



**SUBMISSION PREPARED BY MOLDOVAN NGOs AND INDIVIDUALS  
UNITED TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN MOLDOVA**

Prepared for the Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Moldova,  
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## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN

- I. This report has been produced by the Gender Equality Platform in cooperation with the National Coalition “Life without Violence” and the Centre for Entrepreneurial Education and Business Support. The document was prepared for submission to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the course of preparation of Universal Periodic Review on the implementation of international obligations by the Republic of Moldova in the UN Human Rights Council.
- II. The Platform for Gender Equality is an informal coalition of 25 individuals and legal entities<sup>1</sup> united to promote gender equality as a fundamental human right and a fundamental principle of social justice in Moldova<sup>2</sup>. The platform was established in July 2015 with the support of the East Europe Foundation in Moldova.
- III. The National Coalition „Life without violence in the family” is a social platform established on 29 April 2014 that comprises 18 Non-Government Organizations and public institutions from the Republic of Moldova, providers of protection services for the victims of domestic violence.<sup>3</sup>
- IV. The Centre for Entrepreneurial Education and Business Support is a Moldovan non-governmental organization that contributes to the social and economic development of the country through development and harnessing vocational skills, private initiative and entrepreneurial spirit.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- V. The report covers the following **issues that affect women and men disproportionately**: (i) women’s significant under-representation in decision-making bodies has stayed constant over a decade; (ii) the number of domestic violence victims that report to police continues to grow; (iii) discrimination of women in the labour market persists and women continue to be overrepresented in the worst paying jobs; (iv) women continue to be the main caretakers of children, with minimal involvement of fathers - a phenomenon that is determined by both gender blind public policy and social paternalist perceptions; (v) the only institution that is dealing with gender-based discrimination is the Moldovan Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, yet it does not have the legal power to apply sanctions.
- VI. **Key recommendations** for the Moldovan Government are: (i) adopt the 40% gender quota compliant with the placement and accountability requirements; (ii) ratify the Istanbul Convention and amend the national legislation on combating domestic violence and sexual

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the Platform for Gender Equality: (1) Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Moldova (AFAM); (2) Promo-LEX NGO; (3) Public Association "Gender Center"; (4) Partnership for Development Center (CPD); (5) Resource Center of NGOs for Human Rights (CReDO); (6) Resource Center "Young and Free"; (7) Women's Political Club 50/50; (8) Association "Modern Woman"; (9) NGO "Women for the Future"; (10) NGO "Youth for the Right to Life"; (11) Legal Aid Center for Persons with Disabilities; (12) Voice of Roma Women " ROMANO Alavi"; (13) NGO "Honour and Rights of Contemporary Women"; (14) Association "INRECO"; (15) Association against Violence "Marioarei House"; (16) Forum of Women's Association of Moldova"; (17) Alina Andronache; (18) Antonia Fonari; (19) Olga Nicolenco; (20) Galina Precup; (21) Natalia Scobioală; (22) Gurău Ana; (23) Daniela Enache, (24) Tatiana Chebac; (25) East Europe Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> For additional information on the specific Goals of the Gender Equality Platform please see <http://www.consiliulong.md/agenda-egalitatii-de-gen/?lang=en>

<sup>3</sup> Members of the National Coalition are: (1) Women’s Law Center (also holding the secretariat); (2) International Center “La Strada”; (3) Promo-LEX; (4) "Association Against Domestic Violence-Casa Marioarei"; (5) RCTV „Memoria”; (6) National Center to Prevent the Abuse against Children; (7) Center of Protection and Assistance for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings and Potential Victims; (8) the “Parent-Child Couple” Centre; (9) Center of Family Crisis, Sotis; (10) the Assistance and Counseling Center for Family Perpetrators; (11) „Gender – Center”; (12) Maternal Center ”Pro –Femina”; (13) Maternal Center "Pro Familia din Căușeni"; (14) Cahul Maternal Center (14), „Stimul” NGO; (16) Maternal Center of the Temporary Shelter and Child Rehabilitation Center; (17) „Honour and Rights of the Contemporary Woman” NGO; (18) Youth Center „Dacia”.

violence, ensuring emergency orders to comply with international standards; (iii) adopt measures conducive to substantive gender equality in the labour market, including: childcare services for children aged 0-3, 14 days paternal leave, reform of the pension system, ensure equal pay for equal work; (iv) design and develop a set of complimentary, evidence-based policies and tools to maximize the potential of women's entrepreneurship; (v) strengthen the legal and institutional framework to effectively prevent and combat discrimination against women.

