

National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010–2013

adopted by resolution of the government of the Slovak Republic no. 316/2010 of 12.05.2010

Introduction

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2010–2013 (the Plan) is the implementation document for the Nation Strategy for Gender Equality 2010–2013 (the Strategy).

The government of the Slovak Republic adopted the Strategy on 8 April 2009 in Government Resolution 272/2009 as its basic programming document for implementing a policy of gender equality. The Strategy is a platform for consensus in activities for the implementation of gender equality to 2013.

The content of the Plan is based on the Strategy and covers the four areas defined in the Strategy:

- the economic, business social and medical sectors;
- the family and state family policy;
- public and political life, participation and representation;
- research, education, schools, media and culture.

The Plan emphasises that the most important negative effect of gender inequality in these areas is discrimination against women.

The Plan has been developed on the basis of an assessment of documents previously adopted by the government: the National Action Plan for Women and the Concept of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. This material contained measures and recommendations without adequate financial coverage. They could not ensure the real implementation of gender equality because there was and is no adequate institutional machinery or any directly responsible actor. For the above reasons, no control, monitoring or evaluation machinery has been created for the implementation of gender equality and there is no standardised method in areas such as data collection. The measures and recommendations were not implemented in a consistent manner and there was no synergy between the various levels or any possibility of their comprehensive evaluation. Despite the above problems, it must be stressed that both documents started changes that the Plan will provide further legislative, institutional and financial provision for.

Projects carried out in the programming period 2004–2006 with the support of the structural funds and the Cohesion Fund, in particular as part of the Community Initiative EQUAL and the National thematic network for equal opportunities for women and men, mapped some aspects of gender inequality and formulated specific recommendation on which the Plan is based.

The activities in the Plan emphasise the implementation of international documents of the UN, the EU and the Council of Europe. They draw in particular on the Concluding observations and recommendation of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of 2008, which are given particular attention throughout the document. The topic of gender equality is receiving increasing attention in multilateral bodies such as the United Nations Economic and Social Council, which Slovakia became a member of on 1 January 2010. The United Nations has begun discussion of further steps towards the establishment of a specialised United Nations agency for gender equality that would provide, amongst other things, advice and institutional support in the area of gender equality policy.

The Plan also draws on experience in the twinning project Strengthening the administrative capacities in the area of gender mainstreaming. The most important benefit of this project was being able to observe “on the spot” the specific implementation of gender equality both in France and in Germany as part of the whole national machinery of

public administration and local government, including the forms of cooperation with social partners and non-governmental organisations.

The activities in the plan were prepared in cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the Government council for gender equality and its executive and consultative committees. In the interests of deliberative democracy and maintaining participation and transparency in the preparation of the Plan a consultative seminar was held (Senec, 23–24.11.2009), which opened a wide-ranging discussion of the identification of gender inequalities. The conclusions from Senec, compiled by the department of gender equality and equal opportunities of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (MLSAF), were published on the website www.gender.gov.sk and have been incorporated into systematic measures relating to the legislative and institutional coverage of gender equality. Other proposals were incorporated according to priorities and the financial resources available to the implementing subjects.

The Plan proposes the creation of a new model for the functioning of legislative and institutional provision for the implementation of gender equality based on comparative analysis. In view of the extremely range of areas affected by the implementation of equal opportunities and the continuing low level of enforceability of the right to equal treatment, a part of the activities in the Plan are dedicated to providing additional information and raising awareness of the potential of all actors. Many previous measures had little effect and lead to the reinforcement of gender stereotyping and the corroboration and creation of stereotypical images of “femininity” and “masculinity” and their promotion in the media.

Basic objective, operational objectives and activities of the Plan

A) The basic objective of the Plan is the same as that of the Strategy, which is to create an environment, effective mechanisms, tools and methods for the implementation of gender equality in all areas of the life of society. The plan defines systematic activities in each area, the deadlines for their implementation, the tools and indicators to be used and the organisations and institutions responsible for implementation. The basic objective of the Plan is the full development and implementation of the basic objective of the strategy by means of:

- the adoption of legislative and non-legislative measures to achieve progress in the area of gender equality;
- institutional measures to implement international, European and national policy on gender equality, their coordination in all areas of interest;
- creation of machinery to analyse, monitor and control in a systematic manner the effectiveness and efficiency of adopted measures and means of increasing its effectiveness through action plans in the proposed areas of activity;
- an increase in information and awareness regarding the issue of gender equality in the general public and specialist communities;
- elimination of gender stereotyping and the achievement of a fair balance between men and women;
- the involvement of all interested parties, including civil society in all processes for the adoption, implementation and monitoring of instruments and procedures created to promote gender equality.

B) Operational objectives

The plan defines the main activities in each area, the deadlines for their implementation, the tools to be used and the organisations and institutions responsible for implementation. The activities are based on the operational objectives and the groups of recommendations developed in the Strategy in accordance with the financial allocations for the programming period from the structural funds and the Cohesion Fund to 2013.

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1

To achieve equal status and representation of women and men in decision-making and power

The disparity in the representation of women and men at all levels of power and management is a long-term deficiency of democracy in a number of countries, and especially in Slovakia. The situation in this area was analysed in the Summary report on developments in gender equality in Slovakia and on the activity of the Government Council for Gender Equality, which was approved by the government on 08.04.2009.

