

# EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

SIGI REGIONAL REPORT



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## Acronyms and abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
EWL	European Women's Lobby
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IFAD	United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INFE	International Network on Financial Education
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMG	Open Media Group
SA	South Asia
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SMEs	Small and medium sized enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN CESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAVE	Women Against Violence Europe
WHO	World Health Organization
YMI	Care International's Young Men Initiative



**The SIGI  
in Europe and  
Central Asia**



## Regional overview

**The Europe and Central Asia region sets high global benchmarks on gender equality and women's empowerment.** It has a successful track record of removing the structural barriers that hold back progress on substantive equality between women and men. This regional report presents a detailed analysis of one of the strongest performing regions of the 2014 edition of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) and shows the importance of addressing discriminatory social institutions for national development, inclusive growth and human rights. The 47 countries of Europe and Central Asia (ECA) have very low to low levels of discrimination against women across most of the SIGI's sub-indices; only 24 countries with full data sets are ranked within the SIGI. However, there is considerable heterogeneity in the intensity of discrimination, mirroring the region's diversity of political economies and cultural practice.

**Discriminatory social institutions** are formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict or exclude women and consequently curtail their access to rights, justice, resources and empowerment opportunities.

**The region is a case study on how investing in gender equality pays off for building inclusive and resilient economies.** The region typically performs well-above global averages on key gender indicators, courtesy of long-term commitments to pro-actively reduce gender gaps, remove discrimination, and redress historically entrenched inequalities in labour markets and in other areas of public life. Many countries, such as Belgium and Serbia (two of the top performers in the SIGI 2014, see page 10) offer valuable policy lessons for other ECA countries as well as other global regions. Gender gaps in all level of education have been reduced and, in some countries, trends are showing a reverse gender gap in favour of girls in terms of performance and years of education (e.g. Austria, Moldova and Spain) (UNECE, 2014c; World Bank, n.d.). The region on average also boasts relatively high female labour force participation rates; all sub-regions show participation rates which are higher than the global average (World Bank, n.d.).

**However, such progress has not wiped out gender inequalities, suggesting that new, increased and innovative policy responses are required.** While sub-regional differences in terms of scale of gaps exist, many common trends are also noticeable. Challenges persist in all areas of socio-economic life and within the household. It is important to note that while gender gaps in labour force participation and wages have declined across European Union countries, this is mostly due to a worsening of the male situation rather than an improvement of that of women (EU, 2013; EIGE, 2015a). Women still spend on average 4.5 hours on unpaid care work a day, 2.5 times more than men (UNECE, n.d.). Even in countries that see high levels of female labour force participation, women are concentrated in the public sector and in low-paid public-sector jobs, such as education and hospitality (UNECE, n.d.). In contrast, the majority of employees in the industry sector are men (75%), and women are less likely to be found in professions related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (UNECE, n.d.). The glass ceiling continues to block women from advancing in their careers and few women are found on corporate boards (EU, 2012). Regardless of their job sector or level, women earn less than men and progress in closing the gender wage gap has been slow (OECD, 2012; Sattar, 2012). In the political sphere, women still represent only one in four members of parliament on average.

**Moreover, the changing political and economic landscape of the region threatens the gains made in gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decades.** Advances in gender equality are under risk as a result of the deteriorating economic situation brought on by the global financial crisis impacting many European countries and by the transitions experienced in former Soviet republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus (European Commission, 2013; World Bank, 2013).

Gender equality is vulnerable to becoming another victim of austerity due to budget cuts in basic social services, such as healthcare and childcare, “shifting the burden of coping and caring onto the shoulders of women” (UN Women, 2015). Stagnating labour force participation rates of women in Central Asia and the Caucasus since 2008, for example, have been linked with reduced social services (World Bank, 2013).

**Awareness of the gender impacts of socio-economic policies is important to avoid both rollbacks on progress and reinforcing discriminatory social institutions.** The SIGI country profiles report examples of some of the unintended consequences for gender equality of shifting policy priorities and reducing budgets: increases in the share of unpaid care work for women, reduced welfare services for domestic violence survivors, and the revival of traditional discriminatory practices, such as bride kidnappings and early marriage. These are a reminder of the fragility of social transformations, in particular when changes to social norms are not integrated into the response. Recognising and prioritising social norms in the design and implementation of sectoral policies offer the double dividend of promoting gender equality as well as inclusive and sustainable development.

**This “SIGI Regional Report” identifies five priority areas that should be addressed in order to improve the long-term development objectives of Europe and Central Asia and to better protect women’s rights.** Three priority areas cut across the region: violence against women and girls (restricted physical integrity), women’s unequal share of unpaid care work (discriminatory family code) and low female political voice (restricted civil liberties). Two priority areas are specific to the Central Asia and the Caucasus sub-region: lowering high rates of early marriage (discriminatory family code) and reducing the alarming number of missing women (son bias). As some of the examples in Section 2 highlight, discrimination against women represents costs for economic and human development. Introducing and strengthening gender-responsive legislation have helped tackle gender inequalities; however, reducing and eliminating levels of discrimination in these social institutions through a holistic approach based on rights and centred on social norms would accelerate progress towards substantive equality.

**Substantive equality** is a comprehensive understanding of equality between women and men: *De jure (or formal) equality and de facto (or substantive) equality are different but interconnected concepts. Formal equality assumes that equality is achieved if a law or policy treats men and women in a neutral manner. Substantive equality is concerned, in addition, with the effects of laws, policies and practices and with ensuring that they do not maintain, but rather alleviate, the inherent disadvantage that particular groups experience (UN CESCR, 2005, para. 7).*

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer the governments of Europe and Central Asia a timely and holistic framework to turn commitments into concrete action and to track social norm change.** Targets under SDG 5 on gender equality and women’s empowerment address many of the region’s biggest challenges, including the five priority action areas identified above. Implementing the SDGs’ ambitious agenda, which should include establishing a robust measurement matrix to track progress, would enable the region to capitalise on its already relatively strong position on gender equality and create more opportunities for women to contribute to developing their economies and communities.

**The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** were adopted at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015. Among the 17 goals focusing on the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) is one stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG 5). Gender equality is mainstreamed in other goals (cf. SDG 1, 6, and 8).<sup>1</sup>



## Key messages

**1. Without integrating a social norms lens into national development strategies and policies, progress on gender equality in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) will be vulnerable to shifting political priorities and economic downturn.** The region's strong performance on reducing gender gaps and protecting women's rights are under strain in the current economic climate. This risks being further exacerbated by region-wide trends to cut social services spending, which is reinforcing traditional gender roles and curbing women's ability to contribute to their economies and societies. Levelling of or rollbacks on progress on gender equality could be averted by including a social norm lens in the design and implementation of all sectoral policies. Anchoring policies in social norms and rights would foster attitudinal shifts in favour of gender equality at all levels of the socio-political spectrum, securing sustainable social transformation.

**2. Discrimination against women represents an important cost for the region's development.** Promoting gender equality in legislative frameworks, practices and attitudes fosters inclusive economies, which are more resilient and dynamic, particularly important in the current economic environment. New evidence based on the SIGI points to the adverse impacts of discriminatory social institutions on long-term growth. Overall, gender-based discrimination in social institutions is estimated to represent income losses of USD 1.4 trillion across the region, that is, 4% of regional GDP; income gaps between non-OECD and OECD countries in the region could be reduced by 7% on average if levels of discrimination in the former were to match OECD levels.

**3. Laws are a critical first step to tackle discriminatory social institutions but must be accompanied by appropriate budgets and system support to deliver their full impact.** The SIGI ECA country profiles offer examples of the important steps the region has taken in recent years to close legal loopholes and offer more legal protections for women, notably in the area of gender-based violence. Yet implementation gaps continue to weaken their efficiency and impact, with low awareness and available resources commonly cited as shortfalls across all sub-regions. Allocating appropriate budgets, investing in gender-responsive legal systems (including training key stakeholders e.g. the police, the judiciary), raising community-awareness, providing key social services (e.g. welfare houses), and improving women's legal literacy programmes are critical to turn laws into living documents with real impact for communities.

**4. Protecting the rights of the girl child is an investment in equality, human rights and the region's development potential.** The vulnerability of girls' rights in certain countries of the region, notably in Central Asia, is manifested in the alarming rates of early marriage, missing women and other harmful traditional practices, such as bride kidnappings. These discriminations are harmful for girls' health and well-being, violate their rights and also close down opportunities for girls to pursue empowerment pathways through education and employment. Breaking the vicious cycle of discrimination by protecting the girl child's rights could help unleash a virtuous cycle for women's empowerment in economic and public life with wide-ranging benefits for all.

**5. The Sustainable Development Goals offer new opportunities for the region to respect its commitments to gender equality and catalyse socially transformative change.** The new global framework sets ambitious targets on some of the principal challenges confronting the region, such as political leadership, violence against women and girls, and early marriage. SDG 5 should be leveraged to optimise existing efforts at the national level, including strengthening the evidence base through the collection of reliable and timely data to benchmark and track progress. Measuring levels of discrimination against women and the extent to which discrimination affects their development pathways is a challenge due to missing data. Similarly, ratification of and full compliance with international normative instruments, notably the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Convention would further support the region in achieving these ambitious goals by 2030.

## Key results

### Discriminatory family code

**Early marriage:** The majority of countries in the region have legislation establishing the legal age of marriage for girls and boys at 18 and the prevalence of early marriage in Europe and Central Asia is low (4%) compared to the global average (13%). Despite legislation, early marriage remains an issue particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus (e.g. 14% in Georgia) and Southeastern Europe (e.g. 7% in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The highest prevalence is found in Bosnia and Herzegovina where 17% of girls aged 15-19 are married, divorced or widowed.

### Restricted physical integrity

**Violence against women and girls:** Despite legislation, violence against women and girls remains high in the region, fuelled by legal loopholes and high acceptance rates of violence. Twenty-three countries do not recognize marital rape as a crime, four of which allow perpetrators to marry their victims to avoid persecution. The number of women who accept domestic violence as justified ranges from 4% (Belarus) to as high as 60% (Turkmenistan). Five countries have no laws addressing sexual harassment.

### Son bias

**Missing women:** Over the past two decades, the phenomenon of missing women has emerged as cause for alarm in six countries concentrated in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Although policies have been introduced to prohibit sex-selective abortions, skewed sex ratio at birth show that more boys than girls are being born than would be naturally expected: in Azerbaijan, 113 boys are born for every 100 girls.

### Restricted resources and assets

**Equal access to resources and assets:** All 47 countries in the region have removed legal barriers to women's access to resources and assets, according equal rights to women and men to own, use and control land and non-land assets. Gender gaps in financial inclusion have been closed with equal numbers of women and men having an account at a financial institution in the large majority of countries.

### Restricted civil liberties

**Women's political voice:** Over one in four members of parliament are women, above the global average but masking strong regional diversity: from 9% (Hungary) to 46% (Sweden). Twenty-nine countries have no quotas at the national and sub-national levels; in the absence of legislative quotas, some countries have better benefited from voluntary party quotas, however, to boost female political participation.

# Tackling gender discrimination in social institutions: learning from Belgium and Serbia

## Belgium

Belgium presents very low levels of discrimination across all five sub-indices of the SIGI. The equal rights of women and men are enshrined in the Belgium Constitution (1997) guaranteeing women's rights within the family, freedom from violence, access to resources, as well as civil and political rights. Belgium has a long history of working to end gender inequality through non-discriminatory legislation and public policies supporting women's empowerment. The government has shown a commitment to supporting women in the workplace and addressing restrictive gender stereotypes; despite this, there remain gender gaps in employment outcomes.

Women and men in Belgium are accorded equal rights in the family under the Civil Code (2004) including equal rights to parental authority, inheritance and divorce. In the case of divorce, parents share joint authority over their children. The Belgian Civil Code (2004) establishes the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 years for both sexes; however, girls and boys can be married earlier with parental consent. Changes to the Penal Code in 2011 increased punishment against forced marriage and forced cohabitation to imprisonment of up to two years and fines.

The country has a strong and comprehensive legal framework addressing gender-based violence. Domestic violence, rape, including spousal rape, and sexual harassment are all criminal offenses under the Penal Code (2001). In 2010-14, a national action plan against domestic violence (*Plan d'action nationale de lutte contre la violence entre partenaires et d'autres formes de violences intrafamiliales 2010-2014*) extended its scope to cover forced marriage, honour-related violence and female genital mutilation (FGM). Sexual harassment legislation was reinforced in 2014 by a series of laws mandating training of staff, obliging employers to act in cases of a complaint and appointing a prevention advisor. The Penal Code (2001) also criminalises FGM and punishes those who encourage the practice. Working with civil society organisations (CSOs), the government developed an "FGM Prevention Kit" to help public service officials detect FGM and support victims (Council of Europe and Amnesty international, 2014; Institute for the equality of women and men, 2014).

The Civil Code (2004) guarantees women and men equal access to land and non-land property and financial services. Women's access to financial services is one of the highest in the world with almost 100% of women having an account at a formal institution (World Bank, n.d.).

Women's political voice has been strengthened over the past two decades, and electoral quotas exist at both national and sub-national levels. Women's representation in parliament has increased significantly, from 12% in 1995 to 39% in 2014. In 2005, Belgium launched "Felink", an online network to support women in career networking across the federal civil service (OECD and CAWTAR, 2014).

In the labour market, gender gaps persist in wages and occupational segregation. In 2014, 58% of women aged 15-64 were employed compared to 66% of men (World Bank, n.d.). Belgian law mandates equal remuneration for women and men (Convention Collective de Travail), and the gender wage gap (6%) is one of the lowest in the region (OECD, 2014c). To address vertical segregation in employment, the Belgian Company Code and the National Lottery (2011) established a quota of one-third of management board seats for women in state-owned and private companies, and it includes sanctions for non-compliance. Since its introduction, women's presence on boards in the 20 largest companies has increased from 11% in 2011 to 22% in 2014 (UNECE, 2014b).

Belgium's maternity leave policy exceeds the International Labour Organization's (ILO) recommendations: the Labour Law (1971) grants women 15 weeks of paid maternity covered by the state at 82% of their salary for the first 30 days and 75% for the remaining time (Loi sur le travail, 1971). To help women transition back to work, they can spread their last two weeks of maternity leave over eight weeks. Men are entitled to ten days of paternity leave, and they cannot be fired for taking their leave. The number of men taking paternity leave has steadily increased from 8% in 2002 to 26% in 2012 (SPF, 2012). Finally, Belgium has met the Barcelona targets (2002), established by the European Council, on providing childcare for children under the mandatory age of schooling (Rand, 2014).

## Serbia

Serbia shows very good performance in the SIGI sub-indices of discriminatory family code, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. Gender equality is enshrined in the Serbian Constitution (2006), and the government has implemented public policy measures to tackle discrimination against women. These include the National Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality (2009) followed by a National Action Plan to carry it out. Despite these national commitments to gender equality, women in Serbia continue to face the threat of violence, and gaps remain in employment outcomes.

The Family Law of Serbia (2005) establishes the legal age of marriage at 18 years for both women and men; however, girls and boys can marry from the age of 16 with permission from a judge. In addition, the Family Law (2005) states that “spouses shall be equal” and grants parents equal decision-making authority over children during marriage and after divorce. Under the Family Law (2005), women and men have equal rights to inherit land and to initiate divorce.

Serbia has strengthened legislation protecting women from violence; however, women’s access to justice is limited. Domestic violence is covered under the Criminal Code (2005), the Family Act (2003) and the Law on Gender Equality (2009). To address domestic violence, the government of Serbia adopted the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship (2011). Programmes to support victims of violence include a national hotline, women’s shelters and counselling centres. Rape is criminalised under the Criminal Code (2005); however, spousal rape is not mentioned. The criminal code does not cover sexual harassment. The Law on the Prevention of Harassment in the Workplace (2010) aims to eradicate discrimination, including sexual harassment, at work. Under this law, employers can face fines if they fail to inform staff that sexual harassment is prohibited. Women’s CSOs working in Serbia have reported poor implementation of legislation in some areas, such as significant delays in treating cases of domestic violence by the courts. Moreover, there are high levels of underreporting due to social stigma or fear that police will not investigate (Praxis and ERRC, 2012).

The Constitution of Serbia (1990) accords women and men equal rights to own and access land and non-land assets. However, most land and property is owned by men in Serbia, with women owning only 18% of agricultural holdings (GID-DB, 2014). Women in Serbia also benefit from equal access to financial services, including bank loans. Serbia has reached gender parity in accessing bank accounts, with equal numbers of women and men having an account at a formal institution (83%) (World Bank, n.d.). In addition, 25% of entrepreneurs in Serbia are women (UN Gender Theme Group in Serbia, 2015).

In terms of civil liberties, women and men have equal rights to access public space. Non-governmental organisations working in Serbia have reported that women from the Roma community may face some discrimination in education and the labour market (Amnesty International, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2013). As for women’s political voice, the law on the Election of the Representatives (2004) established a 30% electoral quota at both the national and sub-national levels. As of 2014, 34% of parliamentary seats were held by women; this is higher than both the global and regional averages (21% and 25% respectively).

The Labour Law (2009) prohibits gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Employment rates in Serbia are generally low for the region, although women still face lower employment rates than men (33% compared to 49% in 2013) (World Bank, n.d.). The gender wage gap has been decreasing steadily over the past ten years to 11% in 2013, much lower than the regional average of 22% (Avlijaš et al., 2013). In 2012, women represented 16% of board members in large companies (European Commission, 2012).

Women are entitled to 4 weeks of paid maternity leave before birth and 52 weeks after birth at 100% of their salary as specified in the Labour Law (2009). This exceeds the ILO’s recommendations on maternity leave and is one of the longest in the European Union. The Labour Law (2009) also prohibits the dismissal of pregnant women. To support working parents and in particular single mothers, the government adopted the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children (2009) which provides a child allowance and helps cover the costs of pre-school childcare for working mothers.

## Europe and Central Asia sub-regions

### Central Asia and the Caucasus (+ Turkey)

Armenia	Russian Federation
Azerbaijan	Tajikistan
Georgia	Turkey
Kazakhstan	Turkmenistan
Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan

### Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe

Albania	Hungary
Belarus	Poland
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Republic of Moldova
Bulgaria	Romania
Croatia	Serbia
Cyprus*	Slovak Republic
Czech Republic	Slovenia
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Ukraine

### Western Europe and the Baltics

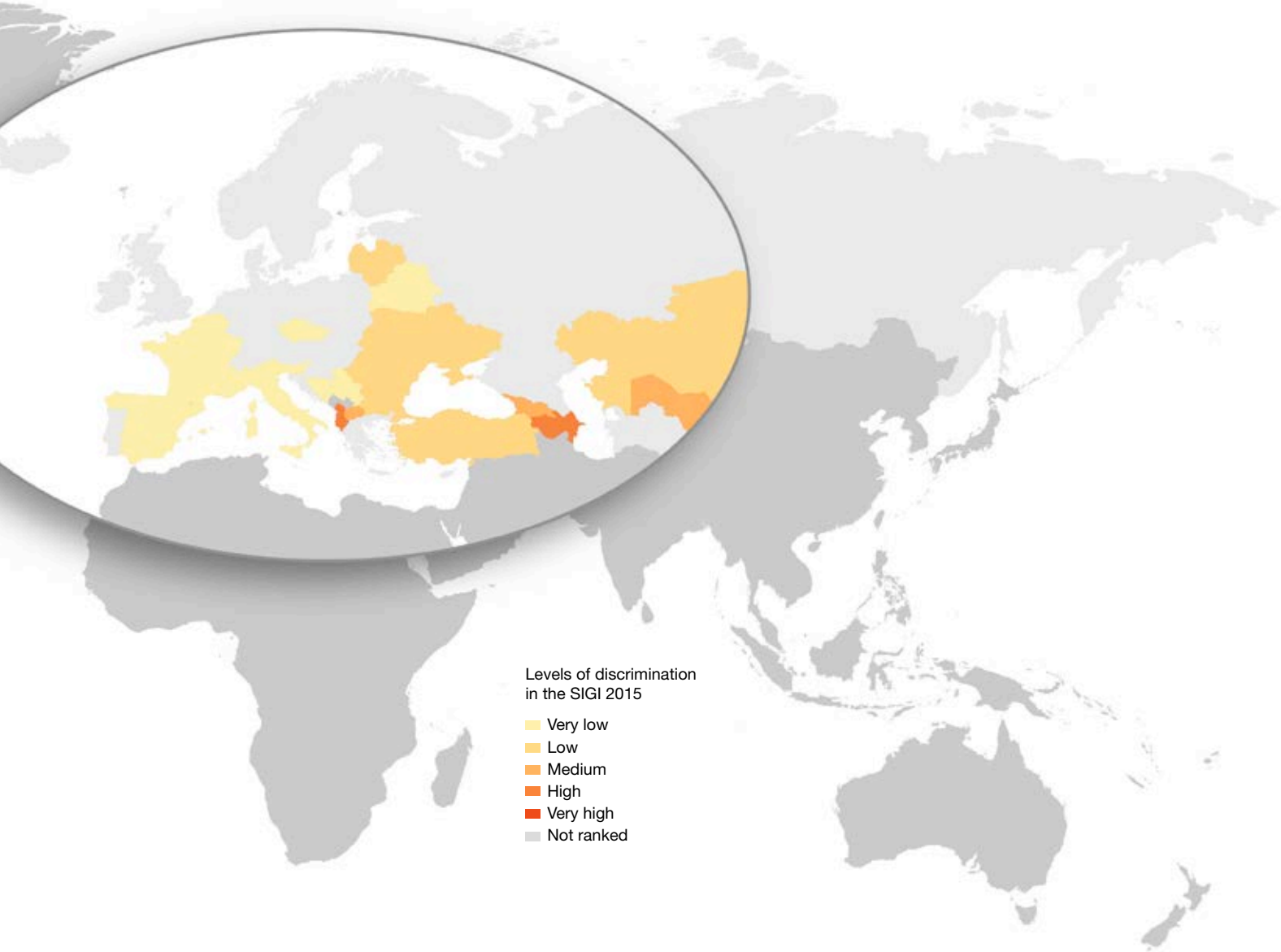
Austria	Latvia
Belgium	Lithuania
Denmark	Luxembourg
Estonia	Netherlands
Finland	Norway
France	Portugal
Germany	Spain
Greece	Sweden
Iceland	Switzerland
Ireland	United Kingdom
Italy	

#### \* Note by Turkey

The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”.

Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union

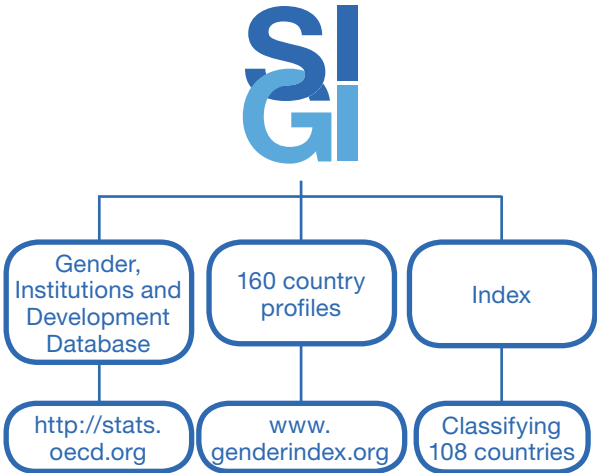
The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.



# SIGI 2014 results for ECA

# About the SIGI

The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures gender-based discrimination in social norms, practices and laws across 160 countries. The SIGI comprises country profiles, a classification of countries and a database; it serves as a research, policy and advocacy tool for the development community and policy makers. The SIGI covers five dimensions, spanning major socio-economic areas that affect the life course of a girl and woman: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. These dimensions look at the gaps that legislation, prevalence and attitudes create between women and men in terms of rights and opportunities.



As a composite index, the SIGI scores countries on 14 indicators. As shown by the figure opposite, the indicators are grouped into five sub-indices that measure one dimension of social institutions related to gender inequality.

The SIGI is an unweighted average (of a non-linear function) of the following five sub-indices: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and assets, and restricted civil liberties. The SIGI and its sub-indices values are between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no inequality and 1 indicating complete inequality (cf. Methodology in Annex or the full methodological background paper available at [www.genderindex.org](http://www.genderindex.org)).

### Discriminatory family code

This sub-index captures social institutions that limit women’s decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family. These formal and informal laws, social norms and practices co-exist in different types of legal systems including civil or common law, customary law, and religious laws and cover areas such as marriage, parental authority and inheritance. Women’s decision-making power and status determine both their ability to choose their own development pathways and the well-being of their families.

### Restricted physical integrity

This sub-index captures social institutions that limit women’s and girls’ control over their bodies, that increase women’s vulnerability, and that normalise attitudes toward gender-based violence. This includes formal and informal laws, norms and practices that fail to protect women’s physical integrity and reproductive autonomy and that allow violence and female genital mutilation. Restricted physical integrity due to gender-based violence and to a lack of reproductive autonomy has serious impacts on health outcomes for women and their children and on economic and social development indicators by increasing women’s vulnerability to poverty.

## Son bias

This sub-index captures unequal intra-household investments in caring for, nurturing and allocating resources to sons and daughters reflecting the lower value given to girls. A family preference for sons over daughters can manifest itself in different ways, including higher mortality, worse health status or lower educational attainment among girls. Consequences of social norms and practices that devalue daughters are various: missing women, under-investment in the health and nutrition of girls leading to infant mortality, under-investment in girls' education, etc.

## Restricted resources and assets

This sub-index captures discrimination in women's rights to access and make decisions over natural and economic resources. This includes discriminatory practices which undermine women's rights to own, control or use land and non-land assets; discriminatory practices that restrict women's access to financial services; and social norms imposing that women's assets be mediated only by men. Insecure or weak rights to land, non-land assets and financial services reduce income-generating opportunities for women, lower decision-making power for women within the household, increase food insecurity for women and their families, and make women and families more vulnerable to poverty.

## Restricted civil liberties

This sub-index captures discriminatory laws and practices that restrict women's access to public space, their political voice and their participation in all aspects of public life. This includes a lack of freedom of movement, the inability to vote or run for election, and negative attitudes toward women as public figures or as leaders. This sub-index highlights the importance of women's participation in community actions and public decision making for a range of development outcomes such as governance, health and education.

Social Institutions and Gender Index				
<b>Discriminatory family code</b>	<b>Restricted physical integrity</b>	<b>Son bias</b>	<b>Restricted resources and assets</b>	<b>Restricted civil liberties</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal age of marriage</li> <li>• Early marriage</li> <li>• Parental authority</li> <li>• Inheritance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence against women</li> <li>• Female genital mutilation</li> <li>• Reproductive autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missing women</li> <li>• Fertility preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure access to land</li> <li>• Secure access to non-land assets</li> <li>• Access to financial services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to public space</li> <li>• Political voice</li> </ul>

## SIGI classification

The 2014 edition of the SIGI scores 108 countries according to their level of discrimination in social institutions. It classifies them into five groups, from very low levels of discrimination in social institutions (15% of the countries, with a SIGI average of 0.02) to very high levels (16% of the countries). This classification groups countries having similar level of discrimination in the SIGI by minimizing differences between countries' SIGI scores in the same class and maximize the differences between classes.

The scores for the ECA region from the 2014 edition of the SIGI and its five sub-indices are presented in the Annex (see page 59).

Rankings for all 108 countries according to the sub-indices are as follows. For discriminatory family code, 159 countries are ranked. Top performers are Australia, Korea and South Africa among others, while the lowest performers are Afghanistan, India and Mali. Regarding restrictions on female physical integrity, 120 countries are ranked. While in France, the United States and Uruguay, women do not face restrictions on their physical integrity, this is an important concern for women living in Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan. The dimension son bias ranks 129 countries: from Costa Rica, Haiti and Swaziland, to Azerbaijan, Nepal and Pakistan where girls are devalued. Among the 160 countries ranked in the sub-index restricted resources and assets, the social institutions in Mauritius, Sweden and Ukraine do not discriminate against women, while those in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Papua New Guinea do. In the sub-index restricted civil liberties, 160 countries are ranked.



Among them Bolivia, Lesotho and Zimbabwe display low levels of discrimination while Iran, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia highly restrict women's civil liberties.

#### **Countries having very low levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (SIGI < 0.04)**

These countries are characterised by robust legal frameworks and measures that provide equal rights in the family code and in access to resources and assets and that promote women's civil liberties. In most of these countries, women and men have equal parental and inheritance rights, and early marriage is not a common practice. Women do not face restrictions on their access to public space or their participation in politics. Neither missing women nor female genital mutilation is a concern. However, the countries lack laws to protect women from violence and measures to implement them, and women need better access to justice. On average 20% of women in these countries have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime.

#### **Countries having low levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.04 < SIGI < 0.12)**

These countries are characterised by strong laws providing equal rights for women and men in the family code, in access to resources and assets, and in civil liberties. Both sexes enjoy equal opportunities to own and make decisions over land and other resources. Female genital mutilation is not practiced, and most women have reproductive autonomy. These countries have inadequate legal frameworks regarding violence against women. On average 31% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, and more than 29% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.

#### **Countries having medium levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.12 < SIGI < 0.22)**

These countries are characterised by inconsistent or conflicting legal frameworks covering the family code, women's access to resources and assets, and civil liberties. The strong influence of customary practices perpetuates discrimination in these areas. Specifically, women face discrimination in terms of the legal age of marriage, parental authority, inheritance, and rights to land and financial services. Women are restricted in their access to public space, as well as in their participation in political life due to the absence of quotas at the national and/or sub-national levels. Legal frameworks addressing violence against women are inadequate (e.g. certain types of violence are not included). On average, 39% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.

#### **Countries having high levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (0.22 < SIGI < 0.35)**

These countries are characterised by discrimination embedded in customary laws, social norms and practices and by inappropriate legal protections against gender discrimination in all dimensions of social institutions. The legal frameworks and/or the customary laws discriminate against women in respect to the legal age of marriage, parental authority and inheritance. Women's physical integrity is restricted due to inadequate legal frameworks to address violence against women and high levels of acceptance of domestic violence. Moreover, female genital mutilation is a common practice. Most of these countries have medium to very high levels of devaluation of daughters and preference for sons, as shown by the numbers of missing women or the unbalanced sex ratios at last birth. Finally, women's access to public space and resources is limited. On average 32% of women have been victims of domestic violence in their lifetime, and more than 49% of women agree that domestic violence is justified under certain circumstances.

#### **Countries having very high levels of gender discrimination in social institutions (SIGI > 0.35)**

These countries are characterised by very high levels of discrimination in legal frameworks and customary practices across most sub-indices and by very poor implementation measures. The family code greatly discriminates against women: almost one third of girls younger than 19 are married, and women face severe discrimination in their parental authority and inheritance rights. Women's rights to own and control land and other resources and to access public space are extremely limited. There are serious infringements on their physical integrity matched by high levels of acceptance and prevalence of domestic violence: 44% of women have been victims of domestic violence, and 59% accept that it is justified under certain circumstances.



**The development cost  
of discriminatory  
social institutions**

**SI  
GI**

# The cost of discrimination in Europe and Central Asia

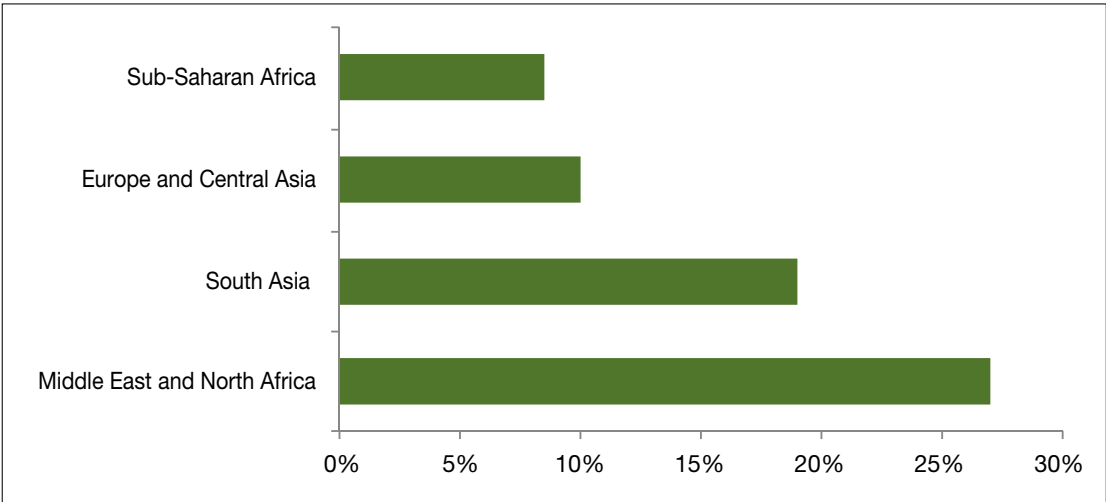
**Gender equality has been recognised not only as a fundamental human right but also as a critical economic challenge.** Gender inequality undermines a number of development goals and reduces economic growth. Lowering discrimination against women, by increasing women's opportunities and rights, would benefit all: closing gender gaps would improve women's well-being as well as increase countries' monetary living standards, as measured by their income per capita.

**Gender discrimination represents a cost for countries since it is associated with lower incomes.** Restricting women's economic contribution through both lower involvement in the workforce and discrimination in social institutions is costly for countries, as shown in the following two sections. Hence, narrowing gender gaps in the workforce as well as tackling discriminatory social institutions represent an opportunity for economic recovery and inclusive growth. Gains from parity emerge from equal outcomes in work (OECD, 2012; Cuberes and Teignier, 2013; McKinsey, 2015) and are also linked to socially transformative change (Ferrant, Granella and Kolev, forthcoming).

## The cost of gender gaps in labour force participation

**While women make up half of the world population, their economic contribution is highly restricted with serious macroeconomic consequences:** 865 million women worldwide have the potential to contribute more fully to their national economies (Aguirre et al., 2012). Thus income losses attributable to gender gaps in labour market are substantial (Figure 2.1): 27% in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 19% in South Asia (SA), 10% in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) and 8.5% in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Cuberes and Teignier, 2013).

Figure 2.1 Income losses associated with gender gaps in labour force participation by region

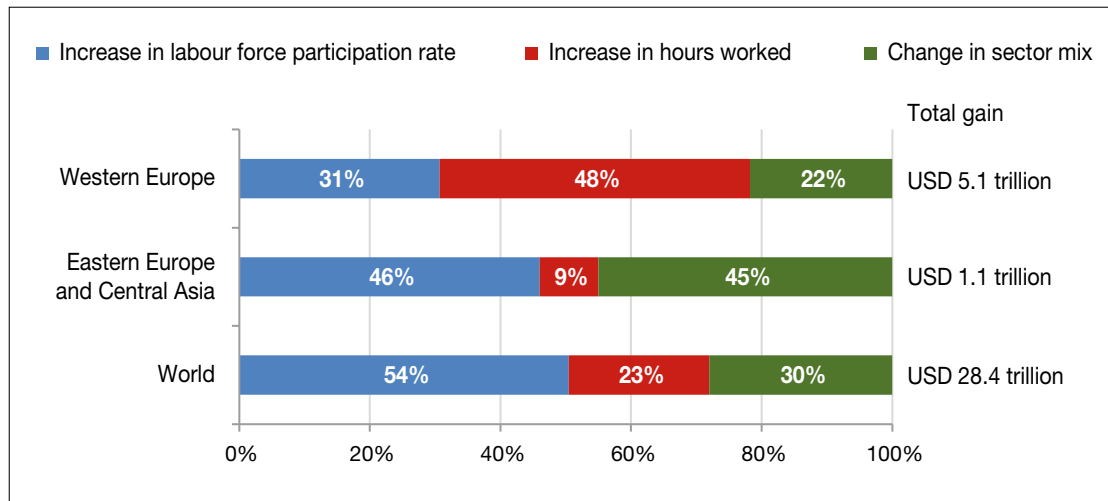


Note: This figure presents income losses as a percentage of GDP associated with current gender gaps in labour force participation. Source: Cuberes and Teignier (2013).

**Although Europe and Central Asia have significantly reduced gender gaps, the region would benefit from full parity.** In addition to having a similar labour force participation rate, women and men should enjoy equal opportunities within the labour market in terms of occupation and type of contract (part-time versus full-time). Tackling gender occupational segregation, women's overrepresentation in part-time jobs and the glass-ceiling could provide macroeconomic gains for ECA. The regions of Western Europe and of Eastern Europe and Central Asia would increase annual GDP by 23%, i.e. adding USD 5.5 trillion and USD 1.1 trillion to annual GDP in 2025, respectively (McKinsey, 2015).

**Interestingly, the drivers of additional income vary within the ECA region.** In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where large numbers of women already participate in the labour force, 45% of the potential increase in income would come from shifting women into higher-productivity sectors, thereby reducing gender occupational segregation. In Western Europe, 50% of this potential increase would come from closing the gap in part-time work (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 **Income gains from gender parity in labour force and their drivers by sub-region**



Note: This figure presents the total gain associated with closing gender gaps in labour force participation, as well as the contribution of three types of improvements to the total gain.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute (2015).

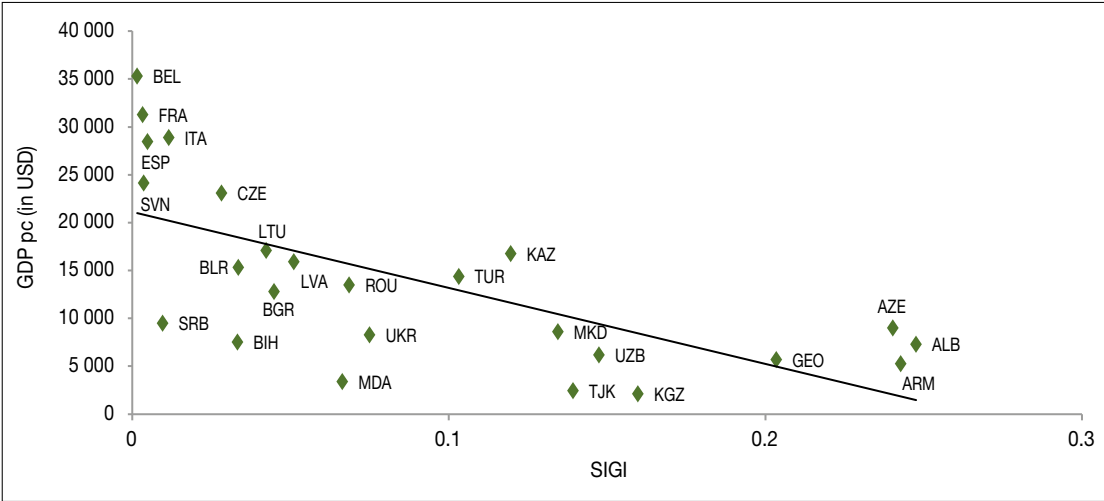
**ECA countries with aging populations have a particular interest in narrowing the gap in labour force participation.** These countries face economic challenges regarding their pool of labour and their GDP growth. In Russia for example, the labour force is estimated to shrink from 76 million in 2014 to 71 million in 2025; increasing female employment rates and economic contributions might mitigate this decline (Rosstat, 2014).

## The cost of gender discrimination in social institutions

**Discriminatory social institutions are also costly for economies.** While their role has been neglected in the gender and growth literature, they lower countries' income levels. Higher levels of discrimination in social institutions, measured by the SIGI, are associated with lower levels of income per capita (Figure 2.3). This negative effect is explained by the influence of discriminatory social institutions on the way in which human and physical assets are generated, as well as technological progress and the efficiency with which these assets are used in production (Ferrant, Granello and Kolev, forthcoming).

