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Topic (i) Macro-economic changes and policy decisions

Gender Differences in Changes on the Labour Market in Transition Countries

Submitted by UNECE Secretariat¹

Invited Paper

Summary: The paper presents a gender perspective on trends and policy implications of changes on the labour markets during the first ten years of the transition process within a context of data requirements. It also presents activities developed by the Regional Adviser on Gender and Economy. It consists of three parts. Part I shows gender asymmetry in selected labour market developments based on available data. Part II presents policy implications and requirements for data, and part III presents advisory services on gender and economy. The paper concludes that gender asymmetry on labour markets requires more attention at policy level. This is necessary to design effective policies minimizing social costs of adjustments on the labour markets and fully utilizing human resources for stimulating economic growth.

More data, analysis and exchange of best practices in providing equal opportunities to men and women are required to address gender asymmetry on the labour markets. The UNECE advisory services on Gender and Economy, which were established in 2001, aim at assisting member countries in reaching this objective, which is included into many UN documents, especially the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration. These activities aim at promoting the exchange of best practices in mainstreaming gender into economic policies. Special attention is given to promotion of women's entrepreneurship and improving women's access to E-business and new technologies. These activities are developed in co-operation with UN agencies and other international organizations.

Introduction

Men and women have entered the transition process unprepared to face the loss of job security and massive lay-offs. The situation of women and men at the onset of the transition process reflected the past system, where women played in most cases a role of second-earners employed in less strategic sectors within the industrialization model led by heavy industries. Despite high participation in the labour force women remained responsible for childcare and family. As a result many working mothers were less interested in promotion and/or engaging in activities outside the work place. Wage increase was not a big incentive. In real terms the gender gap in wages was relatively small due to the flat structure of wage scale and across the broad social benefits. The situation has changed with the decline of real wages and rapid diversification of wages and salaries under market conditions.

High participation of women in full-time employment, work experience, and especially the structure of employment and level and profile of education, could be considered as factors facilitating women's adjustment to a new situation on the labour market. Women had a general educational profile (often secondary or tertiary) as opposed to a narrow vocational training typical for men working in industrial

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sector. The high share of women's employment in service sector, though in the past less prestigious and less paid, could also be looked at as an advantage. Many of the service branches experienced a dynamic growth under market conditions (retail trade, banking, insurance) providing new job opportunities as opposed to men dominated heavy industry, where job opportunities were rapidly shrinking with the decline of output.

Important factors facilitated men's adjustment to the changes on the labour market. Top management posts in the economy, higher wages and a strong position in labour market institutions, such as trade unions and chambers of commerce, gave men a better position in the privatisation process and access to formal and informal networks in all sectors of the economy. This opened access to benefits from privatisation and jobs including through self-employment and starting own businesses.

I. Gender asymmetry in labour market developments

Men and women were affected by the loss of job security, GDP decline and restructuring. Gender asymmetry, however, was seen in employment cuts, sectoral changes and access to new jobs in the private sector. The overall trends show that, until recently, women absorbed a disproportionately large share of employment cuts. Data on sectoral changes and self-employment in selected countries show that they did not benefit as often as men from job opportunities in the private sector and in the most dynamic branches of the service sector. Women's share in part-time employment increased, which could indicate the trend towards feminisation of this market segment. The gender asymmetry should be seen in the context of significant differences in the economic situation, progress in reforms and policies in countries and sub-regions.

Decline in employment

Some countries, especially Russia and CIS countries, managed to keep employment cuts at relatively low level, when compared to the fall of output at the expense of lower labour productivity and mounting wage arrears. In many other the cuts remained in double digits and up to over 20% in some countries in central and south-eastern Europe and in the Baltic States. Economic recovery in the second half of the 1990s improved the situation on the labour market, but employment continued to decline in a number of countries.

Employment cuts were the deepest in the first half of 1990s when GDP sharply declined and countries introduced major reforms and austerity measures to stabilize the economy. During that time the decrease in women's employment was larger than for men's in the majority of countries (11 out of 17) (Table 1). The differences ranged from 25 percentage points in Armenia, Macedonia or Estonia to close to 10-13 points in Albania, Lithuania and Russia. Significant gender gap in employment cuts was also seen in Kazakhstan, Slovenia and Ukraine.

During 1995-1998, women's employment declined more than men's in 9 out of 17 countries, or, as in Slovenia, increased less. It should be noted that for women in the Baltic States (except Estonia, where some improvement was noticed), all CIS countries as well as Albania, Hungary and Slovenia this was a continuation of disproportional cuts in female employment. In several countries men continued to be more affected than women, such as in Romania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia or benefited less from the increase of employment, such as in Poland and Slovakia.

During the last two years men were more affected than women by employment cuts in all countries, except Armenia, Slovakia and Slovenia. The explanation of this trend requires further research. Probably it reflects the pattern of structural changes, which longer protected men's jobs in industry. It may suggest, however, also women's flexibility in adjusting to the demand, including through accepting jobs at the lower end of the labour market.

There is also a need to more detail analysis of changes in employment by sub-regions and countries. Men, especially those with narrow technical skills and living in declining regions, have been hard hit by employment cuts. In many regions in Russia or Ukraine but also elsewhere they have little chances for new jobs. A sharp decline in male life expectancy seen in Russia and a number of CIS countries in the early 1990s is now largely associated with the stress of loosing a job and social position.

Sectoral changes in employment 1992-1997

During the restructuring process there was a shift of employment from agriculture and industry towards services. Data for selected countries in central Europe, the Baltic States and the Russian Federation, show that women took over the large share of the costs of this shift as indicated by changes in women's share in employment by industry (Table 2). The decline in employment in agriculture seen in all countries (except Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Slovakia), and industry was not compensated by the increase of employment in services (except Slovakia, Romania and Slovenia) (Table 2). Cuts of women's jobs in industry reflected shedding-off clerical positions and restructuring of light industries, such as textiles, which lost state support already in the early phase of transition as opposed to male-dominated heavy industry.

