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Gender Mainstreaming in the Republic of Macedonia: Beyond the EU Lenses

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPM	Center for Research and Policy Making
DAW	Division for Advancement of Women
DEO	Department for Equal Opportunities
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EEC	European Economic Community
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
ESE	Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labor Organization
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Member of Parliament
NAPGE	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women
PHARE	Program of Community Aid to the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe
RCS	Roma Center Skopje

SAPARD Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural
Development

SDC Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNIFEM United Nations Development Fund for Women

UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment
of Women

*“In addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, Governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of **mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes** so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively”.*

[Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, paragraph 79]

INTRODUCTION

In his book on political philosophy entitled “Politics”, Aristotle elaborates that “man is by nature a political animal” and that “man is by nature a social animal”.¹ There is clearly no reference to women as societal actors. The birthplace of democracy which occurred in the ancient Greek city states implied that women and children are not citizens, since they were unable to participate in the decision-making process. The society has clearly evolved since the Fourth Century B.C. Women are steadily acquiring their positions as equal societal actors, especially due to the recent developments in the last two Centuries. The basic human rights of women, i.e. their ability to vote, their right to education and equality in treatment are enshrined in most of the Constitutions in today’s world societies. What is equally important is the introduction of the concept of gender mainstreaming in the recent decades, due to the ingenious and constant efforts made by the United Nations to place women’s rights and empowerment highly on the global agenda.

The purpose of this paper is to try and analyze the gender mainstreaming developments in one specific country - the Republic of Macedonia². The main research question is focused on the ways in which the society is being transformed since the beginning of the official EU accession process. Therefore, the main questions are related to the type of institutional and legal changes which occurred as a result of the compliance with the *acquis communautaire* and other internationally binding documents, identification of the main areas of concern according to the EU lenses, and lastly analysis of the bottom-up perspective

¹ Aristotle: “*Politics*”, trans. Benjamin Jowett (University of Adelaide, Australia: 2013), <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/a8po/index.html> (June 14, 2013).

² The Republic of Macedonia was admitted into the UN in 1993 under the provisional reference “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” due to the still ongoing name dispute with Greece; the reference FYROM continues to be used in all major international institutions until a political solution can be found.

provided by the NGO sector and other international actors involved in mainstreaming the gender perspective into the Macedonian society. This scope of work is relevant for the creation of future policies, strategies and national campaigns which aim at advancing the position of women in Macedonia.

The first chapter provides an overview of the historical developments of the concept of gender mainstreaming. The initial starting point is the United Nations and its efforts to promote the concept within the organizational structure of the World Conferences on Women. The author will make an attempt to identify the main results and outcomes of these Conferences which made an enormous impact in the creation and promotion of gender mainstreaming as a concept. The following section will be focused on analyzing the European Union's evolutionary process in the introduction of the concept, as well as the institutional changes which took place as a result of the attempts to mainstream the gender perspective into the European society.

The second chapter will be focused on the formal, top-down changes in the Republic of Macedonia. After gaining its independence in 1991, the country went through numerous societal changes due to the transition process. The aim of the chapter will be to provide an analysis of the recent gender mainstreaming developments, with special reference to the EU accession process which the country is currently undertaking. Therefore, the National Action Plans for Gender Equality, the Legal framework and other institutional changes, as well as the Revision Reports (2007-2012) prepared by the European Commission will be subject to detailed analysis. The purpose of the research in this section is to answer the following questions: what kind of transformational changes have occurred in the institutional and legal set up, as well as policy making procedures in the Macedonian society when addressing women's

rights and gender mainstreaming?; are the National Action Plans for Gender Equality adequate in terms of structured policies and further implementation?; have the institutional changes provided proper results for the planned gender equality achievements?; how does the EU view gender equality and gender mainstreaming in Macedonia and what are the main areas of concern which ought to be addressed in order for the country to successfully join the European Union?

The third chapter will attempt to specifically examine the areas of major concern, i.e. the issues which are most challenging for women living in the Macedonian society. The following areas will be elaborated in more details: Women in rural areas; Women from minority groups with special attention to the challenges of Romani women; Women in the labor market and Gender pay gap; Women in decision-making positions and Domestic violence. The author will try to use beyond the EU lenses approach when analyzing the above topics, by mainly using available data and information provided by the NGO sector as well as information provided by relevant international organizations. The following questions will be addressed in detail: what are the specific challenges that each of these groups of women are faced with in the Macedonian society?; what type of projects and activities have been implemented so far and what kind of results did they achieve?; what are the NGO and academic perceptions in regards to gender equality in Macedonia and how do they identify the possible positive developments in the future? The main goal is to provide a strong component beyond the lenses of the EU, i.e. to present what societal actors consider as main issues which ought to be tackled in order to achieve better results in the gender mainstreaming process.

1. HISTORY OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING

True changes in the promotion of gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality came with the introduction of the concept of gender mainstreaming. This chapter describes the evolution of this concept at both international and EU level. It starts with the role of the United Nations and the importance of the World Conferences on Women and their subsequent follow-ups, after which it describes the institutional changes within this international organization. The following part gives an overview of the gender mainstreaming developments and institutional changes within the European Union.

1.1 Gender Mainstreaming at International Level

The most commonly used definition of gender mainstreaming is taken from the Report of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for 1997. In Chapter IV of the aforementioned Report, the definition of the concept of gender mainstreaming is stated as follows:

*“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality”.*³

³ Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997 (A/52/3, 18 September 1997), Chapter IV: Coordination segment, A. Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/52/plenary/a52-3.htm> (May 28, 2013).

This definition clearly emphasizes the integration of gender considerations across all societal levels and across all policy fields. It also foresees the active involvement of men (not only women) in the process of achieving the ultimate goal – gender equality.

1.2 The UN and Gender Mainstreaming

The United Nations is playing a pivotal role in placing the concept of gender mainstreaming on the international agenda. Women's rights were foreseen since the very creation of the UN, that is to say they are included in the founding Charter of this Organization. Article 1 of the first Chapter states the Purposes of the United Nations, and paragraph 3 includes the following statement:

“To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion” (UN, Charter of the United Nations, 1945).

The UN is trying to reach the goals of promoting equal freedom and treatment for women through organizing World Conferences on Women and through the establishment and operation of institutions within the UN system which are fully engaged in activities related to women's rights, gender equality and empowerment of women. In the attempt to distinguish the achievements and significant accomplishments that these institutional tools are putting forward, the following subchapters shall be divided into: World Conferences and Institutions operating under the UN umbrella, with the task of promoting women's rights, gender equality and ultimately promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming on the global

arena, including both the Member States and NGO's as crucial actors in achieving the goals.

1.2.1 World Conferences on Women

The concept of *gender mainstreaming* traces its roots back to the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Women, held in Nairobi in 1985. Although the term itself was still not put into use, the Nairobi Conference can be considered as one of the most important building blocks in the establishment of the gender mainstreaming concept, since for the very first time it was concluded that gender equality is not an isolated issue, but encompasses all areas of human activity.⁴ The term *mainstream* is only mentioned in paragraph 111 of the Report, stating that organizational and other means should be used which “would include specific measures which are conceived in such a way that the autonomy of women is enhanced so that they bring women into the mainstream of the development process on the same basis as men” (UN, 1986).

Ten years later, the 4th United Nations Conference on Women was held in Beijing, in September 1995. The significance of this Conference was that gender mainstreaming was endorsed as a strategy for the very first time. Also, the crucial importance of the 4th Working Platform of the World Conference was that all Member States were obliged to develop a concept in order to implement the gender mainstreaming into their national strategies.⁵ Twelve critical topic areas were identified, namely: “Women and Poverty”, “Education and Training of Women”, “Women and

⁴ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (Nairobi, 15-26 July, 1985), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/otherconferences/Nairobi/Nairobi%20Full%20Optimized.pdf> (May 28, 2013).

⁵ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September, 1995), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf> (May 28, 2013).

Health”, “Violence against Women”, “Women and Armed Conflicts”, “Women and Industry”, “Women in Positions of Power and Decision-Making”, “Mechanisms for Promoting Women”, “Women’s Human Rights”, “Women and Media”, “Women and the Environment” and “The Girl Child”. There was still no clear definition or explicit reference to the term “*gender mainstreaming*” within the framework of the Beijing conference either. The only description of the concept was presented as part of the “Women and the Environment” section of this Report, in paragraph 252. It is stated that “governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, including, as appropriate, an analysis of the effects on women and men, respectfully, before decisions are taken” (UN, Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1996). Although there was no clear definition of the concept, those who participated in both Nairobi and Beijing stated that they had felt a clear sense of continuity. According to Leticia Ramos Shahani⁶, who was the Secretary-General of the UN Third World Conference on Women in 1985, the work which was achieved in Nairobi significantly contributed to the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, which was structured in a concrete and detailed manner.

Only five years later, in June 2000, the Beijing +5 five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action took place in New York. The aim was to recapitulate the achievements and possibly indicate further developments in the field of women’s rights and empowerment. As an outcome of this conference, there were two official documents: Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly -

⁶ Leticia Ramos Shahani, “The UN, Women and Development: The World Conferences on Women” in Arvonne S. Fraser and Irene Tinker, eds., *Developing Power: How Women Transformed International Development* (New York, USA: First feminist press edition, 2004), 35.

Political Declaration⁷ and Resolution – Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁸, often referred to as the Outcome Document. The Political Declaration was re-confirming the already adopted documents, whereas the Outcome Document outlined the achievements and obstacles in the twelve previously identified critical topics, and it further identified the challenges which were affecting the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Actions and initiatives to overcome the obstacles were proposed, both on an international and national level. The overall purpose was to significantly expand the possibilities to implement the actions which were already foreseen in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. According to Anne S. Walker⁹, it is disputable whether the set goals were in fact achieved.

The Political Declaration which was adopted in Beijing +5 included a provision stating that all Member States should regularly assess the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As a result, the Beijing +10 Review and Appraisal was organized and held in February-March 2005. The aim of the conference was to review both Beijing 1995 and Beijing +5. The Final Report¹⁰ of this conference clearly states the need to implement “gender mainstreaming in all

⁷ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: S-23/2. Political Declaration (16 November 2000), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/ress232e.pdf> (May 29, 2013)

⁸ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: S-23/3. Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (16 November 2000), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/ress233e.pdf> (May 29, 2013)

⁹ Anne S. Walker, “*The International Women’s Tribune Centre: Expanding the Struggle for Women’s Rights at the UN*” in Arvonne S. Fraser and Irene Tinker, eds., *Developing Power: How Women Transformed International Development* (New York, USA: First feminist press edition, 2004), 101.

¹⁰ United Nations Commission on the Status of Women: *Report on the Forty-ninth session (28 February – 11 and 22 March 2005)*, Economic and Social Council, Official Records 2005, Supplement No. 7 (New York, 2005), 24. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/346/33/PDF/N0534633.pdf?OpenElement> (May 29, 2013).

programme formulation and implementation activities” (UN, Commission on the Status of Women, 2005). The document further states that “gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting women’s empowerment” which should be adequately addressed through proper legislation, policies and programmes. It provides a clear incitement for all Member States to include gender mainstreaming in all policy-making and institutional levels.

The fifteen-year Review and Appraisal (Beijing +15) in 2010 focused mainly on exchange of information between the Member States, the UN and the NGO sector. In the Final Report¹¹ gender mainstreaming is emphasized as a pivotal strategy in achieving complete and successful implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. However, the impacts from the 2008 economic and financial crisis have been identified as detrimental for the progress in this field, and the financial assistance for developing countries in achieving the gender equality goals has been pointed out as an important tool in implementing the gender mainstreaming process. Gender-responsive budgeting is also presented as an additional tool to tackle the ongoing challenges on an international level.

Clear efforts were made to advance and empower women as a result of the Beijing conference, but also as a result of the follow-up conferences as well (Beijing +5 and Beijing +10). However, there were also certain controversies which occurred within the course of these UN hosted events. As Benjamin Stachurski has stated in his book entitled “*The Promise and Perils of Transnationalization*”, there were certain

¹¹ United Nations Commission on the Status of Women: *Report on the Fifty-fourth session (13 March and 14 October 2009 and 1-12 March 2010)*, Economic and Social Council, Official Records 2010, Supplement No. 7 (New York, 2010), 44. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/305/76/PDF/N1030576.pdf?OpenElement> (May 29, 2013).

controversies surrounding the positions of the actors involved in the conferences. He is pointing out to the formation of loose coalitions both at Member State and NGO levels, which attempted to “turn back the clock and reverse the achievements” (Stachurski, 2013). Certain Member States, such as Poland, Nicaragua, Algeria, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, Egypt and Iran “tried to revise the results of the previous conferences” (Stachurski, 2013), and Christian fundamentalist groups from the NGO sector were strongly opposing the new agenda. The opposition forces coming from both levels were successfully avoided and actions and commitments did move forward as a result of the outcomes of the conferences. However, they might present themselves as blocking points to future substantial achievements.

Overall, the conferences and follow-ups helped in the creation of a new and better understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming. They also presented clear pathways to be taken in order to achieve significant results. The endorsement of the gender mainstreaming strategy was successfully introduced with Beijing 1995 and the twelve critical topic areas were also identified; further achievements and obstacles were presented with Beijing +5 and an incitement for Member States taking significant actions were specified with Beijing +10 and Beijing +15. Progress in the implementation of the twelve critical areas has been noted and increased implementation was foreseen as one of the major priorities placed on the UN agenda. The above stated conferences truly paved the way forward towards the promotion of gender mainstreaming as a concept, as well as its actualization and placement on the international agenda.

1.2.2 UN Institutions for advancement of Women

Until July 2010, there were four distinct United Nations agencies which dealt with the issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment.

They were the following: Division for the advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). These previously separate bodies were blended together with the creation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN)¹². The aim of this organizational reform within the UN system was to bring together the resources in order to create a bigger impact in the fields of gender equality and women's empowerment.

UN Women has three main roles: to support inter-governmental bodies in the creation of their policies, to help the Member States in the implementation of the set standards through both technical and financial means, and to hold the UN accountable for its own activities in the promotion of gender equality. In regards to its mandate, it is very similar to UNIFEM, but the major distinction is its independence from UNDP. In Sophie Harman's¹³ view, in order for UN Women to be successful there should be a clear policy profile combined with cooperation with actors outside of the UN system in order to achieve the external support which would result in pressures for additional policy changes. The author therefore emphasizes the need for cooperation between UN Women and other international actors in order for its actions to have meaningful outcomes on a global scale.

¹² United Nations General Assembly: *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly. 64/289. System-wide Coherence* (21 July, 2010) http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289 (May 29, 2013)

¹³ Sophie Harman, "Women and the MDGs: too little too late, too gendered" in Rorden Wilkinson and David Hulme eds., *The Millennium Development Goals and Beyond: Global Development after 2015* (New York, USA: Routledge 2012), 89.

