



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**

**Eighty-sixth session**

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**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under  
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms  
of Discrimination against Women**

**Replies of Albania to the list of issues and questions in  
relation to its fifth periodic report<sup>\*,\*\*</sup>**

[Date received: 7 July 2022]

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present report may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## List of abbreviations

PA	People's Advocate
ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPD	Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination
CRM	Coordinated Referral Mechanism for domestic violence cases
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCM	Decision of Council of Ministers
DFLA	Directory of Free Legal Aid
EU	European Union
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NCCE	National Center for Continuing Education
NCGE	National Council of Gender Equality
NGO	Non-governmental not for profit organization
NSGE	National Strategy for Gender Equality

## I. Introduction

1. The Republic of Albania has the pleasure of submitting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the responses to the list of issues and questions in relation to the Fifth Periodic Report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
2. The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs coordinated the collection of information from: the Ministry of the Interior/General Directorate of the State Police, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Finance and Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the People's Advocate, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, the Central Election Commission and the General Prosecutor's Office. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection processed the information and prepared the following information, for the period October 2020-June 2022.
3. According to the Committee's instructions, the answers are summarized within the limit of 10,700 words and appendices in 2000 words.

## II. Responses to the questions addressed by the committee

### Visibility of the Convention and the Optional Protocol

4. The text of the Convention, published on the School of Magistrates' official website, is an integral part of the training of magistrates and the continuing training of judges, prosecutors and judicial police officers. The spirit and principles of the Convention are reflected in the General Prosecutor's orders and instructions, on the respect and proper procedural protection of women. The Committee's previous concluding observations have been published on Ministry of Health and Social Protection's official website (<https://shendetesia.gov.al/rekomandime-dhe-konventa/>). The Convention, Optional Protocol and the general recommendations are treated with priority in trainings with police, prosecution coordinators<sup>1</sup> and professionals from other law-enforcement institutions, at the central and local level.
5. During the reporting period, there are organized 50 trainings/information meetings on the Convention and communication/investigation procedures: 10 trainings for magistrates conducted from School of Magistrates; 26 trainings from prosecution coordinators, coordinated from General Prosecution Office; 14 courses and webinars with Gender Equality Officers at central and local level conducted from Albanian School of Public Administration, also supported by international organizations and CSOs.

### Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts<sup>2</sup>

6. The Government of Albania paid special attention to women's rights and gender equality during the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery efforts. Women were involved in all decision-making at the central level (Ministry of Health and Social Protection and Ministry of Finance and Economy, both the main policy-making ministries for the response to COVID-19 are led by women), as well as at the local level (as

<sup>1</sup> Employees of the assistance sector in the prosecution office, to subjects with special status, who provide services and enable the exercise of rights for victims and witnesses of criminal offenses".

<sup>2</sup> For details see Albania's report on the Council of Europe's website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/promoting-and-protecting-women-s-rights>.

Prefects, District Mayors, members of Municipal Councils, or Mayors of municipalities). Data on infected cases and their follow-up are kept disaggregated by gender, age, place of residence, etc.

7. Through the cooperation between the central and local governments, CSOs and international organizations, there were taken immediate measures to help families in need, the women and men elderly, especially those who lived alone, the homeless and families who had lost their houses due to the 2019 earthquake. 233,248 families were treated with food packages, clothing, reimbursable medicines, financial assistance, as well as home delivery of economic aid and payments for persons with disabilities.

8. Double payment of economic assistance was applied to 482 victims/survivors of domestic violence, with a protection order, and to 63,508 beneficiary families of economic aid, including 6,000 women heads of households.<sup>3</sup> 4,524 families that did not benefit from the economic aid scheme were supported with financial assistance of 16,000 ALL.<sup>4</sup>

9. Institute of Public Health continued screening services for breast and cervical cancer for women, except for the second week of March and the month of May 2020, the respecting anti-covid protocols. In addition, breast cancer awareness activities continued (pink October) and planned activities in the districts on follow-up with colposcopy of women positive for cervical cancer screening.

10. Employees of residential care institutions for the elderly, people with disabilities and children, who were self-quarantined due to COVID-19, were treated with additional payment.<sup>5</sup>

11. Ministry of Health and Social protection (MHSP), disbursed funds from the Social Fund in April 2020 to 14 winning municipalities in the amount of 61 million ALL. One project provided emergency services against violence against women and domestic violence. For 2021, from the Social Fund there are financed services for victims/survivors of domestic violence, in four municipalities, in the amount of 11,258,165 ALL (125 cases were treated; preventive services and ongoing counseling of groups at risk were offered). The support continues for the year 2022 in the amount of 7,126,725 ALL.

12. MHSP supported multifunctional services in three municipalities for 2021, in the amount of 11,035,627 ALL (158 cases of women/girls in need of support and empowerment in a risk situation were treated). For 2022, four multifunctional services and the opening of a new multifunctional service in two other municipalities have been supported, in the amount of 16,179,731 ALL.

13. MHSP supports financially three specialized anti-trafficking services, in three large districts of the country, in the amount of 29,879,324 ALL (254 women/girls were treated, as well as their children, for the year 2021).

14. The amount of economic assistance for victims/survivors of domestic violence equipped with a protection order, until the end of December 2021 was 3,000 ALL/month. 694 victims/survivors benefited from this payment for 2021. Starting from January 2022, the payment has tripled to 9,000 ALL/month.<sup>6</sup> 835 victims/survivors of domestic violence equipped with a protection order, benefited from this payment for the period January-March 2022.

15. During the pandemic, immediate measures were taken to ensure continuity of specialized support services for women, children and family members at risk or

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<sup>3</sup> DCM No.254/2020.

<sup>4</sup> DCM No.314/2020.

<sup>5</sup> DCM No.371/2020.

<sup>6</sup> DCM No.898/2021.

victims/survivors of violence. Protocols/instructions/regulations were approved for: operation of sheltering services; management of domestic violence' cases; abused children; operation of the sexual assault treatment center, residential services for the elderly, for people with disabilities, etc. 19 specialized housing services for cases of domestic violence and human trafficking were assessed for emergency needs, and they were supplied with disinfection tools and information as needed. The staff of these services were continuously trained and mentored, in parallel with the local coordinators of the 61 Coordinated referral Mechanisms (CRMs) in the country. 246 members of 18 CRMs who faced an increased number of cases' management during pandemic' restriction were supported with ongoing information and mentoring.

16. MHSP in cooperation with WHO and UNICEF provided online training for 1,800 professionals, focused on mental health and psycho-social support in emergency situations.

17. Online services were applied through: Green line 0884040 in MHSP website; Platform [www.nukjevetem.al](http://www.nukjevetem.al); National Hotline for Women and Girls 116117, National Children's Hotline ALO 116111; Psychologists <https://arsimi.gov.al/kontaktopsikologun/> etc. Primary legal assistance was offered through the platform <https://juristionline.al/> and through the free green line number 08001010. An awareness spot to report cases of domestic violence, with the respective free of charge numbers (also accompanied by sign language and English subtitles), was posted on the MHSP' website: <https://www.facebook.com/MinistriaeShendetesisedheMbrojtjesSociale/videos/252515315870825/>.