Changes in the employment structure within the service sector show that women moved towards public services and benefited less than men from the expansion of market driven services. In all countries women's share in employment in education increased reaching 70-80%. A similar trend was seen in health and social care. At the same time women's share in financial intermediation declined, except in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. The decline was as big as by 24 percentage points in Latvia and by 10-14 percentage points in Hungary, Lithuania and Russia. When compared with relative wages in the financial services and education these changes represent a move towards less dynamic and less paid jobs (Table 3). Jobs in education and other public services are also increasingly insecure against the pressure of finding resources to increase wages or repair infrastructure. Using the OECD benchmark for student-teacher ratios, for example, up to one third of the teaching labour can be reduced in most countries (World Bank 2002).

Unemployment

The pattern of unemployment does not indicate consistently higher unemployment rates for women as compared to men. In 1997 only in five out of 11 transition countries reviewed in the *Economic Survey of Europe 1999* were female unemployment rates higher than the men's. Female unemployment rates were lower than men's in Hungary, Latvia, the Russian Federation and Slovenia but higher in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. This is confirmed by recent data from the *Economic Survey of Europe 2002* (Chart 1). In 2001 women's unemployment was higher in four out of 10 countries (the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia and Slovenia), and only in the first two countries the difference was substantive. The decline of the ratio of female to male unemployment during 1998-2001 also indicates relative improvement of women's situation in the labour market, except in Estonia and Slovenia.

In many countries, however, lower unemployment rates reflected women's withdrawal from the labour market, especially in the first phase of the transition process (Table 4). In all countries for which data were available, the decline in women's activity rates was sharper than for men between 1985 and 1997, except Slovenia. This may be less relevant to explain lower unemployment rates for women since 1997 as in a number of countries women's activity rates declined less than men's, or such as in Hungary or Russia, increased more than men's. More research is needed to explain these trends.

Presented data on unemployment do not provide the full picture. Countries with very high unemployment rates in South-Eastern Europe, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia (around 40%), Croatia and Yugoslavia (22-26%), are not included into Chart 1. In countries where benefits are higher than those related to unemployment many women choose extended maternity leaves rather than unemployment. Finally, surveys from several countries show the specifics of female unemployment, which is characterized by more difficulties in finding a new job. Women largely rely on government services in finding employment while men use a more efficient method to finding a job through personal contacts and networks.

Income and wages

Prior to 1989, average female wages were 20-25% lower than men's. The differences were due to occupational segregation in less paid sectors and lower positions in the economy, but there was also an element of discrimination. However, the differences were not substantive due to relatively flat distribution of wages under planned economy.

During the transition the profile and level of education were important factors explaining rising wage disparities, especially in Eastern Europe (Rutkowski 1999). So far, however, there is no evidence that women benefited from the increase of returns on education. In Ukraine women constitute 60% of workers with higher education but their average wage is 29% lower than average wage of working men (Ukraine report for UNICEF 2000). Data from some countries suggest that the wage gap may have increased. In 1997 women's wages in Russia were estimated at only about 55% of male wages as compared to about 70% in 1989 (NHDR 1999). The opening of the gender gap is partly explained by growing wage differentiation in favour of male dominated industries and better job opportunities for men in the private sector.

In all countries family incomes were seriously affected by the decline in social services and family related transfers. Due to the pattern of sharing responsibility for rising a family women were more affected than men. The erosion of social services took place through the changes in the structure of social expenditure (cuts on health and education as compared to pensions), moving away from in-kind to cash benefits, the value of which sharply decreased due to inadequate indexation and changes in the quality of public services. In a number of countries also shares of family benefits and maternity and childcare benefits in GDP declined. The quality of pre-school and primary education deteriorated and schools lost many of their social functions, such as primary health care. Social functions of schools played an important role in equalizing educational opportunities for children but, together with other child-related benefits and services helped, women to combine maternity with paid work.

The trend towards feminisation of poverty is shown by several studies including those looking at child poverty (World Bank 2000; UNICEF 2000). The most vulnerable to poverty are single mothers, large families and older women living alone. There are big differences in the situation of women in countries and sub-regions. The most vulnerable to poverty are women living in countries and sub-regions affected by political instability, war and/or military conflicts, such as many countries in the South-Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus. In these countries many families were displaced and have lost their jobs, homes and property.

Private sector jobs and entrepreneurship

In all transition countries there are success stories of women entrepreneurs. The number of women entrepreneurs is, however, much lower than men. Men start own businesses usually twice as often as women (Chart 2). The gap between men and women in entrepreneurial activities has widened during the 1990s in most countries for which there are data (seven out of 12 countries Table 5). National studies confirm lower levels of women's entrepreneurial activity and underline the role of gender specific barriers to start own businesses in such countries as Poland (Lisowska 2001) or Bulgaria (Stoyanowska 2001).

These studies also indicate that most women businesses are small or micro-enterprises and that many women became self-employed due to the lack of other job opportunities. Many women are involved in such activities as cross-border trade (“suitcase trade”), subcontracting work at home or street trade (Esim 2000).

Clearly women’s entrepreneurial potential remains untapped in transition countries especially when compared to global trends. The number of women entrepreneurs has rapidly increased during the last ten years contributing to GDP growth and creating new jobs in most countries in Western Europe, North America and elsewhere. Between 1992 and 1997, the total number of women-owned firms increased in the United States by 16 per cent, that is two-and-a half time faster than the average growth rate of all types of businesses. By the end of 1990s about 8.5 million women-owned businesses account for over one third of all businesses and employ one out of four workers. In the United Kingdom, women start one in four new businesses. In France, Germany, Italy and other developed market economies, there is a fast rise of women-headed companies.