One of the recent activities taken in the direction of cooperation with other actors was the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding*¹⁴ between UN Women and the European Union. The MOU was signed by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton and Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs on behalf of the EU, and Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women Michelle Bachelet on behalf of UN Women. The primary purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding was to strengthen the cooperation between these two organizations in order for them to work more closely together towards achieving the gender equality goals that both organizations share. The MOU emphasizes the principles and the overall and specific objectives of the partnership, as well as the areas of cooperation between them (paragraphs 1-4). As it is notable when considering the stated principles in the MOU, both organizations strive for enhanced complementarity and best use of their already existing resources, which clearly indicates that this closer cooperation is intended to result in lack of overlapping areas of action, as well as best use of the available financial, technical and staff resources. Since the MOU was signed in April 2012, it is yet too early to make a proper analysis of the outcome of this advanced cooperation. The possibility to evaluate the outcome will probably be possible in the following years. The author Celeste Montoya¹⁵ clearly identifies the connection already established between these two organizations in the way that “European advocates (along with women from around the world) have played a role in pushing for EU policy responses, but they have also leveraged its actions, using

¹⁴ *Memorandum of Understanding between the European Union and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)*, (Brussels: April 16, 2012) http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/international-organisations/documents/un-woman_en.pdf (May 29, 2013).

¹⁵ Celeste Montoya, *From Global to Grassroots: the European Union, transnational advocacy and combating violence against women* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 74.

UN developments to pressure national and regional governments (such as the EU) to change their policies” (Montoya, 2013). It is evident that the interrelatedness between the two organizations already exists, whether it is through advocacy and implementation aspects or joint cooperation. The following section will therefore address the gender mainstreaming process within the framework of the European Union, its historical developments and current institutional set up.

1.3 Gender Mainstreaming within the European Union (EU)

The European Union is another pivotal actor in promoting the concept of gender mainstreaming on the international scene. It has undertaken numerous projects, activities and legislative changes in this respect, especially in the years following Beijing 1995. For the purpose of providing a brief historical overview and analysis, the following sections will be focused on the most important gender mainstreaming developments within the EU according to the analytical perceptions of the author of this Thesis.

The inclusion of gender policy within the European Union traces its roots back to the 1950’s and the signing of the Treaty of Rome. Article 119 of the Treaty includes the following paragraph:

*“Each Member State shall during the first stage ensure and subsequently maintain the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work”.*¹⁶

This Article is a reflection of the possible establishment of social standards, since the basic idea for the creation of the EU was political, but it was to be achieved through economic means, as Jean Monet has envisioned it with his functionalistic approach. But its implementation was not evident throughout the

¹⁶ The Treaty of Rome (March 25, 1957), http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/emu_history/documents/treaties/rometreaty2.pdf (May 30, 2013), 43.

1950's and 1960's. It was only through the women's movement in the 1970's that the application of Article 119 was put into practice. However, it took another 20 years before any true action was taken in regards to women's rights and their empowerment.

Significant changes within the EU framework occurred only after the United Nations World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing in 1995. The following year the European Commission stated its pledge to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy. It was included in the Communication from the European Commission¹⁷ from 21 February 1996, entitled: "Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into all Community Policies and Activities". The document states that the systematic inclusion of gender issues is crucial for long-lasting development for the entire society. In Teresa Rees's¹⁸ view, three models for equal opportunities were established after 1996: equal treatment, positive action and gender mainstreaming (Rees, 1998). That same year the First Annual Report "Equality for Women and Men in the EU" was published by the European Commission, which created a higher level of transparency for this policy area than in previous years (Rees, 1998). It was clearly a significant step forward in placing gender mainstreaming on a more substantial level of not only through transparency, but also through actualization of the issue and its inclusion not only in economic and social terms, but also throughout the entire policy-making structure of the European Union.

Significant step forward towards institutional support for the gender mainstreaming process was the appointment of Gender Mainstreaming Officers in 29 departments in 1997. They were placed in charge of developing adequate policies in this area, which were to be elaborated in the "Guide to Gender Mainstreaming Assessment" papers. However, the legally binding commitment came into force with the Treaty of Amsterdam upon its coming into force on 1

¹⁷ Communication from the Commission "Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into all Community Policies and Activities"(February 21, 1996) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1996:0067:FIN:EN:PDF> (May 30, 2013).

¹⁸ Teresa Rees, "Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, Training and Labor Market Policies" (London, UK: Routledge, 1998), 27.

May 1999. According to Article 2 EC, equality between women and men is enlisted as one of the primary tasks of the Community. Article 141 EC, which was until then the aforementioned Article 119, was renumbered and also amended. The following provision in Article 141 (1) was included:

“Each Member State shall ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied”.¹⁹

The subsequent sections (a) and (b) provide a legal description of the meaning of discrimination based on sex. Roberta Guerrina²⁰ points out that the Amsterdam revisions of the Treaty on the EU fostered the introduction of the principles of gender mainstreaming within the legally binding structure of the Treaties (Guerrina, 2005). These legally binding achievements clearly provided potentials for a greater impact of the gender mainstreaming strategy within the European Union.

The EU has also foreseen the preparation of Action Programs on Gender Equality within its institutional framework, as well as annual Reports on the equality of men and women in the European Union. Following the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005, the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 was an adequate follow-up of the Framework and it included the following priority areas: equal economic independence for women and men, the reconciliation of private and professional life, equal representation in decision-making, the eradication of all forms of gender-based violence, the elimination of gender stereotypes and the promotion of gender equality in third countries (Commission, 2006). In March 2010 the Commission issued a declaration named “A Women’s Charter”, which was launched under the presidency of Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso. Five principles were outlined in the document, namely: equal economic independence, equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, equality in decision-making, dignity,

¹⁹ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and Related Acts (Official Journal C 340, 10 November 1997) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/treaties/dat/11997D/htm/11997D.html#0140040061> (May 30, 2013).

²⁰ Roberta Guerrina, *“Mothering the Union: Gender Politics in the EU”* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press 2005), 55.

integrity and an end to gender-based violence and gender equality beyond the union (Commission, A Woman's Charter, 2010).

The current Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 was created on the basis of the Women's Charter and the previous Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010. It contains six main principles, five of which are identical with the Women's Charter, and the sixth one is encompassing the horizontal issues: gender roles, legislation and the governance and tools of gender equality (Commission, Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015, 2010).

Seminars, workshops, networks and other activities are also included in the EU agenda for promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming on a wider policy level. The most prominent networks which were recently created are the Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship (WES) and the Network of Women in Decision-Making, which was founded by the European Commission in 2008. The most prominent institution which was created by a Commission's Regulation in 2006 is the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Although it started formally working only in 2009, it is clearly establishing itself as the key initiator and support mechanism for implementing gender mainstreaming aspects in the EU policy-making process. More detailed analysis of the work of the EIGE will be presented in the following section.

1.3.1 EIGE's role in Gender Mainstreaming

The Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council for establishing the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)²¹ was presented by the Commission in March 2005. Section 2 of this document clearly states the justification of the Commission's proposal for establishing the institute. The need for a multidimensional

²¹ Commission of the European Communities: *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council for establishing the European Institute for Gender Equality*, COM (2005) 81 final (Brussels, 08.03 2005) <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Proposal-for-a-regulation-establishing-EIGE.pdf> (May 31, 2013).

approach to gender equality, the socio-economic aspects (52% of the EU population are women and they are also vital for sustainable development regarding the population's aging challenges) and the need for independence of the institution in carrying out its tasks are enlisted as one of the key reasons for its creation (Commission, Proposal for a Regulation for establishing the EIGE, 2005). The following year the institute was officially established through Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council²². The document specifies the institute's objectives, tasks, activities and working methods, as well as its legal personality and capacity. The establishment of this institute was a result of the "thematic spillover" which occurred in the field of gender equality (Vleuten, 2007).

Although it was officially created with the Regulation from 2006, the institute only became operational in June 2010. It is based in Vilnius, Lithuania and it recruits 40 permanent staff members. The three basic focal areas of the EIGE²³ are: 1) Compiling existing data at European level and developing methods to improve the objectivity, comparability and reliability of data and indicators; 2) Gender mainstreaming methods and tools and 3) Data collection and dissemination (EIGE, Mid-term Work Programme (2010-2012), 2010).

Although the institute has been just recently created, the responsibilities it has been assigned with and the scope of work which it covers have already resulted in numerous activities and projects related to the promotion of gender equality on a European level. In terms of including

²² Official Journal of the European Union: *Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a European Institute on Gender Equality* (December 30, 2006) <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:403:0009:0017:EN:PDF> (May 31, 2013).

²³ European Institute for Gender Equality: *Mid-term Work Programme (2010-2012)*, (April 29, 2010) http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Mid-term_Work_Programme%202010-2012_en.pdf (May 31, 2013).

the gender mainstreaming aspects within its activities, the institute has developed specific methods and tools which include the collection of data regarding the tools which the EU institutions and Member States are using to promote gender mainstreaming, processing of the data collected and its subsequent dissemination. After a consultation process with an expert group, EIGE decided to focus on Gender Training as the main tool for gender mainstreaming. In general terms, Sara Hlupekile Longwe²⁴ defines gender training as “training to provide the skills and methods for improved gender-orientation of development programmes” (Longwe, 1998). It is therefore seen as the most adequate tool for dissemination of good practices in this field. In its analysis entitled “Gender Training: factors contributing to its effective implementation and challenges”²⁵, the institute has outlined the following key activity areas: integrating gender training into national gender equality policy, tailoring gender training to the context and participants’ needs and recognizing power imbalances (EIGE, Gender Training, 2012). The institute further initiated an elaboration of a Study on the use of “good practice” with the aim of developing methodologies which would be used in addressing the mainstreaming of the gender perspective into all policies and fields of work within the EU framework. The above stated are a clear indicator to the importance and validity of the EIGE in tackling the challenges and promoting gender equality on a broad European level.

The institute has also issued numerous publications which serve one of its founding purposes, that is to say the dissemination of collected data and exchange of good practices. The most important publication which is

²⁴ Sara Hlupekile Longwe: “*Education for Women’s Empowerment or Schooling for Women’s Subordination?*” in Caroline Sweetman ed., “*Gender, Education and Training*” (Oxford, UK: Oxfam 1998), 20.

²⁵ European Institute for Gender Equality: “*Gender Training: factors contributing to its effective implementation and challenges*”, (November 13, 2012) <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Factors%20contributing%20to%20effective%20i mplementation%20of%20GT.pdf> (May 31, 2013).

relevant for the further analysis of this paper is “Good practices in gender mainstreaming: Mainstreaming gender into the policies and the programmes of the institutions of the European Union and EU Member States”²⁶. The document once again emphasizes the importance of the concept of gender training, and it also provides an elaborate example of six good practices in this respective field of activities. But the most essential information provided in this document is related to the process of identification, description and analysis of ‘good practices’ for gender mainstreaming. The proposed criteria for their assessment states that ‘good practices’ are “able to work well, replicate in other contexts (transferable) and/or provide a valuable learning experience” (EIGE, Good practices in gender mainstreaming, 2012).

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter was focused on the historical concept of gender mainstreaming, which traces its roots back to the United Nations’ efforts to launch it on the international agenda. The major breakthrough of the concept came in 1995 within the 4th United Nations Conference on Women which was held in Beijing, and subsequently had a spillover effect both within the UN’s institutional set up (the creation of a new entity – UN Women) and the European Union. The latter instigated the gender mainstreaming process in 1996, and subsequently broadened its scope of activities through initiatives from the European Commission, Action Programs and Framework Strategies on Gender Equality, and the creation of the European Institute for Gender Equality. As C. Montoya pointed out, European advocates also played a role in using the UN developments to pressure their governments for changes in the policies

²⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality: “*Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming: Mainstreaming gender into the policies and the programmes of the institutions of the European Union and EU Member States*” (November 28, 2011) <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Good-Practices-in-Gender-Mainstreaming.pdf> (May 31, 2013).

(Montoya, 2013) which clearly emphasizes the link between the UN and the EU in the creation and implementation of the gender mainstreaming concept. These international and regional developments point out to the path which ought to be taken on a state level. The next chapter will describe the gender mainstreaming process in the Republic of Macedonia with reference to the incremental developments of the process on the national arena. In particular, it will present the changes which have taken place with the country's application to become a member of the European Union.

2. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MACEDONIA

The Republic of Macedonia is an independent and sovereign state since its secession from Yugoslavia in 1991. A Referendum for Independence was held on 8th of September 1991, and the population voted in favor of independence. A ratification of the new Constitution²⁷ followed in November of that same year. The principle of gender equality was included in the 1991 Constitution under Articles 9, 54 and 110. The country became a member of the United Nations²⁸ in 1993 and the 38th member state of the Council of Europe²⁹ in 1995, whereby it pledged itself to comply with the commitments of those organizations in achieving gender equality. Macedonia applied for EU membership in 2004, and the Council granted its candidate status in 2005. Aspirations for joining the EU family stipulate compliance with the European Union Law, i.e. the treaties and legislations which have a direct effect on the law of each Member State (or an indirect effect in the case of directives). All of the above stated memberships and aspirations have had a significant impact in the promotion of gender mainstreaming on a national level, and subsequently its inclusion in the legislation and institutional set up within the country.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the gender mainstreaming activities that have been undertaken since the country has applied to become a member state of the European Union.

²⁷*The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia* (November 22, 1991), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=538> (June 1, 2013).

²⁸ United Nations General Assembly: “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: Admission of the state whose application is contained in document A/47/876 -S-/25147 to membership in the United Nations”, (April 27, 1993), <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N93/240/37/IMG/N9324037.pdf?OpenElement> (June 1, 2013).

²⁹ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: “Communication from the Committee of Ministers: Resolution (95) 23 (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 19 November 1995 at the 547th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies), (October 25, 1995), <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=8278&Language=EN> (June 1, 2013).

The aim is to analyze the connection between the top-down actions taken in order to comply with the *acquis communautaire* and the actual developments in the area of women's rights, gender equality and gender mainstreaming. This chapter will focus on the top-down process, both stemming from the legislative changes and action plan commitments instigated by the Government, as well as the EU's perceptions of the achieved progress in the gender mainstreaming area.

2.1 *On the road to EU membership*

The Stabilization and Association Agreement³⁰ signed in 2001 placed the aim at future adhesion to the EU as one of the top priorities on the political agenda in the country. The political process was continued with Macedonia's identification as a potential candidate during the Thessaloniki European Council Summit³¹ in 2003. It was a clear positive political signal for the country's prospects of joining the Union. Following its application it became a candidate country in 2005. In 2008 the Accession Partnership³² for the country was adopted by the Council, which contained only one provision related to women's rights. The provision is enlisted in the human rights and protection of minorities section and it states the following: "further enhance the protection of

³⁰ Council of the European Union: "*Legislative acts and other instruments: Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, of the other part*", (Brussels: March 26, 2001), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/saa03_01_en.pdf (June 1, 2013).

³¹ European Union's Council meeting: "*General Affairs and External Relations*" (June 16, 2003), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/76201.pdf (June 1, 2013).

³² Official Journal of the European Union: "*Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and repealing Decision 2006/57/EC*" (March 19, 2008), http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/documents/eu_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/apojeu190308_en.pdf (June 1, 2013).

women's and children's rights" (Council, 2008). However, since the country was aspiring towards an EU membership it clearly made its commitment to comply with the Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria) and thereby to accept the Community's *Acquis communautaire*. As stated in the previous chapter, Article 119 of the EEC Treaty regarding the principle treatment of women and men was already set in place, and the changes and amendments with the Amsterdam Treaty which included several new provisions (included in articles 2, 3, 13, 137 and 141) had already established the legal basis on which the country should strive to comply with. Therefore, the legal rules were already set for the country to make the necessary changes and efforts to comply with EU's visions for gender equality and mainstreaming the gender perspective, which will be examined further on. According to Silke Roth³³, "while the EU offers important political opportunities, the domestic level is the crucial factor for success (or failure) of feminist mobilization, in particular with respect to the implementation of gender equality policies, in old as well as in new member states" (Roth, 2008), a statement which could be applied for candidate countries as well.

