries and other agencies of the executive branch towards achieving gender equality; - in charge of national reporting to CEDAW; - ensures mainstreaming gender equality principles into legislative and normative acts and approves the gender expertise procedures 			<p>The Inter-Agency Council is replicated at pro-vice level by similar Gender Coordination Councils.</p> <p>The work of the Inter-Agency Council is facilitated by the system of Gender Focal Points at the level of Deputy Minister and Deputy Governor, as by the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities. This system is developed throughout the country, vertically & horizontally.</p> <p>It is additionally reinforced by introduction of full-time Gender Advisers at some key ministries and Governors' offices, and creation of Gender Resource Centers at province level.</p> <p>The Inter-Agency Council monitors implementation of the State programme on gender equality, 2006-2010. Each province has developed its own action plan, to ensure implementation of the State programme.</p>

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Political support	Resources	Notes
Ukraine						
The sub-committee on provision of legal support to the rights of women, family and child						
The sub-committee acts under the Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Verkhovna Rada (National Assembly) of Ukraine	Legislative Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - defines main principles of state policies in gender equality; - mainstreams gender equality principles into legislative branch; - exercises parliamentary control over implementation of legal provisions for gender equality. 				The work of the Sub-committee is facilitated by the appointment of Gender Focal Points in each of 27 secretariats of the parliamentary committees and commissions.
The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (The Institute of Ombudsperson)						
The sub-committee acts under the Committee on Human Rights, National Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Verkhovna Rada (National Assembly) of Ukraine	Legislative Branch	The Commissioner (in other documents also mentioned as a Representative) for Human Rights is granted, by the law "On the Authorized Human Rights Representative of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine", with a substantial authority to address flagrant violations of human rights. The Law on equal rights and equal opportunities provides the Commissioner with a mandate to address gender-based discrimination Amendments also have been made into article 13 of the Law of Ukraine on the Ombud office of the Verkhovna Rada, to specifically include functions of monitoring equal rights and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring of compliance with the equal rights and opportunities principles; - consideration of appeals on gender-based discrimination; - annual reporting must provide review of the status of equal rights and opportunities. 		Not reported	

Structure	Location (support)	Mandates	Roles/Functions	Resources	Notes
Uzbekistan					
The Women's Committee					
Stand-alone organization established in 1991 by the Government, headed by the Deputy Prime-Minister in charge of women's issues, & registered as a non-government organization. Has a well-developed structure, vertical & horizontal throughout the country, when at every level of public authorities one position of a deputy is occupied by a woman who chairs the local branch of the Women's Committee. There is a position of an adviser at every local neighborhood community, and position of Vice-Rector in charge of women's issues in every higher education institution (since 2009) funded from the state and local budgets.	Executive branch – under the Cabinet of Ministers	Legal basis: the Decree of the President. Initiates, coordinates and implements state policies, programmes and projects aiming to improve the status of women; Consults the Government ; Five priority areas defined as: (1) employment and economic well-being of women; (2) reproductive rights and health; (3) women in leadership; (4) women and law (eradication of discrimination); (5) women and education (development of professionalism and competency)	- develops and implements practical measures to execute state policies in providing social and legal support to women; 'protection of motherhood and childhood; professional, physical and spiritual development of women and enhancing their social and political participation'; - monitoring and coordination of NGOs working in the area of improving the status of women; health, legal education and social protection, etc; - participate in implementing the state policies to 'build healthy family', women's health, women's and family sports, promoting healthy; -community level work to educate women in religion, to counteract 'destructive forces to influence women and involve them in extremist and terrorist activities'; - developing and implementing measures to address women's employment, improving conditions of work, especially in rural areas, social protection, entrepreneurship; - forming a cadre of young women-leaders.	- Financial support from the state budget (the amount not reported)	Works closely "with the line ministries; with the institutes of legislative branch: the Parliamentary committees and the Office of the Ombudsman on Human Rights and the National Centre for Human Rights; and civil society. Twice a year convenes a forum of NGOs, and cooperates for that purpose with the National Association of NGOs (NANNOUZ). The National action plan based on the CEDAW concluding observations is approved by the Ministry of Justice and is underway.
National Association of NGOs of Uzbekistan (NANNOUZ)					
Stand-alone organization, registered as NGO In its strategy has a special direction to work with women and youth.	Main partner of international donor to work with the civil society in the country	-Development of civil society, by providing methodological, technical, information and financial support to NGOs,	- consolidation of NGOs; - social partnership with the state bodies; - strengthen participation of NGOs in the process of reforms; - support to the process of liberalization and democratization of the society; -capacity building of NGOs		NANNOUZ , with the Women's Committee, often plays a role of an executing agent for gender programmes & projects supported by international community

