

**Twenty-fifth anniversary of the
Fourth World Conference on Women
and adoption of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)**

**Comprehensive national-level review
Estonia**

Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?

Achievements

Strategic framework

In 2015, the Government of the Republic approved the “Strategy for Preventing Violence in 2015-2020”¹, encompassing violence between children, abuse of children, domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking in human beings, and aiming to achieve a situation in which violence is not tolerated in society, violence is noticed and it is interrupted. The aim is also that victims of violence would be protected and would receive help, that work would be conducted with abusers and in relation to prevention of violence. In order to achieve the Strategy’s overall goal, 4 sub-goals have been set: people’s skills in avoiding, recognising and intervening in violence have improved; protection and support of violence victims corresponding to their needs is better ensured; proceedings of violence cases are more victim-friendly; treatment of perpetrators of violence is more effective and their repeat offending has decreased.

In the strategy, violence prevention is addressed at three levels of prevention – universal prevention, protection of victims and dealing with consequences of violence. Firstly, the strategy addresses public awareness and education of people; secondly, it focuses on the risk of falling victim or committing an offense; and thirdly, the consequences of violence are addressed through the strategy, providing support measures to victims and interventions to violent offenders. The solutions proposed in the strategy are guided by the World Health Organisation’s understanding that risk factors for violence are related to the society (e.g. norms favouring violence, gender inequality), the community (e.g. lacking victim support services), relationships (e.g. domestic conflicts, poor parenting skills) and persons (e.g. history of abuse as a child, psychological and behavioural problems, addiction problems). See also the answer to question 14.

In July 2016, the Government of the Republic approved the “Welfare Development Plan for 2016-2023”². The development plan has four sub-goals, one of which is gender equality, thereby creating the first ever governmental level large-scale strategy for gender equality. The gender equality policies of the development plan are implemented through the four-year rolling Gender Equality Programme(s).

Measures planned in the development plan and the programme(s) vary from awareness raising to legislative initiatives, including both special measures to promote gender equality and activities that support the implementation of gender mainstreaming. To reduce gender

¹ Strategy for Preventing Violence in 2015-2020 is available in English at: http://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/sites/krimipoliitika/files/elfinder/dokumendid/strategy_for_preventing_violence_for_2015-2020.pdf

² Welfare Development Plan for 2016-2023 available in English: http://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/eesmargid_ja_tegevused/welfare_development_plan_2016-2023.pdf

inequality, prevent its resurgence, and achieve gender equality in different spheres of life, attention is paid to reducing gender stereotypes that cause gender inequality and their negative impact; reducing gender segregation in education and the labour market; supporting the economic independence of men and women, therein reducing the gender pay gap; achieving a gender balance on the decision-making levels of society; enhancing the protection of rights; and ensuring institutional capacity, including the analysis and management capabilities necessary for the promotion of gender equality. Implementation of the development plan and the programme(s) is monitored through indicators.

Reducing gender pay gap

Although the gender pay gap in Estonia is still the widest in the EU, it has slowly decreased over the last years, from 29,9% in 2012 to 25,6% in 2017, according to Eurostat.

In order to decrease gender pay gap by tackling its various causes, Estonia has mainly implemented research and awareness-raising activities (described below under relevant answers) but also taken steps to ensure adequate wages in female-dominated sectors, such as education. There has been a pan-party political commitment to raise the (average) salaries of basic school and upper-secondary school teachers over the last years, with an aim to reach 120% of the average salary in Estonia. Their salaries have almost doubled during the last eight years, although actual salaries of both primary and secondary school teachers still need to increase to reach the OECD average.

Easing the care burden of women

In Estonia, the difference in the employment rates of men and women is biggest among women and men with very young children. According to Statistics Estonia, in 2017 the employment rate for women with a child less than 1 year old was 16,2% and the employment rate for men with a child less than 1 year old was 92,6%. However, after the period of parental leave, the labour market participation stabilizes among women and men. For example, the employment rate of female and male (aged 20–49) by presence of 3–6-years old child was 83,5% and 95,6% accordingly³. The reasons for such differences include the unequal distribution of caretaking for very young children, the shortage of suitable childcare facilities for them and compensation schemes that support the long-term exclusion of women from the labour market after giving birth.

Estonian parental leave system is very generous by its duration. However, the main criticism has been that the system is rather inflexible and also due to women's high take up of parental leave, women face longer career breaks, which also influences their career perspective negatively.

Considering the high level of education of Estonian women as a whole, which exceeds the general level of education of men, the significant investment of society in the education and training of women is not utilised when women are out of labour force. The lower employment rate of women also increases their economic dependence and inequality in the long-term, i.e. in the retirement age.

³ Statistics Estonia, 2017

In order to address these problems, in recent years, Estonia has taken various measures to ease the care burden of women and to provide them with better opportunities for active labour market participation, higher salaries and career-development.

In 2016, a memorandum of the parental leave and benefit system changes was drawn up, based on a Green Paper on family benefits, services and parental leave, submitted to the government in 2015. The main goal of the changes was to encourage more fathers to share the care responsibilities and to provide better possibilities for reconciliation of work and family life. The government approved the proposals for amendments in the parental leave and benefits system in March 2017. As many of the changes required development of new and extensive IT systems, the law amendments were adopted in the parliament in two phases in December 2017 and October 2018 and are implemented gradually in 2018-2022. More detailed information about the changes has been provided below under the answer to questions 7.

The policy proposals of the Green Paper, which focused on early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, prevised to increase the availability of ECEC places and to further the participation of children who are least privileged and/or with special needs.

In recent years the Ministry of Social Affairs has supported creating new childcare places with the help of the European Social Fund. Additionally, the Ministry of Finance coordinates building new childcare and kindergarten places. More detailed information about these activities has been provided under the answer to question 7.

Although in previous decades there has been a lack of childcare places in bigger cities of Estonia, the childcare places created recently have alleviated the situation. Also, since 2016, in case there is a lack of public childcare places for a child aged 1,5-3 years, the local governments may offer or compensate a private childcare place instead of a public childcare place. In recent years the participation in ECEC services has increased. According to Statistics Estonia, while in 2012, 23% of the children aged 0-2 and 91% of children aged 3-6 participated in formal childcare, in 2017, the percentage in these age groups was 28% and 95% accordingly.

Women in state level leadership positions

While both horizontal and vertical segregation is still prevalent in Estonia (see in more detail under Challenges), a positive change can be noted at the leadership level positions in institutions involved in the review of constitutionality and legality. In 2014, the Government appointed a woman as the Chief Public Prosecutor and in 2015, the parliament appointed to the office the first female Chancellor of Justice. Additionally, in 2016, the first female President of the Republic was sworn into office. The number of female judges at the Supreme Court has risen to 4 (of 19).

Gender mainstreaming

Although there is still a lot of room for improvement both at the level of systematic strategic and institutional approach and at the level of practical implementation, gender mainstreaming has been among the gender equality policy priorities during the whole period.

In the framework of a project financed from the Norway Grants 2009-2014 gender equality programme (co-ordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs), the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner carried out a range of activities to support implementation of gender mainstreaming in Estonia, including by facilitating discussions on practical implementation and by raising awareness. The activities included e.g. a seminar on improving political decision making through gender impact assessment with experiences and practices from Finland, Belgium and Austria presented and discussed, and a discussion held on the system of impact assessment of legislation in Estonia and how gender impact assessment could be improved within this framework. In 2014, the Office of the Commissioner published a gender mainstreaming online handbook to provide support for policy makers on state and local level for taking into account the gender equality principle in developing, implementing and monitoring of development plans and programmes and projects of the European Structural and Investment Funds. Also, several analysis papers, drawing attention to gender issues in specific policy areas (including e.g. education, labour market, entrepreneurship etc.), were published. Furthermore, a regular newsletter was published in Estonian on the latest developments in gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

In 2014, the Ministry of Finance made available the guidelines for policy makers to be taken into account when preparing development plans and when planning measures to be financed from the EU Cohesion Policy funds in order to give guidance for promoting “recurrent topics” which include gender equality. The Ministry of Social Affairs provides guidance for other ministries to enhance implementation of this obligation.

In Autumn 2015, in the framework of implementation of the ESF programme “Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013”, practical and tailor-made gender mainstreaming trainings were organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs for policy-makers in six ministries – the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Additionally, trainings for members of the inter-ministerial working-group on gender mainstreaming have been carried out in the framework of this ESF programme. The aim of the trainings was to provide policy-makers with know-how on implementing the gender mainstreaming obligation foreseen in the Gender Equality Act.

There have also been positive institutional developments. In order to provide additional support for the policy-makers and -implementers for gender mainstreaming and complying with the principle of equal treatment in the use of the EU Structural and Investment Funds, a competence centre was created in the Office of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner by an agreement between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Commissioner in April 2015. One of the main tasks of the centre has been to provide feedback and counselling in the process of preparing conditions for granting support from the ESI Funds and to carry out surveys to analyse the outcomes of gender mainstreaming and equal opportunities activities at project level. The centre has also created a variety of information materials, including thematic factsheets and guidelines for implementing agencies, intermediate bodies and users of the funds and organised trainings to support their efforts. In addition, it co-ordinates the work of an equal opportunities network to support a practical co-operation in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities on other grounds in the

use of ESI Funds. Some more concrete examples of the activities of the centre have been described below under relevant answers. The activities of the centre are financed from the technical support budget of the Cohesion Policy funding, with an annual budget of 89 156 EUR.

Violence against women

Efficient response to domestic violence, including providing help to victims, has been a priority for Estonia during the whole period. In order to tackle intimate partner violence and domestic violence different developments have taken place during the last five years, among these legislative changes, changes in victim support system, and changes in ways of cooperation and coordination of investigation and support provision. More detailed description can be found under the answers to questions 14 and 15. A variety of changes have also been implemented to tackle trafficking in women and girls about which more information is provided under the answer to question 13.

Challenges

Implementation of the Gender Equality Act

An analysis of the implementation of the Gender Equality Act by employers was carried out in 2015⁴. The aim of the study was to get an overview of how the private, public and non-profit sector employers implement the Gender Equality Act in their human resources practices. In addition to an overview of the implementation of the Gender Equality Act among employers, the study developed indicators which assess the implementation of the Gender Equality Act in human resource practices and which could be used for regular monitoring of the subject. The study used combined research methods, i.e. qualitative and quantitative methods.

The overall conclusion of the study is that the awareness of the Gender Equality Act among Estonian employers is low. Only 4% of the employers claimed that they are well aware of this law. Most of the respondents (46%) had heard about the Gender Equality Act, but they did not know the contents of the law. The study also showed that the awareness of the employers of legislation prohibiting gender discrimination in recruitment process was low and discrimination in recruitment on the basis of gender was widespread. The study also indicated that although most of the employers (90%) have job descriptions and 64% of the organizations have regulated the wage principles, in the documents regulating working relations and conditions, the gender equality principles and/or goals are the least stipulated (4%) and in 33% of organisations wage is completely negotiable. On the positive side, the awareness of employers of their responsibility in solving the situation where gender-based harassment or sexual harassment has occurred in the workplace was relatively good.

In addition to obligations for employers, the Gender Equality Act also stipulates a gender mainstreaming obligation for state and local authorities. Regardless of a variety of supporting

⁴ Turk, Pirjo; Anniste, Kristi; Masso, Märt; Karu, Marre; Kriger, Tatjana 2015. Study on Implementation of the Gender Equality Act and Developing Indicators to Assess the Impact of the Act. Tallinn: Praxis Centre for Policy Studies. Available online (Executive Summary pp 47-49):http://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Ministeerium_kontaktid/Uuringu_ja_analuusid/Sotsiaalvaldkond/uuringuaruanne.pdf

activities (see also above) during the last decade, only a limited progress can be noticed regarding awareness of the policy makers and due to that also in the practice of policy planning, implementation and monitoring.

Reducing horizontal and vertical segregation

Estonian labour market is characterised by a horizontal gender segregation that is the biggest among EU countries. According to the gender segregation index⁵, in 2016 the gender segregation in occupations was 30 and in sectors 24,5 in Estonia, compared to EU average of 24,1 and 19 respectively.

The horizontal segregation of a labour market largely depends on the impact of gender stereotypes on the educational, vocational, and professional choices of men and women. Women often work in professions that are considered important but are not very highly rewarded – for example, the social, healthcare, and educational domains. Men are overrepresented in real estate, construction and ICT.

The same appears when looking at the vertical segregation, as managerial level is dominated by men. However, the proportion of women among managers has risen from 33% in 2013 to 39% in 2017, which shows a positive trend.

Gender inequality on the decision-making levels of society is reflected also in the representation of men and women in politics. Of 101 members of the Estonian parliament, 29 are women. Of 15 members of the Government of the Republic, 3 are women.

The representation of women in politics is most affected by the decisions of political parties in determining the holders of positions and by the choices made in compiling the list of candidates. While the proportion of women and men among the members of political parties is relatively equal, management bodies of those political parties are dominated by men. Over the last 10–15 years, the proportion of female candidates in the list of candidates has not changed significantly (27% of the candidates in the parliamentary elections of 2015, 32,1% in 2019). In addition to the percentage of female candidates, whether they are elected or not depends on their placement in the list of candidates compiled by political parties.

In 2017, administrative reform in Estonia was carried out, which decreased the number of cities from 30 to 15 and the number of parishes from 183 to 64. In November 2018, only 1 of 15 city majors was a woman, in city governments women made up 33% of members.

The horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the labour market constitute factors that, in turn, influence the differences in the pay of men and women. According to Eurostat, the gender pay gap in Estonia is still 25,6% (2017).

Set-backs

In June 2017, a member of the parliament proposed a draft law that would foresee a zipper method in parliamentary, local and European Parliament elections. The draft law was

⁵ Methodology explained in „2018 Report on equality between women and men in the EU“ (p 62): www.ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/document.cfm?doc_id=50074

discussed in the Constitutional Committee of the Parliament and later by the parliament but did not pass the necessary readings. It did, however, generate some discussion over zipper method and gender quotas in the general public.

In August 2018, the Government approved and sent to the parliament a draft amendment to the Gender Equality Act, aimed at increasing pay transparency and strengthening implementation of the equal pay principle. Unfortunately, due to expiry of the mandate of the parliament in February 2019, the draft was dropped from the proceedings. More information about the draft is provided under the answer to question 2.

2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes? (please check relevant categories)

Eliminating violence against women and girls

Efficient response to domestic violence, including providing help to victims, has been a priority for Estonia. During the past five years, in addition to legislative, awareness raising and research activities, Estonia has also increased the availability of services for women who are survivors of violence. Women's support centre service, including women's shelters, are available all around Estonia. Additional shelters have been opened to enable better access for women and their children. Physical distance and transportation may still pose a problem for some women suffering from violence, but additional resources have been set aside also for transportation to services. The availability of services has improved also by creating 24/7 national victim support crisis hotline for all the survivors of crime, physical-, sexual-, emotional violence. More detailed information concerning the activities implemented can be found under the answers to questions 13-18.

Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)

Right to work and rights at work have also been among the priorities of the gender equality policy during the past five years.

In 2012-2016, a 2 000 000 EUR gender equality and work-life balance programme was carried out with financing from the Norway Grants 2009-2014, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Different projects were implemented under the programme. One of the projects aimed at developing a new concept for gathering and analysing gender pay gap statistics by Statistics Estonia. The other project, carried out by the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner, targeted inter alia at raising rights awareness and helping victims of discrimination directly through strategic litigation, as well as increasing the capacity of officials assisting discrimination victims. In addition to these pre-defined projects, four open call projects (two on education and two on work-life balance) and eleven small grant scheme projects were carried out in 2013-2016. More information about some the projects is provided under answers to relevant questions. A closing conference of the programme, held in September 2016, tackled topics like gender aspects in education, the role of media in promoting gender equality and challenges related to work-life balance.

Following the request of Estonia as the presidency state of the Council of the EU in the II half of 2017, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) prepared a review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States report to explore the progress made between 2004 and 2015 in breaking gender segregation in education, training and the labour market in the EU⁶. In order to pave the way for further progress through effective policy measures, Estonia proposed to the Member States for discussion draft Council Conclusions on enhanced measures to reduce horizontal gender segregation in education and employment. The agreed conclusions were adopted by the EPSCO Council in December 2017⁷.

Measures taken to address prejudices and stereotypes affecting educational and work-related choices at the national level have mainly concentrated on STEM, including ICT, and defence areas. More information about respective activities is provided mainly under the answers to questions 12 and 27.

Regular awareness raising activities have been implemented to draw attention to the problem of gender pay gap, its causes and solutions, including in the framework of marking a yearly Equal Pay Day in April. In 2016 and 2017, in addition to more traditional information activities, a youth literature contest was organised in the context of Equal Pay Day, where high school pupils could submit essays, poems and short stories on the topic of equal pay and other gender equality issues. Best texts were awarded. Some additional activities are described under the answer to question 6.

Efforts have also been made to tackle some of the causes of the gender pay gap with legislative measures. In August 2018, after two years of drafting and consultations, the Government of the Republic approved and sent to the parliament a draft amendment to the Gender Equality Act, aimed to provide the Labour Inspectorate with a right to exercise administrative and state supervision over implementation of the requirement of equal pay for women and men in the public sector organisations in order to enforce implementation of this principle. The draft also specified some already existing requirements directed to all employers (both public and private sector), e.g. concerning data collection and informing employees or their representatives, with proposed amendments paying special attention to questions of equal pay. Unfortunately the parliament did not adopt the draft and due to parliamentary elections that took place on 3rd of March 2019, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure and Internal Rules Act of the Parliament, upon the expiry of the mandate of the Riigikogu, all draft legislation on which the proceedings were not completed during the mandate of that Riigikogu were dropped from the proceedings.

From January 2019 to the end of 2021, a project is carried out, aimed at clearing up further reasons for our still remarkable gender pay gap. More information about this activity is provided under the answer to question 37.

⁶ Report "Study and work in the EU: set apart by gender: Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States" published by EIGE in 2018, is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20173992_kina26893enn_pdf.pdf

⁷ Adopted Council Conclusions on enhanced measures to reduce horizontal gender segregation in education and employment are available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15468-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

Information about plans to support employers both in fulfilling legal requirements and taking voluntary measures to promote gender equality in their organisation, including concerning wages, is provided under the answer to question 5.

Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)

Supporting work-life balance and more equal sharing of parental responsibilities between women and men has been among the policy priorities for Estonia for some years already.

Two larger-scale work-life balance projects were financed through an open call from the Norway Grants gender equality programme and implemented in 2014-2015. A project implemented by the Responsible Business Forum aimed at improving the situation of work-life balance among the employees by organising e.g. training programmes for mentors, a development programme for employers and awareness raising events for wider audience of employers and employees. The second work-life balance project, implemented by the Tallinn University of Technology, aimed at creating a mechanism design for providing efficiency and equity in matching kindergartens and children. Additional small-scale projects on this topic were financed from the same programme through a small grant scheme.

To encourage more fathers to take parental leave and give more flexibilities for families to combine work and family life, several changes have recently been made into the parental leave and benefits system. More detailed information about the changes is provided under the answer to question 7. Also information concerning developments in the provision of childcare services is provided under the answers to questions 1 and 7.

The wellbeing of people with disabilities often depends on their family members. However, this care responsibility is difficult to reconcile with active participation in the labour market which is both important from the perspective of women's economic independence and the use of ever-decreasing human resources of the state. Therefore Estonia has taken different measures in the past five years to address the needs concerning long-term care. See information provided under the answer to question 7 concerning long-term care measures and under the answer to question 5 concerning future plans.

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

In last five years, the Estonian universal child allowances for first and second child have increased more than 3 times. Such changes have influenced the rapid decrease of child poverty. While in 2014 the absolute poverty rate of families with children was 8%, by 2017 the rate had decreased to 2,8%.

Additional information concerning measures taken to improve social protection is provided under the answers to questions 9 and 10.

Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

In 2017-2019, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner's Office implemented a project "BREAK! – overcoming gender stereotypes in Europe through cross-media learning"⁸, in co-operation with Estonian Public Broadcasting, Foundation InnoVe, Tallinn University, Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson in Lithuania and the Centre for Gender Equality in Iceland and co-financed by the European Commission through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. The aim of the projects was to contribute to overcoming educational and occupational gender segregation by reaching out to young people aged 13-30 through innovative cross-media tools and practices that are familiar for the youth. In the centre of the project was the creation and airing of a 10-episode TV-series "Why Not?!" about a journey of a young woman becoming a rap-artist. Moreover, study materials for teachers, on how to talk about (gender) stereotypes to the students in different classes and in different age groups, were produced in Estonia and made freely accessible on the project's website and on a digital study materials portal e-koolikott. Additionally, trainings were held for teachers and career counsellors on the use of the produced study materials. Also, a series of radio shows was aired in Estonian and in Russian where different equality topics were discussed. The project was introduced to young people all over Estonia also through 15 county visits to schools in 2018.

3. Over the past five years, have you taken specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination? (please check relevant categories)

In 2013-2016, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner's Office implemented a project under the Norway Grants gender equality programme (see information provided under the answer to question 6). In the framework of this project, information materials (brochures and web materials) on equal treatment principle were compiled and published, with a special focus on minority communities and vulnerable social groups who are more likely to be victims of gender discrimination and multiple discrimination. For example, information materials were made available concerning ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation⁹.

In the framework of the same project, the Commissioner commissioned development and initial implementation of an equality measurement model. Prepared by the Tartu University Johan Skytte Institute for Political Studies, a study report¹⁰ on an equality measurement framework was published in 2016, where indicators were proposed to monitor inequality based on gender, disability, ethnic origin, age and sexual orientation and an analysis of the situation of persons belonging to different population groups was provided. The study showed that according to the indicators used in the framework, gender inequality manifests primarily in career, sense of security, education, health and politics.

⁸ More information about the project is available through its homepage at: <https://brea-k.eu/en/>

⁹ Information materials published are available (mainly in Estonian, to some extent in Russian and English) at: <http://www.vollinik.ee/trukised/>

¹⁰ The study report "Kellel on Eestis hea, kellel parem? Võrdõiguslikkuse mõõtmise mudel" is available in Estonian (with a summary in English) at: http://www.vollinik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/kellel_on_eestis_hea.pdf

4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country?

NO

5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes? (please check relevant categories)

Eliminating violence against women and girls

In preventing, combating and assisting victims of violence, we deal mainly with domestic violence, sexual violence and trafficking in women. Most clients of the victim support services in Estonia are women, and most of them are victims of domestic violence.

In the coming years, there is a need to both develop victim support services more generally and to create and develop measures aimed at new target groups. At present, many victims still do not reach victim support services. For example, in cases of domestic violence, depending on the county, 10-70% of the victims get into contact with victim support staff. Active informing of victim support services and a transformation of work practices in cooperation with the police began in 2018, positive results have already been seen, but this is only the beginning of the process of changing the image and role of victim support.

Amendments are planned to be made to the Victim Support Act in order to expand the possibilities of receiving psychological help, as well as to improve the capacity of psychological counselling.

Plans are also made to further enhance the women's support centre service, including in order to increase its user-friendliness and to strengthen its connections with the victim support service.

Sexual Violence Crisis Centres are located in four hospitals covering regionally the whole country, and it is planned to develop this service in terms of training specialists and providing better information about the service.

Cross-sectoral cooperation will be co-ordinated in the coming years (2019-2023) within the framework of the Governmental Action Plan for Preventing Domestic Violence. The tasks of the police, prosecutor's office and victim support are listed and the implementation of the action plan is monitored by the Government.

The challenges facing trafficking in women are primarily related to Estonia's transition from a country of origin to a destination country. Problems related to assisting third-country nationals are planned to be tackled more than hitherto by finding solutions for providing effective assistance. A range of services for women involved in prostitution was widened starting from 2019. Women can now also use the support person service and peer-counselling. Also field-work to find victims of exploitation will be expanded. The aim is to

identify victims of trafficking and to provide support and services, including support for entry into the labour market, for all women involved in prostitution.

Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)

Measures specifically planned to decrease gender pay gap in the coming years include an in-depth analysis of the gender pay gap in Estonia and development of IT-tools.

Gender pay gap is one of the most crucial issues on gender equality field in Estonia. However, what is peculiar about Estonian gender pay gap is that features such as segregation, education, work experience or any other factor that we have data on only explain 15% of the pay gap, leaving 85% a grey area. From January 2019 to the end of 2021, a project is carried out aimed at clearing up further reasons for our still remarkable gender pay gap. More information about this is provided under the answer to question 37.

In order to support employers both in fulfilling legal requirements and taking voluntary measures to promote gender equality in their organisation, while also enabling them to keep the administrative burden of these activities as low as possible, two IT tools are planned to be developed. The first one is intended to use personnel and wages data that employers have already provided to the state and make automatic calculations that would give a preliminary indication to the employer whether there might be some shortcomings in following the principle of equal pay for women and men in the organisation. The second one is planned as a tool to support the employers in analysing more thoroughly gender equality situation in an organisation, including concerning wages.

Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)

Several changes have been designed to the parental leave and benefits system. The aim of the changes has been to encourage more fathers to share care responsibilities with the mothers. Another aim is to provide more flexible possibilities for families to combine being on parental leave and participating in the labour market. Although the proposals for changes to legislation have been approved, the amendments are coming into force gradually – some are already being implemented, some will come into force and be implemented in the coming years. More detailed information on the changes is provided under the answers to questions 1 and 7.

At the end of 2018, the Government discussed also an additional action plan for changes in the long-term care system. The main aim of the changes is to increase the availability of long-term care services to reduce the care burden on informal carers and through that, support the reconciliation of work and care. In June 2019, the newly formed Government coalition agreed that the Ministry of Social Affairs should continue to develop long-term care reform plan and should submit planned policy measures to Government for decision in November 2019.

Changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes

In 2019-2020, the think tank Praxis is implementing a project “Nudging Women to Power” financed from the European Commissions` Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, with a co-financing from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the National Foundation of Civil Society and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The general objective of the project is to improve women’s access to high-level political decision-making. It aims to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the importance of gender equality in public policy making and how the media as well as political organizations can help to empower women in achieving higher positions as well as visibility and credibility in public domains. For this, literature and policy reviews, media analysis and interviews with politicians and journalists to analyse the main impediments for Estonian women to speak up in public debates, to enter politics, or to ascend to leadership positions will be carried out. Building on the research results interactive seminars for Estonian politicians and journalists will be organized to compile and design online behavioural toolkits that can be used continuously by political parties and journalists to help to improve the situation. The direct target group of the project are Estonian journalists and national policy makers participating in seminars organized during the project. The wider target audience will be all journalists, policy makers, women interested in decision-making and the whole society benefitting from more equal representation of women and men in politics.

