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**THIS ACTION IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**ANNEX VI**

to the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the multiannual action plan in favour of the NDICI Neighbourhood East Region for 2023-2024

**Action Document for EU4Gender Equality Phase II**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

This document constitutes the annual work programme in the sense of Article 110(2) of the Financial Regulation, and action plan/measure in the sense of Article 23(2) of NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

**1. SYNOPSIS**

**1.1. Action Summary Table**

<b>1. Title OPSYS Basic Act</b>	EU4Gender Equality Phase II Multiannual Indicative Regional Programming Document (MIP) 2021-2027 <sup>1</sup> OPSYS business reference: ACT-62102 ABAC Commitment level 1 number: JAD.1278326 Financed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe).
<b>2. Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)</b>	No
<b>EIP Flagship</b>	No
<b>3. Team Europe Initiative</b>	No
<b>4. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action</b>	The action shall be carried out for the benefit of the Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus <sup>1</sup> , Georgia, the Republic of Moldova <sup>2</sup> and Ukraine.
<b>5. Programming document</b>	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) 2021-2027

<sup>1</sup> In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus’s involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with representatives of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises. Should there be a change of the context this may be reconsidered. In the meantime, the EU continues to engage with and, where possible, has stepped up support to non-state, local and regional actors, including within the framework of this regional programme.

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter referred to as “Moldova”.

	Multiannual Indicative Regional Programming Document (MIP) 2021-2027 <sup>3</sup>
<b>6. Link with relevant MIP(s) objectives/expected results</b>	Priority area 5 of the MIP: Resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies Specific objective 2: Strengthen democracy, gender equality, human rights and anti-discrimination. Expected result: Increased gender equality and women's empowerment <sup>4</sup>
<b>PRIORITY AREAS AND SECTOR INFORMATION</b>	
<b>7. Priority Area(s), sectors</b>	DAC codes: 151 - Government & Civil Society-general 160 - Other Social Infrastructure & Services Priority area of MIP 2021-2027: Priority area 5: Resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies
<b>8. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</b>	Main SDG: - SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Other significant SDGs: - SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all - SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. - SDG 10. Reduced inequalities - SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong and inclusive institutions.
<b>9. DAC code(s)</b>	<b>151 – Government &amp; Civil Society-general</b> 15180 – Ending violence against women and girls – 10% 15170 – Women's rights organisations and movements, and government institutions – 80% <b>160 - Other Social Infrastructure &amp; Services</b> 16010 – Social Protection – 10%
<b>10. Main Delivery Channel</b>	Indirect management: 40000 Multilateral organisations And Direct management: 60000 Service contract
<b>11. Targets</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Climate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social inclusion and Human Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Rights, Democracy and Governance

<sup>3</sup> C(2021)9370

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<b>12. Markers (from DAC form)</b>	<b>General policy objective</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Participation development/good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Inclusion of persons with Disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>RIO Convention markers</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	Biological diversity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Combat desertification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Climate change mitigation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Climate change adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>13. Internal markers and Tags</b>	<b>Policy objectives</b>	<b>Not targeted</b>	<b>Significant objective</b>	<b>Principal objective</b>
	EIP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	EIP Flagship	YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Tags	YES		NO
	transport	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	environment, climate resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	digital	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	economic development (incl. private sector, trade and macroeconomic support)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	human development (incl. human capital and youth)	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
health resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
migration and mobility	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

agriculture, food security and rural development			
Digitalisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital skills/literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
digital services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tags	YES	NO	
digital connectivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
education and research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Migration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduction of Inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COVID-19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### BUDGET INFORMATION

<b>14. Amounts concerned</b>	Budget line(s) (article, item): BGUE-B2023-14.020111-C1-NEAR – EUR 8 000 000 Total estimated cost: EUR 8 000 000 Total amount of EU budget contribution EUR 8 000 000
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#### MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

<b>15. Implementation modalities (management mode and delivery methods)</b>	<b>Direct management</b> through: - Procurement <b>Indirect management</b> with the pillar assessed entity(ies) to be selected in accordance with the criteria set out in section 4.3.2
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### 1.2. Summary of the Action

The EU is committed to achieving gender equality and protecting women's and girls' rights. Following the important results achieved in the first phase of EU4Gender Equality, this new phase of the program continues to aim to increase gender equality and women's empowerment in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region by addressing root causes of gender inequalities and promote gender transformative change.

The program will contribute towards the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”). Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and is labelled as G2 per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, which implies that improving gender equality is the principal objective.

It contributes to the priority area 5 of the MIP 2021-2025: Resilient, gender equal, fair and inclusive societies and its specific objective of strengthening democracy, gender equality, human rights and anti-discrimination.

The action has three main components. The first component will focus on supporting EaP governments and policy makers, providing them with sector based guidance and mentoring in order to mainstream gender equality and promote a gender sensitive perspective in their reforms. It will also support the overall coordination of gender mainstreaming in all EU’s post-2020 EaP priority areas. The component will focus on ensuring effective, fair and inclusive impact on decision making. Sharing EU expertise, lessons learned and good practices on gender mainstreaming in public institutions will also contribute to supporting the EU membership perspective of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The main aim of the second component is to focus on the root causes of gender inequality related to norms and gender stereotypes with the ultimate aim to enhance women’s empowerment and gender equality. Such efforts of innovative programs will in the long run deepen democracy, improve the respect for women’s and girls’ (in all their diversities) rights and provide examples of concrete changes in the perceptions and roles of women and men.

In the third component, the program has a specific focus on promoting men’s role in caregiving which will promote women’s economic empowerment and employment, prevent domestic violence and improve the relationship between fathers and their children. Good practices of challenging social norms and promoting fatherhood will be scaled up and institutionalised, including through capacity building and support to professionals within the health and the private sector.

The action will build on the success of the first phase of EU4Gender Equality and will provide an important contribution to EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) as a unique initiative with a gender transformative approach in its core that is further complemented by a rights-based and intersectional approach. In particular, the action is aligned with the following thematic areas of engagement of EU GAP III: “Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence”, “Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women”, “Promoting equal participation and leadership” and “Integrating the women, peace and security agenda”.

### **1.3. Beneficiar(y)/(ies) of the action**

The Action shall be carried out in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus<sup>5</sup>, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, out of which all are included in the list of ODA recipients. Final beneficiaries are men, women, boys and girls in the local communities.

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<sup>5</sup> In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of Belarus’s involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with Belarusian authorities. However, it continues to engage with and even step-up support to the Belarusian civil society including within the framework of this regional programme.

## 2. RATIONALE

### 2.1. Context

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union (EU) and a recognised universal human right. It is essential for the well-being, economic growth, prosperity good governance, peace and security. In November 2020, the European Union adopted the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III), an ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in all external EU actions. It promotes a gender transformative approach meaning examining, questioning, and changing rigid gender norms and imbalances of power which disadvantage women and girls and generate discriminations at all ages, starting from early childhood, in societies. This requires a context-sensitive way of working, through strong partnerships and dialogue with local actors, civil society and local communities and support to women's organisations. The GAP III is implemented through Country Level Implementations Plans (CLIPS) based on a national gender analysis in each country. Five of the six EaP countries have developed a CLIP, Belarus is the only country without a CLIP. These CLIPs highlight that gender equality will be mainstreamed throughout all actions of the MIP.

The **European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025**<sup>6</sup> is also based on a dual approach of targeted measures to achieve gender equality, combined with strengthening gender equality. It highlights the importance of addressing gender at the institutional level, and requires teaming up and actions by all EU institutions, Members States and EU agencies, in partnership with civil society and women's rights organisations, social partners and the private sector. This strategy also means that dedicated funding for gender equality is essential.