Based on the discussion during consideration of the Second, third and fourth period reports of the Slovak Republic (the Report) on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the UN Committee) recommended that Slovakia should use temporary special measures, in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and its General Recommendation 25, as part of a necessary strategy for the accelerated achievement of substantive equality for women, in all fields where it may be deemed necessary, especially at the highest levels of decision-making. The UN Committee further recommended that the Government sensitize political parties and the public at large about the importance of these measures and urged the state party to adopt sustainable measures including setting specific objectives and deadlines for faster increases in women's representation in elected and appointed bodies in all areas and at all levels of political and public life. The UN Committee also recommended concentrating efforts on increasing the number of women in appointed decision-making posts in the public administration. The proposed measures should establish objectives with deadlines, the implementation of an awareness-raising campaign, the provision of financial incentives to political parties and the creation of targeted training and instruction programmes for women standing for election or elected to public office. The UN Committee urged the state party to monitor the effectiveness of adopted measures consistently and to report results in its next periodic report.

The questions of the members of the UN Committee during consideration focussed on the activities of the Slovak government as to whether it had provided extensive and on-going training on CEDAW and temporary special measures for members of parliament and how Slovakia planned to adopt temporary special measures with regard to sex and gender.

The activities for Operational Objective 1 are formulated to promote systematic decisions to achieve equal representation of women and men at all levels of decision-making and power. The proposed activities will allow the creation of an optimal environment for the balanced participation of women and men in political decision-making. Activities include the preparation of a comparative analysis of the implementation of gender equality in the election laws of selected EU member states where a more equal representation of women and men in

legislatures has been achieved. The analysis will include proposals for changes in relevant laws and for the enlargement of the competence of the parliamentary committee for human rights, minorities and the status of women to include all issues relating to gender equality; committees of regional and municipal councils should also have increased competence in the area of gender equality. A condition is successful negotiations with political parties on the possibility for addressing gender equality on the party level and changes to the law on political parties and political movements to provide positive financial incentives to parties that adjust their statutes to promote gender equality and to increase contributions per votes received in elections for parties that provide for equal representation of women and men. The success of the activities depends on a gender-positive transformation of the education process, the media and traditional role models in relation to decision-making and power.

The proposed activities will facilitate equal representation and participation of women and men in political and public life at all levels of management and decision-making. It is expected that each activity will have a positive impact on daily life.

The above problems in political and public life can also be overcome through support for more active citizenship and promotion and expansion of accessible public services and gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the setting of public policies and public budgets.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
1.	Prepare a comparative analysis of the implementation of gender equality through the electoral laws of selected EU member states	R: Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR) D: 2011	SNCHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative study and analysis • Draft recommendations
2.	Propose possibilities for amending legislation to provide for the implementation of gender equality	R: Ministry of Interior (MI), MLSAF D: 2013	Chapter of the MI MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft model of a legislative system providing for gender equality • Amended statutes of political parties • Forms of financial incentives for gender positive political parties
3.	Prepare draft guidelines for the activities of representative bodies at all levels on issues of gender equality and institutional machinery for it (committees, permanent commissions etc.)	R: MLSAF D: 2010	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposals for the enlarged competences of the parliamentary committee for human rights, minorities and the status of women to include gender equality and equal opportunities • To prepare draft activities for the permanent commissions of regional and municipal councils for gender equality • Number of

				committees, commissions
4.	To initiate and conduct negotiations with representatives of political parties on ensuring gender equality in political structures.	R: MLSAF, MI D: continuously	Chapter of the MLSAF, MI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with the parliamentary permanent commission for gender equality and equal opportunities • Number of meetings • Results of meetings

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2

To identify gender stereotyping, weaken it and avoid it, and to create non-stereotypical systems of relations including a culture and awareness that respects the equality of women and men and to achieve full acceptance of the equality of women and men in systems of upbringing and education

Gender stereotyping is one of the most pronounced problems in all areas of society and also one of the areas in which various adopted measures most often fail. Gender stereotyping is a process through which gender characteristics are institutionally assigned, formulating and defending gender stereotypes of typical male or female characteristics and the roles and positions of men and women in society. The concept of gender stereotyping as a process that creates gender stereotypes is not systematically accepted or recognised.

Gender stereotypes are often transmitted from individual to individual via the family, school, media or other authorities. The activities for Operational Objective 2 are therefore aimed broadly so as not only to indicate but also to capture the cross-cutting and universal nature of gender stereotyping in every area. The key areas are education, upbringing, media, culture and science, where the development and implementation of information and education campaigns is planned, education, coaching and mentoring.

For the above reasons, operational objective no. 2 is a very important instrument for achieving gender equality and represents one of the key points of the plan. Insufficient research has been done on the identification of gender stereotypes, which is one of the reasons why they have not yet been successfully eliminated.

Despite Slovakia's commitments under international documents, and direct and secondary EU law, and despite practical needs, society as a whole remains insufficiently aware of the need to recognise the problem of gender stereotyping and the tools for identifying and eliminating it.

