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Participation of women in public and political life in the Republic of Moldova

Report developed in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Facility of the Council of Europe

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This Report was developed on the basis of relevant sociological studies and available statistics related to gender equality in the Republic of Moldova and it describes the present situation and the major trends in this field. The Report also includes the findings and recommendations formulated in the framework of the National Workshop "Women participation in political and public life in the Republic of Moldova", organized by the European Institute for Political Studies, in partnership with "Partnership for Development" Centre, with the financial support of the Council of Europe. The workshop aimed at pointing out the current situation and the major trends in the field.

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Introduction

Permanent and systematic promotion of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men is a relatively recent concern for the Republic of Moldova. The endeavours undertaken by the Republic of Moldova since the proclamation of its independence for harmonization of the legislation with international and European standards, with the European provisions on equal opportunities and equal treatment for women and men are considerable, but not sufficient.

The legal status of women has, no doubts, enhanced, but equality is far from being a reality. Women enjoy the same rights as men, nevertheless, they do not always have equal access to opportunities provided to men and they often cannot benefit from their rights.

The analysis of the situation in the Republic of Moldova from the perspective of various gender equality issues, presented in various reports of the associative sector and of the Government, points out that the following fields are the most problematic: women empowerment in the political, economic and social fields and violence against women. Despite the fact that Government, civil society and international organizations have implemented and supported multiple initiatives and projects aimed at improving the situation in the above-mentioned fields, the situation remains alarming. Or, women still are under-represented to the highest political fora, to central and local government positions, even though they have a university education background and high-level professional skills. Women are often discriminated on labour market, while their remuneration counts for approximately 80% of men's remuneration. The lack of child care services at preschool stage and the low involvement of men in bringing up children and in their education are serious obstacles to full professional accomplishment of women and to their involvement in public and political activities. Problems faced by women in the Republic of Moldova are various and they are serious impediments to ensuring welfare and optimal living conditions: lack of measures for encouraging women's entrepreneurship, massive migration, domestic violence and traffic in human beings.

The Council of Europe, through its pioneer activities aimed at promoting equality between men and women, has guided the progress in gender field in all member-states over the past decades. Besides the fact that the activities conducted by the Council of Europe generated a new understanding of the issue of equality between women and men, the Council of Europe has also played an extremely important role for the Republic of Moldova, as a member-state, through the provision of a comprehensive and solid reference legal framework for gender equality, of standards ensuring balanced participation of women and men in decision-making process and the protection of women against violence, as well as through promotion of an exhaustive approach to integration of gender issue in all initiatives, policies and programmes, including into the budgetary process.

The activities of the Council of Europe are based on two principles: equal opportunities for women and men are a constituent part of human rights and a fundamental criterion for democracy. The regulations and tools developed by the Council of Europe in the field of gender equality¹ were at the basis of all demarches undertaken by the Republic of Moldova up to now in terms of enhancing the condition of women. The recommendations of the CE², intended to promote and to strengthen equality between women and men, provide specific wor-

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- 1 European Convention for Human Rights : Article 4 – Prohibition of discrimination; Protocol No. 7, Article 5 – Equality between spouses; Protocol No. 12, Article 1 – General prohibition of discrimination; European Social Charter (Updated), 1996; Council of Europe’s Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
 - 2 Recommendation No. R(98)14 on gender mainstreaming; Recommendation No. R(2000)11 on action against traffic in human beings for purpose of sexual exploitation; Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence; Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in public and political decision-making; Recommendation Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education; Recommendation Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms; Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)1 on the inclusion of gender differences in health policies, Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member-states on the role of women and men in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building.

king mechanisms to help the Government improve the situation in the field of gender equality. In the same time, they set a solid basis for the civil society to ground its requests for boosting the process of gender consolidation in the framework of consultations of civil society by governmental institutions (such a process has intensified since 2009, due in particular to the platform for facilitation of exchanges of opinions aimed at sensitization and for influence at national level on policies and legal tools, through the establishment of the National Council for Participation and through other activities³ aimed at enhancing the collaboration between civil society and the Government, Parliament, local government, development partners and other social stakeholders).

I. Traditional concepts on women's role in the society

Gender equality is a social-economic concept with political implications and this fact determines the importance of the analysis of social, economic and political contexts in a changing society from the perspective of the role of men and women.

According to the terminology of the Council of Europe, equality between women and men means visibility, autonomy, responsibility and equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. It is contrary to inequality – not to the difference – between the two genders. Equality of opportunities between women and men requires accepting and capitalizing, at an equal extent, on the complementarity of women and men, as well as on the various roles they play in the society. According to Law no. 5 on ensuring equal opportunities between women and men⁴ (2006), equality between women and men means “*equal rights, equal opportunities, equal participation in all spheres of life, equal treatment of women and men*”.

3 www.cnp.md; www.particip.gov.md

4 <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=315674>

The Moldovan society is patriarchal, while the relationship between genders is still traditional, what means perpetuation of traditional gender roles. Despite the fact that, over the past decades, the Republic of Moldova has been passing through a comprehensive democratisation and development process as a State, a large share of the country's population has conservative beliefs about the role of women and men in the society. In the same time, due to fundamental transformation of gender relations in modern Western world and of the scope of the phenomenon of migration in Moldova, some changes can be revealed at the level of social relations. The driving force which generates such changes is the increase of women's educational level (the gross rate of women enrolment at all educational levels amounts to 65.8% compared to 61.3% - for men), alongside with income increase coming both from wage labour (average wage of women in 2011 counted for 87,8% of men's average wage, compared to 73% in 2008 and 68% in 2006), and from other income-generating activities (entrepreneurship) or from labour abroad. Such changes have an impact not only on women's position in the society, but also on the country's economy and on the State's general organization.

Other developments in terms of human genders are related to the sphere of private life and to the structure of a typical household. Or, there is a growing inclination of women towards living alone and educating children out of wedlock, especially as a result of a higher rate of divorces (the divorce rate was estimated at 3,1% in 2011, and the rate of marriage – to 7,3%) and of concubinage. In the same time, year by year, the organization of life in a couple is changing essentially: the average age of young people who get married for the first time has grown in the Republic of Moldova (24 years for women and 26 years for men in 2011, compared to 22 years and, respectively, 25 years in 2007), while the total fertility rate remains at the low level of 1,3 (in 2011).

In addition to statistical data which reckon any modification in terms of women progress⁵ imperceptible sometimes for empirical observations, public opinion polls, on the other hand, reveal the most relevant gender beliefs. The results of the single exhaustive poll con-

5 <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=442&id=3860>

ducted in Moldova in the field of gender equality - Gender Barometer in the Republic of Moldova⁶ - confirm the existence of the patriarchal model in the Moldovan society, according to which taking care of the family and of the household is the most important responsibility of a woman. Most of respondents, both men and women, agree with such statements, as: *a man's responsibility is to bring money in the household, while the woman's responsibility is to take care of the family and of the household (64,6%); having a job is good, but a house and children is what women really wish (63,1%); a child of preschool age would suffer if mother has a job (62,8%); family life will suffer if the woman has a full-time job (61,6%); it is not good if the man does not work and takes care of children, while the woman has a job (55,8%).*

The approach to household responsibilities and the attitude towards them was another issue investigated within the poll. The poll's results clearly revealed the superior position of the man in relation with the woman from the perspective of household responsibilities. Women are mainly responsible for kitchen, cleaning, laundry and washing the dishes, alongside with child education and everyday care (despite the fact that 3/4 of male and female respondents support the idea that child education is an equal responsibility of both partners). Differently from women, men are mostly responsible for such tasks, as repairing household appliances and less for other chores, where the share of women participation is rather large. Despite the considerable number of women's household responsibilities, they are also in charge of daily household shopping (according to the responses of 48% of respondents).

While asked „*Is there a real equality of rights between men and women in Moldova?*“, an approximately equal number of respondents agreed (43,5%) and disagreed (41,9%) with this statement. The respondents usually assign a general meaning to the notion of „*equality of rights between men and women*“, i.e. the equality of women and men in all fields of social life (women should be allowed to do what men are allowed).

6 http://www.progen.md/files/7140_barometrul.pdf

Women participation in management of family life and administration of public life is accepted by most of respondents, 60 of the sample consider that the gender of the person who leads in the family or in public life does not matter, and that professional skills are what really matters in public life. In the same time, a superiority attitude of men in relation with women persists among male population, 40% of them being persuaded that a man should better lead in the family and in public life.

Despite the fact that a considerable share of men do not accept the idea of women participation in public life in leading positions, most of them recognize that women involvement in politics or in business would not have a negative influence on these spheres of social life. On the other hand, while being asked if they would elect a man or a woman for a precise leadership position (president of parents' board at school, school director, member of the local/raion council, president of the local/raion council, mayor, deputy or president of the country), most respondents stated in almost all cases (except the position of mayor and president of the country) that the gender of the elected person is not essential, but his/her professional skills. In the same time, the analysis of the poll's data pointed out that 49% of respondents consider that *"men are better leaders than women"*.

The comparative analysis pointed out, both in women's and in men's responses, the trend to decrease of the level of women acceptance for leadership positions (mostly among male respondents) with the increase of the level of leadership positions. According to the respondents, women involvement in public life in the Republic of Moldova, particularly in the political sphere, is blocked by a series of objective factors (for example, household responsibilities: 59,8% of the population of the Republic of Moldova consider that *"burdening women with household duties"* impedes the Moldovan women from being more active in political life and 64,7% consider that *"women are too busy with household duties and do not have time for leadership positions"*).

Other reasons pointed out by the respondents:

- Lack of political levers for encouraging women participation in political decision-making (36,8% of the population of the Republic of Moldova think that *“the political system built up mostly from men is an impediment for more active participation of Moldovan women in political decision-making”*);
- Men are interested in restricting the access of women to leadership positions (52,6% of respondents stated that *“men are interested in not allowing women to compete with them for a leadership position”*);
- The political system consists mostly of men;
- Differences in education of men and women (47,9% of the population of the Republic of Moldova consider that *“women are taught that administration is not their job”*);
- Subjective/psychological reasons: persistence of a mentality according to which women have poorer leader skills, women are less united and they are afraid of large responsibilities (47,4% consider that *women are not confident in their own forces*”, 45,5% think that *“women are less united than men”*, 44,6% stated that *“women are afraid of large responsibilities”*).

