

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



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# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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## Introduction

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**E**qual participation of women and men is at the heart of modern democracy in many countries. In addition to suffrage, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw) defines the rights of women and men to “participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government”.

More women than ever before are participating in politics worldwide. Higher numbers of women are being elected to public office and, in many countries, more women are attending political events, engaging with government bodies and registering as voters. More than 10 500 women served as national parliamentarians in 2017, accounting for over 23% of total parliamentarians worldwide. There are millions of women politicians serving at sub-national levels, and many more women candidates who run for political office in each election. Despite gains in women’s political activity, women remain significantly under-represented in politics worldwide. Women continue to face multiple challenges in taking up positions in political and public life. Few women are elected as governors, mayors or to other decision-making positions at the local level. Fewer than 20 countries worldwide in 2017 had women as their head of state and/or government.

Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina women remain the under-represented gender in politics. The situation has not changed since the 2018 general elections, with 21.4% of elected women in the parliamentary assembly. This result comes despite the quota laid down in the election law for the less-represented sex on the list of candidates and despite a number of actions targeting capacity building and promotion of women in politics. This is below the European average of 26.4% and below the 40% threshold of the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council of Europe standards and even below the Beijing benchmark of 30%.<sup>1</sup>

However, as women's political activity has grown, so has the frequency and degree of violent responses to their presence in politics. Around the world, politically active women – voters, candidates, local councillors, members of parliament (MPs), community activists, bloggers and so on – regularly find themselves on the receiving end of acts or threats of violence. Growing acts of violence against women serve as a strong barrier to women accessing their right to participate fully and equally in politics and public life. There is no denying that over the past decade, the increase in women's political representation has been accompanied by a rise in violence against women in politics (VAWP).

Violence against politically active women is a serious problem that discourages women from participating in political processes, constitutes a fundamental violation of their human dignity, undermines democracy and is an obstacle to the strengthening of egalitarian and non-discriminatory societies. The problem has been hidden, unknown, unrecognised or ignored. It is considered part of the "normal" practice of politics, the struggle for power or the "price to pay in politics".

Violence against women in politics has three special characteristics:

- ▶ it targets women because of their sex;
- ▶ in its very form, violence can be gendered, as evidenced by gender-based threats and sexual violence;
- ▶ its impact is the discouragement of women to be or become politically active.

Demonstrations of violence against politically active women take the following forms, all of which have distinctive characteristics when implemented in the

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1. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by 189 Member States meeting in China in 1995. It stresses the need for UN member states to adopt affirmative action measures to achieve gender equality in elected office. This document has confirmed the 30% target previously endorsed by the Economic and Social Council, of the UN General Assembly.

field of politics: psychological, physical, sexual and economic. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, recent research indicates that 60% of women in politics have experienced a form of violence in politics and over 96% of that violence was verbal or emotional.

What is common to all documented experiences is that violence impacts the ability and willingness of women to participate in public life. It affects women at each stage of their political engagement: as activists, candidates and holders of elected office. While its severity depends on the type of political violence experienced, at the very least, each victim's personal integrity is harmed, and their human rights violated. Violence against women in politics also negatively impacts women's ability to fully enjoy and exercise their political rights. It hinders their participation and their political representation, often leading them to give up a political career after holding an elective position. The emotional, psychological and physical toll of participating in politics extinguishes the desire of other women who aspire to participate in political life. It threatens democracy at its core – as democracy without the equal and active participation of half of the population is impossible.







## Violence against women in politics in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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**B**osnia and Herzegovina has a well-arranged institutional and legal framework for gender equality at all levels of authority, which is for the most part the consequence of the responsibilities Bosnia and Herzegovina took on by signing and ratifying international conventions in the field of human rights. Bosnia and Herzegovina is required to respect the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), in addition to other international documents relevant for the protection of women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) "Women, Peace and Security".

## Domestic legal framework

The ratification of the Istanbul Convention by Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 7 November 2013, refocused the development of the legislative framework and the establishment of the corresponding mechanisms to address gender equality and women's rights. The law on gender equality defined, *inter alia* the responsibilities of the relevant institutions, namely the Agency for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Gender Equality Centre of the Republika Srpska. The country is implementing the current gender action plan, focusing, *inter alia* on preventing and combating gender-based violence, including domestic violence and trafficking in human beings. While the legal framework is in place, there is a need for institutional capacity building and provision of assistance to victims of domestic violence. In particular, efforts are still needed in tackling gender-based violence.