One of the most important instruments for eliminating gender stereotypes is education. The identification of gender stereotypes and their negative effects for the equality of women and men in public and private life must be combined with the development of gender-sensitive approaches in upbringing and education so as to eliminate discrimination based on sex and gender. The activities in the plan include a proposal to analyse the situation in education in all levels of school and map the level of educational activities with regard to gender equality. The solution requires the development of a concept for education in all levels of schools defining the basic framework and standards for gender-sensitive upbringing in

schools. It should specify a set of principles and rules for gender-sensitive education and a set of problems and areas requiring urgent change.

Slovakia also lacks systematic education in the field of gender equality. This should include accredited higher education programmes in the field of gender studies or gender equality in the first, second and third levels of education. So far no such programme has been submitted to the accreditation commission for the paradoxical reason that there are doubts regarding the ability of graduates to make practical use of such an education. This is related to the non-existence of independent accredited institutions, departments of gender studies with graduates holding degrees in the field of gender equality. Another problem is the shortage of supervisors for such fields of study. Continuing education in gender equality is often provided under the supervision of uncertified experts. To address this problem the Plan includes certification of education programmes and experts.

The issue of gender equality is often seen as one that is not a priority that needs to be addressed in public administration. The successful implementation of gender mainstreaming requires at least a basic knowledge of the issue and sensitisation to perceive problems from a gender perspective. Only an increase in knowledge and sensitivity can “increase the visibility” and draw attention to the gender aspects of many social, political and economic problems. If we want state and public administration authorities to take gender equality seriously, we need to start the process of educating those who have power in administration and management and who are responsible for the implementation of action plans and directives that relate to gender issues. The Plan includes the development of traditional and distance-learning courses on gender equality issues relating to the performance and management of ministries and at other levels of public administration and their incorporation into ministerial education programmes.

The Ministry of Culture is defined by law as the central state administration body with responsibility for the state language. Theoretical studies indicate that language is not only a tool for naming reality but also has strong potential to shape and affect reality. In the everyday use of the Slovak language women are made invisible, although it is argued that the so-called generic masculine names and includes both men and women. Research into the perception of reality through linguistic representation shows, however, that the majority of people imagine only male individuals in apparently gender-neutral references. The development of a gender-sensitive language is an important tool in the elimination of the gender stereotypes that cause gender inequality. The activities therefore include the development of a manual for the gender-sensitive use of language in public administration that will be made available to all central state administration bodies. The preparation of a manual on gender-sensitive language will require the participation of experts specialising in the issue of gender equality and experts in the field of gender-insensitive language.

In Slovakia no competent institution has so far carried out a comprehensive analysis of the level of textbooks in gender terms. Analysis of some teaching materials carried out by non-governmental organisations have shown that the textbooks used in elementary and secondary schools present gender stereotypes both in individual terms (the properties and characteristics that they ascribe to men and women) and in terms of the division of labour (the occupations and activities in which women and men are shown are strictly determined by gender). The analysis will be used as the basis the development of rules and principles for the development of gender sensitive textbooks that would then be put into practice.

The successful application of a gender perspective requires not only a top-down approach but also a change in awareness and understanding of issues amongst those at whom the top-down process is aimed. This means that the gender perspective should not be dictated to people “from on high” as something that should and must be carried out, but requires the participation of civil society in solving serious problems. By increasing information and

conducting a campaign to increase sensitivity to gender issues it is possible to initiate discussions of various issues such as gender (in)equality, gender stereotypes in all areas but in particular in the areas of education, health, culture etc. This can also make a significant contribution to encouraging people to think in more gender-sensitive ways.

Despite the efforts made, gender stereotyping can still be found in nearly every area of society. Gender stereotypes persist in the media, marketing and advertising as fixed, simplified or even caricatured beliefs about the allegedly suitable and appropriate behaviour of men and women and their suitable and appropriate attributes and other mental and social qualities.

The media, marketing and advertising affect the perception of equality between women and men and play an important role in overcoming gender stereotypes. Since the problem of gender-insensitive media content relates mainly to television broadcasting, it is necessary to be consistent in applying the basic regulations for member states of the European Union regard to television broadcasting, which are contained in Council Directive 89/552/EEC: This lays down a general framework for preventing all forms of discrimination. The basic law on the prevention of discrimination and gender-insensitive approaches in Slovakia is Act No. 308/2000 Z.z. on broadcasting and retransmission, as amended. Under section 19(1) and (2), a programme service and all its parts, must not either through its production or content offend against the human dignity and basic rights and freedoms of other, must not promote violence or in an open or hidden form promote hatred, disrespect or defamation based on sex, race, skin colour, language, belief or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, membership of a nationality or ethnic group. Increasing the gender sensitivity of the media, marketing and advertising is another challenge for starting gender mainstreaming processes.

Increasing public awareness and information regarding the existence and the negative effects of gender stereotypes in society in order to weaken them through information channels requires collecting adequate source data and establishing state research and development programmes and programmes to develop research and development infrastructure in the area of gender equality and the identification of gender stereotypes. The Slovak Research and Development Agency (SRDA) provides funding in response to written requests in accordance with Section 12(7) of Act No. 172/205 Z.z. At the present time calls for new state programmes are suspended. In future if new calls for programmes and programme topics are announced, it will first be necessary to open discussion in the research community about the given issue. The Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Rectors' Conference are represented in the Government Council for Gender Equality at the highest level. Activities in the Plan will be organised so that a proposal for a long-term state research and development programme focussing on the issue of gender equality is developed in accordance with Act No. 172/2005 and in cooperation with central authorities, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, bodies representing higher education institutions and the representatives of employers' associations. State research and development programmes are submitted for government approval by the minister of education after previous public discussion and consultation in the Council for Science and Technology.