## 1. PARTICIPATION AND EQUAL REPRESENTATION

- 1.1. **The level of representation of women in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova is lower than in the European Union, OSCE and global averages.** Throughout the last 5 national and 2 local elections, the percentage of women on the party lists has not increased significantly. The proportion of **women candidates** in the 2005 elections was 29%; in 2009 it was 29,9% and in 2014 it was 30.5%. Nevertheless, only 21.78% of women were elected in the Parliament in 2014, translating into 22 women out of 101 parliamentarians. Consequently, the political class and the Government did not undertake actions conducive to substantive gender equality in decision-making.<sup>4</sup>
- 1.2. **A worrying trend is the increased level of sexism promoted by politicians and public officials.** Several politicians used sexist language in criticizing each other or describing the difficult situation of the country, in particular during the electoral campaigns, as well as in attacking their rival female politicians<sup>5</sup>. This is a direct cause of the Government failure in developing and implementing awareness-raising programs to combat gender related stereotypes.<sup>6</sup> The statute of the parliament is lacking specific provisions on the language that would target sexist remarks and humiliating statements that could lead to sexual harassment. Moreover, there is no policy that would address sexual harassment within the Parliament.<sup>7</sup>
- 1.3. There are several **factors that undermine the participation of women in politics, including (i) the non-transparent and unclear mechanisms of promotion within political parties<sup>8</sup>; (ii) the economic dependence of women on their husbands/partners and the double burden of the household that relies mostly only on women; (iii) the dependence**

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<sup>4</sup> Women are placed at the end of the candidate's lists which prevents them from accessing into the parliament even though they have been active members of the parties. Only 5.9% of women are placed in the first 10 positions on the lists in comparison with 11% of men. This clearly diminishes the chances of women to get elected and to increase their number in the parliament. See more in the report on national elections that took place on 30th of November, 2014. Available only in Romanian: Șanse Egale în procesul electoral, Centrul "Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare", Chișinău, 2014, pag.17 [http://www.progen.md/files/6842\\_raport\\_final\\_alegeri\\_2014.pdf](http://www.progen.md/files/6842_raport_final_alegeri_2014.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> For example, Mihai Ghimpu the leader of the Liberal Party and member of the parliament said that "he does not need dolls in the politics", referring to Maia Sandu a former Minister of Education who was running for the position of the Prim-Minister. The mayor of the capital city, Dorin Chirtoacă also made sexist remarks in relation to his female rival, Zinaida Geceanîi who was running for the mayor position. He said that because she is 59 years old she should stay home and take care of her grandnephews instead of running for the office. Such sexist attitudes and remarks make women reluctant to enter politics and those who are already in politics face unnecessary pressure in defending themselves and proving that they should be in politics.

<sup>6</sup> The Group of Feminist Initiatives from Moldova, an informal group of gender equality activists monitored the sexist declarations made by the politicians in 2015. The list has been published by the press on the occasion of the International Day of Women. You can consult the list of sexist declarations made by the politicians in 2015. Available only in Romanian: <http://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-sociale/declaratii-sexiste-facute-de-persoane-publice>

<sup>7</sup> Gender Audit of the Moldovan Parliament. Available only in Romanian: Audit de Gen în cadrul parlamentului Republicii Moldova. Spre dezvoltarea unei instituții mai sensibile la dimensiunea de gen, Sarminte D. Bulte, P.C., Chișinău, 2015, pag.24 [https://issuu.com/un\\_moldova/docs/raport\\_auditul\\_de\\_gen\\_ro\\_2](https://issuu.com/un_moldova/docs/raport_auditul_de_gen_ro_2)

<sup>8</sup> Analysis of the local elections found that where the process of candidate selection is more decentralized – more women tend to be nominated as candidates <http://progen.md/index.php?pag=n&opa=view&id=330&tip=publicatii&start=&l=ro>

**of political parties on a handful of donors, primarily men.** In 2014 election campaign, women candidates represented 30,5% of all candidates but they had only 8,1% of all declared revenue by the candidates. The Parliament adopted legal amendments to increase transparency requirements and introduce public funding for political parties, but the threshold for donations remains excessively high (against the recommendations of Civil Society Organizations and the Venice Commission to lowering significantly) and proposals to use part of the public funds to encourage political parties to support political participation of women were voted down. All these factors prevent women from getting involved in politics.<sup>9</sup>

