



# COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL-LEVEL REVIEW FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

## BEIJING+30

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAF	Academy of the Armed Forces
AF	Armed Forces
AFMIS	Albanian Financial Management Information System
AIDA	Albanian Investment Development Agency
ALMP	Active labor market program
AMA	Audiovisual Media Authority
ASCAP	Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education
ASCS	Agency for the Support of Civil Society
ASP	Albanian State Police
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
CC	Criminal Code
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CLWG	Counseling Line for Women and Girls
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRIPPD	Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSE	Comprehensive sexual education
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDPUE	General Directorate of Pre-University Education
GEO	Gender Equality Officers
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GRP	Gender Responsive Procurement
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HJC	High Judicial Council
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICTS	Intersectoral Counter-Terrorism Strategy
ICSS	Intersectoral Community Safety Strategy
ILO	International Labor Organization
IJSC	Intersectoral Justice Strategy for Children
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework Management
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
ISPVC	Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of the Victims of Crime
ISPVECT	Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism
IWG	Interministerial Working Group
JYCPC	Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center
LGAP	Local Gender Action Plan
LGU	Local Self-Government Units
LOPUE	Local Offices of Pre-University Education

LPCS	Local Public Safety Councils
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoD	Ministry of Defense
Mol	Ministry of Interior
MES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MP	Members of Parliament
MTBP	Mid-Term Budget Program
NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills
NAIS	National Agency of Information Society
NAP	National Action Plan
NARC	National Agenda for the Rights of the Child
NASRI	National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation
NCATS	National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters
NCGE	National Council for Gender Equality
NDC	National Determined Contribution
NDRRS	National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy
NEEVT	Not in education, employment, vocational training
NESS	National Employment and Skills Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Not for Profit Organization
NPCE	National Plan for Civil Emergencies
NSCCH	National Strategy on Climate Change
NSDEI	National Strategy for Development and European Integration
NSGE	National Strategy for Gender Equality
NSS	National Security Strategy
OSP	Official Statistics Program
PA	People's Advocate
PWD	Persons with disabilities
RDPUE	Regional Directorates of Pre-University Education
SARDF	Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLSSI	State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	sexually transmitted infections
VAWG	Violence against Women and Girls
VET	Vocational education and training
VT/PVT	Victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking
YGP	Youth Guarantee Program
WEP	Women's Empowerment Principles
WPS Agenda	"Women, Peace and Security" Agenda

## SECTION ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

The Government of Albania began the preparation of the national report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), on February 8, 2024, through a comprehensive process, led by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP), as the main leading authority of the national mechanism for gender equality, at the ministerial level. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection led, coordinated and supported the Interministerial Working Group, as well as followed all the necessary steps until the completion and delivery of this national review. The questionnaire for the collection of information was shared with the members of the Working Group and other stakeholders, such as: local self-government units, independent and human rights institutions, civil society organizations, employees' organizations, international organizations, etc. In the process of preparing the report, about 189 (one hundred and eighty-nine) institutions and organizations were invited to provide their contribution, and 7 (seven) working, consulting and evaluation meetings were held. After updating the content based on all the written contributions as well as the comments and suggestions provided in the meetings, the completed report was sent for a written confirmation to all the relevant line ministries. The report was approved at the meeting of the National Council for Gender Equality (NCGE), on May 27, 2024. The submission of the national review report respected the deadline, June 1, 2024.

As a result of the above process, it is identified that the Albanian state has made significant efforts to advance policies and measures in all twelve critical areas of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action (Beijing 25+), but the progress has been affected by the 2019 earthquake, the pandemic caused by COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. Due to the urgency and unpredictability of both the damages and the social, economic and health consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, it was impossible to conduct in-depth analysis of the impact of financial measures on men and women. These measures to mitigate the crisis consequences are based only on the data available at the time of their preparation. Important measures have been undertaken for the advancement of gender equality in the following fields: employment; reducing and redistributing unpaid care and unpaid work at home; narrowing differences between the genders in the digital field; promoting employment and supporting start-ups, women's enterprises; social protection including special measures for mother and child protection; the expansion of social care services and specialized support services; improving health outcomes and increasing information on sexual and reproductive health, etc.

However, during the implementation of these important measures, the relevant institutions have also encountered difficulties and challenges, which have affected the level of progress in some of the critical areas, as well as the results achieved for women, young women and girls, or for all vulnerable groups in their diversity. For example, the fact that many women in agriculture do not have equal rights on ownership of property and assets, partly due to patriarchal practices of land inheritance, affects the achievement of appropriate results in terms of their economic empowerment. Climate changes have also impact on the increase of the challenges women face in agriculture. The situation gets worse for Roma women, Egyptian women, or women with disabilities and women living in rural areas. So, there are precisely such aspects of intersectionality that draw attention to the need for more in-depth gender analysis and measures that must be undertaken in conformity with the specific needs of these groups, in every field.

Positive trends in employment rates and participation of women/young women in the labor market were interrupted by COVID-19, leading to job losses and decrease of number of labor force. Therefore, immediately after overcoming the emergency situation, the Government of Albania took measures to address unemployment, especially among young people. The Youth Guarantee Program aimed at including in the labor market of young people not in education, employment, vocational training, increasing the level of the minimum wage, reducing the gender gap in wages, or engaging in Global

Accelerator for Decent Work and Social Protection for Just Transitions, aiming at creating jobs and the development of skills in the main sectors of the environmental economy and digitalization, etc., are some of the concrete examples of measures undertaken to progress towards inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work.

Digitalization of public services, an important step for which Albania has been evaluated, is accompanied with accessibility problems for vulnerable communities due to education, lack of skills and financial constraints. The new Strategy on Education (2021-2026) emphasizes the need for infrastructure development in urban areas and suggests the reuse of existing spaces in schools in rural areas. The measures undertaken to narrow the differences in digital use, which are being implemented from the first grades of nine-year education, are another example of efforts to address the challenges faced by women, young women, or girls in all their diversity in accessing e-services.

Public care services for children or adults in need disproportionately affect women's participation in the labor market. Long-term care is officially recognized for persons with disabilities and individuals aged 65+. The Government of Albania, through the Social Fund, has started the first efforts to provide home assistance services, with two innovative typologies: home assistance and mobile units, in several municipalities of the country. Social and health insurance schemes do not cover cash and in-kind benefits for care-seekers and informal caregivers. Further strengthening of care services, their expansion throughout the country and for all vulnerable categories or groups, would enable the addressing of this obstacle that keeps women and young women away from the labor market and affects the balance between working time and social life, as well as would improve significantly the quality of life for all.

Good results are achieved in the protection against various forms of gender-based violence, but victims/survivors face problems in the effective implementation of legislation, specialized support services which need to expand and cover the entire territory of the country, information about their rights (especially when it comes to persons with disabilities in sight, hearing, etc.), the impact of gender stereotypes and the blaming and prejudicial attitude that society holds in these matters, the increase in cases of femicide, as well as the problems in the operation and effectiveness of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms of cases at the local level. Digital violence, harassment and sexual violence need to be addressed with all the appropriate means that ensure the necessary protection.

The participation of women in decision-making and politics is a good example and the Albanian State can share the results and mechanisms with other countries. Currently, the government cabinet has 55% women in its composition, a woman Deputy Prime Minister and ten women ministers (out of 17 ministers in total), while the Assembly is led by a woman Speaker and consists of Committees and Subcommittees headed by women and with the participation of a significant number of women. However, there is a need to move in the same direction to strengthen even the decision-making position of women at the local level, for example in the post of a municipality mayor.

Likewise, despite the positive measures undertaken to protect peace, security and increase the representation of women in these matters, there is a need for further interventions to also have satisfactory results of women's involvement even in those areas that have been considered "neutral" from a gender perspective (for example in the fields like environment, infrastructure, natural disaster risk management, etc.).

The Albanian government has decided to focus on the policies and measures that will be undertaken in the future, innovation and transformative practices, to lead the change that will help to address strategic objectives in the fields of energy, agriculture, tourism, processing industry and other important fields. Artificial intelligence will be placed at the top of the government's agenda, to ensure that no one will be

left behind in the digital transformation. A positive example is the digitalization and interconnection of digital systems through the e-Albania government portal, which acts as one stop shop for the provision of public services of the government institutions. This portal currently provides 95% of all public services, and has made it possible to save many years of waiting time and a lot of money that citizens and businesses used to spend on obtaining these documents. However, this positive practice should be accompanied by more investments aiming at increasing the access of the marginalized groups to these services.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is another positive example to be shared in the framework of this national review, as gender responsive budgeting policies play an important role in achieving gender equality objectives. State budget funds are increased, where the percentage of total budget expenditures in Mid-Term Budget Programs (MTBPs) for gender issues has increased from 2,3% for MTBP 2017-2019 to 9% for MTBP 2022-2024 and 10 % for GRB. In the last three years, budget funds for GRB are: USD 90 million in MTBP 2017-2019; USD 120 million in MTBP 2018-2020; USD 285 million in MTBP 2019-2021; USD 348 million in MTBP 2020 - 2022, USD 506 million in MTBP 2021-2023 and USD 410 million for MTBP 2022-2024.<sup>1</sup>

## SECTION TWO: PRIORITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND SETBACKS

### *1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?*

In the last five years, the Government of Albania has made significant progress in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment, but it still faces challenges and obstacles that must be addressed through continuous efforts to achieve real and sustainable equality in practice.

Albania has a generally solid normative framework for the promotion, enforcement and monitoring gender equality and non-discrimination on the grounds of gender. In the Global Database of the SDGs<sup>2</sup>, Albania has been evaluated for the year 2022 with 100 points (out of 100) in terms of the degree to which the legal frameworks promote, enforce and monitor gender equality; 88.9 points with respect to violence against women; 80 points with respect to employment and economic empowerment, as well as 90.9 points with respect to marriage and family benefits. Albania is not a party to the UN Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (1962), but has ratified ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work. The Law "On Gender Equality in Society" has fulfilled the goal for which it was originally drafted in 2008 and is already in the process of revision to respond to the current situation and challenges of gender equality in Albania. Comprehensive legal acts have been drawn up for the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, and a number of individual characteristics, including sexual orientation or the expression of gender identity, but Albania is still expected to implement other reforms in different sectors, in compliance and harmonized with the EU *Acquis* on gender equality. Despite the progress at the level of legislation and policies, it is necessary for Albania to strengthen their implementation in practice, accountability and monitoring mechanisms, to ensure the achievement of all gender objectives and indicators within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to specifically address the impact that COVID-19 has had on women and men, young women and young men, girls and boys, in all their diversity.

<sup>1</sup> Report on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), first round of thematic evaluation: "Building trust through providing support, protection and justice", July 2017 - December 2022, pg.15. See: <https://rm.coe.int/state-report-addressed-to-grevio-1680ac0c69>

<sup>2</sup> Managed by UN Women. Shih: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/alb#goal-5>

**Putting women and girls at the center of sustainable development and integration of Albania in the EU.** The new National Strategy for Development and European Integration, the new National Strategy for Gender Equality and other sectoral strategies that are currently in the process of being implemented or updated, provide opportunities for identifying the main measures that must be taken to promote full gender equality. Placing women, young women and girls at the center of efforts for sustainable development and EU integration should be based on strategic pillars, such as: increasing investments to eliminate gaps in the implementation of existing commitments; complete and accurate gender statistics; strengthened mechanisms for coordinating actions and monitoring results; the use of women's leadership skills and their unlimited leadership capacities; as well as equal representation and participation of women in decision-making at all levels.

**Increasing funds for interventions in the field of gender equality is of fundamental importance for achieving results of the sustainable development.** Although Albania has made considerable progress in planning and implementing gender responsive budgeting, more needs to be done to ensure that the allocation and use of public resources directly respond to ongoing concerns about gender inequalities and the rights of women, young women and girls, in all their diversity. The implementation of national strategies and programs that are prepared, must be accompanied with the strengthening of the monitoring capacities and mechanisms of cost-effectiveness of these documents, based on the financial resources allocated and spent.

Attention should be paid to **the current gaps in gender statistics** in order to enable appropriate measurement of the results achieved in the field of gender equality and to objectively assess the impact of policies and investments. The lack of disaggregated data on the basis of sex, age, residence, ethnicity, disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity expression, civil status, employment, migrant, asylum seeker, etc., as well as the social, economic and legal situation in all sectors, is a challenge that must be resolved through the generation and availability of reliable data, comparable over the years and regularly updated.

**Effective leadership and efficient coordination of stakeholders at the central and local levels** are of fundamental importance to ensure the continuous treatment of gender inequalities in all areas of government action. The Law on Gender Equality created a special national mechanism of gender equality, which includes: the National Council for Gender Equality; the Directorate of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Policies, as well as the Sector of Gender Equality Policies in the Ministry of Health and Social Protection; but also a network of gender equality officers in ministries, other institutions and local self-government units. However, in their general organization, weaknesses are also observed, for example, in the clarity of roles and responsibilities, insufficient funds, capacities in need of strengthening, the lack of systematic inter-institutional cooperation, not only between actors at the central level but also in their cooperation with the local self-government units, etc. Therefore, the application of gender integration should be implemented at every stage, i.e. the drafting, enforcement, monitoring and evaluation of the policies on the basis of which the national mechanism for gender equality operates.

**The expansion of the leadership role of women and girls is of key importance.** It is undeniable that significant progress has been made in the field of women's political participation and representation. Thanks to the gender quotas, the number of women parliamentarians in the Assembly of Albania and in the municipal councils has been increasing. With 55% of ministerial posts represented by women, Albania ranks among the top ten countries in the world; or 42.8 percent of the members of the Supervisory Council of the Bank of Albania are women and with a woman Deputy of this Council, compared to the average of 20.3 percent in the central banks of European Union member states. The continuous promotion of the role of women, young women and girls as agents of change and as contributors - just like men, young



men and boys - has a positive impact on making the right decisions and further orientation on the country's development path, during the next years.

The last parliamentary elections offered opportunities for recreating an inclusive political environment, which respects the rights of women and family members of male and female candidates and their supporters, paying attention to the different needs and interests of women and men, young women and young men, girls and boys, enabling the voiceless to have their saying, and promoting the participation of the voting and non-voting electorates.

**Eliminating all forms of gender-based violence, harmful practices and violence against children.**

Violence against women and girls continues to be one of the issues that requires priority attention and intervention. Deeply entrenched patriarchal norms perpetuate and legitimize violence, abuse and discrimination, thus creating major obstacles to achieving true equality between women and men, girls and boys. The Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs), set up in all 61 municipalities in the country face difficulties in their operation; social care support services and specialized ones, despite continuous funding from the state, are not sufficient in number. The legal definition of rape in the Criminal Code is still based on the use of force or threat by the perpetrator rather than lack of consent and the burden of proof falls on the victim. The legislation has gaps in the areas of security in the use of the Internet and there are no legal provisions for the protection of victims of other criminal offences other than domestic violence (such as stalking, harassment or sexual assault); therefore, CRMs are not obliged by law to handle such cases. Cultural resistance to change and the existence of multiple and intertwined gender discrimination limit access to justice for victims of gender-based violence belonging to various groups, including the Roma and Egyptian community, migrant women and men, women and men refugees, the LGBTIQ+ community, persons with disabilities (women and men) and the elderly (women and men), as well as children (girls and boys) who are victims of crime or in conflict with the law. During the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, gender-based violence led to the creation of a “hidden pandemic” which policy-makers must address in its entirety and complexity, by prioritizing three strategic approaches:

**I) Ensuring leadership and accountability:** State actors, including the parliament, the government, national human rights institutions (such as People's Advocate, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination) and judicial bodies, should give priority to issues of gender-based violence; the authorities responsible for the promotion of gender equality must be empowered and equipped with the appropriate resources and capacities to lead responsive actions and their coordination. Political leadership is extremely important, through the National Council for Gender Equality among others. National institutions should promote carrying out of actions, monitor progress and adapt activities, learning from successes and failures. This includes the need for better coordination of work with the local actors: mayors and municipal councils, police and courts, coordinated referral mechanisms, school personnel, local NGOs and social workers. All these actors are on the front line and must be able to fulfill their responsibilities.

**II) More investments:** more resources are needed to ensure full implementation of existing laws. Although Albania has made significant progress in harmonizing its legislative framework with the international normative standards, further amendments are needed to effectively fight sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking, whether online or offline. The full package of services for protection, treatment until the integration of the female/male victims, female/male survivors of the gender-based violence should be easily accessible to all persons in need, regardless of their place of residence, by delivering them where they are missing, even in the form of mobile services. This includes strengthening a victim-centered approach and providing more protection for female victims/survivors, through the provision of legal aid and the timely enforcement of protection orders. Access to health and psychological counseling services, social protection, housing, and income guaranteeing opportunities should be increased. Women, young women and girls in all their diversity, including women asylum seekers and refugees, must have access to functional and standard emergency shelters. National telephone lines to help women and men citizens and referral mechanisms should become sustainable, have clear

objectives, sufficient funds and human resources. Civil society efforts should be supported, including those to address the intersectionality dimension of gender-based violence (such as ethnicity, age, disability, place of residence, etc.).

III) **Priority treatment of education, dialogue and public awareness.** Albanian men, young men and boys continue to adhere to stereotypes of gender roles, which are often associated with a closed circle of aggression. A commitment of the entire society is needed, with schools equipped and prepared to be at the forefront of promoting human rights and combating patriarchal attitudes, through the mobilization of young women and men students, parents, women and men guardians and women and men members of community, in discussions on topics such as child protection, equality and non-discrimination, cultural and racial diversity, education on sexuality, positive masculinity, girl empowerment and self-defense, as well as safe use of the Internet. Informing the public also plays an extraordinary role in eradicating the culture of gender stereotyping, violence and abuse. The media must be part of the solution, through reporting on the implementation of laws and policies, supporting the female survivors, instead of justifying the perpetrators of violence, as well as offering opportunities to young men and women who do not agree with this status-quo, to express their opinion. In addition, the protection of the privacy of female victims/survivors should also be prioritized: the publication of information with personal data of victims (especially girls and boys minors) should not be tolerated.

**Strengthening economic justice and economic empowerment of women and girls.** In Albania, gender inequalities in economic opportunities continue to exist, related to labor force participation, levels of informality and access to productive resources. Although employment for 15-64 year olds has steadily increased, participation of women in labor force continues to be lower (66.6 percent) than of men (80 percent).<sup>3</sup> The choices made by women and girls are also influenced by the existence of stereotypes in employment, which orient them mainly in the field of health and social services, in education, or agriculture - all these sectors characterized by low wages. Agriculture remains the primary sector of employment for women (33.9 percent women, compared to 23.7 percent men).<sup>4</sup> In addition, women's access to the labor market is also affected by the proper addressing of care needs for children, or other dependent family members.

Women's participation in business has increased over the past decade, and 31.2 percent of businesses in the country are run or owned by women. However, the majority of women's enterprises are small businesses with insufficient capital and low profit rates (for example in manufacturing and agriculture). The active participation of women in the development of the private sector remains low, especially for women in rural areas, and the influence of gender-discriminatory behaviors and norms is present at all levels. Gender inequalities in access to loans also play a role in this regard, along with the fact that land ownership titles continue to be mostly in the name of the "head of the household" (mainly husband, father-in-law, brother, father, grandfather), which limits women's rights to productive resources, such as the right to business registration, the right to benefit from loans and agricultural advisory services, and their opportunities to leave a violent relationship. To accelerate the empowerment of women and girls, the following actions should be prioritized:

**I) Promotion of decent work, equal pay and employee rights,** as well as the transition of women from the informal economy to the formal one, through the reduction of gender divisions in the labor market, as well as the increase in the leadership role of women and their negotiating power in the family, on economic decisions. Greater investments are needed in ensuring quality care services, undertaking reforms in legislation and policies, creating decent care jobs in order to recognize, reduce, redistribute and reward unpaid care work, as well as to guarantee the rights and representation of people who work in the field of care.

<sup>3</sup> See the INSTAT data from the publication "Men and women, 2023", page 71 <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See the INSTAT data from the publication "Men and women, 2023", page 78 <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>

**II) Encouraging and empowering women's entrepreneurship and women run businesses**, including social entrepreneurship and access to finance through the provision of innovative investment schemes that promote the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises run by women. Other targeted actions should include services for business development and employment support, as well as employment in the green economy. It is necessary to create an enabling environment for women's economic activities and their access to productive resources, including women's access to land use, to income from emigration, to technology and finance.

**III) Challenging the existing gender norms** within the family and in the labor market, through the recognition of the roles and responsibilities of men and boys in the family, by promoting legal reforms such as the inclusion in the law and the implementation into practice of provisions for paid paternity leave.

**Investing in women's health and education.** Albania spends approximately 3 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health and education, compared to the 9.9 percent of GDP that is spent on average in the European Union Member States. Despite improvements in this direction, there is still a need for intervention especially for certain groups, for example for women living in rural and remote areas, as well as for Roma and Egyptian women who may have more limited access to primary health care and sexual and reproductive health services. The teenage birth rate has decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year by 10 births for every 1,000 girls aged 15-19, compared to 12.1 births in 2021).<sup>5</sup> As provided for in the Action Plan 2021-2027 for LGBTIQ+ persons, steps are being taken to draft relevant protocols and other measures foreseen for babies and intersex individuals. However, it is important to scale up actions to expand comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education programs to ensure that women, young women and girls, in all their diversity, enjoy their health rights without discrimination. The following should be included:

**I) Improving access to health services** and improving prevention services in public health, especially in terms of access to these services of women belonging to national minorities and young women, as well as for HIV prevention and the development of comprehensive sexual education;

**II) Taking effective measures to eliminate discrimination** of LGBTIQ+ persons, ensuring their access without discrimination to health services, as well as including in the school curricula education about LGBTIQ+ persons.

**Education results** also influence the orientation of girls and young women in the selection of higher studies branches, as well as subsequently in their access to the labor market. In vocational education, the majority (approximately 82 percent) are boys, mainly due to the existence of stereotypes related to "men's occupations", the social environment in vocational schools, the types of school programs offered, as well as employment prospects for girls after graduation. On the other hand, in university education, 58.7 percent of students are girls, compared to 41.3 percent boys.<sup>6</sup> Although the number of girls obtaining a university degree is higher compared to that of boys, the number of girls entering the labor force is lower and does not correspond to the level of their educational qualification. Schools and universities can also play a much more active role in eradicating the patriarchal mindset and gender stereotypes that continue to leave women behind, as well as revising enrollment criteria to allow more refugee boys and girls to be included in the education system. In order to overcome these challenges, coordinated actions must be taken in these areas:

**I) Priority should be given to inclusive and financially affordable education**, through the creation of stronger and more gender-responsive educational structures for the promotion of gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusiveness. The measures undertaken and which are being implemented continuously, such as providing scholarships, transportation for female/male students living in remote areas, programs for the vocational education and training of teachers, reconstruction and construction of

<sup>5</sup> INSTAT, "Men and Women, 2023", pg. 15. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> INSTAT, "Men and Women, 2023" pg. 58. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12598/burra-dhe-gra-2023.pdf>

education facilities that meet the standards of accessibility and gender equality, must continue focus especially on providing quality education for vulnerable groups.

**II) Investing more in girls' education to achieve equal access to all forms of education and vocational training**, with more focus on the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, digital knowledge and skills, and technical and vocational education and training.

**III) Fighting gender stereotypes**. Schools at all levels should serve as strategic entry points to combat gender stereotypes, social norms and discriminatory attitudes that still leave women and girls behind, focusing on reducing gender-based violence and increasing well-being and physical/mental safety of both, boys and girls.

## **2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?**

**1. Policies, legislation, services related to equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice.** Gender equality is one of the objectives of the National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2022-2030 (NSDEI) and specific interventions contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the 2030 UN Agenda. In the NSDEI, the vision of gender equality aims to “a society that values gender equality and justice as necessary conditions for sustainable social, economic and political development of the country, empowers all individuals to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life, does not allow anyone to be left behind, as well as relying on the principle of zero tolerance against harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence, punishing perpetrators and protecting, rehabilitating and reintegrating abused persons”. In order to advance further, the Government of Albania has approved the “National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 - 2030 (NSGE2021-2030) and its Action Plan”, which envisages measures and actions which are harmonized with the meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 UN Agenda. All line ministries and local self-government units have taken measures and are constantly planning actions to fulfill the goals of these two important strategies, in cooperation and with partners, civil society organizations and international organizations.

The Law “*On Protection from Discrimination*”, as amended<sup>7</sup> has been aligned with the EU acts, not only from the legal aspect but also as a more advanced social and institutional perception of the principle of equality and non-discrimination. The main amendments consist in: additional causes that prohibit discrimination such as citizenship, sex characteristics, living with HIV/AIDS and appearance (Article 1); the addition of forms of discrimination such as multiple discrimination, discrimination due to multiple affiliation (intersectionality), hate speech, segregation, sexual harassment, structural discrimination, incitement to or aiding another to discriminate, declared intention for discrimination, new definition for “victimization” (Article 3); the new legal provision and the doubling of sanctions for severe forms of discrimination (Article 3/1 and Article 33); the obligation of public authorities to promote equality and prevent discrimination in exercising of their functions (Article 7, point 3); changing the powers of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination regarding the review of complaints from persons or groups of persons who claim to have been discriminated even when they are anonymous, from organizations with legitimate interest, the right to file a lawsuit in court in defense of the principle of equality and non-discrimination, the right to set in motion the Constitutional Court, monitoring the implementation of the Law “On Gender Equality in Society”, for issues related to collective interests (Articles 32, 33); the extension of the deadlines for submitting the complaint, “shifting the burden of proof”, passing it to the subject who is alleged to have committed discriminatory behavior (Article 33); the obligation of the national media to publish the Commissioner's decisions that found discrimination through hate speech, etc.

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<sup>7</sup> On 15.10.2020, with Law No. 124/2020 “On some amendments and addenda to Law No. 10 221, dated 04.02.2010 “On Protection from Discrimination”, the legal amendments to the Law “On Protection from Discrimination” were approved”.

**Access to justice.** In the previous report, we explained the approval of law no. 111/2017, "On legal aid guaranteed by the state", which enabled the creation for the first time of a network of institutions responsible and engaged in providing and guaranteeing legal services. In September 2020, the law became fully functional with the approval of all the latest by-laws for its implementation, 13 (thirteen) in total, which regulate each specific field of legal aid. The rights, protection and inclusion of women and girls are in the focus of the work of the local government, where many of the municipalities have undertaken a series of measures at the policy level, among which, the signature by 18 (eighteen) municipalities of the country of the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life and the preparation and approval in Municipal Councils of Local Gender Action Plans (LGAPs) by 12 of them; the preparation of Social Plans approved by the Municipal Councils, which include measures for victims of violence and trafficking, as well as for other disadvantaged groups of women. The municipalities can apply to the Social Fund to meet their needs for delivering social services for groups in need.

**2. The elimination of violence against women and girls has been the focus of legislative initiatives adopted by the Albanian state** prioritizing the implementation of the recommendations of GREVIO or the CEDAW Committee, which have enabled the adoption of a series of comprehensive and coordinated measures to combat domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence against women. The urgent recommendations related to **the improvement of the legislation** have been fulfilled, through the adoption of amendments in the existing law against domestic violence, completion of the sub-legal framework, amendments in the Criminal Code and the adoption of new laws. **NSDEI 2022- 2030**, one of the main pillars of strengthening human rights, aims at 'Democracy and the strengthening of institutions and good governance', where some of the strategic objectives that are directly related to the 2021-2030 NSGE focus on reducing domestic violence and violence against women. Other measures related to the achievements in this direction consist of: the establishment of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRM) for cases of domestic violence throughout the country (61 municipalities); increasing the number of specialized support services for the treatment of female victims/survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence (35 in total); increasing the percentage of offenders punished and then rehabilitated; increasing the number of trained female/male professionals who work with victims of gender-based violence (women/men judges, women/men prosecutors, women/men teachers, women/men police officers, women/men judicial police officers, women/men local coordinators, women/men bailiffs, women/men doctors etc.); organizing awareness campaigns and legal education activities, making men and boys part of the solution, etc.

**3. Political participation and representation.** The Albanian government has made significant progress in women's participation in decision-making. The Gender Equality Index in the country, published for the first time in 2020, according to the European methodology, ranks Albania better than the average of EU members in the field of power, where the implementation of gender quotas has resulted in a significant increase in representation of women and girls in political life and decision-making. The number of women Members of Parliament in the Albanian Assembly has been increased, from 36 (29.5%) in 2019, to 50 (35.7%) in 2024. In the Parliamentary/Assembly elections, on April 25, 2021, 1,841 candidates were registered (732 women and 1,109 men) and 140 Members of Parliament (50 women and 90 men) were elected. The Speaker of the Assembly is a woman; deputies of the Speaker are one woman and one man; out of eight Permanent Commissions in total, four or 50% are headed by women; the government is headed by a men Prime Minister, a woman Deputy Prime Minister and consists of 17 ministers, 10 of which are women. Local government: The 2019 local elections resulted in 8 women mayors from a total of 61 municipalities (or 13%). Compared to 2016, where there were 6 women mayors or 9.8%, it is noticed an increase of 3.2%. In the partial local elections of March 2022, a total of 19 women/men candidates for mayors were registered (3 women and 16 men) and in the 6 municipalities where these elections were held, 6 mayors resulted winners (2 women and 4 men). Women in Municipal Councils make up about 44% of the total number of councilors. Some other achievements are: promoting women's engagement

in politics and encouraging them to participate in elections as candidates or voters; awareness raising and training of all electoral staff to ensure the fulfillment of gender quotas and respect for women's rights in the electoral process; monitoring and reporting data regarding the representation of women in politics and in electoral bodies to identify any lack or challenge in this regard.

#### **4. Gender responsive social protection (e.g. universal health coverage, cash transfers, pensions).**

In the advancement of gender equality in the field of social protection, Albania has made some important progress. The focus on social protection also includes universal health coverage, cash transfers and pensions, where gender-responsive social protection policies and programs are essential to ensure equality. Albania has taken steps to improve access to health services for all citizens, including women. There are specific programs for mother and child health, providing prenatal and postnatal care, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, breast cancer, reproductive organs, etc. Likewise, more and more importance is given to comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health. The Albanian government has implemented various social assistance programs aimed at supporting low-income families, including cash transfers that can help women in more disadvantaged economic situations, by tripling their economic support. The pension system in Albania has also included provisions aimed at supporting older women.

**5. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).** The state budget funds during these five years have been in increase, where the percentage of total budget expenditures in Medium-Term Budget Programs (MBP) for gender issues has increased from 2.3% for MBP 2017-2019 to 9% for MBP 2022- 2024 as well as 10% for Gender Responsive Budgeting in the last three years. Budgetary funds for GRB in MBP 2017-2019 result in USD 90 million<sup>8</sup> and USD 410 million for the 2022-2024 MBP. For the first time in 2020, the new Albanian Financial Management Information System enabled the monitoring of budget execution and made it possible to calculate the exact amount of GRB funds spent by central institutions. The Law on Local Self-Government Finances has also created opportunities for the effective involvement of GRB in all phases of the local financial management cycle (annual and mid-term budget programming, monitoring and reporting, assessment and audit). Local Self-Government Units (LGUs) are tasked to address gender inequality issues or full respect for gender equality in at least one of the policy objectives of the programs, clearly identifying gender products and indicators.

### **3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?**

**In legislative aspects** the principles of equality and the prohibition of any form of discrimination against women and vulnerable groups such as victims/potential victims of trafficking, gender-based violence, domestic violence, young mothers, persons with disabilities, minorities, LGBTI+ persons, the elderly etc., are included in the new or improved laws on: social care services, employment and its programs, social insurance, compulsory health care insurance, social housing, property, education, legal aid, adaptation and accessibility, child protection, Criminal Procedure Code, etc.

**Assembly of the Republic of Albania**, has undertaken a series of measures to supplement and intensify efforts to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination, including intersectionality, such as: conducting public hearing sessions of the Permanent Committees of the Assembly, the annual reports of the Prosecutor General, People's Advocate, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, etc., where information was requested/provided on issues related to gender equality and non-discrimination, CEDAW recommendations, etc.; conducting hearings with Roma and Egyptian women/girls, some of whom are victims of domestic violence, as well as with young women on gender discrimination, bullying, school violence and gender-based violence; the establishment of the Subcommittee for Sustainable Development; the exercise of parliamentary review

<sup>8</sup> Calculations also fluctuate based on the exchange rate USD/for ALL

over the implementation of the principle of equality by central, local or independent institutions (as envisaged in the Law on Gender Equality); increasing the representation of women in the parliament and its bodies (50 women MPs in this legislature); in international organizations and permanent delegations; in the constitutional bodies and established by law, as well as in the judiciary, etc.

**Independent human rights institutions** constantly undertake actions in this direction. For example: **Central Election Commission** has undertaken several measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of underrepresented groups of women and girls in the electoral process, such as: organizing information and educational campaigns to increase awareness and participation of women and girls in the electoral process, emphasizing the importance of voting and their electoral rights; cooperation with civil society organizations and interest groups to monitor and report possible cases of discrimination during the electoral process and to provide support and assistance in necessary cases; creating platforms and mechanisms to listen to and address the concerns and needs of women and girls regarding the electoral process; television and radio spots dedicated to women, girls and the importance of their involvement in the electoral process, etc. **Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination** has given some recommendations regarding: the implementation of the principle of gender equality in the appointed local government bodies; issues of protection from discrimination in remuneration in labor relations; taking positive actions, at the cross border points, giving priority to the elderly, children, people with serious health problems, people with disabilities and pregnant women; the approval of an additional fund in the economic assistance scheme, in the amount of 500 ALL per month, for each child of families treated with economic assistance, who regularly attend the school; the process of drawing up donation contracts also on behalf of women for the apartments benefited from the reconstruction grants as a result of the damage caused by the 2019 earthquake; taking measures to guarantee the effective benefit of economic assistance by the victims of violence in family relations, etc.

**People's Advocate** is strengthening its activity for the protection of the rights of citizens, promoting accountability from government bodies, monitoring the implementation of important ratified Conventions, drafting special reports in the area of gender equality (on violence against women, moral and sexual harassment in public administration, the situation of the LGBTIQ+ community, the monitoring of gender budgeting, etc.). The recent initiative undertaken in relation to the Femicide Watch is also another important action in this direction and a very good model of the work of institutions focused on the protection of human rights.

**In key policies for gender equality**, the prevention of discrimination and the promotion of the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls is emphasized not only in their description, but also in all the measures and actions that are undertaken for the implementation and fulfillment of the goals for which these policies are drawn up (for example, "The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030" that highlight these elements in its entirety and in the strategic, specific objectives and planned measures).

**The responsible central and local self-government institutions continuously** develop interventions with the aim of preventing multiple and combined discrimination and promoting the rights of women, young women and girls in all their diversity (as explained in the answers to the following questions, especially in the third section of this report).

**Training of women/men professionals** on international instruments, promoting gender equality and actions against gender discrimination, are also important to properly address issues of gender discrimination and respect for the rights of women, young women and girls in all their diversity. As explained in the answers to the questions, especially in the third section of this report, these activities of building and strengthening professional capacities, in every field, have been developed with priority and

paying due attention, thanks also to the cooperation with civil society organizations and international organizations.

**Establishing, strengthening and extending social care services**, is also another important measure taken over the last five years with the aim of providing services to all women and men in need, with a focus on women, young women and girls from vulnerable groups and with the aim that no one is left behind.

The above, as well as all the clarifications given in the following pages in response to the questions in the specific sections of this report, show that Albania pays attention to the proper addressing of multiple and intersecting forms of gender discrimination as well as to the recognition, respecting, enjoying and protecting the rights of women, young women and girls, in all their diversity.

#### ***4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?***

Global and national crises in the past five years such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the 2019 earthquake, etc., have undoubtedly had their impact on the measures and actions taken to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, sometimes reducing the resources available to these measures for certain periods.

The November 2019 earthquake and the COVID-19 pandemic have affected the implementation of social housing programs and highlighted the need for disaster risk preparedness in this sector, at different levels. The 2019 earthquake left approximately 11,490 housing units damaged or severely destroyed and approximately 19,000 more with moderate damages. The consequences of the earthquake were severe in rural areas where residents lost their homes and other basic facilities, necessary for their daily activities. Funds allocated for the earthquake amount to almost 90% of the total budget allocated for social housing.

The lack of property and business insurance has resulted not only in individual losses for the directly affected owners, but also in a greater burden for the budget, public debt and generations to come. The government and private insurers have recognized the need for intensified efforts to increase insurance coverage in the future. A draft law on the introduction of mandatory housing insurance has recently been drafted (in August 2023) including a formula for its calculation, in accordance to the area where the house is located and its size. The obligation to purchase earthquake insurance also applies to social rental housing and units in the process of legalization. For categories in need, the premiums will be covered by the state budget. The draft law paves the way for the creation of a National Earthquake Fund, which will be financed mainly by premiums collected from the public, funding from the state budget and donations.

Overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth has remained at stable annual levels of 3-4%, with the exception of the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, when GDP growth experienced the lowest and highest point between 2021 and 2022.

It is also important to note that after the 2019-2020 period, emphasis has been restored on all twelve critical areas and measures and actions have been envisaged to prevent the negative impacts that these crises can have on the lives of women, young women and girls in the future (including here also in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 - 2030).

Albania will continue to monitor, analyze and react to external impacts on development, through the main actions of monetary, fiscal and other macroeconomic policies and strategies, strategies which will have impacts that are expected to bring changes in all sectors of the economy and Albanian society.



## **5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programmes?**

**1. Prioritizing quality education, training and lifelong learning for women and girls** in Albania in the next five years is essential for the promotion of gender equality, economic development and social progress. These efforts not only contribute to the empowerment of women and girls, but also create a foundation for a more prosperous and just society. Through this priority, the Albanian state aims to address the gender inequalities that girls and women continue to encounter in their access to education and access to quality education. Prioritizing education helps narrow the gender gap, ensuring equal opportunities to learn and develop skills. Education and training are essential for preparing women, in all their diversity, with the necessary skills for the labor market, thereby improving their employability and reducing gender disparities in employment rates. Educated women are more likely to participate in the labor force, contributing to economic growth. By improving education for women and girls, Albania can fully exploit its economic potential. Education fosters entrepreneurship. Women who receive training are better prepared to start and maintain businesses, by promoting innovation and economic diversification. Promoting education for women and girls helps in challenging and changing traditional gender roles and stereotypes, creating a more inclusive and equal society. Education provides women with the necessary tools for economic independence, thereby reducing their vulnerability to poverty and increasing resilience to economic problems. This priority is in line with all the measures that Albania has taken, but also with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). While Albania has aligned its legislation with the European Union legislation, improving education for women and girls demonstrates a commitment to EU values and standards for gender equality and human rights.

**2. Prioritizing the elimination of violence against women and girls** shows Albania's commitment to the fundamental principles of justice and equality. This commitment is related not only to the implementation of laws but also to strategies that have envisaged concrete activities and measures to be implemented until 2030. As part of the international mechanisms in the next years, will be enforced the relevant recommendations of CEDAW<sup>9</sup>, the recommendations that the GREVIO group of experts will give, etc. The effective implementation of these conventions requires concrete and continuous actions to eliminate violence against women. Violence against women is a complex phenomenon, which has serious physical and psychological effects. Women who experience violence often suffer from long-term health problems, mental health problems and reproductive health problems. Domestic violence affects not only women, but also children and the whole family. This negatively affects the stability and well-being of households and communities. Eliminating violence against women is essential for their empowerment and active involvement in social, economic and political life. Violence hinders women's full participation in society and affects their opportunities for personal and professional development. Violence against women has a significant economic cost, including costs to public health, social services and lost productivity. Investing in violence prevention and victim support can lead to significant economic savings for the state. Women who are safe and supported are more likely to participate in the labor market, thus contributing to the country's economic growth and development. SDG 5 (Gender Equality) seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Eliminating violence against women is a key part of this goal and is essential for sustainable progress. Preventing violence against women also helps to achieve other goals, such as good health and well-being (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4) and peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

**3. Women in entrepreneurship and women's entrepreneurship** is the focus of Albanian policies. A special strategy has been drafted, which aims at the entrepreneurship of women and girls. Other

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<sup>9</sup> The Action Plan for the fulfillment of the recommendations as provided from CEDAW Committee in October 2023, approved in the NCGE, on May 27, 2024

initiatives consist on the creation of start-ups and the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs, which increase their economic independence and reduce dependence from the other sources of income, thus giving women the opportunity to have more control over their lives and their families. The strategies and policies that the Albanian state will implement in the next years aim to promote the creation of programs and policies that increase women's access to funds, grants and loans. When women succeed in entrepreneurship, they contribute to improving living standards not only for themselves, but also for their families and communities. Women entrepreneurs bring new and innovative ideas, helping to diversify and improve the Albanian economy. Women's entrepreneurship creates jobs and helps reduce unemployment, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Supporting women in entrepreneurship helps improve the gender balance in the business sector and promotes equality in the workplace. When women become successful business leaders, they challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive changes in social perceptions and norms. The promotion of women in entrepreneurship is in compliance with SDG 5 and SDG 8.

**4. Digital and financial inclusion of women.** In recent years, the Government of Albania, like the countries and regions in the European Union (EU), has developed Smart Specialization Strategies (S3) as a new tool for promoting innovation and regional development. The S3 approach aims to identify some priority areas of the regional/national economy where the impact of public investments in research, development and innovation can be very important. It emphasizes the potential of cross-sectoral linkages, apart from traditional industries, and promotes diversification based on these linkages. The Albanian state has also digitalized the internal government systems and a series of measures have been taken for the inclusion of women and girls in digital education, their employment and the further development of this sector. Artificial intelligence is another goal towards which future policies will be developed in our country. In Albania, there is still a gender disparity in access and use of technology and financial services. Improving the digital and financial inclusion of women and girls will help mitigating this disparity and build a fairer and more equal society. By ensuring access and support for them in the digital and financial field, Albania can benefit from their potential for creation and innovation in the economy. Improving the digital and financial skills of women and girls will help increase education and professional development. This will pave the way for them to be involved in different professions and sectors, contributing to the development of their skills and of the country's economy. Technology and finance are part of everyday life, and the involvement of women and girls in these areas is important for protecting their rights and safety in the digital world. By including women, young women and girls in all their diversity, steps can be taken to address the challenges and risks they may face.

**5. Gender-responsive social protection (e.g. universal health care, cash transfers, pensions, integrated social and community services, etc.)** as a priority aims to promote gender equality, social welfare and economic development of the country. Gender responsive social protection is essential to address gender disparities and discrimination in society. Ensuring equal access for women, in all their diversity, to health services, cash transfers, pensions and social services will help increase gender equality and build a fairer society for all. Providing a universal health care system and integrated social services for women will help improve their health and well-being. This will increase the quality of life and help reduce social and gender gaps in access to health care. Women often bear the burden of caring for families and children. A gender-responsive social protection will provide financial support and services to ease the burden of care and improve the quality of life of families and the raising of children. Social support for women has the potential to contribute to economic growth. By providing gender-responsive social protection, women can have more financial security to take risks and influence the country's economic growth. A strong social protection system for women helps increase stability and social peace in the country. When women have equal access to social services and financial support, the sense of justice and equality in society increases, reducing social tensions and contributing to the peace and stability of the country.

## SECTION THREE: PROGRESS ACROSS THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

### I. INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK

#### **Critical areas of concern:**

- A. Women and poverty
- F. Women and economy
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

#### **6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?**

**The National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2019-2022**<sup>10</sup> contained measures and actions aimed mainly at: promoting opportunities for decent work, implementing effective labor market policies, increasing skills through quality education and vocational training for young women/young men and women/men, improvement of qualifications systems, continuation of data collection divided by sex and gender statistics, monitoring through gender-sensitive indicators, etc. **As a result of the implementation of NESS 2019-2022**, the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) prepared a sustainable action plan to address the needs of women and men from vulnerable groups registered with it. The employment system was integrated with the system of economic aid and the payment system of the persons with disabilities, for the interoperability of data and the facilitation of procedures. Registered unemployed persons go through an extensive interview process in order to determine the barriers to their employment (e.g., childcare, lack of transportation, health problems, etc.). The interview is completed with the drafting of an individual action plan for active labor market programs.<sup>11</sup> Special attention was paid to strengthening governance and accountability for gender equality to improve the gender responsive policies of employment and skills development policies. Beyond ensuring gender responsive budgeting, the Ministry of Finance and Economy (currently the Ministry of Finance) designed proactive policies that provide women with equal opportunities with men, in employment and improvement of skills/retraining. The challenges faced by women in accessing the labor market were taken into account and specific measures were designed to address them (e.g., child care and transport allowances, or extending the duration of the qualification program for women victims of domestic violence and trafficking, etc.). In vocational education, girls who enroll in non-traditional occupations receive monthly attendance-related scholarships. In monitoring the labor market and all other NESS indicators, efforts have been made to regularly collect, analyze and report data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics. More specifically, elements such as labor force participation, employment and unemployment rates, gender wage gap, etc., are periodically monitored and integrated into all planning and implementation of strategic actions.<sup>12</sup> **The budget spent** on labor market programs and vocational education and training (VET) for the period 2019 - 2022 increased, respectively: ALL 4,175 billion in 2019; ALL 4,448 billion in 2020; ALL 4,903 billion in 2021 and ALL 4,525 billion in 2022.<sup>13</sup>

**The National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2023-2030**<sup>14</sup> aims to create quality jobs and opportunities for employment and skills throughout the country, quality education and training for young women/woung men people and women and men, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, and

<sup>10</sup> Adopted by DCM No.659, dated 10.10.2022. See: <https://arkiva.financa.gov.al/punesimi/>

<sup>11</sup> "Answers of Albania regarding the list of issues and questions in the framework of the fifth periodic national report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", submitted to the CEDAW Committee in July 2022 paragraph 112. See: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FRQ%2F5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FRQ%2F5&Lang=en)

<sup>12</sup> "Progress Report on the implementation of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2022, for 2022". Published on 20.07.2023. See: <https://arkiva.financa.gov.al/punesimi-dhe-afesimi-profesional/>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 86. See details also in table 1 in "Annex 1" in this report.

<sup>14</sup> DCM 173 dated 24.03.2023 "On the approval of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, the Action Plan for its implementation, and the Youth Guarantee implementation plan 2023-2024". See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2023/03/24/173/006a8e4b-bc79-4032-9553-60814bc2527f>

strengthening the work and qualifications system in the market. “Increasing the inclusion of women in the labor market” is a priority measure of NESS 2023 – 2030 which focuses especially on the integration of inactive women, through gender-responsive training policies, flexible employment and self-employment, and providing specific support to their activation. For this purpose, mechanisms will be built to identify the needs and profiles of inactive women through administrators/social administrators and gender equality officers at local level, and mechanisms to provide training and employment opportunities in various economic sectors, including care sectors. In addition, programs will be designed and implemented to increase the participation of women in the rural and agricultural labor market by informing and supporting them to access and benefit from funds for rural development, agro-tourism, etc. Institutions will support inactive women with entrepreneurship and social economy, production of local products or green economy, online business activities, and assessment of the possibility for fiscal incentives in these sectors. **The cost of implementing the NESS 2023-2030** is estimated at ALL 75,513,866,666, of which ALL 50,949,415,955 are funds from the state budget, ALL 7,392,277,484 are foreign funding and ALL 17,172,173,227 or 23% constitutes a financial gap.<sup>15</sup>

**The Youth Guarantee Program (YGP) 2023-2027**<sup>16</sup> focuses on promoting the employment of young women and young men as one of the priorities of the Albanian government. The target group is young women and young men not in education, employment, vocational training (NEEVT), since the percentage of unemployment for this group is very high. The YGP began to be piloted during 2023 with the support of NEEVT young people registered at the Labor Offices, who benefit from an offer of employment/vocational training/education, within 4 (four) months of losing their job or leaving vocational training. The program contains two phases. The pilot phase (year 2023 - 2024) provides measures such as: organization and operation of the local strategy for signaling and registration of NEEVT young people; development and testing of the NAES IT system to record entries for the Youth Guarantee; reforming the criteria for the implementation of employment promotion programs; necessary legal changes for youth organization grants; etc. The results of the pilot will guide the expansion of the program in the following years. **The estimated cost for the implementation of the YGP** for all steps (mapping, communication, preparatory phase and bidding phase) for both phases (pilot and follow-up), for a period of five years, is estimated at EUR 55,523,803, of which EUR 49,593,803 are EU funds, EUR 5,191,250 are state budget funds and EUR 738,750 are funds from other contributions. Of these, EUR 1,977,300 are planned for the pilot phase (year 2023); EUR 6,732,500 are planned for 2024, EUR 10,917,750 for 2025; EUR 15,320,000 for 2026 and EUR 20,541,250 EUR for 2027.<sup>17</sup>

**Measures and actions aimed at advancing gender equality in the area of employment** have been envisaged and are being implemented in the framework of the National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE). From the monitoring of the implementation of the **NSGE 2016-2020**<sup>18</sup> it was found that the actions foreseen for increasing the participation of women in the labor market, increasing their access to employment programs and reducing the gender gap, were implemented to the rate of 93.4%. Part of these actions was also the support provided to women in entrepreneurship, through the funds of the Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA), where during 2019 the beneficiaries of support schemes were: 69,2% men and 30,8% women for the innovation fund; 21,1% men and 78,9% women for the start-up fund; 93,1% men and 6,9% women for the competitiveness fund and 20% men and 80% women for the creative economy fund. Policy I of the **NSGE 2021-2030**<sup>19</sup>, focuses on the fulfillment of economic and social rights of women, young women, girls and men, young men and boys in society and the

<sup>15</sup> “NESS 2023-2030”, page 34 and details in table 2 in “Annex 1” in this report.