One important aspect which ought to be taken into consideration is the access to EU funds which are granted within the pre-accession framework. There were three available funds for pre-accession countries prior to 2007, namely: PHARE (Program of Community Aid to the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe), SAPARD (Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) and ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession). Since 2007, the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) was introduced in order to consolidate the different funds into a single pre-accession assistance

³³ Silke Roth: "*Gender Politics in the Expanding European Union: Mobilization, Inclusion, Exclusion*" in Silke Roth ed. "*Gender Politics in the Expanding European Union: Mobilization, Inclusion, Exclusion*", (New York, USA: Berghahn Books, 2008), 10.

mechanism which would create better efficiency and higher level of consistency. There are currently two main sources of funding the gender related projects in Macedonia. The first one is part of IPA Component IV, and the second one refers to the projects financed under EIDHR³⁴ (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights). The IPA Component IV projects are implemented by national authorities in a decentralized implementation system, and some of them are targeting directly women. The following IPA Component IV projects are under current implementation: “Strengthening the capacities of NGO’s and other providers of social services for integration of women from minority groups in the labor market” (1 service contract of 477.000 Euros started in autumn 2012) and “Strengthening and enabling women from minority groups to improve their employment potentials via specialized trainings tailored to their needs and potentials” (1 Grant scheme of 1.500.000 Euros). Other projects are also promoting gender equality, but women are not their exclusive target group, such as the “Support to the employment of young people, long-term unemployed and women” project. This was a 15 months planned project which finally lasted 25 months. The results and outcomes of these projects should be subject for future analysis.

In order to properly assess the changes which occurred in the concept of gender mainstreaming with relations to the EU pre-accession process, the author will mainly use the 2007 - 2012 time frame for the proceeding analysis. There are three reasons for the selection of this period: the first one is that the National Action Plan for Gender Equality was created within the 2007-2012 period, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) closely corresponds to the same time frame (it is planned for the period of 2007-2013) and the country’s Progress Reports prepared by the

³⁴ See entire list of projects funded under EIDHR on the following web site: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/documents/projects/contract_list2013_01_en.pdf

European Commission correspond to the same period (as of June 2013 there are a total of 6 yearly Progress Reports available for the 2007-2012 time period).

2.2 *National Action Plans*

The Government brought the first National Action Plan for Gender Equality in 1999. It was a reaction to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from 1995 and it can be viewed as a first step towards institutionalization of the gender perspective. The follow-up was the creation of the second National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012³⁵ (NAPGE), following the adoption of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men from 2006. The NAPGE was adopted in May 2007 with the aim of improving the status of women and continuing the gender equality policies. It also was also created to serve the purpose of joining the international commitments to gender equality together with the directions and measures which ought to be taken for improving the status of women³⁶. The working group which prepared the NAPGE consisted of 22 members, coming from both Governmental bodies and the civil sector. Ten strategic areas of social action were identified: respecting and advancing the rights of women, promoting gender-equality in decision-making, advancement of recording gender-disaggregated statistical data, gender sensitive education, economic empowerment of women, removing all sorts of violence against women,

³⁵ *National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2007-2012* (Skopje, Macedonia: May, 2007),

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:3WH8Uw_qVwsJ:legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/3410/file/Nation%2520Action%2520Plan%2520on%2520Gender%2520Equality%25202007-2012_en.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=de (June 2, 2013).

³⁶ *Периодичен Извештај од мониторингот на политиките за родова еднаквост во Р. Македонија* (Акција Здруженска, Скопје, June 2010), <http://www.civicamobilitas.org.mk/attachments/article/23/Periodocen%20monitoring%20final.pdf> (June 2, 2013).

advancement of health of women and men, decreasing poverty, increasing the responsibility of the media for promoting the gender concept, increased participation of women in the peacekeeping process and inclusion of the gender aspect in the protection and promotion of healthy environment (NAPGE, 2007). The time framework from 2007-2012 was given, with provision for detailed elaboration of the activities in annual operational plans. The institution responsible for monitoring and coordination of the NAPGE was the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, i.e. the Department for Equal Opportunities. The latter was also bearing the responsibility of preparing the annual operational plans. Strategic objectives, as well as activities and indicators were prepared for each of the ten areas of social action foreseen in this document. Each strategic objective included the institutions and holders which were to be held accountable for its implementation.

A special section was dedicated to the country's aspirations for European integration. It outlines the then recent developments in the policies of the EU and the actions that the country ought to take in compliance with the Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men and the Lisbon Agenda. It also states that the Republic of Macedonia will have to amend its plans, policies and actions to act in accordance with the Union's policies (NAPGE, 2007).

The NAPAGE was subject to analysis and criticism both in terms of its contents and implementation. According to Prof. Jasna Koteska's³⁷ view in her Comments Paper on the Implementation of gender mainstreaming in Macedonia, "the main problem with the National Plan is that

³⁷ Jasna Koteska: "Exchange of good practices on gender mainstreaming: Implementation of gender mainstreaming – Comments paper, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (European Commission, Justice: Belgium, 17-18 May 2011), http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_be/mk_comments_paper_en.pdf (June 2, 2013).

substantial portions of it are descriptive and read more as activity report rather than policy document” (Koteska, 2011). In their yearly Report about the monitoring of gender equality politics in Macedonia from 2010, the NGO Akcija Zdruzenska elaborates on the institutional inefficiencies of the implementation process. The main criticism presented in this document is directed towards the unrealized assumptions for successful implementation of the planned activities. It is stated that there were several reasons for criticism: firstly, there was a lack of real transformation in the processes of creating and implementing the policies and measures as a precondition for implementation of the activities foreseen in the operational plans; there was no consultation process where all relevant actors could give their contribution to the creation of the operational plans; there was limited expertise and capacity of the coordinators for equal opportunities who were in charge of providing substantial contribution to the creation of the yearly operational plans; there was dependency from the international institutions in terms of providing expertise, technical and financial support which led to the implementation of the created politics to be highly dependent on the internal politics of the international institutions; there were no established procedures for accountability in regards to the implementation of the operational plans; and lastly, there were no monitoring and analysis procedures within the process of implementation (Zdruzenska, 2010). The same positions of the NGO sector could be observed after the closure of the planned time frame for the NAPGE. In the Shadow Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW³⁸ (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) from 2012, both Akcija

³⁸ *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women*, prepared by the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of Republic of Macedonia – ESE and Akcija Zdruzenska (Skopje, 2012), http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ESEM_for_PSWG_en.pdf (June 2, 2013).

Zdrzenska and ESE (Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women) presented the same positions regarding the implementation process of the NAPGE as in 2010.

The question then arises as to why the observed deficiencies in the implementation process were not taken into consideration by the responsible institutions in 2010, only for the same statements to be replicated by the NGO sector after the final stage of the National Action Plan's realization in 2012? The coordination and proper implementation of any plan or strategy of that scale and importance requires adequate transfer of information among all actors involved in the process. Even more so that international actors were once again included in the support for the preparation of the NGO's evaluation reports (in the case of the 2010 Report the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – SDC was providing the financial support).

The overall observations by the actors involved in the evaluation of the implementation of the NAPGE coming from the NGO sector was that it there was a lack of capacity of the coordinators for equal opportunities, the process of evaluation, monitoring and consultation was also lacking, and the dependency on the international institutions' support contributed to the inefficient enforcement of all the activities planned for proper developments in the area of gender equality. What is yet to be observed in the future is as to whether the lessons learned from this process will in any way affect the possible positive prospects for the implementation of the next National Action Plans for Gender Equality in Macedonia.

Two other National Action Plans were elaborated by specifically targeting Roma women, taking into consideration that the Roma community is one of the most vulnerable minority communities in the country.

The first National Action Plan for Romani Women³⁹ was planned for the 2008-2010 period, whereas the second one is planned for the 2011-2013 period. The NAP for Romani Women 2008-2010 included specific activities, responsible parties who were assigned with implementing the tasks as well as a specific time frame for their implementation. The focus was placed on several crucial areas: education, employment, health, human rights and public and political participation. The assessment of its implementation was severely criticized, especially by the Roma NGO sector in the country. In their commentary on the realization of Romani women rights, the NGO Roma Center Skopje (RCS) referred to the situation in regards to the NAP's implementation as "more than terrifying"⁴⁰. They further on elaborate that the Government acknowledged the lack of implementation and that the activities implemented were completely financially dependent on international donors (Skopje, Submission to CEDAW, 2013). According to their detailed analysis of the planned and realized activities, only two activities was partially implemented (training for trainers, which included the training of 24 Romani women and analysis of the current legislation) out of a total number of 24 activities planned in the first NAP for 2008-2010. The second NAP for Romani Women 2011-2013 was also subject to criticism by Roma Center Skopje. They underline the deficiencies to address the real needs of Romani women starting from the process of preparation of the second NAP. According to RCS, the plan was prepared and adopted based on the premises that it would not have "any financial

³⁹ The NAP and other relevant documents prepared within the framework of the Roma Decade are available at <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/?ItemID=6FC822BBA79A61429117F41943673AE4> (June 3, 2013).

⁴⁰ Roma Center Skopje: *Submission to CEDAW - Commentary on the realization of the Romani women rights with focus on the 2006 CEDAW Committee Recommendations No. 28* (January, 2013), http://www2.ohchr.org/English/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/RomaCenterSkopje_ForTheSession.pdf (June 3, 2013).

implications” on the state budget (Skopje, Submission to CEDAW, 2013). The further detailed implementation analysis is very similar to the NAP from 2008-2010, where the activities are clearly defined but the implementation level is very poor. Their overall conclusion is that “the authorities perceive the issue of Roma and Romani women in Macedonia as a ‘project issue’ for which money should come from donors” (Skopje, Submission to CEDAW, 2013).

It is apparent that activities have been undertaken in terms of planning projects and preparing National Action Plans to address the most salient issues regarding gender equality. On the other hand, i.e. in regards to the implementation phase, there is constant criticism, coming especially from the NGO sector and by academics working in this field of expertise. The willingness to address gender inequality is persistent, however the abilities and funds for transforming the planned activities into actions is lacking. Part of it is due to the lack of financial resources and dependency on international institutions and the other underlying obstacle can be observed in the lack of expertise of the public administration personnel who is assigned with the implementation and assessment of the planned activities. As Prof. Jasna Koteska stated, “much effort is needed from various domestic and foreign stakeholders to constantly remind the authorities that a political will for gender mainstreaming and political commitment to do so is crucial, if more rapid progress is to be expected” (Koteska, 2011).

2.3 Legal framework

The legal framework for gender equality in the Republic of Macedonia is derived from two approaches: the first one includes all the laws which include positive measures to be taken in order to ensure gender equality, and the second one is the particular Law on Equal Opportunities for

Women and Men⁴¹, which was passed by the Parliament in May 2006. The Law from 2006 had an improved version which was enacted in 2012 after numerous consultations with international organizations and legal professionals⁴².

There are 19 other legal documents in addition to the Laws on Equal Opportunities from 2006 and 2012 which incorporate the gender equality perspective in the Republic of Macedonia. The most notable legal documents which include gender equality in their legal provisions, according to the author's view, are the following: the Constitution⁴³ from 1991, where Article 9 includes the provision that all citizens are equal in their rights and freedoms, regardless of their gender, race, color, national or social origin, political or social beliefs, property and social status (Constitution, 1991); the Law on Secondary Education of the Republic of Macedonia⁴⁴ from 1995, where the prohibition of discrimination based on gender is included in Article 3, paragraph 2; the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia⁴⁵ from 1996; the Inheritance Law of the Republic of Macedonia⁴⁶ from 1996, where Article 3 states that all citizens are equal in exercising their inheritance rights; the Law on Local Self-Government of

⁴¹ Закон за еднакви можности на жените и мажите (Official Gazette of RM No. 66/06 from 29. 05. 2006), <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/ZEM.pdf> (June 02, 2013).

⁴² The *Opinion on the Draft Law on Equal opportunities for Women and Men of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia prepared by OSCE/ODIHR* (Warsaw: June 9, 2011) as well as previous Opinions on the Revised versions of the Draft Law on Equal opportunities for Women and Men for the country are available on the following web site: <http://www.legislationline.org/search/runSearch/1/key/opinion+on+equal+opportunities/topic/7/country/31/region/1/rows/10/type/2>

⁴³ The access to the official web site is presented in footnote 25 of this paper

⁴⁴ Закон за Средно Образование (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 44/95 dated from 20.09.1995), http://bro.gov.mk/docs/zakonodavstvo/sredno/Sredno_obrazovanie_95.pdf (June 3, 2013).

⁴⁵ Кривичен Законик (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 37/96 dated from July 29, 1996), <http://www.moep.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/KRIVIcen%20zakonik.pdf> (June 3, 2013).

⁴⁶ Закон за Наследувањето (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 47/96 dated from 12.09.1996) <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=377> (July 3, 2013).

the Republic of Macedonia⁴⁷ from 2002, which governs the establishment and institutional organization of Equal Opportunities Commissions; the Laws on Election of Representatives⁴⁸ and Local Elections⁴⁹ from 2004, both provisioning at least 30% representation for each sex; the Labor Law of the Republic of Macedonia⁵⁰ from 2005, which contains provisions for equal treatment between women and men in Article 6, indicating equal employment opportunities, equal possibilities for career advancement, qualification, education, requalification, salaries, rewards, sick leave, working conditions, working hours and equal treatment regarding cancellation of the employment contract; the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Macedonia⁵¹ from 2008, which provisions equal access to higher education institutions for all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, as stipulated in Article 7; the Law on Social Protection of the Republic of Macedonia⁵² from 2009, legally enforcing prohibition of all sorts of direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, race, skin color, nationality, ethnicity, social status and so forth, as included in Article 20; and the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination⁵³ from 2010, which

⁴⁷ *Закон за Локалната Самоуправа* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 5 dated from 29.01.2002), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=219> (June 3, 2013).

⁴⁸ *Закон за Избор на Пратеници во Собранието на Република Македонија* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 49/04 dated from 14.07.2004), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=69> (June 3, 2013).

⁴⁹ *Закон за Локалните Избори* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 55/04 dated from 07.06.2004), <http://pravodaznaes.mk/documentDetail.php?id=592> (June 3, 2013).

⁵⁰ *Закон за Работни Односи* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 62/05 dated from 28.07.2005), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=285> (June 3, 2013).

⁵¹ *Закон за Високото Образование* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 35 dated from 14.03.2008), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=799> (June 3, 2013).

⁵² *Закон за Социјална Заштита* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 79 dated from 24.06.2009), http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/zakon_so_zastita_osnoven.pdf (June 3, 2013).

⁵³ *Закон за Спречување и Заштита од Дискриминација* (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 50 dated from 13.04.2010), <http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentDetail.php?id=4846> (June 3, 2013).

according to Article 1 provides prevention and protection against discrimination in exercising the rights guaranteed with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the laws and all the ratified international agreements (Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, 2010).