In the “**2021 Joint Staff Working Document**, Recovery resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership” the EU outlined how to take forward cooperation with Eastern partner countries in the years to come. These priorities cannot be achieved without gender mainstreaming, i.e. without making sure that women and men equally contribute and benefit from the resilient economies, accountable institutions, environmental and climate resilience, digital transformation and resilient and inclusive societies. It is considered that gender priorities will multiply the positive outcomes associated with the achievement of the document's objectives.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of **resilient, sustainable and integrated economies**, the gender pay gap which stands at 29.1% in the Eastern Partnership region on average, alongside with women's underrepresentation in entrepreneurship and decision-making in business and in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) occupations, hold back the economic growth. On average, women in the region spend far more time on unpaid care work than men. Caring for children, other family members and other domestic responsibilities remain the key reason underlying economic inequalities between women and men. Structural inequalities in the economy are not only caused by gender stereotypes, but also by factors including location (i.e. residing in rural vs. urban areas, or residing in remote locations), limited access to public transportation in rural areas across the EaP region, and limited child care facilities. Therefore, significant work remains to be done to encourage and support women's ability to build economic security for themselves, their families and communities.

With regard to **accountable institutions, the rule of law and security**, key gender equality issues in the EaP region include gender-based violence that Eastern partner countries still lack effective mechanisms to address. Other issues include women's underrepresentation in decision-making in the judiciary, law

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<sup>6</sup> Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Union of Equality; Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

<sup>7</sup> EU4GenderEquality: Reform Helpdesk, [Gender Equality and post-2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities: A Guide on how to Promote Gender Equality in Policy, Programming and Reform Work](#), Feb 2022

enforcement agencies and the military, as well as limited opportunities for women to have their voices heard and to equally participate in conflict prevention and peace processes across the region. Nevertheless, it is clear that essential services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) are extremely scarce across the region, and prosecutions are few and far between. Overall, it is estimated that law enforcement agencies prosecute fewer than 10% of the cases of GBV reported to them. Women remain underrepresented in law enforcement and the armed forces, especially at decision-making levels. In recent decades, the EaP region has faced multiple conflicts. Despite this, women remain largely underrepresented in peace and security processes, and women's needs and perspectives tend not to be considered in conflict resolution strategies.

Gender gaps in **environmental and climate resilience** in the EaP region include women's underrepresentation in the climate and energy sectors, especially at the decision-making. They also include the disproportionate impact of limited access to natural resources, and limited protection from climate change risks, on women – especially elderly and rural women. Other challenges include women's underrepresentation in agriculture businesses, as well as the fact that women's perspectives are poorly integrated into green transition and circular economy policies, which limits compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.<sup>8</sup>

Key gender equality-related challenges to resilient **digital transformation** include the gender and generational divide in access to digital technologies and services, which were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Other issues include gaps in digital literacy, women's underrepresentation among science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) students (26.3% on average) and professionals (27.6% on average), as well as in ICT businesses and decision-making on digital transformation, and online discrimination and cyber violence.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of **resilient, gender equal and inclusive societies**, common challenges exist across Eastern partnership Countries. There is an average 8.1-year gender gap in life expectancy between women and men in the region, disfavours men. Other challenges include women's underrepresentation in parliaments (25.8% on average), public administration and local councils, as well as suboptimal national gender machineries and a lack of gender-sensitive policies and reforms.<sup>10</sup>

Over the past decade, Eastern partnership Countries have made progress in various aspects of gender equality. Legislative frameworks for gender equality are in place, and, in all six countries, action plans for reducing inequality have been developed and approved. All six EaP countries have adopted the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 that called upon United Nations members to accelerate action towards gender equality and women's empowerment in all areas of life, and have acceded and/or ratified the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Of the region's six countries, half (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). While Armenia has signed the convention, ratification has been pending for several years. Azerbaijan and Belarus have not yet signed the convention. Two of the EaP countries have in place National Action Plans to implement the United Nations Security Council 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Those are Ukraine's National Action Plan (2020-2025) and Azerbaijan's National Action Plan (2020-2023). Georgia, Armenia and Moldova have not updated their plans after their expiry, and Belarus is the only country in the region that does not have a National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> [Gender Equality and post-2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities: A Guide on how to Promote Gender Equality in Policy, Programming and Reform Work](#), Feb 2022

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/>

Eastern Partnership Countries have recently launched effective solutions to address many of these challenges. Examples includes gender quotas introduced for parliamentary elections in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, supported by mentorship and capacity building for women politicians and political parties. Specifically, Armenia adopted a 25% quota in 2016, Georgia introduced a 20% quota in 2020, Moldova introduced a 40% quota in 2016, and Ukraine adopted a 40% quota in 2019 (Ukraine and Georgia apply quota to both national parliamentary and local elections).<sup>12</sup> Other examples include women’s entrepreneurship actions in Moldova, and women and girls in STEM initiatives implemented by civil society in Belarus and Ukraine.

However, much remains to be done in practice. In the Commission’s opinions on Georgia’s and Moldova’s application for membership the need to consolidate efforts to enhance gender equality and fight violence against women were highlighted in the recommendations. Progress varies across the region, and critical gender gaps still exist. Gender stereotypes remain prevalent throughout the region and represent root causes of the above-listed inequalities and discrimination. While women and men in EaP countries generally perceive that there has been progress towards achieving gender equality<sup>13</sup>, there are considerable risks for setbacks. Political developments and unprecedented security concerns in the EaP countries, such as Russian aggression against Ukraine, the protracted political crises in Belarus, as well as COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges have undermined some hard-won gains on gender equality and have exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, including unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work, perception of men as soldiers and women as housekeepers, increased risks of gender-based and domestic violence, etc.

Complementarity, synergies and donor coordination will be ensured throughout the activities. During the first phase of the regional EU4Gender Equality action, 2020-2023, progress was made towards shifting social perceptions, challenging gender stereotypes and increasing men’s participation in unpaid domestic and care work. Laws, strategies and reform programs were also gender mainstreamed through demand driven assistance to governments in the Eastern Neighbourhood countries. The action will build on the achievements and the connections that were created during the first phase of EU4Gender Equality.

The experience of Oxfam, Swedish Sida and Canadian SIDA, and UN agencies in changing stereotypes and transformative programming will be taken into account. The program will also collaborate with global actors such as *Equimond: Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice* working to promote gender equality by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls, *the Global Men Engage Alliance* working with men and boys for gender equality and the *Global MenCare* campaign.

Other EU supported programs in the region which are complementary and would provide cross learnings, include EU4Business initiative which supports women led SMEs, EU4Dialogue promoting the inclusion of women in peace processes and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and the EU-Council of Europe “Partnership for Good Governance” Joint Programme, which works on women’s access to justice, supports the delivery of the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention and other European gender equality standards in the Eastern Partnership Countries. In addition, synergies will be created with relevant ongoing bilateral actions.

## 2.2. Problem Analysis

### Short problem analysis

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<sup>12</sup> EU4GenderEquality: Reform Helpdesk, [Gender Equality and post-2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities: A Guide on how to Promote Gender Equality in Policy, Programming and Reform Work](#), Feb 2022

<sup>13</sup> Analytical Brief based on the findings of the Baseline Study on Gender Norms and Stereotypes on the EaP countries, UN Women, UNFPA, 2022.