In a society in which gender stereotypes are a significant factor in everyday life, research and development cannot be exempt from their influence and even here it is possible to find claims, methodological procedures and theories that are gender biased. Sufficient research has not yet been done on the identification of gender stereotypes, which is one of the reasons why they have not yet been successfully eliminated. It is therefore necessary to initiate scientific research programmes for the comprehensive and in-depth performance of the following tasks:

1. mapping of the status of women and men in the area of science and research and identification of gender stereotypes in other areas of social life (upbringing and education, media, health etc.);

2. beginning a process of criticism in science and research from a gender perspective and proposing new theories and methodologies that would lead to the elimination of gender stereotypes in the area of science and research.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
5	Develop a comprehensive analysis and concept of education in the area of gender equality including standards, methods and a system of accreditation for all levels of education	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MEdu), the education centre (EC) of the MLSAF and NGOs D: 2013	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive analysis • Concept for all levels of education (including minimum standards for elementary, secondary, higher and continuing education) • Pilot programme to test implementation of the concept for education in the area of gender equality, standards, methodologies and the accreditation system in selected education facilities including professional education and courses for school children • Implementation of the concept in practice
6.	Development of a comparative analysis of EU media law and mapping of the situation to eliminate gender insensitive media products	R: MLSAF in Cooperation with the Ministry of Culture (MC) EC MLSAF D: 2011	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative analysis and taxonomy of EU media laws and the definition of “gender insensitive media products” • Number of proposals for legislative changes • Monitoring of media products through the coordination unit of the Institute for Gender Equality • Number of gender insensitive media products identified • Number of justified complaints to the Advertising Council and the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission
7.	To add to pedagogical–organisational instructions on gender issues, to develop a qualitative analysis of selected textbooks used in elementary	R: MEdu in cooperation with the National Institute for Education and	Chapter of the MEdu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational instructions for the given school year for elementary and secondary schools

	and secondary schools regarding human rights, including gender equality, and to propose an amendment of directive of the Ministry of Education no. 15/2008	non-governmental organisations D: 2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology for the qualitative analysis of textbooks from a gender perspective • Proposal for revision of the conditions for bids to produce textbooks taking into consideration gender and amendment of directive of the Ministry of Education no. 15/2008
8.	Increase information and awareness regarding the issue of gender equality in order to weaken gender stereotyping in all areas of social life focussing on particular target groups (the public, specialists, the media, schools, health care etc.) in coordination with specialised methodological activities of ministerial institutions.	R: MLSAF, MEdu, MC, Ministry of Health (MH) in cooperation with the EC MLSAF and NGOs D: continuously	Ministerial chapters National project OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaign focussed on increasing gender sensitivity, the elimination of gender stereotypes (in labour market, upbringing and education, media, health etc.) • creation of a new internet portal • cultural and educational activities in cultural and educational institutions • Information leaflets developed in cooperation with NGOs • Seminars with the media and advertising agencies • Creation of a basic database of “good practice” based on analyses of current projects in the area of gender equality • Number of campaigns • Number of cooperating public and private media • number of ministerial information and education events and participating organisational units
9.	Implement gender studies as part of continuing education, including the use of e-learning for the executive and management units of central government bodies and other levels of public administration, with an emphasis on the use of gender-sensitive language in public administration.	R: MLSAF, all ministries in cooperation with EC MLSAF and NGOs D: continuously	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of education modules • Development of a manual for gender-sensitive language • Implementation of training • Number of persons trained • Number of training sessions (seminars,

				workshops) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of ministerial concepts and education plans incorporating gender education
10.	Create a system of long-term, effective support for research focussing on gender issues and the identification of gender stereotyping (acquisition of verified data on economic and social development, upbringing and education, health, culture and the media etc.)	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the Slovak Research and Development Agency, the Slovak Rectors' Conference D: continuously	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal of research tasks and programmes Research State programme of research and development State programme for the development of research and development infrastructure Number of research projects and programmes

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3

To incorporate the equality of women and men as a structural element in the creation and operation of systems of relations and the formation of a democratic society

Democratic societies should promote gender equality as a fundamental characteristic of their social structure. Gender equality is not an optional extra and its contribution to the solution of social problems is often underestimated. Institutions and organisations are only superficially gender neutral and encourage structural gender inequalities through latent and invisible barriers to the exercise of individual choice. For this reason power relations in organisations and institutions and their structures generate gender inequality. Inadequate awareness of gender issues and their misunderstanding or the denial of their importance is one of the factors blocking progress in this area.

Gender is a characteristic of social structures as well as a characteristic of individuals. There is a gender hierarchy that creates inequality through regulative practices that place individuals into segregated sectors, industries and professions, assign them resources and privileges according to the division of labour in the gender hierarchy.

Operational Objective 3 and its activities are intended to inhibit gender hierarchies and promote gender diversity, cooperation, partnership and participation.