In 2019, an 18-month research project will start that will concentrate on developing and piloting nudging methods to increase the share of women among ICT sector students and employees. The project is co-funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Estonian Research Council.

Additionally, different activities are planned to be implemented in order to raise awareness of a general public concerning gender stereotypes, their negative impact on everyday life and on decisions and on the development of economy and society. More specific activities will be planned also to raise awareness of especially men and young people about gender equality and to increase their willingness and preparedness to contribute to promoting gender equality.

Other

Estonia will also continue its efforts to raise gender equality awareness and to improve relevant knowledge and skills of policy-makers, including through the work of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Competence Centre for the use of Cohesion Policy Funding.

Please see also information about planned activities (such as virtual gender equality competence centre, the sixth Gender Equality Monitoring and the third compilation of articles “Towards a balanced society: Women and Men in Estonia”) under the answer to question 37.

Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Critical areas of concern:

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

6. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment?

Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation

Concerning equal pay legislation, please see information provided about the draft amendment of the Gender Equality Act under the answer to question 2.

In 2011-2015, the Ministry of Social Affairs implemented the European Social Fund programme "Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013" in the framework of which also awareness raising activities were organised on the Equal Pay Day in 2014 and 2015. The main focus of the informational activities in 2015 was the influence of parental care responsibilities on the gender pay gap. Activities included public events and discussions in different towns. Also some video clips drawing attention to relevant gender stereotypes were shown in cinemas of biggest towns during the week of Equal Pay Day.

In 2013-2016, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner's Office implemented a 700 000 EUR pre-defined project under the Norway Grants gender equality programme. The project was aimed at promoting gender equality through empowerment, awareness raising and gender mainstreaming. One set of activities under the project aimed at increasing the effectiveness of legal protection against gender based discrimination by raising rights awareness and helping victims of discrimination directly through strategic litigation and by increasing the capacity of officials assisting discrimination victims. The project had a special focus on minority communities and vulnerable social groups who are more likely to be victims of gender discrimination and multiple discrimination. Among others, the project also improved the capacity of the Commissioner to provide counselling and legal support to women who have faced discrimination when pregnant or returning to work from the child-care leave. Complaints concerning possible discrimination of pregnant workers and parents of small children have formed a majority among the complaints made to the Commissioner for years, thus this group continues to be under special attention by the Commissioner.

Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)

Estonia does not use gender-specific labour market policies. However, new policies undertaken, among them financial subsidies for training for low skilled workers, the disability

reform and services encouraging people with reduced ability to find work, also affected positively the employment and welfare of women.

Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace

In 2015, a guideline was published in the framework of implementation of the ESF programme “Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013” on preventing sexual and gender-based harassment at work¹¹. The guideline is targeted both at employers and employees, providing help in recognising harassment, in understanding the rights and obligations provided by law and in addressing the cases of harassment.

In 2017, sexual harassment which had previously already been prohibited under the Gender Equality Act, became, although to some extent in a more restricted form, also a misdemeanour punishable by a fine or by detention. According to the Penal Code, sexual harassment is an intentional physical act of sexual nature against the will of another person committed against him or her with degrading objectives or consequences.

Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women

No specific measures have been taken to improve financial inclusion and access to credit. However, improvements related to access to credit may be driven by the changes in the Family Benefits Act, which aim to allow additional income during the parental benefit period up to half of the maximum amount of the benefit and entered into force in March 2018. Although parental benefit may be received also by the father of the child (starting from the age of 70 days of the child), upon circumstances when benefit is received by mother, these additional possibilities for income increase also the creditworthiness of these women and provide better access to credit. More information about these changes is provided under the answer to question 7.

Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment

Estonia does not separately regulate informal work, but in case the prerequisites for the existence of the employment contract are met, all the requirements according to Employment Contracts Act must be fulfilled regardless of whether the formal employment contract is concluded or not.

A new Simplified Business Income Taxation Act¹² came into force in January 2018, creating a legal basis for banks to offer a natural person an opportunity to open an entrepreneur account and fulfil his or her business income tax liability in a simplified manner. From January 2019, the service is offered in one bank in Estonia. The entrepreneur account creates a new simple and affordable way of doing business. A person who has opened an entrepreneur account is not obliged to register as an entrepreneur and to calculate revenues and expenses. Accounting and tax reports are not required when using an entrepreneur account because

¹¹ Guideline on preventing sexual and gender-based harassment at work is available in Estonian at: https://gender.sm.ee/fileadmin/user_upload/ahistamise_ennetamise_juhised.pdf

¹² Simplified Business Income Taxation Act is available in English at: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/522122017001/consolide>

the tax liability is calculated on the basis of the payments to the entrepreneur account. An entrepreneur account is useful for a person who provides services to other natural persons in the areas of activity that do not involve any direct expenses, or for a person who sells self-produced goods or handicraft goods or the goods with low costs of materials or acquisition. Examples of such activities include baby-sitting, housekeeping, gardening, repair or construction services that do not involve direct costs or in which a customer pays for the costs. An example would also be the sale of self-produced goods to natural persons as well as to legal persons if the cost of raw material or source material is low compared to the selling price of the goods. For example, the sale of handicraft and art, or the sale of food, plants etc. grown or produced by the natural person. An entrepreneur account is also an appropriate solution for new forms of entrepreneurship, such as the payments received from the provision of services from one natural person to another natural person through ride-sharing service platforms etc.

By signing the agreement, the entrepreneur account owner will allow the bank to reserve business income tax from the total amounts received on the entrepreneur account and to transfer the business income tax to the Estonian Tax and Customs Board. The business income tax rate is 20% of the total amount received on the entrepreneur account if the amount does not exceed 25,000 euros per calendar year and 40% of the amount exceeding 25,000 euros received on the entrepreneur account per calendar year. Estonian Tax and Customs Board distributes the received business income tax: income tax rate of 20/53 and social tax (pension and health insurance) rate of 33/53.

Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)

Much effort has been put into further developing public e-services and making them accessible to all. The government aims to provide public e-services invisibly and seamlessly and facilitate business to business and business to person interaction. In addition, Estonia has invested in the physical digital infrastructure to provide these e-services to everyone, regardless of their location. Estonia also recognises the importance of enhancing citizens' digital skills as a pre-condition for inclusive labour markets, improved productivity and sustained economic growth, and has therefore invested heavily in enhancing citizens' digital skills in order to cope with the digital transformation in workplaces and in society as a whole¹³¹⁴.

A variety of activities aimed at improving ICT-skills of adults, promoting ICT-related after-school activities and safe use of ICT have been implemented by a Look@World Foundation (Vaata Maaailma SA)¹⁵, founded in 2001 by 10 companies from the banking, telecommunication and ICT sector. Look@World Foundation also co-ordinates the work of a

¹³ For more detailed information about connectivity, use of internet services and digital public services, please see the Estonian Country Report for Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2018, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2018-20/ee-desi_2018-country-profile_eng_B43FFF58-F3FD-633C-F5833D8295BB9EB0_52221.pdf

¹⁴ In addition to information provided below, please find more information about the Estonian approach to developing digital skill of its population at: <https://e-estonia.com/creating-next-generation-of-digital-state-developers/>

¹⁵ More information about specific projects is available at the homepage of the Foundation at: <http://www.vaatamaailma.ee/projects>

National Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, created in 2017 and consisting of representatives of the public (the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Education and Research), private and non-profit sectors and aiming its activities on developing the digital skills of Estonians. Several members of the coalition (the Estonian Qualification Authority, the Ministry of Education and Research, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) also belong to the board of the OSKA prognosis system which tackles the contradiction between the skills of the labour force and needs of the labour market and provided training opportunities. Since 2015, OSKA analyses the needs for labour and skills necessary for the economic development of Estonia. The system also analyses the question of digital skills in each economic sector they analyse.

In 2017, two projects were launched that are directly targeted at improving citizens' digital skills. The e-Community project aims to develop a sustainable network of training centres based in local libraries. Over a three-year period, more than 1 000 librarians will be trained and equipped with training materials related to basic technology usage but also e-services, social media, cybersecurity, etc. In 2017-2020, a DigiABC project, commissioned by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, is implemented in co-operation of the Employers Association and an IT training company, financed from the ESF support scheme. The main aim of the project is to provide training in basic digital skills to 3000 manufacturing industry workers through their workplace in order to raise their confidence in using technology. Although 60% of the workers participating in the project are planned to be from the sectors where the majority of workers are men (forestry and wood industry and machinery and metal industry), also workers from other industries (e.g. food industry) have participated. The total budget of the project is 475 728 euros.

Additional information about activities to more specifically increase the interest of young women and girls in ICT and their relevant skills, is available under the answer to question 12.

Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)

In order to increase diversity in management bodies of financial institutions, Estonian legal acts provide obligations to move towards gender balance in management bodies. For example, from May 2014, the Credit Institutions Act¹⁶, which applies to banking activity in Estonia, stipulates that among the duties of the Nomination Committee, formed from the members of the supervisory board and submitting the candidates for the member of the management board, is also setting the target level for representation of the underrepresented gender in the management board, and preparation of the policy for how to increase the representation of the underrepresented gender in order to reach the target level set, and the publishing of the data with regard to the target level, policy and the implementation thereof. The Committee is also tasked with the development and regular assessment of the policy of diversity in the composition of the management bodies valid in credit institutions and the procedure for the selection of the management board and, where necessary, making amendment proposals. Upon nomination of the candidates for member of the management board to the supervisory board the Nomination Committee is required to

¹⁶ The Credit Institutions Act is available in English at:
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/501042019006/consolide>

ensure the balance between the knowledge, skills and experience of the candidates for member of management board and the implementation of the principles of diversity in the composition of the management bodies established in credit institutions.

Similar requirements apply also to investment firms and operators of securities market as enacted in the Securities Market Act from January 2018, according to which the Nomination Committee has a task to also set the target level for representation of the underrepresented gender in the management board and prepare a policy on how to increase the representation of the underrepresented gender and meet that target level set. The managers and employees of an investment firm are governed by the provisions of the Credit Institutions Act.

7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?

Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)

In the Estonian Social Survey 2016, Statistics Estonia collected module based statistics about the care burden due to disability and/or long-term health conditions and the intensity of care. The Ministry of Social Affairs has proposed to keep the relevant questions in this survey annually.

In March 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs presented results of the fifth Gender Equality Monitoring survey, where also questions regarding domestic work were asked and compared with the previous results. More information concerning the survey is available under the answer to question 36.

Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable

A Green Paper on family benefits, services and parental leave was submitted to the Government in autumn 2015, including 11 policy proposals. The main policy proposals promoting gender equality concerned changing the parental leave and benefit system as well as amending the conditions of early childhood education and care services. Many of the policy proposals of the Green Paper have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. More information on the amendments concerning parental leave and benefit system is provided under relevant section of the answer to this question.

The policy proposals of the Green Paper, which focused on early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, foresaw increasing the availability of ECEC places and to further the participation for children who are least privileged and/or with special needs.

In recent years, the Ministry of Social Affairs has supported creating new childcare places with the help of the European Social Fund. In 2015-2018, altogether 1193 childcare places were created all over the country to alleviate the shortage of childcare facilities. The European Social Fund supports these facilities with 3.6 million euros, which is added to the local government self-financing. The new childcare facilities receive support for up to 36 months.

In 2018, a call for applications for the local governments and employers was announced in order to create flexible childcare places for children whose parents work on non-standard working hours and for children with special needs.

In addition, in 2014-2020, the Ministry of Finance is coordinating a 34 million euros funding scheme from the European Regional Fund for the construction of nearly 2200 new places in childcare facilities and kindergartens in the three major urban areas of Estonia.

Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

In autumn 2017, the Government made a decision to finance the most urgent long-term care measures in 2018-2021 by additional 16 400 000 euros. Among these measures are, for example, a state financed daily and weekly special care service for people at working age with multiple disability, providing new service places in care homes to elderly with dementia and creating a Competence Centre for Dementia.

In July 2018, an amendment of the Employment Contracts Act, enabling a leave for the care of an adult with a profound disability entered into force. According to the amendment, an employee is entitled to receive up to five working days in the calendar year for the care of an adult with a profound disability (care leave) if the employee is: directly ascendant or descendant; brother, sister, half-brother or half-sister; spouse or registered partner; guardian; or appointed guardian of a severely disabled adult. The purpose of the care leave is to encourage the sharing of care burden between those who contribute to the care of a person with profound disabilities. Care leave helps caregivers to continue their working life and encourages them to enter the labour market.

Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave

Several changes have been designed to the parental leave and benefits system. The aim of the changes has been to encourage more fathers to share care responsibilities with the mothers. Another aim is to provide more flexible possibilities for families to combine being on parental leave and participating in the labour market.

In 2016, a memorandum of the parental leave and benefit system changes was drawn up, based on the Green Paper from 2015 (see above). The main goal of the changes was to encourage more fathers to share the care responsibilities and to provide better possibilities for reconciliation of work and family life. The government approved the proposals for amendments in the parental leave and benefits system in March 2017. As many of the changes required development of new and extensive IT systems, the law amendments are implemented in two phases.

