



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the seventh periodic report of Estonia*

General

1. Please provide information and statistics, disaggregated by age, disability, ethnicity, minority status and nationality, on the current situation of women in the State party, to enable monitoring of the implementation of the Convention. In accordance with the State party's obligations under articles 1 and 2 of the Convention, and in line with target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere, please indicate how the State party intends to improve the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the areas covered by the Convention, so as to support policymaking and programme development and to measure progress towards the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of substantive equality between women and men, including with regard to the specific areas covered in the present document. Please provide information about processes of regular consultation and cooperation with civil society organizations working for women's rights and gender equality on matters relating to the implementation of the Convention. Please elaborate on funding mechanisms for women's rights and gender equality organizations and on measures taken to ensure an environment that is safe and in which such organizations can collaborate with the State party.

Women's rights and gender equality in relation to the pandemic and recovery efforts

2. In line with the Committee's guidance note on the obligations of States parties to the Convention in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, issued on 22 April 2020, please indicate measures implemented by the State party to redress long-standing inequalities between women and men and to give a new impetus to the implementation of gender equality by placing women at the centre of the recovery as a strategic priority for sustainable change, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, to meet the needs and uphold the rights of women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and to ensure that, in the context of lockdown measures, whether partial or total, and in post-crisis recovery plans, women and girls are not relegated to stereotypical gender roles. Please indicate measures in place to ensure that all COVID-19 crisis response and recovery

* Adopted by the pre-sessional working group on 9 July 2021.



efforts, including the recovery and resilience plan: (a) address and are aimed at effectively preventing gender-based violence against women and girls; (b) guarantee the equal participation of women and girls in political and public life, decision-making, economic empowerment and service delivery, in particular in the design and implementation of recovery programmes; and (c) are designed so that women and girls benefit equally from stimulus packages, including financial support for unpaid care roles, that are aimed at mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic. Please explain how the State party is ensuring that measures taken to contain the pandemic, such as restrictions on freedom of movement or physical distancing, do not limit access for women and girls, including those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to justice, shelters, education, employment and health care, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Legislative framework

3. Please provide information on progress made in the implementation of the Gender Equality Act to ensure the equal treatment of women and men and to promote gender equality, which requires State and local government authorities, educational and research institutions and employers to promote equality between women and men. Please also provide data on the number of complaints and prosecutions in relation to discrimination on the grounds of sex in the past five years, the sentences imposed on the perpetrators and the reparations provided to victims under the Act.

Women's access to justice

4. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 11)¹ and its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, please provide information on measures taken to ensure that women have access to effective remedies in respect of complaints about violations of their rights, including by strengthening the mandate and resources of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner to enable her to issue legally binding decisions and take cases of discrimination against women to court on behalf of the complainant and ex officio in cases of general interest. Please also provide information on measures taken to ensure that disadvantaged women, such as women with disabilities, have access to courts and free legal aid. Please inform the Committee of plans to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Please report on the training available on gender-sensitive investigation methods for members of the criminal justice system (para. 13 (d)).

National machinery for the advancement of women

5. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 13), please describe measures taken to adopt a comprehensive national strategy for gender equality and to develop the national machinery for the advancement of women, including in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Please provide information about the mechanisms of the national machinery for the advancement of women for ensuring gender mainstreaming at the central and municipal government levels, as well as across all sectors of policymaking. Please provide detailed information on the results achieved to date under gender equality policies of the welfare development plan, 2016–2023, implemented through four-year rolling gender equality programmes, including the monitoring process and indicators employed.

6. The Committee has been informed that the State budget allocation for the activities of the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner was €506,956 in 2020. Please provide information on the human, technical and financial resources

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, paragraph numbers refer to the Committee's concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of the State party ([CEDAW/C/EST/CO/5-6](#)).

available to the Commissioner and the Equality Policies Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the area of the advancement of women and gender equality. Please also inform the Committee about measures to ensure the Commissioner's institutional independence, given the role of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the nomination of the Commissioner. Please report on training available on gender equality for national and local governmental officials (para. 13 (d)). Please describe measures to ensure that gender impact assessments form an integral part of the legislative process and on gender impact assessments carried out on existing legislation (para. 13 (e)). Please also inform the Committee of efforts undertaken to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy through gender budgeting analysis at the State and local levels (para. 13 (f)).

Temporary special measures

7. Please provide information on awareness-raising campaigns conducted to promote understanding of the importance and non-discriminatory nature of temporary special measures (para. 15). The Committee notes that the State party scores only 28.2 in the Gender Equality Index of 2017 in the area of "power", against an average among European Union member States of 48.5. Please inform the Committee of temporary special measures, such as a quota system, put into place to achieve substantive equality between women and men, in particular with reference to the participation of women in decision-making bodies, both in the public and private sector, and to promote the equal representation of women in all areas of the Convention in which they are underrepresented or disadvantaged, in accordance with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

8. Please provide information on measures taken to combat discriminatory stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and to strengthen understanding of the concept of equality between women and men (para. 17 (a)). Please inform the Committee of any innovative measures taken to use the education system to enhance a positive and non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men. Please also inform the Committee of awareness-raising and media campaigns on the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women on the basis of all grounds covered by the Gender Equality Act and the Equal Treatment Act (para. 17 (b)).