18. The State Police took special measures<sup>7</sup> to: increase attention and maximum assessment of every call/notice of domestic violence; immediate cooperation and coordination with the relevant structures in the Municipality, for cases' referral; increased attention from the field police services to immediately protect the domestic violence' victims/survivors who breaks the rules of movement restriction due to the violence happening, and the notification of relevant police structures that deal with domestic violence' cases; the careful determination of the protection measures in the request-lawsuit addressed to the court, in accordance with the victim/survivor' situation, etc.

19. The High Judicial Council excluded from the measures on postponement of court sessions, among others: family matters, with the care object of judgment, obligations and respect juveniles' rights, custody and adoption; protection measures against domestic violence; the exercise of parental responsibility; care and food obligations; criminal cases in charge of children in conflict with the law, when the measure of arrest or detention has been applied to them, etc.

20. The Bailiff General Directorate, during the COVID-19 pandemic, continued the execution of executive titles with the object of care, obligations and respect for the juveniles' rights, child' custody, adoption, exercise of parental responsibility; care and food obligations; Protection orders and immediate protection orders; mediation for the resolution of disputes in the criminal field, when during the investigation it is assessed as necessary to protect the child' interests, etc.

21. In Department of Public Administration' Order<sup>8</sup> there were formulated measures with equal rights and obligations for employees of both sexes, in employment and parenting. It was foreseen: a) the determination of the working schedule changed depending on the schedule that the child would attend the school, but ensuring that the maximum duration did not change; b) if both parents/legal guardians of the child were employed in public administration institutions, they should ensure that the

<sup>7</sup> Instruction paper No.2192/2020.

<sup>8</sup> No.80/2020.

responsibility for accompanying the children according to different school schedules is not to only one of them; c) parents/legal guardians of children who attended pre-school education and basic education had to make available to the human resources unit of their working institution, the children's school schedule and a proof that the other parent/legal guardian was not benefiting at the same time from mitigating' measures.

22. Interest on electricity delays for all Roma and Egyptian families was waived. Rent expenses for 385 families benefiting from social housing, during the period March-April 2020, were covered by the Municipality of Tirana.

23. Support was provided to the Albanian National Association of the Deaf (ANAD) to provide information on COVID-19 in sign language to the hearing-impaired community, as well as for the operation of a 24-hour telephone line for information/referral services for this community. Daily press releases from MHSP were accompanied by sign language interpretation.

### **Legislative framework and definition of discrimination against women**

24. In Albanian legislation, there is a definition of discrimination against women that covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres, as well as intersecting forms of discrimination. With Law No. 124, dated 15.10.2020 "On some additions and changes to Law No. 10221, dated 04.02.2010 "On protection from discrimination", there were added: protected causes for which discrimination is prohibited (citizenship, sex characteristics, living with HIV/AIDS and appearance - Article 1); eight new forms of discrimination (*multiple discrimination, intersectional discrimination, structured discrimination, hate speech, segregation, sexual harassment, incitement and aiding to discrimination, and abetting and declared intent to discriminate - Article 3*); "Severe forms of discrimination" and double the amount of the fine for them were foreseen (Article 3/1 and Article 33); etc.

25. Article 7 of the law on protection against discrimination defines the obligation of public authorities, natural or legal persons and the public and private sector, to: treat every person equally and fairly; eliminate all unfair privileges and discrimination for anyone, based on personal, political, economic, social and cultural rights; promote equality and prevent discrimination in the exercise of their functions.

### **Access to justice**

26. Law 111/2017 "On legal aid guaranteed by the state", gives importance to the provision of free legal aid to women. Persons with economic disabilities, as well as persons in the capacity of special categories, such as: victims/survivors of domestic violence, sexually abused, human trafficking or minors, benefit from legal aid, regardless of their income or assets. Legal aid is of primary form (information, legal advice, representation before administrative bodies) and secondary (representation with lawyers for free, exemption from all court fees and expenses).

27. For primary legal aid, the following have been established and are functioning: 10 Primary Legal Aid Service Center (PLASC), 12 Law Clinics at Higher Education Institutions and 12 NGOs, authorized according to agreements with the Directorate of Free Legal Aid. During 2022, there will also be established 4 PLASC, to cover 100% with services of the entire territory in the country, with 14 centers.

28. The Directorate of Free Legal Aid (DFLA) has signed nine cooperation agreements with other institutions that focus on protecting the legal rights of citizens.

29. Throughout the time years 2020-2022, DFLA has organized/participated in 182 meetings/awareness activities, with a focus on all beneficiary categories of legal aid guaranteed by the state.

30. From the statistical data of DFLA, it results that: 197 women benefited from primary legal assistance during November-December 2020; a total of 8153 people, including 3263 women benefited during the year 2021, and 1145 women benefited from primary legal assistance during January-April 2022.

31. 70% of persons seeking free secondary legal aid are financially unable, while the 30% include special legal categories such as victims of violence, beneficiaries of social protection schemes, etc. 65% of the applicants are women and 35% are men. Out of the total of 849 requests for legal aid, 754 are civil, where the main ones are marriage settlements, pension benefits and property conflicts. While the other two categories have an equal weight, where 61 are criminal and 57 are administrative matters. For 2020, out of 181 decisions, 154 were for civil cases, 13 criminal and 14 administrative. During January-April 2022, 184 women received secondary legal assistance. In about 20% of the total requests, there is required only coverage of court fees, while in the rest of requests there is required a lawyer, together or not with coverage of court fees.

32. For the year 2021, Roma and Egyptian community have benefited from primary legal aid in 325 cases (253 handled by the PLASCs and 72 by NGOs).

33. During 2020, the General Prosecutor has unified the procedural measures in the prosecution offices with general jurisdiction so that investigations and prosecutions for criminal offenses such as violence against women and violence based on hatred against women victims, are in fast, efficient terms and with requests for punishment measures effective, proportionate and deterrent. The unifying sub-legal framework with the victim-centered approach and the protection of human rights has been completed. During 2021, instructions were prepared for increasing the effectiveness and reducing deadlines, in the investigation and prosecution of cases with/and against minors in conflict with the law, guided by the principles of a criminal justice as friendly as possible, the highest interest of minors, as well as guaranteeing their rights, to contribute to the reduction of criminality, their rehabilitation and reintegration. The directive unifies several procedures and criminal procedural acts in cases involving minors, in accordance with best practices and international standards. The instruction will be completed with the preparation of nine standard acts/models. Work is also underway to increase the capacities of prosecutors, judicial police officers and prosecution coordinators for subjects with special status, for handling cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence, as well as collecting and administering of data, in accordance with international standards.