The first part of changes in the Family Benefits Act were adopted by the parliament in December 2017 and will come into force gradually in 2018-2020. According to the new system, from July 2020, fathers will have an individual right for paternity leave and benefit for 30 days (until that time, the paternity leave duration is 10 working days). Also, several new work-life balance measures will be established. For example, parents may receive parental benefit as well as earn income and the parental benefit will be reduced only when the

monthly income exceeds 1.5 times Estonian average salary (1660 euros in 2019). This would enable, both parents to work part-time and share the care responsibility accordingly. Additionally, 19 months of parental benefit and leave can be used in one part or in several parts at any time until the child turns 3 years.

The second stage of amendments to the parental leave and benefits system were adopted by the parliament in October 2018. The amendments to the law include renaming of the pregnancy and maternity leave as maternity leave and the introduction of changes to the terms and conditions of the leave. Compared to pregnancy and maternity leave, the period of maternity leave will be shortened from 140 to 100 days, but as a result the parents will have a longer paid parental leave period (current childcare leave). Whereas the pregnancy and maternity leave was reimbursed as maternity benefit from the budget of the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, the maternity leave will be paid as mother's parental benefit through the Social Insurance Board from the state budget. In addition, the amendments of the law included also changing the conditions for child leave and adoptive parent leave as well as providing more flexibility for the conditions and compensation of parental leave. The amendments of the second stage will come into force on 1 April 2022.

Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women

Local authority of the capital city Tallinn introduced free public transport system to all its registered residents and, regardless of their registered residency, to all Estonian pupils from 1st of January 2013.

Additionally, in April 2018, the Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure signed a regulation that left it to Estonia's public transport centres to decide whether or not they wanted to hold on to the current ticket system, or adapt their pricing towards a system that eventually is free of charge to the residents of a certain area. The regulation replaced arrangements previously made at the county level to set the maximum ticket price within the area of operation of a certain public transport centre. While in 2017 the counties' bus lines were funded with a total of €36.4 million out of the state budget as well as from local governments and ticket sales, €42.1 million was made available to cover the operating cost in 2018. Since 1st of July 2018 public transport is free in 11 counties of 15.

During the last 5 year Estonia continued to develop e-solutions and e-services (among them e.g. e-Health Records, e-Prescription, i-Voting, e-school solutions, e-registries, etc.) which improve the availability of a wide range of services, provide time-saving opportunities and increase the living standard of the users¹⁷. For example, online prescriptions and general practitioners' call services decrease the time and mobility constraints that fall on women due to care obligations related to children and elderly family members. E-school solution "ekool" provides an easy way for parents, teachers and children to collaborate and organize all the information necessary for teaching and learning. I-Voting simplifies remarkably voting process during parliamentary, local and also European Parliament elections.

¹⁷ More information about e-solutions and e-services developed and provided by the state is available at: <https://e-estonia.com/solutions/>

Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work

In order to encourage more fathers to share the care burden with mothers, a media campaign “Kasvage koos” (“Grow Together”) was carried out from November to December 2017 calling on fathers to spend more time with their children, including using parental leave. Fathers talking about growing together with their children were featured in television, on the radio, on social media and street advertisements. During the campaign, changes to the parental leave and benefits system coming into force were also discussed, and it was possible for the interested parties to familiarise themselves with the various options for parental leave at the campaign site¹⁸.

8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?

YES

Estonia has implemented consolidation measures, such as public sector downsizing, over the past five years. Since 2015, the state reform has been one of the priorities of Estonian Government. The main idea of the state reform has been to decrease the costs of public governance and to find efficient and smart solutions for the state administration. Main reforms have included the consolidation of different state authorities, consolidation of state support services to the State Shared Service Centre, decreasing bureaucracy, implementing IT solutions, local government (territorial) reform and elimination of county governments. Regional policy measures, aiming to balance the urbanization processes, have been for example re-locating state positions, creating state one-stop-shops and so on.

Demographic trends have significantly influenced the general government and it will influence the society even more in the future. According to the demographic prognosis, by 2040 the working-age population (age group 15-74) in Estonia will be decreasing by ~130 000 employees (-13.3% of 976 733 in 2018¹⁹), which linearly and rigidly means that general government has to decrease by ~15 000 employees (-12.9% of 116 224 in 2018²⁰) by the year 2040, i.e. around 650 employees a year (in average -0.6% per year of 116 224 in 2018²¹). Total population of Estonia is 1 323 820.²²

The main indicators considering public governance and general government sector are ratio of working-age population (age group 15-74) to general government employees (target $\leq 12.0\%$)²³ and share of general government expenditure of GDP (target $\leq 39.3\%$). Government has implemented different measures in order to maintain and reach the strategic goals. For example, one of the most influential policy measure and instrument has been the downsizing of general government employees. In 2015, the Government set the goal

¹⁸ The campaign site is available in Estonian at: www.papsigakodus.ee

¹⁹ Statistics Estonia (1.01.2018)

²⁰ State Accountancy Database: *Saldoandmike infosüsteem* (2018)

²¹ State Accountancy Database: *Saldoandmike infosüsteem* (2018)

²² Statistics Estonia (1.01.2019)

²³ Parallel indicator is also ratio of employment (age group 20-64) to general government sector (target $\leq 18.9\%$)

regarding decreasing general government by ~3000 employees in 4 years (-2.5% of 118 253 in 2015²⁴). Every ministry had been responsible for creating the plan and decreasing the number of state employees. The Ministry of Finance had been coordinating the process by monitoring the reduction and briefing the government about the progress. The most influential reduction had been achieved through previously mentioned structural reforms. As a result, the central government had been decreased by ~1765 employees (FTE) (-3.2% of 55 163 in 2015²⁵) during 2015-2018. Also, the local governments had experienced the downsizing as a result of local government (territorial) reform. Reductions had been in compliance with the decrease of the working-age population.

The Ministry of Finance has not monitored or assessed the impact of the reduction measures in the public sector expenditures/employees on gender.

If YES, have assessments on their impact on women and men, respectively, been conducted?

No gender impact assessment has been conducted by the state.

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

9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services

Women constitute only 29% of the tech sector work force in Estonia. The same percentage applies for female ICT students.

In order to widen women's opportunities to participate in the prospective and future-oriented labour-market sector, such as ICT, Estonia has introduced some programmes to attract women into the tech industry. More information about the activities is available under the answers to questions 6 and 12.

²⁴ State Accountancy Database: *Saldoandmike infosüsteem* (2015)

²⁵ State Accountancy Database: *Saldoandmike infosüsteem* (2015)

Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)

In last 5 years, Estonia has tripled the amount of child allowances. Although the child allowances are universal and either parent can apply for it, the share of women among receivers of the child allowances is 97%. Allowances and benefits have an important role to play in reducing poverty of women. In 2017 social transfers (excluding pensions) reduced the absolute poverty of women aged 18-64 by 63%, while five years ago, in 2014, only by 47%, impacted by the increase of family allowances. Such changes have supported also rapid decrease of child poverty. While in 2014 the absolute poverty rate of families with children was 8%, by 2017 the rate had decreased to 2.8%.

In 2014, the amount of child allowance for the first and second child of a family was 19.18 euros, and 76.72 euros for the third and each subsequent child. In 2019, the amount of child allowance is 60 euros for the first and second child. From 2015 onwards, the child allowance for the third and subsequent child is 100 euros.

The allowance for a family with many children in the case of three or more children was enforced on 1 July 2017 and it is paid in addition to the child allowances described above. The amount of allowance for a family with many children is 300 euros for a family with three to six children; for a family with seven or more children the allowance amount is 400 euros.

Those allowances are monthly allowances paid from the birth of the child until he or she attains 16 years of age. A child who is enrolled in a basic school or upper secondary school, or a child without secondary education enrolled in formal vocational education has the right to receive child allowance until he or she attains 19 years of age.

Information concerning the changes to the State Pension Insurance Act is provided under the answer to question 10.

Supported women's entrepreneurship and business development activities

There are some specific actions carried out which are targeted to female business owners or potential women entrepreneurs. Most common are female mentors and mentor clubs, supported in local level by county development centres.

Additionally, some NGO-led activities have been carried out. For example, ETNA Estonia, an NGO specifically concentrating on promoting and supporting entrepreneurship among rural women, run a microcredit project in 2012-2014, co-financed by the Open Estonia Foundation, to offer a comprehensive support package for women wishing to start with entrepreneurship or widen their business. The support package included mentoring, entrepreneurship trainings and entrepreneurship loans for women. By the end of the project, 34 loan contracts were concluded and 66 035 EUR of the whole 95 860 EUR loan resource had been distributed. The financial mechanism continued to exist also after the end of the project.

As another example, in 2018, BPW Estonia carried out a project of empowerment programme for Estonian women to become entrepreneurs in cooperation with Coca Cola Foundation and the Estonian Business School. More than 500 women participated in the activities of the project, including e.g. inspiration trainings, creation of Success Teams and compiling and

sending to all political parties a Memorandum of Inclusive Entrepreneurship. Also, Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre has regularly organised conferences and seminars to facilitate discussions and exchange of experience in the field of women and entrepreneurship.

During the last five years Estonia's public sector support measures for enhancing our entrepreneurial performance have become more and more accessible and flexible to various groups (e.g. start-up grants, grants for companies' access to public communication, water and electricity systems). Estonia also strongly supports responsible enterprise – in the spring of 2019, 24 partly or fully public companies signed an agreement to follow the principles of socially, economically and environmentally responsible management.

Other

Estonia does not use gender-based labour market policies, but there are general skill development and labour market policies also affecting women. These include free skills improvement and training for low-skilled or other workers in risk of unemployment, support for entrepreneurship and support for completing education, wage support for the employer, if the employed person has been unemployed or in a risk group.

As the health, education and life expectancy for women is higher in Estonia, job counselling and other employment services made available to seniors in 2014 likely affected senior women in an important way. Impact assessment has not yet been carried out.

10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?

Reformed contributory social protection schemes to strengthen women's access and benefit levels

According to the State Pension Insurance Act, the Government of the Republic prepares an analysis once in every five years concerning the effect of the bases for calculation of state pensions and evaluates the financial and social sustainability of the pension insurance system and, if necessary, submits a proposal to the parliament. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance compiled such an analysis in 2016. In 2018, the parliament adopted the changes proposed by the analysis and the Government to the State Pension Insurance Act. Pension reform addressed the problems of pensions' adequacy of low wage earners and the sustainability of pension system. As 77% of the insured persons are receiving wages below median income and I and II pillar pensions depend largely on contributions, many people (among them many women) will receive low pensions in the future. In order to reduce the impact of the contributions to the future pensions, changes in pension formula were made. New pension formula comes into force in 2021 and the stops increasing pension inequalities. Second important development was the linkage of pensionable age with life expectancy. Pension age will be linked to life expectancy from 2027 when the previous rise in pensionable age is achieved (65 years for both men and women). The change in pension formula and the rise in pensionable age will make everyone's (especially low income person's) pensions bigger in the future.

Third improvement was the flexible retirement concept. The flexible retirement concept will allow people to retire flexibly before legal pensionable age as they receive pensions even while they keep on working. According to old State Pension Act, the pension payments were stopped if early retirement pensioner started working. In order to increase one's pension, it is now possible to stop the pension payments and start them later again. While the pension payments are stopped they will grow actuarially neutrally. It is also possible to take out only half of pension which makes later pension payments higher. In 2021 the concept of flexible pension will come into force.

See also information concerning the entrepreneur account under the answer to question 6.

11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?

In addition to continuing with implementing measures initiated already during previous periods, some additional steps have been.

Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes

In 2018, a methodical guideline for teaching sexual- and reproductive health subjects to pre-school children was published. This guideline is not gender specific, but it covers both genders' particularities.

Other

To guarantee that people who use drugs, who have been detained by the police, receive all the necessary services (e.g. addiction treatment, harm reduction, social support, victim support etc.) a law enforcement assisted diversion program was initiated in 2018. Program provides to people who use drugs support person's services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week as an alternative to coercive sanction. Although the service is not gender specific, gender based differences in clients' needs are addressed (women who use drugs are supported by female support persons and linked, when necessary, to other more specific services).

Also from 2018, training is provided to child protection officers on how to work with parents who use drugs. One of the aims of this training is to protect the rights of women who use drugs who have children as there have been cases when their parental rights have been unjustly terminated.

12. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls?

Taken measures to increase girls' access to, retention in and completion of education, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development programmes

In autumn 2015, in the framework of the ESF programme “Promoting Gender Equality 2011-2013”, career days for boys and girls were carried out in chosen vocational schools, universities and workplaces, enabling secondary school pupils to receive first-hand information about professions stereotypically considered as more suitable for representatives of the other sex. E.g. girls participated in the events focusing on IT-studies, STEM fields, mechatronics; boys in events focusing on teacher training or nursing education. If possible, participants could also do practical exercises. All together 193 pupils in the age group of 15-19, 45% of them boys and 55% girls, took part of the events.

Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals

Two larger-scale projects financed through an open call from the Norway Grants 2009-2014 gender equality programme were carried out in 2014-2015 aimed to raise awareness of teachers and other educational staff and to integrate gender equality issues into teacher training.