Gender equity means a fair allocation of resources such as money, time, knowledge and economic, political, coercive and symbolic power for each gender. In the absence of such a fair allocation it is reasonable to speak of socio-economic and cultural-symbolic gender injustice.

The key activity is increasing the quality of the implementation of existing legislation in practice, i.e. the real use of resources for legal protection to provide redress in practice for breaches of the rules on equal treatment laid down by the Anti-discrimination Act.

In view of the inadequacy of legislative support for gender equality, it is necessary to prepare draft legislative and institutional measures for ensuring gender equality as a cross-cutting and horizontal issue based on good practice and acts on gender equality passed in

Denmark, Estonia, Slovenia, Norway and elsewhere. The anti-discrimination act defines gender-based discrimination and its elimination but does not provide adequate provision for the processes by which gender equality is implemented or the promotion of equality. Any proposal of legislative and institutional provision for gender equality should include the design of the institutional system for the implementation of gender equality that will be established by the law on gender equality (the Government Council for Gender Equality, persons/organisational units in ministries and local government offices and other organisations and institutions responsible for enforcing gender equality), the Institute for Gender Equality, temporary special measures, plans for gender equality, monitoring and evaluation of measures supporting gender equality, reports on changes with regard to gender equality and other activities.

These activities will be complemented by more intensive support for social partners in promoting gender equality, primarily through a financial allocation in the national project of the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion “Centre for Social Dialogue”.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
11.	Carry out a comparative analysis of laws on gender equality in selected EU countries and Slovak law and propose legislative and institutional measures establishing gender equality as a cross-cutting horizontal issue.	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: 2012	Chapter of the MLSAF National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative analysis • Sessions of the Government Council for Gender Equality on the proposed recommendations and the analysis • Proposed plan for legislation on gender equality
12.	Consistent support for real gender mainstreaming in the areas of activity of ministries	R: all ministries D: continuously	Chapters of all ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of support, for example gender-positive education • Machinery for support • Financial allocations • Gender positive activities carried out (their number and the number of participants)
13.	Support for social partners in promoting gender equality	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the EC MLSAF D: continuously	MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF NP Centre for Social Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of educational activities focussing on gender equality • Activities to support gender equality in social dialogue at the regional level
14.	Certify gender audit and the Family and Work audit for the auditing of employer organisations, carry out pilot tests of the	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC	National project of OP Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of methodology and manual

	family audit in practice and create a network of gender integrated organisations and institutions	MLSAF D: 2011	and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment of legislation • Certification of the gender audit • Provision of training for auditors • Discussion of the value of unpaid work • Networking • Number of persons trained • Number of participating subjects
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OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4

To create support mechanisms for the full participation of women and men in economic and social development and for any distribution of financial, technical, material, spatial and temporal resources and services that promotes gender equity.

Sustainable equity in gender relations cannot be achieved without changes in the norms and structures through which these relations are maintained. As a principle of distribution, gender equity provides women and men with access to resources and benefits independently from gender.

The Plan also takes into account the recommendations of the UN Committee in 2008, when it expressed concern at the limited scope of the existing legislation to eliminate discrimination on various grounds, including sex, which merely aims at equal treatment of individuals and does not fully reflect the principle of substantive equality embodied in the CEDAW. The Committee encouraged Slovakia to reflect the provisions of CEDAW in all relevant legislation and in all Government plans and policies across all sectors and levels. Act No. 90/2001 Z.z. allows direct recourse in domestic courts to rights embodied in international human rights documents that Slovakia has ratified. Unfortunately limited awareness (even amongst experts on law) regarding the provisions of CEDAW and the procedures that can be used under its Optional Protocol create a situation in which the law guarantees women access to justice but their ability to exercise this right in practice and bring cases of discrimination before the courts is hampered by factors such as limited information on their rights, lack of assistance in pursuing these rights and legal costs. The UN Committee requested that Slovakia remove impediments that women may face in gaining access to justice. The UN Committee further urged the State party to take special measures including measures relating to legal literacy to enhance women's awareness of their rights so that they may be able to exercise them as well as to encourage them to opt for legal action rather than mediation whenever it is justified. In this regard it is primarily necessary to review the level of costs for court cases relating to discrimination based on the Anti-discrimination Act and to consider amending the act on court fees and fees for extracts from the criminal register.

In the period to 2013, the scope of labour law disputes will be monitored and consideration will be given to the possibility of maintaining a separate court register for labour issues that would mean that such cases would be managed by one or more judges.

According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Justice, no case relating to the right to equal treatment and protection against discrimination has been completed in the period since the Anti-discrimination Act came into effect. Labour law disputes fall are assigned to civil judges, who give priority labour law and custody cases.