34. The remedies for fulfilling complaints against gender-based discrimination are: complain to the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) and lawsuit in the relevant courts. Complaining to the KMD does not deprive the citizen of the right to file a lawsuit in court. Before or after the complaint, any person who thinks she/he is a victim of any form of discrimination has the right to file a civil lawsuit, in cases where compensation is sought, or criminal if the discrimination violates one of the provisions of the Criminal Code.

### **Burden of proof**

35. The amended Labor Code (Article 32 2/b) obliges employers to take measures to prevent sexual harassment and concerns of a sexual nature, as well as to not penalize the victim for reporting incidents of violence in the workplace. In case of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, the employer is obliged to prove that it has not violated the principle of equal treatment, and in the case of sexual harassment, the law shifts the burden of proof to the employer or the alleged person to have committed the harassment (Article 32/5).

36. The Code of Administrative Procedures (Article 82/2) provides that in cases where the party presents evidence on which the claim for discriminatory behavior is based and on the basis of which it can be presumed that there was discrimination, the other party and/or the public body is obliged to prove that the facts do not constitute discrimination, regardless of the obligation of the public body to make available to the parties evidence possessed by it.

37. The law on protection against discrimination, amended (Article 33 point 7/1) determines that “In cases where the complaining party presents evidence on which the claim for discriminatory behavior is based and on the basis of which it can be presumed that there was discrimination, the other party, against which the complaint was filed, is forced to prove that the facts do not constitute discrimination”.

### **National machinery for the advancement of women**

38. From the Evaluation Report of the National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE) 2016-2020 conducted by MHSP<sup>9</sup> prior to the drafting process of the new NSGE 021-2030, it turned out that the NSGE 2016-2020 was implemented to the extent of 80%. Numerous achievements related to women’s empowerment, progress towards gender equality and the reduction of gender-based violence and domestic violence were noted. The implementation of the NSGE 2016-2020 has a significant impact on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 5 “Gender Equality”.

39. Strategic Goal 1 “Economic empowerment of women and men”, was achieved to the extent of 74.7%, and evidenced an increase in the participation of women/girls in the labor market, as well as the need to extend the services of Local Self-Government Units throughout the country.

40. Strategic Goal 2 “Guarantee the factual and equal participation and engagement of women in political and public decision-making”, was achieved to the extent of 75.5%, and recommends that the positive results achieved should be long-term, sustainable and extended to public decision-making as well and to the local self-government.

41. Strategic Goal 3 “Reduction of gender-based violence and domestic violence”, was realized to the extent of 84.8%, and recommends the increase of human and financial resources in function of the progress of work for the management of cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence, the extension and the diversification of services, tailored according to the needs of all vulnerable groups of women, etc.

42. Strategic Goal 4 “Strengthening the coordinating and monitoring role of the National Mechanism for Gender Equality, as well as increasing the awareness of society for the advancement of gender equality”, was achieved by 81.2%, and recommends: the need for the allocation of more resources, the strengthening of relevant structures; creation of full-time job positions dedicated only to issues of women’s empowerment and progress towards gender equality; the use of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) as a tool for gender mainstreaming in policies and actions across all sectors and at all governing, decision-making and implementing levels. These recommendations have been translated into measures and concrete actions in the new National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030.<sup>10</sup>

43. GRB, successfully applied for years in the central government in Albania, is gaining special importance at the local level as well. In the Medium-Term Budgetary Program (MTBP) 2022-2024 there are 45 budgetary programs with GRB included

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<sup>9</sup> Supported from UN Women.

<sup>10</sup> <http://shendetesia.gov.al/barazia-gjinore/>.



(out of 75 budget programs in total), with an increase of 9% of the budget (compared to 7.9% that was in the MTBP 2021-2023).

44. The distribution of human resources in the mechanism of gender equality and the implementation of the GRB at the local level, are foreseen as part of the IV strategic goal of NSGE 2021-2030. The budget for the implementation of this strategic goal occupies 11.9% of the overall budget of the strategy and will be covered to the extent of 85% by the state budget (21% calculated inside MTBP 2021 – 2023), 8% with foreign funding/other sources and 7% financial gap. Monitoring the effectiveness of GRB also at the local level is part of the actions foreseen under this strategic goal.

45. Gender Equality Officers and Finance employees at the local level receive continuous training on GRB. ASPA has trained 116 employees during 2020<sup>11</sup> and 344 employees during 2021.<sup>12</sup> The trainings are continuing in 2022, too.

46. MHSP regularly monitors the implementation of national policies for gender equality (NSGE) and submits these reports for approval to the National Council for Gender Equality. Similarly, MHSP reports, upon request, to the Subcommittee for Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, the Alliance of Women MPs, or in hearings in parliament. The Women MPs Alliance meeting for the new legislature took place in December 2021,<sup>13</sup> while the hearing to report about violence against women in the Committee for Labour, Social Affairs and Health was held in June 2022.

#### **National human rights institution**

47. The Institution of the People's Advocate (PA) has been defined as the highest national institution for the promotion, prevention of violations and protection of human rights in Albania. In December 2020, the PA of Albania was re-accredited with Status "A" by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) which evaluates and determines on behalf of the United Nations Organization, the quality, standards, weight and importance of all national human rights institutions.

48. The total number of PA' staff for 2022 is 57 people: an assistant commissioner is dedicated to the protection of the rights of women, LGBTI persons, the right to marriage, family, as well as an assistant commissioner for the protection of human rights defenders.

49. PA in cooperation with local government has also opened 7 regional offices, to facilitate the communication of the citizens with the institution, which has led to the increase of citizens' trust in PA. During the period 2019-2022, several trainings of the PA' staff were conducted with the aim of strengthening their capacities in terms of: gender equality; GRB; the identification, collection and use of gender sensitive statistics; gender discrimination; etc.

50. PA has a separate budget, which it administers itself. This budget is increased from 105,500,000 ALL in 2016 to 129,200,000 ALL for 2022. PA, as a national human rights institution, needs the security of human and financial resources, for the full, independent and effective performance of its responsibilities and functions in the protection of human rights, as well as in terms of promoting higher standards of respect for women/girls rights.

<sup>11</sup> Supported by the Information and Education Centre for Development (CIES).

<sup>12</sup> Supported by UN Women.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.parlament.al/News/Index/15244>.

**Temporary special measures**

51. CPD in collaboration with UN Women Albania, carried out the study “Gender Equality and Discrimination in the Appointed Bodies of Local Government” during 2019,<sup>14</sup> in which gender discrimination is manifested in Albania, at the top management levels in local self-government. The study presented the situation of the municipalities regarding compliance with Law No. 139/2015 “On local self-government” in combination with Law No. 9970/2008 “On gender equality in society”. Some recommendations from the study were: amendment of the law “On Protection from Discrimination”; amendment of the Law “On Gender Equality in Society”, amendment of the Law “On Local Self-Government”, etc.

