



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
12 June 2026

Original: English
English, French and Spanish

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Information received from Montenegro on follow-up to the concluding observations on its third periodic report*

[Date received: 8 June 2026]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



I. Introduction

1. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted its Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report of Montenegro (CEDAW/C/MNE/CO/3) on 3 June 2024. Pursuant to paragraph 54 of the Concluding Observations, Montenegro hereby submits information on the implementation of the follow-up recommendations contained in paragraphs 16(a), 26(b), 30(a) and 36(b).

2. During the reporting period, Montenegro continued to strengthen its legislative, institutional and strategic framework for the promotion of gender equality, the protection of women from discrimination and violence, and the enhancement of women's participation in political and public life. Significant progress has been achieved through the adoption of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2025–2029, improvements to the electoral framework and the preparation of a new Law on Gender Equality.

II. Follow-up information on the concluding observations (CEDAW/C/MNE/CO/3)

A. Information relating to paragraph 16 (a)

3. Since the adoption of the Committee's Concluding Observations, Montenegro has undertaken a number of measures aimed at strengthening institutional capacities for the implementation of gender equality policies.

4. Under the Rulebook on Internal Organisation and Systematisation of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights adopted in 2024, the number of staff members in the Department for Gender Equality was increased from three to four. At the same time, continuous efforts have been made to strengthen staff capacities through training programmes implemented by the Human Resources Administration, international organisations and development partners. Two staff members successfully completed a Training of Trainers programme in the field of gender equality with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

5. To strengthen coordination and mainstreaming of gender equality policies, a network of 115 gender equality coordinators has been established across state administration bodies, local self-government units, healthcare institutions, social welfare centres, courts and prosecution offices.

6. A major step forward was achieved through the adoption of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2025–2029, accompanied by the Action Plan for 2025–2026.¹

7. The Strategy serves as the overarching policy framework for advancing gender equality and is aligned with the CEDAW Convention, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Istanbul Convention and the European Union acquis.

8. The Strategy defines measures aimed at improving the status of women in the areas of political participation, economic empowerment, education, health, protection from gender-based violence, gender-responsive budgeting, media and the digital environment. Particular attention is given to women exposed to multiple and intersectional discrimination, including women with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian women, women living in rural areas, older women and members of the LGBTI community.

¹ <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/4e791e04-f143-4db4-ad37-ca9dbb1ec4c>.

9. A Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy has been established, while indicators, responsible institutions, implementation deadlines and funding sources have been clearly defined.
10. Further institutional progress has been achieved through the preparation of the new Law on Gender Equality. On 29 May 2026, the Government of Montenegro adopted the Draft Law on Gender Equality and submitted it to the Parliament of Montenegro for consideration.
11. The Draft Law represents a comprehensive reform of the existing legal framework and is aligned with CEDAW Convention, the European Union acquis, recommendations of the European Commission and the Istanbul Convention.
12. In order to address long-standing challenges in the field of gender equality, particularly limited institutional capacities, the lack of specialised expertise, uneven implementation of standards and insufficient accountability mechanisms, the Draft Law envisages the establishment of a Gender Equality Agency as a specialised institution supporting the implementation of gender equality policies.
13. The Agency will play a key role in monitoring and analysing the state of gender equality, coordinating policy implementation, providing professional and methodological support to institutions, developing standards and training programmes, coordinating the network of gender equality officers, and promoting the integration of a gender perspective into public policies at both national and local levels.
14. Furthermore, the Draft Law introduces the mandatory appointment of gender equality officers within public authorities, mandatory gender impact assessments of legislation and public policies, gender-responsive budgeting, an improved system for collecting and using sex-disaggregated data, temporary special measures aimed at achieving substantive equality between women and men, and accountability mechanisms for failure to comply with legal obligations.
15. These measures directly respond to the Committee's recommendations regarding the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender equality, improved policy coordination and the establishment of sustainable institutional capacities for the implementation of the Convention.
16. Montenegro considers that significant progress has been achieved in implementing this recommendation, while its full implementation will be further enhanced following the adoption and implementation of the new Law on Gender Equality.

B. Information relating to paragraph 26 (b)

17. Montenegro has initiated the process of amending the Criminal Code with the aim of introducing femicide as a distinct criminal offence. The proposed amendments seek to ensure adequate legal recognition, qualification and sanctioning of killings of women motivated by gender-based discrimination, unequal power relations and other forms of violence against women.
18. The introduction of femicide as a separate criminal offence will contribute to more effective action by courts and prosecution services, stricter punishment of perpetrators, a better understanding of the root causes of such crimes and more accurate statistical monitoring of gender-related killings of women. This will strengthen the prevention of violence against women and enhance confidence in the justice system.

19. The proposed legal solutions are aligned with the Istanbul Convention, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women and Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The criminalisation of femicide has also been recognised as an important component of Montenegro's European Union accession process, particularly within efforts to strengthen the protection of women against gender-based violence.