<sup>16</sup> DCM 173, dated 24.03.2023 “On the approval of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030, the Action Plan for its implementation, and the Youth Guarantee implementation plan 2023-2024”. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2023/03/24/173/006a8e4b-bc79-4032-9553-60814bc2527f>

<sup>17</sup> “Youth guarantee implementation plan 2023–2024”, page 119. See DCM No. 173, dated 24.03.2023 (page 58 et seq.), at:

<https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2023/03/24/173/006a8e4b-bc79-4032-9553-60814bc2527f>

<sup>18</sup> “Evaluation Report: Implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016-2020”. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/>

<sup>19</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 400, dated 30.6.2021. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2021/06/30/400/2387ac14-fd00-44cd-a291-bc00eb26f89f>

empowerment of women, young women and girls *in all their diversity*, aiming at growth and sustainability of the environmental (green) economy, and their equal participation in the digitalization process. This policy contains a set of measures and actions that focus on reducing the barriers that keep women, young women and girls away from the labor market, and increasing the access of women, young women and girls *in all their diversity* to decent work including non-traditional employment sectors (in particular in science, technology, engineering, mathematics). In order to measure the effectiveness of these measures, gender-sensitive indicators are also provided. From the monitoring of the implementation of the NSGE 2021-2030 for the period of time 2021-2022<sup>20</sup>, it is identified that about 35% of the activities foreseen on the progress of gender equality in the area of employment have been fully implemented, 12% have been partially implemented, 30% are in the process of implementation, 18% have not been implemented and information is missing for 5%. In parallel with the implementation of measures and other actions provided in the NSGE 2021-2030 for the advancement of gender equality in the area of employment, it is imperative that the responsible institutions give due importance to the regular planning of these measures in their annual plans, and their interweaving with other measures foreseen in this direction as part of NESS 2023-2030.

**Increasing the level of the minimum wage and reducing the gender gap in wages** are also priorities of the Government of Albania. The level of the minimum wage has increased from ALL 26,000 for 2019-2020 to ALL 40,000 for 2023-2024. The goal until 2025 is for the minimum wage to reach ALL 45,000.<sup>21</sup> However, even though the minimum wage level is the same for both genders, care must be taken to apply this measure correctly in the private sector. The gender pay gap has decreased during the reporting period, respectively from 10.1% in 2019 to 6.6% in 2020, to 4.5% in 2021 and to 6.2% in 2022.<sup>22</sup>

**Convention C190.** Albania ratified the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention (no.190) on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work on 03.02.2022<sup>23</sup> and work is being done to inform and strengthen capacities for the implementation of this convention into practice. The State Labour and Social Services Inspectorate (SLSSI) has participated in the training of inspectors/labor inspectors on the content of Convention C190 organized by ILO during 2022. In 2023, between the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) and SLSSI was concluded a Cooperation Agreement (Prot. No. 300, dated 22.02.2023), which aims to increase the interaction between them for the prevention, reduction and addressing of gender equality, non-discrimination, violence and harassment in the world of work. Pursuant to this agreement, inter alia, the following were held: information meeting on discrimination, violence and harassment as matters of safety and health at work (23 May 2023); training on inspection and monitoring with a focus on the implementation of the obligations of the C190 Convention (June 22 - 24, 2023); the annual conference of SLSSI and CPD (11.12.2023), where the annual balance of achievements and experiences on reducing discrimination, violence and harassment in the world of work was reflected, and it was agreed in principle on the action plan for 2024 in this direction, etc.

**Engagement in the Global Accelerator for Decent Work and Social Protection for Just Transitions.**<sup>24</sup> Albania confirmed high-level engagement in the Global Accelerator on August 1, 2023 (through the Deputy Prime Minister) and the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism is led by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.<sup>25</sup> With the support of the United Nations, policy mapping (2023) was carried out, the findings of which guided the process of drafting the Roadmap

<sup>20</sup> See the relevant reports at: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/>The monitoring report of NSGE 2021-2030 for the year 2023 is in the process of preparation.

<sup>21</sup> See table 3 in "Annex 1" attached.

<sup>22</sup> INSTAT "Women and men in Albania", editions of 2020, 2021 and 2022.

<sup>23</sup> Law No. 13/2022 "On the ratification of Convention 190 "Convention on Violence and Harassment" of the International Labor Organization, 1986. See: <https://qgz.gov.al/eli/fz/2022/30/38f028cc-c3bc-4956-96cf-dc221db20efe>

<sup>24</sup> The Global Accelerator is an initiative launched in September 2021 by the Secretary General of the United Nations, which aims to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the creation of decent jobs, mainly in green, digital economies and care, and to extend social protection to people who are excluded.

<sup>25</sup> See: <https://unglobalaccelerator.org/pathfinder-countries/albania>

for the implementation of the Global Accelerator<sup>26</sup>. The main focus is the creation of jobs and the development of skills in the main sectors of the environmental economy and digitalization, and the expansion of social protection, in line with the goal of further progress towards development and integration in the EU. The roadmap outlines a comprehensive strategy for implementing the Global Accelerator leveraging existing policies and plans to achieve sustainable and integrated solutions, higher productivity gains, social protection in an enabling and empowering environment for all, etc. More specifically, the goal is to significantly increase the coverage of social protection programs, especially for persons with disabilities (PWD), children, the elderly and rural residents; improving the quantity and quality of benefits from social protection programs and reducing gender inequalities in this regard, especially for unemployed women/young women; increasing employment rates, especially among vulnerable groups (such as PWDs, etc.); successful cooperation with the private sector to provide employment opportunities for all categories, especially PWDs and other key groups identified in this roadmap, etc. The preliminary costs estimated as necessary for the implementation of the envisaged measures are: 7 million euros (23% funding gap) for integration into the labor market, 23 million euros (12% funding gap) for disability reform, 21 million euros (12% funding gap) for economic aid reform, 9 million euros (46% funding gap) for industry-led skills development and compatibility with labor market requirements, and €1 million for strengthening the Integrated National Financing Framework Management (INFF). Funding of actions involves a combination of domestic and international resources, requires careful planning, cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, and strong monitoring mechanisms.<sup>27</sup>

**7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?**

Albania has undertaken and implements a series of legal measures aimed at balancing work and family life, such as: payment of maternity leave; paid childcare leave for both parents; the right to maintain the workplace for obtaining a four-month full or split parental leave, until the child reaches the age of 6; paid care support for persons with disabilities, etc., as presented in the previous state report in the framework of Beijing+25. Other support measures based on the increase of workload and unpaid work of women, especially during COVID-19, are: the application of the baby bonus (from 2019); financial support for families receiving economic aid, or women who are heads of households or victims/survivors of domestic violence during COVID-19 (2020 - 2021); tripling of economic support for victims/survivors of domestic violence provided with a protection order; special support for unemployed women with three or more children up to 18 years old (from 2023); etc., which are explained in more detail in this report in the following sections (in response to question 11).

The reduction and redistribution of care and unpaid domestic work, and the promotion of work-life-family balance, are issues also addressed in national strategies for gender equality. In **NSGE 2016-2020**, the reduction of women's unpaid work in the family was intended to be achieved through increased access and quality of social services. This objective was implemented to the rate of 57,5%<sup>28</sup> and among the unimplemented actions was the provision of social services in community centers by local self-government units for the third age people, or for children, women and mothers with disabilities, etc. **NSGE 2021-2030**, contains a specific objective with measures focused on the equal division of work and unpaid care in the family, information on the forms of paid leave allowed for each parent, improvement of the legal framework and policies related to the flexibility of working from home, extending the time of paid leave for both

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<sup>26</sup> The Roadmap was prepared by the Government of Albania, the country team of the United Nations (UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, UN Women, FAO), under the technical guidance of UNICEF and UNDP during the period October - December 2023. Part of the process of its preparation was the consultation with civil society and social partners in December 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Source: Draft Guideline for the Global Accelerator for Albania, January 2024 version, made available to consultants by UN Women, for the purpose of preparing this national report (unpublished).

<sup>28</sup> "Evaluation Report: Implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2016-2020". See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/>

parents, etc. From the monitoring of the implementation of NSGE 2021-2030 for 2022<sup>29</sup>, it results that only 18% of the foreseen activities have been fully implemented, 10% partially implemented, 18% have not been implemented and for 54% no information has been provided by the responsible institutions.

Data on the engagement of women in unpaid care work in the family, and on friendly policies for work-life-family balance, have also been collected from studies conducted by CSOs and international organizations (2021-2022)<sup>30</sup>. Findings affirm that unpaid family work and care burden girls/young women/women more heavily (67% of girls and 30% of boys aged 10-14, 95% of girls/young women/women and 38% of boys/young men and men aged 15-64, and 86% of women and 63% of men aged over 65). In the private sector, employees work more hours per week on average compared to those in the public sector (65% in the private sector versus 14% in the public sector work on Saturdays, 37% in the private sector versus 5% in the public sector work on public holidays and 29% of employees in the private sector do not have the right to benefit from annual leave). The private sector offers more opportunities than the public one for flexible hours, although both sectors are still rigid in this regard (almost one in three employees in the private sector has some kind of flexibility during working hours, compared to only 7% of female employees in the public sector). There are significant differences between the private and public sectors in the provision of facilities for socializing or eating meals, where employees of the state administration not only do not have dedicated facilities, but also do not have a lunch break scheduled. Both sectors lag far behind in providing other services such as dedicated breastfeeding facilities or childcare facilities (38% of businesses provide support for pregnant or breastfeeding women by giving them the opportunity to disconnect from work and 4% offer dedicated space for nursing mothers). Only half of the businesses interviewed (200 interviews with businesses at national level) have heard of family-friendly policies. 95% of businesses think that the government should support them to encourage the implementation of gender-responsive and family-friendly policies through tax relief (79%), financial support (65%), promotion (35%) and participation in decision-making (15%).

The Social Plans prepared by the Local Self-Government Units (LGUs)<sup>31</sup>, include the expansion of services such as nurseries and childcare, and services for the disabled – the establishment and empowerment of which facilitate the burden of unpaid care work for women and girls. An important role in this direction is also played by various activities focused on gender equality, particularly with boys and girls in schools, with the aim of promoting positive gender norms, the equal value of boys and girls in the family and society, the importance of equal participation of boys and girls in social and community activities, but also in performing care work in the family, etc. The cooperation of LGUs with the employing institutions for the creation of support and care services for children in their premises is also a very interesting experience, which has started to be piloted in Albania.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, the LGUs are foreseeing as part of their work, especially through community centers or community services, the organization of positive parenting courses, highlighting in these courses the importance of engaging boys, young men and men in unpaid care work in the family, especially in raising and educating children.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/> The monitoring report of NSGE 2021-2030 for the year 2023 is in the process of preparation.

<sup>30</sup> Conducted by UNFPA and IDRA Research & Consulting: "Current family-friendly policies and legal provisions in Albania", February 2021; "Fact sheet: Current situation of gender equality in Albania", March 2021; "Analysis on gender-responsive family friendly policies in Albania", June 2021; "Implementation of Family-Friendly Policies and Gender Equality in the Public and Private Sector - Business Perspective", June 2022; "Implementation of Family-Friendly Policies and Gender Equality in the Public and Private Sector - Perspectives of Employees", August 2022; etc., see: <https://albania.unfpa.org/sq/publications>

<sup>31</sup> Prepared with the support of UNICEF.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the Municipality of Tirana in cooperation with the National Commercial Bank (BKT) opened the first nursery in the workplace, in 2021.

<sup>33</sup> With the support of UNFPA, "Act for Society" prepared a manual for positive parenting courses, adapted to be used by community centers at local level (2021 which was piloted and then completed with employees of Tirana Municipality (2022). During the year 2023, the trained employees were mentored for holding such courses and this experience is already being implemented by the Municipality of Tirana. Similarly, positive parenting courses are also being conducted by a number of other municipalities in the country, on their own initiative or with the support of CSOs and international organizations.

## 8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?

Although the number of girl students graduated in the branch of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is lower than that of boys (respectively: 3.7% girls and 8.6% boys for the academic year 2018-2019; 3.4% girls and 9.3% boys for 2019-2020; 3.3% girls and 10.2% boys for 2020-2021; 3.8% girls and 10.5% boys for 2021-2022)<sup>34</sup>, currently in the National Agency of Information Society (NAIS), as the main institution responsible for ICT, young women and women predominate in leadership positions (55%).<sup>35</sup> Albania has the highest percentage of women and young girls who have obtained the scientific degree “Doctor/PhD” (62.3%) in the field of science, technology and innovation. In 2021, it was established the Network of Albanian Women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), which aims to contribute to the social and economic empowerment of women and young girls by increasing their representation in STEM, both in the academic field and in the scientific research and innovation.

The trend of Internet use by both genders has also improved: during the period 2018-2020, the number of women and men who had used the Internet “in the last three months” increased a lot in Albania, especially for women (12.2 points percentage), with an increase almost double the increase in internet use by men (6.9 percentage points).<sup>36</sup> After 2020, the trend leveled off and by 2022, 81.5% of women and 83.7% of men aged 16 - 74 had used the Internet “in the last three months” marking an increase of 3.3 percentage points, compared to the year 2021.<sup>37</sup> During the year 2023, 81,7% of women and 84.6% of men in the 16-74 age group were internet users “in the last 3 months”.<sup>38</sup>

The Albanian government<sup>39</sup> has undertaken an initiative to develop digital skills among girls/boys and young people, as an opportunity to narrow the digital division between the sexes. This initiative aims to include the subject “ICT and Coding” in grades I, II and III in an interactive way, and further, to reformat the teaching of the subject of ICT in grades IV-XII in the most contemporary ways and to provide the students with more practical knowledge in this field. It is also intended to equip all pre-university education schools with smart laboratories accessible to all students, and the preparation of ICT subject teachers in pre-university education for teaching the subject interactively and in compliance with the contemporary curricula, platforms and equipment. The first phase is being implemented in the first grades in 100 schools for the 2022-2023 school year. The second phase of this project, during the years 2023-2025, aims at the construction of smart laboratories in 884 schools of pre-university education in Albania, extension of teaching for the first grades in 984 schools with laboratories and piloting of the program in the second and third grades of the 100 schools that were involved in the first phase of project implementation. Then the project will continue to be extended throughout the country until 2023.<sup>40</sup> During the year 2022-2023, 108 SMART labs<sup>41</sup> and during 2023-2024, supply will continue to 200 schools and 216 SMART labs have been planned. The planned fund for financial support was 500 thousand dollars.

The curricula of the ICT subject in basic education and upper secondary education aim to introduce and develop the digital competences of students, ensuring an equal approach for all, without gender differences. During the year 2022 in 1,194 schools with more than 4,334 teachers and about 120,000 students between the ages of 10 and 15, it was implemented the “21st Century Schools” program<sup>42</sup>, which

<sup>34</sup> Data from INSTAT from the publications “Women and men in Albania” for the years 2020,2021,2022 and 2023. See: [www.instat.gov.al/publikime/](http://www.instat.gov.al/publikime/)

<sup>35</sup> See: <https://akshi.gov.al/grate-ne-tech-rol-i-tyre-ne-fushen-e-tik/>

<sup>36</sup> INSTAT (2021). Survey on “Use of information and communication technology (ICT) in households and by individuals” in 2020. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/kushtetsociale/teknologjis%C3%AB-s%C3%AB-informacionit-dhe-komunikimit-tik-n%C3%AB-familjedhe-nga-individ%C3%AB/#tab2>

<sup>37</sup> INSTAT (2023). Survey on “Use of information and communication technology (ICT) in households and by individuals” in 2022. See:

[https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11157/ict-2022\\_shqip.pdf](https://www.instat.gov.al/media/11157/ict-2022_shqip.pdf)

[https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12854/ict-2023\\_shqip.pdf](https://www.instat.gov.al/media/12854/ict-2023_shqip.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> In cooperation with the Albanian-American Development Foundation (AADF)

<sup>40</sup> Monitoring report for the period June – December 2023 “Digital Agenda of Albania 2022 – 2026”, page 14. See: <https://akshi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Plani-i-monitorimit-te-AD-per-vitin-2023-1.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> 100 labs partially financed by the budget and partially by AADF (laptop funding for 100 schools), and 8 labs with the support of the Open Society Foundation for Albania (OSFA).

<sup>42</sup> Led by the British Council and funded by the UK Government.



aimed to provide students with critical thinking skills, digital, problem solving and coding skills through fun, interactive and innovative learning. Each 9-year education school is being equipped with devices called micro:bit with which students can program and use them in all subjects to solve everyday problems. In the competitive groups on coding challenges, organized in the framework of this program, the participation of girls was especially encouraged. The Coding Program for young people launched on January 23, 2023 has 1068 young people registered in short-term courses (68 more than planned).

In the framework of the project “Developing teacher competences for a comprehensive system of teacher vocational development” (TEAVET)<sup>43</sup> as a partnership of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES)/ Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education (ASCAP) with 8 (eight) Albanian higher education institutions (HEIs) and 3 (three) European HEIs, for the period 2019-2020, there were accredited 16 training modules on digital learning, teaching/learning strategies, active civilization, inclusiveness in education, learning culture, methods of reading-writing, etc.; it was created the database of trained teachers; and it was held a closing international conference with the main findings as a result of the implementation of this project.

***The National Strategy for Education 2021-2026***<sup>44</sup> aims, inter alia, to develop digital competence, through the best use of ICT for teaching and learning. The use of ICT in the academic process contributes to the development of digital competence in pupils and is necessary in order not to interrupt the learning process even in exceptional situations (such as Covid-19). The difficulties and lessons learned during the distance learning period, March - June 2020, through the creation of the [akademi.al](https://akademi.al)<sup>45</sup> platform, supplementing knowledge through video recordings, and combined classroom and online learning, have served MES as a guide for taking the necessary steps to promote gender responsive education, especially in STEM subjects. Informative sessions on breaking gender stereotypes that influence career choices and the perception of girls/young women about the skills needed in computer science; discussions on gender differences in careers and equal opportunities for all genders in the fields of STEM; the creation of special programs and initiatives to encourage girls’ interest in ICT and STEM, etc., have already become part of the planned actions in the framework of pupils’ career orientation. About 1,200 teachers have also been trained for the use of ICT in the teaching-learning process and for cyber security. MES has drawn up the “2024 – 2025 National Program for the Professional Development of Teachers”, which aims to improve the learning outcomes of students through the professional development of all teachers, coordinated and institutionalized with all actors in the field of education, with a focus on reading, mathematics, natural sciences (physics, biology, chemistry), based on the STEM approach.

In the framework of vocational training programs, 3 -12 month courses in the field of ICT are supported to the extent of 50% or 100% by the Albanian government according to the category of applicants, who after the completion of the course, can be easily integrated into technology job market. These programs aimed at empowering and supporting girls/young women interested in changing careers or improving their economic situation in the future, are implemented by the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES).

The production of informative brochures<sup>46</sup> for children and their parents on the safe use of ICT, and the preparation of a group of supporters or teachers in a number of schools on Internet safety, is another important measure aimed at not only the reduction of the digital divide, but also the possibility of safe usage of the Internet.

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<sup>43</sup> Funded by the European Commission, the Erasmus+ program, with the main focus on increasing the capacities of the academic staff of Albanian HEIs for the training of teachers, and the establishment of the training system through lifelong learning centers in these HEIs (a 3-year project: 2017-2020).

<sup>44</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 621 dated 22.10.2021 “On the approval of the National Strategy for Education 2021-2026 and the Action Plan for its implementation”. See: <https://www.coursehero.com/file/151885569/Vendim-621-date-22102021-Per-miratimin-e-SKA-2021-2026pdf/>

<sup>45</sup> With the support of UNICEF.

<sup>46</sup> UNICEF Internet Safety Project

In the cross-sectoral strategy “**Digital Agenda of Albania 2022-2026**”<sup>47</sup> it is emphasized that artificial intelligence will be placed at the top of the government’s agenda, to ensure that no one will be left behind in the digital transformation: citizens must have every opportunity to acquire the skills they need, nurturing talent and promoting gender equality and diversity. The process of digital transformation has long started in Albania and all public and private actors are working hard to change the mindset of citizens regarding this new and inevitable form of communication. From 2020, citizens and businesses apply only through the e-Albania platform and there are the employees of the public administration who collect all the state documents for services that are used and reused, making citizens free from the burden of collecting them physically on paper at state counters.

In the monitoring report on the implementation of the “Digital Agenda 2022-2026” for 2023, the NAIS (National Agency for Information Society) states that as a result of the increase in the number of electronic services offered online on the e-Albania platform, the number of users until December 2023 reached 3,074,325, which includes citizens, businesses and employees of the public administration. The number of annual transactions on the Government Interaction Platform, which is the basic architecture of data exchange among 60 electronic systems on real time and safely, reached 297 million for the entire year 2023. The e-Albania government portal acts as one stop shop for the provision of public services of government institutions, currently providing 95% of all public services, (fully online without the need for physical presence of the individual, vehicle or laboratory sample). It is estimated that e-Albania has saved citizens and businesses about 1,000 years of waiting in line to receive state documents with an electronic stamp and about 9 million EUR in their pockets, from the removal of fees for these documents that are already offered free of charge in the platform in their electronic version. The approach of the government portal e-Albania to the digitalization of services has also been evaluated by the reports of international organizations, from the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the US Department of State and the European Commission, which give Albania the maximum grade in digital governance.<sup>48</sup> However, a concern in all this development regarding digitalization remains the ability of certain groups to easily access and use the e-Albania platform, including women/young women/girls from vulnerable groups, the elderly, PWD, etc.

**The National Strategy for Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation 2023–2030**<sup>49</sup> is another important policy document that promotes progress towards ICT and STEM through the implementation of which it is aimed to: increase the efficiency and sustainability of the system for supporting scientific research, integrated at international level, in the entire spectrum of the fields of natural sciences, engineering and technology, medicine, agriculture, social and human sciences; creating an environment that facilitates and encourages mechanisms of interaction and transfer of technologies for cooperation between the research, economy, innovation communities and public institutions; promoting the culture of science and innovation in education to ensure a didactic approach with an emphasis on research practices and projects. The data processed by the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI), show that the number of winning national and international projects led by women and girls is higher than that of projects led by men and boys. The data of 2022 show that out of 84 proposals evaluated by NASRI in all priority areas, 46 projects were announced as winners, of which 31 projects were led by women and girls. However, the above-mentioned achievements reflect initiatives to promote gender equality only in specific aspects of scientific research. In this context, it remains important to draw up a national plan for the promotion of gender equality in science, technology and innovation, aiming at integrating the gender perspective in all measures and actions that will make possible the achievement of the advantages of this strategy.

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<sup>47</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 370, dated 1.6.2022 “On the approval of the cross-sectoral strategy “Digital Agenda of Albania” and the Action Plan 2022-2026. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2022/06/01/370/8fd7b0cf-6848-431f-8bc6-5d08d16deaa7>

<sup>48</sup> Monitoring report for the period June - December 2023 “Digital Agenda of Albania 2022 – 2026”, pages 10-11. See: <https://akshni.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Plani-i-monitorimit-te-AD-per-vitin-2023.-1.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 542, dated 20.09.2023. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2023/09/20/542/96f316d6-b135-42fb-a64a-abbfa9484c8>

**NSGE 2021-2030** also contains concrete measures for reducing gender gaps in digitalization, and for encouraging and supporting innovative ideas aimed at the environmental economy and digitalization, in the entrepreneurship of women and young women in all their diversity. From monitoring the implementation of this strategy for 2022, it results that in 2022 new courses were added and developed, such as: digital skills with 422 participants (45% women/girls); Graphic Design with 231 participants (56% women/girls); computer network technician with 13 participants (23% women/girls); Web design with 118 participants (55% women/girls) and other courses with 8614 participants (51% women/girls).<sup>50</sup>

**9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**

The performance of our country's public finances over the past five years has been affected by several national natural disasters and international events such as: the November 2019 earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine. These events have had a non-positive impact on the path of fiscal consolidation that the Albanian government had undertaken before 2019 and this negative trend is especially noticeable in 2020 where the budget deficit reached 6.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) compared to the previous year that was 1.9% of the GDP, largely dictated by the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, fiscal consolidation continued after this year, with a gradual decrease in the level of the budget deficit and the public debt stock, and at the end of 2023 the budget deficit was 2.2% of the GDP.

Due to the urgency and unpredictability of both the damages and the social, economic and health consequences caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, it was not possible to conduct in-depth analyses of the impact of financial measures on men and women. The financial measures designed to mitigate the resulting crisis were based only on the data available at the time of their drafting, and it was not possible to extend the analysis of their impacts in an unclear and uncertain future, in different social groups.

Furthermore, during the 2019-2024 period, a series of measures have been taken in relation to the public sector, especially in the restructuring and reorganization of the government cabinet, which do not result in austerity measures or staff reductions. Such restructuring aims at the better reorganization of the central government through the creation of ministries or portfolios in line with the priority directions of the government program for sustainable development. The data for 2024 show that: the Ministry of Health and Social Protection holds the largest ministerial portfolio of ALL 78,238,015,000 (according to the structure of the Ministry, it is anticipated that Health and Social Protection be included in one Ministerial Portfolio); the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy follows with ALL 57,137,485,000; the Ministry of Education and Sports with ALL 52,223,097,000; the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation (established by DCM no.30 dated 17.01.2024) with ALL 51,116,216,000; the Ministry of Defense with ALL 48,338,376,000; the Ministry of Interior with ALL 25,950,856,000; the Ministry of Justice with ALL 14,734,650,000; the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development with ALL 14,180,500,000; the Ministry of Finance (separated from the Ministry of Economy by DCM no. 31 dated 17.01.2024) with ALL 10,926,750,000; the Ministry of Tourism and Environment with ALL 3,523,107,000; the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs with ALL 3,239,300,000.<sup>51</sup> The current government cabinet confirms 11 ministers with portfolio and 6 Ministers of State without portfolio, respectively: the Minister for Entrepreneurship and Business Climate, the Minister for Relations with Parliament, the Minister for Public Administration and Anticorruption, the Minister of State and Chief Negotiator, the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Youth and Children. Women in the government cabinet are responsible for spending 57.1% of ministerial budgets (the first three ministries with the largest budget portfolios are headed by women).

<sup>50</sup> NSGE 2021-2030 implementation monitoring report, for the year 2022. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://financa.gov.al/akti-normativ-nr-1-date-21-02-2024/>

The above goes in support of actions to implement the various measures of the Beijing Platform for Action.

## II. POVERTY ERADICATION, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- A. Women and poverty
- B. Education and training of women
- C. Women and health
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

### **10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

**Policies to reduce poverty and promote employment.** In the above sections, the legislative but also political measures that the Albanian state has undertaken regarding the promotion of employment and the reduction of poverty for women and girls have been clarified. Some other strategic measures are also envisaged in the 2021-2030 NSGE under the 1st strategic goal aimed at: reducing/eliminating poverty through the fulfillment of economic and social rights for women, young women, girls and men, young men, boys in society; empowering women, young women and girls, in all their diversity, aiming at growth and sustainability of the environmental (green) economy; and their equal participation in digitalization. By 2030, the Albanian state aims to influence poverty<sup>52</sup> alleviation by increasing the identification of poor individuals, children and families, and their social integration, increasing to 50% the share of beneficiaries included in employment schemes, converting them from passive to active schemes.

In the **National Youth Strategy<sup>53</sup> and its Action Plan 2022-2029**, Policy Goal 2 provides measures and activities aimed at supporting and promoting youth innovation, and increasing the skills and professionalism of young people through quality education ICT and other areas of digital development, to increase and improve their opportunities to integrate into the labor market. In the focus of the policies are young girls and marginalized groups of young women.

**An Action Plan for the Implementation of Youth Guarantee 2023-2024** was adopted in 2023, containing measures to provide a decent offer of employment, training or education to every young women/men (aged 15-29) within four months from their identification, in accordance with EU recommendations. The commitment to provide young people with decent work and quality education is in line with SDG #8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG #4 (Quality Education).<sup>54</sup>

One of the objectives of the **2021-2027 Strategy for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries 2021-2027<sup>55</sup> (SARDF)** aims to promote local development through improved employment and business opportunities on and off farms, and through community-led development initiatives. Inter alia, SARDF anticipates the support of female/male young farmers to set up and develop agricultural businesses, especially among the needy female/male young people in rural areas. From the monitoring of the implementation of the NSGE 2021-2030 for the year 2022<sup>56</sup>, it results that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) carried out several awareness-raising and training activities with women and

<sup>52</sup> The Institution of the People's Advocate has carried out a study on the minimum living in 2021, where, among other things, it suggests changing the law no. 57/2019 "On social assistance in the Republic of Albania" and the inclusion as a special provision of the definition of the living minimum. See: <https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/reports/Minimum%20jetik%20ok.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> See: <https://riniafemijet.gov.al/en/strategjia-kombetare-e-rinise-2022-2029-tashme-miratar/>

<sup>54</sup> More details on the Youth Guarantee Program were provided in response to question 6 above, in this report.

<sup>55</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 460 dated 29.06.2022 "On the approval of the Strategy on Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries 2021-2027".

See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2022/06/29/460/a49807d6-28cb-4973-94ea-60d89bf8d41c>

<sup>56</sup> See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/> The monitoring report of the NSGE 2021-2030 for the year 2023 is in the process of preparation.

girls (1 meeting on property rights over land<sup>57</sup>, 10 days of training<sup>58</sup> from which 300 women farmers benefited, and about 8100 women farmers were assisted and provided access to information<sup>59</sup>). From the National Support Schemes, 505 women applicants were successful.

**The Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and Business Climate in Albania** has presented the National Strategy for the Development of Innovative Entrepreneurship 2024 – 2030<sup>60</sup>, which aims to promote entrepreneurship in the country, through a new economic model driven by innovation, comprehensive development, especially through the empowerment of women in entrepreneurship. This initiative is in line with the State Agency for the Support and Development of Start-Ups and Facilitators (Start-UP Albania)<sup>61</sup>, which has initiated calls for grants in the total amount of 3 million euros, financed by the Albanian state budget. 40% of grant applicants are women, reflecting a growing interest and participation among women entrepreneurs. The strategy includes provisions to facilitate and support women entrepreneurs and advantage in grant qualification points, in cases where points are equal between male and female applicants, priority is given to women, signaling a commitment to promoting gender equality and empowerment in the entrepreneurial landscape of Albania. *(For details, refer to INSTAT's data on women owners/administrators shown in the answer to question no. 22 of this report).*

**The “EU for Youth<sup>62</sup>” program** aims to support the participation and empowerment of young people in the political, economic and social life of Albania. The activities planned to be implemented within the Action Plan will focus on three areas of support related to young people in Albania in accordance with the goals of the “EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027”<sup>63</sup> and “Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2020-2030”<sup>64</sup>. According to INSTAT's calculation, the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has a weight of about 27%.

**Active labor market programs (ALMPs)<sup>65</sup>** have undergone a redesign process based on evidence from past programs and international best practices. In 2020, three DCMs were adopted, introducing a set of eight new ALMPs. Of these, five were drawn up based on preliminary assessments and international best practices, while the other three were formulated in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the employment promotion law guarantees priority for the employment of marginalized groups and special categories such as women/young women victims of violence, trafficking survivors who benefit from the following ALMP programs:

**(1) On-the-job training<sup>66</sup>** targets job seekers without qualifications and trains them on the job: provides the employer with a grant for 4 months, based on a training plan approved and supervised by the trainer appointed by the employer; **(2) Wage subsidy<sup>67</sup>** is a one-year subsidized work contract, where the job seeker's need matches the employer's profile: the wage is determined based on the market wage and the duration of the subsidy is determined based on the job seeker; **(3) The internship employment program<sup>68</sup>** ensures a quick transition to the labor market for newly qualified graduates in the same field or similar field to their studies, for a period of 6 months; **(4) Self-Employment Program<sup>69</sup>** helps start a business and offers financial grants and support to unemployed job seekers who have a well-defined and

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<sup>57</sup> Organized in collaboration with UN Women and FAO

<sup>58</sup> Organized by Agricultural Technology Transfer Centers in cooperation with Regional Agencies of Agricultural Extension.

<sup>59</sup> From Regional Agencies of Agricultural Extension.

<sup>60</sup> The draft document was open for public discussion until 26.04.2024. See: <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/716>

<sup>61</sup> <https://startupalbania.al/>

<sup>62</sup> Included in Thematic Priority 1: Educational policies, employment, social protection, comprehensive policies and health, part of the contract provided under the National Program IPA 2022 with beneficiaries the Ministry of State for Youth and Children, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the relevant subordinate institutions. The amount of financing is 5 million euros.

<sup>63</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218(01))

<sup>64</sup> See: <https://rm.coe.int/a5-brochure-youth-sector-strategy-2030-albanian/1680a0d17a>

<sup>65</sup> See the data of table no. 4 in “Annex 2” of this report.

<sup>66</sup> DCM No. 17, dated 15.01.2020, as amended

<sup>67</sup> DCM No. 17, dated 15.01.2020, as amended

<sup>68</sup> DCM No. 17, dated 15.01.2020, as amended

<sup>69</sup> DCM No. 348, dated 29.04.2020

viable business idea and plan; **(5) The Employment and Training Program in Community**<sup>70</sup> addresses the needs of long-term unemployed jobseekers, with a focus on workforce training, to reintegrate jobseekers into the labor market, in accordance with local employment opportunities, and is implemented in partnership with communities and CSOs/volunteer organizations; **(6) Provision of subcontracted training**<sup>71</sup> is a subsidy scheme for employed and unemployed job seekers, where training is provided by private training providers; **(7) Training Program in Albania**<sup>72</sup> for young people aged 15-29, with short vocational training courses through Vocational Training Centers; **(8) Subsidies** for the adaptation of the workplace which provides financing up to 1600 euros to enable the adaptation of the workplace to the needs of a person with disabilities. Such a subsidy is integrated in all the aforementioned programs; **(9) Transportation and childcare subsidies** are available to support the integration of vulnerable jobseekers into the labor market.

**Social Employment Fund.** The Employment Promotion Law also introduces a quota scheme for public and private employers and creates a Social Employment Fund to finance employment and skills development programs aimed at integrating people with disabilities into the labor market, aiming both disabled people and their families. This newly introduced quota/tax scheme provides that every employer with more than 25 employees must hire one disabled person and then one additional person for every 50 employees. If the employer does not fulfill this obligation, it must contribute to the Social Employment Fund an amount equal to 100% of the minimum salary per month for each unfulfilled obligation. The fund is not yet fully operational.

**The unemployment benefit**<sup>73</sup> is a fixed benefit, in the amount of 50% of the minimum gross salary (20,000 ALL - about 200 euros). The job seeker must meet certain criteria<sup>74</sup> and unemployment benefits are granted for a limited duration ranging from three months for those who have paid social contributions for at least 12 months, to a maximum of 12 months for those who have paid contributions 10 years or more. Women over 55 and men over 60 receive 12 months of unemployment benefits as long as contributions have been paid for a minimum of 12 months. The self-employed are excluded from this scheme.

**Social reintegration.** The MHSP in cooperation with MFE (today MF) and NAES have drawn up the exit strategy with the aim of transitioning from the passive scheme to the labor market. A joint order<sup>75</sup> between the Minister of Health and Social Protection and the Minister of Finance and Economy was signed in January 2022 for the referral mechanism for the employment and social integration of family members of working age who benefit from the economic assistance scheme. The order is based on the referral model initially piloted for three months in one of the municipalities<sup>76</sup> and currently the model has spread to 12 regions, which meet monthly to evaluate, refer and hire active members of working age. Social mentoring is part of the individual plans prepared to support the reintegration of EA beneficiaries.

**Local Self-Government Units**<sup>77</sup> (LGUs) have taken measures to implement central policies for referrals for employment and vocational courses<sup>78</sup>, employment in private businesses (the paid training program at the workplace made possible the employment of 18 cases of these 14 women)<sup>79</sup>. Job fairs were

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70 DCM No. 535, dated 08.07.2020

71 DCM No. 646, dated 5.10.2022

72 DCM No. 264, dated 27.04.2023

73 Approved by DCM No. 161/2018

74 Must have at least 12 months of insurance (not consecutive); be unemployed, registered as unemployed in an employment office; be willing to undergo training and retraining and not be entitled to other social insurance benefits except for partial disability pension.

75 Joint order no. 52 dated 26.01.2022.

76 Elbasan Municipality

77 The information refers only to the municipalities that answered the questionnaire

78 The municipalities of Vau i Dejës, Selenica, Pogradec, Lushnje, Lezhë, Durrës, Prenjas

79 Durrës municipality

organized online<sup>80</sup> (during the pandemic), but also physically (2023), as well as activities to promote rural women or products from the agricultural sector such as: “Craft Fair”<sup>81</sup>, Bashtova Festival<sup>82</sup> “Artisans for Cultural Heritage (ArtCult)”<sup>83</sup>, “Kavaja heart of Albania” Fair, awareness and education<sup>84</sup> through the organization of awareness campaigns for the employment of women and girls, and meetings with the community. (*Social entrepreneurship, business creation are made possible by the cooperation of municipalities<sup>85</sup> with NGOs.*)

In addition to institutions, **civil society organizations**<sup>86</sup> also play an important role in the employment, housing, the provision of free legal services for categories in need, support for families, mothers who are heads of households towards employment and active labor market policies, including internships or support for economic initiatives, with a focus on families returned from unsafe migration and not only, supporting the Afghan community for about 3 years now by providing cash transfers during their stay in our country, intertwined with a number of other integrated services. About 2000 women were supported<sup>87</sup> *for the cultivation of wild Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAP) support with agricultural equipment, training on good agricultural practices, participation in round tables, fairs, support to conclude agricultural contracts with businesses, etc. that brings security to the market for their products. Furthermore, 70 women and girls employed in the fashion industry have been supported with free legal aid, ensuring that their right to be paid is respected. Through this program<sup>88</sup> advisory services for women-led enterprises were available and in 2021, there were 17 local advisory projects in Albania, and various training courses, ad-hoc webinars and mentoring were organized.*

The Government of Albania has undertaken a number of other supporting initiatives with cash payments, special care for mothers with several children, for victims/survivors of domestic violence, measures during the Covid-19 situation especially for vulnerable groups, etc., which are presented in the answers to the following questions in this report.

### **11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

**The National Social Protection Strategy 2020-2023**<sup>89</sup> aimed and had important achievements for the reformation of social protection policies through the transition of the economic aid scheme (EA) into an active scheme that enables social reintegration; revising the disability assessment system, intervening and ensuring the reintegration of children into the family and community, paying special attention to social and biological orphans, ensuring the provision of integrated social and community welfare services. In addition, the strategy has made possible the creation of better connections and integration between active employment policies and inclusion and social protection policies.

The Albanian Government has recently approved the **National Social Protection Strategy**<sup>90</sup> **2024-2030** with DCM no.152/2024, taking into consideration the European Commission's strategic documents on

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<sup>80</sup> Kavaja municipality

<sup>81</sup> Activity organized by the Albanian Network for Rural Development in cooperation with the Municipality of Kavaja and with the support of UN Women Albania within the project “Economic empowerment of women in the value chain of handicrafts in the municipality of Kavaja”, with the financial support of the Swedish Government.

<sup>82</sup> Activity organized within the “Routes4culture” project, financed by the EU through the EU4Culture program implemented by UNOPS in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Kavaja.

<sup>83</sup> Activity organized by the “Urban Research Institute” URI, financed by the EU within the “EU4Culture” program, implemented by UNOPS, in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Kavaja Municipality.

<sup>84</sup> Selenica and Pogradec

<sup>85</sup> Pukë, Krujë, Librazhd, Durrës (within the implementation of the project “Sustainable Socio-Economic Reintegration of Migrants Returned to Albania”, financed by GIZ, which is implemented by NISMA ARSIS in partnership with Terre des Hommes - 26 cases have been supported of these 22 women

<sup>86</sup> Psycho-Social Center “Vatra”, Vlora and Arsis Initiative

<sup>87</sup> Through SIDA funds, 3 programs have been supported; Local Economic Development Program/LED, program for Olof Palme International Center (2018-2022 and 2023-2025), Regional Program “Women in Business” in cooperation with EBRD 2014-2022 (total financing for WB: 73 MSEK),

<sup>88</sup> EBRD

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.sherbimisocial.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Strategjia-kombetare-2020-2023-okay.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> <https://shendetesia.gov.al/legjislatoni-4/>

social care, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 5 - Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (5.c Adopting and strengthening sound policies and binding legislation to promote gender equality and empowering women and girls at all levels). One of the main pillars of the Strategy is the reform of the payment schemes, taking into account the gender perspective, specifically the goal of the policy is to alleviate poverty for every individual in need and improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities through support with financial schemes and appropriate, gender responsive and transparent benefits for coping with crisis risks. Measures are foreseen for the provision of services **for the third age**, where gender differences between elderly women and men will be taken into consideration, providing services that suit their specific needs.

A special attention has been given to the protection of the mother and the child, which were also priorities targeted by the National Social Protection Strategy 2020–2023<sup>91</sup>. Maternal and child protection and care is essential for nutrition and good health, the well-being of mothers and their children, the prevention and reduction of poverty and vulnerability, and the achievement of gender equality in the labor market. Since January 2019 and continuously, it has been applied the “**baby bonus**”, which aims to support new families, increase the number of births and develop society. By means of the bonus, Albanian families are supported in the amount of ALL 40,000 ALL for the birth of the first baby; in the amount of ALL 80,000 for the birth of the second baby; in the amount of ALL 120,000 for the birth of the third baby and so on for the following babies. In total, around 210,000 children have been supported and in the 2024 budget for the baby bonus, ALL 2.2 billion have been provided. The measure regarding the provision of baby and mother care packages was also very successfully implemented for Roma and Egyptian mothers who gave birth in the hospital.

In 2021, several revisions were made to the **amount of economic aid (EA)** for certain categories, such as: doubling the amount of EA for families with 3 or more children, while an additional 10% was provided for other families, and tripling of payment for orphans, victims of trafficking and victims of domestic violence. In 2022, another increase in the EA amount was made for other categories, such as doubling the payment for women heads of families with up to two children, doubling for people over 65 who do not benefit from old-age pension or social pension. The other families of the scheme benefited 10% more on the increase from the beginning of 2022. In recent years, the number of Roma and Egyptian women who have been supported with economic assistance/benefits or have been included in reintegration programs has increased (from 112 Roma women and 89 Egyptian women in 2016 to 1,785 Roma women and 846 Egyptian women in 2019). Raped women, who have a protection order, have been provided with triple payment. The gender composition of economic assistance beneficiaries is almost equal, although the number of men is slightly higher than the number of women. In the framework of the measures taken to increase the benefit of economic aid, pursuant to DCM no. 597/2019, as amended, around 1,000 victims of violence and trafficking since 2022 have benefited from the tripling of the amount of economic assistance benefits. Payments are also given to over 164,000 women/girls and men/boys with disabilities and their caregivers (most of whom are the mothers/sisters/wives, etc., of these persons). For the first time, special support is offered to unemployed women with three or more children up to the age of 18, with a family income of up to 100,000 ALL per month, supporting them with the payment of social and health contributions for the period of care to a child up to 5 years old.

**The Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016–2020 (DPPS)** is a very important document of the Albanian government, which guarantees a contemporary and responsible system for assessing social inclusion in various sectoral policies, such as: social protection, employment and growth skills, health, education, housing and provision of basic needs, as well as in the policies of social participation and respect for human rights. This document aims at creating a protective and reintegrating environment for

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<sup>91</sup> Approved by Decision No. 866, dated 24.12.2019 “On the Approval of the National Social Protection Strategy, 2020-2023, and the Action Plan for its implementation”.



the most excluded groups and categories of the Albanian society, including women, people living in poverty or experiencing violence, people with disabilities, children, young people and the elderly suffering from social exclusion.

**Pursuant to Law 121/2026 “On social care services”, since 2019 the Social Fund has been established and operating** through which 73 social care services have been established, from which 51 municipalities and 8 districts have benefited with a planned fund in the amount of ALL 1.2 billion, offered in total across several years (cumulatively) to 32,869 individuals, compared to the year 2020, where only 14 services were established, with a fund of ALL 74 million, or to the year 2022, where there were set up 40 services in 27 municipalities and 6 districts, with a total funding of ALL 600 million for 5,644 women and men beneficiaries.

The MHSP continues to focus on the expansion of specialized support services, the improvement of their standards, and continuous financing through the state budget but also with the continuous financial assistance provided by international partners. In addition to the specialized services mentioned in the response of the question no. 16 in this report, with the support of UN Agencies<sup>92</sup> three community resilience centers have been set up for social protection for women at local level<sup>93</sup>, and it was made the Mapping of Social Care Services<sup>94</sup>, which presents the typology and type of services, but also their role in meeting the social needs of the beneficiaries of the services. It turns out that services are delivered today in 391 care institutions or 16% more than in 2021 (339 institutions)<sup>95</sup>. These institutions provide 1,147 services or 2.3 times more than in 2021 (493 services), for 36,642 beneficiaries, individuals in need, from 10,000 in 2021. Public institutions make up 61% of the total number of services provided in 61 Municipalities and “Non-Public” institutions make up 39%, compared to 2013 where non-public institutions made up 70% of the total number of services provided. Social care services divided by beneficiary groups, in percentages are shared; (1) services for families in need (37%); (2) services for persons with disabilities (children and adults) (28%); (3) services for the elderly (13%); (4) services for children without parental care (8%); (5) services for victims of violence and trafficking (10%); (6) services for young people in need (4%). *[More detailed information on the inventory of family social care services can be found in Annex 2 of this report].*

**Local Self-Government Units (LGUs)** have taken concrete measures both in implementation of state social protection policies and also commitments at local level. Some municipalities<sup>96</sup> have set up integrated services in cooperation with civil society organizations, while other municipalities<sup>97</sup> have had a positive impact on raising awareness and promoting the equal participation of men and women in the economic, social and cultural life. The priority of the municipalities’<sup>98</sup> work has been the provision of women with economic assistance, housing (rent bonus, soft loan), employment. The results from the mapping of areas with social problems, a practice that is being carried out at local level<sup>99</sup> serve as a guide for planning interventions according to needs. Meetings and continuous trainings to inform the rights of women and girls have influenced the legal education of women and girls, in all their diversity, for the protection of their rights.

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<sup>92</sup> UNDP

<sup>93</sup> Kurbin, Lezha and Durrës.

<sup>94</sup> With the support and in cooperation with UNICEF

<sup>95</sup> See table no. 5 in 'Annex 2'

<sup>96</sup> Vlora, Matë, Kruja

<sup>97</sup> Selenicë, Vau i Dejës, Pustec, Korçë, Kavajë, Fushë-Arrëz, Devoll

<sup>98</sup> Puka, Prrenjasi, Pogradeci, Memaliaj, Lushnje, Korça, Kamëz, Dropull, Devoll

<sup>99</sup> For example, Lezha municipality

## 12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

**On the basis of the interventions envisaged in the National Strategy on Health 2021-2030<sup>100</sup> is the progress towards Universal Health Coverage.** The National Action Plan for HIV/AIDS 2020-2025<sup>101</sup> contributes to the achievement of SDG 5 and especially goal 5.6: “Ensuring a universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action”. The plan contains concrete measures for the prevention of HIV in a broader context of gender rights and sexual and reproductive health, with a focus on the most vulnerable and at-risk groups, such as adolescent girls, young women involved in sex work, Roma and Egyptian communities, injecting drug users and the LGBTIQ+ community. HIV testing for pregnant women is offered in primary care health facilities (PMTCT is part of the health care package of the primary health care) and in maternity hospitals. The number of pregnant women being tested for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has increased significantly in recent years. In accordance with protocols, treatment and care for pregnant women living with HIV before, during and after birth and infant prophylaxis is available and provided free of charge. HIV-positive women and their families receive information, counseling and support about the stigma and discrimination they may face as a result of their HIV-positive status. The Institute of Public Health periodically provides data on the “Number of new infections of HIV cases in the female population per 1,000 unaffected population”, which, for the reporting period, for girls, young women and women for all age groups) result as follows: 0.025 in 2019; 0.022 in 2020; 0.024 in 2021; 0.023 in 2022 and 0.024 in 2023<sup>102</sup>. In addition, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PTNF) is a key component of the national response to HIV and one of the specific objectives of the National HIV/AIDS Action Plan 2020-2025, for which, supporting interventions include the promotion and provision of HIV/STI testing to pregnant women through institutional-oriented counseling and primary health care. It was approved the national guideline for screening pregnant women for HIV, syphilis and hepatitis “Guidelines for testing pregnant women for several infectious agents: HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and Rubella”. According to this guideline, pregnant women are offered HIV testing to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission of the virus, and to protect the woman’s health. This document provides information and operational guidance for all health care providers involved in providing care during pregnancy. The capacities of medical staff have increased (256 doctors, nurses from maternity hospitals, front-line care units in six municipalities<sup>103</sup>, while further expansion continues in other municipalities.

