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Gender Action Plan III- 2021-2025

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Country Level Implementation Plan – Armenia

With the adoption by the College of the European Union (EU) Gender Action Plan III: An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action (GAP III) on 25 November 2020, the EU reaffirms the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout EU external action at all levels and in all sectors. This GAP III was extended on 21 November 2023 to build on its achievements towards a gender-equal world.

This GAP III Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP), built on the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021 – 2027 (MIP), the Human Rights Country Strategy 2021-2024 and Gender Country Profile (CGP)¹ of the Republic of Armenia (Armenia) 2021, covers both the programmatic and political commitments and propose specific actions and initiatives for promoting gender equality in the Republic of Armenia.

The following actors have been consulted in the preparation of the CLIP: the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MESCS) and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA), EU Member States (EU MSs), women’s organisations and other civil society actors.

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women’s empowerment in the country

In the past few years, Armenia has been making some progress in the [Global Gender Gap Index](#), which is calculated each year by World Economic Forum. From being 102nd in numeric position in 2016, to advancing to 98th in 2019 and 2020. Impact of pandemic and war in 2020 affected the score of Armenia in global gender gap index in 2021, since Armenia has fallen to

¹ All the references for this CLIP can be found in the Armenian Country Gender Profile (CGP): <https://euneighbourseast.eu/news-and-stories/publications/country-gender-profile-of-the-republic-of-armenia/>

114th place on the index². However, a significant progress has been made in 2023 and currently Armenia is on the 61st place among 146 countries included in the report³.

Main changes occurred in terms of a sub-index of economic participation. From 96th place in 2021, 84th place in 2022 Armenia made it to 52nd place in 2023. The most significant changes are registered in the labour force participation rate.

Overall, Armenia is on the third place in regards to the Global Gender Gap Index among ten countries of Eurasia and Central Asia region⁴.

The Government of Armenia addresses gender inequality through a number of policy instruments: i) the National Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 for Gender Equality, ii) the 2022-2024 National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Provisions of the UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, iii) the Law on Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Victims of Violence within the Family and Restoration of Peace in the Family, iv) the Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

A new Strategy for 2024-2026 will be finalized with EU support by early 2024.

The national mechanisms of gender equality are the following:

- **Council on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adjunct to the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.** In this Council, there is a working group led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which includes gender focal points from different ministries.
- **Permanent commissions on gender issues** established in each *marzpetaran* (regional governing body).
- **The Council on Domestic Violence** exists de-jure, however amendments to the law on domestic violence are needed so that the Council can properly function.

Ever since 2018, the MLSA became the main government actor in the formulation and implementation of gender equality policy and promotion of gender mainstreaming.

In 2019, the Council on Women's Affairs, chaired by the RA Deputy Prime Minister, was established. The Council is a national mechanism that assists to the involvement of women in the democratic processes, and ensures equal rights and equal opportunities among men and women in Armenia⁵. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and wars, the Council didn't get much work done.

The current CLIP is based on the Multi-annual Indicative Program (MIP) 2021-2027, the Human Rights Country Strategy 2021-2024, the Armenia-EU Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and on the Road Map for civil society and the Gender Action Plan III. The Gender Country Profile was elaborated with the EU4Gender Helpdesk, through

² World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2021, Cologny, WEF, 2021, available at:

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/244387/the-global-gender-gap-index>

³ https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf

⁴ https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf

⁵ <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=102587>

various consultations with the government gender focal points, civil society organisations, representatives of the EU Members States and representatives of United Nations agencies.

The priority areas of EU cooperation with Armenia financed under the MIP are:

- **Resilient, sustainable and integrated economy**

Main gender sensitive results to be achieved:

- **Gap in economic activity of men and women to be decreased**, especially for women in the age group 25-34 years old. A number of women outside of the labour force in the age group 25-49 has increased since 2021. In 2021 in the age group of 25-49 of those who were outside of the labour market around 70% were women⁶. In 2022 this number increased reaching to 82% in the age group of 25-29 and 80% in the age group 25-49 among those outside or labour force in Armenia⁷. Consequently, women employment reached its peak in the 40-54-year-old age group, meaning that women are out of the job market during their most employable years, they have fewer skills and working experience compared to men in the same age group and employers are reluctant to hire women over 40 years old. The reason of not being involved in the labour market and not actively looking for a job is a fact of being engaged in the housekeeping (43% of women). Only 1 % of men mentioned the same reason as a factor of being out of the labour market⁸. Overall, in 2022 38% of young women and 16% of young men at the age 15-29 were neither in education, nor in employment. Most working women (62%) are involved in the fields of public administration, education, health and social work and service provision (61%)⁹. There are more women in public sphere (30% compare to 18% of men), but in non-public sphere of economy the situation is the opposite (70% of women and 82% of men, respectively)¹⁰. Men are more involved in formal and informal employment in almost areas: agriculture, industry, construction, services. Twice more women compare to men work part-time (25% vs 13%, respectively)¹¹. Women more than men are engaged in the unpaid trainings, own-used production of goods and services. There are much more women volunteers as well (64% of women compare to 36% of men)¹².
- **Preschool attendance in Armenia, especially in rural areas to be increased**. At present the level of pre-school attendance in rural areas sits around 17.2%.
- **The percentage of women employers and business owners to be increased**. A substantial gender gap is recorded in Armenia in favour of men among employers, since the 86% of employers are men. On the other hand, when it comes to women

⁶ Men and Women, 2022

⁷ Men and Women, 2023

⁸ [https://armstat.am/file/article/gender_2023\).pdf](https://armstat.am/file/article/gender_2023).pdf)

⁹ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, Women and Men in Armenia 2023, Government of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan, available at: [https://armstat.am/file/article/gender_2023\).pdf](https://armstat.am/file/article/gender_2023).pdf)

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

business owners, women are under-represented among business owners and that women-owned enterprises are smaller and more disadvantaged than those owned by men as long as access to credit, resources and assets are concerned.

- **Ensure increase of participation of women from marginalized communities in the labour market.**
 - **Ensure integration and engagement of women from the displaced population in the labour market.** Among 100 632 displaced 52% are women and girls. Given the high rates of unemployment in the country and the limited availability of childcare options, promoting women's access to decent work and childcare facilities are seen as a major priority. However, there is a need to overcome the psychological trauma before initiating any assessment regarding available skills and job placement¹³. Women with few resources are at increased risk of adopting negative coping mechanisms. These may include survival sex, and girls dropping out from school to provide childcare while parents are working as reported in 2020 crisis¹⁴.
 - **Gender pay gap to be decreased.** Gender pay gap was 39.2% in 2022¹⁵. Gender pay gap in Armenia increased since 2018 by 3.9 points making women's earnings 61% of men's earnings.
- **Accountable institutions, rule of law and security**

Main gender sensitive results to be achieved:

- **Better gender parity in decision-making in all branches of the government at the national and subnational level to be ensured.** Nowadays, at the national level, there are only two women ministers. Only 6% among heads of consolidated communities are women. Only 6 % of women are deputy heads of communities. There are no women among deputies of Yerevan city mayor either. In the meantime, 50% of Yerevan municipality staff are women. Among 1326 council members of communities not even half are women (29% only).
- **Istanbul Convention to be ratified.** Armenia's ratification of the Istanbul Convention was prevented by a strong anti-gender opposition movement. War in 2020, military attack of Azerbaijan on Armenian territory in 2022, massive influx of ethnic Armenian refugees from Nagorno Karabakh in 2023, internal political instability have also impacted the delays in the ratification of strategic documents.
- **Gender-based discrimination in law and practice to be addressed.** The new criminal code identifies domestic violence as an aggravating circumstance in a number of crimes, however domestic violence is not a stand-alone criminal offense. An amendment to the Law on *Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence, and Restoration of Solidarity in the Family* was introduced. According to the amendment a new mechanism allowing for monitoring through electronic devices in special cases for the protection purposes will increase the

¹³ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/armenia-gender-alert-01-voices-of-women-activists-and-civil-society-organizations-en.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2m64dCtz3DXZdHXL2raFNUBBpXaR26ydKMLvb6kMJQglwtG1GRGfsKSKU>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

effectiveness of the response in emergency cases. Legislation to ensure equality and non-discrimination on all grounds, including on sexual orientation and gender identity is not adopted. Acts of hate speech are criminalized, however, hate crime is not. In addition, the criminal code does not recognize animus due to sexual orientation or gender identity as aggravating criminal circumstances in hate crimes.