Several other Laws also include gender equality provisions, such as: the Law on Internal Affairs (1995), the Law on Political Parties (2004), Amendments and Supplements to the Family Law (2004), Amendments and Supplements to the Criminal Code (2004), the Law on Courts (2006) and the Electoral Code (2006)⁵⁴.

The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which was passed in May 2006, determines the basic and special measures for the establishment of equal opportunities between women and men, the assignments and duties of the parties in charge of attaining equal opportunities, as well as the appointment of Coordinators for equal opportunities. The aim of this law was to promote the principle of gender equality not only in the political, economic, social and educational field, but in all fields of social life (Закон за еднакви можности на жените и мажите, 2006). According to Article 13, paragraph 2, all Ministries are obliged to appoint a Coordinator who will be in charge of coordinating the assignments related to the establishment of equal opportunities. A total number of 23 Coordinators and their deputies were appointed in all Ministries, as well as several other state agencies⁵⁵. It is important to note that all of the appointed Coordinators were women, whereas there were

⁵⁴: Aferdita Haxhijaha Imeri, Biljana Nastovska, Sherife Ismaili, Daniela Dimitrievska and Liljana Asenov: *“Policy on Gender Equality – Perception of Efficiency and Transparency”*, trans. Ismail Krifca (Macedonian Women’s Lobby: Skopje, 2012), http://mzl-mk.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/Politiki-za-rodova-ednakvost_ENGL-1FINAL.pdf (June 3, 2013).

⁵⁵ The complete list of all appointed Coordinators and their deputies is available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/koordinatorki1.pdf>

only 3 men appointed on deputy positions. In Jackson Katz view, although specifically referring to gender-based violence as a key area of his research, an important remark is provided which could be applied in broader terms, and it refers to the fact that “women’s issues are personal for men too”⁵⁶ and that men should play an equal role in any issue that is currently labeled as “women’s issue”. In the author’s personal view, the option of appointing an increasing number of men on Coordinator positions should be open for future consideration by the officials who are responsible for their appointment. But the more important subject for analysis refers to the tasks and responsibilities which the Coordinators are actually performing, as well as the competencies they have upon being appointed to their positions. According to Akcija Zdruzenska, there are numerous deficiencies in the operation of this part of the State machinery, namely: some of the Coordinators are not even informed about their appointment; others are not consulted as to whether they would accept to hold the position; their level of knowledge about gender equality is very variable; some of them are not acquainted with the National Action Plan for Gender Equality and subsequently have no information about their role in implementing it; there are no officially prescribed duties and responsibilities for their positions, which additionally limits their capacities⁵⁷. The Law also prescribes the establishment of Commissions for Equal Opportunities within the units of local self-government, according to Article 16, paragraph 2. The Law further prescribes the appointment of a person to perform the role of Coordinator, who would actively participate in the preparation of the National Action Plan for Equal Opportunities in reference to the self-

⁵⁶ Jackson Katz: *“The Macho Paradox: Why some men hurt women and how all men can help”*, (Naperville, Illinois, USA: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2006), 15.

⁵⁷ *Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women*, prepared by the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of Republic of Macedonia – ESE and Akcija Zdruzenska (Skopje, 2012), http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ESEM_for_PSWG_en.pdf, p. 3-4, (June 2, 2013).

government units. The NGO's Akcija Združenska and ESE point out to the non-functionality of these appointed bodies as well, by stating that "approximately 70% have not prepared annual work programs, and only one half of them have taken some measures and activities" (Združenska E. a., 2012).

The new Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men⁵⁸ was adopted in January 2012. This Law includes more provisions in regards to the legal responsibilities of the Government, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and other state organs (Articles 10-14). The NGO sector once again expresses its criticism both in regards to the lack of promotional activities upon its enactment and in terms of its implementation. It has been observed that the technical provisions stated in the new Law "were not respected by a single institution, including the Government" (Združenska E. a., 2012). They continue their argument by pointing out to the need of creating a system which would clearly indicate the responsibilities and whose activities would be monitored following the application phase in order for the proper implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men to take place.

The agent responsible for implementation of the Law on equal opportunities is the Department for Equal Opportunities (DEO)⁵⁹. It was established in March 2007, as a separate department operating within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP). It consists of two separate units: a Unit for Gender Equality (as a successor to the pre-existing Unit for Promotion of gender equality which was founded in 1997) and a Unit

⁵⁸ Закон за еднакви можности на жените и мажите (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 6/2012 dated from 13.01.2012), http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/zem_2012.pdf (June 4, 2013).

⁵⁹ The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy produced the publication "Department for Equal Opportunities" supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is available at [http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Sektor_za_Ednakvi_moznosti_ENG\[1\].pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Sektor_za_Ednakvi_moznosti_ENG[1].pdf) (June 4, 2013).

for Prevention and Protection against any kind of Discrimination. It was created with an aim of promoting inter-department and inter-sector cooperation, and it serves as the main link between the Government, the Parliament, the Ministries (equal opportunity coordinators) and the Local Self-Government (coordinators and commissions for equal opportunities (MLSP, 2012). Each appointed Coordinator for gender equality has the responsibility of preparing an annual report and submit it to the DEO. Although the DEO is responsible for support, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of all the activities related to promotion of gender equality, it lacks the executive authority, i.e. executive responsibility in regards to the successful implementation of the planned activities (Zdruzenska A. , 2010). The reports on the activities conducted by the DEO are presented directly to the Government, but they are neither transparent nor available to the public (Zdruzenska A. , 2010). It is certainly a necessity to make those reports publicly available, since they are a toolkit to be used not just by the governmental officials, but also by the other stakeholders which are actively working on the promotion of the gender equality perspectives in the country (such as women NGO's, international organizations which are the major donors in the field etc.).

The legal framework for gender equality is clearly present in the Republic of Macedonia. There are numerous Laws which include the gender equality perspective as an addition to the specific Law on equal opportunities of women and men, and the DEO and the Coordinators are legally established to serve the purpose of coordination and proper linkage between the different institutions which are tackling the issue. However, the manner in which the tasks are delegated, the limited competence of the Coordinators and the lack of executive authority of the DEO clearly contribute to the inefficiency and limited scope of the actually realized activities in the field. There is a need to include proper selection of the appointed Coordinators

who are competent in the respectful field, and proper duties and assignments should be clearly delegated to the appointed personnel. Monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of the data is also another prerequisite for successful implementation of the responsibilities prescribed by the current Law.

The following sub-chapter will be focused on the European Union's view on the progress made in the gender equality and gender mainstreaming field in the Republic of Macedonia, with a 2007-2012 time frame which includes all the Progress Reports prepared up to date (June, 2013).

2.4 Progress Reports 2007 – 2012

The purpose of these Progress Reports issued on annual bases for both candidate and potential candidate countries is to assess the progress made in the previous twelve months on their road to the EU. The Reports include assessments on the relation between the EU and the country at stake, the political and economic criteria, as well as the ability to assume the obligations of membership⁶⁰. As of 2012, the Republic of Macedonia has been presented with assessments on the country's progress for six consecutive years. The following analysis will be focused on EU's top-down approach in assessing the progress made in the area of women's rights and gender equality, i.e. the main obstacles and challenges that the country is facing in that respect, viewed through the EU lenses.

The Progress Report for 2007⁶¹ includes its first analysis on women's rights under the Economic and social rights section (p. 14). A slow progress of the implementation of the 2006 Law on equal opportunities is

⁶⁰ Each of the six analyzed Progress Reports for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (from 2007-2012) contain 4 main chapters: Introduction, Political criteria, Economic criteria and Ability to assume the obligations of membership.

⁶¹ Commission of the European Communities: "*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*", (Brussels, 06.11.2007), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/fyrom_progress_reports_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

noted, and some progress is observed in the areas of education, healthcare, political participation (33 out of 120 MP's were women, as well as 3 out of 23 members of the Government were also women). Major concern is expressed for the situation of women in rural areas and ethnic minority women. Under the Employment and Social Policy chapter (p. 44) there is once again estimation on the slow progress on the implementation of the Law on equal opportunities, where it is specified that the definitions provided in the law were not completely in compliance with the *acquis communautaire*. It is further pointed out to the lack of existence of a national body which will be in charge of gender equality issues. Insufficient action was observed in five critical areas: employment, rural women, ethnic minority women, violence against women and human trafficking (p. 45). In the Judiciary and Fundamental rights chapter (p. 48), the adoption of a declaration condemning all forms of violence by the Parliament is acknowledged (p. 52), but the criticism stems from the narrow definition of rape in the Criminal Law which in their view results in difficulties for successful prosecution of the offenders. The EU's overall observation from 2007 views women as a vulnerable group subject to discriminatory practices.

The Progress Report for 2008⁶² includes a positive remark regarding women's participation in the candidate list during the early Parliamentary election process, noting that women counted for 35% ⁶³(p. 7-8). In the Economic and Social Rights Section (p. 18) several positive activities were enlisted, such as: the establishment of equal opportunity committees in 79

⁶² Commission of the European Communities: "*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report*", (Brussels, 05.11.2008), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia_progress_report_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

⁶³ Article 21, paragraph 3 of the Electoral Code from 2006 provisions that "each gender shall be represented in the election management bodies with at least 30%" (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 40, dated from 31.03.2006), <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/id/5658> (July 5, 2013).

out of 85 municipalities; the assignment of the Sector for equal opportunities within the MLSP as the gender equality body; the record number of women MP's, which was 38 out of a total number of 120; the adoption of a national strategy against domestic violence and the amendments to the Law on the family, as well as widening of the definition of rape in the Criminal Law (which allowed higher level of legal protection for women). Major concerns are expressed regarding the lack of capacity and defined mandate for the Sector for equal opportunities, women's rights in rural areas, domestic violence, practice of family voting instructions in the Albanian community during the election process and the double (both racial and gender) discrimination for Roma women and girls. Some progress was noted in the field of equal opportunities (p. 52), mostly in reference to the establishment of the Sector for equal opportunities and the increased number of equal opportunities committees within the municipalities (73 in 2008, compared to only 30 such committees in 2007). The lack of sufficient administrative capacity is pointed out, as well as the presence of stereotypes and discriminatory traditions for ethnic minority women. The overall evaluation in regards to women's rights and gender equality in the 2008 Report points out to limited progress (p. 61). Discriminatory practices and domestic violence are specifically indicated as major areas of concern.

The 2009 Progress Report⁶⁴ states that none of the 13 women who ran for the mayor position were elected in the 2009 Local Elections process (p. 9). There were 85 mayor positions available, and following the previous elections when there were 3 women holding the mayor's position, none were elected in 2009 (p. 18). Regarding women's rights, efforts were noted in the attempts to address the issue of domestic violence with the

⁶⁴ Commission of the European Communities: "*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2009 Progress Report*", (Brussels, 14.10.2009), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/mk_rapport_2009_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

appointment of a national body in charge of coordination of the activities of the national strategy against domestic violence. A critical approach is taken regarding the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities, mainly in the area of its realization and the lack of expertise and experience of the appointed personnel within the ministries and at local level (p. 18). There were no funds allocated for the implementation of the National Action Plan for Roma Women for 2008, and the financial dependency on international institutions is also noted regarding the Law on equal opportunities. The lack of capacity of the Department for Equal Opportunities to fulfill its role is further pointed out, as well as the slow progress in addressing women's rights in the rural areas. Roma women and girls are once again mentioned in this Report with the same remark as in the 2008 Progress Report, i.e. they continue to be subject to double discrimination (p. 18). As a result, the country is defined in terms of partially meeting the social and economic criteria (p. 20). As in the 2008 Report, the 2009 Reports indicates "some progress" regarding equal opportunities (p. 54). Most of the observations are continuous from the previous years, with the additional concern for the low level participation of women in decision-making positions at both national and local levels, due to the outcomes of the Local Elections.

The Progress Report for 2010⁶⁵ indicates the increased number of women MP's to 41, which is more than the 30% participation prescribed with the Electoral Code (p. 7). Positive remarks are given regarding the implementation of the Law on equal opportunities, with the appointment of a civil servant from the MLSP in charge of dealing with complaints regarding unequal treatment (p. 18). Strengthening of the local commission's capacities has also been observed, as well as positive

⁶⁵ Commission of the European Communities: "*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2010 Progress Report*", (Brussels, 09.11.2010), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/mk_rapport_2010_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

changes in the Labor law regarding sexual harassment and discrimination in the work place. Major criticism is placed on tackling the issue of domestic violence, with the urge for strengthening the capacities for implementation of the existing National Strategy (p. 18). The lack of long-term strategic approach to equal opportunities is further pointed out, together with the remark for financial dependence on foreign donors which was also mentioned in the previous Reports. Little progress was observed in terms of improvements in the position of rural women and Roma women and girls (p. 18). The lack of attention to women's health is presented for the first time as an area of concern which needs to be addressed. Concrete numbers were given for comparison between the female employment rate in Macedonia and the EU, indicating that the female employment level in Macedonia is 29.4%, compared to the 59.1% employment level in the European Union (p. 53). This is presented as a clear indicator for less favorable labor market trends for the women in Macedonia as compared to the EU. Compared to the previous Reports, progress in the implementation of actions which are targeting Roma women is noted for the first time, although such progress is observed as still lacking in terms of addressing the rights of women from the rural areas (p. 62). Women's participation in politics is once again characterized as being low. The activities in reaching equal opportunities are characterized as having achieved "little progress" (p. 53). The same critical areas of concern can be identified in this Report, with the addition of the issue of women's health, which was pointed out for the very first time.

The 2011 Progress Report⁶⁶ observes the increase of women heads of list in the early Parliamentary elections, from six in 2008 to 15 in 2011.

⁶⁶ European Commission: "*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2011 Progress Report*", (Brussels, 12.10.2011), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/mk_rapport_2011_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

The number of women candidates was 34% out of the total number of 1679 candidates (p. 7). Positive observations are noted in terms of increased awareness of the population regarding domestic violence issues, the responsiveness towards the needs of the victims, as well as the strengthened position of the national body in charge of dealing with these issues (p. 18). Progress is also viewed in addressing the health needs of women, which was subject to criticism in the previous Report from 2010. Discriminatory customs, the issues concerning double discrimination of Roma women and girls and the low level of participation of women in the political life is once again subject to non-sufficient progress (p. 18). It is further stated that “the equal opportunity issue is not a political priority of the Government” (Commission, Progress Report 2011, 2011). Roma women and youth are presented as an especially vulnerable group, due to the high unemployment rate, poor living conditions and health, as well as low level of school attendance (p. 21). A big reduction of the employment level of young women is presented as a key factor for the 2.4% decline in total youth unemployment (p. 25). The mechanisms for equal opportunities are assessed to be in place, however the lack of financial and human resources is estimated to be a major obstacle in tackling the ongoing challenges (p. 54). The increase in women’s employment rate is estimated at 36%, but compared to the EU average it is still substantially low. Overall, the lack of expertise by the staff members, the limited financial resources and the lack of political will are presented as key factors for the limited progress in achieving women’s rights and gender equality.

The last Progress Report issued for 2012⁶⁷ once again enlists the same issues which ought to be addressed, as noted in the previous Reports.

⁶⁷ European Commission: “*Commission staff working document – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2012 Progress Report*”, (Brussels, 10.10.2012), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2012/package/mk_rapport_2012_en.pdf (June 5, 2013).