**Mental health:** Law no. 44/2012 “On mental health”, as amended, provides the provision of health care for persons with mental health disorders in a less restrictive environment, mainly at community level, to avoid displacement from the family environment as much as possible and to facilitate social integration and rehabilitation and the creation of facilities for these persons and their families, inclusion in social life, as well as the provision of care for persons with mental health disorders by multidisciplinary teams that respond in a complex manner to medical, psychological, social and rehabilitation needs. The law was amended in 2021<sup>104</sup> in order to strengthen the legal protection of persons with mental health disorders in accordance with the recommendations of the People’s Advocate through the National Mechanism Against Torture and the Helsinki Committee and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe (CPT). At a strategic level, the Albanian state has implemented the Action Plan for the Development of Mental Health Services 2013-2022<sup>105</sup> and the Action Plan for Mental Health 2023-

<sup>100</sup> Approved by DCM No. 210, dated 6.4.2022. See: <https://www.qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2022/04/06/210/8590c194-dc8b-4fa3-aa49-4140d87e11bb.q=strategjia%20>

<sup>101</sup> See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Plani-Kombetar-i-Vepimit-per-HIV-AIDS-2020-2025.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> Table no. 6 complete with these data is attached to this report

<sup>103</sup> Durrës, Shkodër, Fier, Korçë, Vlorë and Elbasan

<sup>104</sup> Law 20/2021 “On some addenda and amendments to Law no. 44/2012, “On mental health”, amended”. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/liqi/2021/02/15/20/99aaf4f2-4855-4db8-a4b6-5ffae6b85502>

<sup>105</sup> See: [https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Plani\\_i\\_Vperimit\\_per\\_Zhvillimin\\_e\\_Sherbimeve\\_te\\_Shendetit\\_Mendor\\_2013\\_-\\_2022.pdf](https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Plani_i_Vperimit_per_Zhvillimin_e_Sherbimeve_te_Shendetit_Mendor_2013_-_2022.pdf)

2026<sup>106</sup>, which contain measures and policies, based on the philosophy of protecting the rights of persons with mental health disorders and special needs, the fight against exclusion and social discrimination, the empowerment of people with mental health disorders and mental disabilities, gender-sensitive interventions, the decentralization of mental health services and deinstitutionalization through the reduction of the number of psychiatric beds, and the establishment and strengthening of community mental health services. Furthermore, the new plan (2023-2026), is based on the principles of universal health coverage, human rights and inclusiveness, evidence-based practice, integrated approach throughout the life cycle, social-health and cross-sectoral approach. *(For more detailed information on mental health, please refer to Annex 2, attached to this report).*

**The national cervical cancer screening program in Albania** is based on the Decree No. 47 of the Council of Ministers, January 2019, which uses high-risk Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) testing as primary screening and targets women in the 40-50 age group. The policy aims to ensure that, within five years, all women in this age group can have a high-risk HPV test as part of routine examinations in primary health care centers (PHCs). All primary screening tests and follow-up examinations are provided free of charge at the point of care, regardless of whether patients are covered by the health insurance scheme or not. The number of women screened each year within the program is registered regularly and in the period 2019 - 2023 there were 52,080 women<sup>107</sup> screened. In the framework of the prevention of Cervical Cancer in 2022, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection with Order No. 58 dated 17.10.2022 "On some addenda and amendments to the national vaccination calendar" added the vaccine against HPV, 4 valent, for girls born from January 1, 2009. The application of the HPV vaccine has been extended throughout the country and there has been an increase in vaccinated girls since the application began. A total of 18,845 vaccine doses have been applied from November 2022 to April 2024.<sup>108</sup> **The breast cancer screening program**<sup>109</sup> approved by the DCM of August 2020 regulates access to free services for early detection and responsibilities in the health system. The initial target group for mammography screening is women 50-60 years old, to be expanded to 50-70 years old. Clinical breast examination (CBE) is offered to other age groups. The call is made by the doctors/family physicians. 13 stationary mammography units cover all regions of the country and 2 mobile mammography units provide services to hard-to-reach areas. Follow-up is free at the point of care. In the University Hospital of Tirana there is a fully functional breast center, while 7 regional hospitals provide chemotherapy treatment. The program enables the control of mortality from this cancer. In 2023, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection issued Order No. 171, dated 24.03.2023 "On the approval of the sexual and reproductive health action plan 2023-2030"; one of the basic principles of this document is the fulfillment of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

**Measures for the provision of specialized health services:** (a) Adaptation of quality standards and basic protocols in all regional hospitals of the country. (b) Improvement of technology; tripling the range of laboratory tests provided free of charge in hospitals and more emergency medical services, including 35 new ambulances; (c) Creation of new emergency cardiac hemodynamic centers in regional hospitals, etc. The effect of the health reforms undertaken in recent years and the increase in universal coverage of the Albanian population through new health programs and policies, in services, financing, has made this visible and tangible in health results and indicators. Thus, the indicator and trend of age-standardized mortality (a mortality indicator that avoids the effect of population aging) for some important groups of diseases, has started to decrease in Albania. Measures have been taken to increase the capacities of the medical staff<sup>110</sup>, activities to improve the curricula and include in them the issues of gender equality

<sup>106</sup> Approved by Order no. 580 of the Minister of Health, dated 8.09.2023

<sup>107</sup> For details, please refer to table no. 7 and graph no. 1 in "Annex 1" as part of this report

<sup>108</sup> Detailed data on these vaccinations, the number of vaccinated people each year and the respective municipalities, can be found in the table attached to this report as an annex.

<sup>109</sup> For details, please refer to graph no. 2 and graph no. 3 in 'Annex 3' as part of this report

<sup>110</sup> An important role was played here by the support of UNFPA, with the preparation of the relevant module and with the continuation of the training of health workers. UNDP has also contributed to the training of representative(s) of health institutions that are members of the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms in several municipalities of the country. The Center "Human Rights in Democracy" has also provided training to increase the capacities of the staff of some of

and especially the aspects related to the violence against women and domestic violence, have also been organized with the Faculty of Medical and Technical Sciences, as a result of which it was possible to include topics on violence against women and domestic violence in some of the Bachelor's and Master's level study programs for the 2018-2019 academic year.<sup>111</sup> The final goal is to include in the curriculum of this Faculty a complete module with this topic.

**CSOs.** Civil society organizations<sup>112</sup> provide various services related to mental health, while UN Agencies<sup>113</sup> play an important role in promoting the involvement of new fathers in the care and raising of newborns; the Bebo application provides detailed information for mothers with children since their birth; specific health services have been expanded for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, maternal health and HIV services. Contributions<sup>114</sup> have been made for the collection of information on healthy/unhealthy and risky behaviors of boys and girls, in a way that revealed specific risks related to the gender of the child that is a source of information in the country's approaches to the prevention and treatment of chronic and non-communicable diseases, diseases that nowadays originate in childhood, and is a strong ally of the Government of Albania in the procurement of controlled and quality vaccines for children, including those against HPV. Measures have also been taken to support mental health for girls and boys including access to specialist services and counselling.

### ***13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?***

**The measures taken for the adoption of policies and laws** aim at creating a comprehensive education system, based on the principles of equality and lifelong learning, increasing the skills and professionalism of young people through quality education, supported by employment counseling services and youth-oriented career orientation, increasing and improving opportunities to enter the labor market on the basis of fair and equal chances to reach the full youth potential, significant efforts to improve access and provide support for marginalized young people. (National Youth Strategy 2022-2029<sup>115</sup>, Law no. 75/2019 "On Youth"<sup>116</sup>).

**Strengthening education curricula to increase gender responsive policies and eliminate bias, at all levels of education.** The curricular framework of pre-university education is built on the principles of non-discrimination in order to guarantee the best interest of pupils and respect and complete and comprehensive development of his/her personality, which are part of all school programs, and especially of the subject of "Civics" for grades (1-10). For the support of teachers at all levels of pre-university education, subject guides and auxiliary materials have been prepared that include the coverage of rights and anti-discrimination issues. 149 modules have been accredited in the field of inclusiveness (of which 24 cover the topic of inclusiveness in school, social equality, bullying, hidden dropout), for which teachers, school psychologists, social workers, officers/school security officers, etc. have been trained; Such modules include addressing issues related to respect for human rights and non-discrimination in their programs.

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the largest health centers of the Municipality of Tirana and the Municipality of Kamëz in relation to the responsibilities assigned to them by the legislation against domestic violence and gender-based violence. This center, as an organization that has been monitoring the institution of detention of women/girls for years, has continuously lobbied for the improvement of their medical treatment in the detention facilities and in the prison hospital.

<sup>111</sup> This UNFPA initiative, which is implemented through the partner organization the Albanian Center for Population and Development, started in 2017, making possible the training of the academic staff of this Faculty with international and national trainers. Likewise, a set of supporting materials have been made available and the responsible lecturer(s) have been helped to prepare specific information on the topics added to their course programs. One of the training activities with this faculty consisted in the discussion of the draft Package of Basic Services and Standard Action Procedures for health in the treatment of cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence, translated and adapted for Albania by UNFPA with the support of UN Women.

<sup>112</sup> "Vatra" Center

<sup>113</sup> UNICEF, UNFPA, etc.

<sup>114</sup> UNICEF

<sup>115</sup> See: <https://riniafemijet.gov.al/2194-2/>

<sup>116</sup> See: <https://riniafemijet.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Liqji-Nr.75.Date-4.11.2019-Per-Rinine.pdf>

**Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children and young women/young men in education through legislative, administrative and institutional reforms.** The DCMs, guidelines and agreements in force enable: a) free textbooks and transport for children in 9-year education; b) priority for Roma children for enrollment in kindergarten and part-time basic and secondary education; c) 50% tuition fee reduction for university studies (second cycle/master's) for Roma and Egyptian students; d) simplification of registration/return to school procedures for children who, due to their circumstances, were either unable to attend basic education for at least two academic years, or who dropped out of school, are street children or those who are not registered; e) the relief for women who have not completed full-time basic education to do so part-time, admitting them in one or two classes above the one listed in the last school document they have, after approval by a relevant commission; f) exclusion of Roma and Egyptian students from tuition fees for university studies (first cycle/bachelor's degree); g) signing interministerial agreements for the identification and registration of all children subject to compulsory education, including street children; h) providing Roma and Egyptian students with free textbooks even in higher secondary education; i) eliminating exclusionary and neglecting attitudes towards Roma and Egyptian children in the school community and j) preserving and developing the cultural identity, inter alia, of Roma and Egyptian students. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MES), the Ministry of the Interior (Mol) and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection have collaborated to identify children from vulnerable groups, Roma/Egyptians of school age and have facilitated their integration in kindergartens and schools. The MES has guaranteed the appointment of employees of local educational institutions, responsible for pre-university education, in the role of mediator of vulnerable groups, with the aim of raising awareness and improving their access to education and increasing attendance in the academic process. DCM no. 666, dated 10.10.2019<sup>117</sup>, as amended, provides support with scholarships for pupils, children of families in need, who are enrolled in basic education, but due to financial impossibility do not attend basic education, Roma and Egyptian pupils, pupils with one parent, orphans, etc.

**Measures for Persons with Disabilities.** DCM no. 148, dated 13.03.2024<sup>118</sup> provides the creation of pre-university public educational institutions of special education in resource centers (RC), as institutions that provide special education and special support and rehabilitation services for pupils with disabilities, in order to prepare and integrate them into society, promoting the increase of academic results through the professional preparation of teachers and support and rehabilitation services for PWD.

***Strengthening of measures to prevent teenage pregnancies and enable teenage girls to continue their education even in the event of pregnancy and/or motherhood.*** The program for health education, with a focus on "Sexual education as a life skill in a safe school environment"<sup>119</sup>, aims to prevent teenage pregnancies and in the modules included in the subjects of biology, health education and physical education, topics that deal with issues abstinence, parenting and unwanted pregnancies have been integrated. The programs for the age groups 10-12, 12-16 and 16-18 years old are mandatory and a total of 140 classes are provided, which include topics such as: the development of the body in certain age groups, reproduction and reproductive organs, sexual maturity, fetal development during pregnancy and the influence of drugs, diseases and diet, contraceptive methods, abortion and sexual relations at an early age, the most widespread sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in our country, including HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea, syphilis, etc. Pursuant to the program, a series of activities have been carried out in the framework of the inclusion and implementation of health education with a focus on sexual education, and informational materials have been prepared on sexual abuse, and on online access. Furthermore, there were identified the schools that will serve as coordinating centers for the continuation of the program "Sexual education as skills for life" in a safe school environment and the

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<sup>117</sup> Amended by DCM no. 511, dated 27.07.2022, "On some amendments and addenda to DCM no. 666, dated 10.10.2019, "On financial quotas for food in canteens and dormitories and determining the criteria for pre-university students to benefit scholarships and remunerations in public educational institutions".

<sup>118</sup> "On the criteria and procedures for the opening, closing and reorganization of special education institutions in resource centers, and on the way of their organization and operation"

<sup>119</sup> Program undertaken by the Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education (ASCAP) in cooperation with MES and UNFPA,

creation of these coordinating centers. An accredited member civil society organization<sup>120</sup> of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)<sup>121</sup> suggested that sex education be part of the school curriculum in a contemporary and comprehensive manner to address topics such as early marriage, early pregnancy, sexual health and mental health. It is necessary to strengthen cooperation between teachers, pupils and parents to use more effective teaching methods, including technology and interactive learning methods.

**Local Youth Councils**<sup>122</sup> have been established in 61 municipalities, with the aim of involving young women and young men in various activities and encouraging them to contribute to society through positive and innovative changes. In many cases, they are composed of young people from rural areas, where there is a tendency to exist fewer opportunities and advantages for young people, especially for girls. Their aim is to fight the stigmas and prejudices that come from society, encouraging the involvement of young people of both sexes in activities and projects.

**The Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA)** during the period 2019-2023 organized about 126 trainings for raising the capacities of public administration employees based on the module “Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination”, “Gender Responsive Budgeting”, “Fundamental Rights, protection from discrimination, gender equality”, training a total of 3157 participants.

*The [punetembare.al](http://punetembare.al) platform has made possible the employment of the students of excellence in the public administration. The “Fund of Excellence” created by DCM in 2020<sup>123</sup> supports students and young scientists who agree to follow a master's or doctoral study program in one of the best 15 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the world, according to the Times Higher Education ranking for the most recent year. International relations offices have been set up in almost all Albanian HEIs that, in cooperation with foreign HEIs, realize the recognition of mobility and foreign diplomas of students, legalization of documents, transfer of studies and mutual agreements. International relations offices cover the implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements and the implementation of international projects which, through the Erasmus + program, since 2015, have made possible short-term mobility in Europe from other parts of the world for students, researchers and staff.*

Contribution was given<sup>124</sup> for the implementation of programs to increase girls’ access to attendance and completion of primary and secondary education, and Vocational Education and Training (VET) and skills development programs; educational curricula have been strengthened to increase gender responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education; trainings on gender equality and human rights have been offered to teachers and other education professionals; promoting safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls; increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and digital fluency and literacy; it was provided access to safe water and sanitation services and facilitated menstrual hygiene management especially in schools and other educational/training settings; strengthened measures to prevent teenage pregnancies and enable teenage girls to continue their education in case of pregnancy and/or motherhood, especially community-based awareness to discourage child marriage, etc. In addition, support classes for after-school education, transportation services to ensure the attendance of school by Roma and Egyptian children, activities for youth groups for the level of high secondary education and university education<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>120</sup> Albanian Center for Population and Development

<sup>121</sup> See: <https://www.ippf.org/>

<sup>122</sup> Through institutional interaction, awareness activities, exchange of good practices, headed by the Minister of State for Youth and Children and the National Youth Agency.

<sup>123</sup> DCM no. 160 dated 19.02.2020 “On the financial support of excellent students and civil servants (Excellence Fund)”. See: <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VKM-nr.-160-dt.-19.02.2020.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> UNICEF and Arsimi Initiative

<sup>125</sup> Arsimi Initiative

**14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic closes the gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?**

The government paid special attention to women's rights and gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the recovery efforts. Women were involved in all decision-making at central level (MHSP and the Ministry of Finance and Economy – currently the Ministry of Finance, the two main ministries in defining policies for the response to COVID-19, were led by women), and at local level (such as Prefects, District Mayors, members of Municipal Councils, or Mayors of municipalities). Data on infected cases and their follow-up are kept separated by sex, age group, place of residence, etc. With the exception of the second week of March and the month of May 2020, the Institute of Public Health continued screening services for breast and cervical cancer for women, respecting anti-covid protocols. In addition, breast cancer awareness activities continued (pink October) and planned activities in the districts on the improvement of colposcopy follow-up of women positive for cervical cancer screening. Employees of residential care institutions for the elderly women and men, peoples with disabilities and children, who self-quarantined due to COVID-19, were treated with additional pay.<sup>126</sup>

The MHSP disbursed funds from the Social Fund in April 2020 to 14 winning municipalities in the amount of ALL 61 million. One project provided emergency services for cases of violence against women and domestic violence. In 2021, the Social Fund financed services for victims/survivors of domestic violence, in four municipalities, in the amount of ALL 11,258,165 (There were treated 125 cases and there were provided preventive services and ongoing counseling for groups at risk). The support continued in 2022 in the amount of ALL 7,126,725.

The MHSP supported multifunctional services in three municipalities in 2021, in the amount of ALL 11,035,627 (There were treated 158 cases of women/girls in need of support and empowerment in a risk situation). In 2022, support was given for four multifunctional services and the opening of a new multifunctional service in two other municipalities, in the amount of ALL 16,179,731. The MHSP financially supports three specialized anti-trafficking services, in three large regions of the country, in the amount of ALL 29,0879,324 (in 2021, 254 women/girls and their children were treated, accordingly).

The amount of economic assistance for female victims/survivors of domestic violence provided with a protection order until the end of December 2021 was ALL 3,000/month. 694 victims/survivors benefited from this payment for 2021. Starting from January 2022, the payment has tripled to the amount of ALL 9,000/month.<sup>127</sup> 835 victims/survivors of domestic violence with protection orders benefited from this payment for the period January-March 2022. Double payment of economic assistance was applied to 482 victims/survivors of domestic violence with protection orders and to 63,508 families, beneficiaries of economic assistance, including 6,000 women heads of families.<sup>128</sup> 4,524 families that did not benefit from the economic assistance scheme were supported with financial assistance of ALL 16,000.<sup>129</sup> 233,248 families were treated with food packages, clothing, reimbursable medicines, financial assistance, as well as with home delivery of economic assistance payments and for persons with disabilities.<sup>130</sup> Food packages were also distributed to 17,381 children and 8,784 families, hygiene-sanitary packages to 15,440 children and 8,120 families, and 524 families were helped with cash.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> DCM No. 371/2020

<sup>127</sup> DCM No. 898/2021

<sup>128</sup> DCM No. 254/2020

<sup>129</sup> DCM No. 314/2020

<sup>130</sup> Through cooperation between central and local government, CSOs and international organizations.

<sup>131</sup> The emergency group set up by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection in cooperation with UNICEF and several civil society organizations (Terre des Homes, Nisma Arsis, Save the Children, World Vision, Alo 116 111, Santa di Frontiera, etc.).

During the pandemic, immediate measures were taken to ensure continuity of specialized support services for women, children and female/male family members at risk or female victims/survivors of violence. Protocols/instructions/regulations were approved for the operation of sheltering services; management of cases of domestic violence; abused children; operation of the sexual assault treatment center, residential services for the elderly, persons with disabilities, etc. 19 specialized housing services for cases of domestic violence and human trafficking were assessed for emergency needs and supplied with disinfection tools and information as needed. The staff of these services were continuously trained and mentored, in parallel with the local coordinators of the 61 Coordinated Referral Mechanisms (CRMs) in the country. 246 members of 18 CRMs who dealt mostly with case management during the period of restrictions due to the pandemic, were supported with continuous information and mentoring.

1,800 professionals were trained online by the MHSP in cooperation with WHO and UNICEF on mental health and psycho-social support in emergency situations.

Online services were applied through: Green line 0884040 on the MHSP website; Platform [www.nukjevetëm.al](http://www.nukjevetëm.al); National Counseling Line for Women and Girls 116117, National Counseling Line for Children ALO 116111; Psychologists <https://arsimi.gov.al/kontakto-psikologun/> etc. Primary legal aid was offered through the platform <https://juristionline.al/> and through the free green number 08001010. An informative spot to report cases of domestic violence, with the numbers where you could call free of charge (also accompanied by the language of signs), was posted on the website of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection: <https://www.facebook.com/MinistriaeShendetesisesedheMbrojtjesSociale/videos/252515315870825/>

The State Police took special measures<sup>132</sup> to: increase attention and maximum evaluation of every call/notification of domestic violence; immediate cooperation and coordination with the relevant structures in the Municipality, for the referral of cases; increasing the attention of the police services in the field to immediately protect the victim of domestic violence, monitoring those who break the rules of movement restriction due to the violence and the notification of the relevant police structures that deal with cases of domestic violence; the careful determination, in accordance with the situation of the victim, of the protection measures that are stated in the lawsuit file addressed to the court, etc.

The General Directorate of Bailiff's Service, during the COVID-19 pandemic, continued the execution of executive titles with the scope of care, obligations and respect for the rights of children/juveniles, guardianship, adoption, exercise of parental responsibility, care and food support; protection orders and immediate protection orders; mediation for the resolution of disputes in the criminal field, when during the investigation it is assessed as necessary to protect the interests of the female/male child, etc.

In the Order<sup>133</sup> of the Department of Public Administration, measures were formulated with equal rights and obligations for employees of both sexes, in employment and parenting. The following are stated: a) the determination of the working schedule changes depending on the schedule that the child will attend the lessons, but ensuring that the maximum duration does not change; b) if both of the child's parents/legal guardians are employed in public administration institutions, they should ensure that the responsibility for accompanying the children according to the different lesson schedules does not belong to only one of them; c) parents/legal guardians of children who attend pre-school education and basic education should make available to the human resources unit of the institution where they work the children's school schedule and proof that the other parent/legal guardian is not benefiting at the same time, from the relief measures.

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<sup>132</sup> Letter Rogatory No. 2192/2020

<sup>133</sup> No. 80/2020



Interest was waived on electricity delays for all Roma and Egyptian families. Rent expenses for 385 families benefiting from social housing, during the period March-April 2020, were covered by the Municipality of Tirana.

Support was provided to the Albanian National Association of the Deaf to provide information on COVID-19 in sign language to the hearing-impaired community, and to operate a 24-hour information/referral hotline for this community. Daily press releases from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection were accompanied by sign language interpretation.

### III. FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES

#### **Critical areas of concern:**

- D. Violence against women
- I. Human rights of women
- J. Women and the media
- L. The girl child

#### **15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?**

The Albanian state has undertaken important measures to guarantee protection for various forms of gender-based violence, also implementing the recommendations of international mechanisms such as GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) and CEDAW. The legal amendments<sup>134</sup> have come as a consequence not only of the obligations that the state has assumed within the framework of the conventions, but also as a necessary need to guarantee effective protection for victims of various forms of gender-based violence. However, despite the positive changes in the legal aspect, but also in policies, or specialized support services, as well as information for the best possible recognition of these forms of violence and the protection provided, it must be accepted that some forms of gender-based violence are not reported enough, or they are not dealt with properly in practical terms.

**Domestic violence exercised by other family members.** Law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, "On measures against violence in family relations", as amended, is the main act that aims to prevent and reduce domestic violence in all its forms, as well as to guarantee more protection for victims. In addition to the important amendments that this law underwent in 2018<sup>135</sup> which were presented in the previous report (Beijing+25), it was amended again in 2020<sup>136</sup>. Introducing the gender approach in the law and emphasizing the special guarantees of protection to women and girls as victims of violence, together with children and the elderly; special protection for persons with disabilities in accordance with the concept of reasonable accommodation (Article 1, Paragraph 1, Article 6 and other provisions in the law); expanding the circle of subjects that are included in the category of family members by providing special protection for **people who are in an emotional (intimate) relationship**, regardless of whether they had a formal relationship such as marriage or cohabitation (Article 7); ensuring protection also for cases of domestic violence against migrants, asylum seekers, stateless persons and foreigners in general who are in the territory of Albania (Article 4); the immediate order by the Court on the removal of the abuser from the apartment for a certain period of time, when the victim and the abuser live in the same shelter (Article 10, point 1); etc., are guarantees for a better protection of all women/young women/girls from domestic

<sup>134</sup> More detailed information is provided in the Appendix 3 of this report

<sup>135</sup> With Law 47/2018, fulfilling the key recommendations of the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee (2016) and the Initial Assessment Report of GREVIO (2017) for Albania. Changing some of the definitions related to domestic violence, to harmonize it with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and specific references to the Constitution of Albania, the CEDAW Convention and the Istanbul Convention as the basis of this law (Article 3), which makes these conventions directly applicable by providing for all forms of gender-based violence that are guaranteed in them.

<sup>136</sup> With Law 125/2020 "On some additions and changes to Law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, "On measures against violence in family relationships", as amended". See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Liqi-Nr.125-2020-Shtesa-dhe-ndryshime-te-LDHF-6996-2016.pdf>

violence. Some of the amendments in 2020 were also designed to respond to the need to address domestic violence in civil emergency situations, starting from the COVID 19 pandemic crisis. In the implementation of the legal amendments, a number of by-laws have been approved in accordance with the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO recommendations, where the new DCM (327/2021)<sup>137</sup> is of particular importance, on the basis of which the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM) operates at the local level, as a means of implementing the coordinated multi-sectoral approach to dealing with cases of domestic violence.<sup>138</sup> In addition to further clarifying the roles and responsibilities of institutions and professionals for the effective management of cases of domestic violence, this decision creates space for aspects of case management by the CRM to be applied, even in cases of other forms of gender-based violence against women. With the amendments made to the Criminal Code in 2020<sup>139</sup>, psychological violence in family relationships is criminalized for the first time, it is envisaged the involvement in these relationships of persons in a relationship or former intimate relationship with the perpetrator of the criminal offense (thus harmonizing the content of Article 130/a of the Criminal Code with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention), as well as strengthening the penalties for some figures of this criminal offense.<sup>140</sup>

**The General Prosecutor** has issued general instruction no. 17/2020 “On the investigation and effective criminal prosecution of criminal offenses against violence against women, domestic violence, and hate-based violence”, which aims to unify procedural measures in prosecution offices of general jurisdiction so that the investigations and criminal prosecution for these offenses to be in quick, efficient and with requests for effective, proportionate and deterrent measures. The General Prosecutor has issued general instruction No. 8, dated 15.11.2021 “On the investigation and effective criminal prosecution of criminal offenses with minors in conflict with the law, victims and/or witnesses” with the aim of increasing efficiency, effectiveness and reducing deadlines in the investigation and prosecution of cases with/and against minors, in conflict with the law, victims and/or witnesses. The instruction is guided by the principles of a friendly criminal justice, based on the best interest of the child as well as the guarantee of their rights, in order to contribute to the reduction of criminality against minors, in their rehabilitation, reintegration. This instruction has also unified some procedures and criminal procedural acts in cases with minors, in accordance with the best practices and international standards in criminal justice for minors.

**Violence by an intimate partner, including sexual violence and marital rape**, enjoys protection in civil and criminal legislation, as the intimate partner is considered a member of the family (domestic violence), but also in criminal legislation (Article 130/a, Domestic Violence) the intimate partner is included

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<sup>137</sup> DCM no. 327, dated 02.06.2021 "On the mechanism of coordination of work between the authorities responsible for referring cases of violence in family relationships, as well as its procedure for the support and rehabilitation of victims of violence, which repealed DCM no. 334/17.2.2011, the National Mechanism for the coordination of work for the referral and treatment of cases of domestic violence and the rules on the manner of its proceedings. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VKM-Nr.-327-dat%C3%AB-2.06-00000002.pdf>

<sup>138</sup> Which abolished DCM no. 334/17.2.2011, the National Mechanism for the coordination of work for the referral and treatment of cases of domestic violence and the rules on the manner of its proceedings. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VKM-Nr.-327-dat%C3%AB-2.06-00000002.pdf>

<sup>139</sup> **Law no. 35, dated 16.04.2020 "On some additions and amendments to law no. 7895, dated 27.1.1995, "Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania"**. See: [https://portavendore.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Liqi-nr.-35-2020-P%C3%ABr-ndryshimet-n%C3%AB-Kodin-Penal\\_compressed.pdf](https://portavendore.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Liqi-nr.-35-2020-P%C3%ABr-ndryshimet-n%C3%AB-Kodin-Penal_compressed.pdf)

<sup>140</sup> See Article 130/a "Domestic Violence" of the Criminal Code, amended by Article 1 of Law no. 35/2020, which (Article 130/a) provides: "Battering, and any other act of physical or **psychological** violence, against a person who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant or former cohabitant, close relative (preborn, unborn, brothers, sisters, aunts, mothers, grandsons, granddaughters, children of brothers and sisters), or a close relative (father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter), or in **an intimate relationship or former intimate relationship to the perpetrator of the criminal offence**, resulting in the violation of his or her physical, psycho-social and economic integrity, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.

Serious threat of murder or serious injury against a person who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant or former cohabitant, close relative (preborn, unborn, brothers, sisters, aunts, mothers, grandsons, granddaughters, children of brothers and sisters), or a close relative (father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter), or in **an intimate relationship or former intimate relationship to the perpetrator of the criminal offence**, resulting in the violation of his or her physical, psycho-social and economic integrity, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to four years. Intentional injury against a person who is a spouse, former spouse, cohabitant or former cohabitant, close relative (preborn, unborn, brothers, sisters, aunts, mothers, grandsons, granddaughters, children of brothers and sisters), or a close relative (father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter), or in **an intimate relationship or former intimate relationship to the perpetrator of the criminal offence**, resulting in a temporary disability for work for more than nine days, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to five years. The same offences which are committed repeatedly or in the presence of minors, shall be punishable by one to five years of imprisonment."

as a criminal subject. Also, the amended Law on Domestic Violence (LDV) provides protection in the civil process even for sexual violence if it is conducted by the family members. Sexual violence (Article 107/a, Criminal Code) and marital rape (Article 102, Criminal Code, Sexual relations with adults by use of force, protection between spouses or cohabitants is guaranteed) are criminal offenses provided for in the Criminal Code. However, sexual violence by the intimate partner and marital rape still remain under-reported forms of violence, due to the mentality and stigma attached to them. The CEDAW Committee, in its concluding remarks for the Albanian state in October 2023<sup>141</sup>, notes with concern that the definition of rape in the Criminal Code is still based on the use of force or threats by the perpetrator of violence rather than lack of consent. NGOs<sup>142</sup> play an important role in the legal analysis they carry out and the recommendations for legal amendments, specifically suggest: *Changing the definition of rape of adult women so that this definition is based on the absence of freely given consent and does not require the demonstration of the use of force or resistance; (Amendment of article 102 of CC); Changing the definition of rape of minors aged 14 - 18 years so that this definition is based on the absence of freely given consent and does not require the demonstration of the use of force or resistance. (Article 101 of CC); Providing for sexual behavior as a criminal offense without the person's consent, as described in Article 36, point 1, letters b of the Istanbul Convention: engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person (except penetration); Causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person without his/her consent is considered a criminal offence; Amending the article 102.a of the Criminal Code and in general all articles that provide for sexual crimes in order to avoid discriminatory provisions and language due to sexual orientation.* In the Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health 2022-2030, the prevention of intimate partner violence, and non-partner sexual violence and exploitation, and provision support to the victim and help to perpetrators, is envisaged as an objective.

**Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and workplaces.** Regarding “Sexual Harassment” concept, it was added in 2020 to Law No. 10221 dated 04.02.2010 “On protection from discrimination”, amended<sup>143</sup> the concept of “Sexual concern”, as any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention). Violence, harassment, including sexual harassment, are phenomena present in the environment of labor relations in Albania. In addition to the Istanbul Convention, which regulates the main forms of violence against women, Albania has also ratified Convention No. 190 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work - these two important instruments establish obligations for legal improvements in the field of gender-based violence in Albania. According to the ILO Convention No. 190, in order to implement a comprehensive, integrated and gender-responsive approach, Albania must address violence and harassment in the world of work as well as safety and health at work in the legislation for equality and non-discrimination, as well as in the criminal law, as the case may be. Also, based on the Istanbul Convention, Albania must take the necessary legislative or other measures to guarantee that any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment is created, be subject to a criminal sanction or other legal sanction. The Albanian Criminal Code, although does not specifically address violence and harassment in the field of labor relations, has adopted provisions for the protection of human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms for every person, also considering the protection from violence and harassment in these relationships. However, some of these provisions, specifically Article 108/a

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<sup>141</sup><https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/352/80/pdf/n2335280.pdf?token=xDUwUo8sR7leWbMMfE&fe=true>

<sup>142</sup> The study was drawn up in the framework of a project “Improving Albanian legislation in the field of gender equality”, implemented by the Center for Civic Legal Initiatives with the support of the Office of UN Women and the Office of the UN Representative in Albania. See: [https://www.qag-al.org/publikime/legal\\_review\\_report.pdf](https://www.qag-al.org/publikime/legal_review_report.pdf)

<sup>143</sup> Amended by Law no. 124/2020, dated 15.10.2020. See: <https://qgz.gov.al/eli/fz/2020/191/4a6fb792-6c8d-4637-ba0f-fa0ece007562>

“Sexual Harassment” and Article 121/a “Stalking” should be completed by specifying violence and harassment in the world of work, underlining the actions within the criminal offences of sexual harassment and stalking that are carried out in the workplace or in connection with work, as well as the consequences that lead to psychological, psychosomatic, physical disorders and diseases or to a decrease in the work productivity of the victim as a result of harassment. It is also important to discuss whether it is necessary for the laws to provide for cases of abuse of duty when the victim is vulnerable due to age, illness, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, or is a victim of domestic violence.

**Violence against women and girls facilitated by technology.** As mentioned above, sexual harassment (Article 108/a of the Criminal Code), but also stalking (Article 121/a of the Criminal Code), unjust interference in private life (Article 121, Criminal Code), obstruction or violation of the confidentiality of correspondence (Article 123, Criminal Code), are forms of violence that are protected by criminal legislation, but do not have a digital component. For this reason, the Alliance of Women MPs<sup>144</sup> has taken the initiative to address and guarantee the protection of victims of cyberviolence through proposals to change the legislation or undertake other necessary actions. In this context, a series of activities have been organized with various actors such as line ministries, the High Judicial Council, the General Prosecutor, judges and prosecutors, MPs, journalists, representatives of civil society, international partners, etc. A study is being carried out with the aim of analyzing the Albanian legislation and international standards to give concrete proposals, both in terms of legislation and other measures that must be taken by the responsible institutions. The CEDAW Committee in the concluding observations on the periodic report of Albania (October 2023)<sup>145</sup>, notes with concern that cyber violence and femicide have not been defined as specific criminal offences. Furthermore, the organization<sup>146</sup> that works with victims of gender-based violence has given the same suggestions, that is, that the Criminal Code needs to be amended and shall punish the new forms of violence that women and girls experience, such as cyber bullying through of constant harassment on social networks, threats, publication of images of personal life, publication of a manipulated intimate image, etc. The lack of specific articles in the Code has led to the impossibility of law enforcement bodies to initiate proceedings against the perpetrators, who have committed such actions, leaving a free ground for the violators.

**Femicide/Femicide/gender-based killings of women and girls**, is defined as an intentional killing with a gender-related motivation, can be driven by stereotyped gender roles, discrimination against women and girls, unequal power relations between women and men, or harmful social norms. Over the past 13 years, 159 women and girls were killed by men in Albania, mostly by family members. One of the most recent initiatives<sup>147</sup> (March 8, 2024) is the establishment of the “Femicide Watch” at the **People’s Advocate**, which will collect and analyze data at the national level to promote more effective policies and mechanisms to prevent gender-based killings of women. The “Femicide Watch” will cooperate with the actors involved, who play a role in collecting and analyzing data about femicide in Albania. Data will be collected and analyzed in accordance with the statistical framework approved by the United Nations. Civil society<sup>148</sup> has also contributed to this form of violence, through the study of this phenomenon both from the legislative point of view, and international standards, but also by analyzing judicial verdicts on the killing of women.

**Gender-based violence against women in politics, including women's human rights advocates**, has not found an adequate protection either in the legislation or in the part of the services delivered. Initiatives have been taken by the CEC (explained in question no.22, page 58 of this report) to address

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<sup>144</sup> With the support of UN Women, the United Nations Joint Program "Ending Violence Against Women", funded by the Government of Sweden

<sup>145</sup> <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/352/80/pdf/n2335280.pdf?token=xDUwUo8sR7leWbMMfE&fe=true>

<sup>146</sup> Elbasan Women's Forum

<sup>147</sup> This initiative was undertaken in cooperation with UN Women, as part of the Joint UN Program "Ending violence against women in Albania", funded by the Government of Sweden.

<sup>148</sup> Killings of women (Femicidi) and the attempt for femicide in Albania (2017-2020), the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI) and Femplaz, with the support of UN Women in the framework of the regional program "Ending Violence Against Women" (EVAW) in the Western Balkan and Turkey, 2023. Information retrieved from the study, page 38 <https://www.qag-al.org/publikime/femicidi.pdf>

this form of violence, as well as a 2021 study titled “Violence against women during elections and gender bias in the media coverage of the general elections of April 2021 in Albania”<sup>149</sup> where, among other things, the way women in politics are presented by the media and the role that the latter can and should play in this direction (for more, refer to the answer to question 23 page 63 in this report).

**Gender-based violence in the media**, constitutes another form of violence that has increased especially in recent years, especially through social media. The change that the Audio Visual Media law has undergone, the work of the People's Advocate institution, other independent institutions of civil society, (as explained in other parts of this report, especially in the answer to question 23, page 63) are some of the efforts being made to properly address this form of violence.

**Early and forced child marriages** is an underexplored issue that affects girls from different social groups; it is mainly driven by gender inequality, poverty and social exclusion and has a number of harmful effects. In the Family Code (FC), the age for marriage is 18 years. The law provides for exceptions for marriages prior to the legal age (18 years), which can only be authorized by the court (Article 7 of FC). The absence of a provision that defines the minimum age under which the “court” is not allowed to grant this authorization-permit as an exception to the legal age to marry is noted and this has also been highlighted by GREVIO as problematic for Albania in its assessment report in 2017<sup>150</sup>. According to INSTAT, the number of girls married under the age of 18 in 2022 was 15 (compared to 19 in 2021). The percentage of girls married between the ages of 15 and 17 is very low, while the highest numbers are recorded at the ages of 18 and 19, respectively 6.1% and 4.7%. While boys do not get married before the age of 18 and the percentage of boys married at the age of 18-19 is below 1%.<sup>151</sup> The CEDAW Committee in its concluding remarks for Albania, recommends “*Reviewing the Civil Code in order to remove all exceptions to the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for both women and men and pursue its efforts to combat child and forced marriage, including addressing the root causes of this harmful practice...*”<sup>152</sup> Measures to support girls at risk and to prevent early child marriages are also envisaged in the 2021-2030 NSGE (in Specific Objective III.1, measures III.1.2, II.5.2.f, etc.). Recommendations for legal changes have also been given by NGOs<sup>153</sup> regarding: legal specifications for a minimum age, below which marriage cannot be allowed even by court decision; clarification of active legitimation in proceedings related to underage marriage - clarification of the form of search in court for cases with the object of “permission of underage marriage”, etc. *Progress Report for Albania 2023*<sup>154</sup> has identified that the continuation of child marriage, driven by gender inequality, poverty and social exclusion, remains an issue of concern. The lack of official data makes it impossible to have an accurate analysis of this phenomenon, while laws for the protection of minors from child marriage are generally ineffective or inconsistently applied. However, as of 2021, the government has prioritized addressing child marriage in its budgeted national policy framework and the National Agenda on the Rights of the Child 2021-2026 contains targets and measures to combat this practice. The national deinstitutionalization plan 2021-2023 included an economic reform program with a financial package for the development of alternative childcare services and the closure of social care institutions. But family and alternative care laws are often inadequately enforced and not fully enforced. Additional efforts are needed to further implement and address all violations of children's rights.

**Female genital mutilation (FGM).** FGM is not considered an Albanian problem and so far there have

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<sup>149</sup> The study conducted by the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Youth (Observatory) and supported by UN Women Albania within the United Nations Joint Program “Ending violence against women in Albania” financed by the Government of Sweden through the Acceleration Fund SDGs in Albania. See: [https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/media\\_brief\\_web.pdf](https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/media_brief_web.pdf)

<sup>150</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-first-baseline-report-on-albania/16807688a7>

<sup>151</sup> INSTAT, “Men and Women 2023”, pg.16

<sup>152</sup> Concluding remarks for the fifth periodic report of Albania, October 30, 2023, 48/b, pg. 13. See:

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FALB%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en)

<sup>153</sup> [https://www.gag-al.org/publikime/legal\\_review\\_report.pdf](https://www.gag-al.org/publikime/legal_review_report.pdf)

<sup>154</sup> [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_690%20Albania%20report.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf) see page no.38

been no initiatives to address this form of violence in legislation and the provision of protection. However, in the training and information meetings and sessions organized by a number of stakeholders, even this form of violence is not left out of attention. There are explained not only the causes and consequences, but also what could be the consequences of the lack of a legal provision in the local legislation regarding this form of violence.

**Trafficking in women and girls.**<sup>155</sup> Albania provides protection in legislation and through policies dedicated to this form of violence. In addition to the provisions in the Criminal Code (Article 110/a “Trafficking of adults” and Article 128/b “Trafficking of minors”), there are a number of policies and mechanisms that deal with this problem, such as the National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Trafficking, the National Referral Mechanism for the identification, referral and assistance of victims/potential victims of trafficking at the local level, the National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters (NCATS) which include housing services provided by the state and by specialized NGOs, etc. Civil society organizations focused on this issue have been supported for 10 years now by the state, also through the Social Fund. (More detailed information can be found in the answer to question 29, page no. 76 of this report).

The above legal framework on the various forms of violence against women and girls addressed in Albania is also complemented by a series of policies that foresee specific commitments and relevant budget planning for the implementation of various obligations derived from the legislation, among which it especially is important: [Fourth National Strategy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan, 2021-2030 \(NSGE 2021-2030\)](#)<sup>156</sup>. The third Strategic Goal of “NSGE 2021 – 2030” focuses on “Reducing all forms of harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence”. The strategy provides a comprehensive approach to addressing domestic violence and all forms of violence against women, emphasizes the importance of discrimination due to multiple gender affiliation (intersectionality), recognizes the challenges that women and girls from certain groups face not only because of gender, but also because of other factors, as well as paying special attention to women and girls, in all their diversity, especially from rural and disadvantaged areas, ethnic minorities, disabled persons, LGBTI+, single mothers, trafficked, elderly, migrants and asylum seekers.

Referring to the Report of the People's Advocate “On the situation of domestic violence and violence against women in Albania for the period January 2020 - September 2021” carried out in implementation of the Resolution of the Assembly of Albania, it was noted that *in recent years, very important measures have been taken to address domestic violence and gender-based violence, especially for the improvement of legislation and the by-laws, but it is identified the need for:* (a) The drafting of a legal framework that comprehensively addresses all forms of gender-based violence, except for domestic violence, so the need for legal framework on sexual harassment and violence, stalking, forced marriages, etc. (b) Amendments to the Criminal Code that comply with the Istanbul Convention such as the definition of the criminal offence of forced sexual relations, forced marriages, the criminal offence of forced sterilization and female genital mutilation.

## **16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?**

Improving the legislation has been a priority of the Albanian state, to deal with all forms of gender-based violence, explained in the question above. The expansion of the existing specialized services as well as the improvement of their operation standards have been the focus of the interventions of the Albanian state, in cooperation with international organizations and specialized NGOs in this direction.

<sup>155</sup> Information about by-laws can be found in appendix no. 3, page no... of this report

<sup>156</sup> Adopted by Decision No. 400, dated 30.6.2021, "On the Approval of the National Strategy for Gender Equality, 2021-2030 and its Action Plan". See: [https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB\\_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf](https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/WEB_Strategjia%20Kombetare%20-%20EN.pdf)

**Empowerment of services.** Currently, 35 specialized services are guaranteed for victims of gender-based violence (GBV), which focus mainly on sheltering services, counseling, treatment of cases of sexual violence, etc.

**Shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation** are guaranteed through: two national state shelters (one for victims of domestic violence and one for victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking); **eight public and non-public residential centers** (long-term shelters) that provide long-term services for victims of GBV and DV that have a geographical extension in four cities<sup>157</sup>; **sixteen public and non-public emergency residential centers** (emergency shelters) that offer services 24-72 hours, for victims of GBV and DV which are divided into centers managed by municipalities<sup>158</sup>, centers managed by NGOs<sup>159</sup>, as well as centers managed by the municipality and NGOs<sup>160</sup>; **as well as three centers for the treatment of cases of sexual violence**, specifically the LILIUM Center in Tirana managed by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and two new integrated services “One stop center” in the regional hospitals in Fier and Shkodër. Other forms of safe accommodation are the housing program, rent bonus, social housing, etc. From the data of the Ministry of Finance and Economy (currently MF), for the year 2021, it results that 302 out of a total of 2700 beneficiaries of the housing programs, or 11.2% of the beneficiaries, were female heads of households and victims of DV. The total amount of allocated funds is ALL 398,365,000, where about 11.2% or approximately ALL 44,616,880 have been allocated to the female heads of households and victims of DV. For the year 2022, at the end of August, it appears that out of approximately 2,400 beneficiaries, 174 or 7.2% were female heads of households and victims of DV. The total amount of allocated funds is ALL 534,713,429, where about 7.2% or approximately ALL 38,499,366.9 have been allocated for female heads of households and victims of DV.

**Telephone support lines (helpline). National Counselling Line for Women and Girls (NCLWG) 116-117**, 24/7 service, during the years 2019-2022 received 15,197 phone calls, carried out 1,511 face-to-face counselling, as well as provided legal assistance, accompaniment in court, other legal support for 750 cases. NCLWG has been functioning even during the closure/isolation situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. From the cooperation and support provided to NCLWG in the framework of the regional project “Ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey”, over 3,000 women and girls, survivors of violence, turned to counselling and specialized services dealing with various forms of violence. From June 2021 to July 2023, 5,924 women called NCLWG, of which 3,050 received information and counselling; of them, 926 also received free legal aid and 92 free secondary legal aid in the form of judicial representation (of these 142 were Roma women, 105 women with disabilities and 206 children).<sup>161</sup> Abused children can call ALO 116111, a specialized, free 24/7 service of a non-profit organization, which is also supported by the state budget. During the years 2019-2020, it received 39,677 calls, 1,962 referred cases of violence, abuse, neglect, bullying. In 3,570 phone calls, children received psycho-social support from the online counselor. During the years 2019-2022, the State Police enabled the operation of the 112,129 line throughout the territory of the country for reporting all forms of violence and 7,909 calls were received for DV.

In Albania, a center for the LGBTIQ+ community is operational where 173 beneficiaries are treated, as well as a specialized service in the Lezhë District, set up with the support of the Catholic religious' community, for women and girls in vulnerable situations.

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<sup>157</sup> 5 in Tirana, 1 in Vlora, 1 in Elbasan, 1 in Shkodër

<sup>158</sup> Përmet, Pogradec, Roskovec, Sarandë, Urë Vajgurore, Krujë, Kukës

<sup>159</sup> Shkodër, Korçë, Elbasan, Vlorë, Tiranë

<sup>160</sup> Dibër

<sup>161</sup> In the framework of the support of LKGV from the implementation of the regional UN Women Program "Implement norms, change mindsets II" with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

**Services for women migrants, women asylum seekers, women from ethnic groups, etc.** Based on the social services legislation in force, all categories, including asylum seekers, are part of the support programs for services for abused women. The Coordinated Referral Mechanisms for DV cases treat with multidisciplinary and specialized services women and girls who are victims of violence, women migrants, who are part of national or ethnic minorities, as well as women asylum seekers. Medical and psychological services are provided by medical centers, local self-government units (LGUs), NGOs, etc.