The objective of the project co-ordinated by the Estonian Women’s Associations Roundtable²⁶ was to promote gender equality through integrating the gender perspective into teacher education and training, raising gender awareness of teacher educators and practicing teachers and developing a comprehensive system of support to achieve the objective. Its direct beneficiaries were academic staff involved in teaching future teachers; future teachers; practicing pre-, general education and vocational schools’ teachers; professionals holding management posts in educational establishments; gender research experts. A website on gender and education²⁷ was created by the Estonian Women’s Associations Roundtable, gathering various research papers and materials to help teachers to integrate gender aspects to their teachings. The website is also informative to a more general public, providing information and most recent information on gender and education.

The objective of the Praxis Centre for Policy Studies’ project²⁸ was to support the integration of gender equality in the education system of Estonia, thereby contributing to a reduction in gender inequality in Estonian society. Two subject courses on gender equality for universities and one in-service training course for teachers of Estonian general education schools were developed and tested.

To ensure that the courses meet the needs of Estonian society, teachers and students, a survey was carried out among students in order to identify their experiences, knowledge and attitudes regarding gender equality, and interviews were conducted with students and teachers of education and social sciences, as well as experts in the field of gender equality and education. In addition, an analysis of the experience of the Nordic countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden) and academic literature was conducted.

A follow-up project was implemented by Praxis in 2016, with a financing from the Gambling Tax Council. The purpose of the project was to increase the gender awareness in educational system, with particular emphasis on school management bodies. During the project a one-day in-service training course that covers topics such as equal treatment and gender equality in schools, the role of school management in creating stereotype-free school culture and

²⁶ More information about the project is available at: <http://www.enu.ee/enu.php?keel=3&id=452>

²⁷ Website is available in Estonian at: <http://www.enu.ee/haridus-ja-sugu/>

²⁸ More information about the project is available at: <http://www.praxis.ee/en/works/mainstreaming-gender-equality-into-general-and-higher-education/mainstreaming-gender-equality/>

teaching practices etc., was developed for school principals and management. The course was also piloted in two groups.

Increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and digital fluency and literacy

In spring 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs organised tailor-made training for career counsellors working with young people. The aim was to give career counsellors basic training of gender and gender equality in order to help them understand gender aspects in their work and give them gender mainstreaming skills.

Trainings have been organised for career counsellors to raise their gender awareness. Additionally, in 2017, several information materials were produced by the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Competence Centre for the use of Cohesion Policy Funding on how to awake and support girl's interest in STEM fields, including for parents²⁹ and hobby group instructors³⁰. In 2017, also a study about the gender aspect of the hobby education of natural, technological and exact sciences was carried out³¹.

In 2016-2020, TeaMe+, a European Regional Development Fund financed programme for popularizing STM (science and technology and mathematics) fields, is carried out in Estonia, co-ordinated by the Estonian Research Council. Partners of the programme include the Estonian Academy of Sciences and the Estonian Newspaper Association. The science communication programme "TeaMe+" aims, among other things, to inform youth (and individuals that influence them) of professions and career opportunities associated with STM, to improve the image of STM related professions and to spread the science-driven manner of thinking and scientific literacy³².

Additionally, in 2016-2020 also science communication projects funded from the open call "Teeme+" are carried out, co-ordinated by the Archimedes Foundation. The aim of the call is popularisation of research among young people and in society as a whole. The call helps to fund popularisation activities at institutional level (e.g. including, higher education institution, etc.). Support is given for the development of attractive and modern NTES (natural, technological and exact sciences) content for general and hobby education, as well as for improvement of the quality and availability of career information in the area of NTES in cooperation with enterprises. Activities such as systematic events, series of events and other initiatives that promote research (focusing, in particular, on smart specialisation areas relevant for companies) are funded.

In 2019, an analytical study about the popularisation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities carried out in Estonia in 2013-2018, and the challenges still to

²⁹ Available in Estonian at: http://kompetentsikeskus.volnik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/infoleht_lapsevanematele_LTT.pdf

³⁰ Available in Estonian at: <http://kompetentsikeskus.volnik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Juhised-LTT-huviringide-juhendajatele.pdf>

³¹ The study report is available in Estonian at: http://kompetentsikeskus.volnik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Uuringu-aruanne_LTT-huviharidus-sooline-aspekt.pdf

³² More information about the science communication activities of the Estonian Research Council is available at: <https://www.etag.ee/en/activities/science-communication/>

be faced, was published, commissioned by the Estonian Research Council. Some attention was paid also to gender aspect of the activities and challenges³³.

From 2014, the national curriculum refers to digital competence as a key competence. However, as a subject, ICT is optional. Schools are responsible for deciding how students' ICT skills are being developed – via different subjects or through a separate subject. Often schools design their own curriculum for ICT. The government supports schools in integrating digital culture into learning via different programme-based initiatives aimed at e.g. developing learning materials, providing teachers' education etc³⁴.

In 2016-2017, the think tank Praxis carried out a study "ICT education in Estonian schools and kindergartens", commissioned by the Information Technology Foundation of Estonia (HITSA) with a financing from the ESF³⁵. The study examined information and communication technology (ICT) education to gain a better overview of the teaching of digital skills in Estonian general education schools and kindergartens.

Several challenges manifested based on the results of analysis of curricula and syllabi of schools and online surveys among teachers and pupils. For example, the study indicated that the organization of teaching digital skills in Estonian general education schools varies to a large extent, with 20% of schools teaching digital skills as a separate subject already in the first stage of study and approximately 50% of schools teaching digital skills as a separate subject in the second and third stages of study. Almost 70% of general education schools offer their pupils ICT hobby groups for the development of digital skills.

Similarly, also the role and proportion of digital skills (e.g. skills related to information queries, critical assessment of data, development of content, technology education, such as programming and robotics) in school syllabi varies. The study also revealed challenges regarding access to digital tools and digital study materials, as well as concerning their quality and use. In addition, the study showed that despite the active participation of teachers in various digital skills related in-service trainings, and overwhelmingly positive attitude towards using digital tools, there are shortcomings in using the digital skills in the study process.

Estonia has also expanded its specific efforts to increase the % of women in ICT. For example, the "ICT is everywhere" communication campaign tries to overcome the stereotypes linked with careers in the ICT-sector. A special focus of the campaign is on informing girls on various job opportunities involving ICT in order to encourage them to consider studies or jobs in digital economy. The campaign was initiated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in 2018. During the two-year campaign, 50 media events take place in schools around Estonia and, in cooperation with the non-profit organisation Tech Sisters, 10 separate workshops in various technology companies. Another aspect of the campaign is to highlight female role models, since their lack is one of the factors why many women do not choose a career in the ICT sector. For the campaign the ministry is partnering with, among

³³ The study prepared by the Institute of Baltic Studies (Balti Uuringute Instituut) and HeiVäl Consulting in 2019 is available at: <https://www.etag.ee/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Teadust-ja-tehnoloogiat-populariseerivate-tegevuste-kaardistamine-ja-anal%C3%BC%C3%BCs.pdf>

³⁴ More information on this topic is available at: <https://e-estonia.com/creating-next-generation-of-digital-state-developers/>

³⁵ Leppik, Cenely, Haaristo, Hanna-Stella, Mägi, Eve (2017). IKT-haridus: digioskuste õpetamine, hoiakud ja võimalused üldhariduskoolis ja lasteaias. More information about the results of the study is available at:

<http://www.praxis.ee/en/works/ict-education-in-estonian-schools-and-kindergartens/>

others, Idea Group, Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications, Tallinn University of Technology, NGO Community Tech Sisters and the educational programme “Enterprising School”.

Another project, “Choose IT!” was launched together with Estonian IT companies and enables 500 postgraduates to learn a new profession and become software developers. The programme involves a 6-week training course followed by an 8-week internship in a company. While this project is not specifically targeted at women, currently around 62% of the participants are women.

There are also active third sector initiatives that focus on girls that aim to bring more women to the ICT sector by tackling (gender) stereotypes concerning the IT-sector. For example, Tech Sisters³⁶, founded in 2013, arranges entry level hands-on technology-focused workshops in development, robotics and design and monthly networking events to provide opportunities to meet, mingle and share experiences with peers. Women in Tech, founded in 2015, aims to promote women’s presence and interest in the fields of technology and IT by organising e.g. coding workshops and creative campaigns and supporting networking.

Also some more concrete private and third sector initiatives can be pointed out. Digigirls, an initiative of Tech Sisters and its partners, is a series of events for girls in 7th-12th grades introducing them to ICT field³⁷, offering a possibility to participate in design, programming, databases, testing, marketing and project management workshops in order to show the variety of aspects of working in the IT sector and skills needed for that. Also an international initiative Rails Girls has provided a possibility for girls studying in 10th to 12th grades and also women with no previous experience in IT, to take part in a two-day event to learn the basics of programming with help from experienced mentors and create a personal webpage.

Another initiative, a HK Unicorn Squad³⁸, started in 2018 and aims to raise the interest of girls of 7-12 years of age in technology, especially in robotics. While in spring 2019, there were 16 Unicorn Squad groups in different parts of Estonia, with 200 girls participating, from autumn 2019, already 35 groups are expected to start to operate.

Additional example of an initiative, not necessarily restricted only to the field of tech and ICT, is a programme “Superheroes”³⁹ - a free of charge entrepreneurship and leadership programme for 13–17-year-old girls, started in 2017 and consisting of a series of 10 workshops, implemented during 4 months. The programme offers participants role models, support through coaches and mentors, safe environment to test their ideas, etc.

³⁶ More information about the activities of Tech Sisters is available at: <http://techsisters.org/>

³⁷ More information about DigiGirls initiative is available at: <http://www.digigirls.ee/>

³⁸ More information about HK Unicorn Squad initiative is available (in Estonian) at: <https://www.facebook.com/HKUnicornSquad/>

³⁹ More information about the Superheroes programme is available at: <https://superheroes.ee/>

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

13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape

In order to tackle intimate partner violence and domestic violence different developments have taken place during the last five years, among these legislative changes, changes in victim support system and changes in ways of cooperation and coordination of investigation and support provision. More detailed description can be found under replies to questions 14 and 15.

Trafficking in women and girls

A variety of changes have also been implemented to tackle trafficking in women and girls. The description of an offence of trafficking in human beings underwent some changes in 2017 and 2019. According to the present regulation, placing a person, for the purpose of gaining economic benefits or without it, in a situation where he or she is forced to marry, work under unusual conditions, engage in prostitution, beg, commit a criminal offence or perform other disagreeable duties, and keeping a person in such situation, if such act is performed through deprivation of liberty, violence, deceit, threatening to cause damage, by taking advantage of dependence on another person, helpless or vulnerable situation of the person, is punishable by one to seven years' imprisonment. Information concerning a specific offence of human trafficking with respect to minors, is provided a reply to question 29.

The Victim Support Act was amended and starting from January 2017, presumed victims of human trafficking can also receive services. There is no longer a need for a criminal investigation to be started in order for the person to be entitled to receive victim support services, the expert opinion presented by the NGO providing services will suffice. This guarantees that no potential victim fails to receive special services.

Support for prostituted persons includes more services since 2019, including support person service and labour market services. An outreach work is carried out now in all four regions of Estonia in order to find trafficking victims more efficiently. Also, the budget for services has increased, being 100 000 euro per year in 2018 and 160 000 euro in 2019. In addition, for identified victims there is a special additional budget.

Changes have taken place also with regard to prevention and counselling. Since April 2019, the anti-trafficking hotline service, previously provided with state financing by an NGO, has been provided by the Social Insurance Board, and its budget has also increased.

Additionally, new guideline on how to identify victims and how to guarantee their arrival to social services and shelter was finalized in 2019 and will be introduced and disseminated via anti-trafficking network in June 2019. The guideline was composed in co-operation of all the relevant counterparts, including the police, prosecutors, victim support, NGOs etc. and is valuable tool for making sure victims' rights are fully protected.

Concerning prevention of trafficking for forced labour, the following can be noted. In 2015, the Police and Border Guard Board and the Labour Inspectorate signed a cooperation agreement to exercise the state supervision over the working conditions of migrant workers. According to the agreement, the Police and Border Guard Board and the Labour Inspectorate will conduct inspections in collaboration to detect foreign nationals who are staying/working in the state illegally and to detect possible cases of human trafficking. In November 2016, Estonia ratified Protocol of 2014 to the ILO Forced Labour Convention which came into force concerning Estonia in November 2017.

14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?

Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation

Efficient response to domestic violence, including providing help to victims, is a priority for Estonia.

The Penal Code of Estonia criminalises all forms of domestic violence.

In 2015, in addition to changes to the Penal Code described under answers to other questions, a list of aggravating circumstances was expanded to include also commission of the offence against a person who is in a service or financially dependent relationship with the offender, and against a former or current family member of the offender, against a person who lives with the offender or a person who is otherwise in a family relationship with the offender; and commission of the offence against the person by an adult in the presence of a minor. Additionally, in case of physical abuse, a more severe punishment is foreseen if the abuse is committed in a close relationship or relationship of subordination.

In 2015, also an amendment of the Code of Criminal Procedure came into force, enabling the court to apply a temporary restraining order with the electronic surveillance with the consent of the suspect or accused. Under the same law, since 2016, unless a prosecutor or a judge conducts the hearing or it would hinder the course of the proceeding, a victim has the right to request that his or her hearing is conducted by a person of the same sex when it comes to sexual violence, gender-based violence or a criminal offence committed in close relationship.

