Social Institutions and Gender Index

SIGI 2019 Regional Report for Eurasia



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Preface

Providing women with the same rights and opportunities as men in the private and public spheres is not just a matter of human rights: it is an economic opportunity that no Eurasian country can afford to miss. As this report points out, the 2017 cost to the regional economy of gender-based discrimination in laws, social norms and practices is estimated at USD 39 billion (7.5% of the region's income). The social impact of gender inequality affects the quality of life of millions of women in every sphere, and also has consequences for their families and communities.

Eurasian countries are committed to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, notably through their ratification of the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Gender equality and women's empowerment are included as a mainstreamed target and stand-alone Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5). Moreover, many countries have a long history of striving for gender equality through national strategies. This represents political recognition that the region cannot achieve sustainable and inclusive development while holding back half of the regional population. Still, much more is needed to achieve de facto equality between women and men.

For the last decade, the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) has supported Eurasian countries in better understanding the barriers to gender equality. By looking at the *de jure* and the *de facto* situations – and their effects, which are often in opposition to each other – the SIGI 2019 Regional Report shows that, despite impressive advances towards gender equality since the last edition of the SIGI in 2014, informal laws and practices embedded in society can thwart the statutory legal system. In other words, reforms can have limited traction unless the region's cultural, social and religious norms and structures are also taken into account.

This SIGI report calls for rethinking how gender equality is tackled, taking into account the political economy, while emphasising the need to reshape gender norms to achieve the SDGs. Indeed, empowering all women and girls requires redefining what it means to be a woman or a man in the Eurasia region. Making this shift will need better data collection, better analysis and better sharing of innovative approaches at the national and sub national levels. The OECD Development Centre will continue supporting this paradigm shift and optimising the SIGI's relevance to Eurasian policy makers as they advance towards achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.

Mario Pezzini

Director, OECD Development Centre

Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary-General on Development

Foreword

Since its launch in 2009, the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) has been measuring and addressing gender-based discrimination by looking at the invisible part of the iceberg and providing a clearer vision of how social institutions shape women's lives. The SIGI looks at the gaps that legislation, social norms and practices create between women and men in terms of rights and opportunities. This innovative tool assesses social institutions holistically by looking at the *de jure* and the *de facto* situations. Where customary laws and social norms still largely determine communities' and individuals' behaviour, standard policies to promote gender equality are insufficient to precipitate social transformation. The SIGI 2019 has also been adapted to meet the needs of the development community as it works towards Agenda 2030. The SIGI is an official data source for SDG indicator 5.1.1. on legal frameworks and for almost all targets included in SDG 5, providing a comprehensive vision of national progress on gender equality.

The SIGI Regional Report for Eurasia specifically analyses regional and sub-regional legal and cultural specificities in order to understand the barriers to gender equality more clearly and to identify the drivers behind persistent forms of discrimination. It offers policy recommendations for Eurasia to reshape gender norms, promote women's roles in private and public spheres, and capitalise on opportunities.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COE	Council of Europe
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Centre
CSO	Civil society organisations
DF	Discrimination in the family
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
EFCA	Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GID-DB	Gender Institutions and Development Database
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
ILO	International Labour Organization
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGMAP	City of Osh Municipal Auto Transport Enterprise
RAFPR	Restricted access to productive and financial resources
RCL	Restricted civil liberties
RPI	Restricted physical integrity
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAW	Violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the main outcomes of the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2019 in 12 Eurasian countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The report considers gender equality in relation to women and the family, women's physical integrity, women's access to productive and financial resources, and women's civic rights. Building on this assessment, the report provides a set of good practices and policy recommendations to enhance stakeholders' efforts to deliver on gender-equality commitments and to accelerate the pace of change.

Focusing on gender norms makes economic sense for Eurasia

In addition to discriminatory formal and informal laws, discriminatory social norms and practices restrict women's economic empowerment and thus impede sustainable development. Gender discrimination is not only costly for women, who are denied full access to economic, political and social life, but it also has a cost for their families, communities and national economies. The SIGI 2019 Report for Eurasia estimates that such discrimination induces a loss of 8% in the regional level of investment, reduces women's average years of schooling by 16% and decreases labour force participation by 12%. As a result, at the current level of discrimination, the 2017 regional income in Eurasia is reduced by 7.5%, a loss of USD 39 billion. If gender parity in social institutions were to be achieved by 2030, it would increase regional GDP growth in Eurasia by 0.4% every year until then, representing a gain of USD 2 961 per capita.

The high cost of discriminatory social institutions affects women's opportunities in the labour market. Despite the narrowing of gender gaps in education, Eurasia's women still struggle to develop their economic potential. Across the region, almost two-thirds of the youth population not in education, employment or training (NEET) are young women. When women do work, they are often confined to low-paid jobs, explaining partially why they earn on average 30% less than their male counterparts. Occupational segregation and glass ceilings are pervasive: women account for only 9% of the board members of central banks, 15% of members of the governing boards of trade unions, and fewer than 15% of board members of companies registered on stock exchanges. If Eurasian women were to participate in the labour market as men do, it would add up to USD 1.1 trillion, or 23%, to the regional GDP by 2025. About 40% of this potential increase could come from shifting women into higher-productivity sectors. This would also have huge social benefits, narrowing the pension gender gap and reducing the vulnerability of older women. Yet ensuring a smooth school-to-work transition for girls, labour equity for working-age women and social justice for women of retirement age requires addressing social norms and practices that limit women's empowerment opportunities throughout their lives.

Eurasia performs comparatively well on gender equality

The Eurasia region has a successful track record of removing legal barriers and fostering social norms favourable to gender equality. New legislation has enhanced equality and abolished discriminatory laws. All countries in the region now grant women and men equal parental authority and the same rights and responsibilities with regard to their children during marriage and after divorce, and women now benefit from equal inheritance rights. Eurasia is one of the world's regions where women's reproductive autonomy rights in cases of non-desired pregnancy are most secure, with abortion on demand being legal in all 12 countries. All countries in Eurasia have also adopted measures to offer paid maternity leave, while paid parental leave entitlements are available in seven countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine). Similarly, certain social norms that are detrimental to equality have become less prominent. For instance, social acceptance of domestic violence decreased from 27% in 2014 to 21% in 2018.

Legal reforms and the ensuing shift in social norms explain the relatively good performance of the region. The SIGI results indicate that the overall regional level of discrimination in social institutions is 24%, ranging from 21% in Eastern Europe to 27% in the Caucasus, compared with 29% at the global level. Only countries in Western, Southern and Northern Europe perform better in all SIGI dimensions. All countries of the Eurasia region but Tajikistan have low levels of discrimination. The region's relatively good performance is reflected in all dimensions: the level of discrimination in the *family* (31%) is much lower than the global average (44%); guarantees on women's *physical integrity*, with a level of discrimination of 20%, are relatively similar to the global average (22%); the level of discrimination against women's *access to productive and financial resources*, at 26%, is similar to the global average (27%); the upsurge of support for women's rights activism has led to substantial advances in securing women's *civil liberties*, allowing Eurasia (21%) to have a lower level of discrimination than the global average (29%).

Yet legal barriers and discriminatory social norms hamper progress

Nonetheless, advances in efforts to protect women's rights are still undermined by persistent discrimination in the legal frameworks of certain Eurasian countries. No country explicitly provides women with the same right as men to be recognised as the head of household. Turkmenistan is the only country in the region where marriage before age 18 is banned with no exceptions. In the remaining 11 countries, girls are allowed to marry below the age of 18 with parental or judicial consent. The law still restricts women's workplace rights, with five countries[1] prohibiting women from working the same night hours as men, and ten from entering certain types of jobs.[2] No country has yet provided women with comprehensive legal protection from all forms of violence. The main legal loopholes reside in the non-criminalisation of sexual harassment (in ten countries[3]), domestic violence (in five countries[4]) and marital rape (in eight countries[5]).

Deeply entrenched social norms are the most pervasive issue in the region. In fact, across the region, women and girls face daily discrimination due to cultural and social norms. In the Caucasus, for example, the undervaluing of the girl child has led to alarmingly unbalanced sex ratios: among ages 0-4, 170 000 girls are missing in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Violence against women remains a serious issue in the region, with 17% of women becoming victims of physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at

least once in their lifetime, and up to 46% in Moldova. Across the region, women's leadership abilities are underestimated in both the private and the public sectors, partially explaining their underrepresentation in positions of economic and political power. Indeed, 56% of the population in the region considers that men make better business executives than women do, and only 35% of managerial positions are held by women. Similarly, 62% of the population believes that men make better political leaders than women do, and women occupy only 19% of parliamentary seats. Entrenched patrilineal inheritance systems in Central Asia and the Caucasus still provide daughters and/or widows with a lower share of inheritance than sons and/or widowers.

The transition period that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 can help to explain current levels of gender asymmetry. During the transition, budgets for the provision of social services were significantly reduced in former Soviet republics.[6] Consequently, low-income women saw their caring and domestic responsibilities increase, and unbalanced sex ratios started to emerge: economic and social hardships forced some families to reduce the number of children they had, or reinforced the desire to have sons to compensate for the disappearance of social safety nets. The privatisation and restitution of property and land assets also placed women in a disadvantaged position, with men mainly listed as the *de facto* heads of household and landholders.

The most difficult area of change is the family

Across Eurasia, laws and social norms governing the family create the most resistance to change. These laws and norms concern the roles of both men and women: social expectations prevent men from assuming equal caring responsibilities, and they confine women in their reproductive role.

- At the regional level, 16% of the population think it is not acceptable for a woman in their family to work outside the home for pay (up to 22% in Central Asia), and 38% of respondents declare that children with working mothers will suffer (up to 54% in the Caucasus).
- Although paid parental leave is granted in 7 of the 12 countries in this report, men are unlikely to take their paternity or parental leave entitlements. In Belarus, for example, only 1% of men take advantage of parental leave. In Armenia, 87% of men declare that they would not take paternity leave after the birth of a child (compared to 23% of women), and 48% say that they would not need to take parental leave because their spouse would attend to childcare (2% of women).
- As a result, women continue to labour under the double burden of responsibility for nearly all domestic chores in addition to working outside the home. Women perform 2.5 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men per day on average. In Belarus, 68% of households favour a traditional family arrangement where the man works and the woman takes care of the house and children.

A whole-of-society shift is needed to reshape gender norms

Gender equality cannot be achieved without engaging all actors, including governments, development co-operation stakeholders, religious and community leaders, local civil society, foundations, the private sector, teachers, health professionals, justice and police officers, the media, men and, of course, women themselves. The variety of underlying drivers of persistent gender gaps in Eurasia calls not only for legal reforms to eradicate

discriminatory provisions and close legal loopholes, but also a deep social transformation to challenge discriminatory social norms, as well as customary, traditional and religious laws and/or practices.

The multidimensional aspect of gender discrimination requires going beyond the usual mainstreaming approach by implementing an integrated multisectoral strategy. The various forms of discrimination women face in the private and public spheres, and in access to productive resources, overlap with threats to their physical integrity and their ability to control their own bodies. Gender inequalities begin even before birth and continue until old age, and exist in all spheres of society. Governments should use a multiple-points-of-entry strategy that takes account of the complexity of the political economy. For example, financial inclusion requires better access to land, which implies equal inheritance rights. Similarly, in order to narrow gender gaps in labour outcomes, including the gender pay gap, it is necessary to challenge stereotypes around girls' education and social norms justifying child marriage and stigmatising working mothers.

Feminism in Eurasia also needs to shift its focus from considering only women to also looking at what it means to be a man. Greater incentives for men to contribute in novel ways to gender equality are indispensable, and the social contract must be reshaped to redefine *masculinities*.

Notes

[1] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[2] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[3] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[4] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[5] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[6] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Key policy recommendations

Each thematic chapter of this report provides detailed policy recommendations on the 16 SIGI indicators (providing a comprehensive legal framework to address violence against women, for example). This section lists cross-cutting policy recommendations.

Reshaping gender norms to unleash the potential of Agenda 2030 requires a three-pronged approach to all discriminatory social institutions included in the SIGI:

Start with legal reforms and gender-responsive policies

- Eurasian governments should start by eradicating remaining discriminatory laws and plugging legal loopholes. This means looking into discriminatory legal provisions related to women's workplace rights as well as legal failures to address violence against women and girl-child marriage in a comprehensive way. Women should be able to choose their profession in all sectors and with all types of jobs, even those considered too hazardous, arduous or morally inappropriate for a female worker. All forms of violence against women in all places should be criminalised, including sexual harassment, domestic violence and marital rape. All countries should follow Turkmenistan's example in raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both sexes without exceptions.
- Statutory rights should take precedence over customary laws to enforce legal equality commitments for all women and girls irrespective of their location, marital status, ethnicity or religion. For example, policy makers in Central Asia and the Caucasus should align statutory and customary inheritance laws.
- A social norms lens should be applied to all policies and programmes to improve their gender-responsiveness and foster social transformation. Public policies from the outset should address the root causes of gender inequality. This is notably true in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia where advocacy campaigns and/or educational programmes are key to address the devaluation of the girl child and eradicate the phenomenon of missing women.
- Moving away from traditional gender mainstreaming,[1] Eurasian national gender strategies should adopt multi-sectoral and integrated approaches to create a more conducive environment for women's empowerment. Leaving no one behind means tackling gender discrimination in all economic, social and public spheres. It means involving various ministries, for example those concerned with education, labour and social protection, to avoid the domino effects of discrimination and reduce women's vulnerability at all stages of their lives. This notably includes improving girls' school-to-work transition, addressing glass-ceiling and gender occupational segregation, and closing the gender pension gap. Similarly, financial inclusion policies should go hand-in-hand with land access programmes.

Second, foster social transformation through community mobilisation

- Capitalising on women's economic potential requires challenging negative gender stereotypes and reshaping gender roles. This is particularly true when focusing on women's political and economic leadership, and the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities within the family. Quotas and parental leave schemes are clearly insufficient to challenge the widespread stigmatisation of women in politics or as working mothers.
- Beyond engaging men in efforts to enhance gender equality, it is time to redefine masculinity. A major rethinking of the social contract and what is expected regarding "masculinity" is needed for men to be at the centre of social transformation. Greater incentives are also needed. Shifting social norms is neither a female responsibility nor a strictly female-oriented process.
- Nothing can be done without engaging all actors in a whole-of-society shift. A deep social transformation eliminating discriminatory customary and religious laws and practices requires shared commitments. Every citizen and all institutions have a role to play: governments, development co-operation stakeholders, civil society, community and religious leaders, teachers, health professionals, justice and police officers, the media, foundations, the private sector and others. Social transformation can be propelled by legal reforms, but it also requires change on the ground.
- Support of women's rights movements and their amplification through community engagement should never cease, as backlash always threatens progress. The last decade has seen new actors get involved in supporting gender equality and an upsurge of movements supporting women's rights. However, forms of backlash are threatening progress all over the region. It is critical to draw on new actors and ways of communication to amplify women's rights campaigns through community dialogue and innovative practices aimed at changing gender norms across society.

Strengthen data collection and monitoring

- More evidence and more data are needed to better monitor progress and understand the drivers of gender inequality. Despite the widespread belief that female genital mutilation (FGM) is not an issue in Eurasian countries, the example of Georgia, where cases of FGM were uncovered, illustrates the need to collect data. Similarly, the importance of collecting individual data and statistically defining the household as an addition of individuals rather than a homogenous unit has also been shown in Georgia. Women suffer from invisible discrimination and a risk of poverty due to the lack of household data disaggregated at the level of individuals.
- Increased access to qualitative data is needed. The official designation of SIGI as a data source for monitoring SDG 5.1.1, on "whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex", recognises that comparable and reliable data on legal discrimination are critical for monitoring the SDGs.[2]

- Investment in analytical capacity is needed at the national level. Producing data is a valuable first step, but statistics take on added power when they are used by decision makers to inform policy. Moreover, data analysis offers a unique opportunity for citizens to ask for strengthened accountability to improve the gender responsiveness of public policies. It can ensure that policies are assessed from the perspective of women's and men's needs and interests, and can hold decision makers accountable for their performance in reducing the gender gap.

Notes

[1] Gender mainstreaming refers to the design of all public policies and use of policy instruments with the promotion of gender equality in mind.

[2] The World Bank Group, Women Business and the Law is the second official data source for SDG indicator 5.1.1. For more information see: https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/SDGeHandbook/Indicator+5.1.1.

Introduction

Eurasian countries are committed to promoting gender equality and to the empowerment of women, notably through the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which most of the 12 countries in the region have ratified. Moreover, many countries in Eurasia have a long history of including gender equality in their national strategies, notably through the Soviet legacy. However, attention to discriminatory legal and social institutions has been limited. As this report demonstrates, putting the reform of discriminatory laws, social norms and practices at the core of gender strategies in the Eurasia region will open new opportunities for the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Discriminatory social institutions define what it is legally and socially acceptable to think, do or say, and how it is acceptable to act in relation to gender. As such, they closely link individual sets of rights and opportunities to a person's gender. More precisely, discriminatory social institutions are defined as formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that restrict or exclude women and girls, consequently curtailing their access to rights, justice, empowerment opportunities and resources.

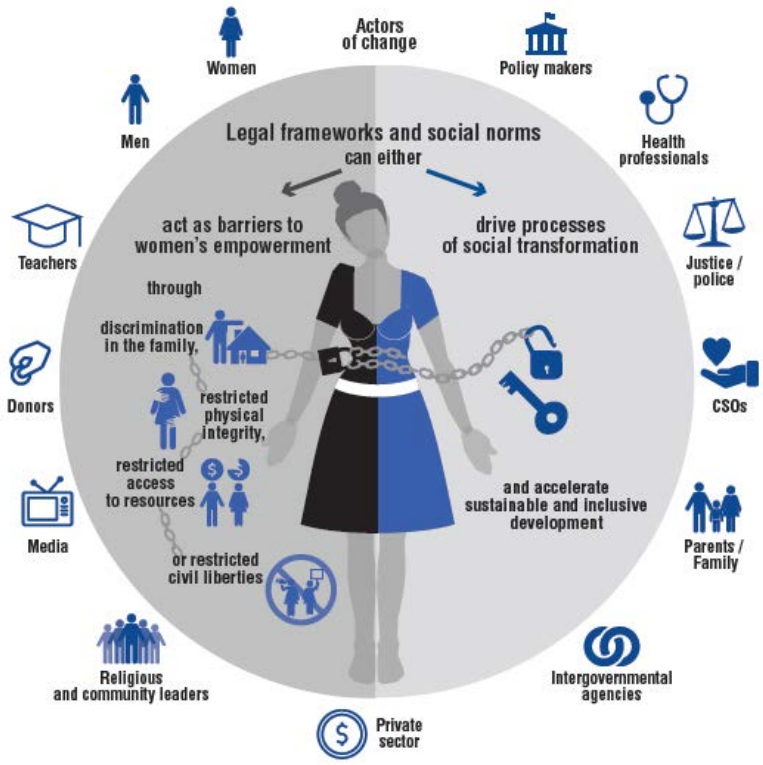
These laws and norms impede sustainable and inclusive development by preventing women and girls from realising their political, economic and social rights. Discriminatory social institutions also limit the potential for the achievement of the development objectives set in the Sustainable Development Agenda: sustained and inclusive economic growth (SDG 1, 8 and 10), well-being for all (SDG 3), healthy lives (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4) and full and productive employment (SDG 8). Indeed, such discrimination induces a loss of 8% in the regional level of investment, reduces women's average years of schooling by 16% and their labour force participation by 12%. As a result, the current levels of discrimination, as measured by the SIGI, reduce Eurasia's income by 7.5%, which is the equivalent of a loss of USD 39 billion (Chapter 2).

Despite political commitments, standard gender policies have not been sufficient to narrow all gender gaps in the region. Eurasia performs relatively well compared to the global average: gender gaps in education have been narrowed and women participate in large numbers in the labour force. Labour force participation in the region stands at 53% for women and 71% for men, compared to global averages of 48% for women and 75% for men. However, gender inequalities in labour market outcomes persist and have even widened in some countries. The gender wage gap is around 30% in the region (World Bank, 2019[1]), compared to 16% at the global level (ILO, n.d.[2]). In Ukraine, the gender gap in labour participation has increased by five percentage points in the last 20 years (OECD, 2019[3]). Occupational segregation and glass ceilings are also pervasive: women account for only 9% of members of the boards of central banks, 15% of members of the governing boards of trade unions, and less than 15% of board members of companies registered on the stock exchanges (OECD, 2019[3]). Almost two thirds of the youth population not in education, employment or training (NEET) are girls (ILO, 2018[4]).

Unless a deep social transformation occurs to reshape gender norms, it will take almost 100 years to achieve gender equality in the region. The last three SIGI reports, conducted over the past decade, have consistently shown that governments in Eurasia need to pay more attention to discriminatory laws, social norms and practices if they want to achieve gender equality and further promote women's empowerment, in line with Agenda 2030. This requires not only to further legal reforms aiming to eradicate discriminatory provisions and close legal loopholes, but to also undertake measures that could foster a deep social transformation to challenge discriminatory social norms and customary, traditional and religious laws and practices (Figure 1). Indeed, in all countries of the region, individual and collective beliefs are still influenced by patriarchal norms that confine women in their caring and reproductive roles and underestimate their potential contribution to economic and political life. In the Caucasus, for example, undervaluing of girls has led to unbalanced sex ratios. In Central Asia, widow's inheritance rights are still denied by discriminatory customary, traditional and/or religious practices.

Addressing gender inequality requires a rethink on the role of men in the region. While feminism mainly focuses on promoting women's empowerment and redefining social expectations about the role of women, this report calls for greater attention to the issue of *masculinities*.[1] Across Eurasia, *hegemonic masculinities* expressed through violence and resistance to caring responsibilities or paternity leave appear to be socially expected and accepted. Greater incentives are needed for men to be fully included in efforts to address gender inequality and to nudge them to be drivers of change. A major rethinking of the social contract and what is expected regarding *masculinities* would thus represent a quantum leap for gender equality in the region.

Figure 1. SIGI approach



Notes

[1] The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting (UNICEF, 2005)

References

ILO (2018), *ILOSTAT Database*, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.FE.ZS (accessed on 1 March 2019). [4]

ILO (n.d.), *ILOSTAT*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva, https://www.ilo.org/ilostat (accessed on 18 March 2019). [2]

OECD (2019), *Promoting Gender Equality in Eurasia: Better Policies for Women's Economic Empowerment*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://www.oecd.org/eurasia-week/Promoting-Gender-Equality-Eurasia-Feb2019.pdf (accessed on 23 March 2019). [3]

World Bank (2019), *Gender Equality in Europe and Central Asia*, World Bank Group, Washington, http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/gender (accessed on 23 March 2019). [1]

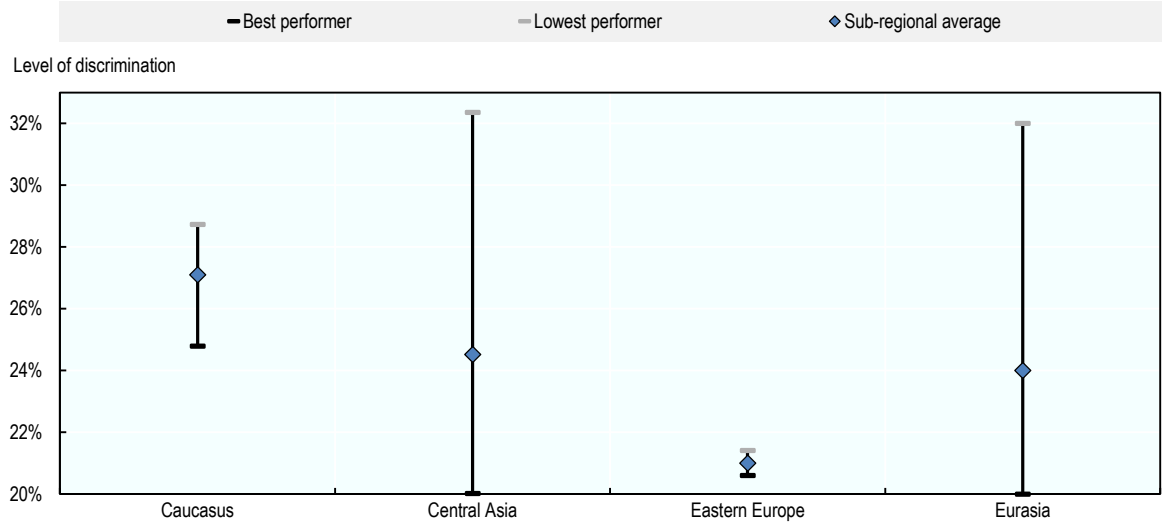
Chapter 1. SIGI 2019 results

This chapter presents an overview of regional trends and results from the 2019 Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) and its four dimensions: discrimination in the family, physical integrity, access to productive and financial resources, and civil liberties. It outlines the main areas of progress and challenges regarding formal and informal laws, social norms and practices related to gender equality in Eurasia. It emphasises sub-regional disparities and the heterogeneity of progress.

SIGI overview

Eurasia has made progress on reforming laws and shifting social norms detrimental to gender equality. National legal reforms have enhanced gender equality in the region and abolished a large number of discriminatory laws. All countries grant women and men equal parental authority and the same rights and responsibilities with regard to their children during marriage and after divorce. All countries have adopted measures to offer paid maternity leave, while paid parental leave entitlements are also available in 7 out of 12 countries.[1] Eurasia is one of the world's regions where women's reproductive autonomy rights are best protected in cases of non-desired pregnancy, with abortion on demand being legal in all 12 countries. All Eurasian countries also explicitly recognise equal rights of inheritance and ownership of land and non-land assets. Furthermore, gender discriminatory social norms have become less prominent. For instance, the social acceptance of domestic violence decreased from 27% in 2014 to 21% in 2018.

Figure 1.1. SIGI 2019 results by sub-region



Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. SIGI 2019 results with regional and sub-regional best and lowest performers.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

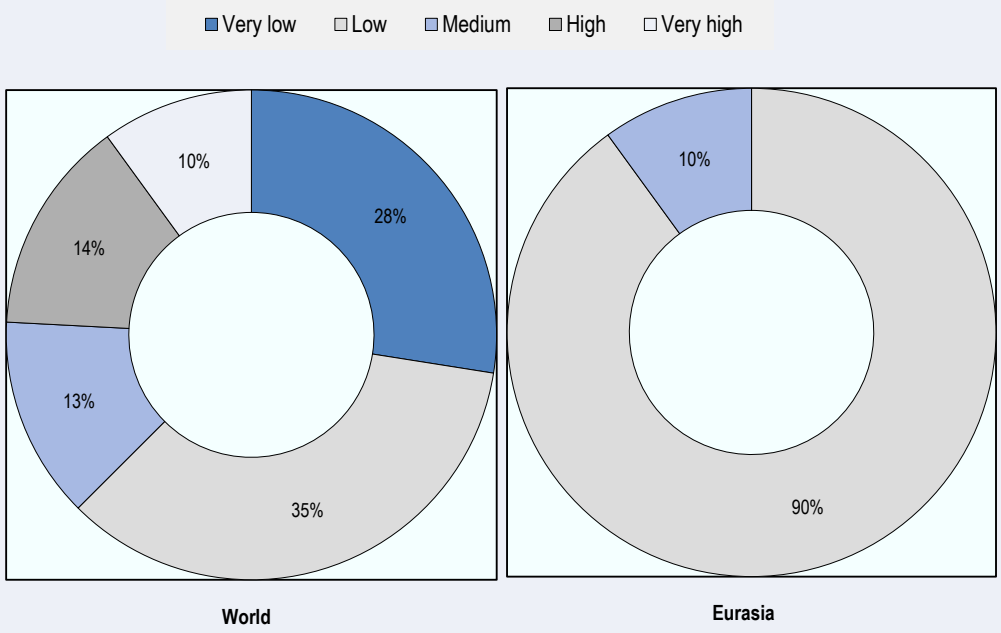
As a result, Eurasia performs relatively well on gender equality in social institutions. The SIGI ranks countries from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination; a low score is therefore preferable to a high score. SIGI 2019 results indicate that the level of discrimination in social institutions in the Eurasia region is 24%, ranging from 21% in Eastern Europe to 27% in the Caucasus (Figure 1.1), compared to 29% at the global level. Nine of the region's 12 countries have low levels of discrimination, one has medium levels of discrimination while two are not ranked due to missing data (Box 1.1, Figure 1.2). Globally, discrimination levels are lower in Western Europe (12%), Northern Europe (15%) and Southern Europe (18%), and in North America (18%) and East Asia (22%), but Eurasia performs better than Latin America and the Caribbean (25%), Southeast Asia (35%), Africa (40%), Western Asia (41%) and South Asia (48%).

Box 1.1. SIGI 2019 classification

The SIGI scores 120 countries, including 10 out of 12[2] Eurasian countries, and classifies them into five groups:

- Very low level of discrimination (SIGI < 20%): 33 countries, representing 28% of the countries ranked. No Eurasian country has been classified in this group.
- Low level of discrimination (20% < SIGI < 30%): 42 countries, representing 35% of the countries ranked. Nine of the ten Eurasian countries have been classified in this group (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, and Ukraine).
- Medium level of discrimination (30% < SIGI < 40%): 16 countries, representing 13% of the countries ranked. One Eurasian country has been classified in this group (Tajikistan).
- High level of discrimination (40% < SIGI < 50%): 17 countries, representing 14% of the countries ranked. No Eurasian country has been classified in this group.
- Very high level of discrimination (SIGI > 50%): 12 countries, representing 10% of the countries ranked. No Eurasian country has been classified in this group.

Figure 1.2. SIGI 2019 distribution



Note: Based on SIGI 2019 data. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not ranked as there is missing data on restricted physical integrity and restricted access to productive and financial resources.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

The Soviet legacy helps to explain Eurasia's relatively good performance but also persistent gender gaps, particularly on wages and family responsibilities. Recognising the economic, social and political potential of women, the Soviet Union enacted legal reforms promoting women's emergence from the confines of the household into the wider public arena. This partly explains the relatively good performance of the region's 12 countries, of which all except Mongolia are former Soviet republics. For example, the Soviet Union adopted legislation during the early 1920s establishing equal rights to hold land, to act as heads of households and to participate as full members in rural communes, and also establishing civil marriage, easy divorce, abortion services, maternity pay and childcare facilities (Ishkanian, 2003[1]). These changes had profound consequences on relations between women and men (Lapidus, 1978[2]), as evidenced by the high rates of female participation in the labour force, in the Communist Party and in local governments. However, gender wage gap and occupational segregation were also the norm during this period (World Bank, 1999[3]). In addition, the traditional division of labour within the family persisted, resulting in a "double burden" as women were increasingly engaged in the labour market without benefitting from affordable domestic workers (World Bank, 1999[3]).

Some laws still undermine efforts to protect women's rights. No country in the region explicitly provides women with the same right as men to be recognised as the head of household. Legislation still restricts women's workplace rights, with five countries prohibiting women from working the same night hours as men (Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine), and ten from entering certain types of jobs (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan).

Legal loopholes expose women to discriminatory practices. Turkmenistan is the region's only country where marriage before age 18 is banned with no exceptions. In the remaining 11 countries, girls are allowed to marry below age 18 with parental or judicial consent. As a result, and although the regional prevalence of girl child marriage (8%) is below the global average (16%), this rate remains much higher than the rate of boy child marriage (2%). In addition, no Eurasian country has yet provided women with comprehensive legal protection from all forms of violence. The main legal loopholes include the non-criminalisation of sexual harassment (in ten countries[3]), domestic violence (in five countries[4]) and marital rape (in eight countries[5]).

Customs, traditions and religious practices also weaken legal protections. Entrenched patrilineal inheritance systems in Central Asia and the Caucasus still grant daughters and/or widows a lower share of inheritance than sons and/or widowers. Similarly, traditional patrilineal kinship systems limit women's land rights. Payment of a "bride price"[6] continues to undercut women's legal right to file for divorce in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

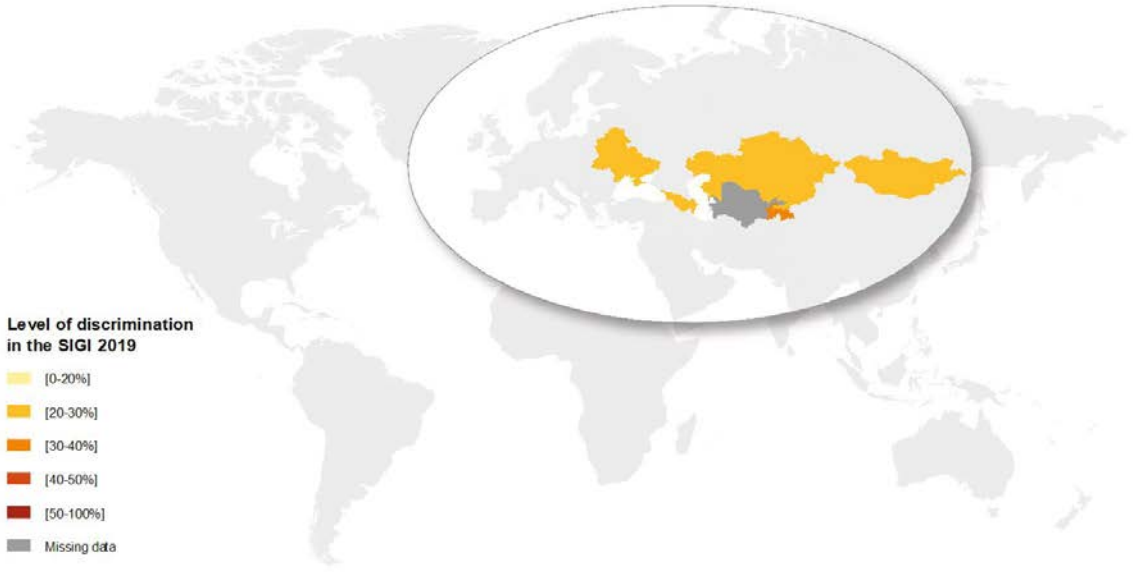
Social norms continue to hamper women's empowerment opportunities. The pervasive view of women's role as caregivers restricts their access to economic opportunities. At the regional level, 16% of the population thinks it is not acceptable for a woman in their family to work outside the home for pay, and this rises to 22% in Central Asia. In Belarus, 68% of households favour traditional family arrangements where the man works and the woman takes care of the house and children. Even when women are working, social norms confine them to jobs with low pay and responsibility: 56% of the population considers that men make better business executives than women do, ranging from 46% in Ukraine and up to 75% in Azerbaijan. Social norms also affect women's

access to entrepreneurship. In Armenia, for example, female entrepreneurs have to be accompanied by male relatives for business meals or networking events. Similar discriminatory attitudes can be observed with regard to women's role in politics: 62% of the region's population believes that men make better political leaders than women do.

Entrenched social expectations about male roles hamper gender equality. Although paid parental leave schemes are granted in seven[7] of the 12 Eurasian countries, men are unlikely to take their paternity or parental leave entitlements. For example, only 1% of Belarusian men take advantage of parental leave. Traditional norms and views of masculinity are reflected in fathers' reluctance to share caring responsibilities and benefit from paid leave schemes. In Armenia, for example, 87% of men declare that they would not take paternity leave after the birth of a child (compared to 23% of women), and 48% state that this is because their spouse or someone else would be responsible for childcare (2% of women). Moreover, expression of *hegemonic masculinities*[8] through domestic violence by men is still largely accepted. One in five Eurasian woman, and up to one in three in Central Asia, declares that a husband is justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances, such as burning a meal.

The intensity and forms of discrimination vary significantly across Eurasia (Figure 1.3). Women in Mongolia face the lowest level of discrimination in social institutions as measured by the SIGI (20%), while the level in Tajikistan is 32%. The Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are characterised by alarming levels of "missing women",[9] while countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia show no evidence of son bias in sex ratios. Girl child marriage remains a concern in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where 14% of girls aged 15-19 are married, divorced or widowed, compared to 5% of girls in Armenia.

Figure 1.3. Levels of discrimination in Eurasia



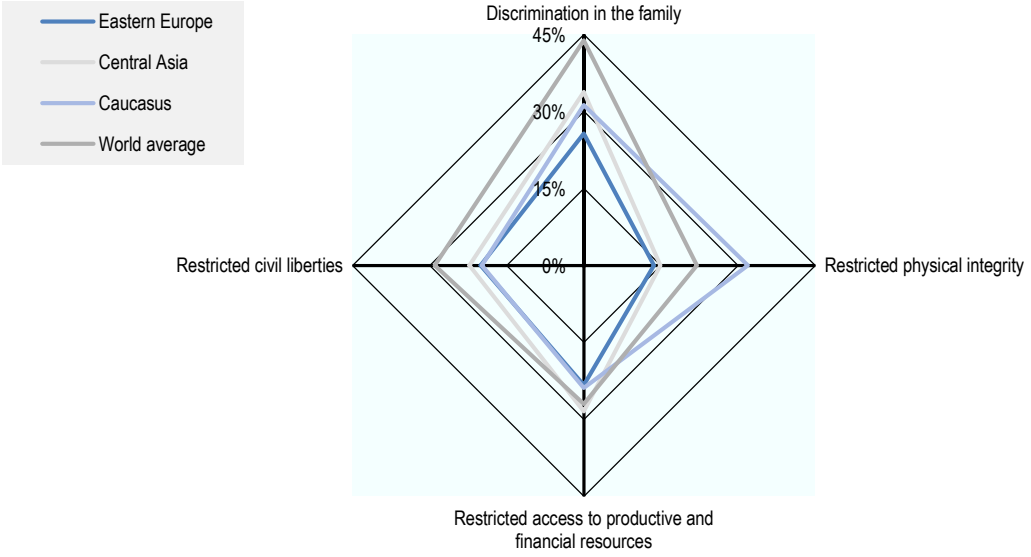
Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, and Ukraine have low levels of discrimination (20-30%). Tajikistan has a medium level of discrimination (30-40%) and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not ranked due to missing data.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

The post-Soviet transition may have increased gender asymmetries. The sheer magnitude of the changes during the transition from the Soviet era has put economic growth and the development of macroeconomic institutions at the centre while marginalising gender issues (World Bank, 1999[3]). During the transition period, funding and budgets for the provision of social services were significantly reduced in former Soviet republics (Lapidus, 2000[4]). Consequently, low-income women saw their caring and domestic responsibilities increase. Unbalanced sex ratios started emerging prominently after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This was caused by economic and social hardship, which forced many families to reduce the number of children they had, or reinforced their desire for sons to compensate for the disappearance of social safety nets. During the privatisation and restitution of property and land assets, women were placed in a disadvantaged position. Indeed, despite land parcels being attributed to families, men were largely listed as the de facto heads of household and landholders.

Progress and challenges in the SIGI dimensions

The relatively good performance of the Eurasia region in the SIGI is reflected in all dimensions (Box 1.2), but prominent sub-regional disparities are evidence of differences in social norms and practices (Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4. SIGI sub-regional results in the four dimensions



Note: Regional and sub-regional averages in the four SIGI dimensions, with world averages.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Box 1.2. About the SIGI

The OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) is a unique cross-country measure of discriminatory social institutions: formal and informal laws, and social norms and practices that restrict women's and girls' rights and access to empowerment opportunities and resources.

The SIGI is comprised of four components:

- country profiles containing comprehensive qualitative information on legal frameworks and action plans to protect women's rights and promote gender equality (for 180 countries)[10]
- the Gender, Institutions and Development Database comprising variables measuring the level of discrimination in laws (categorical variable), social norms (attitudinal data) and practices (prevalence rates) for 180 countries[11]
- a cross-country ranking classifying 120 countries according to their level of discrimination in social institutions (for Eurasia results, see Annex A, Table A.1)
- a policy simulator allowing policy makers to scope out reform options and assess their likely effects on gender equality in social institutions (oe.cd/sigiSIM).

