

# Evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants' gender equality programming

Final Report

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# List of acronyms

CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG ENER	European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy
DG MOVE	European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility & Transport
DPP	Donor Programme Partner
EEA	European Economic Area
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
EU	European Union
EU GES	A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025
FEMM	European Parliament's dedicated Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
FM	Financial Mechanism
FMO	Financial Mechanism Office
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GrACE	Grant Administration and Collaboration Environment
IPO	International Partner Organisation
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (while other abbreviations exist, LGBTI is used throughout this report as an umbrella term unless specific groups within the umbrella are referenced)
NFP	National Focal Point
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PA[number]	Programme Area
PO/FO	Programme/Fund Operator
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights

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# Executive summary

The evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants' gender equality programming was conducted by Ecorys for the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO). The evaluation aimed to:

- A. review and compare the EEA and Norway Grants' efforts to promote gender equality and reduce gender-based violence in the 2009–2014 Financial Mechanism (FM) and the 2014–2021 FM, including the targeted and the mainstreaming approaches;
- B. assess the context and current needs for gender equality and action against gender-based violence to provide recommendations to improve relevance and effectiveness in the design, planning and implementation of gender equality programming in future EEA and Norway Grants.

## Part A: Looking back

### Relevance

The interventions implemented during the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 periods were found to be relevant and well aligned with national and European priorities. The Grants' relevance was perceived to have improved between the previous and current periods in at least two studied countries (Portugal, Lithuania), but the picture is mixed.

There is room for improvement in the Grants' programming at various levels. A review of the Blue Book identified disparities in coverage and clarity between targeted and mainstreaming approaches. Gender considerations are not included systematically in the mainstreaming approach. Except for the Active Citizens Fund, the level of gender mainstreaming across programmes is unsatisfactory. This limits the implementation of gender mainstreaming at the project level.

### Coherence

Generally, the Grants played a key role in enabling project implementation in both FM periods. Case study findings suggest financing for gender equality and action against gender-based violence and domestic violence was lacking in some countries and the Grants helped to fill those funding gaps. The Grants also filled a funding gap for specific actors, in particular Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). This was found to be particularly important in countries where CSOs working on women's rights and representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) persons have been denied funding by 'anti-gender' governments. The EEA and Norway Grants represent an alternative to EU funding for smaller organisations with less capacity and experience in bidding for international support. These points were highlighted in the Lithuanian, Romanian, Slovenian and Polish case studies.

### Effectiveness

Interventions promoting gender equality and the prevention of domestic and gender-based violence were found to have been highly effective in the 2009–2014 period. Emerging findings suggest that these interventions are also likely to be highly effective in the 2014–2021 period. Combining several activities into one project increased the likelihood of success when the combination was appropriate for the context. Projects implemented by public sector institutions were often cited as being among the most effective interventions. On the other hand, complex interventions implemented through open calls were often viewed as being risky due to possible delays or mismatches between needs and contextual factors. The evaluators found it difficult to identify the least effective interventions. The Covid-19 pandemic was cited as the most significant constraint to achieving results followed by operational challenges, particularly those related to finances.

For both Grant periods, the types of interventions promoting gender equality that are particularly replicable include: developing and using curricula and training materials; developing capacity, irrespective of target audience or format; documenting best practices and sharing guidelines for replication; providing services that fill gaps in existing support, such as childcare; and mobilising businesswomen through networking.

The most replicable interventions countering domestic and gender-based violence in both Grant periods include: providing services for victims; collecting data for service planning and communication activities; increasing the knowledge of service providers, the police, the judiciary and potential victims; and awareness-raising among the general public.

In both periods, the targeted approach was operationalised through dedicated programme areas. This allowed for a comprehensive assessment of gender equality results against programme budgets.

A 'targeted within mainstreaming' approach was adopted for the Active Citizens Fund, where gender equality and gender-based violence were specified as one of five areas of support. Such an approach allows for an overall assessment of the work done within these areas of support, as shown in result frameworks and in budget allocations.

It is more difficult to assess results in the mainstreaming approach, which involves assessing data disaggregated by gender in addition to assessing other variables, such as policy markers, target groups and (sub)sectors. These variables make it possible to identify projects potentially relevant to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence. While the approach to reporting is conceptually sound, the evaluators found that the quality of this data can be lacking. This limited the evaluators in accurately assessing results and budget allocations.

## Part B: Looking forward

### *Relevance*

The EU has been slowly progressing towards increased equality. However, differences remain between Member States. Progress on gender equality has been driven by respective political, social and economic contexts. Some Member States have experienced a rebirth of right-wing populism and anti-gender tendencies, creating unfavourable contexts for actions supporting the Istanbul Convention, LGBTI rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and interventions against gender-based violence. The context and potential for mainstreaming work-life balance interventions is better than that for tackling gender-based violence.

While gender-based violence is controversial in some countries, the evaluators found a generally better context for work related to domestic violence. This confirms the need to continue targeting both gender-based violence and domestic violence. The evaluators suggest that this work could better address sexual violence, victims' needs, the intersectional perspective and the online dimension. Prevention is another area that could be better addressed, with a focus on engaging men and boys.

Currently, key needs include capacity-building, sensitisation and training of government officials and other professionals. The capacity-building of CSOs, especially women's rights CSOs, was also strongly highlighted. While progress is being made, persisting negative social attitudes build a case for wider awareness-raising within the general public, including on the role and image of men and boys in society.

Case studies in this evaluation highlight the need for working with marginalised groups that experience multiple forms of discrimination, including: (i) Roma women and girls in Slovakia; (ii) LGBTI people in Romania; (iii) Roma women and girls in Romania (iv) Roma women and representatives of other vulnerable groups in Czechia, such as people who suffer from specific diseases, and young adults in institutional and foster care.



There is also a need to apply the intersectional approach more effectively at country level to promote gender equality and prevent domestic and gender-based violence. The EEA and Norway Grants themselves do not address intersectionality well, although Roma women are more visible.

The overall Grants' design involves various stakeholders at different stages. However, more involvement at country level is recommended. Donor Programme Partners' and International Partner Organisations' participation could be improved in the programme design and planning stage. Donor project partners could be more involved in implementation to strengthen the mutual character of cooperation. However, a solution to help cover their costs must also be found. Reporting requirements must be clear and proportionate to any related burden so that donor project partners can focus on contributing expertise.

Beneficiary States could improve the participation of thematically relevant CSOs in design, planning and/or implementation. Closer engagement of local and community-based organisations and actors representing vulnerable target groups in programme consultation and implementation could benefit overall relevance and effectiveness. To avoid conflicts of interest for CSOs involved in programme design, the process could comprise open and transparent country-level online consultations or independent needs assessments involving CSOs and target groups as informants.

The Grants have responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. However, such disruptions during financing periods may require a reassessment of initial plans. For instance, it could be beneficial to conduct mid-term reviews of programmes. These would facilitate the adaptation of interventions to external disruptions which affect gender equality. This would ensure both programme resilience and relevance to societal needs in the face of major external challenges.

To counter anti-gender equality movements in the Beneficiary States, the evaluators suggest the following promising approaches: feminist and women's rights activists switching from transactional to more disruptive approaches, such as protests; attracting support for and building coalitions around the women's rights agenda, which has become increasingly intersectional; grassroots organisation and decentralisation of activism; simplification of language, appeals to emotions and lived experiences; and the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to engage the public. The findings also highlight the need for funding to reach populations that are outside big cities, which represent untapped potential.

### *Coherence*

Gender equality is a key element of the new EU budget for 2021–2027. The overview of main EU funding sources and priorities in relation to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence encompasses multiple thematic areas. In some cases, especially in the European Social Fund+, priorities are broadly defined. As a result, it is difficult for the EEA and Norway Grants to identify niches or gaps. However, seeking thematic niches may not be so important since funding for priorities such as the prevention of gender-based violence is not fully covered.

Case study findings suggest that the Grants could do more to support vulnerable and marginalised groups. In several countries, LGBTI people and Roma women need greater support. Almost all case studies highlight awareness-raising or similar actions (promotion or campaigns) among the types of possible actions for future programming. Some case studies suggest the need for more activities involving the education system.

### *Sustainability*

The evaluators found evidence for continuing support to projects promoting gender equality, work-life balance, and the prevention of gender-based violence. The stakeholders interviewed agreed that continuing the targeted and mainstreaming approaches is optimal. The targeted approach allows for adequate funding of interventions while allowing easy management and monitoring. The mainstreaming

approach is advantageous for funding a greater number of smaller projects. This has the potential to produce results at different levels of governance and society, in various thematic areas and on a wider geographical scale.

Conceptually, work on work-life balance, domestic violence and gender-based violence could be combined under either a 'gender equality' or broader frame in one programme area. These issues are all rooted in gender inequality, with gender-based violence being its most severe form. A combined programme area could thus be framed as tackling gender inequalities (or gender discrimination) and related violence.

The key to designing one overall programme area for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence lies in a comprehensive understanding of both issues across the supported countries. Gender analyses and ex ante gender impact assessments could be conducted to improve this understanding. The evaluators believe that applying these methods prior to the development of the Blue Book and programme design would ensure that all supported activities better contribute to gender equality. A 'targeted within mainstreaming' approach could be adopted to promote gender equality across the areas supported in the Grants, including climate, civil society and rule of law. This would entail designing specific support measures into programmes with gender equality results in mind.

### *Effectiveness*

The current operationalisation of the targeted approach allows gender equality results to be sufficiently captured. The operationalisation of the mainstreaming approach could be improved in possible future financial periods by conducting gender analysis and ex ante gender impact assessments. Additionally, reporting accuracy should be improved to limit inconsistencies and errors in how projects are categorised with sector codes, policy markers, target groups and indicators disaggregated by gender. The evaluators were not able to identify an obvious way to improve this, but the FMO should continue to clarify the expectations and definitions for Fund and Programme Operators who, in turn, work with project promoters.

### *Recommendations*

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluators offer the following recommendations.

1. The FMO should continue to conduct consultations. During the design of programmes, the FMO should better involve CSOs, members of academia, national human rights institutions and equality bodies, and other less frequently involved stakeholders (e.g. trade unions, employer organisations, business associations or other professional organisations), ensuring that the consultation process avoids possible future conflicts of interest if the participating stakeholders apply for project funding. Independent needs assessments that require consultations with these stakeholders could be an option.
2. When national authorities oppose the incorporation of specific gender equality-related issues – such as tackling gender-based violence, promoting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, SRHR and LGBTI rights – into country-run programmes despite an identified need for such work, the Donors should divert resources to finance related actions under the Active Citizens Fund and the Regional Funds.
3. The Donors should consistently include gender equality and related concepts (broader equality, diversity and inclusion) in the language of the Blue Book and push for their inclusion in programme (implementation) agreements.
4. The Donors should continue to tackle gender-based violence as part of the targeted approach, making sure that the programming covers all phenomena encompassed by this term and that the intersectional perspective is applied. Beyond domestic violence, country programming should more strongly address

sexual violence and online violence. Different funding modalities should be considered to address the dynamics of the respective needs, including a mix of long- and short-term, ad hoc and strategic funding.

5. The Donors should continue funding work-life balance-related issues under the targeted approach. However, if the mainstreaming approach is selected, care must be taken that work-life balance issues are consistently included in all programme areas to maintain the focus. Under work-life balance, the EEA and Norway Grants should also more strongly promote men's participation in care responsibilities in families and care work more generally.

6. If there is a desire to reduce the number of programme areas, the Donors should combine work-life balance with gender-based violence programming. This can be done under the heading of 'tackling gender inequalities and related violence', with gender being highlighted specifically or not depending on the political priorities and values that the Donor States would like to promote.

7. The Donors should strengthen the mainstreaming approach by including dedicated gender equality-relevant support measure(s) systematically in all programme areas and highlighting gender equality-related (or equality, diversity and inclusion) considerations in the respective programme area descriptions.

8. The Donors should ensure that gender equality is reflected in all procedures, including grant applications, institutional and project setups, and monitoring and evaluation. In granting processes, gender balance should be ensured among project assessors, and points could be granted not only to projects that promote gender equality with concrete activities but also to those that make provisions for ensuring equal participation.

9. The EEA and Norway Grants should continue the intersectional focus on Roma women and girls and strengthen the intersectional approach in its programmes. The specific needs of LGBTI people should be better addressed. Vulnerable and marginalised groups targeted in programmes should be selected based on local contexts.

10. The Grants should increase support for organisations working for women's and LGBTI people's rights both in the Active Citizens Fund and other relevant programme areas, such as domestic and gender-based violence, rule of law, climate, business, research, education, local development, justice, and culture. This support should also encompass CSOs working on a broader equality agenda and representing people experiencing multiple forms of discrimination. The funding should be flexible (long- and short-term, ad hoc, strategic, emergency-related, etc.) and consider the long-term character of the fight for gender equality. The support should also target CSOs and activists working outside capitals and large cities, as well as grassroots organisations.

11. The Grants should continue to provide funding for awareness-raising among the general public (e.g. to increase understanding of gender-based violence, reduce stigmatisation of victims) and among specific stakeholders (in particular public officials, law enforcement bodies, justice professionals); capacity-building among CSOs (including on ICT use); networking and grassroots organising, including supporting links between CSOs representing different marginalised and vulnerable groups in line with the intersectional approach, as well as country-level research on anti-gender movements and trends. Donors can also use Regional Funds (or a similar transnational fund set up in the future period) to support relationship-building across different movements at the European level.

# 1. Introduction

The report presents the results of the evaluation of the EEA and Norway Grants' gender equality programming. The evaluation was requested by the Financial Mechanism Office (FMO) and conducted by Ecorys Polska in 2022.

## 1.1. Background

The EEA and Norway Grants adhere to core European values, such as equality and respect for human rights for all people, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity. The core principles of good governance, sustainable development, gender equality and non-discrimination are integrated into the programme design. The Grants pursue a dual approach of gender mainstreaming and targeted actions. Under the current 2014–2021 Financial Mechanism (FM), gender equality is explicitly addressed by two programme areas (PA22 and PA04) through nine programmes, with the allocation of approximately EUR 33 million.

The overall evaluation purpose was to review and compare with past FMs' efforts to promote gender equality and reduce gender-based violence and domestic violence (Part A) and to investigate the context and current needs to provide recommendations to improve the design, planning and implementation of gender equality programming in the EEA and Norway Grants (Part B).

Gender equality is not defined in the EEA and Norway Grants. The Terms of Reference suggest its implicit broad understanding that combines a more traditional focus on women's rights with a broader intersectional perspective. This report departs from this wide concept of gender equality. It talks about women, girls, men and boys, as well as LGBTI people, Roma people, persons with disabilities and members of other vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Considering the field of gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence, Part A reviewed and compared the previous and current FM to evaluate their: (i) *relevance* to national and European priorities; (ii) *coherence* with other funding streams; (iii) *effectiveness* and most significant results considering the types of interventions, replicability and reporting operationalisation.

Building on findings from Part A and further research, Part B investigated: (i) the *relevance* of actions against current needs, including possible interrelations with other grounds, such as racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression; (ii) the most promising approaches to anti-gender movements and possible ways to engage relevant stakeholders; (iii) possible niches that could be filled out by the Grants to ensure *coherence*; (iv) *sustainability* of future gender-focused programmes and promising approaches for future gender mainstreaming in other areas; (v) approaches for the *effective* gender equality operationalisation and capturing of gender equality results; (vi) effective ways of stakeholder support.

Table 1 Programme areas covered by the sampled interventions in the current FM

Approach	Programme areas covered
Targeted approach	Work-life Balance (PA04); Domestic and Gender-based Violence (PA22)
Mainstreaming approach	Research (PA02); Education (PA03); Roma Inclusion (PA07); Local Development (PA10); Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Security (PA12); Climate Change (PA13); Civil Society (PA15); Good Governance (PA16)

In the current FM, the evaluation focuses on a sample of 24 national programmes and 2 regional programmes (Fund for Regional Cooperation and Fund for Youth Employment).<sup>1</sup> The national programmes are implemented in Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. The sampling of programmes was conducted during the inception phase and confirmed with the FMO. All the programmes that include the targeted approach are included in the sample. The sampled programmes cover a wide range of thematic areas from climate, environment and research to education, governance, local development, Roma inclusion and justice. The evaluation also covers four programmes implemented under the Active Citizens Fund.

The programmes chosen for the evaluation reflect both the targeted and mainstreaming approaches to gender equality, gender-based violence and domestic violence. Some sampled programmes include cooperation with International Partner Organisations, i.e. the Council of Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The vast majority cooperate with Donor Programme Partners. The sample represents programmes funded under the Norway Grants or the EEA Grants, as well as those funded by both streams.

## 1.2. Context

The EEA and Norway Grants address the needs of selected EU Member States. Contextually, the EU is committed to eliminating inequalities and promoting gender equality 'in all its activities'.<sup>2</sup> Since introducing the first directives in this area in the 1970s, the EU has developed extensive legislation<sup>3</sup> on gender equality.<sup>4</sup> Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU, and Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, establish gender equality as a core EU value and aim. It is an underlying motif of numerous Treaty provisions.<sup>5</sup> The latest 2020 commitment of the European Commission to achieve a Union of Equality reinforced the high position of gender equality on the EU policy agenda. In March 2020, the European Commission presented its 2020–2025 Gender Equality Strategy. Its key objectives include ending gender-based violence, challenging gender stereotypes, achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy, and gender balance in decision-making and in politics.<sup>6</sup>

Despite significant efforts to advance gender equality across EEA countries, **gender inequality continues to be a challenge** persistent in almost all areas of social life, including work, health and education.<sup>7</sup> As depicted by the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) Gender Equality Index, the progress over the last decade (2010–2019) indicates that it will take nearly three generations to achieve gender parity at the current pace.<sup>8</sup>

The improvements in gender equality differ across countries and domains. While all EEA and Norway Grants Beneficiary States from 2014–2021 FM score below the EU average on EIGE's Gender Equality Index, some slow yet notable progress was made between 2010 and 2020 in several countries. The biggest changes were reported in Malta and Portugal.<sup>9</sup> The countries with the slowest pace of changes

<sup>1</sup> The list of countries covered by the Fund for Regional Cooperation is available at: <https://eeagrants.org/topics-programmes/fund-youth-employment> and <https://eeagrants.org/topics-programmes/fund-regional-cooperation>

<sup>2</sup> The key Treaty articles are: Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU and Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, making gender equality a core value and aim of the Union and its Member States; Article 8 TFEU on gender mainstreaming in all activities; Article 19 TFEU, giving the EU the competence to introduce legislation to combat gender-based discrimination; Article 157 TFEU establishing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and giving the EU a legal basis for gender equality law in employment; and Article 157(4) TFEU and Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which recognise positive action as a method of achieving gender equality.

<sup>3</sup> The EU has adopted six Directives covering equality between women and men in the workplace, in self-employment, in access to goods and services, in social security, in pregnancy and maternity and on family related leave and flexible working arrangements for parents and carers. Together they have progressively set a legal standard across Europe ensuring a broad protection from discrimination. Numerous cases brought to the European Court of Justice have further strengthened the principle of equality and delivered justice for victims of discrimination.

<sup>4</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service (2019), [Promoting equality between women and men](#)

<sup>5</sup> See Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU, Articles 8, 10, 19 and 157 TFEU and Articles 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2020), [Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025](#)

<sup>7</sup> EIGE (2021), [Gender Equality Index 2021: Fragile gains, big losses](#)

<sup>8</sup> EIGE (2021), [EIGE-2021 Gender Equality Index 2021 Report](#)

<sup>9</sup> EIGE (2022), Gender Equality Index 2022, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022>



over this period were Poland, Hungary and Czechia.<sup>10</sup> When looking at country scores per domain, all Beneficiary States covered by the 2014–2021 programming **score higher in the domains of health, money and work, and lower in the areas of knowledge and time.**<sup>11</sup> **The intersection of gender with additional conditions of vulnerability or marginalisation, e.g. disability, ethnic, religious or migrant background, is visible both in the area of work-life balance and gender-based violence.**<sup>12</sup>

Data show that gender inequality – domestic and gender-based violence, low work-life balance, women's low access to political decision-making and other issues – still pose a challenge in all Beneficiary States. In all countries, **violence against women is the most alarming issue.** Some Beneficiary States have seen turbulent debates around the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. These developments align with backlashes in the domain of violence and other domains, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).<sup>13</sup> For instance, the views that the Istanbul Convention is a means to promote same-sex marriages, undermine marriage, family and parental rights are present in several Beneficiary States.<sup>14</sup>

These issues show that the areas supported by the EEA and Norway Grants in the 2014–2021 period reflected the challenges that shaped the Grants' implementation context. They also indicate that the current 'gender landscape' in the Beneficiary State calls for urgent action, as the anti-gender equality movements negatively influence gender equality across countries. New major challenges for gender equality also emerge, putting the gains already made at risk.<sup>15</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic reversed progress on women's rights and gender equality, exacerbated existing inequalities and amplified existing violence against women.<sup>16</sup> The work-life balance was significantly impacted, especially when schools and childcare institutions were closed, and the amount of unpaid work grew considerably.<sup>17</sup> Another recent development is the fastest-growing **population exodus** in Europe since World War II caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The related risks include sexual violence as a war crime and trafficking of human beings.

## 1.3. Methodology

The evaluation used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research and analytical methods. This approach allowed for gathering rich data, triangulating with different information sources and ensuring robust analyses.

### 1.3.1. Desk research

Desk research covered **documents and data**, including: guidelines for the EEA FM and Norwegian FM 2014–2021; financial and result indicator data from the Grant Administration and Collaboration Environment (GrACE) system; programme-level documentation, such as Memoranda of Understanding, programme agreements, concept notes, project descriptions, Annual Programme Reports; programming documentation for EU funding mechanisms; reports from previous FMs; previous

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Based on [EIGE Index 2021](#)

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2020), [Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025](#)

<sup>13</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (2021), Gender Equality Index 2021: Fragile gains, big losses, available [here](#), Global Philanthropy Project (2020), [Meet the Moment: A Call for Progressive Philanthropic Response to the Anti-Gender Movement](#); Norad (2019), [Weaponizing Faith and Family Opposition to SRHR Policies](#)

<sup>14</sup> See for example: <https://www.pap.pl/en/news/news%2C689006%2Cjustice-ministry-applies-withdraw-domestic-violence-convention.html> [accessed 24.01.2023]; <https://iycoalition.org/the-istanbul-convention-a-trojan-horse/> [accessed 24.01.2023]

<sup>15</sup> EIGE (2021), [Gender Equality Index 2021: Fragile gains, big losses](#). Human Rights Watch (2020), [Hungary Rejects Opportunity to Protect Women from Violence](#)

<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2021), [2021 Report on Gender Equality in the EU](#); EIGE (2021), [Gender Equality Index 2021: Health Report](#); European Commission (2021), [2021 Report on Gender Equality in the EU](#)

<sup>17</sup> Blasko, Z. (2020), [Working from Home when Teachers Do the Same – Teleworking and Work-Family Conflicts during COVID-19 Lockdowns](#)

evaluations of EEA and Norway Grants FM; national policies and strategies; academic and grey literature.

Additionally, we conducted a **quantitative analysis of 92 FMO agreements, as well as documentation of two Regional Funds and a multi-country programme** focused on social dialogue and decent work. Using an Excel matrix, based on keyword searches (see Annex II: Quantitative mapping additional information for a list) and content analysis, we systematically coded these documents to provide quantitative data on how gender equality, domestic and gender-based violence and related concepts are referenced. Based on data provided by the FMO, **relevance at the project level** was also subject to analysis.<sup>18</sup>

### 1.3.2. Primary data collection

The evaluation involved **collecting data at country level. Semi-structured interviews** were conducted with 51 persons representing: (i) National Focal Points and Programme Operators under the targeted approach to gender equality and gender-based and domestic violence; (ii) Programme Operators and Fund Operators representing the mainstreaming approach to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence; (iii) other stakeholders at country levels (e.g. experts, CSO representatives). Most of the interviews were individual. In some cases, multiple representatives of an institution participated. At a **non-country level, individual interviews** included the representative of the Fund Operator for the Regional Funds and the Data Quality Officer at the FMO. Four **focus group interviews** were also conducted with a total of 17 representatives of Donor Programme Partners, International Partner Organisations and other international stakeholders.

Table 2 Summary of interviews conducted at the country level

Country	Programme Operator / Fund Operator / National Focal Point representatives	Stakeholders' representatives
Estonia	3	1
Latvia	2	2
Lithuania	4	2
Poland	10	1
Portugal	5	1
Romania	9	1
Slovakia	7	0
Slovenia	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>8</b>

Primary data collection also involved an **online survey** with project promoters from programmes included in the sample (see Annex V: Survey response rate for an overview of the sample and response rate). The survey was translated into national languages. Invitations were distributed to email addresses provided in GrACE by promoters implementing projects (i.e. with 'signed' or 'completed' project status). The project constituted the unit of analysis. Project promoters that implement multiple projects were asked to complete the survey for every project separately.

### 1.3.3. Limitations

This evaluation has several limitations, mainly related to sampling, timing, institutional memory and data quality.

<sup>18</sup> The dataset included project-level information available in GrACE.

The study adopted purposive sampling to select programmes for in-depth review of the mainstreaming approach. The sample represents a range of Beneficiary States and various programme areas, but a different sample could provide a different picture. Two analyses were conducted to obtain a broader overview: (i) a quantitative review of national programme and programme implementation agreements, documentation of Regional Funds and the multi-country programme Social Dialogue and Decent Work, and (ii) analysis of project data provided by the FMO.<sup>19</sup> Results of these supported the assessment for the evaluation questions under relevance. Notes on the methodology are presented in Annex II: Quantitative mapping additional information.

For the 2014–2021 FM, the main limitation is the early stage of implementation of some programmes, with some projects having started in 2022. With limited progress achieved, effectiveness was challenging to assess. To mitigate this, we reviewed Annual Programme Reports and gathered interviewee feedback on the expected results of contracted projects. However, an assessment depends on successful project implementation. Identifying the least effective interventions also proved difficult. The interviews were not sufficiently informative with regard to replicability either.

Limited institutional memory hindered the assessment of the 2009–2014 FM. Some potential respondents involved in the 2009–2014 FM have changed employment and could no longer be reached. Therefore, the interviews yielded limited information. To account for this limitation, desk research covering final programme reports, previous evaluations and assessments was used to collect data on achievements and make comparisons between the two programming periods.

While a comprehensive analysis of results and budget data sourced from GrACE was possible for interventions representing the targeted approach, it proved more challenging for mainstreaming. Targeted interventions are designed with a full results framework and have a dedicated budget, which facilitates analysis. In contrast, the mainstreaming approach is operationalised in reporting through disaggregation of relevant indicators and different variables (policy markers, target groups and (sub)sectors) that allow projects to be identified as potentially relevant to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence. While such an operationalisation is conceptually sound, issues with data reliability at the project level translated to limitations of analyses at the programme and Grant level. This affects the accuracy of gender equality results and allocation assessment, as discussed in the chapter on effectiveness, and detailed in the 'Rapid assessment of reporting systems and data quality' (2021).<sup>20</sup>

Initially, Part A of the evaluation was to rely mainly on desk research and an online survey with project promoters. However, the evaluation team decided to proceed with the interviews in June 2022, to mitigate the risk of limited availability of interviewees during the holiday season in July and August. The survey was launched during the holiday season and held open for 35 days, giving the respondents sufficient time to answer the questions.

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<sup>19</sup> The dataset included project-level information available in GrACE.

<sup>20</sup> Ecorys, 'Rapid Assessment of Reporting Systems and Data Quality', December 2021.



## 2. Part A: Looking back

### 2.1. Relevance

*Evaluation question 1: Comparing the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 periods, to what extent have the EEA and Norway Grants responded to national and European priorities in gender equality and gender-based and domestic violence?*

#### 2.1.1. Gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence in EEA and Norway Grants programming

##### *2014–2021 Blue Book review*

The Blue Book for the 2014–2021 FM was reviewed to establish how gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence are programmed in the EEA and Norway Grants.<sup>21</sup> This allowed us to determine the extent to which gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence are covered in the programming and identify the priorities pursued through the Grants.

Gender is embedded in the Blue Book, with 37 instances of the use of this word identified. This includes two horizontal requirements: that all funded programmes (1) are based on specific principles, including 'gender equality', and (2) shall adhere to the core European values, including respect for equality and 'the respect for human rights for all people, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity'.

Expectedly, the concept is best covered under the **targeted approach** in which 'gender' or 'women' are mentioned most often, i.e. in PA04 (9 and 10 instances, respectively) and PA22 (13 and 6 instances respectively). The main **objectives** pursued through the targeted approach include the prevention of domestic and gender-based violence and protection and assistance to victims (PA22) and improvement of work-life balance (PA04).<sup>22</sup>

The EEA and Norway Grants also aim at **mainstreaming gender equality** throughout the remaining 21 programme areas. While gender equality principles and values are to be implemented horizontally throughout these programme areas, **gender equality is not consistently covered throughout the programme areas. Specific gender equality priorities for the mainstreaming approach are less defined** than in the case of the targeted approach. Except for the Active Citizens Fund, gender is rarely mentioned directly under the mainstreaming programme areas.

Beyond direct references to 'gender' or 'women', **the mainstreaming programme areas refer, albeit not often, to a range of issues that fall under our broad understanding of gender equality**. These include categories, such as equality, diversity and inclusion, (anti) discrimination or human rights, as well as references to (a focus on) vulnerable, disadvantaged or marginalised groups. We count those as aspects relevant for gender equality.

<sup>21</sup> <https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-blue-book-overview-supported-programme-areas>

<sup>22</sup> The improvement of work-life balance includes specific areas, such as: (i) national strategies, systems and policies to promote work-life balance and gender equality; (ii) gender equality in the labour market; (iii) women's economic empowerment; (iv) gender-equal institutions and organisations; (v) childcare policy, aiming at affordable, good quality and accessible childcare; and (vi) policy/systems for family leave entitlements. See, EEA and Norway Grants, Blue Book, Programme area n°4 Work-life balance.