The gender equality law and the law on prohibition of discrimination (LPD) provide the legal framework for gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mechanisms for protection against discrimination were improved in line with the EU directives. In accordance with the provisions of the LPD, it is possible to initiate civil proceedings in cases of direct and indirect discrimination, and incitement to discrimination. Harassment or sexual harassment and acts of gender-based violence are subjected to a claim before the prosecution, in accordance with the standards of criminal legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under which the procedure is being conducted. The Law on Amendments to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 2016, provided a better definition of discrimination. The list of grounds for prohibited discrimination has been expanded and now explicitly includes age, disability and sexual orientation. The position of the victim was improved by the use of more effective protection mechanisms, in particular the judicial proceeding for protection against discrimination.

The Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in line with the Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is in accordance with Recommendation 28 (paragraphs a and b) of United Nations document CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5 on concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the 2013 amendments and changes to the election law, proportional representation exists when one of the sexes is represented by 40% of the total number of male and female candidates on the lists (the quota was previously 33%). Furthermore, the party list must contain at least one candidate of the less-represented gender among the first two candidates, two candidates of the

less-represented gender among the top five candidates, etc. The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina rejects the party list if it fails to comply with the quota rule.

Practical measures for the promotion and improvement of gender equality, including affirmative measures in all spheres of social life, are defined by periodic strategic documents at both state and entity levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participation of women in politics is one of the priorities of the Agency for Gender Equality and the gender centres and is clearly stated in the current national Gender Action Plan 2018-2022 and the Action Plan to Implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Moreover the agency and the gender centres are active in this area with a stronger focus on gender-mainstreaming of standards in the work of respective governments and to date have advocated inclusion of the principle of equal representation and of the 40% quota in a number of laws and policies at the entity, cantonal and local levels.

## **Institutional mechanisms**

The Law on Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina established the existence of and the obligation to establish institutional mechanisms for gender equality. Today, a network of institutional mechanisms for gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes all levels of legislative and executive powers. In accordance with the law, the key institutional mechanisms for gender equality are:

1. the Agency for Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
2. the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; and
3. the Gender Centre – Centre for Gender Equity and Equality of the Government of Republika Srpska.

The Agency for Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in order to monitor the application of this law at state level, and, together with the gender centres, represents the institutional mechanism for monitoring and surveillance in the country. In order to raise awareness about gender equality, it is also necessary to establish relevant mechanisms at all levels of government, including the cantonal and the municipal levels. Institutional mechanisms at the local level are further discussed in Chapter II of this manual. Within the provisions of its Article 23, the law provides for the obligation to adopt an action plan at the national level to promote gender equality. Accordingly, existing co-operation of institutional mechanisms for gender equality laid the foundations for the development and adoption of the gender action

plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a strategic political document that, at the state level, defined the fundamentals of action on the introduction of gender equality and the application of legal obligations in all relevant areas of society.

## **Situational analysis**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the participation of women in legislative and executive bodies at all levels is about 20%. The election law adopted in 1998 introduced a gender quota for candidates in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following a number of amendments of the Election Law, an electoral quota is currently stipulated in Article 4.19. The quota is mandatory, it regulates a relatively high percentage of 40% and it has a mandatory rank–order rule. The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina is authorised to reject any list that is not created following this rule.

As a result of 2018 general elections, the representation of women in the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently 23.8%. The increase in the number of women in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina is noticeable, as is the attitude of the electorate towards the women elected, since four women who were elected in 2010 were re-elected in 2014. Out of three members (chairperson, one female deputy and one male deputy), the first deputy of the College of the House of Representatives is a woman. This is an example of the impact of the measure set out in the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives (Annex II, Tables Nos 12 and 13). In entity parliaments, average female participation is 19.7% (21.4% in the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 18% in the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska). In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of women increased by more than 4%, while there was a decrease in number of elected women in the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska. At the cantonal level, the female average is 31%.

Progress was seen in the implementation of Recommendation 28 (paragraphs c-e) of the “Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5), with the formation of the club of women parliamentarians of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – the first inter-party club in the country. In co-operation with other clubs and working parties, the club is working on the creation and adoption of measures and the overseeing of legislation in all areas of interest to women. An action plan of activities was developed and priority topics defined in co-operation with the gender institutional mechanisms for joint

lobbying through thematic sessions, round tables and meetings with non-governmental organisations.