Discriminatory practices and stereotypes that women in rural areas are challenged with, the low political participation and under-representation on the labor market, the limited actions targeting Roma women are all enlisted as continuous challenges which haven't been appropriately addressed (p. 15). A critical view was taken on the lack of better integration of the gender perspectives by the institutions, as well as the lack of strategic approach regarding the implementation of the NAP (p. 15). Great concern is expressed for the very low participation of women in the active labor market (p. 45). The mechanism which deals with complaints of unequal treatment within the MLSP is estimated as not functioning properly, due to the confusion between equal opportunities and anti-discrimination (p. 46). Little achievements are prevailing when evaluating all critical areas of concern regarding women's rights and equal opportunities, and the progress is estimated as being moderate (p. 53).

The question therefore arises: why are the same problematic issues being observed in all six Progress Reports and no adequate action was taken? Was it due to the lack of staff expertise, the lack of financial resources or the lack of political will to implement the already existing Laws and NAP's or a combination of all of the above? As Rebecca Tiessen points out, "real change through gender mainstreaming involves attention to the distribution of power and is harder to achieve because it requires a deeper commitment to changing organizational norms and procedures".⁶⁸ Having the institutional set up already in place, the commitment to undertake the needed changes is clearly lacking.

⁶⁸ Rebecca Tiessen, *Everywhere/Nowhere: Gender Mainstreaming in Development Agencies* (Bloomfield, USA: Kumarian Press, 2007), 2.

2.5 *Conclusion*

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the activities undertaken for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality in the Republic of Macedonia for the period from 2007-2012. Analysis of the NAP's and Laws enacted for the promotion of equal opportunities was presented, with critical lenses coming from the NGO sector. In addition, the EU's view on gender equality was analyzed through the data presented in the 2007-2012 Progress Reports. In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to present the most challenging gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues in Macedonia. They will be divided into specific areas of concern, which emerge as the most salient ones based on the analysis presented in this chapter.

3. BEYOND THE EU LENSES – ASSESSMENTS OF THE GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This chapter will be focused on closely examining the situation of the most vulnerable groups of women in the Macedonian society. In order for a proper advancement of the gender mainstreaming concept to be achieved, these target groups ought to be given special attention through proper implementation of strategies and policies which would address their needs. Based on the top-down approach presented in the previous chapter, several critical areas of concern will be addressed in detail. The aim is to combine available statistical data with the view of other actors (NGO's, academics and international organizations) involved in the gender mainstreaming process, in order to make a proper analysis of the current situation in the respective areas.

3.1 Women in rural areas

Women living in rural areas have been identified as one of the most vulnerable groups in the Macedonian society. The data presented in the 2002 Census⁶⁹ refers to the total number of population per municipality and not per village, but the CRPM (Center for Research and Policy Making) cross-analysis from 2012 indicates that 45.2% of the total population in the country lives in rural areas⁷⁰. Thereby, the percentage of population living in urban areas is 54.8% and it represents the majority within the country. Rural women are faced with numerous challenges in their everyday lives according to the latest CRPM research conducted on the topic in 2012. One of the critical areas is the level of education, which

⁶⁹ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: “*Census of population, households and dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002 and Total population, households and dwellings according to the territorial organization of the Republic of Macedonia, 2004*” (Skopje, May 2005), <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/knigaXIII.pdf> (June 6, 2013).

⁷⁰ Center for Research and Policy Making: “*Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas*” (Skopje, 2012), <http://www.unifem.sk/uploads/doc/ANGweb2.pdf> (June 6, 2013), p 15.

is lower for rural women compared to rural men and most notably to urban women (CRPM, 2012). According to the Labor Force Survey from 2009⁷¹, the level of education for rural women is lower than rural men, especially in the categories with no education and incomplete primary education, as the percentage figures indicate in the following table.

Table 1: Education attainment of rural residents per gender and in comparison to urban

Educational attainment	Rural Women	Rural Men	Urban Women	Urban Men
Without education	5%	2%	2%	0.8%
Incomplete primary	18%	10%	8%	3%
Primary and lower secondary education	46%	42%	27%	22%
3 years of secondary education	6%	11%	7%	13%
4 years of secondary education	21%	29%	37%	44%
Higher education	1%	2%	4%	4%
University level education	4%	4%	14%	13%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: CRPM “*Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas*” (2012), summary of the data taken from the Labor Force Survey 2009 (SSO 2010a)

The discrepancy is even higher when the educational attainment of rural women is compared to both urban women and men.

The low level of participation in the active labor force is another major area of concern. As the following table indicates, rural women have the lowest level of activity rates as participants in the active labor force.

⁷¹ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: “*Labor Force Survey, 2009*” (Skopje, July 2010), <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.10.04.pdf> (June 6, 2013).

Table 2: Activity rates of population aged 15 years and over, by gender and urban/rural division

Year	Urban Women	Urban Men	Rural Women	Rural Men
2007	49 %	66 %	36 %	70 %
2008	49 %	67 %	36 %	71 %
2009	49 %	67 %	36 %	72 %

Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), summary of the data taken from the Labor Force Survey (according to SSO 2010d)

Only approximately one in every three rural women is actively looking for a job, compared to half of urban women and more than two-thirds of rural men. One of the major obstacles related to the low level of activity in the labor work force is the limited access to child care facilities⁷², as indicated in the CPRM survey of rural women and men conducted in 2011. Only 10% of the lowland villages have access to kindergartens, and the percentage is even lower for the highland villages. This is a major contributing factor to the limited opportunities for rural women to seek employment opportunities (CRPM, 2012). The accessibility of health care facilities, as well as available treatment from generalist and specialist doctors in rural areas is also limited⁷³. There are clear disparities between the access to primary health care facilities between highland and lowland rural areas, and the access to specialist services indicates more than one and a half hour walking distance away for both types of rural habitats. CPRM assesses the high level of unpaid work that rural women perform as a result of taking care for ill family members, which is a responsibility that they are assigned to in most of the cases (CRPM, 2012). Inadequate infrastructure and limited access to public transportation is another major area of concern. The need for improved road network both in highland and

⁷² See Appendix 1, Chart 1: Accessibility of child care facilities in rural areas

⁷³ See Appendix 1, Chart 2: Accessibility of generalist and specialist doctors in rural areas

lowland villages is identified as one of the highest priorities for both women and men in the rural areas (CRPM, 2012). Moreover, women are identified as more frequent users of public transportation⁷⁴. One of the reasons for the higher level of public transport usage for rural women compared to rural men is connected with gender stereotypes related to driving. CRPM's findings indicate that: "women drive cars less than men and operating heavy agricultural machinery is not a 'womanly' activity"⁷⁵. The above indicates that gender stereotypes are prevailing in the rural areas, and women are given specifically assigned roles in the rural households and communities. When attempting to identify the major reasons for inactivity of rural women, the CRPM research from 2011 indicated 2 key aspects: family and unpaid home work. Both are closely related to the patriarchal expectations of women as primary caregivers and housewives.

The CRPM 2012 study identifies one positive development for rural women, which is related to the increasing level of secondary school education for rural girls⁷⁶ due to the introduction of compulsory secondary education on a national level. However, the possible future developments related to this positive change are subject for future analysis. Improvements are needed in the areas of infrastructure, health care access, child care facilities, raising the level of active participation of rural women in the labor force as well as increasing the level of employment opportunities for rural women, or the result from obtaining higher level of education might possibly lead to increased migration of this target group to urban areas.

⁷⁴ See Appendix 1, Chart 3: Usage of public transport

⁷⁵ See footnote 69

⁷⁶ See Appendix 1, Chart 4: Percentage of male and female students enrolled into secondary school (out of the ones that have completed primary) 2005-2010

A total number of five projects have been financed by the EU targeting rural development, based on the official data available for contracts managed by EUD⁷⁷ (2007-2013) and supported through the EIDHR program. However, only one of the projects was specifically targeting gender issues, namely the project entitled “Achieving Gender Equality in Rural Communities”. It was a 2011-2013 time framed project implemented by the Association for Local Rural Development from Tetovo, with an allocated budget of 67 947, 00 Euros. The project was implemented in 4 villages in the Polog region: Bogovinje, Brvenica, Vrapciste and Zelino with the aim of institutionalizing the gender mainstreaming approach in the rural communities within the region⁷⁸. Clearly, more substantial allocation of funds is required with the aim of targeting rural women through the EIDHR program, since all of the Progress Reports analyzed in the previous chapter point out to the deficiency in positive changes for this specific target group.

The overall conclusions which can be drawn from the data presented above are that the key areas of concern for rural women have been clearly identified in the CRPM analysis from 2012. Policies and programs need to be developed in order to address the main challenges that rural women are faced with: education, health care access, child care facilities, proper infrastructure, increased labor market activity and persistent gender stereotypes. Targeting these areas requires a top-down impact, both in regards to elaboration of specific strategies for advancement of rural women, as well as allocation of proper financial and staff resources which would ensure proper implementation of the planned activities.

⁷⁷ A list of all the ongoing and completed projects is available on the following web page: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/documents/projects/contract_list2013_01_en.pdf

⁷⁸ Detailed information about the activities related to the implementation of the project are available on the official web page of the “Association for Local Rural Development”: http://www.zlrr.org.mk/rural_project/eng/rural_projecy_eng.html#

3.2 Women from minority groups

The latest Population Census⁷⁹ in the Republic of Macedonia was successfully conducted in 2002. The figures reveal that out of a total number of 2, 022, 547 citizens, there are 1, 297, 981 ethnic Macedonians, 509, 083 ethnic Albanians, 9, 695 ethnic Vlachs, 53, 879 ethnic Roma, 77, 959 ethnic Turks, 35, 939 ethnic Serbs and other ethnic groups living on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The census figures clearly reveal that Albanians represent the highest majority ethnic group in the country, followed by the Turks and the Roma ethnic group. The ethnic Macedonians, Serbs and Vlachs are predominantly Orthodox Christian by religion, and the Albanians, Roma and Turks are mainly Muslim. There are also linguistic differences among the ethnic groups, since each of them speaks its own language. The cultural characteristics are also specific for each of the above mentioned groups, thereby creating a multi-ethnic milieu in the ethnic composition of the country.

Ethnic minority women have been identified as a specifically vulnerable group in all the EU Progress Reports. Due to the double discrimination of the Romani women, their current challenges will be elaborated in detail in the next sub-chapter. The question therefore arises: what are the specific challenges that minority woman are encountering in the Macedonian society? Are they interrelated with the overall obstacles that Macedonian women are facing on daily bases, that women from rural communities are challenged with, or is it more related to specific cultural features of the patriarchal society that they live in? The following paragraphs will make an attempt to reveal the specificities of these groups of women.

⁷⁹ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: “*Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Macedonia, 2002*” (Skopje, May 2005), <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/knigaXIII.pdf> (June 8, 2013).

In a study examining the reasons for economic inactivity of low-skilled women from minority groups in Macedonia, the economist Diego F. Angel-Urdinola⁸⁰ indicates that the traditional values are the main reason which deters many women from working outside the home. The author further elaborates that while the main reasons for unemployment for both women and men for different ethnicities are nepotism and lack of personal connections, there were major differences for unemployment between women coming from different ethnic groups. Out of the total number of interviewees, it is reported that only 11% of the Albanian women are economically active, and 35% of them are less likely to be employed than Macedonian women (Angel-Urdinola, 2008). The interviewed Albanian, Turkish and Roma women stated that traditional norms require them to perform all the household work, which limits their possibilities to seek employment. These patriarchal stereotypes are deeply-rooted in the society, therefore the key actors which can make an impact are the women NGO's, since women appear to trust those organizations (Angel-Urdinola, 2008).

As the CPRM study suggests, "Gender differences in education remain to be determined by ethnic/cultural background" (CRPM, 2012). The Albanian, Turkish and Roma girls are identified as the most vulnerable group, especially in reference to lack of secondary school education. Although the numbers have slightly improved over the years, the vulnerability of these specific groups still exists mainly due to the lower family expectations for them to complete their secondary education and "the bigger pressure to marry at a young age" (CRPM, 2012). The study was conducted by specifically targeting the women from rural areas, but due to the limited availability of ethnically segregated data the author finds

⁸⁰ Diego F. Angel-Urdinola: *"Why are low skilled women from minority groups economically inactive in Macedonia"?* (September, 2008), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGENDER/Resources/gnewsletterp7.pdf> (June, 9, 2013).

the information relevant in this context as well. The following table illustrates the percentage of girls in secondary education:

Table 3: Percentage of girls (based on ethnic background) in secondary school out of the total number of students in secondary education

	Macedonians	Albanians	Turks	Roma
1999/2000	51%	41,1%	36,8%	39,8%
2000/2001	50,8%	42,1%	38%	43,3%
2001/2002	50,7%	43,8%	42,3%	37,4%
2006/2007	49,7%	42,0%	40,7%	44,4%
2007/2008	49,7%	44,3%	41,8%	46,4%
2008/2009	50,1%	43,7%	42,8%	46,3%
2009/2010	49,9%	46,2%	45,8%	47,1%

Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), summary of the data taken from the State Statistical Office: elementary and secondary schools at the end of school years 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; CPRM calculations

The study further reveals differentiations in the level of education of women based on different ethnical background⁸¹. Namely, whereas over 50% of Macedonian women have completed at least secondary education, over 50% of the Albanian and Turkish women have completed only primary education or less (CRPM, 2012). There are clear distinctions in lifestyle and prevalence of stereotypes between rural and urban areas. However, due to the lack of relevant analysis targeting specifically minority women in the country, the author relies on the currently available information within the course of the analysis. Preparing specific reports, gathering ethnically segregated data for women on a national level, as well

⁸¹ See Appendix 2, Chart 1: Level of education of rural women per ethnic group

as assessment of the current situation would be highly useful for future research projects.

The CPRM Survey from 2011 reveals another important aspect in the assessment of differences between Albanian men and women. The findings indicate that 83.3% of the Albanian men are bilingual (speak Macedonian as well as Albanian), whereas only 64.2% of the Albanian women are bilingual (CRPM, 2012). Therefore, it is a clear indicator as to why women are more reluctant to communicate with state institutions, look for employment, or even perform visits to the doctor without being accompanied by a male member of the family who speaks Macedonian. Again, differences are expected to be observed in this respect compared to the minority women living in urban areas. In addition to the previously stated information, only 3% of the interviewed Macedonians confirmed their bilingual capacities (CRPM, 2012).

Proxy voting is another major area of concern targeting minority women in the country. As the Report on Women's Political Participation in Macedonia⁸² indicates, proxy voting is particularly prevalent in the Albanian parts of the country, where men typically vote on behalf of women. However, the Report also points out to different experiences of women, since some of them are active and exercise their democratic right of voting during elections, both within the Albanian and Roma communities. There were several campaigns organized to address this issue, however the latest Freedom House report for the country once again indicates the existence of proxy voting predominantly in Albanian Muslim communities.

⁸² Marcia Greenberg and Kara McDonald: *“Women's Political Participation in the Republic of Macedonia: Opportunities to Support Women in Upcoming Elections – and Beyond”*, (August, 2000), http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACM344.pdf (June 9, 2013).