52. After the completion of this study, with the amendments to the law “On Protection from Discrimination” in 2020, the competences of the CPD have been increased to: a) examine complaints from persons or groups of persons who claim to have been discriminated against, b) monitor the implementation of the Law “On Gender Equality in Society”; c) file a lawsuit in the Court, in defense of the principle of equality and non-discrimination, for issues related to collective interests; d) set the Constitutional Court in motion, when during its activity it finds that the law or normative act violates the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals (Article 32).

53. In NSGE 2021-2030, there are foreseen: the amendment of Law 9970/2008 “On gender equality in society”, the application of gender quotas for the representation of women in local political and public decision-making, etc. The envisaged actions target “all groups” in society, with a special focus on groups that suffer intersectional and multiple discrimination.

54. In the Local Action Plans for Gender Equality (LGAPs) prepared by 12 municipalities aiming at implementation of the European Charter for Equality of women and men into the local life<sup>15</sup> is emphasized the increase in the number of women/girls from all groups in decision-making, including as administrators of administrative units, in Municipal Councils, in Youth Boards, in hearings and consultations with the public, etc.

**Stereotypes and harmful practices**

55. In NSGE 2021-2030, there are foreseen measures and actions aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes and harmful practices, such as: actions that promote equal sharing between women/girls/boys and men of unpaid family work and care; encouraging young people to apply in fields of study traditionally considered “suitable for the other gender”; supporting more girls/young women/women in the use of technology and digital tools; encouraging young women/women for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, including in areas related to the green economy; highlighting women/young women as positive images in political and public decision-making; educating and encouraging women in rural areas to seek the enforcement of their right of ownership over agricultural land; challenging gender stereotypes through programs on communication and positive parenting; informative activities on early marriages and other harmful practices, education on sexual and reproductive health, etc.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Raporti-i-Barazise-gjinore-ne-pushtetin-vendor.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_egalite\\_en.pdf](https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf).

### Gender-based violence against women

56. Approval of Law no. 125 dated 15.10.2020 “On some additions and changes to law no. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 “On measures against violence in family relationships”, amended, brought improvements in several areas such as: emphasizing special attention to women, girls, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, subject to this law; order from the court, as a protective measure of domestic violence, for the immediate removal of the abuser from the house for a certain period of time, when the victim and the abuser live in the same house; addition of the article on the rehabilitation of abusers; inclusion in the order for the precautionary measures of immediate protection, of the immediate removal of the abuser from the house, when the victim and the abuser live in the same house, unless the abuser is a minor, elderly or person with disability - until the court issue the immediate protection order or protection order; application by the police of a request to the court for the issuance of a protection order, without first requesting the issuance of an immediate protection order, if a state of emergency has been declared in the country; etc.

57. DCM No.327, dated 02.06.2021 “On the mechanism of coordination of work between responsible authorities, for the referral of cases of violence in family relation, as well as its proceedings, for the support and rehabilitation of victims of violence”, aims to prevent domestic violence and violence against women, through identification and reporting, referral and management of cases of violence, support and rehabilitation of victims of all forms of this violence, as well as punishment of perpetrators and giving them the possibility of rehabilitation in relevant programs.

58. Procedures for issuing three protective orders<sup>16</sup> are explained in detail in the law, in the above DCM and in the protocol for the management of cases of domestic violence by CRM’ members. Clarifications are also given in the joint instructions of the Minister of Health and Social Protection and the Minister of the Interior (together with the relevant risk assessment formats, or claims-lawsuits for each order).

59. Monitoring the implementation of protection orders is defined as a joint obligation of police officers and local coordinators against domestic violence in the municipality. Municipal employees, after continuous monitoring of the implementation of protection orders through various forms of contact with the victim/survivor, regularly prepare and submit every 60 days a monitoring report to the police structures. If during the monitoring they observe elements of violation of the implementation of protection orders, the local coordinators prepare and submit the monitoring report before the 60-day period, thus notifying the police immediately. The instructions on monitoring and the relevant forms are explained and are part of the “Protocol for the management of domestic violence’ cases, at the local level, through the CRM’ members”.<sup>17</sup>

60. For the proper implementation of legal changes, the timely and responsible issuance of protective orders and the monitoring of their implementation, trainings are constantly organized with police officers. During the period 2021-May 2022, about 400 police officers were trained in 9 Local Police Directorates.<sup>18</sup> During 2021, the training on “Standard Operating Procedures and the investigation of sexual crimes” was also held, where 20 crime investigation specialists were trained.

<sup>16</sup> Precautionary Immediate Protection Order, Immediate Protection Order, Protection Order.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.undp.org/albania/publications/protokoll-i-menaxhimit-te-rasteve-te-dhunes-ne-familje-ne-nivel-vendor>.

<sup>18</sup> With the support of the Swedish Community Policing Project (SCPA).

61. In the frame of changes to the law on domestic violence, MHSP in cooperation with the Albanian School of Public Administration conducted an online training in December 2020 with the participation of 48 local coordinators.
62. During the period 2020-May 2022, 50 CRM in the country were continuously supported to improve their effectiveness, including training of 15-20 members in each of them.<sup>19</sup>
63. In 2021 ASPA<sup>20</sup> organized 3 workshops in 12 regions of the country on regional cooperation for handling cases of domestic violence, with a total participation of 50 professionals.
64. MHSP in cooperation and with the support of UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR, State Police and Albanian Caritas, organized in July 2021 two training meetings with representatives of the border police, state police and CRM' members of these municipalities (45 participants in both meetings) where it was discussed on the identification of cases of asylum-seeking women and children victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence and their referral to the relevant CRM' services in both municipalities.
65. Trainings for filling cases of violence in the REVALB system were conducted with 65 members of 27 CRMs for the period July-December 2020; 61 local coordinators and 110 members of 57 CRMs were also trained during the period 2021-May 2022.
66. For the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the field of health and social care services for the treatment of cases of domestic violence,<sup>21</sup> during 2020, 118 representatives from the Municipality, State Social Service and health were trained through 9 online sessions and 41 health professionals were trained face-to-face with a module accredited by the National Center for Continuing Education. For 2021, 110 health workers and 63 social care services workers were trained with accredited modules. Two one-day trainings were also provided to the staff of Administrative Units and the social and community centers of Tirana Municipality, for 40 participants.
67. Prosecutor's coordinators have participated in seven different trainings on domestic violence and violence against women, coordinated by the General Prosecutor's Office.
68. In six municipalities in the country<sup>22</sup> it has been worked during 2021 to complete the socio-economic reintegration model of victims/survivors of gender-based violence.
69. The School of Magistrates has organized for magistrates two trainings dedicated to domestic violence and violence against women (in 2020 and 2022).
70. With the initiative of MHSP and in cooperation with the High Judicial Council, the School of Magistrates and UNDP, it is prepared and published the Commentary on the Law on measures against violence in family relationships,<sup>23</sup> as launched in a meeting on June 23rd, 2022.

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<sup>19</sup> Technical assistance provided by UNDP and UN Women.