Currently, there are two women ministers in the Committee of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was a significant increase (25% female ministers) in the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while there has been a decrease in representation of women in ministerial positions in the cantons. There are 25% of women in the government of the Republika Srpska, including a prime minister (now in her second term). In the local elections in 2016 there was a slight increase in the number of women elected: six women (4.3%) were elected mayors, in comparison with 3.6% in 2012. The share of women in the composition of councils/assemblies is 18.34%, (compared to 17.1% in the 2012 local elections).

A recent study (Miftari 2019) found that 60.2% of respondents experienced some form of violence during their time as politicians, and that 45.8% of female politicians experienced violence just because they are women. Most of the respondents (69.9%) agreed with the claim that violence against women in politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not recognised as a form of gender-based violence, that is, violence directed against women just for being women, and a violation of human rights. Most also agree that violence against women in politics is perceived as a normal phenomenon in politics (66.3%). A somewhat smaller proportion of respondents (53%) believed that violence against women in politics is widespread.





## Parliaments

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**P**arliaments are both workplaces and model institutions of democracy, with a duty to set examples, uphold standards and exemplify zero tolerance for gender-based violence in both policy and practice. They should establish mechanisms for VAWP complaints.

The multi-dimensional nature of VAWP means that combating violence against women in politics cannot and should not be completely exclusive from efforts to curb violence against women in the wider population, particularly the structural and systemic driving factors. Stopping VAWP also means engaging politically with the institutions that can unfortunately often be complicit in its existence: political parties and parliaments.

### Recommendations for parliaments on VAWP

- ▶ While most parliaments have codes of conduct, these are almost exclusively gender neutral and have no provision for dealing with the specific kinds of behaviour and issues related to VAWP. Parliaments could take steps to introduce language that is more pointedly designed to address the causes and impact of VAWP.



- ▶ All MPs should be encouraged to review “walk-in” policies pertaining to their constituency offices.
- ▶ Greater co-operation with Civil Society Organisations should be encouraged, especially those with long experience in combating violence against women. Their daily work on the ground provides insights that an outside observer may not have.
- ▶ Construct and enforce systems for the protection of victims of violence, assault, harassment and bullying.



## Political parties

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**P**olitical parties are the cornerstone of democracies. They are mechanisms for civic engagement, providing citizens with an avenue for participating in the democratic process and exercising their fundamental rights to shape the decisions and direction of their country. They are also the doorway to elected office. Political parties provide the “training ground” for young or new politicians, and recruit, select and support candidates for elections. As such, political parties can be a gateway to political participation for groups who have historically been excluded from the process, including women. However, because of history, tradition and gender norms, political parties can also be “protected” public spaces, allowing and enabling violence to take place against women within their ranks.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, potential women candidates are faced with enduring stereotypes. In the Bosnian context in the 2018 general elections; only 16% of party lists were headed by a woman, thus 84% of the lists had a man as a party chair. The person in the top of the winning list is typically the one who will gain the seat in the state or entity parliaments.

Political parties should work together to agree and adopt a joint code of conduct for candidates, officials, members and politicians, and sanctions should be imposed on anyone who falls foul of that code. Political parties must take steps to institute zero-tolerance policies through strong sanctions against harassment, including sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. Party loyalty should never be prized more highly than uncovering the truth or supporting those who bring allegations.

Political parties should review and reassess internal decision-making processes, particularly those involving candidate selection or allocation of (financial) resources. Processes that are considered “informal” – for example, there are no established rules of procedure; no clear criteria for choices made; where decisions are taken during closed gatherings or in meetings for which no minutes are taken; where there is no regular schedule and/or there is no oversight or evaluation process – are more likely to foster a significant gender imbalance within the party and encourage a hostile environment for women.

Parties should also assess their internal and organisational culture for indications of violence or hostility towards women. This includes identifying internal processes and traditions that are highly confrontational, involve debates without rules, contain an unnecessarily high level of antagonism, or even include rhetorical insults or physical intimidation. These are major contributors to keeping women out of politics.

Institutional protocols should be developed to encourage women MPs to officially report offences to the political leadership and to the police if a violation of the legislation related to sexual offences, domestic violence or any other form of violence. These measures would send a strong message to the party membership that such behaviour is unacceptable and would promote an enabling environment for women members.