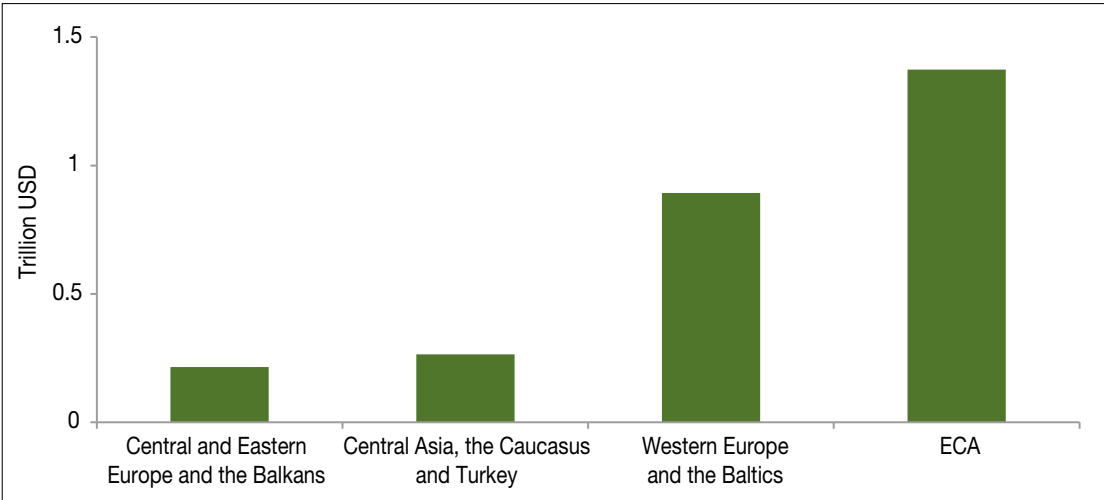
**Gender-based discrimination in social institutions is associated with huge income losses for all regions around the world, reducing potential income per inhabitant.** The current level of discrimination induces a loss of USD 12 trillion or 16% of global income. For ECA countries included in the analysis, this is equivalent to a total loss of USD 1.4 trillion: USD 265 billion for Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey, USD 216 billion for Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans and USD 893 billion for Western Europe and the Baltics (Figure 2.4). Hence, not only would women benefit from equal treatment in social institutions, but each inhabitant of ECA would gain on average USD 2 252; each inhabitant in the region's OECD countries would gain up to USD 4 239.

Figure 2.3 Income per capita by SIGI score



Note: This figure presents the relationship between levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions and income per capita, controlling for the main determinants of long-term growth (investment, human capital, geography, rule of law, trade openness, gender gaps in outcomes, etc.). For more information, see Ferrant, Granella and Kolev (forthcoming).  
 Source: OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database; Penn World Tables, V.8.1 (2013).

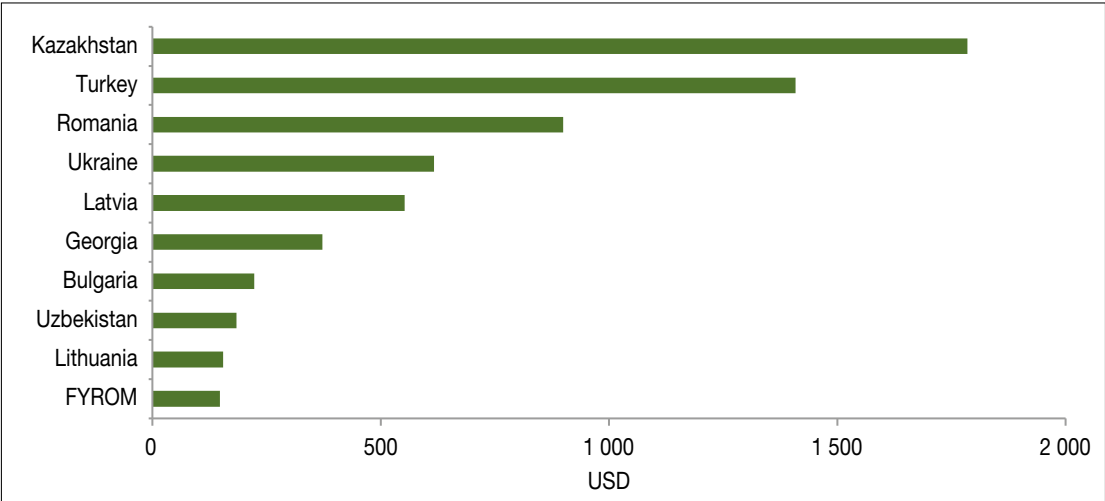
Figure 2.4 Income losses associated with discriminatory social institutions by sub-region



Note: This figure presents the losses of income associated with discriminatory social institutions. Central Asia and the Caucasus include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe include Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, FYROM, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Western Europe and the Baltics include Belgium, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Spain.  
 Source: Ferrant, Granella and Kolev (forthcoming).

**Each step to reduce and eliminate discrimination can produce long-term positive results.** Eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination in social institutions requires long-term commitments. However, by introducing gender-responsive policies and programmes and removing discrimination in legal frameworks, countries could improve their position within the SIGI classification. Decreasing countries' levels of discrimination would have positive and substantial macroeconomic gains: on average the GDP per capita of the ECA region would increase by USD 439 or 4%. Living standards would be improved, adding up to 10% of income per capita in Kazakhstan or Turkey; this would represent an additional income per capita of USD 1 785 and USD 1 408 respectively (Figure 2.5).

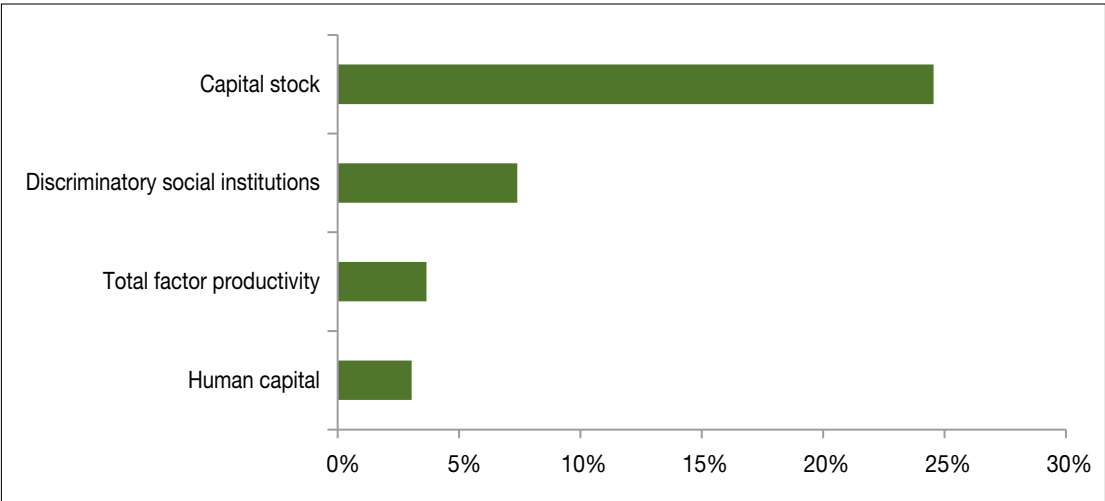
Figure 2.5 Income gains associated with an upgrade in the SIGI classification by country



Notes: This figure presents the potential gains associated with a country's upgrade in the SIGI classification.  
 Source: Ferrant, Granella and Kolev (forthcoming).

**Regional differences in levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions could account for regional disparities in living standards.** This regional report shows that women living in ECA countries face various levels of deprivation related to discriminatory social institutions, which vary widely in terms of form and intensity. Seven percent of the income gap between the OECD and non-OECD countries may be explained by differences in the level of discrimination in social institutions, 25% by differences in capital stock accumulation, 3% by differences in human capital and 4% by differences in factor productivity (Figure 2.6). Therefore, non-OECD countries in the region could reduce the income gap with OECD countries by 7% on average by decreasing their levels of discrimination in social institutions to OECD levels.

Figure 2.6 Drivers of income gaps between OECD and non-OECD countries in Europe and Central Asia



Note: This figure presents the share of the income gap between OECD and non-OECD countries from the region as explained by determinants of long-term growth.  
 Source: Ferrant, Granella and Kolev (forthcoming).

## Labour market outcomes and unpaid care work

**Gender gaps in the workplace are critical to understand gender disparities in terms of poverty, as labour market outcomes affect living standards and poverty. Women's economic empowerment offers a primary way out of poverty.** However, women face discrimination along their career, and inequalities accumulate over their life course. Discriminatory social institutions and social expectations of gender roles place a greater burden of housework on women while work arrangements deny them a balanced family-work life. Therefore, women are unable to fully develop their potential in paid jobs, working part-time and in the lowest paid sectors. Gender wage gaps and women's lower participation in paid work result in large cumulative gaps in lifetime income, explaining women's disadvantage in pension and poverty (UN Women, 2015).

### Gender gaps in labour outcomes

**In Europe and Central Asia, gender gaps in labour market outcomes are below global averages, yet inequalities are pervasive and in some countries, worsening.** In 2013, women in the region experienced relatively high labour force participation (63%) compared to the global average (55%) (World Bank, n.d.). This varies across sub-regions from 59% in Central Asia and the Caucasus, 58% in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe and 70% in Western Europe and the Baltics. However, women are still discriminated against: they participate at lower rates than men (77%); earn less and are more likely to work part-time (OECD, 2012). Non-OECD countries in the region have an average gender wage gap of 22%, with the highest gap found in Tajikistan (65%) (Sattar, 2012), while Western Europe and the Baltics tend to see smaller gaps, the lowest found in Belgium where women earn 6% less than their male counterparts (OECD, 2014). Across the region, over 50% of employed women work part-time, and up to 97% in Georgia and Bulgaria (UN, 2015). Recent reports highlight the deteriorating situation of women's labour outcomes in former Soviet countries, linked with the political and economic transition of the past 20 years, which has seen important reductions in social service provisions (World Bank, 2013). Increased participation in the workforce does not guarantee parity at work. Gender-based occupational segregation is a key factor in women's socio-economic disadvantages. Two types of segregation are observed. First, women and men tend to be employed in different occupations (horizontal segregation) resulting in female overrepresentation in low productivity and low wage sectors (the "sticky floor" phenomenon). Second, women and men have different levels of seniority (vertical segregation) and are underrepresented in managerial positions (the "glass ceiling" phenomenon) (Sattar, 2012).

### Unpaid care work

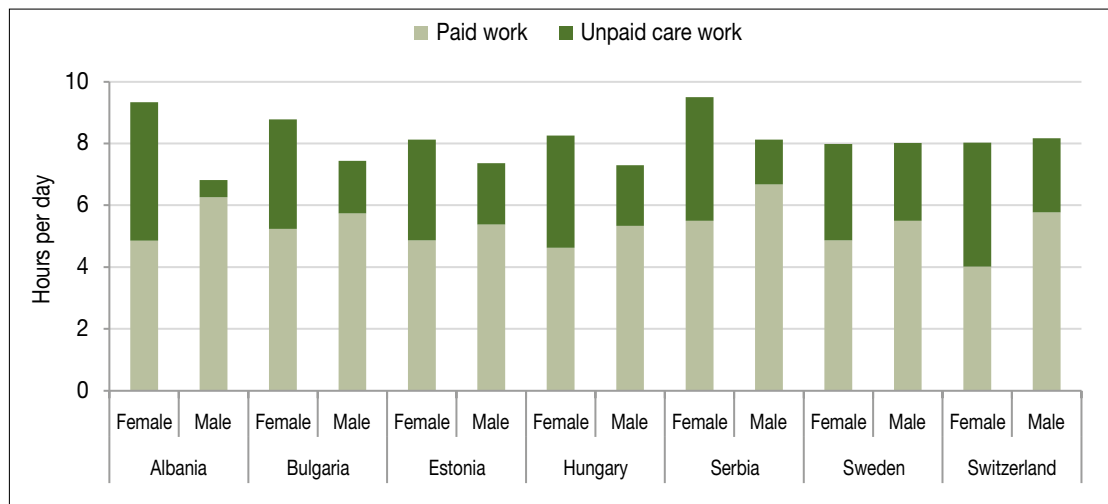
**Pervasive inequality in caring responsibilities may explain such gaps in labour market outcomes.** Women typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. In Europe and Central Asia, women spend on average 2.5 times more time than men performing housework or taking care of children, and elderly or disabled family members (Ferrant, Granella and Kolev, forthcoming). In Albania, Armenia, Portugal and Turkey, women spend over four times more time on unpaid care activities than men. This is in addition to their paid activities, thus creating the "double burden" of work for women (Figure 2.7).

**This unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men limits women's economic empowerment.** The amount of caring responsibilities affects individual labour outcomes, by reducing the time potentially available for market activities. Time is a limited resource that is allocated between labour and leisure, productive and reproductive activities, and paid and unpaid work. Therefore, each minute spent on unpaid care work is one minute less potentially spent on market activities. Since women typically bear the bulk of caring responsibilities, unpaid care work significantly reduces their labour participation and wages, as well as the quality of their jobs compared to men (Ferrant, Granella and Kolev, forthcoming).

**Unpaid care work** refers to non-remunerated activities performed within the household for its maintenance and well-being such as childcare and housework (Elson, 2000).

**The unequal distribution of unpaid care work largely explains gender gaps in labour market outcomes** (Figure 2.8). In countries where women spend an average of five hours per day on unpaid care activities, 50% of the women are active, compared to 60% in countries where they devote less than three hours per day to such activities. Therefore, more unequal distribution between women and men is associated with higher gaps in labour force participation. In countries where women spend almost eight times the amount of time on unpaid care activities as men, they represent only 35% of the active working population. However, when the difference drops to less than two times the amount, women's labour force participation increases to 50% of the active population (for a given level of GDP per capita, fertility rate, urbanisation rate, maternity leave, and gender inequality in unemployment and education).<sup>2</sup>

Figure 2.7 Time spent on paid and unpaid care work by gender



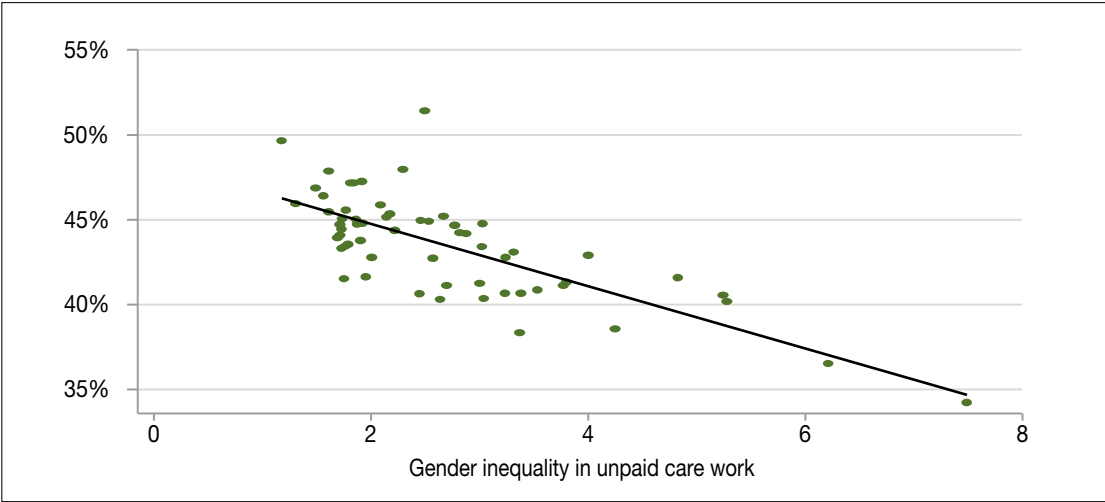
Note: This figure presents the time devoted to paid and unpaid care work of employed people aged 20-74 in hours per day.  
Source: UNECE (n.d.).

**In addition, when women spend more time than men on unpaid care work, their employment situation worsens compared to men's.** The struggle for women to reconcile care responsibilities with paid employment can lead to “occupational downgrading”. Unpaid care activities constitute a time and energy-consuming occupation, relegating the care provider to part-time employment and sectors where working arrangements are more flexible. The unequal amount of time that women spend on unpaid care work increases the probability that they will be engaged part-time. Therefore, this has negative long-term implications on women's earnings and pensions, reducing superannuation contributions and retirement incomes.

Gender inequalities in unpaid care work are also linked to gender wage gaps. A cross-country analysis indicates that in countries where women spend a large amount of time on unpaid care and where there is a large gender gap in time spent, the gender gap in hourly wages is also higher (for a given level of GDP per capita, fertility rate, female unemployment rate, female education, urbanisation rate, and maternity leave) (Figure 2.9). In countries where women spend twice as much time as men on caring activities, they earn only 65% of what their male counterparts earn for the same jobs. This drops to 40% where women spend five times the amount of time on unpaid care work (for full-time employees).



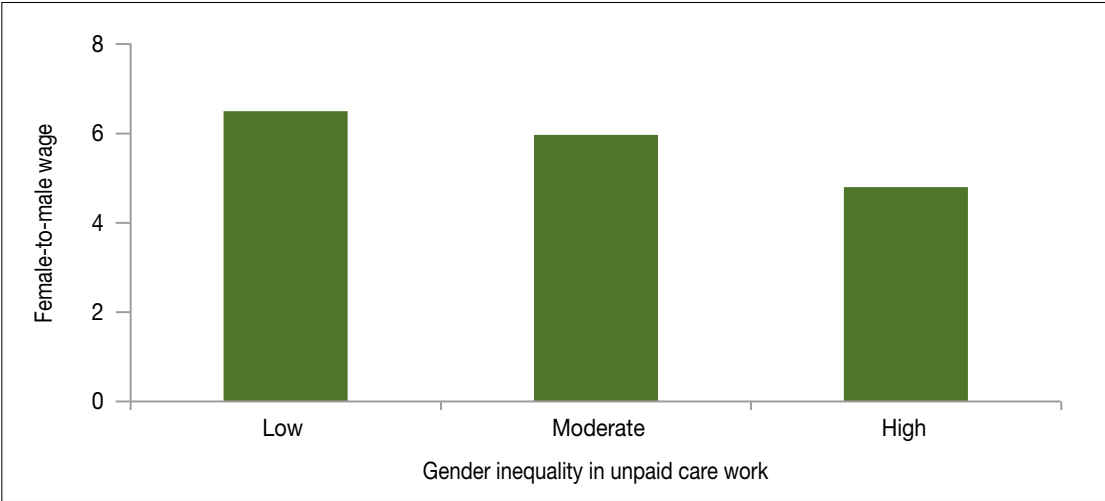
Figure 2.8 Inequalities in unpaid care work and labour force participation



Note: This figure presents the relationship between the female share of the active population and gender inequality in unpaid care work, controlling for the country’s GDP per capita, fertility rate, urbanisation rate, maternity leave policies, and gender inequality in unemployment and education. Gender inequality in unpaid care work refers to the female-to-male ratio of time spent in unpaid care work.

Source: Based on World Bank World Development Indicators (2014); OECD (n.d.), Gender Institutions and Development Database.

Figure 2.9 Inequalities in unpaid care work and gender wage gaps



Note: This figure presents the positive relationship between the estimated gender hourly wage gap and the female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care activities, controlling for GDP per capita, fertility rate, urbanisation rate, maternity leave, and gender inequality in labour force participation, unemployment and education. Low inequality: female-to-male ratio  $\leq 2$ ; 2 < moderate  $\leq 5$ ; and high  $\geq 5$ .

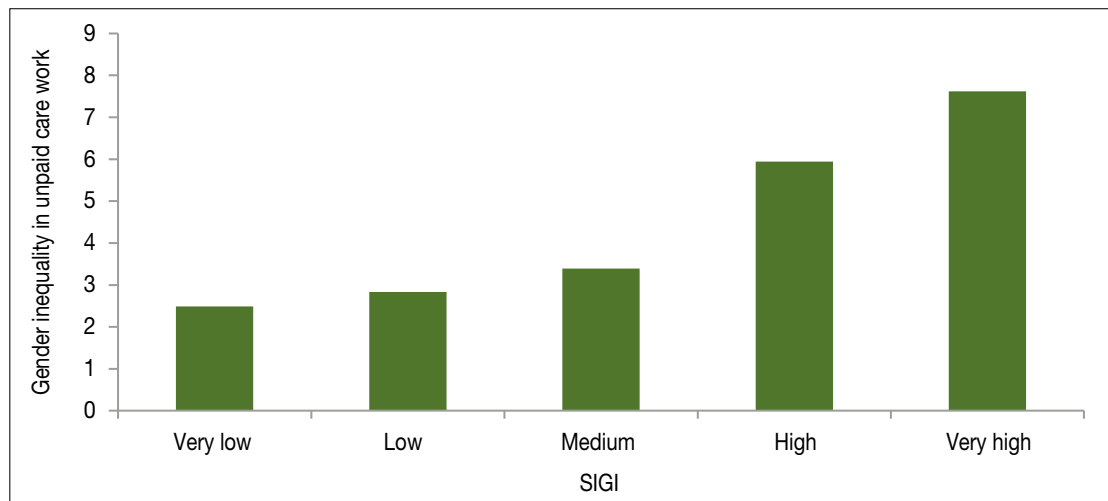
Source: World Economic Forum (2014); World Bank World Development Indicators (2014); OECD (n.d.), Gender Institutions and Development Database.

