

Bulgaria

About

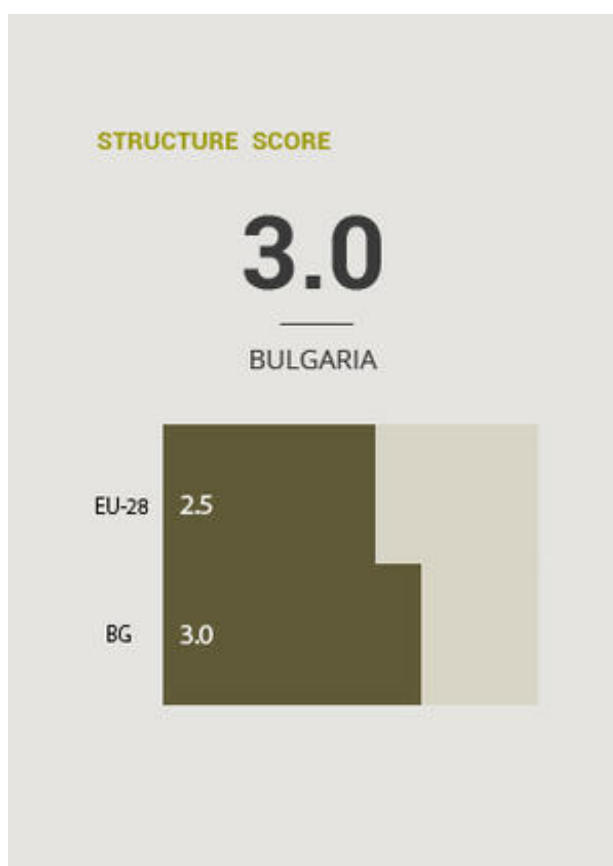


Before Bulgaria's accession to the European Union (EU), gender equality was enshrined in the constitution under Article 6. The Law on Protection against Discrimination was passed in 2003 according to EU directives.

In general, the influence of the EU and international agreements on gender-mainstreaming policies in Bulgaria has been substantial. Pressure from the EU accession process in the 2000s had a significant effect on the development of the gender equality field in Bulgaria, partly because of the

significant effect on the development of the gender-equality field in Bulgaria, partly because of the alignment of Bulgarian legislation with the *acquis communautaire*. Gender mainstreaming is mentioned and foreseen in the National Strategy on Promotion of Gender Equality for 2009–2015, and important gender-mainstreaming activities took place in recent years through ad hoc gender-mainstreaming training funded by external programmes like MATRA (under the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and PROGRESS (an EU financial instrument).

Structures



In 2000, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was appointed as the institution responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing the state policy for gender equality. A Women and Men's Equal Opportunities Sector was created within the ministry at the beginning of 2004, and was developed and transformed over the years. It is currently known as the Equal Opportunities, Anti-Discrimination and Social Benefit Department within the Policy for People with Disabilities, Equal Opportunities and Social Benefits Directorate at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

There is also a National Council on Gender Equality within the Council of Ministers. This is a consultative body that sets the general direction for gender equality in Bulgaria through the yearly National Plans for Promotion of Gender Equality and their respective monitoring reports. However, it is only a consultative body. There are no officially institutionalised gender-equality focal points or key contacts in the 15-line ministries. There is no way of following up gender

points or key contacts in the 13 line ministries. There is no way of following up gender-mainstreaming actions conducted by the ministries – if any are indeed undertaken – since there is no central national coordination.

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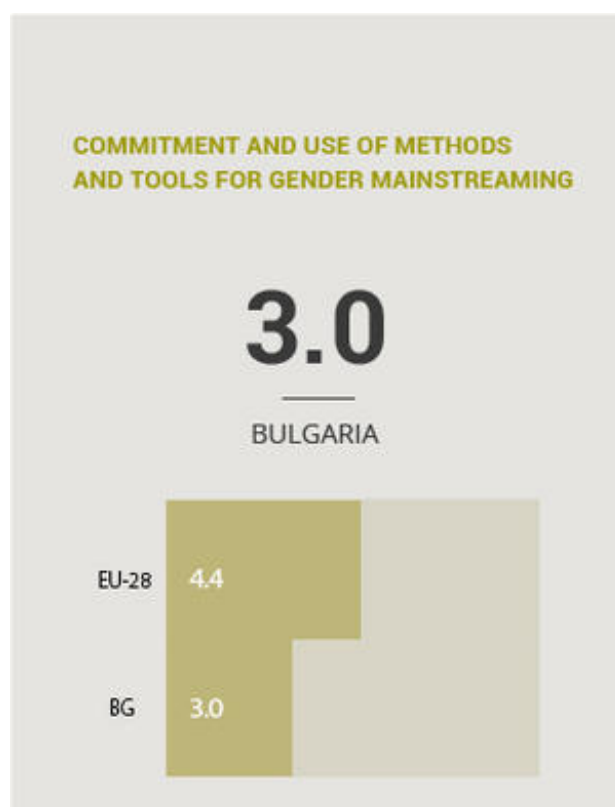
Laws and policies

Unlike the yearly National Plans for Promotion of Gender Equality issued by the National Council on Gender Equality, the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality 2009–2015 explicitly mentions gender mainstreaming as a priority. The strategy outlines the specific objectives that have to be achieved in order to eradicate all obstacles to achieving real equality between women and men in the country, and brings together the efforts and actions of the executive at all levels, as well as those of local self-government.

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Methods and tools





Few gender-mainstreaming methods are in use, such as stakeholder consultations and sex-disaggregated statistics. Evaluation, indicators and regulatory activity have been planned for future use. Funding for capacity-building training targeted at public officials has been provided through external programmes like MATRA and PROGRESS.

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Good practices

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