Out of 21 mainstreaming programme areas, **only 2 have gender equality-relevant aspects included at all three programming levels, i.e. among objectives, areas of support and suggested measures.** These are PA15 'Civil Society' and PA17 'Human Rights – National Implementation' (see Annex III: GE-related aspects in the mainstreaming programming areas (Blue Book review) for the identified relevant aspects in all programme areas). Thirteen other mainstreaming programme areas include areas of support and/or suggested measures (but not objectives) that have been qualified as directly or indirectly relevant for gender equality and tackling domestic and gender-based violence.

**No explicit gender equality-relevant aspects were identified among objectives, areas of support and supported measures in six programme areas.**<sup>23</sup> Considering their thematic scope, this lack of detail is surprising. Some programme areas (e.g. PA11, PA12 and PA13 falling under the environment, energy, climate change and low carbon economy priority sector) thus miss an opportunity to draw Beneficiary States' attention to gender equality-relevant issues in sectors not traditionally considered for gender equality. The actions under these sectors are also more at risk of being gender-blind. Specific gender equality-related areas of support or, at least, supported measures could help to avert this risk.

Gender equality coverage and the clarity of related priorities differ between the targeted and mainstreaming approaches. In the mainstreaming programme areas, gender considerations are not covered systematically. While aspects indirectly relevant to gender equality are covered more often, it does not ultimately guarantee inclusion of gender equality-relevant aspects in the existing programmes and projects further down the pipeline. Consistent inclusion of gender-related aspects and language (or broader equality, diversity and inclusion) in the Blue Book should be both desirable and possible. Dedicated gender equality-relevant support measures could be programmed systematically in each of the programme areas and gender-related (or equality, diversity and inclusion) considerations could be consistently highlighted in descriptions of mainstreaming programme areas.

### *Results of the quantitative review of programme agreements and programme implementation agreements*

A quantitative review was conducted on **92 programme agreements and programme implementation agreements** (jointly referred to below as 'programme agreements'), **as well as agreements for two Regional Funds and the multi-country programme Social Dialogue and Decent Work.** The purpose was to analyse the budget composition and references to key concepts, such as **gender, equality, gender equality, gender-based violence, discrimination and inclusion.** We used a set of key words to search through the documents and code the results. Annex II: Quantitative mapping additional information contains the list of variables for which the data has been collected. We complemented these findings with the analysis of project data obtained from the FMO.<sup>24</sup>

The review of **funds distribution shows** that out of the total grant amount dedicated to the analysed programmes (EUR 2,060,971,167), **only around 1.6% (EUR 33,073,193) was dedicated to targeted programming,** as part of PA04 and PA22. The programme agreement data, however, do not provide enough information on the distribution of funds to the mainstreaming approach. There is no specific information at the programme level on the portion of the available funding dedicated directly to gender mainstreaming, and the emphasis on gender mainstreaming varies both across programmes and across projects, so our understanding is limited.

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<sup>23</sup> These are PA03, PA09, PA11, PA12, PA13, PA14, PA23. Under PA03 (Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship), in programme area specifics, the Blue Book clarifies that '[a]ll programmes shall address gender disparities in education and training'. In PA09 (Youth Participation in the Labour Market), when explaining the relevance of support, the Blue Book notes that '[s]ome groups are at more of a disadvantage than others, in particular young women, migrants, young people from minority and/or disadvantaged backgrounds, and people with disabilities'.

<sup>24</sup> The project data provided by FMO as of June 2022 comes from project-level information available in GrACE.

**The analysis of the word content of the programme agreements could suggest that gender is a rather well-established concept**, with 90 agreements (c. 98%) referring to it directly. However, for gender equality, such a reference is present in only 17 (18%) agreements. Equality, violence and discrimination references are present in 23 (25%), 25 (27%), and 23 (25%) agreements, respectively. **But a closer look at the context in which such references are included gives a more nuanced picture.** Even though almost all agreements mention gender, in 61% of the cases (55 agreements), gender is only included as a disaggregation criterion for result indicators. No agreement invokes gender equality among its principles, although 20 include equality. This may be surprising considering the Blue Book's requirement for all programmes to be based, among others, on the principle of gender equality. Direct reference to the Istanbul Convention is only made in six agreements (7%).<sup>25</sup>

The **comparison** between agreements that include the **targeted approach component** and those representing the **mainstreaming approach** shows further differences. The targeted approach agreements exhibit a stronger gender orientation, consistent with our analysis of the Blue Book. For example, while both the targeted and mainstreaming approach agreements mention **gender** in all or almost all cases, the average count of gender mentions per agreement amounts to 41.4 and 8.9 times, respectively. The differences are even more pronounced for mentions of violence.

**Within the mainstreaming approach, the agreements of the Active Citizens Fund stand out.** The Active Citizens Fund programming (15 agreements in the sample, 16%) emerged as a subgroup within the mainstreaming approach where gender mainstreaming and gender-based violence seem more pronounced than in other thematic areas. This is consistent with a more visible coverage of gender equality and gender-based violence in PA15 (under which the Active Citizens Fund is programmed) in the Blue Book. Among the 19 agreements that mention (gender-based) violence within the mainstreaming approach, 11 concern the Active Citizens Fund. The agreements for the Active Citizens Fund mention **gender** on average 17.7 times, compared to the average 8.9 times for all agreements under the mainstreaming approach. They also refer to **gender equality** in 80% of cases, which is a much higher share than in other agreements.

An analysis of the data obtained from the FMO from the GrACE system regarding the list of projects under different programmes suggests differences in the relative performance of projects under the targeted and mainstreaming approaches as well. A relatively low share of all projects is carried out under the targeted approach (1.8%, 52 projects), but all of them are gender relevant.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, only 13.44% of projects under the mainstreaming approach (which constitute 98.91% of all projects) classify as such (see Table 3 Relevance of projects under targeted and mainstreaming programming).

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<sup>25</sup> Discrimination is directly referenced in 23 agreements (25%), with most referring to the discrimination based on disability (22), ethnic origin (18), race (14), sexual orientation (14) and gender identity (14). No agreement mentions multiple discrimination explicitly. There is only one mention of intersectional considerations in a footnote. Nevertheless, some of the agreements refer to vulnerable groups at risk of intersectional discrimination (notably, five mention Roma women among the target groups). Inclusion and vulnerable groups are mentioned in 31 (34%) and 41 (45%) agreements, respectively. The main categories listed as target groups for inclusion and as disadvantaged/vulnerable groups are Roma and youth, as well as minors/children (more details in Annex II: **Quantitative mapping additional information**).

<sup>26</sup> Calculations on dataset of projects provided by EFTA, as of June 2022. The data classify projects' relevance for gender based on: 1. Target group (Victims of DGBV or human trafficking, LGBTI); 2. Project sector (mentions 'gender' or not); 3. PA code (PA04 or PA22); 4. Policy marker: gender (Fundamental); 5. Text searches in project summary: 'female victim', 'gender-based', 'domestic violence', 'homophobic', 'gender stereotype', 'LGBT', 'violence against women', 'women's rights' (or 'women's rights'), 'human trafficking', 'feminist/feminism'. If any of the above conditions is met, the project is categorised as relevant for gender.

Table 3 Relevance of projects under targeted and mainstreaming programming

Programming area	Relevant		Not relevant		Total	
	No. projects	Share (%)	No. projects	Share (%)	No. projects	Share (%)
PA04	20	100.00	0	0.00	20	0.42
PA22	32	100.00	0	0.00	32	0.67
<b>Total targeted approach (PA04+PA22)</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1.09</b>
Active Citizens Fund (ACF)	314	15.85	1667	84.15	1981	41.35
Mainstreaming approach excluding ACF	323	11.71	2435	88.29	2758	57.57
<b>Total mainstreaming approach (other PAs)</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>13.44</b>	<b>4102</b>	<b>86.56</b>	<b>4739</b>	<b>98.91</b>
Total projects	689	14.38	4102	85.62	4791	100.00

Source: FMO project-level data, June 2022. Own elaboration.

Similar to findings of the quantitative mapping of agreements, the analysis of project-level data highlights the Active Citizen Funds as more relevant to gender than other mainstreaming approaches. As many as 15.85% of the Active Citizens Fund projects are relevant to gender, compared to 11.71% projects under other mainstreaming approach programmes.<sup>27</sup> These differences may be explained by the thematic scope of that fund – almost a third of project sectors in the Active Citizens Fund are directly or closely related to gender issues.<sup>28</sup> Among the Regional Funds, 15.15% of projects under the Youth Employment Fund are relevant for gender. The Regional Cooperation Fund is less relevant for gender, with only one gender-relevant project. The Social Dialogue and Decent Work programme includes some gender-relevant projects, according to project level information from GrACE.<sup>29</sup>

There is considerable disproportion between budget allocations on the targeted and mainstreaming approaches (1.6% vs 98.4% of the combined programme Grant budget, as our quantitative analysis of programme agreements has shown).<sup>30</sup> The data provided by the FMO show that, in general, 9.08% (EUR 177,716,197) of all funds support gender-relevant<sup>31</sup> projects across both targeted and mainstreaming approaches, while 90.92% of the budget (EUR 1,780,566,446) goes into projects that are not gender relevant.<sup>32</sup>

The quantitative review shows that gender-related concepts are reflected in different programme agreements at different levels. The majority of agreements that mention gender do so only in the context of indicator disaggregation. A relatively low number of mentions of 'gender equality' and direct references to concepts of (gender-based) violence and discrimination further indicate that, for many programmes, those important considerations are left out of the foundational programmatic documents. The findings show a less-than-satisfactory level of gender mainstreaming with less than 40% of programme agreements referring to gender in the main text (excluding those that use gender only as

<sup>27</sup> The data regarding project relevance and on the content of programme agreements differ slightly from those in the table below due to a slight difference between programme samples used by Ecorys and FMO. The list of differences is provided in Annex II: **Quantitative mapping additional information.**

<sup>28</sup> 8 out of 30 project sectors, including: countering trafficking, domestic and gender-based violence, gender equality in employment, gender equality organisations and institutions, gender policy, gender management and administration, human rights and reproductive healthcare.

<sup>29</sup> Project 'Wingate' under the Fund for Regional Cooperation, and e.g., the Polish 'Good Climate for Good-Quality Workplaces', the Croatian 'Towards prevention and elimination of violence and harassment at workplaces in Croatia' and the Polish 'Mum on the labour market' under the Social Dialogue-Decent Work (SDDW) programme.

<sup>30</sup> Out of the total grant amount dedicated to the analysed programmes (EUR 2,060,971,167), only around 1.6% (EUR 33,073,193) was dedicated to targeted programming as part of PA04 and PA22.

<sup>31</sup> Calculations on dataset of projects provided by EFTA, as of June 2022. The data classify projects' relevance for gender based on: 1. Target group (Victims of DGBV or human trafficking, LGBTI); 2. Project sector (mentions 'gender' or not); 3. PA code (PA04 or PA22); 4. Policy marker: gender (Fundamental); 5. Text searches in project summary: 'female victim', 'gender-based', 'domestic violence', 'homophobic', 'gender stereotype', 'LGBT', 'violence against women', 'women's rights' (or 'women's rights'), 'human trafficking', 'feminist/feminism'.

<sup>32</sup> Total grant amount equals EUR 1,958,282,643. The difference between this amount and the total number provided in n. 12 stems from a slight difference between programme samples used by Ecorys and FMO. The list of differences is provided in Annex II: **Quantitative mapping additional information.**

an indicator disaggregation criterion) and no agreements referring to gender equality as a principle. In some types of programmes, the thematic overlap is stronger, thus inducing stronger gender focus reflected in programme agreement wording. This is particularly the case under the targeted approaches and thematic project sectors under mainstreaming approaches, notably the Active Citizens Fund. Other programmes do not seem to include sufficient gender equality focus. Gender is not mainstreamed systematically across different programmatic areas. As programme agreements and programme implementation agreements constitute a fundamental reference for Programme Operators and Fund Operators in defining activities and developing project calls, their content sets out the priorities to be put in place. A lack of gender priorities at the programme level limits the implementation of the mainstreaming approach at the project level.

### 2.1.2. Relevance for European priorities

**The EEA and Norway Grants programming process builds in a mechanism to ensure coherence between the Grants and EU priorities, as the Priority Sectors and Programme Areas are agreed with the EU.**<sup>33</sup> The Blue Book reflects both how the EU values are implemented in the Grants and which aspects are important for Donors among EU priorities.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Targeted approach*

**At the time of programme design for the FM 2014–2021, the selection of priorities for the targeted approach was grounded in European legal and policy frameworks, as well as analyses developed by EU and other European actors.** For example, the domestic and gender-based violence focus drew from the findings of the survey on violence against women conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights,<sup>35</sup> as well as reporting by the Council of Europe and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.<sup>36</sup> The work-life balance-related programming (PA04) corresponded well to EU priorities as expressed in the 2006 and 2011 European Pact for Gender Equality<sup>37</sup> or the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015<sup>38</sup> and related documents.<sup>39</sup> Thematic overlaps included, in particular, focus on national frameworks (strategies, systems and policies), reconciliation of work and family life, childcare and family leave entitlements, including specifically increased take-up of paternal and care leave among men.

Not all relevant EU actions were explicitly translated to the EEA and Norway Grants programming under PA04 on work-life balance, as the EU programming had to do with a wide range of EU policy areas and instruments and was much more detailed. However, the correspondence of priorities was strong from the start, including the same intersectional perspective focusing on 'low labour market participation of older women, single parents, women with a disability, migrant women and women from ethnic minorities'.<sup>40</sup> Some aspects of EU programming were included under the EEA and Norway Grants mainstreaming programme areas.

**The priorities of the targeted approach related to work-life balance and domestic and gender-based violence remain relevant given the current European priorities. Fighting domestic and**

<sup>33</sup> EEA and Norway Grants, Summary of results – consultation on the draft 'Blue Book' for the EEA and Norway Grants 2014–2021, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Scoping interview with the FMO.

<sup>35</sup> FRA (2014), Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main report, 2014.

<sup>36</sup> EEA and Norway Grants, priority sectors and programme areas 2014–2021 (Blue Book), Programme area n°22 Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

<sup>37</sup> The Council of the European Union (2011), Council conclusions on the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011–2020.

<sup>38</sup> European Commission (2010), Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015.

<sup>39</sup> European Commission (2010), Commission Staff Working Document. Actions to implement the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015, SEC(2010) 1079 final.

<sup>40</sup> See, European Commission (2010), Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015, p. 12; EEA and Norway Grants, Blue Book, p. 14.



**gender-based violence is on top of the agenda.** In the Council of Europe, domestic and gender-based violence is tackled by the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO monitoring,<sup>41</sup> the Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2017 and the current strategy.<sup>42</sup> The EU has prioritised preventing and fighting domestic and gender-based violence as well. This is evident from the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025 (EU GES).<sup>43</sup> The EU takes the Istanbul Convention as its point of departure, having signed it in 2017. However, the ratification of the Convention by the EU has proved difficult so far.<sup>44</sup> Most recently, in March 2022, the EU reaffirmed its commitment to tackling domestic and gender-based violence. The European Commission tabled a relevant proposal for a directive.<sup>45</sup> Both the EEA and Norway Grants and the EU share a commitment to victims. Within the EU, apart from the EU GES, this commitment is expressed in such policy documents as the first ever EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025),<sup>46</sup> building on the Victims' Rights Directive.<sup>47</sup>

**The fairly broad conceptualisation of PA22 limits possibilities for more in-depth comparisons** between the EEA and Norway Grants and the domestic and gender-based violence priorities at the European level. It is not always clear to what extent specific issues covered e.g. by the EU GES are also a priority for the Grants. For example, the EU GES notes that 'violence **prevention focusing on men, boys and masculinities** will be of central importance'.<sup>48</sup> There is no equivalent area of support or suggested measure in the Blue Book. Similarly, the EU GES notes that 'online violence targeting women has become pervasive with specific, vicious consequences and that this is unacceptable. It is a barrier to women's participation in public life'.<sup>49</sup> In the Blue Book, the online aspect of domestic and gender-based violence is only mentioned in passing.

**The focus on work-life balance as the second programming area in the targeted approach is also aligned with European priorities,** as expressed e.g. in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; Principles 2 and 9 of the European Pillar of Social Rights; 2019 Council Conclusions.<sup>50</sup> In 2019, the EU adopted the Work-life Balance Directive.<sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> The alignment between EU priorities and Grants can support the implementation of the directive. The newest EU GES notes that 'improving the work-life balance of workers is one of the ways of addressing the gender gaps in the labour market'. It also states that '[the European] Commission will ensure that Member States correctly transpose and implement this directive'.<sup>53</sup> The priorities continue to overlap, e.g. closing the gender gaps in the labour market (family leave, flexible working arrangements), addressing the gender pay gap, and closing the gender care gaps (equal share of care responsibilities, childcare).

While largely aligned, work-life balance (PA04) is differently conceptualised in EEA and Norway Grants compared to the EU GES. The work-life balance under the Grants seems to be broader than EU GES, but narrower in scope than the EU GES priority of 'thriving in a gender-equal economy'. Although some

<sup>41</sup> Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/grevio>

<sup>42</sup> Council of Europe (2018), Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018–2023, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, March 2018.

<sup>43</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025, COM(2020) 152 final.

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. [www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-push-for-european-democracy/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-push-for-european-democracy/file-eu-accession-to-the-istanbul-convention)

<sup>45</sup> European Commission (2022), Proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, COM(2022) 105 final, 2022/0066 (COD).

<sup>46</sup> Information available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/criminal-justice/protecting-victims-rights/eu-strategy-victims-rights-2020-2025\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/criminal-justice/protecting-victims-rights/eu-strategy-victims-rights-2020-2025_en)

<sup>47</sup> Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012L0029>

<sup>48</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025, COM(2020) 152 final.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Council of the European Union (2019), Closing the Gender Pay Gaps: Key Policies and Measures – draft Council Conclusions, 9804/19, 29 May 2019.

<sup>51</sup> Which aims at: (i) better supporting the work-life balance for parents and carers; (ii) encouraging a more equal sharing of parental leave between men and women and (iii) addressing women's underrepresentation in the labour market. Several other directives in the areas of gender equality and working conditions also address issues related to work-life balance.

<sup>52</sup> Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9438&langId=en>

<sup>53</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025, COM(2020) 152 final.

elements of the latter are also covered through the mainstreaming PAs (e.g. PA01, PA02, PA03 and PA09), some aspects of the EU GES could be better reflected in the Grants, both in the work-life balance and mainstreaming programming. These include: (i) tackling discriminatory social norms and stereotypes about women's and men's skills, which EU GES considers to be one of the factors contributing to a higher representation of women in lower-paid jobs and sectors, and in unpaid work (and lower representation of men in care professions and as caregivers/in family life); (ii) tackling vertical segregation in education and work; (iii) achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy, as currently, women remain underrepresented in higher paid professions, while men remain underrepresented e.g. in care professions.

### *Mainstreaming approach*

**The strategy of addressing gender equality through a dual approach of targeted programming and mainstreaming is in line with the approaches adopted by the EU and the Council of Europe. The specific gender equality-related priorities identified under the mainstreaming approach (see Annex III: GE-related aspects in the mainstreaming programming areas (Blue Book review) for a listing of those aspects) also agree with European priorities.** By way of example:

- Under PA01 'Business Development, Innovation and SMEs', a suggested measure concerns promoting entrepreneurship, especially for young and/or **female entrepreneurs**. The latter is also mentioned in the EU GES and promoted in the EU cohesion policy.<sup>54</sup>
- PA02 'Research' supports e.g. capacity-building in research, including the **careers of female researchers** and early-stage researchers. One of the suggested measures is addressing gender imbalance in science and research. This corresponds with a strong policy effort within the EU to promote gender equality to strengthen the European research and innovation potential,<sup>55</sup> e.g. through the Horizon Europe requirement for gender equality plans.<sup>56</sup>
- Under PA07 'Roma Inclusion and Empowerment', one of the support measures is 'empowering Roma women by supporting the freedom of choice for Roma women and girls, and mainstreaming Roma women's issues in relevant national programmes'. This is broadly in line with the EU GES, which highlights Roma inclusion when discussing intersectionality and with the EU Roma strategic framework,<sup>57</sup> although the latter is far more elaborate and specific.
- PA15 'Civil Society' includes gender equality and gender-based violence as one of its five areas of support, but it also refers to 'promoting LGBTI [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex population] rights and anti-discrimination activities' among its supported measures. The latter is a very broad formulation quite obviously in line, for example, with the EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025.<sup>58</sup>
- Under PA16 'Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency', a support measure exists in campaigns aimed at raising awareness and empowering women's participation in government. This aligns well with the EU GES priority area of 'leading equally through society' that foresees achieving gender balance in decision-making and politics.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A new ERA for Research and Innovation, COM(2020) 628 final.

<sup>56</sup> Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/what-gender-equality-plan-gep>

<sup>57</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation, COM(2020) 620 final.

<sup>58</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020)698 final.

### 2.1.3. Relevance to national priorities

The programming process of the EEA and Norway Grants created conditions for ensuring that **the overall programming reflects the country-level gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence needs and policy priorities**. The process involved consultations of the Blue Book with country-level actors. This included web-based public consultations and consultations directly with the main partners in the Beneficiary States – the National Focal Points.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the specific priorities in each Beneficiary State are set in the Memoranda of Understanding and programme agreements that are negotiated with country-level decision-makers.

It does not surprise, therefore, that, **in general, the reviewed country programmes entail gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence aspects that are highly relevant from a national gender equality policy perspective**. For example, in Portugal the Grants responded to critical issues that are high on the policy agenda. There was a very clear alignment between the programme design and the national strategic and policy objectives. No tensions were identified in the literature review or by the interviewed stakeholders. In Czechia, the Human Rights programme's goals on domestic and gender-based violence correspond to the goals stated in the national strategies. In Poland and Slovakia, gender equality was declared as a goal in strategic documents, but is perceived as politically deprioritised by the authorities.

The alignment between EEA and Norway Grants country programmes and national gender equality priorities does not mean that all EEA and Norway Grants gender equality priorities as outlined in the Blue Book are in line with national political agendas in Beneficiary States, or vice versa. Politically, some Beneficiary States have deprioritised gender equality, or openly attacked gender, the Istanbul Convention and related notions (see Section 3.1.5). This is clearly against the objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants. The programming under PA22 on domestic and gender-based violence is the most controversial from the perspective of some Beneficiary States. However, country programmes are the result of a compromise and, thus, the least common denominator between the two sides. When a more progressive gender equality agenda, in line with the EEA and Norway Grants objectives, cannot be pursued through the Beneficiary State country programming due to the politics of the national authorities, funds could be diverted to the Active Citizens Fund and/or the Regional Fund (or a similar structure in the next FM), as offering more flexibility.

**The comparison between the past and present FMs at country level suggests a higher relevance of the current FM in some countries, but the overall picture is mixed.** In Portugal, by including domestic and gender-based violence as a programme area in the 2014–2021 period, the Grants have enabled the work-life balance programme to align more effectively with national priorities. In Lithuania, the NFP considered the current FM as having better-defined programmes, with an added focus on domestic violence, which contributes to the national priorities. In Slovenia, with the focus only on work-life balance, gender equality is featured less in the 2014–2021 period than it previously was.

**The combination of the targeted and mainstreaming approaches was found to be useful. However, the relevance of EEA and Norway Grants programming at the country level may vary between the targeted focus on domestic and gender-based violence and gender equality.** For instance, our research in Romania revealed that the Grants better addressed the national priorities related to domestic and gender-based violence than the ones on gender equality.

In some countries, while highly relevant, the **Grants' programming does not cover certain national priorities in relation to gender equality or domestic and gender-based violence**. In Romania,

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<sup>59</sup> European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025, COM(2020) 152 final.



research identified nationally strategic aspects that are not covered, including, for example, the participation of Roma girls and young women in science, technology, engineering and maths education, both identified as problems and national priorities.<sup>60</sup> In Estonia, the Violence Prevention Agreement (a national strategy for 2021–2025) also covers the prevention of violence in the digital world, which is not part of EEA and Norway Grants programming.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.2. Coherence

### 2.2.1. The capacity of EEA and Norway Grants to fill funding gaps

*Evaluation question 2: Comparing the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 periods, to what extent have the EEA and Norway Grants filled a funding gap at times the programmes were designed?*

**The EEA and Norway Grants have generally been able to address different types of funding shortages or gaps in both FMs.** Some differences between the FMs have been observed in the Polish, Slovenian and Portuguese case studies.

The Grants play a **key role in enabling project implementation**. The 2016 Rapid Assessment of the 2009–2014 FM found that ‘at least two thirds of the interventions explored in the study appeared to not be able to secure funding from other sources’.<sup>62</sup> The evaluators noted that the Grants ‘responded to existing needs in three specific ways: what they funded, how they funded, and the amount they funded’.<sup>63</sup> Case study findings suggest that **financing for gender equality, action against gender-based violence and domestic violence is lacking in some countries, which the EEA and Norway Grants help remedy**. The Latvian case study presents the EEA and Norway Grants as the main, if not the only supporter of gender quality-related issues, without distinction between FMs. The Polish case study highlights that the funding pool for gender equality and action against gender-based and domestic violence has been decreasing over recent years due to the anti-gender tendencies. This situation is also observed in Slovakia. This has left the EEA and Norway Grants as the **leading funding mechanism** available. Similarly, in Portugal in the current FM, the Grants have filled critical funding gaps in the prevention of gender-based and domestic violence, notably through investment in education.

The EEA and Norway Grants are sometimes **associated with niche or controversial topics, indicating the Grants’ complementarity with other financing sources and perhaps less aversion to risk**. Without distinguishing between FMs or naming specific issues, the Czech case study highlights the Grants’ ability to fill gaps in the financing of specific topics that lack systemic state support or funding from the European Social Fund. The Lithuanian case study indicates that the EEA and Norway Grants have supported activities in the most problematic areas. The Estonian report notes that external funding for gender equality, gender-based and domestic violence from the EEA and Norway Grants has helped to tackle important problems that may not be perceived as such by the general public and are thus difficult to justify by political actors.

The case studies also indicate that **the EEA and Norway Grants fill a funding gap for specific types of actors, in particular CSOs**. This has been specifically highlighted in the Lithuanian, Romanian, Slovenian or Polish case studies. This support for CSOs is particularly important in countries such as

<sup>60</sup> Romania country report.

<sup>61</sup> Estonia country report.

<sup>62</sup> NCG (2016), Rapid Assessment of EEA and Norway Grants’ Support to Gender Programmes.

<sup>63</sup> NCG (2016), Rapid Assessment of EEA and Norway Grants’ Support to Gender Programmes.

Poland or Slovakia where CSOs working on women's rights and representing LGBTI persons have been put on 'a starving diet' (denial of funding) by the anti-gender governments.

**With easier access for CSOs, the EEA and Norway Grants differ from EU funds and are an alternative for organisations with lower capacity and experience.** Previous research on EU gender equality funding shows that despite high-level commitments, gender equality funding across EU public policies is fragmented; funds tend to go to large consortia and seasoned practitioners, while women's organisations receive almost none of it.<sup>64</sup> The Grants create a lower barrier to entry. This has also been confirmed e.g. in the Slovakian case study with interviewees seeing the Grants as an alternative to the resource-complex and capacity-driven administrative and implementation processes of the European Social Fund.

In Romania, the case study indicates **the EEA and Norway Grants' capacity to fill a funding gap for a particular beneficiary group.** Although not excluded by EU funds, the empowerment of Roma women is better addressed by the Grants (RO-LOCALDEV). The EU-Romania Partnership agreement for the period 2014–2020 and the subsequent Operational Programme Human Capital targeted Roma children and Roma unemployed persons but not women. Roma women are better targeted by the RO-LOCALDEV programme and in some projects funded by RO-ACTIVECITIZENS. Case studies also highlight the added value of the EEA and Norway Grants (and complementarity with other funding, e.g. EU funds) in **financing pilot and innovative projects**, which can then be continued under state budgets (e.g. in Portugal).

The Grants have generally found complementarities with other sources of funding, such as state budgets and EU funds. The programme-based approach has allowed the FMO and NFPs to articulate areas of interventions that complement EU funds and national priorities in a meaningful fashion. In practice, it required considerable coordination between relevant programme management bodies (NFP, PO, ministries and other government actors) with a balanced focus on both compliance and performance to maximise synergies and impact.

## 2.3. Effectiveness

### 2.3.1. Most significant results

*Evaluation question 3: Comparing the 2009–2014 and the 2014–2021 grants periods, what are the most significant actual or anticipated results related to gender equality and the work against domestic and gender-based violence from both the targeted and mainstreaming approaches?*

The interventions that bring the most significant results often combine activities in several areas. Communication activities, data gathering and research, service provision and capacity-building may reinforce each other in a 'mixed' project, bringing better results than if conducted separately.

The most significant programme results related to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence in both Grants periods were, or are expected to be, achieved in four areas:

- raising awareness through communication campaigns using various media and of various scales (country-wide addressed to the general public or targeted to specific groups);
- gathering data and conducting research;

<sup>64</sup> Weisblatt, K., Charhon, P., Knocking on EU's door: An exploration of EU funding for gender equality, Prospera, March 2019.

- piloting gender equality measures, providing and developing services for victims and perpetrators of violence;
- raising capacities of institutions and improving competencies and knowledge of professionals working with gender equality issues and in the context of fighting domestic and gender-based violence.

These areas, further discussed below, were primarily identified in the targeted approach programmes.<sup>65</sup> Country-level research proved that stakeholders had difficulty in identifying results relevant for gender equality within the mainstreaming approach, except for the Active Citizens Fund. In this case, Fund Operators were able to discuss tentative results due to the early stage of programme implementation. However, for the mainstreaming approach, indicators addressing gender equality or gender-based violence are only included in results frameworks of the PT-WORKLIFE<sup>66</sup> and Active Citizens Fund programmes (albeit not all).