In this context, it is worth being mentioned that, in general, the above-mentioned obstacles are equally shared by male and female respondents. From this perspective, a conclusive fact may be discerned - most of respondents of both genders consider that, in the Republic of Moldova, men are rather concerned about their job, and women – about family or they make attempts to match the family and the job (48,6% of respondents think that women in Moldova are rather concerned about matching family and the job, while 43,3% of respondents stated women are concerned about family and 54% of them consider that men are rather concerned about their job and only 4,1% of respondents think that men are mostly concerned about their family).

Researchers in social-economic fields and in gender equality consider that changes in terms of gender relationship are to a large extent determined by the European Union’s paradigm of gender

equality, as well as by the level of enforcement at national level of the Social Charter and of the Social Chapter of Maastricht Treaty⁷. In the same time, the woman's condition in the society is enhancing due to the rapidity of such transformation, even though such a rapidity is not symmetrical in terms of attitude changes, at the level of people's beliefs.

II. Political participation of women

The efficiency of a democratic system cannot be assessed without considering the degree of citizens' representation to decision-making fora. A real democracy cannot be strengthened in a society where a considerable share of the electorate is not constantly represented. A system based on political competition where inequality is perpetuated is not an open system and it does not take into account the principle of meritocracy and the competencies. If such a representation imbalance persists, it will generate in the future a democratic deficit. The increase of political participation of women in governance structures is considered as one of the basic ways to strengthen gender balance in the society. In fact, the representation of women in the decision-making process is very inhomogeneous and it depends on the administrative level and on political events occurred each year.

Political participation of women depends on a number of factors, such as: awareness of one's own rights and claiming them, access to information on the legislation in force, on policies, institutions and structures which „govern“ their life; self-confidence, self-esteem and capacity to provoke and to face (if needed) the existing State structures; networks and relationship providing support and models of positive role; an environment „empowering“ them – a political, legal, economic and cultural environment favourable for full involvement of women in decision-making processes. Other factors include: economic dependence and shortage of appropriate financial resources;

7 Gender Transformations, Sylvia Walby

different employment opportunities (and, implicitly, career development); discriminatory social-cultural attitudes and negative stereotypes perpetuated within families and in public life; overload with domestic responsibilities; intimidation, harassment and violence; lack of access to information.

In addition to the legal framework, women face the following *social-political obstacles* during the race for decision-making scenes: (i) predominance of a masculine model associated with the political success and with politics, in general (within the post-communist space, the political personage is identified with a number of characteristics, but the list does not include being a family man); (ii) considering the man as the „head of the family” in all social, economic and political fields; (iii) limited support from the side of political parties, from financial support to the level of trust and human support; (iv) weak responsiveness of political parties to collaboration with women’s organizations; (v) men are interested in not allowing women to compete with them for leadership positions; (vi) lack of political and social incentives for having a system of education and training in the field of women leadership intended to orientate young women towards politics; (vii) lack of models and of support form the side of women in power.

Social-economic obstacles can also be hardly overcome: (i) women are to a large extent financially dependent on men; (ii) women do not have the required resources or the economic networks which might support them in an election campaign; (iii) women do not have time resources which are limited because of their double duties (domestic and professional).

The third type of problems faced by women willing to enter the political activity are the *ideological and cultural problems*: (i) in many societies, the widespread cultural patterns are the traditional ones which assign predetermined social roles to women and men (the woman is mostly in charge of care, house, children, private area in general, while the man is in charge of the public area); (ii) unequal power relations between women and men in the family; (iii) low level

of women's self-confidence about entering the election; (iv) women's perception of politics as „dirty“, „rough“ and, consequently, low concern about it; (v) fear of violence, harassment, critics and divorce; (vi) the way how the mass-media treat women of the political area (in general, the press imposes the women's image in politics as an atypical image).

Current⁸ and comparative context

Women's participation in political structures and process, where are made the decisions on the use of resources generated both by men, and (particularly) by women, remains insignificant. Or, the increase of women's political participation in governance bodies is considered as one of the basic ways to restore gender balance in the society.

Women's representation in the decision-making process is very non-uniform in the Republic of Moldova. In 2008, women did not succeed to expand their representation in leadership positions at the level of local government. In the same time, the number of female councillors, both at local, and at raion level raised. At local level, the position of consultant/ specialist, which is the lowest in the hierarchy, is held mostly by women. At the level of legislative power, since the legislative election of 2009, the conjuncture is more favourable for women. The number of women deputies in the Parliament has raised. As for women's representation to decision-making positions at the level of central government, the following tendency can be discerned in the Republic of Moldova: despite the fact that a certain gender balance in wage distribution and even in decision-making positions exists in ministries and in other central government bodies, the ratio women-men decreases at the highest decision-making positions of the hierarchical ladder.

8 During the report editing a new Government was appointed in Moldova and now there are two women as Deputy Prime Minister, one of them being also among other four women in Minister position (in comparison two women in former Government composition).

Although the representation of women to raion and local councils, as well as to the Parliament is enhancing, no anticipation can be done about women's presence in decision-making bodies after the coming election, as this fact will to a large extent depend on each political party's perception of the issue of gender equality. On the other hand, it is also worth being mentioned that, despite the optimistic figures revealing a growing participation of women in decision-making, it is difficult to estimate their real participation in *de facto* decision-making.

In the Transdniestrian region, 4 out of 42 deputies are women, and they are involved in the activities on 5 parliamentary committees (out of 9). The administration of the Supreme Council of Transdniestria consists exclusively of men, and the Office of the Supreme Council – of women. In the total number of 12 ministers, there are 3 women and in the total number of ten local government presidents, there are 3 women. The administration of the Supreme Court consists of 4 people: two women and two men, and the Council of the Supreme Court has 5 members, including 2 women.

The most frequently used indicator for showing the level of women's representation and of their participation in the decision-making process is the percentage of women's presence in elective decision-making bodies. The Recommendation Rec(2003)3⁹ of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member-states on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making process points out that balanced participation means that the representation of either women or men in any decision-making body in political or public life should not fall below 40%. Comparing this reference indicator to the level of women's representation in decision-making bodies in Moldova (see the table below), it becomes obvious that it has never been achieved.

9 The document can be accessed at [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(2003\)3&Language=lanEnglish](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(2003)3&Language=lanEnglish)

Seat in the Parliament	Number of women in Parliament	Percentage of representation, %
1990- 1993	12 in 380	3,8
1994 - 1998	5 in 101	4,9
1998 - 2001	9 in 101	8,9
2001 - 2005	16 in 101	15,8
2005-2009	21 in 101	20,9
2009'07-2010	26 din 101	25,7
2010 - 2014	19 din 101	18,8

Table 1: *Level of women's representation in Parliament of the Republic of Moldova 1990-2010*

The analysis of the lists of candidates in elections plays a particular role in complex evaluations of women's opportunities to accede to decision-making bodies (Gender monitoring conducted systematically by „Partnership for Development” Centre). At the past four legislative elections, the share of women candidates – although it reached the level of 29% on average (in 2005) – has not changed, moreover, it has even decreased slightly (see the chart below).

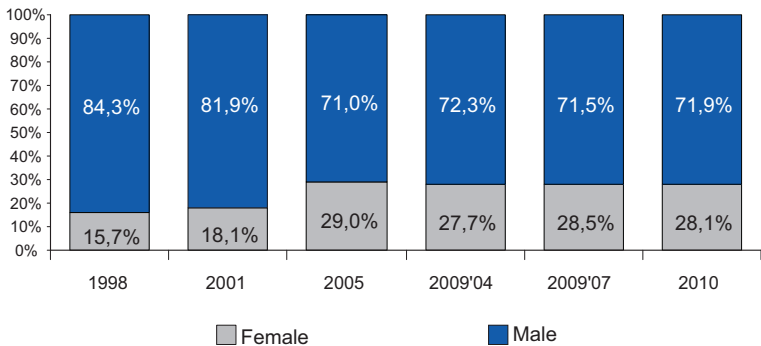


Chart 1: *Gender composition of the lists of candidates for the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova.*

Despite the fact that the share of women in the total number of candidates to legislative elections has not raised at the past four elections, the general share of representation amounts to nearly 30%, what can be considered as a progress. On the other hand, the analysis of women candidates *positioning* in the lists of parties shows a very unbalanced situation. Or, there are parties with a considerable share of women candidates, but they are *positioned* on less eligible positions in the lists, i.e. they have less opportunities to accede to a decision-making position. The chart below shows the share of women in the total number of candidates within each decile (ten positions) at the past six legislative elections.

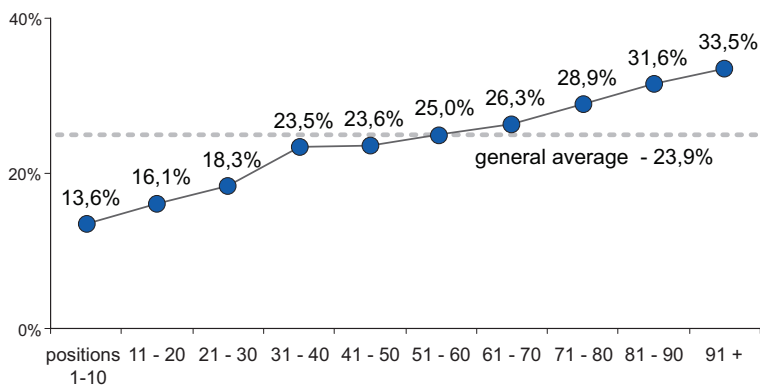


Chart 2: *Women positioning in the lists of candidates for elections, by deciles (elections of 1998-2010)*

Thus, women counted on average for 23,9% of the total number of candidates at the past six legislative elections. The analysis of women's presence in the lists of candidates shows that it depends on the position and that their percentage grows continuously by the end of the list in particular (from the inferior to the superior deciles). In the first decile (the first ten positions in a list of 100 candidates) women counted for 13,6%, i.e. much less than the general percentage in the lists (23,9%). In the second decile, the women's representation is not much wider, counting for only 16,1%. The percentage of

women is much larger than the general percentage – 25% - only in the sixth decile (i.e. inside the positions 51-60 in a list of 100 candidates), and it grows constantly further, reaching the share of - 30,6% in the last decile (the last ten positions in the list of candidates).

