



# Bulgaria

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

The main policy commitments in the area of gender equality in Bulgaria are set out in the national strategy for gender equality 2009–15, which aims to 'provide guarantees for equal treatment, equal access to resources and equal participation of both women and men in decision-making, with a view towards their successful personal and social development and the promotion of gender equality in all spheres of social, economic and political life.'

The Unit for Equal Opportunities, Antidiscrimination and Social Benefits at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) is responsible for implementing the strategy. The MLSP is committed to gender training for ministry and local authority staff, along with introducing a gender-mainstreaming approach to the impact assessment of gender equality policies and gender-sensitive budgeting.

## GENDER TRAINING IN PRACTICE

Gender training is coordinated and delivered by the MLSP, often in partnership with the Commission for Protection against Discrimination or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as the Centre for Women's Studies and Policies, the Gender Project for Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation. The MLSP has held a number of gender training activities aimed at building or improving the capacity of its staff, the staff of other ministries and those of NGOs. Activities in 2011 included gender training for 30 experts from the strategic planning units of the 15 ministries belonging to the National Council on Equality between Women and Men. The training took place over four sessions, each lasting 3 days, and was also attended by representatives of NGOs and social partners. A manual of best practices was produced to help apply the approach nationally.



Gender training was usually partly sponsored by the MLSP until 2009, and by EU programmes such as Progress (2007–13) and the ESF operational programme on human resources development. Two gender training programmes have taken place on average each year since 2005. Gender training in Bulgaria faces challenges such as lack of interest or difficulties in understanding the topic, or reluctance to acknowledge the need for or benefit of gender training. Some of the most effective gender training courses include practical learning-by-doing elements or interactive exercises (e.g. role-playing games), making use of examples from everyday life as well as examining best practices from other countries.



## ABOUT THE STUDY

This factsheet summarises research findings for Bulgaria from the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) 2-year project on 'Gender training in the European Union', which is part of EIGE's gender mainstreaming methods, tools and good practices work. The project collected practical information about gender training across the 27 EU Member States and Croatia, dating 2005–12.

The information is based on desk research and stakeholder interviews conducted between February and April 2012 by ICF GHK. The interviews included representatives of national ministries tasked with the coordination of gender mainstreaming, other ministries and public organisations at national, regional and local level that deliver or commission gender training courses to their staff, and a sample of gender trainers who deliver the training. Further, the information contained herein was validated with EIGE's thematic network on gender training in autumn 2012.

Other outputs from the study include online databases of gender trainers and training resources available on EIGE's website at: [eige.europa.eu](http://eige.europa.eu)

## EXAMPLES OF GENDER TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Two EU-funded projects have contributed to training to support gender mainstreaming at local level.

- In 2007, the trans-European project 'Equality for local development: gender mainstreaming in municipalities' provided support to the municipalities of Sofia, Veliko Turnovo and Plovdiv (coordinated by the Centre for Women's Studies and Policies). The project aimed to encourage balanced participation of women and men in decision-making in local communities and increase the analytical and practical capability of staff in local authorities to implement gender-equality policies.
- In 2009 the Progress-funded project 'Building effective capacity for implementing the approach to gender mainstreaming' developed a methodology for implementing gender mainstreaming in Bulgaria. One hundred representatives of the central, regional and local administrations received gender training during this 1-year project.

## WHY DO WE NEED GENDER TRAINING?

Gender training is an educational tool that supports gender mainstreaming through building the capacity of ministries, local authorities and other partners to consider and address issues facing women and men in their work and lives. Gender training:

- raises awareness of gender issues and contributes to changing stereotypes;
- provides staff with expertise and analytical skills to identify gender inequality;
- develops understanding and builds competence to do things differently;
- benefits organisations by supporting a culture in which both women and men can prosper;
- helps to create a more equitable society.

Staff members may be trained on concepts such as what is gender; how to undertake gender analysis; key issues facing women and men in different sectors; underlying causes and how to address these; and how to construct gender-sensitive indicators.





## FACTS AND FIGURES

- The national strategy for gender equality 2009–15 summarises the government's commitments to gender mainstreaming in Bulgaria. The strategy is implemented through annual action plans which include gender training and related activities aimed at building capacity in the public administration.
- An estimated 600 ministry officials participated in gender training in 2011. In addition, more than 2 000 representatives from local authorities, social partners and other stakeholders, such as NGOs, SMEs, media, etc., have taken part in gender training since 2005.

### ARE YOU LOOKING FOR GENDER TRAINERS?

Please visit EIGE's Gender Trainers database at:  
<http://eige.europa.eu/content/gender-trainers-database>

### ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FURTHER RESOURCES ON HOW TO MAINSTREAM GENDER AND IMPROVE GENDER KNOWLEDGE?

Please visit EIGE's Gender Training Resources database at:  
<http://eige.europa.eu/resources/gender-training>

### USEFUL LINKS

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy:  
<http://www.mlsp.government.bg/bg/index.asp>

Unit for Equal Opportunities, Antidiscrimination and Social Benefits, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy — national policy on gender equality:  
<http://www.mlsp.government.bg/equal/index.asp>

## About the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans and beyond, by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable information on gender equality in Europe.

More information:

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