**The People's Advocate has carried out inspections**<sup>162</sup> for specialized support services and while welcoming all the efforts and measures undertaken by the Government and Local Self-Government Units to respond to the needs of victims of violence with specialized services, allocating funds through the Social Fund mechanism, continues to observe that: these services still need to be improved, be increased in number and extended throughout the country, to be accessible to all groups of women together with their children and has recommended the further improvement of the standards of social care in emergency centers for violence against women and domestic violence.

**Free legal aid** is offered pursuant to law no. 111/2017 in the form of primary legal aid (legal advice), secondary (representation before judicial bodies) and exemption from court fees and expenses and those for the execution of the verdicts. Primary legal aid is provided by 47 providers: 20 Primary Legal Aid Service Centers<sup>163</sup>, 12 Law Clinics at Higher Education Institutions and 15 Non-Profit Organizations authorized to provide this service by the Ministry of Justice. During the years 2020-2023, out of a total of 26,877 cases that have benefited from primary legal aid, 2,916 are victims of DV, sexual abuse and trafficking. During the years 2020-2023, the courts have issued 2,833 court decisions for secondary legal aid and/or exemption from process fees and/or execution of the decision, of which about 995 are victims of domestic violence, beneficiaries of social protection schemes and 1 victim of trafficking.

**Trainings.** The focus has also been on increasing the capacities of various actors who work with victims of GBV and that have received continuous training. **Police:** during the years 2019-2023, about 811 police officers were trained on issues of DV and legal changes, GBV, standard work procedures and investigation of sexual crimes, prevention and misuse of firearms in the context of DV. **School of Magistrates:** during the period 2019-2024, about 30 different training activities of several days were carried out and judges, prosecutors, judicial police officers, academic staff were trained.<sup>164</sup> In 2023, **coordinators of victims in the General Prosecutor's Office** have drafted a training manual on the issue of GBV. In this manual, online sexual violence against minors and treatment of cases of online sexual abuse, interviewing techniques, establishing a long-term communication with the minor victim as well as trauma and its effects are dealt with. 16 victim coordinators of all prosecutors' offices of general jurisdiction and 19 officers of the judicial police in the prosecutor's office have been trained. There were also trained<sup>165</sup> representatives of educational institutions, child protection units, judicial police officers in the police in Fier and Saranda. **Albanian School of Public Administration:** in 2021, 1,288 participants were trained in 53 online training courses with certification and information sessions on "Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination" and "Domestic Violence and the Role of the Responsible Authorities".

**Strengthening strategies and interventions for the prevention of violence against women and girls.** **Ministry of Education and Sport** in implementation of NSGE 2021-2030 is supporting the strengthening of capacities through continuous trainings. Local education units and directorates of

<sup>162</sup> National Center for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence (2021-2022); Center for the management of cases of sexual violence LILIUM (2021-2022); Long-term shelters managed by NGOs in cooperation with local government such as the Center Vatra in Vlorë (2022); STREHA Center for LGBTI youth (2023); Emergency shelters in: Kukës, Pogradec, Sarandë (2022), Gjirokastër, Durrës (2023); National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking - every year

<sup>163</sup> Tiranë, Durrës, Elbasan, Lushnje, Berat, Fier, Vlorë, Pogradec, Gjirokastër, Lezhë, Shkodër, Dibër, Korçë, Kukës, Tropojë, Përmet, Pukë, Mat, Kavajë, Kurbin, 12 The center is supported by ADA funds.

<sup>164</sup> More detailed information in appendix 3 of this report

<sup>165</sup> In collaboration with UNICEF



education institutions prepare and carry out trainings with teachers and the community of parents and appoint a teacher in each kindergarten/school to cover and coordinate the activities within the action plans. The staff of each institution have been familiarized with the requirements and planning for the implementation of the NSGE 2021-2030. In each Local Office of Pre-University Education (LOPUE) has been appointed a person who follows and monitors the activities within the framework of this strategy in each school. Furthermore, the school institutions have appointed a coordinator teacher to cover and coordinate the activities in implementation of the NSGE 2021-2030, through action plans prepared by each pre-university education institution (PUI) and activities, mainly informative and awareness-raising, related to the implementation of the strategy.

**State Police and Community Policing for the education of young people**<sup>166</sup>. The creation of a special organic function of Community Policing Specialist and Assistant Specialist for education and work with young people in all police stations has significantly improved the education of young people and the realization of ongoing awareness campaigns with students (for topics related to education on traffic rules, the negative effects of smoking, alcohol, drugs, to preventing radicalism and violent extremism, dealing with other security issues), as well as cooperation with youth organizations, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists, school security officers to identify, treat and solve together the problems of bullying, crime, domestic violence, violations of the law, in order to prevent involvement of young people in criminal activity and to increase safety standards in education institutions and in the community.

**Specialized courts.** Domestic violence cases in the civil process are judged by judges of the family section of the civil courts, while criminal cases involving minors are judged by the juvenile sections of the criminal courts. The High Judicial Council (HJC) has approved an instruction<sup>167</sup> related to the number of judges who judge in juvenile sections, who have the obligation to be trained and the decision<sup>168</sup> to accelerate issues that examine the rights of the minors or affect them. In terms of monitoring the activity of the courts, law no. 115/2016 "On the governing bodies of the justice system", created the institution of the Inspectorate of Justice, which carries out institutional and thematic inspections on every aspect of the work of the courts (addressed the recommendation of GREVIO for monitoring the court practice).

## 17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?

**Nationwide awareness campaigns.** Public awareness of harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, to change mentality and attitudes regarding violence against women, is one of the strategies used for years in Albania, which has brought about positive results. In the country, awareness campaigns and information and education activities coordinated through the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in partnership with the line ministries and local institutions and civil society organizations, as well as with the support of United Nations Agencies and other international organizations, are continuously organized. For years, Albania has been engaged in organizing awareness-raising activities within the global campaign of 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence (November 25 - December 10). The activities were coordinated and each campaign had defined slogans. Campaigns and activities are also carried out during the month of March every year on the occasion of the International Women's Day. Especially in the 2019-2021 campaigns, hundreds of organized activities took place throughout the country, where millions of interactions were reached out through messages, videos and infographics distributed on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube) as well as meetings, exhibitions, interviews on TV, publication of promotional messages against violence on screens of shopping centers,

<sup>166</sup> Community Policing Program 2017-2023 (Total Budget 41.4 MEK), financed by SIDA

<sup>167</sup> Instruction no. 79, dated 30.05.2019 "On the appointment of judges for judging juvenile justice cases";

<sup>168</sup> Decision no. 78, dated 30.05.2019 "On the calendar of review of cases in the Courts of Appeal"

public squares or televisions.<sup>169</sup> Many businesses, representatives of institutions and media have joined the awareness raising activities.<sup>170</sup>

**During pandemic COVID-19 period**, there were also actions aimed at supporting women and girls in situations of gender-based violence. In 2020, a nationwide SMS campaign was implemented through the “Gender Laboratory”, which until January 2021 managed to inform up to 40,000 people about the services delivered in protection from violence against women.<sup>171</sup> 310 university students and high school students (86 boys, 228 girls) were informed about GBV through 12 information sessions. 60 university students (49 girls, 11 boys), especially from rural areas, were informed about GBV specifically in the digital world. Three of them were then selected and organized awareness raising meetings in local high schools informing 254 young people (179 girls, 75 boys) through a set of online and offline meetings in seven high schools in Elbasan Municipality and Elbasan district.<sup>172</sup> About 350 posters were placed in public spaces, municipal offices and public information stands in all seven municipalities of Elbasan district, reaching the information of about 6,000 people about the services provided during the COVID-19 pandemic situation.<sup>173</sup>

**Involvement of men and boys.** A series of activities have been developed that focus on the inclusion of boys and men<sup>174</sup>, for example, the creation of the “Be a man Club” in 11 municipalities and in high schools in the city of Tirana<sup>175</sup>, an initiative that gathers young girls/young boys in discussions in the form of debates on issues of equality and harmful gender stereotypes and WV-GBV. Around 1,700 young boys and girls, men and women participated in activities specifically aimed at engaging boys and men.<sup>176</sup> During the year 2022, about 360 young men, as well as 20 education professionals were equipped with basic knowledge about gender equality, positive masculinity and GBV.<sup>177</sup> A trained group of 11 young people engaged in 16 sessions to transform traditional masculine norms.<sup>178</sup>

**Involvement of religious communities.** Work with religious communities in Albania to engage them as allies in efforts combating against domestic violence has been underway for years. During 2020, about 121 individuals (36 men and boys and 85 women and girls) from religious communities in Elbasan district were informed about gender equality and combating harmful gender norms through seven public forums focused on the role of religious communities in this direction (forum links can be found in Appendix 3 of this report).<sup>179</sup> In 2023, two NRMs (Pogradeci and Vlora)<sup>180</sup> officially included religious communities as members of the Steering Committee for the first time. Two advertising spots<sup>181</sup> were produced with messages from 7 leaders of the religious communities of Vlora Municipality.

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<sup>169</sup> The data were taken from the annual reports of the Joint Program of the UN with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection “Ending violence against women in Albania”, January 2019-June 2022, with the support of the Swedish Government, according to which, about 3,000,000 interactions are carried out in these campaigns during the years 2019-2021.

<sup>170</sup> In the 2020 campaign, around 150 businesses, public institutions, media and sports institutions changed their social media logos during the #Orangetheworld movement with the support of UN Women.

<sup>171</sup> By the Observatory for Children’s and Young People’s Rights within the framework of support from the implementation of the UN Women regional program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>172</sup> By the Elbasan Women’s Forum in the framework of support from the implementation of the UN Women regional program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>173</sup> By the Elbasan Women’s Forum in the framework of support from the implementation of the UN Women regional program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>174</sup> Within the UN program against violence

<sup>175</sup> Regional approach supported by ADA and implemented by CARE Austria, through ACT for Society

<sup>176</sup> Supported by UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP

<sup>177</sup> From the Counseling Line for Boys and Men, with the support of the regional UN Women Program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>178</sup> From the Woman to Woman organization, with the support of the UN Women regional program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>179</sup> Conducted by the Women’s Forum in the framework of support from the implementation of the regional UN Women Program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with EU funds. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023

<sup>180</sup> With the support of the Albanian Center for Population and Development (ACPD) and UNFPA

<sup>181</sup> First spot: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8YRSnwMuY8>. The second spot with interviews of religious leaders was broadcasted on the social media of the Aulona Center, ACPD had about 9000 views, on TV 6+1 Vlora during the 16 days of activism, as well as on the link below: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&feature=youtu.be&v=AFsp82m4nEY&fbclid=IwAR1GF4tZDL-mAhiQWxTFeP66t0bCJvA2KKUmUdAqnBIKJ\\_0eN1djqxB9Cag](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&feature=youtu.be&v=AFsp82m4nEY&fbclid=IwAR1GF4tZDL-mAhiQWxTFeP66t0bCJvA2KKUmUdAqnBIKJ_0eN1djqxB9Cag)

**Involvement of other stakeholders: Ministry of Justice (Department of Free Legal Aid)** has developed/participated in 775 meetings/awareness raising activities (in 2021 and 2023). **State Police**, is also engaged in awareness campaigns organized with the support of organizations or institutions that focus on the prevention of violence.<sup>182</sup> The activities were attended by students from 95 secondary schools. In the process of coordinating the activities of the campaign, 40 local NGOs were engaged, which implemented projects of the Grant Scheme financed by SIDA. **MES** has undertaken specific actions consisting of: (a) creating safe environments, including schools, workplaces and public spaces; (b) the training of female/male security officers in relation to sexual abuse, where all the components of identification, distribution, symptomatology, etc. are treated; (c) training of psycho-social service female/male employees for protection, security, identification and referral of cases in need of protection; (d) drafting a manual with practical activities for education against the phenomenon of bullying that includes the entire pre-university education system; (e) having a reformed competency-based curricula (preparatory grade - grade 12) in order for students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, cultural support of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation for the diversity of cultures and the contribution that culture makes to sustainable development; (f) better cooperation between schools and child protection units. MES has contributed to the creation of the system for the identification, prevention and reporting of violence, bullying, violent extremism and the minimization of hate speech in schools. In cooperation with the partners, MES developed a comprehensive protocol for the prevention and reporting of all forms of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, neglect, sexual harassment, exploitation), homophobia, bullying, hate speech and extremism in schools. Following the best practices in the region, teams composed of teachers, students and parents have been established in schools with the aim of creating safe environments without violence and peaceful resolution of conflicts among the female/male students. The priority of MES is the prevention and elimination of violence against children and young girls and boys inside and outside of school. Cases of violence in school institutions have been recorded and dealt with throughout the country. The psycho-social service has provided direct services to all children in pre-university education with a special focus on children in need. Based on the need for online communication as the only form of communication during the 2020-2021 school year, the Psychologist's Corner was created on the official web pages of the institutions in charge for pre-university education. In this space, students or parents contacted psychologists to receive counseling or access counseling materials during the pandemic period.

**LGUs. Municipalities**<sup>183</sup> have been involved in various awareness-raising activities to bring changes in behavior, have distributed information, leaflets on the prevention and response to gender-based violence. Municipality together with NGOs<sup>184</sup> has organized several awareness-raising events about gender-based violence, such as: creating a mural and attending a theatrical performance with the participation of various actors and about 100 young girls/boys; activities for working with women, men and couples to improve their interpersonal communication, conflict management and shared decision-making skills<sup>185</sup>; promoting non-violent family relationships and positive parenting practices<sup>186</sup>; training cycle on positive parenting promoting healthy family relationships<sup>187</sup>. At the local level, the support of municipalities has continued regarding the drafting of plans for the social and economic integration of women and girls' victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence. During 2021, in six municipalities<sup>188</sup> the drafting of plans

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<sup>182</sup> The Swedish Community Policing Project also makes an important contribution in this regard (SCPA)

<sup>183</sup> Devoll, Dropull, Lushnje

<sup>184</sup> Kavajë Municipality in cooperation with Community Center "Today for the Future"

<sup>185</sup> Kamëz

<sup>186</sup> In collaboration with World Vision, as well as in Tirana, in collaboration with ACT for Society and UNFPA – a training manual has been prepared for this purpose, and community center staff have been trained (during 2022-2023) and they themselves piloted the implementation of the manual and courses on positive parenting (2023 onwards).

<sup>187</sup> Vlorë, Korçë (with the support of the Social Fund and in cooperation with the Arsis Initiative) and Lushnje

<sup>188</sup> Durrës, Tiranë, Pogradec, Elbasan, Vlorë, Shkodër

for the social-economic re-integration of victims of gender-based violence was completed.<sup>189</sup> During 2022, work continued regarding the implementation of these plans and the awareness of the Municipalities regarding the measures they contain, as well as reintegration plans were drawn up in four other municipalities.<sup>190</sup> All plans focus on socio-economic re/integration of abused women and girls in the areas of economic empowerment (property rights, employment and vocational training), housing, education and social care.<sup>191</sup>

**NGOs** have implemented projects related to GBV prevention by contributing to: *working with women, men and couples to improve their interpersonal communication, conflict management and shared decision-making skills;*<sup>192</sup> *empowering women and girls to promote their economic independence and access to resources, and to promote equal relationships in families, communities and societies;*<sup>193</sup> *reducing poverty through targeted interventions for women or families;*<sup>194</sup> *creating safe environments, including schools, workplaces and public spaces;*<sup>195</sup> *promoting non-violent family relationships and positive parenting practices;*<sup>196</sup> *promoting positive attitudes, beliefs, values and norms with gender equality, especially among men and boys;*<sup>197</sup> *mobilizing community/religious/traditional leaders, politicians, influencers, journalists or media influencers (such as athletes or celebrities) to influence having positive norms;*<sup>198</sup> *raising public awareness to change attitudes and behaviors;*<sup>199</sup> *promoting equal gender values in primary and secondary education, including all-inclusive education on sexuality;*<sup>200</sup> A podcast was produced<sup>201</sup> on domestic violence in the 16 days of activism campaign. During the year 2021, the Platform "Safe from gender-based and sexual violence" was launched, which aims to improve capacities and knowledge about comprehensive sexual education (CSE) and sexual violence for young people, teachers, parents, community.<sup>202</sup> The manual was also designed for experienced trainers, sex education educators, NGO activists, and other professionals who work with young women and men at risk of social exclusion, such as LGBTIQ+, Roma and young women/men at risk of gender discrimination. At the end of the course, the participants, in addition to increasing their knowledge, are trained in the implementation of CSE, the identification and treatment of violence and abuse, as well as the referral of cases.

## 18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

Albania is a state party to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and has signed the Convention's Additional Protocol for enhanced cooperation and disclosure of electronic evidence. The Albanian state has also approved the National Cyber Security Strategy 2020-2025 and its Action Plan, through which the necessary mechanisms for the safety of children in cyber space have been created. Based on this strategy, in December 2020, by order of the Minister of the Interior, the "Strategy for the Investigation of Cybercrime" and the 2021-2025 Action Plan were approved, for the establishment and development of appropriate institutional mechanisms, increasing the level of the response to cybercrimes in the country but also increasing the continuous cooperation with international partners. In the General Directorate of

<sup>189</sup> As part of the UN WOMEN project in cooperation with the organizations "Different and Equal (D&E) and the Albanian Women's Empowerment Network (AWEN).

<sup>190</sup> Kukës, Berat, Dibër and Korçë. These plans were drawn up by the "Different and Equal" organization in cooperation with the respective municipalities.

<sup>191</sup> The monitoring report of the implementation of the 2021-2030 NSGE for the year 2022, pg. 22.

<sup>192</sup> Vatra, Elbasan Women's Forum, Swedish Embassy

<sup>193</sup> Vatra, AWEN, Elbasan Women's Forum, GIZ, Human Rights in Democracy, Center for Gender Justice, CC Kukës, RISI HELVETAS, UNICEF.

<sup>194</sup> Vatra, AWEN, Elbasan Women's Forum, Center for Gender Justice, Arsis Initiative, RISI HELVETAS, UNICEF

<sup>195</sup> Vatra, AWEN, OSCE, Human Rights in Democracy, UNICEF;

<sup>196</sup> Vatra, AWEN, OSCE, Elbasan Women's Forum, Center for Gender Justice, Arsis Initiative, Human Rights in Democracy, UNICEF;

<sup>197</sup> Vatra, AWEN, OSCE, Elbasan Women's Forum, Center for Gender Justice, CC Kukës, Swedish Embassy, UNICEF; as well as "Me, the Woman"

Pogradec, with the support of We Effect (2023)

<sup>198</sup> Vatra, AWEN, OSCE, Elbasan Women's Forum, Swedish Embassy, UNICEF.

<sup>199</sup> Vatra, AWEN, OSCE, Elbasan Women's Forum, Human Rights in Democracy, Center for Gender Justice, Arsis Initiative, Swedish Embassy, UNICEF.

<sup>200</sup> Vatra, AWEN, UNICEF

<sup>201</sup> By OSCE, See: [Gender Equality Dialogues \(buzzsprout.com\)](https://buzzsprout.com)

<sup>202</sup> From Albanian Center for Population and Development, see: <http://acpd.org.al/?p=1054>

the State Police, in the Department of Criminal Police, is set up the Sector for the Investigation of Cybercrimes has with a special structure from 2023, the Sector of Investigating Pornography with female/male Minors, and there are established these sections in the local police departments. Detailed information on the investigation of criminal offences and concrete data are presented in Appendix 3 of this report. A **24/7 Coordination Unit** has been established, which exchanges information with the counterpart agencies and partners on all criminal offences committed via the Internet, including those of child pornography. The State Police (SP) has its **focal points** for cybercrimes with Europol, Interpol, 24/7 PoC Cybercrime Convention, 24/7 PoC High Tech Crime G7, NCMEC<sup>203</sup> (**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**), Liaisons Officers. The unit is the contact point for Europol's **AP TWINS** analytical project which supports the prevention and combating of all forms of criminality related to sexual exploitation and abuse. In the framework of the program/package "Safety of female/male Young People" that SP has with MES, which is implemented in all districts, among the topics that are dealt with in public/non-public schools are: actions against domestic violence and trafficking; against bullying/cyberbullying, for which the police officers involved in the initiative have also been trained. In one school year, this program is implemented in about 1,296 schools, of which 1,192 are public schools and 106 non-public schools, and the beneficiaries are about 25,800 students.

**Measures undertaken by MES.** The Agency for Quality Assurance of Pre-University Education (ASCAP), in 2023 drafted the "Manual on Internet Security"<sup>204</sup>, which provides a package of guidelines and advices related to promoting the safe and effective use of Internet by students and teachers and addresses issues such as cyberbullying, sexual harassment, hacking of personal data, addiction to online games, etc. In addition, ASCAP and the Albanian Media Institute, in 2023 have trained about 150 teachers (part of 10 schools) on media education, challenges and risks in the virtual world, privacy rules and some of the main risks that can be encountered along internet use. The project has also been piloted with the female/male leaders of the networks on Social Sciences and Biology-Chemistry, where 120 network leaders have participated in these trainings (in 2023). The professional network of ICT teachers (2021-2022) has been set up and is operating. In their in monthly meetings, they discuss, share experiences and assess needs, while the group of school coordinators prepares an assessment report on cyber security. Regarding the cyber security of students and their protection from illegal and harmful content in pre-university education institutions, the following acts have been approved: Joint instruction between MES and MHSP no. 658, dated 23.09.2019, "On the procedures and actions undertaken by the education structures, in cooperation with the child protection structures, in the cases where in the premises of the pre-university education institution is found that a child is accessing illegal content on the Internet and/or to the detriment to her/his age"; Instruction no. 34, dated 16.11.2018, "On the prohibition of mobile phones in pre-university education institutions, both by the teacher and the student"; For the psycho-social service, the following documents have been approved: "The work practice of the psycho-social service"<sup>205</sup> and "General ethical principles of psycho-social service"<sup>206</sup>, which deal with situations of online violence, bullying and abuse at school. **Women/men teachers, women/men Security Officers and Psycho-social service** have carried out a series of awareness-raising activities on the issue of safety with students and teachers on the topic: "Use of the Internet, the dangers of extremist behavior on the Internet"; "Safe children on the Internet and protection from virtual violence", organized with students of lower secondary education classes with representatives of the Child Protection Unit (CPU), the Coordinator against Domestic Violence and institution psychologists. As part of the International Day of Safe Internet, activities with awareness-raising messages were organized at school.<sup>207</sup> The publication of the section "Report illegal content" on the official website of MES, the General Directorate of Pre-

<sup>203</sup> Sends daily reports and materials found on the Internet related to child pornography, sexual exploitation or other harmful content.

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.ascap.edu.al/kurrikula>

<sup>205</sup> <https://www.ascap.edu.al/praktika-e-punes-se-sherbimit-psiko-social-shkollor/>

<sup>206</sup> <https://www.ascap.edu.al/parimet-per-etiken-profesionale-te-sherbimit-psiko-social-shkollor/>

<sup>207</sup> <https://arsimi.gov.al/udhezim-nr-34-date-16-11-2018-per-ndalimin-e-telefonit-celular-ne-institucionet-arsimore-parauniversitare/>

University Education (GDPUE), the Regional Directorates of Pre-University Education (RDPUE), the Local Offices of Pre-University Education (LOPUE) and of institutions of pre-university education, which is linked to the online portal [www.cesk.gov.al](http://www.cesk.gov.al) of AKCESK, to block access to websites with illegal content, which helps children, persons exercising their parental responsibility and young people, to report illegal content encountered while browsing the Internet.

**BrightSky application.** The program “End violence against women”<sup>208</sup> supported the partnership between Vodafone Albania, MHSP and the Ministry of Interior (MI) to design and launch the BrightSky app, a new online support program for women victims/survivors of DV and GBV accessible from June 2021. The app is free to download and can be used on a mobile phone and/or other smart devices and provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship, or to those who are concerned about someone they know. The app can be used to provide information to anyone who wants to learn about domestic abuse and some of the types of support available. With the support of this program, 70 women from marginalized groups (Roma, LGBTQI+ and women with disabilities) were provided with 70 smartphones donated by Vodafone Albania and were trained to use the BrightSky application.<sup>209</sup>

**NGOs** have provided their contribution to the training of media professionals<sup>210</sup> aiming at encouraging the creation and use of non-stereotyped, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media, including social media; to the support<sup>211</sup> for victims of digital violence, to awareness-raising activities, provision of recommendations for drafting a specific law on the prevention and protection of victims of digital violence, etc.

**LGUs.** Municipalities are engaged in awareness activities<sup>212</sup> with women/men students, young girls/boys, teachers, parents about online abuse, stalking, the risks of technology, stereotyping the image of women and girls online with mocking videos, sharing images, safe use of internet, the consequences and actions that can be taken to prevent this form of violence, etc. In addition to informational activities with the whole community, meetings were organized with the Alliance of Women Councilors and employees in the municipality<sup>213</sup> where this issue was discussed and two videos were prepared with prominent figures of the city and a video with members of the CRM in order to prevent the gender-based violence. Other activities organized by the municipalities are: various trainings with female/male specialists of the area in schools about bullying or harassment that occurs through social networks<sup>214</sup>; activities with women/men technology specialists and women/men technology service providers to define and apply good practices in this regard<sup>215</sup>; awareness activities to report cases of gender-based violence in social networks and cooperation with the police for the management and resolution of each identified case; organization of various activities “Internet Safety”, “Cyberbullying”, “Stop Trafficking” etc. These activities are organized with the children and parents who are beneficiaries of the services delivered in the social centers.

## 19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women’s organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?

The Albanian state has provided several forms of support to civil society organizations, specifically: **Allocation of funds through the Agency for the Support of Civil Society (ASCS)**, a central public entity. During the years, **2019-2023**, the ASCS has signed 251 contracts with NGOs with the total

<sup>208</sup> The joint program of the United Nations “End violence against women” implemented by UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women funded by the Swedish Government.

<sup>209</sup> The Albanian Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AFRPWD), the Roma Women’s Rights Center (RWRC) and the LGBT Alliance, as part of the support from the implementation of the UN Women regional program “Implement norms, change mindsets II” with funds of the EU. The data are taken from the final report of phase II prepared by UN Women for the period February 1, 2020 - July 31, 2023.

<sup>210</sup> With the support of the Swedish Embassy and UN Women.

<sup>211</sup> Psycho-Social Center Vatra, Vlorë

<sup>212</sup> Fushë-Arrëz, Vlorë, Pogradec, Përrenjas, Lushnje, Lezhë, Krujë, Korçë

<sup>213</sup> Korçë Municipality

<sup>214</sup> Korçë Municipality

<sup>215</sup> Durrës Municipality

disbursed amount of ALL 416,850,000 (about EUR 4,115,004.94), of which the winning projects with a focus on violence against women/domestic violence are calculated at a total value of ALL 17,100,000 (about EUR 168,805.53) or 4.1% of the total amount of the budget. In **2020**, there is a lack of funding for projects in the field of combating domestic violence.

**Allocation of funds through social enterprises**, is based on law no. 65/2016 and in the relevant DCM on social enterprises, which envisages a support fund in the amount of ALL 249,760,000 (about 2 million and 81 thousand euros) and during the reporting period, nine non-profit organizations received the status of social enterprises.

**Allocation of funds through the Free Legal Aid Directorate**<sup>216</sup> which has provided budget funds for non-profit organizations that deliver primary legal aid to women and girls in need, of 4 million ALL for each budget year, from 2019 onwards. In March 2023, two NGOs were financed<sup>217</sup>.

**Allocation of funds through the Minister of State for Youth and Children**<sup>218</sup>, to the implementation of the law no. 75/ 2019 "On youth",<sup>219</sup> and DCM no. 681, dated 02.09.2020, is funded the project on the transformation of the behavior of young girls and boys in Tiranë, Devoll and Bulqizë (beneficiaries are 197 boys and 106 girls), with the aim of education on violence, drug use and reproductive health, as well as strengthening the capacities of 49 professionals (women and girls coming from the health staff, psychologists, teachers, etc.).

**Allocation of funds through the Social Fund**<sup>220</sup> aims to contribute directly to the provision of the set of social services for the categories in need at the local level through the establishment of new services where the need of the family and the individual is greater, as well as the improvement of existing services as part of the social plans of municipalities. In the five years of operation of this financial mechanism, local self-government units have been supported for the establishment of 73 social care services, from which have benefitted 51 municipalities and 8 regions. Two counseling lines have been financially supported, namely "ALO 116-111" and the Counseling line for Women and Girls. Three specialized shelters at the regional level for victims of trafficking and the salary and social insurance fund from the state budget for 28 employees is ALL 21.6 million/year. The shelter for LGBTI is financed by the state budget at about ALL 7 million every year. Two national services for victims of domestic violence and victims of trafficking are financed, in total by the state budget – ALL 22.8 million (48 female/male beneficiaries for cases of DV, or trafficked - about 600 female/male beneficiaries). The Lilium Center and two one-stop-centers, from 2023, in Fier and Shkodër<sup>221</sup>, have benefitted for the treatment of child victim of sexual abuse and other forms of abuse, which have treated 20 cases in one year. Five multifunctional community centers that also benefit abused women are financially supported, as well as four emergency services/shelters for abused women and girls living in rural areas: Gjirokastër (the service continues 100% funding from the municipality), Lezhë (2,729,299 ALL), Kukës (1,665,506 ALL), Berat (1,164,000 ALL).

**LGUs finance NGOs:** Providing free legal and psychological services and a free telephone line<sup>222</sup>, providing facilities for awareness-raising activities with victims of violence and for the organization of trainings on issues of gender-based violence<sup>223</sup>, financial support<sup>224</sup> for the rent of counseling offices and

<sup>216</sup> The Directorate of Free Legal Aid is a public legal entity under the Ministry of Justice, whose mission is to guarantee free Legal Aid.

<sup>217</sup> "Vatra" Center, Vlorë and Counseling Line for Women and Girls

<sup>218</sup> In the Annual Funding Program and Grant Fund Distribution Scheme, Public Call No. II for projects, announced by the National Youth Agency supported financially the organization "Counseling Line for Women and Girls"

<sup>219</sup> "For the way of creation, organization and operation of the National Youth Agency",

<sup>220</sup> More detailed information in appendix no. 3 of this report

<sup>221</sup> Funded by UNICEF (Fier and Shkodra center)

<sup>222</sup> Durrës Municipality finances the "Today for the Future" Community Center"

<sup>223</sup> Lushnje municipality

<sup>224</sup> The Municipality of Vlorë financially supports the Center Vatra Vlorë

other operational costs and from 2023 also the rent of the shelter, support with various projects of NGOs working to prevent violence against women and girls<sup>225</sup>.

**International Organizations** provide ongoing support to NGOs working on GBV prevention and response, specifically support to women's organizations by involving them in specific project activities, such as training or awareness campaigns<sup>226</sup>, making 11 Podcasts<sup>227</sup> to address and discuss issues of gender equality and its promotion in public discourse. Excellence Program for Women in the Municipality<sup>228</sup> (#WoMEP) dedicated to empowering councilors as leaders of municipal councils, with a special focus on increasing their leadership and management skills, better understanding of setting development priorities for local governments, as well as managing budgets and municipal fiscal policies. Albanian Women's Empowerment Network/AWEN<sup>229</sup>, consisting of 10 NGOs has benefitted continuous financial support<sup>230</sup> with a fund of 24.3 MSEK (about EUR 2.1 M). The same support<sup>231</sup> is offered through phases I and II through the Joint UN Programs "End violence against Women", as well as through the Community Policing program. Support is provided through regional funds<sup>232</sup> to strengthen reintegration services for women, victims of domestic violence. Increasing the capacities of NGOs staff working for the GBV, of the judiciary and institutions has been the focus of the international training program<sup>233</sup> organized<sup>234</sup> in the last five years. There are prepared development programs in order to prevent and react against the gender-based violence through which are identified and supported<sup>235</sup> NGOs working in this field, there are supported shelters for victims of trafficking, provided various services to survivors, paying part of the expenses (partially, because the Government of Albania and other donors have financially supported the rest).

## 20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?

The State Police, in order to prevent and eliminate any possible form of discrimination or publication of materials, on the Internet, has reached the establishment of cooperation with the company Meta Platforms INC and the company of the social network Tik-Tok. This agreement was reached after the meeting held in February 2024 with the representatives of the Tik Tok company, which will enable the return of answers to the Directorate for the Investigation of Cyber Crimes to the State Police for any investigation involving Tik Tok, as well as will have to close all pages that contain inappropriate images and videos, including issues between girls/boys minors.

In April 2023, the Assembly of Albania adopted the Law No. 30/2023 "On some amendment and addenda to Law No. 97/2013, "On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania", which included the definition of sexism in the media. Law no. 97/2013 "On Audiovisual Media in the Republic of Albania", as amended, is fully aligned with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union, specifically with Directive 2010/13/EU "Audiovisual Media Directive" amended by Directive 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and the European Council, which has explicitly guaranteed the protection of the fundamental freedoms and rights, as well as respect for human dignity in audiovisual broadcasts.

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<sup>225</sup> Lezhë municipality

<sup>226</sup> Supported by the OSCE Presence in Albania

<sup>227</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/252262420280804>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/267438885429824>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/280476064126106>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/292508846256161>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/297971522376560>

<https://www.facebook.com/OSCE.Albania/posts/317684427071936>

<sup>228</sup> Implemented by OSCE in Albania

<sup>229</sup> ADA supports the AWEN network with regional funds to strengthen reintegration services for women, victims of domestic violence.

<sup>230</sup> SIDA

<sup>231</sup> SIDA

<sup>232</sup> ADA supports the AWEN network

<sup>233</sup> Supported by Sida

<sup>234</sup> The Swedish Police and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

<sup>235</sup> UNICEF



Specifically, focusing on issues of gender equality, law no. 97/2013 as amended has provided:

*Article 32, point 4: "... The AAMSP do not broadcast programmes with content that incite hate on grounds of race, gender, religion, ethnic, national, and any other form of discrimination."*

*Article 42, point 3/(b): "... Communications with commercial nature in audiovisual broadcasts are not allowed ... include or support discrimination on sex, race, ethnic origin, national, age, belief, religion, incapacity or sexual orientation grounds..."*

*Article 76, point 1: "Services provided at the request of the users are not allowed to include programs that stimulate hatred on the grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, nationality or religion."*

The Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) approved the Audiovisual Media Broadcasting Code with decision no. 60, dated 10.07.2023, in which a special chapter has been added, related to the fight against sexism and the portrayal of gender stereotypes in audiovisual media content. The Code was drafted in accordance with the international acts and recommendations, specifically Recommendation Rec (2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers of member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms, Recommendation Rec (2017) 9 of the Committee of Ministers of member states on gender equality in the audiovisual media sector, also in accordance with the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030. The Code expressly guarantees the protection and respect of human rights, including the promotion of gender equality, the prevention of gender discrimination and the fight against sexism in audiovisual media. AMA, in the capacity of the regulatory authority in the field of audiovisual media, keeps a special and continuous attention to all audiovisual contents which must guarantee compliance with legal requirements related to the issue of gender equality in their broadcasts.

Despite the legal improvements, no concrete measures have been envisaged for social platforms and networks, where sexist language and increased hate speech against different communities and persons, including the LGBTIQ+ community, have been identified, especially in 2023. The People's Advocate addressed this identified issue, that violates the rights of different communities by recommending "Taking measures, for some legislative amendments, with an emphasis on preventing sexism in the media and dealing with the problems generated by this phenomenon", requiring the responsible institutions to amend and improve the legislation, specifically Law No. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality in society", Electoral Code, Law on Cinematography, Law No. 97/2013, "On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania", etc.

The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, in cooperation with the Central Election Commission, also drafted/issued a joint recommendation, where they emphasized the need and obligation of political parties as well as media organizations, to respect the principle of equality and non-discrimination, curbing the use of hate speech and stereotyping of women in politics, etc., referring to the situation of the 2021 elections (for more details on this recommendation, refer to the answer to question 22 of this report).

In this direction, the Municipalities also play an important role in educating and raising public awareness about the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media, as well as in raising awareness for addressing gender stereotypes that perpetuate women from the media, including social media. Trainings were organized, with the participation of journalists from the city, in which the topic of discrimination against women and gender bias in the media was addressed, for the privacy and confidentiality of issues related to children, girls and women.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Activities carried out by Lezhë and Krujë Municipalities

Attempts to address the portrayal of women and girls in the media have also been made by civil society organizations<sup>237</sup>, who have publicly reacted against the digital violence, discrimination and gender bias, requiring the Audiovisual Media Authority to deal seriously with the use of hate speech in the media, discrimination and prejudice, especially directed against girls and women.

## 21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?

In the answers to the above questions (15-20), the measures taken by the country to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls, specifically vulnerable groups such as victims/potential victims of trafficking, gender-based violence, domestic violence, new mothers, disabled people, minorities, LGBTI+ people, the elderly, etc. All these groups are included/targeted in new or improved laws on: social care services, employment and its programs, social insurance, compulsory health care insurance, social housing, property, legal aid, adaptation and accessibility, child protection, Juvenile Criminal Justice Code, Criminal Procedure Code, etc.

**Women LGBTIQ+.** The State Police has improved the digital system for processing statistical data on hate crimes, where for each offence provided for in the Criminal Code, motive data is generated on the ground of sexual orientation. In 2019 there were 7 cases and in 2020 there were no recorded cases of hate crimes on the ground of sexual orientation. The State Police and the Police Academy have refreshed the training modules for police officers on LGBTI issues. There can be also mentioned some data recorded in Albania's Progress Report 2023; *Hate speech and discriminatory language in the media, especially online, criminal offences and discrimination against members of the trans community continue and must be addressed. In 2022, the CPD handled a case of hate speech against the LGBTIQ community. In 2023, two new cases of hate speech were registered and are being processed. According to the data of civil society organizations based on a survey, about 40% of people in the LGBTIQ community reported incidents of discrimination, of which only 20% were reported to the police. Of the total number of referred cases, only 15% have been resolved.*

**Women with disabilities**<sup>238</sup>. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has recommended that the Albanian state should: Ensure that the law on measures against violence in family relations is implemented with a view to including a disability perspective and addressing the specific risks of gender-based violence and the barriers to protection faced by women and girls with disabilities<sup>239</sup>. This Committee is concerned that efforts to collect data about persons with disabilities are based on the medical approach to disability and are fragmented. The disaggregated data are not systematically collected, analyzed on the situation of persons with disabilities in close consultation with their representative organizations with a view to designing adequate public policies. The committee recommended that the Albanian state a) establish systematic data collection and reporting procedures that are in line with the Convention, to be followed by the Institute of Statistics; b) collect data on violence against persons with disabilities; c) develop evidence-based public policies in collaboration with their representative organizations. The Strategy for Gender Equality is a comprehensive gender equality policy that addresses the multiple and cross-cutting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities.

<sup>237</sup> "Vatra" Center is part of the AWEN Network and other organizations

<sup>238</sup> See the publication: Take measures to collect systematic data on gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, prepared by the Albanian Foundation for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AFRPW) in cooperation with the LGBTI Alliance and the Center for Roma Women's Rights, in the framework of the initiative "Providing the necessary technological equipment for girls and women who belong to the most vulnerable social groups, to access services focusing on violence against women and girls"

<sup>239</sup> Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2019). Concluding observations on the initial report of Albania. <http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPRiCAqhKb7yhspdJq2SN0FynLS%2BUiWUJagofjmf0rHJ5MLWvzpc5ePiubk65eOKd%2FNGE6rLwV%2B8UH2qHAe2phnAZHFMFuZbrUzNlNmuu8vWWy5fRMtqz>, par 31 and 32.

## IV. PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS

### **Critical areas covered:**

- G. Women in power and decision-making
- H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- I. Human rights of women Women and media
- L. The girl child

### ***22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?***

***The Electoral Code and the role of the Central Election Commission (CEC).*** The Electoral Code amended in 2020 sanctions the obligation of electoral subjects, the electoral administration and the court to respect the principle of gender equality. In this context, the Code legitimizes the CEC to exercise control in cases of violation of this principle and to intervene mainly for its restoration, even in cases of omission. In exercising this function, the CEC undertook the necessary procedures to fill the vacancies created in the Assembly<sup>240</sup> from the handover of 58 mandates, complying with the gender criterion. Furthermore, the legal amendments regulate the obligation of political subjects to respect the principles of gender representation in the composition of the Electoral Administration Zone Commissions. The addition of sanctions for violations of articles and rules is considered necessary to guarantee gender equality. It was highlighted that the Electoral Code (2020) provides two legal standards for the gender quota, in parliamentary elections the quota is 30%, while in local elections it is 50%. The CEC has imposed sanctions on electoral subjects for non-implementation of the gender quota. Meanwhile, the Law on Gender Equality obliges all public sector institutions, including members of Electoral Administration Zone Commissions, to have no less than 30% personnel of each gender in their compositions. The CEC administration guarantees a gender representation of 66 women and 27 men.

***Participation in central political decision-making.*** Albania has taken important steps to promote women's participation in political decision-making, especially at central level. The number of women parliamentarians in the Albanian Assembly has been increasing, from 36 (29.5%) in 2019 to 50 (35.7%) in 2024. In the Parliamentary/Assembly elections, dated April 25, 2021, 1841 candidates (732 women and 1109 men) were registered and 140 Members of Parliament (MP) (50 women and 90 men) were elected. Since 2021, the Speaker of the Assembly has been a woman, the position of Vice-Speaker has been held by a woman and a man. In the government cabinet, the Prime Minister is a man and the position of Deputy Prime Minister is held by a woman. In addition, the number of women ministers increased from 6 women in 2019 to 10 women in 2024. In the five ministries with the highest budget portfolio for 2024, three are headed by women ministers.<sup>241</sup> Until 2020, the Ministry of Defense (MoD) was headed by a woman, a position held by a woman since 2013 in Albania.<sup>242</sup> The Chief Negotiator for European Integration is also a woman. According to the data for 2022, four women are Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees (out of 8 Committees in total) and one woman is Chairperson of a Parliamentary Group (out of 4 groups in total).<sup>243</sup>

<sup>240</sup> In 2019, the Democratic Party and the Socialist Movement for Integration handed over the 58 mandates they had in the Assembly of the Republic of Albania.

<sup>241</sup> The five ministries with the highest budget portfolio for 2024 are the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Economy, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation and the Ministry of Defense. The first three are headed by women ministers. See: <https://arkiva.financa.gov.al/akti-normativ-nr-1-date-21-02-2024/>

<sup>242</sup> See the announcement for the appointment of the first woman minister, at: <https://www.facebook.com/MinistriaMbrojtjes/videos/marria-edetvr%C3%ABs-nga-ministria-e-mbrojtjes-zni-mimi-kodhe-ii/592779867452215/>

<sup>243</sup> INSTAT, "Men and women, 2023", page 109

In 2020, an Albanian MP was appointed for the first time to the post of Vice President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>244</sup> The Constitutional Court in the country has been headed by a woman since 2019.<sup>245</sup>

As for the justice system, 15.4% of the members in the High Court are women. In the Courts of Appeal, 20% are female Chairpersons, while 39.7% are female Judges. In the Courts of Judicial Districts, 45% are female Chairpersons, while 50.7% are female Judges. In the Administrative Courts, 33.3% are female Chairpersons, while 41.2% are female Judges. In the Administrative Courts of Appeal, 66.7% are female judges.<sup>246</sup>

**Local political decision-making.** For the local elections of 30 June 2019, 97 (11 women and 86 men) candidates were registered for mayor and 61 mayors (8 women and 53 men) were the winners. A total of 9882 people (4842 women and 5040 men) were registered as candidates for municipal council members, and 1621 municipal council members (707 women and 914 men) were the winners. In the partial local elections dated 06.03.2022 a total of 19 candidates (3 women and 16 men) were registered for mayors in the 6 municipalities where these elections were held and 6 mayors (2 women and 4 men) were winners. Thus, the number of female mayors remains really low and generally the position of women/young women/girls in political decision-making leaves much to be desired, especially if we analyze the representation of women/young women/girls from vulnerable groups, who suffer discrimination on the grounds of multiple and intertwined affiliation (intersectionality).

**Awareness and education about the rights of female/male voters** has been the focus of the work of the CEC, which has taken several measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of underrepresented groups of women and girls in the electoral process, which include: (i) Organization of informational and educational campaigns to increase the awareness and participation of women/young women/girls in the electoral process, emphasizing the importance of voting and their electoral rights (25 educational and informational meetings with women of the Roma community in the period January - March 2023)<sup>247</sup>. In these meetings, a call was made to check the name in the List of female/male Voters and the Voting Center; (ii) Cooperation with CSOs and interest groups to monitor and report possible cases of discrimination during the electoral process and to provide support and assistance as needed; (iii) Creation of platforms and mechanisms to listen to and address the concerns and needs of women/young women/girls in relation to the electoral process; (iv) TV and radio spots dedicated to women/young women/girls about the importance of their involvement in the electoral process, etc. The CEC has drawn up a detailed program for informing, educating and raising awareness of the voters, with a special focus on women/young women/girls and the role they should have in elections.

**The role of independent human rights institutions.** The study published in 2019 by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD)<sup>248</sup> constitutes the first institutional approach to the gender configuration in the composition of the appointed bodies of the local government, which found that: a) out of 58 municipalities that provided information, 37 have more than 1 deputy mayor and 21 have only one deputy mayor (no woman); b) of the 20 municipalities with only one male deputy mayor, none is headed by a female mayor. Out of 37 municipalities with 2 or more deputy mayors, only 15 have respected the gender quota of 30% or more. 20 out of 37 municipalities do not have any female deputy mayor, although the municipality has at least 2 such in its structure; c) out of 343 administrators appointed in these 58 municipalities, there are only 52 women (or 15%). At the end of the local elections of 2023 in Albania and the distribution of the mandates of the mayors/chairpersons of the local self-government units, the CPD and the People's Advocate (PA) with a joint recommendation and in cooperation with the supporting

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<sup>244</sup> Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" 2023-2027, page 14.

<sup>245</sup> See: [Gjykata Kushtetuese \(gjk.gov.al\)](http://gjkata.kushtetuese.gov.al)

<sup>246</sup> INSTAT "Men and women, 2023", page 113.

<sup>247</sup> With the support of the British Government and two organizations that protect the interests of the Roma "Voice of Roma" and "Irca".

<sup>248</sup> "Gender equality and discrimination in appointed local government bodies" in cooperation with UN Women Albania

organizations of this initiative, recommended the provision of balanced gender representation in the appointed bodies at the local government in Albania, in accordance with the Albanian legislation, and in accordance with the international documents signed and ratified.

Focusing on the election campaign dated 25.04.2021, the CPD in cooperation with the CEC have issued a joint recommendation, where they have emphasized the need and obligation of political parties and media organizations to respect the principle of equality and non-discrimination. In concrete terms, it has been recommended that: political parties and media bodies consider adopting or relying on Codes of Conduct for election campaigns in which there are rules on discrimination, harassment and hate speech; political parties, candidates, as well as people who work for them, must refuse to use discriminatory language in their programs and campaigns or propose discriminatory policies and laws, express or support ideas or theories of the superiority of a group of people on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and other protected characteristics or a combination thereof; media bodies in their coverage of election campaigns must refuse to use or support hate speech; political parties must ensure in their lists a representation that reflects the diversity of people in society, etc.

The People's Advocate (PA) in partnership with the CPD conducted the study "Violence against women in politics"<sup>249</sup>, during the 2021 election year, based on issues such as the use of sexist and discriminatory language during the election campaign. The thematic analysis identified different forms of violence that women experience in political decision-making, such as: contempt and offensive language; interruption of speech, ridicule, insults, jokes; false accusations in the media; threats; putting into question their abilities; removal from the party's candidate lists; denial of access to party finances during election campaigns; dismissing or threatening to dismiss them (and their family members) from government positions; false accusations and rumors of a sexual nature; sexual harassment; disregard during meetings; considering their contribution as of little or no importance; limiting the role in the voting of predetermined decisions; manipulation of women's vote during voting procedures; exclusion from information, etc. For women who have tried to reach leadership positions in the party - the party they adhere to is the main source of violence. Based on these findings, the PA addressed recommendations to political parties, women's political organizations, CEC, civil society organizations, human rights institutions, media.

**Representation in diplomatic missions.** In 2021, the participation of women in diplomatic missions results as follows: 30.8% women Ambassadors, 66,7% Plenipotentiary Ministers, 46,2% Advisor Ministers, 56,5% Advisors, 63,6% First Secretaries, 59% Second Secretaries and 50% Third Secretaries.<sup>250</sup>

**Representation in police structures.** In police structures, the number of women employees is very low and there have been no significant changes in the last five years. In 2022, among 10,868 women/men police employees, classified by rank and gender, 14.8% were women. At the top management levels, no woman has been in the position of Chief Executive. In 2022, only 1 woman occupied the level of Senior Director. The number of women employees increases with decreasing rank level and reaches the highest levels for Inspector and Civilian ranks. In 2022, among the total number of employed women, women Inspectors made up 41.1% and women Civilians 38,2 %. The number of men in Police structures is very high compared to the number of women, with the exception of the Civilian level, where the number of women exceeds that of men.<sup>251</sup> The policies for each competition at the Academy of Security are based

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<sup>249</sup> Supported with technical expertise by UNDP within the United Nations Joint Program "Ending Violence against Women in Albania", financed by the Government of Sweden.