Some women and men find attractive jobs in the private sector, often in foreign firms and FDI related activities. This labour market segment is, however, shallow and very competitive. Best job offers are addressed to young (25-30 years old) people most often with degrees in law or economics and fluent in foreign languages. Women and men have to adapt to busy work schedule, frequent travels, long hours working hours and/or work over weekends. Competitive pressure, however, most often means that these are women who have to choose between career and family (Ruminska-Zimny 1999).

Part-time and atypical forms of employment

During transition atypical jobs, rare prior to 1989, started to emerge along with the expansion of the private sector, enterprise restructuring and expansion of parallel economy. The latter consisted of “grey economy”, where activity was legal, though not registered, and “black economy” embodying many illegal and/or criminal activities, such as drug trafficking. The expansion of grey economy was a response to high social security contributions in the formal labour market, which many firms could not afford. Proliferation of black economy benefited from institutional weakness, including lack of law enforcement, which allowed for high profits from illegal operations.

Many women are interested in atypical working contracts because of their flexibility but also because other jobs may not be available. They include a variety of working arrangements, such as fixed-term contracts, part-time work and telework. Data on atypical employment are usually based on part-time employment. In all eight transition countries for which data are available, except FYR Macedonia, women have higher share in part-time employment, than men. These differences are especially big in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Moldova (Chart 3). Though some atypical jobs could be prestigious and well paid, such as free-lance journalists or part-time lawyers, most is in small enterprises in order to cut labour costs and/or in grey/black economy. This opens way to abuse in terms of wage level, safety and working conditions and social benefits.

Data on atypical jobs from western Europe, where this segment of labour market is highly feminised, shows disadvantages of these jobs, including the lack of social entitlements and benefits (maternity leaves and/or pensions), large differences in wages and salaries as compared to full-time jobs and predominance of low-status occupations (cleaning offices, serving in restaurants) (EUROSTAT 2000). It could be expected that these disadvantages of atypical work contracts would be similar for women in transition countries, where there are few institutional regulations of atypical employment.

A growing number of young women in transition countries are finding jobs in the booming sex business. This is not only the case of Russia, Ukraine or CIS countries, or poorer countries in eastern European countries, but also countries in central Europe. In most countries sex business is related to organized crime and reap huge profits along with drug business. Many young women are “exported” to western countries,

including as far as to Japan, to become “hostesses, singers or dancers”. Many young women do not realize that this is a euphemism for prostitute. They are victims of their own “naiveté”, but also of poverty and illusions for rapid improvement in living standards.

II. Policy issues

Against the background of trends on the labour market key policy issues to be addressed include: lack of a gender perspective at policy level, proliferation of discriminatory practices, support to women entrepreneurs, social protection and care functions, access to knowledge economy and ICT.

Lack of a gender perspective at policy level

The lack of a gender perspective in transition policies could be explained by a number of factors including their focus on macroeconomic policies and building market institutions. Labour market policies, especially in the first phase of the transition process, reflected the traditional male breadwinner model at macro and micro levels. Women were encouraged to leave the labour market through early retirement policies (the Czech Republic and Poland) and more attractive parental leave schemes (Belarus and Ukraine). Concerns for maintaining jobs for male breadwinners as well as the growing gap in social services and childcare were important factors behind these policies. Being at home women were expected to have more children, a concern in countries with declining fertility trends prior to 1989. There were also arguments that women should be liberated from «forced» participation in labour market under socialism and/or return to their «pre-destination», most often advanced by the extreme right-wing political parties and supported by fundamental wings of organized religions.

Clearly, the breadwinner model could not provide a framework for labour market policies in transition countries. Few women could afford to leave the labour market for economic reasons. At the same time for younger and well-educated generations of women in transition countries housewife as a career model has no appeal for similar reasons as elsewhere. They want independence and financial security coming from paid work under market conditions and eroding «cradle to grave» state protection. They also want satisfaction and social position which come with a professional career.

Policies in transition countries contrasted with trends in countries in developed market economies and elsewhere, where during the 1990s women’s contribution to economic growth has been widely acknowledged. This is reflected in many UN documents especially the Beijing Platform of Action and the Millennium Declaration adopted by member countries. It should be mentioned that gender aspects of labour market trends and policies are discussed at national levels in many countries. There is a growing consensus that sustained economic development require policies building partnership between men and women in the labour market and within a family.

Integration of a gender perspective at policy level requires data and analytical background to evaluate and monitor changes on the labour market by sex. More detailed analysis is needed on sectoral and occupational changes in employment and wages. There is also a need for more discussion and exchange of best practices, as countries have to evaluate different options and adjust them to the conditions and policy priorities in individual countries. This requires political support and commitment, now limited by a low level of women in parliaments and at decision-making positions.

Proliferation of discriminatory practices

The increase of discrimination of women under the new situation on the labour market in hiring, employment, career advancement, dismissal and wages was documented by ILO surveys (Paukert 1996). The discrimination was seen especially in the private sector where employers favoured young women and

offered short-term contracts, or casual work to avoid any costs, which might arise from maternity and childcare. Women were often requested to bring medical certificates that they are not pregnant before signing the contract. Older women, and women with small children, have difficulties to find a job in the private sector (Lisowska 1998). Main reasons of discriminatory practice in hiring are claims that women are less available to work under pressure and longer hours required by many firms in the private sector and the perception that women are more expensive workers (Fong 1996).

Fighting discrimination in the labour market is difficult due to the lack of a clear definition of such discrimination in labour market codes in all transition countries. In the past, this problem was irrelevant due to full employment. Legislation system enables thus uneven treatment of men and women, as for example through specifying sex in recruitment ads. In general, while women are discriminated in the existing labour market codes, men in turn have fewer rights in family matters, especially in contacts and care for children after separation and/or divorce.