It is worth noting that while the SIGI score is available for only 120 countries (including ten Eurasian countries), variables measuring the level of discrimination in laws, social norms or practices are available for each of 180 countries, including the 12 Eurasian countries analysed in this regional report (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. List of Eurasian countries by sub-region

Caucasus	Central Asia	Eastern Europe
Armenia	Kazakhstan	Belarus
Azerbaijan	Kyrgyzstan	Moldova
Georgia	Mongolia	Ukraine
	Tajikistan	
	Turkmenistan	
	Uzbekistan	

The SIGI and its dimensions look at the gaps that legislation, attitudes and practices create between women and men in terms of rights and opportunities. The SIGI covers four dimensions spanning major socio-economic areas that affect the entire lifetimes of women and girls (Figure 1.5), and that are analysed in the SIGI as sub-indices.

- The *discrimination in the family* (DF) dimension captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and that undervalue their status in the household and the family.
- The *restricted physical integrity* (RPI) dimension captures social institutions that increase the vulnerability of women and girls to a range of forms of violence and that limit women's control over their bodies and reproductive autonomy.
- The *restricted access to productive and financial resources* (RAPFR) dimension captures women's restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets.
- The *restricted civil liberties* (RCL) dimension captures discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access to and participation and voice in the public and social spheres.

Discrimination in the family

The regional level of discrimination in the *family* (31%) is much lower than the global average (44%). Yet, it is significantly higher than in Western, Northern and Southern European countries (19%, 22% and 28%, respectively), as well as Eastern Asian and Northern American countries (25% and 27%, respectively).

Formal and informal laws, social norms and practices governing the *family* are the most difficult area to change, exposing women to high levels of discrimination in Eurasia, and especially in the Caucasus and in Central Asia where levels of discrimination are respectively 31% and 34%, compared to 26% in Eastern Europe. Across the region, legal loopholes and discriminatory social norms perpetuate women's subordinate status and lower their decision-making power in the household. Societal expectation on gender roles are reflected in findings on women's lower status in the household and the pressure women face to perform domestic chores and child rearing.

- Women across Eurasia continue to be responsible for nearly all domestic chores in addition to working outside the home (the "double burden"). Women perform on average 2.5 times more unpaid care and domestic work than men per day. For example, women spend four hours a day on such work in Kyrgyzstan and six hours in Azerbaijan, compared to two hours for men in both countries.
- The stigmatisation of working mothers is persistent. On average, 38% of Eurasian respondents declare that children will suffer when a mother is in paid employment, ranging from 32% in Belarus to 65% in Georgia.

Restricted physical integrity

With a regional level of discrimination of 20%, the protection of women's *physical integrity* in Eurasia is relatively similar to the global average (22%). Female genital mutilation (FGM) does not seem to be an issue in the region except in some Georgian communities, and reproductive autonomy is well guaranteed. However, violence against women is a pervasive issue across the region: 17% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime, and up to 46% in Moldova.

Moreover, sub-regional disparities are huge. Within the region, Eastern European and Central Asian countries exhibit low levels of discrimination (14% and 15%), in line with those of the best performing regions: Western, Southern and Northern Europe (11%, 12% and 13% respectively). In contrast, countries in the Caucasus have among the highest levels of discrimination in this dimension worldwide (32%, compared to 36% in West Africa, the poorest performer). This poor performance is explained by the persistent phenomenon of "missing women". Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have alarmingly unbalanced sex ratios among children aged 0-4, with 170 000 missing girls and women aged 0-19 years in the three countries.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

The level of discrimination against women's *access to productive and financial resources* is similar in Eurasia (26%) to the global average (27%), with significant homogeneity within the region. The Eurasian performance is significantly less good than that of the Pacific (5%), Northern Europe (6%), Western Europe (6%), North America (14%), Southern Europe (18%), Latin America (23%) and East Asia (24%).

Solid political commitments in the region to improve women's access to productive and financial resources have not been fully translated into narrowed gender gaps in outcomes. All countries have taken the necessary steps to remove legal restrictions against women's rights to land and non-land assets and financial services by enshrining gender equality in legal frameworks. Similarly, all Eurasian countries have adopted measures to offer paid maternity leave, while paid parental leave entitlements are available in seven countries. However, persisting social norms result in lower economic power: only 27% of the region's land and 35% of managerial positions are held by women.

Restricted civil liberties

An upsurge of support for women's rights activism has led to substantial advances in securing women's *civil liberties*: Eurasia (21%) has lower levels of discrimination than the global average (29%), with high homogeneity across the region. Eurasian countries' performance is quite similar to that of Latin America (20%), while Western, Southern and Northern European countries do slightly better (11%, 15% and 17% respectively).

Yet the legal protection of women's civil liberties has not been fully translated into gender parity. In all countries, legal frameworks provide women and men with equal rights to citizenship, participation in politics and travel, and with equal access to justice. Eight countries[12] in the region have introduced or strengthened measures to promote gender-balanced political representation. However, stereotypes about women's role and leadership abilities restrain their political voice, while threats of violence restrict their freedom of movement. Public spaces and infrastructure are not built to best address women's needs: women represent 69% of people who do not feel safe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood.

Figure 1.5. The composition of the SIGI 2019



Notes

[1] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[2] Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not ranked as there is missing data on restricted physical integrity and restricted access to productive and financial resources.

[3] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[4] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[5] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[6] Bride price is generally paid by the groom or the groom's family to the bride's family. Dowry is generally paid by the bride's family to the bride or to the wedded couple.

[7] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

[8] Cultural norm that continuously connects men to power and economic achievements. This pattern of masculinity, which shapes the hegemonic position, is not only adverse to equality and inclusion, but also brings disadvantages and costs for men (EIGE, n.d).

[9] The "missing women" phenomenon is captured by a shortfall in the number of girls aged 0-4, relative to their expected survival rate in the absence of sex-selective abortions, female infanticide and with similar levels of health and nutrition to boys.

[10] Available at www.genderindex.org/.

[11] Available at https://stats.oecd.org/. The number of countries covered depends on data availability.

[12] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

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Chapter 2. The development cost of discriminatory social institutions

This chapter demonstrates how gender-based discrimination in social institutions impedes sustainable and inclusive development. It first describes to what extent legal barriers and discriminatory social norms and practices reduce economic growth. It then emphasises how such discrimination compromises women's empowerment throughout their lives, notably by hindering their school-to-work transition, leading to a high proportion of young women not in education, employment or training, and by increasing the vulnerability of elderly women to poverty, as evidenced by gender pension gaps.

Women's economic, social and political empowerment is critical for meeting political commitments towards Agenda 2030. No Sustainable Development Goals can be achieved if women are left behind. Efforts to abolish discriminatory laws and reshape gender norms in all spheres of Eurasian societies are not only essential to fulfil the fundamental rights of half of the population (i.e. women), but they also support strategies to promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

Leaving no one behind, as called for by the SDG framework, recognises the importance of addressing women's needs throughout their life cycle, from childhood to old age. The international community has shown increasing commitment to reducing NEET rates (youth not in education, employment or training) and building inclusive social protection systems, including pension schemes, to reduce the vulnerability of women at all stages of their lives. Target 8.6 of the 2030 Agenda aims to "substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training" by 2020, and Target 1.3 to "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable".

Discriminatory social institutions have a high economic and social cost for the region. Gender gaps in education and employment outcomes slow economic growth. Difficult school-to-work transitions for young women and the risk of poverty for older women create huge social challenges. The first section of this chapter estimates the economic cost of discriminatory social institutions, while the second and third sections illustrate how discriminatory social institutions affect women's choices and outcomes at specific stages of their lives: before entering the labour market and after retiring.

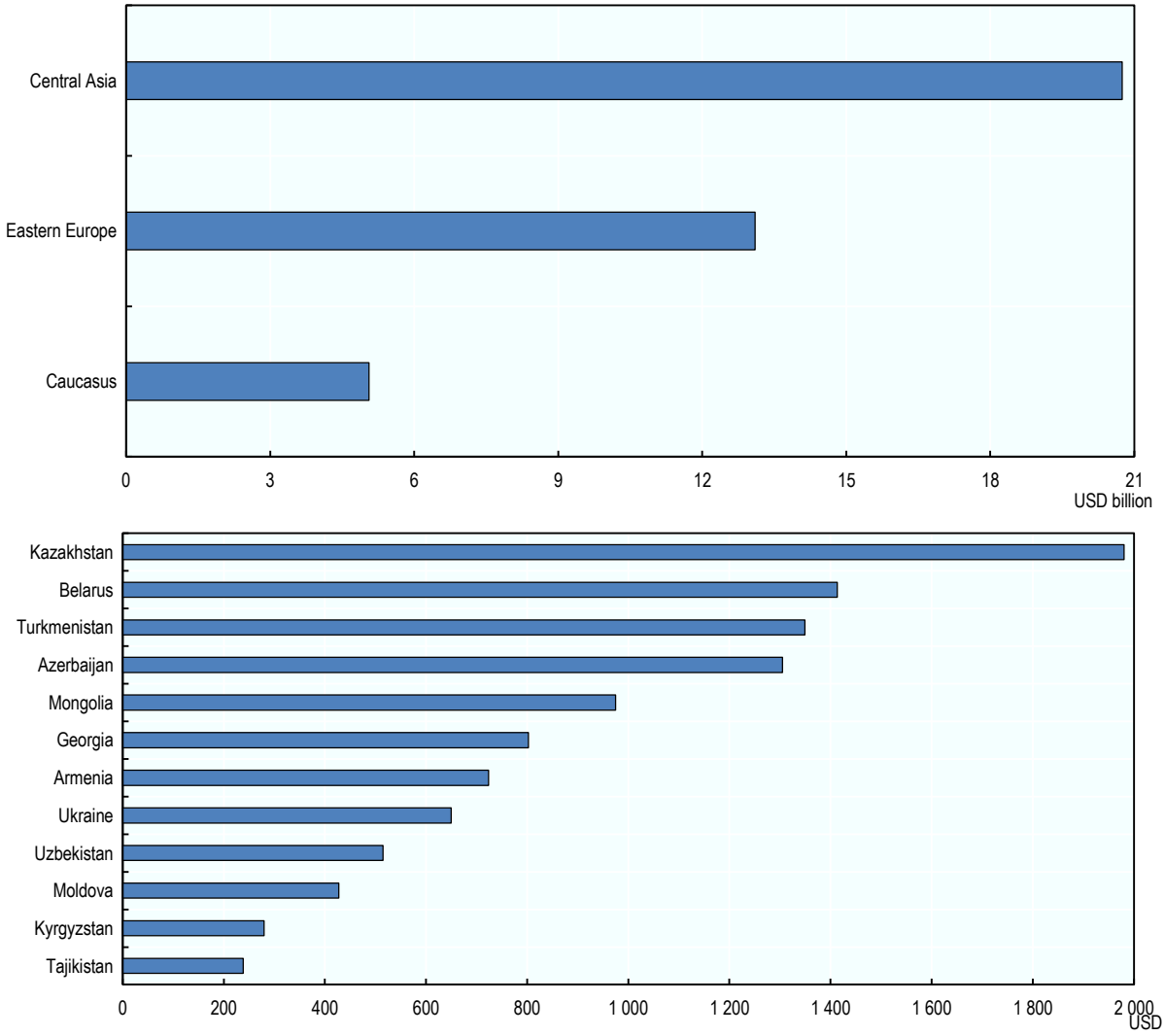
The economic cost of discrimination

Gender-based discrimination in social institutions impedes economic growth. Discriminatory social institutions constrain women's opportunities through their influence on the unequal distribution of power between men and women in the family, in the economic sphere and in public life (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[1]). For example, the practice of early marriage limits girls' access to education, which has an impact on their future employment opportunities (OECD, 2019[2]). In Kyrgyzstan, 20% of out-of-school girls are not attending school because they got married (DHS, 2012[3]). Similarly, threats to women's physical integrity can transform schools and workplaces into unsafe spaces. In Moldova, one in five women have been subjected to sexual harassment at school, and the same proportion at their workplace (Partnership for Development Centre, 2018[4]). The absence of child and elderly care facilities or family-friendly job policies, combined with the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities, also creates barriers to women's full participation in economic life. In Georgia, 22% of women who have a part-time job (but 0% of men) cannot work more hours because their family obligations do not allow them to do so (CRRC, 2018[5]). In Armenia, 14% of economically inactive women (but 0% of men) are not working because they are unable to find suitable childcare facilities (CRRC, 2018[6]).

Billions of dollars are lost due to gender-based discrimination. Losses due to discrimination in Eurasia's social institutions are estimated at USD 39 billion, or 7.5% of the regional income. This loss amounts on average to USD 888 per capita.[1] After taking into account other geographic, economic and institutional factors that also explain economic growth, regional income losses associated with current levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions are significant: about USD 5 billion in the Caucasus (USD 944 per capita); USD 13 billion in Eastern Europe (USD 830 per capita); and

USD 21 billion in Central Asian economies (USD 890 per capita) (Figure 2.1). Discrimination against women is particularly costly for some economies: the GDP loss is greater than USD 1 000 per capita in Azerbaijan (USD 1 305), Turkmenistan (USD 1 349), Belarus (USD 1 414) and Kazakhstan (USD 1 981).

Figure 2.1. Income loss associated with discrimination in social institutions



Note: The upper panel presents the sub-regional income losses associated with current levels of gender-based discrimination in social institutions. The lower panel presents these losses at the national level in terms of GDP per capita. Income losses are measured in terms of 2017 real income at current PPP.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019 and World Bank (n.d.), *World Development Indicators*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-development-indicators.

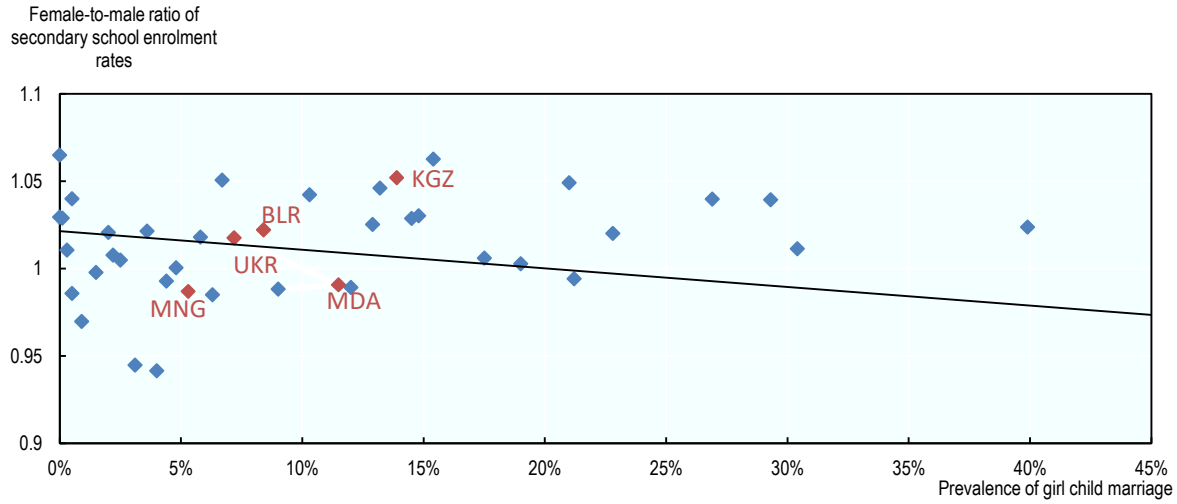
Gender-based discrimination in social institutions hampers global development through three main channels: reduced women's human capital, reduced women's labour-force participation and lower levels of investment. The growth literature suggests that a country's level of economic growth depends on its levels of physical and human capital, as well as on total factor productivity (Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992[7];

Solow, 1956[8]). Given a similar distribution of innate abilities between men and women, the exclusion of women from educational opportunities and the job market artificially reduces the pool of talent from which employers can draw, and therefore decreases countries' ability to accumulate physical and human capital and to innovate (Ferrant and Kolev, 2016[1]).

Discriminatory social institutions like child marriage and son preference lower women's human capital by 16%. Almost all countries in the region have attained gender parity in school enrolment at the primary, secondary[2] and tertiary[3] levels (World Bank, n.d.[9]). Yet discriminatory practices make it more complicated for women and girls to invest in their own human capital, notably due to the higher prevalence of child marriage among girls than boys, early pregnancy, discriminatory attitudes and practices towards girls' higher education, and caring and domestic responsibilities.

- Girls in the region are four times as likely as boys to be married before their 18th birthday. Yet all countries but Turkmenistan legally allow girls to marry before the age of 18. This is of particular concern in countries where more than one in ten girls marry early: Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (14%), and Moldova (11%). High gender gaps in **early marriage** rates are related to high gender gaps in secondary school completion rates (Figure 2.2). In Moldova, for instance, 26% of girls and women with secondary education married before the age 18, compared to 3% of those who pursued higher education (UNICEF, 2014[10]). This correlation between child marriage and high female school drop-out rates is exacerbated by rurality and poverty.
- Child marriage is closely linked with **adolescent pregnancy**: 90% of the 16 million adolescents who give birth each year are married (UNFPA, 2015[11]). In Eurasia, there were 27 births per 1 000 adolescent girls in 2016. This is below the world average of 45, but the adolescent fertility rate is preoccupying in the Caucasus (46), especially in Azerbaijan (53) and Georgia (47) (World Bank, n.d.[9]), because a high prevalence of early pregnancy is linked to greater inequality in secondary school enrolment (OECD, 2014[12]).
- **Discriminatory attitudes** towards girls' higher education can reduce their average years of schooling: 28% of the population in eight countries[4] think that a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl. Discriminatory attitudes towards girls' higher education are found among 37% of the Central Asian population, and up to 41% in Kyrgyzstan and 49% in Uzbekistan (Inglehart et al., 2014[13]).
- The unequal distribution of **domestic responsibilities** within the household results in "time poverty" for women and girls, who have less time for school, studies and paid work (Ferrant and Thim, 2019[14]). In Kazakhstan, boys aged 10-14 spend one hour a day on domestic tasks, compared to one hour and a half for girls (Committee of Statistics of Kazakhstan, 2014[15]). Due to domestic responsibilities, 20% of Eurasian women between ages 15 and 24 are not in education, employment or training, compared to only 2% of men (see next section). Domestic responsibilities prevent 25% of young women in Armenia, 28% in Kyrgyzstan and 31% in Georgia from undertaking studies or paid work (UNECE, n.d.[16]).

Figure 2.2. Relation between child marriage and secondary school enrolment



Note: Relationship between the prevalence of girl child marriage (measured as the proportion of girls and women aged 15-19 who have ever been married or in union) and the predicted value of gender gaps in secondary school enrolment, controlling for the country's income level, urbanisation rate, share of female teachers, gender inequalities in primary school enrolment and unemployment, and regional dummies.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019 and World Bank (n.d.), *World Development Indicators*.

Discriminatory workplace legislation, norms and practices, such as the absence of paid paternity leave or gender-based violence, reduce women's labour-force participation by 12%. Across the region, women represent 44% of the economically active population, despite accounting for 51% of the working-age population. Women in Eurasia represent a larger share of the workforce than women globally (39%). However, the gender gap in labour-force participation is in favour of men in all 12 Eurasian countries: from 4 percentage points in Moldova (where 45% of women and 49% of men are economically active) to 28 percentage points in Tajikistan (where 48% of women and 76% of men are economically active) (World Bank, n.d.[9]). The lower participation of women is notably related to discriminatory laws and practices, as well as social expectations underestimating women's economic role and confining them to reproductive and caring activities, while threatening their physical integrity.

- In all countries but Armenia and Georgia, **discriminatory laws** restrict women's employment opportunities across sectors. Women are prohibited from working the same night hours as men in five countries[5] and from entering certain types of jobs deemed hazardous, arduous or morally inappropriate in ten countries.[6] In Kazakhstan, for instance, women are barred from performing 380 jobs in fields such as construction, manufacturing industry, transport, water supply and sanitation or natural resources extraction. Kazakh firms in the sectors of mining and quarrying, construction, and transport and storage have around 80% of men among their employees (ILO, n.d.[17]).
- The large **gender pay gap** in the region may discourage some women from seeking paid employment. On average, women's monthly earnings are 30% lower than those of men across the region (UNECE, n.d.[16]). In Ukraine, women's hourly wage rates are on average 18% lower than men's, independently of the

hours worked, the type of activity or the type of occupation. This gap reaches 25% in Belarus, 27% in Kyrgyzstan, 33% in Armenia and 46% in Azerbaijan. The gender pay gap is partly explained by the under-representation of women in better paid positions (for example, only 35% of all managers in Eurasia are women); their over-representation in lower paid positions (59% of service and sales workers are women); and among part-time workers (23% of employed women and 13% of men work part-time in the region) (ILO, n.d.[17]; UNECE, n.d.[16]). The pay gap also stems from direct gender discrimination, where employers pay men and women a different wage for work of equal value. All countries but Georgia mandate equal pay for equal work; however, this limits application of the equal pay principle to work done by two individuals in the same area of activity and within the same working unit. Belarus and Tajikistan are the only countries where the law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value, which covers broader cases where women and men carry out different work in different sectors (World Bank, 2018[18]). Moreover, no country in the region foresees sanctions for non-compliance or legally mandates companies to report on how they pay women and men.

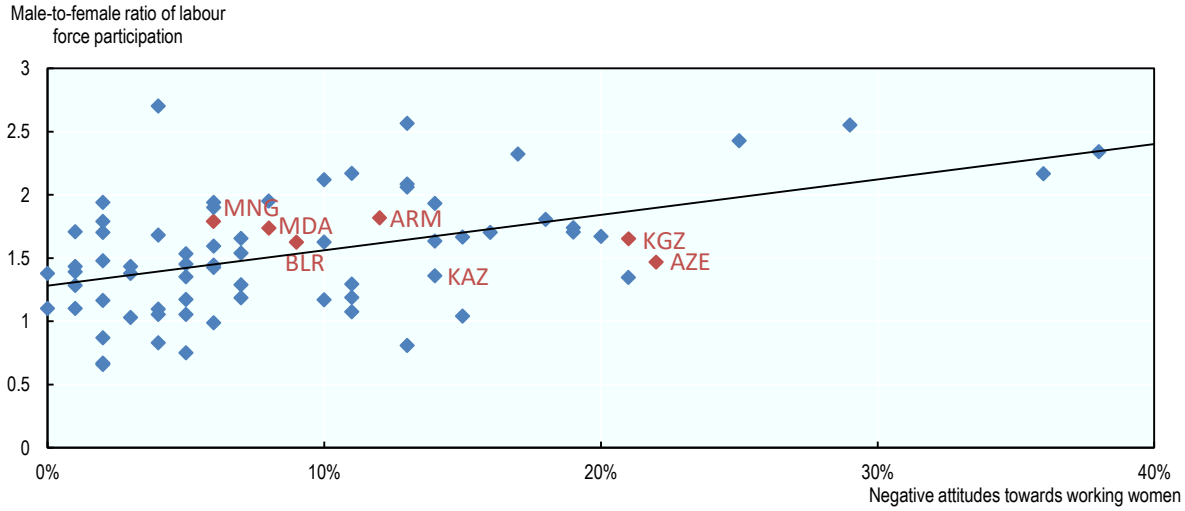
- In many cases, **discriminatory norms** confine women to the home, while men are expected to earn money for the household. For example, 32% of the population believe that if a wife earns more money than her husband, it is almost certain to cause problems within the marriage (Inglehart et al., 2014[13]). Discriminatory norms are particularly prevalent in Central Asian countries, such as Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan.[7] Larger gender gaps in labour-force participation are observed in countries where negative attitudes towards working women are widespread (Figure 2.3).

- These discriminatory attitudes are reflected in the **distribution of domestic responsibilities** across the region. Women spend close to five hours a day performing household chores and taking care of relatives, compared to just over two hours for men. In Armenia, women spend five times more time per day than men on unpaid care work. The absence in five Caucasus and Central Asian countries[8] of paid paternity or parental leave for fathers reinforces these gender stereotypes. All in all, higher inequalities in unpaid care work are related to higher gender gaps in labour-force participation (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014[19]). In Georgia and Armenia, respectively 22% and 7% of women who work part-time declare that they do not have enough time to work more than they do because of family obligations, compared to 0% of men in both countries (CRRC, 2018[6]; CRRC, 2018[5]).

- Threats to women's **physical integrity** are common and further restrict their economic participation. Fertility preferences for sons in the Caucasus have led to a missing women phenomenon, decreasing the size of the female labour force: 170 000 young women are missing in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia (UNFPA, 2012[20]). One in six women in the region has suffered domestic violence; up to one in three in Mongolia and one in two in Moldova. No country has yet enacted laws to protect women from all forms of violence, without exceptions and in a comprehensive manner. Domestic violence has a wide range of adverse consequences beyond physical and psychological injuries. It leads to absenteeism, reduced productivity and higher health care and criminal justice costs (Duvvury et al., 2013[21]; CDC, 2003[22]) In Ukraine for example, violence against women is estimated to cost the economy USD 208 million per year, or 0.23% of the annual

GDP (UNFPA, 2017[23]). In Moldova, government spending on social assistance (e.g. counselling, shelter and food for survivors), health care and legal services for victims of domestic violence amounted to USD 1.8 million in 2015[9] (Women's Law Center, UN Women and WHO, 2016[24]).

Figure 2.3. Effect of discriminatory attitudes on female labour-force participation



Note: Relationship between negative attitudes towards working women (measured as the proportion of the population who do not think it is perfectly acceptable for any woman in their family to work outside the home) and the predicted value of gender gaps in labour-force participation (male-to-female ratio of labour-force participation rates), controlling for the country's income level, fertility rate, urbanisation rate, maternity leave policies, gender inequalities in unpaid care work, education and unemployment, and regional dummies.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019 and World Bank (n.d.), *World Development Indicators*.

Restricted access for women to entrepreneurship, financial resources and investment opportunities reduces physical capital accumulation by 8%. Economic growth requires investment in physical capital (machinery, buildings, raw materials, etc.). Physical capital accumulation is mainly driven by firms and entrepreneurs and is thus hampered by restrictions on female entrepreneurship. Only 15% of firms across the region have majority female ownership (World Bank, 2017[25]), and 19% of working women are own-account workers, compared to 25% of men. The gender gap in entrepreneurship in the region is lowest in Eastern Europe (12% of working women and 16% of men are own-account workers), followed by the Caucasus (24% of women and 28% of men) and Central Asia (29% of women and 36% of men). The gap reaches up to 15 percentage points in Georgia and 17 in Kyrgyzstan (ILO, n.d.[17]). Women's entrepreneurship and their contribution to physical capital accumulation are lower than men's because women face gender-specific discrimination when accessing financial capital or assets.

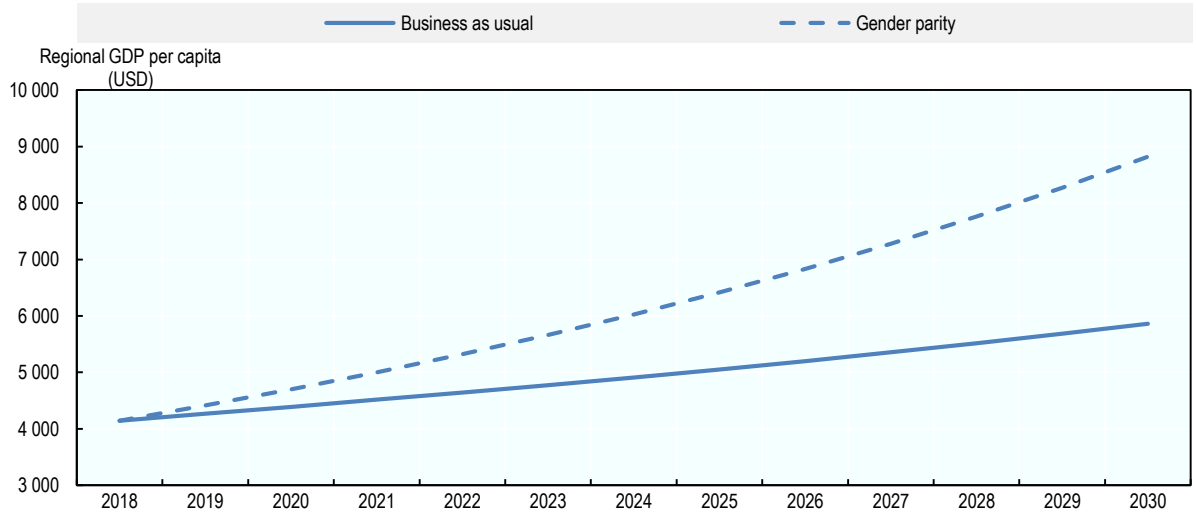
- Women are less likely to **access bank financing**, and if they do they are more likely to pay higher interest rates. Across the region, 16% of women-led firms that applied for a loan saw their request denied, compared to 10% of men-led firms. In addition, firms led by women are often required to provide higher collateral: 218% of the loan amount on average, compared to 197% for men-led firms (World Bank, 2017[25]). The gender gap in required collateral is particularly

pronounced in Kazakhstan, where women-led firms are on average asked to provide collateral 51% higher than men-led firms; Belarus (33%); and Mongolia (29%).

- Women's ability to provide collateral to secure a loan is restricted by their **lower ownership of land and non-land assets**. The legacy of discriminatory privatisation and restitution land schemes in former Soviet republics, as well as patrilineal inheritance systems and the common registration of assets in a man's name, result in gender inequalities in asset ownership. As financial institutions often demand collateral guarantees to grant a loan, women are disadvantaged. All countries in the region present a gender gap in obtaining credit. It is particularly pronounced in the Caucasus, and reaches 8 percentage points in Georgia, where 28% of men and 20% of women borrowed from a financial institution in 2017 (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018[26]).
- Business networks and associations are generally **male-dominated** and more difficult to access for women (Sattar, 2012[27]). As men have traditionally been over-represented among entrepreneurs, they are also more present than women in informal networks. In addition, women's domestic responsibilities can result in their having limited time to attend events and gatherings outside of working hours. Yet these networks are crucial for providing entrepreneurs with support, training, information, business exposure and access to funding.
- Women's lower access to learning opportunities may result in **lower female financial literacy**, which can prevent some women from navigating complex loan application procedures or obtaining fair interest rates. An international survey of financial literacy revealed that 51% of adult women and 60% of adult men in Georgia are able to reach the minimum target score on financial knowledge, compared to 56% of women and 69% of men in OECD countries (OECD, 2016[28]). Differences in financial literacy might stem from segregation in higher education.

Gender parity represents an immense economic opportunity. Reducing gender-based discrimination in social institutions through appropriate policy measures could yield substantial economic benefits. A gradual reduction of gender-based discriminatory social institutions by 2030 could increase the regional annual GDP growth rate by 0.4 percentage points over the next 11 years (Figure 2.4). In other words, the regional GDP per capita in 2030 is estimated at USD 5 858 without a reduction in gender-based discrimination in social institutions, compared to USD 8 889 if discriminatory social institutions were totally eliminated. This represents a gain of USD 2 961 per capita. Reaching parity in social institutions would add USD 2 750 to the GDP per capita in Eastern Europe, USD 2 936 in Central Asia and USD 3 203 in the Caucasus.

Figure 2.4. Income gains associated with reduced discrimination in social institutions



Note: GDP forecasts for 2030 in two scenarios: (i) business as usual, using available growth forecasts, and assuming no change in the regional level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions between 2018 and 2030; (ii) gender parity, assuming that each country would have eliminated gender-based discrimination in social institutions by 2030. GDP forecasts are measured in terms of 2010 real GDP per capita at current PPPs. These calculations exclude Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as they do not have a SIGI 2019 score.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019 and ERS International Macroeconomic Dataset (2017).

Box 2.1. A life-cycle approach to women's empowerment in the region

Gender-transformative policies with multisectoral entry points, going beyond standard *gender mainstreaming*, are needed in order to leave no one behind and fully benefit from women's economic contribution. This makes the case for including social norm policies and programmes in national growth strategies and adopting an integrated approach. Here are some recommendations:

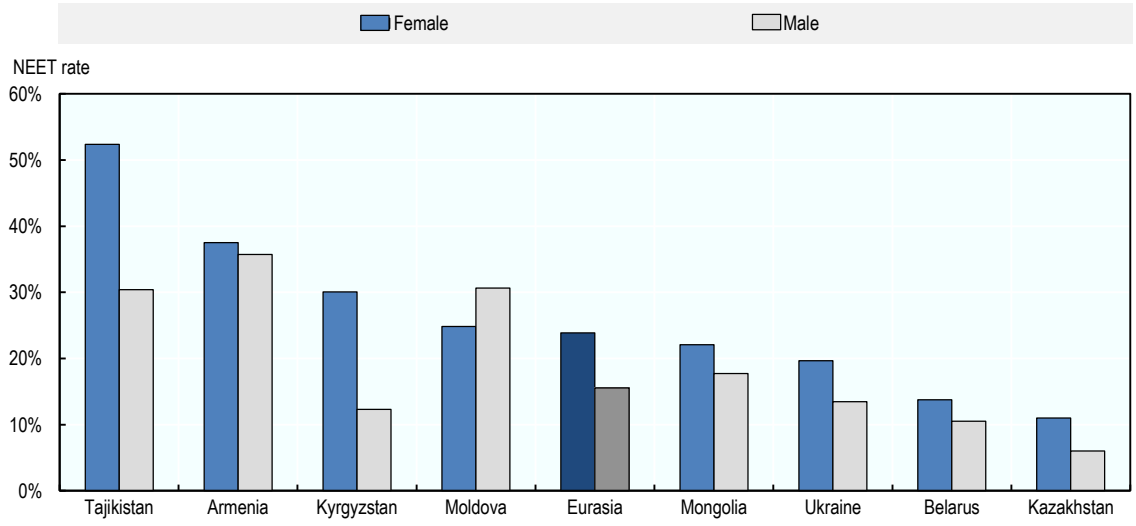
- **Non-discriminatory and gender-responsive laws** are the first step towards challenging discriminatory social institutions.
  - Prohibit child marriage under any circumstances.
  - Criminalise all forms of violence against women, enforce existing legislation and prosecute perpetrators.
  - Allow women to apply for the same jobs as men and reduce the gender wage gap by legally mandating companies to report on how they pay women and men.
  - Introduce or strengthen paid parental leave schemes and family-friendly labour-market policies such as flexible work schedules or government-supported child and elderly care services.
  - Equalise the legal retirement ages of women and men.

- However, laws are not enough and must be accompanied by preventive approaches and **enforcement measures**
  - Include soft skills more systematically in educational and training systems. Beyond fundamental skills such as literacy and numeracy, these include self-confidence, communication and decision-making skills.
  - Support women who wish to shift from informal economic activities to the formal economic sector or to start an economic activity (facilitate access to credit, increase financial literacy, promote joint assets titling for married couples in order to facilitate women's access to financial services).
  - Apply and include a gender perspective in the design of all public policies, such as employment policies, pension schemes or retirement benefit programmes. For example, guarantee that extended leaves or interrupted employment trajectories do not penalise women's access to minimum contributory pensions.
  - Recognise the care economy and compensate for time allocated to unpaid care work and childbearing through pension credits.
- Ultimately, policies and programmes must seek to **eliminate or shift discriminatory social norms.**
  - Encourage girls to enrol in traditionally male-dominated fields of study such as the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).
  - Promote an egalitarian vision of the role men and women can play in a society, notably by challenging stereotypes stigmatising working women and by advocating for better sharing of domestic responsibilities between women and men.

Discriminatory social institutions and young women NEET

Women are over-represented in the Eurasian NEET population. Across the eight Eurasian countries with available data,[10] 20% of youth aged 15-24 are not in education, employment or training, compared to 22% at the global level (ILO, 2017[29]). The over-representation of women and girls among NEETs is lower in Eurasia, at 58%, than at the global level, at 77% (ILO, 2018[30]). Yet in all Eurasian countries but Moldova, women are more likely than men to be NEET (Figure 2.5). Some 24% of young women in Eurasia are not in education, employment or training, compared to 15% of men, and women represent 1.9 of the 3.4 million NEETs. This gender gap is particularly pronounced in two Central Asian countries: Tajikistan (30% of men and 52% of women) and Kyrgyzstan (12% of men and 30% of women). The region's female NEET rates are highest in Tajikistan (52%), Armenia (38%) and Kyrgyzstan (30%), and lowest in Kazakhstan (11%) and Belarus (14%) (ILO, 2018[30]).

Figure 2.5. Women are more likely to be NEET than men



Note: NEET rate by country and sex. Data are for 2017 except for Belarus (2009), Moldova (2015) and Tajikistan (2009).
Source: ILO (2018), *ILOSTAT database*, https://www.ilo.org/ilostat/.

Gendered patterns among NEETs shed light on young women's needs. All NEETs are outside the education system and neither in training nor working (including not in informal employment). They can be separated in two categories: economically inactive non-students (outside the labour force) and unemployed non-students (part of the labour force). The majority of women NEETs in the region are inactive non-students ("inactive" is here employed in its economic definition, that is to say neither working nor unemployed), while men are more likely to be unemployed non-students (without work but ready to work), and therefore considered part of the labour force. For example in Armenia, 69% of non-student young women are inactive, while 31% are unemployed. The pattern is opposite for men: 36% are inactive and 64% unemployed (ILO, 2014[31]).

Women NEETs represent an untapped economic potential. Women NEETs could contribute to sustainable and inclusive development through work or by enhancing their human capital. These women would contribute to an increased GDP directly through their employment and/or their high-skill status, but also indirectly through an increase in tax revenues and a decrease in social allowance expenditures. In Moldova, for instance, 25% of young women are NEETs, representing an opportunity cost in tax revenue and foregone earnings of 2.5% of the country's GDP, or USD 1 314 per female NEET in 2016 (OECD Development Centre, 2018[32]).

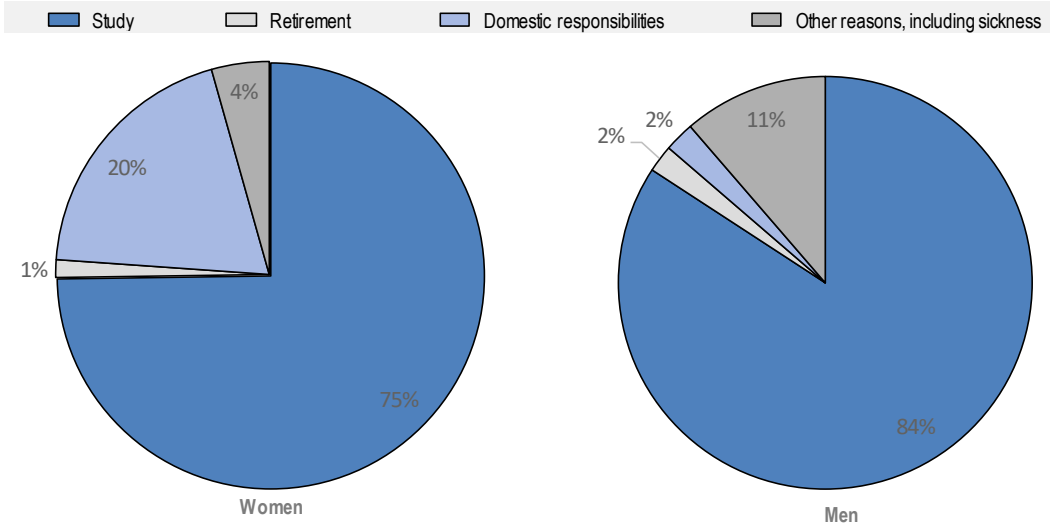
Women NEETs also represent an unrecognised economic resource. Youth NEETs are commonly considered "inactive" or "unproductive" when not looking for a job. Yet a large proportion of them, especially women, perform unpaid housework and produce non-market goods and services that are essential for their households' consumption and wellbeing, thus generating value. While female NEETs performing housework remain unpaid, they allow other members of the family to work and, at the same time, can be considered as substituting for domestic workers. Since the production of goods for own final consumption is excluded from GDP calculations, NEETs' contribution to the economy is invisible. By using time-use, labour-force and income survey data, it is possible to estimate NEETs' contribution to the national economy through their unpaid

care work. In Mongolia in 2015, 20% of women and girls and 14% of men and boys aged 15-24 were NEET (ILO, n.d.[17]). On average that year, they spent respectively 3 hours and 48 minutes and 1 hour and 24 minutes per day on unpaid care and domestic work (NSO Mongolia, 2015[33]). If they had been remunerated for these activities at the average wage of Mongolian paid domestic workers, they would have contributed 1.3% of GDP (NSO Mongolia, n.d.[34]; World Bank, n.d.[9]). This contribution is mostly based on female labour (1%).

