

# WHERE ARE THE WOMEN? GENDER EQUALITY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

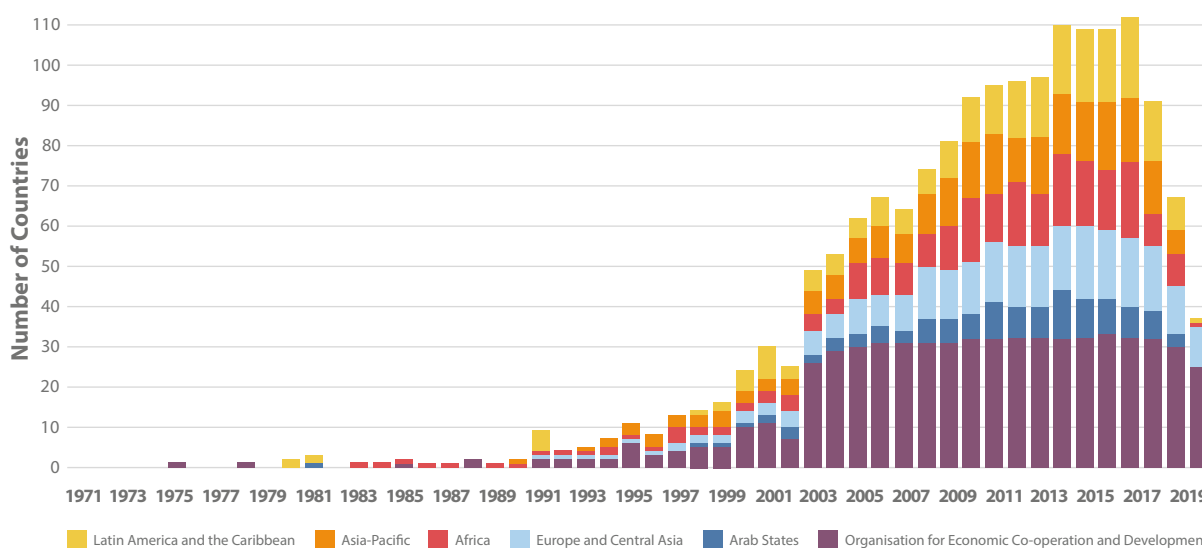


**G**ender equality in public administration has improved in recent years, but there is still a long way to go. Women’s participation in the civil service approaches parity with 46 percent on average across 139 countries and territories.<sup>1</sup> Yet, significant variation across countries and regions means that only one-third (33 percent) of countries have reached this goal. At decision-making levels of the civil service, women make up only 31 percent of top leadership positions on average. Women are also largely missing from COVID-19 policy decision-making spaces. Even though women make up 58 percent of employees in health ministries worldwide,<sup>2</sup> they average just 24 percent of COVID-19 task force positions and make up only 18 percent of task force leadership.<sup>3</sup>

This report updates the data on women’s participation and leadership in public administration in Europe and Central Asia in the context of the COVID-19 response in the region. Consistent with global trends, women in Europe and Central Asia are underrepresented at all levels of public administration.

## Gender Equality in Public Administration in Europe and Central Asia<sup>4</sup>

**FIGURE 1**  
Availability of gender-disaggregated data on public administration employment between 1970 and 2020



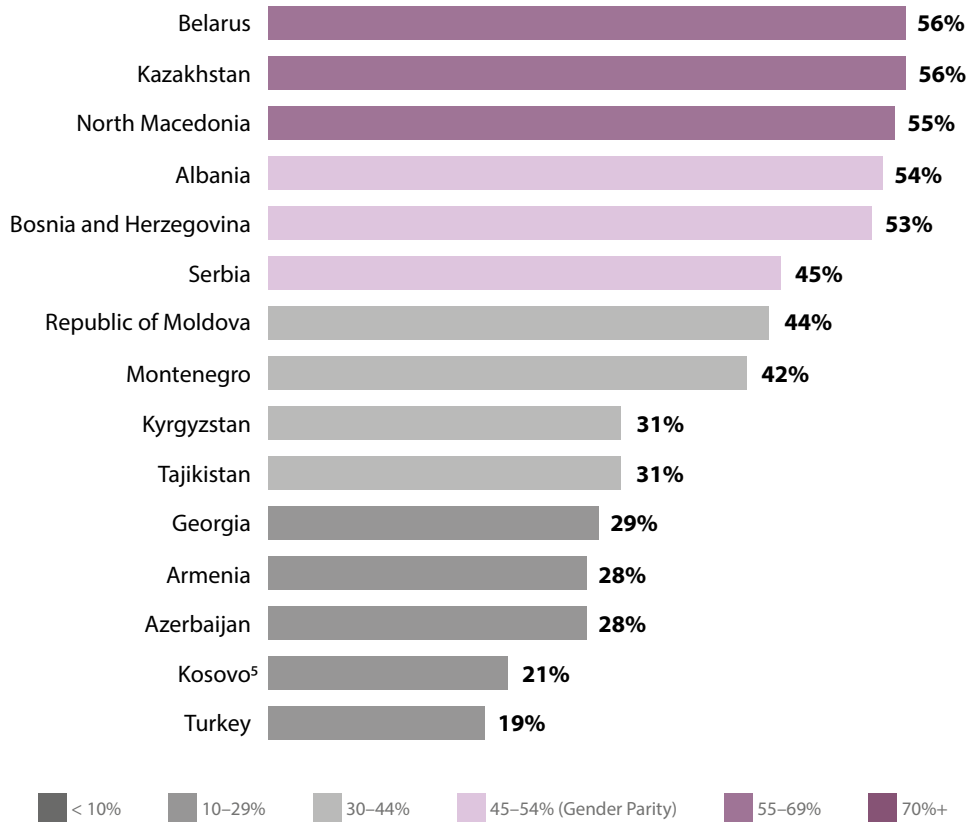
**Source:** Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) dataset, December 2020.