<sup>20</sup> Supported by UNDP.

<sup>21</sup> Approved in February 2020 with Orders 100, 101 and 102 of the Minister of Health and Social Protection.

<sup>22</sup> Supported by UN Women.

<sup>23</sup> <https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Komentari-Ligji-Dhuna-ne-Familje-13-prill.pdf>.

71. The network of local coordinators created in 2020 by MHSP with the support of UNDP, in addition to the online trainings benefited during the 2020-2021 period, it is trained by MHSP with the support of UNDP (June 28-29, 2022) on difficulties and challenges in managing cases of domestic violence and violence against women (58 participants from 42 municipalities of the country).

72. Among the 27 services that operate in Albania for the entities provided by law, with the object of sheltering, health care, legal, psycho-social, protection, security provision, anti-trafficking services, education, childcare and telephone counseling, 18 of them are classified as shelters (7 long-term and 11 short-term/emergency), 5 as counseling lines, 1 specialized center for handling cases of sexual violence, as well as 3 daily/community services. 14 services are under the jurisdiction of state entities and another 13 are managed by NGOs and are distributed throughout the country. The National Center for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence (NCTVDV) and the National Reception Center for Victims of Trafficking (NRCVT), treat until reintegration women/girls, survivors of domestic violence or trafficking.

73. Specialized support services are partially financed from the state budget (MHSP, social fund, district, etc.). Details of these financings were presented in paragraphs 7-10 of the responses above. Budget for NCTVDV was 22,735,294 ALL for the year 2020, and 21,530,000 ALL for each of the years 2021 and 2022. Budget for NRCVT was 20,854,580 ALL for the year 2020, and 22,350,000 ALL for each of the years 2021 and 2022.

74. The Ministry of Justice has allocated funds for:

- Free legal aid for women/girls in need, in the value of: 18,000,000 ALL for 2020; as well as 28,000,000 ALL for 2021;
- Women prisoners, in the value respectively: 94,000,000 ALL for 2020; and the same amount for 2021;
- Convicted women supervised, in the value respectively: 15,047,000 ALL for 2020 and the same amount for 2021;
- Protection orders for women, in the value respectively: 3,195,000 ALL for 2020 and 4,492,000 ALL for 2021;
- In 2019, has signed a project with UNDP “For the expansion of free legal services for women and men in Albania” in the amount of 1,000,000 EUR for the period 2019-2022.

#### Statistics on domestic violence from the State Police

<i>Year</i>	<i>Identified cases</i>	<i>Claim-suit for IPO/PO</i>	<i>Proceeded criminally (Article 130/a)</i>	<i>Authors arrested</i>	<i>Violation of IPO/PO</i>	<i>Damaged women</i>	<i>Damaged minors</i>
2020	4 701	2 816	1 505	615	138	3 497	237
2021	5 312	3 266	1 631	638	169	3 960	269
January–April 2022	1 731	1 001	595	247	61	1 334	105

Table 1: Data on domestic violence 2020- April 2022

<i>Year</i>	<i>Murders</i>	<i>Total of victims</i>	<i>Women/girl' victims</i>
2020	6	7	6
2021	16	16	10
January–30 April 2022	4	4	4

Table 2: The number of murders that occurred in the family (Article 79/c) and female victims for 2020-April 2022

### Statistics from the Institute of Forensic Medicine for examinations and expert reports

<i>Cases and time periods</i>	<i>Non-family violence</i>		<i>Domestic violence</i>		<i>Sexual Violence</i>		<i>Police violence</i>		<i>Violence by the educator</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
October–December 2020	44	168	19	3	12	2	1	4	0	1
January–December 2021	205	600	72	7	35	7	0	10	1	0
January–18.05.2022	70	216	34	3	13	1	0	0	0	0

Table 3: IFM Statistics 2020-May 2022

75. National Helpline for Women and Girls 116-117 (24/7 service) in 2020 has received 5,597 phone calls, conducted 650 face-to-face consultations, and provided legal assistance, accompaniment in court, or other legal support for 750 cases. The helpline has been operating even during the closure/isolation situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The forms of reported violence are psychological (57%), physical (42%), economic (31%) and sexual (7 cases), often combined. For 2021, it received 3469 phone calls and conducted 827 face-to-face counseling sessions. The largest number of calls came from residents of Tirana District. The forms of reported violence are psychological (56%), physical (48%), economic (33%) and sexual (8 cases). The reporting of sexual violence still remains in low numbers.

76. National Center for the Treatment of Victims of Domestic Violence (under the authority of the State Social Service), during 2020 it treated a total of 60 residents, of which 23 women and 37 children (19 girls and 18 boys). 47 (young) residents have entered the center's program, including 19 women and 28 children (17 girls and 11 boys). 51 residents have left the program and are in the process of reintegration, including 19 women and 32 children (17 girls and 15 boys). During the year 2021, a total of 85 cases were treated, of which: 38 women and 47 children of which (28 girls and 19 boys). 76 cases entered the program, including 34 women and 42 children (25 girls and 17 boys), 67 residents left the program, including 30 women and 37 children (21 girls and 16 boys). 58 residents have left the program and are in the process of reintegration, including 27 women and 31 children (18 girls and 13 boys). During the period January 1, 2022-June 1, 2022, a total of 48 cases were treated, of which 19 women and 29 children (26 girls and 13 boys). 31 residents entered the center's program, including 14 women and 17 children (9 girls and 8 boys), and 34 residents left the program, including 14 women and 20 children (11 girls and 9 boys).

77. The LILIUM center dedicated to victims of sexual violence, from December 2019 to May 31, 2022, has treated 106 victims of sexual violence, over 80% children and over 90% women/girls. For the period January-May 2022, 14 cases were treated, all girls under the age of 18. Cases after receiving services at the center are referred to other services as appropriate.

78. Pursuant to the Joint Instruction of the Minister of Justice and the Supreme Judicial Council no. 9, dated 17.06.2020 "On determining the rules for the creation

of a special database for domestic violence cases in the Courts and their unification and registration”, on the portal <http://gjykata.gov.al/> statistical reports on issues of domestic violence have been added, for issues with the object “Issuance of a protection order” (PO) and “Issuance of an immediate protection order” (IPO). These reports are updated and reflected in real time on the portal, for all courts of judicial districts.

79. Every year, MHSP coordinates the activities of the 16 days of activism against violence against women (November 25-December 10). The 2021 campaign had the slogan “Stop violence against women now!” and more than 300 awareness-raising activities were carried out with the participation of central and local institutions, CSOs, etc., supported mainly by United Nations Agencies.

80. In 2021, CPD has recommended “Taking measures to revise point 6, article 12, of law no. 57/2019 *“For Social Assistance in the Republic of Albania”* and point 12, of Chapter III, of DCM no.597, dated 4.09.2019 *“On determining the procedures, documentation and the monthly measure of the benefit of economic aid and the use of the additional fund on the conditional fund on economic aid”*, in order to ensure parallel access to victims of domestic violence, as victims of violence and as a category in need, due to lack or insufficiency of income.” This recommendation has not been implemented as there are still no legal changes.