- **Gender-sensitivity of state policy makers**, including law enforcement and judiciary, in order to improve gender-sensitive policies in the field of sexual and gender-based violence. Up to these days, the Armenian Criminal Code does not outline any specific guidelines for qualifying cases or punishing crimes which involve domestic violence. Law enforcement officers and judges lack of appropriate training. Prevention/prohibition of sexual violence was introduced in the new Labour Code in 2023, however complaint and response mechanism, as well as responsible parties has not been defined and operationalized yet.
 - **Gender based violence as a result of conflicts/wars and displacement to be addressed.** The rates of gender-based violence are expected to increase greatly, due to the loss of livelihoods, overcrowded conditions, and psychological distress. Information sharing and scale up of GBV mitigation, prevention and response services are crucial¹⁶. According to the data provided by the support centres for the victims of domestic violence in the regions of Armenia, the number of cases is increased after the war in 2020 and continue increasing now.
- **Environmental and climate resilience**

Main gender sensitive results to be achieved:

- **Women to be involved in the production of agricultural goods**, work in safe and protected environment. Currently, women are over-represented in informal employment in this sector, which undermines their full enjoyment of workers' rights and protection.
- Women's visions and experiences are utilized in the process of **addressing climate-related problems**.
- **Food security to be ensured** in the design and implementation of poverty reduction programs. Overall, 30% of households are food insecure in Armenia. However, among food insecure households 28% were headed by females and 18% by males in 2022. The households which are food insecure and/or poor are the ones having female head of household, divorced or widowed head of household, those having 4 and more children, 8-12 household members, having a household member with the first group of disability and a disabled child, being a single unemployed pensioner, being hosted or living informally in a dwelling, as well as not owning a car¹⁷.
- **Women to have more access to natural resources and utilities.**
- **To improve living conditions** of women and men also through improved access to drinking and irrigation water.

¹⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/armenia-gender-alert-01-voices-of-women-activists-and-civil-society-organizations-en.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2m64dCtz3DXZdHXL2raFNUBBpXaR26ydKMLvb6kMJQglwtG1GRGfsKSKU>

¹⁷ <https://armenia.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/Poverty%20and%20food%20security%20-%20a%20snapshot%20of%20interlinkages.pdf>

- **To promote new green economic development and jobs linked to the green transition**, equally available to women and men,
- **Frameworks for inclusive green economy and promotion of green growth and jobs** are enabled.
- **Resilience of health system through enhancing public health systems to be increased.**
- **Access to public health by men and women, including women and girls with disabilities, to be enhanced.** Physical obstacles and discrimination prevent women and girls with disabilities from exercising their sexual and reproductive health rights. Biased attitudes and lack of knowledge and skills among the medical personnel affects in particular women and girls with disabilities and women living with HIV, especially in rural parts of Armenia. There are also more than 2000 people with disabilities among displaced population¹⁸.
- **2023-2030 Disaster and Risk Reduction National Strategy to be implemented.** The Strategy has some gender sensitive elements. It also recognizes the importance of gender equality, and special needs and characteristics of women, children, elderly, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups¹⁹.

- **Resilient digital transformation**

Main gender sensitive results to be achieved:

- **Percentage of women and girls involved in the innovation, science and technology (IST)** to be increased. Women's involvement in the information and communications technology sector in Armenia is 40%. However, only 11% of leaders in the ICT sector are women and the pay gap in this sector is substantial. Gender pay gap in the information and communication technology sector is quite high (40%).
- **Policy environment and infrastructure for digital transformation**, reduction of digital divide by narrowing gender, urban-rural digital disparities are enhanced.