Gender equality is a driver for economic development. Women's increased access to and progression in the labour market is a strong driver of economic growth and has a notable progressive impact on a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Gender equality and egalitarian gender roles are more likely to lead to safer and healthier societies where individuals are free to make choices and live to achieve the full potential.<sup>14</sup> It has been estimated that closing the gender gap between 2015-2025 would add USD 28 trillion, or 26% to annual world-wide GDP in 2025 compared to a business as usual scenario.<sup>15</sup>

Challenges to democracy have increased globally over the last two decades and are linked to attacks on human rights and gender equality.<sup>i</sup> They include anti-democratic threats to justice systems, targeting of the press, disinformation campaigns to influence elections, and the mainstreaming of far right groups.<sup>ii,iii</sup> These trends worsened further during the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>iv</sup> and risk undoing much of the last century's progressive gains, which touch upon distribution of power, resources, and influence.<sup>v</sup> These challenges are also affecting the EaP countries. Five EaP countries rank relatively low in the World Economic Forum's annual Global Gender Gap report for 2022, with the exception of Moldova, which ranks 16th. Belarus ranks 36th, Georgia 55th, Ukraine 81st, Armenia 89th, Azerbaijan 101st.<sup>16</sup>

### Gender equality commitments and implementation

Human rights of women and girls, men and boys are specifically protected by normative frameworks and commitments that should be reflected in national policies and action plans. They are an important basis for holding governments accountable and for bringing local issues to the attention of human rights bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Having well-established legal frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment, the EaP countries still face considerable challenges in enforcing these in practice. Women remain remarkably absent from the political structures of power, both in the executive and in the parliamentary branch. On average, 14% of ministers and 16% of parliamentarians are women, in the EaP. In the economic field, despite the fact that women are generally more educated than men, they represent 10% of members of the governing bodies of employers' organisations and 15% of trade unions' members. Gender pay gap is significant among all EaP countries (ranging between 24% and 50%), while horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market is critical. Fighting violence against women is a challenge shared by many countries, including the EU's Eastern neighbours. Statistics of the reported cases show that between 7% - 25% of women (depending on the country) have been victims of domestic violence. Most cases however remain unreported.<sup>18</sup>

Progress towards gender equality is largely linked to effective political reforms, based on impact assessments and gender budgeting. While most partner countries have limited tools and capacities to implement key commitments, others also lack the political will to do so. Gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies remains suboptimal across the EaP region. Most national and regional policies are gender neutral.<sup>19</sup> Gender equality needs to be mainstreamed in all strategies and actions, ongoing and planned reforms, as well as within the organisations themselves. Any analysis needs to assess unequal power relations and gender stereotypes within each sector.

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<sup>14</sup> UN Women regional office for Europe and Central Asia and UNFPAs regional office for Europe and Central Asia, Together against Gender Stereotypes and gender based violence, Base line study 2022

<sup>15</sup> McKinsey Global Institute, The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$ 12 Trillion to Global Growth < Executive Summary, McKinsey & Company, New York, NY 2015

<sup>16</sup> World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2022, July 2022.

<sup>17</sup> [sida662353en-sidas-work-for-gender-equality.pdf](https://sida662353en-sidas-work-for-gender-equality.pdf) (cec.eu.int)

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0365\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0365_EN.html)

<sup>19</sup> EU4GenderEquality: Reform Helpdesk, Gender Equality and post-2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities: A Guide on how to Promote Gender Equality in Policy, Programming and Reform Work, Feb 2022.

## Social norms

Cultural norms and gender stereotypes that assign responsibility for care work solely to women influence the opportunities and choices women have in their professional lives. Deeply rooted gender inequalities and social norms as well as gender discriminatory policies and laws are among the root causes of gender inequality. Unequal power structures, discriminatory and gender stereotypical social norms and attitudes affect women, men, girls and boys in different ways. Girls and women suffer the most of the negative impact of rigid social norms and gender discrimination. They are more likely than men and boys to experience restriction in their freedom and mobility: have less decision making power and higher level of gender-based violence and harassment across their life cycle and in all contexts. Men and boys can also experience negative consequences because of gender stereotypes. Men are for example less likely to be actively involved in their children's lives than women are. Men and women are not a homogenous group. Their ability to shape their own life is also affected by other social variables such as age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and religion and other beliefs.<sup>20</sup> Women, men, boys and girls who live in poverty and are deprived of their rights are more likely to be effected by gender inequalities.

In Eastern Partnership Countries, harmful stereotypes and perceptions about women's and men's roles still persist. According to the findings of a 2020 Baseline Study on Stereotypes, most women and men (averaging from 50% in Georgia to 83% in Armenia) in the EaP countries believe that women are primarily responsible for unpaid domestic work. The notion that "a good wife should never question her husband's decisions, even if she disagrees with them" is widely believed in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. A majority of respondents in Armenia (72%), Azerbaijan (56%), and Georgia (53%) felt that conflicts between a husband and wife, even if involving violence, should remain private.

Birth registration documents show evidence of prenatal sex selection in favour of boys in Azerbaijan (116.8 boys born for every 100 girls), in Armenia (114.8) and in Georgia (113.6)<sup>21</sup>. Although recent data suggest an improving trend, skewed gender demographics are symptomatic of deeper gender inequalities. Such imbalances may also have important social and economic consequences in the long term.<sup>22</sup>

These stereotypes and perceptions limit women's ability to reach their full potential. Harmful social norms, beliefs and stereotypes are the root causes of inequalities, gender-based discrimination, and gender-based violence. The same traditional gender norms also affect men, assigning them the role of breadwinner and provider. While many men in the region want to spend more time with their children, social and economic pressures prevent them from doing so.

The focus for achieving gender equality has often been on women: how to remove barriers for the inclusion of women, how to empower women, how to ensure that women gain access to health, economic, educational, and other opportunities. Since inequities are often created by unequal power dynamics between men and women, efforts that shift these dynamics, encourage behaviour change, and engage men and boys as allies, are central to making progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.<sup>23</sup>

## Unequal division of care work

Cultural norms and gender stereotypes that ascribe care work solely to women limit women's opportunities and choices in their professional lives. Various time-use studies in the EaP countries show that women who

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<sup>20</sup> [sida662353en-sidas-work-for-gender-equality.pdf \(cec.eu.int\)](https://ec.europa.eu/sida662353en-sidas-work-for-gender-equality.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Knowledge Brief by the World Bank on Exploring the phenomenon on missing girls in the South Caucasus

<sup>22</sup> UNFPA issue brief Combatting violence against women and girls in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 2015

<sup>23</sup> [Gender Equality is Not Just a Women's Issue - FSG](#)

are not in the labour force, report domestic responsibilities as the primary reason behind their absence from the labour market. Eastern Partnership Countries lag behind the EU average in terms of gender inequalities in unpaid care work. Women in these countries spend an average of 4.5 hours every day on unpaid care work, while men spend 1.7 hours, with considerable variations across the region. This means that women in the region spend, on average, 2.7 times more time on unpaid care work than men. This gap increases when people have children.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, data on men and gender equality from the region show similar results as those of the EU, namely that a more equal sharing of caregiving would have a positive impact on women's employment. Men have proven to be adopting new care taking responsibilities when the health sector has been engaging with fathers during their partner's pregnancy or when their children are young. Shifting this perception towards a more equal sharing of caregiving would not only have a positive impact on women's employment, but also on children's wellbeing and men's mental and physical health.

Men's positive involvement in the lives of their partners and children creates a global opportunity for equality, and it benefits women, children, and men themselves. Engaging men as involved fathers can lead to improved maternal and child health, stronger and more equitable partner relations, a reduction in violence against women and children, and lifelong benefits for daughters and sons. Research has shown that men's involvement as caregivers also has benefits for them: it makes them better fathers, improves their intimate relationships, and enhances their quality of life.<sup>25</sup>

### Gender based violence

All Eastern Partnership Countries have legal frameworks and action plans in place to combat gender-based violence (GBV). Nevertheless, responses to GBV face multiple challenges across the region. Key reasons for GBV include harmful social norms and gender stereotypes as well as a lack of effective mechanisms to prevent, respond or even measure such violence. This creates a sense of impunity, while discouraging survivors from reporting instances of violence.

Combining an analysis of data from social surveys with an analysis of official national statistics suggests that approximately 80% of GBV cases remain unreported because women do not trust law enforcement's capacity to address violence, as well as due to traditional gender norms, stereotypes, and fears of retaliation.<sup>26</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased the prevalence of gender-based violence globally, including in the EaP region. During lockdowns, which were introduced to curb the spread of COVID-19, partners were confined to limited spaces, while the economic crisis and employment concerns generally increased levels of stress. This appears to have contributed to the fact that more women reported violence since the pandemic began.