In 2017, Estonia ratified the Istanbul Convention. In relation to that, several amendments were made to legislation, including to the Penal Code and the Victim Support Act. In order to further improve the available protection of women from violence, sexual harassment, harassing pursuit, forced marriages, female genital mutilation and purchasing sex from a victim of human trafficking were criminalized in the Penal Code. Concerning sexual harassment, see also the answer to question 6.

According to amendments made to the Victim Support Act, from January 2017 the women's support centre service has been organised by the Social Insurance Board. The service, which was previously lacking a clear system and set national funding, has become a continuously developed national service but is still carried out by women's support centres (NGOs).

Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls

In 2015, the Government of the Republic approved the "Strategy for Preventing Violence in 2015-2020" (see the answer to question 1). The preparation of the strategy was coordinated by the Ministry of Justice; the working group included all relevant ministries, their agencies, citizen associations and local governments. The strategy covers, inter alia, domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking. The strategy determines those responsible for the activities; specific objectives have been formulated, as have been the indicators of their achievement and the resources used for achieving the objectives. The Strategy's implementers are the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with their subordinate authorities (the Estonian Forensic Science Institute, prosecutor's offices, the Police and Border Guard Board, the Estonian National Social Insurance Board, the National Institute for Health Development). In order to support the implementation of the Strategy, a Lead Group of the Strategy for Preventing Violence in 2015-2020 was created in 2016. Main purpose of the Strategy's lead group is to take responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy and coordinate activities of the responsible parties, as well as to discuss the developments in the sector, the issues requiring solutions and amendment to the operational programme of the Strategy.

Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)

Estonia is implementing a multi-sectoral approach for supporting victims of domestic violence. National Victim Support is the central point coordinating the work and leading the network activities all around Estonia. In 2017, a pilot project was initiated by the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Health and Labour to better protect victims of domestic violence by an enhanced co-operation and improved everyday practices of law enforcement, social and child protection, women's shelters and other relevant counterparts. The new approach was piloted in Pärnu city and county from December 2017 to March 2018. The project aimed to test different approaches that ensure victim's security and empowerment, rapid intervention and case management, and effective need-based social and psychological support. For protecting all the victims, perpetrators were removed from the scene and victims were provided with support from National Victim Support system and women's shelters. In order to fulfil the project's goal, coherence of co-operation and rapidness of information exchange were increased. Based on the analysis of the results of the pilot project, its steering group made proposals for changes in the organization, resources and legislation regarding law enforcement and social affairs, local government and victim support organizations that

were agreed on the Government level. The implementation of the tested collaborative activities will continue in 2019, and it will be gradually introduced throughout Estonia by 2021. In addition, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) method is being used in more serious cases of domestic violence. The two approaches together will provide safety and security for victims of domestic violence and their children.

Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)

In Estonia, national victim support services are offered to all victims of crimes, neglect, physical, sexual or mental violence. The objectives, target groups, location, etc. of victim support services are stipulated in the Victim Support Act. Victims can receive compensation of the cost of psychological care and compensation meant for crime victims. They also receive the national victim support services. Victim support service workers have received a thorough training and have the necessary skills to provide counselling to victims of various crimes, including violence.

Victim support services are organised by the Social Insurance Board in all counties across Estonia. From 2017, the Victim Support Department of the Social Insurance Boards also organizes the women's support centre service, as well as services for victims of sexual violence and victims of human trafficking.

In 2014, 3,013 people turned to victim support due to domestic violence; in 2015, that number was 3,650; in 2016, 3,740 and in 2017, 4,582. In 2018, more than 5000 persons received help from national victim support in connection with domestic violence. Most of the people turning to victim support for that reason were women.

In order to strengthen victim support, a special funding for women's support centres was specified in the state budget for the first time in 2014, when it was 430,000 euros. The budget was increased to 500 000 euros for the years 2015-2017 and reached 1 000 000 euros in 2018. Around 2000 women per year receive services from women's support centres.

In addition, in 2017, a regulation of the Minister of Health and Labour which stipulated the programme for training on the topic of violence against women, came into force. According to the regulation, all people who worked with victims of violence against women and had not completed the corresponding training by 1 January 2017, had to undergo the training. The training is free of charge. In 2017, the training was organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs; as of 2018, it is provided annually by the Social Insurance Board.

A free support line (short number 1492) was created for victims of violence against women; victims, their close ones and specialists can call this support line 24/7. The support line is financed from state budget. In the period of 2013-2016, during 32 months 2,096 calls were made to the helpline for victims of violence against women. 93% of callers were women, 7% were men (mostly people close to a female victim). Of the cases, 31% mainly involved physical violence, 45% psychological violence, 18% economic violence and 7% sexual violence. In most cases, the abuser was a partner or ex-partner of the victim. 750 calls were made in 2017.

In addition, in order to provide better support for all the victims of crime and violence, since January 2019, the Social Insurance Board provides victim support crisis hotline (number 116 006). During its first month of action, already 575 calls were received.

24/7 support is available also via chat⁴⁰. The victim support practice has changed to a great extent and now, the crisis support is provided already at the domestic violence crime scene. Counselling is facilitated by the police and provided by the national victim support service.

In order to provide support and services for victims of sexual violence, a project “Creating and Empowering an Extensive Support Network for Victims of Sexual Violence” was implemented in 2014–2016. A crisis care and rehabilitation service for victims of sexual violence was developed and piloted. Guidelines were compiled for doctors concerning how to work with victims of sexual violence, training was organised for medical staff. Also network training and an information campaign were carried out. At the end of the project, the Social Insurance Board continued the activities, including initiating the provision of services for victims of sexual violence in two Estonian hospitals in 2016. In 2017, two more centres were set up at hospitals. In all four regions, the relevant service is ensured, medical personnel has been trained and evidence, which can later be used in court, is collected from victims. The services are financed from the state budget.

Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls

The Ministry of Justice annually analyses the criminal statistics of domestic violence⁴¹. In addition, the Ministry of Justice has financed several violence related surveys. For example, in 2015, the Ministry of Justice commissioned a survey “Experience of Estonian adolescents aged 16–19 with abuse” and in 2017 survey about the treatment of victims in criminal justice system, both carried out by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the Tartu University.

Different studies have been carried out in previous years. Estonian Institute for Open Society Research prepared an analysis in 2016 of the cost of gender based violence which can be used as a basis for more economically sustainable policy decisions in the future. A survey conducted by the Estonian Women Shelter Union in 2015 showed a high client satisfaction with the availability and quality of the services. Also a survey and a study were conducted to improve knowledge and data about the nature and spread of sexual violence in Estonia. In addition, public opinion on gender-based violence was studied and it appeared that almost nobody today considers domestic violence a private matter. Some more information about the studies carried out is available under the answers to questions 15 and 36.

Introduced or strengthened measures for improving the understanding of causes and consequences of violence against women among those responsible for implementing measures on ending violence against women and girls

The judicial training department of Supreme Court organizes the judicial training and offers annually also trainings related to violence. For example in 2017 and 2018, the training focused on the psychological aspects of domestic violence were offered.

⁴⁰ The service is available through a homepage: www.palunabi.ee

⁴¹ The information is available at: <https://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/statistika-ja-uuringud/kuritegevus-estis>

In 2016, the Ministry of Justice organized seminar about FGM to specialist working with the victims of violence and translated a guidance material related to FGM. In 2018, the Ministry of Justice financed trainings for legal practitioners who council the victims of sexual violence.

Other

Since 2017, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the President of the Republic of Estonia, has annually acknowledged organizations and specialist working with prevention of violence with the Violence Prevention Award⁴².

15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviours

For raising awareness of violence against women and domestic violence, numerous network trainings have been carried out for specialist who come into contact with victims (e.g. police officers, prosecutors, judges, social workers, victim support and child protection workers, medical staff, teachers, etc.).

In order to raise awareness of the general public, various campaigns and informative events were organized, including campaigns such as 'Open your eyes', 'No justification for sexual violence' / 'NO means NO', 'Violence is not love', 'Who hits, does not love', 'Shadows', also with funding from the EU and Norway Grants.

More specifically, for example in 2014-2015, a project "Bringing up a violence free generation", financed from the EU Progress Programme, was implemented in co-operation of several ministries, boards and NGOs. Among the activities was an awareness raising campaign "Open your eyes" targeting young people, training of the trainers and specific empowerment trainings targeting boys and girls. Rather innovative in the project was the cooperation with annual biggest dance event "The School Dance" that created good opportunity to approach young people all over Estonia and talk about gender roles and gender based violence.

In order to raise awareness of prostitution and trafficking in women, a media campaign "1ELU" was organized in 2017 in co-operation of several ministries and NGOs. The campaign had three phases and one of them concentrated on targeting the demand for prostitution that fuels human trafficking.

Violence against women, especially domestic violence, is often described, problematized and analysed in the Estonian media.

⁴² More information on the Violence Prevention Award is available at: <https://www.kriminaalpoliitika.ee/et/kriminaalpoliitika/vagivallaennetuse-tunnustusahind>

In 2014, a study on the prevalence and awareness of sexual violence was carried out by the Estonian Sexual Health Association⁴³. Additionally, commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs, surveys of awareness and attitudes of the Estonian population concerning gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings were conducted in 2014⁴⁴ and 2016⁴⁵ in the framework of a Norway Grants programme “Domestic and Gender-Based Violence”. While the surveys showed that in case of domestic violence, more awareness raising is needed among men, older people and representatives of other nationalities. Concerning trafficking in human beings, more awareness raising activities were shown to be needed among young people and representatives of other nationalities.

Grassroots and community-level mobilization

During 2012–2016, the Ministry of Social Affairs coordinated a programme titled “Domestic and Gender-Based Violence”, the main goal of which was to reduce and prevent gender-based violence and human trafficking⁴⁶. The total budget of the programme was 2,352,941 euros, of which 2 000 000 euros was support from Norway Grants. Ten projects were financed in the framework of the programme which were directed at noticing intimate partner violence, children, young people with special needs, prevention of human trafficking, and providing support to victims of human trafficking and prostitution. Projects were implemented by NGOs. The following activities were carried out:

- Providing improved support services for victims of gender-based violence and improving the skills and knowledge of people who work with victims of violence.
- Supporting the helpline against human trafficking, providing preventive counselling and support to victims.
- Developing and providing new services to victims of sexual exploitation.
- Increasing public awareness of gender-based violence by way of training, campaigns, studies and analyses.
- Increasing public awareness of human trafficking by way of training, campaigns, studies and analyses.
- Supporting non-profit organizations working in the field of domestic violence and human trafficking in order to increase their operational capacity.

The largest support, 908,510 euros, was granted to the Estonian Women`s Shelters Union. The aim of the project was to provide improved support services to victims of violence, strengthen cooperation between institutions and to increase relevant public awareness.

⁴³ An overview of the results is available in Estonian at: <http://www.estl.ee/admin/upload/Dokumendid/Seksuaalv%C3%A4givala%20levimus%20ja%20hoiakud%20Estis.pdf>

⁴⁴ Main conclusion of the survey are available in English at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/eesmargid_ja_tegevused/Norra_toetused/Koduse_ja_soopohise_vagivalla_vahendamise_programm/survey_on_the_attitudes_of_estonian_inhabitants_in_relation_to_gender-based_violence_and_human_trafficking_2014.pdf

⁴⁵ Main conclusions of the survey are available in English at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/eesmargid_ja_tegevused/Norra_toetused/Koduse_ja_soopohise_vagivalla_vahendamise_programm/s_oovagivalla_ja_inimkaubanduse_uuringu_2016_kokkuvote_eng.pdf

⁴⁶ More information about the programme is available in English at: <https://www.sm.ee/et/granted-projects>

Perpetrator programmes

Estonia has mandatory social programmes in prisons and in probation. In addition, there is a programme for voluntary participants called “Inner strength”. In 2019, the Social Insurance Board is working towards widening the service and making it available for more people.

16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?

Introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions

Since July 2017, in addition to activities that can be qualified as unauthorised surveillance, repeated or consistent attempts to contact another person, watching him or her or interference in the privacy of another person against the will of such person in another manner, if the intent or effect thereof is to intimidate, humiliate the other person or disturb him or her in any other manner, is forbidden by the Penal Code. It is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to one year's imprisonment. In 2018, 200 such offences were registered. 83% of perpetrators were men and 82% of victims were women.

17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?

Provided training to media professionals to encourage the creation and use of non-stereotypical, balanced and diverse images of women and girls in the media

In 2016, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Competence Centre for the use of Cohesion Policy Funding published a handbook both in Estonian and in Russian on how to avoid using stereotypes and prejudices, including those related to gender, when preparing information materials⁴⁷.

In September 2019, a training will be organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs to support tackling hate-speech (including gender-based). The main target group for the training will be journalists. The training will give insights and know-how for dealing with hate-speech directed at journalists themselves, for covering certain sensitive topics and for refraining from using language and approaches that might encourage or even incite hate-speech.

See also information about the 2017-2019 project “BREAK! - overcoming gender stereotypes in Europe through cross-media learning” under the answer to question 2.

See also information concerning 2019-2020 project “Nudging Women to Power” under the answer to question 5.