### **Recommendations for protection of women from violence within political parties**

- ▶ Explicitly mention human rights, equality and non-discrimination in objectives and principles enshrined in the statutes, regulations or other foundational documents of political parties, to provide the framework for sustaining internal actions for progress towards equality and inclusion.
- ▶ Put in place and respect the laws enacted to fight violence against women.
- ▶ Put in place mechanisms to protect women from all types of violence against them, and penalise the perpetrators.

- ▶ Create an ethics committee and a disciplinary committee to protect women from violence within political parties.
- ▶ Consider and denounce conjugal and familial violence within political parties.
- ▶ Protect women when they file complaints about violence against them.
- ▶ Put in place measures adapted to the needs of women within political parties.
- ▶ Establish corrective measures and functioning rules that are democratic, adapted to the needs of women within political parties, and take into account a work–life balance.
- ▶ Establish meeting hours and locations that are suitable for women in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ▶ Educate and sensitise advocates and members of political parties on women’s needs and violence against women.
- ▶ Promote women’s participation within political parties, including in leadership roles.
- ▶ Put in place legal and practical measures to enable women to fully express their political rights and participate in the public sphere.
- ▶ Diversify the portfolios which women work on in political parties, and offer more substantive tasks to women within political parties.
- ▶ Publish data on women’s leadership in political parties. Improve party structure and ensure independence.
- ▶ Provide training on the independence of political parties.
- ▶ Ensure the financial independence of political parties by state financing which accounts for women and their needs.
- ▶ Ensure the financial autonomy of women so that they may finance their electoral campaigns and carry out their political party functions and responsibilities.

## **Recommendations to state and public institutions**

- ▶ Fight violence against women in political parties.
- ▶ Put in place structures, policies and laws that combat violence against women in all societal institutions.
- ▶ Develop housing and programmes to protect women victims of violence.
- ▶ Establish an independent observation body which identifies violence against women and men and regularly reports on the information.

Introduce a ban on all violence against candidates into the code of good electoral conduct for political parties.

- ▶ Promote women's political participation.
- ▶ Implement the law on parity for candidates.
- ▶ Establish concrete measures to facilitate women's participation in political life, such as quotas within political parties.
- ▶ Ensure transparent political parties financing.
- ▶ Oppose and renounce clientelism which disenfranchises women.

## **Recommendations to civil society and women's organisations**

- ▶ Fight against all forms of violence against women.
- ▶ Ensure that laws against gender-based violence are respected.
- ▶ Educate all relevant stakeholders in society on violence against women.
- ▶ Denounce and hold accountable perpetrators of violence against women.
- ▶ Regularly gather and publish data on violence against women.
- ▶ Change the perception of the political process.
- ▶ Eliminate prejudices towards politics and change the perception of politics within society.
- ▶ Promote women's political participation.
- ▶ Educate women on how to enter politics.
- ▶ Help women to develop the self-confidence and skill sets needed to participate in politics, including developing campaign and lobbying strategies.



## Internet, social media and online sexist hate speech

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**O**nline sexism is rampant throughout Europe, with women disproportionately affected, especially young women and girls, women journalists, politicians, public figures and women's human rights defenders. One aspect of online sexism is critically commenting on expressed views or opinions. While attacks on men are more often based on their professional opinions or competence, women are more likely to be subject to sexist and sexualised abuse and invective, the extremity of which may be magnified by the anonymity offered by the internet. Online attacks not only affect women's dignity but may also prevent women, including in the workplace, from expressing opinions and result in pushing them out of online spaces, undermining the right to free speech and opinion in a democratic society, limiting professional opportunities and reinforcing the gendered democratic deficit.

Another aspect is that the digital age has deepened the scrutiny to which women's bodies, speech and activism are subjected. In addition, sexist misuse of social media, such as posting of intimate visual material without the consent of those depicted is a form of violence that needs to be addressed.