There is limited information about available support for survivors. Whilst countries such as Georgia and Ukraine have launched hotlines for survivors of gender-based violence, information about available protection remains rather limited in all six Eastern Partnership Countries. There are almost no rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. This also contributes to the fact that action is often not taken at the individual, community or social levels to address GBV.

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<sup>24</sup> EU4GenderEquality: Reform Helpdesk, Gender Equality and post-2020 Eastern Partnership Priorities: A Guide on how to Promote Gender Equality in Policy, Programming and Reform Work, Feb 2022

<sup>25</sup> [About MenCare - MenCare \(men-care.org\)](https://men-care.org/)

<sup>26</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE-led Survey on Violence Against Women: Well-being and Safety of Women. Ukraine Results Report, OSCE, Vienna, 2019, available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440312>; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE-led Survey on Violence Against Women: Well-being and Safety of Women. Moldova Results Report, OSCE, Vienna 2019, available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/424979>; <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440312>

Efforts to end GBV falter when males are not engaged as part of the solution. Men are the principal perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and a radical mindset shift is necessary to bring about lasting behavioral change. Male engagement is critical to ending violence and discrimination against women and girls. Partnering with men as allies to establish positive gender attitudes is key to changing a culture that has historically reinforced GBV.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the systematic use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war has been observed in many conflicts including the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Numerous reports of incidents of sexual violence perpetrated against women and girls in Ukraine have emerged while the overall risk of GBV, including sexual exploitation and abuse and trafficking, increases as the war continues. The national machinery of GBV survivor's support is undergoing a revision at all levels with Governmental coordination group in charge of the process.

Identification of main stakeholders and corresponding institutional and/or organisational issues (mandates, potential roles, and capacities) to be covered by the action.

The main stakeholders and direct beneficiaries of the action are as follows (with the exception of Belarus public bodies and state-owned enterprises):

**The Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministries of Interior, Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Education, Science Culture and Sport** and the national machineries for gender equality in the EaP region, as the key guardian of policies and capacity building of the social services.

**The Ministries of Healthcare** in the EaP region will be involved in the capacity development of health care professionals in neo-natal and childcare to reach out to fathers.

The commitment to change cannot only be at the hands of individuals and communities, it should primarily be reflected in political commitments from decision-makers. **Parliamentarians and local level politicians and local/regional authorities** will therefore be addressed through sensitisation on the importance of involving men in care taking responsibilities and to enhance access to childcare services and to promote paternal leave in order to enhance women's participation on the labour market and to strengthen economic growth. The **private sector** will also be mobilised to promote male engagement and family friendly policies.

Local stakeholders and community leaders, including faith based actors will also be approached to address gender stereotypes and to promote gender equality.

The indirect/final beneficiaries of the action are **women and men, young people, boys and girls across the EaP region** who will be challenged to reconsider current gender stereotypes and traditional norms, including the roles of women and men in care giving. Particular efforts shall be put on reaching the most marginalised communities, including representatives of minority groups, migrant communities, persons with disabilities and those living in the rural areas as well as migrant and IDP populations

Local advocacy actions will be implemented in coordination with **CSOs** (women's organisations, youth organisations, feminist organisations, human rights and other organisations) – a key stakeholder that knows the environment and an actor for change, which will play a critical role in the design and implementation of awareness raising activities around gender equality and men's responsibility for care services. Women's organisations, youth organisations, feminist organisations, human rights - and other civil society organizations will also be used to enhance sustainability of interventions beyond this action.

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<sup>27</sup> [Engaging Men to End Gender-Based Violence Against Women - World | ReliefWeb](#)

### 2.3. Lessons Learned

Implementation of the EU4Gender Equality phase I in the Eastern Neighbourhood countries established a basis for stronger gender mainstreaming in the policies and programs of the EaP region as well as the introduction of new approaches for addressing and shifting harmful gender stereotypes, promoting men's care roles and the prevention of Gender Based Violence (GBV). It is also evident that closing the gender gap, shifting harmful gender stereotypes and achieving behavioural and structural change takes time and needs continuous support and efforts.

In particular, the achievements to build on include:

- **22** national policy/legislative documents/programmes were analysed from a gender perspective with the Helpdesk support in **5** countries (except Belarus)
- **1007** government staff (**822** women and **185** men) and **30** EUDs staff (21 women and 9 men were trained) on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming
- **26** research/analytical/knowledge products produced by the Helpdesk, covering EaP countries
- Around **35.6 million people** heard persuasive messages on promoting gender equality and eliminating harmful gender stereotypes through social media campaigns
- 22 CSOs received **small grants** to implement innovative projects in all six Eastern Partnership Countries.
- 3,819 men benefited from around 32 '[Fathers' Schools](#)'
- Around **16.7 million people** were informed of the importance of men's caretaking responsibilities
- **734** health professionals and family center specialists learned about the importance of engaging men during pregnancy and childbirth and about the importance of promoting active fatherhood

The second phase of the action will be guided by the lessons learned from the evaluation from the first phase as well as from learnings from similar programs implemented in other parts of the world. It has also been informed by an attitudinal baseline survey carried out in the EaP countries during the first phase of the program.

Effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in policy and reform work requires mostly political will, commitment and leadership matched with a technical capacity for gender analysis. In this regard, identifying gender champions in senior positions across the administration has proven an effective method to increase local commitment. More specifically, the EU4Gender Equality Reform Help Desk which was set up in the previous phase to provide demand-driven assistance to governments in the EaP on mainstreaming gender in new laws, strategies, actions and documents has been welcomed and strongly utilised by the partners and it is therefore important to maintain this type of demand driven support.

To measure change as well as support evidence-based policy making, it is critical to have access to regularly generated consistent gender-disaggregated data. It is also important in order to have standardised strategies, tools and indicators across the countries and across the activities that are being implemented and more work needs to be done to further develop those. The baseline study on gender norms and stereotypes carried out in the framework of EU4Gender Equality phase 1 in the countries of the Eastern Partnership Countries has proven to be an important basis, which can be further developed and used for measuring progress.

Close coordination with and ownership by EU Delegations is crucial to ensure a multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach to promote existing technical assistance and their wide use. Continuously raising the issues at all levels (including in bilateral policy dialogues) is an important tool. The benefit of having a regional program includes the added value of developing regional tools and methods and the cross learning

between countries. Cross learning events (online and offline) as well as study visits have proved to be useful and thus, will continue in the second phase.

At the same time, the flexibility to take the local context into consideration as well as to adopt the program based on new developments, is essential. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, for instance, required adjustment of project activities, including adaptation of some of the fatherhood programs, so that fathers could keep in contact with their separated families. In the conflict affected areas awareness about gender equality and gender transformative approaches in post conflict peacebuilding processes could become of a particular importance. Local ownership will remain essential.

A number of innovative approaches have been tested in the first phase and the most successful ones will continue and will be scaled up. When possible these will be institutionalised within the governments, such as the promotion of fatherhood through the health sector.

Working with progressive faith based leaders has proven effective and essential, especially in conservative communities. Partnering with the private sector has been another successful entry point for promoting fatherhood and family friendly policies, especially in context where the civil society is shrinking. This will be further assessed and expanded in the next phase.

Strategic communication has been an important approach for raising awareness about gender stereotypes and norms within the community. An important lesson has been to focus on positive messages, such as the benefits of men's involvement in their children's lives.

There has been resistance from governments and feminist organisations towards the rehabilitation programs of perpetrators in some countries. In the second phase this will no longer be a pillar of the program, but the consolidation of learning and the support to partners in countries where the program has worked well will continue.

### **3. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION**

#### **3.1. Objectives and Expected Outputs**

The Overall Objective (Impact) of this action is to increase gender equality and women's empowerment in the EaP region.