It is also proposed that the powers of the labour inspectorate should be strengthened and that regular inspections should be carried out in the area of gender equality and the reconciliation of work and family life in accordance with labour law.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
15.	Support temporary special measures to eliminate discrimination against women	R: Office of the government and state administration bodies D: 2011	From the budget chapters of the responsible subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of temporary special measures • Monitoring, evaluation, reports of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights • Subject matter, content, criteria of temporary special measures.
16.	Train labour inspectors in gender equality issues and provide for regular inspections in the area of gender equality	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the National Labour Inspectorate D: 2011	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of labour inspection, number of controls and the increase in efficiency • Methodology • Creation of specialised job descriptions • Specialised inspections • Number of departments • Number of training sessions/hours • Results of inspections and the rate of compliance with section 2(3) of the Anti-discrimination

				Act
17.	Monitor the scope of labour-law disputes	R: Ministry of Justice (MJ) in cooperation with MLSAF D: 2013	Chapter of MJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the scope of contested labour law disputes • Proposed changes to the justice system (e.g. exemption from court fees) • Change in the quality of rulings and additional statistical reporting
18.	Develop instruments to eliminate horizontal and vertical gender segregation in industries and occupations and gender differences in pay for equal work and work of equal value; put them into practice and provide training	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: 2011	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative study of systems used in other countries to classify occupations / jobs for the purpose of determining pay for equal work • Classification of occupations/jobs for the purposes of setting pay • other methods
19.	Develop tools for implementing gender budgeting and carry out pilot seminars and testing of gender budgeting methods and tools in practice	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance (MF) and EC MLSAF D: 2011	Chapter of the MLSAF National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group • Sub-groups for specific areas • Pilot project activities in each phase of the budgeting process (planning, implementation and evaluation) • Development of methodology • Seminars, training • Pilot testing of gender budgeting • Analysis of the pilot tests, methodology • Report on findings regarding

				gender budgeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participating subjects
20.	Create networks of actors able to influence the problem of gender equality at the national and regional level to encourage the sharing of experience and good practice in the implementation of gender equality	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: 2010	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working groups • Number of meetings of working groups held
21.	Support employers in implementing gender positive and family positive measures, reconciling work and family life and providing pro-gender education activities	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: continuously	Chapter of the MLSAF National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology • Competition for employers with good policies for the family, gender equality and equal opportunities and the Family and Work audit • Information forums, testing for employers • Number of employers participating in activity

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5

To build and improve institutional mechanisms for the promotion and implementation of gender equality at all levels of the state administration, self-governing authorities and other organisations and institutions (infrastructure, network and focal point)

It is essential to raise the quality of institutional mechanisms for promoting the implementation of equality between women and men at all levels of public administration and other organisations and institutions.

The UN Committee noted with concern the insufficient level of cooperation and communication between Slovakia and women's non-governmental organisations, which became apparent during the constructive dialogue. The Committee therefore recommended that Slovakia increase its cooperation with women's non-governmental organisations by, inter alia, increasing their participation in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and subsequent evaluation of policies, programmes and strategies aiming at achieving equality between women and men. Taking the above into consideration, the Plan emphasises cooperation with the non-governmental sector in implementing gender equality.

In order to comply with the above it is necessary amend the competence act, the act on self-governing regions, the act on municipal administration and the organisational regulations of ministries and all central state administration bodies to strengthen gender equality. Vertical

strengthening means the development of a proposal to increase the competence of the deputy prime minister to include coordination of gender equality and equal opportunities, the establishment of a specific department to handle gender equality issues and the designation of an organisational unit in each ministry to handle gender equality issues. The offices of regional and local self-governing authorities should appoint an organisational unit to have competence in gender equality issues, e.g. in the office of the president or mayor.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
22.	Prepare documentation of options for the incorporation of the gender equality agenda into the competence act, the act on self-governing regional authorities and the act on municipalities.	R: Office of the government, Ministry of Interior in cooperation with MLSAF D: 2012	Chapter of the Office of the government MI MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals and recommendations Discussion of proposals Options for incorporating proposals into legislation
23.	Amend the organisational regulations and internal regulations of ministries and all central state administration bodies to incorporate gender equality and designate an organisational unit in each ministry to bear responsibility for gender equality issues	R: all ministries and central state administration bodies D: 2012	Chapters of ministries and central state administration bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in organisational regulations and internal regulations Institutional embodiment of gender equality, e.g. in the direct competence of ministers and/or state secretaries Level of compliance with regulations
24.	Ensure the sustainability of the national project Establishment of the Institute for Gender Equality at the national and regional level after the completion of the project	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: 2012	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of the Institute for Gender Equality and its regional focal points (allowance organisation of a central state administration body)
25.	Develop a proposal to increase the competence of the deputy prime minister to include coordination of gender equality and equal opportunities	R: MLSAF D: 2010	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal of organisational provision for coordination of gender equality and equal opportunities
26.	Develop instruments for establishing gender mainstreaming at the national and regional levels	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF	National project of OP Employment and Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative rules Methodology Number of institutions

		D: 2011	Inclusion	actively participating in the implementation of methodology and instruments at the national and regional levels
27.	Develop gender sensitive programmes for the economic, social and cultural development of self-governing regions	R: Self-governing regions D: 2012	Public administration budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming documents • Number of self-governing regions participating
28.	Ensure adequate administrative and human resources and training in gender equality at all levels of public administration	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the offices of self-governing regions and municipalities D: 2012	Public administration organisations and institutions and their budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focal points • Creation of systematic positions • Number of employees • Job description and training in gender equality issues

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 6

To increase the effectiveness and quality of the system for the prevention and elimination of discrimination and violence in all its forms

The government has approved the National action plan for prevention and elimination of violence against women 2009–2012. The prevention and elimination of discrimination and violence will require above all legislative changes through an act on gender-based violence in accordance with the human rights commitments adopted by Slovakia, in particular CEDAW and General Recommendation 19. Within the framework of CEDAW, gender-based violence is understood as violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. This definition includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. This definition determines methods for solving and eliminating violence against women, which requires specific strategic approaches. Failure to take these specific characteristics into consideration makes any effective solution to the problem of violence impossible.