- 1.4. **The efforts undertaken by the Government did not achieve expected results.** The Government drafted and approved the bill no. 322 on 08 May 2014 that establishes the 40% gender for women both sexes in the central and local authorities. This bill was registered within the Moldovan Parliament under the draft law no. 180 of 05.15.2014. The Moldovan Parliament approved the bill in its first reading on 17 July 2014. As of 16 March 2016 the law was not adopted yet. The status quo remained the same for the national election that took place on 30 November 2014 and the local elections that took place on 14 and 28 June 2015. In this way, women have been deprived one more time from the affirmative actions that would enable them to participate in the decision-making at all levels on equal terms with men.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1.5. Introduce a minimum gender representation quota be voted in the final reading. The law should include: (i) a 40% minimum quota; (ii) the quota be applied for every 5 spots on the candidates' list; (iii) authority for the Moldovan Electoral Bodies to refuse registration in the elections of those political parties that do not comply with the gender quota.
- 1.6. Amend the legislation on political party and campaign financing to include: (i) that 30% of the public funds for political parties are allocated based on the “more-for-more” principle: the more women and youth the parties include on the candidates' lists, the more public money they receive; (ii) Allowing Women and Youth organizations of political parties to utilize at least one third of the allocated public funds to organize activities that promote participation of women and youth in the electoral and political processes;
- 1.7. Introduce provisions into the statute of the parliament about the prohibition of sexist language;
- 1.8. Develop and implement national awareness-raising campaigns about gender stereotypes, targeting the sexist statements made by the politicians.

## **2. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

- 2.1. Recent statistics<sup>10</sup> and survey data<sup>11</sup> confirm that **domestic and sexual violence are widespread violations in Moldova.**<sup>12</sup> They violate women's rights, including freedom from

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<sup>9</sup> Report on national elections that took place on 30th of November, 2014. Available only in Romanian: Șanse Egale în procesul electoral, Centrul “Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare”, Chișinău, 2014, pag.6  
[http://www.progen.md/files/6842\\_raport\\_final\\_alegeri\\_2014.pdf](http://www.progen.md/files/6842_raport_final_alegeri_2014.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA, *Violence against Women in the Family in the Republic of Moldova* (2011).

<sup>11</sup> Women Law Center, Perceptions Survey “Men and Gender Equality in Moldova” (2015)

<sup>12</sup> About 63.4 % of women and girls aged 15 or older had experienced at least one form of physical, psychological, or sexual violence over their lifetime with the prevalence of violence in rural areas being higher (about 69 %). Only a limited number of victims have reported some form of violence against them, thus only 9 % out of 40 % of physical violence have reported it<sup>12</sup>. A recent perception Survey reveals that physical violence exists in almost 50 % of the families of surveyed men. Every fifth man had

discrimination, equal protection before the law, liberty and security of person, equality before the courts, recognition as a person before the law, freedom from torture.

- 2.2. In 2011 upon UPR review, the Moldovan authorities were proposed ten recommendations on combatting violence against women Recommendations No. 8, 11, 18, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 64 and 93. Their implementation status is listed according to three categories:
  - A. **Recommendations that did not register any implementation progress** (Recommendations No. 8<sup>13</sup>, 11<sup>14</sup> and 31<sup>15</sup>);
  - B. **Recommendations reported as implemented by the Government**, but requiring further implementation (Recommendations No. 64 and 93);
  - C. **Recommendations that registered partial implementation progress** with more efforts needed (Recommendations No. 18, 30, 32, 33, 34 and 64). Some of the efforts and issues of the implemented recommendations are addressed below.
- 2.3. **Recommendations reported as implemented by the Government (B):** while the number of sanctioned aggressors have increased<sup>16</sup>, the punishments for domestic violence have not been increased<sup>17</sup> and the Plan of Action for the implementation and monitoring of the Law on preventing and combating domestic violence<sup>18</sup> is not developed yet. The most recent 2013 draft modifications developed with the support of civil society to the Law on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence (Law 45) aimed at harmonizing the national legislation to Istanbul Convention provisions is still with the Government.
- 2.4. **Recommendations that are partially addressed (C):** the main challenges in promoting gender equality as a national priority<sup>19</sup> are perceptions, gender stereotypes and gender inequalities in the family, Moldovan society, amongst service providers and law enforcement. High tolerance of violence, with 27,7% of men and 17,5 % of women believing that violence should be tolerated in order to preserve the family, and a wide acceptance of physical violence, with 41,1% of men believing there are moments when a woman should be beaten up, represent significant impediments in combatting domestic violence. Because of the stereotyped social norms, associated with male domination and aggressiveness and female submission, violence often fails to be recognized and reported<sup>20</sup>. Police and prosecutors equally exhibit attitudes of blame and insensitivity towards victims, often