So far, however, attempts to introduce anti-discriminatory legislation were few or they failed to go through parliaments. This was the case of Poland where the Parliament rejected in 1999 the project of a law on equal treatment of men and women in political, economic and social life, which embodied among other the definition of gender discrimination in the labour market, ban on sex discrimination in presenting women and men in school books, creation of high level body for gender equality and adoption of gender parity in all publicly elected bodies (Nowakowska 1999).

Support to women entrepreneurs

Establishing a sound environment for the development of entrepreneurship and SMEs is an important priority of economic policy in all transition countries. The instability of the tax system and other regulations in the private sector, the lack of access to credit, weak institutional framework business support services limit the development of new businesses in all transition countries.

Support to women entrepreneurs requires, however, alleviation of gender specific barriers in starting own business. Women lack access to networks (trade and business associations) and they are excluded from the informal "old-boys" networks. Women are in a worse position than men in terms of getting important information on credit, training opportunities, finding business partners and markets. They have also less access to collateral due to the uneven distribution of assets during the privatisation process. Time constraints due to more family responsibilities limits women's time for learning and/or exploring business opportunities. Finally, the social climate in many countries and stereotype views of gender roles translate into a negative public attitude towards women entrepreneurs, unequal treatment by the state administration and/or discrimination in connection with bank loans. In many countries, women are also more vulnerable as victims of new forms of criminal offence, widespread in a number of transition economies (Ruminska-Zimny 2000).

The growing gap between women and men entrepreneurs is an important policy argument in favour of special programmes supporting women's entrepreneurship. These programmes will help to fully utilize women's contribution to growth, job creation and development of the private sector. Such programmes exist in a number of ECE member countries, especially in North America and in Nordic countries. There is also a growing support to women entrepreneurs in Western Europe, often initiated at local levels. Programmes supporting women-entrepreneurs, however, should be an integral part of gender sensitive employment policies. Clearly not all women or men could start an own company and self-employment cannot be looked at as a solution of all problems related to unemployment.

Social protection and care functions

Changes in the welfare system were driven by constraints of public finance but reflected also the move towards less state and more individual responsibility. Many services were privatised and enterprises get

rid of social functions and facilities ranging from kindergartens to vacation resorts. There was also a move towards funded social protection schemes, such as private pensions.

As a result of these changes the costs of having children and rising a family (and thus reproducing labour force) have been shifted from the state to family level. These costs have sharply increased in all transition economies. Changes in welfare systems put thus women at a double disadvantage. They remained overpriced in terms of the welfare provisions, but lost most benefits helping them to combine paid work with rising a family (Einhorn 1994). Their unpaid caring work within a family has also increased. Having children became in many ways “the worst economic decision a women can make” (Crittenden 2001). This decision is now much less often taken than prior to 1989.

The decline of fertility rates observed in all transition countries brings gender issues into the very centre of longer-term transition strategy. During the 1990s fertility rates in transition countries moved from relatively high level, by western standards, centred on replacement (2.1 child per women in 1982) to some of the lowest levels on record. Now, all transition countries have the lowest fertility rates in Europe (1.3), and in the world, lower than that in western economies (1.5). The decline of fertility rates was accompanied by depart from a relatively youthful pattern of marriage and childbirth in many transition countries (UN ECE 1999). Though factors behind demographic trends are complex re-designing a market based family support system in which responsibilities and costs of having children would be shared among the state (central and local levels), private sector, and households, is an important policy priority.

The main policy issue is how to adjust the welfare system to the two-career model of the family. The solutions vary greatly by country. The Scandinavian model is often presented as the most progressive one allowing for gender equality in access to paid employment, level of wages and social provisions to combine paid work and family life. This may not necessarily be an option for many transition countries due to constraints of public finance. Other options, should carefully evaluated. Countries have, however, to accept the two-career model as a base and open the discussion of redefining the social contract and redistributing responsibilities between the state at central and local levels, private sector and individuals.

Certainly there are no off-the-shelf solutions and all have to be discussed within the context of economic realities in individual countries. However, engendering labour market policies cannot be solved without adequate family and social protection policies. This involves more discussion on the impact of budgetary cuts on men and women, gender aspects of pension reforms and changes in fiscal system. The new system of social protection should create conditions, which could enable women to reconcile paid work and family responsibilities rather than force them to chose between professional career and motherhood.

Access to knowledge economy and ICT

Education plays a key role in determining employability. From a gender perspective, two issues are important: first, women’s access to a “male” education profile, which includes mathematics and computer science, and second, women’s access to life-long learning.

Though women are often better educated than men, their education profile remains “female”. In most countries women are in a majority among university graduates. Only in some countries is their share in commerce, law, mathematics and computer sciences close to men’s share. Women continue to choose a “female” education profile, which locks them into “female” segments of the labour market. Among university graduates, they still dominate in the arts and humanities, social services and medical studies. To meet the challenge of new information and communication technologies (ICT) more investments in women’s education is required.

Inadequate access to life-long learning is another factor, which affects women’s employability. The global market requires frequent adjustment of skills and knowledge to the changing demand under the influence of competition and evolving information technologies. This type of learning is most often

provided by employers, including through on-the-job training. The most important barrier to life-long learning is related to constraints on women's time, which is limited by caring functions.

III. UNECE advisory services on Gender and Economy

Advisory Services on Gender and Economy were established in January 2001. They respond to the concerns of UNECE member countries related to gender inequalities in economy expressed at the Regional Beijing+5 Meeting held in January 2000 in Geneva. Special attention is given to gender inequalities resulting from the transition process in countries in eastern and central Europe, central Asia and in the Caucasus.

The UNECE is well positioned to provide assistance to Member States in implementing the Beijing commitments in the area of economy. UNECE comparative advantages include: economic database and analysis of regional trends, sex disaggregated data and expertise in gender aspects of the transition process, inter-governmental platform for dialogue and exchange of best practices, networks of experts, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and national machineries for gender equality.

