

# Slovenia

## Legislative and policy framework

The Slovenian Constitution guarantees equal human rights and fundamental freedoms, prohibits discrimination based on any personal circumstances, including sex (Article 14), and guarantees the right to equal employment opportunities (Article 49).

Gender mainstreaming was introduced into Slovenian national legislation through the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act in 2002, which remains the key legal instrument for gender equality and gender mainstreaming.<sup>[1]</sup> The government and all ministries are obliged to consider gender equality when planning, designing, and implementing policy measures (Article 11). All ministers must appoint Coordinators for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, who are then responsible for the implementation of duties within the competence of the Ministry. Additionally, the Equal Treatment Act of 2006 was succeeded by the Protection against Discrimination Act in May 2016.<sup>[2]</sup>

In 1997, the Women's Policy Office carried out a pilot project on gender mainstreaming focused on capacity-building for policymakers and decision-makers and to develop guidelines for gender mainstreaming. Slovenia's pre-accession processes and EU legislative and policy framework on gender equality had an important influence on the establishment of structures and policies during its EU accession candidacy (1996–2004).

Based on the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (Article 15), the first national programme on gender equality was adopted in 2005, since which time gender mainstreaming has been recognised as a horizontal strategy to be implemented throughout all policy areas. Under the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (Article 16), a two-year action plan should be adopted to implement a National Programme, with the government reporting on their implementation to the National Assembly every two years (Article 17). The objectives and measures defined in the national programme provide guidelines to the ministries and other governmental authorities for planning and implementing their respective policies and programmes as regards gender equality. The most recently adopted strategy was the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men known as the National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2015–2020,<sup>[3]</sup> which was set up following the 2005-2013 Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. It introduced a dual approach of special measures and gender mainstreaming, with this approach being applied to all policies and programmes to achieve the goal of gender equality in practice.

### **The National Programme for Equal Opportunities 2015–2020 Priority areas**

- 1 Economic independence
- 2 Reconciliation of professional and private or family life
- 3 Knowledge society without gender stereotypes
- 4 Social inclusion
- 5 Health
- 6 Balanced representation of women and men
- 7 Violence against women
- 8 Gender equality in foreign policy and international development cooperation

After the strategy expired in 2020, no further strategy was put in place. However, the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2022-2030 has been drafted and once adopted, it will be implemented through two-year action plans.

In 2015, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZEM) adopted a set of Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in the Work of Ministries 2016-2020. The Guidelines acknowledge the need to strengthen gender equality policy, including the gender mainstreaming work of ministries and coordinators. They support the Coordinators for Equal Opportunities in performing their core tasks, such as promotion of equal opportunities, monitoring consideration of gender equality aspects in drafting regulations and measures, and cooperation in preparing and implementing the national programme, as well as international commitments.

---

## **Structures**

### **Governmental equality bodies**

In Slovenia, the responsibility for promoting gender equality is set at the ministerial level. The Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MDDSZEM) is responsible for the promotion of gender equality, and the Minister is vested with the same power and authority as other ministries in autonomous policymaking initiatives. Ministerial responsibility is established by law and encompasses gender equality, along with labour relations, labour rights, social and family policy or disability issues.

The Equal Opportunities Division (Sektor za enake možnosti) of the MDDSZEM is responsible for gender equality. It was established in 2012 to replace the Governmental Office for Equal Opportunities (formerly named Women's Policy Office) that had been in place since 1992. The Division is established as a unit and thus exists at an intermediate level within the Ministry. It coordinates gender equality policy and proposes, recommends, implements and promotes programmes and measures for strengthening equality between women and men. It provides expert support to ministries and municipalities in implementing gender mainstreaming. The Ministry prepares the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, as well as analyses, produces reports and carries out awareness-raising campaigns. It cooperates with the EU, international organisations, and civil society in the field of empowerment of women and achievements of gender equality. Moreover, the Head of the Equal Opportunities Division is directly responsible to the Minister.

The Equal Opportunities Division has seven employees. The Division is rarely consulted about government policies, programmes, and measures in fields other than gender equality, as policies are generally seen as being "gender neutral", and thus having the same impact on both women and men. However, the Division is sometimes consulted during the inter-ministerial coordination phase of adopting new policies and legislative proposals.