## Discriminatory social institutions and caring responsibilities

**Discriminatory social institutions are at the root of unequal distribution in unpaid care work, indirectly creating gender gaps in labour outcomes.** By defining which behaviours are deemed acceptable and by constructing gender roles, social institutions can explain gender inequalities in unpaid care work. In most societies, working for pay is considered a masculine task while unpaid care work is seen as women's domain. This cuts across societies at any level: even among the wealthier and educated households, inequalities in caring responsibilities persist, as women contribute more time devoted to housework and care than men, irrespective of their employment status, income or education level.

**The level of gender discrimination in social institutions as measured by the SIGI relates to the way responsibilities for housework and care are shared between women and men.** In countries where social institutions discriminate highly against women, women's role in society is restricted to reproductive and domestic functions, with women performing more unpaid care work than men. In other words, higher SIGI scores are associated with higher gender gaps in time devoted to unpaid care work (Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10 **Unequal allocation of unpaid care responsibilities by SIGI classification**



Note: This figure presents the female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care activities by SIGI classification.  
Source: OECD (n.d.) Gender Institutions and Development Database.

**Tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is a first step in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between women and men in order to reduce gender gaps in labour outcomes.** Conversely, when discrimination against women in social institutions is lower, the distribution of caring responsibilities between women and men is more equal. Reducing the level of discrimination in social institutions encourages gender roles to evolve allowing for more opportunities for the share of unpaid care work to be redistributed between women and men. Women are less associated with reproductive and domestic roles. Similarly, social norms create new opportunities for men to assume domestic and care responsibilities.



# SIGI sub-index analysis





## Discriminatory family code

The discriminatory family code sub-index captures the restrictions on women’s decision-making power and their status in the household and the family. This sub-index measures the prevalence of early marriage, gender discrimination in legal age of marriage, parental authority and inheritance rights.

The region shows the strongest performance in the discriminatory family code sub-index. Forty countries have very low to low levels of discrimination and only six countries show medium levels of discrimination.

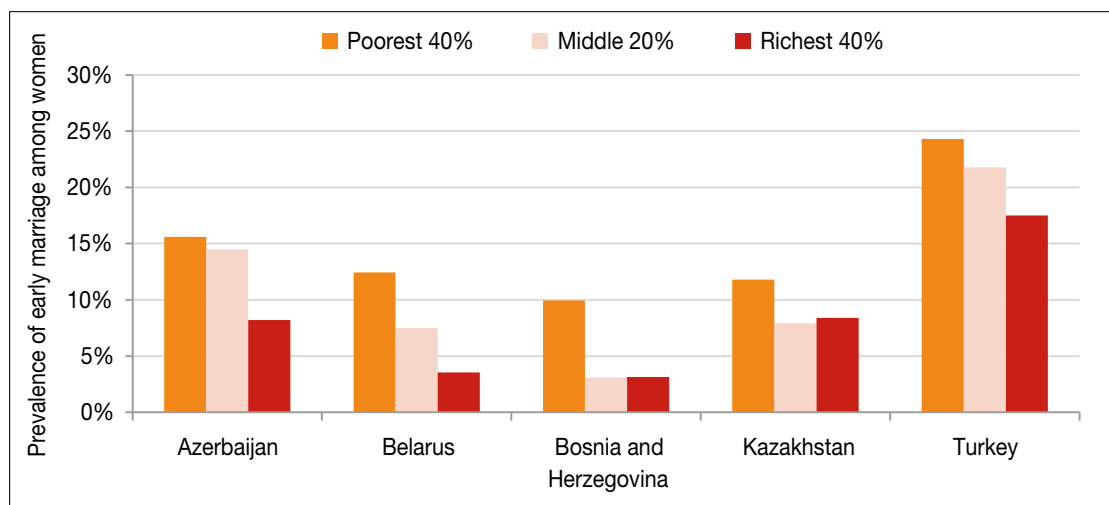
Europe and Central Asia showed the lowest levels of discrimination against women in the Discriminatory family code sub-index compared to the other four sub-indices measured by the SIGI. The region boasts strong legal frameworks granting women and men equal parental authority in the household and equal inheritance rights. Countries have introduced legislation and implemented policy measures to combat early and forced marriages; however, the practice continues to be a concern primarily in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Traditional gender stereotypes which designate caring activities as predominantly women’s responsibility are found across the region. Women’s larger share of unpaid care work than men hurts their opportunities for economic empowerment and is linked to gender gaps in the labour force (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014).

The region is generally characterised by comprehensive legal codes regarding women’s and girl’s rights within the family. Higher levels of **early marriage** in Central Asia and the Caucasus and some Southeastern European countries stand out as cause for concern. Overall, the regional average (4%) remains well below the global average (13%). In Western Europe and the Baltics only 1% of girls aged 15-19 are married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union with nine countries having almost no prevalence of early marriage (e.g. Austria, Denmark and Ireland). Sharp discrepancies between the remaining countries in the region (e.g. 17% in Bosnia and Herzegovina) indicate that early marriage is still a problem in some countries.

**Early marriage** is defined as a formal marriage or informal union before the recommended minimum age as established by a number of international declarations and conventions. It is measured as the percentage of girls aged 15-19 who are married, divorced, widowed or in informal unions.

A range of socio-economic factors, including poverty and restrictive gender roles in the household, drive the practice of early marriage (UNFPA, 2014). Early marriages are more prevalent in the poorest households. In Belarus, for example, girls from the poorest families are three times more likely to be married before the age of 18 than girls from the richest households (Figure 3.1). In impoverished communities, girls may be considered a monetary burden on their natal household. Thus, early marriage may be seen as an option to reduce household costs. Early marriage is also connected to a low value placed on girl's education. When discriminatory stereotypes confine females to household and child care activities, their formal schooling is deemed unnecessary at a young age. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, early marriages often take place against the will of the bride or without her prior knowledge (Rankovic, 2012). In some rural ethnic communities in Kyrgyzstan, an estimated 60% of marriages occur because of bride kidnapping (UNECE, 2014c). Reports of forced marriages and bride-kidnappings are evidence of girls' lack of decision-making power and lower status in the household (e.g. Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan).

Figure 3.1 **Early marriage prevalence rates by income**



Note: This figure presents the percentage of women aged 20-24 married or in union before age 18 by income group.  
Source: Demographic Health Surveys (n.d.).

Numerous international conventions and declarations have established the **legal age of marriage** for girls and boys at 18 years (e.g. CEDAW and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Three quarters of the countries in Europe and Central Asia have legislation setting the minimum age of marriage for boys and girls at 18. The remaining 12 countries where girls can legally marry before the age of 18 without parental permission are scattered throughout the region (e.g. Poland, Portugal and Turkey). In two countries, legislation regarding the legal age of marriage discriminates solely against girls, allowing them to marry at a younger age than boys (Luxembourg and Uzbekistan).<sup>3</sup> For example, under the Family Code of Uzbekistan (1998), girls can legally marry at 17 and boys at 18.

Over the past decade, governments have amended family and civil codes and enacted policy measures targeting early marriage. Examples include amendments to the Azerbaijani Family Code (2011) increasing the minimum age from 16 to 18; amendments to the Lithuanian Civil Code (2010) increasing the minimum age from 15 to 18; and amendments to the Ukrainian Family Code (2012) equalising the minimum age of marriage for boys and girls to 18. Other positive measures to protect girls

from early marriage include Tajikistan's Criminal Code (1998), under which parents can be prosecuted if they allow a daughter under 18 years old to marry, and amendments to the Criminal Code (2009) of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) where anyone who “enables” a marriage that is against the law (including early marriage) can face fines or imprisonment of up to three years.

Gaps in the legal framework and weak enforcement of laws, however, undermine positive advances in efforts to protect girls' rights. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the three regional Criminal Codes (2000, 2003 and 2013), it is illegal for an adult to co-habitat with someone under 18 years of age; however, charges can be avoided if the couple marries. A similar provision is found in the Serbian Criminal Code (2005). In Central Asia and the Caucasus, legislation regarding the legal age of marriage has been found to be poorly enforced with courts regularly allowing children under the age of 18 to marry (UNFPA, 2014). Customary marriages may be used in place of civil registration as a way to circumvent legislation concerning the legal age of marriage (e.g. Albania, Armenia and Tajikistan) (Rankovic, 2012). Where unregistered customary marriages are not legally recognised (e.g. Tajikistan and Ukraine), young girls are left without legal protection for their rights in the household and after divorce. To address this issue, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan have all passed legislation making it illegal for religious ceremonies to take place without proof of prior civil registration; however, UNFPA research (2014) points to the lack of enforcement mechanisms in these laws and the difficulties of implementation at the local level.

Women's decision-making authority in the household is protected by comprehensive legislative frameworks across the region. All 47 countries grant women and men equal parental authority both during marriage and after divorce. Recent improvements to strengthen women's **parental authority** include the Law on Marriage and Family (2011) in Kazakhstan which states that in the household “spouses enjoy equal rights and bear equal obligations”. In certain countries women face difficulties asserting their decision-making authority. Discriminatory customary law (e.g. Greece) and restrictive gender roles in the household (e.g. Georgia) limit women's ability to exercise their parental authority. In Georgia, research by USAID (2010) found that women have little real decision-making power as gender stereotypes place men as the de-facto head of household. Divorce legislation concerning child custody in the region most often allows for joint or single custody arrangements; however, child custody is more likely to be granted solely to mothers instead of joint custody or to fathers reflecting entrenched gender stereotypes of women as the natural caregiver (European Parliament, 2014). NGOs supporting divorced fathers have drawn attention to the uneven application of joint custody arrangements and the negative effect this has on fathers limiting their parental authority after divorce (Platform for European Fathers, n.d.).

Secure **inheritance rights** for women and girls help to ensure their economic well-being and increase their decision-making authority. All 47 countries in the region provide women and men with equal inheritance rights; despite this, women's ability to realise these rights varies across sub-regions. In Southeastern and Eastern Europe, inheritance rights of daughters and widows are restricted in practice in four countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYROM, and Moldova). In Western Europe and the Baltics, widows' and daughters' inheritance rights are protected in practice in all but two countries where customary laws may discriminate against women (Greece and Spain). In Greece, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) recognises religious law in minority communities under which girls receive a smaller share of inheritance than boys. In Spain, there are reports that in some communities under local customary laws sons inherit a larger share of family agricultural land than daughters (FAO, 2010).

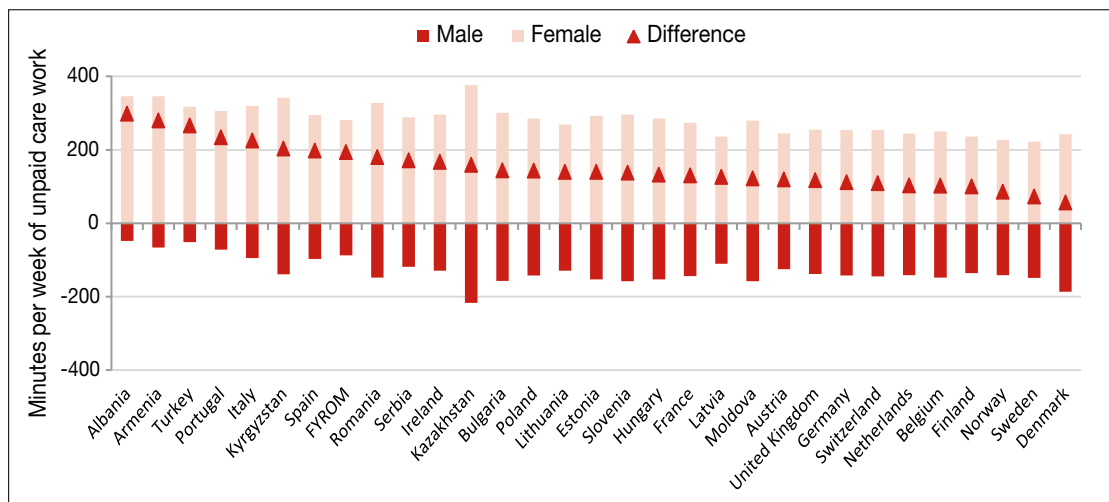
Discriminatory barriers to women's inheritance rights are most common in the Central Asia and Caucasus region. In six countries, SIGI country profiles point to the vulnerability of daughters' inheritance rights due to patrilineal kinship systems (e.g. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan). Under these systems, wives move to live with the husbands' families, thus forgoing their rights to inherit from their parents (e.g. Georgia and Turkmenistan). In Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, the legal code accords women and girls the same inheritance rights as men and boys; despite this, it is customary for the youngest son to inherit the family home. The Kyrgyz Family Code (2000) states that property acquired during marriage is under the joint custody of both spouses; however, in practice, women's access to

and control over property remains vulnerable as it is often registered solely in the name of the husband or brother (EBRD, 2013). The lack of properly enforced inheritance rights can have negative economic consequences for women. Weak inheritance rights for daughters and widows have been linked to gender gaps in property ownership and lower decision-making power for women in the household (World Bank, 2013). Similar practices were noted in SIGI country profiles for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and FYROM, as well as for rural communities in Moldova and Serbia.

Women’s **right to initiate divorce** is guaranteed in law across the region. After divorce, women may face discrimination and poverty due to negative attitudes towards divorced women and weak state intervention for divorced mothers. As the majority of single-parent households are women, a larger share of women than men depend on support systems and can face precarious economic situations when they are not paid. Governments in Western Europe and the Balkans have introduced legislation to support divorced mothers including punishments for non-payment of guaranteed payment by the state (European Parliament, 2014). Austria, Estonia, Germany, Latvia and Sweden, among others, guarantee child maintenance payment by the state (OECD, 2015). Cyprus amended the Spouses Property Relations Law and the Parents and the Children Relations Law (2008) giving courts the ability to mandate automatic alimony payments from former spouses. Nonetheless, women across the region may face difficulty receiving alimony payments from their former husband (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, France and Lithuania).

In all countries in the region, women bear a larger share of **unpaid care work** than men. This is driven by discriminatory gender stereotypes in the household which perceive household and child care tasks as feminine. On average, women spend 2.5 times the amount of time on household chores and child care than men. This is explained by differences in levels of involvement of both sexes. In Denmark, men devote on average 186 minutes and women 243 minutes per week on unpaid care work, compared to 48 and 346, respectively, in Albania (Figure 3.2). Governments have introduced the issue of unpaid care work in national legislation recognising its discriminatory impact on women. Examples include Albania’s Law on Gender Equality (2008) and the United Kingdom’s Work and Families Act (2006). Iceland’s Marriage Act (1993) aims at a more equal distribution of unpaid care work in the household, stating, “spouses shall, as practicable, share the work to be performed in the home”. Recent research on unpaid care has shown that legislation is insufficient and that targeted policies and greater investment in social protection and services, including provision of child care facilities, are needed to see real change (UN Women, 2015).

Figure 3.2 Gender gaps in unpaid care work

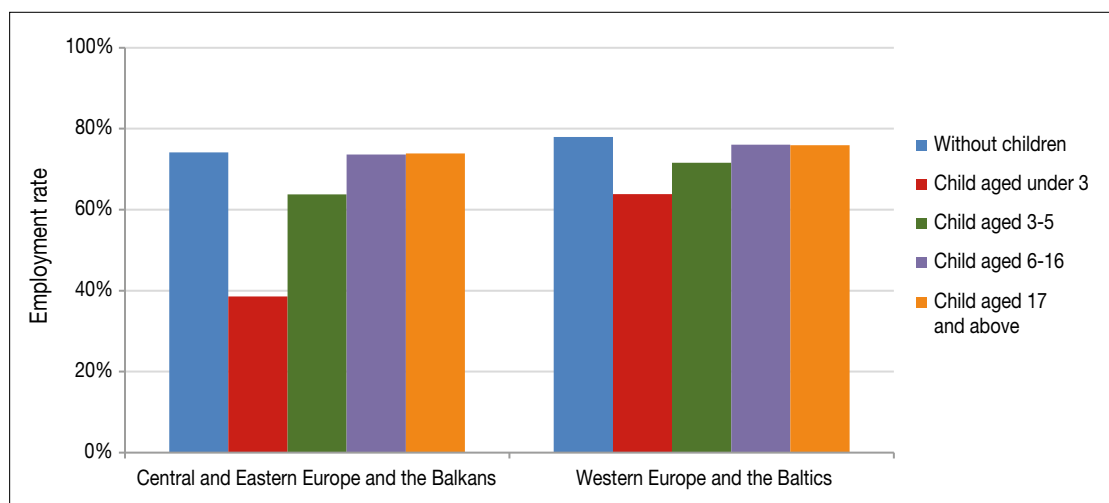


Note: The figure represents minutes per week spent by women and men in unpaid care work, as well as gender gaps.  
Source: UNECE (n.d.).



The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men has been linked to gender gaps in labour market outcomes including lower female labour force participation and greater gender gaps in wages (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014). Not only are women in Europe and Central Asia less likely than men to be in the labour force, they are more likely to work part-time. For example, in Austria 46% of employed women are in part-time employment. The effect increases for women with children: in the Czech Republic there is a 33% difference in employment rates between women with and without children (UNECE, 2014b), and in France 40% of women alter their employment status when they become mothers, switching to part-time or lower-paid work (UNECE, 2014b). As shown in Figure 3.3, the negative impact of having children under the age of three is more important in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans than in Western Europe and the Baltics. In the latter women's employment rate drops from 78% to 64%, compared to 74% to 39% in the former. A larger burden of unpaid care work also affects women's opportunities for advancement in the workplace as they have less time to devote to their careers. Low public child care provision further limits women's career choices. This results in vertical segregation, where fewer women reach top management positions and more women are confined to lower level positions (Rand Europe, 2014; UN Women, 2015).

Figure 3.3 Women's employment rate by age of the youngest child



Note: This figure presents employment rates of women aged 25-49 in 2012 by age of their youngest child.  
Source: UNECE (n.d.).

Government action to support working parents can have a significant impact on women's economic opportunities. European Union (EU) countries that provide comprehensive support for working parents see higher rates of female employment than those that do not (UN Women, 2015). Nordic countries, which have implemented extensive policies and programmes to support working parents, see the highest levels of female participation in the labour force. This includes affordable and high-quality child care options, one of the most important factors influencing women's labour force participation (OECD, 2012). Results from European Commission survey (2014) on work and family life balance found that in some European countries lack of childcare options was the most frequently reported reasons for women working part-time or not at all (e.g. Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria) (Rand Europe, 2014). Flexible work arrangements are another tool to help families balance work and home commitments. The Nordic countries along with France and Slovenia have introduced flexible work policies to the benefit of women's labour force participation (European Commission, 2010). In Slovenia, the Family Friendly Company certificate has been awarded by the government since 2007 to companies that adopt family-friendly principles including flexible working arrangements and child-care services (EU, 2013).

Discriminatory attitudes against women in the workplace shape their employment choices and reinforce restrictive gender roles in the household. In a European Union survey (2015), 60% of respondents agreed that “family life suffers when the mother has a full-time job”. Discriminatory attitudes against mothers in the work place may discourage women from finding a healthy work life balance. For example, the survey in the United Kingdom showed that even when mothers had flexible work opportunities, they felt uncomfortable asking for them or faced negative consequences when they did (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015).