The internet and social media are both vehicles for freedom of expression and promoting gender equality, but they also allow perpetrators to express their abusive thoughts and engage in abusive behaviour. While racist hate speech is recognised as contrary to European and international human rights standards, the same is not always true of sexist or misogynist hate speech, and current policies and legislation at all levels have not been able to adequately address the issue. Therefore, it is necessary to take responsibility for combating hate speech and ensuring that the same rules apply to sexist hate speech as those developed for racist hate speech when it comes to the use of criminal law sanctions.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Implement legislative measures that define and criminalise incidents of sexist hate speech and that are applicable to all media, including reporting procedures and appropriate sanctions. More proactive detecting and reporting procedures for sexist hate speech should also be encouraged in respect of all media, including the internet and new media.
- ▶ Establish and promote programmes (including software) for children, young people, parents and educators to assist in advising children on media literacy for a safe and critical use of digital media and appropriate digital behaviour. This should be done through school curricula and through the production of handbooks and factsheets on what constitutes sexist behaviour, unwanted sharing of material on the internet, and appropriate responses, including gender-sensitive information about online safety. Ensure the wide dissemination of such materials.
- ▶ Develop information and campaigns to raise awareness about sexist misuse of social media, threats in the internet environment and the situations children and young people face (for example, blackmail, requests for money or unwanted posting of intimate pictures) with practical assistance about how to prevent and respond to such situations.
- ▶ Undertake campaigns directed at the wider public on the dangers, opportunities, rights and responsibilities related to the use of new media.
- ▶ Establish online resources providing expert advice on how to deal with online sexism, including procedures for swiftly reporting/removing harmful or unwanted material.
- ▶ Undertake regular studies and gather sex and age disaggregated data on cybersexism and cyberviolence and share outcomes as appropriate.
- ▶ Integrate a gender equality perspective into all policies, programmes and research in relation to artificial intelligence to avoid the potential

risks of technology perpetuating sexism and gender stereotypes and examine how artificial intelligence could help to close gender gaps and eliminate sexism. This includes measures to increase the participation of women and girls in the information and technology field as students, professionals and decision makers.

- ▶ Design of data driven instruments and algorithms should be a factor in gender-based dynamics. Transparency around these issues should be improved and awareness raised about the potential gender bias in big data; solutions to improve accountability should be offered.







## Media

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Media, advertising and other communication products and services which reiterate sexism in their reports (electronic, print, visual and audio) contribute to an environment that tolerates and trivialises “everyday” sexism. It is manifested through:

- ▶ sexual, sexualised and racialised depictions and objectification of women, men, girls and boys, including in advertising, films, television, video games and pornographic material;
- ▶ derogatory or trivialising reporting about women’s appearance, dress and behaviour rather than balanced and informed discussion of their views and opinions;
- ▶ reporting on and representing women and men in stereotypical roles within the family and community;
- ▶ reproducing and perpetuating gender stereotypes with respect to victims of gender-based violence;
- ▶ unbalanced representation and the lack of meaningful participation of women in diverse professional and informative roles (experts, commentators), especially with respect to minority women.

The portrayal of women in politics in the media was the subject of research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (for example, “Female politicians in media: A missing picture”, Agency for Gender Equality, 2010, “Women in Politics: Does size matter?”, Infohouse, 2014, “Misogyny in BiH: An analysis of misogyny and sexism and public reactions to them between 2013-2018”, Fondacija Fridrih Ebert BiH and Banja Luka Centre for Human Rights, 2018), which shows that this topic is one of the central issues for the participation of women in politics. However, there are not sufficient quantitative and qualitative data or research about representation and the position of women politicians in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the project undertaken by United Women Banja Luka “Gender Equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Informed Public Opinion and Gender-Sensitive Media”, it is clear that no media in Bosnia and Herzegovina have written procedures related to equal representation of men and women in media. The analysis: “Women and Political Life in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina”, confirmed that the lack of media interest in women in politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is particularly evident during electoral campaigns and that the most public appearances are reserved for men.

The “Rulebook on media presentation of political subjects from the day of announcing the elections until the election day”<sup>2</sup> explicitly prohibits any stereotypical presentation of women and/or men and sets out sanctions that are based on the existing independent regulatory and self-regulatory bodies, the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Press Council.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Introduce legislation banning sexism in media and advertising, and encourage monitoring and enforcement of such measures.
- ▶ Urge and provide support for the participation of the information and communication technology, media and advertising sectors in the drafting, adoption and implementation of self-regulatory policies and mechanisms for the elimination of sexism, including sexist hate speech within each sector.
- ▶ Promote the role of media watchdog and advertising organisations in addressing sexism.
- ▶ Encourage the establishment of an institution that is competent to receive, analyse and review complaints in relation to sexism in the media

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2. Article 11, “Rulebook on media presentation of political subjects from the day of announcing the elections until the election day” (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 29/18).

and in advertising, and has the authority to require that sexist content or advertisements be withdrawn or modified.