81. Objectives, measures and actions for the reduction of domestic violence and all forms of gender-based violence are foreseen in strategic goal III of the NSGE 2021-2030. This strategic goal has, in financial terms, the largest weight in the implementation of the strategy, namely 63.8% (total cost of 2,172,074,993 ALL from which 1,042,034,420 ALL are foreseen in MTBP 2021-2023, other sources and donors, 735,596,572 ALL are costs that will be planned in the budget 2024 – 2030 and 394,444,001 ALL are financial gap).

82. For specialized support services for victims/survivors of gender-based violence, it is planned to set up: 4 regional centers for sexual assaults and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation (2021-2030); 2 long-term trauma recovery services for victims of sexual violence and trafficking for sexual exploitation (2026-2030); 2 regional shelters for the long-term treatment of cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence (2024-2030); 49 emergency shelters for gender-based violence and domestic violence at the municipal level (2024-2030); increasing the percentage of the social services budget dedicated to the operation of specialized support services, from 26% (2021) to 32% (2025).

83. In order to strengthen the capacities of the CRM’ members established in the 61 municipalities in the country, in the NSGE 2021-2030 there are foreseen: 120 training on improved legislation (2021-2025); 61 online training to recognize/implement the Recommendation of the Council of Europe Rec/KM/(2019)1 for “Preventing and combating sexism” (2022-2025); 300 training of primary health service professionals, for the provision of essential services on sexual and reproductive health, including in the conditions of civil emergencies and natural disasters.

84. For the education of society with the principles of gender equality and zero tolerance to gender-based violence, in NSGE 2021-2030 there are foreseen: 48 online awareness activities (2022-2025); 10 national campaign of 16 days of activism on gender-based violence (2021-2030); 61 programs on positive parenting and premarital counseling, set up in cooperation with municipalities (2025-2030); 1200 meetings with women/young women/girls on sexual and reproductive health (2021-2025).

85. In addition to the above, in the NSGE 2021-22030 there are also foreseen interventions that are led by other the ministries or responsible institutions such as

MES, MoI/ASP, MoJ, ASPA, etc., on capacity building, community education, improvement of the legal framework, as needed, discussion on early marriages and other harmful practices, provision of free legal aid, creation of opportunities for socio-economic reintegration of victims/survivors of violence gender-based, etc.

### **Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution**

86. The Ministry of the Interior is the responsible institution for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Trafficking 2021-2023. In this context: the reporting formats and the risk format have been prepared; information on the implementation of the plan is requested from the responsible institutions; coordination has been made with the directorates in the Ministry of the Interior for the implementation of relevant measures, etc.

87. Albanian legislation provides for the exemption of trafficking victims from punishment. Article 52/a paragraph 2 of the Criminal Code provides that: “The person injured by criminal offenses related to human trafficking may benefit from exemption from punishment, for committing criminal offenses during the period of trafficking and to the extent that she/he was forced to commit those illegal actions or omissions”. In practice, there is no criminal prosecution against victims of trafficking for criminal offenses that they were forced to commit for the purposes of trafficking. The prosecuting body argues that the victim should not be criminally prosecuted for the offenses committed due to trafficking, since the victim’s will has been violated and the subjective side of committing the criminal offense is missing.

88. In almost every case investigated, victims of trafficking are placed in the respective centers where they are provided with free accommodation, food and other services. They also have the right to enter the witness protection program if they feel threatened. All victims or potential victims of trafficking, whether Albanian or foreign, enjoy the same access to the protection system. Assistance and protection of the victim/potential victim of trafficking is not conditional on the cooperation of the victim with the justice authorities, despite the continuous encouragement of the victims of trafficking to testify in criminal proceedings. In Article 11 of Law 111/2017 “On Legal Aid Guaranteed by the State”, it is provided that victims of trafficking benefit free legal aid at all stages of criminal proceedings.

89. In 2021, a total of 159 victims/potential victims of trafficking were identified, of which: 154 potential victims and 5 trafficking victims, 47 adults and 112 children, 60 men/boys and 99 women/girls, 156 Albanians and 3 foreigners. During the period January-May 2022, 60 possible victims of trafficking have been identified, of which: 18 adults and 42 children, 15 men/boys and 45 women/girls, 58 Albanians/Albanians and 2 foreigners (Syrian).

90. Statistical data of the prosecution: for 2020, 23 criminal proceedings were registered and 1 criminal proceeding for adult trafficking (Article 110/a) was sent for trial, where 4 defendants are suspected of having trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and 1 defendant was sent for trial. 5 criminal proceedings were registered and 1 criminal proceeding for trafficking of minors was sent for trial (Article 128/b). For the year 2021, 8 criminal proceedings have been registered and 5 criminal proceedings for trafficking in adults have been sent for trial (Article 110/a), where 15 defendants are suspected of having trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and 5 defendants have been sent for trial. 2 criminal proceedings were registered and 2 criminal proceedings for trafficking of minors were sent for trial (Article 128/b). During this period, no cases were handled where it was requested to include the victims of trafficking in the protection of witnesses or associates of justice’ program.

91. Assistance for victims/potential victims of trafficking is provided in residential centers and in the community. Services are provided without distinction/



discrimination to women/girls compared to men/boys. The detailed assistance programs include rehabilitation activities in accordance with the identified needs. All victims/potential victims of trafficking who have received integration services attend various professional courses for free qualification at Vocational Training Centers.

92. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed<sup>24</sup> between the General Prosecutor's Office and the OSCE Presence where Annex II focuses "Action against human trafficking in Albania" and aims to contribute towards a general reduction of the spread of human trafficking in Albania/from Albania.

93. To increase the efficiency of international cooperation, we mention the appointment of the Albanian Liaison Prosecutor to Eurojust, on 01.01.2021 and the inauguration of the Office of the Liaison Prosecutor of Albania near the headquarters of Eurojust in The Hague, on 29.10.2021 by the General Prosecutor of Albania and the President of Eurojust, whose presence will enable the consolidation of experience and capacities, as well as improve the response in a more organized institutional manner to the serious threat of transnational organized crime, which includes human trafficking.

94. GRETA's recommendations have been taken into consideration and included in concrete objectives and measures in the National Action Plan for the Fight against Human Trafficking 2021-2023. The adoption of a special anti-trafficking law is envisaged, which will regulate: the issue of compensation for victims of trafficking, the definition of a coordinating authority, the improvement of standard procedures and the facilitation of access to the labor market of victims/potential victims of trafficking. The development of trainings as well as awareness/sensitizing activities for the community are also part of the National Action Plan.

#### **Participation in political and public life**

95. The Central Election Commission (CEC) consists of 85 employees, of which 29 are men and 54 are women. 2 positions are vacant, under recruitment procedure by the Human Resources Directorate.