Annex II: Types of structures, location, mandates, roles and functions of principal national mechanism

Table I: Types of structures and location of principal national mechanism

Types of structure	Location	States	Year reformed	Year established
Autonomous Bodies (institutes, councils/commissions)	Under the Parliament	Georgia The Russian Federation	- -	2004 2006
Stand-alone institutions Departments/ Ministries	Cabinet of Ministers	Azerbaij�n Tajikistan Turkmenist�n Uzbekistan	- - -	1998 1991 1994 1991
Office/Dependency	Under the Administration. of the Presidency	Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan	2008 2008	1995 2000
Divisions/Units/Offices/ Bureaus within another body	Departments/ Ministries	Albania Armenia Belarus Bosnia & Herzegovina Montenegro Moldova Serbia Ukraine The FYR Macedonia	2008 2009 2004 - 2008 2008 2005 2007	2006 2002 2001 2001 2003 - 2007 - 1997

*NGO

Table II: Other types of national mechanisms

States	Types and location of mechanisms							
	Executive						Parliamentary	Judicial
	Committees/ commissions/ working groups	National advisory/ consultative councils	Accountability institutions/ ombuds	Inter-departmental/ ministerial / multi- sectorial/ taskforces	Intra-agency commissions/ committees	Decentralized mechanisms (regional/ municipal)	Committees/ commissions/ caucus	Committees and working groups
Albania	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Armenia			x	x		x	x	
Azerbaijan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Belarus	x	x		x		x	x	
Bosnia & Herzegovina	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Georgia							x	
Moldova	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Montenegro	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Kazakhstan	x	x	x	x	x	x	xç/xp	x
Kyrgyzstan	x	x	x	x	x	x	xç/xp	x
Russian Federation			x		x	x	xp	
Serbia	x	x	x	x	x	x	xp	
Tajikistan	x		x	x		x	xp	x
The FYR of Macedonia	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Turkmenistan		x		x		x	x	
Ukraine	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Uzbekistan	x	x	x	x		x	x	x

Note: xç- Caucus; xp- in Parliaments

Table III: Mandates, Roles and Functions

Types of structure		Principal Roles and Functions													
		Promote legislation	Promote, develop and update public policies	Develop strategic and action plans	Develop/implement national action plans	Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming	Develop and improve research and statistic data collection	Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings)	Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out	Coordinate activities and foster collaboration	Educate and mobilize social and community sectors	Offer direct services to general or specific populations	Strengthen local, municipal, provincial sectors	Promote, develop and implement programs and projects	Violence against women task force or committee
Albania	Division/Unit within another body/ By Law		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
	• National Council of Gender Equity		✓			✓			✓	✓			✓		
	• Sub – commission for Minors and Equal Opportunities, part of the Parliamentary Commission on Health, Labour and Social Affairs.	✓													
	• Inter-ministerial Task Force (statistics)	✓					✓	✓							
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson)	✓										✓			
Armenia	Division/Unit within another body			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	
Azerbaijan	Stand-alone institution		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• National Coordination Council		✓						✓	✓					
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson)	✓										✓			
Belarus	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓		✓		
	• National Council								✓	✓				✓	
	• Committee/Commission (Parliament)	✓	✓												

Table III: Mandates, Roles and Functions (Continued)