### Good practices

- **Challenging perceptions on parenting to promote work-life balance:** In Poland, a national awareness-raising campaign targeting small- and medium-sized enterprises and employed parents was launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and co-financed by the European Social Fund’s Human Capital Operational Programme. The campaign, “Etat Tata. Lubie to!” (Full-Time Dad. I Like It!), encouraged men to participate more actively in childcare. The campaign was also designed to convince employers that both parents of young children are equal and valuable employees. Activities included workshops for fathers, radio and television programmes, a competition on employers’ best practices, a database of examples of good practice, and a campaign called “Day with a Child at Work”. The campaign’s evaluation reported a change of attitudes towards equal sharing of work and family life among men and employers (EIGE, 2013).
- **Combatting early marriage through education:** In Kyrgyzstan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) carried out a pilot project in 2013-14, funded by the European Union (EU), to reduce early marriage and keep girls in school. UNDP developed life-skills and confidence-building training courses for both female and male students in a high school in Southern Kyrgyzstan. The courses also included raising student awareness on the negative effects of early marriage and discussing the practice of kidnapping young women for marriage. As a result, 74 girls completed their education in the course of the two years (22 in 2013 and 52 in 2014). The project boosted the girls’ self-confidence by giving them some practical skills that they could use to become economically independent. To build on these positive results, the local government included the course modules in the school curriculum of other schools in the area (UNDP, 2015a).



## Restricted physical integrity

The restricted physical integrity sub-index measures the following: prevalence of violence against women; attitudes towards violence against women; laws addressing domestic violence, rape (including spousal rape) and sexual harassment; and the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM).

It also measures women's reproductive autonomy.

The region performs well in the restricted physical integrity sub-index: 16 countries show very low to low levels of discrimination and 11 countries have medium levels of discrimination. Close to half of the countries (19) have missing data for this sub-index.

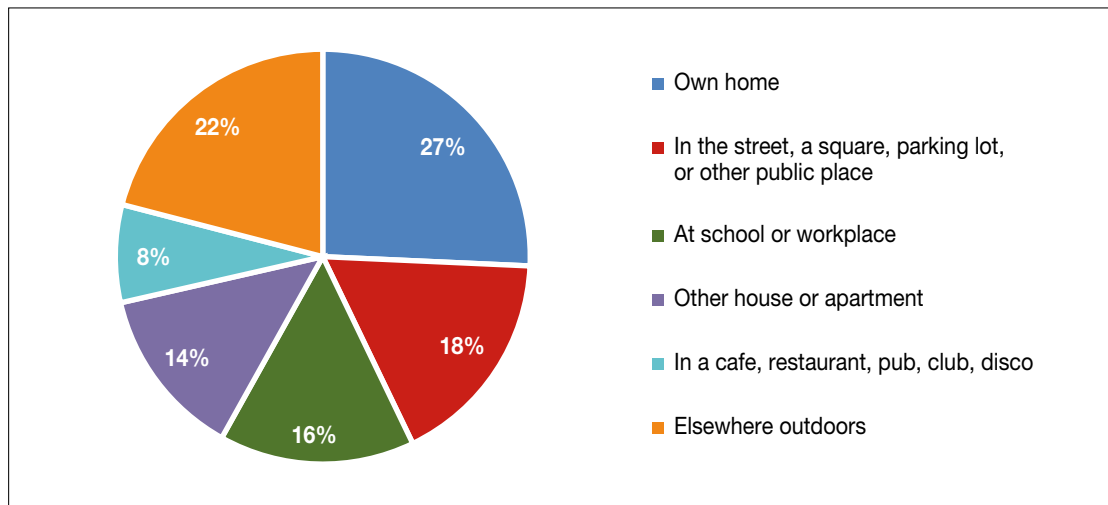
Women's right to freedom from violence and ability to make decisions over their reproductive autonomy are unevenly protected across the region, with vast differences in terms of existence and quality of laws, implementation and enforcement measures and levels of acceptance of gender-based violence. Countries in the region span the very low to medium levels of discrimination classifications in this sub-index. While different trends and characteristics divide the region, the 48 countries are united by one common factor: gender-based violence is pervasive, with reported prevalence rates reaching up to 50% in certain countries. Acceptance of violence continues to perpetuate not only cycles of violence but also underreporting and perceptions of violence as a "private matter".

Strong regional and national commitments to eliminating gender-based violence reflect its growing political prioritisation and recognition of its detrimental effect on women's basic rights and well-being. The Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (2011) (the "Istanbul Convention") represents, for instance, an important regional step forward to co-ordinate and harmonise laws and actions to combat gender-based violence and discrimination against women. However, it is important to note that to date less than half of the Council's member states have ratified this Convention (20 out of 47), which only came into force in 2014.<sup>4</sup>

At the national level, several countries have enacted laws and action plans and have increased national budgets, e.g. France’s fourth “plan interministériel de prévention et de lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes (2014-2016)” and Serbia’s National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationships (2011).

Gender-based violence is not confined to one environment. As Figure 3.4 shows, women experience violence in many different places covering all parts of their daily lives. Most violence against women by a non-partner within EU countries occurs at home (27%) or in the street (18%); however, women also experience violence in academic and work settings and in social situations such as restaurants or cafes.

Figure 3.4 **Places where violence against women occurs**

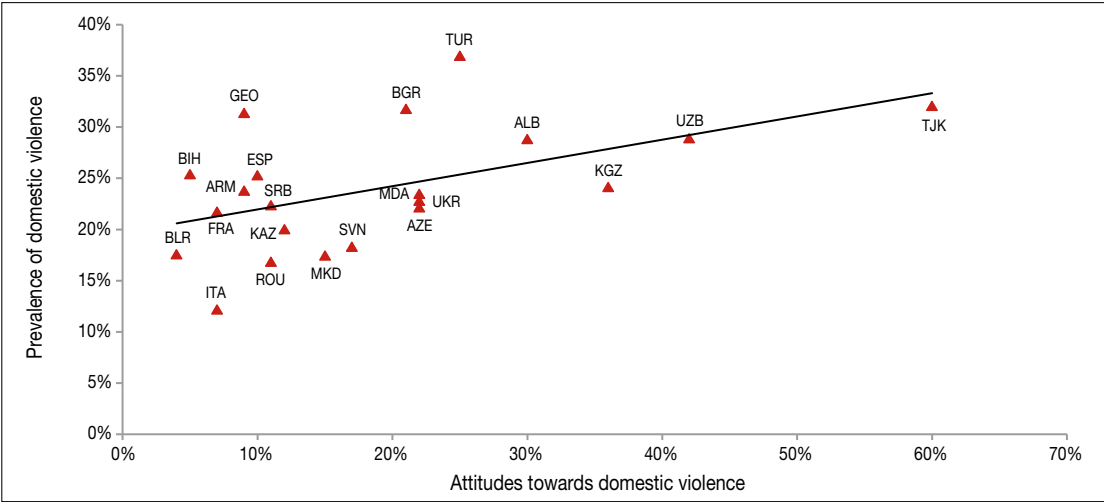


Note: This figure presents the share of places where violence against women by a non-partner happened in the 28 EU member states. Source: FRA (2012).

**Domestic violence** remains a common challenge for all countries in the region, exacerbated by unenforced or weak legal frameworks, insufficient support services, and social acceptance and stigma. Almost all countries (except for Armenia and Uzbekistan) recognise domestic violence as a crime, although legal frameworks vary in terms of scope and severity of punishment. Specific and comprehensive laws can be found in ten countries (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Slovenia and Sweden). These laws typically recognise all forms of violence (e.g. psychological, sexual, economic and physical) and include support systems, such as refuges, victim support, temporary restraining orders, and awareness raising and training of justice systems and the police. Half of all countries have strong legislation albeit with limitations in terms of implementation measures and service delivery. The lack of welfare services for victims in many countries has been identified as one cause for underreporting (UNECE, 2014a).

A noticeable positive trend in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus is the recent introduction of legislation against domestic violence (e.g. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine). This signals strong public will and commitment to tackle the problem of restricted physical integrity and a promising first step to protecting women’s right to freedom from violence.

Figure 3.5 Acceptance and prevalence of domestic violence against women



Note: This figure presents the relationship between acceptance of domestic violence against women and prevalence, controlling for GDP per capita and laws against rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment. Acceptance is measured by the percentage of respondents agreeing that domestic violence is justified under certain conditions. Prevalence of domestic violence is the percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

Source: OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database.

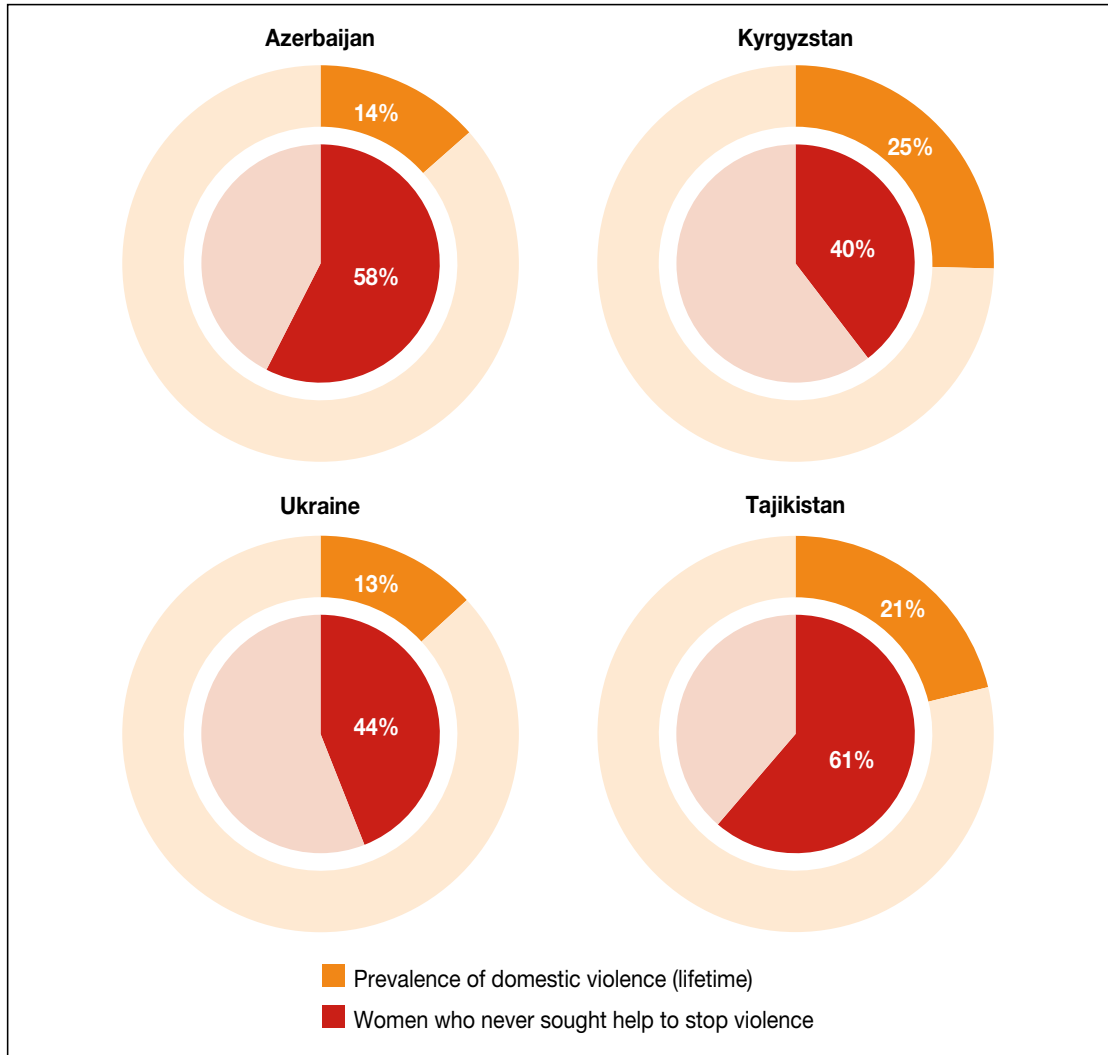
Legal measures appear to have challenged social acceptance of domestic violence; ongoing high prevalence rates in some countries highlight, however, the mixed and slow pace of change. As shown by Figure 3.5, high levels of acceptance of domestic violence are associated with high prevalence rates, even after controlling for the presence of legal measures. Across the region, the percentage of women who see domestic violence as justified under certain conditions is low (12% on average in Western Europe; 21% on average for other parts of Europe and Central Asia). In some countries, it is as low as 4% (Belarus) or 5% (Bosnia and Herzegovina). However, countries in Central Asia still show significantly higher levels of acceptance, reaching as high as 38% in Turkmenistan, 42% in Uzbekistan and 60% in Tajikistan. Reporting remains low with commonly identified major obstacles: mistrust of justice systems, negative attitudes of the police, perceptions that it is a “private matter” and fear of social stigma or of being blamed (UNECE, 2014a; UNFPA, 2014a). Across European Union (EU) countries, only one in three female victims seek support from the police or a victim support organisation (FRA, 2014). In Tajikistan, 61% of the 21% of women who have experienced domestic violence never sought justice or help (Figure 3.6). On average across the region, close to one in four women (22%) have an experience of physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner; in certain countries, rates are much higher, affecting almost one in two women in Georgia for example. UNFPA ranks many countries in the Central Asia region as having the highest levels of domestic violence worldwide (UNFPA, 2014a).

**Rape** is included in all legislative frameworks in the region, yet with significant variations in terms of definition and enforcement. Of the 23 countries that do not recognise marital rape as a crime, four allow perpetrators to marry their victims to escape punishment (Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and the Russian Federation). Most countries include stronger penalties for aggravated rape, such as forced sexual activities with minors or pregnant women or sexual activities leading to injury or death (e.g. Azerbaijan, Moldova and the Netherlands).

Low reporting, prosecution and conviction rates for rape are common criticisms by women’s rights non-governmental organisations across the entire region. In Iceland, for example, conviction rates were 3% in 2013 (EWL, 2013); similar rates for arrests or convictions can be found in other countries (e.g. Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Tajikistan). To provide additional support to victims (both women and men), many governments have included welfare centres, helplines and training of the judiciary and police services within either the law or action plans.

For example, Norway's law mandates that each county must have a crisis centre offering support and counselling for rape victims. Budget restrictions in many countries since the financial crisis have seen the closure or cutting back, however, of such services.

Figure 3.6 Prevalence of domestic violence and the share of victims who never sought help



Note: This figure presents prevalence of lifetime domestic violence and the extent to which such violence goes unreported, as measured by the percent of women aged 15-49 who have experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner and who never told anyone about the violence nor sought help from any source to end the violence.

Source: Demographic and Health Survey (n.d.); OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database.

Legal protections against **sexual harassment** vary considerably across the region: it is one form of gender-based violence with the patchiest legislative coverage. Within most countries of Western, Central and Northern Europe, anti-sexual harassment legislation is covered either in specific laws, the criminal code or labour code (e.g. Czech Republic, Iceland and Lithuania). The EU Directive addressing sexual harassment in the workplace has acted as a standard-setting lever: EU Directive 2006/54/EC is legally binding on its 28 member states.

This is in stark contrast to other sub-regions, notably Central Asia, which have no legislation at all (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan), or the Russian Federation, where a draft bill continues to be debated since 2012.

Enforcement of laws against sexual harassment remains a common challenge and is linked to the quality and scope of the legislative coverage. For example, sexual harassment is often defined solely within the remit of the workplace (e.g. Armenia) rather than also including other public places, such as educational establishments (e.g. Bulgaria and Finland). This often results from sexual harassment only being addressed in labour codes without a criminal penalty or being treated as a misdemeanour subject to a fine or other lighter sentence. In countries where it is included within a criminal code or treated as a crime in other legislation (e.g. non-discrimination laws or equality acts), penalties can range from fines, for the perpetrator as well as the employer, to imprisonment. In the Netherlands, employers are responsible for protecting employees from sexual harassment and for establishing a prevention programme. Similar measures are in place in other countries (e.g. Cyprus). Other commonly cited issues cutting across the region are a lack of mechanisms to lodge complaints (e.g. an independent ombudsman) or to monitor enforcement, as well as a lack of awareness of legal rights (e.g. Lithuania and Ukraine). Reports from women's rights networks indicate that underreporting is pandemic due to fear of reprisal or social stigma (e.g. Armenia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia [FYROM] and Ukraine).

The right to make decisions on their **reproductive autonomy** is for the most part secure in the region. On average, 13% of women in countries covered report not having access to contraception. Access to contraception or information about sexual and reproductive health is more problematic in rural areas, in particular, in part due to distance to healthcare centres. The highest percentages can be found in the Balkans where one in three women in Bosnia and Herzegovina (30%) and FYROM (34%) face restrictions on their reproductive autonomy.

**Abortion** is legal in all countries of the region, albeit with different durations for eligibility and other criteria (e.g. in cases of foetal impairment, risk to the mother and cases of rape). Seven countries impose stricter barriers, such as requiring authorisation from two physicians (e.g. Cyprus and Germany).

**Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is not an issue in the region. In 2015, the United Kingdom added FGM Protection Orders to its existing anti-FGM legislation (the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003). The Protection Orders gives third parties (which can include the victim) the right to alert authorities if they believe that FGM will be practiced in the United Kingdom (UK) or overseas. Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act, punishment for bringing a UK citizen overseas to have FGM performed carries a sentence of up to 14 years.

### Good practice

- **A nationwide campaign to change attitudes to violence:** A national media campaign called “Šutnja nije zlato” (Silence Is Not Golden) was conducted in Croatia in 2007-08 on the topics of domestic violence and human trafficking. Organised by the Centre for Education, Counselling and Research (CESI) and the Open Media Group, the campaign was targeted at secondary-school pupils and teachers, decision-makers, and the general public. It consisted of television spots, billboards, illuminated signs, as well as leaflets and the Web. It also included raising awareness of the different types of gender-based violence in schools through seminars for secondary-school teachers: 64 teachers were trained in using creative techniques to work with youth on preventing gender-based violence, and 1 200 pupils increased their knowledge on the subject. In addition, results from a survey by a media research agency indicated a high level of understanding of the campaign's message among 15-18 year olds. Positive results included important community engagement, with 31% of participating pupils saying they would like to join an organisation that supports victims of gender-based violence. In addition, 94% of teachers plan to continue educational activities in the future. CESI established strong relationships with the relevant state institutions to inform them about project activities and replicated the project by training teachers in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (EIGE, n.d.).

### Box 3.1 CARE's "Young Men Initiative - Boys and Men as Allies in Violence Prevention and Gender Transformation in the Western Balkans"

CARE Balkans has implemented the "Western Balkan Gender-Based Violence Prevention program – Young Men Initiative (YMI)" since 2007 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to build more gender-equitable attitudes among young men aged 15-19 and to reduce both peer violence and violence against young women.<sup>5</sup> It contributed to changing social norms around gender equality and masculinities and was later expanded into Albania and Kosovo.



To counter the prevalence of rigid norms and gender roles associated with masculinities, CARE Balkans developed the YMI as a way to promote gender equality and encourage a healthy, non-violent lifestyle among young men. The programme targets young men in this post-conflict context, where rates of interpersonal violence remain high. Norms encouraging violence as "manly" are widespread, compounded by harmful practices such as drug and other substance abuse, as well as high youth unemployment rates. CARE Balkans first carried out research to identify the gender norms that contribute to young men's violent behaviour. It took into account young men's experiences and opinions to ensure that the programme is relevant for them. The results of the research informed the choice of topics included in the educational workshops and community campaigns which formed the base of the YMI. Between 2007 and 2010, pilot activities were carried out in school settings, reaching 4 000 men aged 14-18. The educational workshops promoted critical and personal reflection on gender, masculinities and health, emphasising violence prevention. They were largely adapted from the Program H manual, which Promundo launched in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2002 and successfully adapted in other countries. The method has been recognised as changing young men's attitudes related to violence.

*"The workshops greatly influenced me. I have changed significantly... I learned a lot about myself and how aggressive I was before. I am not fighting anymore."* — Dominik, 17, Zagreb

To complement these activities, a social marketing campaign called "Budi Muško" (Be a Man) aims to spread key messages from the educational workshops. It is articulated around visuals, a slogan and "Be a Man Clubs" (BMC) in schools. Each BMC has 20-50 members who create activities to reach students with the campaign messages. Activities include "fun workshops" to learn new skills in different media to communicate campaign messages; local celebrities (athletes, actors, singers, journalists) are recruited to participate in these activities, which attract more students to join.