**Projects conducted during the 2009–2014 period under the gender equality interventions contributed to introducing gender issues into the public discourse.** For instance in Latvia, interviewees noted that prior to 2009, gender equality was largely absent from the public debate and the political agenda. Although the change cannot be attributed solely to the Grants, the supported projects had a meaningful role in putting gender issues on the agenda and improving awareness among government representatives and the public.<sup>67</sup> In Estonia, the predefined project 'Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner' included activities targeting the media, creating a communication strategy and hiring a communication specialist. This led to increased media coverage about the Commissioner's activity, contributing to raising awareness on gender equality issues.<sup>68</sup>

Similarly, **projects contributed to raising the visibility of domestic and gender-based violence issues.** This was the case in Czechia where stakeholders claimed that public campaigns and awareness-raising activities organised by CSOs influenced the general public and political elites.<sup>69</sup> In Romania, in turn, a national campaign led to increased public awareness of the existence of the law on domestic violence by 17%.<sup>70</sup>

**Awareness-raising activities continue to form part of gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence projects in the 2014–2021 period, but they are often addressed to specific target groups rather than the general public.** Such activities were highlighted as leading to significant results in the RO-ACTIVECITIZENS programme. The Fund Operator of that programme also noted that the current awareness-raising projects continue and complement results of projects supported by the Grants in the previous period.<sup>71</sup>

Significant results also included **collecting data on gender equality, gathering good practice examples and developing recommendations for policy.** In Portugal, interviewees highlighted that these were particularly significant in the 2009–2014 period. The PT07 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance programme focused on developing knowledge as a foundation for increasing the visibility of gender equality issues and recommending changes in laws and policies. This

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<sup>65</sup> The overview of the types of interventions and modalities included in each of the programmes is presented in Annex VII: Types of activities supported in the targeted approach.

<sup>66</sup> PT-WORKLIFE supports projects within three programme areas: PA04 Work-life Balance (under Outcome 1), PA16 Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency (Outcome 2) and PA22 Domestic and Gender-based Violence (Outcome 3). While PA04 and PA22 are programme areas where gender equality is targeted, PA16 is an area of gender mainstreaming. The results framework includes indicators specifically related to gender equality also in this programme area.

<sup>67</sup> Latvia country report.

<sup>68</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, '2009–2014 Rapid Assessment of Gender Programmes - Final Report', 2016, p. 46.; Estonia country report.; EE09 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance Final Programme Report, p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Czechia country report.

<sup>70</sup> Romania country report; RO20 Domestic and Gender-based Violence Reduced Final Programme Report, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Romania country report.

was achieved through investment in research and data collection through predefined projects. Data collection continues to be important in the 2014–2021 period. In the EE-LOCALDEV programme, a predefined project creating a virtual competency centre of gender equality has recently been launched, with a national gender equality monitoring survey as one of the key activities. Notably, the survey builds on the methodology developed within the previous FM.<sup>72</sup> The Fund Operator of the RO-ACTIVECITIZENS programme also considered research and data as contributing to the development of public policy related to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence during both funding periods.<sup>73</sup>

Interesting results were achieved through projects that involved research and service development, related to work-life balance. They aimed at **promoting and piloting mechanisms that help to balance work and life, and address gender inequalities** in employment. In Portugal, the PT07 programme included designing new solutions that facilitate equality in the workplace in partnership with private sector institutions, focusing on local level projects. The PT-WORKLIFE programme continued this line of activity through a project that led to women being promoted to leadership positions.<sup>74</sup> Under the previous FM, work-life balance measures were also piloted in Slovenia (the SI05 programme),<sup>75</sup> where engaging men and cooperating with employers in testing concrete practices led to broader impact than expected.<sup>76</sup>

In Romania, stakeholders observed that **capacity-building projects** in the 2009–2014 period resulted in **professionals in law enforcement and judiciary institutions (prosecutors, judges) obtaining knowledge on interventions in domestic and gender-based violence cases**. Significant results of the RO20 programme<sup>77</sup> also included the **delivery of services for violence victims** and the development of the national strategy against human trafficking. Notably, in the current FM, provision of services is conducted not only at larger scale within the targeted approach but also under RO-ACTIVECITIZENS at the community level.<sup>78</sup> Projects providing support to victims and training of support service providers were also identified as significant in Estonia, with some support systems piloted under the Grants securing continued government funding.<sup>79</sup>

**Interventions that bring the most significant results often combine activities in several of the areas listed above.** This is well exemplified by the Coordinating Methodological Centre for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CMC), which interviewees in Slovakia mentioned as particularly significant. The CMC was designed as a flagship project of the SK09 Domestic Violence programme in the previous FM to develop, implement and coordinate a comprehensive national policy for prevention, intervention and elimination of violence against women. It also aimed at gathering knowledge and data, supporting violence prevention and ensuring prompt assistance to victims. During the 2009–2014 FM, the CMC produced several significant results, enabling a comprehensive infrastructure of support for women and other persons exposed to different forms of violence. Despite these outcomes, the CMC did not receive systematic state funding, but its continued activity is supported through the European Social Fund and the 2014–2021 FM SK-DOMESTIC programme (as a predefined project), which confirms that external funding is still needed in the thematic area. Under the current grant, the CMC is expected to deepen the cooperation of public sector institutions, including the police, justice, health and service agencies. The project entails regional coordination activities for protection against violence, analytical tasks and primary prevention activities,

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<sup>72</sup> Estonia country report.

<sup>73</sup> Romania country report.

<sup>74</sup> Portugal country report.

<sup>75</sup> Full programme name: Norwegian Financial Mechanism Programme SI05.

<sup>76</sup> Slovenia country report.

<sup>77</sup> Full programme name: RO20 Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

<sup>78</sup> Romania country report.

<sup>79</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 50.

such as training police officers and investigators, preparing specialised interrogation rooms and expanding social intervention programmes for offenders.<sup>80</sup>

Significant results are also expected from the 'Support for Barnahus implementation in Latvia' predefined project (LV-HOMEAFFAIRS), which is another example of an ongoing multi-sector/activity intervention. The project entails legislative amendments, training of professionals from various fields relevant to domestic violence, inter-agency cooperation and coordination, as well as awareness-raising campaigns and renovating facilities. While interviewees expect support for victims and decreased risks to be important results in the short term, systemic change and wider societal impact is anticipated in the long run.<sup>81</sup>

Both the CMC and Barnahus were **designed as predefined projects, streamlined with national strategies and planned and developed in consultation with public sector institutions based on their priorities. This alignment contributes to achieving planned outcomes and results.** In the case of the CMC, such an effect was noted for the 2009–2014 period and is expected to occur in the current period in both interventions, while also increasing project significance in the broader country context.<sup>82</sup>

The projects and results discussed above represent the targeted approach. We found it **difficult to identify significant results of the mainstreaming approach** through qualitative research, as interviewees struggled to provide examples of concrete projects and tangible results. Discussions often led to highlighting effects of broader societal changes. In the case of PL-EDUCATION, the Programme Operator observed that, currently, promoters of educational projects pay more attention to the language used, in particular in training materials. They also understand gender equality in a broader sense than an equal number of women and men participating in project activities.<sup>83</sup> Among the sampled programmes, the LT-ACTIVECITIZENS, PL-ACTIVECITIZENS-NATIONAL and RO-ACTIVECITIZENS programmes include in results frameworks indicators specifically designed in relation to gender equality or gender-based violence. Not all Active Citizens Fund programmes support the 'gender equality and gender-based violence area' as such. However, relevant projects may be implemented under other areas of support. The only other sampled programme that included such indicators for a mainstreaming programme area was PT-WORKLIFE, where Outcome 2: Improved accountability systems for women's equal participation is linked to PA16 (good governance).<sup>84</sup>

### 2.3.2. Most effective types of interventions

*Evaluation question 4: Comparing the 2009–2014 and the 2014–2021 grants periods, what types of interventions for gender equality and work against domestic and gender-based violence appear to be most/least effective and why?*

The rapid assessment of gender programmes conducted in 2016 found that **the assessed gender equality interventions were highly effective, although combining several types of activities in one project increased the likelihood of success.** The most effective projects 'improved knowledge, understanding, and opportunities for responding to the [gender equality] challenge, and they appear to

<sup>80</sup> Slovakia country report.

<sup>81</sup> Latvia country report.

<sup>82</sup> Slovakia and Latvia country reports.

<sup>83</sup> Poland country report.

<sup>84</sup> Outcome indicator: Share of targeted women and girls exhibiting improved understanding of the importance of participation. Output indicators: number of gender equality indicators defined by the National Statistical office; number of surveys on gender equality designed in accordance with Eurostat guidelines; platform for mapping gender equality in municipalities created; number of municipalities implementing gender mainstreaming instruments developed in FM 09–14; number of professional staff trained on gender issues at local or regional level.



have been effective because they were able to appeal to the general public. In short, the activities increased awareness and, in doing so, made the need for interventions clear'.<sup>85</sup> **Combining activities appropriately to a given context was found to be key**, in particular for interventions that aimed at influencing policies to promote equal work solutions. Although the assessment did not identify entirely fruitless interventions, it noted that even if individual activities are executed well within a mix, an inadequate combination decreased the chances of achieving outcomes. For example, curriculum development without research and campaigning activities would not lead to policy change. Moreover, **political will and funding were necessary for successful implementation**. The assessment noted that the long-term improvement of gender equality is dependent on the governments' clear political position backed by adequate funding.<sup>86</sup>

The 2016 assessment also found that **a combination of activities in domestic and gender-based violence interventions led to increased effectiveness**, provided that the mix was adequate for a specific context.<sup>87</sup> Contextual factors, such as unfavourable legislation, can be overcome through a multi-method approach, in particular by combining campaigns and capacity development. However, even in favourable contexts, interventions that combined multiple types of activity were more successful than those that did not.<sup>88</sup> The analysis showed several examples of results in such combined interventions:

*Result: increased capacity and knowledge about domestic and gender-based violence among the police and judiciary:*

Context: a conservative government + legislation unfavourable to women:

- capacity development + awareness-raising + research activities → increased capacity;
- capacity development + awareness-raising - [without research] → capacity not increased.<sup>89</sup>

*Result: increased reporting of domestic and gender-based violence cases:*

Context: a progressive government + legislation unfavourable to women:

- capacity development among the police and judiciary → increased case reporting.

Context: a conservative government + legislation unfavourable to women:

- capacity development among the police and judiciary + research activities + awareness-raising campaigns → increased case reporting.<sup>90</sup>

*Result: reduced acceptance of domestic and gender-based violence:*

Context: a progressive government + legislation favourable to women:

- capacity-building of law enforcement → reduced acceptance.

Context: a conservative government + legislation unfavourable to women:

- capacity-building of law enforcement + awareness-raising → reduced acceptance.

Context: a conservative government + legislation favourable to women:

- capacity-building of law enforcement + awareness-raising → reduced acceptance.<sup>91</sup>

This evaluation confirms that projects that were designed for a specific context and incorporated multiple types of activities have been more effective in the 2009–2014 grant period, both in the area of gender equality as well as work against domestic and gender-based violence. Stakeholders often highlighted **predefined projects as the more comprehensive interventions**, designed and implemented with government institutions in charge of specific policy, ensuring effectiveness. **Interviewees also expect predefined projects that combine multiple types of activity to be particularly effective in the**

<sup>85</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 19.

<sup>86</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 33.

<sup>87</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, p. 22.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

**current programming period.** Implementing a wide range of activities in predefined projects is possible due to large budgets and time frames. Open calls and small grant schemes do not offer these advantages and results are correspondingly limited. Implementing complex interventions through open calls was viewed as risky due to possible delays and a potential mismatch with specific needs and contextual factors. On the other hand, open calls and small grant schemes are expected to generate diversity and innovation.

For the 2014–2021 FM, data from interviews indicate that **high effectiveness is also expected of interventions conducted by community-based CSOs, advocacy organisations and support service providers with a strong record of implementing relevant activities, access to stable funding sources and established partnerships with other institutions.** These findings are supported by survey results. These characteristics were among the five most often indicated as helpful in achieving results (see Table 4).

Table 4 Factors facilitating result achievement

What factors helped / help in achieving the intended results of your project?	Count	Share
Experience with implementing similar projects in our organisation	330	69%
Enough human resources involved in the project	243	51%
Possibility of adjusting the timing, size or scope of the project	218	46%
Support from the Programme Operator or Fund Operator	191	40%
High interest of our project target group(s) in the project	181	38%

*Source: Own elaboration of survey data, n=497. Five most often indicated factors presented.*

For **countering domestic and gender-based violence**, high-quality results are expected from projects implemented by organisations in cooperation with government entities. In such projects, organisations provide domain expertise and know-how, and are prepared to offer accessible services for victims in the long term. Cooperation with government entities (at national or subnational level) reinforces the stability of the project and services, and brings in their expertise in legislation. CSO and public sector cooperation is also important for projects aimed at preventing violence.

**Gender equality projects** are seen as more likely to succeed when promoted by organisations characterised by credibility, knowledge of target groups and social attitudes, and access to authority or high-visibility figures who can support communication. Projects also benefit from cooperation with public sector institutions, especially at the local or municipal level, as well as other CSO partners. In the case of work-life balance interventions, effectiveness is increased when project promoters cooperate with employers' and employee organisations.

The indicator analysis did not allow us to draw conclusive comparisons of intervention effectiveness. **Programmes from the 2009–2014 period included in the sample were highly successful, achieving target values for almost all indicators. The analysis for the 2014–2021 period showed limited progress. However, this is provisional, as programmes are still in implementation.** Information gathered in desk research and from Programme Operators suggests that targets should be achieved by 2024, as calls are finalised and projects advance in implementation (see Annex IV: Indicator analysis – 2014-2021 Financial Mechanism). Survey results indicate that the majority of projects achieved, or will achieve, the intended results or more (61% responses for the mainstreaming and 70% for the targeted approach).

Table 5 Project promoters' assessment of project effectiveness

Did/will your project achieve its intended results?	Mainstreaming approach		Targeted approach	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
Our project achieved/will achieve more than the intended results	86	19%	5	10%
Our project achieved/will achieve the intended results	188	42%	29	60%
Our project achieved/will achieve most of the intended results	45	10%	4	8%
Our project achieved/will achieve some of the intended results	11	2%	1	2%
Our project did not/will not achieve the intended results	4	1%	0	0%
It is too early to say	115	26%	9	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Own elaboration of survey data, n=497.

We found it difficult to identify the least effective types of interventions. The indicator analysis provided limited insight. Stakeholder interviews did not prove informative on this subject. However, based on survey results, factors that hindered effectiveness could be identified (see Table 6). The factor that the respondents indicated most often can be characterised as incidental, related to the pandemic. Other factors are operational, linked to implementation difficulties. Low political interest, which can be viewed as a systemic challenge, was the fifth most often chosen factor.

Table 6 Factors hindering result achievement

What factors hindered/hinder the achievement of project results?	Count	Share
Negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on project feasibility or timeline	221	47%
Unexpected increase in project costs	112	24%
Requirements and processes related to public procurement	97	21%
Limited financial resources in our organisation	92	20%
Low political interest in or priority of our project	70	15%

Source: Own elaboration of survey data, n=491. Five most often indicated factors presented.

### 2.3.3. Most replicable interventions

**Evaluation question 5: Comparing the 2009–2014 and the 2014–2021 grants periods, what types of interventions for gender equality and work against domestic and gender-based violence appear to have the highest degree of replicability?**

The 2016 rapid assessment found that the majority of interventions related to gender equality were replicable, in particular within the area of work-life balance. **The potential for replication was generally attributed to a clear targeting strategy and well-defined end beneficiaries.**

The following types of gender equality interventions were identified as particularly replicable:

- Development of curricula and training. Developing and using materials or conducting capacity building led to positive effects, irrespective of the target audiences or format. Once developed, materials can be re-used or adapted to other contexts.
- Documentation of best practices and developing and sharing guidelines to promote the replication of best practices.
- Provision of services. Interventions such as childcare provision can fill gaps in existing support services. Models that were successful in one location can be replicated where the needs of the beneficiary groups are similar (while taking into account contextual factors).



- Mobilisation of businesswomen. Support for women to access better positions in the labour market led to the establishment of a network that further served as a multiplier, mobilising and supporting other businesswomen. Such a network can multiply effects of the initial project as membership grows.<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, the majority of work against domestic and gender-based violence supported in the 2009–2014 period appeared to be highly replicable. The most replicable interventions identified were:

- Provision of services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence, such as shelters that provide safe living environments, assistance in finding employment, psychological support. Such services address prevalent needs and require limited adaptation to replicate.
- Data collection. Gathering information on violence helps to develop effective service provision plans. Data also highlight the magnitude of the problem and can be used in advocacy and campaigning.
- Capacity development among service providers and potential victims as well as among the police and judiciary, in particular providing knowledge on effective use of policies, laws and existing mechanisms to support victims.
- Awareness-raising among the broader population about domestic and gender-based violence and the resources available to victims.<sup>93</sup>

**The same types of activities can be considered as highly replicable in the 2014–2021 grant period. However, the effectiveness of interventions depends on developing a combination of activities that is adequate to a specific context. Therefore, replicating an intervention in a different context will likely lead to different results.**

Apart from the above, based on our research on the 2014–2021 period, the following gender equality interventions have a high potential for replicability:

- Awareness-raising activities aimed at specific target groups and promoting reconciling family and professional life. This includes, in particular, measures to influence men's awareness of and attitudes towards issues such as childcare and sharing household responsibilities. Projects of this type are small in scope and budget and have been supported by a small grant scheme of SK-DOMESTIC and in PL-ACTIVECITIZENS-NATIONAL.
- Actions directed at reconciling the needs of employers and employees to improve work-life balance. This includes actions conducted in cooperation with business organisations to provide solutions for specific workplaces and focused on developing positive organisational practices. Replicable examples of cooperation with business include the Promova project, supporting women's leadership, implemented in PT-WORKLIFE in the current period and in Spain in the previous Grant period.

Regarding work against domestic and gender-based violence, the additional replicable interventions identified in the 2014–2021 period include:

- Awareness-raising campaigns targeting specific groups and tailored to their characteristics (a subset of the whole population, as opposed to the general population). The examples include campaigns for boys and men, aimed at preventing violence and promoting good role models to ultimately prevent violence. Such campaigns should engage authority figures, e.g. celebrities, religious leaders, etc. held in high regard by the specific target group (as in EE-LOCALDEV). Campaigns could also target people living in specific areas, e.g. small cities or rural areas.

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<sup>92</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, pp. 18–19.

<sup>93</sup> NCG Independent Assessment, pp. 20–21.

- Networking connecting CSOs, public institutions and support service providers to facilitate cooperation, mutual exchange of knowledge and best practices, training and capacity-building. This type of activity is visible in many predefined projects and aimed at comprehensively counteracting domestic and gender-based violence. The projects planned in RO-JUSTICE were mentioned as replicable examples.
- The Barnahus model of responding to child violence, which is implemented as a predefined project in Latvia under PA22 (LV-HOMEAFFAIRS) and in Slovenia under PA16 (SI-EDUCATION).

### 2.3.4. Operationalisation of the mainstreaming and targeted approach in reporting

*Evaluation question 6: Comparing the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 periods, how are the targeted and mainstreaming approaches operationalised in reporting? To what extent do the reporting approaches in the two periods make it possible to assess gender equality results?*

The Grants' reporting system provides several types of information that determine the extent to which gender equality results and the financial support provided to relevant projects may be assessed. **Assessment is fairly straightforward in the case of the targeted approach, where a comprehensive analysis is possible. Targeted programmes have a dedicated budget and are designed with a full results framework.** During the 2009–2014 period, the targeted approach was implemented through the PA28: Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance and PA29: Domestic and gender-based violence programme areas. In the 2014–2021 period, the relevant programme areas are PA04: Work-life Balance and PA22: Domestic and Gender-based Violence. The fully developed results framework helps to evaluate achievements of each specific programme, as measured by outcome and output indicators, and the corresponding allocations.

**The Active Citizens Fund allows for a specific approach to operationalisation, which can be viewed as 'targeted within mainstreaming'.** Within the Active Citizens Funds, gender equality and gender-based violence can be selected as areas of support by Fund Operators. This selection is reflected in dedicated outcomes, result frameworks and allocations. Among the evaluated interventions, LT-ACTIVECITIZENS, PL-ACTIVECITIZENS-NATIONAL and RO-ACTIVECITIZENS include gender equality and gender-based violence in support measures, defining outcomes and output indicators. However, CZ-ACTIVECITIZENS, PL-ACTIVECITIZENS-REGIONAL and PT-ACTIVECITIZENS do not support this area. Relevant projects are implemented within these interventions, but under different areas, for example, human rights or inclusion of vulnerable groups. Results of such projects are more difficult to capture in reporting.

Assessment of results and allocations is considerably more complicated under the mainstreaming approach. Each programme has a result framework with outcome and output indicators. **The Grants have defined a set of core indicators to be used across programmes that encompass the same programme areas. Some indicators may be disaggregated by gender into the categories 'male', 'female' and 'not specified'.**<sup>94</sup> Gender disaggregation of core indicators should, conceptually, facilitate the analysis of the gender dimension of the EEA and Norway Grants. However, our interviews and the recent 'Rapid assessment of reporting systems and data quality' noted an unexpectedly large number of 'not specified' categorisations. According to the rapid assessment, this can have different

<sup>94</sup> The Core Indicators 2014–2021 guidance document lists 9 out of 15 core outcome indicators disaggregated by gender, 3 out of 6 core output indicators and 4 out of 7 bilateral output indicators.

explanations, such as difficulty of disaggregation in certain types of projects (e.g. in media-related activities where the audience is counted), misinterpretation of indicators by project promoters, problems with measurement related to promoters' lack of skills or capacity. In our view, the reluctance of participants to declare their gender as male or female should also be considered, and the system should at least be extended to include non-binary gender identification, as well as refusal of declaration. The current reporting system lets users describe why the 'not specified' category was used in the 'comment' field of the results framework. The rapid assessment rightly recommends mandatory completion of this field. This should lead to identifying the common causes and point to how the categorisation could be improved to collect accurate and reliable quantitative data.

Aside from core indicators, **result frameworks include programme-specific indicators, some of which can be directly attributed to gender equality** (e.g. 'Number of female researchers going abroad for research' in PL-Applied Research). This provides an opportunity to set gender-specific objectives for an intervention. In our assessment, this is a good practice that allows for accurately capturing a large extent of gender equality results. However, it requires acknowledging and understanding the gender dimension of a programme area at the programme design stage.

**Results reporting is further developed at the project level by assigning policy markers, target groups and detailed sector codes to projects** supported by the Grants. This allows for counting projects with certain characteristics and generating corresponding financial data. In the reporting system, **policy markers** are variables that can be applied for each project. They indicate that project activities contribute to a certain issue, e.g. gender equality, that cannot be adequately captured through other means.<sup>95</sup> The 2009–2014 FM specified 'gender equality' and 'sexual minorities – lesbian, gay, transsexual, bisexual (LGBT)' among policy markers. In the 2014–2021 period, 'gender equality' is used as a policy marker, while LGBTI describes a target group (discussed below). Domestic and gender-based violence was not specified as a policy marker in the FMs, but was included in the sector codes (described below). For the available policy markers, project promoters can mark their project as either 'relevant' (issue is important but not the main focus or justification) or 'fundamental' (issue is the main focus or justification).<sup>96</sup> If a project is not explicitly advancing the issue, then the project promoter should tick the 'not applicable' option. For gender equality, the guidance specifies that just because many beneficiaries of a project are women, it does not automatically mean that the project promotes gender equality. Rather, the policy marker should be applied to projects intended to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, or to reduce discrimination or inequalities based on gender. Thus, analysing the projects that have selected gender equality as relevant or fundamental should give an accurate picture of the Grants' contribution to gender equality. However, interviews with the FMO suggest that overreporting occurs, as project promoters select 'relevant' or 'fundamental' simply because the project includes women.

Project promoters report on **target groups**, which include intermediary and end beneficiaries at the project level. This includes gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence-relevant groups, such as 'victims of hate crime/hate speech', 'victims of domestic and gender-based violence', 'victims of human trafficking', minority status-related groups, such as 'lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex population (LGBTI)', and specifying 'women' or 'men'.

In addition, project promoters specify **the sector and**, if possible, **the subsector** for their project. The sector code is selected by answering the question 'Which specific economic, societal or environmental area in the Beneficiary State is the funding intended to support'? This includes gender equality and

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<sup>95</sup> Results reporting guide.

<sup>96</sup> The 2014–2021 Financial Mechanism uses the policy markers gender equality, Roma inclusion and empowerment, social inclusion of vulnerable groups other than Roma, anti-discrimination, and transparency and anti-corruption.

domestic and gender-based violence-relevant codes, such as 'gender policy, management and administration', 'domestic and gender-based violence', 'gender equality organisations and institutions', 'gender equality in employment' and 'reproductive healthcare'.<sup>97</sup>

**For the mainstreaming approach, data on policy markers, target groups and on the sector or subsector allow for identifying projects potentially relevant to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence. Conceptually, this operationalisation can be used to assess gender equality results to a large extent.** However, interviewed representatives of the FMO considered such data weak due to the instances of incorrect application of variables and markers. Although the Programme Operator, Fund Operator and National Focal Point representatives we interviewed did not describe problems with reporting, data collected in this study suggest that some stakeholders at this level do not have a strong idea about gender mainstreaming. Insufficient knowledge would explain misinterpretation of guidelines, or the inability to identify reporting issues or work with project promoters on accurately classifying projects in terms of policy markers, target groups and sectors and subsectors. The 2016 rapid assessment also found that the quality of information at the project level needed to be improved.<sup>98</sup> **Problems with data reliability at the project level translate to limitations of analyses at the programme and Grant level, impeding the accuracy of gender equality results and allocation assessment.**

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<sup>97</sup> Results reporting guide.

<sup>98</sup> Ecorys, 'Rapid Assessment of Reporting Systems and Data Quality', December 2021.

## 3. Part B: Looking forward

### 3.1. Relevance

#### 3.1.1. Context for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence

*Evaluation question 7: In the EU, considering both physical and online contexts, what is the context and current needs for gender equality and action against gender-based violence and domestic violence?*

**The contexts for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence are different at the EU and Member State level.** The EU has embraced gender equality as one of its core values. It aims to foster it through the targeted and mainstreaming approaches. The EU has previously been criticised for neglecting to promote gender equality,<sup>99</sup> shortcomings in its approach to gender mainstreaming<sup>100</sup> and slow progress on gender equality overall. But it has stepped up its efforts. Apart from political appointments, including the choice of Ursula von der Leyen as the first female president of the European Commission and increased female representation in the European Commission, EU actions on gender equality have included:

- **Policy developments**, such as the adoption of the EU GES 2020–2025<sup>101</sup> and the Global Action Plan III related to the promotion of gender equality through the EU's external actions.
- **Legislative actions**, such as signing and efforts to ratify the Istanbul Convention, adopting the Work-life Balance Directive;<sup>102</sup> tabling the proposals for a new directive on violence against women<sup>103</sup> and for a directive increasing pay transparency;<sup>104</sup> reaching a provisional agreement (after a 10-year stand-still) between the European Parliament and Member State negotiators on a bill to increase the presence of women on corporate boards.<sup>105</sup>
- **Financing actions**, including mainstreaming gender equality through an EU multiannual framework,<sup>106</sup> preparation of a methodology on gender mainstreaming across funding<sup>107</sup> and tackling gender equality via various funding programmes and instruments (e.g. Horizon 2020).<sup>108</sup>
- **Animating debates and cooperation on gender equality** by bringing stakeholders from different industries to address issues of inequality as part of cooperation and coordination

<sup>99</sup> See, Cullen, P. (2020), 'From neglect to threat: feminist responses to right wing populism in the European Union,' *European Politics and Society*.

<sup>100</sup> Hubert, A., Stratigaki, M. (2016), 'Twenty years of EU gender mainstreaming: rebirth out of the ashes?' *FeminaPolitica - Zeitschrift für feministische Politikwissenschaft*, 25(2), 21–36. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoa-51107-5>

<sup>101</sup> Alongside other equality strategies acknowledging the need for action on LGBTIQ+ rights, the rights of persons with disabilities and representatives of the Roma.

<sup>102</sup> Information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en>

<sup>103</sup> European Commission (2022), Proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence, COM (2022) 105 final, 2022/0066 (COD).

<sup>104</sup> Information available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0093>;

[www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/press-room/20220401IPR26532/gender-pay-gap-parliament-backs-binding-pay-transparency-measures](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pl/press-room/20220401IPR26532/gender-pay-gap-parliament-backs-binding-pay-transparency-measures)

<sup>105</sup> Information available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220603IPR32195/women-on-boards-deal-to-boost-gender-balance-in-companies](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220603IPR32195/women-on-boards-deal-to-boost-gender-balance-in-companies)

<sup>106</sup> Although there is substantial room for improvement in this respect, as evidenced by the recent report from the European Court of Auditors, the ECA noted, among other things, that there is not yet any effective framework to support gender mainstreaming and that the EU's budget cycle has not adequately taken gender equality into account. See, ECA (2021), Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action.

<sup>107</sup> Focus group interview conducted for the evaluation on 29 July 2022.

<sup>108</sup> E.g. EU Award for (Academic) Gender Equality Champions, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-widera-2022-gender-prize-02>

platforms, e.g. the Equality Platform for the Energy Sector set up by DG ENER<sup>109</sup> (focused strongly, albeit not solely, on gender equality) and Women in Transport – EU Platform for change<sup>110</sup> established by DG MOVE.