20. The draft amendments to the Criminal Code are currently undergoing the process of alignment with the European Commission.

21. Although the legislative procedure has not yet been completed, Montenegro considers that concrete and significant steps have been taken towards the full implementation of this recommendation.

22. Montenegro expects that the adoption of the amendments to the Criminal Code will establish a comprehensive legal framework for the recognition and prosecution of femicide in accordance with international and European standards.

C. Information relating to paragraph 30 (a)

23. Significant progress has been achieved in implementing this recommendation through the amendments to the Law on the Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament, adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro on 29 July 2025.

24. Through amendments to Article 39a of the Law, the minimum representation of the underrepresented sex on electoral lists was increased from 30% to 40% (Article 39a, paragraph 1). In addition, Article 39a, paragraph 2 stipulates that at least one candidate of the underrepresented sex must be included among every three candidates on an electoral list.

25. These provisions have improved the position of women on electoral lists and increased their chances of being elected to representative bodies at both national and local levels. Furthermore, electoral lists that do not comply with the requirements set out in Article 39a cannot be officially registered. List submitters are required to rectify identified deficiencies within the legally prescribed deadline, thereby strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms.

26. The adopted solutions represent a significant improvement compared to the previous legal framework and constitute a direct response to recommendations issued by the CEDAW Committee, ODIHR and the Council of Europe.

27. Although the adopted model does not constitute a full zipper system requiring the strict alternation of women and men candidates on electoral lists, the increase of the quota to 40% and the introduction of candidate placement requirements represent an important step towards achieving gender parity in political representation.

28. Montenegro considers that this recommendation has been implemented to a large extent.

D. Information relating to paragraph 36 (b)

29. Although Montenegro has not yet adopted a dedicated national programme for providing free or affordable contraceptives, sexual and reproductive health has been recognised as an important priority within the National Gender Equality Strategy 2025–2029. The Strategy highlights the need to develop and implement programmes aimed at improving access to contraception, preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the risk of sexually transmitted infections.

30. Reproductive health counselling services formally exist within all primary healthcare centres in Montenegro and constitute an important mechanism for providing information, counselling and support in the areas of family planning and sexual and reproductive health. The scope of services varies among municipalities. In smaller healthcare centres, these services are often provided through the regular work of designated gynaecologists, while larger centres operate specialised counselling units and parenting schools. Pursuant to the Law on Health Care, healthcare centres are required to implement health promotion, disease prevention and women's healthcare measures through family planning services.

31. In addition, the strategic framework in the field of healthcare recognises counselling services as important centres for prevention and public education. The Health Development Strategy, as the overarching strategic document of the Ministry of Health, recognises their importance, while the Strategy for the Preservation and Improvement of Reproductive and Sexual Health provides a specific framework for the development of preventive programmes, youth education, support for pregnant women and coordination of gynaecological services and counselling centres at the primary healthcare level.

32. Despite the absence of a dedicated national programme on accessible contraception, healthcare institutions continuously implement preventive measures related to the promotion of sexual and reproductive health. HPV vaccination in Montenegro began on 26 September 2022 and was expanded during 2023 and 2024 to include girls and boys from different age groups. Since 8 February 2024, HPV vaccination recommendations have covered girls and boys aged 9–14 as the primary target group, adolescents aged 15–18 as the secondary target group, while vaccination is also available to young women and men aged 19–26.

33. By the end of 2024, HPV vaccination coverage among girls in the final year of primary school reached 26.8%, compared to 6.7% among boys. Among students in the final year of secondary school, vaccination coverage reached 14.9% for girls and 6.6% for boys.

34. In addition, under the National Programme for Early Detection of Cervical Cancer, more than 13,000 women were invited to participate in screening during 2024, while more than 11,000 women underwent screening examinations. Of all screening tests performed, 13.86% yielded positive results across all age groups.

35. Montenegro recognises that this recommendation has not yet been fully implemented. However, important activities have been undertaken in the field of sexual and reproductive health. In the coming period, it will be necessary to strengthen intersectoral cooperation, particularly between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, in order to explore modalities for establishing a programme that would ensure greater availability of free or affordable contraceptives.

III. Conclusion

36. Montenegro has achieved significant progress in implementing the follow-up recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

37. The most substantial progress has been made in strengthening the institutional framework for gender equality and enhancing women's political participation. The adoption of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2025–2029 and the adoption by the Government of the Draft Law on Gender Equality represent key steps towards strengthening the protection and promotion of women's human rights.

38. At the same time, Montenegro continues its efforts to criminalise femicide and improve the availability of sexual and reproductive health services.

39. Progress overview:

- Recommendation 16(a) – Largely implemented;
- Recommendation 26(b) – In progress;
- Recommendation 30(a) – Largely implemented;
- Recommendation 36(b) – Partially implemented.

40. Montenegro remains committed to the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee's recommendations through continued legislative reforms, strengthening institutional capacities and advancing the status of women in all areas of social life.