96. In fulfillment of the legal obligations for the central elections decreed for 25.04.2021, the CEC recruited 305 support employees (171 men and 134 women). While fulfilling the legal obligations for the partial local elections decreed for the date 06.03.2022, the CEC recruited 178 support employees (101 men and 77 women).

97. In 2021, in the framework of the election campaign of the central elections (dated 25.04.2021), CEC and CPD prepared recommendations for preventing the use of hate speech during the election campaign, which deals, among other things, with equal representation in electoral lists, recommending from both signatory bodies that: "Political parties should consider implementing practices and policies to achieve in their electoral lists a representation that reflects the diversity of people in society, at all levels, even in cases where there is no express legal obligation to do so."<sup>25</sup>

98. In November 2021, the People's Advocate conducted a study on violence against women in politics and came up with concrete recommendations to reduce this form of violence against women, where, among other things, it is emphasized: creation of legal mechanisms by political parties to deal with political violence before, during and after elections; CEC should play a proactive role in preventing economic violence (e.g., unequal distribution of funds during election campaigns) and in monitoring political parties; to work for challenging gender stereotypes; to organize campaigns that promote the increase of women's participation in politics; Audiovisual Media

<sup>24</sup> No.627 prot., dated 13.04.2021.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/rekomandim-per-KQZ.pdf>.

Authority to take steps to ensure that women candidates are allowed fair television time to communicate their message and political agenda to voters, etc.

99. Measures and actions for the inclusion of women from all groups of society in political and public decision-making at the local level are also foreseen as part of strategic goal II of the NSGE 2021-2030.

### **Education**

100. DCMs, guidelines and agreements to promote the education of Roma and Egyptian children enable: a) free textbooks and transport for children in 9-year education; b) priority for Roma children for registration in kindergarten and part-time basic and secondary education; c) 50% tuition fee reduction for university studies (second cycle/master); d) simplification of registration/return to school procedures for children who, due to their circumstances, were either unable to attend basic education for at least two academic years, or who dropped out of school, are street children or are not registered; e) facilitating women who have not completed full-time basic education to do so part-time, by accepting one or two grades above the one listed in their last school record, after approval by a relevant committee; f) exemption of students from tuition fees for university studies (first cycle/bachelor's degree); g) signing inter-ministerial agreements for the identification and registration of all children subject to compulsory education, including street children; h) equipping students with free textbooks even in higher secondary education; i) eliminating exclusionary attitudes towards Roma and Egyptian children in the school community and j) preserving and developing the cultural identity, among others, of Roma and Egyptian pupils and students.

101. In the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians in the Republic of Albania 2021-2025, there are measures that support Roma and Egyptian students, in particular, girls and women attending secondary and higher education, through scholarships, tuition fee reduction and exemption from the payment fee for the protection of a foreign language (obligatory for equipping with a diploma) and the provision of special quotas.

102. During the 2019-2020 school year, 14,515 Roma and Egyptian students attended pre-university education (4,862 Roma and 9,653 Egyptian), or 39% more than the previous school year. From the 3,792 Roma students enrolled in basic and upper secondary education, 1,703 were girls. From the 7,915 Egyptian students enrolled in 9-year basic and upper secondary education, 3,513 were girls. During the 2020-2021 school year, 14,875 Roma and Egyptian students attended pre-university education (4,774 Roma and 10,101 Egyptians), while during the 2021-2022 school year, 14,264 Roma and Egyptian students (4,286 Roma and 9,978 Egyptians) attend classes.

103. The Ministry of Education and Sports prioritizes the engagement and development of the capacities of deaf women/girls and has included them in all its activities. Increasing the number of deaf girls who will complete high school is one of the goals set. They will get educated and will have more employment opportunities.

104. There are 15 girls attending the Institute of Deaf Students, 15 female teachers, 10 female assistant teachers and 9 female guardians, all trained in sign language.

In the Albanian National Association of Deaf People (ANAD), 3 deaf women/girls are engaged as sign language instructors, 2 as trainers, 4 on the board of the association and 2 on the board of young people.

105. The dropout rate in basic education for the 2019-2020 school year results 0.49% (0.46% girls and 0.53% boys), where in primary education is 0.47% (0.45% girls and 0.49% boys and in lower secondary education it is 0.57% (0.47% girls and 0.66% boys). For the 2020-2021 school year, the basic education dropout rate results 0.51%

(0.44% girls and 0.56% boys), where in primary education is 0.51% (0.45% girls and 0.55% boys) and in lower secondary education it is 0.51% (0.43% girls and 0.58% boys).

106. The dropout rate in upper secondary education for the school year 2019-2020 results 1.76% (0.85% girls and 2.84% boys), where in high school is 1.78% (0.85% girls and 2.88% boys) and in oriented secondary education is 1.29% (0.69% girls and 1.8% boys). For the school year 2020-2021, the dropout rate in upper secondary education results 1.51% (0.90% girls and 2.00% boys), where in high school is 1.52% (0.90% girls and 2.25% boys) and in oriented secondary education is 1.37% (0.90% girls and 1.79% boys).

107. In higher education, for the academic year 2019-2020, in the 2-year programs there are 36% girls and 64% boys; Bachelor 59% girls and 41% boys; Integrated programs 68% girls and 32% boys; Professional and Scientific Master 64% girls and 36% boys; Doctorate and specialization 58% girls and 42% boys.

108. Between academic years 2012-2013 and 2019-2020 there is an increase in the participation of girls in: Information and Communication Technologies from 37% to 39%; Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction from 28% to 32%, there have been years where it has reached 41% (2015-2016); Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary from 27% to 46%; Services, from 27% to 32%.

109. About 54.5% of the academic staff are women and 45.5% are men; 59.5% of the academic staff have completed PhD/Doctor of Science studies (53.9% men and 46.1% women); 27,3% are Ass/Professor (57,2 % men and 42,8% women); 12,1% are with title Professor (71,1% men and 28,9% women); 53,9% of docents are men and 46.1% are women. 30,6% of the academic staff have participated as authors and with co-authors of up to 10 scientific monographs; 64,9% of them have participated in up to 10 articles in scientific journals abroad; 30,7% have participated in up to 10 national projects and 30,9% have participated in up to 10 international projects.

110. Modules and curricula on sexual education in schools have been prepared by the Pre-University Education Quality Assurance Agency, in collaboration with MES and UNFPA, and during 2022, the work will continue to strengthen capacities and apply these curricula into practice.

## **Employment**

111. The action plan of the National Employment Strategy 2019-2022 focuses on increasing opportunities for decent work through efficient labor market policies, ensuring quality education and training for young people and adults, promoting inclusion and social cohesion and strengthened the system of qualifications and the labor market. The gender aspect is reflected in the text of the strategy and the measures of its action plan, both in the measures that refer to mechanisms for data collection and those for the implementation of employment policies and legislation.