Taking into account the particularities of the election system in Moldova (proportional, based on lists of candidates), it is important to analyze the women's representation in the lists from the perspective of their positioning. This factor is even more important than the number of women in the lists.

Women's representation in local government is similar. At local election of 2011, the share of women candidates to the position of mayor was lower (18,9%) than the share of women candidates at local election of 2007 (23,5%).

Consequently, the situation has not improved considerably after the elections (see the table below).

Year	2003	2007	2011
The number of women elected mayors	138	163	166
Percentage of women elected mayors	15,37%	18,15%	18,51%
Percentage of women elected to local councils	-	26,5%	28,6%
Percentage of women elected to raion and municipal councils	-	13,2%	17,4%

Table: *Women's representation to local government in Moldova 2003-2011*

The Republic of Moldova took – by signing the Declaration of Millennium Development Goals – many commitments in terms of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Target 1 of Goal 3 aims at „Increasing women's representation in decision-making positions (from 26,5% in local councils in 2007 to 40% in 2015,

from 13,2% in raion councils in 2007 to 25% in 2015, from 18% of women mayors in 2007 to 25% in 2015 and from 22% of women lawmakers in 2005 to 30% in 2015)". Despite the fact that elections are supposed to be held until the year 2015 (both legislative, and local), civil society organizations estimate that the commitments taken by the Republic of Moldova in this field will not be achieved if the Election Code is not modified (particularly, adopting the electoral quotas of representation). Government's Report on the achievement of Millennium Development Goals¹⁰, submitted in 2010 to ECOSOC Council of the United Nations, estimates as „probable” the feasibility of reaching this target.

The evaluation of women's representation in decision-making fora can be done as the result of the simple comparison with the percentage of women's representation in decision-making bodies in other regions or countries. According to the world classification¹¹ of women's representation in national parliaments done by the Inter-parliamentary Union, Moldova stands on the 64th position out of 143, Rwanda being on the first position with 56,3% of women in its national Parliament. A group of seven countries with null representation of women in decision-making bodies¹² are on the 143rd position of this classification. Compared to Romania and Ukraine, the level of women's representation in Moldova is much larger, Romania being on the 101st position with 11,2% of women in its legislative body, and Ukraine is on the 122nd position with 8% of women in the legislative body. In the same time, according to the chart below, the level of women's representation in Parliament of the Republic of Moldova is rather low compared to the average representation in various regions, including compared to world average.

10 The Report can be accessed at http://www.gov.md/public/files/raport_odm/ro/MDG_-_Cu_COPERTI_LINKS_pentru_web.pdf

11 Women in Parliaments, Word Classification. Situation as on 31st of March 2012 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

12 Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Islamic Republic of Iran

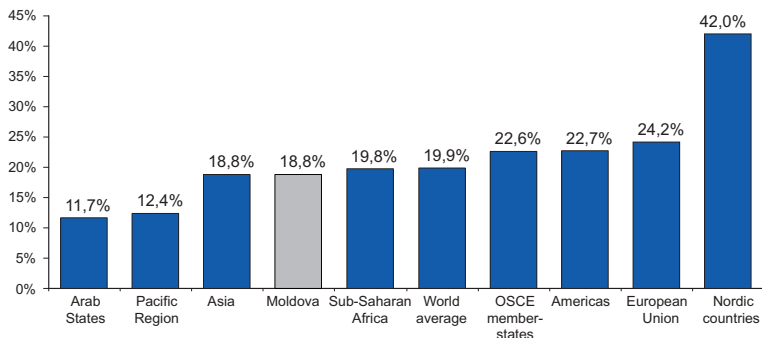


Chart 3: Average level of women's representation in national legislative bodies, by regions

Present trends in promoting women participation

On the 15th of September 2010, a group of deputies¹³ brought to the Parliament's agenda a draft law on the modification of the Election Code through imposing a compulsory quota of minimum 30% of women in the lists of candidates for each type of elections. During Parliament's session of the 19th of January 2011, Government approved a positive notification on that draft law. The Government's notification states, among other, that the approval of the respective draft law remains at the discretion of the Parliament. Civil society representatives convoked at a meeting of the National Council for Participation, the National Council of NGO-s of Moldova, Civic Coalition for Free and Fair Elections and ProGen Alliance requested to Parliament leaders the organization of debates on the respective draft law¹⁴, but their request was ignored by the specialized parliamentary committee. Nevertheless, such debates were and still are necessary, because the experience of other States in terms of implementing the system of gender quota points out several prerequisites for the success of this measure intended to increase the number of women in decision-making positions¹⁵.

13 The draft can be accessed at: <http://www.parliament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislativ/tabid/61/LegislativId/245/Default.aspx>

14 See the text of the address at: <http://www.progen.md/?pag=n2&opa=view&id=57&tip=communicate&start=&l=>

15 „Partnership for Development” Centre has conducted an analysis of the

In the framework of a recent public opinion poll, citizens of the Republic of Moldova were asked their opinion about this issue¹⁶. Their responses revealed a scattered perception of the problem. Most of respondents expressed an approving opinion, that is, they consider as necessary a larger presence of women in decision-making positions (see below the responses to the question „Do you think it is necessary to increase the number of women in leadership positions?”). Taking into account the current limited presence of women in the supreme legislative body, as well as the results of public opinion polls conducted over the past years, it may be concluded that the population is more favourable for increasing women’s political participation.

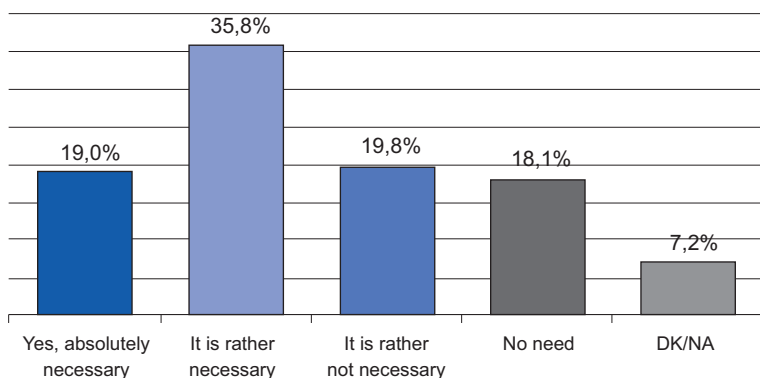


Chart 4. The need for increase of the number of women in leadership positions

implementation of the system of gender quotas in the European Union’s countries, and in member-states of the OSCE. In the total number of 51 countries subject to analysis, 15 states have successfully implemented the system of electoral gender quotas of 29% within their election systems. In member-states of the European Union and in Eastern Europe, there is a share of 30,7%, mostly in countries of the Southern part of Europe (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Slovenia, Serbia).

16 A survey conducted within Omnibus service of the Centre for Sociological Research and Marketing „CBS-AXA”, on a sample of 1331 people, inhabitants of the Republic of Moldova (living on the right-side bank of the Dniester).

The above-mentioned survey does not point out any difference of approaches among different age-groups of the population. For example, 55,5% of young people aged 18-29 do not accept the idea of a larger presence of women in the State's supreme bodies, and the share of respondents aged 60 or more who share such an opinion amounts to 52,1%. Such a fact invalidates the frequent opinion that elderly people are more reticent towards women's political participation. On the other hand, youth does not necessarily mean an emancipated vision on women's participation in decision-making bodies. The survey under consideration also revealed that education is associated with more progressive visions. Or, the population with a higher educational background (university education, specialized secondary education) is better aware of gender imbalance existing among the decision-making elite. In order to find out the opinions of citizens of the Republic of Moldova on the tools intended to foster women's accession to politics, the respondents were requested to express their viewpoint on this issue. Thus, half of respondents stated that political parties must be compelled to include a certain number of women in their lists of candidates (see below the responses to the question „Do you think that legislation should include compulsory provisions for the political parties to include a certain number of women in the lists of candidates for elections?“).

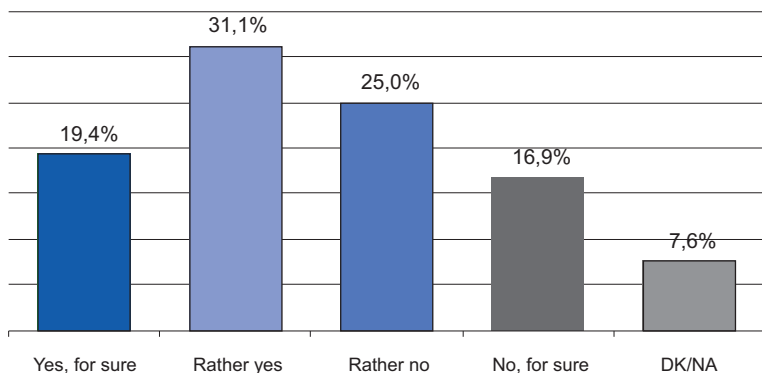


Chart 5: Opinions about the need for compulsory provisions for political parties to include a certain number of women in their lists of candidates for elections.

Consequently, a request of the electorate is practically emerging. On the other hand, only one political structure in the country included in its constitutive documents a provision on the minimum quota of 30% of women candidates in their election lists. The respondents' answers show that not only the feminine electorate exclusively pleads for promoting the tools for increase of women's presence in politics as it was assumed, but a large number of men also agree with such an approach (women - 55,2% and men - 45,3%). University education graduates and holders of specialized education diplomas expressed a higher level of support for this idea (55%).