Gender-based violence against women

9. The Committee takes note of the follow-up information provided by the State party ([CEDAW/C/EST/CO/5-6/Add.1](#), para. 3), on the strategy for preventing violence, 2015–2020, which includes domestic violence. Please indicate the proportion of women between 15 and 49 years of age who have been subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past five years. Please describe partnerships with civil society actors undertaken to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategy and the progress achieved. Please also provide information on the steps taken to ensure the meaningful participation of women's rights organizations in the implementation and monitoring of the laws related to gender-based violence against women. Please inform the Committee of measures taken to make shelters, legal aid, psychological counselling and specialized services available, accessible and inclusive for all women who are victims of gender-based violence. Please report on the lessons learned from the strategy and on forthcoming plans and strategies to further prevent domestic violence.

10. In view of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 19 (b)), please inform the Committee of progress made in amending the Penal Code with a view to reviewing the definition of rape as any non-consensual sexual act irrespective of use of violence or force. The Committee takes note of the follow-up information provided by the State party ([CEDAW/C/EST/CO/5-6/Add.1](#), paras. 6–8) on the criminalization of sexual harassment in 2017 under article 153 of the Penal Code. Please explain the narrow definition of sexual harassment, its limitation to “physical acts” and the exclusion of remarks and behaviours with a sexual or sexist connotation. The Committee takes note of the follow-up information provided by the State party (*ibid.*, para. 11) indicating that the State party considers economic and psychological violence as part of division 2, Offences against Health, of the Code. Please inform the Committee of progress made in adding economic and psychological violence to the definition of domestic violence.

11. In view of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 19 (c)–(e)), please inform the Committee of measures taken to ensure the systematic and effective enforcement of court decisions, in particular those that concern protection orders or emergency protection orders for women who are victims of gender-based violence, and provide data on the detention and prosecution of violators of protection orders for the past five years. Please inform the Committee of progress made in amending the Family Law Act to ensure that the occurrence of domestic violence is always taken into consideration in determining the custody of children.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

12. With reference to the Committee's previous concluding observations (para. 20), please provide information about the current public policies and action plans to combat trafficking in persons and provide the number of women and girls who have been victims of trafficking, disaggregated by age, country of origin, minority status and migrant, refugee or asylum status. Please also report on the following:

(a) Existing mechanisms and the human, technical and financial resources allocated to identifying women and girls who are victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation;

(b) The number of investigations and prosecutions of cases of trafficking in women and girls, and the sentences imposed on the perpetrators, in the past five years;

(c) The type of redress and reparations provided to women and girls who are victims of trafficking;

(d) Support services available for victims of trafficking, including psychosocial support, free legal aid and shelters.

13. Please provide data on the prevalence of the exploitation of prostitution, including the sexual exploitation of girls, and inform the Committee of measures to support women who wish to leave prostitution, including by assisting them in gaining access to alternative means of livelihood.

Participation in political and public life

14. The Committee notes a decrease in the representation of women in decision-making positions and that women account for 29 per cent of members of the parliament, 13 per cent of members of Government and 46.8 per cent of ministers, including the Prime Minister. Please provide data on the representation of women in appointed political positions, local administrative bodies at the municipal level, the judiciary, the foreign service, the media sector and in State-owned companies. Please provide information on measures taken to promote the equal representation of women in political and public life, including at decision-making levels, and to promote the

representation of disadvantaged groups of women, such as rural women, women from ethnic and linguistic minority groups and women with disabilities, in political office (para. 23). Please provide data on the extent of online harassment, notably through social media, against women who take public positions on certain societal issues and describe the State party's legal framework, policies and processes with regard to cyberharassment and measures taken to protect the rights of victims.

Nationality

15. Please inform the Committee of statelessness determination procedures, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, in order to expedite naturalization, and provide data on the naturalization of women and girls with undetermined citizenship for the past five years (para. 25).

Education

16. The Committee takes note of the research project carried out from 2019 to 2021 aimed at decreasing stereotypes and segregation and increasing the proportion of girls and women in the information and communications technology sector. Please provide information on the results of the project, the next steps and other measures to promote women's and girls' choices of non-traditional fields of education, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics and digital technology, and the corresponding career paths. Please provide information on measures taken to revise school textbooks and education curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes and to include elements raising awareness of gender equality. Please provide information on temporary special measures, including incentives, used to ensure the representation of women in leadership positions in academic institutions. Please report on steps taken to overcome reported discrimination in access to education for girls with disabilities and girls belonging to linguistic and ethnic minority groups.