- ▶ Encourage relevant bodies, such as gender equality commissions or national human rights institutions, to introduce education and training strategies, and tools for journalists and other media and communication professionals on the recognition of sexism, on how to promote positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men in the media and in advertising, and on how to promote gender-sensitive communication.
- ▶ Support research on the prevalence and impact of sexist portrayals of women and girls in the media and in pornographic material, the extent to which they exacerbate gender inequalities and violence against women and girls, and also on their impact on women's physical, sexual and psychological health.
- ▶ Run campaigns on the links between sexism, lack of gender equality and violence against women and girls; and promote positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of women and men in the media and in advertising.
- ▶ Encourage the equal participation of women and men in media decision-making positions and in content, and the establishment of databases of women experts on all subjects.
- ▶ Adopt positive measures for excellence and leadership in promoting balanced gender representation.
- ▶ Encourage the promotion of positive images of women as active participants in social, economic and political life, and of positive images of men in non-traditional roles such as carers.
- ▶ Support and promote good practice through dialogue and the development of networks and partnerships between media stakeholders to further combat sexism and gender stereotypes within the sector.
- ▶ Support projects addressing the multiple and intersecting discrimination of women in vulnerable situations.





## Workplace

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**W**orkplace sexism takes many forms and is present in the public and the private sector. It manifests itself through sexist comments, and behaviour aimed at an employee or group of employees. Sexism in the workplace includes, among other things, derogatory comments, objectification, sexist humour or jokes, over-familiar remarks, silencing or ignoring people, gratuitous comments about dress and physical appearance, sexist body language, lack of respect and masculine practices which intimidate or exclude women and favour fellow men. It impinges upon equality and dignity at work. Sexist assumptions based on traditional gender roles may result in the belief that women, as mothers or would-be mothers or carers, are less reliable colleagues and employees. Conversely, there may be hostility towards mothers who do not stay at home or, alternatively, they may be excluded from important opportunities to advance their careers and, as a consequence, their professional lives. This contributes to the glass ceiling that limits women's promotion opportunities. Such assumptions can also result in sexist remarks towards men who take up caring responsibilities. Some workplace environments are especially male dominated, with a high risk of fostering a culture of sexism. In addition, women occupying decision-making positions or those perceived as challenging the institutional male-dominated hierarchy may be especially subject to sexism. Similarly, men may experience sexism in female-dominated workplaces, or for being employed in typically "female" work.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Review labour legislation to prohibit sexism and sexist acts at work, and promote good practices such as risk analysis, mitigation and management measures, complaints mechanisms, remedies for victims and disciplinary action through civil or administrative law processes.
- ▶ Encourage and provide support for the systematic review of rules, policies and regulations within both public- and private-sector establishments with a view to the adoption of appropriate codes of behaviour that incorporate complaints mechanisms and disciplinary measures in relation to sexism and sexist acts. This should also include intersecting forms of discrimination, for instance, concerning migrant status or disability.
- ▶ Encourage independent professions, professional organisations and trade unions to embrace the fight against sexism within their organisations, including in their internal rules.
- ▶ Devise and make widely available a toolkit for combating sexism, including relevant legislative provisions and explanations as to the institutional benefits of eliminating sexism, and examples of sexist acts and of good practices for the elimination of sexism. Employers and managers, union representatives and other relevant personnel should be reminded of their obligation to eliminate workplace sexism and of the remedial action available for victims.
- ▶ Urge commitment from the highest level (in the public and private sectors) for the promotion of an institutional culture that rejects sexism within the workplace, for instance through the drawing up of equality policies, internal guidelines and campaigns on different forms of sexism and deconstruction of stereotypes, increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and breaking the glass ceiling, including through temporary special measures such as targets and quotas.
- ▶ Urge commitment from the highest level (in the public and private sectors) to promote awareness, information and prevention as regards sexist behaviour and to take all appropriate measures to protect workers from such conduct.



## Public sector

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**S**exism in the public sector and reliance on gender stereotypes can result in the refusal of public services and unequal access to resources. At the same time, women working in the public sector, including those elected or members of decision-making bodies, at all levels, frequently face challenges to their dignity, legitimacy and authority owing to sexism and sexist behaviour.

