



Equal Opportunities for
Women and Men:
Monitoring the Law and
Practice in New Member
States and Accession
Countries
of the European Union

FACT SHEETS - 2005

BULGARIA
CZECH REPUBLIC
ESTONIA
HUNGARY
LITHUANIA
POLAND
ROMANIA
SLOVAKIA
TURKEY

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WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN BULGARIA?

Since 2002 a number of important changes have been made to Bulgarian legislation and new pieces of legislation have been adopted in order to further transpose the *acquis communautaire* in the field of equal treatment for women and men. Significant progress on gender equality legislation was made through amendments and new provisions in already existing laws, including the Labor Code. The most substantial step forward came with the adoption of a new act, the Law on Protection Against Discrimination, which entered into force in January 2004.

There is currently no separate Committee within the National Assembly specifically assigned to work on gender equality issues. These functions are given to the standing Human Rights and Religious Affairs Committee, which considers bills on anti-discrimination and equal treatment issues. A National Council on Equality between Women and Men was set up by Government Decree 313/17.11.2004. The Council is a consultative body to the Council of Ministers and will develop and implement the national policy in gender equality in collaboration and coordination with government authorities and the non-governmental sector. The program of the Council, the National Action Plan for Encouragement of Equality between Women and Men 2005, was adopted on 9 December 2004.

The Employment Strategy 2004-2010 pays special attention to the need to develop policies on equal opportunities for all social groups that are reflected in the National Action Plan for Employment.

A National Commission for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings has been established. At its session on 26 January 2005 the Commission approved a National Program for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was adopted by the National Assembly on 16 March 2005 and entered into force on 1 April 2005.

WHAT DO THE FACTS SAY?

- 54.2 percent of all unemployed persons in Bulgaria are women. This includes single mothers and mothers with children up to the age of three. 46.2 percent of men and 37.5 percent of women were employed in the first quarter of 2004;
- In higher paid managerial positions, there were 48,856 men (compared with 31,591 women) in 2002. Similarly, the positions of analytical specialists, applied science specialists and specialists engaged in the service sphere remain a female occupation - 71,661 as compared to 51,571 men. On the whole, women are paid 72% of men's salaries.



WHAT IS DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN?

“Discrimination against women” shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

(*Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Article 1.*)

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE EU TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY?

“The EU has a long-standing commitment to promoting gender equality, enshrined in the Treaty since 1957.

The Community legal framework ensures that women and men are equal before the law. [...] Moreover, equal treatment legislation is a firmly established integral part of the *acquis communautaire* that countries applying for EU membership have to respect.” (Proposal by the Commission for a Council Decision on the Programme relating to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005); Introduction)

WHAT IS THE ACQUIS COMMUNAUTAIRE?

The *acquis communautaire* is the body of common rights and obligations which binds all Member States within the European Union. It comprises Community law, all acts adopted under the second and third pillars of the European Union and the common objectives laid down in the Treaties.

- Women' political participation figures are higher than in previous years: after the 2001 Parliamentary elections, 27.1 percent of MPs were women. After the local elections in 2003, 9 percent of mayors, 16 percent of chairs of municipal councils and 24 percent of municipal councilors were women.

WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY?

- Bulgaria has made significant progress in building up the basic framework for equality between women and men. The legal basis is present, the first institutional bodies are being created, and plans and programs are being developed. The first steps in the right direction have been taken, but the country still has to resolve a number of issues.
- In order to achieve gender equality, governmental and non-governmental bodies must synchronize their programs and plans in order to avoid any discrepancies or shortcomings in the system of measures and actions.

A WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

- Bulgaria needs a separate national strategy dealing with equality between women and men;
- Gender indicators must be developed so that the National Statistical Institute can collect and process data to monitor gender equality;
- More research needs to be done with gender indicators in order to be able to spot a wider variety of problems;
- In addition to the anti-discrimination act, a special law on equal treatment for women and men should be adopted in order to grant positive measures for improving women's representation, particularly in elected bodies.

DID YOU KNOW:

Psychological abuse is a major stress factor in the working environment for 14.9 percent of women and for 10.2 percent of men?

MORE INFO:

www.cwsp.bg; www.nsi.bg; www.mlsp.government.bg