<sup>250</sup> INSTAT "Men and women, 2023", page 111.

<sup>251</sup> INSTAT, "Men and women, 2023", page 105. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/publikime/librat/2023/burra-dhe-gra-2023/>

on the State Police Regulation<sup>252</sup>, according to which “*In the admission quotas for each competition, there are also determined the quotas for the less represented gender, the children of women/men police officers who have fallen on duty and the minorities*”.<sup>253</sup> Meetings were held in all district directorates, for the promotion of the education system of the Academy of Security, highlighting the importance and need of young women candidates/women candidates for admission to the State Police. Young women/women from the Local Directorates and the General Directorate of the State Police participate in all promotional groups.<sup>254</sup> In these meetings, it was noticed an increase in the participation and interest of young women/women to apply and be part of the State Police forces. In addition, in 2023, the Association of Women in the State Police<sup>255</sup> became active; it held consultative meetings in the Anti-terror Directorate, some Local Police Directorates and in the Academy of Security, on the issues of young employees/women in State Police (2023).

**Representation in the armed forces.** For the first time in 2019, a woman sub-lieutenant as a platoon commander participated in the mission in Afghanistan; and for the first time in April 2019, 2 women military officers became part of the United Nations mission in South Sudan. As of 2019, participation in the United Nations mission in South Sudan has continued with 2 military women in 2020; 1 military woman in 2021; no military women in 2022 (2 military men this year); 1 military woman in 2023 and 2 military women in 2024<sup>256</sup>. In 2019, women in the armed forces were represented by 19.4%,<sup>257</sup> while this representation in 2022 dropped to 15.0%. In 2022, in the total number of women employed with ranks, women officers made up 40.9%.<sup>258</sup> In 2023, 4955 were men in uniform and 899 women in uniform (or 15.3%).

**Decision making and business.** In 2022, the percentage of women owners or managers in active enterprises was 31.2% (from 31.1% in 2021). The percentage of women owners or managers is higher in small enterprises (with 1-4 employees) with 32.5% women, a higher percentage compared to 2021. In other categories of enterprises (5-9, 10-49 and over 50 employees) the percentage of women owners/administrators has increased, compared to the previous year. The number of businesses with women owners or managers is greater in the Service Sector than in the Manufacturing Sector, respectively 33.4% and 17,2 %.<sup>259</sup> In addition to the information provided in response to question 10 above, in this report (related to the National Strategy for the Development of Innovative Entrepreneurship 2024-2030), support for women in business was also provided through the regional program “Women in Business 2019-2022”.<sup>260</sup> As a result of this support, advisory services for women-led enterprises were continuously available throughout its implementation period. The program organized various training courses, ad-hoc webinars and mentoring. In 2021, there were 17 local advisory projects in Albania. In addition, the focus of some civil society organizations remains on increasing the representation of women on company boards, in accordance with the EU Directive on increasing the gender balance on Company Boards, approved on October 17, 2022.<sup>261</sup>

**Implementation of the Women’s Empowerment Principles.** The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEP) are a set of principles that provide guidance for business on how to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community.<sup>262</sup> WEPs are informed by

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<sup>252</sup> Approved by DCM no. 750, dated 16.09.2015, amended by DCM no. 1143, dated 09.12.2020, where “Quotas for competition” are defined in article 128, paragraph 2.

<sup>253</sup> Amended (words added in point 2) by DCM no. 1143, dated 9.12.2020

<sup>254</sup> According to Order No.1426 of the General Director of the State Police, dated 06.10.2023.

<sup>255</sup> By Court Decision no. 1124/1, dated 21.07.2023

<sup>256</sup> For more details, refer to table in the Annex IV of this report.

<sup>257</sup> The 5th Albania’s report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2021, paragraph 122. See: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2046178/N2226977.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> INSTAT, “Men and Women, 2030”, pg. 106. See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/publikime/librat/2023/burra-dhe-gra-2023/>

<sup>259</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>260</sup> Joint program of SIDA and EBRD (with a fund for women in business in the amount of 73 MSEK).

<sup>261</sup> For more, see: <https://www.consiliium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/17/council-approves-eu-law-to-improve-gender-balance-on-company-boards/>. The Organization “Women in Boards, Albania” (WOBAL) will work towards the implementation of this directive in Albania.

<sup>262</sup> Founded by UN Women and the UN Global Compact. For more see: <https://www.weps.org/about>

international labor and human rights standards and are based on the recognition and responsibilities that businesses have to take action on gender equality and women's empowerment. WEPs are the main tool for bringing corporations closer to the gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. By joining the WEP community, the business/company demonstrates commitment to this agenda at the highest levels and works collaboratively with multiple stakeholders to promote business practices that empower women. These practices include equal pay for equal work, gender-responsive supply chain practices and zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace. In 2022, the number of WEP signatories in Albania increased to 38 companies, from 11 companies in 2021. This translates into internal and external actions by private sector partners to raise awareness on women's rights within their companies and in their communities. In 2023, over 40 Albanian women entrepreneurs increased their networking skills and access to potential business investors, including the establishment of links with thirteen banks, consulting and communication companies, which are part of the WEP signatory group. Partners from the private sector, women entrepreneurs, government institutions and representatives of the international community created networks and discussed future access to financing opportunities, during the EXPO fair for Women's Entrepreneurship in Albania, organized in Tirana.<sup>263</sup>

**The National Youth Strategy 2022-2029**<sup>264</sup>, inter alia, contains objectives and measures to empower adolescent girls and boys to participate especially in local decision-making through Youth Councils. Various implemented programs<sup>265</sup>, such as those for supporting the creation of Youth Councils, U-Report, Child Friendly Cities, UPSHIFT, PONDER etc., have supported media and political education, reasoning and debate skills, dialogue with girls and boys in order to influence in decision-making for issues that affect them. The meetings of the Group of MPs "Friends of Children"<sup>266</sup> with adolescent boys and girls are very important, as in these meetings the MPs have the opportunity to hear from the girls and boys about various social and community issues, including issues of gender inequality, discrimination and exclusion, etc.

Measures and actions for the inclusion of women in all their diversity in political and public decision-making at local level are also envisaged as part of policy II of the **NSGE 2021-2030**, focused on creating conditions that enable equal participation and representation in this regard. From the monitoring of the implementation of these measures for the year 2022, it results that 25% of the planned activities have been fully implemented, 62% have been partially implemented and for 13% there is no information from the responsible institutions on their implementation status.<sup>267</sup>

**Empowering vulnerable groups to participate in public decision-making.** Important interventions in this direction have been made especially with the support of the Acceleration Fund for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Albania, created as a collaboration of United Nations Agencies with the Government of Albania. The results from the implementation of the second phase of this fund have also addressed the need to empower vulnerable groups in terms of promoting their participation in public decision-making. Vulnerable groups, especially Roma and Egyptian communities, PWDs, young people, women and CSOs focused on their rights, were empowered with information, knowledge and advocacy skills on their rights to benefit from social services, and were actively engaged at local and

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<sup>263</sup> The work with businesses and corporations to sign the Principles of Women's Empowerment, and other activities subject to the implementations of these principles are being supported by UN Women Albania

<sup>264</sup> See: <https://riniafemijet.gov.al/2194-2/> The strategy was drawn up with the support of UNICEF and the measures mentioned above were included thanks to the technical expertise provided for this purpose.

<sup>265</sup> With the support of UNICEF.

<sup>266</sup> The Group of MPs "Friends of Children" (GDMF) is a voluntary parliamentary group of 48 MPs, chaired by the Speaker of the Assembly and has no political nature. It consists of MPs from all parliamentary groups, who express the desire to contribute to the addressing of children's rights and their realization in an effective way during the exercise of the legislative functions of the Assembly, parliamentary oversight and during the discussion and approval of the budget of the state. This group is an added value to support and cooperate with all partners and groups of society engaged and the children themselves, in the field of children's rights and the respect of such rights. For more see: <https://www.parlament.al/struktura/9a2efb41-4237-4a38-8124-4d71d307c56c>

<sup>267</sup> The monitoring report for the implementation of the 2021-2030 NSGE, for the year 2022, page 31.

national level in advocacy forums and public consultation mechanisms, in search of their rights, as an opportunity to influence comprehensive policy planning and decision-making. These actions resulted in the improvement of local policies (e.g. comprehensive local social plans, establishment of new social care services, better response to the needs of vulnerable communities, etc.).<sup>268</sup>

**23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

Women and young women play a very important role in the media and their position as leaders of editions and programs has been improving. They have given examples of successful professionals from journalism in the field to the models of the moderators of shows with the highest visibility (prime time). Nevertheless, a lot of work and efforts are still needed for women in the media to take their deserved position, especially in media decision-making.

The challenges of women professionals in the media field remain great. A study<sup>269</sup> conducted on women in the media in 2020 revealed the low percentage of women invited to debates on political, economic, etc. topics, compared to their higher presence in talk show programs, the predominance of women and girls in the position of the victim in many chronicles and editions; deformed models of women and girls, particularly on screens, but also on portals, which damage the image of the girl/young woman/woman and give breath to gender-based violence; the categories most targeted and affected by hate speech are women, the Roma and Egyptian community, the LGBTIQ+ community, religious communities and people with disabilities; etc. Although the situation from 2020 has been improving, other similar studies with comparable data are needed to reach generalized conclusions on the position of women in media decision-making.

Another study conducted in 2021 "Violence against women during the elections and gender bias in the media coverage of the April 2021 general elections in Albania"<sup>270</sup> reveals that: While there are many media operating in Albania, media owners usually exercise control over the content, limiting editorial independence and encouraging self-censorship among journalists, many of whom are precariously employed. In the past, the media have reported cases of violence against women during elections and violence against women in politics, for example, cases where women candidates have faced pressure to resign rather than take their seats as MPs, and physical attacks on women candidates during election rallies. Overall, however, the media often promote the delegitimization of women as viable political actors by portraying women in public life in a sexualized manner, reporting baseless (and irrelevant) claims about their personal lives, or focusing in their clothes and appearance, rather than their work and essential contribution to society. Despite the fact that women constituted 40% of the candidates for MPs, in the articles or shows where the candidates were mentioned or discussions were made about them during the pre-election period, only 22% were dedicated to women, while 78% were dedicated to men. Quantitative monitoring revealed a very low media engagement on issues related to women's rights and

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<sup>268</sup> Successful results have been achieved especially from the implementation of the project "No One Left Behind II", where only for the year 2021, with the support of UNDP, more than 1800 Roma and Egyptians (371 families) benefited from the implementation of integrated social services in Lezha, Kruja and Fier; 4 community centers for children with disabilities (Korçë, Shkodër, Roskovec dhe Pukë) became functional and the capacities of the staff of 13 community centers were strengthened through online training and study visits; 6 organizations of persons with disabilities implemented small grant projects and strengthened their capacities for advocacy, networking and expression of their electoral rights (involving more than 400 persons with disabilities). With the support of UN Women, over 1,200 women and men in 12 municipalities raised their voices and participated in participatory budgeting processes; 840 vulnerable women and girls, including young women, the elderly, rural women, women with disabilities and unemployed women benefited from training and information and were empowered to express their needs during budget hearings. About 20% of the concerns raised were discussed with the municipalities and became priorities in the 2022 budgets. In addition, the capacities of 30 representatives of CSOs and 35 representatives of LGUs from 12 municipalities were strengthened not only to activate and engage the community and women of all groups in participatory budgeting, but also to process and address their needs in the right way. The Prisma network continues to play an important role in the participatory budgeting process.

<sup>269</sup> "Changing the narrative about women in media", supported by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. See: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcaipcgiclfefindmkaj/https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/albanien/17190.pdf>

<sup>270</sup> Prepared by the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Youth (The Observatory) and supported by UN Women Albania within the United Nations Joint Program "End violence against women in Albania" funded by the Government of Sweden through the Acceleration Fund NGOs in Albania. See: [https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/media\\_brief\\_web.pdf](https://albania.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/media_brief_web.pdf)



gender equality. Only 2% of election-related articles or broadcasts in the pre-election period, 1% in the election and post-election period, and 2% in the period covering the formation of the new cabinet of ministers included some discussions of sexual and reproductive rights, violence towards women, women's economic, cultural or social rights, or women's political participation.

The organization of annual forums of women/men journalists<sup>271</sup>, their mentoring and training on issues of gender equality, violence and non-discrimination, is a very good practice that affects the empowerment of the role of women in media. Albania has increased visibility and awareness of issues of gender equality and women's empowerment, through increased media reporting with gender sensitivity. During the year 2023, there were published about 55 media reports with gender sensitivity<sup>272</sup>, covering gender responsive budgeting, women's political participation and violence against women. Over 40 women/men journalists increased their capacities and the skills and knowledge needed to effectively report on the gender dimensions of budgets and their impact on different segments of society, contributing to this result.<sup>273</sup>

WikiGap<sup>274</sup> is an initiative aiming at increasing the number of articles about women on Wikipedia in the Albanian language. In this context, meetings (Edit-a-thons) are organized every year with the participation of volunteers who have been trained in how to edit and write articles. In recent years, the number of articles in the Albanian language about successful and inspiring Albanian and non-Albanian women has increased significantly.

In 2022, the Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA) took an initiative to include for the first time the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination in the Broadcasting Code for Audiovisual Media and for this purpose held (during the period January - December 2022) four public hearings. The amendments aim at improving issues of gender equality in the media, avoid sexist language and protect women and girls victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence from re-victimization during the reporting of specific cases in media broadcasts.<sup>275</sup>

Regarding the positioning of young women/women in decision-making in ICT, as was also explained in the answer to question 8 above in this report, even though the number of female students graduated in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is lower than the number of boys, in leadership positions in the National Agency for Information Society (NAIS), and in the scientific degree "Doctor of Science", in technology and innovation, young women and women predominate (respectively with 55% and 62.3%).

The measures taken to increase access, affordability and use of ICT for women and girls (e.g. free Wi-Fi hubs, community technology hubs) have also been implemented thanks to the support of international organisations. For example, the BiblioTech<sup>276</sup> project through which Wi-Fi centers have been set up in public libraries in several large cities, although designed for girls and boys, best serves both young women and young men and women and men, as the centers are near public libraries. Or the collaborations of LGUs<sup>277</sup> with representatives of the ICT industry have enabled safe internet areas for girls and boys. Filters placed in these areas, including many of the squares, parks and other public spaces, make navigation safe for women as well.

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<sup>271</sup> Such an annual practice takes place in Albania with the support of UN Women and each year certain themes are chosen in the field of gender equality, non-discrimination and women's empowerment.

<sup>272</sup> With the support of UN Women

<sup>273</sup> UN Women held these capacity-building sessions with the media throughout the year and in all thematic areas, and through media forums.

<sup>274</sup> Initiative supported by the Embassy of Sweden.

<sup>275</sup> The Audiovisual Media Authority, "Public Consultation Report on the amendments to the Media Broadcasting Code in Albania". See: [ama.gov.al](http://ama.gov.al)

<sup>276</sup> Implemented with the support of UNICEF

<sup>277</sup> Cooperation of the Municipality of Tirana with UNICEF

**24. Please describe your country's current national women's machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.**

According to the legislation in force<sup>278</sup>, the state authority responsible for gender equality and the fight against domestic violence is the minister covering issues of gender equality. Gender equality issues for the period 2019-2024 continue to be covered by the **Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP)**, thus, this ministry represents the National Mechanism for Gender Equality and women's empowerment in Albania. This function in the MHSP is exercised and fulfilled through the **leadership role of the Minister in the National Council for Gender Equality**, and the functioning of the **Directorate of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Policies** through the **Sector of Gender Equality Policies**.

**The Sector of Gender Equality Policies** consists of one head of sector and two specialists. In 2024, a competition was opened for the two positions which, after the selection, will continue the work, with duties and responsibilities dedicated to issues of gender equality and in accordance with the vision and mandate of the national mechanism of gender equality. This sector coordinates work with all the line ministries, independent institutions, local self-government units, civil society organizations and international organizations, on issues of gender equality, women's empowerment, and reducing domestic violence and gender-based violence. In financial terms, there is an increase in the budget of this sector, mainly for personnel salaries. Other activities related to informational meetings, awareness campaigns, strengthening the capacities of professionals, etc., are implemented with the financial (often also technical) support of international organizations.

The Network of Gender Equality Officers. State institutions at central and local level have the legal obligation to cooperate with the relevant minister covering gender equality issues to exchange information and facilitate the fulfillment of her/his function. This cooperation and coordination is carried out through the Gender Equality Sector. For this purpose, a **Gender Equality Officer (GEO)** has been appointed in each ministry to handle and address gender equality issues and one or more local gender equality officers are appointed in each municipality. At present, Gender Equality Officers have been appointed in 11 ministries, one focal point the State Police and 61 GEOs have been appointed at local level, which in most cases also play the role of local coordinator, for the management of domestic violence cases.

**The National Council for Gender Equality (NCGE)**<sup>279</sup> is the highest advisory body for issues of gender equality and for ensuring gender integration in all areas, especially in political, social, economic and cultural matters. The Council is established by Order of the Prime Minister and is renewed once every four years. The NCGE is headed by the Minister of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and consists of 9 representatives of line ministries at the rank of deputy minister and senior directors, and three representatives of civil society, who are elected on the basis of an open competition, having experience and contribution to these issues as criteria.

At the level of the Assembly, in addition to the **Alliance of Women MPs**, the issues of gender equality and gender-based violence and domestic violence are discussed (but also supported and further addressed) in the **Committee for Labour, Social Affairs and Health, the Subcommittee for Sustainable Development, Voluntary Groups**, etc. The Committee for Labour, Social Affairs and Health has as areas of responsibility: labor relations, social affairs, social security, family, women and health as well as the issues of the sustainable development agenda of the United Nations and the

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<sup>278</sup> Law No. 9770, dated 18.12.2008 "On gender equality in society" and Law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against domestic violence", as amended.

<sup>279</sup> According to Law no. 9770, dated 18.12.2008 "On gender equality in society", articles 11 and 12.

implementation of the commitments arising from it. Subcommittee on Sustainable Development<sup>280</sup> has as its area of responsibility economic and social development, sustainable economic growth, the realization of sustainable development objectives and the 2030 Agenda of the UN. The Voluntary Group for Population and Development<sup>281</sup> aims to advocate for issues related to population and development and more specifically to reproductive health, issues related to demography, aging, etc.

**25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women's organizations)**

As explained in the answer to question 24 above, the integration of gender equality in all sectors is made possible through a number of bodies, starting from:

- **The Assembly of the Republic of Albania**, which ensures that it fulfills this obligation through the cooperation and support of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection with structures such as: the Alliance of Women MPs, the Committee for Social Affairs and Health, the Subcommittee for Sustainable Development, Voluntary Group for Population and Development, etc.;
- **The National Council for Gender Equality**, as the highest advisory body for issues of gender equality and for ensuring gender integration in all areas;
- **The Ministry of Health and Social Protection**, as the main authority in charge and as the central institution - national mechanism for gender equality and women's empowerment;
- **Gender Equality Officers at central level** (in line ministries);
- **Gender Equality Officers at local level** (in municipalities).

Independent (such as the Central Election Commission, Audiovisual Media Authority, etc.) and human rights institutions (as the People's Advocate and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination), the School of Magistrates, the Albanian School of Public Administration, Civil Society Organizations, women/man workers' organizations (trade unions), international organizations and other partners focused on gender equality issues and women's empowerment also play an important role for the integration of gender equality in all sectors.

Gender mainstreaming has been introduced for years now as a strategy to include the different concerns, experiences and needs of women and men as part of an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and that inequality is not perpetuated. Likewise, Gender Responsive Budgeting has been introduced as a tool to achieve gender integration. Gender analyses and gender impact assessments are continuously being used as important research tools, the findings of which are serving as guidelines for the preparation of a number of important national documents.

Consultation processes with interest groups, such as civil society organizations (with a focus on women's rights, young people, gender equality, sustainable development, etc.), trade unions, private partners, media, education and scientific institutions, international organizations, etc., have already become very important advocacy tools for designing the most effective, appropriate and comprehensive policies.

In the period 2019-2023 a series of gender analyses<sup>282</sup> and evaluations of existing policies were carried out, as well as a series of consultative meetings were held within the framework of the revision of legislation, or the preparation of strategies and action plans, for all critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

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<sup>280</sup> Established by the Assembly with decision no. 34/2022 dated 14.4.2022

<sup>281</sup> Established by Order of the Speaker of the Assembly No. 43, dated 18.07.2023

<sup>282</sup> Implemented with the support of UN Women in particular, and in cooperation with civil society partner organizations.

**26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women's rights and promote gender equality?**

**The Institution of the People's Advocate (PA)** has been defined as the highest national institution for the promotion, prevention of violations and protection of human rights in Albania. In December 2020, the PA was re-accredited with Status "A" by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) which evaluates and determines on behalf of the United Nations Organization, the quality, standards, weight and importance of all national institutions of human rights. The PA in cooperation with the local government has also opened 7 regional offices, in order to facilitate the communication of the citizens of these locations with the institution, which has led to the increase of citizens' trust in PA.<sup>283</sup> The legal tool that the PA has for putting in place a violated right are the recommendations addressed to the institutions at central and local level, for taking measures for the problems identified through complaints, cases with initiative, inspections or issues forwarded by civil society. Two examples that we can mention in the entirety of the recommendations given by the PA during the period that this report focuses on, are: the recommendation of 2022 for "Taking measures to respect the gender rights of co-ownership on housing benefited from reconstruction grants as a consequence of the damages of the 2019 earthquake"<sup>284</sup>, which directly affects the improvement of women's access to property rights, their economic empowerment; and the 2023 recommendation for "Taking measures, for some legislative amendments, with an emphasis on the prevention of sexism in media and handling of problems generated by this phenomenon", which directly affects the prohibition of the use of sexist language and hate speech for certain persons/groups, including members of the LGBTI+ community. This recommendation was reflected both in the amendments to the law on Audiovisual Media<sup>285</sup> which included the definition of sexism in media and in the Audiovisual Media Broadcasting Code<sup>286</sup> approved in July 2023 by the Audiovisual Media Authority, where a special chapter was added, related to the fight against sexism and the portrayal of gender stereotypes in audiovisual media content.

In the framework of his legal mandate as a promoter of the rights of women and girls, the advancement of gender equality and the fight against domestic violence, taking into account the multiple affiliation (intersectionality), the PA: (i) has made official statements in the official website, the media and the FB social platform, drawing the attention of institutions, especially in cases of domestic violence or gender-based violence, to intensify efforts in a coordinated manner to respond to victims/survivors in time, with professionalism and specialized services; (ii) has organized or participated in round tables on women's rights, where the PA raised her recommendations for the empowerment of women/girls, the increase of central and local budgets as tools for addressing violence against women, the empowerment of social structures and the role of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism in the country's municipalities in order to guarantee immediate support for the victims of domestic violence, the correct implementation of the law, and the need for legal improvements to fill gaps in the legislation; (iii) has organized open days in different cities and regions of the country, with the aim of informing as many citizens as possible in all their diversity, about the role of the institution and the problems they can address.

**The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination<sup>287</sup> (CPD)** is an independent institution in the exercise of its duties, which ensures effective protection from discrimination and from any form of behavior that promotes discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic, education or social status, pregnancy, parental affiliation, parental responsibility, age, family or marital status, civil status,

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<sup>283</sup> Answers prepared by Albania regarding the list of issues sent by the CEDAW Committee, July 2022, paragraphs 44 and 46.

<sup>284</sup> Notified by the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives to guarantee the right of ownership for married women on real estate, benefiting from the reconstruction programs of houses damaged by the 2019 earthquake.

<sup>285</sup> Law no. 30/2023 "On some amendments and addenda to Law No. 97/2013, "On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania", as amended.

<sup>286</sup> By decision no. 60, dated 10.07.2023

<sup>287</sup> Created based on Law no. 10221/2010 "On protection from discrimination".

place of residence, health status, genetic predispositions, disability, affiliation to a special group, or for any other reason.<sup>288</sup> The CPD has the powers to: provide assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints about discrimination (examining complaints, conducting administrative investigations, imposing administrative sanctions, filing lawsuits and setting in motion the Constitutional Court); conducting independent surveys regarding discrimination; monitoring the implementation of the Law on Protection from Discrimination and the Law on Gender Equality; publishing reports and giving recommendations on any issue related to discrimination; raising awareness for promoting the principle of equality and non-discrimination; provision of written information, in Albanian language, in the languages of minorities, and in formats usable by persons with disabilities; developing regular dialogues on discrimination issues with relevant social groups; including non-governmental organizations, etc.<sup>289</sup>

The CPD for the period 2019 - March 2024: (i) participated in 482 court proceedings, whose procedural position was either the defendant, the third party or the requesting party (the applicant). (ii) was notified about 429 court decisions, according to the competent courts, for court proceedings where the CPD has participated as a defendant (when the annulment of the decision of the CPD is requested), a third party (when the finding of discrimination and compensation is requested) or the requesting party/the applicant (when the issuance of the execution order for the decisions of the CPD fines is requested). Of these decisions, in 115 cases, the plaintiff or third party was a woman/young woman/girl. Administrative investigation: during 2019, the CPD took 1 decision on non-acceptance (on the ground of gender) and 2 decisions on non-discrimination (on the ground of gender, followed by the cause of philosophical beliefs and health condition). In 2020, the CPD issued 7 decisions on the merits on ex-officio complaints/cases, where discrimination on the ground of gender was alleged and there were given the following: 1 decision on discrimination, 3 decisions on non-discrimination, 2 decisions on non-acceptance, 1 decision to terminate investigative procedures after the effectiveness and purpose, for which the investigative procedure had been initiated, were achieved. In 2021, the CPD issued 15 decisions on ex-officio complaints/cases, where discrimination on the ground of gender was alleged and there were given the following: 3 decisions on discrimination, 6 decisions on non-discrimination, 3 decisions to terminate investigative procedures after the effectiveness and purpose, for which the investigative procedure had been initiated, were achieved, 2 decisions to terminate the investigative procedures as it was not possible to provide enough information to come up with a final decision, 1 decision on dismissal because the complainant went to the court for the examination of the case. In 2022, the CPD issued 7 decisions on ex-officio complaints/cases, where discrimination on the grounds of gender was alleged and there were given the following: 2 decisions on discrimination, 3 decisions on non-discrimination, 2 decisions on non-acceptance. In 2023, the Commissioner issued 11 decisions on ex-officio complaints/cases, where discrimination on the ground of gender was alleged and there were given the following: 2 decisions on discrimination, 5 decisions on non-discrimination, 4 decisions on dismissal (non-acceptance). The allegations encountered during the examination of the cases are mainly related to discrimination in employment (dismissal on the ground of gender, unfavorable treatment of employees during employment relations), provision of appropriate housing by local self-government units, treatment of citizens by the police forces while the latter receive criminal reports, the use of hate speech by public figures, etc.

These two important institutions have also been continuously supported by United Nations Agencies: to carry out various monitoring exercises regarding the rights of children (including the right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse), affected by COVID and earthquake;<sup>290</sup> to prepare various informational materials and informational activities – videos, brochures, illustrated books of judicial practice, open day activities, online communication channels, especially during COVID, etc., especially

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<sup>288</sup> See: <https://www.kmd.al/>

<sup>289</sup> "Annual Report of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination 2023", pages 28-30. See: <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Raporti-i-KMD-2023.pdf>

<sup>290</sup> The People's Advocate was supported by UNICEF in this regard.

with a focus on girls and boys;<sup>291</sup> to explore opportunities to interact with the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to widely disseminate information on the final concluding remarks of these Committees, and to prepare and present alternative reports for the bodies of the Conventions;<sup>292</sup> to set up the first observatory (Watch) in Albania for monitoring the issue of killing women (femicide);<sup>293</sup> etc.

**The Commissioner for the Right to Information and Protection of Personal Data (CRIPPD)** is an independent institution of the public administration that conducts administrative investigations and has the right of access to the processing of personal data, and the right to collect all the necessary information for the fulfillment of supervision duties; orders the blocking, deletion, destruction or suspension of unlawful processing of personal data; gives instructions before processing is carried out and ensures their publication. The CRIPPD is recognized and has access to information and documents, subject to complaint, according to law “On the right to information” or related to the case under review, including information classified as “state secret”. All public and private institutions are obliged to cooperate with the CRIPPD Office, providing all the information it requires for the fulfillment of legal duties.<sup>294</sup> The law on the protection of personal data was revised in 2023.<sup>295</sup> According to the EC Progress Report for Albania 2023, in order to ensure effective alignment with the EU acquis on data protection, the capacities of CRIPPD must be strengthened. In 2022, the CRIPPD handled 370 complaints and conducted 48 administrative inspections, issuing 48 recommendations and 63 administrative sanctions. In response to the massive leaks of personal data in 2021, the CRIPPD issued a decision in November 2022 that put fines to the General Directorate of Taxation and the General Directorate of Road Transport Services for their respective responsibility for the violations. A intersectoral finding of the CRIPPD from its administrative inspections was the lack of awareness about data protection in public administration. Concerns about the handling of personal data by private companies and public administrations continued in 2022. In general, strong legal and institutional safeguards are needed to prevent personal data breaches, to raise public awareness on the relevant risks and to raise the awareness of public institutions about the obligations provided by the law.<sup>296</sup>

## V. PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- E. Women and armed conflicts
- I. Human rights of women
- L. The girl child

### ***27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?***

Albania was elected for the first time as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period 2022-2023. As part of this mission, it was committed to promoting a peaceful society through a gender approach, focusing on the reinforced implementation of the “Women, Peace and Security” Agenda (WPS Agenda), and through more comprehensive peace processes that respect gender

<sup>291</sup> Supported by UNICEF, in particular

<sup>292</sup> Supported by UNICEF, in particular, and UN Women

<sup>293</sup> Cooperation between UN Women and the People’s Advocate

<sup>294</sup> <https://idp.al/rreth-nesh/>

<sup>295</sup> Law no. 78/2023, dated 21.9.2023 was published on the Official Journal no. 152, dated 20.10.2023. The full updated law is accessed at:

<https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Liqj-2008-03-10-9887-perditesuar-nga-QBZ-2.pdf>

<sup>296</sup> European Commission: Progress Report for Albania 2023, pages 30-31. See: chrome-extension: [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD\\_2023\\_690%20Albania%20report.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-11/SWD_2023_690%20Albania%20report.pdf)

equality, empowering women and protecting their rights.”<sup>297</sup> Resolution 1325, approved by the UN Security Council (October 31, 2000) emphasizes the importance of the role and equal participation of women in the process of preventing and resolving conflicts, building lasting peace, setting in the foreground the agenda for women, peace and security in the world.

Albania has joined the countries that have a ***plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council “On women, peace and security”*** (Resolution 1325) since 2018 when it also approved the first action plan for its implementation.<sup>298</sup> During the implementation of the Action Plan 2018-2020, an active cooperation was observed between the responsible state institutions, civil society organizations and international partners. This approach resulted in the implementation of 82% of the measures of the 2018-2020 Action Plan.<sup>299</sup> The approach followed aimed at increasing the number of women and girls in the system, and having a system that fully reflects the aspects of organization and operation with gender sensitivity. Although the data speak of an increase in the participation of women and girls in the military, police forces, or even in other sectors, the number of women and girls in decision-making in the security and peacekeeping sectors remains low. Local self-government units have been engaged in a limited number of activities for the “Women, Peace and Security” (WPS) Agenda. Some local self-government units do not even recognize Resolution 1325. Even regional interaction for the WPS Agenda was deemed necessary to be strengthened. The media and higher education institutions were engaged in activities related to the implementation of the WPS Agenda, but not actively.<sup>300</sup>

After the approval and implementation of the first Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325, the Albanian government, through the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, continued the commitment and coordination of work to guarantee the same approach to this policy and the approval of the second Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

***The second Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325<sup>301</sup>, for the time period 2023-2027*** has the following vision: “An Albanian society where women and girls have a reinforced role and are actively involved in maintaining peace, conflict prevention and resolution, and a society that makes a sustainable contribution at the international level, guaranteeing the rights of women involved in conflict situations”. Increasing women representation and engagement in the security sector by reducing gender stereotypes of women’s participation in the security field decision-making processes and enhancing the country’s contribution to international policy that guarantees the rights of women and girls involved in conflict and post-conflict situations, have been perceived as part of the mission that is intended to be achieved with the implementation of this second Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325. The plan is in harmony and compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 and SDG 16), in line with the NATO Action Plan 2021-2027 for the WPS Agenda, which supports the commitment of allies to further advance gender equality, and in line with the European Union policy.

The consistency of the policy within the WPS Agenda is a reflection of the goal to include and have the contribution of women and girls in political and public life in the country and to use the capacities of the whole society. A more in-depth approach to human security, including access to education, health care, the opportunity to work and access to justice, has received the necessary attention through this second

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<sup>297</sup> National Action Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council on “Women, Peace and Security 2023 – 2027”, page 7

<sup>298</sup> With the support of UN Women, in cooperation with the Association of Women with Social Problems (AWSP), today the Association of Women, Peace and Security, through the Gender Equality Fund.

<sup>299</sup> Monitoring Report no. 2, October 2019 - November 2020, “On the implementation of the Inter-institutional Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council, “On Women, Peace and Security” 2018 - 2020”, Ministry of Health and Social Protection. The Coalition for Women, Peace and Security, consisting of over 30 CSOs, also contributed to monitoring the implementation of the 2018-2020 Action Plan.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> With the support of UN Women. An important role was also played by the Embassy of the Netherlands, the OSCE Presence in Albania, and the Embassy of the United States of America.

Plan of Action for the implementation of Resolution 1325, emphasizing the innovative approach to security and peace, towards an agenda that addresses security with a softer approach to human, economic or even environmental security. Part of this Action Plan are measures that reflect sensitivity to climate change, food insecurity, pandemic diseases such as COVID 19, terrorism, cybercrime, etc., which by nature extend beyond a country and destabilize a country as much as attacks or territorial invasions. Higher human security and innovative approaches are also included as a special suggestion of civil society in the country. Cooperation within the country, regional and international cooperation are essential for creating a safe and favorable environment for women and girls as peace builders, human rights defenders and civil society activists. CSOs and various international actors played a very important role during the drafting and implementation of the first action plan and during the drafting of the second action plan, and they are equally expected to cooperate in its implementation. The total fund required to finance this second action plan, for the five years of its implementation, is ALL 127,254,605, of which: ALL 47,684,605 are for salaries and insurance for the staff of central institutions and the remaining amount, ALL 79,570,000 are for trainings/meetings or technical assistance. The financial gap is 16% or ALL 20,325,000, given that concrete commitments have not yet been made by donors for the development of some of the activities related to conferences or study visits.

**“National Security Strategy (NSS) 2023-2028”**.<sup>302</sup> The NSS aims to reflect as comprehensively as possible the main challenges and threats to Albania's national security, and to include institutional responses to them. From the analysis of the situation, based on the findings from which this strategy was prepared, it results that in addition to geopolitical changes and increased security threats, important challenges also appear in cyberspace, where technology can be used at any time as a weapon against social, economic and political stability. Security threats are made even more challenging by the absence of a cyber arms control regime. Security of critical and important infrastructures; energy security; malicious influencing activities; environmental degradation; pandemic and epidemic outbreaks; terrorism and radicalization towards violent extremism; organized crime; economic security; corruption; public safety; social economic problems; food security; illegal immigration through the territory of our country; the emigration of Albanian citizens and the risk of a military aggression are all elements analyzed in this strategy, based on the conclusions from which the corresponding measures and actions were formulated. The NSS is implemented by the national security system, is implemented through a comprehensive process, which engages all actors and other factors of society that have opportunities and capacities to contribute to the security service. The main institutional responsibility for the implementation of the NSS rests with the Council of Ministers, its subordinate institutions and the line ministries.

**Intersectoral Counter-Terrorism Strategy (ICTS), 2021–2025 and its action plan 2021–2023**<sup>303</sup>. The ICTS 2021– 2025 represents the fundamental national strategic document in the fight against terrorism that combines the agenda of integration in the European Union for fulfilling the obligations of chapter 24, in the area of the fight against terrorism, with the sustainable economic and social development of the country, including the connection with sustainable development goals. It constitutes the strategic document that defines the national vision for the creation of a society without terrorist threats, with the image of a safe country and with European standards of compliance with fundamental human rights and freedoms, also supporting aspirations for integration into the European Union. “Albania with a society without trafficking, organized crime and terrorist threats, with an image of a peaceful country and with European security standards” is the vision of this strategy, which is intended to be achieved through policies and priorities aimed at preventing and reducing terrorist threats through: increasing the results in countering terrorism through the establishment and use of an efficient risk assessment system, followed by the institutional strengthening of the units engaged in this field; drafting of an organic law in

<sup>302</sup> Approved by Law No. 14/2024 “On the approval of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Albania”. See: <https://www.mod.gov.al/images/PDF/2024/strategjia-kombetare-2024.pdf>

<sup>303</sup> DCM No. 1137, dated 16.12.2020. See: <https://cve.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/vendim-2020-12-16-1137.pdf>



accordance with EU standards for the fight against terrorism; establishment and functioning of the Inter-institutional Committee for the Coordination of Actions in the Fight against Terrorism. The total cost, calculated for the implementation of this strategy and the Action Plan is ALL 3,885,644,600 (31,085,157 Euros, with an average reference rate calculated at ALL 125 for 1 euro). The financing of the action plan of the strategy will be made only from the state budget and for the period 2021-2023, the state budget is expected to fund the implementation of the plan approximately to the extent of 100% of the required financing. The strategy is not accompanied by a financial gap as the costs are included within the budget ceilings provided in the MTBP 2021-2023. The financial cost after 2023, of ALL 1,212,944,200, is expected to be financed by the MTBP 2022-2024 and others in continuation.<sup>304</sup>

**Intersectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and Counter Terrorism (ISPVECT) and their action plans 2023–2025.**<sup>305</sup> ISPVECT 2023-2025 is guided by the priorities of the Albanian government in the field of security and the political program of the Council of Ministers that deals with “Safe Albania” component. This strategic document represents an increased attention to the prevention of terrorist acts, the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism through the creation of more stable communities and institutions, the rehabilitation and reintegration of radicalized persons and returnees from conflict areas and their families, the development of a strategic communication and the prevention of online radicalism. This strategy will serve as the main instrument to coordinate institutional interaction combating violent extremism and terrorism. The emphasis for achieving the vision of this strategy will be placed on the prevention of terrorist acts, using a coordinated response by state institutions in close cooperation with the community. Any response must necessarily take into account the fact that a terrorist attack will not be successful if there are plans to prevent terrorist attacks and the necessary structures with a comprehensive approach to the collection and efficient handling of information, interaction, and rapid response. The strategy is implemented through two action plans, respectively the Counter-Terrorism Action Plan and the 2023-2025 Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. The total cost of the two integrated action plans is in the amount of ALL 2,363,960,315, where 99% (or ALL 2,361,033,002) is financed by MTBP 2023–2025 and only 1% is supported by donors. The anticipated activities are financed by the budget programs of the responsible institutions and there is no financial gap.<sup>306</sup>

**The Coordination Center for Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)** was created<sup>307</sup> as a result of a series of measures that the Albanian Government has undertaken to address the emergence of violent extremism among Albanian citizens who joined the ranks of extremist organizations in the conflicts in the Middle East in the past years. This is a center for coordination and capacities development of local stakeholders and frontline practitioners involved in efforts to counter violent extremism in Albania and the region, by sharing best practices and developing effective evidence-based responses to counter the threat of violent extremism. CVE is administered by the Office of the Prime Minister and financed by the State Budget. The goals of CVE are: strengthening coordination, cooperation and partnership at local, national and international level, between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sector, religious communities and the media, in the identification and implementation of effective interventions; encouraging local research as a means of understanding the conditions, factors and causes that drive radicalization that can turn violent and community resilience to violent extremism; strengthening community resilience and reducing attraction to radicalization and violent extremism through education, employment and prevention programs and policies by police in community; reducing the impact of extremist propaganda on social networks and online recruitment, using social media as communication channels to promote alternative narratives and positive messages. CVE aims to cooperate with public and private sector stakeholders to maintain and promote the values of tolerance

<sup>304</sup> Cross-Sectoral Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2021–2025, and the action plan 2021–2023, page 48

<sup>305</sup> DCM No. 81 dated 14.02.2023. See: <https://cve.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Strategjia-CT-CVE-2023-2025-vkm-81-14-02-2023.pdf>

<sup>306</sup> Cross-Sectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism and the Fight against Terrorism 2023–2025 and the action plans 2023–2025, page 59.

<sup>307</sup> In 2018. See: <https://cve.gov.al/>

and religious harmony, the protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy, and the protection of Albanian society from violent extremism.

**Intersectoral Community Safety Strategy (ICSS) 2021 – 2026 and action plan 2021 – 2023.**<sup>308</sup> The ICSS clearly identifies priorities through national strategic policies and objectives and outlines the guiding principles that will support cross-sectoral efforts to ensure public safety. The ICSS creates a foundation for building and fostering the collaborative environment in which government and citizens can carry out their respective prevention and protection responsibilities more effectively. The policies and specific objectives of the ICSS are in line with some of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, respectively: SDG 3, SDG 5, SDG 11 and SDG 16. Increasing community safety parameters; engagement and interaction with the community; and reforming the police service and increasing the capacities for community security are the three goals of the ICSS policies which will be implemented through measures such as: strengthening inter-institutional cooperation for risk and damage assessment and preventive measures; carrying out risk assessments on a local basis by Local Public Safety Councils (LPSC); prevention through education; the use of new technologies for territory control; full functioning of LPSCs; creating a special fund for community safety; human resources empowerment; establishment of new offices in urban and rural police areas, etc. Some of these measures are intended to be implemented through funds from the state budget, but also supported by donors, who have programmed some items in their budgets. The total estimated cost for the implementation of this strategy and the Action Plan is ALL 7,760,392,246, or EUR 62, 083,138 (the average exchange rate for reference is calculated at 125 ALL for 1 euro).

**Intersectoral Strategy for the Protection of the Victims of Crime 2024-2030 (ISPVC).**<sup>309</sup> The Ministry of Justice, in the role of the ministry in charge of drafting and monitoring strategic policies in the field of justice, for the first time drafted the ISPVC 2024-2030, which aims to empower the victims of criminal offences, guaranteeing support, protection and a safe environment, so that victims/survivors report the crime. This intersectoral strategy aims to improve access to justice, establish a national compensation scheme, and facilitate access to compensation for victims/survivors, guaranteeing fair and appropriate compensation to them. Informing the victim, treating him/her with dignity, preventing secondary victimization and repeated victimization, support and protection for victims at every stage of the process and, when necessary, even after the end of the criminal process, is one of the challenges that this strategy has addressed. The gender perspective is integrated in the preparation, drafting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ISPVC 2024-2030 and the expenditure programs, with the aim of promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination, and addressing the issue of women's and men's representation in measures related to the protection of the victims of crime. Gender indicators will inform the policy-making process and ensure that interventions respond to the different protection needs and priorities of women and men who are victims of crime. Statistics and gender indicators will be an essential part of monitoring and evaluating the implementation and results of policies, measures and activities. For this purpose, the data on the implementation of the ISPVC 2024-2030 will be collected and presented by sex, as a primary and general classification; and gender statistics will reflect gender issues in this regard. Data collection methods will take into account gender stereotypes, and social and cultural factors that may drive gender bias in relation to the protection of female victims/survivors of crime.

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<sup>308</sup> Approved by DCM No. 1139, dated 24.12.2020. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/eli/vendim/2020/12/24/1139/ee9ac734-a09b-4eee-bf81-1a09d73a001d>

<sup>309</sup> Approved by DCM No.729, dated 13.12.2023. See: <https://www.drejtesia.gov.al/strategjia-ndersektoriale-e-mbrojtjes-se-viktimate-te-krimet-2024-2030/>

**28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

The Ministry of Defense and the General Staff of the Armed Forces (AF), pursuant to the NSGE 2021-2030 have put gender issues at the center of their attention and work. In this framework, policies, strategies, plans, education programs have been drawn up, and a series of activities and awareness-raising activities have taken place. Thus, there can be mentioned: the integration of the gender perspective in the Human Resources Management Strategy 2020 - 2024<sup>310</sup>; the drafting of the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2030 in AF<sup>311</sup>; the drafting, revision and improvement of policies, recruitment procedures and the review of organigrams (TOP) etc., for the inclusion of the gender perspective; ensuring the sustainability of women's representation in the AF for the period 2020-2025, etc.

Commitments to women, peace and security have been integrated into key national and interministerial policies, and into planning and monitoring frameworks: women personnel have become part of career commissions for personnel promotion; the number of female lecturers in the education institutions of the AF (Armed Forces Academy, NCO Academy, Troop School) has increased; the number of female personnel attending institutional or functional courses abroad has increased, including those attending higher studies at military academies abroad; in the recruitments made for candidates for young officers in December 2022 - December 2023, about 11% of the winners were young women and women.

The implementation of gender responsive budgeting has also been part of the interventions in this regard, reflected in the following programs:

- **The "Military Education" program** contains specific, appropriate and measurable gender indicators: for 2019, output 1 "Skilled capacities for quality training and education in the Armed Forces", Objective 1 "Education, qualification, training and gender promotion in accordance with NATO standards", measurement unit "number of trained women" specifically 138 trained women, actual expenditure ALL 89 000, cost per unit ALL 645 thousand, implemented 100%.
- **The "Social Support for women/men Soldiers" program** contains concrete, appropriate and measurable gender indicators: for 2019, output 1 "Distributed benefits for the supplementary insurance of female/male soldiers and special treatment as former female/male employees of military enterprises", Objective 1 "Income support for about 2,277 women who are treated with supplementary pension", measurement unit "number of financially supported women", actual expenditure ALL 3,209,000, cost per unit ALL 1,410,000.
- In 2024, 320 military women benefit pensions. There are 1,412 women military beneficiaries of the supplementary pension.<sup>312</sup>
- In 2023, 52 military and civilian women benefited from financial assistance (in case of illnesses, disasters) in the amount of ALL 3,743,000.
- In 2024, 43 military women benefited from financial assistance (in case of illnesses, disasters) in the amount of ALL 6,320,245.
- During 2019-2023, 795 military women benefited from education and training of the Armed Forces at the Academy of the Armed Forces (AAF), with an approximate cost of ALL 547,219,649.

<sup>310</sup> Approved by Order no. 246 of the Minister of Defense, dated 24.02.2020

<sup>311</sup> Approved by Order no. 651 of the Minister of Defense, dated 06.05.2022

<sup>312</sup> A table with more detailed data on the coverage (benefits) and pensions received by people in the Armed Forces can be found in Annex 5, attached to this report.

Curricula have been revised in all institutional courses held at the Academy of the Armed Forces, the Academy of Non-Commissioned Officers, for the inclusion of topics on gender equality, themes with PhD students, etc.

- Trainings and seminars have been organized pursuant to UN Resolution 1325, with representatives from NATO countries, with female staff of the AF.
- The highest civilian and military personalities in the AF have organized meetings with the women personnel in the structures of the AF, with the children of female/male military personnel. Incentives, medals were given to the women personnel, priority in granting holiday accommodation, etc.
- Training for gender integration was conducted by the US military team (4 - 8 March 2024) with the participation of military women from the human resources offices, for civil-military cooperation, female/male lecturers, etc.

Albanian legislation such as the Labor Code, the status of female/male military personnel, policies and procedures, instructions, etc., do not have exclusionary or differentiating criteria for military or civilian women. Procedures and criteria for the recruitment, employment, selection of female/male soldiers to attend academies, colleges, military courses ensure equal opportunities for both women and men, where the selection procedures are merit-based. Women in the AF hold major ranks such as Brigadier General, Colonel and have or perform highly responsible positions, such as: Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the AF, Commanders, Directors, Attachés, Sector Managers, etc. In the recruitments made for female/male soldiers, female/male officers in the period 2020-2024, there are personnel recruited or employed even from remote or rural areas without any type of restriction. In the Ministry of Defense (MOD) and its dependent structures, employment opportunities have been created for persons with disabilities, by adapting the infrastructure and work environments for this purpose. In addition, employment opportunities in this institution have been created for young women/women who have completed higher education with excellent results.