The Specific(s) Objective(s) (Outcomes) of this action are to

1. Increased gender mainstreaming in planning and implementation of major reforms, policy-making and legislative work
2. Shifted harmful social perceptions and gender stereotypes
3. Increased participation of men in caretaking of their children

The Outputs to be delivered by this action contributing to the corresponding Specific Objectives (Outcomes) are:

Contributing to Outcome 1 (or Specific Objective 1):

- 1.1 Institutions benefit from competences and capacities to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation of public policies and reforms
- 1.2 Women's rights organisations and other civil society organisations have the capacities to sustain evidence-based dialogue with public administrations

Contributing to Outcome 2 (or Specific Objective 2):

- 2.1 Relevant target populations are aware of harmful gender stereotypes and perceptions and positive gender roles
- 2.2 Partner organisations have enhanced competences and capacities to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and gender discrimination and to promote positive gender roles

Contributing to Outcome 3 (or Specific Objective 3):

- 3.1 Programs to improve men's care responsibilities and domestic work are enhanced and expanded
- 3.2 The private sector have enhanced capacity to promote gender equality, engaged fatherhood and family friendly policies

### **3.2. Indicative Activities**

Activities related to Output 1.1:

- Providing access to a demand driven helpdesk with a pool of experts supporting EaP Governments and relevant EU stakeholders on mainstreaming gender in new laws, strategies, programs and documents. The help desk will provide, advice and assistance, capacity and knowledge development as well as support for inclusive recovery. Sustainability will be assessed and ensured through the request approval procedure.
- Conducting mapping and support with design of regional and country-specific key structural reforms that would boost gender equality, for example through gender equal family policies.
- Sharing EU expertise, lessons learned and good practices on gender mainstreaming in public institutions.

Activities relating to Output 1.2:

- Supporting capacity of local women's and civil society organisations (youth, women's rights, human rights and others) for them to conduct and sustain evidence based dialogues to hold government accountable.

Activities related to Output 2.1:

- Scaling up innovative campaigns and communication approaches for triggering behavioural change among target population (women, men, young people, boys and girls).
- Partnering with youth organisations to target young people as key agents of change including through tested innovative approaches and solutions, e.g. social theatres, social media, etc. contributing to regular collection of gender-disaggregated data on harmful gender norms and stereotypes. Standardization of data collection methods and tools across the countries and activities to measure change effectively and consistently. Using this data for awareness raising and for policy advocacy to promote gender-responsive solutions at the national and regional levels.
- Support knowledge exchange and network building between partners at the regional level through a community of practitioners. This includes regular newsletters, annual forums of partners to present their findings, learn and share from other regions/countries and agree on priorities for their networking and joint activities.

Activities related to Output 2.2:

- Partnering with and supporting women's rights and civil society organisations (youth, human rights and others) to target beneficiaries, faith-based leaders and decision makers to improve gender equality by addressing harmful gender stereotypes and prevent gender based violence in different spheres, incl. labour market, decision making, ICT/STEM, etc. (build on the successes from phase 1).

- Strengthen partner organisations to address gender stereotypes and discrimination (including GBV), during emergencies and war times, including supporting resilience building and early recovery efforts in Ukraine.
- Strengthen the capacity of partners to measure the results in a systematic and comparable way.

Activities related to Output 3.1:

- Expanding Fathers' Schools and engaging more men as engaged fathers and partners. Building capacities of facilitators of existing Fathers' Schools based on the findings of the analysis done under EU4Gender Equality first phase of their needs and finding flexible and sustainable solutions for functioning of existing Fathers' Schools through partnering with national and local authorities to institutionalise good practices. Some of these schools will be online and through videos to maintain family relations during separation

Activities contributing to Output 3.2:

- Partnering with private sector to address social norms and stereotypes in the employment area and reach wider groups of men and promote involved fatherhood through the employers (in particular in male-dominated sectors).
- Advocating for applying good practices from EU countries on gender equal family policies and paternal leave through public and private sectors.

Throughout the action, support will be provided to the prevention of domestic violence. Attention will also be paid to GBV, in particular in the context of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine.

### 3.3. Mainstreaming

#### **Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

**Outcomes of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening** (relevant for budget support and strategic-level interventions)

The SEA screening concluded that no further action was required.

**Outcomes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The EIA screening classified the action as Category C (no need for further assessment).

**Outcome of the Climate Risk Assessment (CRA) screening** (relevant for projects and/or specific interventions within a project).

The CRA screening concluded that this action is no or low risk (no need for further assessment).

#### **Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls**

As per OECD Gender DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as G2. This implies that improving gender equality is the principal objective.

Gender equality is a core value for the European Union. Through the EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III)<sup>28</sup>, the EU has made strong commitments to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls and push for more and faster progress

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<sup>28</sup> EU Gender Action Plan III: An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join-2020-17-final_en.pdf)

toward gender equality in the partner countries, including increasing the level of women participation, representation and leadership in politics and governance, via support for democracy and governance actions and public administration reforms.

The EU4Gender Equality II action takes a gender transformative approach which supports gender mainstreaming across the priority areas for cooperation set out in the long-term policy objectives for EaP post-2020 while promoting the transformation of individual and collective imaginaries, attitudes and behaviours than under pin gender inequitable relations and prevent gender-based violence. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. It is also a driver for economic development. Women's increased access to and progression in the labour market is a strong driver of economic growth and has a notable progressive on a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Gender equality and egalitarian gender roles are more likely to lead to safer and healthier societies were individuals are free to make choices and live to achieve the full potential.<sup>29</sup>

Commitment and bold action are needed to accelerate progress, including through changing social norms and gender stereotypes as well as the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality. Greater investment in gender statistics is vital, since less than half of the data required to monitor Goal 5 are currently available.

The EU4Gender Equality II action will contribute to the following EU GAP III thematic areas of engagement: "Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence", "Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women", "Promoting equal participation and leadership" and "Integrating the women, peace and security agenda".

### **Human Rights**

The EU4Gender Equality II action is aligned with the EU's Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024. The actions will be implemented following a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights, which will be particularly relevant for people in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations. The five working principles below will be applied at all stages of implementation: legality, universality and indivisibility of human rights; participation and access to decision-making processes; non-discrimination and equal access; accountability and access to the rule of law; transparency and access to information. The implementing partners will tasked to ensure that this approach is taken across the entire action.

During the program implementation, rights holders (including women and youth groups) will be empowered to claim their rights. Duty bearers, including government officials will be hold accountable through advocacy and the provision of resources and tools to fulfil their obligations. Multiple forms of discrimination will also be addressed from an intersectional approach to ensure that no one is left behind and to avoid unintended negative impacts in terms of human rights.

### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D0. This implies that the disability perspective will not be systematically mainstreamed in all aspects of the program. However, civil society partners involved in the implementation of the action will also promote the rights of women with disability and the program will reach out to the most marginalised populations including persons with disability.

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<sup>29</sup> UN Women regional office for Europe and Central Asia and UNFPAs regional office for Europe and Central Asia, Together against Gender Stereotypes and gender based violence,: Base line study 2022

## **Democracy**

Gender equality is essential for resilient, fair, democratic and inclusive societies. It is essential for ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, everyone's contribution is recognised and everyone's potential is fully unlocked. Marginalisation and exclusion of any segment of the population in democracy building processes and institutions undermine democracy. Women are underrepresented in decision making processes globally.<sup>30</sup>

The action will promote democratic structures while supporting the governments with expertise in gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting: support for the promotion of gender equality in new laws, strategies, programmes, and documents. It will also empower civil society organisations to hold their governments accountable.

## **Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience**

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine grossly violates international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermines European and global security and stability. As a result of the Belarus involvement, as recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU is further suspending planned and ongoing programmes and activities with the participation of Belarusian public authorities and state-owned enterprises. The EU will continue to step up its support to Belarusian pro-democratic civil society. The ongoing active military aggression seriously affects the situation of human rights in Ukraine and the possible implementation of this action. The EU and its Member States are committed to provide support for the reconstruction of a democratic Ukraine.

Unresolved protracted conflicts continue to hamper development in the region and have already caused numerous casualties, damages and displacement of the local population. In this regard, the action takes into account the conflict sensitivity, in particular by raising awareness about the needs of people affected by conflicts and providing adequate support.

