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The Director-General

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Secretary General

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP - *Tajikistan*

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

Tajikistan ranks the lowest among group of countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the international rankings assessing gender equality. In the Gender Inequality Index (GII) Tajikistan ranks 84th of 162 countries showing low ratings in adolescents birth, female seats in the parliament and low participation of women in labour force.¹ Compared to other countries in Central Asia, Tajikistan rates the lowest in GII ranking. In the World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap Index, Tajikistan ranks 137 of 153 countries showing particularly low ranking in economic empowerment and opportunity followed by political empowerment and educational attainment.²

Despite having a relatively good legal and policy framework on gender equality and its ratification of key international human rights treaties related to gender equality, women in Tajikistan still do not enjoy all the prescribed rights and state guarantees of gender equality on equal footing with men. In fact, the status of girls and women in the family, society, and public area is lowering, and current state efforts on empowerment of girls and women are not effective. As to significant achievements, some progress is evident in the representation of women in Parliament, the narrowing of gender disparities in education, and the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates. However, prevalent stereotypes about the roles of women and men, and traditional and religious beliefs about subordinated positions are deeply rooted in society and cut across the government, legislation and policies, thereby hindering such progress in Tajikistan in political, economic and social spheres. The analysis below is based on the Gender Country Profile (GCP) for Tajikistan which EU Delegation to Tajikistan commissioned in 2021 prior to drafting this CLIP. GCP was drafted based on review of secondary data and interviews with key actors, including civil society organisations working on gender equality and women's empowerment in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan has ratified several international human rights treaties relating to gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and numerous ILO Conventions. Current implementation of recommendations received through the UN human rights monitoring mechanisms is not linked to national policies and strategies on gender equality and elimination of violence against women. The Beijing Platform for Actions (BPfA) is not used effectively as a guiding document for drafting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating gender equality in all sectors in Tajikistan. Tajikistan faces significant challenges in achieving SDG 5.³ Legislation on gender equality has some discriminatory provisions and several critical gaps. Several targeted programmes were adopted: a National Strategy on the Advancement of the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021-2030; a State Programmes on Education, Selection and Appointment of Talented Women and Girls to Management Positions for 2017-2022; a State Programme on Prevention

¹ UNDP (2019), Human Development Report 2019 Briefing Note for Countries on the 2019 Human Development Report Tajikistan, p. 6, available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/TJK.pdf

² World Economic Forum (2020), Global Gender Gap Report 2020, p.329.

³ Sachs et al. (2020): The Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/TJK/indicators>

of Family Violence in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2014-2023. There is no comprehensive approach applying the intersectionality perspective and the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) inherent in SDGs. Tajikistan did not develop a strong mechanism to implement gender equality laws and policies across national development sectors. The Committee on Women's and Family Affairs (CWFA), a national gender machinery is understaffed and underfunded, and its status in the government hierarchy does not correspond to its expected role of implementation of gender equality policy in the coordinated manner.

Tajikistan is a male-dominated society. At the political level, Tajikistan shifted towards even more conservative understanding of the role of women when in 2009, the President adopted a Decree to rename the 8th of March - the International Women's Day - Mother's Day. Women are perceived as playing a role of mothers and within the families rather than as workers, leaders in public domain. Environment for the participation of women in decision-making is not conducive. Participation of women in the representative, executive and judicial branches of power has not reached even a 30 per cent representation of women. Against this background, the legislation of Tajikistan does not provide for temporary special measures to advance gender equality.⁴

Reliable national statistics on the prevalence of various forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) do not exist. GBV in Tajikistan, especially domestic violence, has deep-rooted structural causes of gender inequality and patriarchy. There is a high tolerance of GBV, especially domestic violence, in society, including among women. Not all forms of GBV are prohibited in Tajikistan. The response to GBV is weak in Tajikistan. Judges, police, lawyers, and prosecutors are not required to receive training on GBV, its prevention, and the protection of the survivors. There are very few state-funded services for victims of GBV, especially in rural and community levels. One of the most critical gaps in service provision is access to effective legal remedies.