Employment

17. The Committee takes note of the planned amendments to the Gender Equality Act, in effect from 1 July 2020, which give the Labour Inspectorate the mandate to monitor the implementation of the requirement for equal pay for work of equal value among women and men and the right to oblige employers to carry out equal pay audits in the public sector. Please give detailed information on the results of the monitoring of equal pay requirements in the public sector, including the number of audits requested and the outcome. Please explain why the control of the Labour Inspectorate will not apply to the private sector and what measures are taken to raise awareness among employees in the private sector of the support available from the Labour Inspectorate and of the obligations of employers. Please provide information on the results of the in-depth analysis of the gender pay gap undertaken by the State party, its use in policymaking and in awareness-raising activities and the digital dashboards and applications developed to put the results to use among the public.

18. The Committee notes that the employment gap among women and men between 20 and 49 years of age was 36.1 percentage points in 2019, that men accounted for less than 3 per cent of people on parental leave in 2019 and that paternity leave was extended to 30 days in July 2020. Please inform the Committee of measures taken, in addition to the media campaign conducted in 2017 on the role of fathers in raising children, to encourage men to take paternity leave. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party that it has supported municipalities in creating new childcare centres and that it plans to improving the availability of long-term care services for dependent relatives. Please provide detailed information on the number

of childcare centres created in the past five years and on the availability of long-term care services.

19. With reference to the Committee's previous recommendations (paras. 28–29), please provide information on the following:

- (a) Mechanisms in place for filing complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace and for ensuring that cases are brought to court by the Labour Inspectorate and/or the Commissioner for Gender Equality and Equal Treatment ex officio;
- (b) Measures taken to reduce horizontal and vertical occupational segregation;
- (c) Statistical data on employment, including court data, disaggregated by sex, on the enforcement of the Gender Equality Act;
- (d) The representation of women in management positions in private companies in the past five years;
- (e) Sanctions applied against employers who violated the Gender Equality Act in the past five years;
- (f) Measures taken to address employment discrimination against women returning to work after maternity leave;
- (g) Measures taken to promote equal access to the labour market for women belonging to minority groups, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, transgender women and intersex persons.

Health

20. With regard to previous recommendations of the Committee (para. 31), please elaborate on measures taken to address the high rates of drug and alcohol abuse and related deaths among young women and to ensure that rural, older and marginalized women are not excluded from access to health services. Please inform the Committee of progress made towards providing access to affordable sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls and reducing waiting periods for obtaining health appointments, in particular with respect to sexual and reproductive health services, especially for women in rural areas.

Economic empowerment of women

21. Please inform the Committee about measures to support women entrepreneurs throughout the State party, start-up businesses owned by women and women beneficiaries of finance schemes for businesses, including microcredits and appropriate technology for establishing and developing small- and medium-sized enterprises, and the eligibility criteria for start-up programmes, microcredit schemes and entrepreneurship programmes. Please also inform the Committee of measures taken to increase the amount allocated under the child maintenance fund, so that it is at least equal to the State-required minimum child maintenance level (para. 33).

Rural and marginalized groups of women

22. Please provide comprehensive statistical data, disaggregated by age, ethnicity, nationality, geographical location and socioeconomic background, on the situation of disadvantaged or marginalized women, such as rural women, women belonging to ethnic minority groups, migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women, older women, women affected by poverty, women and girls living in street situations, women with disabilities, women taking care of family members with disabilities or older family members, lesbian, bisexual, transgender women and intersex persons, for all areas covered by the Convention. Please inform the Committee of any amendment to the

Equal Treatment Act to cover discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity in all spheres of society, and provide information on the implementation and monitoring of the Act. Please inform the Committee about the involvement of women's organizations in new rural policy planning, specific programmes addressing the rights and situation of women and strategies to ensure that rural women and girls have adequate access to high-quality education, employment and health care, as well as to decision-making processes and means of economic empowerment (para. 35).

Marriage and family relations

23. The Committee notes that the minimum age of marriage is set at 18 years, under article 1 of the Family Law Act, but that courts may "extend the active legal capacity" of children over 15 years of age, in order to allow them to marry. Please provide information on mechanisms to track cases of child and/or forced marriages, the number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators during the reporting period and plans to amend the Family Law Act to ensure that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years for women and men, without exception. In the light of the Committee's previous recommendations (para. 39), please inform the Committee of the rates of default on child support payments among men and measures in place for the enforcement of child support orders and of regulations to implement the Registered Partnership Act of 2014.

Climate change and disaster risk reduction

24. The Committee takes note of the climate change adaptation development plan adopted in 2017. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that climate change policies take into account the differentiated and disproportionate impact of climate change on women in order to better integrate a gender perspective into relevant policies and programmes and to ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes on climate change at the local and national levels, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change.

Additional information

25. Please provide any additional information deemed relevant with regard to legislative, policy, administrative and other measures taken to implement the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations since the consideration of the previous combined periodic reports, in 2016. Such measures may include recent laws, developments, plans, programmes and ratifications of human rights instruments, as well as any other information that the State party considers relevant. Please note that, further to the issues raised in the present document, the State party will be expected, during the dialogue, to respond to additional questions relating to areas covered by the Convention.