UNECE Advisory Services on Gender and Economy draw on the broad UN mandate to promote human rights, gender equality, social justice and economic development and a specific mandate to mainstream gender into the economy, which is defined by the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and other UN documents including the Agreed conclusions of ECOSOC (1997), the documents of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (1996 and 1999) as well as the Millennium Declaration (2000) and the Follow-up resolution of the General Assembly GA 55/162.

The framework for the advisory activities is provided by the recommendations from the intergovernmental meetings organized by the UNECE in contribution to the Beijing process: the High Level Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Beijing Conference in Vienna in 1994 (E/ECE/RW/HLM/7) and the Regional Beijing+5 Meeting in Geneva in 2000 (E/ECE/RW.2/2000/7) (www.unece.gender).

Advisory Services on Gender and Economy have cross-sectoral character and combine analytical work and operational activities and diversity of partners and beneficiaries, including an important role of non-governmental organizations. Strengthening cooperation among all actors concerned with economic aspects of gender equality would contribute to progress in reaching the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and economic growth and development prospects in all countries in the region.

The Regional Workshop on Women and Labour Markets was organized by UNECE in cooperation with UNIFEM and the World Bank in January 2001 (Warsaw, Poland). The Workshop was opened by the UNECE Executive Secretary and representatives of the World Bank and UNIFEM. UNECE provided an overview of regional trends in changes of women's situation, identified speakers and organized a discussion on key policy issues. Recommendations of the workshop were launching the process of integrating a gender perspective into economic policies and national budgets, strengthening government's capacity in this area and establish standards to measure progress. Enhanced partnership between the World Bank, the ECE and UNIFEM was also advocated. The proceedings from the workshop were published by the World Bank.

During 2001 many activities focused on raising the awareness of problems of women-entrepreneurs. UNECE organized the First Forum of women-entrepreneurs attended by over 350 participants from 39 member countries (October 2001, Geneva). The discussion focused around three major themes: personal experiences of successful women entrepreneurs, the role of professional and business networks among women-entrepreneurs, and access to new technologies and markets. The following documents were prepared by the UNECE Secretariat: Information Note (OPA/AC.21/1); Connecting SMEs Owned and Led by Women to the Global Digital Economy: A Proposal for Action (OPA/AC.21/2); UNECE Euro-Asian Foundation of Women-Entrepreneurs (OPA/AC.21/3), Women Entrepreneurs of the Year

(OPA/AC.21/4) and Building Regional Networks Among Women-Entrepreneurs (OPA/AC.21/5). All documents are available in English and in Russian at the UNECE website.

A number of sub-regional workshops on women's entrepreneurship was also organized in co-operation with CEI (Croatia; Italy), BSEC (Russia).

The UNECE will organize the Second Forum of Women Entrepreneurs (17-18 March 2003, Geneva), Round Table on women's access to ICT (Bucharest, 7-9 November 2002) and a Round Table on women-entrepreneurs in south-eastern Europe (Skopje, November 2002). A regional symposium on mainstreaming gender into economic policies is planned for 2003 in cooperation with DAW. The Workshop will focus on gender and macroeconomics and will gather economic policy makers, experts, NGOs and international organizations.

Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship

The First meeting of the new Team of Specialists on Women's Entrepreneurship was held in February 2002. The mission of the Team of Specialists is to assist Governments and women in the ECE region in fully utilizing women's skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial potential to stimulate economic growth and job creation in their countries, which is a condition to improve living conditions and alleviate poverty. To this end, the Team of Specialists:

- collects information on the situation of women-entrepreneurs and identifies gender specific barriers to entrepreneurship in countries and sub-regions;
- collects best practices of national policies supporting women's entrepreneurship in the ECE region;
- organizes the exchange of information and experiences involving governments, business community and civil society;
- prepares recommendations how to incorporate concerns of women-entrepreneurs into institutional and legal frameworks for business activities and address other gender specific barriers;
- promotes organization of training courses and life-long learning for women -entrepreneurs to facilitate start-ups and developing business activities under the conditions of globalisation and rapid progress in information and communication technologies (ICT);
- creates a web-site within the framework of the UNECE web-system in cooperation with the participating specialists in order to expand networks among women-entrepreneurs, improve access to information; and
- raises the awareness in the member States on women's entrepreneurship through the enlargement of the UNECE Portrait Gallery of Excellent Women Entrepreneurs and other relevant activities.

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TABLE 1

Growth rates of GDP and employment in Eastern Europe, the Baltic States and the CIS, 1991-2000

(Cumulative, percentage)