Types of structure		Principal Roles and Functions													
		Promote legislation	Promote, develop and update public policies	Develop strategic and action plans	Develop/implement national action plans	Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming	Develop and improve research and statistic data collection	Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings)	Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out	Coordinate activities and foster collaboration	Educate and mobilize social and community sectors	Offer direct services to general or specific populations	Strengthen local, municipal, provincial sectors	Promote, develop and implement programs and projects	Violence against women task force or committee
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body		√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√			√	√
	• Stand-alone bodies (Gender Centers)		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
	• Committee/Commission Working groups	√		√		√			√		√	√	√		
	• Accountability institutions (Ombudsperson)	√	√					√	√			√			
	• Committee/Commission (Parliament)	√	√												
Georgia	Consultative body - Legislative branch	√	√	√		√				√					
Moldova	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body/ by Law		√	√	√	√	√	√	√					√	
	• Inter-ministerial body		√	√		√			√	√				√	√
	• Committee/Commission/ Legislative	√	√			√			√						
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson)	√										√			
Montenegro	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body/ by Law	√	√			√			√	√	√				
	• Committee/Commission - Parliament	√													
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson)	√				√			√		√				

Table III: Mandates, Roles and Functions (Continued)

Types of structure		Principal Roles and Functions													
		Promote legislation	Promote, develop and update public policies	Develop strategic and action plans	Develop/implement national action plans	Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming	Develop and improve research and statistic data collection	Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings)	Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out	Coordinate activities and foster collaboration	Educate and mobilize social and community sectors	Offer direct services to general or specific populations	Strengthen local, municipal, provincial sectors	Promote, develop and implement programs and projects	Violence against women task force or committee
Kazakhstan	Stand-alone Commission/Dependency/by Decree		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
	• Decentralized mechanism		✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson) – Legislative Branch										✓				
	• Committee/Commission – Legislative Branch	✓							✓						
Kyrgyzstan	Inter-Agency Commission/Working Group/by Decree		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓
	• Committee (Parliament)	✓				✓									
	• Decentralized mechanism				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
The Russian Federation	Inter-Agency Commission/Working group		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	
	Committee/Commission –Legislative Branch -	✓	✓			✓			✓						
Serbia	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body/		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	• Inter-agency commission		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓				✓	
	• Committees/Commission – Legislative Branch	✓				✓									
	• Decentralized mechanisms		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	• Accountability institution (Ombud)										✓				

Table III: Mandates, Roles and Functions (Continued)

Types of structure		Principal Roles and Functions													
		Promote legislation	Promote, develop and update public policies	Develop strategic and action plans	Develop/implement national action plans	Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming	Develop and improve research and statistic data collection	Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings)	Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out	Coordinate activities and foster collaboration	Educate and mobilize social and community sectors	Offer direct services to general or specific populations	Strengthen local, municipal, provincial sectors	Promote, develop and implement programs and projects	Violence against women task force or committee
Tajikistan	Stand-alone body with the Council of Ministers			√	√	√		√			√		√	√	
	• Coordination Council		√						√	√					
	• Inter-ministerial working group on Land reform	√	√												
	• Committee/Commission (Parliament)	√							√						
	• Accountability institution (Ombudsperson)								√			√			
The FYR of Macedonia	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body/ by Law														
	• Inter-ministerial body	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	• Commissions (Parliament)	√	√			√							√		
	• Local coordinators and commissions			√	√	√						√	√	√	
Turkmenistan	Stand-alone body registered as NGO	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√	
	• Decentralized mechanisms										√		√	√	
Ukraine	Division/Unit Office/Bureaus within another body - By law	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	√	√
	• Inter-Agency Council-by Law	√	√	√	√		√		√	√					

Types of structure		Principal Roles and Functions													
		Promote legislation	Promote, develop and update public policies	Develop strategic and action plans	Develop/implement national action plans	Promote and monitor gender mainstreaming	Develop and improve research and statistic data collection	Offer capacity-building (tools and trainings)	Develop monitoring and accountability processes or carry them out	Coordinate activities and foster collaboration	Educate and mobilize social and community sectors	Offer direct services to general or specific populations	Strengthen local, municipal, provincial sectors	Promote, develop and implement programs and projects	Violence against women task force or committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intra-ministerial working groups 					√	√			√				√	√	√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability institution (Ombud) 		√	√									√			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committees/Commissions (Parliament) 		√	√					√		√					√
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized mechanisms 			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Uzbekistan	Stand alone institution registered as NGO and linked with the Cabinet of Ministers – By decree		√	√	√			√		√	√		√	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-ministerial working group on NAP 			√		√				√	√					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-ministerial working group on trafficking 			√	√	√					√				√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliamentary committees/commissions 		√						√							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralized mechanisms 											√	√	√	√	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability institution (Ombudsperson) 												√			