⁴⁷ The handbook is available in Estonian at: http://kompetentsikeskus.volnik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Teabematerjalide-koostamine_eestik.pdf and in Russian at: http://kompetentsikeskus.volnik.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Eelarvamuste-ja-soostreotypide-valtimine-trykistes_vene_k.pdf

18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

YES

Considering the fact that women and girls with different ethnic background may face specific forms of violence, several legislative changes have been adopted during recent years. Forced marriage and female genital mutilation are criminalized since 2017. Also, since 2016, unless a prosecutor or a judge conducts the hearing or if this would hinder the course of the proceeding, a victim has the right to request that his or her hearing is conducted by a person of the same sex when it comes to sexual violence, gender-based violence or a criminal offence committed in close relationship.

In 2017-2018, the Women's Support and Information Centre in Estonia coordinated an international project "WHOSEFVA –Working with Healthcare Organizations to Support Elderly Female Victims of Abuse"⁴⁸, implemented in six partner countries: Austria, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia and the UK to address the barriers and gaps which exist in healthcare settings to effectively support elderly women victims of abuse. The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of domestic violence organizations to cooperate with healthcare providers and policymakers in identifying and responding to gender-based violence among elderly women. Among the beneficiaries of the project were health care organizations and their staff, social care and domestic violence workers, elderly female victims, national and local policy makers, media and through this also general public. The project was co-funded by the European Commission under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme.

Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Critical areas of concern:

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

19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

Collected and analysed data on women's political participation, including in appointed and elected positions

In order to create a discussion about opportunities of women in high-level politics, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner published an analysis about the position of

⁴⁸ More information about the project is available in English at: <http://www.whosefva-gbv.eu/>

women in electoral lists before the parliamentary elections in spring 2015. Additional analysis was prepared based on the results of the elections.

In 2018, a project “The Role of Women and Men in Local Governments and Councils”⁴⁹, co-financed by the state through the Council of the Gambling Tax, was carried out by an independent, non-profit, civil initiative think tank Praxis. The aim of the project was to give an overview of the role of women and men in shaping the local life by collecting and analysing data of the education level, age, pay and occupation of the employees of local governments. The results were published in a policy brief, which can be used in order to improve the situation of women in local governments in the future.

See also information concerning 2019-2020 project “Nudging Women to Power” under the answer to question 5.

20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?

Strengthened the provision of formal and technical vocational education and training (TVET) in media and ICTs, including in areas of management and leadership

Information concerning activities to improve access to and skills for using information and communication technologies has been provided under the answers to questions 6 and 12.

Collaborated with employers in the media and ICT field to improve internal policies and hiring practices on a voluntary basis

In 2015-2016, an NGO BPW Estonia implemented a project ““Work and Life Balance Toolkit for Companies on Bases of Skype” with a financing from small grant scheme of the Norway Grants gender equality programme, in co-operation with Skype Technologies. The purpose of the project was to develop a toolkit to facilitate work-life balance, linking the issue with to corporate image-building and improved competitiveness by example of one company (Skype). Project supported the endeavours of the ICT sector to promote gender equality among its employees. In addition to a study day organised for sharing international practice on work-life balance measures, both theoretical and practical information materials were published. Also, based on the results of a specific employee satisfaction survey, proposals were prepared for the management of Skype Technologies on how to support balancing work, family and private life. Additionally, recommendations, informed by the results of another satisfaction survey carried out in social media, and usable also by employers in general were and published.

Provided support to women’s media networks and organizations

Starting from 2015, a project-based activity support has been provided by the state through the Gambling Tax Council among other organisations to an NGO publishing an independent

⁴⁹ „The Role of Women and Men in Local Governments and Councils“, Praxis:
<http://www.praxis.ee/en/works/women-and-men-local-governments/>

feminist web magazine in Estonia⁵⁰. They publish weekly online articles and interviews on the blog, mostly in Estonian but also in Russian and to some extent in English. The web magazine offers a platform for feminist writers in Estonia and abroad, representing a variety of perspectives, including intersectional. The articles of the web magazine are regularly also republished at the homepages of mainstream media channels. The NGO also works through Facebook (commenting and sharing news), Twitter and Instagram (collecting sexist ads) and arranges creative writing workshops.

21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

NO

22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?

YES

If YES, please provide further information on the methodology, the scope of tracking, past trends and current proportion of investments.

OECD DAC gender equality marker is used for tracking the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In 2018, 142 new projects were financed, out of which 12% have the Gender Marker (GM) 0; 4% have the GM 1, and 7% have the GM 2.

23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

YES

If YES, please list the name of the plan and the period it covers, its priorities, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.

From 2016, the main policy document for gender equality is the “Welfare Development Plan for 2016-2023”⁵¹ and a four-year rolling Gender Equality Programme implemented in the framework of it. Gender equality is one of the four sub-goals of the Development Plan. Measures foreseen to be implemented under the development plan vary from awareness raising to legislative initiatives, including both special measures to promote gender equality and activities that support the implementation of gender mainstreaming. To reduce gender

⁵⁰ The web magazine Feministeerium is available at: <https://feministeerium.ee/en/>. The web magazine was created in the framework of a small grant scheme project of the Norway Grants gender equality programme, implemented in 2014-2015.

⁵¹ Available in English at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/eesmargid_ja_tegevused/welfare_development_plan_2016-2023.pdf

inequality, prevent its resurgence, and achieve gender equality in different spheres of life, attention is paid to reducing gender stereotypes and their negative impact, as well as reducing gender segregation in education and the labour market, supporting the economic independence of men and women, therein reducing the gender pay gap, achieving a gender balance on the decision-making levels of society, enhancing the protection of rights, and ensuring institutional capacity, including the analysis and management capabilities necessary for the promotion of gender equality. Implementation of the development plan and the programme is monitored through indicators. Activities foreseen in the Gender Equality Programme are funded mainly from the state budget.

Framework necessary to support the promotion of gender equality, including the targets of the SDG 5, includes also other programmes under the same development plan (Labour Market Programme, Social Insurance Programme, Welfare Programme), but also other strategies, including the “Strategy for Preventing Violence in 2015-2020” (more information is provided under the answer to question 1) and the Strategy of Children and Families 2012-2020⁵² (especially its strategic objective 5: “Men and women have equal opportunities for reconciliation of work, family and private life in order to promote a quality everyday life that meets the needs of each family member”).

If YES, has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?

Activities implemented to promote gender equality (including those for tackling gender-based violence) are at the moment mainly funded from the state budget, with additional funding from different EU funds and the Norway Grants.

24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

NO

Estonia does not have a specific action plans for implementation of the of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women. Recommendations are being taken into account in the framework of a regular policymaking process.

25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

YES

⁵² The Strategy of Children and Families 2012-2020 is available in English at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Lapsed_ja_pered/lpa_fulltxt_eng_83a4_nobleed.pdf

If YES, does it have a specific mandate to focus on gender equality or discrimination based on sex/gender?

On 13 June 2018, amendments to the Chancellor of Justice Act were adopted by the parliament, stipulating that from January 1st, 2019 the Chancellor of Justice fulfils the functions of the national human rights institution.

Equal treatment is one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia. Under § 12 (1) of the Constitution, everyone is equal before the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, race, colour, sex, language, origin, religion, political or other views, property or social status, or on other grounds.

Under the Chancellor of Justice Act, with regard to issues of equality and equal treatment the Chancellor is competent to verify conformity of legislation with the Constitution and existing statutes (i.e. constitutional review competence), to verify the activities of representatives of public authority (i.e. the ombudsperson competence) and arrange conciliation proceedings for resolving disputes between persons under private law. Division 4 of Chapter 4 of the Chancellor of Justice Act establishes the activities of the Chancellor in promoting the principle of equality and equal treatment.

Equal treatment and gender equality are also part of the Chancellor's mandate through international conventions – the Chancellor is the national preventive mechanism against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, has the competence of the ombudsperson for children, and performs the functions of promoting the implementation, upholding and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As an NHRI, the Chancellor of Justice convened an Advisory Committee on Human Rights in 2019. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Chancellor in protecting and promoting human rights as well as in monitoring the situation of human rights, including in identifying the situation in terms of protecting human rights, raising issues related to human rights and finding solutions for them, identifying the need for and organising human rights surveys, promoting human rights education and improving the exchange of information between stakeholders. The Advisory Committee's 50 members were selected via an open competition and include people from various walks of life from all across Estonia, featuring seasoned specialists in social welfare, education and research, health care, genetic engineering, medical ethics, architecture, labour law, personal data protection, ethnology and language, religious freedom and environmental protection.

There are also several members with an extensive expertise in gender equality (e.g. non-discrimination in employment, gender-based violence, reproductive and sexual rights, disability rights and gender). The general meeting of the committee is held twice a year with field-specific discussions taking place more frequently, as required. Membership and participation in the work of the Advisory Committee is voluntary, the authorisation of a member of the Advisory Committee is personal and the Advisory Committee is elected for a period of four years.

If YES, please provide up to three examples of how the NHRI has promoted gender equality. (2 pages max.)

As the Chancellor of Justice fulfils the functions of the national human rights institution officially only starting from 1st of January 2019, no examples can yet be brought about how the NHRI has promoted gender equality.

Peaceful and inclusive societies

Critical areas of concern:

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

26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?

Adopted and/or implemented a National Action Plan on women, peace and security

In 2015, Estonia adopted its Second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for implementation of the UNSC resolution 1325 in the years 2015-2019⁵³. The NAP was prepared in co-operation with representatives of ministries, other authorities and NGOs. The action plan is executed within the scope of their competency by the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Defence League and women`s voluntary defence organization “Naiskodukaitse”, who cooperate closely with NGOs, academia and research institutions. The activities are divided into five thematic subgroups: 1) supporting the full realization of all human rights of women and the empowerment of women in conflict zones and post-conflict zones; 2) cooperation, information exchange and raising awareness at the International level; 3) raising awareness at the national level; 4) inclusion of women in positions related to peace and security in Estonia; 5) increasing the efficiency of cooperation and information exchange in Estonia.⁵⁴

In 2019, the final report of the NAP will be compiled, as well as the new NAP drafted for the period of 2020-2024.

Used communication strategies, including social media, to increase awareness of the women, peace and security agenda

In the last five years, annual conferences, seminars and roundtables have been organized on the topic of Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The objectives of the events have been public awareness raising, sharing experiences with international partners and highlighting progress on WPS in the work of different stakeholders in Estonia. The events have gathered at least

⁵³ National Action Plan on women, peace and security for 2015-2019 is available at: http://www.vm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/diplomacy/human-rights/1325_tegevuskava_2015-2019_en.pdf

⁵⁴ Overview of the implementation of the NAP in 2015-2017 is available at: https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/Estonia_for_UN/Rasmus/1325_overview_report.pdf

150 participants annually, communication messages have reached thousands of readers and viewers.

On the international agenda, Estonia has been long-standing supporter of an ambitious WPS agenda, taking floor at thematic UNSC open debates and other related discussions. At the EU level, Estonia has actively participated in gender-related EU development policy debates, supporting more ambitious objectives in this field.

Estonia has helped to advance the WPS agenda internationally also by making annual voluntary un-earmarked financial contributions in support of the work of the UN Women and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years 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?

Promoted and supported women's meaningful participation in peace processes and the implementation of peace agreements

On the international level, Estonia has regularly made statements at the relevant UNSC open debates and the Arria-Formula meetings, emphasizing the importance of meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security, not only as beneficiaries of the processes but as leaders, partners and agents of change.

By supporting the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Estonia has contributed to alleviation of the situation of women and girls in conflict situations. Through its NGOs, Estonia has supported directly the education of women and girls in different conflict affected countries, such as Afghanistan. These efforts contribute to the empowerment of women and girls, making it also possible for them to participate in the peace processes in their countries.

Integrated a gender perspective in humanitarian action and crisis response

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made voluntary contributions (earmarked and un-earmarked) to international development cooperation and humanitarian aid organizations that have the gender perspective incorporated into their activities, including among other contributions, to CERF, UN OCHA, IRCR, WFP, WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNOPS.

In armed conflicts, humanitarian action and crisis response, Estonia has been contributing to institutions that have integrated the gender perspective into their activities, such as the ICRC, IFRC, The European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, „The Madad Fund“, CERF, WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and OCHA. The funds have been used in conflict-affected regions, for example, in Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Ukraine, Libya and Yemen.

Moreover, Estonia is supporting projects implemented by Estonian NGOs targeting vulnerable groups, including women, in crisis and conflict situations. For example, NGO Estonian Refugee Center received a contribution earmarked for humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons and victims of conflict to support their activities in connection with the situation of Ukrainian IDP's in 2017-2018⁵⁵. The project was supporting entrepreneurship and re-qualification in Donetsk and Zaporozhe Oblasts. Particular emphasis was placed on supporting women in establishing small businesses. In 2018-2020, NGO Mondo is implementing a project addressing the need for education and psycho-social support of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. The overall objective of the project is to improve the situation of 1,500 Syrian refugee families in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The project is focusing in particular on children, the youth and women. The targeted groups can go back to school and attend various courses to acquire modern professional skills (such as IT skills) that significantly improve their competitiveness in the labour market.

Projects supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have to incorporate the gender equality principle as a horizontal topic into their activities.

Other

In 2017, the Ministry of Defence released a policy white paper for increasing participation of women in military service. The main objective is to encourage more women to choose military career, to foster and increase gender equality in the Estonian armed forces, therefore bring greater diversity, talents and ideas to military and leadership positions. The stipulated policy measures include various activities related to the improvement of the Estonian Defence Forces` (EDF) working environment and enabling women to serve in all military units as well their equal treatment with men in the assignment of professions. In line with a principle of evidence-based policymaking, the measures also provide for more thorough research of gender issues in the military, including collection and analysis of sociological data.