Due to prevailing stereotypes and gender roles assigned within the household activities, minority women are additionally challenged in their attempt to exercise their individual rights and freedoms. Moreover, religious beliefs as well as linguistic barriers are also aspects which should be taken into consideration when addressing the needs of this group of women. Numerous variables ought to be taken into consideration when projects targeting this group are to be elaborated, namely: urban/rural division, linguistic skills, religious beliefs, patriarchal roles and other key aspects which require close examination if positive results are to be expected. As noted in the case of proxy voting, these women have different experiences and express different levels of social activity. In order to address their specific needs, small scale local projects conducted by the NGO sector seem to be the most appropriate strategy to assist them in becoming more active members of the society.

3.2.1 Romani women

Romani women represent a specifically vulnerable group in Macedonia. The double discrimination (both by gender and ethnicity) undoubtedly results in specific challenges and areas of concern which the authorities ought to address. According to USAID's Gender Assessment Report⁸³ from 2010, "discrimination in access to health care, education, employment, adequate housing, and exposure to domestic and other forms of violence are among the main challenges facing Romani women" (USAID, 2010).

Education is one of the main pillars towards the achievement of gender equality and enhancement of women's rights in general. The figures related to the education of ethnic minorities in the country reveal that

⁸³ USAID: "*Gender Assessment USAID/Macedonia*", (June, 2010), http://socialtransitions.kdid.org/sites/socialtransitions/files/resource/files/Macedonia_Gender_Assessment_2010.pdf (June 8, 2013).

gender differences among the students belonging to the ethnic minority groups clearly exist. Whereas the differences between the number of male and female students are decreasing for the Albanian and Turkish communities, the gap is actually increasing in the case of the Roma ethnic community (from 46.4% female students in 1997/98 to 35.9% in 2007/2008) (Zdruzenska A. , 2010). Thereby, it is clearly an area of major concern. Moreover, the research findings presented in the Shadow Report on the Situation of Romani Women⁸⁴ from 2005 reveal that discrimination does exist in the educational system in the country. Out of a total number of 143 women who reported discrimination in education, 40% reported discrimination by their teachers, 21% experienced harassment by their classmates, 11% felt discriminated by the school staff members and 29% were subject to unequal treatment by their parents (promotion of the Romani boys and placement of the Romani girl in a subordinated role). This data clearly indicates the reasons for the decreasing number of Romani girls in the educational system, which is influenced both by the societal discriminatory views and by the stereotypical gender role which they are assigned with as female family members. Going back to the ingenious remark by Jackson Katz⁸⁵ which was mentioned in the previous chapter, women's issues are also men's issues, and therefore both genders should be actively involved in the process of creating changes in the societal views on 'women's issues'. Developing strategies, seminars and training programs which target Romani men are essentially needed if positive changes are to be expected in this problematic area.

Another major area of concern is the inactive role in the labor force that Romani women are experiencing. The traditional values and norms are

⁸⁴ Roma Centre of Skopje, Network Women's Program and European Roma Rights Centre: "*Joint submission: Shadow Report on the Situation of Romani Women in the Republic of Macedonia*", (October - November, 2005), <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/media/03/83/m00000383.pdf> (June 8, 2013).

⁸⁵ See footnote 54

prevailing, which places Romani women in the position of primary caregivers for the children and elderly family members, as well as the main performers of household duties. Also, according to the Gender Budget Analysis of Social Protection and Active Employment Policies⁸⁶ conducted by the MLSP in 2010, the share of the grey economy within the Roma ethnic community is especially evident. Romani women's role as household assistants, caregivers for children and elderly people, as well as workers in the craftsmanship and agricultural sectors are described as prevailing job descriptions which are part of the grey economic activities in the country (MLSP, Gender-Budget Analysis, 2010). The disadvantageous position of Romani women in regards to employment opportunities is further enhanced by discrimination practices. The Shadow Report on the Situation of Romani Women⁸⁷ indicates that 43% out of 63 interviewed Romani women were rejected by employers based on the statement that "Roma are not appropriate for the job", and 35% of them experienced discrimination in the working conditions (lower salaries, longer working hours and reduced possibilities for career advancement).

The high rates of domestic violence that Romani women are experiencing is another prevailing concern which needs to be properly addressed. In the Report on Domestic Violence in the Roma Community in the Republic of Macedonia⁸⁸, the Roma NGO "Sumnal" presents data on the widespread levels of domestic violence that Romani women are faced with. Namely, 71% of the interviewed women reported of having experienced

⁸⁶ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy: "Gender-Budget Analysis of Social Protection and Active Employment Policies in the Republic of Macedonia", (Skopje, 2010), <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/Rodova%20Analiza%20ANGLISKI%2001%20MART%202010.pdf> (June 8, 2013).

⁸⁷ See footnote 80

⁸⁸ Здружение на Граѓани "Сумнал": "Синтетски Извештај по Проектот – Семејно Насилство кај Ромската Популација во Република Македонија и Одговорот на Институциите на Државата", (Skopje, 2010), http://www.unifem.sk/uploads/doc/SN_kaj_Romska_populacija_i_odgovorot_na_instituc_iite_na_drzavata.pdf (June 8, 2013).

psychological, physical or sexual violence. The physical violence was reported in 56.6% of the cases, and 30.5% of the victims reported at least one form of cruel violence (Sumnal, 2010). The percentage of reported cases of experienced violence further stated in the Report is another critical area which needs to be addressed. Namely, whereas the overall reporting rate to the police authorities in the country is 20.7% and the shelter reporting rate is 18.7%, the same figures in the case of Romani women are 6.1% and 3.5%, respectively (Sumnal, 2010). The most prevailing reasons for lack of reporting are identified as: the feeling of shame and condemnation by the family and the society, the prevailing mistrust in the institutions, and especially the doubts in the efficiency of proper law enforcement. The issue of shame is stated to prevail as one of the main reasons for lack of reporting for all ethnic communities in the country, whereas the mistrust in the institutions is specific to the Romani women's perception due to past experiences (Sumnal, 2010). Clearly, major initiatives are needed to address this societal problem which is cross-cutting the ethnic lines and presents itself as an overall societal challenge. What distinguishes Romani women as a specifically vulnerable group in this respect is the lack of financial independence, the lack of higher level of education and the lack of trust in the institutional system which is set up in order to address these issues.

Provision of adequate health care is another area of concern for Romani women. Whereas the statistical data presented in the Shadow Report on the Situation of Romani Women from 2005 indicates that only 9% of the women do not have access to health care, the discriminatory practices in the access to these public services indicate that 48% out of the total number of 237 interviewees stated that they were subject to discrimination while receiving the needed health care assistance (Roma Centre, 2005). Again, discrimination appears to be the prevalent obstacle which this

group is faced with even in cases where the general provision of services is available for women coming from various ethnic backgrounds.

In an attempt to identify the NGO's perspective regarding the major challenges that Romani women are facing, the author analyzed the conclusions presented as an outcome of the Consultative Meeting among Romani women activists from Macedonia⁸⁹, held in March 2012. The major organizational challenges stated in the Report are related to the institutional sustainability, the lack of trust by the community and the lack of permanent staff members and donors, as well as the need to strengthen the cooperation both within the NGO sector and with the other women's organizations in the country. The problems at community level are identified as follows: unemployment / poverty, illiteracy, domestic violence, early marriages, lack of awareness for human rights of women and the low motivation for active participation in the NGO sector.

The above stated can serve as a clear indicator for possible future activities in the field of improving the position of Romani women in Macedonia. It is evident that this group of women is the most vulnerable one in the society, challenged by educational, health care, employment and domestic violence issues which are even more difficult for them to address due to the prevailing discriminatory practices they are faced with. In order to tackle the given problematic, a more comprehensive approach is needed which would include raising the anti-discrimination practices within the whole society if the prevailing discrimination obstacles are to be adequately addressed.

⁸⁹ Roma Center of Skopje: *“Report: Consultative Meeting among Romani women activists from R. of Macedonia”*, (Skopje, April 2012), <http://www.romawomeninfo.com/doc/crs/drugo/Consultative%20meeting%20of%20Romani%20women%20activists%20and%20NGOs%20from%20R.%20Macedonia%20EN%20.%202023.03.2012.doc.pdf> (June 8, 2013).

3.3 Women in the labor market

According to the latest labor force survey issued by the State Statistical Office in 2011⁹⁰, 60.3% of the employed persons were men, whereas only 39.7% were women. The percentages of inactive population were 36.1% and 63.9% for men and women, respectfully. In an attempt to identify the main reasons for such gender related discrepancies, Evelyn Viertel⁹¹ points out to several distinctive reasons for inactivity of women in the country, namely: “slow school-to-work transition, full-time household activities, residence in rural areas and ethnic background” (Viertel, 2008). Additional obstacles identified in the Report are irregular employment practices, as well as the institutional and legal barriers. The findings clearly point out to the interconnectedness of the lack of labor market participation with the findings presented in the previous sub-chapters. Education and skills are clearly playing one of the crucial roles in employment, as well as the obstacles related to stereotypical household chores that women are conducting on daily bases. The rural areas are specifically challenging due to lack of infrastructure and job opportunities, and ethnicity also plays a role in the overall inactivity. In E. Viertel’s opinion, fighting inactivity among women requires “a complex response from many actors and policy areas” (Viertel, 2008). It is clear that due to the extended transition phase that the country was experiencing, the issue of employment was constantly one of the biggest challenges for all Macedonian citizens. But several other studies related to the topic also point out not only to general shortage of jobs, but also to irregularities in job allocations, widespread practices of nepotism and prioritizing political affiliation when public administration

⁹⁰ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: “*Labor Force Survey, 2011 – Statistical Review: Population and Social Statistics*”, (Skopje: October 2012), <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.12.11.pdf> (June 11, 2013).

⁹¹ Evelyn Viertel: “*Gender Study: Barriers to Labor Market Participation of Women in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*”, (November, 2008), <http://socialtransitions.kdid.org/sites/socialtransitions/files/resource/files/Gender%20Macedonia.pdf> (June 11, 2013).

jobs are available. Non-compliance with the already enforced labor regulations is another major problem, since many private employers tend to hire people to work on trial bases, and then firing the person with only a minimal or no financial compensation for their work (Viertel, 2008). The Study conducted for the European Commission's Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG⁹² indicates two supporting mechanisms for low participation in the labor force: net flows of remittances and the free health insurance that unemployed people can also benefit from (Euro-Balkan, 2009). Similar findings were pointed out in regards to the reasons for low labor participation of women, but additional emphasis was given to the lack or limited availability of child care facilities and the care for elderly family members. The specifically vulnerable group is stated to be young rural women with low level of education, especially those that belonging to ethnic minorities (Euro-Balkan, 2009). The above once again points out to the close link between rural areas, ethnic minority women and low level of labor force participation. In his concluding remark when analyzing the labor market problematic, Mr. Sasho Kjosev⁹³ (Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics in Skopje) states that there are no "quick fixes" to be expected, since the Macedonian labor market has been experiencing severe challenges for a considerable amount of time. However, he suggests that if a sustained reform program is to be conducted, it should include support from both the political and the citizen level, combined with a wide-range dialogue between all parties involved in the process (Kocev, 2007).

⁹² Euro-Balkan Institute: "*Labor Market in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – A Study for the European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG*", (October, 2009), <http://eurobalkan.academia.edu/>, (June 11, 2013).

⁹³ Sasho Kjosev: "*Unemployment in the Republic of Macedonia – Specifics and Possible Solutions*", (November 12, 2007), <http://facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/eao/eao200702/eao200702-07.pdf> (June 11, 2013).

In a comparative study conducted on the topic of Women in the Labor Market in Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia⁹⁴, an important remark is made on the issues which are difficult to monitor and statistically analyze. Namely, it is pointed out that in Macedonia being employed means not only gaining financial benefits, but also gaining social status in the society. Therefore, the women who are not active in the labor market tend to be marginalized from mainstream society (Karat, 2005). This is an important aspect which ought to be taken into consideration for possible future analysis. The source also reveals that the situation is slightly improving, but that women are mostly employed in lower paid sectors (textile industry, agriculture, education, trade, catering, health etc.) (Karat, 2005). These findings raise the question of further challenges that Macedonian women are faced with once they enter the labor market. Gender pay gap is also prevalent, and due to its specific features it will be subject to detailed analysis in the following sub-chapter.

The overall findings indicate that the labor market opportunities are not only challenging for women, but also for men in the country. However, the former ones are specifically confronted with stereotypical expectations as primary caregivers in the family, traditional and religious values which they are expected to comply with, as well as social acceptance and acknowledgement based on their participation in the labor market. The rural/urban differences in employment opportunities are also prevailing, as well as the specific vulnerability of minority women, especially young girls. Once they actually become active, the next set of challenges is to find a decent job which would not be confined to the low-paid sectors of employment. Additionally, the gender pay gap is also prevalent and it will be subject for more detailed analysis in the following paragraphs.

⁹⁴ Coalition Karat – Gender Equality: “*Women in the Labor Market in Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia*”, (New York: 2005), http://www.karat.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/infosheet_Labour_popr.pdf (June 11, 2013).

3.3.1 Gender pay gap

In order to analyze the gender pay gap, a definition of what it stands for should be primarily identified. According to EU Justice, “the gender pay gap is defined as the relative difference in the average gross hourly earnings of women and men within the economy as a whole”. The Eurostat data indicates that on an EU level, the average gender pay gap is estimated at 16.2% for 2011 (2008 – 17.3%, 2009 – 16.6%, and 2010 – 16.1%).⁹⁵ Notable differences in the figures presented can be identified for individual Member States (in 2011, Estonia has the highest gender pay gap – 27.3% and Slovenia the lowest – 2.3%). However, on a general EU level the gender pay gap has a decreasing tendency.

In Macedonia, according to the Summary Report prepared by European Commission Justice⁹⁶, the gender pay gap is around 20%. The main reasons for the wage differences are identified as: “direct discrimination, stereotypes, sectoral and occupational segregation, non-linear careers due to the care for children, and traditional decisions regarding occupations for women” (Justice, 2011). The Report further indicates that according to the World Bank assessments, 83% of the gender pay gap in Macedonia cannot be rationally explained, which clearly points out to gender discrimination. This statistical data is in reference only to the official economic figures, and does not include the grey economic areas in the country.

⁹⁵ Eurostat: “*Gender Pay Gap in Unadjusted form in % - NACE Rev. 2 (structure of earnings survey methodology)*”, (May, 2013), <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu> (June 11, 2013).

⁹⁶ European Commission Justice: “*Summary Report: Exchange of Good Practices on Gender Equality – Reducing the Gender Pay Gap*”, (Germany, 5-6 December 2011), http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_de/summary_report_de_2011_en.pdf (June 11, 2011).

Similar findings regarding the rationally unexplainable gender pay gap are presented in Diego F. Angel-Urdinola's Policy Research Paper⁹⁷ from 2008. The author also points out to the significant findings that there is a low level of mobility among low-skilled women and that local labor markets are prevailing, which undoubtedly leads to firms having monopolistic power. In some regions of the country, a high percentage of employed women work in the textile industry, with very precarious conditions in terms of working hours, salaries and safety (Angel-Urdinola, Policy Research Working Paper 4795, 2008). It is identified that high levels of discrimination as well as low levels of mobility leads to firms paying their workers below the minimum wage level, which is especially the case for low-skilled women. The results of the paper indicate that there is in fact a large pay gap, especially among low-skilled men and women working in the private sector. The author suggests minimum wage policies (which can have possible downside effect to employment), as well as other policies which would strengthen the markets and improve the working conditions for women.