- **Resilient, fair and inclusive society**

Main gender sensitive results to be achieved:

- **Protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms, gender equality, and anti-discrimination** to be strengthened.
- **Evidence-based, inclusive dialogue and policies** to be developed and adopted. Policies in Armenia presents some gaps when it comes to inclusiveness.
- Social inclusion through **equitable access to public services and socio-economic integration** to be enhanced. Women in Armenia still represent the majority of the long-term unemployed population (53%), the majority of registered unemployed are also women (63%) and 60% of women work in sectors that are not particularly lucrative, including agriculture, education and health care.

¹⁸<https://www.gov.am/en/news/item/10373/#:~:text=There%20are%20230%20pregnant%20women,with%20disabilities%20among%20the%20displaced.>

¹⁹ <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/5694/about>

- **Access of various groups of population, including those from disadvantage and vulnerable groups, and from the displaced population to public education, social services, information, culture, and employment** to be improved. Lack of essential gynaecological care is still a problem for women from marginalised and vulnerable groups in Armenia. A further example of the necessity to improve access of vulnerable groups to these kind of services is provided by the persisting gender bias in Yezidi communities. Indeed, among 40,000–60,000 Yezidis, only a handful of Yezidi girls attend university.
- Support measures for **continuous capacity building of women’s civil society organizations** to be ensured.
- **Harmful social norms and gender biases to be addressed through education, media and public discourse.** Gender Social Norms Index shows that 92% of Armenian population shares at least one gender related bias. There are more men sharing at least two biases than women (82% vs 68%, respectively). There are more women than men without any biases in Armenia (10% vs 5%, respectively)²⁰. At the same time, main biases occur in respect of economic participation, physical integrity, and the least biases are registered in respect to education and gender ²¹. According to the baseline study on gender norms and stereotypes conducted by the UN Women, 64% of women and 71% of men in Armenia believe that a good wife shouldn’t question her husband, even if she disagrees with him. Over half of male respondents believe that men make better political leaders. 66 % of women and 75% of men think that it is better for a child if his/her mother does not work, and half of the population agree that it is more important for a man to advance in his career than for a woman²².

2. The objectives and the selected thematic areas of engagement:

The overall objectives of the EU action for gender equality and women’s empowerment in Armenia are:

1. to ensure freedom from all forms of gender-based violence,
2. to strengthen economic and social rights and empower girls’ and women’ s advancing for equal participation in leadership and gender equality in education
3. to integrate the women, peace and security agenda, and
4. to promote gender equality in the green and digital transformation.

Special attention will be paid to the gender specific needs of girls and women from marginalized communities, including those with disabilities and displaced population.

The overall objectives, corresponding to four out of six GAP III strategic policy areas on gender equality and women’s empowerment, will be addressed with actions deriving from the MIP 2021-2027 and to be promoted in the political and policy dialogues.

Freedom from all forms of gender-based violence

²⁰ <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/gsni202303pdf.pdf>

²¹ https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2021-22pdf_1.pdf

²² UN Women baseline survey

To reach the overall objective that women and girls live lives free from gender-based violence, the EUD Armenia will focus on the following specific objectives:

- Promoting capacity building programs for representatives of state to increase their gender-sensitivity and skills to address gender-based violence.
- Supporting judicial reforms directed towards ensuring specific procedures in order to criminalize any form of domestic and sexual violence.
- Supporting the implementation of the Law on protection of Victims of Violence within the family and restoration of peace in the family.
- Supporting ratification of the Istanbul Convention.
- Supporting implementation of effective legal, policy and practical measures to address GBV against women with disabilities, particularly those living in institutions.
- Facilitating the adaptation of robust measures to combat gender stereotypes, discriminatory social norms and school-related gender-based violence in and through education.
- Supporting women's civil society organizations tackling gender-based violence, including online sexism.
- Straightening women's support centers for the victims of gender based violence established by MLSA in the regions of Armenia.