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sex with a girl/woman without her consent, while almost every fourth man had sex with a girl/woman, who was too drunk to say that she didn't want it. 18 % of men admitted they used force to have a sexual intercourse even with the current girlfriend/wife, while 14 % of men used force to have sex with the ex-girlfriend/wife. Approximately 5% of men committed sexual abuse in group.

<sup>13</sup> Recommendation No. 8 “Adopt a specific policy to address the root causes of domestic violence, particularly violence against women and children, and conduct awareness campaigns, particularly in the rural areas”.

<sup>14</sup> Recommendation No. 11 “Strengthen its efforts in the prevention, punishment and eradication of all forms of violence against women and the adoption of comprehensive policies for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child, especially those relating to the prohibition of forced labor”.

<sup>15</sup> Recommendation No. 31 “Consider measures in order to prevail the situation of the high level domestic violence”.

<sup>16</sup> Official statistics of the Ministry of Interior, November 2014 indicate that in 2011, there were 451 sanctions under art. 201 CP, domestic violence, that increased to 1604 in the first 10 months of 2015, compared to 2270 sanctioned individuals in 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation No. 64 “Continue public awareness campaigns on domestic violence and increase the penalties for this crime”. There were no legislative changes concerning penalties of domestic violence.

<sup>18</sup> Recommendation No.93 “Elaborate a Plan of Action for the implementation and monitoring of the Law on preventing and combating domestic violence, and allocate adequate budgetary resources for its implementation”

<sup>19</sup> Recommendation 18 “Continue promoting gender equality as a national priority which echoes the recommendation of SR on violence against women regarding the acceleration of the realization of women's equality with men in all areas”

<sup>20</sup> International Center “La Strada” *Ensuring Access of Victims of sexual violence to adequate legal and social protection* Research, 2015.

doubting victims' statements, minimizing criminal behavior of the aggressors, this resulting in fewer prosecutions<sup>21</sup>.

2.4.1. **Campaigns<sup>22</sup> to address root causes of domestic violence are part of national social policy, yet they are not financed accordingly.** Although the Government supports the 16 Days Campaign against Gender Based Violence, it does not allocate funds to continuously and regularly address gender inequalities and poverty.

2.4.2. The Law nr.45<sup>23</sup> does not provide funding for shelters and victim services<sup>24</sup> and there is a great need for **improving and strengthening the capacity of rehabilitation centres<sup>25</sup>**. There are few shelters in Moldova and they are seriously under-funded,<sup>26</sup> unable to provide a full spectrum of rehabilitation services. The dedicated shelter for the domestic violence victims, the 8 maternal centres and the national shelters can provide temporary accommodation to maximum 181 victims, while the real need for accommodation is for 356 victims<sup>27</sup>. As of 2011, no rehabilitation centres were created or improved.

2.4.3. There are significant gaps in the legislation but also in the investigation and prosecution processes and there is a need for **strengthened mechanisms to detect and investigate cases of domestic violence<sup>28</sup>** by police, prosecution, judiciary, State-Guaranteed Legal Aid service, etc. The latter is given limited attention, hence an important service unable to be used by the victims, who although qualify for legal aid<sup>29</sup> are unable to meet the criteria set out by the Article 19 of the State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Law.

2.4.4. Such a mechanism cannot exist without sound knowledge acquired through **trainings of the law enforcement to deal with domestic and sexual violence<sup>30</sup>**. The most recent programme showed a direct correlation of trainings with the issuance of protective orders and the correct application law<sup>31</sup>. Thus, there is a positive impact when the trainings take place.

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<sup>21</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights, *Implementation of Moldovan legislation on Domestic Violence: A Human Rights Report* (2012), p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Recommendation No 33 "Addressing the root causes of domestic violence in order to carry out awareness campaigns on violence against women and their rights, especially in rural areas" and part of Recommendation No 64.

<sup>23</sup> Law nr.45 on preventing and combating domestic violence.