Tajikistan has made significant progress in the reduction of maternal mortality, reaching 15.4 per 100,000 live births in 2019⁵ compared to 53 per 100,000 live births in 2000,⁶ with 99 per cent of births attended by qualified personnel.⁷ However, the birth rate of adolescents aged 15-19 has remained at seven per cent since 2012. The Health Code (2017), in Article 1, defines reproductive health and reproductive rights, with Chapter 13 explicitly dedicated to them. Education programs on a healthy lifestyle that were developed and piloted in some schools did not fully cover sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.⁸ In 2020, women made up 35.4 per cent of the estimated 14,565 People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Tajikistan, but in recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of women among new HIV cases, from 20.5 per cent in 2010 to 41.4 per cent in 2019.⁹

Women lag behind men the most is economic and social rights in Tajikistan. The low percentage of ownership of assets among women results in limited economic opportunities for women. Young women are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market. Unemployment affects women, especially young women, disproportionately. Women bear a high burden of unpaid care work, resulting in their low participation in the labour force and employment. Women's labour is concentrated in the sectors of agriculture, education and health.¹⁰ Some improvements were tracked in narrowing the gender wage gap. The shortage of affordable and quality childcare institutions, especially in rural areas, is one of the main impediments to improving the economic opportunities of women. Gender inequality at the school level remains persistent despite some improvements over the years. Professional education is male-

⁴ CEDAW Concluding observations 2018, CEDAW/C/TJK/CO/6, paragraphs 21 (b), (c); 32 (a).

⁵ Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan (forthcoming), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 26.

⁶ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2007), Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan, p. 29.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ketting, E and Ivanova, O (2018), Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia: State of the Art and Recent Developments, An Overview of 25 countries, p. 163.

⁹ UNDP (2020), Funding Request Form Allocation Period for 2020-2022, The Global Fund, p. 3.

¹⁰ Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan (2017), Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August 2016), p. 154.

dominated in Tajikistan with girls selecting traditional subjects of study like education, health and social care.

Tajikistan committed to implementing UN SCR 1325 and related WPS resolutions. It adopted two National Action Plans (NAPs): the NAP on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) No. 1325 and No. 2122 for 2014-2019, and the NAP on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions No. 1325 and No. 2242 for 2019-2022. Both NAPs do not fully reflect the content and approaches of the UN SCR on WPS. The main emphasis of the UN SCR on increased participation of women in decision-making, including through active participation of civil society, is not reflected in the NAP.

Climate change and environment, digitalisation is the area where sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis are hardly available. Women are at higher risk of the effects of climate change due to the gender inequality in Tajikistan. Women make up the majority of the labour force in agriculture, but they have limited knowledge about agriculture and farming, new technologies, new crops, fertilisers and their utilisation. In 2019, Tajikistan adopted a National Strategy of Climate Change Adaptation until 2030 which mainstreams gender.¹¹ Tajikistan has adopted a Concept of Digital Economy in the RT,¹² Concept of Electronic Government in the RT,¹³ and the State Programme on the Introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to General Educational Institutions of the RT for 2018-2022.¹⁴ These documents are gender-blind.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

EU Delegation (EUD) to Tajikistan was in the process of development of the MIP for 2021-2027 at the time of drafting of this CLIP. The current draft MIP for 2021-2027 is explicitly based on the national gender equality strategies and EU GAP III with gender-transformative approach to be used as one of the cross-cutting principles in implementation of the MIP. It has three priority areas: 1) inclusive green and digital economy; 2) human development (health and education); 3) natural resources management, efficiency and resilience. In addition to the MIP in the pipeline, EU Delegation to Tajikistan started new projects which are funded by MIP envelope from the previous period, particularly in the area of health and education and rural development, all contributing to implementation of the EU GAP III in the upcoming period. In addition to the MIP, EUD to Tajikistan oversees national implementation of the EU Regional Central Asian Programmes which also contribute to the implementation of the EU GAP III.

Complexity of the gender equality situation in Tajikistan prioritised the focus of the EUD to Tajikistan on supporting targeted interventions on gender equality and women's empowerment (gender marker 2) and policy dialogue on implementation of international commitments of Tajikistan on gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender mainstreaming to MIP priority areas, and, respectively programmes will be ensured through collection of sex-disaggregated data where such data is available and having gender equality as a significant objective (gender marker 1).

As to the EU Member states, only Germany and France have residential presence with Germany being in the phasing out stage of its bilateral technical assistance to Tajikistan. These EU MS along with like-minded donors - Switzerland and the UK - remain key partners of the EU in policy dialogue on gender equality and women's empowerment in Tajikistan.