Another question was related to the threshold to be imposed to political parties in terms of women quota in their lists of candidates. The analysis of the results leads to the conclusion that most of respondents who support the idea of imposing a quota of representation opted for a threshold of a third of positions for women. One third of respondents (34,5%) consider that parties must be compelled to share equally the positions in their lists, and 6,5% of them think that women even should have a larger share. Other respondents (15,3%) opted for a threshold of 40 %, and only 23,4% of them pleaded for the share of 30%. Some respondents (17,4%) pleaded for a lower threshold, without specifying it (see below the responses to the question, „Which should be the compulsory minimum percentage of women in the lists of candidates of parties?“).

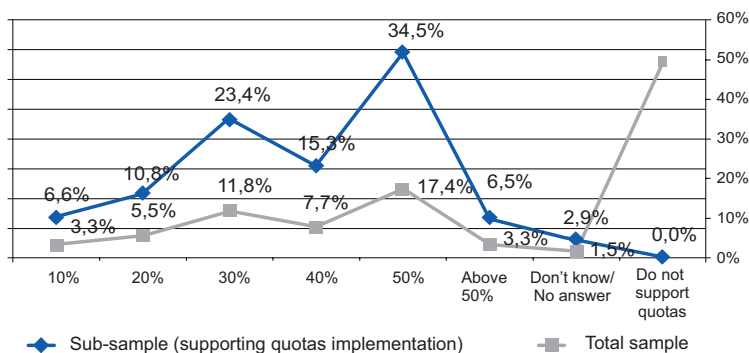


Chart 6: Opinions about the compulsory minimum percentage of women in the lists of candidates of parties

The analysis of the experience of elections held over the past 10 years shows an insignificant presence of women in the lists of candidates, and a very limited presence on eligible positions. If provisions on the positioning are not included in the legislation, the usefulness of setting thresholds will be very low. In the same time, comparative analyses with countries which have legal provisions on the quotas of representation let us conclude that the sole establishment of such a threshold, without any system of financial stimulation and financial penalization, would be inefficient in Moldova.

Recommendations formulated by the participants in the National Workshop

- ✓ *Encouraging youth – through education and the educational system – to involve in civic activities and consolidation of mentoring activities focussed on them;*
- ✓ *Promoting, by the means of the mass-media, successful feminine models in politics;*
- ✓ *Enhancing the political culture of the population about the importance of women's participation in politics;*
- ✓ *Enlarging women's access to information, consultancy services, mentoring and training activities aimed at developing leadership skills, especially in the rural areas;*
- ✓ *Including in the legislation provisions on the minimum quota of 40% of representation, by deciles, with financial stimulations and penalization for parties;*
- ✓ *Familiarization with the accessible mechanisms for promotion of women at the level of political parties (affirmative actions), for sustaining their political activities and for developing their potential.*

III. Role of education and of the mass-media in promoting women

Education is by excellence a field in which the issue of gender equality can and must have the largest area of intervention. The educational system, through its institutions, is a major segment for gender socialization, therefore gender education of children has to be conducted *sine-qua-non* and consistently. This means that gender dimension should be a constituent and indispensable part of the educational process, and that gender equality requires an integrative approach, so that it becomes one of the educational values of the system of education in the Republic of Moldova. At the national level, there is no distinct subject in terms of gender equality and we do not recommend having it, although in many countries such subjects are traditional and raise the children's and students' interest. The following two scenarios, which need to be combined, would be the most appropriate: developing gender equality modules within relevant educational subjects (for example, within the optional subject „Life Skills” or „Education for Family Life”, „Civic Education” etc.) and, what is particularly important, to integrate gender equality education issues into all subjects, so that gender education is continuously provided within all basic subjects. Moreover, gender sensitization of the teaching staff during university education or recycling and continuing training courses would encourage openness to gender equality issues and would help overcome gender stereotypes in relation with pupils' behaviour and performance.

In 2005, Soros-Moldova Foundation, in collaboration with “Partnership for Development” Centre, conducted a survey¹⁷ on gender perspective in the contents of school manuals and curriculum. The survey pointed out the existence of multiples gender imbalances in manuals and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes. The survey's results showed that teaching aids and manuals for pre-university education perpetuate some gender models and values, but they are able to aggravate gender imbalances in the society. Both the beha-

17 “Gender models and values in public education in the Republic of Moldova” (CPD, 2005). Coordination: Doina-Olga Stefanescu.

viour of the teaching staff, and the contents and pictures in school textbooks create for the children a context for gender socialization which is unfavourable for gender education. The survey revealed that gender dimension is not taken into consideration by authors of the curriculum and of textbooks, gender issues being invisible in them or not important. In the same time, the curriculum does not have any inclusive objectives from gender perspective and only “Civic Education” school subject and the optional subject “Life Skills” deal with some gender issues.

The mass-media, including advertisement, is another major socialization agent. The growing interest in the mass-media and the impact of media products on people, as well as on promoting development is natural and very appropriate, taking into account their large number. The greatest share of information about the world does not come from our own experience; we acquire most knowledge about life from newspapers and magazines, radio, television and electronic mass-media.

In the same time, the mass-media do much more than „reflect” cultural norms and realities. In fact, the mass-media build and rebuild the culture. The mass-media and the media message socialize to a large extent; they influence on human decisions and behaviours; they transmit stereotypes and social models; impose constraints, promote standards and values. The mass-media educate and form the people from the perspective of gender roles and expectations – the way how we perceive the difference.

The Law on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, passed by Parliament of the Republic of Moldova on the 9th of February 2006, includes a distinct article related to the mass-media, notably: (1) and (2) The mass-media shall contribute to promoting the principle of equality between women and men in the society through designing programmes and aids to overcome gender stereotypes. Any public discourse and materials presenting the image of women or men in a humiliating manner for their dignity shall be deemed unacceptable and shall be counteracted in accordance with the present law”.

The researches conducted in the field under consideration reveal that media production presents differently and tendentially the man and the woman, and such a fact perpetuates a crass imbalance between the two genders both from the viewpoint of the share, and of the topicality. Or, women still are a „marginalized group”, and men – a „favoured” one. In other words, the mass-media do not provide a balanced image of men and women, of their involvement and contribution to public and private life. Media products related to women (printed, audio, video and electronic press) often submit a degrading and negative image, prejudicing the women’s image in the society, causing serious repercussion on the way how they perceive themselves and how they are perceived by men. In addition to it, advertisement and pornographic media products, violent and humiliating, also negatively affect the women’s image and, consequently, their participation in the society.

Now, the mass-media do generally anything but perpetuate the traditional and, implicitly, sexist roles, obstructing in such a way the consolidation of gender balance and of a genuine gender partnership, particularly in terms of gender education. In the same time, the greater concern about gender equality in the context of mass-media issues is in fact an expression of the recognition of the mass-media as a powerful and influential cultural catalyst of stereotypes, including of gender ones. Any gender stereotype endeavour which claims efficiency should focuss on public institutions which produce and transmit such standardized, simplistic and reductionist beliefs about the reality.

The analysis of gender dimension in the field of advertisement at international level revealed the existence of a multitude of conservative and patriarchal models (patterns) in representation of masculinity and femininity, notably through exaggeration, mockery, obloquy or disregard for the feminine and exaggerate capitalization on the masculine, considered as a „normality” or presenting them as addictive (alcohol, smoking, etc.). Such findings are also true with regard to autochthonous advertisement products, confirmed by resonant cases disseminated by the media and brought to courts, without, unfortunately, winning the case.

In addition to the fundamental role of the mass-media in terms of weakening the trivial effects of gender stereotypes, the media may also have major influences on women's participation in the political sphere and their involvement in decision-making processes. It occurs because of the fact that, in real life, the perpetuation of gender imbalance and the weak visibility of successful women are obvious barriers to accomplishment of women, notably in such fields of public activity.

According to the data of the survey on „Gender and the mass-media. For a gender sensitive press“¹⁸, men are mostly represented in hypostases of public action (at office, in a suit and tie), what strengthens the idea that political and administrative matters are their major concern. On the other hand, women, being usually associated with private life, are seldom presented in public hypostases, but mostly in a „domestic“ environment. Not numerous and non-significant from the viewpoint of their message (being mostly advertisement illustrations or parts of „specialized“ rubrics) are the mixed pictures of private sphere in which we usually expect to see men and women as partners in action what shows their joint involvement and responsibility, but, unfortunately, it is not like this.

A survey conducted by UN Women in 2008-2009 in the field of presentation in the mass-media of the image of women and men as professionals pointed out that gender reality in occupational field is unfavourable for women. In analyzed newspapers and magazines clearly prevail articles and illustrations of men practising some occupations or holding public positions, with an emphasis on the professional and public actions, skills, performances of professionally successful men, of those with political affiliation or of influential civil society opinion leaders. The survey showed that only 20% of the total number of articles subject to analysis presented the women and the men in a balanced manner, 63% - presented the men as professionals, between 3% and 27% - presented the women as professionals. Men also clearly prevail in the pictures (27% - men, 17% - women). Men as professionals are presented exclusively in their professional environment. Mixed pictures with women and men count on average for

18 „Partnership for Development“ Centre, 2007, Author: L. Handrabura

17%. Pictures with women professionals usually represent them in a private environment, in a relaxed atmosphere, irrelevant to their job. One publication has very few pictures with women as professionals (1-2%) or have only pictures with women from show business (focussing more on the physical appearance than on their professional value). Authors usually do not intend to denigrate women as a social group or to point out men's superiority, but, by virtue of stereotypes, such a tendentious approach of women and men is still rather frequent. Gender roles „discerned” from the conducted analysis confirmed the previous findings and observations, as well as the rooted stereotypes related to the field and to the nature of activities performed by each gender. The picture resulting from the analysis amplifies the known types of femininity and masculinity. Men are present in practically most occupational spheres (central and local government, industry, health, army, culture, sports). Men are those who think, produce, do, start and implement projects, negotiate, evaluate, choose, actively rest. Materials presenting women as professionals are less numerous, and their content is different from the content of articles with men as protagonists, underlining the women's reproductive role and their domestic responsibilities. The information about women is first of all based on psycho-affective criterion which emphasizes the events with a strong emotional and imaginary resonance, determined by the described exceptional or dramatic situation. The actions of women in images generate a distorted and stereotyped perception.