The impact evaluation study from the pilot phase revealed that young men who took part in activities showed more gender-equitable behaviours and decreased their use of violence over time. Activities such as the Budi Muško campaign were seen as key in shifting social norms in a specific context. In addition, young men expressed more flexible views about masculinity after the programme. At the same time, advocacy throughout the pilot phase and beyond has helped to keep the momentum and build partnerships necessary for scaling-up activities.

A key element for the sustainability of the programme was building capacity of local actors to develop and carry out programming to engage young men. These include civil society, youth-serving agencies, schools, centres for social work and young offenders' centres, among others. In addition, ongoing advocacy efforts, including national conferences and widespread media coverage, have helped mobilise governments' attention to work with young men from a gender perspective and to recognise YMI as a successful methodology.

Note: See also CARE International Balkans (2015).

Sources: Barker and Pawlak (2014); CARE International (2012); ICRW (2014).





## Son bias

The son bias sub-index captures the unequal value given to daughters and sons in the household.

Variables measure the phenomenon of missing women and fertility preferences.

Son bias is not a concern for most of the region; however, eight countries concentrated in Central Asia and the Caucasus present high to very high levels of discrimination due to missing women.

SIGI results in the region are divided into two extremes concerning discrimination against girls in the household. The majority of countries in Europe and Central Asia (70%) show little to no evidence of son bias; however, six countries concentrated in Central Asia and the Caucasus show high or very high levels of discrimination. Gender gaps in birth rates and the number of missing women in these countries have risen over the past two decades, causing alarm (UNFPA, 2015b). A global comparison highlights the magnitude of the problem: out of the ten countries with the highest levels of son bias, half are found in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus. Governments have recognised the issue of son bias in international and regional commitments; however, a multi-pronged approach including all sectors of society is needed to address the discriminatory social norms that underlie son bias and reverse the negative impact on women and girls.

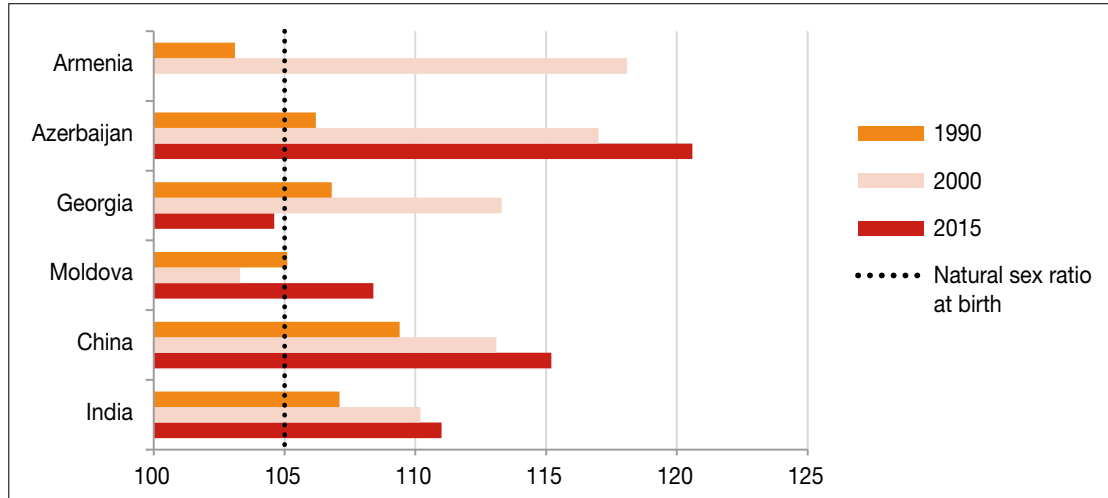
Commitment to addressing son bias within the region is widespread, as authorities recognise the long-term adverse effects of discrimination against the girl-child on empowerment, equality and development. At the international level, countries in the region have adopted the Population and Development Programme of Action (1994) aimed at eliminating the underlying causes of son preference and at ending harmful practices including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection. At the regional level, the Council of Europe passed Resolution 1829 (2011) condemning sex selective abortion and calling on member states to prohibit prenatal sex selection.

In addition, 29 countries in the region have signed and ratified the Oviedo Convention (1997) of the Council of Europe which prohibits sex selection except for medical reasons, such as to avoid serious hereditary sex-related diseases. Despite these measures, there is limited concrete action to reverse negative trends against girls in countries where son bias is a major concern (Dudwick, 2015).

Preferences for sons within the family and the household reflect traditional norms that grant daughters a lower value. Within patrilineal kinship systems that characterise many communities of Central Asia and the Caucasus, sons are traditionally expected to care for their parents, and thus inherit family property (UNFPA, 2015b). In contrast, daughters leave their natal homes after marriage to live with their husbands' families (Das Gupta, 2015). The political transition following the breakup of the Soviet Union appears to have led to a re-emergence and reinforcement of discriminatory practices. Survey results in Azerbaijan (2014) also point to the role of men in protecting households and guarding national borders as reasons for families to prioritise sons over daughters (Gardner, 2014).

Over the past three decades, son bias has manifested itself in large gender gaps in birth rates in Central Asia and the Caucasus and some countries in Eastern Europe. Skewed sex ratios at birth suggest that fewer girls are being born than would be expected. This has led to the phenomenon of “**missing women**”. This refers to a shortfall in the number of women relative to the number that would be expected if there were no sex-selective abortion or female infanticide and if boys and girls received similar levels of health care and nutrition. The SIGI provides evidence of missing women in six countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Georgia and Ukraine. In these countries, sex ratios at birth continue to be higher in favour of boys than the natural birth ratio (e.g. 1.05) reaching as high as 1.11 in Armenia and 1.13 in Azerbaijan. Time series data on birth rates for the countries concerned indicate that this is a relatively new trend beginning in the early 1990s (Figure 3.7). Since then, it is estimated that 171 000 women are missing in these countries (UNFPA, 2015b).

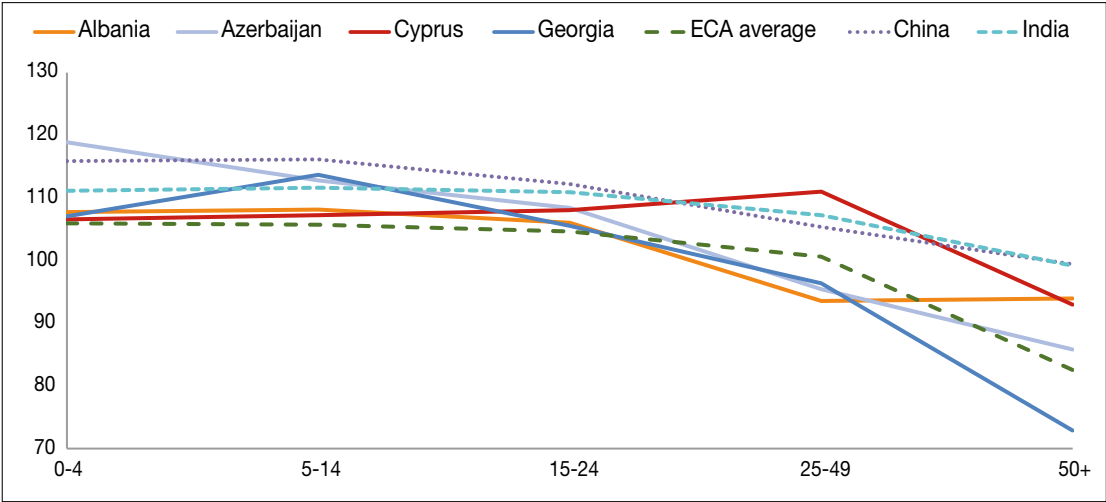
Figure 3.7 **Sex ratio at birth over time**



Note: This figure presents the male-to-female sex ratios at birth. The natural sex ratio at birth is 1.05.  
 Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

The concept of “**missing women**” was first introduced by Amartya Sen in 1990. He hypothesized that over 100 million women were missing due to excess mortality of women from inequality and neglect. (Sen, 1990) Missing women is calculated by the short fall in the number of women in sex ratios for ages 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-64 and 64+ relative to the expected number if there were no sex-selective abortions, no female infanticide or similar levels of health and nutrition, correcting for natural biological and physiological differences. Computed by Pr. S. Klasen using the method discussed in Klasen and Wink (2002).

Figure 3.8 Sex ratios by age cohort



Note: This figure presents the male-to-female sex ratios by age cohort.  
 Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Trends in birth rates in Central Asia and the Caucasus show a particularly high **fertility preference** for sons. All countries in this sub-region have much higher percentages of males than females as the last child born in a family. This reaches as high as 61% in Armenia and 60% in Azerbaijan. In Southeastern Europe, similar gaps are found in Albania (60%) and to a lesser degree in FYROM (56%). Sex ratios at last birth show that families become more concerned with having a son as the number of children in a family increases (Michael et al., 2013). National level data for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia reveal that the highest male-to-female ratio at birth is for the third child in a family, with over 150 boys born for every 100 girls (Das Gupta, 2015). In Albania, fertility preference for sons is compounded by declining fertility rates. Albania saw its fertility rate fall from seven children per woman in 1960 to three children in 1990, while at the same time social acceptance of smaller families, ideally with two children, increased. Despite these changes, women reported feeling pressure from their families and communities to have at least one son (UNFPA, 2012).

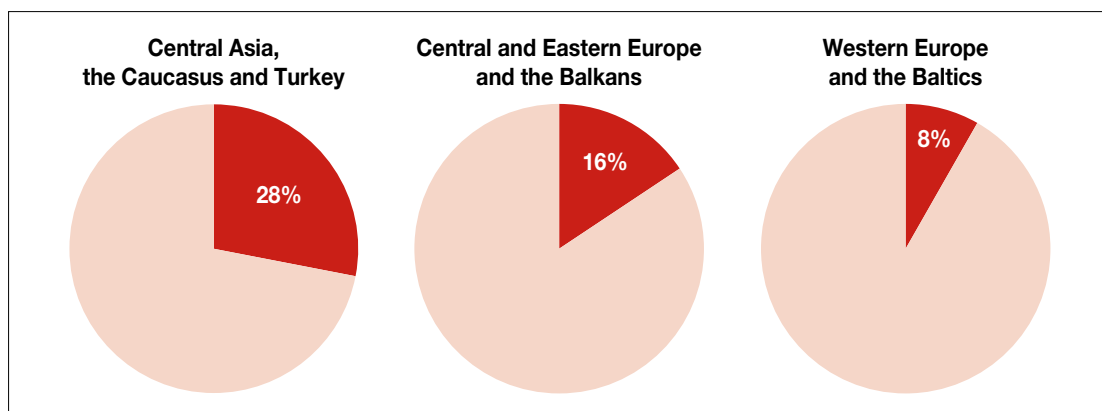
Trends in sex ratios for these countries reveal that gender gaps begin at birth (Figure 3.8). There is no evidence of female infanticide or excess female mortality, unlike other regions where missing women is an issue (e.g. East Asia and the Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia). Instead, sex selection has mainly been linked to medical abortions reducing the number of girls that are born (UNFPA, 2015b). This has been facilitated by relatively accessible ultrasound technologies, which have been used to reveal whether the unborn foetus is a girl or a boy (Das Gupta, 2015). The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women drew special attention to Azerbaijan which is estimated to have the second highest rate of sex-selective abortions in the world, after China (UN Human Rights Council, 2014).

Concerning **son preference in education**, most countries in the region have closed gender gaps in enrolment rates for pre-primary, primary and secondary school; exceptions include Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey (UNECE, 2014c). Girls outperform boys in primary and secondary school where there are often reverse gender gaps (World Bank, n.d.). The number of women in tertiary education has also greatly increased over the past three decades, and women often outnumber men in higher education (e.g. Georgia, Iceland, Italy and Moldova).

Discriminatory attitudes towards girls' higher education can be found throughout the region to varying degrees. They are the highest in Central Asia and the Caucasus where 31% of people surveyed believe that university education is more important for boys than girls (Figure 3.9). This decreases across the other sub-regions to 8% in Western Europe and the Baltics. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, there are reports that women in minority communities may face restrictions on their access to education

(e.g. Hungary and Tajikistan). To address this issue, the government of Tajikistan implemented a quota in higher education institutions for women from rural areas leading to a slight increase in their enrolment between 2011 and 2015 (UNECE, 2014c).

Figure 3.9 **Son preference in education**



Note: This figure presents the share of respondents agreeing that university education is more important for boys than for girls.  
Source: OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database.

While countries have closed gender gaps in education, subject segregation within higher education is common across the Europe and Central Asia region reflecting tradition and expectations of gender roles. Women are less likely than men to pursue subjects such as mathematics and engineering (e.g. France, Italy and Moldova) (UNECE, 2014b). In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Norway, at least 70% of graduates from engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes are men (OECD, 2014b). Differences between girls' and boys' performance in school does not fully explain subject segregation seen in tertiary education. Instead, subject segregation is strongly influenced by social norms and attitudes towards particular fields of study (OECD, 2012). This can have long-term effects on women's economic empowerment: subject segregation is linked to occupational segregation that confines women to poorer paid industries, including hospitality and education, and contributes to the gender wage gap (OECD, 2012).

### Good practices

- A quota to address son preference in higher education:** In response to a low number of girls entering higher education and a high dropout rate, a quota system was put in place in Tajikistan in 2001. The presidential quota ensures women's access from rural areas to higher education. At the same time, the measure indirectly contributes to eradicating gender stereotypes in the education system. It also helps promote gender equality and increases women's economic empowerment. As a result, the number of women enrolled in higher education increased slightly, from 591 in 2011 to 666 in 2015 (EACEA, 2010; UNECE, 2014c).
- Shifting social norms to prevent sex-selective abortions:** To prevent sex-selective abortion in Armenia and promote gender equality, World Vision Armenia, Promundo and MenCare launched a manual in 2015 to work with youth and couples aged 14-18. The manual's objective is to help prevent this harmful practice by engaging a targeted audience to transform underlying discriminatory social norms. The manual, called "Caring for Equality", follows a curriculum of activities designed to challenge these norms and can be used by facilitators or peer educators in group sessions. It includes topics such as power dynamics, caregiving and sharing of household responsibilities, as well as preventing gender-based violence and prenatal sex-selection. In addition, the manual outlines some key steps for participants to design and launch a local mobilisation campaign that can shift social norms in their communities. The manual offers a space of dialogue to challenge traditional norms and enhance the value of the girl child, while encouraging participants to spread positive messages to their families and communities (Promundo and World Vision, 2015).



## Restricted resources and assets

The restricted resources and assets sub-index captures discrimination in women's rights to and control over land and non-land assets. It measures whether women and men have equal and secure access to use, control and own land and non-land assets, and equal access to financial services from formal institutions.

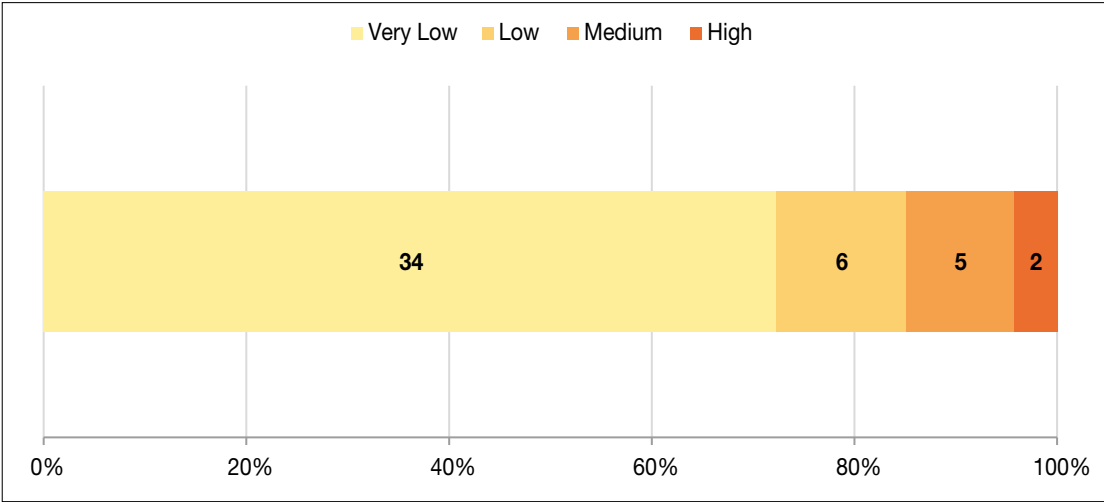
Most countries in the region present very low to low levels of discrimination in the restricted resources and assets sub-index.

Only seven countries have medium to high levels of discrimination.

The 2014 SIGI results highlight the strong performance of Europe and Central Asia in protecting women's rights to land, non-land assets and financial services. The region showed the lowest levels of discrimination in this sub-index among all geographical regions in the SIGI. Overall, the majority of countries (72%) in the region were classified as having very low discrimination against women in this sub-index (Figure 3.10). The low levels of discrimination are due in large part to gender-neutral legislation granting women and men equal rights to access land and property, although discriminatory practices and attitudes still limit women's land rights in countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Gender gaps in outcomes remain throughout the region as men are more likely to own land and have an account at a financial institution.

Governments across the region have instituted comprehensive legislative frameworks granting women and men equal **rights to access land**. Examples include the Civil Code of Belarus (1998), Croatia's Law on the Basis of Ownership and Proprietary Relations (2005) and Finland's Non-Discrimination Act (2004), which prohibits discrimination to land on the basis of gender. Despite legal gender equality, gender gaps in land ownership remain throughout the region with women owning on average 23% of land holdings. While this is higher than the global average (18%), there are sharp discrepancies between countries, ranging from 5% in the Netherlands to 47% in Latvia. In addition, where women do own land, they are likely to own smaller plots than men (FAO, 2014).

Figure 3.10 Regional composition of the restricted resources and assets sub-index



Note: This figure presents the share and number of ECA countries by sub-index classification.  
 Source: OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database.

The varied historical and social contexts of countries in the region have shaped the distinct barriers women face to access land. In many countries of the former Soviet Union, women continue to feel the ramifications of discriminatory practices used during the privatisation or restitution of land. During this time, men were often the only name formally registered even when policies encouraged registration of both spouses (Stanley, Lamb and De Martino, 2013). Research conducted by IFAD (2013) on rural women’s access to land in former Soviet-bloc countries found that gender wage gaps contribute to gender gaps in land ownership as women have less income with which to purchase land. This has more acute consequences for women in this sub-region, as they are more likely to be employed in agriculture than women in Western European countries (FAO, 2014).

Women’s secure **access to non-land assets** has been shown to positively impact their economic well-being and that of their households (Stanley, Lamb and De Martino, 2013). All 47 countries in the region accord women and men equal rights to use, own and control non-land assets. There were no discriminatory practices found in Western Europe and the Baltics concerning women’s ability to claim these rights. Reports of negative customary practices were found in six countries concentrated in Central Asia and the Caucasus (e.g. Georgia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan). Lack of information regarding land rights and limited accessibility of legal recourse have been cited as adversely impacting women’s access to non-land assets (Stanley, Lamb and De Martino, 2013). In Central Asia and the Caucasus, women in unregistered marriages are reported to have insecure access to land due to the absence of legal rights over any property acquired during marriage; this is the case in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Similar trends have been observed in Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania (UNFPA, 2014).