	1991-1994 ^a			1995-1998			1999-2000		
	GDP	Employment		GDP	Employment		GDP	Employment	
		Men	Women		Men	Women		Men	Women
Eastern Europe									
Albania	-20.7	-14.3	-24.2	24.1	0.4	-16.2	15.6	-5.2	4.4
Bosnia and Herzegovina .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bulgaria	-14.7	..	..	-11.1	..	..	8.4	..	..
Croatia	-32.2	..	..	24.0	..	..	3.3	..	..
Czech Republic ...	-10.0	-11.0	-10.5	8.3	-	1.2	2.5	-4.1	-3.7
Hungary	-12.5	-25.5	-26.3	12.7	-0.6	-2.4	9.6	3.0	4.3
Poland	4.2	-9.9	-4.8	27.1	5.1	8.5	8.2	-4.9	-4.7
Romania	-16.1	-8.5	-6.6	-0.5	-13.8	-10.8	-0.6	-4.3	0.4
Slovakia	-19.3	-20.4	-18.5	25.4	1.0	5.0	4.2	-2.4	-3.1
Slovenia	-6.7	-14.8	-20.5	17.0	7.3	5.8	10.1	-1.2	-1.7
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia									
	-20.3	-22.2	-21.6	4.9	-23.9	-17.8	8.8	-1.9	4.2
Yugoslavia	-54.7	-12.5	-8.3	23.5	-12.5	-8.3	-11.8	..	..
Baltic States									
Estonia	-30.7	-14.1	-18.4	26.1	-9.8	-5.1	6.2	-5.1	-4.7
Latvia	50.0	-22.6	-23.7	15.5	-3.4	-4.0	7.7	-0.6	-0.4
Lithuania	-43.8	-2.2	-15.9	21.9	1.9	-4.2	-0.2	-6.8	-1.5
CIS									
Armenia	-50.6	-7.0	-10.6	25.5	-10.0	-10.3	9.4	-2.7	-6.4
Azerbaijan	-52.5	..	..	4.1	..	..	19.3	..	..
Belarus	-27.8	-8.4	-9.0	11.2	-4.1	-7.9	9.4	-3.6	4.5
Georgia	-72.4	..	..	29.5	..	..	5.0	..	..
Kazakhstan	-33.1	-12.4	-19.1	-8.0	-5.1	-8.9	12.8	-2.6	5.6
Kyrgyzstan	-46.4	..	..	13.7	..	..	8.8	..	..
Republic of Moldova.....									
	-60.0	..	..	-11.8	..	..	-1.5	..	..
Russian Federation	-35.3	-4.7	-13.4	-11.1	-5.8	-7.9	14.2	0.3	1.3
Tajikistan	-59.2	..	..	-21.8	..	..	12.2	..	..
Turkmenistan	-32.0	..	..	-7.8	..	..	36.4	..	..
Ukraine	-45.5	-5.6	-12.8	-25.0	-1.0	-4.8	5.6	-5.0	-4.6
Uzbekistan	-18.1	..	..	10.7	..	..	8.6	..	..

Source: Based on UNECE Common Database

^a 1990 is not included due to the lack of data on employment by sex for 1989. This does not affect the general trend as in 1990, employment cuts were not significant ranging in all countries within 1-3 per cent, except Bulgaria, Poland and Slovenia where the cuts were between 4 and 6 per cent.

TABLE 2

Share of women in total employment by industry in selected transition economies, 1992-1997
(Per cent)

	<i>Czech Republic</i>		<i>Hungary</i>		<i>Poland</i>		<i>Romania</i>		<i>Slovakia</i>	
	1993	1997	1992	1996	1993	1997	1994	1997	1994	1997
Total	44.1	43.4	45.7	44.0	45.2	44.7	46.2	45.7	44.3	45.0
Agriculture	35.7	32.7	31.2	24.8	45.6	44.5	52.1	50.8	31.1	31.3
Industry	39.5	37.5	41.3	38.6	33.9	34.8	40.6	39.6	39.0	38.2
Construction	10.3	8.9	15.0	8.6	10.4	9.4	13.5	14.1	10.1	8.6
Total services	54.8	54.4	54.2	52.6	56.4	55.0	48.6	48.7	56.5	57.3
Financial intermediation	66.8	67.8	76.0	66.3	58.2	70.3	61.9	65.3	77.0	72.5
Real estate, renting, etc.	43.7	47.1	51.2	46.8	45.5	38.9	53.4	43.3	46.2	41.8
Public administration	38.8	37.5	34.7	42.7	42.0	42.0	16.7	21.0	44.0	46.9
Education.....	72.1	76.9	75.8	76.1	73.8	76.1	69.0	71.8	75.1	79.5
Health and social care...	79.3	81.1	75.1	75.3	79.5	82.8	76.9	77.1	80.6	79.9
	<i>Slovenia</i>		<i>Estonia</i>		<i>Latvia</i>		<i>Lithuania</i>		<i>Russian Federation</i>	
	1993	1997	1992	1996	1992	1997	1992	1997	1992	1997
Total	46.7	46.3	47.2	48.4	47.8	49.1	52.9	49.2	49.2	47.4
Agriculture	44.4	48.1	36.6	37.5	34.2	37.3	41.2	37.2	36.0	31.5
Industry	40.7	39.4	45.7	40.9	46.4	45.1	51.7	41.8	45.1	39.3
Construction	15.2	10.9	16.5	12.9	12.4	13.7	15.0	11.0	25.0	23.5
Total services	55.8	56.0	59.2	57.5	59.0	58.2	67.3	62.5	61.9	58.7
Financial intermediation	68.8	66.7	76.3	68.2	90.1	66.2	86.1	79.8	85.8	72.2
Real estate, renting, etc.	40.9	50.0	48.6	43.8	49.3	43.3	49.1	46.8	48.0	45.5
Public administration	48.6	52.8	48.1	40.1	39.8	41.5	37.1	35.8	68.3	50.0
Education.....	73.9	78.5	74.0	79.0	77.8	80.1	67.2	76.6	71.9	74.0
Health and social care...	78.9	81.1	86.5	82.1	81.7	83.6	82.4	84.2	83.0	80.9

Source: UNECE Economic Survey of Europe 1999, No. 1. Based on national labour force surveys.

TABLE 3

Changes of relative wages in the financial services and education, 1993 and 1997
(Average wage = 100)

	<i>Financial services</i>		<i>Education</i>	
	<i>1993</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1997</i>
Lithuania.....	305	211	78	86
Estonia.....	196	205	84	78
Hungary	190	199	98	86
Slovakia.....	187	194	82	84
Czech Republic.....	178	174	90	88
Romania.....	151	238	93	83
Poland	150	150	90	89
Slovenia.....	144	149	141	131

Source: Author's calculation based on ILO data (Laborstat).