<sup>24</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights, *Implementation of Moldovan legislation on Domestic Violence: A Human Rights Report* (2012), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Recommendation No. 34 "Continue to fight domestic violence against women, including by improving and strengthening the capacity of rehabilitation centers in the country, especially ensuring access to victims from rural areas"

<sup>26</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights, *Implementation of Moldovan legislation on Domestic Violence: A Human Rights Report* (2012), 2.

<sup>27</sup> Women Against Violence Europe, *Country Report 2013*, 32. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence explanatory report Article 23 (Shelters) stipulated the need of 1 shelter place per 10,000 inhabitants.

<sup>28</sup> Recommendation No. 30 "Further strengthen mechanisms to detect and investigate cases of domestic violence, train law enforcement officials to deal with such cases and provide legal and medical support to victims"

<sup>29</sup> Law No 198 of 26.07.2007 on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid

<sup>30</sup> Recommendation No. 30

<sup>31</sup> As a result of the joint WLC - Ministry of Interior - Police Academy training program during 2012-2015, 2013-2014 HelpAge - Gender-Centru - Ministry of Interior - Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family - Ministry of Health "Breaking the silence: elder abuse in the Republic of Moldova" Project, 920 protective orders had been issued in 2014 compared to 448 in 2013 and 23 in 2011. The decrease in the issuance of protective orders in the first 10 months of 2015 to 701 cases may be attributed to the lack of commitment by the new Minister and reduced capacity building to the police. There is an increase in the number of referrals (for example in 2014 - there were over 7300 reported, out of which about 2200 were investigated and over 920 received protection orders.

- 2.4.5. The issues concerning the **effective implementation of the legislation on protection of women and effective police investigation of complaints**<sup>32</sup> include but are not limited to the following: (i) unaccessible complaint mechanisms for victims, especially from rural areas; (ii) withdrawal of complaints under pressure or due to circumstances; (iii) lack of effective investigation of sexual violence; (iv) protective orders issuance and (v) issues related to their application; (vi) restraining orders in cases of psychological violence when the State provides neither practical and affordable solutions to victims, nor possibilities for an efficient investigation of complaints<sup>33</sup>; (vii) inability of issuing emergency orders (currently not previewed by the legislation); (viii) uneven application of the legislation in cases of restraining order violation; (ix) dangerous settlement practices; (x) lack of specialized services for victims of sexual violence; (xi) low sanctioning of aggressors; (xii) lack of accountability by the law-enforcement and service providers.

**Recommendations:**

- 2.5. Implement all recommendations accepted by Moldova in 2011, focusing on prevention and education campaigns guaranteeing the respect of effective remedies, improved social, medical, and psychological assistance programs for victims, ensuring the appropriate security and welfare of the victims of domestic and sexual violence;
- 2.6. Amend the national legislation on combating domestic violence and sexual violence, including inter alia emergency orders to comply with international standards;
- 2.7. Sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention.

**3. EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKET**

- 3.1. There are worrying trends as it concerns gender equality in the labour market.** The employment rate of women aged 25-49 with at least one child of preschool age has decreased significantly from 56,5% in 2011 to 38,9% in 2014. The employment rate of women aged 25-49 with no preschool aged children was 58,9 % for 2014, indicating a significant employment penalty for mothers.
- 3.2. Gender pay gap remained constant, but there are significant pay inequalities within different sector of economy.** The unadjusted gender pay gap in 2011 and in 2014 was close to 12,4%. In good paying sectors the gender pay gap was much more significant: like finance (32%), ITC (37%), management consulting (30%).
- 3.3. Pension gender gap in on a rising trend.** In 2011 the average pension gap was 10, 12%, in 2017 it is projected to increase to 17,17%. It should be noted that in the last four years the gender employment gap among workers aged 55-64 was close to 20%, mainly due to gender differences in the age of retirement and the fact that women at this age tend to assume additional family responsibilities like caring for a sic family member or grandchild. In Moldova the poverty level rises with age and two thirds of the pensioners are women.
- 3.4. Policy framework relevant to increasing gender equality in the labour market has not been effective.** In 2010 Moldovan authorities adopted a new Program on Gender Equality. One of the specific objectives of the Program was to promote gender equality in labour market. Given the trends described above, one can presume that the policy interventions were