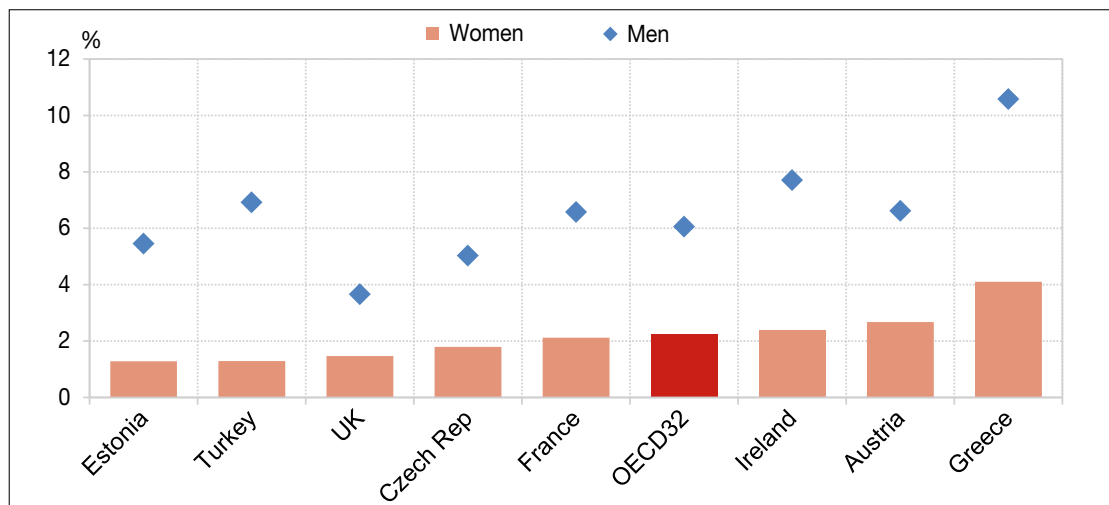
The highest levels of discrimination against women’s rights to access both land and non-land assets are found in Central Asia and the Caucasus. SIGI country profiles from this region attest to the role of traditional patrilineal kinship systems in limiting women’s land and property rights (e.g. Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). Youngest sons are seen as the care providers for their parents and are consequently granted full inheritance claims over family property. This is to the detriment of married daughters, who lose their inheritance rights since they enter their husbands’ families upon marriage. Married women’s property rights are also weakened by lack of legal status in property acquisition and a preference to pass property ownership to other male relatives (Stanley, Lamb and De Martino, 2013). This has also been observed in Albania and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To address this issue, Tajikistan amended its Land Code (2012) providing that any land bought during marriage belongs automatically to the wife and husband equally. Such legal reforms have shown to give women more decision-making power over land during marriage and to protect women’s rights to land after divorce (World Bank, 2015).

Governments in the region have prioritised the financial inclusion of women. All countries grant women and men equal rights to **access financial services**. However, in practice, equal opportunities for women and men are widely diverse. For example, while there is virtually no gender gap in Western Europe and the Baltics, where 88% of women and 89% of men have an account at a financial institution, this gap increases in Central Asia where 29% of women compared to 36% of men have an account at a financial institution. Recognising the importance for women's economic empowerment, countries have actively removed barriers and initiated programmes to counter these gaps: in Turkey, the number of women with an account at a financial institution increased from 33% in 2011 to 44% in 2014, and Azerbaijan saw an increase from 14% to 26% over the same time period (World Bank, n.d.).

On average, women in the region are less likely than men to borrow credit from a financial institution (e.g. Luxembourg, Portugal and Turkey); although reverse gender gaps exist (e.g. Czech Republic and Slovak Republic) (World Bank, n.d.). Governments have recognised the need for additional policy to support women's access to credit. France, Norway, Portugal and Uzbekistan have all implemented loan programmes specifically targeting women. Nevertheless, women continue to face hurdles in accessing financial services. OECD survey results from ten countries in the region found that women had significantly less financial knowledge than men in all but one country (Hungary) (OECD and INFE, 2013). In Central Asia and the Caucasus, women's difficulty to obtain a loan or credit has been attributed to their smaller share of land and property ownership which is often required as collateral (IFAD, 2013). In Kyrgyzstan, women's insecure property rights affects their ability to obtain credit as their husband's consent is needed to pledge any property required during marriage as collateral (EBRD, 2013).

Women see lower levels of **entrepreneurship** than men across the region. In Turkey, for example, 7% of employed men are business owners with employees, compared to less than 1.3% of employed women (Figure 3.11). Governments in Western Europe and the Baltics have been pro-active in implementing policies and national action plans to support women entrepreneurs through microcredit schemes and training programmes (e.g. Denmark, France, Norway and Portugal). Kazakhstan's Entrepreneurship Development Fund, Damu, provides microcredit loans targeted towards rural and poor women. The programme has shown positive results in increasing women's share of small and medium-sized enterprises (DAMU, 2013).

Figure 3.11 **Proportion of entrepreneurs by sex**



Note: This figure presents business owners with employees as a proportion of the employed population by sex in 2010.  
Source: OECD (2012).

### Good practices

- **Providing legal support to women on land and property rights:** In 2011, the government of Tajikistan, in partnership with UN Women, introduced task forces in six districts to provide legal counselling to women on land and property rights. In addition to counselling, the District Task Forces help with official paperwork for women with low levels of literacy and offer them legal representation in court cases. The initiative was a success as it provided essential services to local communities and an increasing number of people started using it. It was especially beneficial to rural women, who by 2012 comprised over 70% of the task forces' clientele. As a result, the government expanded the service and created more District Task Forces across the country. In the first half of 2015 there were 105 state-funded District Task Forces, and 4 800 individuals benefitted from legal support services, of which 75% were women (UN Women, 2012; UN Women, n.d.).
- **Creating self-help groups to empower women:** Since 2010, UN Women is running the Central Asia Regional Migration Programme, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the World Bank. The programme operates in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and targets families and in particular women; it enhances their economic opportunities in the context of an important outflow of male labour migrants. In Tajikistan, the project supports rural self-help groups (SHGs) in accessing micro-credit and also trains its members to start their businesses and become self-reliant entrepreneurs. Since 2010, 6 500 women in Tajikistan benefitted from the programme and were able to create SHGs. Across the country, 800 groups are now providing their members a place to exchange and gain knowledge on issues such as family budget management and entrepreneurship (UN Women, 2014).





## Restricted civil liberties

The restricted civil liberties sub-index captures discriminatory laws and practices that limit women’s access to public space, their political voice and participation in public life. It measures access to public space and political voice, which includes quotas to promote women’s political representation at the national and sub-national levels and the percentage of women in national parliaments.

Almost half of the region shows medium to high levels of discrimination against women in the restricted civil liberties sub-index. Progress in strengthening women’s political voice has stalled in most countries as quotas have shown mixed results.

Europe and Central Asia’s poorest SIGI performance is in the restricted civil liberties sub-index. Restrictions on women’s political voice are challenges that cut across the entire region albeit with varying degrees of severity. While many European countries have successfully secured greater political representation of women in parliament, many other countries scattered across Europe and Central Asia still struggle, despite the introduction of quotas. Only half of the countries have legislative quotas to encourage women’s political participation, and there are signs that quotas are not always fully respected by political parties. Freedom of movement of women is only a concern in a limited number of countries.

Almost all 47 countries of the region guarantee in law and practice women’s **access to public space**. Six countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus (Albania, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) report discriminatory practices in women’s freedom of movement. Particularly in rural areas, there are reports that many women require their husbands’ permission to leave the house or travel within the country.

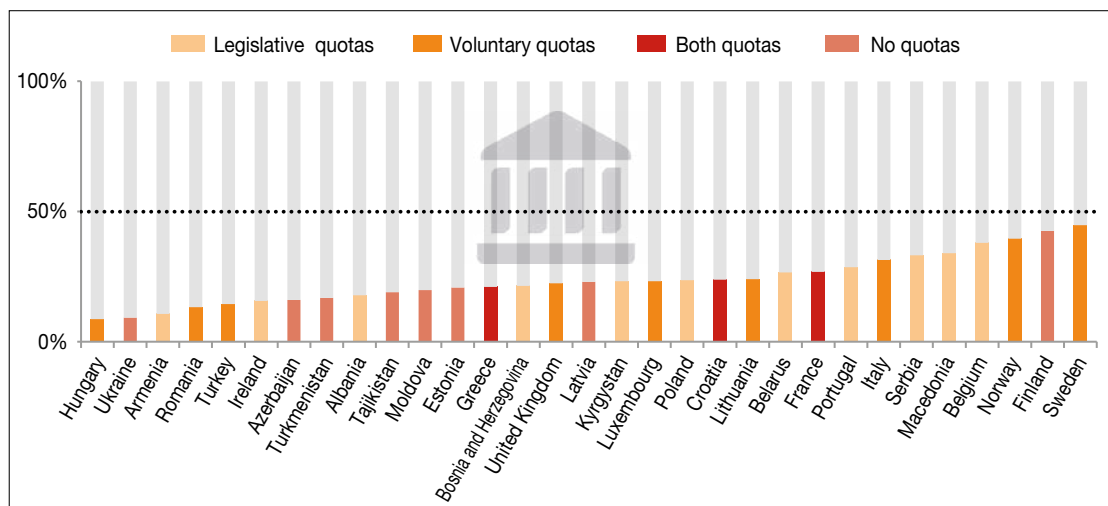
Social taboos in many Central Asian countries on women’s presence outside of the home circumscribe their ability to freely enter public space and engage in employment. Surveys suggest that women are less able to earn an income due to such taboos in Kazakhstan (USAID, 2010).

Early marriage has also been linked to restrictions on freedom of movement and vulnerability to violence. Young brides in a number of Central Asian countries report not being allowed to visit family and friends or work outside of their homes; they also report domestic violence from both their husbands and their in-laws (UNFPA, 2015a).

Women’s **political voice** is on the increase across the region, with only one country (Hungary) showing a decrease in women’s political participation in the last 20 years (UNECE, 2014c). On average, women occupy 25% of parliamentary seats in Europe and Central Asia, slightly higher than the global average of 21%. Regional averages mask the important sub-regional differences between, on the one hand, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Eastern and Central Europe (average 19%) and, on the other hand, Western Europe and the Baltics (30%). Women represent between 9% (Hungary) to 45% (Sweden) of national parliaments (Figure 3.12).

The presence of legislative **quotas** has had a mixed impact on increasing women’s political participation at the national and sub-national levels in countries of Europe and Central Asia. Across the region, there is no direct correlation between legislative quotas and the number of women in parliament. Voluntary party quotas in Nordic countries, such as Denmark (39%) and Finland (43%), have had a greater effect on women’s political participation than legislative quotas in Albania (18%) and Uzbekistan (22%), for example. Voluntary quotas introduced in Norway in the 1970s have been linked to increasing female Members of Parliament (MPs) (OECD, 2014e). However, the success of the voluntary quota system in boosting female political participation across European countries is founded on political will, which is vulnerable, therefore, to any change in political support for gender equality (OECD, 2014e). Moreover, legislative quotas have had a positive impact in Belarus (33%), Portugal (29%), Serbia (32%), Slovenia (32%) and Spain (36%) where close to one in three MPs are women.

Figure 3.12 **Women’s political representation and quotas**



Note: This figure presents the share of women in national parliaments, distinguishing countries with no quotas and countries with legislative or voluntary party quotas.

Source: OECD (n.d.), Gender, Institutions and Development Database.

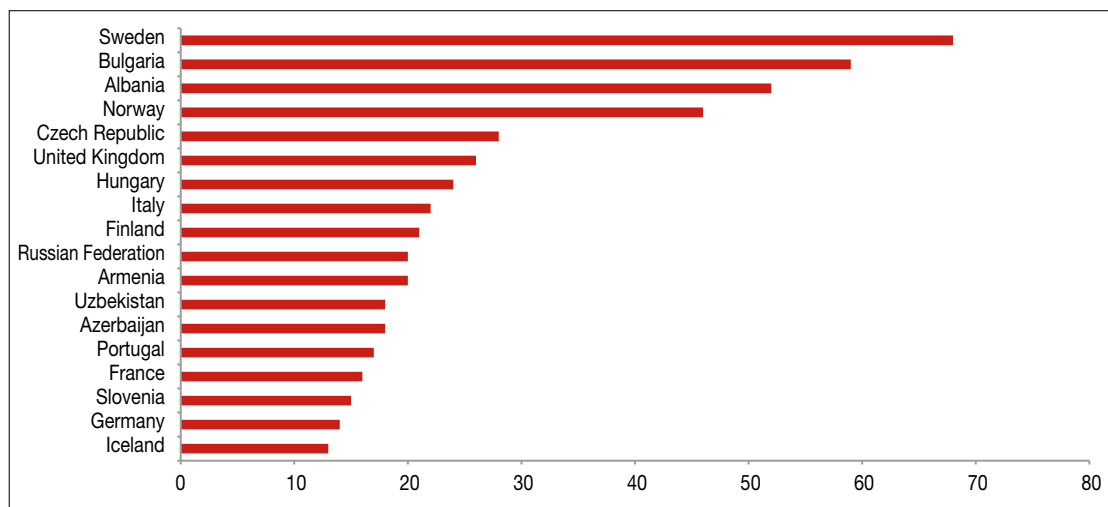
Governments in the region have shown a commitment to protecting women’s **workplace rights** although legal restrictions remain. Countries in Central Asia still prohibit where and when women can work. For example, the Labour Code of Tajikistan (1997) restricts women’s ability to work overtime and their work-related travel. Under Kyrgyzstan’s Labour Code (2004), women are prohibited from working in “harmful or dangerous conditions and from heavy work”. In Russia, women are prohibited from working in 456 different jobs (World Bank, 2015). The majority of countries in Western Europe and the Baltics have removed discriminatory labour laws. Minor restrictions are found throughout Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. These restrictions reinforce gender stereotypes of what work is

appropriate for women and contribute to sector segregation (EBRD, 2015). Many of the occupations not available to women are in mining and manufacturing sectors, thus women are barred from accessing these highly-paid jobs (World Bank, 2015).

The gender wage gap is one of the starkest indicators of discrimination in the workplace. Men earn more than women in every country in the region. The largest gender wage gap is found in Southeastern Europe with men earning 41% more than women. Western Europe and the Baltics have made the greatest progress in reducing the gender wage gap to around 12% (Sattar, 2012). Government efforts in the sub-region to address the gender wage gap include targeted action plans (e.g. Estonia and Finland) and requirements for companies to publish the salaries (Austria). Belgium, which has the lowest gender wage gap in the region (6%), has introduced legislation to combat the gender wage gap; it calls for companies to adopt action plans and to collect and analyse data on wages (Loi visant à lutter contre l'écart salarial entre hommes et femmes, 2012).

Horizontal and vertical segregation in employment contributes to poorer labour force outcomes for women. Men are over-represented in managerial and leadership positions across the region. Women hold only 14% of corporate board seats in the European Union (EU, 2012), although government policies to counteract this are proving successful. The introduction of quotas on company boards in Belgium saw an increase in women's representation from 11% in 2011 to 20% in 2013 (UNECE, 2014b). In Denmark, under legislation introduced in 2012, companies can face fines if they fail to set gender targets and policies to increase women's representation on boards. Since 2009, the share of women in Denmark's boardrooms increased from 10% to 25% in 2013 (OECD, 2014e). Vertical segregation across sectors means more women than men are employed in education, healthcare and social services. This accounts for over 70% of employed women in some countries (e.g. Azerbaijan, Belarus and Romania) (UNECE, 2014b). Women are also over-represented in the public sector (56%), which may provide for greater security but generally has lower wages (UNECE, n.d.). These trends reinforce gender gaps in wages and pensions and leave women more economically vulnerable over the course of their lives (Sattar, 2012).

Figure 3.13 Length of maternity leave (in weeks)



Note: This figure presents the length of maternity leave (in weeks).

Source: UNECE (n.d.).

All countries in the region provide for **maternity leave**, with many offering more than the 14 weeks recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary and Ireland) (Figure 3.13). Not all countries meet the ILO's recommendations for collective financing (Kazakhstan) and for guaranteed wages of at least two-thirds of previous pay (Kyrgyzstan) (World Bank, 2015). This can affect employers' attitudes towards hiring women if they are required to cover the costs of maternity leave and prevent women from taking their entire maternity leave period (UN Women, 2015).

Some studies suggest that longer maternity leave periods can act as a disincentive for employers to hire women (OECD, 2012). Governments have increased protection for pregnant women in the workplace by prohibiting their dismissal during pregnancy. Recent examples include Cyprus' Protection of Maternity Law (2011), amendments to the Law on Labour Relations (2012) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and amendments to Georgia's Labour Code (2013).

Paternity leave and paternal leave policies are important measures to encourage fathers to share caring responsibilities and to allow mothers to return to work more quickly if they so choose. The Nordic countries have set the example on paternity leave beginning with Sweden in 1974. Most Western European and Baltic countries have followed suit. Despite this, men in the region are unlikely to take all, if any, of their paternity leave. Only 2% of fathers in Austria and 6% in Hungary take paternity leave (Gergoric and Schulze, 2015). To encourage men to take leave, countries such as Iceland and Sweden offer paternity leave on a "use it or lose it" basis where their leave cannot be transferred to mothers. This has proven successful in Iceland where 84% of fathers took their entire three months leave quota in 2007 (UN Women, 2015). These policies may have long-term benefits such as increasing fathers' willingness to share caring responsibilities and the acceptance of longer paternal leave for mothers and fathers (UN Women, 2015). In addition, education and training programmes that work with fathers to take more active roles in raising their children have been launched in Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (McAllister et al., 2012).

Women's **civil society organisations** (CSOs) are important actors in promoting women's rights and gender equality in the region. They play a role in monitoring states' legal obligations under international and regional conventions and national legislation (UNECE, 2014c). Many CSOs provide essential services to victims of gender-based violence including hotlines, shelters and counselling (WAVE, 2013). These are particularly important in Central Asia and the Caucasus and South-East Europe where victim services may be underfunded by the state (UNECE, 2014c). They have also helped states develop national action strategies to address discrimination against women and girls such as Ireland's National Women's Strategy (2007-2016) and Belgium's "FGM Prevention Kit". Despite their presence throughout the region, many women's CSOs report underfunding or rely on unpaid volunteers to carry out their work (NGO Committee on the Status of Women, 2014).

### Good practices

- **Increasing women's political participation:** In 2014, UN Women-UNDP launched the "Women in Politics" programme in Moldova to increase the participation of women (including from minority groups) in politics. The programme supports women's participation before, during and after parliamentary and local elections: it provides capacity development to women candidates; works with communities to encourage participatory nomination of women candidates; and offers electoral and parliamentary support to women following their election. The programme, which runs until the end of 2016, includes working with the media, political parties, civil society organisations and male advocates to achieve its goal. Initial positive results include the training of 100 women from party lists before recent parliamentary elections and establishing joint platforms with different stakeholders to increase the number of women in decision-making (UNDP, 2015b; UN Women, n.d.).
- **Training female politicians through mentoring:** To increase the level of women's political representation in the Czech Republic, NGO Fórum 50% launched a mentoring scheme in 2014, together with the Embassy of Denmark and the Nordic Chamber of Commerce. The scheme is part of a broader project co-ordinated by Fórum 50% called "Equilibrium between Women and Men" (2014-16). The scheme connects female politicians from the Czech Republic with those from Denmark and Norway, who have extensive experience in influencing their countries' policy agendas. The mentoring pairs connect via e-mail and Skype to share their experiences. They exchange on how best to promote gender equality and to negotiate with political parties, on campaigning, and on issues around family-work balance and responding to discriminatory attitudes. The programme is mutually beneficial as both the mentor and mentee can expand their political networks, share perspectives and gain new ideas (EIGE, 2015b).

### Box 3.2 EBRD: Supporting equal opportunities in the urban passenger transport sector in Kazakhstan

Women in Kazakhstan face discrimination in the urban transport sector due to entrenched gender stereotypes about the type of work they should do. A recent project led by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) successfully helped tackle such established perceptions concerning women working in the urban transport industry. For EBRD, supporting equal opportunity for both women and men in the sector is a priority.

Transport is a traditionally male-dominated field, which discourages women from applying for jobs and pursuing a career in the sector due to gender stereotypes. In Kazakhstan, attitudes strongly influence the type of position women hold within the transport sector. For example, women are traditionally expected to work as trolleybus or tram drivers, rather than as bus drivers or in maintenance. Another obstacle is legislation: certain licensing requirements make it difficult for women to become bus drivers. For example, to obtain a bus driver's licence requires a heavy goods vehicle licence, as well as 12 months' experience driving a heavy goods vehicle.