The EU4Gender Equality II action is aligned with the EU's Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2019-2024. The program will continue to be sensitive towards conflict and promote peace and resilience. Gender equality will also be mainstreamed into recovery strategies. For instance, during phase one, adjustments were made to respond to the most immediate needs on the ground. This included providing psychosocial support to women and girls in Ukraine and among the refugee population.

Conflict analysis screening has been carried out in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. However, the latter has changed significantly after 24 February 2022. The conflict analysis screening for Armenia and Azerbaijan is to be finalised by the end of 2023. These will feed into the second phase of the program.

## **Disaster Risk Reduction**

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by disasters and threats, including climate change. Due to gender-specific barriers and inequalities, women experience higher loss of lives and livelihoods during disasters and a longer recovery time. Across the board, from life expectancy to education, housing, health, safety, job security, and nutrition, women and girls are impacted more severely than men. This action promotes more equitable gender relations through transforming gender roles, improving women's position

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<sup>30</sup> [Women's participation in politics: technical note \(sida.se\)](#)

and challenging power imbalances between men and women, which are also key to building their resilience to cope and recover from a disaster.<sup>31</sup>

### 3.4. Risks and Assumptions

Category	Risks	Likelihood (High/Medium/Low)	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
3: People and the organisation	Difficulties in involving men in the actions around men and caregiving.	M	M	The program has already managed to involve men in fatherhood programs and the lessons learned in terms of best practices will be built on and awareness campaigns will continue to explain the beneficial outcomes of early engagement in parenting for men. Adjustments will also be made so that fathers can keep in contact with their sons and daughter who have migrated/are displaced
3: People and the organisation	Reluctance by professionals in maternal and child health services to reach out to fathers in their work.	H	H	Through work with the Ministries of Health, relevant professionals have been sensitised during the first phase by colleges from the EU Member States. Good practices and evidence of the positive outcomes of men's early engagement in parenting will be shared. The action will be carefully designed so there is hands on support to health care staff on the methodology and tools used to involve men in their new role as fathers
2: Planning, processes, and systems	Local partners not able to monitor behaviour change	H	M	Close collaboration and capacity building of local partners on M&E,
3: People and the organisation	Opposition from feminist groups towards working with men and boys, that it will undermine their work and take resources away from women's	M	M	The program will closely work with feminist and women's organisation in the region, and support local women's organisations through support to the implementation of small grants.

<sup>31</sup> [A gender-responsive approach to disaster risk reduction \(DRR\) planning in the agriculture sector \(fao.org\)](http://www.fao.org)

	and girls' empowerment			
1: External environment	Security situation making implementation difficult.	H	M	Closely monitor the situation and work closely with local partners to discuss mitigation strategies with particular emphasis on adequately responding to the specific needs of women. Regional/country workshops may have to be moved from one country of another or be conducted online
1: External environment	Ongoing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for project implementation risks in the EaP region.	H	M	A detailed assessment is made of the situation on the ground in the beginning of the action, mitigating security risks and ensuring sustainability of activities. The action will adjust its activities accordingly to continue with activities where and when possible. Contingency plans and other flexibility measures will also be developed.
3: People and the organisation	Backlash from local leaders towards the promotion of men's care giving and domestic work	M	M	Local leaders will be sensitised and facilitators for the fathers schools will be selected from the local communities (Training of the Trainers)
3: People and the organisation	Difficulties in engaging faith based leaders	H	M	The dialogue will be carefully prepared with a few targeted religious leaders, who are aware of the sensitivity and boundaries for effective discussion on gender equality in their community.

### External Assumptions

- The EaP Governments have the necessary political will and interest in mainstreaming gender equality in their reforms, and will make use of the reform experts provided by the EU.
- Since some work has been already done with focus on men and gender equality in the region, there are “men activists” to engage with on the activities on men and caregiving in the action. They will have a critical role in guiding activities.
- There is no deterioration of the situation due to the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

### 3.5. Intervention Logic

The underlying intervention logic for this action is to increase gender equality and women's empowerment in the EaP region. Shifting harmful norms and gender stereotypes takes a long time. Therefore, the action will build on the first phase to further promote sustainable change and to scale up the results. This will be achieved through focusing on the following three components.

Firstly, the Governments often face challenges in implementing their obligations towards gender equality. In addition to the fact that gender equality is often not a key priority for the governments, there are also lack of sufficient tools and capacities to carry out gender analysis for policy reforms. If the assumption that the EaP Governments have the necessary political will and interest in enhancing the impact of their reforms for all citizens hold true, then the component 1 will contribute to increasing the use of gender mainstreaming in the decision-making. Support will be provided to the Governments through a demand driven help desk, which will provide assistance, capacity and knowledge development. Sharing EU expertise, lessons learned and good practices on gender mainstreaming in public institutions will also greatly contribute to supporting the EU membership perspective of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Secondly, the attitudes and social norms based on rigid gender roles restrict women's rights and prevent them from realising their full potential. On average, women spend three times as much time on unpaid care work than men do. Cultural expectations about women's work at home, and their role at the office, limit women's lives and negatively affect men as well. To address this root cause of gender inequality, the second component will focus on changing attitudes about women's and men's roles in the family and in the public sphere. Through online and offline strategies, action partners will promote success stories of women and men who are redefining traditional roles at home, with children, and in the public sphere. Civil society organisations (women's rights, human rights, youth and others) will be engaged through innovative programs for addressing harmful gender stereotypes and gender based violence in different spheres. The component will also contribute to regular collection of gender-disaggregated data on harmful gender norms and stereotypes, and use it for awareness raising and for policy advocacy.

Thirdly, focus on men, fatherhood and a positive masculinity is a key entry point in the transformation for gender equality. It is also key for the prevention of violence against women and girls and all kinds of discrimination against women and girls. Shifting the perception of women's traditional role in the household and encouraging a more equal sharing of caregiving would have a positive impact on women's employment as well as on the children's lives and men's mental and physical health<sup>32</sup>. Working at the grassroots level, project will engage men to take part in Fathers' Schools to become more engaged fathers and partners. The action will also support applying good practices from EU countries on gender equal family policies and paternal leave through public and private sectors.

Preventing and addressing gender based violence will be a crosscutting issue throughout all components. Cross regional knowledge exchange and networking will also be supported throughout the action and stronger connections will be made between the support to the governments and the interventions by the civil society organisations. For instance to support civil society to advocate for paternal leave and care facilities. Sustainability will be promoted through strengthening the institutional capacity of service providers and further support to mainstream gender equality in key governmental policy documents and its implementation.

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<sup>32</sup> UNFPA and Promondo study Engaging Men in Unpaid Care Work, 2018



### 3.6 Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Results	Results chain: Main expected results	Indicators	Baselines (values and years)	Targets (values and years)	Sources of data	Assumptions
<b>Impact</b>	To increase gender equality and women's empowerment in the EaP region.	Country score according to the Gender Inequality Index (OPSYS 64985)	Armenia: 89 Azerbaijan: 101 Belarus: 36 Georgia: 55 Rep. of Moldova: 16 Ukraine: 81 (2022)	Increased by 3 places in ranking in at least three EaP countries	The Global Gender Gap Index, World Economic Forum	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Outcome 1</b>	Increased gender mainstreaming in planning and implementation of major reforms, policy-making and legislative work	1.1 Number of specific actions taken by partner country governments to address gender discriminatory practices and gender based violence and to promote gender equality (OPSYS 88855)  1.2 Number of national policy/ legislative documents/ programs analysed from a gender perspective (type of document, and country)	1.1 0 1.2 0	1.1 To be defined during inception phase 1.2 To be defined during inception phase	Project Progress reports	
<b>Outcome 2</b>	Shifted harmful social perceptions and gender stereotypes	2.1 Extent to which local and national leaders and influencers, including traditional, religious and community leaders, engage in initiatives to challenge and change social norms and	2.1 To be defined in the inception phase 2.2 0	2.1 To medium extent 2.2 Increased by 20%	2.1 Project progress report 2.2 Project survey	