- **Developing tools** promoting and supporting gender equality in various sectors, **collecting data**<sup>111</sup> and **monitoring** different aspects of gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence, e.g. through the work of EIGE,<sup>112</sup> FRA<sup>113</sup> or Eurostat.<sup>114</sup>

The European Parliament's dedicated Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)<sup>115</sup> has been a champion of gender equality for years. It has pushed for progressive reforms in numerous resolutions.<sup>116</sup> Despite remaining challenges, **significant momentum has been created within its institutions and agencies to further gender equality and eradicate domestic and gender-based violence**. This momentum goes as far as debates around Treaty changes. The FEMM has discussed elaboration of the EU Women's Rights Charter promoting women's participation in the labour market and sexual and reproductive rights (including abortion) with a view to including them in the Treaty and the Charter.<sup>117</sup> In 2021, the European Parliament adopted the resolution on the situation of SRHR in the EU, in the context of women's health.<sup>118</sup> Importantly, SRHR are not mentioned in the EEA and Norway Grants Blue Book.

The EU as a community has been steadily, albeit slowly, progressing towards increased equality.<sup>119</sup> However, across the Gender Equality Index, differences between individual Member States are apparent. Progress on gender equality, or lack thereof, has been driven by countries' political, social and economic contexts. As reported in academic and grey literature, **some Member States have experienced a rebirth of right-wing populism coupled with retrogressive tendencies**, contesting access to abortion, sex education, LGBTI rights and the Istanbul Convention (see Section 3.1.5). The anti-gender rhetoric employed by those movements makes the context in those countries particularly difficult for promoting gender equality and combatting gender-based violence.

The evaluation has also shown that **not all countries experience this level of hostility towards gender equality, but other contextual factors may be at play hindering overall progress**. In Portugal, Slovenia and Romania anti-gender movements have not gained similar strength as in Poland or Slovakia. The three countries have a relatively or even very good policy and legislative framework. In Portugal, this framework appears to be coupled with a sympathetic governmental political agenda, although focus group interview participants also noted some tendency for box-ticking.<sup>120</sup> In Romania, however, the implementation of an improved framework appears to be impeded by **indifference of the public, the authorities and professionals** in charge of promoting gender equality and fighting domestic and gender-based violence. The Slovenian country study shows that even a very good **policy framework may be insufficient when the authorities' capacities are lacking**. A nuanced understanding of country contexts – whether dominated by outright hostility, stereotypes, indifference

<sup>109</sup> Information available at: [https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/equality-platform-energy-sector\\_en](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/equality-platform-energy-sector_en)

<sup>110</sup> Information available at: [https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/social-issues/women-transport/women-transport-eu-platform-change\\_en](https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/social-issues/women-transport/women-transport-eu-platform-change_en)

<sup>111</sup> See e.g. Women in Digital Scoreboard 2021, available at: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/women-digital-scoreboard-2021>

<sup>112</sup> E.g. EIGE (2021) Gender Equality Index 2021, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021>

<sup>113</sup> E.g. FRA (2014), Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main report.

<sup>114</sup> E.g. its work on gender-based violence, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/wdn-20211004-1>

<sup>115</sup> Information available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/home/highlights](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/home/highlights)

<sup>116</sup> Only in the current 2019–2024 term has it adopted multiple resolutions devoted to gender equality, e.g.: Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020 (2022); Gender dimension in Cohesion Policy (2021); the EU Strategy for Gender Equality (2021); Promoting gender equality in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers (2021); Equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018–2020 (2021); Challenges ahead for women's rights: more than 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2021); Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy (2020); The need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality (2020); etc.

<sup>117</sup> See [www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/revision-of-the-treaties-presentation-dr/product-details/20220926CAN67025](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/revision-of-the-treaties-presentation-dr/product-details/20220926CAN67025)

<sup>118</sup> Available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0314\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0314_EN.html)

<sup>119</sup> EIGE (2021), Gender Equality Index 2021, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021>

<sup>120</sup> FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 16 August 2022.



or other attitudes, or perhaps by financial and other types of constraints – is key for defining the corresponding needs and appropriate response strategies.

The evaluation shows a **generally better context for work related to domestic violence than gender equality or gender-based violence**. Even countries with stronger anti-gender sentiments among the authorities, such as Poland, Slovakia or Lithuania, have relatively developed frameworks and implement actions to tackle domestic violence. However, in these countries, this work may be, as in the case of Poland and Slovakia, framed as pro-family. Domestic violence is also the focus in countries with better overall climate for gender equality, such as Portugal and Slovenia. In GREVIO country evaluation processes (finalised so far for Poland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia),<sup>121</sup> the Council of Europe's committee (monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention) has noted the focus on domestic violence and underlined the need for looking beyond domestic violence to address other forms of violence against women (see more under 3.1.2).

### 3.1.2. Current needs for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence

**The evaluation shows that there is a strong need to continue the targeted work on domestic and gender-based violence, but with inclusion of the intersectional perspective and recognition of the online dimension.** The current project promoters surveyed for this evaluation were asked to provide their perceptions on how much support is needed for a range of issues related to gender equality. They perceive a significant need for support in 5 areas and a moderate need for support in 12 areas (see Figure 1 below). The five areas perceived as in need of significant support relate to tackling: violence against other vulnerable groups in the online space; domestic violence against women; violence against other vulnerable groups in the physical space; violence against women in the physical space; violence against women in the online space.

With violence against women strongly singled out, the results align with previous research.<sup>122</sup> However, the results also testify to the **need for a broader and intersectional approach to domestic and gender-based violence**, which would underline how 'violence is contingent on women's material conditions, individual attributes and social locations'.<sup>123</sup> For instance, data show that women with disabilities are two to five times more likely to be victims of violence than non-disabled women.<sup>124</sup> The need for **more focus on violence against women with disabilities** was specifically highlighted in the Lithuanian country case study.

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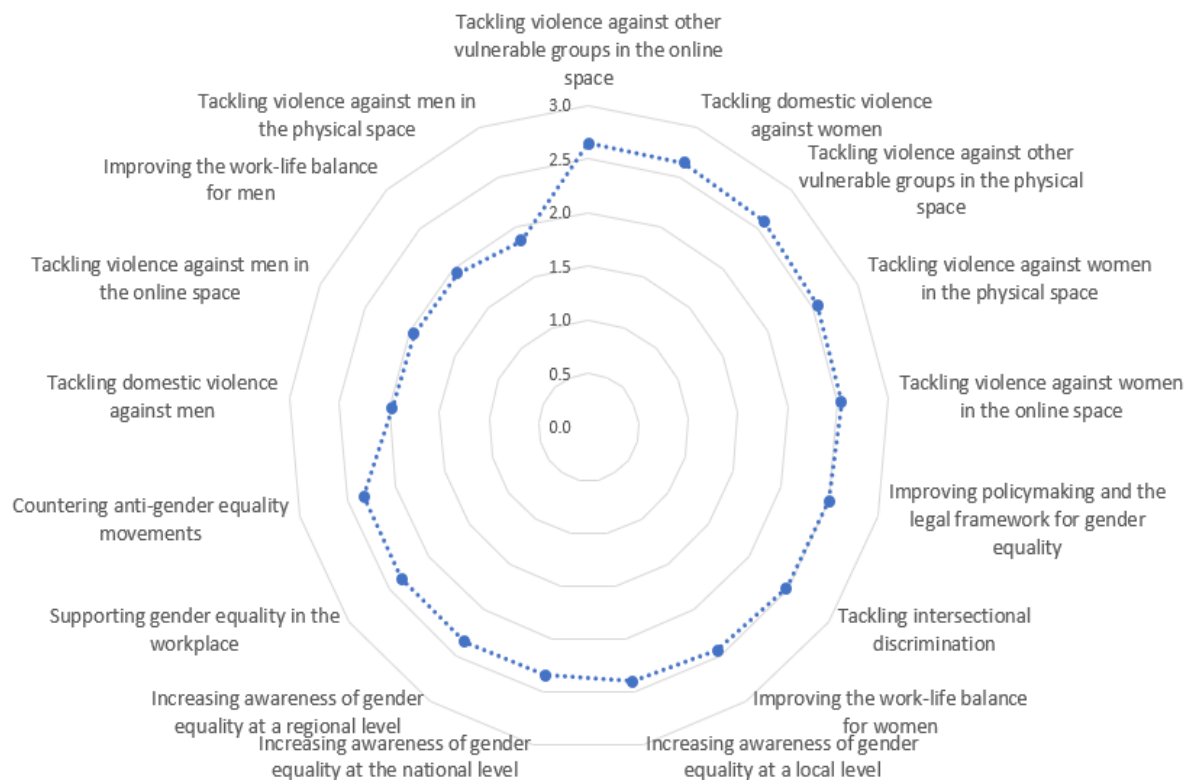
<sup>121</sup> The respective baseline reports are available at: [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Slovenia](#)

<sup>122</sup> European Parliament, The gender inequalities in the European Union (2012), available [here](#); FRA (2014), Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main report.

<sup>123</sup> UN Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo, quoted after Imkaan (2019), The value of intersectionality in understanding violence against women and girls (VAWG), p. 4.

<sup>124</sup> European Parliament resolution of 29 November 2018 on the situation of women with disabilities, available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TqtA-8-2018-0484\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TqtA-8-2018-0484_EN.html)

Figure 1 Areas of support where respondents believe EEA and Norway Grants support is needed



Source: Own elaboration of survey data, n=450. We have assigned the following values to the answers to create our own indicator: 'Significant support needed' – 3, 'Moderate support needed' – 2, 'Limited support needed' – 1 and 'No support needed' – 0. These have been weighted by the number of responses for every category, with 'Don't know' answers excluded from the calculation.

The survey is also in line with disquieting results of research on the experiences of violence among representatives of vulnerable groups more generally. The situation of LGBTI people is particularly difficult, as anti-gender sentiments are often coupled with homophobic and transphobic messaging. In the 2019 FRA survey, most LGBT respondents (58%) said that, over the past five years, they experienced harassment in the form of offensive or threatening situations at work, on the street, on public transport, in a shop, on the internet or anywhere else, including offensive or threatening incidents of a sexual nature.<sup>125</sup> FRA concluded it was difficult to see progress since its 2012 survey.

**The continued focus on domestic and gender-based violence is also justified by the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.**<sup>126</sup> Social distancing and restrictions on movement trapped women and girls and other domestic abuse victims at home with their abusers. In the spring of 2020, several EU countries recorded a surge in domestic violence during the first lockdowns.<sup>127</sup> The lack of immediate, specialised and long-term response to domestic and gender-based violence will have consequences lasting than the COVID-19 pandemic for many women and children.<sup>128</sup>

Survey results also point to **the importance of addressing domestic and gender-based violence in the online environment.**<sup>129</sup> The need for addressing gender-based cyber violence has been

<sup>125</sup> FRA (2020), A long way to go for LGBTI equality, p. 12, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/eu-lgbti-survey-results>

<sup>126</sup> UNDP (2020), Gender-based violence and COVID-19, available at: [www.undp.org/publications/gender-based-violence-and-covid-19](http://www.undp.org/publications/gender-based-violence-and-covid-19); WHO (2005), Violence and disasters, available at: [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/violence/violence\\_disasters.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/violence_disasters.pdf)

<sup>127</sup> 2021 Report on gender equality in the EU, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/annual\\_report\\_ge\\_2021\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/annual_report_ge_2021_en.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> EIGE (2021), Gender Equality Index 2021 Health, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2021-report>

<sup>129</sup> Also highlighted in the FGI conducted as part of the evaluation, 29 July 2022.



recognised by the EU, with legislative responses being considered.<sup>130</sup> Previous research supports this focus.<sup>131</sup> The need for targeting gender equality, gender-based violence and domestic violence in the online space was highlighted in the Portuguese case study. But this issue is still not prioritised in the country's gender equality agenda, nor in the implementation of the EEA Grants in the 2014–2021 FM. By contrast, the Estonian Violence Prevention Agreement 2021–2025 contains a focus on prevention of violence in the digital world.<sup>132</sup> Including this aspect within the EEA and Norway Grants' programming could help put the issue on the political agenda in some countries, such as Portugal, and increase the Grants' alignment with national priorities in others, e.g. Estonia.

While confirming the urgency of tackling domestic violence, **evidence also points to the need to consider other types of violence against women at country level.** The Lithuanian case study underscores the need for addressing **sexual violence.** In its evaluation reports, GREVIO noticed the need for action on sexual violence in Poland, Romania and Slovenia. Some of the shortcomings it noticed include policy gaps (Poland) and legislative misalignment with the Istanbul Convention on the definition of rape (Poland and Romania). What GREVIO underlines in all these countries are **inadequacies in specialist service provision for victims** of sexual violence/rape, stalking, sexual harassment, etc. The need for specialised support services was also highlighted in the Czechia case study.<sup>133</sup> In relation to domestic and gender-based violence, country case studies in Lithuania, Poland and Czechia also indicate **the need for work on the prevention of violence,** which entails working with men and boys (see more below).

The evaluation supports **addressing knowledge gaps through training and capacity-building directed at various actors.**<sup>134</sup> This includes, but is not limited to, actions addressing the following needs in: (i) Lithuania – training professionals on gender equality and domestic violence, building capacity and knowledge to address the challenge of intersectionality among CSOs;<sup>135</sup> (ii) Romania and Slovakia – more systematic and gender-sensitive training of judges to ensure a wider understanding of the cycle of domestic violence, eliminate gender stereotyping and ensure that all instances of non-consensual sex are prosecuted as rape;<sup>136</sup> Portugal – systematic and compulsory initial and in-service training (for all officials concerned with the provision of protection and support services) on different manifestations of violence against women, detection and root causes, prevention of secondary victimisation and the effects of violence on child victims and witnesses.<sup>137</sup>

While government officials and other professionals are seen as targets for sensitisation and training, capacity-building was strongly highlighted in relation to CSOs.<sup>138</sup> The latter is also highly relevant in light of civil society's role in responding to anti-gender movements (see Section 3.1.5).

There is also a **need for effective gender mainstreaming, including capacity-building specifically on this aspect.** It was highlighted in the Lithuanian and Slovenian country case studies, and in interviews.<sup>139</sup> Focus group interview participants urged for strategically and intentionally working on

<sup>130</sup> Shreeves, R. (2021), At a glance: Combating gender-based cyber-violence, European Parliamentary Research Service.

<sup>131</sup> Smętek, J., Warso, Z. (2017), Cyberprzemoc wobec kobiet. Raport, available at: [www.hfhr.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/HFPC-Cyberprzemoc-wobec-kobiet-raport-www.pdf](http://www.hfhr.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/HFPC-Cyberprzemoc-wobec-kobiet-raport-www.pdf); European Parliament (2021), At a glance: Combating gender-based violence: Cyber violence, available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662621/EPRS\\_STU\(2021\)662621\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/662621/EPRS_STU(2021)662621_EN.pdf)

<sup>132</sup> Estonia country report.

<sup>133</sup> Czechia country report; FGI conducted as part of this evaluation on 18 August 2022.

<sup>134</sup> FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 29 July 2022. One of the participants specifically highlighted the need to train law enforcement representatives.

<sup>135</sup> Lithuania country report.

<sup>136</sup> GREVIO (2022), (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Romania; GREVIO (2021), (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Slovakia.

<sup>137</sup> GREVIO (2019), (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Portugal.

<sup>138</sup> For example during the FGI conducted as part of this evaluation on 29 July 2022.

<sup>139</sup> FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 29 July 2022 and 16 August 2022.

gender mainstreaming, with different ideas around this.<sup>140</sup> Some interviewees also highlighted that neither project promoters nor Programme Operators have a strong idea about gender mainstreaming and how to include it in programmes and projects.<sup>141</sup>

While progress is being made, **negative individual and social attitudes still need to be addressed<sup>142</sup> as they often stand in the way of progress** on gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence. This **builds a case for awareness-raising** on various dimensions of interest and towards various groups. The Lithuania case study highlighted the need for raising awareness and conducting social campaigning to fight victim blaming in society and among professionals.<sup>143</sup> The Portuguese case study underscores that education and awareness-raising must be prioritised in the country, not only through the citizenship education programme in schools but also by investing in wider campaigns that target the root causes of inequality and discrimination. In Romania, our research identified the indifference of the general public and the authorities/professionals in charge of promoting gender equality and tackling domestic and gender-based violence as an obstacle. This indicates a need for increased awareness and sensitisation.

**The need for raising awareness also relates to the role and image of men and boys in society.**

Research in Lithuania showed that positive masculinity patterns should be promoted, also to generate positive attitudes towards such initiatives as paternity leave and induce more involvement of men in care responsibilities. Overall, **the need for targeting (and involving) men and boys** also transpires from the research, even if it is not the main thread. The Polish country study underlines that the activities with perpetrators and education of boys is underestimated but should be promoted. International organisations, such as the Council of Europe and UN Women, have also been working on conceptualising the place of men and boys in gender equality policies and in policies to combat violence against women.<sup>144</sup> Men and boys may also be victims of domestic and gender-based violence. However, the evaluation did not identify significant need of targeting this group (see Figure 1 Areas of support where respondents believe EEA and Norway Grants support is needed above).

The evaluation confirmed the **need for continued work on work-life balance, unpaid work and care work, women's participation in the labour market, pay and pension gap.**<sup>145</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the superficial gains in these domains, lending urgency to the gender equality work in this sector.<sup>146</sup> In its 2021 and 2022 Gender Equality Index, **EIGE noted the weakest progress in the EU in the 'domain of time'**. The domain measures gender inequalities in the allocation of time to care and domestic work, as well as social activities. Large variations are visible between countries.<sup>147</sup> Most unpaid care work has been done by women, which is an obstacle to them accessing employment. EIGE data show the most unequal sharing of daily care work in Greece, Cyprus and Poland.<sup>148</sup> In Denmark, Sweden and Slovenia, there is a more equitable sharing of care. In Poland, a significant underachiever, the need for solutions facilitating women's participation in professional and family life and acknowledging the value of unpaid work has been recognised in the recent National Programme of Action for Equal Treatment for the Years 2022–2030.<sup>149</sup> The programme includes a task to increase the

<sup>140</sup> FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 5 August 2022 and 29 July 2022. Also Portugal country report.

<sup>141</sup> FGI conducted as part of this evaluation on 16 August 2022.

<sup>142</sup> Also noticed by the participants of the FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 16 August 2022.

<sup>143</sup> Lithuania country report.

<sup>144</sup> Information on COE work available [here](#), and on UN Women work [here](#).

<sup>145</sup> For example, FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 29 July 2022 and 16 August 2022; IDI conducted as part of the evaluation on 5 October 2022; Romania and Slovenia country reports.

<sup>146</sup> See this acknowledged, e.g., in the Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality France, the Czech Republic and Sweden 2022–2023, 31 January 2022, the text available [here](#).

<sup>147</sup> EIGE (2021), Gender inequalities in use of time live on, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2021-report/gender-inequalities-use-time-live>

<sup>148</sup> EIGE (2021), Gender inequalities in care and pay in the EU, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market>

<sup>149</sup> Polish Government (2022), Uchwała nr 113 Rady Ministrów z dnia 24 maja 2022 w sprawie Krajowego Programu Działań na rzecz Równego Traktowania na lata 2022–2030, Monitor Polski z dnia 5 lipca 2022, poz. 640.

engagement of men in fulfilling care roles, which has been considered insufficient. The need for men's stronger engagement has also been recognised in strategic documents in Czechia.<sup>150</sup>

**Apart from unequal share in unpaid work, the gender pay gap persists across sectors in paid work.** The paid care sector has a large share of women employees who are often in low-income, precarious jobs, with few career prospects.<sup>151</sup> In 2020, women's gross hourly earnings were on average 13% below those of men in the EU.<sup>152</sup> There are significant variations between countries. Among those covered in this evaluation, Latvia and Estonia have the highest gaps of 22.3% and 21.1%, respectively.<sup>153</sup> However, there are also countries where the pay gap is lower than the EU average, i.e. Romania, Slovenia, Poland and Portugal.

In the context of overwhelming needs in many domains, **the openness of the EEA and Norway Grants 'architecture' to accommodate various country-relevant topics** (e.g. through broadly defined priorities in the Blue Book, national consultations of the Blue Book, negotiations of country-level programmes) **has been perceived as a value by the consulted stakeholders. The evaluators share this perception.** In addition to better aligning programming with country needs and priorities, the approach can help maintain a sense of ownership at national level. Thus, it can positively affect implementation and results. At the same time, focus group interview participants also noted the need for countries to use available academic expertise while developing their programmes. Since country programming is highly driven by national authorities, the engagement of independent academic expertise can offer an alternative perspective.

### 3.1.3. Interrelation of the context and needs for gender equality with other discrimination grounds

*Evaluation question 8: How do the context and current needs for gender equality and action against domestic violence and gender-based violence interrelate with other discrimination grounds, such as racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression?*

Research, including this evaluation, shows that **the anti-gender sentiments that have been gaining momentum often go hand in hand with anti-LGBTI messaging.**<sup>154</sup> Those who fall outside of what is considered the norm are used for political gain, especially by right-wing populists. Pictured as an enemy and scapegoated, they are instrumentalised to exploit deeply rooted societal fears, aversion to change and countless other insecurities or frustrations to galvanise political support. This has been **facilitated by social, political and economic volatility** brought about by converging economic crises, the COVID-19 pandemic and, most recently, Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. While some representatives of vulnerable groups are used and attacked in a very visible way, others remain largely invisible. Persons with disabilities or older people are often pushed to the margins of the political agenda; their isolation has been increased by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The equality agenda has been experiencing setbacks in some EU Member States, but it has also received a push from the European Commission** with a series of EU strategies addressing the

<sup>150</sup> E.g. The Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for 2014 – 2020.

foresees the specific goal of '[o]pening the topic of participation of men in taking care of small children, dependent persons and household from the perspective of gender equality and justice'.

<sup>151</sup> EIGE (2021), Gender inequalities in care and pay in the EU, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market>

<sup>152</sup> Eurostat, data available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics)

<sup>153</sup> Eurostat, data available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics)

<sup>154</sup> See e.g. Rawłuszko, M. (2019), 'And If the Opponents of Gender Ideology Are Right? Gender Politics, Europeanization, and the Democratic Deficit', *Politics & Gender*.

equality of different marginalised communities, such as the LGBTI persons, persons with disabilities and Roma people (see Section 2.1.2). The intersectional perspective has been gaining support and strength within the movement, promoting gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence. Intersectionality is present as a horizontal principle in the EU GES 2020–2025 and continuously highlighted by EU actors.<sup>155</sup> However, criticism has also been voiced recognising missed opportunities,<sup>156</sup> suggesting that the work is far from complete.

**Country case studies testify to the need to work with vulnerable and marginalised groups who experience multiple forms of discrimination,** including:

- Roma women and girls in Slovakia who often face multiple forms of discrimination. Various aspects of their identities are essentialised, which is part of the discriminatory practice.<sup>157</sup> As evidenced by Roma women themselves, they face discriminatory practices by a range of institutions because of their ethnicity. However, Roma women's experiences are downplayed. These discriminations combine to prevent Roma women from accessing services and institutional protection when it comes to domestic and gender-based violence.<sup>158</sup>
- LGBTI persons in Romania who need better protection against all types of violence. According to the interviewees, protection measures should address the current social norms related to LGBTI people. There is a lack of awareness, so training – together with clear procedures – is needed in public institutions, including in law enforcement, to address violence against LGBTI people.
- Roma women and girls in Romania who are discriminated against and disadvantaged in several dimensions. Their access to education is significantly worse than the access of Roma men and boys and non-Roma women and girls. Child and maternal mortality is 15 times higher in the Roma community than the national average.<sup>159</sup> Roma women are more likely to be unemployed compared to Roma men or the national average among women.<sup>160</sup> Data from our interviews suggest that Roma women also allocate more unpaid time to care and housekeeping work. They are also gravely underrepresented in power structures in politics, administration, business and social organisations (research institutes, NGOs, sports organisations, etc.). In this context, Roma women need specific measures addressing their vulnerabilities related to education, health, the labour market, their role in the household and their society overall.
- Roma women and representatives of vulnerable groups in Czechia, such as people who suffer from specific diseases and young adults in institutional and foster care, who need inclusion and empowerment measures. Community work, formal and non-formal educational activities, mobilisation and information campaigns are needed to create opportunities to meet gender equality goals.

Focus group interview participants also highlighted the need for the gender equality agenda to encompass intersectional discrimination.<sup>161</sup> They singled out LGBTI people and Roma women (especially access to services), and highlighted the need to do more work on migration, asylum-seeking

<sup>155</sup> See e.g. the acknowledgement of intersectionality in the Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality issued by the governments of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia for the period between July 2020 and December 2021.

<sup>156</sup> ENAR (2020), EU Gender Equality Strategy: A missed opportunity to be truly intersectional, available at: [www.enar-eu.org/eu-gender-equality-strategy-a-missed-opportunity-to-be-truly-intersectional/](http://www.enar-eu.org/eu-gender-equality-strategy-a-missed-opportunity-to-be-truly-intersectional/)

<sup>157</sup> See, *Stratégia pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020* [Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Integration of Roma up to 2020], Government Office of the Slovak Republic, December 2011. Available at (in English): [www.employment.gov.sk/files/legislativa/dokumenty-zoznamy-pod/strategyoftheslovakrepublicforintegrationofromaupto2020.pdf](http://www.employment.gov.sk/files/legislativa/dokumenty-zoznamy-pod/strategyoftheslovakrepublicforintegrationofromaupto2020.pdf)

<sup>158</sup> Rác, I. (2020), 'Barriers to assistance for women from marginalised Roma communities who are experiencing domestic violence', *KONTAKT / Journal of Nursing and Social Sciences related to Health and Illness*, 22, 4, 251–257, DOI: 10.32725/kont.2020.042

<sup>159</sup> Data provided in the Roma inclusion Strategy, available at: [www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Site2014/Strategie/Strategie\\_final\\_18-11-2014](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Site2014/Strategie/Strategie_final_18-11-2014)

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 29 July 2022 and 5 August 2022.

women and refugee women.<sup>162</sup> The Portuguese case study highlighted the critical need to understand and incorporate the intersectionality lens in the promotion of gender equality, but that this has not been a focus to date. Similarly, in Slovenia, intersectionality is not extensively addressed in national policies.

Apart from targeting specific groups and involving them in different actions, there is also a **need for better expertise in applying the intersectional approach among various actors** working to promote gender equality and actions against domestic and gender-based violence. In Lithuania, for example, professional capacity and knowledge to deal with intersectionality is lacking among CSOs.

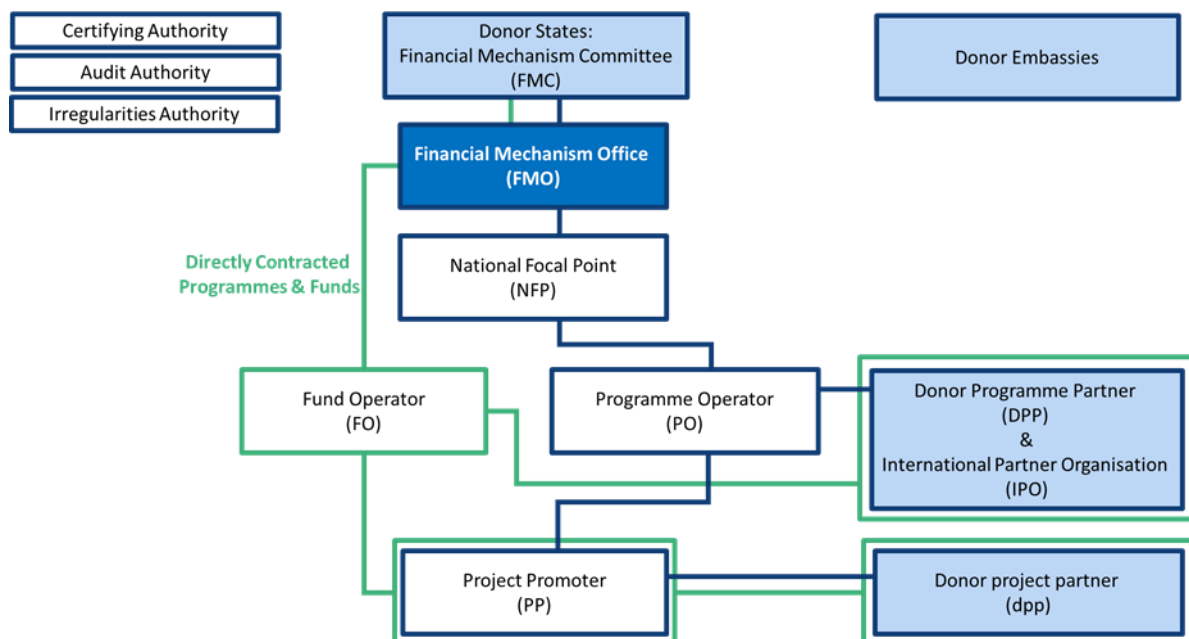
At the same time, the country case studies show that the EEA and Norway Grants themselves do not address intersectionality well in country programming. This has been flagged specifically in Lithuania, Slovenia and Poland. Our quantitative analysis of the Blue Book and programme agreements also supports this conclusion, with the exception of Roma women who are one group that is more visible across the documents (see Section 2.1.1).

### 3.1.4. Stakeholder involvement in design, planning and implementation

*Evaluation question 9: How can stakeholders, including relevant target groups and stakeholders holding relevant expertise in the Donor States, best be involved in the design, planning, and implementation of possible future EEA and Norway Grants programming?*

As reported above (see Section 2.1.3), the programming process foresees participation of various stakeholders, both at the EU and country level. Various actors are also involved in design, planning and implementation. The graph below presents the relations between the various stakeholders involved in EEA and Norway Grants.

Figure 2 Main stakeholders involved in the EEA and Norway Grants



**Source:** FMO, provided by email on 11 January 2021.

<sup>162</sup> FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 29 July 2022.