In accordance with the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (Article 13), gender mainstreaming is coordinated through officials appointed within each of the 16 ministries and they perform the duties of a coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men. The coordinator is responsible for the implementation of tasks within the competence of the ministry based on this Act and must cooperate with the gender equality body to this end. Coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men perform their tasks alongside their regular work.

## **Independent equality body**

In 2012, Slovenia dissolved its independent gender equality body and re-established it as an equality body, covering all grounds of discrimination, initially operating under the MDDSZEM. Since October 2016, a new independent body for the promotion of equal treatment - the Advocate of the Principle of Equality (Advocate) (Zagovornik načela enakosti), established under the Protection against Discrimination Act (PADA), has been operational. It covers all grounds of discrimination as per PADA. It was established in response to a formal notice by the European Commission concerning the implementation of Directives 2000/43/EC, 2004/113/EC, and 2006/54/EC. This new body is vested with increased autonomy when compared to its predecessor.

The mandate of the Advocate is the promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination on several grounds, including gender, ethnicity, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

### **The Advocate of the Principle of Equality Functions**

Conducting and disseminating independent research on the position of people with certain personal characteristics including gender  
Publishing independent reports and making recommendations to state authorities, local communities, holders of public authorisations, employers, business entities and other bodies

regarding the established situation of people with certain personal characteristics

Providing independent assistance and legal support to persons subject to discrimination through counselling and legal assistance

Formally deciding on complaints (e.g., a decision or recommendation addressed to the parties)

Raising awareness amongst the general public on discrimination and measures to prevent it

Participating in judicial proceedings by representing a victim or by instituting a judicial review of the legislation involving discrimination as per this Act

Ensuring the exchange of available information on discrimination with bodies of the European Union

The Advocate is consulted regarding new or existing policies on an ad-hoc basis. However, even when not consulted, the Advocate may still give recommendations i.e., to introduce a policy at any time. Input tends to be given during the process of public consultations and may be provided through participation in the Gender Equality Expert Council of the Ministry for Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which is consulted on selected topics approximately once a year.

The Advocate has 20 employees who spend 0-25 % of their time on gender equality issues, as the body covers multiple discrimination grounds, and no staff member works exclusively on gender equality issues.

The Ombudsperson is the public body responsible for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and is independent of state authorities, local government and public authorities.

## **Parliamentary body**

The Commission for Petitions, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities (Komisija za peticije, človekove pravice in enake možnosti) is located within the body of the National Assembly (Državni zbor Republike Slovenije) and covers gender equality as a specific part of its brief. The role of the Commission is legally based on the Ordinance regarding the establishment and tasks of working bodies in the National Assembly (2014). Its tasks encompass the broader scope of petitioning as a democratic and public mechanism for exposing various potential inequalities and discrimination in the actions of the National Assembly, as well as monitoring, analysing and promoting human rights and liberties, including equal opportunities policies (specifically mentioning gender equality).

## Regional structure

Local administrations are obliged to promote and create equal opportunities according to their jurisdiction and to take a gender perspective into account when planning and implementing their actions and activities (Article 30, paragraph 1 of the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act). They can establish a local Coordinator for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, who cooperates on the planning and implementation of gender equality policy at the local level.

The Ministry encourages local administrations to appoint such a coordinator at the start of new local mandates. Some 20 % of municipalities have done so and there is a trend of strengthening local engagement and local gender equality policy and practice. Around 5 % of municipalities have also adopted specific gender equality action plans. The Ministry has developed guidelines for the preparation of these plans, alongside guidelines for the elimination of stereotypes and the strengthening of gender equality (2016). These guidelines present case studies of gender-blind local policy, together with advice on how to better incorporate a gender perspective into the work of local institutions.

## Consultation with civil society

Article 3 of the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act posits a legal obligation for the government and ministries to cooperate with social partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the field of equal opportunities in formulating solutions and proposals for achieving the purpose of this act. A legally established advisory body is also attached to the MDDSZEM responsible for gender equality - the Expert Council for Gender Equality. The Council is composed of various professionals working in a variety of fields, from academia to trade unions and NGOs active in gender equality, alongside the Advocate of the Principle of Equality.