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<sup>32</sup> Recommendation No. 32 “Effectively implement the current legislation on protection of women against domestic violence, ensure that the police effectively investigate complaints and increase the number, coverage and capacity of shelters for victims of domestic violence”

<sup>33</sup> Feasibility study on the forensic infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova, UNDP 2009/pg.71 - [http://www.undp.md/publications/Forensics\\_Feasibility\\_External%20Audit\\_Report\\_EN.pdf](http://www.undp.md/publications/Forensics_Feasibility_External%20Audit_Report_EN.pdf)

ineffective. Along with this, Moldovan authorities refused to adopt the extension of childcare services for the age 0-3 in 2014 when a new version of the Education Code was adopted, the introduction of 14 days of paternal leave was reduced to period of just 3 days, despite multiple proposals from civil society organizations, the child care leave was not reformed. It is worth noting that childcare leave has a duration of 3 years with the extension possibility to 6 years.

- 3.5. Despite multiple cases of gender-based discrimination in the labour market, relevant legal framework was not improved.** In 2012, the Moldovan authorities established the Non-Discrimination Council. The Council proved to be the only effective institution dealing with discrimination and gender-based discrimination in the labour market. Gender is on top of discrimination cases found by the Council, after the ground of disability. Even though there is a growing number of documented cases of discrimination in the labour market, Moldovan authorities are yet to improve the existing legal framework in order to strengthen provisions dealing with: (i) equal pay for equal work, (ii) reasonable accommodation, (iii) more flexible working arrangements for both parents.

**Recommendations:**

- 3.6.** Have a clear commitment to expand high quality childcare services for children aged 0-3 to at least 40% in the next three years.
- 3.7.** Introduce paternal leave at 14 days, covered from the public funds.
- 3.8.** Reform the childcare leave, enabling both parents to participate and have more choices, encouraging female employment.
- 3.9.** Reform the pension system to reduce gender inequalities.
- 3.10.** Strengthen the non-discrimination legislation by: (i) equal pay for equal work, (ii) reasonable accommodation, (iii) more flexible working arrangements.
- 3.11.** Adopt and implement applicable measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment.

**4. WOMEN’S ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

4.1. Women’s entrepreneurship is a field currently under development and besides facing the everyday challenges as entrepreneurs in Moldova, business women fight with stereotypes and gender discrimination. Most recent studies conducted on women’s entrepreneurship show that the share of women entrepreneurs is 27.5%. The number of male entrepreneurs is 2.6 times higher than the number of women entrepreneurs. The proportions do not correspond to the distribution of Moldova's population by gender: the proportion of women employed in business, much lower than the proportion of women in the economically active population (49.4%) and a total population of Moldova (51.9%)<sup>34</sup>. The main issues in this field relate are substantiated below.

**4.2. Insufficient policy support framework for promotion of women’s entrepreneurship:**

- The Government policies in the field are not gender-sensitive;
- There is no essential data framework in place for promoting women entrepreneurship
- No structured public discussion on gender inequality in entrepreneurship;

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<sup>34</sup> *The National Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Moldova* “Assessing the environment for women’s entrepreneurship in the Republic of Moldova”, Chişinău, 2013  
<http://www.cnpm.md/doc.php?l=en&idc=58&id=165&t=/Publications/ASSESSING-THE-ENVIRONMENT-FORWOMENS-ENTREPRENEURSHIP-IN-THEREPUBLIC-OF-MOLDOVA>

- Recent financial issues that the country is facing creates obstacles in reaching the indicators, set in the Action Plan for 2015-2017 regarding the implementation of the SMEs Development Strategy, where women's entrepreneurship is set as a priority;<sup>35</sup>
- No quantitative and qualitative statistical data consistently collected or analysis carried out for policy purposes.

#### 4.3. Access to financing:

- Lack of financial support programs provided exclusively to women<sup>36</sup> backing them up in start-ups;
- High interest rates for credits and unstable banking system makes entrepreneurs refuse any financial offer from banks.

#### 4.4. Entrepreneurial education and training:

- Currently there are no entrepreneurship training programs specifically targeting women of different age and background;
- Lack of a national accreditation system for private training providers in Moldova creates uncertainty regarding the training effectiveness;
- Poor professional orientation and career guidance from an early age leads to a stereotyped selection of professions and roles.