The latest research on the topic was conducted in 2012 at the request of the International Labor Organization (ILO), and it presents a comprehensive analysis of the gender pay gap in Macedonia. The authors M. Kazandziska, M. Risteska and V. Schmidt⁹⁸ point out two important aspects: gender discrimination with regards to employment opportunities and remuneration. It is also stated that men and women tend to belong to

⁹⁷ Diego F. Angel-Urdinola: "*Policy Research Working Paper 4795 – Can the Introduction of a Minimum Wage in FYR Macedonia Decrease the Gender Wage Gap?*" (December, 2008), <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/docserver/download/4795.pdf?expires=1370950922&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=49D33C09E36D47B6CE0BE5987899E848> (June 11, 2013).

⁹⁸ Milka Kazandziska, Marija Risteska and Verena Schmidt: "*The Gender Pay Gap in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*", (Skopje, ILO: 2012), http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-budapest/documents/publication/wcms_180637.pdf (June 11, 2013).

different sectors in the labor market, which can also be related to the prevailing stereotypes about typically women's jobs (educational sector, health care, social work, textile sector etc.). The traditional role of women in the society is once again stated as one of the key factors for the existing gender pay gap. Furthermore, their findings reveal that rural women have low awareness of the existence of a gender pay gap, and they are also less prone to wage negotiations than men. Women are more often the family members responsible for household maintenance, and this is especially characteristic for families involved in the agricultural sector (M. Kazandziska, 2012). It is recommended that further empowerment of women is certainly necessary, especially in the rural areas. The policies and institutional framework ought to be strengthened, and regular statistical data needs to be available for the creation of adequate policies and measures. Raising the awareness and having proper understanding of the problem are necessary prerequisites for advancement of the position of women in the labor market, according to the concluding remarks presented in the document.

Gender pay gap is a challenge which needs to be addressed not only on a national, but also on a global level. What makes the country specific in this problematic area closely corresponds with the stereotypes, the definition of "women's professions", the household obligations, the low level of labor mobility (which further enhances the monopoly power of private companies), as well as the low level of awareness for this problematic. Economic advancement is a necessary prerequisite for future improvements, but it should also go hand in hand with adequate policies, measures and higher level of gender pay gap awareness within the society.

3.4 Women in decision-making positions

According to the latest data issued by the State Statistical Office for 2012, there is a substantial difference between the employment rate for women

and men in Macedonia. In the last quarter of 2012, 39% of women and 61% of men were employed in the country⁹⁹. On the other hand, the data regarding the unemployment rate for women and men is very similar, i.e. 31.5% and 30% respectfully. The difference between employment and unemployment rates can be explained through the higher labor force inactivity for women. As indicated in the previous sub-chapters, substantial numbers of women are not active in the labor force due to household and childcare duties, stereotypes, low level of labor mobility and so forth. The data further indicates another important aspect related to the level of education and employment rate. As stated, the number of unemployed women with university degrees is almost double compared to the number of men who belong to the same category (30.391 women and 15.378 men). This data closely correlates with a recent statement given by the EC's Vice-President, Ms. Viviane Reading, who points out to the following:

*“Gender equality at work is not a women’s issue, but a business and economic imperative. Today, women still only represent 16% of board members in Europe – a shocking waste of talent when you think that 60% of university graduates are female”.*¹⁰⁰

The statement clearly indicates that the challenge of including university educated women on company boards or managerial positions is present at an EU level as well. A new proposal for a Directive setting the 40% objective for inclusion of the under-represented sex on board-member positions in publicly listed companies was issued by the EC in November

⁹⁹ State Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia: *“Active Population in the Republic of Macedonia, Results from the Labor Force Survey, IV quarter 2012”*, (Skopje, 18.03.2013), <http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2013/2.1.13.04.pdf> (June 12, 2013).

¹⁰⁰ European Commission MEMO: *“Women on Boards: Vice-President Viviane Reading and Markus Klimmer, Managing Director at Accenture discuss challenges and opportunities”*, (May 14, 2013), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-430_en.htm (June 12, 2013).

2012¹⁰¹. It clearly indicates that the EU considers the vital importance of including women on board positions as a step forward to more equality and better economic performances.

In regards to Macedonia, a truly comprehensive research project related to the above topic was conducted in 2013 by the International Finance Corporation¹⁰². The subjects of analysis were women in corporate boards from three Balkan countries – Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. The analysis makes a reference to previous studies conducted by Ms. Verica Hadzi Vasileva Markovska, where in a sample of 36 companies 22.7% of all board members were women in 2011, compared to 23.7% in 2009. Their study included a sample of 29 companies from diverse industries, chosen based on the liquidity of the company's shares. The total number of directors in the sample were 142, and 31 of them were women (approximately 22%). The results of the research point out to the following: 41% of the women have completed Masters or PhD studies, which is a clear indicator that higher educational levels might be an important precondition for board member position; 38% of the women were in the 50-60 years age group, which indicates that experience is also highly valued; 72% of them stated that it is important to have board diversity, but they did not consider gender diversity to be the most important aspect; most of them stated that women are more rational and are better team players than men; 56.5% of women stated that “willingness to compromise between work and private life” was important; all except for one interviewee stated that their voice was heard on board meetings; and 86% of them were against introducing quotas. The biggest obstacles to

¹⁰¹ European Commission Press Release: “*Women on Boards: Commission Proposes 40% Objective*”, (November 14, 2012), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1205_en.htm (June 12, 2013).

¹⁰² International Finance Corporation: “*Women on Corporate Boards in Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia and Serbia*”, (May, 2013), <http://www1.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/c0e2ab804fb037b6ad8cef0098cb14b9/Publication/BalkansBD2013.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> (June 12, 2013).

the inclusion of women as board members were identified as the traditional male-oriented networks and the lower level of professional ambitions that women tend to have. This analysis provides truly insightful information by obtaining responses from women who have already advanced their professional careers. Education and experience are considered as one of the vital factors which contribute to the career advancement, as well as the willingness to make work/private life compromises.

In 2011, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Macedonia conducted a research on the gender representation and level of education of the employees in 628 state and local institutions¹⁰³. The findings indicate that approximately 54% of the public administration personnel are men, compared to 46% women. Although more women have higher educational degrees, most of the managerial positions are held by men (61% of the managerial positions are held by men, compared to 39% held by women). The Ministry of Education (63.4% women), the Ministry of Finance (63.3% women), the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (59.6% women), the Ministry of Local Self-Government (58.5% women) and the Ministry of Health (56.5% women) are enlisted as having a higher percentage of employed women. The overall conclusions presented in the research are that women are less represented in managerial positions, regardless of whether their employment percentage is higher in a given public institution. The Ombudsman research clearly indicates that although the state has made efforts to create preconditions and opportunities for gender equality, inequality still exists between women and men in the public administration sector.

¹⁰³ Народен Правобранител на Република Македонија: “Информација од Истражувањето за Застапеноста на Половите и за Состојбата со Семејно Насилство”, (Skopje, 2011), <http://www.ombudsman.mk/ombudsman/upload/documents/Informacija%20-Ednakvi%20moznosti-mk.pdf> (June 12, 2013).

The study conducted on the topic of “Gender Practice of the Universities in the Republic of Macedonia”¹⁰⁴ indicates that the percentage of women working in the state universities is higher than their percentage in private universities. Their percentage is also higher in Universities teaching in Macedonian or English language, compared to Albanian or other languages of instruction. The vertical analysis, as it was the case with the public administration, points out to the lack of women in the decision-making sectors. The situation might be even more alarming given the 0% to 30% presence of women in the Dean’s Office in different universities. Stereotypes, (de)motivation and prejudices are indicated as the major obstacles for women when trying to participate in the decision-making process. Women were also discouraged from applying for higher positions due to the need to balance their private and professional lives.

Regardless of whether the statistical, public administration or university data is taken into consideration, all information and conducted research indicates that there are a small percentage of women in decision-making positions in Macedonia. Whereas their level of education is in many cases higher than men, their success in climbing the professional ladder seems to be advancing at a slower pace. The reasons are mostly related to stereotypes, societal gender roles and self-discouragement. It is therefore essential to create policies which would be targeting the professional advancement of highly educated women in the country. At the same time, the author finds it essential to include both women and men in the process. Both genders need to acknowledge the benefits of including women in the

¹⁰⁴ Regional Research Promotion Programme/Western Balkans: “*Gender Practice of the Universities in the Republic of Macedonia: Inclusion/Exclusion of Women in the Decision-Making Structures and Processes*”, http://www.rppp-westernbalkans.net/en/research/Completed-Projects/Macedonia/Gender-Practice-of-the-Universities-in-the-Republic-of-Macedonia/mainColumnParagraphs/0/text_files/file/MK_Gender%20Studies_Gender%20Practice.pdf (June 12, 2013).

decision-making process, and use their skills, education and expertise in order to advance the society as a whole.

3.5 *Domestic violence*

The author Richard L. Davis defines domestic violence as “violence that occurs between couples who are living together or once did live together in a conjugal-styled relationship”.¹⁰⁵ It implies that domestic violence can be perpetrated on behalf of both partners in a relationship. However, numerous facts and figures suggest that women are more often victims of domestic violence than men. Moreover, the issue is cross-cutting national, religious, educational and other types of identity borders, since it is a widespread global problem. In the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women from 1993, it is stated that “violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men”¹⁰⁶. It includes but is not limited to physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, community or perpetrated by the State (UN, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

In 2006, the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women (ESE) conducted a truly comprehensive research on domestic violence in Macedonia¹⁰⁷. A Survey including 1,432 respondents coming from different ethnic, educational and living areas was conducted, and the results pointed out that more than 50% of women have suffered some form

¹⁰⁵ Richard L. Davis: “*Domestic Violence: Facts and Fallacies*”, (Westport, CT, USA: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc., 1998), p 1.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations General Assembly: “*Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*”, (December 20, 1993), <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm> (July 13, 2013).

¹⁰⁷ Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women of RM – ESE: “*Life in a Shadow*”, (Skopje, 2006), http://www.domesticviolence.org.mk/Root_docs/Life%20in%20a%20Shadow.pdf (July 13, 2013).

of domestic violence at some point in their lives. Psychological violence was most widely predominant (56.4%), followed by physical (17.7%) and sexual violence (10.6%) (ESE, 2006). When investigating the causes for violence on women, the results indicated the following: drunk (28.9%), jealousy (16.8%), financial problems (15.6%), no cause (11.3%), problems with the spouse's family (10.1%) and so forth. As the figures indicate, alcoholism is the main prevailing factor which eventually leads to domestic violence (as reported by the respondents), followed by jealousy and money issues, and intriguingly enough the "no causes" category. As the researchers suggested, this last category is the most concerning one, since women are unable to identify the real causes which lead to the violent behavior. The influence of violence resulted in fear, loss of self-confidence, depression, sleeping disorders and psychological problems in most of the examined cases (ESE, 2006). Based on nationality, Romani women are mostly affected (36.7%), followed by Albanian (27.4%), Turk (22.2%), Macedonian and Serbian (17.4% each) and others. Another important finding was that a high percentage of women were not acquainted with the legal regulation of domestic violence (43.1% were not informed, and 20.1% stated that they cannot access the information).

The Government's response to this prevailing problem was the elaboration of a National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2008-2011.¹⁰⁸ The Strategy included provisions for intersectoral cooperation, collection of data on quarterly basis, education for the professionals working in this field, organization of national campaigns to increase the public awareness and help reduce the domestic violence etc.

¹⁰⁸ Ministry of Labor and Social Policy: "*National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence*", (Skopje, April 2008), http://nkt.mtsp.gov.mk/nkt/Content/Documents/Nacionalna_strategija_za_zastita_od_sem_ejno%20nasilstvo.pdf (June 13, 2013).

Indeed, several campaigns were organized and carried out in Macedonia, both on national and local levels. One of the national campaigns was named “A Real Man Never Hits a Woman”¹⁰⁹ and the main target audiences were actually men, who were the major abusers according to the previously conducted surveys. The attempt was to change men’s attitudes, beliefs about domestic violence and beliefs related to stereotypes. It featured three prominent sportsmen, who successfully portrayed the image that men’s power should not be used against women. Another campaign entitled “Say No to Domestic Violence”¹¹⁰ was targeting women, with the aim to empower them and help them identify and report domestic violence if they experience it throughout their lives. Other related activities were also conducted on local levels. Domestic Violence lines were also available 24 hours for the victims reporting the abuse.

A very insightful study was conducted in 2012 by a team of researchers and with the support of UN and the Government of the Netherlands. It was a National Survey on Domestic Violence¹¹¹ and it included 2100 responders. The key conclusions indicate that women are much more affected by this phenomenon than men. Also, when a household is experiencing some form of violence, the study found that the violence is occurring on regular basis. The percentage of women victims of domestic violence was 39.4% compared to 35.5% men. The most important indicators for domestic violence were identified as: age, level of education, number of children, rural/urban area and ethnicity. Psychological violence was reported to be the most prevailing form of domestic violence, a finding which corresponds to the ESE survey from 2006. The police was

¹⁰⁹ One of the videos from the “A Real Man Never Hits a Woman” campaign is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=firsAwtlcrA

¹¹⁰ The video featuring the “Say No to Domestic Violence” campaign is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=hgx7UqZ8T48

¹¹¹ Љубинка Поповска, Владо Рикаловски и Д-р Елизабет Виљагомез: “Извештај од Студијата за Националната Анкета за Семејно Насилство”, (August, 2012), http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/semeljno_nasilstvo_anketa.pdf (June 13, 2013).

the public service which would be most often contacted by the victims, followed by the social protection services and the healthcare centers. However, 24% of the respondents stated that they would not report the incident to anyone, which is an alarming indicator. One of the positive findings indicates that 73% of the interviewed people stated that they are aware of the campaigns addressing family violence, which is a clear indicator that the media plays a substantial role in raising the public awareness for this problem.

The Campaign “16 Days of Activism against Gender and Domestic Violence” also takes place on annual bases in Macedonia. As the Women Civic Initiative “Antico”¹¹² reports, a total number of 23 events were organized in 2012, including round tables, workshops and public debates to raise the awareness of the general public regarding domestic violence issues. The support that the NGO sector is receiving from international organizations is crucial for the organization and successful implementation of this type of activities.

As the above presented data suggests, domestic violence is another serious problem that women in the Macedonian society are challenged with. The percentage of psychological violence is clearly prevailing, and the lack of reporting is an area for major concern. On the other hand, there have been numerous efforts done by the Government, the NGO sector and the international institutions in attempt to properly address this problematic. Certain form of support is provided through the social services (with areas for improvement), campaigns for raising the level of public awareness were organized, SOS phone lines were activated and National Strategies were adopted (the latest is for the 2012-2015 period). Clearly, numerous

¹¹² Women Civic Initiative “Antico”: “Кампања 16 дена активизам за борба против родовото и семејното насилство”, http://www.antiko.org.mk/Uploads/Aktivnosti_kampanja_16_dena_MK.pdf (June 13, 2013).

positive activities can be currently identified, which would hopefully bring successful results in the future. The major key actor who plays an important role in changing the stereotypes and raising the awareness for domestic violence is clearly the media. Therefore, organizing media campaigns and strengthening the institutional capacities to tackle the problem will clearly mark the path for positive future developments.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth analysis of the current situation regarding the most vulnerable groups of women in Macedonia, as well as the most challenging issues that women in the country are experiencing. Due to the broad milieu of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and residential differences, targeting specific issues and challenges requires additional extensive research and planning of tailor made activities for rural and minority women. Increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and domestic violence issues can clearly be addressed through broader campaigns, which include awareness raising and proper institutional support. The media is a prevailing factor which can have an impact on changing the stereotypes that Macedonian women from all ethnicities are challenged with. Men should also be included in the overall transformation process in order for gender equality and gender mainstreaming to be achieved.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to answer several questions related to the topic of gender mainstreaming. The first part was focused on the overall historical developments of the concept; the second part provided the top-down approach by analyzing the institutional and legal changes in Macedonia, as well as the EU's view on gender mainstreaming and its main obstacles in the country; and the aim of the third chapter was to present a bottom-up approach by analyzing the challenges of specific groups of women in the Macedonian society.