Independent civil society organisations are often partners of the Ministry in EU-funded projects that promote gender equality issues. They are also consulted when gender strategies or laws are being implemented. When the Ministry organises conferences or seminars on gender equality, they also invite civil society to take part.

---

## Methods and tools

Note: the methods and tools listed under this were the focus of EIGE's 2021 assessment. If certain methods and tools are not mentioned in this section, this does not necessarily mean that they are not used at all by Slovenia.

## Gender impact assessment and gender budgeting

In Slovenia, the use of gender impact assessments remains in its infancy and is currently only carried out systematically in three ministries. Gender budgeting is also still at its foundational stage as ministries approach budgets in gender-neutral terms. However, some ministries plan their budgets by allocating certain funds for the implementation of projects aimed at gender equality.

## **Training and awareness-raising**

The MDDSZEM published comprehensive guidelines on gender-sensitive language in 2018. The guidelines were the outcome of a discussion held by an informal working group, which was formed in spring 2017 at the initiative of the Slovenian Translation Department of the European Commission's Directorate General for Translation and the Equal Opportunities Sector of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The guiding principle of the group in drafting the guidelines was that gender-sensitive language use must be fair and socially responsible. The group sought to gather existing language tools and principles that could be used to employ gender-sensitive language and to highlight cases for which satisfactory solutions have not yet been developed in terms of language use.<sup>[4]</sup>

Regarding training, only employees of the Division of Equal Opportunities and some other employees receive gender equality training voluntarily. For example, three gender equality training sessions were organised for the employees of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Infrastructure in 2019, to boost the gender equality skills of public administration employees. This reflects the fact that there is no legal basis for training although it is mentioned in the Guidelines, which recommends the inclusion of the topic of gender equality in relevant training programmes.

## **Gender statistics**

Within the National Statistical Office (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije – SURS) there is an operational unit that produces sex-disaggregated statistics. The unit works exclusively in the areas of demography, the standard of living, labour market and education. It is established as an inter-departmental cooperation group within SURS' Demography and Social Statistics Division.

The legal basis of SURS is the National Statistics Act in reference to the Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2018-2022 and the Annual Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2021.<sup>[5]</sup> Annual programmes of statistical surveys are the legal basis for conducting statistical surveys in the current year. Each annual programme of statistical surveys contains a detailed overview of regular and development tasks to be implemented by all authorised producers of national statistics, including data on gender in specific fields of operation.

Based on this legal obligation, SURS publishes sex-disaggregated data and successfully manages to disaggregate data for more than 75 % of variables. On the current website of the National Statistical Office, around 760 tables can be found in the SiStat Database, which includes "sex" in the title of the table. Additionally, there are numerous tables where the variable "sex" is used but is not included in the title.

Dissemination is potentially hindered by the lack of a webpage dedicated to gender statistics, but gender statistics are analysed and disseminated regularly through a press release on international women's day and men's day with a short overview of the position of women/men in Slovenia.<sup>[6]</sup>

---

## **Monitoring progress**

### **Indicators for monitoring progress on institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the EU, under Area H of the Beijing Platform for Action**

This section analyses the scores achieved by Slovenia for data collection in 2021 for the four officially agreed-on indicators on institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in order to monitor progress on Area H of the Beijing Platform for Action. It also analyses scores under an expanded measurement framework which includes the role of independent gender equality bodies and assesses the effectiveness of efforts to disseminate statistics disaggregated by sex. Institutional mechanisms refer to national machineries that implement, monitor, evaluate, and mobilise support for policies that promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming. All indicators and sub-indicators are available on the Gender Statistics Database [here](#), including metadata about how the scores are calculated.



For **Indicator H1** on the status of commitment to the promotion of gender equality and considering only the governmental commitment in line with the officially adopted indicator, Slovenia scored 6.5 points out of a possible 12, below the EU average of 7.2. It scored particularly low on sub-indicator H1e on the accountability of the governmental gender equality body where it lost 4.5 points out of a maximum possible score of 5 because there is no national strategy or action plan on gender equality.