TABLE 4
Male and female activity rates in selected transition economies, 1985, 1997-2000a
(Percentage)

	1985	1997	1998	1999	2000	<i>Changes between</i>	
						<i>1985 and 1997</i>	<i>1997 and 2000</i>
Bulgaria							
Male .....	..	56.8	55.6	54.5	54.0	..	-2.8
Female ...	..	46.9	45.6	44.2	44.0	..	-2.9
Czech Republic							
Male	75.1	71.1	70.8	70.6	69.8	-4.0	-1.3
Female ...	59.3	51.8	52.0	52.1	51.6	-7.5	-0.2
Estonia							
Male	82.6 ^b	73.1	71.9	70.8	71.0	-9.5	-2.1
Female ...	71.7 ^b	58.0	57.8	57.0	57.6	-13.7	-0.4
Hungary							
Male	73.9	60.4	60.0	61.4	61.9	-13.5	1.5
Female ...	61.3	42.8	44.1	45.4	45.8	-18.5	3.0
Latvia							
Male	69.4	68.9	68.6	68.1	65.2	-0.5	-3.7
Female ...	68.4	52.6	51.2	50.2	49.9	-15.8	-2.7
Lithuania							
Male	70.1	70.3	69.6	69.2	67.1	0.2	-3.2
Female ...	65.1	53.9	54.9	55.7	54.8	-11.2	0.9
Poland							
Male	69.5	65.9	65.4	..	64.1	-3.6	-1.8
Female ...	54.9	50.3	50.0	..	49.7	-4.6	-0.6
Romania							
Male .....	..	72.5	71.4	70.9	70.6	..	-1.9
Female ...	..	57.7	56.3	56.4	56.4	..	-1.3
Russia							
Male	72.6	69.4	67.6	71.9	70.9	-3.2	1.5
Female ...	63.5	55.9	55.2	59.7	59.2	-7.6	3.3
Slovakia							
Male .....	..	68.6	68.9	68.7	68.6	..	-
Female ...	..	51.8	51.5	52.0	52.6	..	0.8
Slovenia							
Male	82.3	66.2	66.3	64.7	64.5	-16.1	-1.7
Female ...	65.2	53.2	52.9	51.5	51.7	-12.0	-1.5

Source: Based on Economic Survey of Europe No. 1, 1999 and Economic Survey of Europe No 1, 2002.

Note: Working age population used to calculate activity rates is: 15 and over except for Hungary and Estonia: 15-74, and Russia: 15-72.

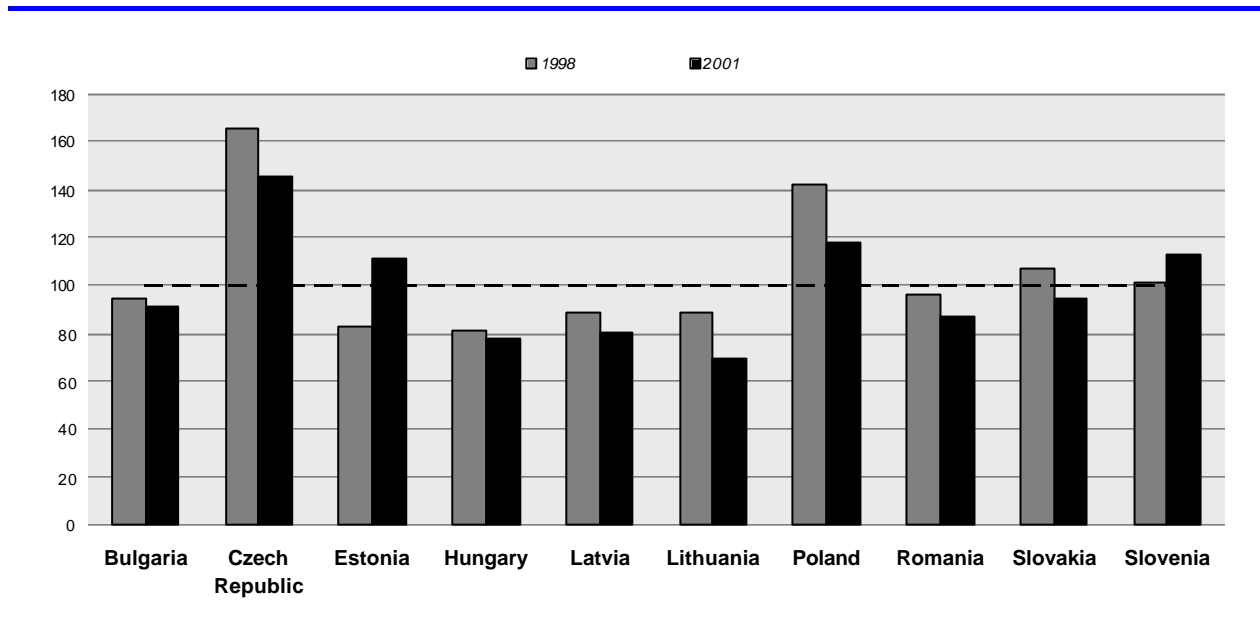
^a Labour force/working age population.

^b 1989,15-69 years.

Chart 1

Ratio of female to male unemployment rates, in selected central and east European economies, 1998 and 2001

(Percentage, male unemployment rate=100)