### Recommendations

- ▶ Include provisions against sexism and sexist behaviour and language in internal codes of conduct and regulations, with appropriate sanctions for those working in the public sector, including elected assemblies.
- ▶ Support initiatives and investigations undertaken by parliamentarians, civil society organisations, trade unions or activists to address sexism in the public sphere.
- ▶ Promote the inclusion of gender equality provisions within the applicable legal framework as good public tender/procurement practice.
- ▶ Ensure training of public sector employees on the importance of non-sexist behaviour in working with the public, as well as with workplace colleagues. Such training should include the definition of sexism, its different manifestations, ways to deconstruct gender stereotypes and biases and how to respond to them.



- ▶ Inform recipients of public services about their rights as regards non-sexist behaviour through, for example, awareness-raising campaigns and specific reporting schemes to identify and mediate possible problems.
- ▶ Promote the strengthening and implementation of internal disciplinary measures for sexism in the public sector and in all decision-making and political bodies, for instance through cutting or suspending responsibilities and funds, or through financial penalties.



## Justice sector

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**S**exism and gender stereotyping within the civil, administrative and criminal justice and law-enforcement systems are barriers to the administration of justice. It can result in decision makers making misinformed or discriminatory judgments based on preconceived beliefs and inherent biases rather than on relevant facts.

### Recommendations

- ▶ With due regard for the independence of the judiciary, ensure regular and adequate training for all judges and magistrates on human rights and gender equality, and the harm caused by gender bias, gender stereotyping and the use of sexist language, especially in cases involving violence against women and girls.
- ▶ Provide for training of all law-enforcement personnel on sexism, cybersexism, sexist hate speech and violence against women; facilitate the reporting to police of such behaviour; and enhance police powers to seize and secure evidence of online abuse.
- ▶ Encourage national and international courts and tribunals to be receptive to third-party interventions and expert opinions on unfamiliar topics, such as sexism and gender stereotyping.

- ▶ Ensure that systems for reporting violations and access to law enforcement are secure, available and appropriate; alleviate financial charges or other deterrents that prevent victims from reporting or pursuing cases in the appropriate forum. Take steps to address the risk of revictimisation.
- ▶ Encourage legal professional bodies to organise public lectures and other events to raise awareness among legal professionals and other relevant stakeholders on sexism and gender stereotyping in the justice system.



## Private sphere

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Sexism within the family can contribute to reinforcing stereotypical roles, women's disempowerment, low self-esteem and the cycle of violence against women and girls. It can also influence life and career choices. Although traditional gender roles within the family (men as breadwinners, women performing household tasks) have generally shifted as more women have entered the paid workforce, factors contributing to change across families and states vary greatly. Sexist behaviour remains widespread in interpersonal relations and women continue to perform much more unpaid work in the home than men. Cedaw Article 16 requires states parties to take appropriate measures to ensure equality between women and men within the family. The link between sexism and prevention of violence against women and girls reinforces the need to take action in the private sphere. The recommended measures above are especially relevant to addressing sexism in the private sphere. However, sanctions for sexism within the family are inappropriate, unless behaviour reaches the threshold of criminality such as physical, psychological or economic violence against women.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Introduce measures in relation to the conciliation between private and working life, including paid maternity and paternity leave, paid parental leave for women and men, universal access to quality and affordable childcare and other social services, and flexible working arrangements for both women and men. Improve access to services for the care of the elderly and other dependants. Organise campaigns to encourage the equal sharing of household and care responsibilities between women and men.
- ▶ Promote policies and measures supporting positive parenting which guarantee equal opportunities for children irrespective of their sex, status, abilities or family situation. Positive parenting refers to parental behaviour based on the best interests of the child that is nurturing, free of gender stereotyping, empowering, non-violent and provides recognition and guidance which involves the setting of boundaries to enable the full development of the child.
- ▶ Introduce measures and tools enhancing the skills of parents to deal with cybersexism and internet pornography.
- ▶ Promote training in recognising and addressing sexism and sexist behaviour as part of professional courses for those dealing with family and interpersonal relationships, for example, social services personnel including maternity welfare and childcare centres.

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As women's political activity has grown, so has the frequency and degree of violent responses to their presence in politics. Around the world, politically active women – voters, candidates, local councillors, members of parliament, community activists, bloggers and so on – regularly find themselves on the receiving end of acts or threats of violence. These growing acts of violence serve as a strong barrier to women accessing their right to participate fully and equally in politics and public life.

This publication analyses violence against women in politics in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina and sets out recommendations to address the problem.



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