Under an expanded measurement framework, which includes sub-indicator H1f on the mandate and functions of the independent gender equality body, Slovenia scored an additional 2.0 points, out of a possible 3. It lost 1.0 point because the mandate of the independent gender equality body is gender equality combined with other non-discrimination areas, rather than exclusively focused on gender equality. The overall score for the expanded H1 indicator was 8.5 out of a possible 15, below the EU average of 9.1.

**Indicator H2** analyses the personnel resources of the national gender equality bodies. For sub-indicator H2a, regarding the governmental body, Slovenia scored 0.5 out of 2 available which was lower than the EU average of 1.0, because there were 5-10 employees working on gender equality in the governmental body. For sub-indicator H2b, regarding the independent body, Slovenia's score was also 0.5, although the EU average was slightly higher at 0.8 because there were 5-10 or more employees working on gender equality in the independent body. For both sub-indicators, the maximum 2 points was awarded where the number of employees was over 100 as an indication of the body being sufficiently resourced.

**Indicator H3** relates to gender mainstreaming. Here, Slovenia scored 4.8 points out of the maximum possible 12, which was below the EU average of 5.1. Slovenia lost 4.7 points, out of the maximum possible score of 6, on sub-indicator H3c on the commitment to and use of methods and tools for gender mainstreaming, in part because there is no legal obligation to undertake an ex-ante gender impact assessment and or gender budgeting.

Under an expanded measurement framework, which includes sub-indicator H3d on consultation of the independent equality body, Slovenia scored 4.8 points out of a maximum of 14, which was lower than the EU average which increased to 5.4. Under sub-indicator H3d, Slovenia lost both available points because the independent gender equality body is only consulted on by department or ministries on the gender impact of new or existing policies, law or programmes in a few cases.

For **Indicator H4** on the production and dissemination of statistics disaggregated by sex, Slovenia scored 3.0 points, just below the EU average of 3.4. It scored the maximum of 2 points for sub-indicator H4a on government commitment to the production of statistics disaggregated by sex because there is a legal obligation for the national statistical office to collect data disaggregated by sex. However, it lost 3.0 points, out of a maximum of 4, for sub-indicator H4c on the effectiveness of efforts to disseminate statistics disaggregated by sex, as there is no website or section of a website devoted to gender statistics which would facilitate dissemination.

---

## References

### Endnotes

[1] Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (2002) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 59/02 , 61/07 - ZUNEO-A, 33/16 - ZVarD and 59/19 ) / Zakon o enakih možnostih žensk in moških (Uradni list RS, št. 59/02, 61/07 – ZUNEO-A, 33/16 – ZVarD in 59/19)

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/61659/89154/F762567517/SVN61659.pdf>

[2] Protection Against Discrimination Act (2016) (Zakon o varstvu pred diskriminacijo (ZVarD)) <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO7273>

[3] Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2020 (ReNPEMŽM15-2). <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RESO108>

[4] Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2018). Smernice za spolno občutljivo rabo jezika (Guidelines for gender-sensitive language)

[https://www.ki.si/fileadmin/user\\_upload/datoteke-splosno/Projektna\\_pisarna/PLOTINA/smernice\\_web.pdf](https://www.ki.si/fileadmin/user_upload/datoteke-splosno/Projektna_pisarna/PLOTINA/smernice_web.pdf)

[5] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 45/95 and 9/01 in reference to the Medium-Term Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2018-2022 (OG RS, No. 63/17) Slovenian version: <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=DRUG4366>, English version: <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/File/DocSysFile/9809/MTPSS%202018-2022-eng.pdf>; and Annual Programme of Statistical Surveys for 2021: English version: <https://www.stat.si/statweb/en/LegislationAndDocuments/StatSurveys>,

[6] Slovenian Statistical Office (2021). International Women's Day <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/news/Index/9419> Slovenian Statistical Office (2021). International Men's Day <https://www.stat.si/StatWeb/en/News/Index/9963> Slovenian Statistical Office (2016). Simply Not the Same: Women and Men from Childhood to Old Age <https://www.stat.si/dokument/8908/Simply-not-the-same.pdf%20>