According to the Blue Book, the key partners in the EEA and Norway Grants include:

- National Focal Points (NFPs) -- the main partners of the Donor States in each Beneficiary State. NFPs have the overall responsibility for ensuring that all programmes in that country contribute to the objectives of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. They serve as a contact point and are responsible and accountable for the implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs);
- Programme Operators -- responsible for preparing and implementing individual programmes agreed in the country in line with the EEA and Norway Grants' core principles and values. The operators are responsible for selecting and contracting projects funded through the Grants<sup>163</sup>;
- Donor Programme Partners -- public entities in Donor States, advising on the preparation and/or implementation of a programme and/ or participating in the implementation of a programme. Their participation is agreed between the Donor and Beneficiary States;
- International Partner Organisations -- international organisations or agencies thereof involved in the implementation of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. IPOs can bring expertise and added value to programme implementation.<sup>164</sup>

In addition, donor project partners are an important partner at the project level. Donor project partners are entities based in Donor States that participate in projects implemented as part of programmes and funds.

**While National Focal Points and Programme and Fund Operators are by default closely involved at all stages, the involvement of Donor Programme Partners, International Partner Organisations and donor project partners varies across programmes.** The figure below summarises which Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations were part of the programmes implemented within the targeted approach across the 2009-2014 and 2014-2021 FMs. Annex VIII: Overview of stakeholders involved in gender-related aspects of targeted programmes in the 2014-2021 FM, in turn, presents more details on stakeholder involvement in gender programming within the 2014-2021 FM.

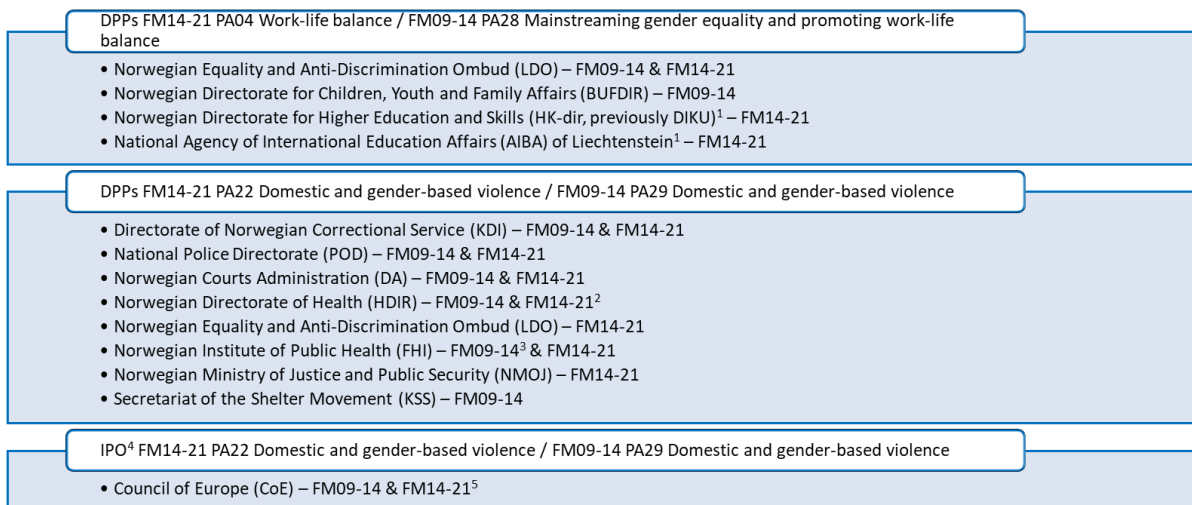
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<sup>163</sup> This also applied to Fund Operators.

<sup>164</sup> FMO, Blue Book 2014-2021.



Figure 3 Involvement of Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations in programmes targeting gender equality in the 2009-2014 and 2014-2021 FMs



<sup>1</sup> In FM14-21 HK-dir and AIBA are DPPs to the 'Education' programme in Slovenia, that covers PA04. They advise on the full program.

<sup>2</sup> In FM14-21 HDIR is DPP to two programmes, including the 'Domestic' programme in Slovakia that covers PA04 in addition to PA22. Their advice is mainly focused on PA22.

<sup>3</sup> In FM09-14 FHI was DPP for the programme in Slovenia that included the programme area 'Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting work-life balance'.

<sup>4</sup> In FM14-21 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is an IPO, including in the 'Human Rights' programme in Czechia that cover PA22. Their advice is focused on PA07 (Roma inclusion and empowerment).

<sup>5</sup> In FM14-21 CoE is IPO to 14 programmes, including the 'Domestic' programme in Slovakia that covers PA04 in addition to PA22. Their advice is mainly focused on PA22.

**Source:** FMO, provided by email on 11 January 2021.

**The evaluation suggests that the involvement of Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations at various stages could be improved.** In the current FM, out of nine, two programmes within the targeted approach do not have any Donor Programme Partners,<sup>165</sup> while four do not have any International Partner Organisations.<sup>166</sup> The majority of targeted programmes cover more than one programme area. When Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations are not assigned to programme areas, outcomes or projects, their focus, and thus the link to gender, is not always clear.

At minimum Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations are involved in Cooperation Committees where they can follow and advise on the whole programme implementation, including gender aspects. In the case of programmes which foresee calls for proposals or small grant schemes, Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations can be involved in Selection Committees as observers or they can hold voting rights. In the evaluators view, it would be advisable for both Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations with gender expertise to always have voting rights in Selection Committees on gender-themed calls or schemes. It would be particularly important in countries that have an anti-gender track record. Donor Programme Partners also provide support in searching for donor project partners.

The gender link in the involvement of a specific Donor Programme Partner and International Partner Organisation is clear when they function as donor project partners or project promoters, respectively. For example, the PT-WORKLIFE programme has a visibly involved Donor Programme Partner – the Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO) that participates in the Cooperation Committee, Selection Committee, but is also a donor project partner in two pre-defined projects focused on gender. Among Donor Programme Partners, the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security

<sup>165</sup> CZ-HUMANRIGHTS and LV-HOMEAFFAIRS.

<sup>166</sup> EE-LOCALDEV, PL-JUSTICE, PT-WORKLIFE, SI-EDUCATION.

(NMOJ) also stands out as more visibly involved in gender-related work. Within PA22, the NMOJ set up multilateral cooperation under the SYNERGY project, e.g. organising thematic meetings.

Apart from closer involvement in implementation, the design and planning stage could also benefit from a stronger involvement of Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations, which could provide support and meaningful input into the Blue Book, priority sectors and programme areas, as well as the MoU negotiations. This is discussed further below (see Section 3.4).

**Donor project partners' participation in the EEA and Norway Grants work has experienced challenges.** Interviewed representatives perceived the current setup as discouraging their participation for several reasons. These were: participation and cooperation that lacked substance, limiting the opportunities for *mutual* learning; small budgets not covering the costs of project participation; excessive and non-transparent administrative burden. Donor project partners noted that their participation in implementation is reduced for example to 'serving as an expert' talking about Donor State experiences, with only brief (not in-depth) engagement in projects. The 'expert' position is perceived as uncomfortable by some interviewees. But interviewees also lacked more substantial activities, parallel to those carried out in Beneficiary States, allowing them to learn from collaborations and making the cooperation real in their eyes.

This sentiment was echoed in the Slovak country study that concluded that the bilateral dimension could be enhanced so that both countries can share their knowledge base. For instance, instead of only organising visits for project promoters from Beneficiary States to Donor States, these could be mutual.

Limited participation of donor project partners was attributed in part to the relatively small scale of projects. The projects are not able to accommodate the standard fees of donor project partners, reducing their activities. The interviewees highlighted that, with the financing that they receive in projects, donor project partners are sometimes not even able to cover the costs of this reduced participation. This leads them to refuse participation altogether. **If donor project partners are to be more involved in the implementation of projects, there has to be a solution for costs**, which the current setup does not provide.

The interviewed donor project partners strongly stressed that reporting and documentation requirements are very burdensome, especially compared to domestic funding. The requirements are also inconsistent between the Beneficiary States, which complicates matters more for organisations cooperating with counterparts from multiple Beneficiary States. The key issue here is **for the reporting requirements to be clear and the burden proportionate, so that donor project partners can focus on participation instead of reporting**.

In the Beneficiary States, international cooperation with Donor States is generally appreciated, but some problems persist. In Portugal, while appreciative of the opportunity, stakeholders shared some frustrations about the nature of cooperation. In some instances, bilateral partnerships had a limited return on investment, given the level of effort required. The FMO can help to avoid a Catch-22 situation, where there is limited belief in the value of cooperation among partners, so there is limited inclusion of cooperation components in the project design, leading to a further decrease in attractiveness and perceived potential of these types of activities.

The consulted stakeholders did not provide a clear view of how this could be addressed, with the FMO itself being best placed to determine the solution within available means. However, setting minimum levels of expected engagement for partners from Donor States (at programme and project level) could be an option. This could relate to specific minimum budget allocations, indicators dedicated to participation of partners in Donor States (beyond satisfaction levels) and more ambitious targets. The DPPs could advise on all those aspects, provided that they are known at the design stage, but also

depending on the dynamics of cooperation with specific Beneficiary States. In terms of budget minima, their support in the decision-making process would be particularly important if they were to also be involved as donor project partners. It is not to say that they should decide on the minima, but their opinion on this should be sought explicitly and should be heard. In the case of indicators, their strong involvement both in designing specific indicators and setting up targets to be achieved through implementation at project level makes sense, as does the push for more ambitious targets overall. This is of course a matter of the level of priority that the Donors attach to bilateral cooperation.

The interviewed donor project partners also highlighted some practices that help them get involved in the projects and, later on, cooperate. One focus group interview participant underlined good experiences with online matchmaking events. They noted that their organisation has developed several projects based on the contacts and relations started during those events. Another participant spoke about pre-project planning visits.

**In some countries, participation of CSOs – especially representing target groups – in design and/or implementation could be strengthened** (including organisations representing specific groups listed in Annex VI: Mapping of niches based on country case studies), including due to their perceived better competences. The findings in Lithuania suggest that CSOs are not engaged or paid for their expertise, while governmental institutions receive better financial support.<sup>167</sup> It highlights the importance of FMO support for projects implemented by CSOs or at least in partnership with CSOs. In Portugal, the stakeholders noted that across the previous and current period of the EEA and Norway Grants the engagement of national stakeholders in the design of the programmes has been a positive and impactful characteristic of this mechanism. However, the Grants could increase engagement of local and community-based organisations and vulnerable groups in the consultation and implementation of programmes. Similarly in Romania the findings point to the need for better inclusion of women, especially women and girls from Roma and other vulnerable groups into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies concerning gender equality, and domestic and gender-based violence.<sup>168</sup>

Since **involvement in design could preclude CSOs from being included in implementation due to the possible conflict of interest, appropriate procedures** are necessary for consultations. Such procedures should be open, inclusive and transparent. They could take the form of public consultations on specific programmes or their elements, as already is the case with the Blue Book, or independent needs assessments which demand engagement of the civil society and representatives of target groups (including specifically organisations representing specific groups listed in Annex VI: Mapping of niches based on country case studies).

The evaluation also shows the need for investing in a **wider range of partnerships for successful implementation**. The Portuguese case study highlighted trade unions, employers' confederations, universities and the private sector as potential partners. In Slovenia, the need was noted for mandatory inclusion of national equality entities or gender focal points (at the national and maybe donor level) in the drafting phases of the project, including drafting of calls for proposals. The Romanian case findings mentioned the Ministry of Education and other education institutions, representatives of local public authorities, representatives of law enforcement and judiciary institutions as important actors to involve.

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<sup>167</sup> Information collected through consultation with representative of women's rights groups on 8 June 2022 and 14 June 2022

<sup>168</sup> See GREVIO (2022), (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Romania.

### 3.1.5. Countering anti-gender equality movements in the Beneficiary States

*Evaluation question 10: What are some of the most promising approaches to countering anti-gender equality movements in the Beneficiary States?*

The anti-gender agenda has been spreading across the EU in recent years.<sup>169</sup> It has found a particularly fertile ground in Central and Eastern European countries, as evidenced by our case studies and literature.<sup>170</sup> Some of the anti-gender movement's most prominent themes include protection of life, 'glorification of heterosexual marriage and family'<sup>171</sup> and opposition to the rights of LGBTI people.<sup>172</sup> Those movements continue to operate in many countries, enjoying the support of state authorities, religious organisations and powerful international actors, including donors. Research has identified promising strategies to counter their influence.

Anti-gender movements have helped reinvigorate feminist activism, as governmental support for anti-gender ideas has made traditional national advocacy difficult, if not impossible. **Feminist and women's rights activists have changed their strategies from transactional to more disruptive.**<sup>173</sup> They have reached for more radical, even confrontational, forms of action. These have included protests and strikes, as well as petitioning state actors and addressing international human rights bodies.<sup>174</sup> The Polish Black Protest in 2016, when crowds of women marched against the proposed abortion ban,<sup>175</sup> and subsequent, more radical, strikes across Poland can serve as a vivid example.<sup>176</sup> These actions have shown potential and translated into some immediate political gains. These gains suggest that funding for social organising, mobilisation, street activism, innovative peaceful protest strategies and intensive international advocacy can possibly translate into positive results for the gender equality agenda.

Disruptive tactics are also accompanied by **efforts to widen the support for and build coalitions around the women's rights agenda, which has become increasingly intersectional.** Networking, mobilising and joining forces with other civil society groups, pro-democracy activists and opposition politicians has been particularly important. But feminist activists have also been seeking support among non-traditional allies, including professionals (e.g. medical doctors and nurses, parent associations, progressives and artists).<sup>177</sup> The effectiveness of this approach highlights the need for funding projects applying an intersectional lens through which representatives of different groups (including different marginalised communities) work together in a multidisciplinary fashion.

**Grassroot organising and decentralisation of feminist and women's dissent** has played a significant role in the success of some protests. This underlines opportunities involved in reaching out to local communities and leaders outside big cities with funding and specific interventions. Grassroot

<sup>169</sup> Kuhar, R., Paternotte, D. (2017), *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing against Equality*, Rowman & Littlefield.

<sup>170</sup> See, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2016), 'Gender Matters! Antifeminism, Newsletter on gender activities by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Newsletter No. 06' (Poland and Slovakia); Krizsan, A., Roggeband, C. (2021), *Politicizing Gender and Democracy in the Context of the Istanbul Convention*, Palgrave Macmillan (Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria); Country fiches produced under the UniSAFE project, available at: <https://unisafe-gbv.eu/national-reports/> (e.g. Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia).

<sup>171</sup> Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2016), 'Gender Matters! Antifeminism, Newsletter on gender activities by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Newsletter No. 06'.

<sup>172</sup> Kuhar, R., Paternotte, D. (2018), 'Disentangling and Locating the "Global Right": Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe', *Politics and Governance*, Vol. 6, Issue 3, pp. 6–19.

<sup>173</sup> Krizsan, A., Roggeband, C. (2021), *Politicizing Gender and Democracy in the Context of the Istanbul Convention*, Palgrave Macmillan, p. 139.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> BBC (2016), Black Monday: Polish women strike against abortion ban, 3 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37540139](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37540139)

<sup>176</sup> Graff A., Korolczuk, E. (ed.) (2022), *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*, Routledge Studies in Gender, Sexuality and Politics, Routledge, London and New York.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

organising has played a major role in the recent Polish mobilisation against the anti-abortion legislation.<sup>178</sup>

Evidence also suggests that shifts to protest-based and decentralised methods have been easier for movements with diversified capacities, and more participatory and grassroot traditions.<sup>179</sup> Krizsan and Roggeband point to the dense, highly networked, very diversified movements in Croatia and Poland that have allowed for a stronger response in those countries. The more centralised, low-capacity movements in Bulgaria and Hungary have found it more difficult to respond to the anti-gender challenges when direct lines of access to governmental actors closed.<sup>180</sup> This creates an argument for continuous investment in quality CSO networks, even when anti-gender sentiments are not strong. When those sentiments intensify, robust CSO networks can function as gender equality 'safety nets' across countries.

Scholars also notice that recent activism has managed to mobilise people who were not involved in any political, including feminist, activism before.<sup>181</sup> Activists have been successful in **identifying themselves with and appealing to the wider public**. Various strategies are credited for mobilising this extended support. For one, the abstract, **highly intellectual language of gender (studies), gender mainstreaming or reproductive rights has been set aside in favour of addressing daily experiences**, including e.g. those of pain, fear or violence. The feminist and women's rights movements have been able to **engage and channel the emotions** of protest participants. Future funding could thus support projects such as social campaigns that aim to engage emotions and connect with people's shared experiences to foster support for gender equality, empathy for victims and resistance to gender-based violence. The connection with the wider public can also be facilitated by the use of common cultural frames of reference. The Handmaid's Tale protests (referencing a book written by Margaret Atwood in 1985 and recently popularised through a TV series) are an interesting example of a format that uses pop culture references that are accessible and understandable to the broader audience.

Apart from the language of the protests themselves, the **means chosen to organise and convey the protests – ICT and social media in particular –** are important to acknowledge.<sup>182</sup> For one, these technologies help in outreach. By their nature, they also allow each protester to exercise agency by tailoring their participation and messages to what they are comfortable with. In other words, social media are both a vehicle for organising and a means of individual expression as part of a protest. They can make the protest more inclusive. Given the role that ICT can play in activities fostering gender equality, capacity-building on this aspect could be considered as a specific supported measure within a gender equality programme area.

**Some also argue that a change of focus from national to international can be helpful.** They point to the fact that 'the anti-gender movement has not grown in each country for nationally explainable reasons, thus it is necessary to perceive and thematise the Europe-wide context'.<sup>183</sup> This constitutes an argument for funding to not only target projects that have potential for transferability across different Beneficiary States, but also multi-country projects, such as under the Regional Funds within the Grants.

The Funders' Initiative for Civil Society has developed a strategic response framework to counter the anti-gender movements.<sup>184</sup> In addition to elements already highlighted in this chapter, the framework also mentions other strategies, e.g. investigative journalism, or strategic litigation and legal defence.

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid. See also Krizsan, A., Roggeband, C. (2021), *Politicizing Gender and Democracy in the Context of the Istanbul Convention*, Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Graff A., Korolczuk, E. (ed.) (2022), *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*, Routledge Studies in Gender, Sexuality and Politics, Routledge, London and New York.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2016), 'Gender Matters! Antifeminism', Newsletter on gender activities by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Newsletter No. 06'.

<sup>184</sup> Global Philanthropy Project (2020), Meet the moment: A Call for Progressive Philanthropic Response to the Anti-Gender Movement.



Just as activists have been trying to develop approaches to counter anti-gender movements as presented above, so have funders. Although research suggests that they do not always have explicit strategies.<sup>185</sup> While some continue previous relevant work, others have been planning targeted funding for interventions countering anti-gender movements; increasing their collaboration with other donors; creating pooled funds; encouraging grantees funded through different portfolios to come together, etc.<sup>186</sup> Based on 2020 research, the Global Philanthropy Project has made recommendations to donors to work together; focus on the future while also attending to the present reality; engage on leadership; share good practices not just initiatives; learn from existing models of donor collaboration and work with leaders in other sectors. In the context of the EEA and Norway Grants, these could call for: (i) collaborating more closely with the EU and other relevant funders active in the EU, e.g. to facilitate co-funding arrangements (which would justify some thematic overlap) or pool resources; (ii) experimenting with different funding modalities and levels of flexibility, especially within the funds, e.g. short-term, smaller reactive grants for immediate needs (disbursed at shorter intervals or on a continuous basis) and more long-term needs, strategic support, with complexity of procedures adjusted to the nature of these modalities; (iii) using the Regional Funds for cross-border relationship-building between grassroots movements and organisations at the European level.

The need for funding mobilisation is clear. Even though evidence increasingly points to feminist movements being key drivers of social transformation, 'less than 1% of gender equality funding actually reaches grassroots organisations'.<sup>187</sup> The need for increasing donor support for feminist movements and organisations has been highlighted in a recent report,<sup>188</sup> which estimates that at least USD 6 billion by 2026 will be necessary to 'hold ground against the anti-gender movement and gain traction in shifting power'.<sup>189</sup> While these reports go beyond the European context, our interviews confirm the need for funding in general and ensuring continuity of financial support when feminist and women's rights organisations cannot rely on the assistance of their governments. This is particularly important given the resources available to anti-gender movements. The 2021 study by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights identified USD 707.2 million in anti-gender funding over the 2009–2018 period originating from the United States, the Russian Federation and Europe. It also found that the annual anti-gender spending in Europe has increased by a factor of four, starting from USD 22.2 million in 2009 and reaching USD 96 million in 2018.<sup>190</sup>

**Development of an effective toolbox against anti-gender movements will require in-depth understanding in addition to testing strategies to see which tools work and how.** For this reason, it is necessary to continue research on these matters. The **EU**, for example, **finances research on gender equality and countering anti-gender agendas**. Most recently, through the Horizon 2020 'Culture, creativity and inclusive society' programme (Democracy and Governance), the EU selected four projects that aim to understand anti-gender movements and their impact, as well as develop counteracting strategies.<sup>191</sup> Being easier to access, the Grants could also support similar efforts, especially at country level, to allow for better understanding of local anti-gender movements. The need

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Tant, E., Jiménez Thomas Rodriguez, D. (2022), How to partner with feminist movements for transformative change, ODI Policy brief, available at: [www.odi.org/en/publications/how-to-partner-with-feminist-movements-for-transformative-change](http://www.odi.org/en/publications/how-to-partner-with-feminist-movements-for-transformative-change)

<sup>188</sup> Phoel, C. (ed.) (2022), Lighting the Way. A report for Philanthropy on the Power and Promise of Feminist Movements, The Bridgespan Group, available at: [www.weshakethetable.org/report](http://www.weshakethetable.org/report)

<sup>189</sup> After Schultz, A. (2022), Funding Feminist Groups Plays Crucial Role in Creating Social Change, Report Says, *Penta*, available at: [www.barrons.com/articles/funding-feminist-groups-plays-crucial-role-in-creating-social-change-report-says-01654876488](http://www.barrons.com/articles/funding-feminist-groups-plays-crucial-role-in-creating-social-change-report-says-01654876488)

<sup>190</sup> Information available at: <https://www.epfweb.org/node/837>

<sup>191</sup> Information available at: <https://cordis.europa.eu/search?q=contenttype%3D%27project%27%20AND%20programme%2Fcode%3D%27HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01-03%27&p=1&num=10&srt=/project/contentUpdateDate:decreasing>



for discernment between facets of the anti-gender movements across countries has been indicated in research.<sup>192</sup>

### 3.1.6. Flexibility of the EEA and Norway Grants setup

***Additional question 1: To what extent has the systemic and institutional setup of the EEA and Norway Grants of the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 periods allowed for flexibility and adaptation to changes in needs and priorities during the respective periods? What measures could be implemented in future periods to ensure effective and efficient adaptation to changing needs and priorities?***

The main aspects of the changing context that have affected the Grants' implementation in recent years include the COVID-19 pandemic, the refugee crisis related to Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and the rise of anti-gender movements.

The interviewed FMO staff observed that the programme development process is quite lengthy and, once it is completed, there is limited space for changes.<sup>193</sup> At the same time, minor adaptations have been possible, e.g. in bilateral activities. Also, larger adaptations have been brought forward. For example, savings made in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic were reallocated to actions in response to the refugee crisis. The interviewed FMO representatives saw the specific moment in programme implementation as contributing to this larger adaptation, due to concerns over low grant absorption rates. They also noted that, mid-way through programme implementation, there is limited time to develop new projects. This means for example that such topics as work-life balance under the COVID-19 pandemic were not addressed beyond what had been included in the original programme design.

While the national approach may offer limited flexibility to react to current developments, the FMO noticed that the set up of the Regional Funds and the Active Citizens Fund offers more change opportunities. The FMO is the Programme Operator, and it has contracted Fund Operators to manage the funds. The national programmes, in turn, are managed by national entities as Programme Operators. However, there is a difference between the Active Citizens Fund and the Regional Funds. The Active Citizens Fund is part of the Memoranda of Understanding for which the agreement of national authorities is needed. The Regional Funds are outside the Memoranda of Understanding. The Active Citizens Fund programmes operate nationally (although with bilateral partnerships and with regional initiatives), while Regional Funds are not focused on one country. The FMO confirmed that it had been able to be more flexible in the funds, including in reacting to the refugee crisis.

The evidence collected at country level – in Lithuania and Portugal – on this matter differs to the FMO's self-assessments. The Lithuanian case study found that the EEA and Norway Grants were very flexible during the second financing period, sometimes even offering proposals to implement changes. The FMO has been seen as a proactive partner regarding changes and offering advice, which has been much appreciated by the Lithuanian counterparts. Partners from Donor States are also praised for their flexibility.<sup>194</sup> The national framework for project implementation, in contrast, is more rigid and it takes time and solid explanation to agree on changes or amendments with the NFPs.<sup>195</sup> In Portugal, all stakeholders emphasised the unique setup of the FM, praising the flexibility that programmes have to

<sup>192</sup> Kuhar, R., Paternotte, D. (2018), 'Disentangling and Locating the 'Global Right': Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe', *Politics and Governance*, Vol. 6, Issue 3, pp. 6–19.

<sup>193</sup> Scoping FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 6 March 2022.

<sup>194</sup> Information collected through consultation on 22 June 2022.

<sup>195</sup> Information collected through consultation on 10 June 2022.

design interventions that are suited to the contexts and needs and to adapt to existing priorities. This has been deemed important during the programmes' design, but it was particularly relevant in the context of programme implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reflections among the FMO staff highlight the need for (and potential in) designing a more responsive framework for the Grants' programming. At the same time, country-level research shows positive perceptions related to the FMO's flexibility, albeit pointing to some rigidity in the national frameworks. Thus, the evaluation does not present a clear picture, including on how the Grants setup could be changed. This suggests that a brainstorming process within the FMO on this matter could be useful. In general, emerging challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression towards Ukraine have been met with flexibility of the Grants' framework and institutional response on the part of the Programme and Fund Operators. This evaluation did not find evidence of adaptations during the 2009–2014 FM, although the financial crisis in that period was arguably a comparably significant challenge.

As argued in this chapter, the Grants maintain a general correspondence with European and national priorities during the FM timeframe. However, the dynamics of change in the context and needs within the same period may require reassessment of initially laid plans (as reflected in programme agreements). For this reason, it could be beneficial to incorporate mechanisms of mid-term reflection in programme design, which would provide opportunity to adjust the intervention to changes, at least by considering the gender dimension of crises. This would ensure programme resilience in the face of major challenges that could influence their relevance to societal needs.

## 3.2. Coherence

### 3.2.1. Niches and gaps for future programming

*Evaluation question 11: Based on the relevant EU strategy and available funding for gender equality programming in the coming years, what could be a niche or a gap for any future programmes/projects? This includes but is not limited to types of results and target groups.*

According to the European Commission, gender equality is a key element of the new EU budget for 2021–2027.<sup>196</sup> Gender equality actions will be funded both through the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027, in particular the European Social Fund+ (ESF+), and the NextGenerationEU instruments, such as Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans. As much as EUR 1.55 billion is earmarked under the EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme. Research on gender equality is funded under Horizon Europe.

**The ESF+** finances the implementation of the European Pillar for Social Rights principles through actions in the areas of employment, education, skills and social inclusion.<sup>197</sup> Gender equality, respect for fundamental rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination constitute horizontal principles for all ESF+ investments. The relevant ESF+ priorities for the 2021–2027 financing perspective are summarised in Table 7 below.

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<sup>196</sup> European Commission (2022), Championing gender equality in the EU and beyond, Factsheet.

<sup>197</sup> Information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/areas-support>

Table 7 ESF+ priorities for funding relevant from the perspective of gender equality

<p><b>Social inclusion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active inclusion</li> <li>• Socio-economic integration of third-country nationals</li> <li>• Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as Roma people</li> <li>• Equal access to quality services and modernising social protection systems</li> <li>• Social integration of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion</li> <li>• Addressing material deprivation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Education and skills:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal access to quality education and training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-balanced labour market participation</li> </ul>

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en/areas-support>

Over 100 different actions on gender equality are foreseen under the Member States' **Recovery and Resilience Plans**,<sup>198</sup> but the related regulation does not set a minimum for spending relating to gender equality.<sup>199</sup> The 26 accepted plans declare gender equality to be a horizontal objective. Yet only some Member States included dedicated reforms or investments addressing gender-related challenges explicitly or indicating women as the main beneficiaries.<sup>200</sup> Among the countries studied in this evaluation, Estonia stands out, but measures were also planned in Czechia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania.<sup>201</sup> These measures focus on increasing women's labour market participation (e.g. through supporting child care and long-term care availability), including specifically in the ICT sector (Estonia and Latvia), addressing gender pay gap and pension reforms. For Bulgaria, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia, no relevant elements were identified. It is noteworthy that, within the recovery and resilience plans, gender equality appears to be conceptualised as equality between men and women, with the intersectional element not being visibly pronounced.

Last but not least, the **EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme** funds actions within four pillars, including three of particular relevance to this evaluation:<sup>202</sup>

- I. Equality, Rights and Gender Equality – promoting rights, non-discrimination, equality (including gender equality), and advancing gender and non-discrimination mainstreaming. The projects will, among other things:

- prevent and combat inequalities and discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and respect the principle of non-discrimination;
- promote women's full enjoyment of rights, gender equality, including work-life balance, women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming;
- combat all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, Afrophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, anti-Muslim hatred and other forms of intolerance, including homophobia and other forms of intolerance based on gender identity both online and offline;
- protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities, for their active inclusion and full participation in society.<sup>203</sup>

<sup>198</sup> European Commission (2022), Championing gender equality in the EU and beyond, Factsheet.