The Directorate of General Inspection (DGI) operates in the Ministry of Defense, which, inter alia, also follows up on complaints and cases of discrimination. The staff of the AF has been introduced to the app on the website of the Ministry of Defense for addressing cases of discrimination and sexual harassment, etc. Pursuant to the Order of the Minister of Defense for the elimination of violence, harassment and sexual harassment in the working environment of the structures the MoD and AF<sup>313</sup>, it was drafted the template for reporting harassment and sexual harassment. The structures in the Ministry of Defense have created opportunities for relief for women in cases of emergencies by making medical aid and transportation available.

Military women have participated in missions in South Sudan (UNMISS Mission) for the years 2019-2024.<sup>314</sup> According to law, it was approved the normative act no. 3, dated 21.6.2023, "On some amendments to normative act no. 1, dated 20.3.2019, of the Council of Ministers "On the participation of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the United Nations mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)", approved by law no. 23/2019", increasing the representation of the military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania with the function of: female/male officer with the rank of "captain-major", with deployment time of 1 (one) year, starting from June 2023, in Bor Command Headquarters, Jonglei, South Sudan.

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<sup>313</sup> Order no. 391 of the Minister of Defense, dated 31.03.2020 "On the approval of the document "Policies and procedures for the elimination of violence, harassment and sexual harassment in the working environment of the structures of the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces".

<sup>314</sup> For details, refer to the table presented in Annex 4 of this report.

In the framework of the political commitments of the Republic of Albania within the United Nations Organization (UN), the Armed Forces will contribute to the Republic of South Sudan, alongside other countries. This participation is governed by:

- According to law, it was approved normative act no. 4, dated 21.6.2023, "On the participation of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania (AFRA) in the United Nations Mission in Abyei (UNISFA)";
- Decision no. 805/2023 of the Council of Ministers "On defining the status, methods of participation and the amount of the daily allowance for service difficulties of the personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania in the United Nations mission in Abyei (UNISFA)".

***29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and on judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?***

The fight against human trafficking continues to be one of the key priorities of the Albanian government and all other structures with duties and responsibilities in this regard. The Ministry of Interior (MoI)/ Anti-Trafficking Sector is the main point for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts at national and international level. The main task of the Anti-Trafficking Sector is the coordination of anti-trafficking efforts at national level and beyond in terms of: prevention, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking/potential victims of trafficking (VT/PVT); criminal prosecution of traffickers and persons involved in it; partnership, whether between state institutions, or independent state institutions, as well as partnership with local organizations and international organizations, which are active in anti-trafficking efforts.

During the reporting period, important measures were taken towards increasing inter-institutional cooperation and coordination, for a coordinated and effective response, with the aim of prevention, identification, referral, protection and reintegration of VT/PVT, and criminal prosecution and punishment of traffickers.

**The Cooperation Agreement for the Operation of the National Referral Mechanism for Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking**<sup>315</sup> includes 15 state and non-state institutions. The main focus of this agreement involves the VT/PVT and their protection, examining each situation on a case-by-case basis and building some standards accepted by all on the way the process of identification, referral and protection of VT takes place. The agreement is the product of a long process of consultation and constructive debate between a significant number of important state, non-state, independent and national and international civil society agencies with a long experience in preventing and combating human trafficking, assisting and protecting the VT not only in Albania, but also beyond it. In addition, with the aim of increasing the role of labor inspectors in the initial identification of PVT and addressing the "victim-centered" approach through education and vocational training, the Ministry of Finance has joined the Agreement through the State Inspectorate of Labor and Social Services and the National Agency for Employment and Skills. Meanwhile, the Ministry of the Interior, in addition to the General Directorate of the State Police, is also represented by the Agency for the Administration of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AASCA). Based on the scope of their work, the Ministry of Justice is also included in the Agreement, as the supervisor of legal aid and compensation of the VT. The Ministry of Justice has under its jurisdiction the State Commission for Free Legal Aid.

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<sup>315</sup> Signed on 26 June 2023.

**The Authority Responsible for the identification, referral, protection and reintegration of victims and potential victims of trafficking**<sup>316</sup> has the task of coordinating the process of identification and referral and leading the enforcement of the National Referral Mechanism regarding all cases of VT/PVT identified and referred in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures. The Responsible Authority, in its composition, has one female/male representative from the Directorate of Anti-trafficking and Migration Policies (specifically, the female/male director, who also has the position of female/male chairperson); four female/male representatives from the General Directorate of the State Police (Sector against Illegal Trafficking, Department of Border and Migration, Sector of Domestic Violence and Protection of Minors and Sector against Cybercrime); and one female/male representative from the State Social Service, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, National Agency for Employment and Skills, State Inspectorate of Labor and Social Services, Consular Directorate at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sports and National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters (NCATS). Representatives from the Prosecution Office and other members of the National Referral Mechanism are invited to attend the meetings of the Responsible Authority, depending on the needs for support and expertise, according to the cases to be handled. The MoI Anti-Trafficking Sector serves as the Technical Secretariat of the Responsible Authority.

**The National Action Plan (NAP) for the Fight against Human Beings Trafficking 2021-2023**<sup>317</sup> is the most important policy and strategic document in the country in the area of anti-trafficking. The NAP also reflected the best international practices and the pandemic situation, in terms of the driving factors of trafficking and the forms of its occurrence, given that human trafficking involves both neighboring countries and EU member states and has similar features in all countries despite the differences they have from a social, economic and cultural point of view. Reducing the threat and impact of organized crime and serious crimes; protection of citizens, institutions and the economy; and increasing the preventive force against the threats of organized crime and serious crimes were the main policy goals of the 2021-2023 NAP policies. The total estimated cost for the implementation of the 2021-2023 NAP was ALL 412,552,420 or EUR 3,300,419 (the average exchange rate for reference is calculated at ALL 125 for 1 euro). In October 2023, the Ministry of Interior<sup>318</sup> started the process of preparing the **new National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Beings Trafficking 2024-2025**. The National Action Plan maintains those elements assessed as the strongest points in the fight against human beings trafficking, but is being updated with a new approach in response to the needs and the new context in which we find ourselves. In this Action Plan, important elements related to the inclusiveness of state and non-state agencies, and the extension of its action throughout the territory of the country, have been conserved, emphasizing again the strengthening of capacities and structures at central and local level and the measures for the protection of women/girls and children, taking into consideration their best interest. The draft NAP 2024-2025 was finalized in December 2023 and every activity provided in the document is accompanied by a financial cost. It is currently sent to the line ministries for consideration and will be approved in the second quarter of the year. The estimated total cost for the implementation of the 2024-2025 NAP is about ALL 276,5 million, or about EUR 2,5 million. (The average exchange rate for reference is calculated at ALL 110 for 1 euro.) For the period 2024-2025, the expenses planned in the budgets of the responsible institutions are about ALL 206,9, which are planned in the annual budget and the Medium-Term Budget Program 2024- 2026. The financial gap for this period is ALL 69,5 million or 25.2% of indicative costs. For the period 2024-2025, the state budget is expected to fund 74.8% of the total

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<sup>316</sup> Established by Joint Instruction no. 132, dated 08.09.2023 "On the establishment of the Authority Responsible for the identification, referral, protection and reintegration of victims and potential victims of trafficking" signed by the Minister of Interior, Minister of Education and Sports, Minister of Health and Social Protection, Minister of Finance and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

<sup>317</sup> Approved by DCM. 670, dated 10.11.2021. See: <https://mb.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NKM-nr-670-date-10.11.2021-Plani-Kombetar-Antitrafik-2021-2023.pdf>

<sup>318</sup> With the support of the OSCE

indicative costs of implementing the plan for the period 2024-2025, while foreign funding has not been identified.<sup>319</sup>

Regarding the position of vulnerability of women and especially children, there are currently two provisions in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania that expressly criminalize human trafficking, specifically: Article 110/a "Trafficking i adult persons" and Article 128/b "Trafficking of minors". In their content, the concepts of "vulnerability" and "abuse of the position of vulnerability", are reflected, according to the definition in international acts, which include women and children. Specifically, the second paragraph of Article 110/a provides that: "When this offense is committed against an adult female person, it shall be punished by imprisonment of from ten to fifteen years". Whereas Article 128/b is related to the trafficking of minors, who are more vulnerable than adults and are therefore more at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking and therefore, the legislator took care to provide a separate article.

Furthermore, for the unification of judicial practice, the Criminal Chamber of the High Court issued unifying decision no. 00-2022-1679 Decision (217) dated 27.07.2022 regarding human trafficking, which, inter alia, provides the concepts of "vulnerability" and "abuse of the position of vulnerability", emphasizing that the courts and the prosecution offices must have attention that people living in a social or family environment with economic, financial, personal or psychological problems should be treated with great care, as PVT. Thus, in the Albanian criminal legislation, and in the unifying decision of the High Court, the abuse of the position of vulnerability/vulnerable position is envisaged as one of the ways traffickers use to achieve their goal.

### ***30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?***

Albanian legislation is based on the principles of child-friendly justice, which has at its core the guarantee of respect, the effectiveness of the implementation of children's rights and their best interest. The domestic legal framework aims to guarantee the necessary elements of friendly justice such as: accessibility, adaptability, effectiveness in fair relation to the needs and respect for children's rights. Principles such as participation and information, the best interest of the child, dignity, protection from discrimination, the rule of law, are at the basis of the Albanian legal framework. Friendly justice includes the right to due process, the right to participate and to understand the proceedings, the right to respect private and family life and integrity and dignity. In addition "the best interest of the child" is presented as a principle with capillary reach throughout our domestic legislation. The legal framework of justice for children has adhered to ratified international instruments and has been developed in accordance with the standards of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, those of the EU and the Council of Europe.

**The Intersectoral Justice Strategy for Children (IJSC) 2022-2026** and its action plan<sup>320</sup>, is the second policy document for the justice system for children initiated by the Ministry of Justice, which aims to effectively implement their rights. The IJSC is based on the results from the implementation of the Justice Strategy for Children and its Action Plan 2018–2021. "The IJSC 2018–2021" aimed at creating the legal and institutional framework of criminal justice for children; the Integrated Juvenile Criminal Justice Data System; beginning of the training of professionals in criminal justice matters for children; and created models of groups of professionals for case management at local level.

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<sup>319</sup> Draft "National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Beings Trafficking 2024-2025", pages 20-21. See:

[https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK\\_697\\_Draft-NAP-Antitrafik-2024-2025--per-mendim.docx](https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/documents/RENJK_697_Draft-NAP-Antitrafik-2024-2025--per-mendim.docx)

<sup>320</sup> Adopted by DCM no. "On the approval of the Intersectoral Justice Strategy for Children 2022-2026, its action plan and the passport of indicators". See: [https://www.drejtesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Vendim-i-KM-892-DATE-27\\_12\\_2022.pdf](https://www.drejtesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Vendim-i-KM-892-DATE-27_12_2022.pdf)

The establishment of the **Juvenile and Youth Crime Prevention Center (JYCPC)**<sup>321</sup> in 2022 was a very important step that also facilitates the implementation of a number of strategy measures. The “IJSC 2022–2026” aims to address the problems faced by children who are involved in the commission of a criminal offense, amid the consolidation of a criminal justice system that prioritizes avoiding the deprivation of their freedom, when such is possible; and addresses criminogenic factors through early intervention for the primary prevention of children’s involvement in criminality and criminal offenses committed against them, through information, education and awareness of children, parents, society about the need to protect children from being involved in the commission of criminal offenses or victimization by them and through the implementation of restorative justice programs and mediation, in cases where children are involved in conflicts or criminal offenses. In addition, increased attention will be shown to children at risk, (especially girls), with the aim of informing them about rights, services and local mechanisms, restoring rights through access to civil, family, administrative and criminal processes. A novelty of this strategy is the increased contribution and proactive approach of pro bono teams and legal advice centers in the targeted areas. The total cost estimated for the implementation of the action plan for the implementation of the Justice Strategy for Children 2022 - 2026 is about ALL 3,4 billion, or about EUR 28,5 million<sup>322</sup>. For the medium-term period 2022-2024, the cost is estimated at ALL 969,7 billion, which are planned in the annual budget and the Medium-Term Budget Program 2023-2025 of the responsible institutions. For the financial year 2022, the costs of the planned expenses have been taken into consideration. For the period 2025-2026, the indicative cost for the implementation of the Strategy is ALL 1,8 billion. For this period of time, it is assumed that for certain activities in the Action Plan, funds from the State Budget will be available for current expenses and investments. After 2025, the state budget is expected to finance the project “Establishment and operation of the Institution for the education and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law”. The financial gap for the period 2022-2026 is ALL 500,7 million or 14.7% of the indicative cost. For the period of time 2022-2024, the state budget is expected to finance the implementation of the plan to the extent of 27%, while 56,4% constitutes planned expenses for the period 2025-2026, where the main expenses will be dedicated to the Institution for the education and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law.

**The National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021–2026**<sup>323</sup> (NARC) was drawn up on behalf of the Albanian Government by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in coordination with the State Agency for Child Rights and Protection, and in consultation with different stakeholders, partners, CSOs, international organizations, etc.<sup>324</sup> NARC consolidates and creates continuity of the work carried out within the framework of the previous National Agenda for the Rights of the Child (2017–2020), addressing ongoing gaps and new challenges, and reflecting innovative perspectives, especially those related to the Strategy of the European Union for the Rights of the Child. This document with a intersectoral approach constitutes the basis for enabling the coordination of efforts between ministries and different sectors; and guides the national regulatory framework towards a harmonized and effective strategy for children. The NARC contains four strategic goals: i) Good governance as regards observing, protecting and fulfilling child rights; ii) Elimination of all forms of violence and protecting children; iii) Child and adolescent friendly systems and services; iv) Promotion of child rights in the digital world. This document provides a number of support measures for the reduction of discrimination and inequalities for girls/adolescents. The total estimated cost for the implementation of the National Agenda for the Rights of the Child 2021–2026 is ALL 1,603,948,852 or EUR 12,831,591. The average exchange rate for reference is calculated at ALL 125 for 1 euro. For the period 2021–2026, the state budget is expected to finance the implementation of

<sup>321</sup> See: <chrome-extension://efainbmnbnibpcajpcgclcfndmkai/https://gpkmr.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/vendim-2019-05-15-314-perditesuar-1-1.pdf>

<sup>322</sup> The average exchange rate for reference is calculated at ALL 118 for 1 euro.

<sup>323</sup> Adopted by DCM no. 659, dated 3.11.2021. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Aqjenda-Kombetare-per-te-Drejtat-e-Femijeve.docx>

<sup>324</sup> With other responsible ministries, local self-government units, independent institutions, civil society organizations, international organizations, which work in the area of children's rights and protection.



the plan to the extent of 58% of the necessary funding, 23% is expected to be financed by other sources and donors, while 19% is the financial gap.

Other measures undertaken for the information and awareness raising of girls and young women regarding gender stereotypes, harmful practices and their impact on everyday life; actions for the empowerment of girls and young women through access and provision of opportunities for quality education and continuous education or training for the development of skills; measures and actions for the comprehensive education on sexual and reproductive health; actions to prevent early and forced marriage of children; policies and measures to reduce all forms of violence against girls; measures to raise awareness about the equal sharing of unpaid work in the family and reducing the burden on girls in this regard; providing opportunities for participation in social and economic life, or for their empowerment in STEM and ICT; etc., are presented in the answers given above to the specific questions related to these areas, in this report. There are also a number of civil society organizations operating in Albania, which focus on the issues of girls and young people, and delivering certain services (advice, information, support and services, referral of cases, etc.) depending on the needs of girls, in certain areas.<sup>325</sup>

The www.ISGURT.al platform that is classified as a hotline (line to report and request help) is a dedicated space, which serves as a unique source of information, manuals, guides related to safe internet for children, parents, teachers, professionals working with/for children to protect children from online abuse and exploitation.<sup>326</sup> On January 21, 2024, the "Friends of Children" Parliamentary Group of the Assembly of Albania and iSIGURT.al jointly organized an open hearing dedicated to the safety and protection of children, especially girls and young women in cyberspace. Representatives of the main ministries and institutions responsible for cyber security, MPs and representatives of civil society organizations became part of the session. Following the session, all MPs present signed the National Pact against Violence against Children, which aims to promote a closer cooperation between institutions, civil society and industry to enable the creation of a digital space where everyone is protected and safe.<sup>327</sup>

## VI. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

### **Critical areas of concern:**

- I. Human rights of women
- K. Women and the environment
- L. The girl child

**31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?**

**The National Strategy on Climate Change and Action Plans<sup>328</sup> (NSCCH)** is the main strategic document that addresses climate change in Albania and is adopted by the Government of Albania in 2019. The NSCCH is drafted in support of EU legislation on the environment and climate and aims at strengthening coordination among sectors in relation to the adaptation measures, environmental protection and sustainable development. In total, the cost for the implementation of the NSCCH is estimated at ALL 11,036,250. ALL 2,970,620 are expected to be covered from the state budget, while

<sup>325</sup> Here we can mention the Counseling Line for Women and Girls; ALO 116; "Voice of Youth" network; "ACT for Society" Center, ACA, Albanian Center for Population and Development, "Different and Equal" Center, "Vatra" Center, Elbasan Women's Forum, Kukes Counseling Center, Center for Citizen Legal Initiatives, "Edlira Haxhiymeri" Shelter", Association "Me, the Woman" Pogradec, "Another vision" Elbasan, "Woman to Woman", Shkodër, Women's Center "Hapa te Lehte" Shkodër, "Aulona" Center, "Jona" NGO Sarandë, Marry Ward Loreto, Network of the community centers "Today for the Future", "Human Rights in Democracy", etc.,

<sup>326</sup> Opened by CRCA Albania since 20215

<sup>327</sup> The session was organized within the framework of the International Safe Internet Day as well as the advocacy campaign that CRCA/ECPAT Albania is implementing as part of the Monitoring Network Against Gender-Based Violence for the implementation of the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee and GREVIO for Albania, supported by UN Women and AIDS. See: <https://www.isigurt.al/lajme/kuvendi-dhe-isigurt-se-bashku-per-mbrojtjen-e-femijeve-vajzave-e-grave-ne-hapesiren>

<sup>328</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 466, dated 3.7.2019 "On the approval of The National Strategy on Climate Change and Action Plans on mitigating greenhouse gases and adapting to climate change". See: <https://qbz.gov.al/share/GzkcixPISvWXPXuZoNVAqzq>

ALL 6,925,800 will be covered by donors and ALL 51,250 from other sources. The financial gap for priority actions is estimated at ALL 1,088,580. The activities that require more budget are those in the agriculture sector, due to the very nature of investments of interventions in infrastructure.<sup>329</sup>

In October 2021, Albania adopted the **Updated National Determined Contribution Report (NDC)**<sup>330</sup>, which aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with 20.9% by 2030. This report includes women and girls among the vulnerable groups affected by the risks of climate change (Point 3.3.3). During the period 2022-2024, the local self-government administration has started working on the drafting of Local Plans on Energy and Climate. In these plans, the needs of women and girls, as part of vulnerable groups, take special place. Until May 2024, six municipalities have completed these plans and two other municipalities are in the process of approving the Sustainable Energy and Climate Plans, as part of their commitment to the Covenant of Mayors to reduce emissions at 40% by 2030. In particular, these plans envisage measures to alleviate energy poverty, which mostly affects the poorest strata of society, the unemployed women and girls, or those with special needs.

**Promoting the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines related to the natural environment.** Focused on strengthening the career orientation of students in pre-university education, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) has undertaken measures aimed at supporting all students, girls and boys, in relation to the orientation towards further education, towards choosing occupations and preparing them for the labour market. Career guidance activities in schools aim at informing all students, girls and boys, making them feel supported to make the transition to the next stage of education as effective as possible, and to follow successfully their lifelong learning. These activities aimed at orienting girls towards new professions, beyond gender stereotypes, to pursue careers in STEM, etc. Such activities include open career orientation days, conversations with parents, visits to Vocational Education and Training institutions, open orientation days in cooperation with universities, activities related to anti-discrimination and gender division of labor, activities that support the socio-emotional development of students etc. The Guide to Career education for students in grades VI - IX, approved by MES with a document No. 600, dated 19.10.2023, has defined important milestones regarding the inclusiveness of girls and boys. The campaign “Choose a profession” undertaken during the 2023-2024 school year with a focus on promoting vocational education and preparing students, girls and boys, for professions in demand in the labour market, also aims to encourage girls to choose profiles and professions in demand in the labour market and to be oriented towards professional decision-making.

In the framework of the **program “Land at school”**, an initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Sports to equip all schools with mini plots (green gardens at school), students, girls and boys, of all ages, under the guidance of their teachers, develop practical skills for cultivating plants, with the aim of connecting children and young people with nature and traditions, as a tool for environmental education and beyond this. Green gardens at schools are plots of land cultivated within the courtyard of schools or in the vicinity of schools in cooperation with the municipalities (LGUs). They foster community spirit, shared purpose and cultural appreciation by building bridges between students, school staff, families, businesses and local organizations. An important part of this program is the orientation of girls and boys towards occupations that are related to science, technology, horticulture and the environment. In order to support schools in the implementation of this initiative, it is prepared the Guideline No. 1823/2, dated 24.03.2023 for the implementation of the initiative “Land at school” in pre-university education (in support of the creation of green gardens at school).

<sup>329</sup> See: [https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-The-National-Strategy-on-Climate-Change-and-Action-Plans\\_Juner-2019\\_-1.pdf](https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2.-The-National-Strategy-on-Climate-Change-and-Action-Plans_Juner-2019_-1.pdf) (pg. 213)

<sup>330</sup> <https://turizmi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/3.-Kontributi-Komb%C3%ABtar-i-Percaktuar-KKP-i-rishikuar-p%C3%ABr-Shqip%C3%ABrin%C3%AB-1.pdf>

**Regionalization of schools** brings more efficiency for female students, who are educated in a more social environment and with specialized teachers. Most education systems around the world are based on the notion that students enter, progress and exit “classrooms” together with a group of peers, girls and boys. In classes where, for various reasons, the age of students, girls and boys, differs by more than one year, students are considered to work in collective classes including one or more students, depending on their number in a certain community or area. In these classes there is usually a single teacher in primary education or several teachers, according to the profile in the lower secondary education. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) in recent years has undertaken a series of measures aiming at reduction (regionalization) of collective classes and supporting collective classes with the necessary infrastructure to increase the quality of the education service they offer. The regionalization of collective classes will provide girls with quality education, in the same learning environment with their peers.

**LGUs** have continued to take measures to ensure women’s access to sustainable time-saving and workload-saving infrastructures (e.g. access to clean water, energy and agriculture), as well as to protect and conserve the knowledge and practices of women in local communities about traditional medicines, biodiversity and conservation techniques.<sup>331</sup> Municipalities<sup>332</sup> have also taken actions to involve women and girls to give their contribution in environmental policies as well as for equal employment for women and men in undertaking the cleaning and greening of the city and in the implementation of all policies related to the environment. The focus of the municipalities has been the intensive work for the conservation of flora and fauna through the coordination of work between public services, NGOs, and civil society and the conservation of the environment and cultural heritage. The awareness raising activities by the municipalities<sup>333</sup> in cooperation with NGOs, have consisted in mitigating climate change, preserving biodiversity and preventing land degradation, as these directly affect the lives of women, especially in rural areas. Some municipalities, in cooperation with schools and civil society organizations, have planted saplings along the entire river area, olive groves, different trees in each administrative unit<sup>334</sup>, have made citizens aware of the promotion and conservation of nature, without interfering and without damaging it<sup>335</sup>, but they are also committed to the maintenance and cleaning of the premises without changing their dynamics.<sup>336</sup> Other activities consist on cleaning public spaces, planting trees, limiting the use of plastic bags, etc.<sup>337</sup>

A number of civil society organizations<sup>338</sup> have supported business initiatives run by women and girls in order to promote local products with a low carbon footprint. The examples include 11 start-ups run by women<sup>339</sup>, groups of women farmers in Shkodër and Vorë supported with agricultural technologies that increase adaptation to climate change<sup>340</sup>, etc. Contributions are also made by the international partners for the support, participation and leadership of women in the management and administration of the environmental and natural resources<sup>341</sup>, in raising awareness of gender-specific environmental and health risks (e.g. consumer products, technologies, industrial pollution) and promoting, educating women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other disciplines related to the natural environment.<sup>342</sup>

**Increasing the awareness of women, young girls and girls about the role they play and should play in the environmental issues**, is organized even in the framework of certain international information days. Thus, in 2022, more than 10,000 individuals were reached through the media campaign

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<sup>331</sup> Municipality of Dropull

<sup>332</sup> Municipality of Lushnje

<sup>333</sup> Municipalities of Lezhë and Selenicë

<sup>334</sup> Municipality of Selenicë

<sup>335</sup> E.g. Parku i Qafështamës, Mali i Krujës, Kalaja e Krujës, Krasta e gjelbëruar, etc.

<sup>336</sup> Activity conducted by Municipality of Krujë

<sup>337</sup> Municipality of Pustec

<sup>338</sup> With the support of bilateral donors and United Nations Agencies

<sup>339</sup> Supported by REC Albania in the framework of Green Enterprises Lead by Women in Albania

<sup>340</sup> Supported by UN Global Program on Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA)

<sup>341</sup> Contributions provided by Swedish Embassy

<sup>342</sup> Contributions provided by UNICEF

organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development<sup>343</sup> on the occasion of October 15, 2022, International Day of Rural Women. During this campaign, the emphasis was on the contribution of rural women to the economic and social life of the country and to the fight against harmful stereotypes. The campaign included a video<sup>344</sup>, which was produced and shared on social networks. It also included a statement on rural Albanian women - challenges and aspirations - which was also shared with local media. Activities were organized throughout the week informing more than 5,000 women.<sup>345</sup>

### **32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?**

In 2023, the **National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (NDRRS) 2023-2030**<sup>346</sup> was approved. This strategy deals specifically with the impact of natural disasters on women and girls, reflected in its chapter 6.4. In this chapter it is mentioned that all phases of disaster risk management and all projects identified by NDRRS will have to consider the element of vulnerable groups and what will be the effects on their wellbeing. The most vulnerable groups consist of financially disadvantaged families, marginalized and socially excluded communities, including minorities and LGBTIQ+ community members, women, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Disaster risk depends on the resilience of the social, economic and political structure and can be reduced by reducing the exposure and vulnerability and increasing this resilience. Vulnerable groups can face specific challenges during and after the disasters. These include lack of access to information and lack of communications, inaccessible facilities and services, lack of access to necessary support resources, lack of inclusive and gender responsive policy frameworks, etc.

The strategy provides for a series of measures for specific actions that address the needs of women and girls in the areas affected by natural disasters, especially by earthquakes and floods. This document addresses the need to include groups of women and girls in the assessment and undertaking of preventive measures, addressing specific needs when facing natural disasters as well as recovery processes after their occurrence. The strategy presents the need to design gender responsive budgeting processes for these measures. Many NGOs working in the area of women's rights and other groups with high vulnerability took part in the process of drafting the NDRRS, thus becoming part of the national policies related to the Civil Protection System and to the disasters' risk reduction.

The civil society organizations participated also in the drafting of the **National Plan for Civil Emergencies (NPCE)**, approved in 2023<sup>347</sup>. In NPCE there are identified problems related to gender equality and the following issues:

- *Connection between gender and civil emergencies.* Emergences and big disasters can affect women, girls, men and boys differently. Often, gender inequalities cause the aggravation of the existing vulnerabilities to the impact of disasters. To be successful, disaster risk reduction strategies must include gender aspects or be gender sensitive at all stages. The international community has recognized the increased vulnerability of women and has provided laws and guidelines for the protection of women and girls in the periods of disasters, as well as for their full involvement in disaster risk reduction. The Humanitarian Charter and minimum standards in Disaster Response of the "Sphere" movement clearly state the commitment to gender-sensitive interventions, including combating gender-based violence, at all stages of disaster response and in each of the five main sectors (water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services). In addition, the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee

<sup>343</sup> In cooperation with UN Women and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations, in the framework of the implementation of the project "GREAT", funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Italy. The data are taken from the Report for the year 2022, made available by UN Women in the framework of the preparation of this report.

<sup>344</sup> See: [Videos | UN Women – Albania](#)

<sup>345</sup> The main event was organized in Shirqjan administrative unit, Elbasan municipality, where rural women from the areas of Elbasan, Korça, Kolonja and Puka gathered together to discuss about the challenges they face every day in their communities.

<sup>346</sup> Adopted by DCM No. 94 dated 22.03.2023. See: [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskqke326/files/2024-01/strategjia\\_kombetare\\_-\\_albanian.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskqke326/files/2024-01/strategjia_kombetare_-_albanian.pdf)

<sup>347</sup> Adopted by the DCM No. 807, dated 28.12.2023. See: <https://qbz.gov.al/ejivendim/2023/12/28/807/b00e5401-bafe-409b-9e12-e6ecef236931?q=strategji>

(IASC) on coordinated humanitarian assistance has specific guidelines for interventions related to gender-based violence in the humanitarian context.

- Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (PRSEAH), which includes strategies, policies and principles for the elimination of any form of sexual exploitation or harassment in the context of civil protection. The involvement of civil defense employees in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse constitutes a serious violation of their responsibility to do no harm and to protect persons affected by crises.
- Gender equality<sup>348</sup> and social inclusion<sup>349</sup> (GESI), are two related concepts which help to improve civil protection for the following categories: excluded persons, women and persons with low economic stability. GESI promotes inclusive policies and focuses on increasing the power of vulnerable or marginalized groups and is an approach that aims at eliminating the existing barriers in order to increase access, as well as enabling decision-making and participation of the marginalized populations. GESI requires that enabling environments be created so that all can engage and benefit equally from development interventions. In the context of recovery, GESI is an approach that aims to eliminate barriers and increase access, facilitate the increased use of rehabilitation services, and improve the experiences of each user.

It is important to note that: during the process of drafting the strategic documents related to the Civil Protection System, the participation of women and girls in decision-making was at least 50%. The aim is to promote the access of women in disaster situations to services such as relief payments, compensation and disaster insurance. In relation to the compensation processes in cases of disasters, it is given priority to women and girls who are heads of households.

At the local level, natural disaster planning processes are at the drafting and planning stage, including women's and girls' groups in the discussion of these local plans.<sup>350</sup> Also, other activities of the municipalities are related to risk management, contributing to the strengthening of resilience abilities and the reduction of losses from the disasters<sup>351</sup>, to efforts to include women in programmes that affect disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience through the integration, support, participation and leadership of women in the management of the environment and natural resources<sup>352</sup>; to guarantee the housing, housing reconstruction, meeting the needs for food and clothing, compensation for the damage caused by the fire in the house, preparation of documentation in case of natural disaster (earthquake, massive flood) and taking preventive measures for disasters using the municipality fund<sup>353</sup> as well as the conditional fund of the Albanian government.

An interesting example of the efforts of local self-government units for the integration of the gender perspective in issues related to disaster risk management is the inclusion of such actions in the Local Action Plans for gender equality, an important document that locates state policies for gender equality, which interweaves efforts to progress towards gender equality in every field. Local Action Plans for Gender Equality are adopted in the Municipal Councils and as such are given priority in implementation and are approved together with the corresponding cost estimates. Durrës municipality<sup>354</sup>, is the first

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<sup>348</sup> Gender equality involves working with men and boys, women and girls, aiming at changing the attitudes, behaviours, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace and in the community. Gender equality means more than just theoretical equality in numbers or laws; it implies more freedom and an improvement in the general standard of living, so that equality is achieved without sacrificing the benefits of men and women.

<sup>349</sup> Social inclusion is defined as the process of improving the conditions for individuals and groups to participate in society, as well as the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of disadvantaged people on the basis of their identity, with the aim of their participation in the society.

<sup>350</sup> During the year 2023, such preparatory processes with groups of women and girls have been conducted in the municipalities of Lezhë, Vorë, Durrës, Fushë Krujë, Fier, etc.

<sup>351</sup> Municipality of Selenicë

<sup>352</sup> Municipality of Lushnje

<sup>353</sup> Municipality of Korçë

<sup>354</sup> With the support of UN Women

municipality in the country that has made such an intermingling of actions in its Local Action Plan for Gender Equality 2023-2025 (specifically in the specific objective III.3. “Promoting gender responsive planning for coping and reducing the risk of the natural disasters”). The cost of implementing these measures with a focus on disaster risk reduction is estimated at ALL 2,778,962, of which ALL 1,931,400 is a financial gap.<sup>355</sup>

**The international partners** have introduced and strengthened the implementation of gender-responsive laws and policies related to disaster risk reduction and building climate and environmental resilience (e.g. disaster laws that address women’s vulnerability to disasters)<sup>356</sup>, raising awareness on the disproportionate vulnerability of women and girls by the impact of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters, and promoting women’s access in disaster situations to services such as assistance payments, disaster insurance and compensation.<sup>357</sup>

**The People’s Advocate** has concluded that environmental issues should be at the center of attention of politics and decision-making, as they are not always considered as cross-cutting issues with other fields. These issues, due to the nature and emergency of the situation in which the whole world currently finds itself, can no longer be and cannot be considered **only** as part of the institution responsible for the environment. Environmental issues, in all their dimensions, should now be considered as closely related to other policies for the development of the country, such as in the area of economy, industry, energy, agriculture, livestock, health, education, etc. On the other hand, in all the analyses, assessments, interventions and measures to be envisaged about environmental issues, it is imperative to take into consideration their different impact on women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity in society. Equally important is raising awareness and education from the early childhood about the right to a healthy environment. The People’s Advocate shares the same opinion with civil society organizations, that while the country has made significant progress in terms of the legal framework for gender equality, increasing the role of women in political and public representation and decision-making, efforts to achieve gender integration in policies, and referring to the environment, there have been efforts to address the challenges in the context of pollution, disaster risk reduction, natural resources management and rural development, there is still work to be done for the inclusion of women and girls in the decision-making processes, in development and management processes in these areas as well as to take the right steps for gender integration as a whole in environmental issues. The People’s Advocate observes that the gender dimension in sectoral environmental policies is almost absent. It is also highlighted that there are no sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators about the specific impacts of the environment on different population groups, such as young people, members of minorities, especially the Roma, persons with disabilities, the elderly, residents in rural and suburban areas, etc., taking into account here also the intersectionality.

## SECTION FOUR: NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

**33. Please describe your country’s national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period of time it covers, its priority, funding and compliance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including targets under SDG 5.**

**The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 – 2030**<sup>358</sup> (“NSGE 2021-2030”) was prepared on behalf of the Government of Albania by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in coordination and consultation with other responsible ministries, local self-government units, independent institutions, civil

<sup>355</sup> See: <https://durre.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Vendimi-nr.151-date-22.12.2022.pdf>

<sup>356</sup> Contributions provided by Swedish embassy

<sup>357</sup> Contributions provided by UNICEF

<sup>358</sup> Adopted by DCM No.400, dated 30.06.2021. See: <https://albania.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/02/national-strategy-for-gender-equality-2021-2030>

society organizations, academia, and international organizations, which work to achieve gender equality and reduce gender-based violence and domestic violence in Albania.

Perceived as a continuation and logically connected to the previous **Strategy for Gender Equality 2016-2020**<sup>359</sup>, the “NSGE 2021-2030” constitutes a guide towards a society where all individuals women, men, young women, young men, girls and boys, irrespective of age, gender, place of birth and residence, ethnic or social group, disabilities, religious affiliation, expression of gender identity and sexual orientation, and other individual characteristics, are provided with equal opportunities to develop their potential; to equally participate in political and public decision-making; to elect and be elected; be educated and trained throughout their life; to be employed and employ by advancing towards new occupations and by challenging gender stereotypes and the gender division of labor; to influence the socio-economic development of the country and get support to develop socially and economically; to establish healthy families, where parents equally share their responsibilities and where communication is the key to solving problems; to live free from harmful practices and violence; and where vulnerable groups are prioritized and supported until they are empowered and enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life – thus, a society where equality is not confused with uniformity and where no one is left behind. “NSGE 2021-2030” is the fourth of this kind and undoubtedly reflects (similarly to the previous strategies) the priority and special attention that the Government of Albania pays to achieving gender equality, as well as reducing gender-based violence and domestic violence, considering their proper addressing as conditions towards sustainable development. This implies its direct relation to the National Strategy for Development and Integration II 2015-2020, and the Government Program 2017-2021.

Prepared for a **ten-year term**, “NSGE 2021-2030” **is closely linked to the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda**. Specifically, it relates to SDG 5, SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 16 and SDG 17. This strategic document properly reflects **the fulfillment of standards or obligations derived from other international documents**, among the most important are distinguished the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, as well as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), etc. “NSGE 2021 – 2030” is also linked to the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020 – 2025 and is especially based on the objectives and measures envisaged in the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality (GAP III) 2021-2025, where it is specifically aimed the harmonization of strategic goals, specific objectives and progress measurement indicators.

**The vision of the “NSGE 2021 – 2030”:** “A society that values equality and gender justice as fundamental conditions for the sustainable social, economic and political development of the country, empowers all individuals to enjoy equal rights and opportunities in all areas of life, does not allow anyone to be left behind, and is based on the principle of zero tolerance against harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence, by punishing perpetrators and protecting, rehabilitating and reintegrating abused persons”. In the entire strategic document and action plan of “NSGE 2021 – 2030”, it is emphasized **the importance of supporting, treating and empowering all women, young women and girls** in general, including those from vulnerable, marginalized groups that suffer from multiple forms of discrimination, such as: women, young women and girls from rural areas, ethnic minorities, with disabilities, LGBTI+, single mothers, victims of rape, victims of trafficking, elderly, asylum seekers, etc., i.e. from all the groups in the society. “NSGE 2021 – 2030” consists of **four main strategic goals**: I. Fulfillment of economic and social rights of women, young women, girls and men, young men, boys in the society and empowerment of women, young women and girls in all their diversity, aiming at a growth and sustainability of the environmental (green) economy, and their equal participation in the digitalization

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<sup>359</sup> Adopted by DCM No.733, dated 20.10.2016. See: <https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/no.46-%20National%20Strategy%20and%20Action%20Plan%20on%20Gender%20Equality%202016-2020.pdf>

process; II. Ensuring the equal participation, representation, and leadership rights of women and men, young women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity in political and public decision-making at the local level; III. Reduction of all forms of harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence; IV. Application of gender mainstreaming as the main tool for achieving gender equality and gender justice in society.

**The estimated total cost** for the implementation of the “NSGE 2021 – 2030” is ALL 3,358,697,259 (27,086,268 EUR).<sup>360</sup> For the period 2021-2030, the state budget is expected to fund 50.5% of the financing necessary for the implementation of the action plan, 33.9% is expected to be financed by other sources and donors, while 15.6% is a funding gap. Current costs account for about 80.1% of total expenses, while the rest (19.9%) is anticipated for capital costs. The Policy Goal III, in financial terms, has the largest weight in the implementation of the strategy, in concrete terms: 63.8%. The Policy Goal I reaches the value of 21.3%, while the Policy Goals IV and II reach respectively 11.9% and 2.9% of the overall cost of the strategy. For more details on costs, refer to annex 6 of this report.

**The monitoring of the implementation of the “NSGE 2021 – 2030”** is carried out regularly and **for the year 2021** it results that: for strategic goal I, no information was provided on the status of implementation for 44% of the activities, 22% of the activities were implemented, 22% of the activities are in the process of implementation and 12% of activities have not been implemented yet; for strategic goal II, no information was provided on the implementation status for 33% of the activities, while 67% of the activities have been partially implemented; for strategic goal III, 61% of activities were implemented, 33% of activities have been partially implemented and 6% of activities have not been implemented yet; for strategic goal IV, 25% of activities have not been implemented yet, 50% of activities are in process, while 25% of activities have been partially implemented.<sup>361</sup> **For 2022**, the monitoring shows that: for strategic goal I, 31% of activities were fully implemented, 12% of activities have been partially implemented, 13% of activities are in the process of being implemented, 21% of activities have not been implemented yet and for 23% of the activities, no information was provided on the implementation status; for strategic goal II, 25% of the activities were fully implemented, 62% of the activities have been partially implemented, and for 13% of the activities no information was provided on the implementation status; for strategic goal III, 57% of the activities were fully implemented, 15% of the activities have been partially implemented, 12% of the activities are in the process of being implemented, 3% of the activities were not implemented and for 13% of the activities no information was provided on the implementation status; for strategic goal IV, 37% of activities were fully implemented, 16% of activities have been partially implemented and 47% of activities are in the process of being implemented.<sup>362</sup> The monitoring report **for 2023 is in the process of preparation**. “NSGE 2021 – 2030” will be revised after 5 years (in 2025) to adapt it to the progress in the implementation of measures, but also to update it in accordance with the needs and medium-term budget programs 2026-2028 of each institution.<sup>363</sup>

**Local Gender Action Plans (LGAPs)**. For the most correct implementation of the NSGE 2021-2030, as well as to progress towards the European integration process, some local self-government units have signed the European Charter for Equality between Women and Men in Local Life<sup>364</sup> and they are working for its implementation. The signing and implementation of the European Charter for Equality, as well as the preparation and implementation of the Local Gender Action Plans (LGAPs) have been defined as measures to be implemented by the LGUs, also in the NSGE 2021-2030. So far in Albania there are 18

<sup>360</sup> The average exchange rate is calculated at 124 ALL for 1 Euro.

<sup>361</sup> “Monitoring report: Implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2021-2030” for 2021, page 6. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Raport-Monitorimi-per-vitin-2021-SKBGJ.pdf>

<sup>362</sup> “Monitoring report: Implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan 2021-2030” for 2022, page 5-6. See: <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Raporti-i-Monitorimit-SKBGJ-2022-.pdf>

<sup>363</sup> NSGE 2021-2030, page 45

<sup>364</sup> A document prepared by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), since 2006 and revised in 2022. See: <https://charter-equality.eu/the-charter/observatoire-europeen-en.html>



signatory municipalities of the Charter<sup>365</sup> (about 30% of the total number of the municipalities in the country). Of these, 13 municipalities have gone through the process of preparing the LGAPs and 12 others had or have specific LGAPs approved by the Municipal Council. More specifically: four municipalities currently have approved LGAPs and they are valid until the end of 2024<sup>366</sup>; one municipality has a valid LGAPs until the end of 2025<sup>367</sup>; three municipalities have gone twice through the preparation and approval process of LGAPs (for the years 2018-2020 and 2022 – 2024 or 2025)<sup>368</sup>; six municipalities have had a LGAP that has been completed<sup>369</sup>; one municipality prepared but didn't approve the LGAP in the municipal council<sup>370</sup>; six municipalities<sup>371</sup> haven't drafted yet one LGAP (of which four have signed the European Charter for Equality during the period 2022<sup>372</sup>-2023<sup>373</sup>), one of them has just initiated the process of drafting the LGAP (May 2024).<sup>374</sup> The measures and actions that are envisaged in these LGAPs are in full compliance with the measures and actions required to be implemented by LGUs in the NSGE 2021-2030, to the implementation of the European Charter for Equality, but also harmonized with EU GAP III, SDGs, international instruments (CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action), etc.

**34. Please describe your country's system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (Gender Responsive Budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.**

One of the main objectives of the reform of the Ministry of Finance has been and remains the full implementation of Budgeting based on the Program and Performance. For this purpose, the fully functional **Albanian Financial Management Information System (AFMIS)** along with the **Integrated Planning System Information System (IPSIS)**, which strongly reinforces **the link between Strategic Planning and Medium-Term Budget** (the interface between them) significantly increases the connection between the gender policies embodied in the National Strategy for Gender Equality or in the sectoral strategies, with the medium-term budget program. The goals and objectives of the gender policies and the relevant key performance indicators (KPI) provided in these strategic documents are transferred from IPSIS to the specific forms of the Statement of Policies of the Budget Programs of the Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP) in the AFMIS system. Based on Law no. 9936 dated 26.06.2008 "On the management of budgetary system in the Republic of Albania", as amended, and Instruction no. 7 of the Minister of Finance, dated 28.02.2018 "On standard procedures for the preparation of the Medium-Term Budget Program", in each budget program, there should be at least one gender target and gender performance indicators, for all targets, or wherever possible. The collection of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics, and their use when conducting policy analysis, is mandatory.

During the preparation of the budget, users from each budget program are required to enter in the MTBP forms the current data on: (a) **Main gender performance indicators** at the level of goals and objectives (IPSIS); (b) **Amounts of gender products** (AFMIS) and (c) **Costs of gender products** (Treasury System and AFMIS). In the AFMIS system, a special box has been placed at the performance indicator level, which must be filled by the employees who enter the data for the budget programs whenever they have to do with gender performance indicators. This step is mandatory and does not allow the process to continue if it is not made. Thus, the labeling (gender tagging) is made at the performance indicator level, which further allows the identification of the objective, the budget program and the institution related to that indicator. This link makes it possible to identify the product

<sup>365</sup> More concretely the municipalities: Gjirokastrë, Korçë, Elbasan, Shkodër, Tiranë, Durrës, Përmet, Bulqizë, Librazhd, Cërrik, Dibër, Pogradec, Kamzë, Gramsh, Lushnjë, Kavajë, Lezhë, Vau i Dejës

<sup>366</sup> Municipalities: Tiranë, Elbasan, Gjirokastrë and Gramsh, prepared with the support of UN Women through EU funds

<sup>367</sup> Municipality Durrës prepared with the support of UN Women through EU funds

<sup>368</sup> Respectively the municipalities of Tirana, Elbasan and Durrës, prepared with the support of UN Women in the two cycles with ADA funds for the LAPGEs 2018-2020 and with EU funds for the LAPGEs 2022-2024

<sup>369</sup> Respectively municipalities of Korça and Shkodra, for the period 2018-2020, with the support of UN Women and ADA funds; Municipalities of Bulqiza, Cërrik, Pogradec, Librazhd for the periods 2020-2022 (Bulqiza) and 2020-2023 Cërrik, Librazhd and Pogradec, with the support of PLGP/USAID

<sup>370</sup> Municipality of Dibër, for the period 2020-2023, prepared with the support of PLGP/USAID.

<sup>371</sup> Përmet municipality has signed the Charter in 2017 with the support of EU Delegation and Kamëz municipality has signed the Charter in 2020 with the support of PLGP/USAID

<sup>372</sup> Municipality of Lushnje, with the support of UN Women and EU funds

<sup>373</sup> Municipalities of Kavaja, Lezha, Vau i Dejës, with the support of UN Women and EU funds

<sup>374</sup> Municipality of Lezha, organized the first meeting for the beginning of the process on 24 may 2024, with the support of UN Women.

that is related to the objective and the performance indicator, which further allows the calculation of the anticipated expenditures for the achievement of that indicator.

The same logic is followed for the factic budget. During the recording of data for the realization of the factic budget, the expenditure is linked to the specific objectives/indicators/products that are realized by means of those expenditures. These data enable **the drafting of a Gender Budget Statement** for the annual budget, a **Gender Responsive Budgeting Annex** for each stage of the preparation of the MTBP and **the Citizens' Budget**<sup>375</sup> with a gender lens for the annual budget before its presentation in Parliament.

**The data from the last five years** for budget forecasts that address issues of gender equality in various sectors, related to the critical areas of the Platform for Action, are as follows:

Table 1: Budget forecasts addressing critical areas of the BPA in various sectors

Year	Agriculture	Foreign Affairs	Internal Affairs	Health and social protection	Culture	Justice	Education	Finance and economy	Infrastructure	Protection
2019	0.1%	1.8%	8.50%	13%	2.20%	1%	44%	6.9%	0.01%	2.50%
2020	0.3%	1.6%	8.30%	14%	2.20%	1%	41%	7.0%	0.01%	2.60%
2021	5%	1%	4.20%	19%	2.50%	0.44%	63%	0.10%	0.01%	4.50%
2022	5.40%	2.70%	2.70%	14%	2.40%	0.04%	29%	2.40%	0.02%	1.30%
2023	5.00%	0.02%	5%	52%	2.60%	11.00%	40%	15.00%	0.02%	4%

Source: Data from the Ministry of Finance, in the framework of the preparation of this report, May 2024.

Table 2: Number of programs and budget funds for Gender Responsive Budgeting over the years.

YEAR	No. of GRB programs	Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)	% of GRB to the total budget	% of GRB to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
2019	38	38,264,748	7.2%	2.3%
2020	43	52,630,418,850	9%	3%
2021	45	50,012,668,836	9%	3%
2022	48	60,380,387,485.13	9%	3%
2023	51	61,592,927,707	9%	3%
2024	76	737,377,663,130	10%	3%

Source: Data from the Ministry of Finance, in the framework of the preparation of this report, May 2024.