The overall objective of the EU action in Tajikistan for gender equality and women's empowerment is to support implementation of international commitments of Tajikistan on gender equality and women's rights through engagement in policy dialogue with both the government and the

¹¹ Approved by the Resolution of the Government No. 482 on 2 October 2019.

¹² Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 642 on 30 December 2019.

¹³ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 643 on 30 December 2011.

¹⁴ Approved by the Resolution of the Government of Tajikistan No. 443 on 29 September 2017.

civil society, outreach and implementation of programmes targeting directly and indirectly strategic and practical needs of women.

The **selected areas** of engagement are:

- Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence;
- Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women;
- Promoting equal participation and leadership;
- Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation.

For each of these areas, the specific thematic objectives which will be pursued are:

- 1) **Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity are better protected from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online through legislation and effective enforcement:**
 - Spotlight Initiative (UN): outcome 1: legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards, on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices are in place and translated into plans; outcome 2: national and sub-national systems and institutions plan, fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including in other sectors.
- 2) **Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are agents of change regarding discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, and gender-drivers of conflict:**
 - Spotlight Initiative (UN): outcome 3: gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices.
- 3) **Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity, who experience sexual and gender-based violence have increased access to essential services and protection:**
 - Spotlight Initiative (UN): outcome 4: women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services, including for long term recovery from violence.
 - Protecting and Empowering women at risk during pandemic and post pandemic crisis in Khatlon, Sugd and Dushanbe (NGO “Korvoni Umed” in cooperation with two shelters under EIDHR CBSS): overall objective is to empower women at risk to be financially self-sustainable and to build the capacity/ involve local authorities and civil society leaders to fight domestic violence and gender based violence in Khatlon region, Sugd region, Dushanbe and RRS in 2021-2023. This will be achieved through operation of women’s shelter in 3 regions of Tajikistan, improvement of women’s socio-economic livelihood conditions and capacity building and awareness raising among youth, local authorities, law enforcement bodies and society.
 - Supporting and Strengthening the Women's Resource Centres in Tajikistan (OSCE under EIDHR CBSS): the main objective is to support the Government of Tajikistan in assisting victims of domestic violence and trafficking (with a focus on rural and disabled women) by providing free psycho-social and legal aid through four Women Resource Centres (WRCs) in Sughd, Khatlon, Rasht and GBAO regions (within a wide OSCE supported network of WRCs spread across Tajikistan), and empowering them to become financially independent by developing their entrepreneurship skills through vocational courses.
- 4) **Women’s rights organisations, social movements and other civil society organisations are influential in ending gender-based violence:**
 - Spotlight Initiative (UN): outcome 6: women’s rights groups, autonomous social movements and relevant CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalisation, more effectively influence and advance progress on gender equality and women’s empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.

- 5) **Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of gender-based violence and harmful practices are increasingly collected and used to inform laws, policies and programmes.**
 - Spotlight Initiative (UN): outcome 5: quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes.
- 6) **Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, and alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy:**
 - Integrated rural development project (GIZ): overall goal is to improve livelihoods in rural areas and develop value chains. All the targets are sex-disaggregated and the project aims for 50% women beneficiaries. One of the components is gender-specific and focused on women's empowerment through entrepreneurship, training women and supporting start-ups, including supporting them in development of business plan and providing them with small grants to implement them.
 - Enhanced competitiveness of Tajik Agribusiness Project (with EBRD): overall objective is to develop Tajik agri-food value chains, increase the competitiveness of agri-food enterprises and improve their quality and product marketing. The project has a target to reach 30 per cent of beneficiaries women.
 - Reviving Uzbekistan and Tajikistan's sustainable Ikat and Silk (RUTSIS) SWITCH-Asia and Central Asia II - Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production- Programme (Adelphi Germany): the overall objective is to contribute the promotion of sustainable growth along the Great Silk Road in Central Asia through revival and upgrading of local silk and IKAT value chains, thereby integrating sustainable consumption and production (SCP) approaches and linking the local value chains to the international markets by emphasising traditional and sustainability aspects, by means of a corresponding sustainable IKAT branding. The value chains targeted are run by women in Tajikistan and women are main beneficiaries of this initiative.
 - Regional Integration and Capacity Building to Boost Agribusiness MSMEs Competitiveness and Trade Promotion in Central Asia - CANDY V (Hilswerk Austria): the action seeks to contribute to the growth of agribusiness MSMEs in CA countries (except Turkmenistan), thus fostering the integration of CA countries in the global trade. As a result of the project at least 50 business intermediary organisations (BIOs) in CA countries are empowered to promote and sustainably support an enabling environment for 150 agribusiness MSMEs, focussing on the promotion of intra-regional and international trade through consolidation of capacities of BIOs and MSMEs, active in the agribusinesses, including food production, processing and export in line with commercial quality standards, food safety and traceability, product promotion, clustering and interaction of business and education/research, and knowledge management. Key food production covered are dried fruits, melons, onions. Majority of labour force in agriculture is women in Tajikistan.
 - Promoting Access to Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights to Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners in Tajikistan (DVV International under EIDHR CBSS): the project has the special focus on female prisoners and ex-prisoners to empower them before and upon release by providing trainings on vocational skills, personal growth, entrepreneurship, project design and consultations for social reintegration.
- 7) **Reduction in gender disparities in enrolment and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys:**
 - Quality Education Support Programme II (UNESCO, UNICEF, KfW and TA working with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment): the programme has several components targeting general education, vocational education and training, employment policies with focus on youth (pupils and students), including vulnerable groups (poor, disabilities, rural areas, low income, children of migrant families, NEETs); curricula for STEM subjects, participation in international assessment PISA and