Action is needed beyond closing gender gaps in education. Closing these gaps has not been enough to ensure a smooth school-to-work transition for girls due to discriminatory social institutions. Although almost all countries have attained equality in educational enrolment at the primary and secondary levels, this has not translated into gender-balanced labour-market outcomes (Figure 2.7). The role of discriminatory social institutions notably includes the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities, which is detrimental to young women's time available for market activities, and societal and institutional barriers to accessing educational and employment opportunities, such as early marriage and pregnancy.

- Young women's **caring and domestic responsibilities** appear to drive female NEET rates up. The expectation that women will be the ones taking care of their family members' well-being constrains their economic empowerment (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014[19]). In Moldova for example, 80% of men aged 15-24 participate in household chores, compared to 93% of women. Young men who participate dedicate on average 2 hours and 24 minutes each day to these activities, compared to 3 hours and 36 minutes for young women (NBS, 2012[35]). Across five countries,[11] 20% of young women are disengaged from the labour market because they have domestic responsibilities, compared to only 2% of men (Figure 2.6). This situation concerns up to 28% of women 15-24 not in the labour market in Kyrgyzstan and 31% in Georgia. In all countries with available data, women represent the large majority, if not all, of the young people who are neither working nor unemployed because they are engaged in household chores: from 86% in Ukraine to 100% in Georgia (UNECE, n.d.[16]).

Figure 2.6. Reasons for not participating in the labour market among youth 15-24



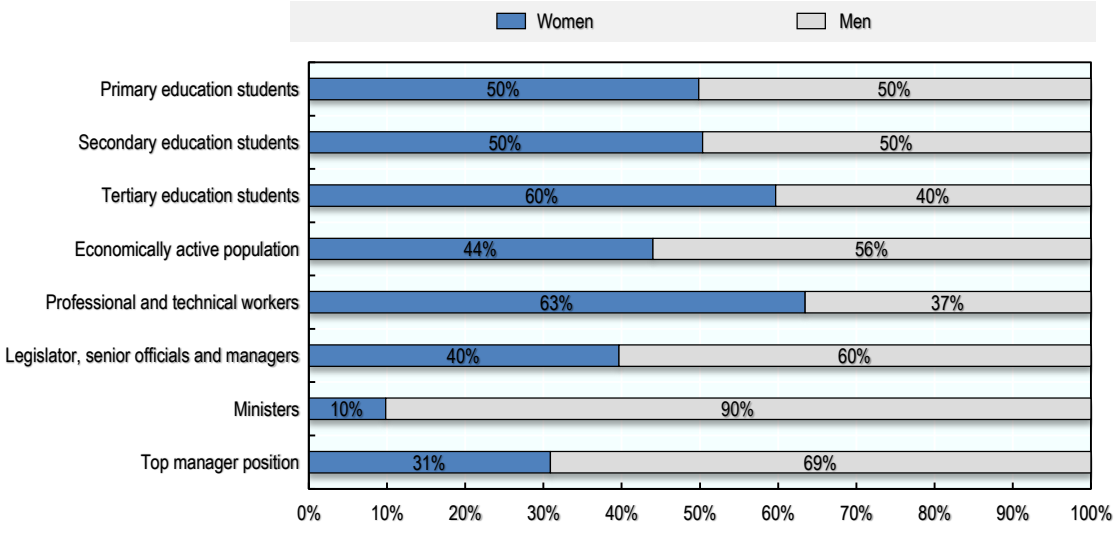
Note: Reasons for not being in employment nor looking for work among youth aged 15-24, by sex, in five countries (Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine).
Source: UNECE (2015), *UNECE Statistical Database*.

- **Early marriage and pregnancy** are linked to female school and labour-market drop-out rates, especially in rural or poor areas, while having children usually increases male economic activity rates (ILO and UNICEF, 2018[36]). In the region, 8% of girls got married before their 18th birthday and there were 27 births per 1 000 adolescent girls in 2016 (World Bank, n.d.[9]) Family status combined with discriminatory family norms can impact a young person's labour-market choices. Starting a family and having children cost time and money. Young mothers are often pressured to stay at home to care for the household, while young fathers are expected to take up any available job to earn a living. In Azerbaijan, for example, 52% of mothers aged 15-29 are not in the labour market, compared to 17% of young fathers; 45% of young mothers are employed, compared to 74% of young fathers (Matsumoto and Elder, 2010[37]).
- A pronounced **gender segregation in higher education** results from lower expectations for girls' performance, a lack of female role models and the lack of encouragement from families and/or teachers. Girls' choices of tertiary education programmes do not reflect the increasing labour opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. For example, only 32% of Eurasian graduates in STEM fields of study are women (UNESCO, n.d.[38]). This proportion is lowest in Belarus (27%) and remains below 50% even in the best performing country (Georgia, with 44% of female STEM graduates). In contrast, women represent 63% of graduates in social sciences, journalism and information (from 48% in Kyrgyzstan to 79% in Belarus). Gender segregation in education affects female employment rates, as women get fewer job opportunities and those available are often in lower paid positions (ILO and UNICEF, 2018[36]).
- In all countries except Armenia and Georgia, **discriminatory laws** prohibit women from working the same night hours as men[12] or from entering certain types of jobs[13], which decreases their employment prospects.

- In many cases, **discriminatory norms** limit women to their reproductive and domestic roles and discourage them from seeking paid employment: 16% of the region's population do not think it is acceptable for women in their family to work outside the home, and 47% think that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (Inglehart et al., 2014[13]). In addition, a woman's salary at the start of her career might not be sufficient to compensate for the high cost of childcare services, and this may discourage her from seeking paid employment. This is particularly true for single parents, of whom the large majority are women: in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, between 85% and 97% of one-parent families are headed by a woman (UNECE, n.d.[16]) These attitudes are reflected in the characteristics of NEETs in the region. Men are more likely to be unemployed, while women are more likely to be inactive (in the economic sense, that is to say neither working nor unemployed). For example in Moldova, 86% of female NEETs are inactive non-students, compared to 63% of male NEETs (ILO, 2016[39]).

The difficult school-to-work transition for women has a domino effect. This effect can continue throughout a woman's life cycle, reinforcing the negative impact of discriminatory social institutions. Women NEETs are particularly vulnerable to social and labour-market exclusion, as they are neither gaining experience through employment nor improving their future employability by investing in their own skills. They then become more vulnerable to discriminatory social institutions that exclude women from the economic and public spheres. This domino effect culminates when elderly women receive lesser pensions (see next section). The exclusion of working-age women from the economic sphere is reflected in labour outcomes of the overall working-age population.

Figure 2.7. Gender equality in education has not translated in gender equality at work



Note: Share of women and men among each category. Regarding the label "top manager position", the percentages should be read as: 31% of firms have a woman as top manager. Data for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not included in the calculations.
Source: WEF (2018), *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*, World Economic Forum, Geneva, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf.

Discriminatory social institutions and the gender pension gap

Eurasian women are disadvantaged in terms of social protection at retirement. In eight countries[14] where data is available, 91% of women of pensionable age receive a pension, compared to 96% of men. While the gender pension gap has been closed in Kyrgyzstan, it stands at about 24 percentage points in Tajikistan. In the Caucasus and Central Asia, 82% and 94% of women above retirement age receive a pension, compared to 87% and 98% of men respectively (ILO, 2016[40]).

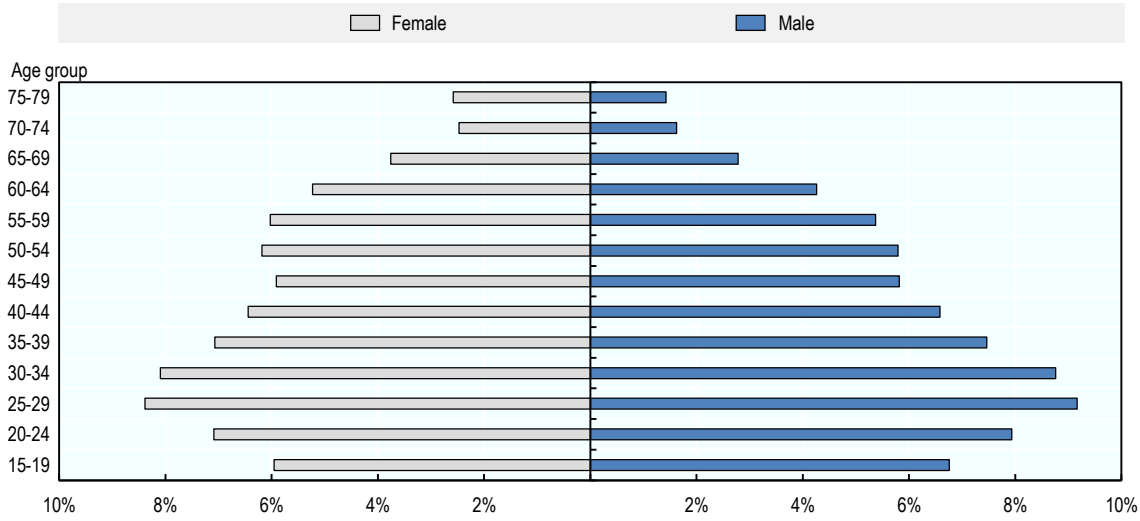
Box 2.2. International legal frameworks on women's rights to social protection

A number of international documents have been ratified over the last 70 years to ensure the right of women to social protection.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) enshrines the right to social protection taking into account gender- and age-related vulnerabilities (Art. 22-25).
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) recognises the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance (Art. 9).
- The CEDAW (1979) reaffirms that states should "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights", and in particular "the right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave".
- The ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation No. 202 (2012) recognises the importance of social security to prevent and reduce poverty, inequality, social exclusion and social insecurity, and to promote equal opportunity and gender and racial equality. Member States are encouraged to regularly collect, compile, analyse and publish an appropriate range of social security data, statistics and indicators, disaggregated, in particular, by gender (Para. 21).

The gender pension gap increases women's vulnerability to poverty. Addressing this gap is all the more crucial because women comprise the majority of older persons: women aged 65 and older constitute 10% of the total female population in Eurasia, while elderly men constitute 7% of the total male population. In addition, the difference between women's and men's life expectancy is greater in Eurasia than in the rest of the world: Eurasian women live on average eight years longer than men, compared to the global average of four years (World Bank, n.d.[9]). Women's greater longevity raises women-specific micro and macro challenges (Figure 2.8). On the one hand, women need to achieve higher levels of savings throughout their lives to have an adequate standard of living when they reach retirement age. On the other, elderly women may require higher social expenditures, as they are more likely to benefit from their own pensions and those of their deceased husbands for longer periods of time. Indeed, most of them will outlive their husbands and be more likely to live alone without a carer (OECD, 2018[41]). In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Uzbekistan, women represent from 74% (Uzbekistan) to 84% (Armenia) of one-person households aged 65 and older (UNECE, 2015[42]).

Figure 2.8. Eurasia counts more women than men among the elderly



Note: Female and male population among each age category as a percentage of the total female and male population.
Source: World Bank (n.d.), *World Development Indicators*, https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/world-developmentindicators (accessed 4 April 2019).

Gender gaps in the labour market fuel the gender pension gap. Pension schemes in Eurasia have failed to address women's specific needs and career paths, reinforcing the marginalisation effect of discriminatory social institutions. The region's pension schemes are still based on the male-breadwinner model, which is not in line with the typical life course of women and tends to reproduce existing inequalities. These pension schemes penalise older women for the accumulation and overlap of inequalities experienced throughout their working lives. The design of social protection policies has not successfully compensated women for disadvantages in the labour market due to discriminatory laws, social norms and practices. Therefore, gender gaps in labour-market outcomes translate into gender gaps in pensions:

- **Discriminatory laws and social norms** impede women from participating in the labour market on an equal footing with men, consequently increasing the gender pension gap. Legal restrictions in labour laws continue to prohibit women from working the same night hours and from pursuing the same professions as men. In addition, stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards women's paid work outside the home affect women's employment opportunities. As noted above, 16% of the population think it is not acceptable for a woman to work outside the home for pay, with this figure increasing to 28% in Uzbekistan. As a result, women in Eurasia are less likely than men to participate in the labour force: 71% of men were in the labour force versus 53% of women in 2018, a gap of 18 percentage points (World Bank, n.d.[9]). As many pension schemes in seven countries[15] in Eurasia are based on a combination of contributory and non-contributory participation, women's under-representation in the labour market leads to lower social benefits after retirement (ILO, 2017[29]).
- Gender stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women's leadership often result in **occupational segregation, glass ceilings and gender pay gaps**, which in turn affect the absolute level of women's pensions. Across eight countries,[16] 56% of the population consider that men make better business executives than

women do (Inglehart et al., 2014[13]). Such gender biases and stereotypes affect women's employment outcomes. Women account for only 9% of members of the boards of central banks and 35% of managers. Only 13% of female workers are employed in the industry sector compared to 30% of men, and they earn 30% less than men on average (OECD, 2019[2]; UNECE, n.d.[16])

- Discriminatory workplace laws and women's burden of unpaid care and domestic work incentivise them to **engage in informal jobs**, consequently decreasing their likelihood of benefitting from a pension after retirement age. Women in the region spend an average of five hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work, notably childcare, as only 46% of children aged three to five attend an early childhood education programme (UNICEF, 2017[43]). Informal jobs often offer women better work-life balance conditions, such as flexible work schedules and part-time working arrangements. This is an important incentive, as it allows women to reconcile family and workplace responsibilities. In five Eurasian countries where data is available, 48% of employed women were working in the informal sector, ranging from 26% in Moldova to 73% in Tajikistan (ILO, 2018[30]). Women's participation in informal work makes them less likely to benefit from social protections offered through formal employment, such as pensions.
- **Social expectations about women's caring responsibilities** lead to fewer years in the workforce compared to men, and consequently to fewer opportunities to save money and lower contributions to retirement plans. In Armenia, for instance, 87% of men declare that they would not take paternity leave after the birth of a child, compared to 23% of women. Career interruptions and their consequences on women's savings and pension contribution are not compensated by gender-responsive pension schemes in Eurasia. Moreover, the lack of accessible and affordable childcare facilities exacerbates the burden of unpaid care and domestic work and diminishes women's ability to return to full-time employment. However, two-thirds of the countries[17] in the region have taken measures to improve women's pensions, such as offering pension credits to compensate for the time spent on childcare (World Bank, 2019[44]).
- **Differences in retirement ages** between women and men still persist due to gender- and age-based discrimination. In many countries, the established retirement age for women is up to five years earlier than that of men (UN Women, 2015[45]). A mandatory earlier retirement age contributes to reducing women's pension income relative to that of men, as women live longer than men and have shorter career ladders due to family-related employment interruptions. In all Eurasian countries except Armenia, the ages at which men and women can retire with full pension benefits are not equal (World Bank, 2019[44]). A lower retirement age for women translates into lower monthly pension entitlements, as women have fewer years than men for accumulating pension contributions and more years of retirement (UN Women, 2015[46]). In Turkmenistan, for instance, women have access to a state pension at age 57 and men at age 60. Pensions are granted to women after 20 years of service, compared to 25 years for men, and the amount paid corresponds to the time worked.

Notes

[1] The estimated cost of gender-based discrimination in social institutions in the Eurasian region was computed following Ferrant and Kolev (2016), using SIGI 2019 updated data.

[2] With the exception of Turkmenistan, where there were 96 girls per 100 boys in secondary education in 2014.

[3] With the exception of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, where there were respectively 75, 61 and 64 girls per 100 boys in tertiary education in 2017. Data for Turkmenistan is for 2014.

[4] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[5] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[6] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[7] In Azerbaijan, 22% of the population do not think it is perfectly acceptable for women in their family to work outside the home; 79% think that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women; and 38% believe that if a wife earns more money than her husband, it is almost certain to cause problems. In Uzbekistan, 28% of the population do not think it is perfectly acceptable for women in their family to work outside the home; 59% think that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women; and 60% believe that if a wife earns more money than her husband, it is almost certain to cause problems (Inglehart et. al, 2014).

[8] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Turkmenistan.

[9] Total government spending on domestic violence in Moldova amounted to MDL 36 092 000 (Moldovan leu) in 2015, or USD 1 830 232 at the 31 December 2015 exchange rate.

[10] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

[11] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine.

[12] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[13] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[14] Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[15] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

[16] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[17] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

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Chapter 3. Discrimination in the family

This chapter presents an overview of discrimination affecting women in the family. It examines discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household across 12 Eurasian countries, covering areas such as child marriage, household responsibilities, parental authority, divorce and inheritance. The chapter also seeks to provide policy makers with the necessary tools and evidence to design effective gender-responsive policies to tackle gender inequality in the family sphere.



Box 3.1. Measuring discrimination against women in the family

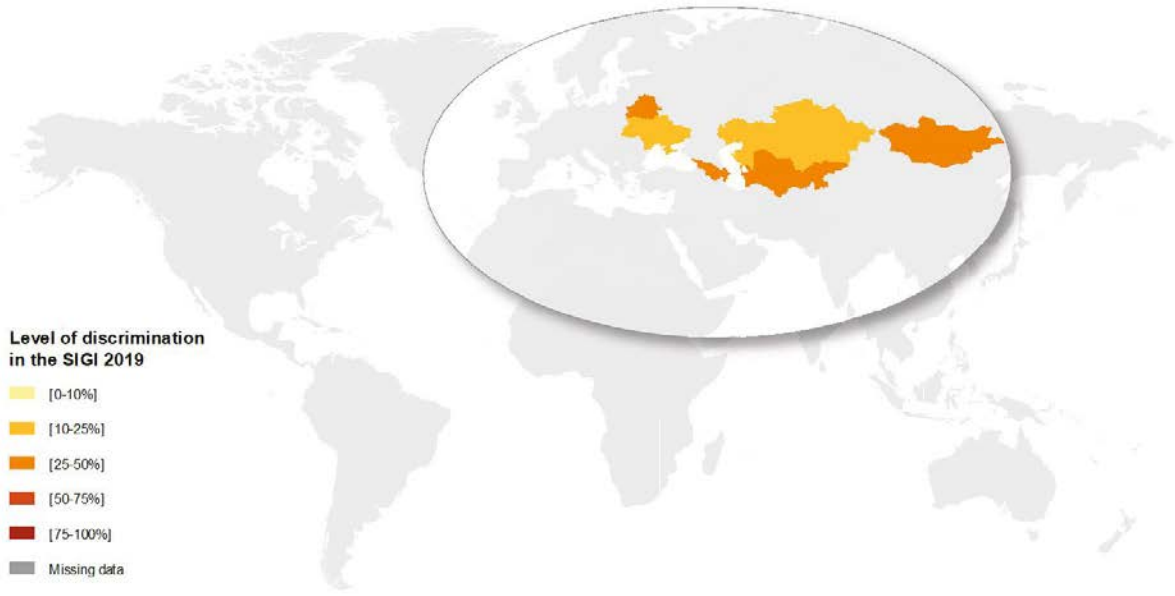
The *discrimination in the family* (DF) sub-index captures social institutions that limit women's decision-making power and undervalue their status in the household and the family. These formal and informal laws, social norms and practices co-exist in different types of legal systems, including civil or common law, customary law and religious laws. They cover areas such as marriage, parental authority, household responsibilities, divorce and inheritance rights.

Women's decision-making power and their status in the family determine both their ability to choose their own development pathways and the well-being of their families.

The DF sub-index is composed of four indicators, all of which take into account non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices.

- "**Child marriage**" captures both the prevalence of girls' formal marriages or informal unions under 18 years of age and the level of legal protection, i.e. whether the legal framework sets the minimum age of marriage for women and men at 18, without judicial exceptions or parental consent.
- "**Household responsibilities**" captures expectations towards men's and women's roles in the family, gender differences in the distribution of domestic duties, and legal acceptance of such differences, i.e. whether women and men enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making abilities and responsibilities in the household.
- "**Divorce**" captures whether women and men enjoy the same rights to initiate divorce without negative repercussions.
- "**Inheritance**" captures whether surviving spouses and siblings enjoy equal rights to inheritance of real estate and personal property irrespective of their sex.

Figure 3.1. Level of discrimination in the family sphere

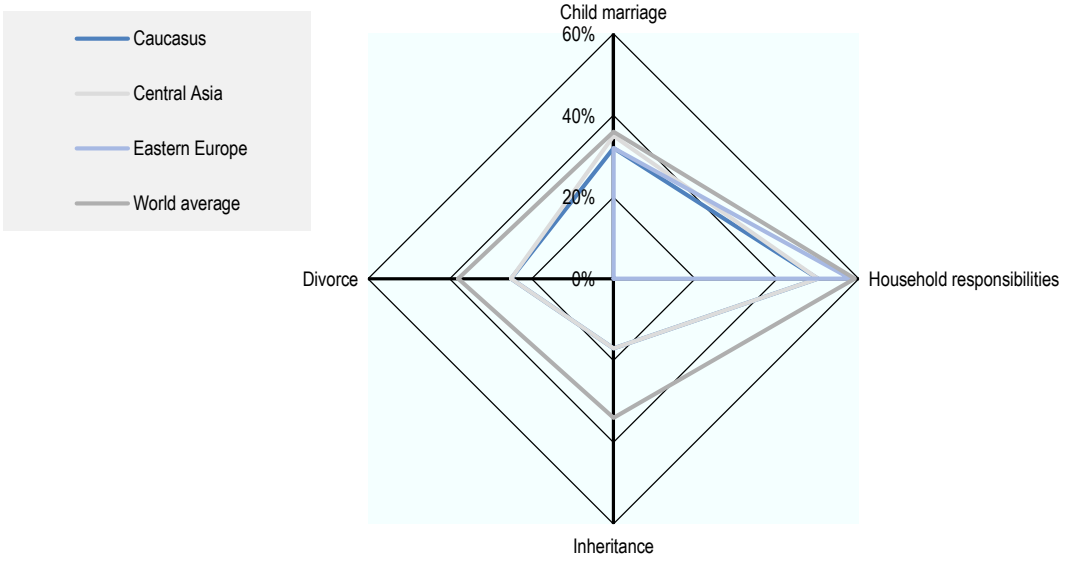


Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine have low levels of discrimination (10-25%). Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have medium levels of discrimination (25-50%). For more information see Annex A, Table A1.
Source: OECD (2019), Gender, Institutions and Development Database, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Discrimination against Eurasian women is most pervasive in the family sphere. Women's status in the family, with an average level of discrimination of 31%, indicates that standard gender-sensitive policies have failed to eradicate legal loopholes, such as child marriage and household responsibilities. Policies have also failed to challenge discriminatory social norms and practices that perpetuate women's subordinate status and lower their decision-making power in the household: caring and domestic responsibilities are still viewed as a female duty, women are unpaid for care and domestic work, and child custody following divorce is often automatically awarded to mothers.

The level of discrimination in the family varies across and within sub-regions. Discrimination is slightly more prevalent in Central Asia (33%) and in the Caucasus (32%) than in Eastern Europe (26%). Moreover, within sub-regions, family laws and social norms define women's status and role differently from one country to another: the twelve Eurasian countries ranked in this sub-index span from low to high levels of discrimination (Figure 3.1). Kazakhstan is the best performer, with a level of discrimination of 22%. Five countries have a low level of discrimination (from 23% in Ukraine to 29% in Kyrgyzstan), while Uzbekistan (42%) and Tajikistan (48%) lag behind.

Figure 3.2. SIGI results in the "discrimination in the family" indicators



Note: Sub-regional and world averages in the four discrimination in the family indicators. For more information see Box 3.1
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Discriminatory social institutions particularly undermine women's capacity to participate as equal actors in the family. Responsibility for household tasks and care-giving is the most pervasive and acute form of discrimination against women in the family sphere. The regional level of discrimination in this indicator is 52%. It is not adequately addressed in the law and women are often confined to their traditional reproductive role and caring responsibilities. No country explicitly provides women with the same right as men to be recognised as head of household; women allocate on average five hours per day to the household, compared to over two hours for men; and 38% of respondents declare that they think children with working mothers will suffer. In other indicators such as child marriage, divorce and inheritance, the regional level discrimination is respectively 33%, 19% and 13% (Figure 3.2). Discriminatory child-marriage laws and practices continue to be a serious issue, particularly in countries in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) and the Caucasus (Georgia). In Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, child-marriage rates (14%) are well above the regional average of 8% and slightly below the global average of 16%.

Kazakhstan is the best performer in the region, with a discrimination level of 22%. This is notably due to its relative good performance regarding girl child marriage. The statutory minimum age of marriage for women and men is 18. At 6%, the child-marriage rate is below the regional average (8%). The legal framework establishes that spouses have equal rights and obligations and jointly exercise parental authority. Either spouse can file for divorce and equal parental rights continue after divorce. Under the law, daughters and sons have the same rights to inherit property, as do male and female surviving spouses. Disinheritance of a surviving spouse is prohibited, with the law further stipulating that the inheritance of the widow shall not infringe upon her rights associated with matrimonial property, including the right of ownership to part of the estate acquired during marriage. Moreover, property dispossession is criminalised. However, challenges remain in terms of child marriage and household responsibilities. In Kazakhstan, civil

registration authorities allow girls to marry before the age of 18 (by up to two years). Furthermore, there is an unbalanced participation of fathers in relation to child support and educational responsibilities. Kazakh women spend on average four hours on unpaid care and domestic activities per day, compared with two hours per day for men. According to recent statistics, only 7% of children under the age of five receive paternal support for early childhood education (MNE RK, UNFPA and UNICEF, 2016[1]). In addition, stigmatisation of working mothers is still widespread, with 38% of the population declaring that children will suffer when a mother is in paid employment.

Child marriage

Key messages

- **Legal sanctions** are stipulated by four countries in Central Asia[1] and two countries[2] in the Caucasus for those facilitating a marriage of an individual who is under the minimum age of marriage. In Central Asia, the prevalence of girl child marriage has slightly decreased, from 11% to 7% over the last decade, becoming the lowest level in the region.
- **Legal loopholes** on the minimum age of marriage nonetheless perpetuate child marriage in Eurasian countries. Eleven countries across the three sub-regions[3] legally allow girls to marry before the age of 18 under certain circumstances.
- **Higher prevalence of girl child marriage** in some countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus stands out as cause for concern. Overall, the regional average (8%) remains below the global average (16%). However, sharp discrepancies across the Eurasian region indicate that child marriage is still a problem in certain countries. The highest child marriage rates are found in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, where 14% of girls aged 15-19 are married, divorced or widowed.
- **Turkmenistan is the region's best performer** in the child marriage indicator and ranks 11th at the world level. The national legal framework sets the age of marriage for girls and boys at 18 without exception. In addition, compelling women to marry, hindering women's right to enter into marriage[4] and kidnapping women for the purpose of marriage are punishable by law.[5] At 6%, the prevalence of child marriage in Turkmenistan is below the regional average (8%).

Key policy recommendations

- **Set 18 as the minimum age of marriage** for girls and boys without any legal exceptions, in order to comply with international and regional legal frameworks such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the CEDAW (Box 3.2). In Turkmenistan, the 2012 Family Code raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both sexes without exceptions.
- **Ensure that all marriages are registered** by the competent civil authorities, including religious and customary ones, to support the effective implementation and enforcement of laws on the minimum age of marriage. In Denmark, for example, religious marriages are recognised by the State if there are no civil impediments.
- **Improve law enforcement** by prosecuting local officials who sign marriage certificates for underage girls and by establishing penalties for those officiating

underage marriages. In this context, the president of Kyrgyzstan signed a law in November 2016 that criminalises underage religious marriages, with 3-5 years' imprisonment for anyone involved in organising or officiating the celebration, parents and clergy included (UNDP, 2016[2]).

- **Adopt comprehensive national strategies to eradicate child marriage** and integrate child-marriage prevention programmes into other government initiatives, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment. In Georgia, a task force on the Issues of Child marriages was established by the Inter-Agency Council and Gender Theme Group in 2015. The group has undertaken a mapping of the government's strategies and action plans relevant to the prevention of child marriage and has made relevant policy recommendations that were integrated in the Governmental Human Rights Action Plan for 2016-17 (CEDAW, 2016[3]).
- **Involve traditional and religious leaders** to raise awareness of girls' rights and the negative effects of child marriage on men within their communities. This implies empowering the most relevant agents of change and strengthening their duties to protect vulnerable young women. In Kazakhstan, a new strategy on the concept of family and gender policy was adopted in December 2016. It recognises the role of local and traditional institutions (e.g. community councils, elders) in advising religious institutions about the harmful effects of child marriages. In Azerbaijan, education and awareness-raising campaigns have been led by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, international organisations and local civil society organisations (Human Rights Council, 2014[4]).
- **Support civil society organisations** (CSOs) committed to ending child marriage and further support the role of community-based organisations by increasing their unearmarked funding and ensuring that they are well equipped and have the necessary skills to mobilise communities to delay the age of marriage (Box 3.3).

Box 3.2. International standards condemning child marriage

Child marriage is recognised in international legal instruments to be a serious violation of a child's human rights. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, numerous international treaties and agreements have been forged to prevent child marriage and protect the human rights of children.

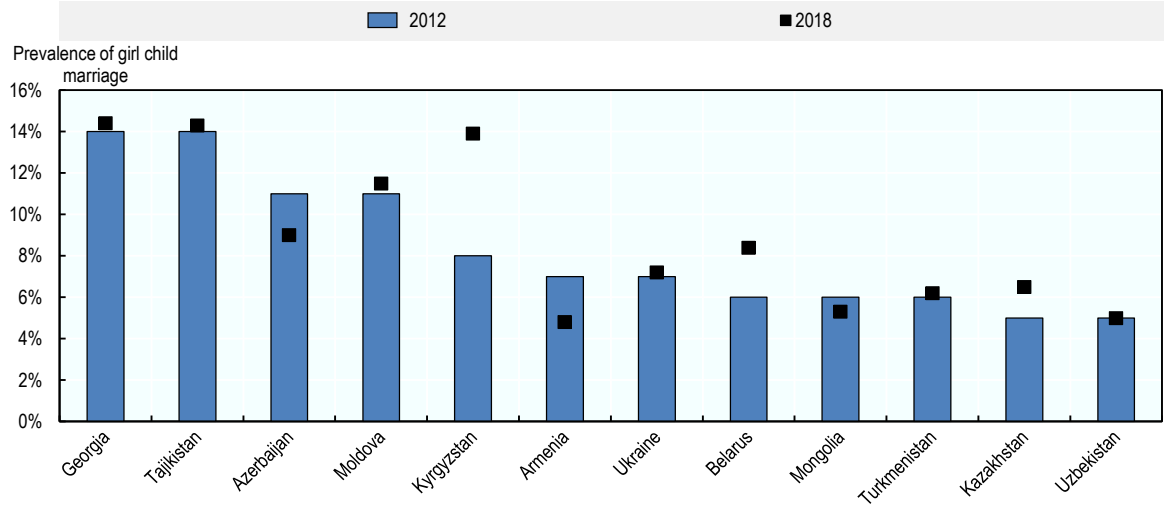
- The Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1962) establishes that all State parties should take "legislative action to specify a minimum age of marriage" (Arts. 1, 2 and 3).
- The CEDAW (1979) states that "the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect" (Art. 16 (2)).
- The Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989) precludes State parties from permitting or giving validity to a marriage between persons who have not attained the age of majority.
- The 2030 Agenda under SDG Target 5.3 aims to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage".

In-depth analysis of child marriage

Governments have stepped up to fight against child marriage. Child marriage is prohibited in seven countries[6] in the Eurasian region, and Turkmenistan prohibits marriage for anyone under the age of 18 with no exceptions. All countries in Central Asia, and Azerbaijan in the Caucasus, have implemented public measures to generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum age of marriage. In addition, four countries[7] in Central Asia and two countries[8] in the Caucasus stipulate legal sanctions for those facilitating a marriage of boys and girls under the minimum age of marriage. In Azerbaijan, anyone facilitating a marriage of an individual who is under the minimum age of marriage can be charged under the Criminal Code. In addition, three[9] Central Asian countries have established awareness-raising and/or education programmes around the minimum age of marriage. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the 2015-17 National Action Plan on Gender Equality sends a strong message condemning child marriage, with specific objectives linked to raising general awareness about the harmful effects of the practice and educating military personnel on the matter.

Gaps in the legal framework still undermine positive advances in efforts to protect girls' rights. In 11 Eurasian countries,[10] girls may still marry under the age of 18 in exceptional cases. In Uzbekistan, legislation regarding the legal age of marriage discriminates solely against girls, allowing them to marry at a younger age than boys. In the remaining countries, except Turkmenistan, girls are allowed to marry below the age of 18 with parental consent (four countries[11]) or with judicial consent (five countries[12]). Furthermore, in four countries[13] in Central Asia and three in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus[14], girls are allowed to marry with the consent of another authority. In Azerbaijan, for instance, a derogation[15] to marry one year earlier than the legal age can be granted by the local body of the executive power of the place of residence of the persons wishing to marry. In Tajikistan, the legal minimum age of marriage for women and men is 18 years, although the court can marry 17-year-olds in exceptional circumstances, without defining the "exceptional circumstances".

Figure 3.3. Prevalence of girl child marriage in 2012 and 2018



Note: Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who were married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union in 2012 and 2018.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Child marriage rates vary across the three sub-regions. The regional prevalence of girl child marriage (8%) is much higher than the prevalence of boy child marriage (2%). There are sharp discrepancies among countries in the sub-regions. Both the highest and lowest prevalence of child marriage are found in the Caucasus, where 14% of girls aged 15-19 are married, divorced or widowed in Georgia compared to 5% of girls in Armenia (Figure 3.3). In Central Asia, child marriage is far more common in Tajikistan (14%) than in Mongolia (5%), Turkmenistan (6%) and Kazakhstan (6%). In Eastern Europe, Moldova has a higher child marriage rate (12%) than Belarus (8%) and Ukraine (7%).

Child marriage can take place against the will of the bride or without her prior knowledge in some countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.[16] Reports of forced marriages and bride kidnappings are evidence of girls' lack of decision-making power and lower status in the household (Rankovic, 2012[5]). Kidnapped women are seen as "belonging" to their husband's family, which in turn restricts their freedom of movement and access to education and employment. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, a high number of marriages result from bride kidnapping, especially in rural and remote areas. Recent reports indicate that 32 bride kidnappings occur each day on average in the country and that sometimes young girls resort to suicide to escape such acts (UNDP, 2016[2]). In Azerbaijan, it is reported that most child marriages take place against the girl's will or under parental pressure. The complicity of religious leaders and parents, as well as the prevalence of unregistered religious marriages, contribute to the persistence of the practice of forced marriage (Human Rights Council, 2014[4]).

Box 3.3. Eliminating bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan

In June 2018, after the murder of a young Kyrgyz woman brought attention to the issue of bride kidnapping, thousands gathered in the streets of the capital, Bishkek, to stand against the Kyrgyz tradition. The United Nations estimates that 12 000 women and girls are abducted every year in Kyrgyzstan to be offered to a potential husband, and that one out of every five marriages in the country is a result of bride kidnapping.

Police authorities in Issyk-Kul have been working at educational institutions and rural meetings to raise awareness that abducting a bride against her will is not a tradition but a crime. Separately, the Bishkek-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) Open Line has developed an app that enables users to upload information on kidnappings in real time and warn each other. It also consolidated a legal guide on how to seek support in bride-kidnapping cases. Previous efforts to raise awareness include a series of short films that aimed to sensitise Kyrgyz society about the practice, encouraging girls' parents to object to bride kidnapping and witnesses of the crime to call the police.

Meanwhile, a law was strengthened by the Kyrgyz Parliament in 2013 to make bride kidnapping punishable by up ten years in prison. This resulted from advocacy campaigns by civil society and national and international organisations, such as UN Women, and the government's commitment to address the issue.

Source: UN Women, *What it means to be a kidnapped bride.*
http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2018/11/video-kyrgyzstan-kidnapped-brides.

Child marriage is an intersectional issue. Girls who lie at the intersection of unequal power structures of religion, race, class and ethnicity are more likely to suffer from multiple obstacles across all stages of their lives, including child and forced marriages.

Child marriage is more prevalent among some minority and ethnic groups in Eurasia. For instance, in Eastern European countries (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine), arranged marriages under common law, not upheld by the state, are practiced in some Roma communities, with Roma girls married at age 15 and younger – often to grooms who are also minors (ECMI, 2017[6]). In the Caucasus, more particularly in Armenia, while rates of child marriage are relatively low (5%), they are reportedly more common among ethnic communities such as the Yezidi and Molokan (Council of Europe, 2014[7]). Among the Yezidi communities, child marriage is considered an important aspect of cultural identity (UNFPA, 2014[8]). In some countries in Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), child marriage remains a problem in Muslim communities, and is a gendered phenomenon particularly affecting girls (UNFPA, 2014[8]).

Household responsibilities

Key messages

- **The law guarantees equality in certain areas of the family sphere.** All countries in the region accord wives and husbands equal parental authority and the same rights and responsibilities with regard to their children.
- **But women do not share the right to be head of household.** Legal loopholes remain across the region. No country in the Eurasian region stipulates provisions recognising women's equal right with men to be head of the household.
- **Discriminatory patterns shape unequal intra-household relations.** Social norms and gender stereotypes perpetuate the traditional male-breadwinner model and curtail women's decision-making power in the family. On average, 38% of Eurasian respondents declare that children will suffer when a mother is away from home to be in paid employment. This is below the global average (50%). In all countries of the region, women bear a larger share of unpaid care and domestic work than men. On average, women spend 2.5 times more time on household chores and childcare than men do.

Key policy recommendations

- **Grant women legal rights in the household and as parents**. Countries should include legal provisions that recognise equal rights for women to be head of the household and that guarantee equal parental authority. They should ensure that these legal rights are also extended to informal unions (Box 3.4).
- **Provide better access to childcare and care for the elderly** in order to reduce the time women spend on domestic care. In one example of this, the Azerbaijan 2020 Socio-Economic Development Concept highlights plans to increase the number of kindergartens to facilitate childcare for working parents.
- **Guarantee family-friendly working conditions** that enable parents to balance their working hours and caring responsibilities. A flexible work schedule or teleworking allows women and men to choose working hours that better accommodate their caring responsibilities. In Moldova[17], both parents are entitled to flexible or part-time working schedules to accommodate childcare needs.
- **Tackle entrenched social norms and traditional views of masculinity** through training and awareness-raising campaigns targeting men. Such actions should aim

to "defeminise" caregiving and reshape existing gender norms that prevent men from assuming equal caring responsibilities. In Ukraine, the UN Population Fund and the Ministry of Social Policy launched the campaign "4 Hands Happiness" in 2015 to engage fathers in having a more active role in childrearing (Box 3.5).

Box 3.4. International standards on gender equality in the family sphere

The right to gender equality in the family sphere is enshrined in several international treaties and benefits from a wide international consensus.

- The CEDAW (1979) affirms women's and men's equal rights and responsibilities as parents (Art. 16 (c)) and acknowledges that women have the same rights and responsibilities as men concerning guardianship, wardship and trusteeship of children (Art. 16 (g)).
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) promotes the equal sharing of responsibilities for the family among men and women and considers this to be critical to their well-being and that of their families (Art. 15).
- Target 5.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) advocates "the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family" and highlights the need to "recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work".