The importance of regulating and of monitoring of the process of developing and using advertisement pictures, as well as of the language used in spots is unanimously recognized. Moreover, any stereotyped representation of women, exaggeratedly focused on their bio-sexual particularities, is catalogued by the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women as „gender discrimination”. Consequently, all media products, in particular advertisement, infringe the international provisions while presenting a degrading and sexist image of women. The Council of Europe pays a great attention to this field, underlining that, through sexist discourses in advertisement, the image of women is seriously altered, particularly in spots addressed to men. As a rule, such spots abound

in sexist images and expressions, which prejudice, sometimes irremediably, their reputation.

In Moldova, UN Women traditionally pays a great attention to the mass-media, conducting surveys and implementing projects and initiatives (in collaboration with civil society organizations and mass-media institutions) intended to enhance the gender culture of mass-media representatives. As a result of trainings activities and of other sensitization and responsabilization activities, some improvements can be identified on some segments (articles and photos), while some other remain faithful to their old message (broadcasts of debating on political, economic issues).

The mass-media do not only reflect the present reality which is still dominated by gender imbalances, but they also build and re-build it through social representations in the public speech. Therefore, they are expected to be a platform for promotion and production of new mentalities, values, principles and ideas embedded in the concepts which are at the basis of participative democracy approach – equal opportunities for all, public and private partnership.

IV. Standards of living

In the Republic of Moldova, there are some disparities in social-economic development of regions, including in the level of their infrastructure development. From this viewpoint, there are huge discrepancies between the infrastructure of Chisinau municipality and of other regions of the country. As most of dwellings in Chisinau are in blocks of flats which are traditionally connected to basic utilities, the largest share of households have access to water supply systems, including supply of hot water, gas networks, have sanitary facilities, bathroom, etc. In the rest of regions, households have poorer living conditions which depend on the level of urbanization of the region, as well as on the level of infrastructure renovation and development. Due to the Programme for water supply and sanita-

tion systems in localities of the Republic of Moldova up to 2015, the population's access to safe water sources has improved over the past years. The living conditions improved due to availability of water supply utilities, bathroom or shower room. From the perspective of such an indicator, the situation is deplorable in North region where not more than 34% of households have access to an aqueduct. On the other hand, from the perspective of the connected utilities, we find out that the sanitation system, sanitary facilities and bathroom are the least accessible in Centre region. The provision of dwelling with the basic utilities depends the least on the gender of the household's head. Although there are some insignificant differences in the share of households headed by men and women from the viewpoint of the availability of a bathroom or of hot water facilities, such differences are mostly determined by the availability of such services in the respective region and less on the household's wealth level.

The living conditions of households also depend on the level of their endowment with durable home appliances, particularly with the ones which ease daily life, such as refrigerator, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, as well as with goods ensuring the population's access to information - TV set, radio, computer, etc. In general, the level of household's endowment with such good has improved over the past 5 years. A survey conducted by the National Bureau for Statistics - "Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova. Analysis from the territorial perspective" (2012) – provides a variety of data in this field. A growing number of households have a refrigerator: in 2010, there were on average 84 refrigerators per 100 households, compared to 79 in 2007. In addition to it, there was an increase of the share of households having a washing machine (66 units per 100 households compared to 56), a vacuum cleaner (49 compared to 40) and a computer (24 compared to 9). Due to the fact that population in Chisinau municipality enjoys better living standards than the population in the other regions, the level of household's endowment with durable goods is higher. But such goods are less accessible for the population of North region, what might be explained by the fact that most elderly people live in this region and this category of population usually can hardly afford buying such expensive goods. The level

of endowment of households headed by women is lower compared to the ones headed by men. Or, a larger share of households with a man as a head of household are equipped with all durable goods. The most significant discrepancies were revealed in relation with possession of cars: on average, 27 units per 100 households headed by men compared to 8 cars per household headed by women. The analysis of car owners from gender viewpoint shows that the share of women possessing a car ranges from 17,0% in Chisinau municipality to 8,8% in South region. On average, there is a ratio of 77 cars per 1000 women in Chisinau municipality and not more than 23 cars in Centre region.

In general, possession of certain goods (car, dwelling, land, etc.) is important from the perspective of the person's safety and his/her economic and social independence. Possession of such goods might reduce the risk of feminization of poverty and, in the same time, provides to women more decision-making power in solving family problems, being a factor for minimization of the risk of domestic violence. From the viewpoint of the access of households to fixed telephony network, nearly 87% of households are connected to such a service. By genders, the share of households with a fixed telephony line ranges from 89,7% in households headed by men to 82,1% in households headed by women.

According to the data of the National Bureau for Statistics, in 2012 the monthly *disposable income* of the population per capita counted on average for 1508,8 lei, being by 4,4% higher than the previous year. In real terms (adjusted to consumer price index)¹, the population's income remained practically at the level of the previous year. Salary is the most important income source for the population, with a share of 42,7% in the total amount of disposable income. Compared to the year 2011, there was a reduction by 2,0 percentage points of the share of the income coming from salaries (see the Annex, Table 1). Free-lance activities make up 17% of the average amount of the monthly income of a person, individual farming activities counting for 9,6%. In the same time, the income coming from individual non-farming activities makes up 7,2% of the population's income. Social allowances

are the second important source of income, making up 19,2% of the average monthly income of the population. The share of social allowances increased by 1,1 percentage points compared to the previous year, due mostly to pensions and social aids. Bank transfers from abroad remain a significant source for the budgets of households. On average, they count for nearly 16,0% of the total amount of income, more by 0,7 percentage points than in 2011.

According to the data provided by the National Bureau for Statistics, in 2012 the monthly amount of the subsistence minimum per person amounted to 1507,5 lei, i.e. an increase by 0,3% compared to 2011. The subsistence minimum remained practically at the level of the previous year due to fall of prices for some products of the food basket. In the same time, there was a reduction of the share of expenditures for non-food products and for service provision in the structure of consumption expenditures of the population. By categories of population, the economically active population enjoys the maximal value of the subsistence minimum – 1585,9 lei, and, in particular, men – 1667,1 lei (see the table below *Developments of the subsistence minimum (lei) in 2009 – 2012*), and this fact is valid both in urban and in the rural areas. In 2012, the average monthly wage in the economy amounted to 3477,7 lei, i.e. by 8,9% more than in the previous year, and this amount covered 2,2 times the subsistence minimum for the economically active population.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total				
Total population	1187,8	1373,4	1503,0	1507,5
Economically active population	1251,1	1453,1	1582,8	1585,9
Economically active men	1327,0	1536,0	1661,9	1667,1
Economically active women	1172,2	1366,1	1499,5	1499,8
Pensioners	1022,8	1184,3	1305,6	1302,8
Children	1112,0	1258,1	1391,4	1409,6

From the demographic perspective, the statistical data show that women live on average by 8,1 years more than men (female life expectancy at birth is 74,92 years and male life expectancy is 66,82 years). Less girls than boys are born each year in Moldova, in 2011 girls counted for 48,5% in the total number of newborns. The average age at first marriage is 24 years for women and 26 years for men – i.e. an insignificant increase of the marriage age compared to the previous years, but still relatively early compared to other European countries. The largest number of divorces, approximately 20,3%, were identified within 30-34 age-group and the empirical observations show that problems related to conciliation of professional life and family life is the major reason for divorce. The maternal mortality ratio is 15 per 100000 live births, one of the highest in Europe, while the total fertility rate remains at a low level, i.e. 1,3 in 2011.

The migration of the population has serious repercussion on the country's population, on the modification of its structure, depending first of all on the age and gender, as well as on other characteristics. During the period 2007 - 2010, likewise in the previous years, more people emigrated from the Republic of Moldova, than immigrated. Gender differences are considerable, more women than men decided to emigrate. Women also make up the largest share of immigrants. Throughout the past four years, 25,5 thousand people left the country and settled abroad. Migration links are particularly dense with Ukraine and Russia (19,8 thousand or 78% in the total number of emigrants). The number of citizens of the Republic of Moldova who settled in the USA amounted to 2,7 thousand, in Germany – 0,9 thousand people, in Israel – 0,8 thousand people. Most of emigrants – both women, and men, are aged 20-29 and 30-39.

The statistics related to health care sector point out that men are the most frequently affected by tuberculosis; a ratio of 130,7 men per 100 thousand inhabitants compared to 50,9 women. The age-groups 35-54 (41,3%) and 25-34 (23,8%) are the most vulnerable. The incidence of malignant tumours also prevails, although insignificantly, among men, the average ratio is 234,7 per 100 thousand men compared to 219,9 per 100 thousand women. Alcoholism is a disorder rather specific to

men, with an incidence by 6 times higher than among women. In the total number of people diagnosed with alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis, 84,8% are men and 15,2% - women. The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases is higher among women, a ratio of 840,7 per 100 thousand people, compared to 385,5 among men. Primary incidence of disability is much higher among men, 439,6 persons per 100 thousand men compared to 279,5 persons per 100 thousand women, the major reasons for disability being work accidents and risk behaviour.

According to the data of the Household Budget Research (HBR), the average size of a household in 2010 was 2,6 persons, with a differentiation between households headed by women – 2,1 persons and men – 2,9 persons. Large households live mostly in South region, with an average number of 2,8 people per household, and the smallest households live in North region (2,4 people). This situation is determined both by the high birth rate in South region, and by the phenomenon of population ageing which is in particular characteristic to North region of the Republic of Moldova.