Inter alia, **the MTBP 2024 – 2026** provides the following interventions related to the critical areas of BPA: Increased number of women who benefit from counseling and information services in agriculture, where 500 women will benefit from these services with a fund of ALL 2,300,000; Health policies will continue to support new mothers with primary and secondary health services, where the investment of approximately ALL 39.5 million in new maternity hospitals is particularly important; Increased number of women and girls who benefit from breast cancer screening services through mobile mammography from 5,450 women to 5,550 for the years 2024-2026 at a cost of ALL 12,500,000, with the aim of preventing cancer cases by increasing breast cancer screening service for the total number of women (age group 50-60 years old) from 15.2% in 2023 to 30.3% in 2026; Increased number of women and girls who benefit from cervical cancer screening services from 11,000 women to 13,000 during 2024-2026, at a cost of ALL 25,000,000 with the aim of reducing mortality from cervical cancer from 2.5/100 000 in 2023 to 2.4/100 000 in 2026; Provision of transportation services for 36,000 girls and boys (44% girls) who have their residence more than 2 km from the school, and for about 12,000 teachers who work more than 5 km from their residence to the permanent work center in the school premises; Employment of 1,520 women and girls from the 2,000 registered in total, at a cost of ALL 342,000,000; Employment of 7,015 women from a total of 11,500 beneficiaries (or 61%) at a cost of ALL 142,600,920 after completing the Vocational Training; Creation of various employment opportunities through vocational education for 18,000 girls and boys, of whom 2,750 (15%) are girls with an education cost of ALL 284,084,625; Family pension support for 41,831 women at a cost of ALL 8,726,044,066 (contributors and transfers from the budget); Funding of the “Baby Bonus” Program for every newborn, guaranteeing a remuneration of ALL 40,000-120,000 for over 45,000 children/year, as a way to help new mothers and fathers, who have never been part of the labor market, to cover the expenses for the first months after

<sup>375</sup> For more, see: <https://financa.gov.al/buxheti-i-qytetarit/>

childbirth; Funding of the special support policy for unemployed women with 3 or more children up to 18 years of age, with a family income of up to ALL 100,000 per month, supporting them with the payment of social and health contributions, for the period of child care up to 5 years old and for the year 2024, 8,000 women are expected to benefit compared to 5,580 women beneficiaries in 2023, at a cost of ALL 800,000,000; Provision of free legal aid to approximately 5,000 individuals who meet the conditions under the law on free legal aid, of whom 3,000 (59%) are women and girls; For abused women and girls, or one-parent families, support will continue with social housing and the cost for social housing for 850 women and girls of the category defined by law will be ALL 47,562,600, calculated as a proportion of the two main products of the schemes; etc.<sup>376</sup>

**The challenges** in making all budgets gender responsive have been and continue to be many, where among the most important we mention: lack of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics, without which the institutions cannot perform in-depth gender analyses; limited technical skills of employees to perform such analyses; insufficient funds to fully address identified needs, etc.

### **35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Albania has taken a series of actions to make known, promote, implement and monitor the progress towards the fulfillment of the Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>377</sup>, and a series of important international documents and instruments, including the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action. **The State Agency for Strategic Planning and Aid Coordination (SASPAC)** coordinates intergovernmental efforts to achieve the SDGs since December 2021. **The Assembly** established<sup>378</sup> in 2022 **the Subcommittee for Sustainable Development**, as part of the permanent Parliamentary Committee for Economy and Finance. The area of responsibility of this subcommittee is economic and social development, sustainable economic growth, the realization of sustainable development goals and the 2030 Agenda of the UN.

The Government of Albania confirmed its leadership and commitment to the SDGs by re-establishing the **Inter-ministerial Committee on the SDGs** and the **Inter-institutional Working Group on SDGs** in 2023. The SDGs have been integrated both in the National Strategy for Development and European Integration 2022 – 2030 (and in the previous NSDI II 2015 - 2020) and in a set of sectoral strategies. During the year 2024, the 2024-2030 SDGs National Roadmap is being prepared to prioritize actions and measures for the achievement of these objectives in accordance with the country's development priorities and the progress in the EU accession process. The 2023 Sustainable Development Report ranked Albania in the top third globally (54th), jumping seven positions.<sup>379</sup>

Through a Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development with the Government of Albania, the UN fully supports and works to achieve the objective of Albania's accession in the European Union (EU), national priorities, and the harmonization and effectiveness of aid. This includes Albania's commitment to achieving the SDGs. Funds available through the Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development 2022 – 2026 are the following<sup>380</sup>: USD 94.4 million (2022), USD 84.4 million (2023) and USD 66.6 million (2024).<sup>381</sup>

Along these processes, the collection and reflection of the voice of women and girls from vulnerable groups and their concerns is realized through the involvement in certain mechanisms **of civil society organizations**, especially women's rights organizations, starting from their involvement in the National Council of Gender Equality (NCGE), as the highest advisory body for gender policies in Albania (which also includes representatives of three civil society organizations). The consultation that the state conducts with CSOs both for the drafting of new legislation or policies, and for the review of existing ones under the gender perspective, is another mechanism that ensures the reflection of the voice and concerns of women/young women/girls, including those from vulnerable groups in these laws and policies and strategies. In addition, the national reports that are prepared for the

<sup>376</sup> For more details refer to "Budget for Citizens, 2024", pages 13-26. See: <https://financa.gov.al/buxheti-i-qytetarit/>

<sup>377</sup> These developments are described in detail in the previous report on the implementation of the Declaration and its Platform for Action, Beijing+25

<sup>378</sup> By Decision No. 34/2022 dated 14.4.2022. The subcommittee consists of 10 members (7 women). See: <https://www.parlament.al/struktura/d1d56719-80b6-4a1e-92df-b1b0314d0e00>

<sup>379</sup> See: [Sustainable Development Report 2023 \(sdgindex.org\)](https://sdgindex.org/)

<sup>380</sup> Signed on 25 October 2021. See: [albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/PRINT\\_Shtator\\_Eng\\_new\\_Updated\\_Albania\\_CF\\_2022-2026\\_OK\\_1.pdf](https://albania.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/PRINT_Shtator_Eng_new_Updated_Albania_CF_2022-2026_OK_1.pdf) ]

<sup>381</sup> See: [Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations in Albania](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/goals/)

implementation of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, or for the implementation of many international instruments, are carried out through comprehensive and consultative processes, thus, with the participation of not only the responsible central and local state institutions, but also with the participation of civil society organizations (especially CSOs focused on women and vulnerable, marginalized groups), international organizations, media, trade unions, etc.

### **36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

This national report on behalf of the Government of Albania was prepared through a comprehensive process. Leadership and coordination was carried out by the **Ministry of Health and Social Protection**, as the main responsible authority of the national mechanism for gender equality, at ministerial level.

The process officially started on February 8, with the support and technical assistance of the UN Women Office in Albania.<sup>382</sup> Preliminary preparations were made until February 23, when the **Interministerial Working Group** was set up, consisting of 16 (sixteen) representatives from line ministries and some independent institutions. The questionnaire for the collection of preliminary information, based on the guidance document for comprehensive reviews at national level, translated into Albanian language, was shared with the members of the Working Group, and with: 61 (sixty-one) **Local Self-Government Units**, 32 (thirty-two) networks/coalitions of **civil society organizations**, 40 (forty) **non-profit organizations focused mainly on women, also from vulnerable groups**, 9 (nine) **independent and human rights institutions** (such as the Ombudsman, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, etc.), with the **Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania**, and with 20 (twenty) **international organizations**, members of the Donor Coordination Group on Gender Equality. Qualitative, updated and categorized data, and gender statistics were made available by the relevant institutions and in particular by the **Institute of Statistics of Albania** (INSTAT).

A detailed calendar of the steps taken until the completion and approval of the report was drawn up, and for every meeting, consultation with interest groups, or evaluation and approval meetings, it was held open communication with the public.<sup>383</sup>

3 (three) official meetings of the Interministerial Working Group were held, respectively: on 26 February (22 participants, 5 men); 12 April (23 participants, 3 men) and 30 April (20 participants, 2 men). Three consultations were organized, respectively: one with the members of the Gender Thematic and Results Group (GTRG) on 2 May (19 participants, 1 man); one with representatives of civil society, trade unions, media, women's organizations, youth organizations and international organizations, on 9 May (46 participants, 6 men), and one with representatives of **Parliamentary Committees or Subcommittees, Alliance of Women Parliamentarians and the State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination**, on 17 May (20 representatives, of whose 13 members of Alliance of Women Parliamentarians).

After updating the content with all the written contributions as well as with the comments and suggestions of the interest groups, the report was sent for a written confirmation from all relevant line ministries, and it was adopted at the meeting of the **National Council for Gender Equality**, on 27 May (31 representatives, 4 men; of whose 14 members of NCGE and GEOs at line ministries, 3 men).

<sup>382</sup> Two consultants contracted by UN Women (Mrs. Iris Aliaj and Mrs. Monika Kocaqi) supported the entire preparation process until the completion of this national report.

<sup>383</sup> For more, see posts on:

<https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania/posts/pfbid02iPaQZ1etcDHKecV1ww2MmbcTCVqpRsGCuGKbf75z6mEiAc8zdto4x4zfqeSQGiutl>

<https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania/posts/pfbid02bWrHw57j8SrSCcN31pn98tJdqXoiNFAFcuG5X9jTX75A8hAbBxzdrvaFgntF8w4yl>

<https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania/posts/pfbid0kF3JhfDHZ7ZLottdmgjFL5r4ggLorT8cn1vzFtoZj4oWA4cooFcMBANA5uDPRHGj>

<https://www.facebook.com/unwomenalbania/posts/pfbid02ri4qnQ5C9Dk4nVbWnkBP88GwV6yKnG7vLa7oSYpTc3eUwAk6mf2K9eQ4EvAT4PsWl>

**37. Please describe your country's Action Plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a state party), or the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms addressing gender inequality/discrimination against women.**

Albania prepared and submitted the fifth national report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in **January 2021**, and the responses to the list of issues sent by the CEDAW Committee in **July 2022**. On **18 October 2023**, the CEDAW Committee took under review Albania's fifth periodic report and on **25 October 2023** adopted the Concluding Observations.<sup>384</sup> The CEDAW Committee has requested from Albania to submit **within two years written information on the steps taken to implement the urgent recommendations** for the following paragraphs: 12 (a) - Consider the possibility of revising Law No. 9970/2008 "On gender equality in society", in accordance with the commitment made in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030 for accelerating the realization of gender equality de jure (legal) and de facto (real); 24 (b) - Amend the Criminal Code to include a definition of rape based on lack of consent, which includes any sexual act performed without consent and takes into account all aggravating circumstances, in accordance with international standards of human rights; 28 (b) - Adopt special temporary measures, such as legally binding quotas and a system of equal gender representation, in accordance with Article 4(1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation no. 25 (2004) on special temporary measures, to ensure equal representation of women, including women from rural areas, women with disabilities, women from ethnic minorities, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women, in the Assembly and municipal legislative bodies, in government bodies, in the civil service and the foreign service, in particular at decision-making levels and 36 (d) - Strictly enforce the ban on terminations of pregnancies for reasons of selecting the sex of babies and provide services, such as toll-free hotlines, to women/young women who are pressured into selective termination of pregnancy based on the gender of the baby.

In this framework, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection with the support of UN Women is preparing **the Action Plan for the implementation of the Concluding Observations on the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. This action plan is being prepared through a comprehensive approach and with the engagement of a number of responsible central and local institutions, independent institutions, as well as in consultation with civil society organizations. A first draft of this plan was sent for review by the relevant stakeholders at the beginning of May 2024 and was approved in the NCGE meeting at the end of May 2024.

Albania rigorously follows and timely completes the reports for other important international instruments, including the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review. Commitment to human rights remains a priority and this process plays an essential role in promoting accountability and positive change. Albania completed the third round of reporting for the Universal Periodic Review in **May 2019** and is preparing for the fourth round (expected to be held in November 2024). According to the preliminary calendar, the deadline for submitting the national report is at the beginning of **August 2024**.<sup>385</sup>

In the periods of time between the two reports for each international instrument, the government of Albania takes measures to make known all the recommendations emerging from these processes (translation into Albanian language and their distribution), coordinates actions and starts implementation (collaborates with the responsible central and local institutions, but also with other important stakeholders such as independent institutions, civil society organizations, academia, media, etc.), and takes into consideration the recommendations given in the processes of drafting and adopting national laws, strategies and policies.

<sup>384</sup> See: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=En&CountryID=2](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=En&CountryID=2)

<sup>385</sup> See: <https://upr.info/en/review/albania>

## SECTION FIVE: DATA AND STATISTICS

### 38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

The Institute of Statistics of Albania (INSTAT) produces annual gender statistics based on the Law on Official Statistics and the National Program on Official Statistics. Gender statistics reflect changes or inequalities in the situation between men/young men/boys and women/young women/girls in areas such as population, education, labor market, social inclusion, health and decision-making. Knowing the situation of women/young women/girls and men/young men/boys in society, in all spheres of life, orientates the policy makers towards appropriate decision-making for the drafting of policies in these areas. The main source of data for the production of gender statistics are administrative sources and social surveys of households conducted by the Institute of Statistics.<sup>386</sup>

**The Official Statistics Program** (OSP) defines the strategy for the development of official statistics and the National Statistical System for a period of five years and contains the main statistical activities that must be carried out by the producers of official statistics during this period of time. In addition, the OSP specifies the institutions in charge for the production of official statistics and the institutions supplying administrative data. The OSP is prepared in close cooperation with the groups interested in official statistics and after receiving the opinion of the Council of Statistics, through the Council of Ministers, and it is presented for final approval to the Assembly of Albania. Following the OSP 2017 – 2021, it was prepared and approved the OSP 2022–2026<sup>387</sup>, which brings a new comprehensive approach, as it was prepared with the full commitment of statistical agencies and all stakeholders contributing to the production of statistics. This program serves to further strengthen the system, with innovative ideas, increasing users' trust in statistics, cooperating with national and international partners, developing capacities for a high professional level, where the science of statistics finds application in practice, and implementing the standards for a faster approach to the European family and the objectives of sustainable development, for a common goal, where no one is left behind. The 2023 annual plan for the implementation of the OSP was also approved.<sup>388</sup>

As never before, during the period 2019–2020, the National Statistical System and INSTAT, in particular, faced situations beyond natural limits, as a result of the November 2019 earthquakes and the global COVID-19 pandemic. The situation caused by the 2019 earthquakes forced INSTAT to reconsider the 2019 action plan to adapt it to the new situation created in the damaged areas, and the involvement of its staff in the production processes of indicators for measuring these consequences in the field. The buildings observed during the processes of updating the maps for the census areas were once again subject to the updating processes, to more accurately identify the damaged buildings and those that could no longer provide the characteristics of a dwelling. Regarding the pandemic, under the new conditions of social distancing, INSTAT defined short-term objectives pursuant to its mission and the principles of European statistics; took into consideration the adaptation of methods and methodologies, such as the use of telephone interviews instead of the traditional method of gathering information and the efficient use of existing resources or the rigorous implementation of the recommendations of Eurostat and international institutions; drew up continuity plans for each statistical activity - a novelty through which it is possible to take precautionary and timely measures to deal with similar situations, guaranteeing the non-interruption of statistical production; provided the necessary conditions for online work via teleworking; created new platforms for online communication among staff members and developed new

<sup>386</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/treguesit-demografik%C3%AB-dhe-social%C3%AB/barazia-gjinore/#tab1> (see: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality/#tab2>)

<sup>387</sup> Law No. 30/2022, dated 24.03.2022 "On the approval of the Official Statistics Program 2022–2026". See: <https://cluster1albania.com/sq/kapitulli-18/>

<sup>388</sup> Adopted by Decision No. 3/2023 of the Assembly, dated 26.01.2023 "On the approval of the 2023 annual plan for the implementation of the Official Statistics Program 2022–2026". See: <https://cluster1albania.com/sq/kapitulli-18/>

soft programs for monitoring the health situation of staff, tracking and monitoring tasks; created a special section on the website, dedicated to COVID-19, where it published the most frequent data, which helped policy makers, analysts, researchers for further economic and social analysis related to the situation created in the country; and designed and is currently implementing a detailed risk register, to ensure the continuity of production activity and the minimization of damages in cases of facing similar situations.<sup>389</sup>

In order to reflect possible gender differences in various areas of life, INSTAT publishes every year a dedicated publication **“Women and Men in Albania”**.<sup>390</sup> The data of this publication serve policy makers, academia, civil society and various users to analyze more broadly the context of gender equality in the Albanian society. This publication is divided into several chapters, such as: Population; Health; Education; Labor Market and Social Protection; Crime and Criminal Justice statistics; Women in decision-making; Social indicators from household surveys; Human rights; Gender Inequality Index and Minimum Set of Gender Indicators.<sup>391</sup>

The minimum set of Gender Indicators has been part of this publication since 2016 and includes 52 indicators, of which 22 are indicators of Sustainable Development Goals. The indicators are structured in the following areas: Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources; Education; Health and related services; Public life and decision-making; Human rights, the rights of women and girls. While the chapters on gender indicators from social surveys in families and indicators on human rights were included for the first time as novelties in this publication in 2020. Starting from 2019, the annual publication “Women and Men in Albania”, is accompanied by an interactive publication, which aims to present data interactively to users, reflecting the differences and similarities between women and men in everyday life. This digital publication contains short text, interactive visualization tools, graphics and tables for each chapter.<sup>392</sup>

**The Gender Inequality Index (GII)**, is a complex indicator, designed in such a way as to present quantitatively the potential loss in human development, as a result of inequalities between the achievements of men and women in the dimensions of reproductive health, political empowerment, education and labor market. The GII ranges from 0 to 1, and higher values indicate more inequality and more loss in human development as a result of inequality. Over the years, the GII results as follows: 0.10 in 2019; 0.06 in 2020; 0.09 in 2021 and 0.06 in 2022.<sup>393</sup>

**The Gender Equality Index (GEI)** measures gender equality in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power, health and in two other domains: intersecting inequalities and violence, based on specific conceptual frameworks. The GEI was first published in January 2020, in collaboration with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).<sup>394</sup>

**Human rights statistics** is a new field and not yet fully developed. INSTAT has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ombudsman for the development of these statistics. Until now, only statistics for complaints about alleged violations of rights handled by the Ombudsman have been developed, according to the type of right; and the statistics that are part of the publication Women and Men in Albania 2020 and 2021, in a separate chapter. Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Office for Human Rights (OHCHR) has prepared international human rights indicators (HRI) updated with the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on this material, the Institute of Statistics has compiled the available indicators of the SDGs related to the areas of human rights.

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<sup>389</sup> OSP 2022 – 2026, pages 4-5.

<sup>390</sup> See: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality/#tab3>

<sup>391</sup> List of indicators established by the Statistical Commission in collaboration with UN Women for the measurement of gender indicators.

<sup>392</sup> This publication was prepared by INSTAT with the support of UN Women.

<sup>393</sup> For more, see: <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/demography-and-social-indicators/gender-equality/#tab2>

<sup>394</sup> See: [https://www.instat.gov.al/media/6661/gender\\_equality\\_index\\_for\\_the\\_republic\\_of\\_albania\\_2020.pdf](https://www.instat.gov.al/media/6661/gender_equality_index_for_the_republic_of_albania_2020.pdf)

### **39. Over the next five years, what are your country's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?**

Referring to the 2022-2026 Official Statistical Program, INSTAT has prioritized gender statistics by integrating them specifically into this program. Priority will continue to be given to the improvement of the publication "Women and Men in Albania" and the increase in the number of published gender indicators, especially in the field of human rights and gender-related SDGs indicators. Work will continue for the production and publication of gender indices and the minimum set of gender indicators, which enable a complete picture of the situation of inequalities in the country and a basis for comparison with other countries.

Conducting household surveys, such as the Violence Against Women and Girls Survey (VAWG) and the Time Use Survey (TUS) will be a priority regarding gender statistics for the next five years. Conducting these surveys will enable updating data on violence and time use, and provide an analysis of progress compared to the previous round of surveys conducted.

Moreover, INSTAT, in addition to the data of the Population and Housing Census 2023, which will provide an overview of the economic and social characteristics of women and men at the time of census, will also provide the basis for more in-depth analyses in this direction.

As foreseen in the Official Statistical Program 2022–2026, in the interest of improving official statistics, and in realizing Eurostat recommendations for the standardization of statistical production, during the five years of this program, the national statistical system will focus on: a) Improvement of the statistical methodology; b) Modernization of data collection methods; c) Reduction of timelines for data processing and publication; d) Increasing the amount of data transmitted to Eurostat.

Regarding the statistical fields, the institutions producing official statistics will engage in improving statistical activities in the following aspects:

- Field of social and demographic statistics: improvements in methodology, data collection, transmissions to Eurostat and new publications.
- Field of economic statistics: improvements in methodology, time frames and new indicators.
- Field of sectoral statistics: improvements in methodology, data collection methods, timelines and transmissions to Eurostat.
- Field of environmental and multidomain statistics: improvements in methodology and transmissions to Eurostat, etc.

### **40. What gender specific indicators<sup>395</sup> has your country prioritized your country for monitoring progress on the SDGs?**

The Institute of Statistics of Albania continues to attach special importance to the SDGs, as the statistics are the instrument chosen to set the basis for monitoring the implementation of these goals at the national, regional and international level. The policies and strategies that should be developed for the achievement of 17 objectives and 169 targets should be supported by statistical indicators for a decision-making based on data. Albania, through INSTAT, since November 2019 is a member of the High Level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB). This group consists of the Member States of the United Nations,

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<sup>395</sup> The term 'gender-specific indicators' is used to refer to indicators that explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and/or refer to gender equality as the underlying objective. For example, SDG indicator 5.c.1 captures the percentage of countries with systems to track public allocations that are directed towards policies and programmes that promote gender equality—the underlying objective is the promotion of gender equality. The term is also used for indicators where women and girls are specified within the indicator as the targeted population (see UN Women. 2018. Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York).]



including 11 regional and international agencies as observers<sup>396</sup>; and since November 2020, the General Director of INSTAT, has been appointed as a co-chair of this group.

The statistical community attaches great importance to the SDGs. In the various meetings organized by United Nations Statistical Commission, UNECE and Eurostat, statistical indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals have had a special importance in their agenda. In this context, the Conference of European Statisticians (women and men), in June 2021, has approved the second UNECE roadmap for statistics on the SDG<sup>397</sup>, where INSTAT has provided its contribution. This edition contains nine chapters as well as two appendices, where key messages and recommendations are given for the preparation of voluntary reports, accompanied by case studies and various initiatives from different countries around the world, regarding the progress of the SDGs.

From the total of 52 gender sensitive indicators of the SDGs related to the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, Albania actually covers 22 of them, where 16 are calculated fully in conformity with the methodology, while 6 partially (because there are missing the necessary data to further share the indicators as required).

The data for 61 indicators of the SDGs are collected and made available by INSTAT<sup>398</sup>, while most of the other indicators, for which there are available data, are based on information from other institutions in the country. For some indicators, information is not available in the country, but it is published by international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. Indicators from the global framework that are available in Albania and for which data are collected by INSTAT, in most cases are in compliance with the requirements of the specific methodology established by the UN working group.

However, there are two main challenges for this set of indicators: 1) The periodicity of data collection for some indicators is not regular and in some cases, the latest available information is often very old. 2) The dimensions and depth of division required by some of the goals of the SDGs are insufficient because of the data currently available in Albania (the divisions required in some of the indicators of the SDGs cannot be carried out due to the lack of detailed data, or the lack of data for certain groups of the population, such as the persons with disabilities, different ethnic groups/national minorities, urban/rural divisions, etc.). Other indicators for which information is available from domestic institutions often lack standardization with the required methodology, which constitutes another challenge for the compatibility of these indicators with the global framework. Furthermore, the lack of standardized methodology even within the country creates conflicts in data reporting as the information provided by government institutions differs in some cases from the information reported by INSTAT. Since the data collection mechanisms used by INSTAT are harmonized with international standards, it is important to further reorganize the standards and methodology for each indicator in the data collection systems used by other government institutions.

Indicators in the “Report on the Harmonization of SDGs with existing sectoral policies” are classified into five groups - (i) available indicators, (ii) indicators for which information is available with effort (for cases where an indicator includes additional calculations based on existing information; (iii) indicators for which information is partially available, for those indicators where the available data are not sufficient enough to reflect all the dimensions of the indicator; (iv) unavailable indicators and (v) inapplicable indicators - for indicators that are not designed for Albania, but for other groups of countries. Based on these considerations, the availability of indicators from the global indicator framework, for each SDG and in

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<sup>396</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/hlg/members>

<sup>397</sup> <https://unece.org/statistics/publications/CES-roadmap-sdg-2>

<sup>398</sup> <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/sdgs/> and <https://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/books/2023/sustainable-development-goals-sdg-2022/>

total, for 2021, results as follows: 77 available, 23 available with efforts, 35 partially available, 94 unavailable and 15 inapplicable.<sup>399</sup>

In relation to the SDGs, INSTAT has dedicated a special focus to objective 5, where most of the indicators are currently produced. The focus remains on the indicators related to women's work in agriculture 5.a.1 and 5.a.2, where continuous efforts have been made even in support to FAO for the calculation of these indicators, but the existing data do not make possible their calculation, in compliance to the given methodology. Thus, conducting the Agricultural Census will be important for obtaining the appropriate data for the calculation of these indicators. The survey on violence and time use will provide coherent data related to the indicators that are the source of these surveys, such as indicator 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.3.2. (A list of SDG 5 indicators that are actually produced and their values for the reporting period and a list with minimum set of gender indicators is attached in Annex 7)

Considering the fact that gender indicators go beyond Goal 5, INSTAT constantly strives to increase the gender-sensitive indicators produced by the SDGs. Priority will be given to indicators related to human rights, and work will continue to ensure disaggregation and combination of data, which provide a complete overview of inequalities not only between men and women, but also between certain groups of population and their different characteristics (intersectionality).

#### **41. Which data disaggregations<sup>400</sup> are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

Household surveys carried out by INSTAT have a well-defined methodology provided by EUROSTAT, which is harmonized in such a way as to enable comparability of data not only in time but also between European countries. Thus, their performance is based entirely on specific regulations, but for certain specific areas, in consultation with different users and interest groups, may be included specific questions or variables necessary for the country.

The first part of the questionnaire, which collects general information about family members (family composition with basic socio-demographic characteristics), includes information about: age, gender, place of birth, citizenship, marital status, employment status, educational level, etc., which are collected regularly. Social surveys still do not collect information on sexual orientation.

The population and housing census collected information on the religious affiliation and ethnicity of the population in Albania, but such information is not regularly collected by social surveys of INSTAT.

## **SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND THE NEXT STEPS**

From this process of reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, over the past five years, the institutions members in the Interministerial Working Group that were engaged in the preparation of the report, in addition to highlighting the achievements and progress made in all the 12 critical areas, had the opportunity to identify the challenges and difficulties encountered, as well as to reflect on how to address them as best as possible in the following years.

The Government of Albania has included the critical areas of the Platform for Action in the main national documents. The actions undertaken to properly address these critical areas are intertwined with the objectives and measures to make the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality. The achievements are numerous, but in summary for each area we can mention that: (1) a series of measures are taken to reduce the number of women, young women and girls, in all their diversity, who live under difficult economic conditions, including during the situation of the

<sup>399</sup> Audit Report "Sustainable Development Goals, 2022", pg..27, see: <https://panel.klish.org.al/storage/php7ciWxm.pdf>

<sup>400</sup> [As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education, marital status, religion and sexual orientation.]

Covid-19 pandemic; (2) continuous successes in the education of women, young women and girls are identified, accompanied by a series of positive efforts for their vocational training and for the orientation more and more towards non-typical occupations, which challenge gender stereotypes, and which will be occupations of the future; (3) there is visible progress in the health sector, where specific measures have been taken for the protection and health care of the mother and child, or the extension of information, programs and services on sexual and reproductive health; (4) the legal framework and policies for protection against domestic violence have been improved, as well as there are continuous efforts to implement them as correctly and effectively as possible, accompanied by the improvement of the capacities of professionals, informing the general public, especially women, young women and girls from vulnerable groups, or with the expansion and extension of specialized support services in compliance with the international standards; (5) appropriate measures have been taken to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security”, and there are continuous efforts to include as many women and young women as possible in decision-making and leadership in the armed forces; (6) the women have been continuously supported and the number of women, especially young women, in entrepreneurship has increased, through policies favoring start-ups as well as orienting and promoting their interest, especially in areas related to digitalization and the environmental economy; (7) priority has been given to women in political decision-making, with a government cabinet where 55% are women and a woman Deputy Prime Minister, an Assembly headed by a woman Speaker and composed of Committee and Subcommittees headed by women and with the participation of a significant number of women; (8) continuous efforts have been made to strengthen the national mechanism of gender equality, through the strengthening of partnerships with the supporting institutions of this mechanism, the strengthening of staff capacities, as well as efforts to increase financial resources in this direction; (9) priority has been given to the protection and respect, but also recognition by the general public of women’s human rights, as well as to the cooperation with independent human rights institutions aiming at becoming more effective in this regard; (10) a number of initiatives have been supported so that women, young women and girls are treated correctly, not stereotyped and avoiding hate speech in visual, printed and social media, as well as they have a stronger voice in decision-making in this area; (11) environmental issues and their combination with gender issues have been discussed more and more, highlighting the important role that women, young women and girls should have in environmental decision-making, but also their different needs and the ways in which the environment affects their lives; (12) work has been done and continues to be done to protect the rights of children, especially of girls and teenagers, specifically in relation to harmful traditional practices, information on important issues related to their empowerment, orientation towards future occupations, protection from violence, discrimination and multiple and gender disadvantage, strengthening their role in decision-making, economy, etc.

The application of gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting as strategies and tools for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation have already been proven to lead to the desired success. Therefore, during the identification of achievements in the framework of the preparation of this report, the application of gender responsive budgeting is listed as one of the most important achievements over the past five years. It is understood that this is a continuous process and its implementation will accompany all the efforts that the Albanian state will decide to make to progress further towards the empowerment of women and gender equality, even in the next years.

The directions selected for the next five years will continue to be focused on education, lifelong learning and vocational training. A nation develops through the education and training of its citizens, therefore providing opportunities for quality education for women, young women and girls, in all their diversity and throughout their lives, is a necessity for sustainable development.

Reducing all forms of violence against women and girls, including cyber-violence and femicide, will remain part of the main priorities for the next years, due to the very importance of having an inclusive

society without violence. It is necessary to inform and raise awareness of the population, especially about gender stereotypes, harmful norms and practices, as well as on the models inherited over the centuries of oppressed women and not enjoying the human rights, which have brought and continue to bring injustice, discrimination and violence today. More work should be done towards sustainable reintegration of victims/survivors of violence. But even the treatment of the offenders through rehabilitation programs aiming at correcting their violent behavior should be expanded and extended all over the country.

Women in entrepreneurship and women's and young women's undertakings should continue to remain part of the priorities for the next years because economic independence and economic empowerment are safe steps towards the overall empowerment of women and progress towards gender equality. The participation of girls, young women and women in information and communication technology, in exact sciences, in the digitization and any other field of the future is also a necessity and is included in the main directions of interventions of the Albanian state in the following years.

Gender responsive social protection, universal health service, cash transfers especially for women from certain groups, pensions, integrated social and community services, etc., will accompany all the efforts and actions that will be undertaken to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

In the next years it will be important to address the challenges faced, for example in the area of addressing the psycho-social problems, of rehabilitation and (re)integration in the community, as well as the social protection of persons with mental health problems (including victims/survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence). Mental health problems, which have increased especially after the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, are not always understood and treated in the right way by the community and individuals in Albania. Therefore, informing and raising awareness of the community in general about the importance of accepting and treating people with mental health problems in the right way takes on special importance and must be done through the involvement of a number of institutions, organizations and individuals, professionals in the area and many more.

Likewise, the professional training of women, young women and girls, in compliance with their needs and the demands of the labor market, especially of women, young women and girls in rural areas, aiming at their economic empowerment and the increase of their independence, is a challenge that must be properly addressed and will be listed among the main priority actions for the next years.

Addressing issues of gender equality beyond social issues is also a challenge, until it is created a level of common understanding of the importance of gender mainstreaming in every field. This can be achieved by strengthening the capacities of professionals on the one hand, but also by exploring, accepting and implementing new forms of intervention through gender integration in areas once called "neutral" from a gender perspective. Here we can list for example the environmental issues, climate change, disaster risk management, energy and water issues, waste management, transport, etc. Albania has taken important steps in all these areas (as explained in this report). For the next years, the main goal will be not only progress in the specified directions, but also more in-depth gender analysis, gender impact assessment and gender integration as a whole, in the measures and activities that will be implemented in these areas.

Gender Responsive Procurement (GRP), for example, could be another tool that even Albania has started to explore and then implement, in order to achieve socio-economic objectives, taking into account gender power relations in value chains during selection of services, goods or works. GRP aims to overcome wage gaps, create jobs for women and avoid gender-related labor inequalities, measures that are already prioritized in the policies of the Albanian government. If properly implemented, the GRP is consistent with the strategy on gender integration and social inclusion and responds to the Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, the exploration and implementation of GRP, with the support of potential

donors and international organizations that possess this expertise, can help the Government of Albania to further progress in achieving its goals, transforming procurement processes into systems that favor inclusiveness and gender equality.

Infrastructure development continues to remain one of Albania's priorities, due to the importance of this field. But this development should definitely be done from the gender perspective. Gender-blind infrastructure is one of the main causes of the lack of access of women and girls to basic services; a gender-blind infrastructure does not take into account the different roles, responsibilities and special needs of women, men, girls and boys in a specific context and how this affects their ability to use or access the infrastructure. These considerations are taken into account and are guiding the further directions of interventions into infrastructure. The assessment of gender impact and defining the measurement of progress, including the fulfillment of gender sensitive indicators, will be used as tools that guide the future development of gender responsive infrastructure in Albania.

The practice of a comprehensive and coordinated approach, where not only institutions responsible for implementation are invited to participate and contribute, but also all local institutions, public or not, local self-government units, independent and human rights institutions (especially the People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination), civil society organizations, employees organizations, networks, coalitions and organizations representing the interests of vulnerable groups, international organizations, media, etc., is a very successful practice, proven to be valid both in the drafting of important documents (legal and policy documents) and in their implementation, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the progress made (as was the case with the drafting of this report). Therefore, this practice will accompany all the relevant processes in the following years as well.

**ANNEX 1. DATA IN SUPPORT OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE FIRST DIMENSION "INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DECENT WORK"**

**Table 3: Planned budget versus actual expenses for the implementation of NESS 2019-2022.**

Amounts are in ALL billion								
Programs	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent	Planned	Spent
Labour market	1,720	1,480	1,699	1,547	2,737	2,466	2,287	1,992
VET	3,238	2,695	3,237	2,901	2,855	2,437	2,868	2,533
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,958</b>	<b>4,175</b>	<b>4,936</b>	<b>4,448</b>	<b>5,592</b>	<b>4,903</b>	<b>5,155</b>	<b>4,525</b>

Source: 2022 progress report on the implementation of NESS 2019-2022

**Table 4: Estimated total cost for the implementation of NESS 2023-2030.**

Cost of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2023-2030		Indicative cost (in ALL)	Source of coverage State budget and foreign funding	Financial gap	
				ALL	%
Policy Goal 1	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.1: Reducing skills mismatch for all occupations	29 522 288 976	26 761 582 497	2 760 706 479	9%
	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.2: Upskilling for both men and women at a working age	1 224 197 588	694 860 124	529 337 464	43%
	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1.3: Better functioning of the labour market for all	3 548 552 652	3 034 853 32	513 699 332	14%
Policy Goal 2	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2.1: More comprehensive employment mediation	26 211 384 015	17 238 944 066	8 972 439 949	34%
	OBJEKTIVI SPECIFIK 2.2: Ensuring decent work for everyone, everywhere	15 007 443 434	10 611 453 432	4 395 990 002	29%
<b>Total</b>		<b>75 513 866 666</b>	<b>58 341 693 439</b>	<b>17 172 173 227</b>	<b>23%</b>

Source: DCM No. 173, dated 24.03.2023 page 34

**Table 5: Increase in the minimum wage level over the years.**

Year	Minimum wage	Notes
2019	ALL 26,000	DCM No. 809, dated 26.12.2018
2020	ALL 26,000	DCM No. 809, dated 26.12.2018
2021	ALL 30,000	DCM No.1025, dated 16.12.2020
2022 (April)	ALL 32,000	DCM No.158, dated 12.03.2022
2022 (September)	ALL 34,000	DCM No. 604, dated 14.9.2022
2023 (April)	ALL 40,000	DCM No. 113, dated 01.03.2023
2024	ALL 40,000	DCM No. 113, dated 01.03.2023

**ANNEX 2. DATA IN SUPPORT OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE SECOND DIMENSION "ELIMINATION OF POVERTY, SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SERVICES"**

**Table no. 4 Number of women/men participants according to the type of Employment Promotion Program**

	2020	2021	2022	2023 (January-February)
DCM 17 (Subsidized employment, on-the-job training, internships)	1105	1896	1790	807
DCM 535 (Community-Employment)	0	207	1267	995
DCM 348 (Self-Employment)	0	44	286	235
DCM 608 (COVID-Employment)	1722	2687	1001	184
Old DCM (ended in 2020)	1319	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4146</b>	<b>4834</b>	<b>4,344</b>	<b>2221</b>

Table no. 5 below reflects the services according to typology, type of social care centers and financing method, number and percentage, at district level, carried out in May 2023

Shërbimet sipas llojit të institucioneve	Gjithsej	Parashoqërore	Rezidenciale	Strehëza	Komunitare	Qendër zhvillimi	Qendër ditore	Familje	Të specializuara	Këshillim	Situatë emergjente	Kujdes alternativ
Publike	357	80	27	7	44	24	45	26	39	10	42	13
Qendrore	92	20	19	2	5	5	8	3	12	2	11	5
Qarku	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Bashkia	212	44	6	5	34	14	31	21	22	6	24	5
Të përziera	49	14	2	0	5	5	6	2	5	1	6	3
Jo Publike	532	113	46	19	77	25	64	46	56	29	40	17
OJF	276	66	16	11	41	17	35	21	27	23	14	5
Donatorë	63	16	2	1	14	0	5	6	9	3	5	2
Privatë	165	26	27	7	19	6	19	14	15	3	19	10
Të përziera	28	5	1	0	3	2	5	5	5	0	2	0
Të përziera	258	45	10	4	42	11	39	27	25	22	28	5
Gjithsej	1.147	238	83	30	163	60	148	99	120	61	110	35
Në %	100	21	7	3	14	5	13	9	10	5	10	3

**INFORMATION ON THE INVENTORY OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR HOUSEHOLDS**

- 1) Pre-social services should be provided by special structures of social services (NJVNR and NJMF)
- 2) Residential services are services provided in residential centers and, in any case, include at least 24-hour long-term care services for individuals in need.
- 3) Temporary shelters for the victims of trafficking (children and women and girls)
- 4) Temporary shelter for LGBTI+
- 5) Temporary shelter for women and girls victims of domestic violence
- 6) Specialized one-stop centers for victims of severe forms of violence, mainly victims of sexual abuse
- 7) Specialized one-stop centers for child victims of severe forms of violence, mainly victims of sexual abuse
- 8) Community services are half-day or full-day services, delivered in day centers, according to the category of beneficiaries.

- 9) Specialized mobility services and family assistance are social care services provided in families for the elderly and persons with disabilities (physical, intellectual and mental disabilities).
- 10) Community services for family empowerment and their social and economic integration
- 11) Community services for child and family support (CHILD HUB) for the prevention of institutionalization and separation of the child from the biological family
- 12) Positive parenting service
- 13) Counselling service for women and girls victims of domestic violence and trafficking
- 14) Online counselling service for children at risk
- 15) 72-hour emergency service is provided to individuals who need immediate assistance due to a life- and health-threatening situation, who are provided with at least immediate accommodation, food and a safe environment.
- 16) The alternative care service ensures the development, education, health and well-being of the child and is provided to the child when it is not in his best interest to stay in a certain family environment.

**Table no.6**

**Number of new infections of HIV cases in the female population, per 1,000 unaffected population**  
**This indicator is provided by the Institute of Public Health.**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Females (15-24)</b>	0.004	0.005	0.015	0.005	0.022
<b>Females (15-49)</b>	0.024	0.025	0.033	0.029	0.026
<b>Females (50+)</b>	0.027	0.019	0.013	0.015	0.020
<b>Females (all ages)</b>	0.025	0.022	0.024	0.023	0.024

### **Detailed information on mental health services**

The decentralization and deinstitutionalization of mental health services continues to be a priority of the Albanian state together with the strengthening of mental health services in Primary Health Care through the establishment of socio-health centers. This intervention was piloted in 2022 and extended to more than 100 health care centers (where 88 psychologists, 14 social workers, 17 speech therapists and 30 physiotherapists and 30 physiotherapists are currently employed and deliver psycho-social and rehabilitation services) and there were added community services specialized in mental health (such as Community Mental Health Centers/CMHCs and Supportive Homes). Currently, 10 CMHCs and 14 Support Houses have been established and are operational (the latter accommodate about 150 people with chronic mental health disorders, of which 65 are women).

In 2023, it was amended DCM no. 456, dated 22.5.2013 “On the composition and mode of operation of the National Mental Health Committee” (approved by Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 539, dated 13.09.2023), which focused on the mental health of children and teenagers, through the establishment of a subcommittee dedicated to the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents. The subcommittee assists the commission in the analysis and assessment of the mental health situation of children and adolescents and social and health services available to this age group, proposing to the Committee strategic or programme interventions, as well as regulatory amendments, which aim to improve mental health for children and teenagers.

In this context, with the support of WHO and UNICEF during 2023-2024, a series of activities have been implemented to improve the mental health and psychosocial well-being and development of children and teenagers in Albania. Initially, during the months of May-July 2023, an in-depth (secondary) analysis of the HBSC 2021/22 survey data was conducted. The purpose of this analysis was to assess mental health and well-being in children and adolescents (11, 13 and 15 years old) and their correlations with socio-



demographic factors, behavioral/lifestyle health characteristics and COVID-19. The main findings were discussed in four round tables in Lezhë (1), Elbasan (1) and Kukës (2). A total of 44 education and health professionals participated in those round table discussions, they emphasized the importance of conducting research studies on the behavior of teenagers, where one of the main findings is the fact that the girls report more on mental health problems compared to boys.

- A Summer School for Mental Health was organized in Pogradec from August 2-6 and gathered 25 young people from five different cities in Albania, namely Tirana, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Puka and Kukësi. The event aimed to create a supportive environment for participants to learn more, discuss and design local actions on overcoming mental health challenges. Regarding gender, 7 of the participants were boys and 18 were girls. During these days the participants were also able to identify the main issues related to mental health in their cities and to initiate and prepare 5 local initiatives that were organized later in the year and involved around 104 young people.

- 10 full-day training sessions were organized with primary health care staff regarding postpartum depression also in their capacity as caregivers/primary caregivers of children. In total, 195 (191 women; 118 from rural areas) health professionals were trained in Elbasan and Lezhë, including midwives, nurses, general practitioners, obstetricians-gynaecologists, neonatologists, vaccinators and mental health specialists in Local Health Care Units or health centers.

- MHSP, through PHI in collaboration with AQAPUE experts, and project experts prepared a manual tailored to address the psychosocial needs of children and teenagers facing mental health challenges. This resource, entitled "Talking about mental health issues with female/male students - A guide to support psychosocial services in schools", was prepared to promote the psychosocial wellbeing of children and teenagers in education settings. To facilitate the presentation of this new support manual, two comprehensive inclusive training sessions were held in Lezhë and Elbasan. A total of 36 psychosocial workers from the secondary schools of Lezha and Elbasan actively participated in these training sessions, with a gender distribution of 33 women/young women and 3 men/young men.

Special attention has also been given to digital interventions in favor of mental health. In this context, two training sessions were organized in Lezhë and Elbasan to present the online platform "ifightDepression" as a useful intervention for the treatment of mild and moderate depression in schools. A total of 36 participants took part, of which 26 psychologists and 10 social workers, with a gender distribution of 33 women/young women and 3 men/young men, working in secondary education and high schools. Representatives from the Directorate of Pre-University Education, the Local Office of Pre-University Education, the Community Center for Mental Health, the Community Center for Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection were also present at the meeting.

- 43 informative sessions with school-aged children and adolescents were organized in October 2023 - March 2024. The aim of this intervention was to improve understanding about mental well-being, improve community attitudes towards adolescents with depression or other mental health conditions as well as the promotion of positive mental health, actively engaging young people. The total number of participants was 1207. The engagement of 15 school health professionals, 4 social workers, 27 psychologists, 42 teachers and 22 health promotion specialists underlined the collaborative and multidisciplinary nature of the project.

- 25 full-day training sessions were held with primary health care professionals on early identification, immediate support and referral for mental health problems and conditions for children and adolescents. A total of 525 health professionals were trained in Kukës, Tiranë, Lezhë and Berat, a total of 525 staff of which 441 women/young women, including family doctors, nurses, general practitioners, mental health specialists, psychologists in health care centers, as well as health personnel in schools.

- The document "I support my friends" was translated and contextualized for Albania, providing guidelines for female/male peer support. In 2024, activities will continue to support peer education by using this tool. On the topic of mental health of female/male young people, a number of different activities have been implemented with the multidisciplinary staff of the primary health care centers (general practitioners, family doctors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), pre-university school staff (psycho-social staff,

teachers), Community Mental Health Centers (psychiatrists for children and adolescents), psychologists, social workers, nurses, speech therapists, etc.) and social protection personnel of local self-government units (Child Protection Unit, etc.), by sharing information on integrated pathways for the identification, care and rehabilitation of children and adolescents who need support for mental health and psychosocial well-being, in all sectors, on the regulatory acts to optimize the delivery and access to integrated care for children and adolescents who need support for mental health and psychosocial well-being, in all sectors, as well as on the monitoring process for integrated care for children and adolescents who need support for mental health and psychosocial well-being.

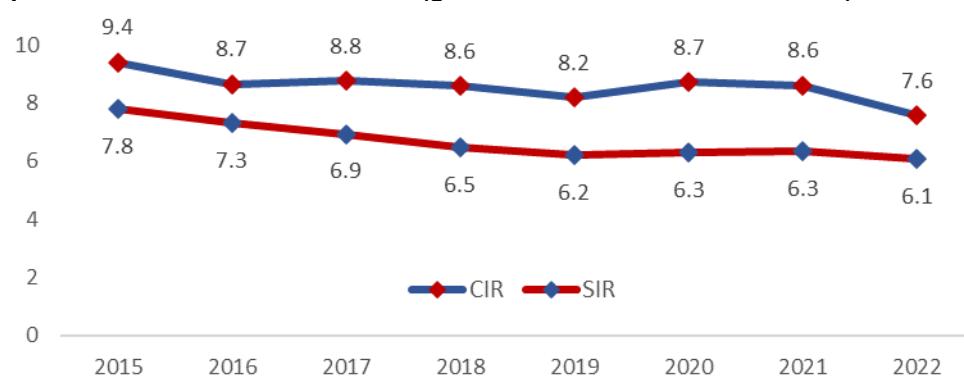
- An anti-stigma campaign for mental health was developed and implemented by MHSP in collaboration with a Youth Organization, supported by the WHO, engaging teenagers and young women from the districts of Elbasan and Tirana, based on evidence-based interventions (the program by peers), reaching more than 600 people (mainly young people, but also parents and teachers) and more than 3000 young people through social media. The main activities of the campaign were: Campaign through video message, information and project presentation by Youth NGO, Participation in the UN WEEK and the fair organized by the Ministry, informative sessions and fairs, MentArt exhibition: display of Artistic Expressions of Mental Health, as well as reaching and social media engagement.