Strengthening of economic and social rights and empowerment of women and girls

In order to meet the objective that will enable women, men, girls and boys to exercise their economic, labour and social rights freely and equally, the EUD Armenia will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Supporting decreasing of inequalities and supporting resilience and human development, in particular targeting women, youth and marginalised groups.
- Facilitation of pandemic and post-war recovery and economic growth.
- Supporting further development of women's owned business, and enabling environment for the strengthening of women's entrepreneurship.
- Supporting human capital and supporting modernization of education, including better quality skills for jobs, preparing girls and boys, women and men, including those from a marginalized background for challenges and opportunities of labour market.
- Prioritizing free growth and jobs (with more accent on environment and innovation) and targeted recovery initiatives in Southern Armenia.
- Supporting building of a stronger gender responsive education systems to promote gender equality and deliver more equitable education results for girls and boys through safe and healthy learning environments, teacher recruitment, training and professional development, curricula and learning materials, work with parents and communities.
- Supporting improvement of access to comprehensive sexuality education in capital and regions of Armenia.
- Supporting social and economic rights of women and girls from displaced population from Nagorno Karabakh.
- Assisting government of Armenia in the introduction and fostering of policies for more flexible work-life balance for women addressing time poverty, providing childcare and family support.

- Assisting government of Armenia in the awareness raising campaign on harmonization of work, family and private life, equal division of reproductive work, and men's active participation in performance of parental responsibilities.

Integration of women, peace and security agenda (WPS)

To reach the overall objective that, rights of women and girls affected by conflict are protected, and women and girl's participation and representation in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict governance is ensured, the EUD Armenia will pursue the following objectives:

- Enhancing security, post-war recovery, and confidence-building, including improved border management, countering violent extremism, conflict transformation.
- Increasing efforts to enhance multilateralism, global solidarity, and to de-escalate geopolitical tensions, thus contributing to peace and security.
- Supporting implementation of UN1325 National Action Plan 2022-2024 adopted by the government of Armenia, including localization of women, peace and security agenda in the border with Azerbaijan regions of Armenia, and ensuring gender perspective on recovery and integration.
- Promoting participation of women in peace negotiations.
- Supporting implementation of confidence-building activities, psychological and rehabilitation programs for women, men, girls and boys in Tavush, Syunik and Gegharkunik regions.
- Supporting implementation of programs aimed at increasing women's leadership in peacebuilding and humanitarian action, and effective implementation of the WPS agenda in Armenia.
- Supporting monitoring of the violation of women and girls rights in the border regions.
- Supporting social, cultural and economic integration of women and girls from displaced population.

Harnessing the challenges and opportunities of the green transition and transformation.

To reach the overall objective that women influence decision-making processes on environmental conservation and climate change policies and actions, the EUD will pursue the following specific objectives:

- Promoting women's and girls' participation and leadership in order to ensure gender responsive strategies to climate mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction, food security, and the inclusive and sustainable management of natural resources.
- Supporting women's networks in green transition sectors, such as sustainable forest management, agriculture and energy.
- Promoting digital education and skills for jobs and entrepreneurship while addressing gender norms and stereotypes that steer women and girls away from technology.

- Supporting women digital innovators and entrepreneurs across multiple industrial ecosystems to build an inclusive digital economy with the aim of closing the digital gender gap.
- Supporting improvement of secure and affordable e-connectivity and inclusive digital skills development, especially for disadvantaged groups, narrowing gender, urban-rural digital disparities.
- Supporting investments in girls' education to achieve equal access to all forms of education and training, including science, technology, engineering and maths, digital literacy and skills, and technical and vocational education and training.

To reach the GAP III target that at least 85% of all new actions in each priority area / sector of the MIP will have gender equality as a significant or principal objective, goals objectives and indicators from the MIP - GAP III corresponding thematic engagement areas, will be used in the design, formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Annual Action Programs (AAP). Implementing partners will be provided with guidance in integrating these in their proposals / contracts.

Engaging with civil society has been critical in ensuring effective reforms, as it has supported gender equality in the Republic of Armenia. The civil society organizations will be involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU actions. One of the priorities of MIP is to increase CSO' capacity in implementing the provisions of the EU Gender Action Plan.

Measures in favour of civil society, foreseen by CLIP, will accompany and inform all the priority areas, with the understanding that a fully democratic, open and inclusive society requires civic engagement, and collaboration of all actors, with civil society and independent media playing the role of fostering positive changes and public oversight. CLIP will also focus on the EU-Civil Society Roadmap 2021-2027 priorities in Armenia which include addressing the human rights agenda, democratisation, policy monitoring and dialogue, monitoring of CEPA implementation, capacities for engagement with citizens and greater sustainability of CSOs, supporting gender equality, youth, the most vulnerable groups and an inclusive and tolerant society, and resilience, engagement in environmental and climate issues.