#### Recommendations:

- 4.5. **Design and develop a set of complimentary, evidence-based policies and tools by relevant** national authorities, aiming to maximize the potential of women's entrepreneurship. As many of the activities included in the Action Plan for 2015-2017 related to women's entrepreneurship of the SMEs Development Strategy are financially supported from the state budget that has not been approved so far, it creates a problem in reaching the indicators set in the plan.
- 4.6. Create a platform or a permanent round table for service providers promoting entrepreneurship development (financial, non-financial, public, private, associative, freelance etc.) and improve their capacity to better support women entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses.
- 4.7. Collect gender segregated quantitative and qualitative statistical data relevant to the field for policy purpose.
- 4.8. Guarantee access to finances for women entrepreneurs (lower interest rates, guarantee fund destined for women as business owners or partners).
- 4.9. Elaborate training and mentorship programs for women at national and regional level, for empowering women entrepreneurs for supporting them in starting and growing their own businesses.
- 4.10. Ensure professional orientation and career guidance from an early age in all educational institutions for young girls to consider entrepreneurship as a career option.
- 4.11. Promote the informative campaign for creating a more positive enabling environment for Women's Entrepreneurship development, by supporting assessments of the situation, and working with governments and policy makers to remove the specific gender barriers that women entrepreneurs face.
- 4.12. Promote best practices, business women as role models and the concept of gender balanced family business.

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<sup>35</sup>Action Plan for 2015-2017 regarding the implementation of the SMEs Development Strategy  
<http://www.mec.gov.md/ro/content/politici-si-programe-imm>

<sup>36</sup> Evaluation report regarding the implementation of the National Program for Ensuring Gender Equality for 2010-2015  
[http://www.mmpsf.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport\\_evaluare\\_pnaeg\\_2010-2015.pdf](http://www.mmpsf.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_evaluare_pnaeg_2010-2015.pdf)

## **5. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

- 5.1. **Institutional framework remains weak and ineffective.** Beyond a dedicated department on gender equality within the Ministry of Labor Social Protection and Family no other ministry has full time personnel responsible to ensure gender equality. Gender focal points within ministries and public authorities have no mandate, no action plan and no accountability. The activity of the Governmental Commission for Gender Equality was infrequent and in 2015 no meetings of the Commission took place. Among the biggest challenges that Moldovan institutions face in terms of ensuring gender equality are: (1) reduced responsibility among agencies / public institutions for achieving gender equality, (2) low understanding of how different policy choices may have different effects on men and women and (3) a very weak mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of how public institutions are implementing initiatives for achieving gender equality. Other challenges include: reduced funding, no data disaggregated by gender, no methodologies or unique approaches in public policy development, reduced knowledge and professional capacity.
- 5.2. **Moldovan policy making is an equality blind process.** An equality blind policy process starts with the average assumption. Most vulnerable and marginalized groups are averaged out. Employment rate, access to services, access to participation, resources is always lower among youth, women, Roma, disabled, rural communities. Policy making process fails to take into account specific gaps based on gender, age, social status, disability or ethnicity. In addition, the policy process fails to define the underlying causes, to develop specific approaches and to ensure that gaps addressed with adequate funds, expertise, institutional commitment and political will. As a result, majority of sectoral policies (the “Moldova 2020” cycle) have no or little effect towards closing the gaps. The gender blind policy index calculated for 2013-15 was 0,86 from the maximum score of 4. The assessment focuses on 3 key elements of the policy cycle. The scorecard had 13 indicators clustered on 3 main areas: (1) problem definition: if special needs of men and women were identified, any core underlying causes of inequality were defined, (2) results framework: objectives are gender mainstreamed, is there a special gender equality objective?, action plan on achieving gender equality objectives, (3) Implementation framework: gender desegregated indicators, strong accountability for gender equality, clear roles and responsibilities for gender equality.
- 5.3. **The Council for Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality (Non-Discrimination Council)** proved to be an effective institution to promote equality, yet its mandate needs to be strengthened.

### **Recommendations:**

- 5.4. Allocate funds for equality focal points in key ministries like education, health and ministry of economy. Equality focal points should have clear mandate, job description.
- 5.5. Develop and adopt an Equality Mainstreaming Procedure to be mandatory for all sector based policies.
- 5.6. Reform the Governmental Commission for Gender Equality as to make all the ministries more accountable for gender equality.
- 5.7. Amend the Parliament’s procedures to mainstream gender equality when amendments and draft laws are reviewed.
- 5.8. Enable the Council on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality with appropriate investigation and sanctioning powers.