One-person households are mostly characteristic to women, a share of 44,6% in the total number of households headed by women. Most single women live in the North (52,2%), and the fewest - in Chişinău municipality (36,1%). As far as men are concerned, the largest share of single men live in the North, and the fewest - in South region. Women's longer life expectancy is one of the reasons for this situation, or, women survive their husbands, what means that a large number of one-person households are headed by elderly women who face multiple household management problems.

Large households are usually headed by men. One third of man-headed households consist of 4 or more persons. On the other hand, women-headed households of this category count for only 14,8%. From the viewpoint of the type of household, nearly 37% of the total number of households are married couples, and one couple in two does not have any child aged below 18. Multiple-family households are quite numerous in the Republic of Moldova. On average, they count for 36,4% of the total number of households in the country.

The analysis of population welfare indicators in the Republic of Moldova¹⁹ pointed out several characteristics, depending on the gender of the person in charge of the household. Households headed by women have the following characteristics:

- most households headed by women are in the urban areas (47,3% compared to 36,8% in the rural areas);
- most of them are one-person households (44,9% compared to 12,5% of households headed by men);
- they make up the largest share of mono-parental families (4,6% compared to 0,2% of households headed by men);
- the average monthly disposable income is slightly higher than in households headed by men (1.485,1 lei compared to 1.423,6 lei);
- households headed by women rely more on social allowances and transfers from abroad.

Characteristics of households headed by men:

- most households headed by men are in the rural areas (63,2% compared to 52,7% in the urban areas);
- most of them are married couples without children (29,8% compared to 5,8% of households headed by women) or care for one child (20,8% compared to 18,0% of households headed by women);
- wage is a more important source of income for households headed by men (47,2% of the total amount of income compared to 40,0% in households headed by women).

Gender disparities in employment

The transition period implies not only unique experiences related to renouncing the life concepts created within a planned economy, but it also implies adopting relevant principles to a market economy. Moreover, changes determined by such a long-lasting transition took place not only in the economic field. Throughout two decades, we are witnesses of fundamental changes in all fields and, in the same time, of the increase of risk factors for some vulnerable groups.

19 <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=ro&idc=264&>

Women are a social group with a high risk of vulnerability and, despite the fact that at empirical level they are not always perceived like this, the statistical data confirm this specific vulnerability, both at global, European and at national level.

The Republic of Moldova issued a number of national documents and ratified a series of basic conventions for elimination of discrimination, including women discrimination. In the framework of Millennium Development Goals, the Republic of Moldova has a distinct objective related to gender equality and a specific target related to reducing wage discrepancies, and specific tasks and indicators have been established in order to achieve this objective (to reduce the disparity between women's and men's salaries by at least 10%). Nevertheless, women still are disadvantaged, and it is estimated that there is little probability to reach this target by the year 2015²⁰. The analysis of statistical data shows that women are much more dependent on the mechanisms of assistance provided by the state and, at the professional level, they are much more dependent on the budgetary field, they are disadvantaged in terms of hierarchical promotion in all fields of the economy, their retirement pension is lower than men's pension; because of the shortage of child care services, they have to take a maternity leave of long duration what disadvantages them when they wish to re-integrate the labour market in relation with their male colleagues who are much more competitive due to permanent presence on labour market. In the same time, erroneous beliefs and gender prejudices, the traditional attitudes towards child education, elderly care, etc. generate a women-unfriendly social-professional environment. Because of the above-mentioned factors, the problem remains within a vicious circle which cannot be overcome without specific approaches.

The data of the National Bureau for Statistics point out the following issues:

- The rate of unemployment is lower among women than among men (4,8% compared to 7,1%), but the share of women in the

20 Moldova's Report on IADGs implementation, **National Voluntary Presentation** for the Annual Ministerial Review of the ECOSOC, Government of Moldova, 2010

- inactive population is higher (53,5%);
- Women mostly work in public administration, education, health care and social assistance (29,9%), in agriculture (24,1%), as well as in trade, hotels and restaurants (22,2%);
 - By groups of occupations, women mainly work as unskilled workers (26,2%), services and trade employees (21,7%) and specialists with the highest level of qualification (18,4%);
 - From the viewpoint of the professional status, women are mostly salaried employees (75,0%, compared to 0,5% of women who have their own business and 20% of free-lance women).

The analysis from the perspective of employment and of the average salary paid by the employers leads to the conclusion that salary disparity between women and men are mostly caused by the fact that women are mainly involved in lower remunerated economic activities (considered traditionally as “feminine”), rather than by differential remuneration because of gender (this fact was confirmed only empirically as a result of case-studies conducted in private sector where the belief that male employees are more dedicated to job prevails, and this is the reason why they are better remunerated than women).

Consequently, the following fields are “feminized” in Moldova: health care and social assistance (80,7% of employees are women); education (women make up 75,4% of employees); hotels and restaurants (71,1% of female employees); financial activities (67% of employees are women).

The considerable progress in the field of labour remuneration was determined by the bound made over the past two years, women earn on average by 12,2% less than men (in 2011, the average women’s wage counted for 87,8% of the average men’s wage).

In 2007, a group of researchers of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova conducted a comprehensive sociological survey (1786 women) focussed on quantitative and qualitative analysis of women

condition on labour market²¹. The survey provides a series of interesting data revealing the disadvantageous condition of women on labour market, adding new data to the existing picture. For example, the survey's results show that 38,1% of business entities consider that women encounter more difficulties on labour market than men. In addition to it, 42,5% of them think that women face discrimination on labour market. Business entities recognized that they prefer to employ men, despite their weaker professional qualification, rather than women-applicants to the same position in order to "avoid possible fluctuations of personnel because of maternity leaves". Business entities consider that women discrimination mostly occurs at employment (56,7%), while 37,8% of them think that this phenomenon is mostly inherent to promotion. It is surprising and, in the same time, alarming that business entities realize even better than female-employees (!) the existence of the phenomenon of discrimination. With regard to women's managerial skills, 42,7% of interviewed business entities stated there were no women with managerial skills in their organizations, while 30,7% of them are persuaded that "only men are the best holders of leadership positions". 21,3% of business entities who took part in the survey do not prefer women for leadership positions because of the fact that women "have to match professional activity with family duties, what is an impediment to appropriate fulfilment of job tasks".

A survey carried out by the National Agency for Employment, entitled "Women condition on labour market" (2007), also provides conclusive data about women discrimination on labour market, pointing out that women are mostly discriminated at employment (42,5%), in the process of professional promotion (37,6%), at labour remuneration (15%) and training (4,9%).

Another comprehensive survey was conducted by the National Bureau for Statistics in 2009, with the support of UN Women – "*The conditions for enterprise start up and development: gender analysis*"²² –

21 „Women Situation on Labour Market in the Republic of Moldova”, ASEM, Chisinau, 2008. Coordination: A. Birca, D. Vaculovschi

22 http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/conditii_intreprinderi/Conditii_creare_intreprinderi_ro.pdf

was focussed on entrepreneurship activity which is now considered by many researchers as one of the basic opportunities for women's economic empowerment and, consequently, it is strongly linked with the increase of women's political participation. The survey shows that the share of women entrepreneurs (employed managers and business co-owners) in the total number of entrepreneurs in Moldova amounts to 27,5%. Respectively, the number of male entrepreneurs is by 2,6 times larger than the number of women. The following two major characteristics of female entrepreneurs make them different from men entrepreneurs:

- The educational level of female entrepreneurs is lower than the one of male entrepreneurs. The share of women entrepreneurs holding a higher education diploma amounts to 64,3%, the share of men – to 69,3%. Taking into account the insufficient external support (under-developed institutional infrastructure, limited access to financial resources, etc.), the educational level does not only characterize a certain level of qualification and enlarges the contact opportunities, but it is also one of the basic resources which foster business development. This statement is confirmed by the fact that entrepreneurs with a lower educational level usually face relatively more difficulties.
- Previous activity of women, before becoming a manager, was relatively seldom linked with entrepreneurship. 10,5% of women and 13,4% of men had a previous experience as employers; 1,3% of women and 2,1% of men - as farmers. More women had previously practised domestic activity - 5,0% (men – only 0,2%) before starting the entrepreneurship activity. The analysis of the activity of enterprises owned/managed by women pointed out that women encounter considerable obstacles in the following positions:
 - Women entrepreneurs relatively often own/manage a micro-enterprise which usually has limited resources and growing opportunities. The share of women entrepreneurs in this category of enterprises amounts to 79,4%, and the share of men - to 67,8%. In enterprises of other sizes, men are usually the entrepreneurs. In the same time, the larger is the size of the business, the larger is the share of men entrepreneurs: in small

enterprises, the share of men entrepreneurs is by 1,4 higher than the similar indicator related to women; in medium-sized enterprises, the respective ratio amounts to 2,3 times; in large enterprises– the share of men entrepreneurs is 3 times larger than the share of women.

- Women entrepreneurs are relatively oftener employed in newly-established enterprises (up to 1 year) and young enterprises (up to 2 years). The share of young enterprises managed by women counts for 25,8% and by men – for 20,7%; the share of new enterprises with women entrepreneurs amounts to – 2,4% and of the ones with men entrepreneurs – to 2,2%.
- Both at the stage of business start up, and at the stage of business development, women encounter more obstacles in terms of access to financial resources. In the structure of the initial capital of companies managed by women, the share of own savings is lower – 72,8% (in companies managed by men – 74,8%), the share of foreign investments – 5,0% (men – 5,5%), state subsidies – 0,4% (men – 1,0%). In the same time, among women, the share of financial resources borrowed from relatives or friends is larger – 13,8% (among men – 11,4%), as well as the share of bank loans– 5,5% (among men – 5,1%).

The survey's authors underline that implementation of special State programmes is one of the most important methods for developing women entrepreneurship. Supporting women entrepreneurs is possible both through special programmes targeted at women, and through programmes focussed on supporting micro-business or start up businesses, because women relatively often own/manage an enterprise from these categories.