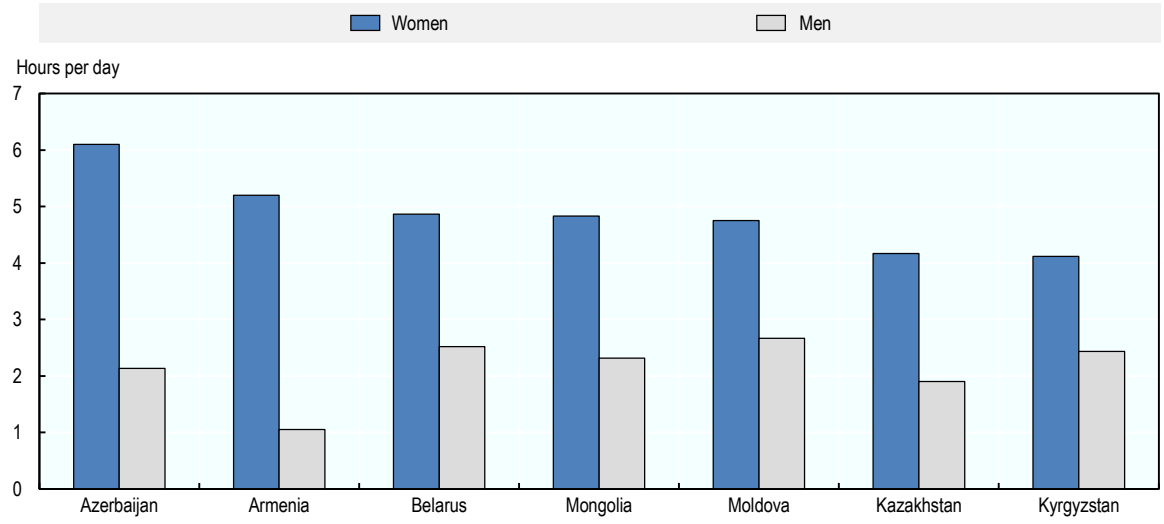
In-depth analysis of household responsibilities

The law protects women's decision-making authority in the household across the Eurasian region. All 12 countries grant wives and husbands equal parental authority and the same rights and responsibilities with regard to their children. Furthermore, no country in the region requires married women to obey their husbands. Women have the same rights as men to choose where to live, irrespective of their marital status.

The law does not recognise women's equal right to be head of household. Despite the fact that the region's countries ensure that spouses should jointly safeguard the interest of the family, their legal frameworks do not contain an explicit provision granting women and men the same rights to be recognised as head of household.

Discriminatory customary practices and restrictive gender roles in the household limit women's ability to exercise their parental authority. In nine countries[18], there are customary, religious or traditional practices that discriminate against women's decision-making within the household. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, men are traditionally considered as the head of the household, while wives are in a subordinate position and tasked with housework and childcare (CEDAW, 2015[9]). Wives must also live with their husband's family and often require permission from their husband to leave the family home (Amnesty International, 2016[10]). Also in Kyrgyzstan, the proportion of women responsible for deciding about larger household purchases is relatively low (9%) in comparison to men (17%) (DHS, 2012[11]). In Turkmenistan, although women's income has increasingly approached the level of men's income, women still face discrimination on matters like managing the family budget and making family decisions (ICWC, n.d.[12]).

Figure 3.4. Distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men



Note: Number of hours that women and men spend on unpaid care and domestic work per 24 hours.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

The gender gap in time spent on domestic work reflects traditional societal views. Discriminatory representations of women's roles and responsibilities are prevalent in the region, and gender stereotypes continue to exercise pressure on women's role, especially regarding domestic chores and child rearing obligations (Figure 3.4). On average, 38% of Eurasian respondents declare that children will suffer when a mother is in paid employment, ranging from 32% in Belarus to 65% in Georgia. Across Eurasia, women perform on average five hours of unpaid care and domestic work per day; in contrast, men spend around two hours. This gap is largest in Azerbaijan, where women spend more than six hours compared to just over two hours for men. In Armenia, women and men are often seen as having distinct gender roles, with women taking primary responsibility for the household and child care, and men engaging in income-earning activities outside the home as the main breadwinner and head of the household (ADB, 2015[13]; FAO, 2017[14]). Armenian women spend on average five hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work, while men spend just over one hour (UNECE, n.d.[15]). Furthermore, 68% of Kazakhs prefer a traditional family arrangement where the man is the breadwinner and the woman takes responsibility for the house and children (EBRD, 2016[16]). In addition, 89% of women in Uzbekistan think that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay, compared to 91% of men (Inglehart et al., 2014[17])

Box 3.5. Ukraine's "4 Hands Happiness" campaign

In order to engage fathers in having a more active role in childrearing, the United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) and Ukraine's Ministry of Social Policy launched the "4 Hands Happiness" campaign in 2015. The aim was to challenge stereotypes about the traditional distribution of family responsibilities and to promote responsible fatherhood, paternity leave and the equal distribution of chores within the household.

The awareness campaign encourages fathers to spend more time with their children and to redistribute caring responsibilities within the household. On average, a Ukrainian father

spends just 56 minutes per day with his children. In 2017, the campaign organised five events where celebrity dads, including football players, rock stars and company chief executives, read books aloud to other parents and their children. The celebrity advocates were featured in an ELLE magazine article entitled "Making Fatherhood Fashionable" and in advertising campaigns in social media and underground (metro) stations, reaching approximately 259 000 people per day.

Source: UNFPA. *Real men do chores too*, https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/news/real-men-do-chores-too-engaging-fathers-domestic-tasks-and-caregiving-combat-gender-inequality

Budget cuts in basic social services hold women back from full equality and increase the burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, funding and budgets for the provision of social services were significantly reduced. Low-income women withdrew from the labour market or switched to part-time work, due partly to the closure of subsidised day care. Women who were no longer able to contribute to the household income experienced a consequent decrease in their bargaining power and decision making within the family (World Bank, 2003[18]). In Ukraine, for example, where preschool education was widely developed during the Soviet period, the closure of preschools and childcare facilities has negatively affected women, especially those living in rural areas (Strokova and Ajwad, 2017[19]). Similarly, in Tajikistan there is a lack of accessible and affordable kindergartens (ADB, 2016[20]), with the total number of preschool institutions falling from 944 in 1991 to 467 in 2009 (ILO, 2014[21]); by 2015, only 10% of girls and 11% of boys were enrolled in pre-primary education (World Bank, n.d.[22]). Moreover, the cost of private preschool establishments is prohibitive for the vast majority of Tajik women (ADB, 2016[20]). All of these factors have substantially increased women's burden of household tasks and responsibilities.

Divorce

Key messages

- **Formal legal equality in divorce is guaranteed** across the majority of Eurasian countries. In 11 of the 12 countries,[19] women have guaranteed equal rights to initiate and finalise divorce. In addition, women have equal rights and responsibilities for children after a divorce, and they continue to share legal guardianship in all countries of the region.
- **Restrictions in divorce proceedings still trap women in some countries.** In practice, when considering unilateral divorce, the courts are entitled to adjourn the proceedings for up to six months in order to reconcile both parties. Since a period of reconciliation is often mandated, survivors of domestic violence may be sent back to abuse, which can escalate due to divorce proceedings.
- **Customary laws still govern divorce in the Caucasus and Central Asia.** Via customary, traditional and religious laws, four Central Asian countries[20] and all three countries in the Caucasus still discriminate in practice against women's legal right to initiate divorce. In addition, unregistered marriages are governed by the same customary and religious laws that prevent women from claiming their legal rights to divorce.
- **Belarus, Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine score best** in this indicator. In these countries, women's divorce rights are protected by legislative

frameworks that provide women with the same rights as men to initiate and finalise divorce proceedings. In Ukraine, divorce can be initiated jointly or unilaterally. Divorce legislation concerning child custody often allows for joint or single custody arrangements. In Kazakhstan, parental rights continue after divorce, and child custody is jointly determined by both parents or awarded to either parent by the court if an agreement cannot be found among them. Furthermore, in the four countries, there are no customary, religious or traditional laws or practices that discriminate against women's rights to initiate divorce or deny a woman's legal right to be the legal guardian of her children after divorce.

Key policy recommendations

- **Restrict conciliation and mediation at all stages of divorce proceedings,** particularly for women affected by domestic violence.
- **Strengthen the registration of customary and religious marriages** to protect the rights of spouses concerning property issues upon the dissolution of marriages by divorce.
- **Adhere to the CEDAW agreement**, which calls on States Parties to eliminate discrimination against women at the inception of a marriage, throughout its duration and at its dissolution by divorce (Art. 16 (1)).
- **Provide free legal advice to women** in family matters, including family law and divorce, to ensure that women know about their rights, have access to equal justice mechanisms and are not forced to abdicate their rights to obtain a divorce. An initiative in Azerbaijan offers a good-practice example (Box 3.6).

In-depth analysis of divorce

Divorce law puts women on an equal footing with men in most countries. Women's equal rights to initiate and finalise divorce proceedings are guaranteed in all Eurasian countries except Tajikistan. In this country, Sharia law permits men to initiate divorce by repeating the word "*talaq*", by which he formally repudiates his wife. This practice applies to both registered religious marriages and unregistered marriages. All countries grant equal rights and responsibilities towards children after a divorce, and most often legislation allows for joint or single custody arrangements. In Belarus,[21] couples are encouraged to draw up a contract specifying what will happen with the children's living arrangements in the event of divorce.

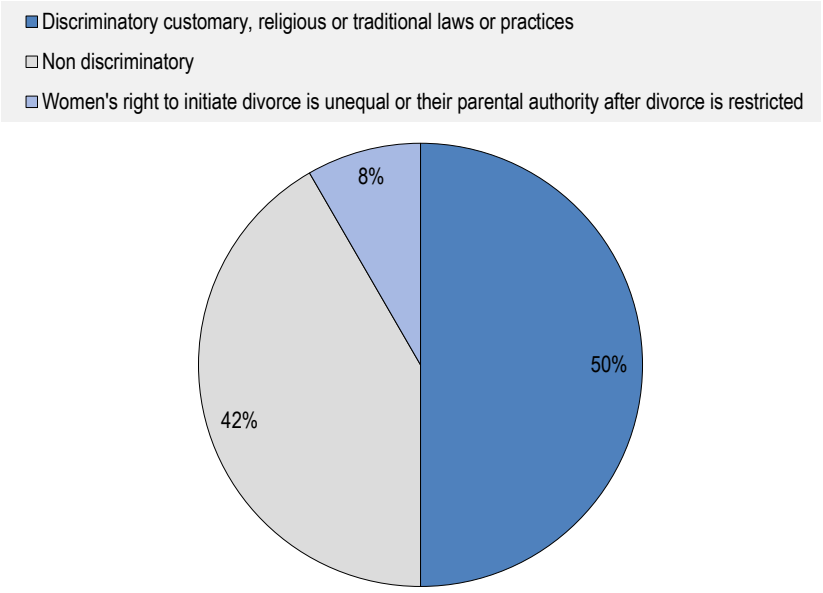
Child custody is more likely to be granted solely to mothers in practice. The granting of sole maternal custody, instead of joint or paternal custody, reflects entrenched gender stereotypes of women as the natural caregivers. Some efforts are being taken to combat this. There are NGOs in Belarus, for instance, that advocate for fathers' rights and fight gender stereotypes that lead to automatically giving custody of children to the mother.

Reconciliation procedures can hinder women's divorce rights. In some countries, a period of reconciliation is mandated by law (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). In Uzbekistan, in addition to filing a divorce through the judicial system, one or both partners must also file a petition with the local "reconciliation commission". This commission, or *mahalla*, acts as a local governmental body with adjudicating powers. In Tajikistan, when considering a unilateral request for divorce, the court must attempt to reconcile both parties and is entitled to postpone proceedings for up to six months to that end. The court can pronounce the divorce only if reconciliation

measures prove ineffective, or if the court establishes that the family unit cannot be maintained.[22] Similarly, in Moldova, when one spouse does not consent to divorce, the court may postpone proceedings for one to six months to provide time for reconciliation, except in cases where divorce is requested due to domestic violence or where the court deems the marriage to be irreparable.[23]

Practices in the Caucasus and Central Asia undermine women's divorce rights. Pervasive customary, religious and/or traditional practices and/or laws continue to undermine women's legal right to file for divorce in these sub-regions (Figure 3.5). In Turkmenistan, divorce in rural communities is rare, particularly due to the custom of paying a "bride price," or *kalym*, which allegedly strengthens the marriage and keeps newlyweds from divorcing. This custom has increasingly been revived, and payments to the bride's family can amount up to USD 10 000 (IWPR, 2012[23]). In Georgia, the Orthodox Church accepts divorce when all avenues for reconciliation have been exhausted and allows second marriages with prayers of repentance for the first divorce uttered during the second marriage ceremony (Mills, 2013[24]). As noted above, repudiation under Sharia law is practised in Tajikistan. In Uzbekistan, women may be discouraged from pursuing divorce, even in cases of reported domestic violence. In addition to discriminatory traditions that discourage women from inquiring into divorce proceedings, the process of finalising a divorce is highly complicated and is an effective barrier to both parties.

Figure 3.5. Legal frameworks governing divorce rights in Eurasia



Note: Share of countries per category of discrimination in divorce rights. See Annex B for more details on the coding. Non discriminatory: Belarus, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine; Discriminatory customary, religious or traditional laws or practices: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; Women's right to initiate divorce is unequal or their parental authority after divorce is restricted: Tajikistan.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019

Box 3.6. Legal aid for divorced women in Azerbaijan

Even though women and men have the same rights to initiate divorce and the same requirements to finalise the process in Azerbaijan, divorcees face social stigmas and judicial barriers. The increasing number of Azerbaijani women filing for divorce often have to anticipate condemnation of their families, lack of support from them and long court battle for children and property.

The Society for the Defense of Women's Rights (SDWR), an association of 24 women's non-governmental organisations, has helped divorced women in Azerbaijan who have become legally and socially vulnerable since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The SDWR has been working alongside Azerbaijani divorced women who feel that they have been treated unfairly by divorce courts, and provides legal aid in order to help victims of domestic violence go through divorce.

Source: One Women, Women's rights in Azerbaijan, https://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/womensit/az_w_sit.pdf.

Divorced women often face social stigma. Prevailing social norms regarding women's responsibility to ensure the stability of the family often inhibit women's legal rights to initiate divorce. In Kazakhstan, divorced women suffer from social stigma to the extent that their sisters often have trouble marrying and their parents may prohibit them from returning home (Emery, 2013[1]). In Azerbaijan, where divorce is seen as socially undesirable, only 4% of women and 1% of men aged 15-49 years reported being divorced (DHS, 2006[25]). Azerbaijani women suffer disproportionately from social stigma, and divorce can be difficult to obtain in court, even in cases of domestic violence (Human Rights Council, 2014[4]). Similarly, in Georgia divorce rates are very low, especially in rural areas, because divorce carries stigma and many couples do not officially register their marriages (Mills, 2013[24]).

Inheritance

Key messages

- **Women in Eurasia enjoy equal inheritance rights.** All 12 countries grant female surviving spouses and daughters the same legal rights as their male counterparts to inherit land and non-land assets.
- **Discriminatory practices occur in Central Asia and the Caucasus.** In six countries,[24] women's inheritance rights are more vulnerable due to patrilineal kinship systems. Under these customary systems, a widow moves in with her deceased husband's family, thus forgoing the right to inherit from her parents. This is the case, for example, in Georgia and Turkmenistan.
- **Six countries have no discriminatory practices.** Half of the region's countries[25] do not discriminate against women in this indicator. These countries provide widows and daughters with equal inheritance rights, and no discriminatory laws or practices restrict these rights in practice.

Key policy recommendations

- **Strengthen inheritance protection mechanisms** by prohibiting disinheritance of the surviving spouse and criminalising property dispossession or the grabbing of inheritance (Box 3.7).
- **Run awareness-raising campaigns around inheritance rights** in rural communities and ensure the provision of free legal advice and support for women to access legal consultations and assistance. Kyrgyzstan offers a good-practice example in this area (Box 3.8).

Box 3.7. International standards on women's inheritance rights

Although many of the most important international human-rights instruments and treaties do not specifically mention the rights and needs of widows, the incidence of women's restricted inheritance rights is widely recognised.

- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) calls on governments to undertake legislative and administrative reforms to give women and girls full rights to the inheritance of land and other property (Para. 60(f)), and to review national inheritance tax systems to eliminate any existing bias against women (Para. 165(f)).
- The CEDAW General Recommendation No. 29 (2013) establishes the principle of equal treatment of surviving females and males and prohibits the disinheritance of the surviving spouse (Para. 53).
- Target 5.A of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) calls upon all governments to "undertake reforms to give women equal rights to inheritance".

In-depth analysis of inheritance

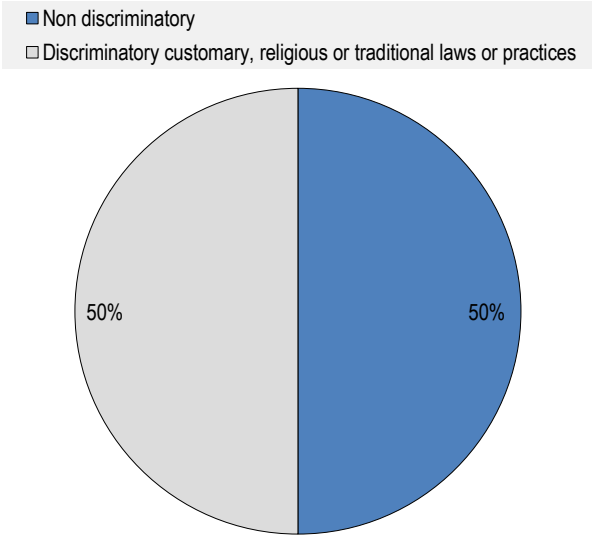
Women's and girls' inheritance rights are protected by legislative frameworks. All 12 countries in the region provide female surviving spouses and daughters with the same rights as their male counterparts to inherit land and non-land assets. Furthermore, all countries ensure that women and men have the same rights to make a will.

Enforcement of inheritance rights could be strengthened, notably in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. 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 (Hallward-Driemeier et al., 2013[26]). Only three countries in Central Asia[26] prohibit disinheritance of the surviving spouse, and among these countries only Kazakhstan criminalises property dispossession or the grabbing of inheritance.

Discriminatory practices can deprive women of their inheritance rights. Women's rights to inherit their husband's property and land are denied in six countries[27] under customary, religious or traditional laws and practices (Figure 3.6). In these countries, despite legal provisions guaranteeing women's inheritance rights, there is evidence to suggest that patrilineal inheritance continues to be practiced. In Armenia, cultural norms dictate that property is usually inherited by and registered to male family members (ADB, 2015[13]). In Turkmenistan, where Islamic law influences inheritance and society favours male ownership of property (FAO, n.d.[27]), sons traditionally receive most of the inheritance – especially the youngest son, who takes care of his parents and ends up

receiving the remainder of his parents' assets (Hays, 2016[28]; ILO, 2010[29]). In Georgia, many respondents to a survey said they believed that a major part of a parent's property, or even all of it, should be given to a son (UN, 2013[30]). Supporting these norms is the strong belief that men function as the continuers of the patrimonial line. In Tajikistan, widows often lack rights over their deceased husband's property, given that property certificates are commonly issued in the husband's name only, or in the name of his family members (ADB, 2016[20]; USAID, 2010[31]).

Figure 3.6. Legal frameworks governing inheritance rights in Eurasia



Note: Share of countries per category of legislation on inheritance rights. See Annex B for more details of the coding. Non discriminatory: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Moldova and Ukraine; Discriminatory customary, religious or traditional laws or practices: Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Box 3.8. Training on women's inheritance rights in Kyrgyzstan

Extensive training for Kyrgyz government staff and civil society organisations (CSOs) has been provided through UN Women to improve gender sensitivity and increase understanding about women's land and inheritance rights.

Approximately 400 heads of village councils participated in workshops to discuss the Law on Agricultural Land Management and provisions in other laws, such as the civil, family and land codes, that were relevant to women's property and inheritance rights. Additionally, these officials learned about the state's obligations to women under the CEDAW and heard directly from women whose rights had been violated.

Source: UN Women and OHCHR (2013), *Realizing women's rights to land and other productive resources*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RealizingWomensRightstoLand.pdf.

Notes

[1] Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[2] Azerbaijan and Georgia.

[3] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[4] Criminal Code, Art. 162.

[5] Criminal Code, Art. 27.

[6] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[7] Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[8] Azerbaijan and Georgia.

[9] Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[10] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[11] Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Mongolia.

[12] Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

[13] Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan.

[14] Azerbaijan, Belarus and Moldova.

[15] Family Code, Art. 10.

[16] Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

[17] Labour Code, Art. 97.

[18] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[19] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[20] Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[21] Code of the Republic of Belarus on Marriage and Family, Art. 38.

[22] Family Code, Art. 22.

[23] Family Code, Art. 38.

[24] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

[25] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Mongolia and Ukraine.

[26] Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[27] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

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Chapter 4. Restricted physical integrity

This chapter presents an overview of discrimination against women's physical integrity in Eurasia. It examines discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – that increase women's vulnerability to a range of forms of violence and that limit women's control over their bodies. It covers areas such as violence against women, female genital mutilation, missing women and reproductive autonomy. The chapter also seeks to provide policy makers with the necessary tools and evidence to design effective gender-responsive policies in order to protect women's physical integrity.



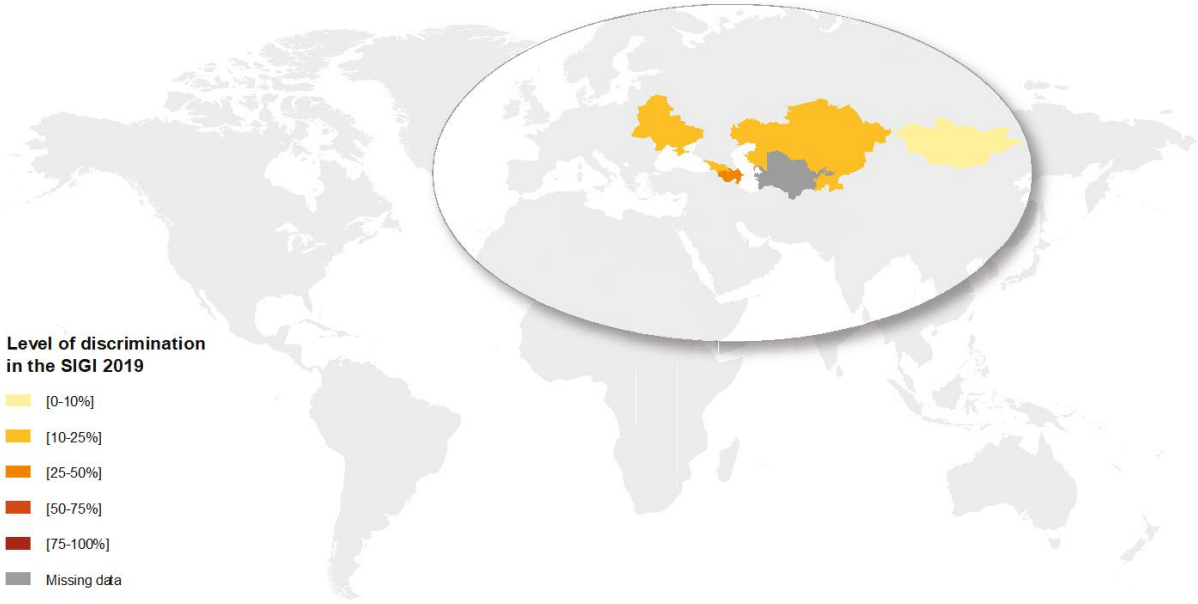
Box 4.1. Measuring women's restricted physical integrity

The *restricted physical integrity* (RPI) sub-index captures social institutions that increase women's and girls' vulnerability to a range of forms of violence and that limit women's control over their bodies. This includes formal and informal laws, norms and practices that fail to respect women's physical integrity, or that serve to normalise and justify practices that impinge upon their reproductive autonomy.

The restricted physical integrity sub-index is composed of four indicators.

1. "**Violence against women**" (VAW) captures the level of social acceptance and prevalence of domestic violence, as well as its legal acceptance: whether the legal framework protects women from violence, including intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment, taking into account non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices.
2. "**Female genital mutilation**" captures the level of social acceptance and prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) as well as its legal acceptance: whether the legal framework criminalises FGM and includes penalties for practitioners, taking into account non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices.
3. "**Missing women**" captures the statistical shortfall in the number of girls in the age range 0-4 years, relative to the expected number, in the absence of sex-selective abortions, female infanticide or preferential treatment of sons over daughters, correcting for natural biological and physiological differences.
4. "**Reproductive autonomy**" captures the prevalence of women of reproductive age who have an unmet need for family planning and contraception, as well as legal discrimination against women with respect to their reproductive autonomy rights in case of non-desired pregnancy.

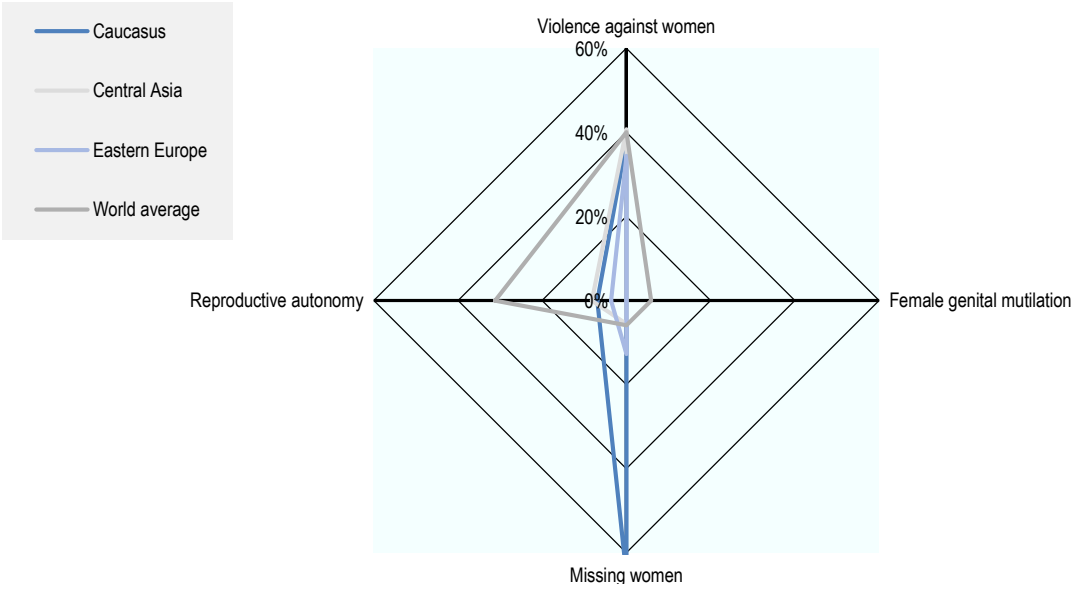
Figure 4.1. Level of discrimination regarding women's physical integrity



Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. Mongolia has a very low level of discrimination (0-10%). Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine have a low level of discrimination (10-25%). Armenia and Azerbaijan have a medium level of discrimination (25-50%), and Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have not been ranked due to missing data. For more information see Annex A, Table A1.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Women's physical integrity is unevenly protected across the region, with an average level of discrimination of 20%. The restricted physical integrity score is the best among the four sub-indices of the SIGI, but the overall score hides regional disparities. Discrimination is more pervasive in the Caucasus (32%) than in Central Asia (15%) and Eastern Europe (14%) (Figure 4.1). The ten countries ranked in this sub-index[1] span very low to medium levels of discrimination. Mongolia is the best performer, with a level of discrimination of 8%. Seven countries follow with a low level of discrimination (from 13% in Moldova to 20% in Tajikistan), while Armenia (35%) and Azerbaijan (43%) have higher levels.

Figure 4.2. SIGI results in the "restricted physical integrity" indicators



Note: Sub-regional and world average, best and lowest performers in the four restricted physical integrity indicators.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Discrimination is especially high regarding violence against women. With a regional level of discrimination of 38%, VAW is the most pervasive and acute form of discrimination against women's physical integrity. It is not adequately addressed in the law, and it is pervasive and commonly tolerated. While female genital mutilation is not commonly practised and women's reproductive autonomy is fairly protected (the region scores respectively 0% and 7%), missing women is a serious issue in the Caucasus, and the regional level of discrimination is 22% in this indicator.

The missing women indicator is high in the Caucasus. Sub-regional scores are similar in three of the four indicators of the restricted physical integrity sub-index (Figure 4.2). Discrimination against women's reproductive autonomy ranges from 4% in Eastern Europe to 8% in Central Asia, the VAW indicator ranges from 34% in Eastern Europe to 41% in Central Asia, and the FGM indicator is equal to 0% in the three sub-regions. However, with a pronounced preference for sons specific to the Caucasus, discrimination in the missing women indicator for this sub-region, at 68%, is far higher than in the other sub-regions (6% in Central Asia and 13% in Eastern Europe).

Mongolia is the best regional performer, with a discrimination level of 8%, and it is the only country with a very low level of discrimination against women's physical integrity. The law accurately protects women from all forms of VAW, including domestic violence and sexual harassment; no evidence suggests the practice of FGM (although it is not criminalised); sex ratios are balanced; and abortion is legal on demand. However, domestic violence remains widespread in Mongolia (affecting 31% of women) and accepted (10% of women condone it), and the prevalence of unmet needs for family planning, at 16%, is the second highest in the region.

Violence against women

Key messages

- **Countries have been increasingly committed to eliminating VAW.** Revised legislation entered into force in Moldova and Mongolia in 2017, making both countries regional leaders in terms of legal response to VAW. Ukraine also took a positive step in 2018 by introducing criminal liability for domestic violence. Rape is criminalised in all 12 countries, no country allows rape perpetrators to escape prosecution if they marry the victim after the crime and there is no evidence of provisions that reduce penalties in case of so-called honour crimes.
- **But no country protects women from all forms of violence.** The main legal loopholes reside in the non-criminalisation of sexual harassment (in ten countries[2] across the three sub-regions) and domestic violence (in five countries[3]). In addition, the legal definition of rape does not include marital rape in eight countries.[4]
- **Domestic violence against women is pervasive and rates decrease slowly**. Despite countries' commitments, 17% of women in the region have suffered intimate-partner violence at least once in their lifetime, and 10% in the past year, down from 11% in 2014. Women in Central Asia are particularly exposed to VAW (20% have suffered domestic violence at least once, and 10% in the past year), as well as women in Eastern Europe (17% and 10%), while women in the Caucasus are the least vulnerable (11% and 7%).
- **Condonement and under-reporting remain high.** The social acceptability of domestic violence, including by women themselves, and the stigmatisation of victims prevents the majority of survivors from reporting the crime. Some 21% of women declare that spousal violence is acceptable under certain circumstances (from 4% of women in Eastern Europe to 34% in Central Asia). While the overall proportion decreased from 27% in 2014, condonement and under-reporting remain high and explain why reducing the high prevalence rate of VAW is an ongoing struggle. Across six countries, 67% of women who suffered violence from their partner never told someone about it or sought help of any sort.
- **Mongolia is the regional best performer** despite its relatively poor ranking at the world level (21st), with a discrimination level of 22% in the VAW indicator. A 2017 revision to the Law on Combating Domestic Violence criminalised most forms of VAW (with the exception of gender-based online harassment). The government implemented a National Programme on the Control and Prevention of Domestic Violence, established shelter homes, a help hotline and service centres. However, social norms remain highly discriminatory since 31% of women have suffered violence from a partner and 10% think it can be tolerated.

Key policy recommendations

- **Provide all women with legal protection** from all forms of gender-based violence, including criminalisation of intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment, without any legal exceptions and in a comprehensive approach, in line with international standards (Box 4.2). Guarantee that all women can claim their rights and obtain legal redress by suing perpetrators. When a woman files for divorce on the grounds of spousal violence, abrogate mandatory reconciliation periods (see Chapter 3).

- **Address discrimination that normalises VAW** and prevents women from reporting the crime in order to ensure that women can seek legal redress under the formal law enforcement and justice systems (Box 4.3). For example, the law in Azerbaijan foresees informative actions raising awareness of the negative legal, medical and social consequences of domestic violence and including other public education activities related to prevention of domestic violence.[5]
- **Guarantee that protection and support services are available** for survivors of gender-based violence. In Belarus, for example, the government operates 109 temporary shelters throughout the country for survivors of domestic violence.
- **Provide rehabilitation for perpetrators of gender-based violence.** In Kazakhstan, for example, assistance organisations are tasked with providing psychological assistance to perpetrators; health authorities are mandated to carry out measures to reduce alcoholism, drug addiction and substance abuse; and violent persons can receive counselling.[6]
- **Train judicial, police, medical and educational personnel** on gender-based violence and the protection of women's human rights. In Georgia, for instance, training on how to deal with domestic violence cases is now included as part of basic police training.
- **Adopt a multisectoral approach to ending VAW** in policies and interventions. For example, supporting women's access to economic empowerment opportunities can enhance their status within the household or increase their ability to leave abusive relationships.

Box 4.2. International standards on violence against women

The due diligence standard, derived from international human rights law, requires States to take positive actions to prevent, investigate, punish and provide remedies for human rights violations, including those committed by private actors.

Violence against women is widely recognised as a fundamental human rights violation. The rights to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings are enshrined in several international instruments.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) guarantees to every individual "the right to life, liberty and security of person" (Art. 3).
- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) calls on States to "pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women" (Art. 4).
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) reaffirms that "violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace" (Art. 112).
- SDG Target 5.2 explicitly calls on States to "eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls".
- All six regional members of the Council of Europe reiterated their commitment to end VAW by signing or ratifying the Istanbul Convention (2011), with the exception of Azerbaijan.

In-depth analysis of violence against women

Countries are increasingly committed to eliminating VAW. Mongolia and Moldova established new legislation in 2017 to criminalise intimate-partner violence (Mongolia) and to better protect survivors (Moldova), making them the best regional performers in terms of legal response to VAW. Ukraine also made progress with a new law criminalising domestic violence in 2018. No country allows rape perpetrators to escape prosecution if they marry the victim after the crime, and there is no evidence of provisions that reduce penalties in cases of so-called honour crimes. In addition, rape is a criminal offense in all countries. Finally, seven countries[7] have implemented a national action plan to eliminate domestic violence, and the law in six countries[8] compels governments to provide a budget or to allocate funding for the implementation of relevant programmes or activities on VAW.

But comprehensive legal protection from all forms of violence is lacking. To date, no country in any sub-region has yet enacted laws to protect women from all forms of violence, without exceptions and in a comprehensive manner:

- **No country has criminalised all forms of sexual harassment.** In Mongolia and Moldova, sexual harassment is a criminal offense but the law does not cover cyber harassment (Mongolia and Moldova) or harassment in educational and sporting establishments and public places (Moldova). In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine, there is legal protection from sexual harassment, but it is not a criminal offense. In Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the law does not provide legal protection from sexual harassment.
- **The legal definition of rape does not include marital rape** in eight countries,[9] even though a wife can file a complaint in all. In Uzbekistan, for example, the Criminal Code foresees imprisonment of three to seven years for anyone who commits a rape, without explicitly including marital rape. However, perpetrating rape on a close relative is considered an aggravating circumstance and punishable by imprisonment of seven to ten years.[10]
- **The legislation on domestic violence protects women in only six countries**.[11] In Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia and Ukraine, domestic violence is a criminal offense, and this includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence from a former partner or a family member. In Tajikistan, the law does not include abuse from former partners. In Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, domestic violence is not a criminal offense.

Domestic violence is a serious issue across the region. Some 17% of women have suffered physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime. Although this is lower than the world level (31%), it varies across the region, ranging from 6% of women in Georgia to 46% of women in Moldova. Lifetime prevalence of VAW is more pervasive in Central Asia (20%) and Eastern Europe (18%) than in the Caucasus (11%). The same patterns are observed regarding recent episodes of intimate-partner violence: 10% of Eurasian women suffered violence from a partner in the past year, from 1% in Georgia to 17% in Kyrgyzstan, compared to 14% of the world's women. Recent episodes of intimate-partner violence are more frequent in Central Asia and Eastern Europe (10%) than in the Caucasus (7%). Domestic violence has far-reaching consequences on the health, economic and social status of survivors, and some women do

not survive: one in two women killed in the region are murdered by an intimate partner or family member (UNFPA, 2016[1]). VAW also represents a cost for societies and economies. In Ukraine, for example, VAW is estimated to cost USD 208 million per year, or 0.23% of the annual GDP (UNFPA, 2017[2]) (see Chapter 2).

Current estimates of domestic violence rates understate the reality. In all 12 countries, the stigmatisation of survivors, fear of retaliation, mistrust in the police and justice systems, and social norms that consider domestic violence as a private matter prevent women from reporting crimes.[12] Across the six countries with available data,[13] 67% of survivors never reported the violence or sought help of any sort. Among women who sought help, 53% turned to their family, while only 22% appealed to medical personnel and 3% to the police (DHS, n.d.[3]). The low reliance on the police is in part explained by the fear of institutional discrimination and the predominance of men among police staff: in Georgia and Kazakhstan, 90% of police officers are men (UNFPA, 2015[4]; UNECE, n.d.[5]).

Discriminatory social norms feed domestic violence. Across the region, 21% of women and girls consider that a husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances (if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with him). Women in Central Asia are particularly likely to condone domestic violence (34%), followed by women in the Caucasus (21%). In Eastern Europe, only 4% of women hold discriminatory attitudes. Discriminatory norms reinforce gender roles in the society and support visions of "toxic" masculinities, whereby a man is entitled to engage in aggressive behaviours towards a woman.

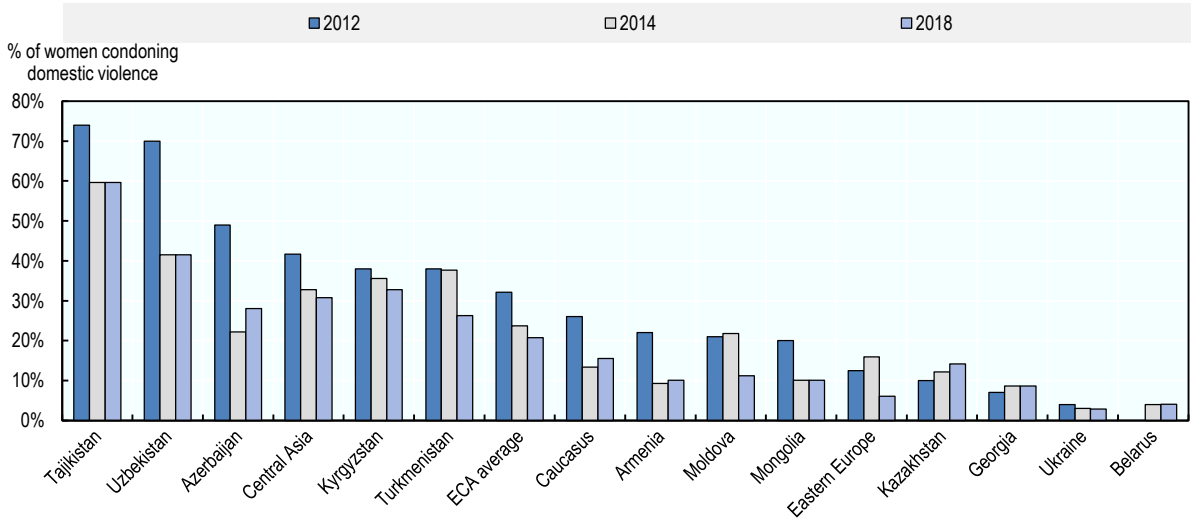
Box 4.3. Mobilising men to fight VAW in Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, where 20% of women have suffered domestic violence in their lifetimes, a "Strong Men Respect Women" campaign was launched to engage men in raising awareness on the causes and consequences of VAW. The campaign is supported by a network of male martial artists who have been trained as advocates in the battle against gender-based violence.