**Table no.7**

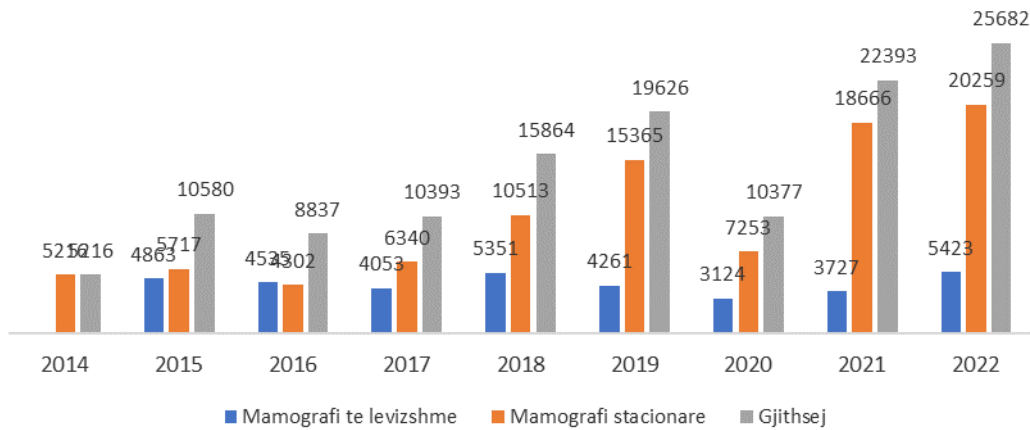
**The number of women screened each year in the framework of the program for cervical cancer**

Year	Screened women
2019	14,000
2020	10,200
2021	8,250
2022	10,400
2023	9,230
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,080</b>

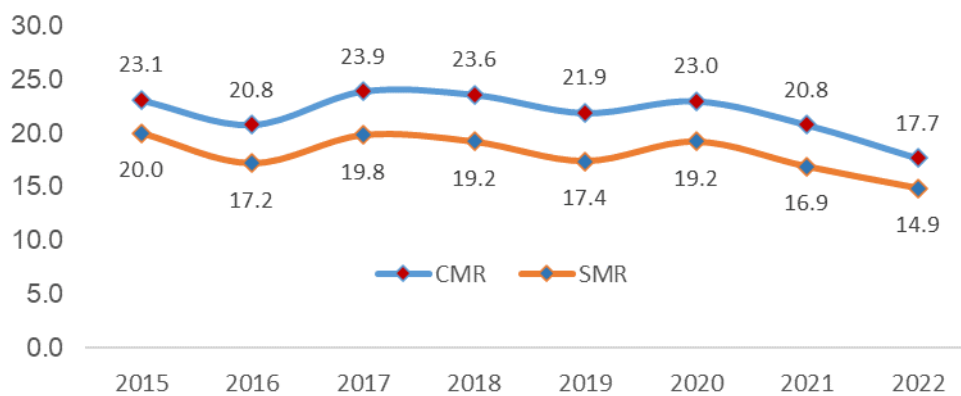
**Graph no. 1 Time trend of incidence (gross -CIR and standardized -SIR) of cervical cancer**



**Graph no.2 Increase of the number of mobile screening mammograms in years for women:**



**Graph no.3 Time trend of mortality rate (gross – GMR and standardized -SMR) from the breast cancer**



### ANNEX 3. DATA TO SUPPORT ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE THIRD DIMENSION “FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, STIGMA AND STEREOTYPES”.

Important acts adopted in implementation of the legal amendments cited in this report are:

- Joint Instruction of the Ministry of Justice and the High Judicial Council No. 9, dated 17.06.2020 “On determining the rules for the creation of a special domestic violence cases database in the courts and the unification of their registration”.
- Standard Action Procedures for dealing with cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence by social care service female/male employees in the framework of cooperation as members of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (February 2020);
- Instruction of the Minister no. 744 dated 15.11.2019 “On the approval of minimum standards of social care services for victims/survivors of gender-based violence and domestic violence, in emergency (short-term) public and non-public residential centers (emergency shelters);
- Protocol on the Management of Domestic Violence Cases at the local level, through the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (CRM), including the same protocol to be used in emergency situations (Covid-19 pandemic situation);
- Protocol on the Management of Sexual Violence cases among female/male adults, at the local level through a coordinated multi-sector approach;
- Standard operating procedures on handling cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence by health service employees in the framework of cooperation as members of the Coordinated Referral Mechanism (2020);

Likewise, the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of State Police have drawn up and distributed a series of documentation (Derogatory Letter) addressed to Police Stations throughout the country for the implementation of laws and bylaws.

In 2020, measures were taken to improve the legal framework, also to respond to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and in particular to the increase in cases of domestic violence as a result of measures to restrict the movement of citizens. The approved acts include:

- MHSP protocol no. 254, dated April 10, 2020 “On the operation of public and non-public residential centers that provide housing services for victims/survivors of domestic violence and for victims/survivors of human trafficking under the COVID-19 pandemic situation”.
- MHSP Instruction No. 253, dated April 10, 2020 on managing cases of children in need of protection during the COVID-19 emergency.
- Normative Act of the Council of Ministers No. 9, dated March 25, 2020 “On taking special measures in the field of judiciary, during the duration of the pandemic situation caused by COVID-19”.

**Other legal acts related to domestic violence and gender-based violence against women.** During the reporting period, Albania has also adopted a number of other legal acts that provide for comprehensive services for victims of domestic violence and those of other forms of gender-based violence against women. They include:

- **Law no. 10/2021 “On asylum in the Republic of Albania”**, among other things, it regulates the terms and conditions for processing the requests of asylum seekers, in conformity with international standards, and provides additional guarantees for persons from special groups, which include, among others, pregnant women, victims of female genital mutilation, persons from the LGBTI community or persons, victims of torture, rape or different forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.
- **Law no. 13/2020 “On some amendments and Addenda to law no. 108/2013, “On Foreigners”**, where better protection is provided for foreign victims of trafficking, as well as victims of gender-based violence.
- Other laws mentioned above that provide for victims of gender-based violence as special beneficiary categories are: Law no. 15/2019 “On employment promotion”: Law no. 22/2018 “On

social housing”; Law no. 57/2019 “On social assistance in the Republic of Albania”; Law no. 111/2017 “On legal aid guaranteed by the state”; Law no. 121/2016 “On social care services in the Republic of Albania”; Law no. 65/2016 “On social enterprises in the Republic of Albania”, etc.

Table no.1 Legal Aid guaranteed by the state

Specific category	Primary Legal Aid	Secondary Legal Aid	Ctegrory Total
<b>Domestic violence victims</b>	1131	112	1243
<b>Sexually abused victims</b>	12		12
<b>Human trafficking victims</b>	92	1	93
<b>Minors victims</b>	21		21
<b>Minors in conflict with the law</b>	2		2
<b>Children living in the social care institutions</b>	0	2	2
<b>Children under custody, who have commenced proceedings without the consent of their legal guardian or against their legal guardian</b>	0	1	1
<b>Persons benefitting from the disability payment / KMCAP</b>	527	102	629
<b>Status of the person with sight impairment</b>	115	29	144
<b>Persons who undergo involuntary and voluntary treatment in mental health service institutions</b>	0		
<b>Persons who are required to remove or limit the ability to act</b>	3		3
<b>Persons, beneficiaries of social protection schemes</b>	767	119	886
<b>Beneficiaries of the economic assistance</b>	89		89
<b>Persons who are required to remove or limit the ability to act, who are required to initiate a process against their legal guardian</b>	0		
<b>Persons whose rights have been violated through an action or omission of action that constitutes discrimination</b>	1		1
<b>Female/male pennsioneer</b>	112	25	137
<b>Specific beneficiary category not defined</b>	116	1	117
<b>Total number of specific categories – Primary and Secondary Legal Aid - 2023</b>	2867	392	3259
<b>Roma/Egyptian women</b>	411	-	411
<b>Total minors</b>	399	-	399

Table no. 2 Cybercrime cases dealt with by the Department of Cybercrime Investigation<sup>401</sup>

VITI	Criminal offence	Cases handled and discovered	Cases handled and not discovered	Total cases	Arrested perpetrators	Perpetrators under proceedings in free situation	Total perpetrators
2019	Article 117/2 “Pornography”	0	5	5	-	-	-
2020	Article 117/2 “Pornography”	6	4	10	3	5	8
2021	Article 117/2 “Pornography”	113	7	120	2	136	138
2022	Article 117/2 “Pornography”	99	21	120	1	100	102
2023	Article 117/2 “Pornography”	24	13	37	1	25	26
2023 <sup>402</sup>	Article 121/a ‘Stalking’ (on-line)	1	0	1	0	1	1

<sup>401</sup> All cases have been referred to the Prosecutor’s Office of the General Jurisdiction. The problem of online blackmail has been continuously followed, which creates material consequences but also endangers the lives of citizens in the Republic of Albania, where after a detailed analysis, a press release is issued regarding the prevention of ongoing consequences..

<sup>402</sup> During the period July December 2023

**Table no.3 Public institutions and those funded by the social fund, the number of beneficiaries for the period 2020-2023.**

No.	Public institutions/ Centers funded by the social fund	Year	Number of beneficiaries treated
1	National Center of the treatment of the Domestic Violence, Kamëz-Tiranë	2020	60 beneficiaries (23 women and 37 children)
2	National Center of the treatment of the Domestic Violence, Kamëz-Tiranë	2021	85 beneficiaries (38 women and 47 children)
3	National Center of the treatment of the Domestic Violence, Kamëz-Tiranë	2022	51 beneficiaries (20 women and 31 children)
4	National Center of the treatment of the Domestic Violence, Kamëz-Tiranë	2023	79 beneficiaries (26 women and 52 children)
5	Emergency Center of the Domestic Violence Victims, Gjirokastrë	2021	10 beneficiaries outside the center, 37 cases with psycho-social, legal services, counseling, support to the households with food packages.
6	Emergency Center of the Domestic Violence Victims, Gjirokastrë	2022 2023	13 beneficiaries, 40 cases with psycho-social, legal services, counseling, support to the households with food packages.
7	Center for Women and Girls "Shelter", Berat	2021 2022-2023- 2024	4 violence cases and 2 trafficking cases (VMT) and 6 cases 2022
8	Shelter 48 hours, Kukës In 2021 the Center has organized awareness campaigns for the mission and operation of the center.	2021 2022( 5 raste) 2023 2024	Awareness campaigns were carried out in 14 administrative units of Kukës municipality by the coordinator of the center and for SPZ of the centers. Meetings with members of the municipal council on the services offered by shelters and ETN, treated 5 cases of violence, 5 cases outside the center with counseling.
10	Counseling Line for women and girls, Tiranë	2020	742 beneficiaries
11	Counseling Line for women and girls. Tiranë	2022 2023 2024	683 beneficiaries

**Table no.4 Budget for social fund**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Counseling Line for women and girls, Tiranë</b>	<b>3,901,500</b>	<b>6,768,552</b>	<b>6,768,552</b>	<b>6,768,552</b>
<b>Shelter in Kukës</b>	-	3,181,245	2,049,707	1,665,506
<b>Shelter in Berat</b>	-	3,087,000	3,087,000	1,164,000
<b>Shelter in Gjirokastrë</b>	6,400.138	4,120,396	1,987,018	1,987,018

## ANNEX 4.. DATA IN SUPPORT OF THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FOR THE FOURTH DIMENSION “PARTICIPATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND GENDER RESPONSIVE INSTITUTIONS ”

Table 6: Participation of AF of the Republic of Albania in UN missions - South Sudan.

Years	Number of participants in the mission
2019	2 military women
2020	2 military women
2021	1 military woman
2022	2 military men
2023	1 military woman
2024	2 military women

Source: Ministry of Defense, 2024

Table 7: Number of women and men in uniform for 2023..

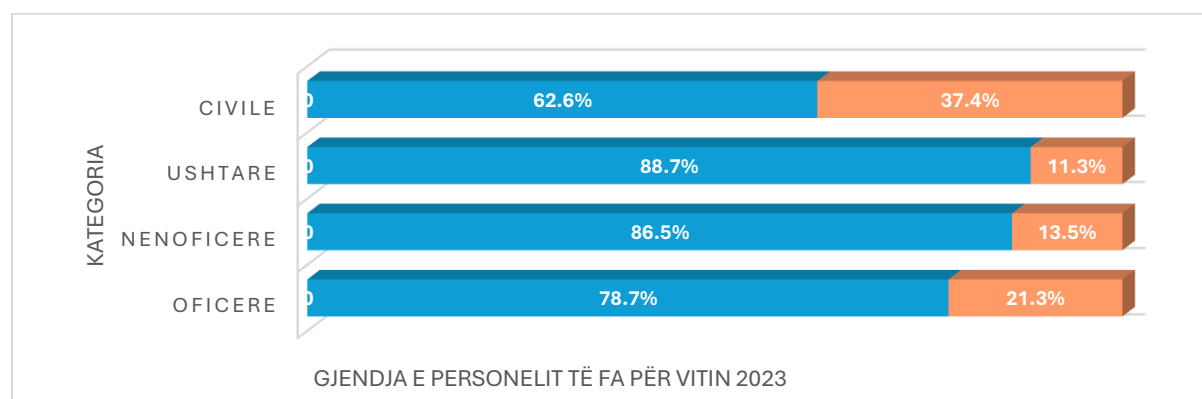
Year	Total	Number		Rate	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
2023	5,854	4,955	899	84.7%	15.3%

Source: Ministry of Defense, 2024

Table 8: Data on the personnel of the Armed Forces for the year 2023.

Category	Total	Number		Rate	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Officers	1,762	1,386	376	78.7%	21.3%
Non-Commissioned Officer	2,652	2,293	359	86.5%	13.5%
Soldiers	1,438	1,276	162	88.7%	11.3%
Civilians	1,748	1,094	654	62.6%	37.4%

Source: Ministry of Defense, 2024



Graphic 1: AF personnel for 2023 (in %). Source: Ministry of Defense, 2024.

## Data related to question 22 "Representation in political and public decision-making".<sup>403</sup>

### DEPUTETËT SIPAS PARTIVE POLITIKE DHE GJINISË, 2022

Members of parliament by political parties and sex, 2022

Subjekti politik	Numër-Number		%		Subject
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Partia Socialiste (PS)	45	29	60,8	39,2	Socialist Party
Partia Demokratike "Aleanca për Ndryshim"	41	18	69,5	30,5	Alliance for Change Democratic Party
Lëvizja Socialiste për Integrim (LSI)	2	2	50,0	50,0	Socialist movement for Integration
Partia Social Demokrate	2	1	66,7	33,3	Republican Party
<b>Gjithsej</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>64,3</b>	<b>35,7</b>	<b>Total</b>

Burimi: Kuvendi I Shqipërisë  
Source: Parliament of Albania

### PËRBËRJA E PARLAMENTIT SIPAS POZICIONIT, 2022

Composition of parliament by position, 2022

Posti	Numër-Number		%		Position
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Kryetar Parlamenti	0	1	0,0	100,0	Head of Parliament
Nënkryetar Parlamenti	1	1	50,0	50,0	Spokesperson of Parliament
Deputete	82	43	65,6	34,4	Member of Parliament (MP)
Kryetarë të Komisioneve Parlamentare	4	4	50,0	50,0	Chairs of Parliamentary Committees
Kryetarë të Grupeve Parlamentare	3	1	75,0	25,0	Chairs of Parliamentary Groups

Burimi: Kuvendi I Shqipërisë  
Source: Parliament of Albania

### NUMRI I PUNONJËSVE NË STRUKTUARAT E POLICISË SIPAS GRADAVE DHE GJINISË

Number of employees in the police force by grades and sex

Punonjësit në polici sipas gradave	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		Number of employers in the Police Force by grades
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Drejtues Madhor	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	Major Director
Drejtues i Lartë	5	1	6	1	7	-	7	-	7	-	High Director
Drejtues	29	-	28	1	27	1	28	1	38	1	Director
Drejtues i Parë	107	10	97	11	92	11	94	11	106	15	First Director
Kryekomisar	277	28	310	29	298	27	299	27	250	25	Head commissar
Komisar	417	35	490	56	476	59	480	59	446	49	Commissar
Nënkomisar	1.313	176	1.197	172	1.219	199	1.231	202	1.258	242	Vice commissar
Inspektor	6.431	681	6.322	661	6.689	671	6.756	679	6.597	661	Inspector
Civil	484	577	471	581	474	598	460	583	557	615	Civilian
<b>Gjithsej</b>	<b>9.064</b>	<b>1.508</b>	<b>8.922</b>	<b>1.512</b>	<b>9.283</b>	<b>1.566</b>	<b>9.356</b>	<b>1.562</b>	<b>9.260</b>	<b>1.608</b>	<b>Total</b>

Burimi: Drejtoria e Përgjithshme e Policisë së Shtetit  
Source: General Directorate of State Police

<sup>403</sup> Source: INSTAT: Women and men, 2023<sup>4</sup>.



## NUMRI I PUNONJËSVE NË FORCAT E ARMATOSURA SIPAS GJINISË

Number of employers in armed forces by sex

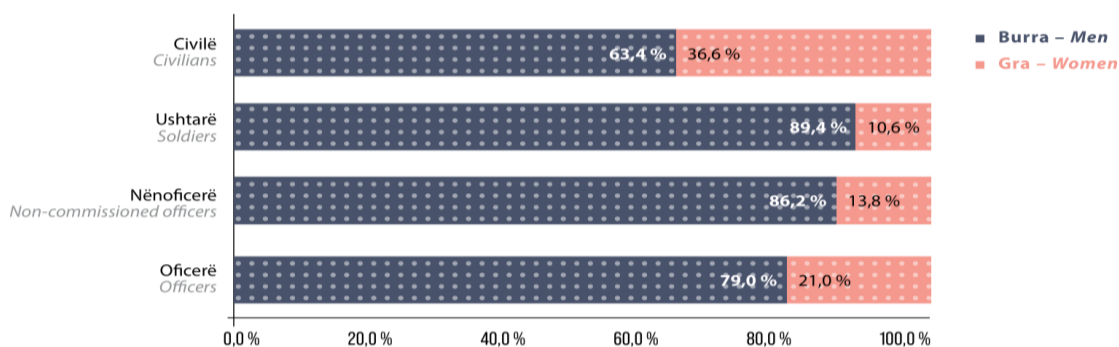
Vitet Year	Numër-Number		%	
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women
2016	6.562	1.389	82,5	17,5
2017	7.012	1.571	81,7	18,3
2018	6.925	1.563	81,6	18,4
2019	6.519	1.569	80,6	19,4
2020	6.315	1.574	80,0	20,0
2021	6.206	1.563	79,9	20,1
2022	5.061	892	85,0	15,0

Burimi: Ministria e Mbrojtjes

Source: Ministry of Defense

## NUMRI I PUNONJËSVE NË FORCAT E ARMATOSURA SIPAS GRADEVE DHE GJINISË, 2022

Number of employers in armed forces by grades and sex, 2022



Burimi: Ministria e Mbrojtjes  
Source: Ministry of Defense

## PJESËMARRJA NË MISIONET DIPLOMATIKE

Participation in diplomatic missions

Shënim: Të dhënat e fundit i referohen vitit 2021 / Note: The data refers to the year 2021

Posti	Numër-Number		%		Position
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Ambasador	36	16	69,2	30,8	Ambassador
Ministër Fuqiplotë	3	6	33,3	66,7	Minister Powerful
Ministër Këshilltar	7	6	53,8	46,2	Minister Counsellor
Këshilltar	10	13	43,5	56,5	Counsellor
Sekretar i Parë	8	14	36,4	63,6	Secretary, First
Sekretar i Dytë	16	23	41,0	59,0	Secretary, Second
Sekretar i Tretë	2	2	50,0	50,0	Secretary, Third

Burimi: Ministria e Punëve të Jashtme

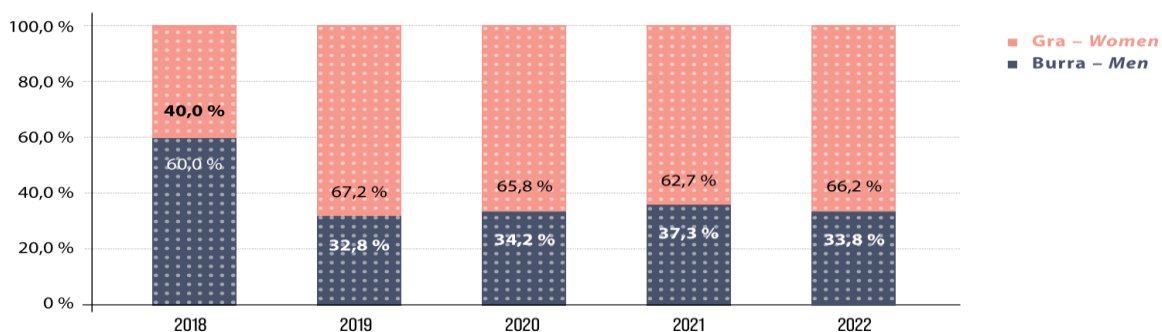
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**POZICIONET NË SHKOLLËN E MAGJISTRATURËS SIPAS GJINISË**  
*Positions in School of Magistrates*

Posti	2019		2020		2021		2022		Position
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Këshilli Drejtues	11	5	8	6	8	6	11	4	Steering Council
Drejtori	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	Director
Studentë konkurrues	84	165	97	180	82	176	93	224	Competitive students
Studente fitues	19	39	26	50	25	42	26	51	Winners Student

Burimi: Shkolla e Magjistraturës  
 Source: School of Magistrates

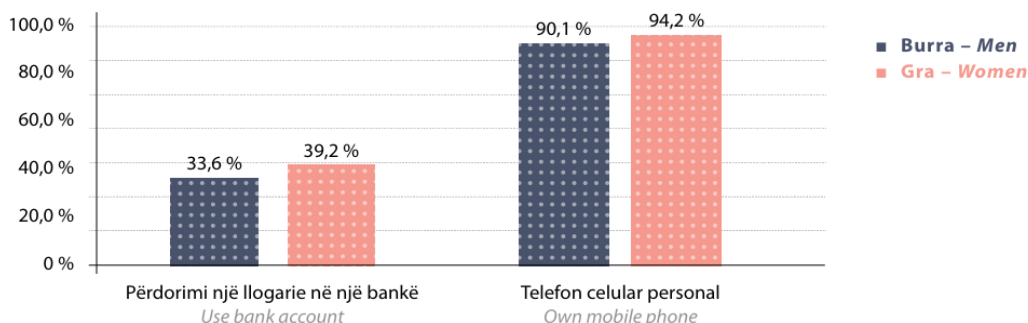
**STUDENT FITUES NË SHKOLLËN E MAGJISTRATURËS**  
*Winners student in School of Magistrates*



Burimi: Shkolla e Magjistraturës  
 Source: School of Magistrates

**PËRQINDJA E PERSONAVE 15-49 VJEÇ QË PËRDORIN NJË LLOGARI NË NJË BANKË DHE PËRQINDJA QË KANË NJË TELEFON CELULAR**  
*Percentage of persons age 15-49 who use an account in a bank and percentage who own a mobile phone*

	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Përdorimi një llogarie në një bankë	33,6	39,2	Use bank account
Telefon celular personal	90,1	94,2	Own mobile phone



Burimi: Anketa Demografike e Shëndetit 2017-18  
 Source: Health Demographic Survey 2017-18

**NDËRMARRJET AKTIVE SIPAS GJINISË SË PRONARIT/ADMINISTRATORIT DHE AKTIVITETIT EKONOMIK, NË (%)**  
*Active enterprises by sex of owner/administrator and economic activity, in (%)*

Aktiviteti ekonomik	2020		2021		2022		Economic activity
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
<b>Gjithsej</b>	<b>68,6</b>	<b>31,4</b>	<b>68,9</b>	<b>31,1</b>	<b>68,8</b>	<b>31,2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Prodhuesit e të mirave</b>	<b>83,1</b>	<b>16,9</b>	<b>83,0</b>	<b>17,0</b>	<b>82,8</b>	<b>17,2</b>	<b>Producers of goods</b>
Bujqësia, pyjet dhe peshkimi	82,3	17,7	82,9	17,1	81,5	18,5	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing
Industria	79,4	20,6	79,0	21,0	78,9	21,1	Industry
Ndërtimi	90,2	9,8	89,5	10,5	88,8	11,2	Construction
<b>Prodhuesit e shërbimeve</b>	<b>66,3</b>	<b>33,7</b>	<b>66,7</b>	<b>33,3</b>	<b>66,6</b>	<b>33,4</b>	<b>Producers of services</b>
Tregtia	65,0	35,0	65,7	34,3	65,8	34,2	Trade
Transporti dhe magazinimi	93,4	6,6	93,1	6,9	91,9	8,1	Transport & Storage
Akomodimi dhe shërbimi ushqimor	71,0	29,0	71,4	28,6	71,6	28,4	Accommodation and food service activities
Informacioni dhe komunikacioni	75,1	24,9	75,5	24,5	74,6	25,4	Information & Communication
Shërbime të tjera	59,4	40,6	59,9	40,1	59,8	40,2	Other Services

Burimi: Regjistri i ndërmarrjeve, INSTAT  
 Source: Business register, INSTAT

**NDËRMARRJET AKTIVE SIPAS GJINISË SË PRONARIT/ADMINISTRATORIT DHE NUMRIT TË TË PUNËSUARVE, NË (%)**  
*Active enterprises by sex of owner/administrator and number of employed, in (%)*

Grupuar sipas numrit të të punësuarve	2020		2021		2022		Group by the number of employed
	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	Burra Men	Gra Women	
Gjithsej	68,6	31,4	68,9	31,1	68,8	31,2	Total
1-4	67,2	32,8	67,6	32,4	67,5	32,5	1-4
5-9	76,1	23,9	76,4	23,6	76,1	23,9	5-9
10-49	78,0	22,0	77,2	22,8	76,7	23,3	10-49
50+	77,2	22,8	76,3	23,7	76,1	23,9	50+

**ANNEX 5. DATA IN SUPPORT OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOR THE FIFTH DIMENSION “PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY”.**

**Table 9: Treatment of AF personnel with pensions/special remunerations for the period 2019-2022.**  
**Source: Ministry of Defense, 2024**

DENOMINATION	YEAR 2019			YEAR 2020			YEAR 2021			YEAR 2022		
	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
Number of persons benefitting from supplementary military insurance	2,003	25,773	27,776	2,023	26,030	28,053	2,043	26,291	28,334	2,063	26,554	28,617
Number of persons benefitting from special treatment as former pilots	-	233	233	-	235	235	-	234	234	-	233	233
Number of persons benefitting from special treatment as former employees in military enterprises	274	181	455	247	163	410	245	161	406	242	160	402
Number of persons benefitting from special treatment as former employees of the naval fleet	-	61	61	-	59	59	-	59	59	-	58	58

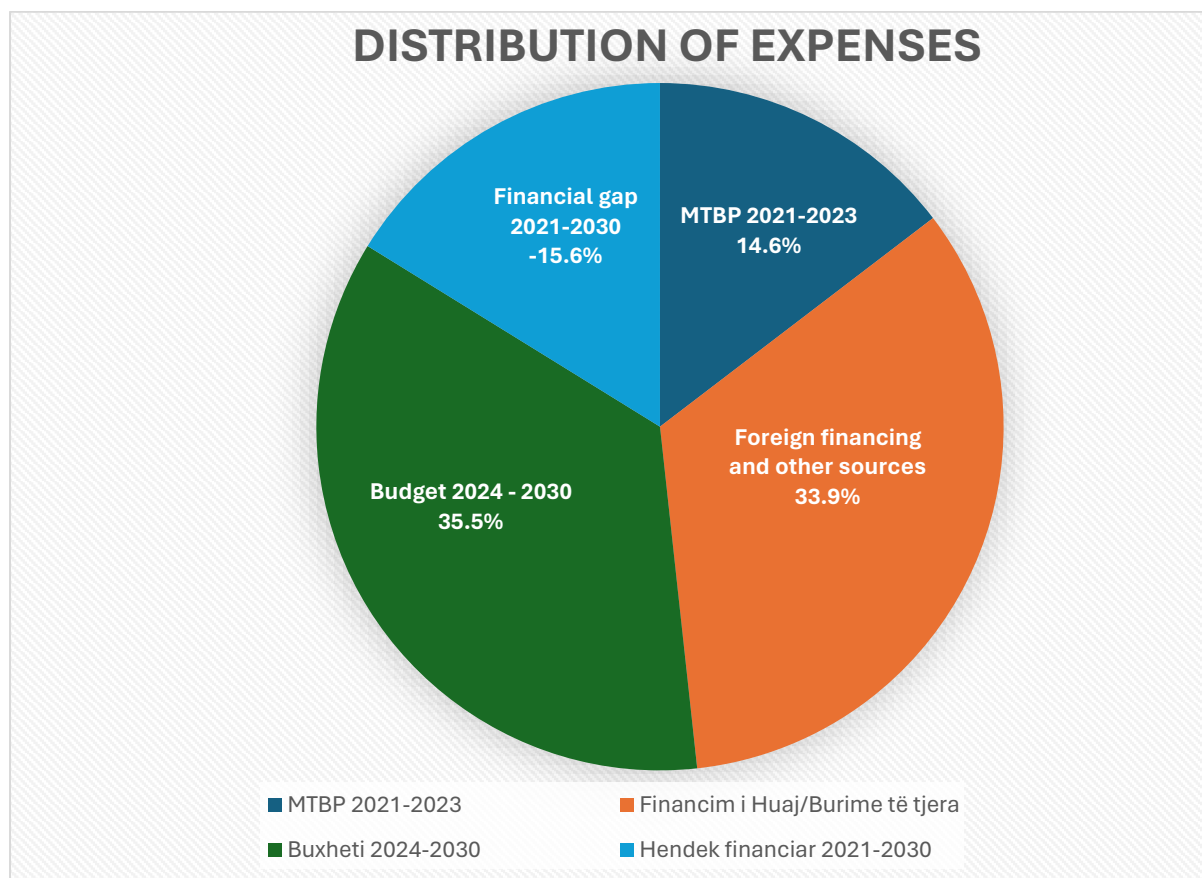
## ANNEX 6. DATA IN SUPPORT OF RESPONSES TO SECTION FOUR OF THE REPORT

**Table 10: Planned costs for the implementation of NSGE 2021 - 2030 for all four strategic goals**

POLICY GOAL	Nature/ Type of Cost	Total Cost	Planned Costs	Costs	Financial Gap
		2021-2030	MTBP 2021-2023/ Other sources and donors	to be planned in the 2024-2030 Budget	2021-2030
P I: Fulfillment of economic and social rights of women, young women, girls and men, young men, boys in society and empowerment of women, young women and girls in all their diversity (from rural areas, ethnic minorities, disabled , LGBTI+, elderly, single mothers, survivors of violence/trafficking, daughters and mothers, migrants and asylum seekers, etc.), aiming at growth and sustainability of the environmental (green) economy, and their equal participation in the digitalization process.	Current	696,104,214	435,418,581	189,638,980	<b>72,599,153</b>
	Capital	20,010,000	6,900,000	11,557,500	
P II: Ensuring the equal participation, representation, and leadership rights of women and men, young women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity from rural areas, ethnic minorities, disabled , LGBTI+, elderly, single mothers, survivors of violence/trafficking, daughters and mothers, migrants and asylum seekers, etc) in political and public decision-making at the local level.	Current	98,284,272	32,277,760	11,988,480	<b>54,018,032</b>
	Capital	0	0	0	
P III: Reducing all forms of harmful practices, gender-based violence and domestic violence.	Current	1,523,129,993	770,164,420	423,441,572	<b>394,444,001</b>
	Capital	648,945,000	271,870,000	312,155,000	
P IV: Application of gender mainstreaming as the main tool for achieving gender equality and gender justice in society.	Current	394,963,280	115,505,108	252,962,424	<b>26,495,748</b>
	Capital	264,500	264,500	0	
<b>TOTAL [ALL]</b>		<b>3,381,701,259</b>	<b>1,632,400,369</b>	<b>1,201,743,956</b>	<b>547,556,934</b>
<b>TOTAL [Euro]</b> <b>1 euro 124 ALL</b>		<b>27,271,784</b>	<b>13,164,519</b>	<b>9,691,484</b>	<b>4,415,782</b>

Source: Data from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, as part of the preparation of this report, May 2024.

**Graphic 1: Distribution of expenses for the implementation of the NSGE 2021 – 2030**



Source: Data from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in the framework of the preparation of this report, May 2024.

## ANNEX 7. DATA TO SUPPORT ANSWERS TO SECTION FIVE OF THE REPORT

### Indicators for SDG 5. Source, INSTAT, 2023

Goal	Targets	Indicators	Definition name	Alignment with UN definition	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	SDG Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	Indicator 5.5.1 a Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments	The proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments, currently as at 1 February of reporting year, is currently measured as the number of seats held by women members in single or lower chambers of national parliaments, expressed as a percentage of all occupied seats.  National parliaments can be bicameral or unicameral. This indicator covers the single chamber in unicameral parliaments and the lower chamber in bicameral parliaments. It does not cover the upper chamber of bicameral parliaments. Seats are usually won by members in general parliamentary elections. Seats may also be filled by nomination, appointment, and indirect election, rotation of members and by election.	100% aligned;	29.5	29.5	35.7	35.7

Goal	Targets	Indicators	Definition name	Alignment with UN	2019
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality	SDG Target 5.5 Ensure	Indicator 5.5.1 b Proportion of seats	The proportion of seats held by women in (b) local governments, currently as	100% aligned;	43.7

Goal	Targets	Indicators	Definition name	Alignment with UN	2019	2020	2021	2022
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	SDG Target 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all	Indicator 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions	This indicator refers to the number of females as a proportion of the total number of persons	100% aligned;	34.7%	35.4%	35.5%	34.9%

Minimum set of gender indicators. Source INSTAT: <https://www.instat.gov.al/al/temat/treguesit-demografik%C3%AB-dhe-social%C3%AB/barazia-gjinore/#tab2>

Treguesit gjinorë Gender indicator	Viti/Year 2020		Viti/Year 2021		Viti/Year 2022		SDG	
	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra -Women		
I	Strukturat ekonomike, pjesëmarrja në aktivitete produktive dhe akses në burime -Economic structures, participation in productive activities and access to resources							
1	Numri mesatar i orëve të shpenzuara në punën e brendshme të papaguar sipas gjinisë -Average number of hours spent on unpaid	2:06 hours	5:43 hours	2:06 hours	5:43 hours	2:06 hours	5:43 hours	5.4.1
2	Numri mesatar i orëve të shpenzuara në punën e paguar dhe të papaguar (barra totale e punës), sipas gjinisë -Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex	11:54 hours	9:45 hours	11:54 hours	9:45 hours	11:54 hours	9:45 hours	
3	Norma e pjesëmarrjes në forcën e punës për grupmoshën 15-24, sipas gjinisë -Labour force participation rates for 15-24, by sex	43.0%	28.5%	41.1%	31.5%	43.6%	33.8%	
3.1	Norma e pjesëmarrjes në forcën e punës për grupmoshën 15+, sipas gjinisë -Labour force participation rates for 15+, by sex	66.9%	52.3%	67.2%	52.6%	68.4%	56.5%	
4	Përpjesa e të punësuarëve që janë të vetpunësuar, sipas gjinisë(15+) -Proportion of employed who are own-account workers, by sex (15+)	39.3%	25.8%	39.0%	23.3%	38.1%	23.7%	
5	Përpjesa e të punësuarëve që janë duke punuar si punëtorë kontribues në familje, sipas gjinisë (15-64) -Proportion of employed who are working as contributing family workers, by sex	15.0%	26.1%	12.9%	25.0%	14.8%	26.6%	
6	Përpjesa e të punësuarëve që janë punëdhënës, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of employed who are employer, by sex	5.2%	1.3%	6.0%	1.4%	6.0%	1.6%	
7	Përqindja e firmave në pronësi apo administrim të femrave, në total -Percentage of adult population who are entrepreneurs, by sex	25.5%		24.1%		31.2%		
7.1	Përqindja e firmave në pronësi të femrave, deri në 4 punonjës -Percentage of firms owned by women, with 0 to 4 employees	25.8%		24.2%		32.5%		
7.2	Përqindja e firmave në pronësi të femrave, 05-09 punonjës -Percentage of firms owned by women, with 05 to 09 employees	23.9%		23.6%		23.9%		
7.3	Përqindja e firmave në pronësi të femrave, 10-49 punonjës -Percentage of firms owned by women, with 10 to 49 employees	22.0%		22.8%		23.3%		
7.4	Përqindja e firmave në pronësi të femrave, 50 + punonjës -Percentage of firms owned by women, 50 + employees	22.8%		23.7%		23.9%		
8	Përqindja e shpërndarjes së të punësuarëve sipas sektorëve për cdo gjini -Percentage distribution of employed population by sector, each sex	55.5%	44.5%	55.5%	44.5%	54.0%	46.0%	
8.1	Bujqësi -Agriculture	31.8%	41.4%	28.8%	40.0%	28.7	40.1	
8.2	Prodhim -Manufacturing	8.8%	14.1%	9.4%	13.5%	8.8	14.7	
8.3	Ndërtim -Construction	12.2%	0.6%	14.2%	0.5%	13.5	0.6	
8.4	Industri nxjerrëse, energji, gaz dhe furnizim me ujë -Mining and quarrying & Electricity, Gas and Water supply	3.3%	1.1%	4.0%	0.9%	4.3	0.9	
8.5	Shërbime të tregut -Market Services	31.7%	21.6%	30.1%	22.3%	30.9	22.5	
8.6	Shërbime jo të tregut -Non-market Services	12.2%	21.2%	13.6%	22.9%	13.8	21.2	



Treguesit gjinorë Gender indicator		Viti/Year 2020		Viti/Year 2021		Viti/Year 2022		SDG
		Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	
9	Punësimi jo formal si një përqindje e totalit të punësimit jo bujqësor, sipas gjinisë -Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, by sex	34.1%	21.9%	34.8%	21.4%	33.3%	21.1%	8.3.1
10	Papunësia sipas grupmoshës dhe gjinisë -Youth unemployment by sex							8.5.2
10.1	15+	11.5%	11.9%	11.3%	11.8%	10.6	11.4	
10.2	15-64	12.0%	12.4%	11.8%	12.4%	10.9	11.7	
10.3	15-24	27.0%	25.9%	25.5%	29.2%	24.1	25.9	
10.4	25-54	11.0%	11.8%	10.3%	10.3%	9.9	10.4	
10.5	55-64	6.5%	7.1%	8.9%	10.6%	7.2	8.9	
10.6	65+	1.2%	0.3%	4.1%	0.1%			
11	Pjesa e popullsisë me llogari depozituese në banka, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of adults (18 years and older) with an deposit account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider, by sex	56.5%	43.5%	56.7%	43.3%	55.9%	44.1%	8.10.2
11.1	Pjesa e popullsisë me llogari huamarrëse në banka, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of adults (18 years and older) with an loan account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider, by sex	56.8%	43.2%	56.7%	43.3%	56.5%	43.5%	
12	Pjesa e popullsisë së rritur që zotërojnë tokë, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of adult population owning land, by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.a.1
13	Hendeku gjinor në paga -Gender gap in wages	6.6%		4.5%			6.2%	8.5.1
14	Pjesa e të punësuarëve (15+) që punojnë me kohë të pjesshme, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of employed (15+) working part-time, by sex	14.4%	22.3%	13.4%	23.6%	12.1%	21.2%	
15	Norma e punësimit e personave të moshës 25-49 vjeç me një fëmijë nën 3 vjeç që jeton në familje dhe pa fëmijë që jetojnë në familje, sipas gjinisë -Employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under age 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household, by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
16	Pjesa e fëmijëve nën moshën 3 vjeç në kujdes formal -Proportion of children under age 3 in formal care	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
17	Pjesa e individëve që përdorin internetin, sipas gjinisë, moshë (16-74) -Proportion of individuals using the Internet, by age (15-59) sex							17.8.1
17.1	Gjatë 3 muajve të fundit / Within the last 3 months	73.2%	71.2%	80.3%	78.3%	83.7	81.5	
17.2	Midis 3 muajve dhe një viti më parë / Between 3 months and a year ago	1.7%	1.7%	0.8%	0.7%	3.0	3.3	
17.3	Më shumë se 1 vit më parë / More than one year ago	5.2%	4.5%	3.7%	3.5%	2.0	2.1	
17.4	Asnjëherë nuk e kam përdorur / Never used it	19.8%	22.6%	15.2%	17.4%	11.3	13.0	
18	Pjesa e individëve që përdorin telefon/telefona celular, sipas gjinisë -Proportion of individuals using mobile/ cellular telephones, by sex and age (15-59)	94.1%	89.2%	94.1%	89.2%	94.1%	89.2%	5.b.1
19	Pjesa e familjeve që kanë akses në media (radio, TV, internet), sipas gjinisë së kryefamiljarit -Proportion of households with access to mass media (radio, TV, Internet), by sex of household head							
19.1	Pjesa e familjeve me akses në TV, sipas gjinisë së kryefamiljarit -Proportion of households with access to mass media TV, by sex of household head	93.0%	91.0%	93.0%	91.0%	93.0%	91.0%	
19.2	Pjesa e familjeve me akses në cel, sipas gjinisë së kryefamiljarit -Proportion of households with access to mass media cel, by sex of household head	88.0%	80.0%	88.0%	80.0%	88.0%	80.0%	
19.3	Pjesa e familjeve me akses në internet, sipas gjinisë së kryefamiljarit -Proportion of households with access to mass media internet, by sex of household head	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	12.0%	

Treguesit gjinorë Gender indicator		Viti/Year 2020		Viti/Year 2021		Viti/Year 2022		SDG
		Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	
<b>II</b>	<b>Arsimi/ Education</b>							
20	Norma e alfabetizimit në grupmoshën 15-24 vjeç, sipas gjinisë -Literacy rate of persons aged 15-24 years old, by sex	98,4%	96,1%	98,4%	96,1%	98,4%	96,1%	
21	Raporti i rregulluar neto i regjistrimit në arsimin fillor, sipas gjinisë -Adjusted net enrolment ratio in primary education by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
22	Raporti i regjistrimit bruto sipas gjinisë -Gross enrolment ratio by sex							
22.1	Raporti i regjistrimit bruto, Filllore ISCED level 1 -Gross enrolment ratio in primary education by sex	102.2	97.2	98.2	92.5	96.1	89.5	
22.2	Raporti i regjistrimit bruto, arsimi mesëm i ulët ISCED level 2 -Gross enrolment ratio in lower secondary education by sex	98.9	93.3	99.2	93	97.9	91.5	
22.3	Raporti i regjistrimit bruto në arsimin e mesëm ISCED level 3 -Gross enrolment ratio in upper secondary education by sex	96.8	90.1	98.7	89.9	95.7	90.2	
23	Raporti i regjistrimit bruto në arsimin e lartë, sipas gjinisë ISCED level 5-8 -Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, by sex	47.7	71.3	49.6	73.2	51.5	74.7	
24	Indeksi i barazisë gjinore -Gender parity index							
24.1	Indeksi i barazisë gjinore, Filllore ISCED level 1 -Gender parity index in primary education by sex	0.95		0.94		0.93		
24.2	Indeksi i barazisë gjinore, arsimi mesëm i ulët ISCED level 2 -Gender parity index in lower secondary education by sex	0.94		0.94		0.94		
24.3	Indeksi i barazisë gjinore në arsimin e mesëm ISCED level 3 -Gender parity index in upper secondary education by sex	0.93		0.91		0.94		
24.4	Indeksi i barazisë gjinore në arsimin e lartë, sipas gjinisë ISCED level 5-8 -Gender parity index in tertiary education, by sex	1.49		1.48		1.45		
25	Pjesa e femrave të diplomuara në arsimin e lartë në shkencë, inxhinieri, prodhim dhe ndërtim -Share of female science, engineering, manufacturing and construction graduates at tertiary level	55.3%	44.7%	57.1%	42.9%	55.2%	44.8%	
26	Pjesa e femrave në mesin e mësuesve të arsimit të lartë dhe profesorëve -Proportion of females among tertiary education professors	58.8%	41.2%	56.2%	43.8%	54.2%	45.8%	
27	Regjistrimi neto në klasën e parë të arsimit fillor, sipas gjinisë -Net intake in first grade of primary education, by sex	65.1	63.4	66.4	64.0	68.7	67.5	
28	Shkalla e përfundimit të arsimit fillor, sipas gjinisë -Primary education completion rate, by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
29	Diplomimet në arsimin e mesëm të ulët, sipas gjinisë ISCED level 2 -Graduation from lower secondary education, by sex	52.3%	47.7%	52.9%	47.1%	52.0%	48.0%	

Treguesit gjinorë Gender indicator		Viti/Year 2020		Viti/Year 2021		Viti/Year 2022		SDG
		Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra -Women	
<b>II</b>		<b>Arsimi/ Education</b>						
30	Norma e tranzicionit për arsimin e mesëm, sipas gjinisë -Transition rate to secondary education, by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
31	Niveli i arsimit për popullsinë e moshës 25 dhe lart, sipas gjinisë -Education attainment of population aged 25 and over, by sex							
31.1	Me arsim fillor dhe 8/9 vjeçar Primary and Lower secondary	43.7%	54.0%	43.2%	52.9%	41.9%	51.4%	
31.2	Me arsim të mesëm Upper Secondary	39.6%	27.1%	39.9%	27.6%	39.9%	27.3%	
31.3	Me arsim të lartë Tertiary	16.6%	18.9%	16.9%	19.5%	18.3%	21.4%	
<b>III</b>		<b>Shëndeti dhe shërbimet e lidhura me të/ Health and related services</b>						
32	Përdorimi i kontraceptivëve në moshën e grave që janë të martuara ose në një marrëdhënie, moshë 15-49 vjeç -Contraceptive prevalence among women who are married or in a union, aged 15-49	60.5%		60.5%		60.5%		3.7.1
33	Shkalla e vdekshmërisë nën 5, sipas gjinisë -Under-five mortality rate, by sex	11.67	10.08	10.72	12.95	9.1	6.0	3.2.1
34	Vdeksheria amtare për 100 mijë lindje -Maternal mortality ratio	3.6		7.35		0		3.1.1
35	Mbulimi i kujdesit gjatë shtatzanisë, moshë 15-49 vjeç -Antenatal care coverage, ages 15-49	88.4%		88.4%		88.4%		
36	Pjesa e lindjeve ku kanë marrë pjesë profesionistë të kualifikuar të shëndetit profesional -Proportion of births attended by skilled health professional	99.98%		99.97%		99.96%		3.1.2
37	Përhapja e pirjes së duhanit mes personave të moshës 15 e lart, sipas gjinisë -Smoking prevalence among persons aged 15 and over, by sex	67%	34.5%	0.67	34.5%	0.67	34.5%	3.a.1
38	Përqindja e të rriturve që janë obezë, sipas gjinisë, moshë (15-59) vjeç -Proportion of adults who are obese, by sex and age (15-59)	18.1%	24.4%	18.1%	24.4%	18.1%	24.4%	
39	Numri i femrave të moshës 15-49 vjeç që jetojnë me HIV/AIDS -Number of Women aged 15-49 living with HIV/AIDS	51	16	51	22	50	16	3.3.1
40	Akcesi në drogërat anti-retroviral, sipas gjinisë -Access to anti-retroviral drug, by sex	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
41	Jetëgjatësia në moshën 60 vjeçare, sipas gjinisë -Life expectancy at age 60, by sex	19.4	22.1	18.7	21.4	21.1	22.8	
42	Shkalla e vdekshmërisë që i atribuohet sëmundjes kardiovaskulare, kancerit, diabetit ose sëmundjes kronike të frymëmarrjes Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabets or chronic respiratory disease by sex							3.4.1
42.1	Diabet			5.2	3.8	5.4	2.3	
42.2	Sistemi i frymëmarrjes			15.8	5.7	8.6	4.4	
42.3	Sistemi i qarkullimit të gjakut			337.2	156.7	250.2	117.3	
42.4	Tumoret			133.5	90.0	131.0	84.0	

Treguesit gjinorë Gender indicator	Viti/Year 2020		Viti/Year 2021		Viti/Year 2022		SDG	
	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra - Women	Burra- Men	Gra -Women		
<b>IV</b>	<b>Jeta publike dhe vendimmarrja/ Public life and decision-making</b>							
43	Përqindja e femrave në pozita ministore në qeveri -Women's share of government ministerial positions	52.9%	47.1%	20.0%	80.0%	20.0%	80.0%	
44	Përqindja e ulëseve të mbajtura nga femrat në parlamentin kombëtar -Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	70.5%	29.5%	64.30	35.70	64.30	35.70	5.5.1
45	Përqindja e femrave në pozicione menaxheriale -Women's share of managerial positions	64.6%	35.4%	64.5%	35.5%	65.1%	34.9%	5.5.2
46	Përqindja e femrave police -Percentage of female police officers	85.6%	14.4%	85.7%	14.3%	85.2%	14.8%	
47	Përqindja e femrave gjykatëse -Percentage of female judges	53.6%	46.4%					
<b>V</b>	<b>Të drejtat e njeriut të grave dhe të vajzave / Human rights of women and girl children</b>							
48	Përqindja e grave dhe vajzave të moshës 15+ i nështruar dhunës fizike, seksuale ose psikologjike nga partneri aktual ose ish-intim në 12 muajve të mëparshëm -Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	33.7%		33.7%		33.7%		5.2.1
49	Përqindja e grave dhe vajzave të moshës 15+ i nështruar dhunës seksuale nga persona të ndryshëm nga partneri gjatë 12 muajve të mëparshëm -Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		5.2.2
50	Përhapja e gjymtimit/ prerjes të organeve gjinitale të femrave (vetëm për vendet përkatëse) -Prevalence of female genital mutilation/ cutting (for relevant countries only)	n/a		n/a		n/a		5.3.2
51	Përqindja e femrave të moshës 20-24 vjeç që janë martuar ose hynë në një marrëdhënie para moshës 18 vjeç -Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18	6.1%		6.1%		6.1%		5.3.1
52	Shkalla e lindshmërisë të adoleshenteve -Adolescent birth rate age per 1000 women in that age group	13.3%		12.1%		10.0%		3.7.2

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