112. The National Employment and Skills Agency has created a sustainable action plan to address the vulnerable categories registered with it. The new employment system is integrated with the system of economic aid and payments of persons with disabilities, for the interoperability of data and the facilitation of procedures. Registered unemployed persons go through an extensive interview process to determine barriers to their employment (e.g., childcare, lack of transportation, health problems, etc.). The interview is completed with the drafting of an individual action plan for active labor market programs.

113. Encouraging the employment of young women is one of the priorities of the Albanian government that will be implemented through the Youth Guarantee Program. The focus of this program will be young women and men who are neither

in employment nor in education, since the percentage of unemployment for this group is very high. For the completion and start of the implementation of this program the work is in progress also during 2022.

114. At the end of 2021, a total of 87,419 unemployed jobseekers (45,125 women or 52%) were registered in the regional and local structures of the National Employment and Skills Agency. Women compose 60% of unemployed jobseekers registered in the categories receiving unemployment benefits, 51% of unemployed jobseekers receiving economic aid, 54% of long-term unemployed jobseekers and 51% of unemployed Roma jobseekers. 49% of registered unemployed Egyptian jobseekers are women, 46% of registered unemployed jobseekers with disabilities are women, and among the migrant group, women compose 32% of those registered.

115. Among the persons employed through employment services, 48% are women. In employment promotion programs, 60% of beneficiaries are women. In vocational training programs, 47% of beneficiaries are women.

116. In the State Inspectorate of Labor and Social Services, the number of complaints about gender discrimination in employment results: 6 complaints for 2020 (3 discrimination, 2 unequal treatment, 1 sexual harassment in the workplace); 4 complaints for 2021 (2 discrimination, 2 unequal treatments in the workplace); 3 complaints for the period January-April 2022 (1 discrimination, 2 unequal treatments in the workplace).

117. CPD for the period October 2020-May 31, 2022, has handled 37 cases of gender discrimination (34 complaints and 3 ex-officio cases). The investigation procedure for 33 complaints has been completed and the review for 1 complaint and for 3 ex-officio continues. At the end of the process, CPD concluded: 4 Discrimination Decisions (1 of them also due to pregnancy); 12 Non-discrimination Decisions; 5 Decisions of non-acceptance (2 of them also due to pregnancy); 7 Decision Achievement of effectiveness; 1 Suspension decision because the complaint was being examined by judicial bodies; 4 Dismissal decisions due to the inability to provide information; 4 complaints in the review process.

118. During October 1st-December 31st, 2020, in 5 cases out of 6 handled, the complaining subjects claimed discrimination for more than one reason; in 2021, in 16 cases out of 21 handled, the complaining subjects claimed discrimination for more than one reason; in 2022, in 8 cases out of 10 handled, the complaining entity claimed discrimination for more than one reason.

119. The School of Magistrates, in cooperation with the ILO and the Government of Sweden, has developed a special training program for the judicial use of International Labor Standards, which is part of the initial and ongoing training program since 2020. In 2021, 50 judges and candidate magistrates (62% women) were trained on international labor standards. On 13.06.2022, the second round of training began with 55 judges and magistrates on: freedom of organization and collective bargaining, equality and discrimination, violence and harassment at work, Safety and Health at Work and Termination of Labor Relations, etc.<sup>26</sup>

120. On 6 May 2022, Albania deposited the instrument of ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) with the Director-General of the ILO. By submitting the instrument of ratification, Albania reaffirms its commitment towards the fight against the violence and harassment in the world of work. It becomes

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.magjistratura.edu.al/sq/projekte/ilo>.

the 13th country in the world, and the 5th country in Europe, to ratify Convention No.190.<sup>27</sup>

### **Health**

121. During 2020, 3,150 women/girls and 10,200 women/girls benefited from the free breast cancer screening service; 16% of patients treated in secondary health services are women/girls; a 55-bed gynecology hospital has been added to the women's/girls' health facilities; about 50,713 women benefited from the free check-up service.

### **Economic empowerment**

122. In the Business and Investment Development Strategy 2021-2027, support for women occupies an important place, referring to several measures. For example, in the measure 'Access to Finance' it was decided that 30% of the beneficiaries will be women entrepreneurs / businesses run by women (2022-2027).

### **Rural women**

123. For the year 2021 Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (supported by UN Women and FAO) has carried out an awareness activity to increase rural women's access to land ownership and a series of activities are planned for 2022.

124. For the year 2021, 10 days of training have been carried out with 320 women farmers as beneficiaries, from the Regional Agricultural Extension Agencies there are assisted and provided access to information to about 8100 women farmers, while from the National Support Schemes, 505 women applicants have been successful.

### **Older women**

125. The specific policies and objectives of the Action Plan on Aging 2020-2024 are aligned with several SDGs, including SDG5. Gender Equality is one of the principles on which the document is based, while the general goals emphasize the creation of a suitable environment that supports and helps older women and men being integrated into society while maintaining their human dignity regardless of health conditions or their functional autonomy.

### **Migrant and returnee women**

126. The National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES) has provided services for Albanian citizens who want to emigrate, those who return from emigration, as well as for foreign citizens who want to work in our country. Albanian citizens returned from emigration have received information and been advised about employment and professional training in the regional and local structures of NAES. In July 2021, the "Needs' assessment for the provision of services for regular migration and returnees for NAES staff" was completed, and the protocols for migrants/returnees were prepared.

127. In December 2021, 567 Albanian citizens returned from emigration (182 women) were registered as unemployed jobseekers in the regional and local employment offices.

128. During 2020 and 2021, the legislation for foreigners was improved, aligned with the directives of Chapter 24 "Freedom, justice, security". This law introduces as an innovation an integrated work and residence permit as the only permit issued by the

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/equality-of-opportunity-and-treatment/WCMS\\_844477/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/equality-of-opportunity-and-treatment/WCMS_844477/lang--en/index.htm).

Albanian authorities and enables foreigners to work and stay in the Republic of Albania. Its bylaws will be prepared during 2022.

129. During 2021 and 2022, the application process was developed online on the e-albania.al portal. In the period January-December 2021, 5,418 citizens/foreign national applicants were provided with employment documents, of which 3,438 were provided with Work Permits (688 women or 20%), 1,596 with Employment Declaration Verification (298 women or 19%) and 384 with Registration Certificate (172 women or 45 %).

130. A number of agreements have been signed to strengthen regional cooperation in the issues of migration and access to the labor market<sup>28</sup> and work is being done to increase the capacities of migration workers. Cooperation with GIZ and IOM in this regard is very important.

### **Marriage and family relations**

131. Polygamy is prohibited in the Republic of Albania based on the Family Code, which in its article 7 provides that marriage can be concluded between a man and a woman who have reached the age of 18. Also, according to Article 9, which provides for prohibitions on marriage, it is foreseen that the person who has been married cannot enter into a new marriage, until the previous marriage has been declared invalid or has not been dissolved.

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<sup>28</sup> With North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, etc.