Recommendations formulated by the participants in the National Workshop

- ✓ *Encouraging youth – through education and the educational system– to access to non-traditional trades from gender viewpoint;*
- ✓ *Promoting successful feminine models in business field through the mass-media;*

- ✓ *Raising the responsibility of Labour Inspection for gender discrimination on labour market;*
- ✓ *Enhancing the legal culture of the population on non-discriminatory legislation in the field of labour market;*
- ✓ *Further development of the institutions of market infrastructure and focussing them on the specific needs of women entrepreneurs;*
- ✓ *Enlarging women's access to information, consultancy services, banking and non-banking sources of funds;*
- ✓ *Getting the entrepreneurs acquainted with basic principles of market economy, working in a competition environment, etc.;*
- ✓ *Getting the entrepreneurs acquainted with accessible tools for promotion of enterprises on the domestic market, for sustaining the activity of enterprises under crisis conditions, for developing exports and enhancing business competitiveness.*

V. Domestic violence against women

The phenomenon of domestic violence against women is very spread in the Republic of Moldova. The country's social-economic development, especially the material problems, determine the emergence and/or the prolongation of dysfunctional behavioural models in the relationship between women and men both at global level, and in Moldova. Or, the social environment, the economic factors, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, of traditional gender relations and of social stigmatization of women cause different forms of violence against women in families of our country.

The Republic of Moldova took several international commitments in terms of non-discrimination, promotion and protection of women. In the Concluding Recommendations for the Republic of Moldova of the 25th of September 2009, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the situation in the field of domestic violence and about the rarity of intervention measures of the judiciary system aimed at countering such acts, and the limited number

and capacity of shelters for victims of domestic violence, as well as about the fact that police interferes only if domestic violence results in grievous bodily harm.

The Committee recommended to Government of the Republic of Moldova to ensure the enforcement of the law on domestic violence and to provide free assistance and other services required for protection of victims. The Committee impelled the Moldovan authorities to undertake prevention measures and to provide training on dealing with violence cases to all the involved professionals, including to policemen, prosecutors, judges and social assistants, with a particular emphasis on gender issues in cases of domestic violence.²³

In the same time, similar observations were also formulated by the United Nations Women's Rights Committee which is still concerned about propagation of violence, including domestic violence, against women of the Republic of Moldova. The Committee pointed out the lack of updated data, by gender, about all forms of violence against women. The Committee impelled the authorities to ensure the access of all women victims of violence to immediate protection measures, including protection orders, and access to a sufficient number of safe shelters and legal assistance.

The Committee requested to the authorities to investigate the reasons and the consequences of violence against women, including domestic violence, and to use the results of investigations for grounded and well-targeted interventions.²⁴ The recommendations also include enhanced measures aimed at improving the social and economic situation of women, particularly in rural areas, and at establishing rehabilitation and reintegration services for victim of trafficking.

Taking into account that domestic violence occurs in a private environment, the size of violence can hardly be estimated. Never-

23 Concluding Observations for the Republic of Moldova, Human Rights Committee, Session 97, 12-30 of October 2009.

24 Concluding Observations for the Republic of Moldova, Women's Rights Committee, 7-25 of August 2006.

heless, the few available data show an alarming situation. The official statistics related to domestic violence are gathered by the police, but the indicators used for data gathering do not allow to reckon all forms of violence in family environment, confining to cases of premeditated murder within family relationship; grievous bodily harm; light bodily injury and the number of domestic brawlers.

According to the data of the Survey on Demography and Health in Moldova, approximately 21% of women and men consider as acceptable that a husband beats his wife for one of the following reasons: she burns the food, she neglects her children, she refuses intimacies, she argues or leaves home without permission.²⁵ The survey also revealed that nearly 27% of interviewed women were subject to violence since the age of 15 and approximately 13% of them had suffered from violence over the previous 12 years. The main aggressors are husbands (69%) and, to a smaller extent, fathers/step fathers and mothers/step mothers. The survey also showed that mothers with many children are oftener victims of violence.²⁶ The largest share of interviewed persons who considered as acceptable that a husband beats his wife were people with a low income and with incomplete secondary education. Consequently, the most vulnerable persons to domestic violence are the ones with the fewest possibilities to claim help and to counter the abuse. The survey „Women at risk”²⁷ revealed that one fourth of Moldovan women aged 16 - 35 suffer from domestic violence.

On the other hand, there is less information available about the situation in the Transdnestrrian region, and the few available data are provided by civil society organizations working in the region. According to the data submitted by „Interaction” NGO which put into ope-

25 National Scientific Centre for Preventive Medicine, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Protection; Moldova: Studiul Demografic și Sănătate (Moldova: Survey of Demography and Health), 2005.

26 Women at risk in the Republic of Moldova: National representative survey”, A report developed by Winrock International (2005).

27 “Women at risk in the Republic of Moldova: National representative survey”, A Report developed by Winrock International (2005), p.111

ration a hotline in Transnistria, during the period April-November 2009 were registered 300 calls and 46 callers were provided assistance (36 adults and 10 children). Most callers reported psychological (134) and physical violence (88). The largest share of callers were women (233), and the rest of them - men (67). Most callers were 30-35 year-old (77), 24-29 year-old (46) and 36-41 year-old (38).

In the framework of a sociological survey on the perception of the phenomenon of domestic violence conducted in the Transnistrian region by „Rezonans” NGO, with the support of UNIFEM (now UN Women), the respondents stated that most victims of domestic violence are women (44,5%) and children (45,3%). The most frequent forms of violence are physical violence (77,7%), corporal punishment of children (51,3%), threat (47%), threat of physical violence (45,4%) and forced sexual relations (42,6%). According to the same survey, one fourth of women in Transnistria suffer from such forms of domestic violence, as physical abuse, economic and psycho-emotional violence.²⁸

The survey „Domestic violence against women in the Republic of Moldova”²⁹ shows a total rate of 63,4%, of prevalence of violence from the side of the husband/partner throughout the whole life, i.e. 6 women in 10 faced, since the age of 15, at least one form of violence. The phenomenon of domestic violence against women is wider spread in Centre region, where nearly 73% of women suffered at least once in their lifetime from a certain form of violence, and the lowest incidence of violence is characteristic to Chisinau municipality (58,4%). Women of Chisinau municipality suffer the least from any form of violence, and the basic reason for it are the emancipation of women of the urban areas, the higher level of women’s informa-

28 Survey on the perception of domestic violence in Transnistria, „Rezonans” NGO, 2009.

29 Conducted by the National Bureau for Statistics in 2010, with the support of the United Nations Entity for gender equality and empowerment of women (UN Women), Embassy of Sweden, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

tion, alongside with the change of visions on the repartition of roles between women and men in the society. Despite the fact that violence from the side of the husband/partner is largely spread in all age-groups, the probability of violence is higher in elder age-groups. Most cases of violence were reported by women aged 45-59.

On the other hand, the survey revealed that nearly 60% of women experienced psychological violence throughout their life. Women of Centre region (67,6%) are the mostly affected by it, while the ones of North and South regions and of Chisinau municipality are somewhat less exposed to such a form of violence - 55-57%. This form of violence is mostly faced by women of the age-group 45-59 (66%), and less by young women (50,2%). In the total number of cases of psychological violence, half of women reported insult, a third of them were intimidated or frightened, and nearly 22% of them were subject to verbal violence and humiliation. Social isolation and the control behaviour from the side of the husband/partner are among the forms of psychological violence. On average, one woman in two has reported control behaviour from the side of the husband/partner throughout her life. The survey also revealed that the most typical form of control is the insistence of the husband/partner to know where the woman is at any moment. In 4 out of 10 cases, the husband/partner becomes furious when the woman talks with another man, and nearly 23% of women are suspected of infidelity. In the same time, 17,6% of women are ignored and treated with indifference, 16,4% of women stated their husband/partner decides what she can do and what she cannot.

Approximately 40% of women reported cases of physical violence from the side of the husband/partner. The highest rate of prevalence of physical violence was scored among young women of South region (77,9%), the lowest rate – among women aged 25-34 of Chisinau municipality (8%). The forms of physical violence applied by husbands/partners range from one slap to use of arms and strangulation of the woman. On average, one third of women were slapped at least once in their lifetime, one fourth of them were pushed or hustled, and one fifth of them were fisted or hit with an object causing pain. From the viewpoint of the degree of severity of physical violence, severe

violence is prevailing. On average, 54% of women victims suffered at least once in their life from severe violence. Women aged up to 44 usually face a moderate physical violence, but since the age of 45 severe violence is prevailing. From the regional perspective, most cases of severe violence were reported in Chisinau municipality and in Centre region (62,3% and 57,1%), while in North and South regions prevails moderate violence (50,2% and 51,2%). According to the data of the survey under consideration, nearly 19% of women were at least once in their lifetime victims of sexual violence of their husband/partner. Most cases of sexual violence were reported by women of Chisinau municipality (23,5%), and the fewest cases – by women of North region (14,7%). This might be explained by the different perception of abusive sexual actions of their husband/partner due to which some women consider sexual relations as „marital duties”, not as violent actions. Another explanation might be the fact that not all women are ready to denounce cases of sexual violence. The most typical form of sexual violence reported by women is „having sexual relations against the woman’s wish” – (14,4%), followed by „forced sexual relations with humiliating, degrading elements” – 11,7%, while 4,4% of women had to accept „sexual relations because of fear”.

The Law on preventing and countering domestic violence was adopted on the 1st of March 2007 and entered into force on the 18th of September 2008. The adoption of this law was an important step towards countering violence and it was an expression of recognition and implementation by the Republic of Moldova of its international commitments in terms of respect for human rights. The Law defines different forms of violence: physical, sexual, psychological, spiritual and economic. A strength of the law is that it gives a broad definition of the law’s subjects, encompassing the concubinage relations.³⁰ The law also provides for the right to request a protective order and entitles any person who is aware of a case of domestic violence with the right to report it.