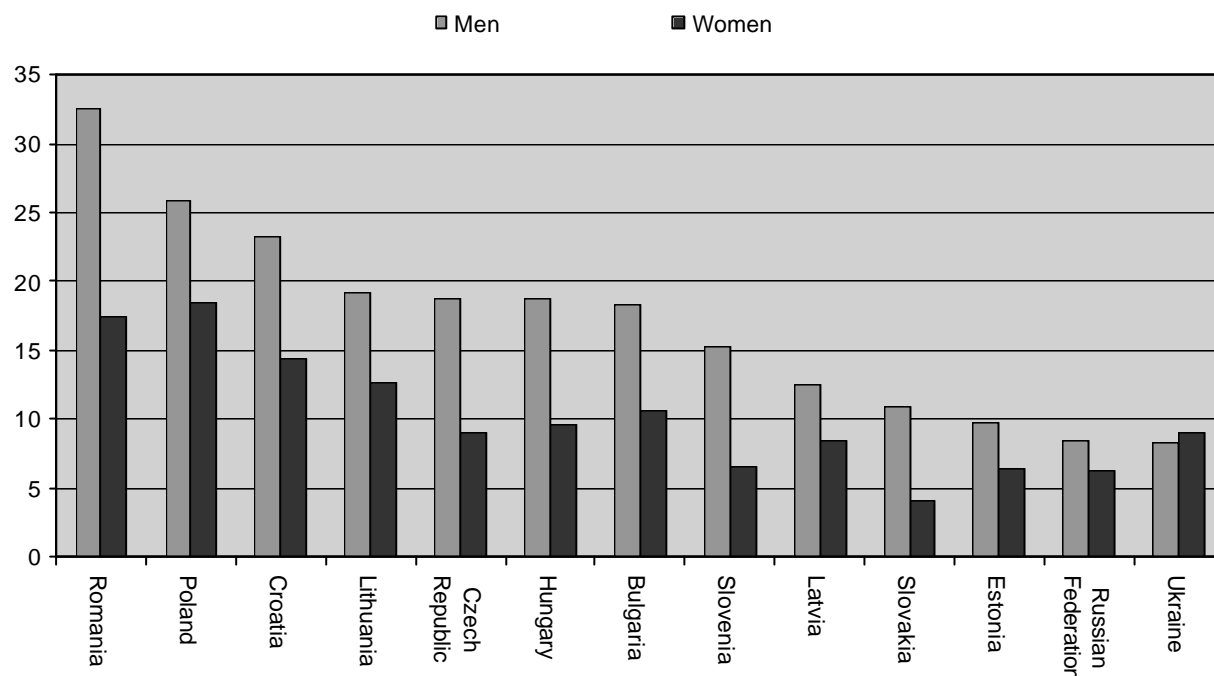


Source: UNECE, Economic Survey of Europe, 2002, No. 1.

Note: A ratio of 100 means that female and male unemployment rates are equal. A ratio above (below) the reference line indicates that the female rate is higher (lower) than the male.

Chart 2

Share of self-employment in total employment in selected transition economies, 2000



Source: Table 5.

TABLE 5

Self-employment as a share of total employment in selected transition economies, 1993 and 2000
(Percentage)

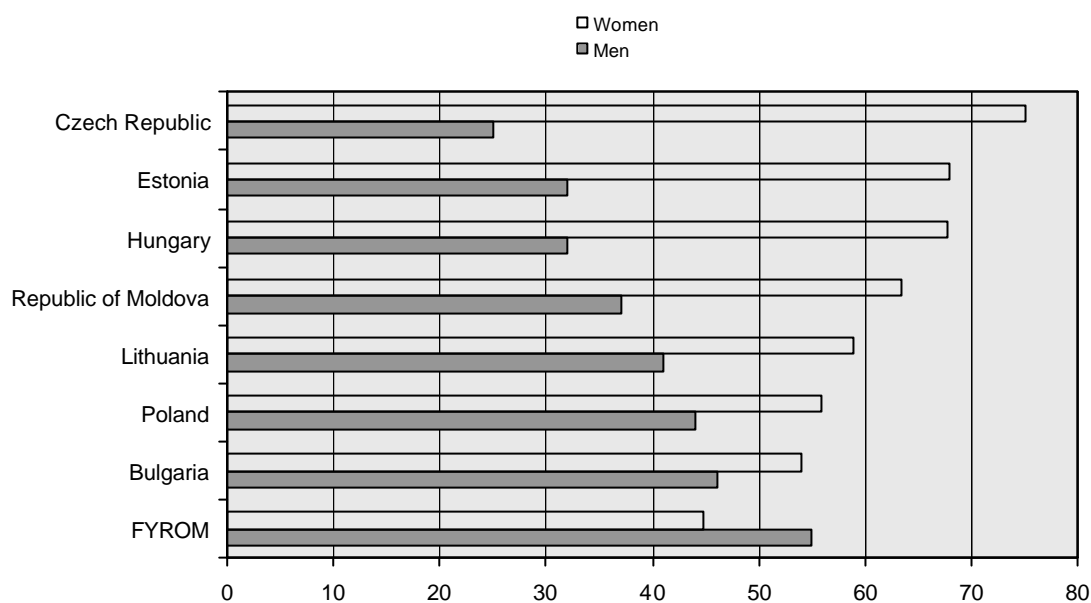
Country	1993		2000		Differences	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	1993	2000
Bulgaria	12.9	9.2	18.3	10.6	3.7	7.7
Croatia	25.1 ^a	15.4 ^a	23.3 ^g	14.4 ^g	9.7	8.9
Czech Republic	15.8	9.4	18.8	9.0	6.4	8.9
Estonia	10.4	6.2	9.7	6.4	4.2	3.3
Hungary	17.4	11.3	18.7	9.6	6.7	9.1
Kazakhstan	0.1 ^c	0.2 ^c	..	..	..	..
Latvia	12.4 ^b	6.9 ^b	12.5	8.4	5.5	4.1
Lithuania	21.5 ^d	14.6 ^d	19.2	12.7	6.9	6.5
Poland	32.2 ^e	29.9 ^e	25.9	18.4	2.3	7.5
Romania	24.4	19.4	32.6	17.4	5.0	15.2
Russian Federation	10.1 ^f	5.6 ^f	8.4	6.2	4.5	2.2
Slovakia	9.0	3.5	10.9	4.1	5.5	6.8
Slovenia	16.0	7.6	15.3	6.5	8.4	8.8
Ukraine	..	..	8.3 ^g	9.0 ^g	..	..

Source: A. Nespovova calculations, based on Labour force surveys (Nespovova 2001).

^a 1996; ^b 1995; ^c 1989; ^d 1997; ^e 1991; ^f 1994; ^g 1999.

Chart 3

Share of men and women in part-time employment in selected transition economies, 2001
(Percentage)



Source: UNECE Gender website.

Website address: www.unece.org/oes/gender