3. Targeted actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

The overall objective of the G2²³ action will be ensuring: (I) freedom from all forms of gender-based violence, (II) strengthening economic and social rights, (III) and empowering girls and women and advancing equal participation and leadership.

At the national level, the action will provide support to the Parliament and the Government to adopt and implement gender transformative laws, policies and budgets in selected sectors, by:

- Reforming and strengthening gender mechanism for effective gender mainstreaming in laws and sectoral policies, by piloting in employment (address the pay gap, equal

²³ Defined as G2 actions in line with OECD gender maker G2. These actions should aim at achieving a long-lasting change tackling harmful gender norms and stereotypes, by implementing a comprehensive and gender-transformative approach

access to jobs, access to finances and care services), education, digitalization and infrastructure.

- Supporting the Government to adopt mechanisms and principles of gender responsive governance.
- Advancing equitable public financing and accountability through gender responsive budgeting.
- Supporting the development of just and inclusive society through support of evidence-based, responsive, participatory, inclusive policies of the Government and assisting disadvantaged groups to improve their living conditions.

At local level, the actions will be aimed at the capacity building of Local/Regional Authorities and empower Civil Society Organizations, coalitions, women and youth from communities to engage in gender mainstreaming at local level by:

- Strengthening and post war economic recovery, social and economic rights of forcibly displaced population, climate resilience and inclusion of women in community development.
- Enabling youth civic activism for gender equitable local governance and empower local women leaders to act as agents of change.
- Improving protection from gender-based discrimination and violence through access to legal services via survivor centered approach.
- Building capacities of local authorities in understanding and use of data for evidence-based violence prevention programs.
- Supporting local CSOs in the effective implementation of GAP III and monitoring of the EU support to the government of Armenia.

The action will address root causes of gender inequalities and apply a gender-transformative, rights-based and intersectional approach and accelerating progress towards global goals including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

Specific indicators under each area of engagement:

Area of engagement I - on freedom from all forms of gender-based violence²⁴:

- Extent to which legislation and/or policy prohibiting/addressing gender-based violence has been developed, strengthened and/or implemented.
- Proportion of victims of violence (sexual and gender-based violence) in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms, disaggregated by sex.
- Proportion of women's rights organizations, autonomous social movements and civil society organizations, including those representing young people and groups facing intersecting forms of discrimination /marginalization in a partner country, report having greater influence and agency to work on ending gender-based violence

²⁴ In 2022, EUR 1,000,000 will be targeting activities and actions implemented by CSO to prevent all forms of gender-based violence (Thematic Programme for Human Right and Democracy)

Area of engagement II - Strengthening economic and social rights:

- Extent to which gender norms regarding women and men social roles, unpaid care work of women, “feminine” and “masculine” jobs are challenged through education.
- Number of women with increased management and leadership skills through government initiatives (disaggregated by sector – public/private).
- Extent to which appropriate policies and measures are implemented by government to improve the access of women and girls to inclusive and quality education, including Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields and quality digital education and training.
- Extent to which lifelong learning opportunities for women, including for occupational transitions is ensured.

Area of engagement III - Empowering girls and women and advancing equal participation and leadership:

- Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliament and (b) local governments.
- Number of reforms and specific measures taken by the Government to implement existing policy commitments on women’s and girls’ participation in decision making.
- Extent to which a gender parity system for appointments and accelerated recruitment of women into senior positions in the public and private sectors is implemented.
- Extent to which local and national media challenge discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes about women’s and girls’ participation and leadership.
- 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 discriminatory practices.

Collaboration with the EU Member states and the UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, etc.) may be envisaged in order to implement the activities mentioned under the three areas of engagement.