According to this law, the courts shall issue within 24 hours a protective order to: oblige the aggressor to leave temporarily the joint

30 Article 6.

dwelling or to keep away from the victim's dwelling, without making any decision on the ownership on assets; oblige the aggressor to keep away from the victim and to refrain from contacting the victim and the victim's children; prohibit any visit to the victim's workplace or place of residence, etc.³¹ Although the law entered into force on the 18th of September 2008, the first order was issued by the courts of Anenii-Noi in September 2009, as a result of sensitization and training activities conducted in this field with the support of donors and civil society.³²

The experts of PromoLEX NGO underlined in their human rights report a number of problems related to enforcement of Law 45-XVI. For example, despite the aggressor's obligation to prove that no act of domestic violence was committed and that there is no need for protective measures, victims of psychological and sexual violence can difficultly obtain a protective order in the absence of corporal injury and, respectively, a medical-legal certificate which might serve as a legal evidence. In such situations, the gravity of psychological violence and of manipulation is underestimated, the victim's statements and complaint are not considered as credible, and the victim remains unprotected. And even if a protective order is issued, its provisions are not always respected by aggressors. Moreover, the Republic of Moldova has to solve the problem of inaction of law enforcement bodies in this field.

The analysis of cases from the practice of Promo-LEX Association³³ and from the practice of other NGO-s and lawyers providing legal assistance to victims of domestic violence points out the following problems: non-enforcement of protective orders; delayed penal suit; refusal to issue protective orders and procrastination of issuance of protective orders.

31 Article 15 (1).

32 Activities conducted in the framework of the Project „Protection and empowerment of victims of human trafficking and of domestic violence”, implemented by UNFPA, UNDP, IOM and OSCE.

33 <http://crjm.org/files/reports/raport.promolex.2009-2010.pdf>

Recommendations of the participants in the National Workshop

- ✓ *Involvement of youngsters – boys and girls – in gender sensitizing educational activities intended to enhance gender culture in the society;*
- ✓ *Enhancing the legal culture of the population through raise of awareness about the importance of knowing the legislation and encouraging the fight for rights;*
- ✓ *Enlarging the access of women to information, legal consultancy services and training activities aimed at developing leadership skills, mostly in the rural areas;*
- ✓ *Including gender issues in training courses on legal matters aiming at gender sensitization of the trainees;*
- ✓ *Ensuring the functionality of assistance centres for victims of domestic assistance and increasing the number of such centres;*
- ✓ *Strengthening the centres and the programmes for aggressor rehabilitation.*

VI. Enforcement of the legal framework the field of gender equality

At national level, the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova is the major document proclaiming the equality of all citizens, regardless of their gender, and, in principle, does not have any discriminatory norms from this viewpoint. Legislation of the Republic of Moldova guarantees for all citizens equal rights to participate in economic and social life, to be trained for a trade, to be employed, to promote and participate in distribution of benefits, to be provided social protection when needed.

The principle of gender equality of women and men is stipulated in several documents of the Moldovan legislation, including in Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, but the most important document from this perspective is Law no. 5-XVI on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men (9th of February 2006). This Law regulates the measures intended to promote equal opportunities for women and

men and elimination of direct and indirect gender discrimination in all spheres of public life in Moldova. It is important that the Law on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men provides for the need to include its basic principles in all „public policies, strategies and programmes, normative documents and financial investments”, i.e to ensure an integrative approach to gender dimension.

In addition to it, the Law provides for setting up the institutional framework required to ensure gender equality and for identifying the public authorities entitled with competences in the field of equality between women and men. These are: the Parliament, the Government, Governmental Committee for equality between women and men, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Protection (now, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family), gender units of ministries and other central and local government bodies. In 2010, Councils in the field of gender equality were established within the concerned ministries: Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy. On the other hand, because of financial constraints, no gender units were established at local government level and such a fact caused a lack of consistency and continuity between national state structures on the one hand, and *raion* and local structures, on the other hand, generating an impediment to efficient operation of institutional mechanisms.

By virtue of the above-mentioned Law, Government of the Republic of Moldova issued Resolution №350 of 07.04.2006 on the establishment of Governmental Commission for equality between women and men, conforming through this measure to the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. On the 7th of August 2006, the Government issued Resolution №895 on the approval of the Regulations of the Governmental Commission for equality between women and men.

Adoption of the legislation in this field was crucial for ensuring equal treatment for women and men *de jure*, and ensuring such an equality *de facto* is a process which needs further support through consistent joint endeavours of governmental and non-governmental structures.

Government's Report for CEDAW Committee mentions that, up to present, the efforts aimed at promoting and ensuring gender equality were focussed on implementation of projects in this field, the Government being a co-partner, but henceforth a special emphasis is put on strengthening the Government's capacity as a catalyst and a promoter of gender experiences due to integration of gender issue in national policies.

The activity of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, notably of its Directorate for gender equality policies and prevention of violence, has a significant contribution to progress done over the past years in the field of gender equality. Nevertheless, the institutional mechanisms in this field have some weaknesses: shortage of human resource trained in this field; staff fluctuation; insufficient level of professional motivation; absence of gender units at the level of local government because of financial constraints; shortage of financial resources; undefinitized tools for monitoring and evaluation of the field under consideration.

Taking into account the Recommendations of the UN Committee for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted a National programme for ensuring gender equality in the Republic of Moldova for 2010-2015 (Government Resolution no. 933 of 31.12.2009) which provides a comprehensive approach aimed at integration of the principle of gender equality in policy documents of all fields and at all levels of decision-making and implementation.

The implementation of the National Programme for ensuring gender equality is supported by two action plans for 2010-2012 and 2013 – 2015. Passing of the above-mentioned documents is a proof of the State's political will to set up better opportunities for ensuring *de facto* and *de jure* gender equality, as a part of the process of building a genuine democracy, conscious and sensitive to gender dimension, based on the prerequisite on ensuring the participation of all members of the society, women and men, in all fields of the life.

Despite the fact that seven years have already passed since the Law was adopted, the progress towards ensuring equal opportunities is still at the incipient stage, and practical enforcement of the Law's provisions is difficult. This slowness is partly caused by deficiencies of the present legal framework, including of the Law on equal opportunities, as well as by the way how the authorities and the society, in general, perceive the topicality of gender equality issue.

The authors of the Report on the compatibility between the legislation of the Republic of Moldova and the provisions of the Law on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men³⁴ analyzed substantially the present national legal framework in the field of gender equality from the perspective of the relevant international standards with a view to identify the normative gaps, as well as the problems related to practical implementation.

As a result of such an analysis, the report's authors formulated a series of recommendations and essential modifications of the national legislation intended to support the enforcement of the Law on equal opportunities and the fulfilment of international commitments in the field of human rights taken by the Republic of Moldova.

At present, the draft version of the proposed modifications is subject to endorsement, and the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family requests the support of international development partners and of the associative sector and, particularly, the receptiveness of governmental structures, for adoption of the draft law on the modification of some normative acts.

34 Developed by Tatiana Catana and Angelina Zaporozhan-Pirgari and Iurie Perevoznic, 2010

Conclusions

Over the past two decades, significant commitments to women's participation in decision-making have been made both at the international and national levels. Moldova Government's engagement to gender equality is clear assumed by Government Programme, legal framework and national institutional mechanisms.

Gender equality is first of all a fundamental right – women have the right to a dignified and free life, the right to capitalize on their potential without any constraints and to enjoy equal opportunities. Women's equal participation in decision-making process is a prerequisite for the economic growth and strengthening democracy in Moldova.

Despite existing international frameworks and national mechanisms for women's advancement in decision-making, there are expressed concerns that efforts were haphazard or ad hoc. It is strongly recommended that policies should have built-in accountability measures and budget support; international development partners' contributions are highly appreciated, but the State's financial support is extremely necessary.

Despite the fact those in recent years, women's participation in politics and decision-making in Moldova has received significant attention, women's full participation in power structures and decision-making is rather low compared to the world average and women remain seriously underrepresented in decision-making positions across the country and most important bodies.

Political empowerment of women is an essential strategy for the country's development, and some urgent measures through legal improvements (such as mandatory quotas, sanctions and incentives, etc.) must be considered for increasing women's participation in political life. The implementation of quotas for women in the national parliament and rayon councils will transform the political landscape in Moldova, removing many of the obstacles faced by women


attempting to run and bringing large numbers of women into political institutions.

Women mobilisation in politics is a requisite tool for a better representation of women's concerns, needs and interests (such as building alliances, Parliamentary Women Caucus, platforms among elected women, between women in Government/ Parliament and women in civil society, between elected women and female voters, between elected officials and private sectors, etc.)

Women in Moldova still face a variety of barriers to their participation in politics and decision-making –discriminatory political structures, as well as social, economic, and cultural barriers – the role and influence of education and media must be increased for a better gender-inclusive governance and social representation of women in politics (as equal contributors for the country's development, as role models to the next generation of girls and boys, etc.).

Traditional attitudes and cultural barriers are among the most difficult to remove and mass-media can be a very important force in shaping cultural attitudes. Since family support and community encouragements are key determinant to participation and success of women in politics, specific strategies aiming at changing the culture are recommended (e.g. delivering training programmes focused on anti-discriminatory attitudes and creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment for civil society and media representatives, youth, teachers, rural community groups; trainings for women running to elections to strengthen their capacities, etc.).

The evidences suggest that civil society is more open to women's leadership than other sectors, but it must be noted that civil society work is often volunteer-based, or under-paid and that women in this sector remain outside of the decision-making process. More active advocacy and lobby activities for women leadership and consideration of women's needs and interests must be taken by civil society organizations.



Stronger integration of a gender focus into governance reform processes is a major step in building institutions that are accountable for gender equality and to women. The success of an effectively gender mainstreaming into the decentralisation reform demonstrates the need for this, the proper time and the openness.

Since Moldova society is still patriarchal and many persons share narrow gender stereotypes and biases, it is equally important to increase the number of women in top positions and to support people (men and women) in leadership positions who are committed to gender equality policies.