The network was initiated by the National Taekwondo and Kickboxing Federation of Tajikistan, in partnership with the United Nations. The campaign, led by the world Taekwondo champion, Daler Tyuryaev, has trained more than 500 athletes on gender equality and violence prevention to speak out against VAW in martial arts lessons, competitions and public gatherings. The athletes appeal to wider audiences through public videos and major media campaigns on national TV channels, and these appeals have reached approximately 70% of the Tajik population.

Sources: UNFPA (2015), "Martial artists fight gender discrimination, violence in Tajikistan", https://eeca.unfpa.org/news/martial-artists-fight-gender-discrimination-violence-tajikistan (accessed on 7 March 2019); UNFPA (2015), *Combatting violence against women and girls in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/21770%20Brief_web.pdf (accessed on 7 March 2019).

Figure 4.3. Acceptance of domestic violence among women in Eurasia



Note: Percentage of women agreeing or agreeing strongly with: "A husband can be justified in hitting or beating his wife under certain circumstances: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses to engage in sexual intercourse with him."
Source: OECD (2012, 2014, 2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Domestic violence is less prevalent and less tolerated than previously. In 2012, 19% of Eurasian women had suffered assault from their partner at least once, compared to 18% in 2014 and 17% by 2018. This trend parallels a reduced acceptance of domestic violence. In 2012, 33% of women believed that a husband could be justified in beating his wife under certain circumstances, compared to 27% in 2014 and 21% in 2018 (Figure 4.3). Progress in this regard has been particularly significant in Central Asia, where the tolerance of domestic violence decreased from 49% in 2012 to 34% in 2018.

Female genital mutilation

Key messages

- **FGM is virtually not a concern in the region.** As no customary practice of FGM has been reported, it has not been on the legislative agendas of Eurasian countries. With the exception of Georgia, no country has criminalised FGM.
- **Data collection is nonetheless needed.** As no country in the region has collected representative survey data on the prevalence of FGM, one cannot assume for certain that it is not a concern. Data collection is needed to reach out to every girl and woman at risk. Georgia's response to the uncovering of FGM cases among a minority community illustrates the importance of data collection.

Key policy recommendations

- **Include FGM modules in national surveys** systematically in order to monitor its use or appearance.
- **Criminalise the practice of FGM** when cases are unveiled, in compliance with international and regional conventions and treaties (Box 4.4). Mobilise public

opinion against the practice through tailored awareness-raising interventions within local communities on the short- and long-term negative consequences of FGM on women's and girls' physical and mental well-being.

Box 4.4. International and regional standards concerning female genital mutilation

FGM is recognised internationally as a harmful practise and a violation of the human rights of women and girls. Several treaties condemn the practice.

- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries. In particular, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 14 (1990) calls on States Parties to "take appropriate and effective measures with a view to eradicating the practice of female circumcision" (Para. a).
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, requires States Parties to "abolish traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children" (Art. 24).
- SDG Target 5.3 explicitly aims to "eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation".
- The Istanbul Convention (2011), signed or ratified by Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, calls on States Parties to take the necessary measures to ensure that inciting, coercing or procuring a girl or a woman to undergo FGM is criminalised (Art. 38).

In-depth analysis of female genital mutilation

Little attention is paid to female genital mutilation in Eurasia. With the exception of Georgia, no country in the region has passed a law to specifically criminalise FGM. However, while no systematic study has been conducted to measure its prevalence, no customary, traditional or religious practices or laws that allow and encourage FGM have been reported. Georgia stands as an exception.

The Georgian example shows that data collection on FGM is crucial for the protection of girls and women at risk. A 2016 study in Georgia uncovered the practice of FGM in some areas of the country. The study revealed that the Avars, a minority group of approximately 2 000 persons living in remote areas of eastern Georgia, customarily cut girls (IWPR, 2016[6]). Prior to this, FGM was believed to be non-existent and therefore was not addressed in the law. The study triggered a political reaction that resulted in the criminalisation of the practice six months later[14] (Box 4.5). The case of Georgia highlights the importance of data collection. Reliable and regularly repeated surveys on FGM allow for the identification of girls and women at risk, the reasons behind the practice and its evolution. In order to reach SDG Target 5.3 ("Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation"), countries need to be able to report on the prevalence of FGM among their population.[15]

Box 4.5. FGM criminalised in Georgia after practice is discovered

The government of Georgia criminalised FGM less than six months after cases of girls being forced to undergo FGM were uncovered.

In November 2016, an investigation of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) revealed that hundreds of girls from the ethnic Avar community, living in eastern Georgia, were being forced to undergo FGM. Before this revelation, it was assumed due to a lack of data that FGM was not practiced in Georgia, and consequently there was no legislation regulating this practice.

As a response to the investigation, the government convened a meeting with NGOs, UN agencies and the IWPR in December 2016 to confirm the allegations and discuss how to address the issue. Immediately afterwards, the Ministry of Justice prepared legal amendments to the Criminal Code to ensure criminalisation of FGM, in compliance with the Istanbul Convention (that the country had signed in 2014, and later ratified in 2017). The government approved these legal reforms in January 2017 and the Parliament passed the corresponding bill, Law of Georgia No. 763, in early May 2017. The law amended the criminal code by adding Article 133,[2] which criminalises complete or partial FGM and punishes it by two to seven years of imprisonment.

Sources: Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (2017), *Implementation of Gender Equality Policy in Georgia*, http://www.parliament.ge/en/ajax/downloadFile/72000/Gender_Equality_NAP_report_2016_ENG_Edited_Final_July_2017 (accessed 7 March 2019); IWPR (2016), "FGM Uncovered in Georgia", https://iwpr.net/global-voices/fgm-uncovered-georgia (accessed 7 March 2019); IWPR (2017), "Georgia: FGM Criminalised Following IWPR Investigation", https://iwpr.net/global-voices/georgia-fgm-criminalised-following-iwpr (accessed 7 March 2019); Parliament of Georgia (2017), *Law 763-IIc Amending the Criminal Code of Georgia*, https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/3664456?publication=0 (accessed 7 March 2019).

Missing women

Key messages

- **Son bias appears high in the Caucasus and low elsewhere**. The SIGI results in the region are divided into two extremes concerning discrimination against the girl child. All countries in Eastern Europe and in Central Asia show little to no evidence of son bias (they score respectively 13% and 6% in the missing women indicator, compared to 6% for the global average). However, countries in the Caucasus show high levels of discrimination (65%).
- **The missing women phenomenon is a concern** in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, where the sex ratios are unbalanced compared to the natural sex ratio and an estimated 170 000 young women are missing.
- **Unbalanced sex ratios are a persistent problem in Azerbaijan** but Armenia and Georgia have made progress (Box 4.7).
- **Discriminatory social institutions foster bias towards sons and undervaluing of daughters**, and this contributes to the missing women phenomenon. In Armenia for example, 54% of the population declare that if a family were to have one child, they would prefer to have a boy, compared with 10% who would prefer a girl and 35% for whom it does not matter.

Key policy recommendations

Adopt integrated and multi-entry-point strategies to help shift son-biased social norms and protect the fundamental rights of girls (Box 4.6).

- **Take effective legal measures to increase women's agency** and ensure that men and women have equal access to the economic and political spheres. This means granting women and men the same legal status, rights and responsibilities in the family and society, particularly in areas such as marriage, inheritance, dowries, heading the household and parental authority.
- **Provide social protection to the most vulnerable,** particularly the elderly, to relieve families from the burden of their traditional role as a socioeconomic buffer against health, employment and age hazards. In Georgia, for example, the introduction and consolidation of a social protection system since 2005 has gradually reduced sons' responsibilities towards their parents.
- **Fight adverse gender stereotypes** and encourage the valuing of girls and women through media campaigns. For example, public awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts are among the key actions of Armenia's State Programme 2015-17 on Preventing Sex-Selective Abortions.

Box 4.6. International and regional standards concerning the rights of the girl child

States have an obligation to eliminate discriminatory practices leading to the phenomenon of missing women.

The concept of missing women was first introduced by Amartya Sen in the late 1980s. He hypothesised that over 100 million women were missing due to excess female mortality resulting from inequality and neglect (Sen, 1990[7]). Commitment to addressing preferential treatment of sons over daughters within the region is widespread.

- The "right to life" is guaranteed to every individual under several international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 3, 1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art. 6, 1966).
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, ratified or accessed by all 12 countries) recognises that "every child has the inherent right to life" and calls on States Parties to "ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child" (Art. 6).
- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, requires States Parties to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of […] practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes" (Art. 5).
- The Programme of Action adopted during the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference, 1994, attended by all 12 countries) enjoins "leaders at all levels of the society [to] speak out and act forcefully against patterns of gender discrimination within the family, based on preference for sons" (Action 4.17).
- The Council of Europe passed Resolution 1829 (2011) condemning sex-selective abortion and calling on member states (including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia,

Moldova and Ukraine) to prohibit prenatal sex selection.

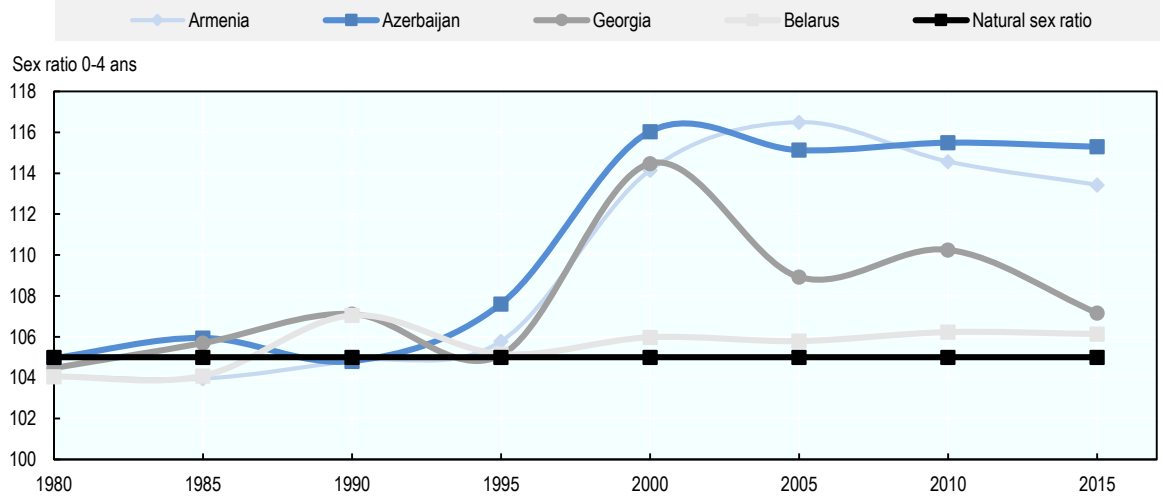
- Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have also signed or ratified the Oviedo Convention (1997) of the Council of Europe, which prohibits sex selection except for medical reasons.

In-depth analysis of missing women

The SIGI results demonstrate a split in the region concerning discrimination against girls in the household. On the one hand, all nine countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia show little or no evidence of missing women (they score 13% and 6% respectively in this indicator, compared to 6% at the global level). The natural sex ratio among children ages 0-4 is around 105 males/100 females (WHO, 2011[8]) and is not expected to rise above 106 in the absence of sex-selective abortions, female infanticide or preferential treatment of sons over daughters. It is slightly above what would be naturally expected in Ukraine (106.3), Moldova (106.7) and Uzbekistan (107.1). However, the historic evolution of the sex ratio in these countries does not suggest recurrent discrimination against girls that would translate into missing women. On the other hand, three of the world's eight countries[16] with the highest levels of discrimination in the missing women indicator are found in the Caucasus: in Azerbaijan (93%), Armenia (76%), and Georgia (27%), fewer girls than expected are being born.

Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have an alarming number of missing women. It is estimated that 170 000 women in the three countries are missing in the age group 0-19 as a result of preference for sons (UNFPA, 2012[9]). There are 108 boys per 100 girls aged 0–4 in Georgia, 113 boys per 100 girls in Armenia, and 115 boys per 100 girls in Azerbaijan. The sex ratio in Azerbaijan is the second highest in the world after the People's Republic of China. This trend started in the mid-1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4. Sex ratios for ages 0-4 in selected countries



Note: Sex ratio for ages 0-4, defined as the average number of boys per 100 girls. Belarus is shown as a reference country with no phenomenon of missing women.
Source: UNDESA (2017), World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/world-population-prospects-the-2017-revision.html.

The situation in the Caucasus reflects the low value given to daughters compared to sons. As neighbouring countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia share some social norms, including a bias in favour of having sons. In Armenia for example, 54% of the population declare that if a family were to have just one child, they would prefer to have a boy, compared with 10% who would prefer a girl and 35% for whom it does not matter. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, 27% and 46% of the population, respectively, would prefer a boy (CRRC, 2010[10]). The preference for sons is rooted in traditional stereotypes regarding men's and women's roles in the society. Sons are viewed as a lifelong economic resource, and they bear primary responsibility for taking care of their elderly parents. They are also associated with higher social prestige and perpetuation of the ancestral line and family name. In contrast, daughters are seen as a liability who, once married, will contribute instead to their in-laws' families. They are also perceived as less capable than sons of supporting themselves and their families (World Bank, 2015[11]).

Box 4.7. Legislation and awareness raising to rebalance the sex ratio in Armenia

With 114 boys for every 100 girls in 2015, Armenia had one of the highest sex imbalance levels in the world, surpassed only by China (116) and Azerbaijan (116). In the early 2000s, the sex ratio at birth was as high as 118 boys per 100 girls, and the ratio for the fourth child in a family with three daughters was 177. Yet by mid-2017, Armenia's sex ratio had fallen to 111 boys for every 100 girls. This indicates that the various studies, programmes and legislative measures undertaken since 2011 to understand and address the reasons behind sex-selective abortions are starting to yield positive results.

Several studies conducted by the UNFPA since 2011 on the prevalence of and reasons for sex-selective abortions in Armenia have allowed governmental and development actors to formulate evidence-based policies and programmes to tackle the issue. Prevention of sex-selective abortions was included in the Gender Policy Strategic Programme 2011-15 and the State Programme 2015-17 on Preventing Sex-Selective Abortions and its action plan.

In 2014, Misoprostol, a drug commonly used to terminate non-desired pregnancies, was added to the list of prescription drugs, and in 2016, sex-selective abortions were outlawed. In parallel, several organisations conducted large-scale activities to raise awareness on the harmful consequences of prenatal sex selection; to train health care, social and educational service providers on preventing sex-selective abortions; and to change harmful stereotypical attitudes towards girls and women. Activities included training sessions, public events, printing of leaflets and posters, and the broadcast of messages and videos on mass media (social networks, radio and TV channels).

Sources: European Union and International Center for Human Development (2016), "Monitoring Public Policy and Programmes to Prevent Gender-Biased Sex Selection and Sex-Selective Abortions in the Republic of Armenia, https://ichd.org/?laid=1&laid=1&com=module&module=static&id=1179 (accessed 7 March 2019); Financial Times (2017), " 'Our community loves boys more.' Armenia's missing girls", https://www.ft.com/content/a4ecb4a2-713f-11e7-93ff-99f383b09ff9 (accessed 7 March 2019).

The cultural preference for sons exists elsewhere, but it translates into skewed sex ratios only in the Caucasus. Discriminatory social norms favouring sons over daughters are found in many countries. For example, 37% of the population in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan think a university education is more important for a boy than for a girl, compared to 24% of the population in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

(Inglehart et al., 2014[12]). Yet skewed sex ratios are observed in the latter three Eurasian countries only. This is the result of intertwined factors:

- Economic and social hardship following the collapse of the Soviet Union may have forced some Eurasian families to reduce the number of children they had, or reinforced the desire for sons to compensate for the disappearance of social safety nets.
- Fertility rates have been declining: while Eurasian women had on average 2.5 children in 1990, they have fewer than 2 today (World Bank, n.d.[13]). As a result, parents have fewer opportunities to have a son, and they may adapt their fertility decisions accordingly (World Bank, 2015[14]). For instance, parents in Armenia who have three daughters are five times more likely to have another child than parents who have three sons.
- Increased and cheaper access to technologies to determine the sex of unborn foetuses and to have sex-selective abortions has allowed people to terminate pregnancies rather than give birth to girls. The larger unbalances in sex ratios for second and third children suggest that sex-selective abortions have been used as a means to not have daughters (World Bank, 2015[11]). In Georgia for example, the sex ratio is balanced among first-born children (105) but rises to 117 for the third birth (National Statistics Office of Georgia, 2015[15]).
- The phenomenon is amplified by high male mortality. Infant and under-five mortality rates are higher among boys than girls, as is normally expected; this indicates the absence of post-natal discrimination against girls.

Reproductive autonomy

Key messages

- **Abortion on demand is legal in all 12 countries of Eurasia**, one of the world's regions where women's reproductive autonomy rights are most secure in cases of non-desired pregnancy.
- **But many women still face barriers to obtaining safe abortions**. Despite the fact that all Eurasian women live under liberal abortion laws, many continue to face barriers to obtaining safe and affordable procedures. Access to abortion is often complicated by the difficulty of finding providers willing to perform it, especially in rural areas, and by the legal and social stigma the procedure carries.
- **Abortion rates are falling with the advent of modern contraception.** While induced abortion has traditionally been used to regulate fertility, abortion rates have been falling as modern contraception methods become more available.
- **But access to modern contraception remains challenging**, especially for low-income categories. Some 11% of women in the region lack access to family planning services**,** in line with the world average of 12%. Women living in the Caucasus (14%) or in Central Asia (15%) are more likely to have an unmet need for family planning than women living in Eastern Europe (6%). In addition**,** 10% of women rely on traditional contraceptive methods such as withdrawal or abstinence, up to 30% in Azerbaijan, compared to 6% at the world level.

- **Ukraine is the best performer in this dimension.** Although all countries protect women's reproductive autonomy, Ukraine has the lowest proportion of women who cannot meet their need for family planning (5%). Therefore, it scores 2% in the reproductive autonomy indicator.

Key policy recommendations

- **Ensure that the right to abortion is guaranteed in practice** and that all women can access safe and legal abortion, especially poor women and women living in rural and remote areas.
- **Ensure that all women have affordable and secure access to high-quality and culturally accepted family planning methods**, through a dedicated national budget line for the procurement of contraceptive commodities. For example, Mongolia has been allocating funds for family planning commodities in the national health budget since 2009.
- **Improve knowledge of modern contraceptive methods**, and women's rights in this regard, for both men and women. Kazakhstan, for instance, has committed to conducting awareness-raising measures and to expanding access to contraception, reproductive health, family planning and counselling services under the Concept on Family and Gender Policy for 2030. Ukraine also offers a good-practice example (Box 4.9).

Box 4.8. International and regional standards concerning women's reproductive autonomy

Women's sexual and reproductive health and rights are enshrined in several international and regional treaties.

- The CEDAW (1979), signed or ratified by all 12 countries, calls on States Parties to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, "the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights" (Art. 16).
- The International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo Conference) brought together 194 governments in 1994. They recognised that "ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility [is a] cornerstone of population and development-related programmes".
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) reaffirms that the rights of women "include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health" (Art. 96).
- More recently, the necessity to ensure universal access to "sexual and reproductive health-care services" (SDG Target 3.7) and to "sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights" (SDG Target 5.6) has been integrated to the SDG framework.

In-depth analysis of reproductive autonomy

Women's reproductive health outcomes have improved in recent decades. The Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goal 5 ("Improve maternal health") triggered greater attention to women's reproductive health needs. Increased availability of family planning services in the region has reduced maternal mortality due to healthier spacing of births, fewer pregnancies and unsafe abortions (UNFPA, 2014[16]). Shifting social norms have also given women greater decision-making authority over their own health. In Armenia, 26% of women did not have a say in decisions regarding their own health care in 2000; this dropped to 4% in 2016 (DHS, n.d.[3]). The maternal mortality ratio in the region has been more than halved, from 63 deaths per 100 000 births in 1990 to 28 in 2015 (World Bank, n.d.[13]). Teenage pregnancy has also decreased. While there were 44 births per 1 000 adolescent girls in 1990, there were 27 in 2016 (World Bank, n.d.[13]).

Eurasian legal frameworks protect women's reproductive autonomy. In all 12 countries, women can legally obtain an abortion (within a 12-week gestational limit in most cases, and at a later stage of the pregnancy under specific circumstances). The Soviet legacy made the region one of the most protective of women's rights in this aspect: in 1920, the Soviet Union became the world's first territory to legalise induced abortion. All Eurasian countries were either part of the Soviet Union (11 countries) or within its sphere of influence (Mongolia), and the right to abortion has been safeguarded. Some countries have reformed their abortion laws since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but none has introduced restrictions. As a result, all countries in the region are in line with international standards concerning women's reproductive autonomy (Box 4.8).

Box 4.9. A co-ordinated approach to promote modern contraceptive use in Ukraine

The use of contraceptives worldwide has significantly increased in the past decades, from 55% of in-union women in 1990 to 63% in 2010. In Ukraine, this rate has increased only marginally, from 66.6% to 67%. Poor knowledge and misconceptions about modern contraception are a major barrier to modern contraceptive use in Ukraine.

To increase positive attitudes and expand the use of modern contraceptives, the JSI Research & Training Institute developed a communications strategy for all stakeholders wishing to change social norms around family planning.

Government and development actors thus adopted a co-ordinated and national approach to increase knowledge and use of family planning and shift mistrustful attitudes. The "Healthy Women of Ukraine" campaign ran from 2011-16 and reached 7.8 million Ukrainians, among whom 25 000 participated in education sessions.

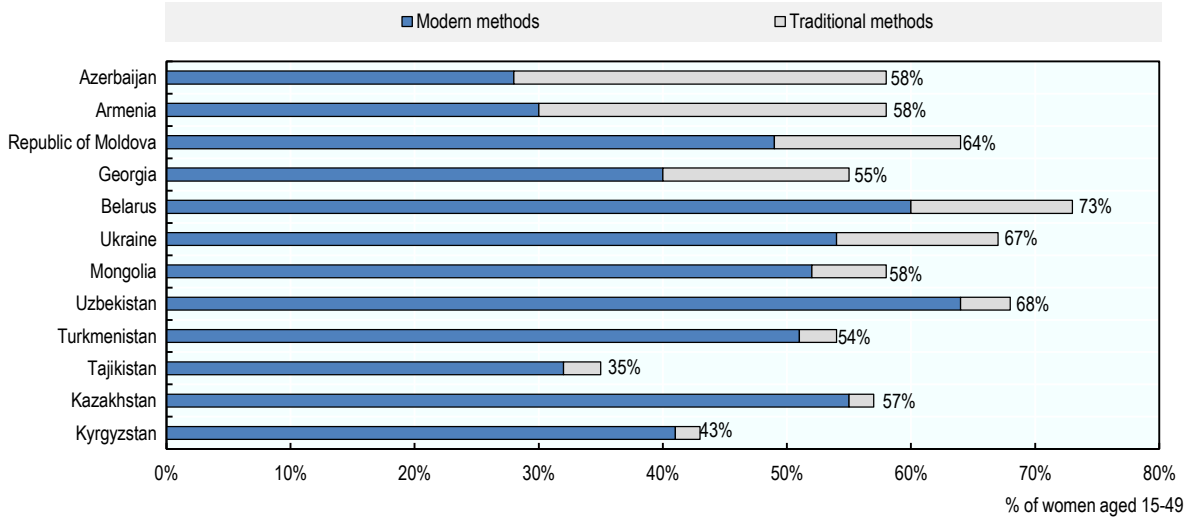
Sources: Alkema et al. (2013), "National, regional, and global rates and trends in contraceptive prevalence and unmet need for family planning between 1990 and 2015: a systematic and comprehensive analysis", https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)62204-1 (accessed 7 March 2019); Podolskyi et al. (2018), "Contraceptive experience and perception, a survey among Ukrainian women", https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-018-0651-8 (accessed 7 March 2019); Compass (n.d.), "Healthy Women of Ukraine Program", https://www.thecompassforsbc.org/project-examples/healthy-women-ukraine-program (accessed 7 March 2019).

But many women still face barriers to obtaining safe abortions. Despite the fact that all Eurasian women live under liberal abortion laws, many continue to face barriers to obtaining safe and affordable procedures. In some countries, women have to overcome legal barriers to obtain an abortion. This may involve a mandatory waiting period, even

when it is not medically required (e.g. Armenia, Georgia), or a requirement for parental consent when the woman is a minor (e.g. Kazakhstan, Ukraine). In practice, access to abortion is often complicated by the difficulty of finding providers willing to perform it, especially in rural areas (ASTRA Network, 2014[17]). The right of medical practitioners to put forward a conscience clause can compound this difficulty. Other barriers include the cost of the procedure and the social stigma it carries (ASTRA Network, 2014[17]). Across eight countries,[17] 47% of the population think that having an abortion can never be justifiable, and this rises to 68% in Georgia (Inglehart et al., 2014[12]).

Abortion rates have fallen as access to contraception improves. In the 1990s, modern contraception was of poor quality and in short supply in the region, and many families resorted to abortion to prevent an unplanned birth (World Bank, 2015[11]). In 1990, the annual rate of induced abortion was an estimated 86 per 1 000 women of reproductive age (15-44), compared to 35 per 1 000 women at the world level. In 2014, this had fallen to about 18 abortions per 1 000 women in the region (UNICEF, 2015[18]). The steep fall in abortion rates has paralleled the steady increase in availability and use of family planning methods. In Central Asia, there were 73 unintended pregnancies per 1 000 women in 1990-94; this fell to 53 by 2010-14 (Singh et al., 2017[19]). The trend is similar for Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Sources of contraceptives have also diversified. In Armenia, for example, 88% of women obtained information or supplies of contraception from public sources in 2000, while in 2016, 65% of women used private medical sources (DHS, n.d.[3]).

Figure 4.5. Contraception use among women of reproductive age



Note: Percentage of women aged 15-49 who use a contraceptive method, by type of method (modern or traditional), in 2018. Modern methods of contraception include combined oral contraceptives, progestogen-only pills, implants, progestogen-only injectables, monthly injectables or combined injectable contraceptives, combined contraceptive patch and combined contraceptive vaginal ring, intrauterine devices, male and female condoms, male and female sterilisation, lactational amenorrhea, emergency contraception pills, standard days method, basal body temperature method, two-day method and symptom-thermal method. Traditional methods of contraception include the calendar or rhythm method and withdrawal (WHO, 2018[20]).
Source: UNFPA (2018), *World Population Dashboard*, https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard.

But access to modern contraception remains challenging. Across the region, 11% of women still have an unmet need for family planning. This percentage is in line with the

global average of 12% but hides sub-regional disparities. In Eastern Europe, 6% of women have an unmet need for family planning, compared to 14% in the Caucasus and 15% in Central Asia. Difficulties in accessing family planning seem to be related to its cost rather than its availability. Across six countries with disaggregated data,[18] 17% of the poorest women have an unmet need, compared to 12% of the richest, but rural women (15%) are not particularly worse off than urban women (14%) (DHS, n.d.[3]). In six countries of the region,[19] access to modern contraception is particularly challenging. Overall, 62% of the region's married or in-union women of reproductive age use a method of contraception. This compares to the global average of 63%. However, women in Eurasia disproportionately use traditional contraception: 10% rely on traditional methods such as withdrawal or abstinence, compared to 6% at the world level.[20] Traditional methods are used by 30% of women in Azerbaijan, 28% in Armenia and around 14% in Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine (Figure 4.5) (UNFPA, 2018[21]). In a context characterised by declining fertility rates, investing in modern family planning services has not been a policy priority for many governments because of the belief that family planning negatively affects fertility rates (UNFPA, 2014[16]).

Notes

[1] RPI scores for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan cannot be computed because of a lack of information on the prevalence and acceptance of violence against women.

[2] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[3] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[4] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[5] Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, Art. 13.

[6] Law concerning the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Art. 13, 15 and 19.

[7] Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

[8] Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan.

[9] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[10] Law No. 2012-XII of the Republic of Uzbekistan On Enactment of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art. 118.

[11] Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia and Ukraine.

[12] For more details and sources, please refer to the SIGI 2019 country profiles available at www.genderindex.org.

[13] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

[14] Law 763-IIc Amending the Criminal Code of Georgia, Art 1.

[15] And more precisely on the "proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age" (SDG Target 5.3.2).

[16] At the global level, alarming sex ratios are found in Georgia, Hong Kong (China), Chinese Taipei, India, Viet Nam, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the People's Republic of China (in ascending order of the sex ratio among 0-4 year olds).

[17] Proportion of the population who think that having an abortion can never be justifiable, by country: Azerbaijan (51%), Armenia (57%), Belarus (30%), Georgia (68%), Kazakhstan (40%), Kyrgyzstan (55%), Ukraine (33%) and Uzbekistan (51%) (Inglehart et al., 2014).

[18] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

[19] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

[20] These figures are computed using data from UNFPA (2018) assuming the rate of traditional contraception use is equal to the difference between the rate of total contraception use and the rate of modern contraception use.

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Chapter 5. Restricted access to productive and financial resources

This chapter presents an overview of women's restricted access to productive and financial resources. It examines discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – that restrict women's access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets across 12 Eurasian countries, covering areas such as secure access to land, secure access to non-land assets, secure access to formal financial services and workplace rights. The chapter also seeks to provide policy makers with the necessary tools and evidence to design effective gender-responsive policies in order to improve women's economic empowerment.



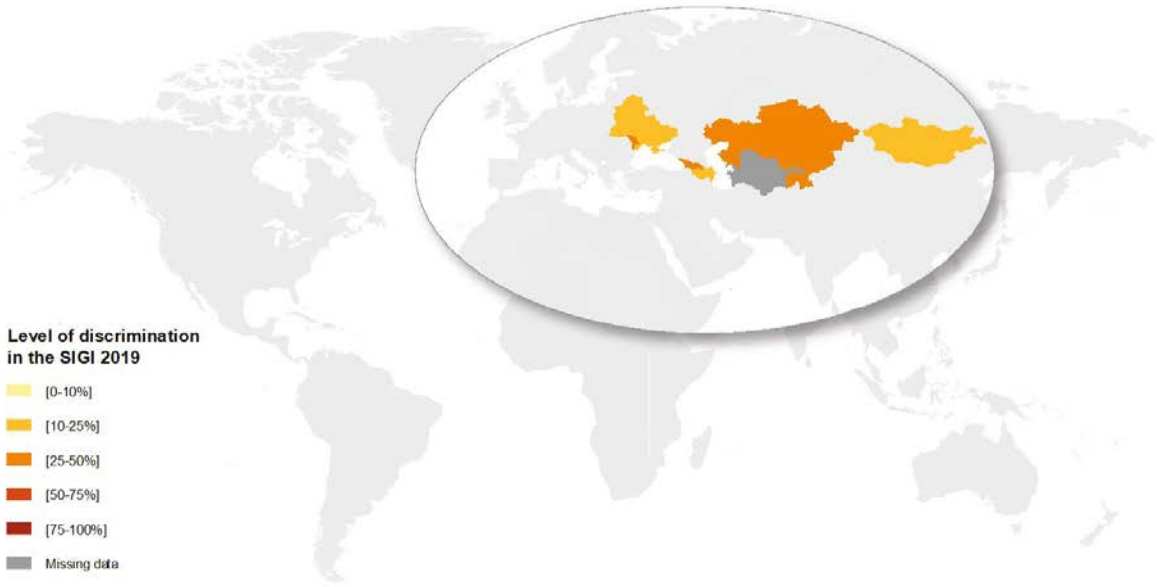
Box 5.1. Measuring women's restricted access to productive and financial resources

The *restricted access to productive and financial resources* (RAPFR) sub-index captures women's restricted access to and control over critical productive and economic resources and assets. This includes: discriminatory laws that deny women access to land, decent work and financial resources; discriminatory customary practices in ownership or decision-making over land, household property and other assets; discriminatory practices or attitudes towards women's formal work; and social norms dictating that women's property ownership or access to credit should be mediated by men.

The sub-index is composed of four indicators, all of which take into account non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices:

- "**Secure access to land assets**" captures the share of women land titleholders and the level of their legal protection, i.e. whether women and men have equal and secure access to land.
- "**Secure access to non-land assets**" captures the share of women house owners and the level of their legal protection, i.e. whether women and men have equal and secure access to non-land assets.
- "**Secure access to formal financial services**" captures the share of women holding a bank account and the level of their legal protection, i.e. whether women and men have equal access to formal financial services.
- "**Workplace rights**" captures the share of women managers and the social and legal acceptance of working mothers, i.e. whether women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities in the workplace. This includes issues related to employment protection during pregnancy, maternity/parental leave, equal remuneration for work of equal value and equal access to professions.

Figure 5.1. Level of discrimination regarding women's access to productive and financial resources



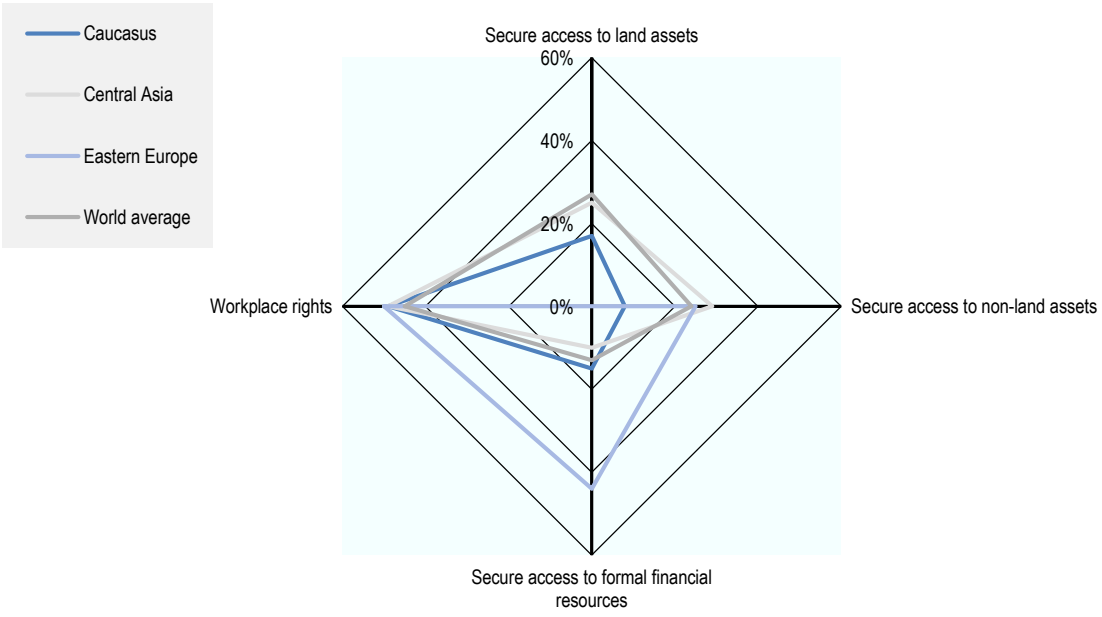
Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Mongolia and Ukraine have low levels of discrimination (10-25%). Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Tajikistan, have medium levels of discrimination (25-50%). Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not ranked due to missing data. For more information see Annex A, Table A1.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender Institutions and Development Database (GID-DB)*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Women's economic empowerment is restricted by insecure workplace rights. The region's average level of discrimination of 26% in the RAPFR sub-index is the second worst score across the four sub-indices of the SIGI. The region has a lower level of discrimination than the global average in secure access to non-land assets (17% versus 24%) and to formal financial resources (10% versus 13%), and it performs better in the indicator of secure access to land-assets (10% versus 27%), but it scores poorly in workplace rights (50% versus 44%). The ten countries ranked in this sub-index[1] span from very low to medium levels of discrimination (Figure 5.1). Belarus is the best performer, with a level of discrimination of 15%, followed by Ukraine (18%). Six follow with a low level of discrimination (from 20% in Mongolia to 29% in Kyrgyzstan), while Kazakhstan (31%), Tajikistan (34%) and Moldova (37%) lag behind.

Discrimination is most pervasive in Central Asia. Women in Central Asia face a higher level of discrimination (28%) than women in Eastern Europe (23%) and the Caucasus (24%) (Figure 5.2). SIGI scores in the workplace rights indicator of this sub-index are similar across all sub-regions. In the three remaining indicators, sub-regional disparities are observed. For instance, discrimination against women in non-land assets is three times higher in Central Asia than in the Caucasus. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the law provides men and women with the same legal rights and access to land assets. However, prevailing customary, religious or traditional practices hinder women in exercising their rights in Central Asian countries.

Discrimination is particularly high in women's workplace rights. Women are proscribed from working the same night hours as men in five countries[2] and from entering certain types of jobs in ten countries.[3] In Eurasia, 53% of women participate in the labour force, compared to 71% of men (World Bank, n.d.[1]). These regional averages fall close to the global average: around the world, 49% of women and 75% of men participate in the labour force. Across eight countries in the region,[4] women earn about 30% less than men on average per month, from 14% less in Moldova to 49% less in Azerbaijan (UNECE, n.d.[2]).

Figure 5.2. SIGI results in the "restricted access to productive and financial resources" indicators



Note: Sub-regional and world averages, best and lowest performers in the four restricted access to productive and financial resources indicators.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Belarus performs relatively well due to laws promoting women's economic rights. With a level of discrimination of 15%, Belarus performs relatively well in this sub-index compared to neighbouring countries (but ranks 34th at the world level). Belarusian legislation does not discriminate against women in relation to rights of ownership, use, decision-making power or use as collateral of land and non-land assets. Partial community is the default marital property regime. In addition, there is no legal discrimination against married or unmarried women with regard to access to formal financial services, including opening a bank account and obtaining credit. The law mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value and protects women from discrimination on the basis of sex in employment. Furthermore, paid maternity and parental leave schemes are available. Parental leave can be taken fully or partially by the father, the grandparents or other relatives of the child until the child reaches the age of three. In addition, the dismissal of pregnant women is prohibited and mothers are guaranteed an equivalent position after maternity leave. Nevertheless, women still face certain legal restrictions in the workplace, such as the type of work they can undertake.

Belarusian women are excluded from numerous occupations in approximately 70 jobs. Furthermore, it is not prohibited for prospective employers to ask about family status.

Secure access to land assets

Key messages

- **Governments have taken first steps to strengthen women's land rights**. This is the case across the region, and is in line with international standards concerning women's land rights (Box 5.2).
  - All countries explicitly recognise women's rights to access land on equal terms with men.
  - In six countries,[5] joint titling is compulsory for married couples.
- **Measures to secure women's access to land are lacking in practice.**
  - At the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union,[6] women were often disadvantaged in land privatisation and restitution schemes, as men were largely listed as the de facto heads of household and landholders. This discrimination in practice still persists today.
  - Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the region's only two countries that have implemented public measures to protect women's land rights, and no country has promoted legal literacy programmes.
  - Only half of the region's countries[7] have developed public measures, programmes and projects to ensure women's participation in co-operatives, producer organisations and/or rural committees.
- **Women's access to land is not protected.** Legal equality for women's land rights in national legal codes has not proven sufficient to protect women's access to land on the ground.
  - Women represent 34% of the agricultural labour force in the region but only 27% of agricultural landholders.
  - Further efforts are needed to measure gender gaps in access to land. Eight countries[8] do not collect sex-disaggregated data and/or statistics on land, including information on agricultural ownership by men and women.
- **Discriminatory customary laws prevail in Central Asia and the Caucasus.** Traditional patrilineal kinship systems limit women's land rights in countries like Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
- **Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine are the leading performers** in this indicator. In these countries, women enjoy the same rights to access land assets as men both in law and in practice. In Moldova, land ownership can be awarded to vulnerable groups such as widows and women (World Bank, 2014[3]). The country's Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (2015-20) includes measures to promote opportunities for young women in running family farms and to support women's economic empowerment in rural settings (FAO, 2016[4]).

