

## GENDER EQUALITY ACTIVITIES DURING THE BULGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN UNION

In Bulgaria the national policy on gender equality is part of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and this policy is supervised at central level by the National Council on Equality between Women and Men, which is a consultative body to the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria.

For the Bulgarian Government the gender equality as a basic human right and an important prerequisite for the realization of all human rights has a great importance.

The priorities of the Bulgarian presidency are part of the **Trio declaration on gender equality** which Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria signed in July 2017 in **Tallinn, Estonia**.

The Bulgarian Government has identified “**Women in the digital world**” as a **key gender equality topic** during the current Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union considering the significant progress achieved in Bulgaria in this area. According to Eurostat, Bulgaria ranks first in the EU in terms of the share of female professionals in the ICTs sector with 34% compared to an EU average of 16%. The enhanced participation of women in a predominantly male sector is indicative of the social progress towards gender equality.

Based on that Bulgaria asked the European Institute on Gender Equality (EIGE) to prepare a Research note on this topic for the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The research results were presented for the first time by EIGE during the **meeting of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming**, which was held on 31.01 – 1.02.2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria as part of the Bulgarian Presidency activities.

During the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and based on the EU Trio Presidency Declaration on Equality between Women and Men, Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria organized a **High-level event entitled: “Women in the digital world”** on 12 March 2018 in New York.

The results of EIGE`s Research note on the topic of Women and men in ICT: A chance for better work-life balance was presented during the other event organized by the Bulgarian government a **High-Level Conference FUTURE OF WORK: A Lifecycle approach**, which was held on 21-22 March 2018, Sofia, Bulgaria. The objective of the Conference was to encourage the

exchange of views on challenges and opportunities related to the future of work in the context of a lifecycle approach.

Other event was under the Bulgarian presidency was **SHE leader@digital 2018 Conference**. It was organized on 12 of April 2018 in Sofia by the Bulgarian Center for Women in Technologies in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and under the patronage of Ms. Maria Gabriel, the Bulgarian Commission for the Digital Economy and Society. The conference was a platform for high-level discussions how to support the girls and women through their way to the leadership in the digital world, as well the role of all stakeholders in this process.

On 17-18 April 2018, Sofia, Bulgaria will be the **Informal meeting of the Ministers of Employment and Social Policy (EPSCO)**. During this event Ms. Virginija Langbakk, director of EIGE will have a presentation about “*Digital world: set apart by gender?*”

**There are some additional key activities on national level in the sphere of gender equality during the period of the Bulgarian presidency:**

- On 7 of March 2018 the Bulgarian Council of Ministries adopted a **National Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality for 2018**.
- The **Annual Equality Report for 2017** is still in a process of elaboration. For the needs of the report was received data from all stakeholders on national level. For first time all 28 district gender equality coordinators, appointed by the approval of the Gender Equality Act in 2016 prepared information, which will be included in the Report.
- Under the implementation of the Gender Equality Act the Minister of Labour and Social Policy has the duty to initiate a procedure of creation and giving of a **Sign for significant implementation of the policy on equality between women and men in Bulgaria**. The procedure started in 2018 for the first time. After a long procedure of announcement, application and selection were nominated 3 institutions/organizations in 3 categories: state institutions (central and local), economic and non-profit organizations, and public organizations and institutions. For the needs of the initiative were elaborated a special logo and plaques, which will be handed to the winners in the three categories during a specially organized for the needs event, which will be on 25 of April 2018 in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.