Understanding the motivation of women to join and serve in the military, appreciating their service experience and addressing the challenges of integrating them effectively into the work environment and overall mission and tasks of the EDF are important factors in the recruitment, retention and successful performance of women in the EDF. In 2017, a survey was conducted in the EDF, with a support from the Ministry of Defence, the report of which highlights many pertinent issues and can serve as a basis for further continuous improvements in personnel policies, training programmes, leadership approaches and management practices in the EDF⁵⁶.

In order to raise awareness and promote women's involvement and wider participation in national defence, including armed forces, communication campaigns have been carried out to increase knowledge and support among Estonian society. Activities have also been implemented with other defence institutions and sub-institutions to raise awareness and support among overall society and target groups.

⁵⁵ More information about the project is available at: <https://www.pagulasabi.ee/en/humanitarian-aid>

⁵⁶ Report "Women in the Estonian Defence Forces—Motivation, Attitudes, Experiences and Challenges" is available at: https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ICDS_Report_Women_in_the_Estonian_Defence_Forces_Andres_Siplane_December_2017.PDF

28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-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?

Other

In order to contribute to alleviation of the situation of women and girls in conflict situation, Estonia has made voluntary un-earmarked financial contributions in support of the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children

Please see information about activities concerning changing negative social norms and gender stereotypes, overcoming the stereotypes linked with careers in the ICT-sector and reducing gender segregation under the answers to questions 2, 5 and 12.

Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage

In order to prevent forced marriages, a specific reference was added to the offences of trafficking in human beings and human trafficking with respect to minors in the Penal Code in 2017. According to the present regulation, influencing of a person of less than eighteen years of age, for the purpose of gaining economic benefits or without it, in order to cause him or her to commence or continue engagement in prostitution or commission of criminal offences, work under unusual conditions, beg or marry against his or her will or appear in pornographic or erotic performances or works and aiding in other manner in the activities specified of a person of less than eighteen years of age, is punishable by two to ten years' imprisonment.

Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices

To eliminate violence against girls, including harmful practices, important legislative changes have been enforced. In July 2017, specific regulation came into force addressing disabling female genital mutilation. According to the Penal Code, disabling genital mutilation of a woman or a girl of less than eighteen years of age, or compelling or placing her in a situation where she would suffer from the commission of such act, or instigation of a girl of less than eighteen years of age to suffer from the commission of such act, is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment. The same act if either committed repeatedly against the same person or committed against two or more persons or committed by a group or if serious health

damage or danger to life or other serious consequences are caused thereby, is punishable by four to twelve years' imprisonment. The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment.

Changes in legislation concerning physical and sexual violence, have already been described in answers to questions 13-18.

Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

Critical areas of concern:

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

30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?

No specific actions have been taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies.

31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?

No specific actions have been taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation.

Section Three: National institutions and processes

32. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.

Equality Policies Department (until 2015, Gender Equality Department), which is also responsible for promoting gender equality, including development of policies and co-ordinating implementation of activities in this field, is under the area of government of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

While from April 2015 to April 2019, the minister responsible for gender equality policies was the Minister of Health and Labour, before that and again from April 2019, the responsible minister is the Minister of Social Affairs.

33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?

NO

The Head of the Equality Policies Department is not a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation. However, the Deputy Secretary General on Social Policy, under whose general management is also the Equality Policies Department, is a member of an inter-ministerial Working Group for Sustainable Development.

34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

YES (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)
NO (Beijing Declaration and PfA)

If YES,

a) Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Beijing Declaration and PfA	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil society organizations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civil society organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Women’s rights organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Women’s rights organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Academia and think tanks	<input type="checkbox"/> Academia and think tanks
<input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based organizations	<input type="checkbox"/> Faith-based organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Parliaments/parliamentary committees	<input type="checkbox"/> Parliaments/parliamentary committees
<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector	<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector
<input type="checkbox"/> United Nations system	<input type="checkbox"/> United Nations system
<input type="checkbox"/> Other actors, please specify.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Other actors, please specify.....

b) Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?

NO

c) Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

Stakeholders listed under point a) of this question have not specifically contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

NO

Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development “Sustainable Estonia 21”, approved by the parliament in 2005, has four goals: 1) viability of the Estonian cultural space; 2) growth of welfare; 3) coherent society; 4) ecological balance. The strategy does not specifically mention either gender equality or empowerment of all women and girls.

Section Four: Data and statistics

36. What are the top three areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?

Re-processed existing data (e.g., censuses and surveys) to produce more disaggregated and/or new gender statistics

In 2013-2015, Statistics Estonia implemented a project “Increased availability of gender pay gap statistics”, financed from the Norway Grants gender equality programme. The project aimed at increasing the availability of more up-to-date and detailed gender pay gap data and analysis in Estonia. In the course of the project, already existing data sources (surveys, registries) were mapped to find the best data sources for monitoring the gender pay gap. One key objective and a result of the project was the creation of a combined database that contains not only data on wages, but also other significant variables necessary for a complex analysis of the gender pay gap⁵⁷. The variables, in turn, help to understand the essence of this phenomenon and provide an explanation for its causes. Statistics Estonia also drafted “Strategy of Pay Gap Statistics 2016-2023” and continues to move towards using various registries to produce statistics.

Conducted new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

In the framework of the Statistics Estonia project, funded from the Norway Grants gender equality programme, a study was carried out in 2014 to evaluate gender wage differences in Estonia from 2011 to 2012. The project also helped to raise awareness of general public about gender pay gap and issues related to this, as during the project easy-to-grasp informative entries were made to the blog of the Statistic Estonia.

⁵⁷ Database bringing together variables concerning gender pay gap in Estonia is available at the homepage of Statistics Estonia at: http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/1_Databas/Social_life/19Worklife_quality/03Gender_equality/03Gender_equality.asp

In 2016, a study report⁵⁸ was published by the Estonian Institute of Open Society Research on the cost of domestic violence in Estonia. The study was prepared in the framework of an open call project „Building a uniform system for the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Estonia“, financed from the Norway Grants domestic and gender-based violence programme. According to the study, the yearly cost of domestic violence in Estonia is 116.5 million euros. Studies on the prevalence and awareness of sexual violence and of awareness and attitudes of the Estonian population concerning gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings were conducted in 2014 and 2016. More information about these studies is available under the answer to question 15.

In 2017, the Ministry of Social Affairs presented the results of the fifth Gender Equality Monitoring. The aim of this national survey is to measure opinions and attitudes regarding the situation and position of women and men in society and concerning gender equality. It covers different topics and areas of life, such as power, economy, working life, private life, education and violence. In the fifth monitoring, compared to previous ones, an additional attention was put on the issues of equal pay, including attitudes towards making of salary-related information available for everyone and possibilities to participate in salary negotiations. It also included a question concerning electoral behaviour - whether a male or female candidate was chosen by the respondent during last elections. The results of the monitoring surveys are used to assess existing gender equality policies and to develop new policy measures to reduce gender inequalities.

In 2018- 2019 Estonia participated in testing and piloting of an EU survey on Gender-Based Violence. Actions included translation and pre-testing of the questionnaire, conducting a pilot survey on GBV at national level, comparing the methodology to conduct GBV survey at national level with the proposal of common methodology of EU-wide survey and analysing the impact of the methodological choices.

In 2019-2020, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioners Office is implementing a project “InWeGe - Income, Wealth and Gender” in a collaboration with the University of Tartu and the TalTech (former Tallinn Technical University). The project with a total budget of over 700 000 euros is co-financed by the European Commission through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. The project has three objectives. First, it analyses gender gap in financial and pension assets, focusing on Estonia, but using data also from other European countries. Second, the project aims to reveal new factors behind gender income gap in Estonia. Additionally, a free of charge and evidence-based innovative web application that predicts wages and pension entitlements is planned to be developed. In spring 2019, scientists from the TalTech and the University of Tartu presented a study about the gender gap in net wealth in Estonia. Administrative data on wealth that is linked to the Estonian Household Finance and Consumption Survey provides an individual-level wealth data for all household types.

⁵⁸ The report of the study „The Cost of Domestic Violence in Estonia“ is available in Estonian at: https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf

Produced knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

In May 2019, the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Competence Centre for the use of the Cohesion Policy Funding published a user-friendly online report “Europe 2020 and Equal Opportunities”⁵⁹ which draws together data on the situation of different social groups, including women and men, young and older people, people with special needs or of different ethnic background, in a variety of fields of life, e.g. at the labour market, in education, in entrepreneurship, concerning health etc., and trends concerning their situation in the period of 2014 and onwards.

37. Out of the following which are your country’s top three priorities for strengthening national gender statistics over the next five years?

Use more gender-sensitive data in the formulation of policy and implementation of programmes and projects

In order to support the use of gender-sensitive data in the planning and implementation of policies, Statistics Estonia continues to publish sex-disaggregated data in their public database⁶⁰ and provide gender-sensitive data and analysis in their topical publications and blog.

Conduct of new surveys to produce national baseline information on specialized topics (e.g., time use, gender-based violence, asset ownership, poverty, disability)

From January 2019 to the end of 2021, a project is carried out with an aim to decrease the still unexplained part of the gender pay gap by clearing up further reasons for it through linking together different existing databases, adding qualitative analysis and using simulation and prognosis models to design evidence-based policy scenarios. The project also creates a low-administrative-cost database for up-to-date data on gender pay gap. Based on the analysis, user-friendly digital awareness-raising features will be developed. As the studies show, women in Estonia often enter the pay negotiation process with a lower pay expectation than men. The digital solutions can have an empowering effect on women, providing information about the average pay level and pay gap in a certain field or position-level. The project is co-financed by the Estonian Research Council.

For the next Statistics Estonia Time Use Survey, to be carried out from December 2019 to November 2020, the Ministry of Social Affairs has proposed to clarify the concept of care burden, to be able to distinguish care need due to disability and/or long-term health problems and the time spent on this type of care.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is also preparing two different studies about care burden and care need (includes also long-term care need) to get a better understanding of both target groups in Estonia.

⁵⁹ The report is available in Estonian at: <https://vordsedvoimalused2020.ee/>

⁶⁰ The database of Statistics Estonia is available also in English through their at: <https://www.stat.ee/en>

Also the sixth Gender Equality Monitoring, a national survey to measure opinions and attitudes regarding the situation and position of women and men in society and concerning gender equality, is planned to be carried out in the coming years.

Production of knowledge products on gender statistics (e.g., user-friendly reports, policy briefs, research papers)

In order to support awareness of gender aspect in different areas of life and policy fields, the Ministry of Social Affairs is planning to compile and publish the third compilation of articles "Towards a balanced society: Women and Men in Estonia" in 2020-2021. Previous similar compilation of articles was published in 2010. The purpose of the publication is to provide an analytical overview of the situation of men and women in Estonian society in various spheres of life. The following themes are covered in the publication: men and women in the labour market; the reconciliation of family and work life; attitudes towards gender equality in Estonia; media; poverty; health; violence in intimate relationships; trafficking of human beings and prostitution; education; women in science; politics; men and women in civil society; and multiple discrimination. This publication will be a useful source of analysed information concerning the lives and situation of women and men in Estonia for many different stakeholders, including policy makers.

Furthermore, a Norway Grants project will be carried out in 2019-2021 aiming to develop a virtual gender equality competence centre where a wide range of information, including data, studies, training material, study programmes for teachers and other important stakeholders, including employers and policy makers, will be made available.

38. Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

YES

If YES, how many indicators does it include and how many of those are gender-specific⁶¹?

National set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs includes 87 indicators, 3 of which are gender-specific (gender pay gap, women in managerial positions, time-use of women and men).

If YES, how many of the gender-specific indicators are additional country indicators (i.e., not part of the global SDG monitoring and indicator framework)?

Two of the three gender specific indicators are country indicators. Although being to some extent similar to indicators in the "Global indicator framework for the Sustainable

⁶¹ 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).

Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, they have been modified.

The national indicator “Gender pay gap” is a simplified version of the global indicator 8.5.1 “Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities”, lacking its detail.

The national indicator „Time-use of women and men“ on the other hand is wider in its scope than the global indicator 5.4.1 „Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location“. It is based on the “Time” domain of the Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)⁶² and includes not only time spent of unpaid domestic and care work but measures also gender gaps in women’s and men’s engagement in sport, cultural or leisure activities outside of their home, combined with their engagement in voluntary and charitable activities.

Information concerning the Estonian indicators of sustainable development based on the UN sustainable development goals is available in the Statistics Estonia publication “Indicators of Sustainable Development”⁶³.

39. Has data collection and compilation on SDG 5 indicators and on gender-specific indicators under other SDGs begun?

YES

If YES, please describe which indicators have been prioritized

An analytical compilation of statistics based on national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs was published at the end of 2018. It included all three gender-specific indicators.

40. Which of the following disaggregations⁶⁴ is routinely provided by major surveys in your country?

- X Geographic location
- X Income
- X Sex
- X Age
- X Education
- X Marital status
- X Race/ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability
- X Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

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⁶² Please see at the homepage of the index: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2015/domain/time>

⁶³ “Indicators of Sustainable Development” Statistics Estonia 2018, available at: https://www.stat.ee/publication-download-pdf?publication_id=44739 (see the list on page 221).

⁶⁴ As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education and marital status.