Key policy recommendations

- **Establish implementing measures to increase women's access to land.** The government of Kazakhstan included measures to equalise women's and men's access to land in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy for 2012-16.
- **Develop legal literacy programmes** to help women, families and communities understand their statutory rights to land. While legal frameworks in the region guarantee women's land rights on equal terms with men, they are largely thwarted by women's general lack of awareness of their rights.
- **Promote joint land titling to increase registration of women's land rights.** In Moldova, the law[9] provides for joint ownership of assets purchased or constructed by spouses during marriage – even when information for one of the spouses is not registered for the property in question.
- **Promote women's participation and leadership** in global, national and local institutions, in governance mechanisms in rural areas and in bodies concerned with the ownership and use of land, in order to increase women's autonomy, voice, agency and decision-making power. In Armenia, the Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness project aimed, in part, to ensure women's participation in co-operatives, producer organisations and rural committees (CEDAW, 2016[5]).
- **Collect sex-disaggregated data** at the individual level to gain a better understanding of barriers to women's land access and ownership. Data collection needs to be coupled with qualitative research methods to take local conditions into account. Currently, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova collect comparable data on land and agricultural ownership by men and women.
- **Design awareness-raising campaigns** about women's land rights to tackle discriminatory patrilineal inheritance traditions and practices that favour men over women. In 2017, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) designed gender-awareness programmes to enhance women's access to land in Uzbekistan (Box 5.3).
- **Adopt an integrated approach to bring inheritance rights into the debate.** Women's inheritance and ownership rights should be at the centre of the formulation of land policies, programmes and projects.

Box 5.2. International standards concerning women's land rights

Women's equal access to, use of and control over land is grounded in core international human rights instruments.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) recognises the right to property (Art. 2).
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) guarantees equality between women and men (Art. 3).
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) calls on States Parties to "undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the

enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights" (Art. 3).

- The CEDAW (1979) acknowledges that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development" (Art. 14.2).
- The ILO's 1989 Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (No. 169) states that "the rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised" (Art. 14.1).
- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) calls on governments to "ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land" and "to formulate and implement policies and programmes that provide access to and control of land" (Para. 58(n)).
- The Habitat Agenda (1996) commits governments to providing "legal security of tenure and equal access to land to all people, including women and those living in poverty", and to undertaking "legislative and administrative reforms to give women full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inheritance and to ownership of land" (Para. 40 (b)).
- The CEDAW Committee considers "women's rights to land, natural resources, as well as fisheries as fundamental human rights" (CEDAW Committee, 2016[6]).
- The SDG framework (2015) recognises women's secure access to land as a key pillar of women's economic empowerment. The international community has committed to secure, enforce and monitor progress on women's land rights in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda by including land-specific SDG indicators (1.4.2[10] and 5.a.1[11]).

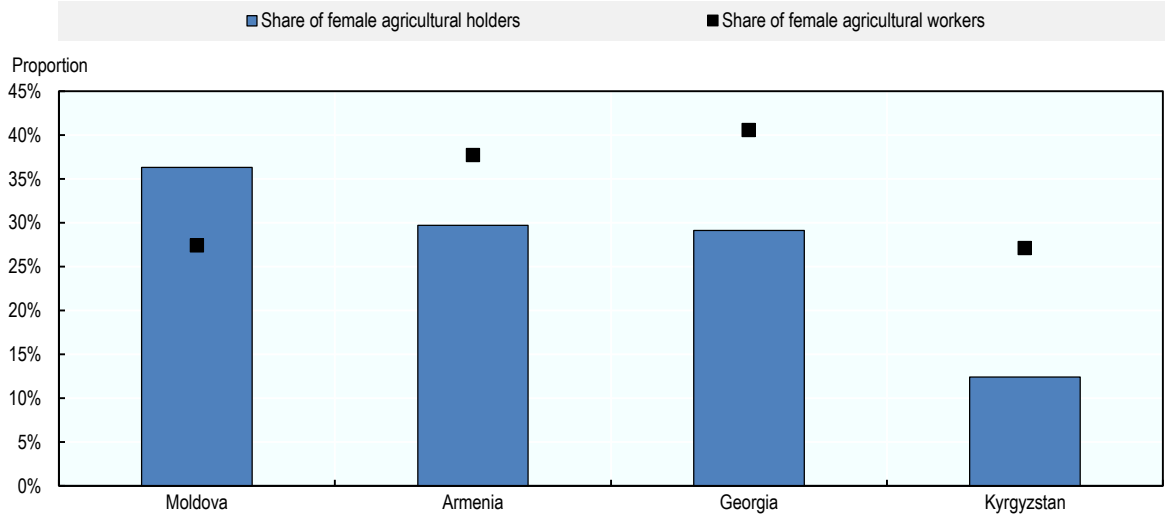
In-depth analysis of secure access to land assets

Comprehensive legal frameworks aim to secure women's rights to land in the region. All 12 Eurasian countries specifically recognise women's rights to own, use and make decisions about land, and to use it as collateral on equal terms with men during marriage and after divorce. One measure adopted by some governments to strengthen women's land rights is to incorporate provisions for joint registration into the legal and policy framework for married, divorced and abandoned women and widows. Furthermore, half of the region's countries[12] have made joint land titling compulsory for married couples, and three[13] of them have implemented this measure for de facto unions as well.

Gender gaps in land ownership persist despite legal gender equality. The limited data available make clear that women are disadvantaged with respect to men. For instance, in the four countries[14] where data is available, 27% of landholders are women (from 12% in Kyrgyzstan to 36% in Moldova). This stands in stark contrast to their participation in the rural economy as agricultural workers. Women in Eurasia are more likely to work in agriculture than their male counterparts: 30% of women are employed in agricultural sector versus 26% of men (Figure 5.3). In Belarus, nearly two-thirds of all female workers are employed in the agricultural sector (66%), compared to only 13% of male workers.

The history of Eurasia has shaped the obstacles women face to access land. In many countries in the region, women continue to feel the effects of discriminatory practices used during the post-Soviet privatisation or restitution of land. In Moldova, for instance, women gained only 1% of assets after land privatisation reforms (Kissyelova, 2004[7]). During this period, men often remained the only name legally registered, even when strategies encouraged registration of both spouses (Stanley, Lamb and De Martino, 2013[8]). This situation was illustrated in Mongolia: following the privatisation of state-owned property, most immovable and movable assets were registered to heads of household, who were men in a majority of cases. Moreover, when women were the heads of household, the distribution of assets appears to have been discriminatory (FAO, 2017[9]). In Tajikistan, property certificates are commonly issued in the husband's name only or in the name of the wife's father or brothers-in-law (ADB, 2016[10]; USAID, 2010[11]). In Uzbekistan, while women's land rights are guaranteed under the Family Code and the Land Code, there is evidence to suggest that men are typically the de facto head of household and thus may be likely to administer joint assets without the consent of the wife. In addition, there are reports of land being deeded solely to the de facto head of household (FAO, 2017[9]).

Figure 5.3. Share of female agricultural holders and workers



Note: This figure presents the female share of agricultural holders as the percentage of total holders and the female share of agricultural workers as the percentage of total female employment by country (when both information are available).
Source: World Bank (2018), *Employment in Agriculture*, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/sl.agr.empl.fe.zs ; OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Due to deeply embedded patrilineal kinship systems, the highest levels of discrimination against women's rights to access land assets in practice are found in Central Asia and the Caucasus. In eight countries [15], women are denied the same rights to access land assets as men under traditional, religious and/or customary laws. Evidence from this region attests to the role of traditional patrilineal kinship systems in limiting women's land and property rights (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. In Armenia, patrilocal marriages, more common in rural areas, see brides go to live with their husbands' families. Within this traditional form of marriage, women usually do not claim their ownership rights over land, either within their own families or within their new stepfamilies, due to a fear that this might be seen as confrontational (FAO, 2017[12]). In Tajikistan, where all land is state owned,[16] women face strong discrimination in accessing land. Women are often excluded from receiving individual or household plots because they are often thought to lack farming knowledge and the ability to cultivate their own land (USAID, 2010[11]).

Legal illiteracy and unregistered marriages compound restrictions to women's land and property rights. In countries where discriminatory traditional practices exist, there is a general lack of knowledge about women's rights over land among the population, including rural women and civil servants. Many Georgian women are unaware of their land ownership rights under civil law, and most property is registered in the name of the husband or the male head of household. Women in Georgia are more often "co-owners" of property (e.g. as shareholders of parents' property, or in the case of a divorce). Unregistered marriages are especially problematic for women because they deprive them of their rights to joint land property.

Further efforts are required to improve female land ownership. No country in the region has promoted legal literacy programmes and projects to enable women to understand their land and property rights. Only two countries in Central Asia[17] have implemented public measures to protect women's land rights. In efforts to promote, protect and empower rural women, half of the region's countries[18] have implemented measures in national programmes to enhance women's participation in co-operatives, producer organisations and rural committees, and to provide training for rural women and capacity-building activities for female-led co-operatives.

Box 5.3. Promoting women's access to land in Uzbekistan

In 2017, the ADB launched the Horticulture Value Chain Development Project, which aims to mitigate environmental, social and gender impact in the farming sector in Uzbekistan.

The project entails a comprehensive Gender Action Plan to enhance women's access to land. It will ensure that loans from participating commercial banks prioritise women and reach at least 20% of the female farmers in the vicinity. It will also set up associations of women farmers in Bukhara, Fergana, Syrdarya, Surkhandarya and Tashkent, and establish groups of women to promote new agribusiness enterprises and new farms.

Moreover, the project aims to raise awareness of the role women play in agriculture and their needs. Success stories about women's groups and associations of female farmers will be disseminated through the local media. Gender-awareness programmes for the main stakeholders and beneficiaries were developed. Examples include the Council of Farmers, participating commercial banks and representatives of the Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Programme.

Source: ADB, *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment,* https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/479841/uzbekistan-country-gender-assessment-update.pdf.

Secure access to non-land assets

Key messages

- **Legal frameworks enshrine equal rights** to access non-land assets for women and men across the region.
  - All countries guarantee women's property rights on an equal footing with men.
  - No country recognises men as the sole administrator of property, and this removes an important barrier to women's property rights.
- **But measures to strengthen women's access to property are missing.** Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the only countries in the region that have implemented public measures to protect women's property rights.
- **Discriminatory practices hinder women's access to non-land assets** in Central Asia and in Georgia in the Caucasus. Due to traditional and religious practices under patrilineal systems, women's access to and control over property remains vulnerable, as men are traditionally expected to care of their parents and thus inherit family property and assets.
- **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine score best** in this indicator thanks to strong legislative frameworks protecting women's rights to non-land assets. The frameworks guarantee women and men the same rights and secure access to non-land assets both in law and in practice. In Armenia, spouses have equal property rights, and any property purchased during the marriage is owned jointly. Both spouses must agree on the administration of marital property.

Key policy recommendations

- **Implement public measures to strengthen women's property rights**. In this context, Kazakhstan's 2030 Family and Gender Policy aims to increase female ownership of non-land assets.
- **Promote jointly titled property**, which would specifically unlock women's access to formal financial services (Box 5.4). A change in the regulations covering asset registration could provide women with equal rights to property and enable them to use assets as collateral to secure loans.
- **Conduct innovative and holistic awareness-raising campaigns** at the community level to ensure that the entire community, and not just women, understands the legal framework regarding women's property rights. Uzbekistan presents a good-practice example (Box 5.5).
- **Adopt an integrated approach to make inheritance rights part of the debate**.

Box 5.4. International standards with respect to women's property rights

Women's rights to property and non-land assets are guaranteed under numerous international and regional instruments.

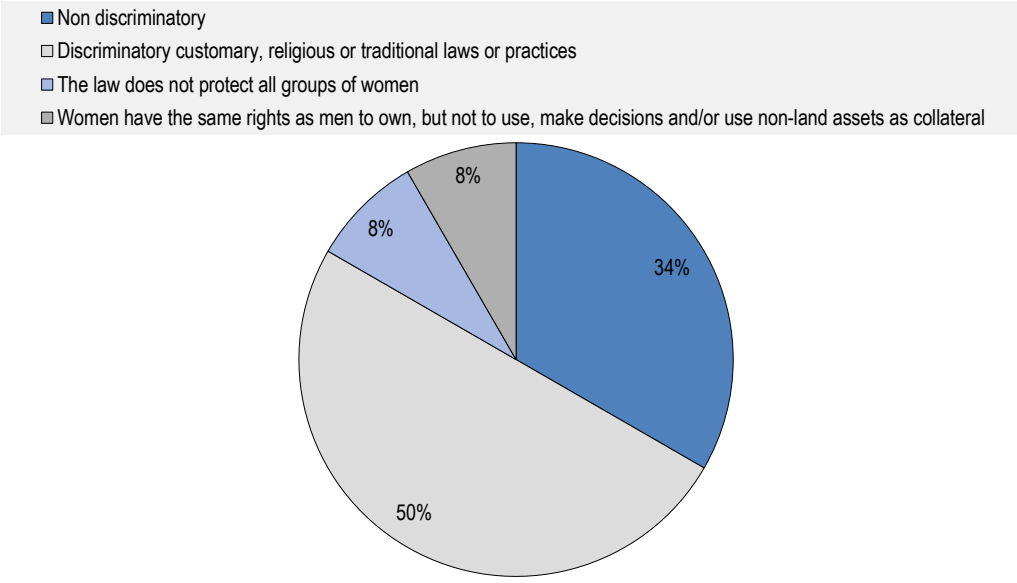
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) establishes the right of everyone to own property regardless of sex (Art. 17.1 and 2).
- The CEDAW (1979) explicitly calls on States Parties to take all appropriate measures to ensure the same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property (Art. 16.1 (h)).
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) calls on national and international NGOs and women's groups to protect women's right to full and equal access to economic resources, including the right to inherit land and other property (Para. 60).

In-depth analysis of secure access to non-land assets

Eurasian countries protect women's rights to access non-land assets through strong legislative frameworks. All countries recognise women's rights to own, use and make decisions about non-land assets and to use these assets as collateral on equal terms with men during marriage and after divorce. Furthermore, no country entitles husbands to solely administer and dispose of marital property. In Ukraine, for instance, marital property is to be administered by the spouses jointly. In Moldova, Law No. 121 (2012) prohibits discrimination in the sale or lease of movable or immovable property. The legal frameworks governing property and assets of 11 countries apply to all groups of women. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have implemented public measures to protect women's property and non-land assets rights, in particular within the context of inheritance.

But gender inequalities in access to property still prevail. Across the region, women are still significantly less likely to own a house in their own name. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, only 19% of documented homeowners are women, while in Armenia, women account for 26% of all house owners. In Kyrgyzstan, 7% of women own a house alone, in comparison with 31% of men (DHS, 2012[13]).

Figure 5.4. Legal frameworks governing property rights



Note: Share of countries per category of discrimination in property rights. See Annex B for more details on the coding. Non discriminatory: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine; Discriminatory customary, religious or traditional laws or practices: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; The law does not protect all groups of women: Turkmenistan; Women have the same rights as men to own, but not to use, make decisions and/or use non-land assets as collateral: Moldova.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Several barriers to women's inheritance of non-land assets persist. Women's access to property and tenure security is closely related to inheritance practices. Despite strengthened legislative frameworks, discriminatory traditional or religious practices in all countries[19] of the Central Asian sub-region and in Georgia restrict women's rights to inherit (Figure 5.4). These inheritance practices have a strong influence on attitudes to property ownership and often discriminate against women. Property and non-land assets are often registered solely in the husband's name. This is particularly true in rural areas, where women often have little involvement in economic decisions. In addition, many married women live in properties belonging not to their husbands but to their fathers-in-law. Women's ability to own and manage property is limited due to traditional gender roles, which place men in charge of non-land assets. In Turkmenistan, property rights in some Muslim communities are governed by religious laws that favour men. In Mongolia, joint ownership practices are uncommon despite the guarantees of the Mongolian Civil Code and Constitution (Khan, Van Den Brink and Aslam, 2013[14]).

Box 5.5. Improving women's access to property in Uzbekistan

In 2011, the ADB launched the Housing for Integrated Rural Development Investment Programme (HIRDIP) in Uzbekistan with a clear gender action plan to improve women's access to property.

Outreach campaigns took place under the programme, and participating commercial banks implemented new gender policies under the supervision of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. Applicants to the programme were ranked via a 19-question

scorecard that gave preference to women by awarding extra points to widowed and divorced women with children, teachers and health care workers, and people with home-based businesses, most of whom are women.

As an outcome, women became owners of 4 300 homes constructed under the programme between 2012 and 2015 (26.5% of the total). Access to high-quality electricity, natural gas and piped water significantly reduced the burden of housework, enabling women to use the time gained to set up home-based businesses. In 2015-16, women owned 823 of the 2 003 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) established by HIRDIP home buyers and received 40% of the micro loans for SMEs available to programme participants.

Source: ADB (2018), "Uzbekistan country gender assessment update", https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/479841/uzbekistan-country-gender-assessment-update.pdf.

Secure access to formal financial services

Key messages

- **Women have equal rights to access formal financial services** thanks to political commitments that have translated into legal reforms (Box 5.6). All countries in the region have removed legal barriers to women's access to bank accounts and credits.
- **This access does not fully address women's needs for financial inclusion.** Gender gaps in access to bank accounts in financial institution have been closed at the regional level, and female ownership of accounts almost doubled between 2011 and 2017 (World Bank, 2017[15]). However, improving women's economic empowerment requires also guaranteeing women equal access to loans, building financial literacy and offering training opportunities that understand and address the specificities of women's individual situations.
- **Lack of asset ownership, collateral and financial literacy hinders** financial inclusion for women. Across the region, women are exposed to many difficulties in gaining access to credit. This is due to traditional stereotypes viewing women's role as a supplementary earner, to women's lack of appropriate skills and to institutional barriers that discourage women from taking out bank loans.
- **Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova score best in this indicator**. These countries guarantee women and men the same rights to open a bank account in a formal financial institution and to obtain credit, in both law and in practice.

Key policy recommendations

- **Adopt an integrated and multiple-entry-points approach** and mainstream gender and women's financial inclusion into the national policy agendas. Women's financial inclusion requires better access to asset ownership, education and financial literacy, in particular among women belonging to minority groups and living in rural areas. The government of Kyrgyzstan is supporting gender-based approaches in credit institutions (2015-17 National Action Plan on Gender Equality). The plan aimed to include gender experts to analyse the national microfinance strategy, conduct an inventory of the lending terms and conditions

of the financial institutions, and develop specific recommendations to improve women's access to financial services.

- **Support financial and digital literacy programmes among women and girls,** particularly among vulnerable and minority groups. Training in information and communications technology (ICT) and financial literacy in school curriculums is central to women's financial empowerment. These programmes allow women and girls to improve their ability to make transactions and manage budgets, and to learn about the importance of saving money, even at a young age.
- **Implement women's entrepreneurship programmes** to improve women's access to finance and economic empowerment (Box 5.7). In 2016, Belarus became one of the first Eastern European countries to launch a Women in Business programme implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The programme promotes women's entrepreneurship and supports SMEs led by women through access to finance and know-how solutions necessary for business growth.

Box 5.6. International standards on women's rights to formal financial services

Women's access to formal financial services is enshrined in a number of international treaties.

- The CEDAW (1979) calls on States Parties "to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular: the right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit" (Art. 13 (b)).
- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) states that governments should "promote and support women's self-employment and the development of small enterprises, and strengthen women's access to credit and capital on appropriate terms equal to those of men through the scaling up of institutions dedicated to promoting women's entrepreneurship, including, as appropriate, non-traditional and mutual credit schemes, as well as innovative linkages with financial institutions (para.166 (a)).
- The CEDAW Committee, in its general recommendation No. 25 (2004), noted that States Parties should implement special temporary measures where necessary in the areas of credit and loans, as well as in legal awareness. Such measures should be directed at women who are subject to multiple forms of discrimination, including rural women.

In-depth analysis of secure access to formal financial resources

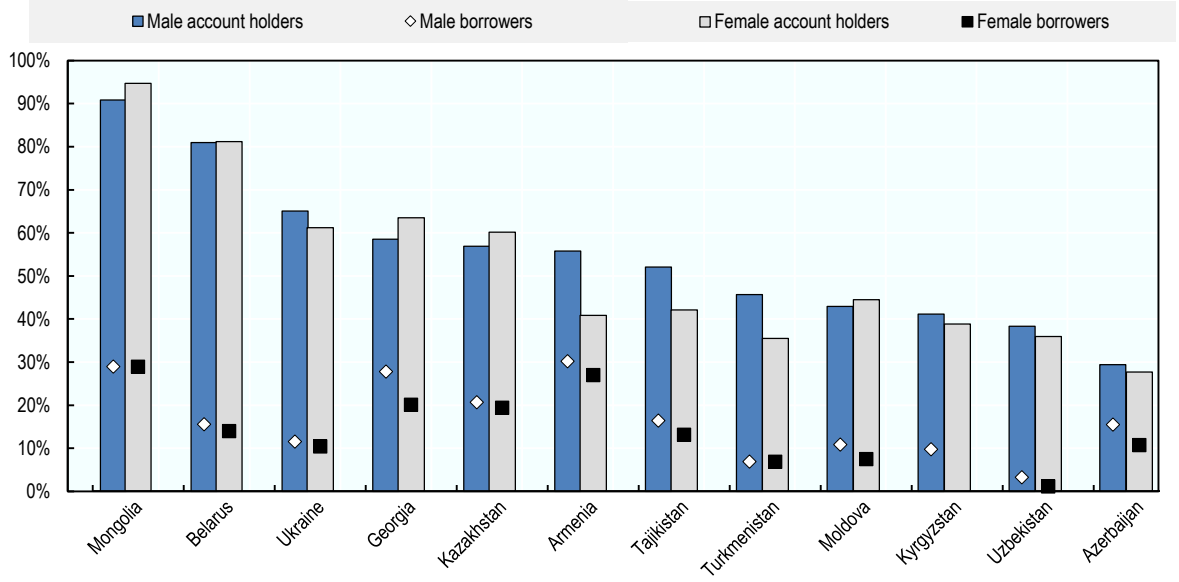
Laws and policies promote women's equal access to formal financial services in the region. The legal frameworks of all Eurasian countries provide women with the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution and they guarantee women's equal access to credit. Governments are taking steps to improve women's financial inclusion: more than half of the region's countries[20] have promoted gender-sensitive measures to expand women's access to formal financial services. In Kazakhstan, for instance, numerous government programmes have been established to promote women's economic empowerment and ensure equal access to financial services by 2030 through the establishment of training centres on business management and

entrepreneurship. They include the 2020 Business Road Map, the 2020 Employment Road Map and the 2009-15 Programme on Microcredit for Female Entrepreneurship.

Women in Eurasia benefit from improved access to bank accounts. Regionally, 50% of all account holders are women, ranging from 44% in Tajikistan to 54% in Georgia (Figure 5.5). In some countries, there is a reverse gender gap in bank account ownership: women hold more bank accounts than men in Belarus (54%), Kazakhstan (54%), Moldova (53%), Mongolia (52%) and Ukraine (53%). But relative equality in access to formal bank accounts hides gender gaps in other areas of women's financial inclusion, such as saving patterns, access to formal credit and the size of loans.

Eurasian women face more difficulties in accessing credit than men, particularly women in living rural areas. Women are slightly less likely (14%) to borrow money from a financial institution than their male counterparts (16%). Women in the Caucasus are more likely to borrow money from a financial institution (19%) than women in Central Asia (13%) and Eastern Europe (11%) (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018[16]) (Figure 5.5). At the regional level, 9% of all women own a credit card, compared to 11% of men. Urban women are more independent in loan-related decisions compared to their rural counterparts. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the proportion of women who received a loan in the previous five years was higher in urban areas (25%) than in rural areas (16%). Some 35% of urban women who received a credit initiated the process themselves, and in 28% of cases it was their husband or partner, compared to 16% and 34% in rural areas, respectively (NSC, 2016[17]).

Figure 5.5. The gender gap in accessing financial services



Note: The bars represent the percentage of males / females (age 15+) who report having an account (by themselves or together with someone else) at a bank or another type of financial institution or report personally using a mobile money service in the past 12 months. The dots and squares represent the percentage of males / females (age 15+) who report borrowing any money from a bank or another type of financial institution in the past 12 months.
Source: World Bank (2018), *Global Findex database*, https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/.

Women still face barriers to financial services in certain sub-regions. The customary, religious or traditional practices or laws of two countries[21] in Central Asia still discriminate against women's legal right to open a bank account at a formal institution, and two-thirds of the countries[22] in Eurasia, most of them in Central Asia (four countries) and the Caucasus (three countries), discriminate against women's rights to obtain credit. This is due to prejudices about their ability to repay loans and to the difficulty for women to draw up business plans and provide collateral owing to financial illiteracy and the fact that property is often registered in the name of the husband or male head of household. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, social norms and cultural practices restrict women's freedom to pledge their own property as collateral without acquiring any other consent. This may inhibit women from accessing sizeable loans: only 1-2% of loans of over EUR 3 800 are granted to women (EBRD, 2013[18]). In Mongolia, due to the unequal distribution of assets and property, women often require the consent of the husband, who is the head of the household, to apply for a loan or credit using the property as collateral (Khan, Van Den Brink and Aslam, 2013[14]). Bureaucratic challenges, including high taxes, heavy customs procedures and numerous inspections, further hinder women's access to credit.

Box 5.7. The Women in Business programme in Eurasia

The Women in Business programme, implemented by the EBRD, is promoting women's access to credit in Eurasia. The programme works alongside women-led SMEs to promote women's participation in business through a range of initiatives, including improved access to finance (EBRD, 2017[19]).

The programme provides access to finance through credit lines to local banks devoted to women-led businesses, and works closely with partner financial institutions to guarantee that financial products are able to better meet the needs of these women-led SMEs. This involves helping the banks build their internal capacity and introduce procedures and organisational structures to efficiently start or expand lending to women.

The programme began in 2016 and to date has been implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine. By mid-2017, credit amounting to more than EUR 36.3 million had been provided through six partner banks in the Eurasia region (EU4Business, 2017[20]).

Female entrepreneurs continue to face an uphill battle because of restricted access to formal financial services. At a time when the number of female-run enterprises is steadily increasing, access to finance is the most important obstacle for entrepreneurship among women. On average, while 7% of men report having borrowed for business purposes, only 5% of women did the same (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2018[16]). Because of women's lower likelihood of owning property, banks' collateral requirements have a greater impact on women than men. In Kazakhstan, for instance, access to finance was identified as a major constraint by 15% of women-led firms, compared to 7% of firms led by men (World Bank, 2013[21]). Another obstacle to women's entrepreneurship is their lower self-confidence and openness to risks. In Georgia, a fear of failure is reported by 42% of female entrepreneurs, compared to 31% of their male counterparts (GEM, 2014[22]). Women also face greater bureaucratic obstacles than men to register a business, as well as harassment and discrimination by tax authorities. In Tajikistan, registering companies takes women ten days more than men on average (Sattar, 2012[23]). In addition, social norms may discourage some women from pursuing entrepreneurial activities. In Ukraine,

female entrepreneurs tend to operate businesses that are small and in strongly feminised and less profitable sectors, while men tend to engage in entrepreneurship activities in the information and technology, engineering services, transport, construction and manufacturing sectors (USAID, 2017[24]).

Workplace rights

Key messages

- **Governments have taken steps to combat workplace discrimination** in an effort to close gender gaps in outcomes.
  - All countries but Turkmenistan have introduced legislation on equal pay and prohibited discrimination in the workplace based on sex.
  - All countries have adopted measures to offer paid maternity leave, and paid parental leave entitlements are available in seven countries.
- **However, gender gaps in labour market outcomes are persistent.**
  - Female labour-force participation stands at 53%, compared to 71% for men, and the gender wage gap is around 30% in the region.
  - Occupational segregation and glass ceilings are pervasive: 13% of women are employed in the industry sector compared to 31% of men, and women account for only 9% of board members of central banks, 15% of members of the governing boards of trade unions and fewer than 15% of board members of companies registered on the stock exchanges.
- **Discrimination continues to obstruct equal employment opportunities** for women across the region.
  - Women are prohibited from working the same night hours as men in five countries[23] and from entering certain types of jobs in ten countries.[24]
  - 16% of the population think it is not perfectly acceptable for a woman to work outside the home for a pay.
  - 56% of the population consider that men make better business executives than women do, from 46% in Ukraine to 75% in Azerbaijan.
  - Due to social norms, people still consider caring responsibilities and household work to be a female domain, and this hinders men from taking parental/paternity leave entitlements. Uptake remains low: in Belarus, for instance, only 1% of fathers accept parental leave entitlements.
- **Mongolia is the best performer in this indicator,** with a level of discrimination of 17%. The government has prioritised eliminating gender-based discrimination in the workplace. The passage of the 2011 Law on Promotion of Gender Equality underlined Mongolia's commitment to equality in the workplace. Women are guaranteed equal rights in employment and labour relations, companies are required to report on implementation of gender-equality initiatives and the status of sexual harassment in the workplace and paid maternal leave is available for 17 weeks. However, other child leave schemes are not guaranteed. Women hold more than 40% of all managerial positions in Mongolia.

Key policy recommendations

- **Remove discriminatory legal provisions** affecting women's equal access to employment (Box 5.8). For instance, lists of banned professions for non-pregnant and non-nursing women should be eliminated. These discriminatory labour laws prevent women from freely choosing their profession or type of job and from exercising their legal right to work. They also reinforce the idea that women should be confined to their domestic and reproductive roles. Belarus has reduced the number of professions in which female work is prohibited, but women are still prohibited from doing 70 jobs, down from 270.[25]
- **Implement measures to close the gender wage gap** and promote greater transparency in pay, promotion and reward processes in the public and private sectors. Measures to close the wage gap include mentoring programmes, where women can learn how to negotiate their salary and working conditions.
- **Increase women's participation and leadership in male-dominated sectors.** Traditionally male-dominated industries and occupations, such as construction, infrastructure, transport and mining, often provide skilled, well-paid and high-status jobs. In Kyrgyzstan, the Osh Auto Transport Enterprise collaborated with the EBRD to tackle gender stereotypes in the transport sector and increase women's participation (Box 5.10).
- **Address social norms restricting women's economic contribution.** Policy makers should promote awareness of the benefits for children and the family of a fulfilled mother, including both homemakers and mothers who work outside the home. It is important to challenge social norms that assume men should be favoured when jobs are scarce or that men make better managers than women.
- **Implement measures aimed at promoting work-life balance,** such as free or affordable early-childcare services, particularly for low-income families, and flexible work arrangements (flexible hours or flexi-time schemes) for both fathers and mothers. The Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future Development Concept highlighted plans to increase the number of kindergartens and to facilitate childcare for working parents (Government of Azerbaijan, 2015[25]).
- **Provide employees with paid paternity or parental leave benefits,** and progressively increase the length of these entitlements. Longer child-related programmes lessen the disparities in leave-taking between low- and high-income families and reduce the burden of women's unpaid care and domestic work. In 2016, the government of Moldova amended the Labour Code[26] to include 14 days of fully paid paternity leave.
- **Encourage men to take paternity and parental leave entitlements,** and promote awareness-raising campaigns about healthy masculinities and the importance of equal sharing of parenting responsibilities. Partnerships between diverse NGOs can have a major role in changing attitudes on caregiving.

Box 5.8. International standards concerning women's workplace rights

Women's rights in the workplace have been guaranteed through numerous international agreements and conventions.

- The CEDAW (1979) calls on States Parties to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
  - the right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings
  - the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment
  - the right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service, and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training
  - the right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work".
- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) underlines the need to take appropriate measures in consideration of women's reproductive role and functions and "eliminate discriminatory practices by employers [...] such as the denial of employment and dismissal due to pregnancy or breast-feeding, or requiring proof of contraceptive use, and take effective measures to ensure that pregnant women, women on maternity leave or women re-entering the labour market after childbearing are not discriminated against" (Para. 165 (c)).
- Core ILO conventions establish key labour standards that promote effective equality between women and men in employment.
  - The Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951 (No. 100) has been ratified by all governments in Eurasia.
  - The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958 (No. 111) has been ratified by all countries in the region.
  - The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention of 1981 (No. 156) has been ratified by three of the region's countries.[27]
  - The Maternity Protection Convention of 2000 (No. 183) has been ratified by one third[28] of the region's countries.
  - The Domestic Workers Convention of 2011 (No. 189) has not yet been ratified by any Eurasian country.
- The SDG Frameworks (2015) recognise the importance to "achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030" (target 8.5). Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda set two indicators (8.5.1 and 8.5.2) to measure and monitor progress in this area.

In-depth analysis of workplace rights

Governments have made progress on women's pay and employment conditions. All Eurasian countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 100 on Equal Remuneration (1951), and all countries but Georgia have introduced legislation on equal remuneration for work of equal value (Box 5.9). In addition, all countries but one prohibit discrimination in employment based on sex.[29] The legal frameworks of Belarus and Tajikistan mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value (World Bank, 2018[26]). Two-thirds of the region's countries[30] have specific bodies tasked with receiving, investigating, adjudicating and enforcing complaints based on discrimination in employment, while six countries[31] impose penalties for companies in cases of gender discrimination in recruitment and promotions.

Box 5.9. The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value

The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value is set out in ILO Convention No. 100 (1951). It calls on member states to "ensure the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value". To date, 173 countries have ratified this convention.

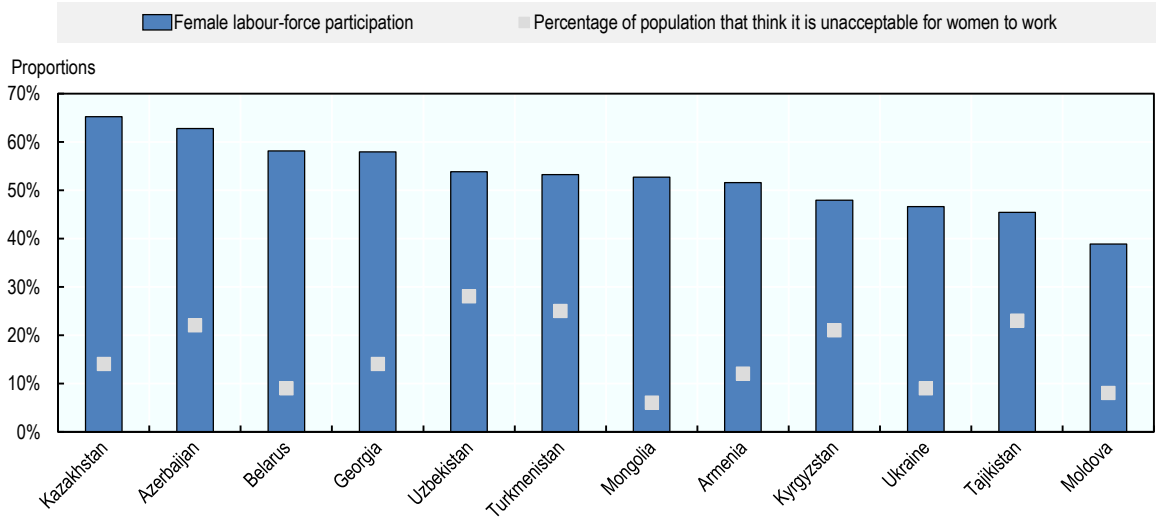
Considering that most labour markets are characterised by horizontal gender segregation and that minimum wages in female-predominant sectors are lower in many cases, countries are recommended to respect the principle of *equal remuneration for work of equal value* rather than *equal pay for equal work*.

Equal remuneration for work of equal value covers broader cases where women and men carry out different work in different sectors, while equal pay for equal work limits the application of the equal pay principle for work done by two individuals in the same area of activity and within the same working unit. Examples of jobs that are of equal value include: cleaners (mostly women) and drivers (mostly men); and social affairs managers (mostly women) and engineers (mostly men).

All governments have adopted measures to offer paid maternity leave. All countries in Eurasia require employers to offer paid maternity leave and all but Azerbaijan protect women's employment when they are on maternity leave. All the countries meet the requirements of ILO Convention No. 183 on Maternity Protection (Box 5.8) and provide for at least 14 weeks of paid leave. At the regional level, women are entitled to take on average 20 weeks of paid maternity leave, ranging from 17 weeks in Mongolia to 28 weeks in Turkmenistan. In addition, three countries[32] in Central Asia and two countries[33] in Eastern Europe prohibit employers from asking about a woman's pregnancy or her intention to have children during recruitment or promotion processes.

Most governments promote parental leave. Parental leave schemes are guaranteed in ten countries[34], and seven[35] of them grant paid parental leave. Paternity leave is available in seven countries[36], among which only Moldova establishes paid entitlements to fathers.

Figure 5.6. Attitudes towards women's employment and female labour participation



Note: This figure presents the proportion of the population considering that it is unacceptable for women in their families to get a paid job outside the home, in relation to female labour-force participation.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

These efforts have not been enough to close gender gaps in labour-market outcomes.

- **Men are more likely than women to work in all Eurasian countries**. Across Eurasia, women have poorer employment outcomes than men: only 53% of women participate in the labour force, compared to 71% of men (World Bank, n.d.[1]). Female labour-force participation is higher in the Caucasus (57%) than in Central Asia (53%) and Eastern Europe (48%).
- **Men are also likely to earn more money than women.** Across eight countries in the region,[37] women earn about 30% less than men on average, ranging from 14% in Moldova to 49% in Azerbaijan (UNECE, n.d.[2]).
- **Women's labour-force participation is marked by horizontal segregation** in Eurasia. For example, 58% of women are employed in the services sector, compared to 43% of men. The second most important sector for working women is agriculture, which employs 29% of them compared to 26% of working men. Gender segregation is more pronounced in the industry sector, which employs 31% of working men compared to 13% of working women (World Bank, n.d.[1]). Gender stereotypes play an important role in proliferating horizontal segregation. In Belarus, for instance, qualitative studies among schoolgirls under the age of ten show that dream jobs follow a highly gendered pattern. Moreover, 77% of Belarusian male university students are reported to believe that women should expect to be the main caregivers as mothers and housewives (World Bank, 2014[27]).
- **Men still dominate managerial positions across the region.** In ten countries where data is available,[38] 35% of all managers are women, ranging from 15% in Tajikistan to 46% in Belarus. The regional average is above the global average of 24%. While gender equality in decision-making positions in business is gaining ground in Eastern European countries, where women hold 43% of all managerial positions, countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia still lag behind, with 33% and 32%, respectively.

Discriminatory formal and informal laws impede equal employment opportunities. Discrimination on the basis of sex in employment is prohibited in 11 countries,[39] yet legal restrictions persist across all sub-regions. The legal frameworks of Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine are comprehensive, specifically covering non-discrimination on the basis of sex in job advertisements, selection criteria, recruitment, hiring, promotions, training, assignments and termination of contracts. But restrictions across the region range from laws prohibiting women from working the same night hours as men (five countries[40]) to laws barring them from pursuing the same professions as men (ten countries[41]). In Uzbekistan, the labour code[42] restricts women's ability to access the labour market by including dispositions that prohibit women from working in certain industries (mining, construction and metalworking). In six countries,[43] customary, religious and/or traditional laws discriminate against women's legal right to enter certain professions. In Mongolia, for instance, discriminatory practices encourage women to pursue unpaid positions within the family sphere. When women do enter the labour market, customary practices consider certain job and employment sectors as inaccessible to women, such as mining or construction (Khan, Van Den Brink and Aslam, 2013[14]).

Discriminatory social norms curtail women's ability to enjoy economic autonomy. At the regional level, 16% of the population think it is not perfectly acceptable for a woman to work outside the home for pay. This figure increases to 22% in Central Asia, followed by the Caucasus (18%) and Eastern Europe (9%) (Figure 5.6). In Belarus, for instance, 68% favour a traditional family arrangement where the man works and the woman takes care of the house and children (EBRD, 2016[28]). Challenges to women's advancement to managerial roles include traditional ideas about women's status in society that restrict their access to professional networks, which are dominated by men. In eight countries,[44] 56% of the population consider that men make better business executives than women do, from 46% in Ukraine to 75% in Azerbaijan (Inglehart, 2014[29]).