The first chapter clearly implies that gender mainstreaming as a concept was initiated mainly by the UN and it created an overall world impact. However, it was an incremental, i.e. step by step process which required proper definition of the concept as well as adequate strategies for its implementation. An important finding in the author's view is that international actors tend to interrelate with each other in the creation of proper policies and measures to address women's issues on a global scale. The EU clearly plays such a role by advocating on an UN level for policies which ought to be adopted domestically. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by UN and EU officials in 2012 is another indicator that cooperation is truly needed in order to combine the financial and administrative resources and target the most vulnerable women's groups in any given society. Therefore, positive outcomes are to be expected in the upcoming years since gender mainstreaming is presented as a global issue and adequate policies and measures for its promotion are already in place. An analysis of the manner in which this cooperation will be conducted, as well as the level of efficiency it might reach are clearly topics which should be explored by the academic circles in the future.

The second chapter provided the institutional and legal framework for gender mainstreaming in Macedonia. The findings point out to the existence of Laws and regulations which create the legal basis for gender equality within the Macedonian society. The Constitution from 1991 also includes the principles of gender equality. National Action Plans have also been prepared to address the issue, and institutional changes have occurred in the recent years with the aim of providing proper institutional support for women. However, there are numerous challenges which are yet to be properly addressed. The findings presented in this thesis point out to the lack of expertise by the professional staff working in the public administration, both on central and local levels. As the analyzed reports indicate, some of the staff members have not even been consulted as to whether they would take over the positions of gender equality coordinators, and also the level of experience of the personnel is also variable. In the author's view, this is a clear indicator that training programs should be developed which would include all staff members working on gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues. Exchange of positive experiences is of vital importance when trying to create adequate policies and measures in any multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. Additionally, proper financial allocation is also needed to actually implement all the policies and strategies already included in the National Action Plans. As the findings indicate, most of the projects which have been implemented in the recent years were substantially dependant on foreign donors. This implies that the Government needs to include gender mainstreaming on its agenda in a more meaningful and financially supportive way, but it also implies that international organizations should acknowledge the enormous responsibilities they are currently having as the almost exclusive gender mainstreaming donors in the society. UN Women and the EU Delegation in Macedonia have the most substantial impact in this respect, and according to the author's findings they obtain high level

of professional expertise and provide substantial support to the both the NGO and the Governmental sectors. What needs to be acknowledged is the fact that Macedonian society is ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse. Therefore, whereas issues such as domestic violence and women in decision-making can be addressed on a national level, the issues related to rural and minority women ought to be addressed on a small-scale level. Every community has its specificities, and women living in a given area share the common problems of their community, whether it is access to health care, kindergartens, education, infrastructure etc. Therefore, small scale projects which would tackle their specific problems are essentially needed in order to properly address their needs. The author would suggest a higher level of inclusion of local women NGO's when allocating financial resources for future projects.

The third chapter of this thesis analyzed the specific areas which were presented as a major area of concern in the EU's Progress Reports (2007-2012). The aim was to present the perspective of the NGO's and international organizations who are actively involved in this field. The findings indicate that all areas of concern are extremely specific in terms of problems and challenges, with one exception – the existence of stereotypes. Whether it is the household responsibilities for rural women, the lack of educational support for minority girls within their families or the lack of women in decision-making positions, the existence of stereotypes is clearly prevalent. This issue undoubtedly requires actions to be taken on a national level. It also requires the inclusion of men, not only women in the process. A positive example was provided with the domestic violence campaign “A Real Man Never Hits a Woman”, where men were the target audience. Therefore, the author suggests planning and implementation of future projects which would make an attempt to break the stereotypes in the society. The media has an enormous impact and

therefore should be used as a tool to spread the idea that stereotypes are impeding the society in numerous ways. A campaign depicting stereotypical behaviors of ordinary citizens and the impact it has on the family and society as a whole should be subject to analysis, planning and implementation in the near future.

Several recommendations will be presented as a result of this extensive analysis, namely:

- Proper actions ought to be taken as a result of the findings and recommendations presented by the NGO sector (as one of the cases indicates, Akcija Združenska and ESE pointed out to the deficiencies in the implementation project of the NAP in 2010, only for the same statements to be replicated by the NGO sector after the final stage of the National Action Plan's realization in 2012);
- Proper training for the employees who are already assigned to the positions of gender equality coordinators is needed;
- Continuous financial support, coming both from the Governmental and international institutions;
- Projects should focus on a small rather than big scale for women from minority groups and rural women. Big scale projects are more appropriate for issues tackling stereotypes, domestic violence and women in decision-making;
- Special emphasis on breaking stereotypes should be provided through media campaigns;
- Education is the key for positive future changes, therefore projects related to higher level of inclusion of girls in the educational system should be taken into consideration (especially in regards to minority girls coming from rural areas);

- A more extensive research needs to be conducted for the specific challenges of minority women;
- Gender training (based on EU's current practices) should be included as a strategic tool for gender mainstreaming;
- All statistically available data should include gender segregated information;
- The inclusion of men is also essential in creating societal changes and raising the importance of gender equality. All future activities should target both women and men;
- And lastly, the author would suggest the creation of a Ministry of Women and Youth in the Republic of Macedonia. The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth was founded in Germany back in 1994. The creation of such a ministry in Macedonia would be of great importance, since not only half but the entire population would benefit from the institutional support provided by this newly created Ministry. Also, it would be another positive step towards joining the European family.

Gender mainstreaming should be one of the top priorities on the national agenda, not only for improving the living conditions of women and girls, but also boys and men who are part of the family, neighborhood, city and the society as a whole. People on leadership positions, both women and men, should strive for the promotion of gender mainstreaming. Boys ought to be encouraged to pursue any career path, regardless of the “women’s jobs” stereotypes. Girls ought to be encouraged to pursue their dreams free of the societal and stereotypical burden. Achieving gender equality is truly possible if both women and men join their efforts to create a better society for the future generations.

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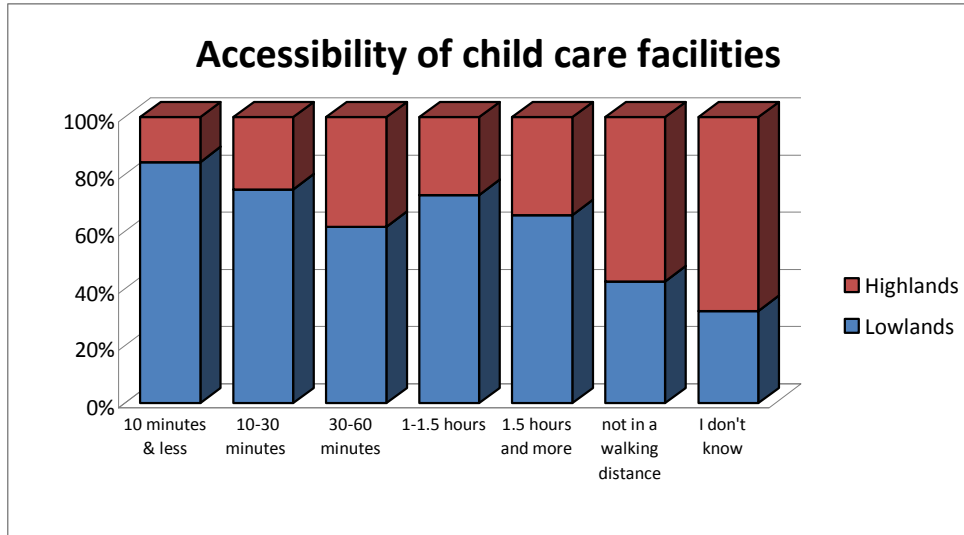
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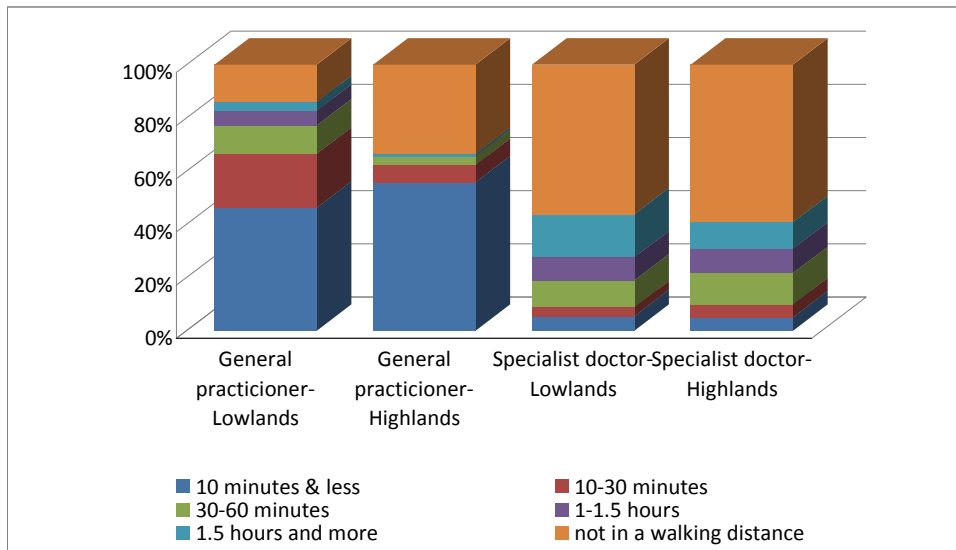
APPENDIX 1 – Women in rural areas

Chart 1: Accessibility of child care facilities in rural areas



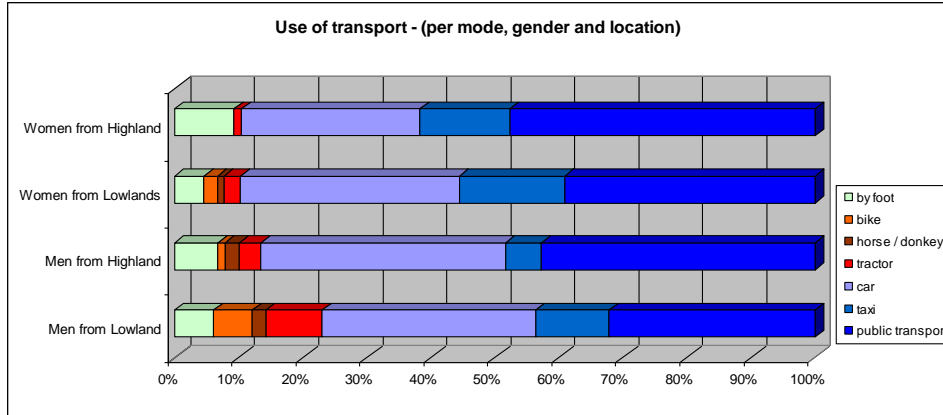
Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), taken from CRPM survey of rural women and men, 2011

Chart 2: Accessibility of generalist and specialist doctors in rural areas



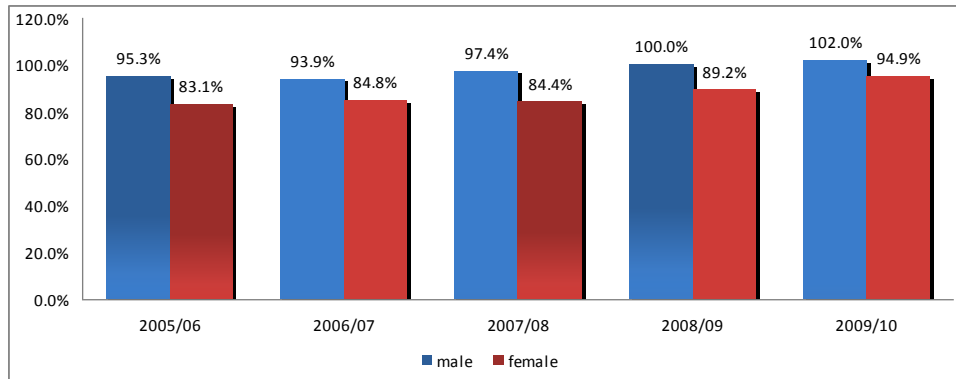
Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), taken from CRPM survey of rural women and men, 2011

Chart 3: Usage of public transport



Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), taken from CRPM survey of rural women and men, 2011

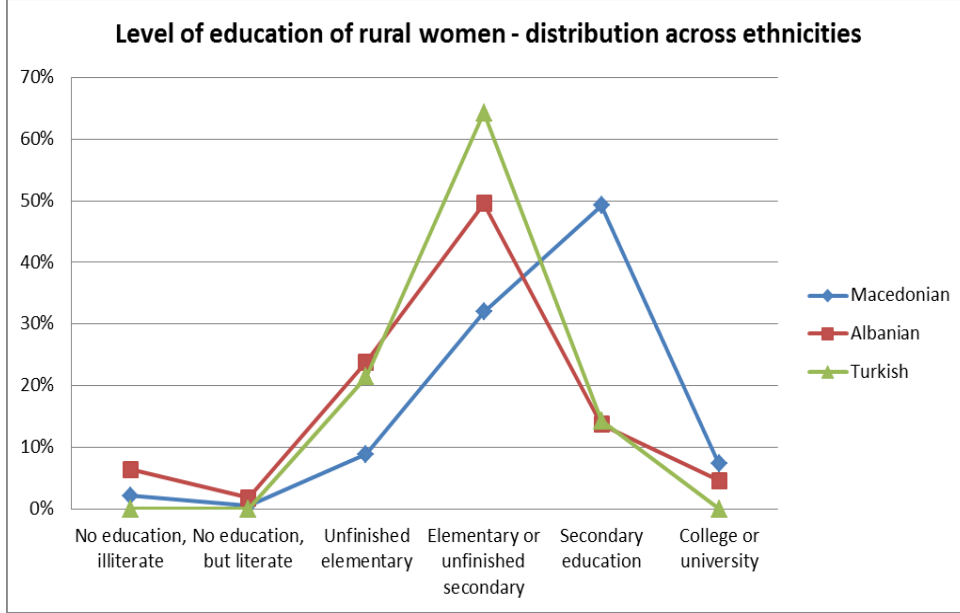
Chart 4: Percentage of male and female students enrolled into secondary school (out of the ones that have completed primary) 2005-2010



Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), taken from State Statistical Office, Schools and students at the beginning and the end of the school year, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; CPRM’s calculations

APPENDIX 2 – Women from minority groups

Chart 1: Level of education of rural women per ethnic group



Source: CRPM “Perspectives of Women in Rural Areas” (2012), taken from CPRM survey of rural women & men, 2011