*"My mother didn't encourage me and still doesn't think that driving is a good job for a woman. She was happier when I was working in a garment factory [because she thought it was more appropriate]. I tell her that bus driving is a good job – I work for two days and then get two days off to spend with my family." – Ludmila, AET's first woman bus driver*



In 2013-15, EBRD worked closely with its client Almatyelectrotrans (AET), Almaty's public transport operator, to promote gender equality in the city's transport sector by ensuring equal opportunity and to increase the number of women bus drivers. As a result of EBRD's technical assistance, AET adopted strategies which led to recruiting the company's first female bus driver in 2015. These include proactive recruitment strategies such as openly stating that women are welcome to apply; new policies and procedures, including a monitoring system for collecting sex-disaggregated workforce data and a commitment to equal opportunity; and improved facilities for women and men, including toilets, canteens and rest areas.

Positive outcomes are numerous. The proportion of women in management has increased from 19% in 2014 to 28% in 2015. Women now work in technical operations, which were previously all-male positions. AET recruited a second bus driver in 2015, which establishes a positive role model and contributes to changing attitudes. For AET, recruiting more female drivers also modernises the company's profile; what is more, 60% of AET's passengers are women. AET managers and staff also reported improved awareness of equal opportunity within the organisation.

*"It's not hard for women to drive buses. We used to think that women shouldn't drive cars; now lots of women drive cars. Why shouldn't they drive buses?" – Yusupov Rashid Khakimovich, Director of Bus Depot number 1, AET.*

Source: EBRD (2015a).



Annex

SI  
GI

## Methodology

### Selection of variables

Variables included in the SIGI 2014 were selected on the following criteria, based on the 2012 conceptual framework:

- **Conceptual relevance**  
The variable should be closely related to the conceptual framework of discriminatory social institutions and measure what it is intended to capture.
- **Underlying factor of gender inequality**  
The variable should capture an underlying factor that leads to unequal outcomes for women and men.
- **Data quality, reliability and coverage**  
The variable should be based on high quality, reliable data. Ideally the data should be standardised across countries and have extensive coverage across countries.
- **Distinction**  
Each variable should measure a distinct discriminatory institution and should add new information not measured by other variables.
- **Statistical association**  
Variables included in the same sub-index should be statistically associated, and thereby capture similar dimensions of social institutions without being redundant.

### Country profiles

The SIGI country profiles contain fully referenced qualitative information relative to social institutions, organised by sub-indices. They were drafted following a standardised structure to ensure comparability across countries in line with the following guidelines:

- **Conceptual relevance**  
Qualitative information should be relevant to the conceptual framework of discriminatory social institutions.
- **Sources**  
All information should be referenced and sourced from constitutions, legal frameworks, and primary publications, reports or studies, using the most recent data.  
Data should be sourced from and cross-checked with reliable studies, reports and publications, including country reports to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, reports by international organisations and country sources.
- **Validation**  
Country profiles were developed through a two-stage internal draft and review process. Qualitative information was validated by external gender experts with knowledge of the policy and legal landscape for gender equality and women's rights at a national level (see list of experts in Acknowledgments).

The SIGI and its sub-indices are constructed according to the steps below.

### Step 1: Building the Gender, Institutions and Development Database

#### Truncating quantitative data at the equality benchmark and inverting the scale.

The SIGI and its sub-indices range from 0 for low discrimination to 1 for very high discrimination.

For some variables, equality is reached at 0.5 instead of 1. Equality in political representation for example is achieved when 50% of parliament members are women. Hence, countries having more than 50% of women have a score of 50%.

According to the variable, the scale from low to very high discrimination is inverted to fit with the 0-1 scale. For female political representation for example, a higher share of women in parliamentary seats means lower discrimination against women. Hence, countries having 50% of women have a score of 0.

#### Assigning a score to qualitative variables

The qualitative information detailed in the SIGI country profiles are quantified using the following coding manual:<sup>6</sup>

- **0:** Women and men enjoy the same rights in law and in practice.
- **0.25:** The legislation is not well implemented.
- **0.5:** The customary laws and practices discriminate against women.
- **0.75:** The legislation is contradictory, non-specific or limited in scope and definition.
- **1:** Women and men do not enjoy the same rights in the legal framework.

In cases where no or insufficient information exists, variables are not assigned a value. The legal indicators are assessed based on all applicable legal frameworks, including civil law, religious law, customary law and traditional law.

## Constructing indicators

Some indicators are based on one variable while others on several. In the latter case, the indicator is the average<sup>7</sup> of its available<sup>8</sup> variables. For example:

$$\text{Parental authority} = \frac{1}{2} (\text{Parental authority during marriage} + \text{Parental authority after divorce})$$

## Standardising the indicators

Standardisation of the original variables is done by subtracting the mean and then dividing by the standard deviation for continuous variables, using results of an ordered probit model for ordinal categorical variables.

### Step 2: Aggregating indicators to build the sub-indices

#### Measuring association between indicators

Each sub-index combines indicators that are assumed to belong to one dimension of discrimination in social institutions. The statistical association between the indicators is tested using a Kendall Tau b rank correlation analysis and a multiple joint correspondence analysis (MCA).

#### Why square each SIGI sub-index?

The quadratic form is inspired by the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke poverty measures (Foster et al., 1984):

- The partial compensation means that very high inequality in one dimension can be only partially offset by low inequality in another dimension.
- The SIGI measures gender inequalities corresponding to deprivation that increases more than proportionally when inequalities increase.
- The SIGI has an aversion to high values of sub-indices.

## Constructing the sub-indices

The sub-indices aim to provide a summary measure of each dimension of discrimination. Constructing a sub-index consists of aggregating the indicators with a reasonable weighting scheme through a polychoric principal component analysis (PCA). The first principal component is used as a proxy for the common information contained in the indicators: it is the weighted sum (see table in Annex) of the standardised indicators that captures as much of the variance in the data as possible.

### Step 3: Computing the SIGI

The SIGI is a composite indicator built as an unweighted average of a non-linear function of the sub-indices:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SIGI} = & \frac{1}{5} \text{Discriminatory family code}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted physical integrity}^2 \\ & + \frac{1}{5} \text{Son bias}^2 + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted resources and assets}^2 \\ & + \frac{1}{5} \text{Restricted civil liberties}^2 \end{aligned}$$

#### Why are the sub-indices equally weighted?

Equal weights for each sub-index offer two benefits:

- Each dimension of discriminatory social institutions has equal value.
- No dimension is more important than another in terms of deprivation experienced by women.

#### How are the SIGI categories defined?

The SIGI classification clusters 108 countries into five levels of discrimination in social institutions: very low, low, medium, high and very high. It is based on the Jenks Natural Breaks Classification. This method of classifying data optimally arranges values into the five levels, or classes. It aims to minimise the average deviation from the class mean, while maximising the deviation from the means of the other classes. Hence, this method reduces the variance within classes and maximises the variance between classes.



## SIGI 2014 framework: Variables and coding

DISCRIMINATORY FAMILY CODE			
Indicator	Variable	Coding	Sources
<b>Legal age of marriage</b>	<b>Legal age of marriage:</b> Whether women and men have the same legal minimum age of marriage	<p>0: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, and the minimum age is 18*.</p> <p>0.25: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, and the minimum age is lower than 18.</p> <p>0.5: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage to both women and men, but there are customary, traditional or religious laws that discriminate against some women by allowing them to be married at a younger age than men.</p> <p>0.75: The law does not guarantee the same minimum age of marriage to women and men, and the gap between women's and men's minimum age of marriage is less than or equal to two years.</p> <p>1: The law does not guarantee the same minimum age of marriage to women and men, and the gap between women's and men's minimum age of marriage is greater than two years. However, there is no law on the minimum age of marriage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SIGI Country Profiles</li> </ul>
<b>Early marriage</b>	<b>Prevalence of early marriage:</b> Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who are married, divorced, widowed or in informal unions	0-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•UN World Marriage Data (2012)</li> <li>•Demographic Health Survey</li> <li>•Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</li> </ul>
<b>Parental authority</b> (average of two variables)	<b>Parental authority in marriage:</b> Whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of and have custody rights over a child after divorce	<p>0: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men during marriage.</p> <p>0.5: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men during marriage, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</p> <p>1: The law does not guarantee the same parental authority to women and men during marriage, or women have no rights to parental authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SIGI Country Profiles</li> </ul>
	<b>Parental authority in divorce:</b> Whether women and men have the same right to be the legal guardian of a child during marriage	<p>0: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men after divorce.</p> <p>0.5: The law guarantees the same parental authority to women and men after divorce, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women.</p> <p>1: The law does not guarantee the same parental authority to women and men after divorce, or women have no rights to parental authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SIGI Country Profiles</li> </ul>
<b>Inheritance</b> (average of two variables)	<b>Inheritance rights of widows:</b> Whether widows and widowers have equal inheritance rights	<p>0: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both widows and widowers.</p> <p>0.5: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both widows and widowers, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against widows.</p> <p>1: The law does not guarantee the same inheritance rights to widows and widowers, or widows have no inheritance rights at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SIGI Country Profiles</li> </ul>
	<b>Inheritance rights of daughters:</b> Whether daughters and sons have equal inheritance rights	<p>0: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both daughters and sons.</p> <p>0.5: The law guarantees the same inheritance rights to both daughters and sons, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against daughters.</p> <p>1: The law does not guarantee the same inheritance rights to daughters and sons, or daughters have no inheritance rights at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SIGI Country Profiles</li> </ul>

## SIGI 2014 framework: Variables and coding (cont.)

RESTRICTED PHYSICAL INTEGRITY				
Indicator	Variable	Coding	Sources	
<b>Violence against women</b> (average of five variables)	<b>Laws on domestic violence:</b> Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from domestic violence	0: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence; the law is adequate overall, and there are no reported problems of implementation.  0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence; the law is adequate overall, but there are reported problems of implementation.  0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address domestic violence, but the law is inadequate.  0.75: There is no specific legislation in place to address domestic violence, but there is evidence of legislation being planned or drafted.  1: There is no legislation in place to address domestic violence.	•SIGI Country Profiles	
	<b>Laws on rape:</b> Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from rape	0: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is included, perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim and implementation is effectively enforced.  0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is included and perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim, although implementation is not effectively enforced.  0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is not included and perpetrators cannot escape prosecution if they marry the victim.  0.75: There is specific legislation in place to address rape, marital rape is not included and perpetrators can escape prosecution if they marry the victim. However, legislation is being planned or drafted.  1: There is no legislation in place to address rape.	•SIGI Country Profiles	
	<b>Laws on sexual harassment:</b> Whether the legal framework offers women legal protection from sexual harassment	0: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, the law is adequate overall and there are no reported problems of implementation.  0.25: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, the law is adequate overall but there are reported problems of implementation.  0.5: There is specific legislation in place to address sexual harassment, but the law is inadequate.  0.75: There is no specific legislation to address sexual harassment, but there is evidence of legislation being planned or drafted.  1: There is no legislation in place to address sexual harassment.	•SIGI Country Profiles	
	<b>Attitudes toward violence:</b> Percentage of women who agree that a husband/partner is justified in beating his wife/partner under certain circumstances	0-100%		•Demographic Health Surveys •Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys •World Value Survey
	<b>Prevalence of violence in the lifetime:</b> Percentage of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives	0-100%		•Demographic Health Surveys •World Health Organization •International Violence Against Women Survey •European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>Female genital mutilation</b>	<b>FGM prevalence:</b> Percentage of women who have undergone any type of female genital mutilation	0-100%	•World Health Organization Population Reference Bureau •Multiple Cluster Indicator Surveys •Demographic Health Surveys	
<b>Reproductive autonomy</b>	<b>Unmet need for family planning:</b> Percentage of married women aged 15-49 with an unmet need for family planning, i.e. who do not want any more children for the next two years and who are not using contraception	0-100%	•Demographic Health Surveys •Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys •World Health Organization	

## SIGI 2014 framework: Variables and coding (cont.)

SON BIAS			
Indicator	Variable	Coding	Sources
Missing women	<b>Missing women**:</b> Shortfall in the number of women in sex ratios for ages 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-64, 65+ relative to the expected number if there were no sex-selective abortions, no female infanticide or similar levels of health care and nutrition	0: There is no evidence of missing women.	•United Nations Population Division
		0.25: The incidence of missing women is low. 0.5: The incidence of missing women is moderate. 0.75: The incidence of missing women is high. 1: The incidence of missing women is severe.	
Fertility preferences	<b>Fertility preferences:</b> Share of males as the last child from women currently not desiring additional children or sterilised	0-100%	•Demographic Health Surveys •Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys •EUROSTAT •National household surveys
RESTRICTED RESOURCES AND ASSETS			
Indicator	Variable	Coding	Sources
Secure access to land	<b>Secure access to land:</b> Whether women and men have equal and secure access to land (use, control and ownership)	0: The law guarantees the same rights to own, use and control land to both women and men.	•SIGI Country Profiles
		0.5: The law guarantees the same rights to own, use and control land to women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same rights to own, use and control land to women and men, or women have no legal rights to own, use and control land.	
Secure access to non-land assets	<b>Secure access to non-land assets:</b> Whether women and men have equal and secure access to non-land assets (use, control and ownership)	0: The law guarantees the same rights to own and administer property other than land to both women and men.	•SIGI Country Profiles
		0.5: The law guarantees the same rights to own and administer property other than land to both women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same rights to own and administer property other than land to women and men, or women have no legal rights to own and administer property other than land.	
Access to financial services	<b>Access to financial services:</b> Whether women and men have equal access to financial services	0: The law guarantees the same rights to access formal financial services (e.g. credit, bank account and bank loans) to both women and men. 0.5: The law guarantees the same rights to access formal financial services to both women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same rights to access formal financial services to women and men, or women have no legal rights to access financial services.	•SIGI Country Profiles
RESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES			
Indicator	Variable	Coding	Sources
Access to public space	<b>Access to public space:</b> Whether women face restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to public space, such as restricted ability to choose their places of residence, visit their families and friends or to apply for a passport	0: The law guarantees the same rights to freely move to both women and men.	•SIGI Country Profiles
		0.5: The law guarantees the same rights to freely move to women and men, but there are some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. 1: The law does not guarantee the same rights to freely move to women and men, or women have no freedom of movement.	
Political voice	<b>Quotas:</b> Whether there are legal quotas to promote women's political participation at national and sub-national levels	0: There are legal quotas to promote women's political participation both at the national and sub-national levels.	•SIGI Country Profiles
		0.5: There are legal quotas to promote women's political participation either at the national or at the sub-national level. 1: There are no legal quotas to promote women's political participation.	
	<b>Political representation:</b> Share of women in national parliaments	0-100%	•World Bank (World Development Indicators) •Inter-Parliamentary Union (Quota Project)

\* The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child considers that adulthood begins at age 18 ([www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC\\_PRESS200910web.pdf](http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf)).

\*\* Computed by Pr. S. Klasen using the method discussed in S. Klasen and C. Wink (2002), "A Turning Point in Gender Bias in Mortality? An Update on the Number of Missing Women", Population and Development Review, 28, pp. 285-312.

## Europe and Central Asia country SIGI scores per sub-index

Country	SIGI	Discriminatory family code	Restricted physical integrity	Son bias	Restricted resources and assets	Restricted civil liberties					
<b>VERY LOW LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</b>											
Belgium	0.0016	0.0038	very low	0.0316	very low	0.0824	low	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
France	0.0034	0.1002	low	0.0000	very low	0.0828	low	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
Slovenia	0.0037	0.0031	very low	0.0891	very low	0.1023	low	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
Spain	0.0049	0.0856	low	0.0622	very low	0.1144	low	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
Serbia	0.0097	0.1094	low	0.1171	very low	0.1504	medium	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
Italy	0.0116	0.0025	very low	0.1029	very low	0.0966	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Czech Republic	0.0283	0.0013	very low	0.0956	very low	0.0855	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.0333	0.2437	medium	0.0672	very low	0.1497	medium	0.2048	low	0.1951	low
Belarus	0.0336	0.0251	very low	0.3544	medium	0.0599	very low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
<b>LOW LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</b>											
Lithuania	0.0424	0.0013	very low	0.2795	medium	0.0931	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Bulgaria	0.0449	0.1504	low	0.3926	medium	0.0988	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Latvia	0.0511	0.0044	very low	0.3466	medium	0.1008	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Republic of Moldova	0.0513	0.2032	low	0.2189	low	0.0000	very low	0.2048	low	0.3539	medium
Romania	0.0686	0.1134	low	0.1700	low	0.0994	low	0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Ukraine	0.0750	0.0414	very low	0.1517	low	0.2430	high	0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Turkey	0.1032	0.1585	low	0.1913	low	0.4036	high	0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Kazakhstan	0.1196	0.0282	very low	0.2176	low	0.1126	low	0.4076	medium	0.6093	high
<b>MEDIUM LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</b>											
FYROM	0.1345	0.1803	low	0.3911	medium	0.5666	very high	0.4076	medium	0.0000	very low
Tajikistan	0.1393	0.3182	medium	0.4138	medium	0.5075	very high	0.2028	low	0.3539	medium
Uzbekistan	0.1475	0.2477	medium	0.2966	medium	0.1884	medium	0.5913	high	0.4505	medium
Kyrgyzstan	0.1598	0.1879	low	0.3771	medium	0.2624	high	0.5913	high	0.4505	medium
Georgia	0.2035	0.3552	medium	0.2112	low	0.6236	very high	0.4076	medium	0.5399	high
<b>HIGH LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI</b>											
Armenia	0.2360	0.0497	very low	0.1853	low	0.9880	very high	0.2048	low	0.3539	medium
Azerbaijan	0.2403	0.1301	low	0.2057	low	0.8587	very high	0.1837	low	0.6093	high
Albania	0.2476	0.1822	low	0.2596	medium	0.8767	very high	0.4076	medium	0.4505	medium
<b>NOT RANKED IN THE SIGI</b>											
Austria	n.a.	0.0000	very low	n.a.		0.1052	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Croatia	n.a.	0.1121	low	n.a.		0.1002	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Cyprus <sup>a</sup>	n.a.	0.0107	very low	n.a.		0.0897	low	0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Denmark	n.a.	0.0006	very low	n.a.		0.0955	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Estonia	n.a.	0.0307	very low	n.a.		0.0954	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Finland	n.a.	0.0031	very low	n.a.		0.0759	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Germany	n.a.	0.0019	very low	n.a.		0.0905	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Greece	n.a.	0.3889	medium	n.a.		0.0872	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Hungary	n.a.	n.a.		0.1190	very low	0.0948	low	0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Iceland	n.a.	0.0031	very low	n.a.		0.0940	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Ireland	n.a.	0.0025	very low	n.a.		0.0720	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Luxembourg	n.a.	0.1471	low	n.a.		0.0988	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Netherlands	n.a.	0.0013	very low	n.a.		0.0870	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Norway	n.a.	0.0013	very low	n.a.		0.0968	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Poland	n.a.	0.1071	low	n.a.		0.0950	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Portugal	n.a.	0.0970	low	n.a.		0.0784	low	0.0000	very low	0.0000	very low
Russian Federation	n.a.	0.0496	very low	0.2891	medium	n.a.		0.0000	very low	0.5399	high
Slovak Republic	n.a.	0.0063	very low	n.a.		0.0906	low	0.0000	very low	0.3539	medium
Sweden	n.a.	0.0031	very low	n.a.		0.0986	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Switzerland	n.a.	0.0824	low	n.a.		0.1037	low	0.0000	very low	0.1951	low
Turkmenistan	n.a.	0.1703	low	0.3271	medium	n.a.		0.2048	low	0.6093	high
United Kingdom	n.a.	0.1041	low	n.a.		0.0843	low	0.3885	medium	0.3539	medium

## Notes

1. See [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)
2. For more details, see Ferrant, G., L. M. Pesando and K. Nowacka (2014).
3. This report is based on the results of the 2014 Social Institutions and Gender Index. Since the publication of the SIGI 2014, Luxembourg has amended its law on legal age of marriage for girls increasing it from 16 to 18, the same as boys.
4. See <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=210&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG>  
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5. The programme receives technical support from Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the OAK Foundation.
6. For more information on the construction of the index and its sub-indices, please refer to the SIGI methodological paper available at <http://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/gender-publications.htm>
7. When the indicator aggregates categorical and continuous variables, the latter are the object of discretisation.
8. Where data is available for only one variable of an indicator, the score is based solely on that available variable.

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