Men's reluctance to benefit from paternal leave reflects traditional views of masculinity. Although paid parental leave schemes are granted in seven countries[45], men are unlikely to take their paternity or parental leave entitlements. For instance, only 1% of Belarusian fathers take advantage of parental leave (CEDAW, 2016[30]). In Armenia, 87% of men declare they would not take paternity leave after the birth of a child (compared to 23% of women), and 48% mention that this is because their spouse or someone else would take care of the child (2% of women) (CRRC, n.d.[31]).

Box 5.10. An initiative in Kyrgyzstan to bring women into the transport sector

The Osh Auto Transport Enterprise has been working closely with the EBRD to tackle gender issues, and in particular to address the company's low number of female drivers: only one out of 164 drivers was a woman.

Under this initiative, an Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination Policy and an Equal Opportunities Action Plan were jointly developed to attract and retain qualified female staff. Simultaneously, several human resources policies and practices were revised under a new corporate development plan.

This led to 11 women being trained to become bus drivers, challenging social norms and the male-dominated environment in the transport sector. Of the women who were trained, five were recruited, significantly raising the initial share of female drivers and staff.

Source: EBRD, https://www.wherewomenwork.com/Career/1290/EBRD-year-of-gender-equality-policies.

Notes

[1] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

[2] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine

[3] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[4] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine.

[5] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[6] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[7] Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[8] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[9] Law No. 1543 on Immovable Property Cadastre, Art. 39.

[10] Indicator 1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognised documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure.

[11] Indicator 5.a.1: (a) Percentage of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (out of total agricultural population), by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

[12] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[13] Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine.

[14] Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova.

[15] Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[16] District and local governments are responsible for allocating land plots for limited or perpetual use, meaning that those wishing to establish a family *dekhan* farm must petition their local government for land (Land Code, Art. 8-9).

[17] Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

[18] Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[19] Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[20] Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

[21] Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[22] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[23] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[24] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[25] Labour Code of the Republic of Belarus, Art. 262; Resolution No. 35 of 12 June 2014.

[26] Law No. 71, Art. 124.

[27] Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

[28] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Moldova.

[29] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[30] Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[31] Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Ukraine.

[32] Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Turkmenistan

[33] Moldova, Ukraine

[34] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan

[35] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

[36] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

[37] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine.

[38] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine.

[39] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[40] Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

[41]Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[42] Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Art. 225, Order No. 865 of 5 January 2000.

[43] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan.

[44] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[45] Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

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Chapter 6. Restricted civil liberties

This chapter presents an overview of discrimination against women's civil liberties in Eurasia. It examines discriminatory social institutions – formal and informal laws, social norms and practices – that obstruct women's access to, participation and voice in the public and social spheres across 12 countries, covering areas such as citizenship rights, political voice, freedom of movement and access to justice. The chapter seeks to provide policy makers with the necessary tools and evidence to design effective gender-responsive policies in order to strengthen women's political participation and civil liberties.



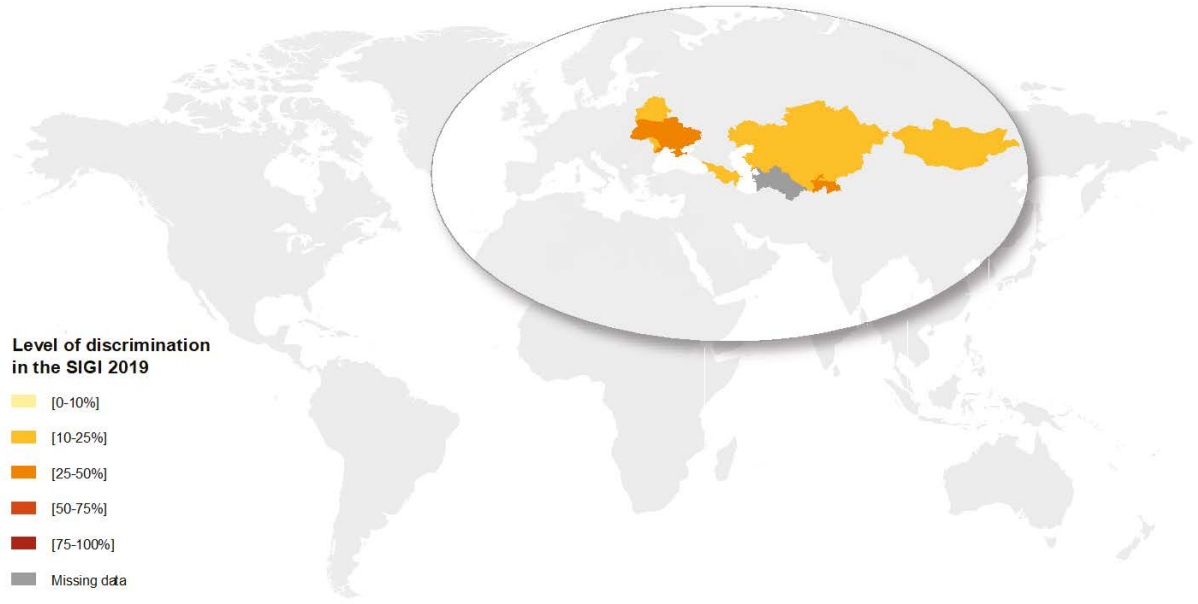
Box 6.1. Measuring women's restricted civil liberties

The *restricted civil liberties* (RCL) sub-index captures discriminatory laws and practices restricting women's access to, participation and voice in the public and social spheres. It encompasses laws, practices and social norms that restrict the mobility or movement of women and girls and that limit their access to the public space, including their ability to travel or apply for a passport.

The civil liberties sub-index is composed of four indicators, all of which take into account non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices.

- "**Citizenship rights**" captures the level of legal discrimination against women regarding their citizenship rights and ability to exercise these rights in practice.
- "**Political voice**" captures the level of legal discrimination against women with respect to their political participation and right to vote, as well as their representation in national parliaments.
- "**Freedom of movement**" captures the formal and informal restrictions that limit women's freedom of movement and access to public space, such as restricted ability to apply for a passport or travel outside the country.
- "**Access to justice**" captures discrimination against women's rights to access justice and opportunity to benefit from justice systems, including religious and customary courts.

Figure 6.1. Level of discrimination regarding women's civil liberties

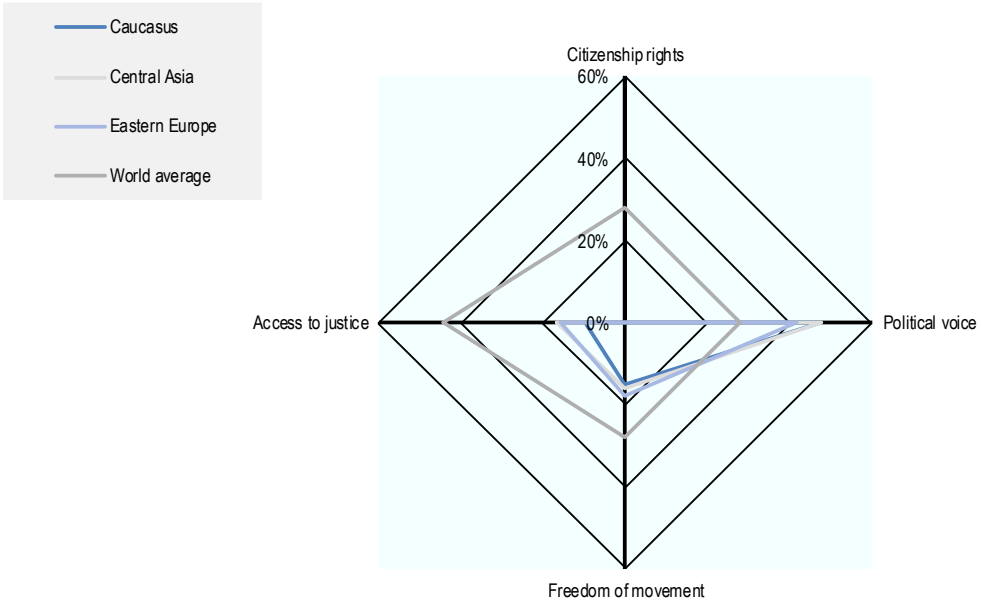


Note: Higher SIGI values indicate higher inequality: the SIGI ranges from 0% for no discrimination to 100% for absolute discrimination. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia and Uzbekistan have low levels of discrimination (10-25%). Tajikistan and Ukraine have medium levels of discrimination (25-50%), and Turkmenistan is not rank due to missing data. For more information see Annex A, Table A1.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Women and men in Eurasia enjoy similar civil liberties. The regional average in the restricted civil liberties sub-index is the second best of the four SIGI sub-indices. With a discrimination level of 21%, the region performs better than the global average (29%). Discrimination is evenly spread across the sub-regions: scores range from 20% in the Caucasus and in Eastern Europe to 22% in Central Asia (Figure 6.1). All 11 of the countries[1] ranked in this sub-index show a low or a medium level of discrimination. Moldova is the best performer with a score of 11%. Nine countries follow with a low level of discrimination (from 18% in Kyrgyzstan to 25% in Tajikistan), while Ukraine (29%) lags behind. The three sub-regions perform similarly in the four indicators of this sub-index (Figure 6.2). For example, discrimination against women's freedom of movement ranges from 15% in the Caucasus to 18% in Eastern Europe.

Women's political voice faces the most discrimination across all sub-regions. With an average level of discrimination of 46% in the political voice indicator, women are not perceived in Eurasia as being capable political leaders (by 62% for the population, from 54% in Eastern Europe to 70% in Central Asia) and remain under-represented in national parliaments (they occupy 19% of parliamentary seats, with little sub-regional variation). However, women and men in all countries have the same citizenship rights. Women's access to justice and freedom of movement are somewhat limited in practice (15% and 16% in the respective indicators), but discrimination remains low.

Figure 6.2. SIGI results in the "restricted civil liberties" indicators



Note: Sub-regional and world averages in the four restricted civil liberties indicators. For more information see Box 6.1.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Moldova is the best performer of the region, with a discrimination level of 11% in this sub-index. Women and men can equally acquire, change and retain their nationality and confer it on their non-citizen spouse and children. They have the same freedom of movement and can apply for a national identity card and passport in the same conditions. The country's commitment to reaching gender equality in public life culminated in 2016 with the adoption of Law No. 71 strengthening non-discrimination requirements in several areas. The law notably introduced a 40% gender quota for candidate lists for national and local elections. Nonetheless, 51% of the population believe that women are less capable political leaders than men. Women hold only 23% of the parliament seats, and they are more likely than men to feel unsafe alone at night in the street.

Citizenship rights

Key messages

- **Women and men have the same citizenship rights in all countries**. No traditional, religious and customary laws and practices infringe upon these rights.
- **Other issues affect women and men alike** in some Eastern European and Central Asian countries, such as low birth registration or high rates of statelessness.

Key policy recommendations

- **Continue efforts to register all citizens,** both at birth and at later stages of life (Box 6.3).
- **Ensure that all people are aware of birth registration requirements** and that they are able to access registration services.
- **Target isolated population groups where registration is lower**, through initiatives such as the campaign targeting the Azeri community in Georgia.

Box 6.2. International standards concerning nationality rights

The right to a nationality is paramount to the realisation of other fundamental rights such as education, social security, employment or political participation. Equality between men and women in this regard is mandatory under a number of international agreements.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "everyone has the right to a nationality" and that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality" (Art. 15).
- The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957), ratified or accessed by six Eurasian countries, specifies that "neither the celebration nor the dissolution of a marriage [...] shall automatically affect the nationality of the wife" (Art. 1).
- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, explicitly calls upon States Parties to "grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality", as well as to "grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children" (Art. 9).
- Resolution 32/7 adopted by the UN Human Rights Council (2016) urges States to "adopt and implement nationality legislation consistent with their obligations under international law, including with respect to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls in nationality-related matters" (Para. 3).

In-depth analysis of citizenship rights

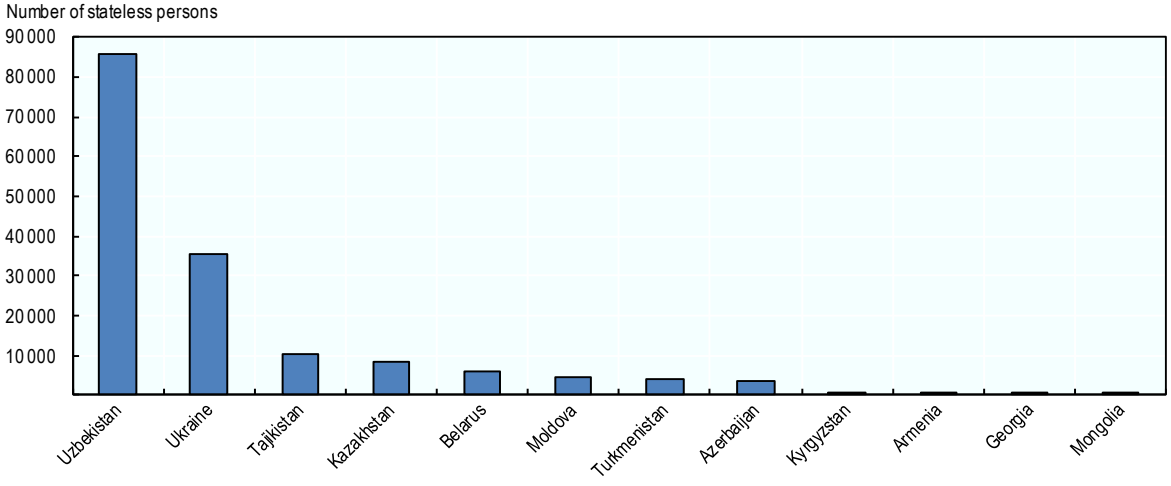
Women and men have equal citizenship rights in Eurasia. Every country in the region complies with international standards (Box 6.2) and provides women with the same rights as men to acquire, change and retain their nationality, as well as to confer their nationality on their non-citizen spouse and children born within and outside of their territories. The law applies to all groups of women and there is no evidence of non-statutory (societal) discrimination against women in traditional, religious and customary laws and practices.

Birth registration is generally high. Across the region, some 98% of children under 5 are registered (World Bank, n.d.[1]). Birth registration rates have traditionally been high in the region and efforts in the last two decades have been devoted to reaching marginalised population groups. There are no significant differences in registration between boys and girls; urban and rural areas; and household income levels (UNICEF, 2013[2]). However, an estimated 700 000 Eurasian children are unregistered, most of them in Tajikistan, where 12% of children are not officially registered. Non-registration of the birth of child has a wide range of dramatic effects, including no civil rights, lack of access to public

services such as health care and education, or increased risk of human trafficking and child marriage.

Statelessness is a major issue in some countries. An estimated 160 000 persons in the region are not considered as nationals by any state under the operation of its law. Although it is difficult to know the exact numbers, approximately 85 000 stateless persons live in Uzbekistan, 35 000 in Ukraine, 10 000 in Tajikistan and 30 000 across the other countries (UNHCR, 2018[3]) (Figure 6.3). Unlike in some other regions of the world, where discriminatory nationality laws are often at the origin of statelessness, in Eurasia many people became stateless as a result of not having obtained national documentation upon the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This affected men and women alike. However, stateless women are often more vulnerable than men to a range of issues, such as human trafficking, child marriage or poor access to healthcare services. In addition, in many households, it is often male family members who obtain an identity document to seek employment abroad, while women engage in informal work opportunities that do not require identity documents. Moreover, women who are living in an informal union because they do not have the papers necessary for official marriage registration have no recourse to the rights and compensations of divorce (UNHCR, 2011[4]).

Figure 6.3. Number of stateless persons by country



Note: Estimated number of stateless persons living in each country as of the end of 2017. Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia are not shown as there as less than 1 000 registered stateless persons in these countries.
Source: UNHCR (2018), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017*, https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf.

Box 6.3. Government-led campaigns to address statelessness in Turkmenistan

Thousands of citizens with undetermined nationality moved to Turkmenistan during Soviet times and were left stateless following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition, the nationality law of neighbouring Uzbekistan requires the country's nationals who establish permanent residence abroad to register with an Uzbek consulate within five years or lose their nationality. Many Uzbek citizens living in Turkmenistan were not aware of this requirement and thus lost their citizenship. As a result of both of these factors, thousands of stateless persons were living in Turkmenistan as of 2007.

To address this issue, the Turkmen government and partners, in particular the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), organised several identification and registration campaigns over the years. A 2007-10 campaign allowed the registration of 4 000 persons. An Action Plan for Joint Activities on Prevention and Reduction of Statelessness was adopted in 2010, and the 2007 campaign was scaled up for the period 2011-14. In addition to the UNHCR, the government partnered with a national NGO, local authorities, village administrators and the embassies of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries to deploy stationary and mobile teams to more than 70 registrations points throughout all provinces in order to assist individuals with the registration and application process. During this campaign, thousands more people received Turkmen nationality.

The review of applications is ongoing, and the government continues to affirm its commitment to addressing statelessness. In 2011, the country acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and in 2012 to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. In 2013, the government adopted a new Citizenship Law incorporating several safeguards to prevent statelessness.

Source: UNHCR (2019), *UNHCR Population Statistics Database*, http://popstats.unhcr.org; UNHCR (2014), *Ending Statelessness Within 10 Years: Good Practices Paper Action I*, https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54e75a244.pdf.

Political voice

Key messages

- **Most countries are committed to strengthening women's political voice.** Legal measures to promote gender-balanced representation in elected public offices exist at the national level in seven countries and at the local level in eight countries[2] across the three sub-regions. Four countries[3] have introduced or strengthened this type of measure since 2014.
- **But quotas have not been enforced because of legal loopholes.** No country has achieved the targeted female representation in parliament.
- **Women remain underrepresented in political life.** They occupy only 19% of parliamentary seats in the region, and Belarus is the only country where women represent more than 30% of members of parliament. Women's political representation ranges from 17% in the Caucasus to 21% in Central Asia.
- **Women's political leadership abilities are still underestimated** due to discriminatory social norms that place women in the home and men in the public space. In all countries, more than half of the population believes that a man makes a better political leader than a woman.
- **Moldova is the best regional performer.** Women and men have the same rights to participate in the political life of the country, and a 40% gender quota for candidate lists for national and local elections has been in place since 2016. But with a discrimination level of 31% in this indicator, the country ranks 42nd at the world level. Stereotypes regarding the role women should play in the society are entrenched: 51% of the population think that women do not make as capable leaders as men, and women occupy fewer than 23% of seats in the parliament.

Key policy recommendations

- **Introduce temporary special measures** such as quotas, reserved seats and requirements for political parties to include women on candidate lists and to fast-track women's representation in national parliaments and local decision-making entities.
- **Supplement quotas with rules and monitoring.** Rules should be established concerning candidates' rank order on lists (women must be placed in winnable positions) and candidates' replacement (a retiring member should be replaced by the next one on the party list from the least represented sex). This should be supported by dedicated funding and accompanied by enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. Sanctions for non-compliance, in particular rejection of candidate lists, have proven more effective than financial incentives.
- **Implement measures to shift mentalities.** Measures are necessary to overcome discriminatory perceptions of women's ability to be competent political leaders **(**Box 6.5**)**. Recognition of the role women play in policy- and decision-making processes should be promoted and female role models should be spotlighted. Girls' and women's participation should be encouraged in schools, universities and corporations, and civil society organisations should foster women's leadership skills and highlight their presence in decision-making spheres.
- **Implement measures to support women who wish to run for election,** such as leadership training or financial support for campaign expenditures. For example, the joint EU-UNDP programme "Women in Local Democracy" in Armenia is designed to enhance women's participation in local governance. It provided training, consultations and networking events to 133 women candidates and helped to elect 87 of them as heads of community and members of local councils.

Box 6.4. International standards concerning equal access in politics and government

Women's presence in politics and government decision-making structures is positive for democratic governance and for education, infrastructure and health standards. This is acknowledged by the international community.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country" and "to equal access to public service in his country" (Art. 21).
- The Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952), ratified or accessed by all Eurasian countries but Azerbaijan, establishes that women shall be "entitled to vote in all elections", "eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies" and "entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions" on equal terms with men (Art. 1, 2 & 3).
- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, calls on States Parties to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country" (Art. 7). In its General Recommendation No. 23 (1997), it further encourages "the use of temporary special measures in order to give full effect to Articles 7 and 8".

- The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) lists women in power and decision-making among its 12 strategic objectives. Specifically, it enjoins states to take measures "that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same level as men" (Strategic Objective G.1.b).
- The UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130 on women and political participation (2012) calls upon States to "enhance the political participation of women" (Para 3).
- SDG Target 5.5 explicitly calls on States to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life".

In-depth analysis of political voice

Countries are increasingly acting to strengthen women's political voice, as encouraged by international treaties (Box 6.4). All women in the region have the right to vote and to hold public and political office in parliament, the public administration and government. To help ensure that these rights translate into gender-balanced representation in elected public office, eight countries[4] across the three sub-regions have instituted measures to promote women's political participation. Six countries instituted mandatory legislated quotas under which party lists of candidates for national and local elections must contain no fewer than 20% of candidates of either sex (Mongolia), 30% (Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) or 40% (Moldova). Some countries instituted measures to encourage parties to comply with the quotas, such as financial incentives (e.g. in Moldova, parties that respect the 40% quota benefit from 10% additional funding) or sanctions for non-compliance (e.g. in Mongolia, candidate lists that do not comply with the 20% quota will not be registered for the elections). In Georgia, the legislation provides 30% supplementary funding to parties that present lists where at least 30% of the candidates are women. In Azerbaijan, there are reserved seats for women in local governments. Four countries have reinforced political commitments in this area since 2014: Georgia increased the additional funding from 10% to 30% in 2014; Ukraine introduced a gender quota at the local level in 2015; Moldova introduced a quota for national and local elections in 2016; and Armenia increased its quota from 20% to 30% in 2016. However, four countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan) have no special measures to promote women's political participation.

Box 6.5. Legal measures to fight discriminatory norms in Moldova

Women in Moldova occupy only 23% of the seats in parliament and 22% of ministerial positions (NBS, 2019[5]). To enhance gender equality, the parliament passed Law No. 71 in 2016. The law introduced amendments to favour gender equality in the public and economic spheres in 15 legal documents, including the Electoral Code, the Law on Government and the Labour Code.

Most notably, this reform introduced a 40% quota for party lists of candidates and for cabinet nominees. In addition, recognising that discriminatory social norms are a major barrier to equality in practice, Law No. 71 introduced provisions prohibiting the use of sexist language and advertising, and established fines for individuals, civil servants and legal entities that do not comply.

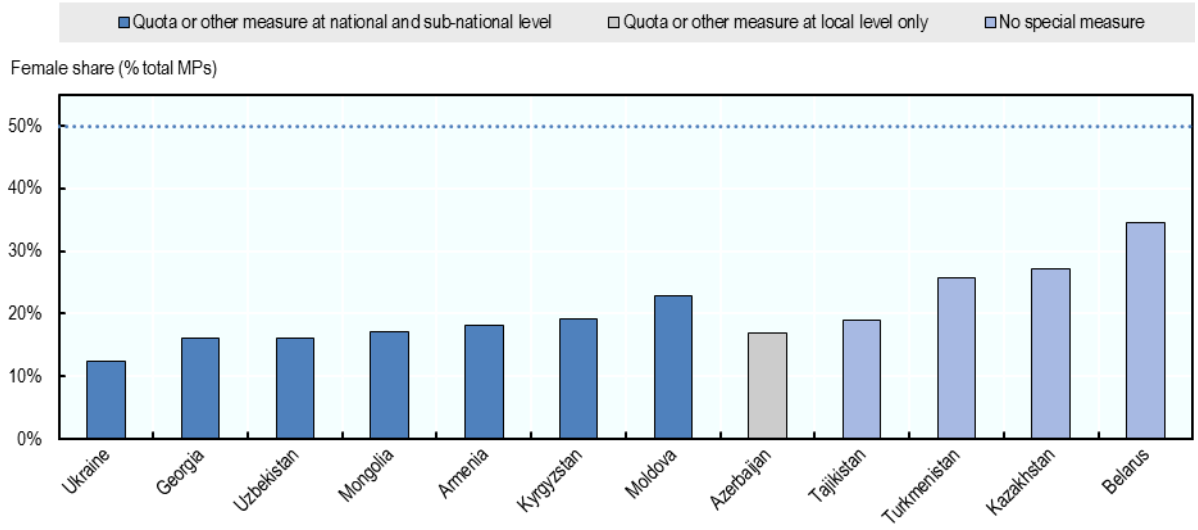
Separately, a 2013 project in Moldova, called "Mass-media institutions self-assessment through gender dimension", analysed the representation of men and women in print and online media. The 17 largest Moldovan mass-media institutions participated in a monthly self-assessment process to evaluate women's representation in their publications. At the beginning of the project, fewer than 17% of articles published had a female protagonist. Nine months later, 29% did (API, 2013[6]) .

Source: UN Women (2016), *"Moldova takes historic step to promote gender equality in politics"*, http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/06/moldova-takes-historic-step-to-promote-gender-equality-in-politics (accessed 7 March 2019).

Women are still under-represented in political life. In all countries, women are less likely than men to stand for political office and to be elected (COE, 2016[7]). They occupy 19% of parliamentary seats across the region. Female representation is slightly higher in Central Asia (21% of MPs) than in Eastern Europe (18%) and the Caucasus (17%), but in all sub-regions it remains below the global average of 23%. Only three countries stand above this average (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Belarus) and only one country (Belarus) has reached the 30% mark for female representation in the parliament.

Quotas have not yet translated in gender-balanced political representation. Across the region, there is no direct correlation between legislative quotas and the number of women in parliament (Figure 6.4). Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Belarus are the three countries with the highest female representation, yet they are also three of the four countries that did not enforce quotas or other special measures to boost women's representation. In the eight countries that did introduce special measures, women remain less represented than required under the legislation. Quotas are important to help compensate for the discriminatory social institutions that confront women who participate in politics, but these quotas need to be properly enforced. Legal loopholes often cause female candidates to be evicted from the lists. In Armenia for example, candidate lists must contain at least 30% of candidates of both genders in every integer group of five candidates. However, women candidates often withdraw after the list has been registered and are replaced by men, as the law does not require the original gender proportions to be maintained (COE, 2016[7]).

Figure 6.4. Women's political representation and quotas



Note: Female share of seats in national parliaments, by whether the government introduced special measures to promote women's political representation.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Discriminatory social norms and practices limit women's participation in politics. Across the region, 62% of the population believe that men make better political leaders than women do, from 51% in Moldova to 75% in Uzbekistan. Discriminatory attitudes are more prevalent in Central Asia (70% of the population) and the Caucasus (65%) than in Eastern Europe (54%). Stereotypical views of the role men and women should play in society are major barriers to women's effective participation in political and public life (COE, 2016[7]). Women are primarily seen as caregivers whose place belongs in the home (85% of women and 81% of men think that being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay), while men are seen as breadwinners and decision makers. No country's laws provide for training for women to support their effective participation in political and public life. As women generally have fewer financial resources than men (see Chapter 5), they also face higher economic barriers to stand as candidates or run a campaign. In some countries (e.g. Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and Tajikistan), candidates for an election must pay an electoral deposit, which can be prohibitive for some women.

Freedom of movement

Key messages

- **Women and men share the same rights to freedom of movement** and to identity and travel documents in all countries.
- **But in reality women are less free than men to access public places.** Due to discriminatory social norms, women are seen as caregivers who belong at home.
- **Women face more challenges in accessing public spaces.** Public spaces and infrastructure are not built to best answer women's needs: women represent 69% of the people who do not feel safe alone at night in their neighbourhood, from 65% in the Caucasus to 68% in Central Asia and 72% in Eastern Europe.

- **The best performer in this indicator is Turkmenistan.** As in the rest of the region, women and men have the same rights to apply for passports for themselves and their minor children, and to travel outside the country. However, Turkmenistan performs better in this indicator because it is the only country where women in general do not feel less safe than men.

Key policy recommendations

- **Organise awareness-raising and information campaigns** around gender-based violence, harassment and harmful stereotypes hindering women's freedom of movement. In Georgia, the women's rights organisation Union Sapari devised a five-month multimedia campaign to raise awareness on sexual harassment and to encourage women to come forward. A video broadcast on social media reached 100 000 viewers, and more than 90 women shared their own stories.
- **Mainstream gender equality** in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of relevant public policies and budgets, and promote the participation of women in public infrastructure decision-making bodies (Box 6.7). For example, one objective of Kazakhstan's Strategy for Gender Equality for 2006-16 was "to introduce gender approaches into the development, realisation and control over implementation of the national legislation, republican and local budgets and state, social and economic programmes".

Box 6.6. International standards concerning freedom of movement

Freedom of movement is a universal human right and is recognised as such in various international documents.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that "everyone has the right to freedom of movement" and "to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (Art. 13).
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, reaffirms that everyone shall "have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence" and "be free to leave any country" (Art. 12).
- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, calls on States Parties to "accord to men and women the same rights with regards to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile" (Art. 15).
- More recently, the necessity to "provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces" (SDG Target 11.7) and to "significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere" (SDG Target 16.1) has been integrated to the SDG framework.

In-depth analysis of freedom of movement

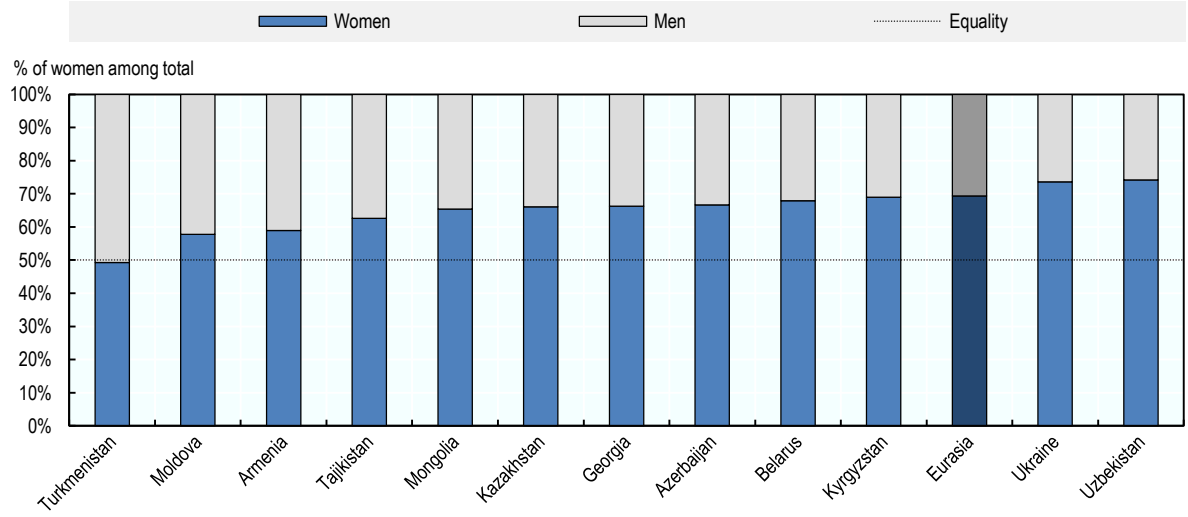
Women and men in Eurasia have the same legal rights to move freely, in line with international standards (Box 6.6). Women and men in all countries have the same rights to apply for identity cards (when applicable) and passports for themselves and their minor

children, and to travel abroad. There is no evidence of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that may interfere in women's rights to obtain identity cards, passports and to travel abroad.

But social norms constrain women's freedom of movement. Social norms around the role men and women should play in society are still discriminatory, notably because they place women in the home, as described in Chapter 3. Particularly in rural areas, there are reports that some women require their husband's consent to leave the house or travel within the country. In Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, around one in three women need their husband's permission to visit their own family or relatives (DHS, n.d.[8]).

Women's ability to enter public space freely is reduced by a lack of gender sensibility in public infrastructure planning. Spatial and public transport planning are often carried out by men, who do not necessarily know about the use women make of these services. In Tajikistan, for instance, only 11% of division heads of the Ministry of Transport are women (ADB, 2016[9]). Yet women rely on public transportation more than men do. In Moldova, for example, women spend 76% of their travel time on public transport, compared to 40% for men (NBS, 2012[10]). Women thus face greater travel challenges, especially rural women: in Kazakhstan, 31% of rural communities do not have regular connections to towns (ADB, 2013[11]). Challenges include the distance between bus stops and low-frequency bus routes, placing isolated women at a greater risk of gender-based violence. Urban women are also at risk: a survey in the Tbilisi metro in Georgia revealed that 45% of women had experienced sexual harassment in the previous six months (ADB, 2014[12]). The gender blindness of public infrastructure planning results in a higher feeling of insecurity in public places among women. Across the region, women represent 69% of the persons who do not feel safe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood, slightly above the world average of 65%. Turkmenistan is the only country where men and women feel equally safe (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5. Women among population not feeling safe when walking alone at night



Note: Proportion of women among the total population declaring that they do not feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Box 6.7. Urban planning for women with disabilities in Ukraine

More than 2.6 million persons in Ukraine live with a disability. However, a lack of reliable, sex-disaggregated and relevant disability data has limited actions by urban planners to eliminate the challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing public spaces and services.

To address this shortcoming, UN Women, the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine and local administrations conducted a Gender Accessibility Audit in the city of Kramatorsk. The audit identified architectural, infrastructure, information and communication barriers restricting the access of women with disabilities to public services, from a lack of ramps and elevators to a lack of staff training on non-discrimination.

The audit findings were used to inform city development programmes and the budget for 2018. The municipal authorities discussed the findings with women and men with disabilities, and they jointly identified practical measures and steps to be implemented.

Source: UN Women (2017), "Gender accessibility audit of the city of Kramatorsk, Donetsk Oblast", http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/country/ukraine/gau%20brochure/gender%20accessibility%20audit_brochure_eng.pdf?la=en&vs=4506 (accessed 7 March 2019).

Access to justice

Key messages

- **Women have the same rights to benefit from justice systems** as men do in all Eurasian countries.
- **But women face de facto discrimination when trying to access to justice.** Barriers include low awareness of women's rights, lack of gender sensitivity in law enforcement systems and discriminatory social institutions. As a result, women represent 59% of the persons who do not trust the justice system and courts of their country, from 46% in the Caucasus to an alarming 63% in Eastern Europe.
- **Recourse to local or informal dispute-resolution mechanisms** further complicates women's equal access to justice in four Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).
- **Georgia is the best regional performer in this indicator,** with a discrimination level of 0%. Women and men have identical legal rights and share the same level of trust in the justice system, and no customary, religious and traditional laws or practices appear to discriminate against women. The government has been committed to ensuring women's access to justice, in particular in cases of domestic violence. Since 2010, the procedures of applying to court by and on behalf of victims of domestic violence have been streamlined, taking into account the particular interests of women and girls.

Key policy recommendations

- **Promote awareness of women's rights** among the population and ensure that women know how to exercise their rights. In Azerbaijan, for example, 20 regional legal advisory service centres have been established to inform women about their rights and enhance their access to free legal aid services, including in relation to violence against women.
- **Promote women's participation at all levels of law enforcement** systems. Kyrgyzstan presents a good-practice example (Box 6.9).
- **Provide mandatory gender-sensitivity training** for law enforcement officials, including judges, prosecutors and police officers, on how to deal with female victims, particularly in cases of gender-based violence. Kyrgyzstan, for instance, developed training material and organised seminars under its National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2015-17 to ensure that employees of law enforcement bodies uniformly apply the law in criminal cases involving women and girls.
- **Support the alignment of rulings of customary or local courts** with national legal standards. It is important to co-operate with members of these local bodies, who are often more accessible to the population and can help increase awareness of women's rights and guide women through procedures.

Box 6.8. International and regional standards concerning equal access to justice

Access to justice encompasses the entire process of obtaining redress against the violation of a right. This includes the right and ability to bring a legal case before a judicial authority, benefit from legal aid, access courts, obtain a fair trial with an effective remedy and provide testimony.

The right to access to justice and equality between men and women in this regard is guaranteed in international instruments.

- The CEDAW (1979), ratified or accessed by all 12 countries, calls on States Parties to "accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity" (Art. 15). Its General Recommendation No. 33 (2015) recalls the "obligations of States Parties to ensure that women have access to justice".
- SDG Target 16.3 aims to "promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all".

In-depth analysis of access to justice

Women and men in Eurasia have equal rights to benefit from justice systems. In all 12 countries, women and men have the same rights and potential to sue and to be sued, and to hold office in the judiciary, and a woman's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in court as a man's in all types of court cases. The law mandates legal aid in civil/family matters in six countries[5] and in criminal matters in all countries but Tajikistan (World Bank, 2018[13]). In addition, several countries have implemented procedural rules taking into account the particular interests of women and girls, such as closed-door

hearings in cases of domestic violence (e.g. Azerbaijan, Ukraine), free legal aid in cases of domestic violence (e.g. Georgia) or if the victim is a single mother raising a minor child (e.g. Kyrgyzstan), and translation services (e.g. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan).

However, women in all countries face non-legislative barriers to accessing justice. Women face practical difficulties to enjoy rights that are not in compliance with countries' international commitments (Box 6.8). The principal hurdle lies in low awareness about women's rights. Not just many women, but also the public at large, including law enforcement officers, are unaware of women's rights, remedies available to claim violations and accessible resources for legal assistance. In Tajikistan, for example, only 64% of the population knows that a wife has a right to initiate a divorce (EFCA and CRRC, 2011[14]). As a result, women often do not go to court even though they have the right to do so. In addition, the cost of accessing justice acts as a barrier for many women. In some instances, especially for women living in remote areas or in countries with a low population density, the distance to the court can also prevent them from accessing justice. A survey in Kazakhstan revealed that more than 80% of the population live more than an hour away from their district capital (where courts are usually located), and that more than 40% live four hours or more away (EFCA and CRRC, 2011[14]). Finally, justice systems often lack gender sensitivity, and some women may face stigma and discriminatory attitudes. The lack of female staff in justice systems compounds this difficulty: only 27% of judges on the constitutional courts of the 12 countries are women, from 6% in Ukraine to 44% in Georgia (World Bank, 2018[13]).

Box 6.9. Promoting gender equality in Kyrgyzstan's law enforcement system

Gender sensitivity in a country's law enforcement system is crucial to achieving equality. In Kyrgyzstan, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a Criminal Justice Programme over the period 2009-16 to strengthen the capacity of justice and law enforcement institutions. Although promoting gender equality was not the primary goal, it was taken into account as a cross-cutting theme.

The UNODC, in collaboration with police officers, conducted gender assessments, provided gender training and raised awareness on the role of women in the police. It also introduced a mentoring programme aimed at encouraging more young women to consider a career in the police and tested gender-balanced street patrols. In 2014, encouraged by the programme, the government modified the recruitment policy for police officers: if two candidates for positions in the police academy or the traffic police obtain equal results, preference shall be given to the candidate belonging to the underrepresented ethnicity or gender.

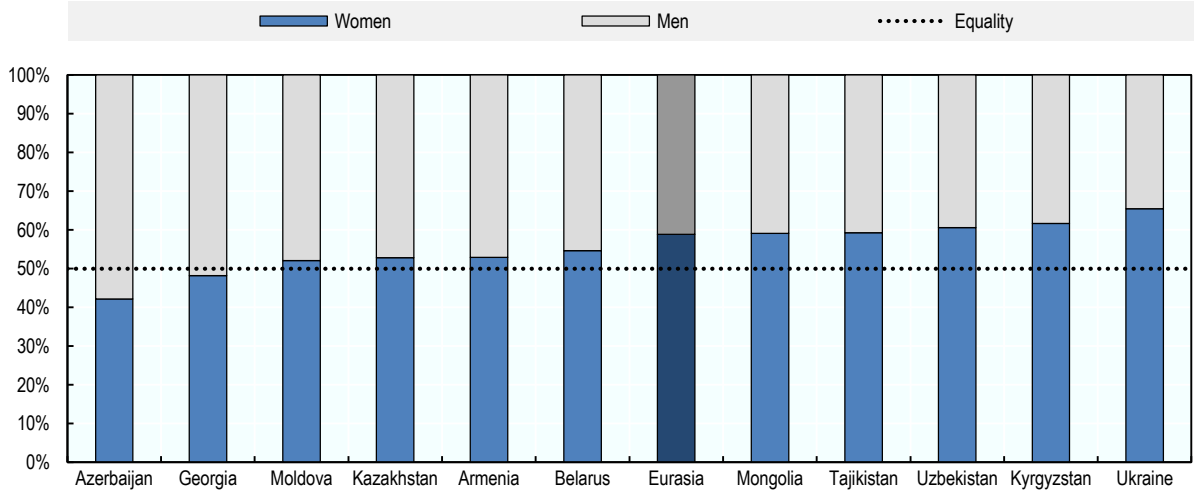
However, the programme achieved limited progress in terms of balancing gender representation in the police. Barriers that were identified include deeply entrenched social norms that view this profession as reserved for men, and the overall low representation of women in all sectors of the economy. Changing gender stereotypes requires time, and sufficient time and resources should be invested.