Calls for proposals for civil society organizations, to implement Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) actions, will be launched every year, under different instruments, starting 2022. In 2022, the project EQUAL - EU 4 Women Empowerment in Armenia (EQAUL) – EUR 1 million - was signed to empower women in Armenia to bring about societal change in Armenia with the specific focus on Ararat, Vayots Dzor, Kotayk, Armavir, Syunik, Shirak, Lori and Tavush marzes. EQUAL provides women duly support to exercise their political, economic and socio-cultural rights, targeting specifically those from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Specific support will be provided by the EU and EU Member states to national gender machineries/networks. Women’s organizations and organizations working on gender equality will receive support in the framework of the civil society facility, civil society organizations and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights Call for Proposals.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

Gender equality is an important part of the EU-RA Government communication within the framework of the Association Agreement implementation. Article 85 in CEPA highlights the importance of promotion of equal opportunities and antidiscrimination aiming at enhancing gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, as well as combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The EU also holds annual political dialogue with the RA, where gender equality figures in the agenda.

The EU Delegation co-chairs the extended Gender Theme Group (eGTG), along with MLSA and UNFPA. This group is to serve as a forum for advancing international conventions on women's and girls' human rights, CEDAW and other related international treaties, and the 2030 Agenda and most specifically the implementation of Goal on Gender Equality (SDG 5) in a concerted action among the UN, international development partners, civil society organizations to best serve the needs and priorities of the Government of Armenia. It is a forum for debate and action on setting the short and long-term implementation priorities aimed at the mainstreaming of gender equality and ensuring that no person, independent of their gender, woman or a girl, as well as man or a boy is left behind. This active group brings together the main stakeholders, national as well as international, to discuss and debate gender related issues in Armenia.

Another component of EU's efforts in supporting peace in the region, as well fostering gender mainstreaming in areas affected by conflict, is the deployment of the **EU Mission to Armenia (EUMA)**. EUMA is a non-armed civilian CSDP mission, currently operating in 6 Forward Operating Bases (FOB). Its observation mandate covers the entire length of Armenia's border areas with Azerbaijan, from the Armenian territory. As one of the main tasks of the Mission is to contribute to human security, EUMA disposes a Gender equality advisor and a network of Gender equality focal points in the 6 FOB to better target gender related issues.

The EU will also work toward enhancing enabling environment for civil society. Increased participation of CSOs in tackling climate change, youth inclusion, COVID-19 impact on the lives of marginalized communities, women's participation in decision-making, combating gender-based violence, and mitigating risks and vulnerabilities in fragile and war-affected communities is set up as a priority indicator.

The action results will be measured through the number of CSOs trained and received financial support.

The EU4Gender Equality: Reform Helpdesk provides regular support to the national gender machinery through consultations, awareness-raising and capacity building activities.

Further specific actions will be elaborated in the coming years in accordance with the priority areas outlined in the MIP.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

The EU Delegation actively highlights international commemoration days and periods, such as International Women's Day, 16 days against gender-based violence, stressing the importance of the commemorated issues in its social media posts, sharing relevant information materials, interviews of the Head of mission, other senior officials. The EU representatives together with the EU Member states participate in events of different levels targeting gender equality and

women's empowerment: from the high-profile yearly International Women's Congress with participation of the top officials to the local training for female activists organised by EU-funded grants.

The EU Delegation also delivers demarches related to the Human Rights Council sessions and UNGA (United Nations General Affairs), where gender issues and women's empowerment featuring as EU's priorities.

At project's level public outreach will be organised in the framework of regional or bilateral projects implemented by UN agencies as well as different grants to NGO's to be awarded under various Calls for proposals and other upcoming national projects. The communication strategies of the above-mentioned actions envisage regular dialogue with civil society organisations, targeted media and social media campaigns, participation in various sectoral events, the distribution of promo items, contests etc. Another regional initiative, the EU4Gender Equality: Reform Helpdesk maintains regular communication with governmental officials, providing them with expertise and regular updates on EU gender equality actions and standards.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

The EU4Gender Equality: Reform Helpdesk will be used to provide further consultations and trainings to Armenian governmental counterparts as well as for gender mainstreaming actions financed by the Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP). The EU Delegation Communication support project will also contribute to the promotion of gender equality through the information and communication activities.