ICT and development of models of financing for VET and higher education. One of the components targets schools' building and rehabilitation with special focus on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). This programme applies gender mainstreaming approach through collection of sex-disaggregated data; reaching gender targets; gender-responsiveness of training and education materials that will be developed; gender analysis in planned surveys and studies (e.g. LFS, school-to-work transition survey; tracer studies).

8) Improved access to safe water and sanitation facilities:

- Integration of principle of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) in the water sector reform in Tajikistan. This programme targets drinking and irrigation water at policy and community levels.

9) Public health systems have sufficient and sustained financing to address the health needs of women and girls in all their diversity:

- Health development programme (GIZ, WHO, UNICEF): the overall goal is to support health system towards universal health coverage with focus on primary health care. The programme targets policy level, health care governance and financing; strengthening primary health care; strengthening infection prevention and control. The infection prevention and control direction will be focusing on maternity, neonatal, paediatric and surgical wards as infections tend to be highest in these areas of secondary health care.

10) Women and girls, in all their diversity, have improved access to justice to safeguard their civil and political rights:

- Support to Civil Registry System Reform in Tajikistan (UNDP): the overall objective is to improve accessibility of basic public services for all rights holders. The project will, among other tasks, support gender equality and women's empowerment by aiming to remove some of the many financial, cultural, and legal barriers women and girls face in experiencing the benefits and protections of civil registration. As a result, women's access to education, health, formal labour market and social protection will be improved.

11) Women, men, girls and boys are equally provided with and using equally public digital literacy.

- IDEA Generation Project: Inclusive Digital Empowerment and Awareness for Tajik Next Generation (Good Neighbourhood through CSO-LA): the main objective is to foster civic engagement of youth, including young women and girls, with the public sector through a dedicated digital platform and create employment opportunities in IT through training and career-oriented empowerment. The participation of young women and girls in the project activities is promoted through the support of ICT materials, while advocacy on gender equality is performed throughout the Action.

As to cooperation with the EU actors, EUD will implement the above-mentioned objectives with EBRD, KfW, GIZ and EU international organisations (ETF, Hilswerk and others).

Civil society engagement roadmap is being developed. However, in drafting of MIP, consultations with civil society organisation were conducted including women's NGOs. Women's NGOs, women human rights defenders and informal networks working on gender equality and women's empowerment were consulted in drafting of GCP and identification of entry points for policy dialogue, coordination and targeted interventions on gender equality.

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

In Tajikistan, the focus of the EUD is on gender-based violence, respectively, contributing to the thematic area: ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence and its thematic objective "Women, men, girls and boys are free from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online". In addition to the national Spotlight Initiative, Tajikistan also benefits from the Regional Central Asia Spotlight Initiative. Majority of specific thematic objectives (1, 2, 3, 7, 8) under this area of engagement will be addressed through these two initiatives. National gender machinery – the Committee on Women's and Family Affairs – is one of the key partners responsible for implementation of Spotlight initiative. After the phasing out of the Project on Prevention of Domestic

Violence (PDV) funded by Switzerland in 2021, EU will remain the only donor funding the interventions on freedom from GBV in Tajikistan.