		<p>discriminatory gender stereotypes (OPSYS 88894, GAP III)</p> <p>2.2 The percentage of populations in target communities with improved attitudes towards gender equality focusing mainly on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women’s participation in employment and leadership</li> <li>• Men’s share household responsibilities</li> <li>• Acceptance of gender based violence (disaggregated by age, sex and location)</li> </ul>				
<b>Outcome 3</b>	Increased participation of men in caretaking of their children	<p>3.1 % of men in the targeted communities who show more engagement in the daily childcare activities.</p> <p>3.2 Number of health workers and health care professional in pre-natal care who are changing their approach to promote the involvement of men in child care and domestic work. (disaggregated by gender and age)</p> <p>3.3 Number of private companies who are changing their policies</p>	<p>3.1 0</p> <p>3.2 0</p> <p>3.3 0</p>	To be defined in the inception phase	Project progress reports, project surveys	

		to promote gender equality and promote fatherhood (family friendly policies, etc.)				
<b>Output 1 related to Outcome 1</b>	1.1 Institutions benefit from competences and capacities to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the planning and implementation of public reforms and policies	1.1.1 Number of staff of governments who have improved competences and capacities in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming (disaggregated by gender) 1.1.2 Number of knowledge products developed and disseminated to support governments in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming (disaggregated by type of products)	1.1.1 0 1.1.2 0	To be defined in the inception phase	1.1.1 Project progress report 1.1.2 Knowledge products	
	1.2 Women's organisations and other civil society organisations have the internal capacities to sustain evidence –based dialogue with public administration	1.2.1 Number of civil society organisations representatives participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues at national level with the support of the EU funded intervention (OPSYS 201215) (disaggregated by type of organisations, women's rights, youth, human rights, etc.) 1.2.2 Number of professional and non- professional human rights defenders trained and	2.2.1 0 2.2.2 0 2.2.3 0	To be defined in the inception phase	Projects progress reports	

		<p>strengthened in their action capacity (OPSYS 65698)</p> <p>1.2.3 Number of women’s rights organisations, peacebuilding organisations, feminist organisations and women human rights defenders’ organisations who participated in consultations around new policies and draft legislation with the national and local government/state actors. (GAP III)</p>				
<p><b>Output 1 related to Outcome 2</b></p>	<p>2.1 Relevant target populations are aware of harmful gender stereotypes and perception and positive gender roles.</p>	<p>2.1.1 Number of public/ media/ communication campaigns designed and implemented (OPSYS 16878)</p> <p>2.1.2 Number of people reached by knowledge products developed supporting evidence based programming and initiatives in changing social stereotypes, patriarchal norms and behaviours</p> <p>2.1.3 Number of regional knowledge sharing actions between CSOs targeted by the program on best practices for changing harmful stereotypes and norms</p>	<p>2.1.1 0</p> <p>2.1.2 0</p> <p>2.1.3 0</p>	<p>To be defined in the inception phase</p>	<p>Project progress reports, Knowledge products, surveys</p>	

<p><b>Output related to Outcome 2</b></p>	<p>2.2 Partner organisations have enhanced competences and capacities to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and to promote positive gender roles</p>	<p>2.2.1 Number of civil society organisation’s representatives and staff trained by the EU-funded intervention with increased knowledge and/or skill to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and to promote positive gender roles (OPSYS 201434)</p> <p>2.2.1 Number of women’s rights and other civil society organisations (youth, human rights, etc.), whose capacity has been strengthened in monitoring, supporting and/or advocating the government on gender equality (type of organisation, country)</p> <p>2.2.3 Number and types for civil society programs implemented to challenge gender norms and harmful practices (country, etc.)</p>	<p>2.2.1 0 2.2.2 0 2.2.3 0</p>	<p>To be defined in the inception phase</p>	<p>Projects progress reports</p>	
<p><b>Output related to Outcome 3</b></p>	<p>3.1 Programs to improve men’s care responsibilities and domestic work enhanced and expanded.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Number of men reached through these actions (disaggregated by age and location)</p> <p>3.1.2 Number of program developed with health workers and health care</p>	<p>3.1.1 TBC (2022) 3.1.2 0</p>	<p>3.1.1 To be defined in the inception phase  3.1.2 To be defined in the</p>	<p>Project progress reports, project surveys</p>	

		professionals and other actors (new and enhanced, disaggregated by type of actors).		inception phase		
<b>Output related to outcome 3</b>	3.2 The private sector have enhanced capacity to promote gender equality, engaged fatherhood and family friendly policies	3.2.1 Number of private companies sensitised on gender equality and engaged fatherhood (disaggregated by type of company)	3.2.1 To be defined at a later stage (2022)	To be defined in the inception phase	Project progress reports	

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

### **4.1. Financing Agreement**

In order to implement this action, it is not envisaged to conclude a financing agreement with the partner country.

### **4.2. Indicative Implementation Period**

The indicative operational implementation period of this action, during which the activities described in section 3.1 will be carried out and the corresponding contracts and agreements implemented, is 72 months from the date of adoption by the Commission of this financing Decision.

Extensions of the implementation period may be agreed by the Commission's responsible authorising officer in duly justified cases.

### **4.3. Implementation Modalities**

The Commission will ensure that the EU appropriate rules and procedures for providing financing to third parties are respected, including review procedures, where appropriate, and compliance of the action with EU restrictive measures<sup>33</sup>.

#### **4.3.1. Direct Management (Procurement)**

The procurement will contribute to achieving Outcome 1: Increased gender mainstreaming in planning and implementation of major reforms, policy- making and legislative work.

#### **4.3.2. Indirect Management with a pillar-assessed entity**

Outcome 2 and 3 may be implemented in indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity, a consortium of pillar assessed entities or several pillar-assessed entities working individually, which will be selected by the Commission's services using the following criteria:

- Demonstrated capacity, knowledge and experience in conducting regional actions in the Eastern Partnership region in promoting gender equality by addressing gender stereotypes, supporting men and fatherhood programmes and combatting violence against women and girls;
- demonstrated knowledge of conducting gender equality campaigns and data collection in the Eastern Partnership region;
- experience from edutainment and other approaches which are proven effective to ensure transformative change;
- demonstrated operational and technical capacities of effective management of sub-grants required to implement the activities listed under Outcome 2 and 3;
- experience from sub-granting to local CSOs in piloting projects on behavioural change.

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<sup>33</sup> [www.sanctionsmap.eu](http://www.sanctionsmap.eu) Please note that the sanctions map is an IT tool for identifying the sanctions regimes. The source of the sanctions stems from legal acts published in the Official Journal (OJ). In case of discrepancy between the published legal acts and the updates on the website it is the OJ version that prevails.

### 4.3.3. Changes from indirect to direct management (and vice versa) mode due to exceptional circumstances

If the implementation modality under indirect management as defined in section ‘4.3.2’ cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, these parts of the action may be implemented through a grant under direct management with civil society organisation(s). The grant shall contribute to achieving the objectives identified in Chapter 3 of this Action Document. The selection criteria will be the ones defined in section 4.3.2.

If the implementation modality under direct management as defined in section ‘4.3.1 (procurements)’ cannot be implemented due to circumstances beyond the control of the Commission, the modality of implementation by indirect management with a pillar-assessed entity(ies) would be used according to section ‘4.3.2’. The indirect management shall contribute to achieving the objectives defined in section 4.3.1.

### 4.4. Scope of geographical eligibility for procurement and grants

The geographical eligibility in terms of place of establishment for participating in procurement and grant award procedures and in terms of origin of supplies purchased as established in the basic act and set out in the relevant contractual documents shall apply, subject to the following provisions.

The Commission’s authorising officer responsible may extend the geographical eligibility on the basis of urgency or of unavailability of services in the markets of the countries or territories concerned, or in other duly substantiated cases where application of the eligibility rules would make the realisation of this action impossible or exceedingly difficult (Article 28(10) NDICI-Global Europe Regulation).