Current legislation provides only partial coverage of certain aspects of the elimination and prevention of violence against women. Furthermore, measures are scattered in a number of different acts and do not provide adequate means for dealing with situations. Violence against women has specific characteristics that require specific strategic procedures for providing aid. Failure to take these specific characteristics into consideration makes any effective solution to the problem of violence impossible.

In the submitted proposal Slovakia also reacts to the Concluding observations of the UN Committee addressed to Slovakia. The UN Committee acknowledged the legal and other

measures undertaken by Slovakia to eliminate violence against women. It was, however, concerned that current legislation against violence may not be fully comprehensive and specific to address all forms of violence against women. The Committee therefore urged the State party to place high priority on the introduction of complex and holistic measures to address all forms of violence against women in the family and in society. The UN Committee requested Slovakia to ensure that legislation against violence be specific and comprehensive, encompassing all forms of violence and in line with the Committee's General Recommendation 19.

Before the preparation of a legislative solution for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence, a comparative analysis of legislation on gender based violence will be carried out. At present violence committed within the family is covered by the Criminal Code. These provisions can also be amended. Any legislative solution will respect the criminal codes, which represent a unified and integrated collection defining and setting punishments for crimes from the less serious to the most serious. Proposals to provide protection and assistance through legislative and institutional means could be embodied in a separate law on the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence. A proposal should be made for a system to finance state and non-state activities for the prevention and elimination of violence against women; financing should be provided in accordance with EU standards in a gender-sensitive manner. The act should provide gender sensitive training for workers in support services regarding violence against women and ensure that the system of accreditation for training programmes relating to violence against women is in accordance with EU standards and human rights principles.

The proposal should establish a legislative foundation for the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence and its definition; it should also provide effective protection and aid through legislatively defined crisis intervention centres and multi-institutional crisis intervention teams in self-governing regions and other machinery for prevention and elimination required by a comprehensive solution of the problem as urged by the UN Committee.

It is important to provide gender-sensitive, systematic vocational training on violence against women for the employees of crisis intervention centres in cooperation with NGOs and to ensure specialised, gender-sensitive guidance and supervision of employees in crisis intervention centres. It is also necessary to develop a system for the operation and evaluation of the network of crisis intervention centres and teams that allows for evaluation of success in the operation of the network from a gender perspective and in terms of compliance with EU rules in the area of violence against women.

The above will be supported mainly by activities within the national project of the Operational Programme Employment and Social Inclusion "Systematic support for the prevention and elimination of violence through coordination and the provision of services by crisis intervention centres and teams".

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
29.	Prepare a comparative analysis of the prevention and elimination of gender-based violence and a proposal of legislative and institutional measures for protecting and assisting women exposed to gender-based violence	R: MLSAF, MJ, Public Prosecutor's Office (PPO), MI, MH, MEdu SNCHR, ombudsman D: 2013	From the budget chapters of the responsible subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a special working group • Comparative analysis • Proposals for legislative and institutional measures for crisis intervention,

				<p>protection and assistance from the helping professions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology for the prevention and elimination of violence in the workplace • Comparison of numbers of cases
30.	<p>Provide counselling through regional advice and intervention centres for women experiencing violence and their children, for the victims of domestic violence and gender-sensitive professional guidance and supervision for workers in crisis intervention centres in cooperation with NGOs</p>	<p>R: MLSAF D: 2011</p>	<p>National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of advice and intervention centres • Results of centre activities • Number of monitoring and evaluation reports produced • Networking of first contact institutions such as the police, medical facilities and others with advice and intervention centres / teams in self-governing regions
31.	<p>Create conditions for an accredited training system on the prevention and elimination of violence against women</p>	<p>R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF MEdu and NGOs D: 2012</p>	<p>National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of accredited training programmes and training modules • Number of persons trained
32.	<p>Systematically support the prevention of violence against women</p>	<p>R: MLSAF MI in cooperation with the EC MLSAF and NGOs D: 2012</p>	<p>National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities in the national project • Development of standards for working with men who commit violence based on foreign experience • Information, education and training activities

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 7

To identify inequalities between women and men through stronger research and gender disaggregated statistics

It is not possible to identify gender inequality without the use of specific gender policy instruments and methods that evaluate the different impacts of inequality on women and men. The shortage of quantitative analysis in this area results from the lack of staff and administrative capacity necessary to carry out gender analysis and evaluate the impact of proposed measures in terms of gender.

Despite progress in the acquisition of gender-based statistics in some areas, e.g. the labour market, there are still not enough gender disaggregated quantitative data and statistics. Adequate attention is not given to the acquisition of qualitative data that could significantly contribute to the identification of value orientations and attitudes to gender-positive change and subsequently to a higher quality of life in society.

The strengthening of the research base will require not only mapping the situation in the area of gender equality but also creating space for representative surveys of developments in gender equality. The provision of adequate staff and administrative capacity for research will allow quality in gender content analysis, secondary analysis of statistical and research data, the use of group and individual interviews and case studies.