<sup>199</sup> Sapala, M. (2022), Briefing: Gender equality in the Recovery and Resilience Facility, European Parliamentary Research Service, available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS\\_BRI\(2021\)698757](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2021)698757)

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Information available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/justice-and-consumers/justice-and-consumers-funding-tenders/funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en)

<sup>203</sup> Information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

II. Daphne – fighting violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children. The projects in this pillar will focus on:

- preventing and combating at all levels all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and domestic violence, also by promoting the standards laid down in the Istanbul Convention;
- preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, young people, as well as violence against other groups at risk, such as LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities;
- supporting and protecting all direct and indirect victims of such violence, such as domestic violence exerted within the family or violence in intimate relationships, including children orphaned by domestic crimes, and supporting and ensuring the same level of protection throughout the Union for victims of gender-based violence.<sup>204</sup>

III. Union values – protecting and promoting Union values. The projects will focus on protecting, promoting and raising awareness on rights by providing financial support to CSOs active at local, regional and transnational level in promoting and cultivating these rights.<sup>205</sup>

The above overview of the main **EU funding sources and priorities in relation to gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence shows a rather comprehensive thematic coverage**. In some cases, especially in the ESF+, priorities are also very broadly defined. As a result, it is difficult to identify niches or gaps. The overview, however, does not explicitly mention financing of actions that target men and boys, which may suggest that this specific group is given less priority, although actions targeting men and boys are also funded.

At the same time, research suggests that accessing **EU funding may pose a challenge to actors with smaller capacity**. Under the EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme, the analysis of the most recent call for proposals to prevent and combat gender-based violence and violence against children (with an allocation of EUR 30.5 million for five priorities) shows that many proposals were rejected due to insufficient relevance and/or quality.<sup>206</sup> For example, in Priority 3 – Primary prevention of gender-based violence (with the final allocation reaching almost EUR 9 million), out of 145 eligible proposals, as many as 73 were rejected for that reason. This specific priority received by far the greatest interest among applicants and as many as 50 eligible proposals were also rejected for lack of budget, despite the original allocation having been increased by EUR 2 million. Not only is the EU funding difficult to obtain, but it is also simply insufficient given the needs. It also normally requires co-financing at variable rates. These factors suggest that seeking niches, in particular thematic niches, may be less urgent, given that the needs in relation to some of the main priorities – such as gender-based violence prevention – are not fully covered. The EEA and Norway Grants can also complement EU funding by decreasing barriers to access for entities with smaller capacity, simplifying granting procedures and maintaining overall flexibility.

**Case study findings support a focus in EEA and Norway Grants programming on vulnerable and marginalised groups**. The selection of specific groups for support should depend on a given country context. Annex VI: Mapping of niches based on country case studies presents different groups highlighted in the case studies. **LGBTI people and Roma women appear as groups necessitating support across a number of countries**. In principle, these groups are covered by EU funding, but the needs are likely much higher, and specific funding gaps have been noted.

**Almost all case studies refer to awareness-raising or similar actions (promotion or campaigns) among the types of actions singled out for future programming**. This is consistent with what has also been reported in the relevance section. The Lithuanian case highlights, for example, a narrow understanding of gender-based violence in the country focused on domestic violence, suggesting a

<sup>204</sup> Information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

<sup>205</sup> Information available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/cerv>

<sup>206</sup> Information available [here](#).

need for familiarising the public with and sensitising it to the whole range of phenomena that gender-based violence covers. Previous research identified a similar need in Bulgaria, where it was considered essential 'to promote a better understanding of gender-based violence among the political circles, as well as within the civil servants in different state institutions' and 'to boost the general understanding of the issue within society'.<sup>207</sup> The Polish case study for this evaluation, in turn, points to the need for awareness-raising on work-life balance and unpaid care work, signalling men as a desired target group. In the context not only of awareness-raising, **the case studies highlight a need for more work on gender equality within the education systems or with young people** (Estonia, Romania, Czechia, Latvia).

Annex VI: Mapping of niches based on country case studies summarises the main types of activities (and results) highlighted in case studies for support in future programming. In this context, 'niche' may be a misleading term, because it suggests a rather small space. Based on our research and taking into account the dynamics of anti-gender movements, 'needs' seems to be a more adequate term. Despite the fact that certain EU financing mechanisms described above may be directed at such needs, we see that support from future Grants will also be required and can help create a critical mass of financing, action and results to make visible progress on gender equality.

### 3.3. Sustainability

*Evaluation question 12: If there were one overall programme area for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence in the future, how should it be set up to remain targeted yet cover relevant gender equality needs in different contexts?*

As discussed under relevance, **the evaluation found strong evidence of the need for continued support for gender equality, work-life balance and activities tackling gender-based violence.** Consulted stakeholders seemed to agree that continuing the targeted and mainstreaming approaches is optimal. The targeted approach allows for adequate funding of gender-specific interventions, while facilitating management and monitoring. The advantages of the mainstreaming approach lie in incorporating gender issues in other projects and funding many (smaller) projects in various thematic areas. This has the potential to generate results at different levels of governance and society, and on a wider geographical scope. Thus, interviewees found it difficult to conceptualise one overall programme area for gender equality and action against domestic and gender-based violence and its potential setup.

**Funding for work against gender-based violence is often not available from state budgets and is also insufficient at EU level.** The EU has supported a number of actions aimed at increasing gender equality, and on work-life balance in particular. Regardless of the availability of funding, differences in gender equality among Member States exist, and have been driven by countries' political, social and economic contexts. Some Member States have experienced a rebirth of right-wing populism coupled with anti-gender tendencies. This has created an unfavourable context especially for actions supporting the Istanbul Convention, LGBTI rights, SRHR and interventions against gender-based violence. There are considerable needs both in the area of gender equality and work against gender-based violence. Taking into account the limited funding availability, a strong 'demand side' argument against combining the two areas could be made. There is a risk that one area would be preferred over the other. In countries with unfavourable political conditions some potential interventions could be unable to gain financial support.

<sup>207</sup> Golemanova, R. (2021), Gender-based violence in universities and research organisations. National fieldwork report. Bulgaria, UniSAFE, available at: <https://zenodo.org/record/5533563#.YVbR2ppBwdU>

**Conceptually, work-life balance and domestic and gender-based violence could be joined into one programme area, either under a 'gender equality' or broader frame. Both dimensions take root in persistent gender inequalities, with gender-based violence being the most severe form of gender discrimination. The combined programme area could, thus, be framed as tackling gender inequalities (or gender discrimination) and related violence.** If a stronger focus on intersectionality and vulnerable or disadvantaged groups was to be added, the framing could be made even broader by taking the gender element out of the programme area title. This would, however, present a risk of losing the gender focus, and could be negatively perceived by organisations working on gender equality. The Donors would have to consider whether this risk is worth taking and, ultimately, which programme area would accurately reflect political priorities around gender and wider equality, diversity and inclusion. With significant risks involved, the broader framing seems an opportunity to avoid the language of 'gender', which has been used by the anti-gender movements to divide the public.

From the implementation perspective, combining the two areas into one seems feasible, since – as presented in the effectiveness sections – similar types of activities were used: awareness-raising and communication campaigns, data gathering and research, service provision and development and capacity-building (see also Annex VII: Types of activities supported in the targeted approach). In fact, some projects supported under one programme area included topics from the other, for example wider campaigning for gender equality while providing services for victims of violence. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that key to intervention effectiveness is appropriately tailoring the type, scope and scale of activities to the needs of target groups and country context. Yet tailored support in all of the studied countries is still needed.

**Country contexts and needs of target groups vary. So the key to designing one overall programme area, combining gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence, would lie in a comprehensive understanding of both issues across the supported countries. We argue that the Grants would benefit from conducting gender analyses and ex ante gender impact assessments at the stage of Blue Book and programme design. The same methods could be applied to developing a 'combined' programme area.** Potential support measures, allocations and modalities could be considered either thematically (i.e. in relation to various programme areas, such as education, rule of law, etc.), or geographically (i.e. in relation to the different contexts of beneficiary countries). Such a setup would prove particularly useful to support gender equality in countries with unfavourable political conditions. In the case of pushback from national authorities against embedding the 'combined' programme area in national programmes, another vehicle could be found in the form of the Regional Funds, which remain shaped by the Donors and the FMO. Project promoters from countries where support for gender equality is unavailable could apply for funding from this source. However, to respond to changing conditions and to ensure relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, priorities of this 'combined' programme area would require frequent updating through recurring gender analyses and ex ante gender impact assessments.

*Evaluation question 13: What are the most promising approaches for structuring or aligning different programmes (programme areas likely to be prioritised in a future period, such as climate, civil society, rule of law) to ensure they also contribute to gender equality?*

In the evaluator's assessment, **to ensure that activities supported under all programme areas contribute to gender equality, gender analyses and ex ante gender impact assessments should be conducted at the design stage.** These tools would facilitate planning support measures that accurately address specific needs in beneficiary countries. We also suggest that a **'targeted within mainstreaming'** approach could be adopted to promote gender equality across the areas



**supported in the Grants. This would entail designing in programmes specific support measures with gender equality results in mind.**

In the 2014–2021 FM, climate is included within the priority sector 'Environment, Energy, Climate Change and Low Carbon Economy'. Three programme areas are further defined in this sector: PA11 Environment and Ecosystems; PA12 Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security; and PA13 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. The gender perspective is relevant in all these programme areas, as environmental and climate changes interact with gender inequalities. As discussed by EIGE, the key issues relate to women's underrepresentation in decision-making institutions, gender differences in adaptation and mitigation strategies, and differences in the effects of climate change.<sup>208</sup> Possible support measures targeting gender issues in PA11 could address representation in decision-making bodies, from the local to central government level, as well as capacity-building for women in administrative positions. As PA11 covers areas related to management, planning, modelling and legal compliance, gender gaps in education related to energy are also relevant. The Grants could support education in natural sciences and technical domains. Competencies in these fields gain importance as progress is made in the fields of energy efficiency, security and renewables (PA12). In the context of PA13, there are gender differences in energy needs and uses, employment and entrepreneurship structure, and the different impacts of natural disasters on women and men. Although the evaluation did not point to examples of practices within the climate area, there is ample space for alignment of climate and gender equality.

The current programming provides examples of aligning civil society with gender equality. The Active Citizens Fund presents the 'targeting within mainstreaming' approach, considered in this evaluation as good practice. Although the 'gender equality and gender-based violence' area was not selected by all Fund Operators, relevant projects are often implemented under other outcomes. Including the area in the results framework facilitates result monitoring.

Rule of law is particularly important in the context of gender-based violence, as in the 2014–2021 period PA22 Domestic and Gender-based Violence was often included in broader 'justice' programmes. In this context, the relevance of gender equality issues relates to differences in access to justice as an element of the rule of law. Due to inequalities at legal, institutional, structural, socio-economic and cultural levels, women's access to justice is not equal. Gender is also relevant in the detention system and women's representation in the judiciary.

Overall, promising approaches identified in the previous and current FM have the potential to be used beyond the analysed programme areas. For example, interviews with Romanian stakeholders suggest that the capacity to address gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence is a matter of training professionals involved in the programmes. This should not be one-time training sessions but rather long-term dialogue that involves all concerned institutions, such as schools, healthcare providers, law enforcement and judiciary institutions.

### 3.4. Effectiveness

*Evaluation question 14: How can the mainstreaming and targeted approaches for gender equality be best operationalised in possible future financial periods to best capture the gender equality results?*

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<sup>208</sup> EIGE, 2012, Gender Equality and Climate Change, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

To best capture gender equality results in future financial periods, **attention should be given to including the gender dimension in programme design and clearly translating it into the results framework.** Current programmes within the targeted approach largely fulfil this condition. The 'targeted within mainstreaming' approach of the Active Citizens Fund further illustrates how support for gender equality can be incorporated into a wider intervention. While clearly contributing to the objective of PA15 Civil Society – strengthened civil society and active citizenship and empowered vulnerable groups – attention to gender equality is given at the level of outcomes and outputs, and adequately measured.

There is, however, room for improvement in programmes under the mainstreaming approach. In our view, **conducting gender analysis at the stage of programme design would help to understand the gender dimension in a given programme area and Beneficiary State. It would allow for identifying possible points of focus and necessary intervention adjustments.** Gender analysis starts with acknowledging that differences between and among men and women, boys and girls exist, and identifying how their needs and position vary in relation to society, resources, opportunities, constraints and power, in a given context.<sup>209</sup> Such an analysis should be expanded by considering intersectional perspectives, including the age dimension, non-binary identity, social roles, different sexual orientations. In practice, as some stakeholders indicated the need for top-down guidance, gender analysis in the Grants could begin at the stage of Blue Book design. It would thus bring attention to issues specific to each priority area. Subsequently, the design of every programme should involve gender analysis, which would improve the programmes' alignment with specific country contexts. The analysis may very likely highlight the need for dedicated, 'targeted' measures within a broader intervention.

Ideally, **gender analysis should be followed by a gender impact assessment which, conducted ex ante, asks the question 'Does a law, policy or programme reduce, maintain or increase gender inequalities?'**<sup>210</sup> Such an assessment would provide better understanding of the gendered effects of the (designed) programme and the possibilities for positive gendered results. Insight gained could be included in the results framework and budget, with funds earmarked, when required. If necessary to effectively monitor results, programme-specific indicators related to gender equality should be planned (including baseline and target values).

Incorporating the gender dimension into the programming stage will require resources and support. Possibly, the Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations could provide those to the FMO and Donors, while the latter would offer the same to Programme and Fund Operators, as well as other national stakeholders. It would benefit programme relevance and, in the longer run, allow for accurate capture of gender equality results. As argued by focus group interview participants, ownership and accountability would also be improved.<sup>211</sup> Importantly, participants stressed that both the targeted and the mainstreaming approach should be continued.<sup>212</sup>

Regardless of programme design, **measures should be taken to improve reporting accuracy across the Grants.** There are inconsistencies and errors in how projects are categorised with policy markers, target groups and sectors. Gender disaggregation is clearly challenging as well. Further guidance from the FMO to Programme and Fund Operators could help minimise these issues, provided they in turn work with project promoters to explain reporting requirements. Unfortunately, the evaluation did not provide examples of how to achieve such know-how transfer effectively. However, multiple stakeholders noted challenges and indicated insufficient clarity about how to monitor and report on gender equality. The FMO should continue efforts to ensure the expectations and definitions are clear and categories

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<sup>209</sup> For more information on gender analysis, see EIGE website: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-analysis>

<sup>210</sup> Gender impact assessment is accessibly described by EIGE at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-impact>

<sup>211</sup> FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 05 August 2022.

<sup>212</sup> FGIs conducted as part of the evaluation on 28 July 2022 and 05 August 2022.

exhaustive so as to facilitate quantitative analyses. Operators need to continue to work with project promoters accordingly. The narrative sections of project-level information and reporting documents should be used by promoters to give details, context and explain possible ambiguities to Programme and Fund Operators. Perhaps filling these sections should be obligatory. If the problem is technical, rather than motivational, A/B testing could be conducted to verify how different layouts, instructions and forms available in GrACE and to project promoters improve reporting results.<sup>213</sup>

***Evaluation question 15: How can the FMO, DPPs, and IPOs best support the mainstreaming and targeted approaches for gender equality in possible future financial periods?***

Based on the current programmes, the future targeted interventions are likely to have well-developed result frameworks. With adequate implementation, they should be successful in reaching gender equality goals. But, we also argued above that there is room for improvement in how gender mainstreaming is included at the programming stage – in shaping the Blue Book and priorities, as well as designing programmes. Tools such as gender analysis and ex ante gender impact assessment can be useful for this purpose.

The relevance analysis shows that **the programming process is not consistent in how gender-specific support measures are tied into the mainstreaming programme areas. In our assessment, this is a key stage at which Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations could provide support and meaningful input into the Blue Book, priority sectors and programme areas.** This assessment was supported by focus group interview participants who emphasised the need to promote gender equality from early stages of the programming process. The participants viewed these stakeholders as potential advisers in designing support for gender equality in specific programme areas, both in the targeted and mainstreaming approach.<sup>214</sup> Evidence from country-level research also suggests room for involvement of Donor Programme Partners and International Partner Organisations in national programming, in particular through guidance on how to include the gender perspective in interventions.

**Stakeholders also identified a need to promote linkages and synergies between the beneficiary countries, programmes and projects. Here, the FMO plays an important role, as it can facilitate communication across the Grants.** To support gender equality in programming and implementation, the FMO could organise experience-sharing platforms, meetings or seminars, promoting best practices. Such events or online tools could provide project promoters and Programme and Fund Operators with examples of how gender mainstreaming can be implemented in practice – knowledge is currently insufficient.

***Additional question 2: To what extent are project promoters reliant on the EEA and Norway Grants in implementing priorities in the field of GE and gender-based violence/domestic violence? How likely are these actions to be continued with limited grants support or lack thereof?***

As discussed in the coherence section, the availability of funding for gender equality projects and work against domestic and gender-based violence has steadily increased, with gender equality being an important element of the new EU budget for 2021–2027. Funding sources will include the EU

<sup>213</sup> A/B testing is a popular user experience research method, with ample instruction available online, for example at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A/B\\_testing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A/B_testing)

<sup>214</sup> FGI conducted as part of the evaluation on 05 August 2022.

Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027, in particular the ESF+ and the NextGenerationEU instruments, such as Member States' Recovery and Resilience Plans. As much as EUR 1.55 billion is earmarked under the EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme. Research on gender equality can and is funded under Horizon Europe. The funding under the ESF+ or Recovery and Resilience Plans corresponds to the work-life balance focus within the EEA and Norway Grants PA04, while that under the EU's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme to the work on non-discrimination and domestic and gender-based violence under PA22.

At the same time, research suggests that accessing EU funding may pose a challenge to actors with smaller capacity due to administrative burdens and co-financing requirements. EU-financed instruments are accessible to public sector institutions and may play an important role in improving public services, many of which are important to gender equality. This includes for example childcare, assistance to family members requiring care and violence prevention. Under the Grants' support, projects providing such services were often predefined, involving larger-scale activities and budgets. Arguably, such interventions could be funded from EU sources. Smaller entities, in particular CSOs with limited co-financing ability, can face more challenges in securing alternative funding to the Grants. While national funding for CSOs is available in Beneficiary States, its availability is often reliant on the political context. The activity of CSOs is often at risk when the authorities are unfavourable to gender equality as a concept or even gender as a term.

Evidence from the 2009–2014 and 2014–2021 period indicates that the sustainability of results is significantly dependent on budget allocations from national and local authorities. With the violence prevention system underfunded in many Beneficiary States, projects that provide services for victims of violence often cannot continue without support from external sources. Stakeholders also noted that the 'gap' between Grant periods is challenging for organisations and institutions that implement gender equality and work-life balance projects. The survey results related to the 2014–2021 FM show that an overwhelming majority of respondents (91.33%) believe that the funding made all the difference, i.e. it allowed the project to be implemented (see Table 8 for all answers to the question).

Table 8 Perceptions of the role of the EEA and Norway Grants in the implementation of projects in the 2014–2021 FM

What role did the EEA and Norway Grants funding play for the implementation of the project?	Count	Share
The funding made all the difference: it allowed the project to be implemented	411	91.33 %
The funding made a difference: the project would have been implemented regardless, but the funding allowed the project to be expanded	32	7.11 %
The funding made no difference: the project would have been implemented regardless	2	0.44 %
Don't know	5	1.11 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

Source: Own elaboration of survey data, n=450.

## 4. Conclusions & recommendations

1. The evaluation did not reveal any major shortcomings concerning the relevance of the EEA and Norway Grants' gender programming to European and national priorities. The Grants' programming has been well aligned with European priorities on gender equality and domestic and gender-based violence. The Grants' country programming has been on the whole in line with national priorities, as outlined in official Member State documents and assessed by stakeholders. The programming process, involving wide public consultations and negotiations with national authorities, helped ensure relevance and ownership.

**Recommendation #1:** The FMO should continue to conduct consultations. During the design of programmes, the FMO should better involve CSOs, members of academia, national human rights institutions and equality bodies, and other less frequently involved stakeholders (e.g. trade unions, employer organisations, business associations or other professional organisations), ensuring that the consultation process avoids possible future conflicts of interest if the participating stakeholders apply for project funding. Independent needs assessments that require consultations with these stakeholders could be an option.

2. The contexts for gender equality actions differ between the European and national levels, creating specific implications for programming. The EU has a strong commitment to gender equality. This calls for a continuous pursuit of better synergies between EU programming and funding and that of the EEA and Norway Grants.

However, the commitment to gender equality is not equally strong across the Beneficiary States. Some countries have witnessed anti-gender and anti-LGBTI rhetoric and/or actions by politicians, including representatives of state authorities. The anti-gender movements have been gaining momentum. These trends have created a generally more hostile context for gender equality, particularly when it comes to resistance to tackling gender-based violence (including the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention), SRHR and LGBTI rights. In these contexts, the global EEA and Norway Grants programming does not always align with the overall politics of the ruling parties, nor should it.

**Recommendation #2:** When national authorities oppose the incorporation of specific gender equality-related issues – such as tackling gender-based violence, promoting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, SRHR and LGBTI rights – into country-run programmes despite an identified need for such work, the Donors should divert resources to finance related actions under the Active Citizens Fund and the Regional Funds.

3. The political misalignment between the EEA and Norway Grants and national authorities in some countries can raise doubts as to whether programme components devoted to gender equality are implemented genuinely. This underscores a need to better embed gender equality-related elements in the language of programming documents, in particular the Blue Book and programme (implementation) agreements. Our review shows that gender equality is not consistently and sufficiently mainstreamed across these foundational documents. Relevant concepts are often not mentioned in the mainstreaming programme areas and agreements. Our research suggests that the lack of gender priorities at the programme level limits the implementation of the mainstreaming approach at the project level. This provides a strong argument for the consistent inclusion of gender equality and related concepts in programming documents. The Active Citizens Fund has emerged as a mainstreaming programme area in which gender equality is visibly included or, perhaps it should even be said, targeted.

The operationalisation of gender equality in the mainstreaming approach could be improved by conducting gender analysis at the stage of Blue Book and programme design. It would facilitate

understanding the gender dimension in a given programme area and Beneficiary State, identifying possible points of focus and necessary intervention adjustments. A subsequent gender impact assessment would facilitate the understanding of the potential gendered effects of the programme.

**Recommendation #3:** The Donors should consistently include gender equality and related concepts (broader equality, diversity and inclusion) in the language of the Blue Book and push for their inclusion in programme (implementation) agreements.

4. The evaluation confirms a strong need for continued work on tackling gender-based violence across countries. Relevant funding is often not available from state budgets and is also insufficient at the EU level. At the same time, the needs are abundant and changing in dynamic and sometimes hostile national political contexts. Thus, a targeted programme area should be devoted to the spectrum of problems that fall under gender-based violence. In fact, relegating gender-based violence to mainstreaming risks losing sight of specific types of violence or specific groups of victims. In this context, our research also underscores a need for a stronger intersectional lens in tackling these phenomena, as well as a more visible coverage of sexual violence and special needs of sexual violence victims, and inclusion of the online dimension. Apart from specific thematic focuses, our research also supports experimenting with different funding modalities, e.g. short-term, smaller reactive grants for immediate needs and more long-term, strategic support, with the complexity of procedures adjusted to the nature of these modalities.

**Recommendation #4:** The Donors should continue to tackle gender-based violence as part of the targeted approach, making sure that the programming covers all phenomena encompassed by this term and that the intersectional perspective is applied. Beyond domestic violence, country programming should more strongly address sexual violence and online violence. Different funding modalities should be considered to address the dynamics of the respective needs, including a mix of long- and short-term, ad hoc and strategic funding.

5. The context for interventions on work-life balance topics appears more favourable, yet the needs are also abundant. Fragile gains were endangered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The collected evidence does not unequivocally conclude whether this work should continue to be targeted or carried out under the mainstreaming programming areas, although the evaluators would argue for targeting this dimension as well. With a substantial emphasis on and funding for this strand available at EU level, moving this dimension under the mainstreaming approach could be a less risky option than in the case of gender-based violence. However, considering the size of the problem and the persistence of needs, the targeted approach seems justified. Our analysis also shows that it is easier to track results within the targeted approach. The research also supports better inclusion of men as a target group in related interventions.

**Recommendation #5:** The Donors should continue funding work-life balance-related issues under the targeted approach. However, if the mainstreaming approach is selected, care must be taken that work-life balance issues are consistently included in all programme areas to maintain the focus. Under work-life balance, the EEA and Norway Grants should also more strongly promote men's participation in care responsibilities in families and care work more generally.

6. There is also the possibility of combining work-life balance and domestic and gender-based violence into one programme area. Both dimensions take root in persistent gender inequalities, with gender-based violence being the most severe form of gender discrimination. The combined programme area could thus be framed as tackling gender inequalities (or gender discrimination) and related violence. If a stronger focus on intersectionality and vulnerable groups were to be introduced, the framing could be made broader by taking the gender element out of the programme area title. This would, however, present a risk of losing the gender focus, and could face justified resistance. The Donors would have to



consider whether this risk is worth taking and, ultimately, which programme area would accurately reflect political priorities on gender and equality, diversity and inclusion. With risks involved, broader framing is an opportunity to avoid the language of 'gender', which has been used by the anti-gender movements to divide the public. This is a matter of political priorities and choices.

**Recommendation #6:** If there is a desire to reduce the number of programme areas, the Donors should combine work-life balance with gender-based violence programming. This can be done under the heading of 'tackling gender inequalities and related violence', with gender being highlighted specifically or not depending on the political priorities and values that the Donor States would like to promote.

7. Given the gender equality-related challenges across all programme areas, the mainstreaming approach should be strengthened. It can complement the targeted approach, but it also has the potential to draw attention to gender-specific problems in areas not historically seen as key in discussions of gender equality. So far, the mainstreaming programme areas have inconsistently incorporated gender equality-related elements. We see the need for dedicated gender equality-relevant support measures to be programmed systematically in each of the programme areas and gender-related considerations to be highlighted consistently in the new Blue Book for each mainstreaming programme area. While included under the mainstreaming programming, this would essentially represent a strategy of targeting gender topics across all thematic domains.

**Recommendation #7:** The Donors should strengthen the mainstreaming approach by including dedicated gender equality-relevant support measure(s) systematically in all programme areas and highlighting gender equality-related (or equality, diversity and inclusion) considerations in the respective programme area descriptions.

8. The conceptual framework around gender mainstreaming within the EEA and Norway Grants is not clear. As defined by EIGE, gender mainstreaming involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting gender equality, and combating discrimination. It is thus a meta-principle whose application should make the whole Grants architecture work in a way that is not gender-blind and facilitate progress on gender equality in all sectors of engagement. Thus, gender mainstreaming should be reflected in procedures, representations and monitoring and reporting mechanisms, including (but not limited to) proper indicators.

**Recommendation #8:** The Donors should ensure that gender equality is reflected in all procedures, including grant applications, institutional and project setups, and monitoring and evaluation. In granting processes, gender balance should be ensured among project assessors, and points could be granted not only to projects that promote gender equality with concrete activities but also to those that make provisions for ensuring equal participation.

9. Based on the analysis of relevance and coherence, the research identified specific themes, target groups and types of interventions that the EEA and Norway Grants are well placed to support. These have been presented under respective sections above, but it is worth highlighting the overall directions.

The evaluation has shown the need for strengthening the intersectional perspective within the Grants and better tackling multiple forms of discrimination. The need for supporting members of vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged groups is clear. At this point, the Grants address the problems of Roma women and girls to a more visible extent; sporadically, they also relate to the situation of LGBTI people, especially under the Active Citizens Fund. The need for targeting these two groups was visible across a number of countries. Overall, the choice of specific target groups should depend on the country contexts.

**Recommendation #9:** The EEA and Norway Grants should continue the intersectional focus on Roma women and girls and strengthen the intersectional approach in its programmes. The specific needs of LGBTI people should be better addressed. Vulnerable and marginalised groups targeted in programmes should be selected based on local contexts.

10. The findings on successful strategies to counter anti-gender movement and niches and gaps in financing point to the need to support CSOs working to further women's and LGBTI people's rights, as well as the rights of other vulnerable and marginalised groups. The first two types of organisations have been particularly affected by anti-gender tendencies and cuts in government funding. The CSOs and activists outside capitals and big cities should also be reached, as their mobilisation played a role in countering retrogressive political actions in countries such as Poland.

**Recommendation #10:** The Grants should increase support for organisations working for women's and LGBTI people's rights both in the Active Citizens Fund and other relevant programme areas, such as domestic and gender-based violence, rule of law, climate, business, research, education, local development, justice, and culture. This support should also encompass CSOs working on a broader equality agenda and representing people experiencing multiple forms of discrimination. The funding should be flexible (long- and short-term, ad hoc, strategic, emergency-related, etc.) and consider the long-term character of the fight for gender equality. The support should also target CSOs and activists working outside capitals and large cities, as well as grassroots organisations.

11. Specific types of interventions have also been highlighted as important for successfully fighting anti-gender movements, or as needed overall to further gender equality in Beneficiary States. Systemic barriers to progress include negative attitudes and low awareness within societies and among stakeholder groups (e.g. public officials). This is why awareness-raising and social campaigning around gender equality and gender-based violence have been highlighted as needs across countries. Further obstacles to fostering gender equality are brought about by the lack of relevant capacity and skills, corresponding to the need for capacity-building. Successful responses to the anti-gender movements underscore the importance of networking, grassroots organising and coalition-building but require understanding such movements' specificity in different countries. In this respect, there is space for the EEA and Norway Grants to fund relevant country-level research as well.

**Recommendation #11:** The Grants should continue to provide funding for awareness-raising among the general public (e.g. to increase understanding of gender-based violence, reduce stigmatisation of victims) and among specific stakeholders (in particular public officials, law enforcement bodies, justice professionals); capacity-building among CSOs (including on ICT use); networking and grassroots organising, including supporting links between CSOs representing different marginalised and vulnerable groups in line with the intersectional approach, as well as country-level research on anti-gender movements and trends. Donors can also use Regional Funds (or a similar transnational fund set up in the future period) to support relationship-building across different movements at the European level.