Source: UNODC (2017), "Final Independent Project Evaluation of UNODC Criminal Justice Programme in Kyrgyzstan", https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2017/KGZT90_Final_Evaluation_Report_May_2017.pdf (accessed 7 March 2019).

Women face the greatest difficulties in matters of domestic violence. Human rights bodies have documented a lack of gender sensitivity in the investigation and prosecution of violence within the family, and this is common to all countries.[6] Discriminatory attitudes and norms surrounding women's physical integrity are widespread and result in a high prevalence and normalisation of violence against women in the region – and domestic violence in particular (see Chapter 4). The few women who speak out and seek justice face institutional discrimination (UNFPA, 2015[15]), due at least in part to the scarcity of proper training on gender-sensitive procedures for women who are victims of violence. The police and justice personnel often hold pejorative stereotypes that may translate into unwillingness to investigate or inadequate treatment of victims. Mediation procedures aim mainly to preserve family unity. The criminal codes of several countries allow the discharge of an offender if he has reconciled with his victim; these reconciliation remedies can be applied to cases of domestic violence (e.g. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan).

Women's distrust of the justice system is greater than men's. Across Eurasia, women represent 59% of the persons who do not trust the justice system and courts of their country (Figure 6.6). This average hides wide sub-regional disparities. In Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with the exception of Ukraine, women and men generally share the same level of trust. In Central Asia, however, four countries present an alarming imbalance. In Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, women represent up to 66% of the people who do not trust the justice system and courts of their country. The same is true in Ukraine.

Figure 6.6. Women among population who do not trust the judicial system of their country



Note: Proportion of women among the total population declaring that they do not have confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019.

Informal courts complicate women's access to justice in Central Asia. In four Central Asian countries, the formal legal system coexists with informal or local courts, such as *Aksakal* courts in Kyrgyzstan or *Mahalla* committees in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Kazakhstan, people often refer cases to the *Akim*, or head of a local government (EFCA and CRRC, 2011[14]). People often rely primarily on these mechanisms. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, 52% of the population would turn to the community elders or a local government official to solve a dispute over land, while only 34% would turn to the courts or the police (EFCA and CRRC, 2011[14]). These systems have the advantage of being more accessible, both physically and financially, and might seem more trustworthy because they are closer to the community. However, they often exhibit systemic gender biases to the detriment of women. Members of these courts may not have an accurate knowledge of the law, which may result in rulings lacking fairness or consistency. More importantly, they can only issue limited sanctions; consequently, issues such as domestic violence are decriminalised and treated as civil matters, and women cannot benefit from protection orders. In addition, decision-making processes tend to be male-dominated and based on discriminatory social institutions. Committees often prioritise reconciliation in cases of divorce or domestic violence, or favour men in family disputes about inheritance (UNESCO, 2011[16]). It is worth noting that in all countries in the region, statutory law takes precedence over customary law.

Notes

[1] The RCL score for Turkmenistan could not be computed because of a lack of information on the population's trust in the justice system and courts of the country.

[2] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[3] Georgia (2014), Ukraine (2015), Armenia and Moldova (2016).

[4] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

[5] Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine.

[6] E.g. the CEDAW Committee. For sources detailed by country, please refer to the SIGI 2019 country profiles available at www.genderindex.org.

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Annex A. Eurasia countries/territories' SIGI 2019 scores

Table A.1. Eurasian countries' SIGI 2019 scores

Country	SIGI	Discrimination in the family		Restricted physical integrity		Restricted access to productive and financial resources		Restricted civil liberties	
LOW LEVEL OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI									
Mongolia	20%	28%	Medium	8%	Very low	20%	Low	23%	Low
Belarus	21%	32%	Medium	15%	Low	15%	Low	21%	Low
Ukraine	21%	23%	Low	14%	Low	18%	Low	29%	Medium
Moldova	21%	23%	Low	13%	Low	37%	Medium	11%	Low
Kazakhstan	22%	22%	Low	14%	Low	31%	Medium	22%	Low
Kyrgyzstan	23%	29%	Medium	17%	Low	29%	Medium	18%	Low
Georgia	25%	34%	Medium	18%	Low	27%	Medium	19%	Low
Armenia	28%	33%	Medium	35%	Medium	23%	Low	19%	Low
Azerbaijan	29%	28%	Medium	43%	Medium	21%	Low	21%	Low
MEDIUM LEVEL OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE SIGI									
Tajikistan	32%	48%	High	20%	Low	34%	Medium	25%	Low
NOT RANKED IN THE SIGI									
Turkmenistan	n.a.	30%	Medium	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Uzbekistan	n.a.	42%	Medium	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	23%	Low

Note: Changes in rankings between 2014 and 2019 should be interpreted with caution for several reasons. First, a genuine comparison is not possible due to changes in variables and methodology between the 2014 and 2019 editions of the SIGI. Second, there is a difference between the number of countries/territories ranked in 2014 and 2019. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have not been ranked as there is missing data on prevalence of domestic violence, attitudes towards working women and share of ownership for bank account, land and non-land assets.
Source: OECD (2019), *Gender, Institutions and Development Database*, https://oe.cd/ds/GIDDB2019

Annex B. Methodology

Box B.1. Selection of variables

Variables included in the SIGI 2019 were selected according to the following criteria:

Conceptual relevance

The variable should be closely related to the conceptual framework of discriminatory social institutions and measure what it is intended to capture.

Data quality, reliability and coverage

The variable should be based on high-quality, reliable data. When microdata were available, the data have been harmonised and standardised across countries/territories. The data included should have extensive coverage across countries/territories.

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 dimension should be statistically associated, and thereby capture similar areas of social institutions without being redundant.

The SIGI includes 27 variables, which are combined into 16 indicators and 4 dimensions (sub-indices). The 27 variables include:

- 14 categorical variables describing the level of discrimination in legal frameworks (for all SIGI indicators but two: missing women and FGM). These variables are based on 144 questions out of the 312 used to draft the SIGI country profiles
- 3 attitudinal variables describing the level of discrimination in social norms
- 10 variables on prevalence rates describing the level of discrimination in practices.

The SIGI and its dimensions 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

Quantitative data are collected and harmonised to be comparable across countries/territories. Data sources vary according to the country/territory and variable.

For example, prevalence of girl child marriage is collected through the UN World Marriage Database, while women's share of parliament seats is based on the Inter-parliamentary Union database.

The SIGI and its sub-indices range from 0 for no discrimination to 1 for absolute discrimination.

For some variables, equality is reached at 0.5 instead of 1. Equality in political representation, for example, is achieved when 50% of members of parliament are women. According to the variable, the scale from no discrimination to absolute discrimination may be inverted to fit with the 0-1 scale. Moreover, quantitative variables are truncated at the equality benchmark. Therefore, countries/territories having 50% or more of female members of parliament have a score of 0.

Box B.2. Country profiles

The SIGI country profiles contain fully referenced qualitative information relative to social institutions, organised by "dimensions" presented as sub-indices in this report. They were drafted following a standardised structure to ensure comparability across countries/territories 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 CEDAW, reports by international organisations and country sources.

Validation

Country profiles were developed through a multiple-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 www.genderindex.org).

Assigning a score to qualitative variables

The qualitative information detailed in the SIGI country profiles is quantified using the following coding manual:

0: The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. There are no customary, traditional or religious laws or practices that discriminate against women.

0.25: The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some customary, traditional or religious laws or practices do discriminate against women.

0.5: The legal framework provides women with the same rights as men. However, it does not apply to all groups of women.

0.75: The legal framework restricts some women's rights.

1: The legal framework fully discriminates against women's rights.

In cases where information is absent or insufficient, 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.

Step 2: Constructing indicators

Some indicators are based on one variable and others on several. In the latter case, the indicator is calculated only if all variables are assigned a value. For example:

Violence against women=ln(1/3 e^(Laws on violence against women)+1/3 e^(Attitude towards domestic violence)+1/3 e^(Prevalence of domestic violence))

Step 3: Aggregating indicators to build the sub-indices

The dimensions aim to provide a summary measure of each area of discrimination. The dimension is calculated only if all indicators are assigned a value. For example:

Discrimination in the family=ln(1/4 e^(Child marriage)+1/4 e^(Household responsibilities)+1/4 e^(Inheritance)+1/4 e^(Divorce))

Step 4: Computing the SIGI

The SIGI is a composite indicator built as an unweighted average of a non-linear function of the dimensions. The SIGI is calculated only if all sub-indices are assigned a value.

SIGI=ln(1/4 e^(Discrimination in the family)+1/4 e^(Restricted physical integrity)+1/4 e^(Restricted access to productive and financial resources)+1/4 e^(Restricted civil liberties))

Box B.3. Frequently asked questions

Why exponentiate each sub-index and indicator?

- As SIGI is a multidimensional index, the use of this formulation helps investigate the trade-offs between the sub-indices/indicators/variables.
- These trade-offs, however, are partial: an increase in inequality in one sub-index /indicator/variable can only be substituted partially by a decrease in inequality in another sub-index/indicator/variable.
- The magnitude of the increase of inequality is largest in the sub-index/indicator/variable where the country already performs poorly.
- While the SIGI 2014 used the "quadratic mean" formulation to compute the level of discrimination, the SIGI 2019 uses exponential and logarithmic functions. This allows more variability in the rates of substitution between low levels and high levels of discrimination.

Why are the sub-indices/indicators/variables equally weighted?

- Each sub-index/indicator/variable of discriminatory social institutions has equal value.
- No sub-index/indicator/variable is more important than another in terms of deprivation experienced by women.

How are the SIGI categories defined?

The SIGI classification clusters 120 countries/territories into five levels of institutional, social and statutory discrimination: very low, low, medium, high and very high.

Definition of variables

Table B.1. Variables used in the analysis and the construction of the SIGI 2019

Variable	Coding	Sources
	Child marriage	
Laws on child marriage*: Whether the same legal minimum age of marriage applies to both women and men	0: The law guarantees the same minimum age of marriage above 18 years to women and men, without legal exceptions in either consent or for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not encourage girl child marriage.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: The minimum age of marriage might be different for men and women, but it is above 18 years, without legal exceptions regarding consent or for some groups of women. Some customary, religious and traditional laws or practices encourage girl child marriage.	
	0.5: The minimum age of marriage might be different for men and women, but it is above 18 years. However, legal exceptions exist concerning consent and/or some groups of women.	
	0.75: The law allows child marriage for both women and men or there is no legal age of marriage for women nor men.	
	1: The law allows child marriage for women but not for men.	
Prevalence of girl child marriage*: Percentage of girls aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union	0-100%	UN World Marriage Data (2017)
Prevalence of boy child marriage: Percentage of boys aged 15-19 years who have been or are still married, divorced, widowed or in an informal union	0-100%	UN World Marriage Data (2017)
	Household responsibilities	
Laws governing household responsibilities*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights, decision-making abilities and responsibilities within the household	0: Women enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, without legal exceptions for any groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women's legal rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women enjoy the same legal rights and decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, without legal exceptions for any groups of women. However, customary, religious and traditional laws or practices discriminate against women's legal rights.	
	0.5: Either not all groups of women enjoy the same legal rights and	

Variable	Coding	Sources
	decision-making freedoms and responsibilities within the household as men, or there is no law regulating household headship.	
	0.75: Women do not enjoy the same legal rights as men to be recognised as the head of household or to have parental authority.	
	1: Women do not enjoy the same legal rights as men to be recognised as the head of household and to have parental authority.	
Attitude towards housewives: Percentage of population aged above 18 years thinking that "Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay"	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Attitude towards women's earning money: Percentage of population aged above 18 years who agrees or agrees strongly that "If a woman earns more money than her husband, it's almost certain to cause problems"	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Attitude towards working mothers: Percentage of population aged above 18 years who agrees or agrees strongly that "When a mother works for pay, the children suffer"	0-100%	International Social Survey Programme World Values Survey
Women and men's share of unpaid care work responsibility: Female-to-male ratio of time spent on unpaid, domestic, care and volunteer work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
Women's contribution to unpaid care work: Women's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic, care and voluntary work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
Men's contribution to unpaid care work: Women's average time spent (in hours) on unpaid domestic, care and voluntary work in a 24-hour period		Various sources[1]
Inheritance		
Laws on inheritance*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights to inherit land and non-land assets	0: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women's inheritance rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. This applies to all groups of women. However, there are some customary, religious or traditional laws that discriminate against women's inheritance rights.	
	0.5: Widows and daughters enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and non-land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Either widows or daughters do not enjoy the same rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and/or non-land assets	
	1: Neither widows nor daughters enjoy rights to inherit land and/or non-land assets	

Variable	Coding	Sources
	Divorce	
Laws on divorce*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights to initiate divorce with the same grounds and evidential requirements for divorce or annulment	0: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and have the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. This applies to all groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women regarding divorce or their parental authority after divorce.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. This applies to all groups of women. However, there are some customary, religious or traditional laws or practices that discriminate against women regarding divorce and/or their parental authority after divorce.	
	0.5: Women have both the same rights to initiate divorce and the same requirements to finalise divorce or annulment as men, without negative repercussions on their parental authority. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women do not have the same rights over divorce as men: either their rights to initiate divorce and/or the requirements to finalise divorce or annulment are unequal, or their parental authority after divorce is restricted.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights over divorce as men: their rights to initiate divorce and/or the requirements to finalise divorce or annulment are unequal, and their parental authority after divorce is restricted.	
	RESTRICTED PHYSICAL INTEGRITY	
	Violence against women	
Laws on violence against women*: Whether the legal framework protects women from violence including intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment, without legal exceptions and in a comprehensive approach	0: The legal framework protects women from violence including intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment, without any legal exceptions and in a comprehensive approach.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: The legal framework protects women from violence including intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment, without any legal exceptions. However, the approach is not comprehensive.	
	0.5: The legal framework protects women from violence including intimate-partner violence, rape and sexual harassment. However, some legal exceptions occur.	
	0.75: The legal framework protects women from some forms of violence including intimate-partner violence, rape or sexual harassment but not all.	
	1: The legal framework does not protect women from violence nor intimate-partner violence nor rape and sexual harassment.	
Attitude towards domestic violence*: Percentage of women aged 15–49 years who consider a husband to be justified in hitting or beating his wife for at least one of the specified reasons: if his wife burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children or refuses sexual relations	0-100%	Pan American Health Organization (2014) UNICEF global databases (2017) World Health Organization World Values Survey (2005-2016)
Prevalence of domestic violence in lifetime*: Percentage of women who suffered intimate-partner physical and/or sexual violence during their lifetime	0-100%	Various sources[2]
Prevalence of domestic violence in the last 12 months: Percentage of women who suffered intimate-partner physical and/or sexual violence in the previous 12 months	0-100%	Various sources[2]

Variable	Coding	Sources
Female genital mutilation (FGM)		
Attitude towards FGM*: Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have heard about FGM and think the practice should continue	0-100%	UNICEF Global Databases (2017)
Prevalence of FGM*: Percentage of women aged 15-49 years who have undergone FGM	0-100%	UNICEF Global Databases (2017)
Missing women		
Missing women*: Sex ratio among 0-4-year-olds (number of males per 100 females)	105-116	UNDP World Population Prospects (2017)
Reproductive autonomy		
Laws on reproductive autonomy*: Whether the legal framework protects women's reproductive health and rights	0: The legal framework protects women's reproductive health and rights in the case of unwanted pregnancy, without conditions. 0.25: The legal framework protects women's reproductive health and rights in case of unwanted pregnancy but imposes conditions. 0.5: The legal framework only protects women's reproductive health and rights in case of unwanted pregnancy with some conditions. 0.75: The legal framework only protects women's reproductive health and rights in case of unwanted pregnancy under strict conditions. 1: The legal framework does not protect women's reproductive health and rights in case of unwanted pregnancy.	SIGI Country Profiles
Access to family planning*: Prevalence of unmet need for family planning – percentage of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49) who want to cease or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception	0-100%	United Nations Population Fund (2017) United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018)
RESTRICTED ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES		
Secure access to land assets		
Laws on access to land assets*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets	0: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights. 0.25: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal right. 0.5: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women. 0.75: Women and men have the same legal rights to own land assets, but not to use, make decisions and/or use land assets as collateral. 1: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to own land assets.	SIGI Country Profiles
Access to land ownership: Percentage of men in the total number of agricultural holders	0-100%	Demographic and Health Surveys (n.d)
Secure access to non-land assets		
Laws on access to non-land assets*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to	0: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights	SIGI Country Profiles

Variable	Coding	Sources
non-land assets	0.25: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal right.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same legal rights to own non-land assets, but not to use, make decisions and/or use non-land assets as collateral.	
	1: Women do not have the same legal rights as men to own non-land assets.	
Access to house ownership: Percentage of men in the total number of people who own a house alone	0-100%	Demographic and Health Surveys (n.d)
Secure access to formal financial services		
Laws on access to formal financial services*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights to open a bank account and obtain credit in a formal financial institution	0: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution to women and men, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women exercising their legal rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account and obtain credit at a formal financial institution. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to open a bank account at a formal financial institution. However, women do not have the same rights as men to obtain credit.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights as men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution.	
Access to bank account services*: Percentage of women in the total number of people aged 15 and above who have an account at a financial institution (by themselves or together with someone else)	0-100%	Global Findex database (n.d)
Access to financial loans: Percentage of women in the total number of people aged 15 and above who borrowed any money from a financial institution in the past 12 months	0-100%	Global Findex database (n.d)
Access to credit card services: Percentage of women in the total number of people aged 15 and above who own a credit card	0-100%	Global Findex database (n.d)
Workplace rights		
Laws on workplace rights*: Whether women and men have the same legal rights and opportunities in the workplace	0: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and fathers and the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women in their legal right to enter certain professions, choose a profession and register a business.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and fathers and	

Variable	Coding	Sources
	the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, there is evidence of customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women who exercise their legal right to enter certain professions, choose a profession or register a business.	
	0.5: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. Parental leave is available to mothers and fathers and the law protects women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: The legal framework guarantees equality between women and men in the workplace. However, parental leave is not available to mothers and fathers and/or the law does not protect women's rights during pregnancy and maternity/parental leave.	
	1: The legal framework does not guarantee equality between women and men in the workplace.	
Attitudes towards working women*: Percentage of population who disagrees with "It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one"	0-100%	International Labour Organization and Gallup Inc. (2017) Latinobarometer (n.d) World Value Survey (n.d)
Representation in managerial positions*: Percentage of women in the total number of persons employed in management	0-100%	International Labour Organization (n.d)
RESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES		
Citizenship rights		
Laws on citizenship rights*: Whether women and men have the same citizenship rights and ability to exercise their rights	0: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality to their spouse and children, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not restrict these rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality to their spouse and children, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some discriminatory customary, traditional or religious practices or laws restrict these rights.	
	0.5: Women have the same rights as men to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer their nationality to their spouse and children. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to acquire, change and retain their nationality. However, women face legal restrictions on their rights to confer their nationality to their husband and/or children.	
	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality.	
Freedom of movement		
Laws on freedom of movement*: Whether women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and travel outside the country	0: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against these rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country, without legal exceptions for some groups of women. However, some customary, traditional or religious practices or laws discriminate against women exercising these rights.	

Variable	Coding	Sources
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) and passports and to travel outside the country. However, this does not apply to all groups of women.	
	0.75: Women do not have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports or to travel outside the country.	
	1: Women do not have the same rights as men to apply for national identity cards (if applicable) or passports and to travel outside the country.	
Security feeling*: Percentage of women in the total number of persons declaring not feeling safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live	Rescaled to 0-100%	Gallup World Poll (2017)
Political voice		
Laws on political voice*: Whether the legal framework promotes women's equal political representation	0: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive. There are special measures to promote women's political participation at the national or sub-national levels. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not restrict these rights.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive. There are special measures to promote women's political participation at the national or sub-national levels. However, some discriminatory customary, traditional or religious practices or laws restrict these rights.	
	0.5: Women and men have the same rights to vote and to hold public and political office in the legislature and executive. There are no legal quotas or special measures or incentives for political parties to promote women's political participation.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to vote. However, women face discrimination against their rights to hold public and political office in the legislature or executive.	
	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to vote.	
Political representation*: Percentage of women in the total number of representatives of the lower or single House of the Parliament	0-100%	Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018)
Attitude towards women's political leadership: Percentage of the population who agrees with "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do"	0-100%	World Values Survey (n.d)
Access to justice		
Laws on access to justice*: Whether women and men have the same rights to provide testimony in court, hold public or political office in the judiciary and sue	0: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases and women have the same rights as men to sue and to hold public or political office in the judiciary. Customary, religious and traditional laws or practices do not discriminate against women's legal right to sue, to provide testimony in court or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer.	SIGI Country Profiles
	0.25: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases and women have the same rights as men to sue and to hold public or political office in the judiciary. Women's testimony carries the same evidentiary weight in customary/religious courts/tribunals. However, some customary, traditional or religious practices or laws discriminate against women in their legal right to sue, to provide testimony in court or to be a judge, advocate or other court officer.	
	0.5: A woman's testimony holds the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases and women have the same rights as men to sue.	

Variable	Coding	Sources
	However, women do not have the same right as men to hold public or political office in the judiciary.	
	0.75: Women and men have the same rights to sue. However, a woman's testimony does not hold the same evidentiary weight as a man's in all types of court cases.	
	1: Women and men do not have the same rights to sue.	
Confidence in the judicial system and courts*: Percentage of women in the total number of persons declaring not having confidence in the judicial system and courts of their country	0-100%	Gallup World Poll (2017)

(*) Variables used to calculate the SIGI score.

Questions used to calculate the SIGI scores

The SIGI country profiles are derived from a questionnaire on gender-related legal frameworks – both formal and traditional/cultural – in the countries and territories covered. The questionnaires are mainly divided into two groups – the legal framework (formal laws) and the de facto situation (customary, religious or traditional practices or laws). While most of the questions have "Yes" or "No" answers, there are two that have numeric values (the questions on the legal age of marriage for women and for men). The list of the questions is as follows.

Table B.2. SIGI questionnaire

DISCRIMINATION IN THE FAMILY
Child marriage
Legal framework
What is the legal age of marriage for women?
What is the legal age of marriage for men?
Is the legal age of marriage the same for women and men?
Are there legal exceptions to the legal age of marriage that allow women and men under the legal age of marriage to marry with the consent of:
a. Parent
b. Guardian
c. Judge
d. The court
e. Other authority. Please indicate which authority is concerned.
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that allow or encourage early marriage of girls?
Household responsibility
Legal framework
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be recognised as the head of household?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be the legal guardians of their children during marriage?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be legal guardians of their children in informal unions?
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to be recognised as the head of household?

Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be the legal guardians of her children?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to choose where to live?
Divorce
Legal framework
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to initiate divorce?
Do women have the same requirements as men to finalise a divorce or annulment?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to be the legal guardians of their children after divorce?
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to initiate divorce?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to be the legal guardians of their children after divorce?
Inheritance
Legal framework
Does the law provide daughters with the same rights as sons to inherit land?
Does the law provide daughters with the same rights as sons to inherit non-land assets?
Does the law provide female surviving spouses with the same rights as male surviving spouses to inherit land?
Does the law provide female surviving spouses with the same rights as male surviving spouses to inherit non-land assets?
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against daughters' legal rights to inherit?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against female surviving spouses' legal rights to inherit?
Legal framework (Exceptions)
Does the legal age of marriage apply to all groups of women?
Regarding women's legal rights to be recognised as the head of household, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Regarding divorce, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Regarding inheritance rights of daughters, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Regarding inheritance rights of female surviving spouses, does the law apply to all groups of women?
RESTRICTED PHYSICAL INTEGRITY
Violence against women
National legal framework on VAW
Does the law provide for a comprehensive approach to address violence against women with specific provisions for:
a. investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrator?
b. protection and support services for victims/survivors?
Has legislation provided for the removal of provisions which reduce penalties in case of so-called honour crimes?
Laws addressing domestic violence
Legal framework
Is domestic violence a criminal offence?
Does domestic violence legislation cover the following abuse:
a. physical?
b. sexual?
c. psychological?
d. economic?
De facto
Are there any exceptions included in the traditional, religious and customary laws or practices that reduce penalties for domestic violence?
Laws addressing rape
Legal framework
Is rape a criminal offence?
Does the legal definition of rape include marital rape?
Does the law repeal discriminatory practices such as reduced sentences or escaping punishment if the perpetrator marries the victim?

Laws addressing sexual harassment
Legal framework
Does the legal framework provide legal protection from sexual harassment?
Does the law on sexual harassment include criminal penalties?
Does the definition of sexual harassment cover:
a. the workplace?
b. educational establishments?
c. sporting establishments?
d. public places?
e. cyber harassment or cyber stalking?
Reproductive autonomy
Legal framework
Is abortion legal?
Are there any conditions on legal abortion?
a. No restrictions on reasons for abortion?
b. To preserve the mental health of the woman?
c. Due to rape, statutory rape, or incest?
d. To preserve the physical health of the woman?
e. Due to foetal inviability?
f. To save the woman's life?
RESTRICTED ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES
Secure access to land assets
Legal Framework
Regarding land, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to:
a. own
b. use
c. make decisions
d. use as collateral
Regarding land, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to:
a. own
b. use
c. make decisions
d. use as collateral
Regarding land, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights regarding land to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral?
Secure access to non-land assets
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to:
a. own
b. use
c. make decisions
d. use as collateral
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to:
a. own
b. use
c. make decisions
d. use as collateral
Regarding property and other non-land assets, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights regarding non-land assets to own, use, make decisions and use as collateral?

Secure access to formal financial services
Legal framework
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
Does the law require married women to obtain the signature and authority of their husband/guardian to open a bank account at a formal financial institution?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to obtain credit?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to obtain credit?
Regarding access to formal financial services, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to open a bank account?
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to obtain credit?
Workplace rights
Legal framework
Does the law mandate non-discrimination on the basis of sex in employment?
Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?
Does the law prohibit women from entering certain professions?
Does the law allow women to work the same night hours as men?
Does the law mandate paid maternity leave?
Does the law mandate paid paternity leave?
Does the law mandate parental leave?
Does the law require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to:
a. choose a profession/occupation or work?
b. register a business?
Regarding women's legal right to choose a profession/occupation or work and/or register a business, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to enter certain professions?
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that require women to have permission from their husband or legal guardian to:
a. choose a profession/occupation or work?
b. register a business?
RESTRICTED CIVIL LIBERTIES
Citizenship rights
Legal framework
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to acquire nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to acquire nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to change their nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with same rights as unmarried men to change their nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to retain their nationality?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to retain their nationality?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality to their spouse?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to confer nationality to their children?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to confer nationality to their children?
Regarding women's nationality rights, does the law apply to all groups of women?
De facto
Are there discriminatory customary, traditional, or religious practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to acquire, change, or retain their nationality?
Are there discriminatory customary, traditional, or religious practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights confer nationality on their spouse and/or children?
Freedom of movement
Legal framework
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to apply for identity cards?

Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to apply for identity cards?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to apply for passports?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to apply for passports?
Regarding identity cards and/or passports, does the law apply to all groups of women?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to travel outside the country?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to travel outside the country?
De facto
Are there customary, religious, or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's rights to apply for identity cards or passports?
Political voice
Legal framework
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to vote?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to vote?
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in
a. legislature?
b. executive?
Enforce, monitor and promote
Do legal quotas exist to promote women's political participation at the national level?
Do legal quotas exist to promote women's political participation at the local level? For the respective country, please define local level.
Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political participation at the national level?
Does the law provide for special measures other than quotas to promote women's political participation at the local level? For the respective country, please define local level.
Are there incentives for political parties to include women on candidate lists for national elections?
Are there incentives for political parties to include women on candidate lists for local elections?
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to vote?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal rights to hold public office?
Access to justice
Legal framework
Does the law provide women with the same rights as men to hold public and political office in the judiciary?
Does the law provide married women with the same rights as married men to sue?
Does the law provide unmarried women with the same rights as unmarried men to sue?
Does a married woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as a married man's in all types of court cases such as:
a. civil?
b. criminal?
c. family court?
d. tribunal?
Does an unmarried woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in court as an unmarried man's in all types of court cases such as:
a. civil?
b. criminal?
c. family court?
d. tribunal?
De facto
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to sue?
Does a woman's testimony carry the same evidentiary weight in customary/religious courts/tribunals as a man's?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women in terms of providing testimony in court?
Are there customary, religious or traditional practices or laws that discriminate against women's legal right to be judges, advocates or other court officers?

Annex C. Glossary

Bride price: Generally paid by the groom or the groom's family to the bride's family. Differs from the dowry, which is generally paid by the bride's family to the bride or to the wedded couple.

Child marriage: Marriage before the age of 18 (UNICEF, n.d.).

Customary, religious or traditional practices or laws: The customs, religions and traditional laws or practices observed among a specific community.

Discrimination against women: Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women (CEDAW).

Domestic violence: Violence that occurs within the private sphere, between intimate partners (CEDAW).

Hegemonic masculinity: Cultural norm that continuously connects men to power and economic achievements. This pattern of masculinity, which shapes the hegemonic position, is not only adverse to equality and inclusion, but also brings disadvantages and costs for men (EIGE, n.d).

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C): All procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (World Health Organization, 2008).

Gender gap: Disparity between women and men, and girls and boys (CEDAW).

Gender norms: Ideas about how men and women should be and act. Most such "rules" are learned and internalised early in life, which creates an inter-generational cycle of gender socialisation and stereotyping (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women).

Gender-responsiveness: To create an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of men's and women's lives and addresses them (UN Women).

Masculinities: Socially constructed definitions for being a man, which can change over time and from place to place. The term relates to perceived notions and ideals about how men should or are expected to behave in a given setting (UNICEF, 2005).

Missing women: This concept was first introduced by Amartya Sen in 1990. He hypothesised that over 100 million women were missing due to the excess mortality of women from inequality and neglect. The "missing women" phenomenon is captured by the shortfall in the number of girls aged 0-4 relative to their expected survival rate in the absence of sex-selective abortions, female infanticide and with similar levels of health and nutrition to boys, correcting for natural biological and physiological differences.

Reproductive health: State of complete physical, mental and social well-being (and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity) in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions and processes (UN).

Sexual harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (UNESCO).

Unmet need for family planning: The gap between women's reproductive intentions and their contraceptive behaviour, defined as the proportion of currently married or in-union women of reproductive age (15-49) who want to cease or delay childbearing but are not using any method of contraception (UNDP, 2018).

Violence against women: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995).

Youth not in education, employment, or training: Young people aged 15-24 who do not take part in educational or training programmes and are unemployed or outside the labour force (ILO, 2017).

Annex D. SIGI sub-regional overviews

Table D.1. List of countries by sub-region

Caucasus	Central Asia	Eastern Europe
Armenia	Kazakhstan	Belarus
Azerbaijan	Kyrgyzstan	Moldova
Georgia	Mongolia	Ukraine
	Tajikistan	
	Turkmenistan	
	Uzbekistan	

Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)

The Caucasus has a low level of discrimination (SIGI=27%) with all countries having a low level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, ranging from 25% for Georgia to 29% for Azerbaijan. Despite this, it is the sub-region in Eurasia with the highest levels of discrimination and is only slightly below the world average of 29%.

- Contrary to trends in the other two sub-regions and the world, women's restricted physical integrity is the main area of concern in the Caucasus, particularly due to the persistent sub-regional issue of missing women. This dimension has a level of discrimination of 32%, the highest in the sub-region; this level is 12 percentage points above the average discrimination in the region and 10 percentage points above the average discrimination worldwide.
- Discrimination in the family, in line with regional and global trends, is also an area of concern in the Caucasus, with the second highest level of discrimination, at 31%.
- Civil liberties is the dimension where the sub-region performs best, with a level of discrimination of 20%, compared to the regional average of 21% and the world average of 29%.
- Access to productive and financial resources is the second best dimension for the sub-region, with a level of discrimination of 24%, below the regional average (26%) and the world average (27%)

Key progress in the Caucasus

Discrimination in the family

Women's inheritance rights are not only equal to men's but also protected. Since 2012, all countries in the sub-region guarantee that daughters and widows in all groups of women have the same rights to inherit land and non-land assets; in Armenia and Georgia, the two countries where customary laws promote discriminatory practices towards women's right to inheritance, the law takes precedence over these.

Restricted physical integrity

Reproductive autonomy rights for women have advanced: abortion on request is legal in all countries, and since 2015 underage women do not need the permission of a parent or guardian to seek the procedure.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Women have better access to non-land assets compared to other sub-regions. Since 2010, all countries in the sub-region provide divorced women the same rights as divorced men to own, use and make decisions concerning non-land assets. In addition, 26% of house owners in the sub-region are women, the highest rate in Eurasia and slightly above the world average (21%).

Restricted civil liberties

Women's access to justice has improved. Since 2007, women's testimony carries the same weight as men's in all countries, and this sub-region is the only one where women have more confidence in the judicial system than men do (46% of the people who declare a lack of confidence are women).

Key challenges in the Caucasus

Discrimination in the family

Attitudes and practices still constrain women's role in the family to being caretakers: 54% of the population believe that children suffer when their mother works for pay, and women spend four times more time on unpaid care and domestic work on average than men do, the highest rate in Eurasia.

Restricted physical integrity

Missing women remains an alarming issue. Deeply embedded son bias is reflected in an unbalanced sex ratio at birth of 113 boys to 100 girls (natural sex ratio=105). It is estimated that in Armenia alone, 93 000 women will be missing by 2060 if the issue is not addressed (UNFPA, 2013[1]).

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Women's access to work opportunities is still restrained by a lack of family-friendly policies. None of the countries in the sub-region provides paid paternity leave or has legal provisions for unpaid paternity leave.

Restricted civil liberties

Women's political voice is still restricted. All countries in the sub-region have customary practices that discriminate against women's legal right to hold public office, and 65% of the population believe that men are better political leaders than women.

Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

Central Asia has a low level of discrimination (SIGI=25%)[1]; Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have a low level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions, and Tajikistan has a medium level.

- Following regional and global trends, discrimination in the family is the main area of concern, with a level of discrimination of 33%, compared to 28% for restricted access to productive and financial resources and 22% for restricted civil liberties. Central Asia has Eurasia's highest level of discrimination in the family, but is still is 10 percentage points below the global average.
- As in Eastern Europe, restricted physical integrity is the area where the sub-region performs best, with a level of discrimination of 15%, compared to a global average of 22%.

Key progress in Central Asia

Discrimination in the family

Child marriage is being tackled through the legal framework. Since 2012, all countries in the sub-region except Uzbekistan have raised the legal age of marriage above 18 for both sexes. The prevalence of girl child marriage decreased slightly over the last decade, from 11% to 7%, becoming the lowest in Eurasia.

Restricted physical integrity

Women's rights to reproductive autonomy have improved. Since 2015, abortion on request is legal in all six countries. In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan women do not require the approval of fathers to seek the procedure.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Policies are enhancing women's secure access to financial services. With National Action Plans established since 2015, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan promote gender-sensitive measures to expand women's access to formal financial services, including credit. Women represent 49% of credit-card owners.

Restricted civil liberties

Monitoring of gender equality has been formally established in the sub-region. Since 2006, all countries have established a specialised body tasked with monitoring gender equality, making Central Asia the only sub-region in Eurasia where this occurs.

Key challenges in Central Asia

Discrimination in the family

Gender roles within the household are still affected by discriminatory social norms embedded in the male-breadwinner model. Across the sub-region, 46% of the population think that it is problematic if a woman earns more money than her husband does, and 87% believe that being a homemaker is as fulfilling as working for pay. Women spend twice as much time in unpaid care and domestic work than men do.

Restricted physical integrity

Political commitments regarding violence against women have not been integrated into legal frameworks, and discriminatory attitudes prevail. Domestic violence is not a criminal offence in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; there is no legal protection against sexual harassment in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; 34% of the sub-region's women believe that domestic violence is justifiable; and 20% have been victims of it in their lifetime.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Women's ability to exercise their work rights is limited by discriminatory social attitudes. Although women legally have the same rights to work as men do, 22 % of the population believe that it is unacceptable for women in their family to have a paid job, and 45% of women of working age are not in the labour force (ILO, 2018[2]), the highest rates in Eurasia.

Restricted civil liberties

Women's political voice is still restricted by discriminatory attitudes. A total of 70% of the population believe that men make better political leaders overall than women do, and 21% of parliamentarians are women, compared to the world average of 24%.

Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine)

Eastern Europe has a homogenous low level of gender-based discrimination in social institutions (SIGI=21%), the lowest in Eurasia. The level of discrimination is below both the regional average of 24% and the global average of 29%.

- The main area of concern for the sub-region, as in the region and the world, is discrimination in the family. This dimension has a level of discrimination of 26%, compared to 23% in restricted access to productive and financial resources and 20% in restrictive civil liberties.
- Restricted physical integrity is the area where the sub-region performs best, as in the region as a whole and the world. Eastern Europe is Eurasia's best performer in this dimension, with a level of discrimination of 14%, compared to a regional average of 20% and a global average of 22%.

Key progress in Eastern Europe

Discrimination in the family

Divorce rights are universal. Since 2004, all countries in the sub-region provide women with the same rights and requirements as men to initiate divorce and be legal guardians of their children, and none of the countries has customary laws or practices discriminating against women's rights in terms of divorce.

Restricted physical integrity

Women's reproductive autonomy has improved. Abortions on request are legal in all three countries until week 12, and restrictions on abortions beyond the first trimester have been reduced since 2013. The percentage of women with unmet needs for family planning has declined from 13% in 2014 to 6% in 2019, the lowest rate in Eurasia.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Despite persistent unequal practices, women fully benefit from secure access to land by law. Since 2004, all groups of women, including divorcees, have the same rights to land as men and there are no discriminatory customary laws in place. Across the sub-region, 34% of landowners are women, compared to 26% in Eurasia and 14% in the world.

Restricted civil liberties

Women's rights to equal access to justice are constitutionally embedded. Since 1996, the constitutions of all three countries grant women the same rights as men to sue. There are

no laws or practices in any of the countries that discriminate against women's right to be judges or women's right to provide testimony in court.

Key challenges in Eastern Europe

Discrimination in the family

Discriminatory practices against women still prevail within the family. Across the sub-region, 85% of the population believe that being a housewife is as fulfilling as working for pay. Women spend five hours a day on unpaid care and domestic work on average, compared to 2.5 hours spent by men.

Restricted physical integrity

Violence against women remains an issue. In Moldova and Ukraine, the law has no specific provisions for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrator. A total of 10% of women in the sub-region had been victims of domestic abuse in the 12 months previous to being questioned, and 17% of women throughout their lifetime.

Restricted access to productive and financial resources

Legal barriers to women's access to work opportunities remain. In Moldova and Ukraine, women are not legally allowed to work the same night hours as men.

Restricted civil liberties

Women's political voice is still limited by practices and attitudes. Women occupy only 18% of parliamentary seats, the lowest rate in Eurasia, and 54% of the population believe that men are better political leaders than women.

Notes

[1] Based on the average of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Tajikistan. There is missing data on Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

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