The Institute for Gender Equality should act as a comprehensive source of information, analyses, studies and statistics. The role of the institute will be to provide information, advice, documentation, training and education services and to organise seminars, conferences, workshops, training and media activities in both traditional and electronic forms. The main benefit of the proposed solution is the implementation of activities based on standardised methodological procedures and approaches for example in data collection.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
33.	Ensure the necessary staffing of the Statistical Office and the publication gender disaggregated statistics.	R: Statistical Office D: 2011	Budget of the Statistical Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System of positions • Press conferences • Publication focussed on gender statistics • Website • Increase in the effectiveness of the preparation of gender-disaggregated statistics
34.	Develop analytical and methodological tools for processing gender-disaggregated statistics	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF D: 2011	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of analytical-methodological instruments for processing gender disaggregated statistics • Propose instruments for reporting unpaid work in the household and its incorporation into reporting (gross domestic product)
35.	Regularly evaluate gender representation in ministerial management positions and gender pay gaps and support ministerial statistical research using gender disaggregated	R: all ministries D: from 2011 annually as at 30.06	Chapters of all ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual evaluation sent to the coordination body for the issue of

	data			gender equality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of measures adopted in response to findings in the evaluation • Incorporation of gender aspect into ISCP (labour cost) research
36.	Provide for annual evaluation of changes in gender equality and report on the situation to the government and parliament	R: MLSAF in cooperation with the Institute for Labour and Family Research, self-governing regions and NGOs D: continuously	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary report on developments in gender equality • Annual reports on the horizontal priority of gender equality • Shadow reports by NGOs

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 8

To create national machinery for control, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of equality between women and men

As a result of the shortage of quantitative and qualitative data and analyses it is not possible to identify gender inequalities and set policies for their solution in specific areas. This also means that control, monitoring and evaluation are insufficiently efficient.

With regard to the competences of the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights (SNCHR) as defined by Act No. 308/1993 Z.z. as amended, it is necessary to review the system for the financing and operation of the SNCHR in comparison with similar institutions abroad, its independence and sustainability for quality monitoring in accordance with the law. The solution of these aspects will contribute to an increased awareness of the problem of discrimination, not only amongst the general public but also in public institutions and organisations.

One of the ways monitoring could be established through a national project would be to prepare a comprehensive system of national monitoring machinery; setting precise penalty mechanisms in the area of gender equality and seeking out deficiencies in the instruments, procedures and methods used in eliminating gender inequality.

The settings of processes and the quality and efficiency of the evaluation of gender equality depend on deliberative discussions¹ in various political arenas, especially the less traditional ones, allowing for the direct participation of the public and their direct responsibility for solving problems of gender inequality at local, municipal, regional and national levels.

	Activity/recommendation	Responsibility Deadline	Financial allocation	Instrument/Output and impact indicators
37.	Prepare a comprehensive system of national monitoring machinery and specific penalty	R: MLSAF in cooperation	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monitoring and

^[1] Deliberative democracy (operating “bottom up”)

	mechanisms for breaches of gender equality and methodological procedures for carrying out effective monitoring, control and evaluation of gender equality, including their implementation in practice	with EC MLSAF and SNCHR D: continuously	National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	evaluation mechanisms developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the use of penalties
38.	Prepare regular monitoring report on gender equality in cooperation with the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights	R: SNCHR in cooperation with MLSAF D: continuously	Chapter of the MLSAF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring report
39.	Carry out an internal audit of generally binding legal regulations on gender equality	R: MLSAF, all ministries in cooperation with the EC MLSAF D: 2012	Chapter of the MLSAF and all ministries National project of OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of audit methods • Surveys of gender equality based on internal audits (staff audit) • Training of auditors • Improvement in management and control processes focussing on gender equality
40.	Provide advice and legal aid on issues relating to gender equality through regional focal points established under the coordination unit of the Institute of Gender Equality	R: MLSAF in cooperation with EC MLSAF and SNCHR D: 2010	National project OP Employment and Social Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of standards for gender-sensitive counselling • Number of persons who received counselling

Conclusion

Implementation of the activities in the Plan will not only improve the quality of the public administration through instruments such as gender mainstreaming, but also promote specific measures for the elimination of gender inequality.

The ambition of the Plan is to build on the emancipatory efforts to improve the application of gender equality made during the over fifty year history of the Community. The Plan also incorporates efforts to achieve the implementation of important documents of an international character such as the Beijing Action Plan and the Millennium Objectives. 2009 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the approval of CEDAW and in 2010 there will be a fifteenth anniversary review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Action Plan. The most important ambition of the Plan is, however, to improve the quality of life in Slovakia by increasing awareness of issues of gender equality.

The success of the Plan will be assessed not only according to the quantitative values of set indicators but primarily according to demonstrable improvements in equality between men and women resulting from increases in staff and administrative capacity for the effective implementation of gender equality and support for measures aimed at preventing and eliminating gender discrimination. The government of the Slovak Republic will monitor implementation of activities in the Plan and in 2014 it will evaluate how specific measures

have implemented gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting. It will then update the Plan for the next period in cooperation with public sector bodies and non-governmental organisations.