# Annexes

## Annex I: Overview of evaluated programmes

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
<b>TARGETED APPROACH</b>								
<b>CZ-HUMANRIGHTS</b> (PAs 07, 17, 22)	PA22	Norway Grants	€ 19 000 000,00	€ 5 485 725,00	€ 5 485 725,00	Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic	none	Council of Europe (CoE) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
<b>EE-LOCALDEV</b> (PAs 06, 10, 14, 22)	PA04	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 18 000 000,00	No budget allocation	No budget allocation	Ministry of Social Affairs	Norwegian Directorate of Health Norwegian Institute of Public Health Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage	No information
	PA22			€ 947 474,00	€ 947 474,00			

<sup>215</sup> Host programme area (PA) is in bold.

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
<b>LT-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 19, 20, 21, 22)	PA22	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 33 000 000,00	€ 3 050 494,00	€ 3 050 494,00	Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI) National Police Directorate (POD) Norwegian Courts Administration (DA) Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)	CoE
<b>LV-HOMEAFFAIRS</b> (PAs 20, 22)	PA22	EEA Grants	€ 15 000 000,00	€ 1 759 500,00	€ 1 759 500,00	Ministry of Interior	none	CoE
<b>PL-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 19, 21, 22)	PA22	Norway Grants	€ 58 221 052,00	€ 6 205 000,00	€ 6 205 000,00	Ministry of Justice	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI) Norwegian Courts Administration (DA) Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)	No information
<b>PT-WORKLIFE</b> (PAs 04, 16, 22)	PA04	EEA Grants	€ 6 000 000,00	€ 2 765 000,00	€ 2 765 000,00	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)	Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO)	No information
	PA22	EEA Grants	€ 6 000 000,00	€ 850 000,00	€ 850 000,00	CIG	LDO	No information
<b>RO-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 16, 19, 21, 22)	PA22	Norway Grants	€ 45 000 000,00	€ 2 125 000,00	€ 2 125 000,00	Ministry of Justice	Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service Norwegian Courts Administration	CoE

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
<b>SI-EDUCATION</b> (PAs 03, 04, 16)	PA04	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 13 500 000,00	€ 1,700,000,00	€ 1,700,000,00	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy	DIKU – Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education National Agency of International Education Affairs (AIBA) of Liechtenstein	None
<b>SK-DOMESTIC</b> (PA 04, 22)	PA04	Norway Grants	€ 9 000 000,00	€ 1 530 000,00	€ 1 530 000,00	Government Office of the Slovak Republic	Norwegian Directorate of Health	CoE
	PA22	Norway Grants	€ 9 000 000,00	€ 6 655 000,00	€ 6 655 000,00	Government Office of the Slovak Republic	Norwegian Directorate of Health	CoE (Project Promoted for PDP3)
<b>MAINSTREAMING APPROACH</b>								
<b>CZ-EDUCATION</b>	PA03	EEA Grants	€ 6 500 000,00	€ 6 500 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Czech National Agency for International Education and Research – Dům zahraniční spolupráce (DZS)	Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality enhancement in Higher Education (Diku, formerly SIU) and the National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	none
<b>CZ-HUMANRIGHTS</b>	PA07	Norway Grants	€ 19 000 000,00	€ 5,698,225,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic	none	Council of Europe (CoE) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
<b>CZ-ACTIVECITIZENS</b>	PA15	EEA Grants	€ 15 250 000,00	€ 15 250 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Open Society Fund Prague (lead) in consortium with the Committee of Good Will - Olga Havel	none	none

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
						Foundation and the Czech Scouting Institute		
EE-LOCALDEV	PA10, PA16	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 18 000 000,00	PA 10 = € 10 377 850,00 PA16 = no budget allocation	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Social Affairs - Estonia	Norwegian Directorate of Health Norwegian Institute of Public Health Norwegian Directorate of Cultural Heritage	none
EE-RESEARCH	PA02, PA03	EEA Grants	€ 7 100,000,00	PA02 = € 5 668 000,00 PA03 = € 1 432 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Education and Research - Estonia	Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-DIR), National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA), Research Council of Norway (RCN)	none
LT-ENVIRONMENT	PA12, PA13	Norway Grants	€ 12 000 000,00	PA12 = € 845 486,00 PA13 = € 329 800,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)	none	none
LT-JUSTICE	PA16	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 33 000 000,00	No budget allocation	not possible to establish the exact amount	Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI) National Police Directorate (POD) Norwegian Courts Administration (DA) Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)	CoE
LV-RESEARCH	PA02, PA03	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 14 000 000,00	PA02 = € 6 410 081 PA03 = € 6 819 919	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia	Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA)	none



Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
PL-EDUCATION	PA03	EEA Grants	€ 20 000 000,00	€ 20 000 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Foundation for the Development of the Education System	Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-DIR), National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA), Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS)	none
PL-ACTIVECITIZENS NATIONAL	PA15	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 33 200 000,00	€ 33 200 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Batory Foundation	none	none
PL-APPLIED RESEARCH	PA02	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 66 000,000,00	€ 62,187,000	not possible to establish the exact amount	National Centre for Research and Development (NCBR)	Research Council of Norway	none
PT-WORKLIFE	PA16	EEA Grants	€ 6 000 000,00	PA16 = € 1 954 999,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)	The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (LDO)	none
PT-ACTIVECITIZENS	PA15	EEA Grants	€ 11 500 000,00	€ 11 500 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation	none	none
RO-JUSTICE	PA16	Norway Grants	€ 45 000 000,00	€ 3,612,500	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Justice - Romania	Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI), Norwegian Courts Administration (DA), Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)	Council of Europe (CoE)
RO-LOCALDEV	PA07, PA10, PA16	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 48 900 000,00	PA07 = € 17 686 412,00 PA10 = € 27 927 843,00 PA16 = € 5 352 525,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF)	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)	Council of Europe (CoE)

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
RO-EDUCATION	PA03	EEA Grants	€ 12 000 000,00	€ 12 000 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	National Agency for Community programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training (ANPCDEFP)	Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-DIR), National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	none
RO-ACTIVECITIZENS	PA15	EEA Grants	€ 46 000 000,00	€ 46 000 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Civil Society Development Foundation	none	none
SK-LOCALDEV	PA07, PA10	Norway Grants	€ 15 000 000,00	PA07 = € 7 540 457,00 PA10 = € 6 354 543,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic	none	Council of Europe (CoE)
SK-GOVERNANCE	PA16	EEA Grants	€ 8 500 000,00	PA16 = € 7 480 000,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic	Norwegian Barents Secretariat (BAR)	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
SI-EDUCATION	PA03, PA16	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 13 500,000,00	PA03 = € 11 470 950,00 PA16 = € 1 329 050,00	not possible to establish the exact amount	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy -Slovenia	Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-DIR), National Agency for International Education Affairs (AIBA)	none
SI-CLIMATE	PA12, PA13, PA16	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 14 500,000,00	PA12 = € 4 250 000,00 PA13 = € 10 250 000,00 PA16 =No budget allocation	not possible to establish the exact amount	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy -Slovenia	Norwegian Environment Agency (NEA)	none

Programme short name <sup>215</sup>	Programme areas	Funding stream	Full grant (EUR)	Grant (EUR) for PA	Gender-relevant financing (EUR)	Programme operator	Donor Programme Partner DPP	IPO
<b>RF-YOUTH</b>	Separate from the Blue Book	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 60 430,000,00	N/A	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ecorys Polska and JCP Srl Italy	none	none
<b>RF-COOPERATION</b>	PA01, PA03, PA07, PA10, PA11, PA13, PA15, PA16, PA19, PA21	EEA & Norway Grants	€ 31 890,000,00	No specific budget allocation per PA	not possible to establish the exact amount	Ecorys Polska and JCP Srl Italy	none	none

## Annex II: Quantitative mapping additional information

During the evaluation, we have conducted a quantitative review of 92 programme agreements and programme implementation agreements (jointly referred to below as 'programme agreements'), as well as agreements for two Regional Funds and the multi-country programme Social Dialogue and Decent Work. The review has allowed us to get a broader overview of how gender and related concepts feature in the agreements. We have analysed the budget composition and references to key concepts, such as gender, equality, gender equality, gender-based violence, discrimination, and inclusion. We used a set of key words to search through the documents and code the results. Additionally, we analysed the project data provided by the FMO as regards relevance of the projects.<sup>216</sup> The main findings of this analysis are reported in the main text of the report. This Annex provides additional information regarding the mapping, including: the list of variables for which the data has been collected, methodological notes regarding the word search and the differences between the two datasets used, as well as graphs and tables presenting the results of this exercise. All graphs and tables presented are a result of Ecorys own elaboration.

### II.1. Methodological note on word search

Table 1 below presents the list of categories we included in the word search for the quantitative mapping of programme documents. The search for each category entailed potential close alternatives and formulations of words, and a search for precise strings was carried out to avoid false positives. We employed MS Excel for both mapping and analysis of data. The following categories and related word combinations include:

- 'gender' - including number of mentions, distinguishing between the parts of agreement where the concept was mentioned (only in the indicators, or also in the main body);
- 'gender equality': also phrased as 'equality between men and women' – including number of mentions, distinguishing between mentions as a principle, under specific outcome, and under predefined project or open call;
- 'equality' – without 'gender' referenced, including also search for 'inequality' (not included in the count of 'equality' mentions), including number of mentions, distinguishing between mentions as a principle, under specific outcome, and under predefined project or open call;
- 'gender-based violence' -including searches of 'Istanbul Convention', 'violence', 'gender based violence (also 'GBV'), 'violence against women' (also 'VAW'), 'cyberviolence against women' (also 'CVAW'), 'domestic violence' (also 'DV'), 'sexual violence', 'women victims' (also 'girl victims' and 'female victims') and 'Synergy project'; for gender-based violence and domestic violence, distinguishing also between mentions under specific outcome, and under predefined project or open call;
- 'discrimination' – including searches of 'discrimination', 'multiple discrimination' (also 'intersectional'), 'ethnic origin' (also 'ethnic', 'ethnicity'), 'race' (also 'racial'), 'disability' (also 'disabilities', 'disable'), 'sexual orientation', 'gender identity', 'LGBTI' (also 'LGBT', 'LGBTQI', 'queer'), 'Roma women', 'inclusion', 'disadvantaged groups' (also 'vulnerable groups' and 'groups in vulnerable situations'), 'minorities', and 'rights of the persons belonging to minorities'.

<sup>216</sup> The project data provided by FMO as of June 2022 comes from project-level information available in GrACE.

Table 1 List of variables by category

Key concept	Collected quantitative data	Number	Average count <sup>217</sup>
Gender	No. agreements that mention 'gender'	90	-
	No. 'gender' mentions per agreement	-	12
	No. agreements that only mention 'gender' in indicators	55	-
	No. of indicators disaggregated by gender	-	8
Gender equality	No. agreements that mention 'gender equality'	17	-
	No. 'gender equality' mentions	-	7
	No. agreements that mention 'gender equality' as a principle	0	-
	No. agreements where gender equality is explicitly addressed by a specific outcome	10	-
	No. agreements where gender equality is addressed by a predefined project or open call	5	-
Equality	No. agreements that mention 'equality'	23	-
	No. agreements that mention 'equality' as a principle	20	-
	No. agreements where equality is explicitly addressed by a specific outcome	0	-
	No. agreements where equality is addressed by a predefined project or open call	2	-
	No. 'inequality' mentions	4	-
Gender-based violence	No. agreements that mention 'the Istanbul Convention'	6	-
	No. agreements that mention 'violence'	25	-
	No. agreements that mention 'violence against women'	7	-
	No. agreements that mention 'Cyberviolence against women'	0	-
	No. agreements that mention 'Gender-based violence' (GBV)	25	-
	No. agreements that mention 'Domestic violence' (DV)	15	-
	No. agreements where GBV and/or DV is explicitly addressed by a specific outcome	8	-

<sup>217</sup> Averages calculated for entire sample, N=92.

	No. agreements where GBV and/or DV is addressed by a predefined project or open call	10	-
	No. agreements that mention 'sexual violence'	5	-
	No. agreements that mention 'women victims'	2	-
	No. agreements that refer to 'Synergy project'	1	-
Discrimination	No. agreements that mention 'discrimination'	23	-
	No. agreements that mention 'multiple discrimination'	0	-
	No. agreements that mention 'ethnic origin'	18	-
	No. agreements that mention 'race'	14	-
	No. agreements that mention 'disability'	22	-
	No. agreements that mention 'sexual orientation'	14	-
	No. agreements that mention 'gender identity'	14	-
	No. agreements that mention 'LGBTI'	2	-
	No. agreements that mention 'Roma women'	5	-
	No. agreements that mention 'inclusion'	31	-
	No. agreements that mention 'disadvantaged groups'	41	-
	No. agreements that mention 'minorities'	28	-
	No. agreements that mention 'rights of persons belonging to minorities'	20	-

## II.2. Methodological note on the databases used for analysis

Our analysis of programme agreements originally covered documents for 92 country programmes. After receiving feedback from the FMO, we additionally included the agreements for two regional funds (RF-COOPERATION and RF-YOUTH) and one non-country specific programme (Social Dialogue-Decent Work – SDDW). Given different geographical scope, these are not directly comparable with the country level programme documents. As such, we have not included them in the calculations together with 92 country PAs, but reported specific information separately.

We have complemented quantitative mapping with the analysis of project-level data provided by the FMO. The database comprises information on projects under 95 programmes and funds (including the three non-country specific programmes we included in quantitative mapping). Both databases cover the same number of programmes, which are largely the same programmes. There are however several differences in the coverage of specific programmes – listed in Table 2 below. These differences are small enough for the analysis of the two datasets to be considered compatible. Whenever differences arise, they are indicated and explained in the text.



Table 2 Differences between programme documents samples

FMO Gender Projects Database	Ecorys Quantitative Mapping Database
CY-CIVILSOCIETYPDPs	x
x	CY-ACTIVECITIZENS
GR-HOMEAFFAIRS	GR-HOME
GR-HOMEAFFAIRS (FMO)	x
X	GR-ASYLUM
GR-LOCALDEV	x
RF-COOPERATION	RF-COOPERATION
RF-YOUTH	RF-YOUTH
SDDW	SDDW
X	SI-CLIMATE

### II.3. Results in graphs and tables

The main findings of the quantitative mapping and analysis were presented in the main text of the report. Here, we include the graphs and tables presenting the results of this exercise. Graphs and tables presented in the report are included here as well for the sake of completeness, but the annex also presents additional graphs and tables.

Chart 1 Programmes budgets Targeted Approach vs Mainstreaming Approach

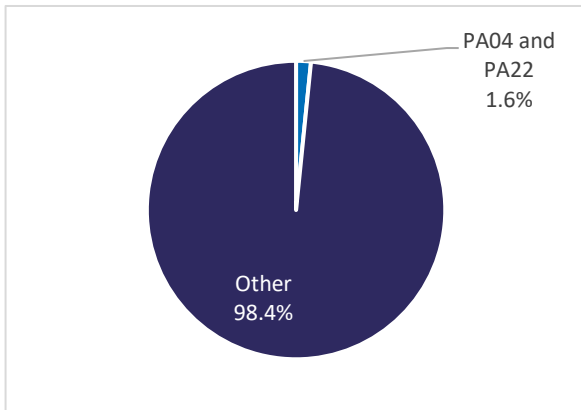


Chart 2 Mentions of the main search words in agreements

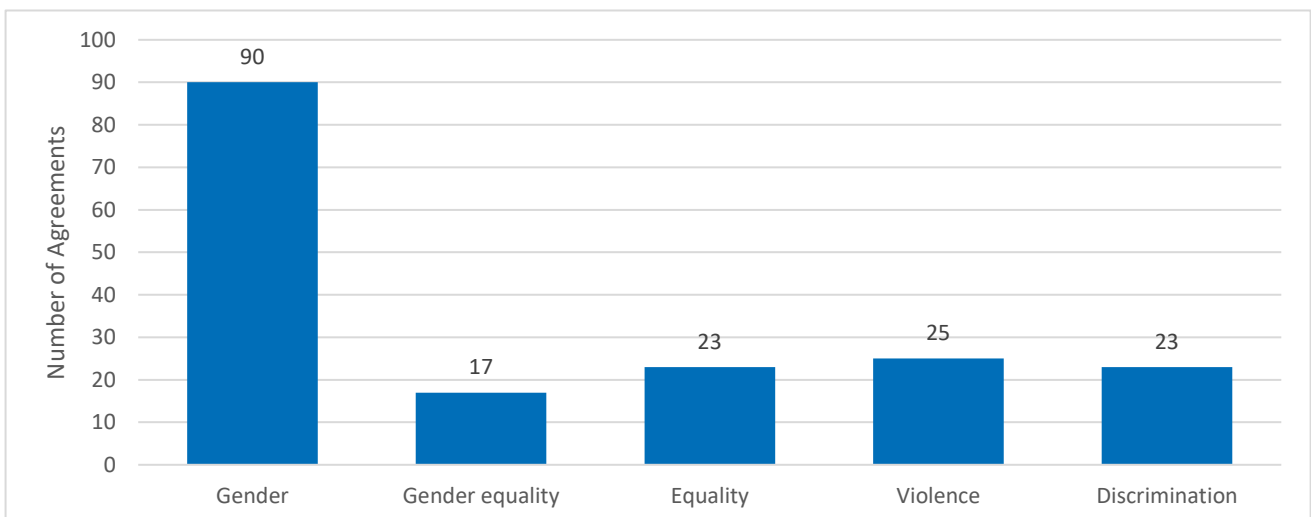


Chart 3 Gender mentions in agreements

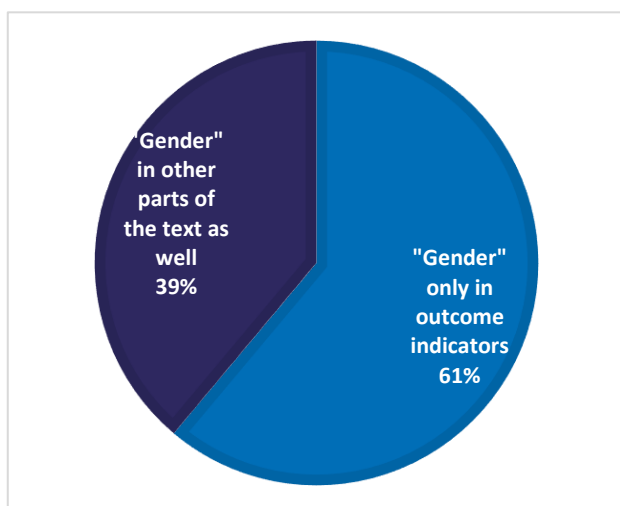


Chart 4 No. agreements mentioning violence-related key words

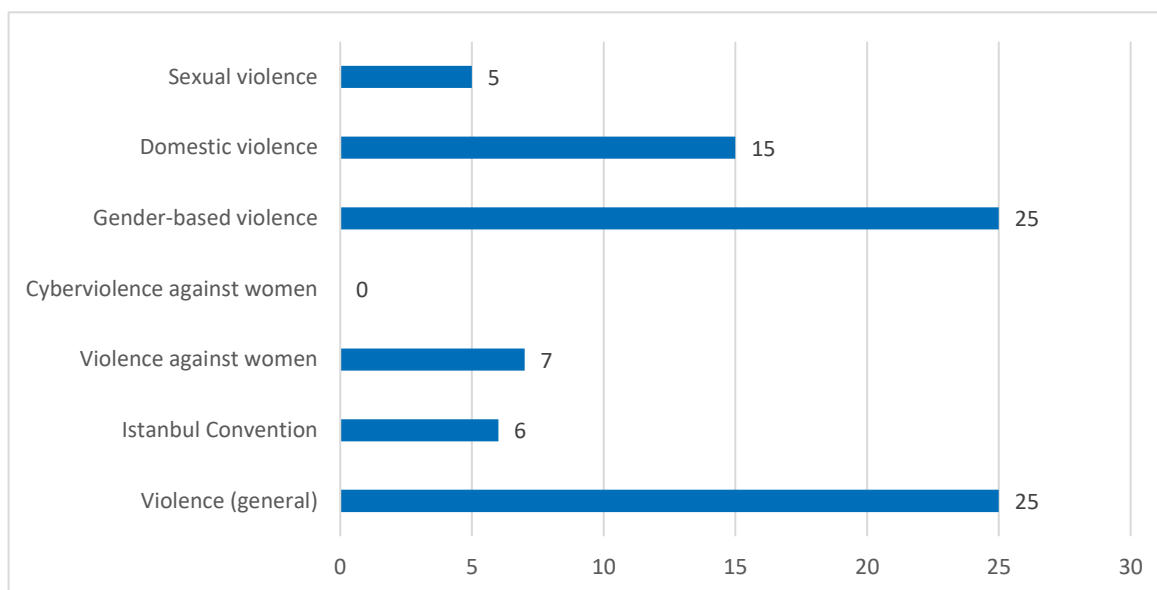


Chart 5 No. agreements mentioning different types of discrimination

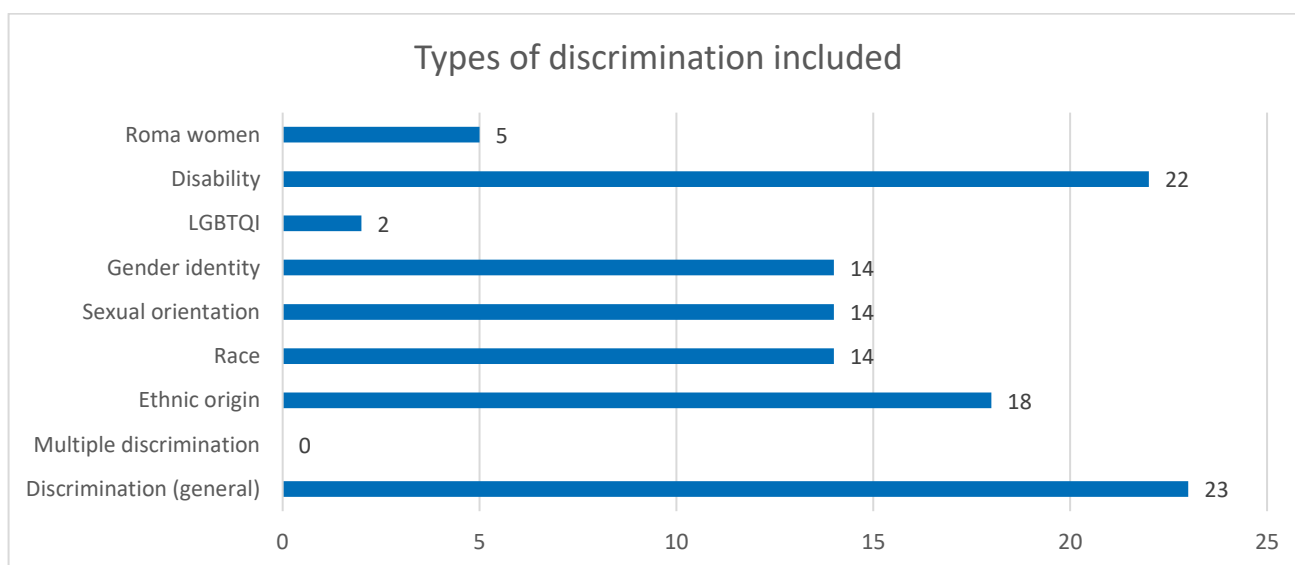


Table 1 Inclusion and vulnerable groups mentions

Groups/categories	Mentioned as target groups for inclusion	Mentioned as a vulnerable group category
Roma	16	17 <sup>218</sup>
Migrants	1	2
Youth/young	17	5

<sup>218</sup> Including one mention of 'Roma women', listed also as a separate category.

Minors/children	4	8
Asylum	0	3
Refugee	0	2
Roma women	0	1
Minorities	3	1
Prisoners	1	2
Persons with disabilities	0	3
Vulnerable groups	16	2
Not specified	1	17

Table 2 Mentions in Targeted Approach vs Mainstreaming Approach (Ecorys data)

Criterion	Targeted Approach	Mainstreaming Approach
Total no. agreements	9	83
No. Agreements mentioning 'gender'	9	81
Share of Agreements mentioning gender	100%	98%
Average count of 'gender' mentions	41,4	8,9
No Agreements mentioning "Gender equality"	5	12
Share of Agreements mentioning "Gender equality"	56%	14%
Average count of "Gender equality" mentions	9,1	0,5
No. Agreements mentioning "Equality"	2	21
Share of Agreements mentioning "Equality"	22%	25%
No. Agreements mentioning "Istanbul Convention"	4	2
Share of Agreements mentioning "Istanbul Convention"	44%	2%
No. Agreements mentioning "violence"	7	18
Share of Agreements mentioning "violence"	78%	22%
No. Agreements mentioning "gender-based violence"	7	18
Share of Agreements mentioning "gender-based violence"	78%	22%
No. Agreements mentioning "domestic violence"	7	8
Share of Agreements mentioning "domestic violence"	78%	10%
No. Agreements mentioning "sexual violence"	3	2
Share of Agreements mentioning "sexual violence"	33%	2%
No. Agreements mentioning "discrimination"	4	19
Share of Agreements mentioning "discrimination"	44%	23%
No. Agreements mentioning "inclusion"	2	29
Share of Agreements mentioning "inclusion"	22%	35%
No. Agreements mentioning "disadvantaged/vulnerable groups"	4	37

Share of Agreements mentioning "disadvantaged/vulnerable groups"	44%	45%
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Table 3 Relevance of projects under targeted and mainstreaming approaches (FMO data)<sup>219</sup>

Programming area	Relevant		Not relevant		Total	
	No. projects	Share	No. projects	Share	No. projects	Share
PA04	20	100,00%	0	0,00%	20	0,42%
PA22	32	100,00%	0	0,00%	32	0,67%
<b>Total targeted approach (PA04+PA22)</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1,09%</b>
Active Citizens Fund (ACF)	314	15,85%	1667	84,15%	1981	41,35%
Mainstreaming approach excluding ACF	323	11,71%	2435	88,29%	2758	57,57%
<b>Total mainstreaming approach (other PAs)</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>13,44%</b>	<b>4102</b>	<b>86,56%</b>	<b>4739</b>	<b>98,91%</b>
Total projects	689	14,38%	4102	85,62%	4791	100,00%

Table 4 Relevance of projects by group of programmes (FMO data)<sup>220</sup>

Group of programmes	Projects relevant for gender	Projects not relevant for gender
Targeted approach	100%	0%
Mainstreaming (all country PA)	<b>13,44%</b>	<b>86,56%</b>
Mainstreaming approach (without Active Citizens Fund)	11,71%	88,29%
Active Citizens Fund only	15,85% <sup>221</sup>	84,15%
RF-Cooperation	5,26%	94,74%
RF-Youth	15,15%	84,85%
SDDW	1,61%	98,39%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,04%</b>	<b>86,96%</b>

<sup>219</sup> Calculations on Dataset of projects provided by the FMO, as of June 2022. The data classifies projects' relevance for gender based on: 1. Target group (Victims of DGBV or human trafficking, LGBTI); 2. Project sector (mentions "gender" or not); 3. PA code (PA04 or PA22); 4. Policy marker: gender (Fundamental); 5. Text searches in project summary: "female victim", "gender-based", "domestic violence", "homophobic", "gender stereotype", "LGBT", "violence against women", "women's rights" (or "women's rights"), "human trafficking", "feminist/feminism".

If any of the above conditions is met, the project is categorised as relevant for gender.

<sup>220</sup> See n. above.

<sup>221</sup> In line with a more visible coverage of gender equality and gender-based violence in PA15 (under which the Active Citizens Fund is programmed) in the Blue Book. Out of 30 project sectors within the Active Citizens Fund, 8 are directly or closely related to gender issues (namely countering trafficking, domestic and gender based violence, gender equality in employment, gender equality organisations and institutions, gender policy, gender management and administration, human rights, and reproductive healthcare).