Through EIDHR and CSO-LA EU Delegation will continue to prioritise actions for targeted interventions on gender equality and women's rights with focus on vulnerable groups of women.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

EU engages extensively in the policy dialogue with Tajikistan and gender equality issues will be addressed at all levels of policy dialogue.

The gender equality and women's empowerment issues from perspective of international commitments are raised by the EU at the following forums of the policy dialogues:

- Cooperation Council between Tajikistan and the EU, yearly, at the ministerial level;
- Cooperation Committee between Tajikistan and the EU, yearly, at the level of senior officials;
- Human Rights Dialogue; yearly, senior officials from variety of Ministries and State bodies, including Ombudsman and specialised thematic committees
- Bilateral meetings between EU officials and officials of the Government of Tajikistan;
- Bilateral meetings between EU Ambassador and Ministers, sometimes in EU HoMs or like-minded formats.
- High level visits of EU and MS officials (EUSR for Central Asia, EU officials, MS delegations).

In 2021, EU has adopted a new Human Rights Strategy for years 2021-2025. Human Rights Strategy outlines five strategic thematic areas of engagement, with gender equality and women's empowerment as one of these key areas. In the annual Human Rights Dialogues, gender equality and women's empowerment is included as a specific agenda item. Prior to Human Rights Dialogues, EU conducts consultations with CSO, including with women's NGOs. Priority topics that EU will address: criminalisation of domestic violence; women's empowerment through access to education and decent work and other issues based on consultation with the CSOs.

Tajikistan expressed the will to negotiate an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) and become a member of the GSP Plus scheme. Both opportunities will be used to advance compliance of Tajikistan with international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. For the GSP Plus, EUD developed a list of possible deliverables in a non-paper format and included criminalisation of domestic violence as one of the possible deliverables. Besides, the process of GSP Plus accession will be used for careful screening of labour rights, including equality and non-discrimination.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

In the last few years, EUD has become a leader among the diplomatic missions in pushing the topic of gender equality and women empowerment into the public communication space. Whilst the public diplomacy plan is drafted by the EUD on the annual basis, several activities are conducted on recurrent basis:

- Supporting the 16 days campaign against gender-based violence, including launching the tradition of lighting of EU delegation building in orange during the 16 days – joined gradually by increasing number of Embassies and international organisations. It is expected that Tajik government will also join as of this year. Organising a football tournament for girls teams with high public visibility (last edition supported by 16 Embassies and the Tajik football federation) to draw attention to gender equality

- Civil society seminars drawing attention to thematic issues and proposing concrete recommendations for action Gender equality and empowerment of women repeatedly figure in national and regional civil society seminars/fora.
- International women's day activities – support to “Forum I” - a festive motivational platform for sharing of experience and women's empowerment and networking
- Social media outreach – engagement with influencers, organisation of thematic challenges (for ex. “Break the stereotypes”), competitions and other forms of communication outreach on gender equality topics.
- Print media and radio campaigns on thematic issues (for ex. an insert on success stories and positive impact of EU cooperation projects on life of Tajik women).
- Featuring the EU Ambassador as a positive role model for women and girls, as well as Child rights Ambassador (with UNICEF).

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

Under item 3.2 *Cooperation Facility* of the MIP EUR 1,82 million have been set aside for a number of support measures, among them also support to the implementation of GAP III at country level (technical assistance for Gender sector analyses, gender mainstreaming, trainings). No specific amount, however, has been earmarked for the aforementioned activities. Gender will be mainstreamed in the future CSO-LA and EIDHR projects.

Has any other specific allocation and/or technical assistance been earmarked under specific programmes by the EU and /or Member States in order to facilitate gender mainstreaming?

GIZ under the EU co-financed Integrated Rural Development Project/TRIGGER has carried out a gender analysis to prepare the efforts towards promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, particularly focussing on women in agriculture and entrepreneurs as well as gender aspects when it comes to access to water resources and water management. IRDP/TRIGGER aims for 50% women beneficiaries.

Date: 09/08/2021

Signature by Head of Delegation: 