### 4.5. Indicative Budget

<b>Indicative Budget components</b>	<b>EU contribution (amount in EUR)</b>
<b>Implementation modalities</b> – cf. section 4.3	
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Increased gender mainstreaming in planning and implementation of major reforms, policy- making and legislative work composed of	<b>3 000 000</b>
Procurement (direct management) – cf. section 4.3.1	N.A
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Shifted harmful social perceptions and gender stereotypes and <b>Outcome 3:</b> Increased participation of men in caretaking of their children composed of	<b>5 000 000</b>
Indirect management with a pillar assessed entity(ies) – cf. section 4.3.2	5 000 000
<b>Procurement</b> – total envelope under section 4.3.1	<b>3 000 000</b>
<b>Evaluation</b> – cf. section 5.2 <b>Audit</b> – cf. section 5.3	will be covered by another Decision
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8 000 000</b>

## **4.6. Organisational Set-up and Responsibilities**

In order to review progress and provide strategic guidance, a Steering Committee meeting will be organised at least once a year on the basis of activity reports presented by the implementing entity in relation to outcomes 1, 2 and 3. The Steering Committee shall decide on the annual activities at the outset of the year and for the monitoring of the implementation at the end of the year. In the meantime, regular video conferences at working level shall be set up to ensure coordination.

The Action Steering Committee will be co-chaired by the Commission and the organisation in charge of the actions. The exact composition will be decided upon at the action implementation inception stage together with the co-chairs. The Secretariat of the Steering Committee is ensured by the selected organisation chosen for the action.

The Steering Committee will also have continued contacts with EU Delegations in relation to the planned activities.

A separate Steering Committee will be established for the service contract. This Steering Committee will meet at least once a year to review progress and provide strategic guidance on the basis of activity reports presented by the implementing entity in relation to outcome 1. The Action Steering Committee which will be co-chaired by the Commission and the organisation in charge of the actions. The exact composition will be decided upon at the action implementation stage together with the co-chairs. Action-specific contact points shall be nominated at headquarters and in EU Delegations to ensure coordinated internal and external communication.

As part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union, the Commission may participate in the above governance structures set up for governing the implementation of the action.

## **5. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

### **5.1. Monitoring and Reporting**

The day-to-day technical and financial monitoring of the implementation of this action will be a continuous process, and part of the implementing partner's responsibilities. To this aim, the implementing partner shall establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and elaborate regular progress reports (not less than annual) and final reports. Every report shall provide an accurate account of implementation of the action, difficulties encountered, changes introduced, as well as the degree of achievement of its Outputs and contribution to the achievement of its Outcomes, and if possible at the time of reporting, contribution to the achievement of its Impacts, as measured by corresponding indicators, using as reference the logframe matrix.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews).

Roles and responsibilities for data collection, analysis and monitoring will be defined during inception phase.

### **5.2. Evaluation**

Having regard to the importance of the action, a final evaluation will be carried out for this action or its components via independent consultants contracted by the Commission.

It will be carried out for accountability and learning purposes at various levels (including for policy revision), taking into account in particular the lessons learned and impacts of gender mainstreaming on reforms in the partner countries, the tangible results brought for the citizens, as well as internal and external communication and visibility of the action.

The Commission shall form a Reference Group (RG) composed by representatives from the main stakeholders at both EU and national (representatives from the government, from civil society organisations (private sector, NGOs, etc.), etc.) levels. If deemed necessary, other donors will be invited to join. The Commission shall inform the implementing partner at least 30 days in advance of the dates envisaged for the evaluation exercise and missions. The implementing partner shall collaborate efficiently and effectively with the evaluation experts, and inter alia provide them with all necessary information and documentation, as well as access to the project premises and activities.

The evaluation reports shall be shared with the partner country and other key stakeholders following the best practice of evaluation dissemination. The implementing partner and the Commission shall analyse the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluations and, where appropriate, in agreement with the partner country, jointly decide on the follow-up actions to be taken and any adjustments necessary, including, if indicated, the reorientation of the project.

The financing of the evaluation shall be covered by another measure constituting a financing Decision.

### **5.3. Audit and Verifications**

Without prejudice to the obligations applicable to contracts concluded for the implementation of this action, the Commission may, on the basis of a risk assessment, contract independent audit or verification assignments for one or several contracts or agreements.

## **6. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

All entities implementing EU-funded external actions have the contractual obligation to inform the relevant audiences of the Union's support for their work by displaying the EU emblem and a short funding statement as appropriate on all communication materials related to the actions concerned. To that end they must comply with the instructions given in the 2022 guidance document [\*Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions\*](#) (or any successor document).

This obligation will apply equally, regardless of whether the actions concerned are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, service providers, grant beneficiaries or entrusted or delegated entities such as UN agencies, international financial institutions and agencies of EU Member States. In each case, a reference to the relevant contractual obligations must be included in the respective financing agreement, procurement and grant contracts, and delegation agreements.

For the purpose of enhancing the visibility of the EU and its contribution to this action, the Commission may sign or enter into joint declarations or statements, as part of its prerogative of budget implementation and to safeguard the financial interests of the Union. Visibility and communication measures should also promote transparency and accountability on the use of funds. Effectiveness of communication activities on awareness about the action and its objectives as well as on EU funding of the action should be measured.

Implementing partners shall keep the Commission and the EU Delegation fully informed of the planning and implementation of specific visibility and communication activities before the implementation. Implementing partners will ensure adequate visibility of EU financing and will report on visibility and communication actions as well as the results of the overall action to the relevant monitoring committees.

## Appendix 1: IDENTIFICATION OF THE PRIMARY INTERVENTION LEVEL FOR REPORTING IN OPSYS

A Primary intervention (project/programme) is a coherent set of results structured in a logical framework aiming at delivering development change or progress. Identifying the level of the primary intervention will allow for:

- ✓ Differentiating these Actions or Contracts from those that do not produce direct reportable development results, defined as support entities (i.e. audits, evaluations);
- ✓ Articulating Actions and/or Contracts according to an expected common chain of results and therefore allowing them to ensure a more efficient and aggregated monitoring and reporting of performance;
- ✓ Having a complete and exhaustive mapping of all results-bearing Actions and Contracts.

Primary Interventions are identified during the design of each action by the responsible service (Delegation or Headquarters operational Unit).  
 The level of the Primary Intervention chosen can be modified (directly in OPSYS) and the modification does not constitute an amendment of the action document.  
 Please tick in the left side column one of the four possible options for the level of the Primary Intervention(s). In the case of ‘Group of actions’ level, add references to the present action and other action(s) concerning the same Primary Intervention.  
 In the case of ‘Contract level’ and ‘Group of contracts’, add the reference(s) to the corresponding budgetary items in point 4.5, Indicative Budget.

The present Action identifies as

<b>Contract level</b> (i.e. Grants, Contribution Agreements, any case in which foreseen individual legal commitments identified in the budget will have different log frames, even if part of the same Action Document)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 1	Contribution Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single Contract 2	Procurement

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<sup>i</sup> Levitsky, S. & Ziblatt, D. (2018). “Elected autocrats maintain a veneer of democracy while eviscerating its substance” in *How Democracies Die*. New York: Penguin Random House.

<sup>ii</sup> Sekalala, S., Forman, L., Habibi, R. et al. (2020). Health and human rights are inextricably linked in the COVID-19 response. *BMJ Global Health* 5(9). <https://gh.bmj.com/content/5/9/e003359>

<sup>iii</sup> CIVICUS (September 2021). Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Snapshot of Protests and Restrictions.: <https://monitor.civicus.org/COVID19September2021/>

<sup>iv</sup> Freedom House. (October 2, 2020). Democracy under Lockdown – The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Freedom. <https://freedomhouse.org/article/new-report-democracy-under-lockdown-impact-covid-19-global-freedom>

<sup>v</sup> Caltrop, S. (February 4, 2022). This isn’t just a women’s issue. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2022-02/isnt-just-womens-issue>