### Annex III: GE-related aspects in the mainstreaming programming areas (Blue Book review)

PA	Name	Objective	Areas of support	Suggested measures
PA01	Business Development, Innovation and SMEs	NA	NA	- Promoting entrepreneurship, especially for young and/or <b>female</b> entrepreneurs
PA02	Research	NA	- Capacity building in research, including supporting the careers of <b>female</b> researchers and early stage researchers	- Measures addressing <b>gender</b> imbalance in science and research
PA03	Education, Scholarships, Apprenticeships and Youth Entrepreneurship	NA	NA	NA
PA04	Work-life Balance	Targeted approach	Targeted approach	Targeted approach
PA05	Social Dialogue – Decent Work	NA	- <b>Gender</b> equality and non-discrimination in the workplace - Work-life balance	NA
PA06	European Public Health Challenges	NA	- Reduction of social <b>inequalities</b> in health and the burden of diseases	NA
PA07	Roma Inclusion and Empowerment	NA	- Implementation of European national, regional and local strategies relevant for Roma <b>inclusion</b> , and investments for systemic changes - Innovative approaches to enhancing the inclusiveness of public institutions and policies	- Empowering Roma <b>women</b> by supporting the freedom of choice for Roma women and girls, and mainstreaming Roma women's issues in relevant national programmes



PA08	Children and Youth at Risk	NA	- Protection of child victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and domestic violence	NA
PA09	Youth Participation in the Labour Market	NA	NA	NA
PA10	Local Development and Poverty Reduction	NA	- <b>Anti-discriminatory</b> activities focusing on groups vulnerable to social and economic exclusion  - Interventions to increase job capacity, especially among the most vulnerable	- Developing active inclusion policies and bottom-up approaches to local and regional development  - Developing activities aimed at promoting equal opportunities for vulnerable groups
PA11	Environment and Ecosystems	NA	NA	NA
PA12	Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security	NA	NA	NA
PA13	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation	NA	NA	NA
PA14	Cultural Entrepreneurship, Cultural Heritage and Cultural Cooperation	NA	NA	NA
PA15	Civil Society	- Civil society and active citizenship strengthened and vulnerable groups empowered	- Human rights and equal treatment through combating any discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity  - Social justice and inclusion of vulnerable groups  - Gender equality and gender-based violence	- Countering hate speech, including support to networks working with hate crime victims  - Promoting LGBTI rights and anti-discrimination activities

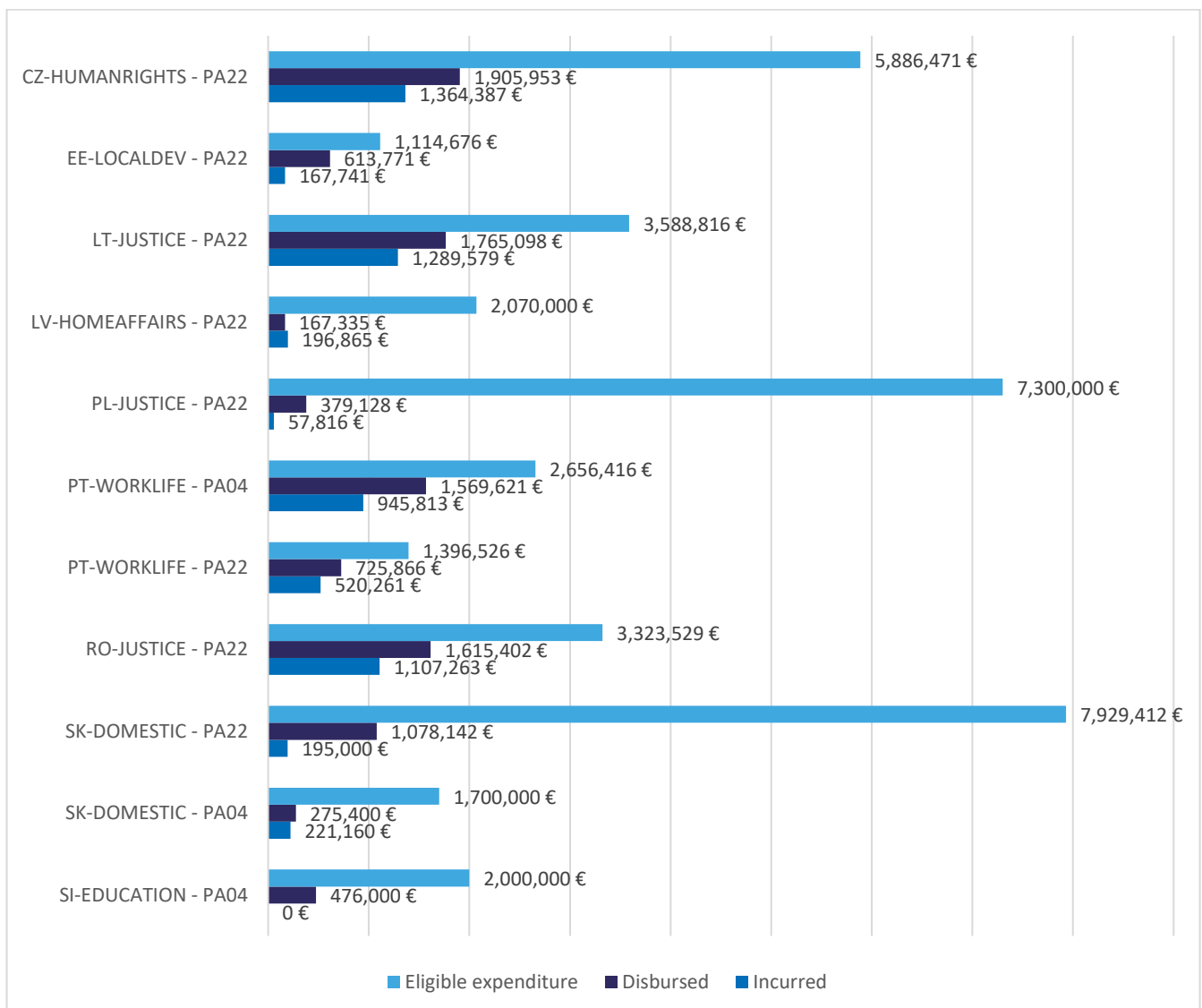
PA16	Good Governance, Accountable Institutions, Transparency	NA	NA	- Campaigns aimed at raising awareness and empowering women's participation in government
PA17	Human Rights – National Implementation	- Human rights situation improved and discrimination and extremism combatted at national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union</li> <li>- Developing and empowering ombudsperson institutions, national human rights platforms and equality bodies</li> <li>- Combating all forms of discrimination, including hate crime and hate speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity building measures linked to developing and empowering ombudsperson institutions, national human rights institutions and equality bodies</li> <li>- Combating all forms of discrimination through awareness raising campaigns and human rights education</li> <li>- Development of systematic dialogue with people working on anti-discrimination issues linked to history teaching and remembrance</li> </ul>
PA18	Asylum and Migration	NA	NA	- Developing reception facilities with a focus on unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups
PA19	Correctional Services and Pre-trial Detention	NA	- Support to vulnerable groups (in pre-trial detention, prison and probation)	- Improving conditions, methods and staff competence on the treatment of vulnerable groups, including women, juvenile offenders, LGBT-people, drug addicts, non-nationals, physically and mentally ill prisoners
PA20	International Police Cooperation and Combating Crime	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Combating hate crime and violent extremism</li> <li>- Combating gender-based violence</li> </ul>	- Training in human rights, cultural awareness and dialogue, including follow-up of country specific recommendations in European and International monitoring reports, such as those of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), and MONEYVAL

PA21	Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Judicial System, Strengthening Rule of Law	NA	- Justice capable of addressing hate crime and extremism	- Improving administrative capacity, skills and effectiveness of the judiciary, including upgrading of technical equipment, reviewing management practices, and improving gender balance in access to justice and in the senior judiciary
PA22	Domestic and Gender-based Violence	Targeted	Targeted	Targeted
PA23	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness	NA	NA	NA

## Annex IV: Indicator analysis – 2014-2021 Financial Mechanism

The 2014-2021 Financial Mechanism programmes are at varying stages of implementation, which limits the possibility of assessing their actual results. Many programmes progress slowly, despite approximately half of the programme lifetime having elapsed. For the targeted approach, the disbursement rates stand below 50%. Although financial progress is mainly used to assess efficiency, it is also informative for effectiveness, since the funding is closely linked to the expected results. The figure below presents financial measures aggregated for outcomes falling into PA4 and PA22 under programmes relevant for the targeted approach.<sup>222</sup>

Figure 1 Financial progress of programmes representing the targeted approach



Source: GrACE data (retrieved 29.08.2022)

For PA22, the largest programme is SK-DOMESTIC with almost EUR 8 million allocated. However, expenditure progresses slowly with a disbursed rate of 16% and an incurred rate of 2% as of 29 August 2022. The second-largest programme is the PL-JUSTICE programme with EUR 7.3 million allocated. This is also the programme with the lowest progress, with only 6% disbursed and 1% incurred. The LV-HOMEAFFAIRS programme also has

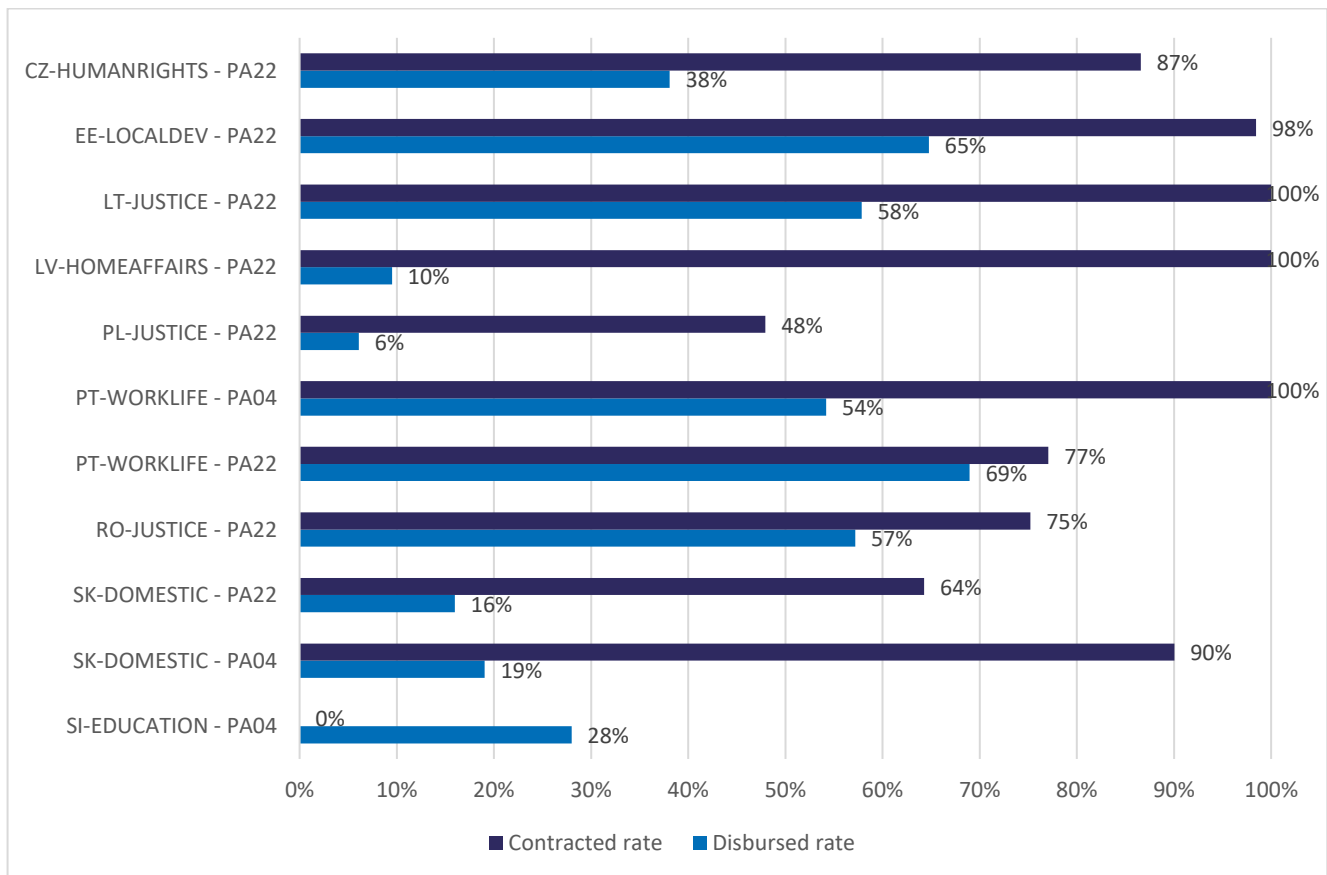
<sup>222</sup> The two outcomes under PA22 of the SK-DOMESTIC programme have been aggregated, and the separate outcomes linked to PA04 and PA22 of the PT-WORKLIFE programme and SK-DOMESTIC programme are presented separately.

low disbursed and incurred rates at 10% and 10% respectively, although the funding is significantly smaller with EUR 2 million eligible expenditure<sup>223</sup>.

On the other hand, the EE-LOCALDEV programme is the most advanced, with 65% of its EUR 1.1 million allocation disbursed. However, this is also the smallest allocation among those analysed. Other advanced programmes have larger allocations, including PT-WORKLIFE (69% disbursed rate of EUR 2.7 million under PA04, 54% disbursed rate of EUR 1.4 million under PA22), LT-JUSTICE (EUR 3.6 million allocation for PA22, 58% disbursed rate), RO-JUSTICE (EUR 3.3 million allocation for PA22, 57% disbursed rate). Under each of these three programmes, some EUR 1.6-1.8 million have been disbursed. The CZ-HUMANRIGHTS programme has a roughly similar amount disbursed at EUR 1.9 million, although it is smaller relative to the entire allocation of EUR 5.8 million giving a disbursed rate of 38%.

There is significant variation in the programmes' progress to date, as evidenced by the disbursed rates. Higher amounts allocated to PA04 and PA22 do not coincide with higher disbursement rates. However, seven out of nine programmes display high contracted rates. This indicates that the expected outcomes should be achieved to a large extent by the end of the programming period. This is particularly visible in LT-JUSTICE, LV-HOMEAFFAIRS which contracted all available funds and PT-WORKLIFE (100% under PA04 and 77% under PA22). The CZ-HUMANRIGHTS contracted 87% of the allocation, while SK-DOMESTIC – 90% under PA04 and 64% under PA22. Based on the contracted rates, the expected outcomes will not be achieved in PL-JUSTICE (48%) and SI-EDUCATION (0%).

Figure 2 Contracted and disbursed rates of programmes representing the targeted approach



Source: GrACE data (retrieved 29 August 2022)

<sup>223</sup> At the time of writing, we could not identify the reason for which the incurred amount exceeds the disbursed amount. We hypothesise it is a result of error in GrACE input data.

For the programmes' results, target achievements to date are also varied. Overall, **the picture emerging from the indicator analysis shows limited progress, with 29% of outcome indicators and 23% of output indicators registering progress** (see Table 1). However, the reported values are based on 2021 APRs, and although information on expected achievements from contracted projects is not available in GrACE, information gathered in desk research and from Programme Operators suggest that targets should be achieved by 2024 as projects advance in implementation. A number of calls was also underway in 2021-2022 (with the exception of SI-EDUCATION, in which significant delays in implementation occurred).

For the PL-JUSTICE and the SI-EDUCATION programmes, no results have been reported for PA22 and PA04 in the 2021 Annual Progress Reports. EE-LOCALDEV, LT-JUSTICE, LV-HOMEAFFAIRS, RO-JUSTICE, and in particular PT-WORKLIFE have exceeded the target values for some indicators. However, when looking at the number of indicators with reported achievements, only EE-LOCALDEV and RO-JUSTICE seem advanced. The former reported achievements for 11 out of 22 indicators and the latter for 8 out of 15 indicators (see table below).

Table 9 Reported achievements and programme implementation progress

Programme	No. of outcome indicators with reported achievement values	No. of output indicators with reported achievement values	No. of predefined projects planned	No. of predefined projects signed	Planned modalities	Implemented modalities (concluded or underway)	Remaining projects and modalities
<b>CZ-HUMANRIGHTS</b>	2 out of 5	2 out of 17	3	3	1 open call, 3 small grant schemes	1 open call, 3 small grant schemes	None
<b>EE-LOCALDEV</b>	2 out of 7	9 out of 15	2	2	1 open call, 1 small grant scheme	1 open call, 1 small grant scheme	None
<b>LT-JUSTICE</b>	4 out of 4	0 out of 10	1	1	None	n/a	n/a
<b>LV-HOMEAFFAIRS</b>	1 out of 1	1 out of 4	1	1	None	n/a	n/a
<b>PL-JUSTICE</b>	0 out of 2	0 out of 6	2	2	2 small grant schemes	2 small grant schemes	None
<b>PT-WORKLIFE</b>	0 out of 5	7 out of 32	5 (PA04: 3; PA22: 2)	5 (PA04: 3; PA22: 2)	PA04: 2 open calls, 2 small grant schemes; PA22: 1 open call, 1 small grant scheme	PA04: 2 open calls, 2 small grant schemes; PA22: 1 open call, 1 small grant scheme	None
<b>RO-JUSTICE</b>	1 out of 3	7 out of 12	2	2	None	n/a	n/a
<b>SK-DOMESTIC</b>	1 out of 8	6 out of 31	2	1	PA04: 1 small grant scheme; PA22: 2 open calls	PA04: 1 small grant scheme; PA22: 2 open calls	1 predefined project (currently proposed)
<b>SI-EDUCATION</b>	0 out of 3	0 out of 4	None	n/a	1 open call	1 open call	None

Source: Programme agreements, Annual Progress Reports, GrACE data (retrieved 14.07.2022)

Apart from the varying stage of implementation, the programmes also differ in the type of supported activities, as evidenced by the diversity of indicators (output indicators in particular). These differences highlight that the comparability of the interventions is largely limited.



## Annex V: Survey response rate

Country/Funding programme	Number of projects	Number of responses	Response rate
Czechia	340	96	28%
CZ-ACTIVECITIZENS	187	54	29%
CZ-EDUCATION	107	18	17%
CZ-HUMANRIGHTS	46	24	52%
Estonia	66	13	20%
EE-LOCALDEV	46	13	28%
EE-RESEARCH	20	0	0%
Lithuania	12	8	67%
LT-ENVIRONMENT	7	3	43%
LT-JUSTICE	5	5	100%
Latvia	24	7	29%
LV-HOMEAFFAIRS	7	3	43%
LV-RESEARCH	17	4	24%
Poland	829	261	31%
PL-ACTIVECITIZENS-NATIONAL	477	189	40%
PL-APPLIED RESEARCH	81	24	30%
PL-EDUCATION	268	47	18%
PL-JUSTICE	3	1	33%
Portugal	149	55	37%
PT-ACTIVECITIZENS	121	44	36%
PT-WORKLIFE	28	11	39%
Romania	518	118	23%
RO-ACTIVECITIZENS	213	51	24%
RO-EDUCATION	192	42	22%
RO-JUSTICE	10	5	50%
RO-LOCALDEV	103	20	19%
Slovenia	2	1	50%
SI-EDUCATION	2	1	50%
Slovakia	50	20	40%
SK-DOMESTIC	19	6	32%
SK-GOVERNANCE	9	1	11%
SK-LOCALDEV	22	13	59%
Total	1990	579	29%

## Annex VI: Mapping of niches based on country case studies

Country code	Target groups singled out in case studies	Types of activities / results singled out in case studies
CZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGBTI people,</li> <li>• Lone mothers</li> <li>• Roma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising</li> <li>• Community-oriented and empowering activities</li> <li>• Gender equality-oriented actions in the education system</li> </ul>
EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific groups singled out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising, including specifically awareness-raising at school-level</li> <li>• Exchanges of knowledge and training for improved cooperation among professionals who come into contact with the target group (esp. in the case of gender-based violence and domestic violence)</li> <li>• Research increasing understanding of the changing situation and emerging needs in the gender equality, gender-based violence and domestic violence areas</li> </ul>
LT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons with disabilities (urgent need)</li> <li>• LGBTI people (especially transgender people)</li> <li>• Older people</li> <li>• Religious, ethnic, national minorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising for increased understanding of gender-based violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, marital rape, and related concepts</li> <li>• Addressing the needs of domestic violence victims, especially those with disabilities, non-existent services</li> <li>• Support services for victims of sexual violence</li> </ul>
LV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma women (biggest room for improvement)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness-raising for young audiences</li> <li>• Support to CSOs</li> </ul>
PL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys and men</li> <li>• Representatives of marginalised and vulnerable groups (persons with disability, ethnic, religious and national minorities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interventions in the area of equality, gender-based violence and anti-discrimination, as well as work-life balance</li> <li>• Social campaigns promoting good behavioural patterns rather than focusing on victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence only</li> <li>• Awareness-raising among men on work-life balance, childcare and equal division of tasks between parents burden of care for older people and/or disabled children</li> <li>• Interventions with an intersectional approach</li> </ul>
PT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migrant women</li> <li>• Women from ethnic minorities</li> <li>• Women with disabilities</li> <li>• Single mothers with dependent offspring</li> <li>• Elderly women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions and innovative campaigns with a gender transformative approach, fighting sexism and gender stereotypes and targeting the root causes of inequality and discrimination;</li> <li>• Actions addressing gender inequality and discrimination, gender-based violence and domestic violence in the online space</li> <li>• Actions addressing decent work</li> <li>• Gender training to policy makers</li> <li>• Actions seeking improvement in gender budgeting and gender indicators</li> </ul>
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma girls and women</li> <li>• LGBTI persons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of gender equality in schools and addressing gender stereotypes in school curricula</li> <li>• Promotion of school participation / prevention of school dropout among Roma girls</li> <li>• Developing comprehensive policy measures addressing violence against LGBTI persons</li> <li>• Promoting STEM careers among girls</li> <li>• Fighting harassment and gender discrimination at work, through the implementation of company or organisation specific measures, as well as through strengthening the national policy</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting better work-life balance tools used by employers and equal division of roles and tasks in the family through the implementation of company or organisation specific measures</li> <li>• Promoting women in power and decision making</li> <li>• Promoting gender mainstreaming in the national policies</li> </ul>
SI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of Roma community</li> <li>• Women migrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporating gender equality budgeting into national processes</li> <li>• Piloting of multi-disciplinary forensic centre for women victims of violence</li> <li>• Research allowing for ongoing monitoring and in-depth understanding of the situation of gender equality</li> <li>• Awareness-raising programmes and advocacy in exposing gender biases across the sectors</li> <li>• Support for gender mainstreaming, including overall support in the preparation of the Gender Equality Plans</li> </ul>
SK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representatives of Roma community, especially Roma women and girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and awareness-raising activities and information campaigns in society about inequalities based on gender and other social categories</li> <li>• Advocacy and development initiatives among beneficiaries, which contribute to changes at the grassroots and community levels</li> <li>• Activities aimed at strengthening participation of women in political and social decision-making</li> <li>• Promotion of social dialogue and decent work agenda</li> <li>• Support for gender-responsive advocacy from CSOs, private and public actors</li> </ul>

## Annex VII: Types of activities supported in the targeted approach

	Communication campaigns	Data gathering and research	Service provision and development	Capacity building
<b>2009-2014 FM: PA29 Domestic and Gender-based Violence</b>				
BG12	Open call; Small grant schemes	Open call	Open call, Small grant schemes	Predefined projects
CZ12	Open call	Open call	Open call	-
CZ13	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	-	Predefined projects
EE11	Open call	Open call	Open call	Small grant schemes
PL14	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	Small grant schemes	Predefined projects
RO20	Open call	-	Open call	Open call, Predefined projects
SK09	-	Predefined projects	Open call, Small grant schemes, Predefined projects	Predefined projects
<b>2009-2014 FM: PA28 Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Promoting Work-Life Balance</b>				
CZ12	Open call	Open call	Open call	Open call
CZ13	Predefined projects	-	-	-
EE09	Predefined projects	Open call; Predefined projects	-	Open call; Predefined projects; Small grant schemes
PT07	-	Predefined projects, Open call, Small grant schemes	-	Open call
RO11	-	-	Open call	-
SI05	Open call, Predefined projects	Open call, Predefined projects	-	-
<b>2014-2021 FM: PA22 Domestic and Gender-based Violence</b>				
CZ-HUMANRIGHTS *	Small grant schemes	Predefined projects	Small grant schemes	Small grant schemes, Predefined projects
EE-LOCALDEV *	Small grant schemes	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	Predefined projects
LT-JUSTICE	Predefined projects	-	-	Predefined projects
LV-HOMEAFFAIRS	-	-	Predefined projects	Predefined projects
PL-JUSTICE	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	Predefined projects; Small grant schemes	-
PT-WORKLIFE	Predefined projects	Open call; Predefined projects	Small grant schemes; Predefined projects	Predefined projects
RO-JUSTICE *	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	Predefined projects	Predefined projects
SK-DOMESTIC	Open call	-	Open call; Predefined projects	-
<b>2014-2021 FM: PA04 Work-life Balance</b>				
EE-LOCALDEV **	-	-	-	-
PT-WORKLIFE	-	Predefined projects; Small grant schemes	Open call; Predefined projects	Predefined projects

SK-DOMESTIC	Small grant schemes	-	-	Small grant schemes
SI-EDUCATION ***	-	-	-	-

Source: Own elaboration. \*Although the CZ-HUMANRIGHTS, EE-LOCALDEV, RO-JUSTICE programmes fall within PA22, some supported activities address broader gender equality. \*\*EE-LOCALDEV does not include outcomes linked to PA04. \*\*\*SI-EDUCATION is not expected to achieve planned results under PA04; the Barnahus predefined project is implemented under PA16.

## Annex VIII: Overview of stakeholders involved in gender-related aspects of targeted programmes in the 2014-2021 FM

Programme	Relevant PAs	Programme operator	DPPs	IPOs	Project promoters	donor project partners
<b>CZ-HUMANRIGHTS</b> (PAs 07, 17, 22)	PA22	Ministry of Finance	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council of Europe</li> <li>FRA<sup>224</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP8 – Office of the Government of the Czech Republic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP8 - Alternativ til Vold (Alternative to Violence)</li> </ul>
<b>EE-LOCALDEV</b> (PAs 06, 10, 14, 22)	PA22	Ministry of Social Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norwegian Directorate of Health</li> <li>Norwegian Institute of Public Health</li> <li>Directorate of Cultural Heritage</li> </ul> <p><i>While DPPs participate in Cooperation Committee meetings, the programme agreement does not assign DPPs to specific PAs or outcomes, so it is not clear to what extent these DPPs worked specifically on gender-related matters (i.e. PDP3 and PDP4).</i></p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP3 - Estonian Social Insurance Board</li> <li>PDP4 - Ministry of Social Affairs - Estonia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP3 - Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies</li> <li>PDP4 - Kilden</li> </ul>
<b>LT-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 19, 20, 21, 22)	PA22	Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)</li> <li>Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service</li> <li>Norwegian Courts Administration</li> <li>National Police Directorate</li> </ul> <p><i>While DPPs participate in Cooperation Committee meetings, the programme agreement does not assign DPPs to specific PAs or outcomes, so it is not clear to what extent these DPPs worked specifically on gender-related matters (i.e. PDP4). However, NMOJ was generally involved in gender-related matters across different</i></p>	Council of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP4 - Police Department of the Ministry of Interior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP4 - Oslo Police District</li> </ul>

<sup>224</sup> According to information provided by the FMO, FRA is focused on PA07 Roma inclusion and empowerment.

Programme	Relevant PAs	Programme operator	DPPs	IPOs	Project promoters	donor project partners
			<i>countries, e.g. it set up multilateral cooperation under PA22, i.e. the SYNERGY network (mentioned throughout the APRs for other country programmes as well).</i>			
<b>LV-HOMEAFFAIRS</b> (PAs 20, 22)	PA22	Ministry of Interior	None	Council of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP6 - Latvian Ministry of Welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP6 - Icelandic Government Agency for Child Protection</li> </ul> <p>Other project partners include e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</li> </ul>
<b>PL-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 19, 21, 22)	PA22	Ministry of Justice – Department for Strategy and European Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service (KDI)</li> <li>Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (NMOJ)</li> </ul> <p><i>DPPs participate in Cooperation Committee meetings. But it is not clear to what extent KDI participated gender-related aspects in the programme. NMOJ supported e.g. the search for a donor project partner for PDP3.</i></p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP2 – Institute of Justice</li> <li>PDP3 – Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP2 – University of Stavanger</li> <li>PDP3 – None</li> </ul>
<b>PT-WORKLIFE</b> (PAs 04, 16, 22)	PA04	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Norwegian Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (LDO)</li> </ul> <p><i>LDO e.g. participated in Selection Committee meetings of small grant schemes. It also functions as the donor project partner in two relevant pre-defined projects.</i></p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP1 – Portuguese Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment</li> <li>PDP2 – Directorate General for Higher Education of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education</li> <li>PDP4 – Confederation of Portuguese Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP1 – LDO; Icelandic Centre for Gender Equality</li> <li>PDP2 – Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference at the University of Iceland</li> <li>PDP4 – LDO</li> </ul>
	PA22				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP6 – Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People</li> <li>PDP7 – Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PDP6 – Stine Sofie's Foundation</li> <li>PDP7 – Nadheim Center</li> </ul>



Programme	Relevant PAs	Programme operator	DPPs	IPOs	Project promoters	donor project partners
	PA16				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP3 – Statistics Portugal</li> <li>• PDP5 – General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP3 – Statistics Norway</li> <li>• PDP5 – Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities; Icelandic Association of Local Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>RO-JUSTICE</b> (PAs 16, 19, 21, 22)	PA22	Ministry of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security</li> <li>• Directorate of Norwegian Correctional Service</li> <li>• Norwegian Courts Administration (NCA)</li> </ul> <p><i>DPPs participate in Cooperation Committee meetings. But, with an exception of the NCA (assigned to PDP1), the programme agreement does not assign DPPs to specific PAs or outcomes, so it is not clear to what extent these DPPs worked specifically on gender-related matters.</i></p>	Council of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP5 – National Agency for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (ANES)</li> <li>• PDP9 - ANES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP5 - The Secretariat of the Shelter Movement; St. Olavs University Hospital, dept. of Brøset Center for Research and Education in Forensic Psychiatry (Brøset Hospital)</li> <li>• PDP9 – none</li> </ul>
<b>SI-EDUCATION</b> (PAs 03, 04, 16)	PA04	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education</li> <li>• National Agency of International Education Affairs of Liechtenstein</li> </ul> <p><i>While DPPs participate in Cooperation Committees, the programme agreement does not assign DPPs to specific PAs or outcomes, so it is not clear to what extent these DPPs worked specifically on gender-related matters.</i></p>	None	No PDPs related to PA04	No PDPs related to PA04
<b>SK-DOMESTIC</b> (PA 04, 22)	PA04	Ministry of Investments, Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norwegian Directorate of Health</li> </ul>		<i>A small grants scheme foreseen in programme agreement, but no PDPs.</i>	

Programme	Relevant PAs	Programme operator	DPPs	IPOs	Project promoters	donor project partners
	PA22	Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic		Council of Europe <sup>225</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP 1 – Institute of Labour and Family Research</li> <li>• PDP2 – Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDP 1 - Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies</li> <li>• PDP2 - Sexual Assault Centre Unit for victims of sexual assaults Oslo Municipality</li> </ul>

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<sup>225</sup> According to information provided by the FMO, Council of Europe is mainly focused on PA22.

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