- Hughes, Melanie M., Müge Kökten Finkel, and Brianna Howell. 2021. "Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) Dataset."
- Ibid.
- UNDP-UN Women-UPITT COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Task Force Dataset. Living database, version 2 (November 11, 2021). Accessible at <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/>.
- Hughes, Melanie M., Müge Kökten Finkel, and Brianna Howell. 2021. "Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) Dataset."



The availability of gender-disaggregated data has improved over time in every region of the world, including in Europe and Central Asia. In this region, 16 countries and territories have gender-disaggregated data available on at least one dimension of public administration (see appendix). All 16 countries and territories have data available on overall employment and decision-making, and five have ministry-level data. Intersectional data remains a large gap in the region: data on age is available for only four countries and territories, disability in only three countries and territories, and race/ethnicity only in North Macedonia.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Percentage of women’s participation across all levels of public administration**



Share of women public administrators in region	
Lowest share (Turkey)	19%
Average	40%
Highest share (Belarus and Kazakhstan)	56%

Number of countries in region	
Women underrepresented	9
At gender parity	3
Women overrepresented	3

**Note:** The graph indicates the overall share of women in public administration for countries in the region using the most recent year of data available. Data prior to 2015 are excluded.

**Source:** Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) dataset, December 2020.

<sup>5</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The designations employed and the presentation of material in this brief do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, UNDP, UN Women, or the University of Pittsburgh concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

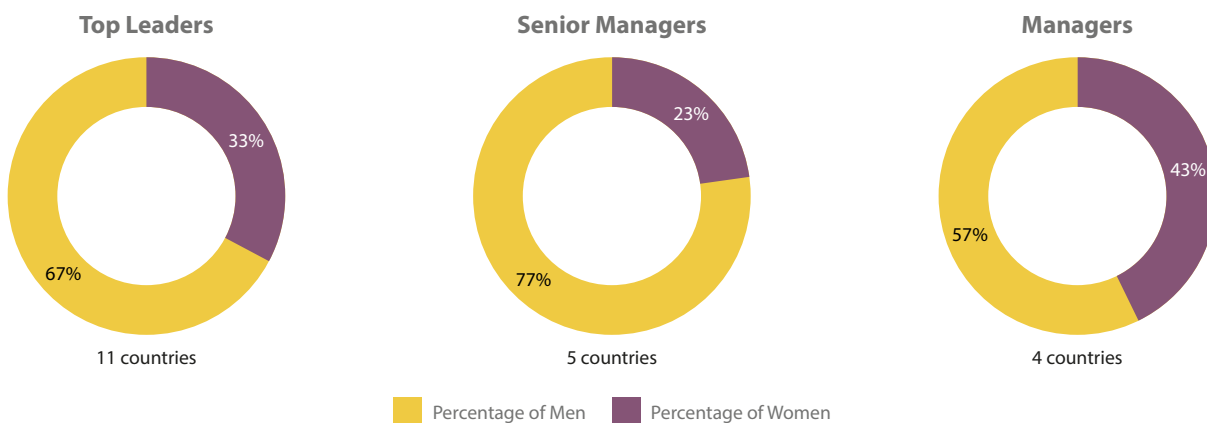


## Women's participation in public administration

In the 15 countries and territories in Europe and Central Asia with data from 2015 or later,<sup>6</sup> women account for 40 percent of civil servants, below the threshold of gender parity.<sup>7</sup> At the country level, three countries reach gender parity: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. Of these countries, only Albania has consistently reported gender equal employment. In fact, women's employment in public administration has not fallen below 54 percent in Albania since 2015. Three other countries surpass gender parity for women: Belarus, Kazakhstan, and North Macedonia. In Belarus and Kazakhstan, women have consistently made up over 56 percent of public administrators for all years of available data since 2015. At the same time, women's underrepresentation remains persistent during this same time period in the nine other countries and territories in the region with relevant data. Women are the most underrepresented in Turkey and Kosovo,<sup>8</sup> where they make up only 19 and 21 percent of public administrators, respectively.

## Women in public administration decision-making positions

**FIGURE 3**  
Share of women among public administration decision-making positions



**Note:** Data is displayed for most recent year available. Data prior to 2015 is excluded.

**Source:** Gender Parity in Civil Service (Gen-PaCS) dataset, December 2020.

Women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making in public administration in Europe and Central Asia. The region stands out for its relatively widespread reporting of gender-disaggregated public administration data at the highest levels of decision-making.<sup>9</sup> In top leadership positions, women make up only 33 percent of public administrators across 11 countries and territories with available data (see appendix). Women are overrepresented among top leaders only in Albania (55 percent) and reach parity only in Bosnia and Herzegovina (45 percent). Women are underrepresented at this level in all other countries with available data.

At lower levels of decision-making in public administration, this data is reported much less frequently. Across the five countries with available data, women make up only 23 percent of senior management positions in public administration and are underrepresented in all five countries, though they approach parity in Albania (43 percent)

<sup>6</sup> Countries with data from prior to 2015 were excluded from this analysis. One country in the appendix has data from 2008. Data points are calculated using the most recent year of data available. See appendix for more details.

<sup>7</sup> Parity is defined as an equal number of men and women, however small deviations from 50 percent women and men are expected, in some cases simply because of an odd number of positions. This brief therefore considers parity to have been reached once there are 45 percent women, and women's overrepresentation begins at 55 percent.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 5

<sup>9</sup> This is largely thanks to the collection and reporting of decision-making public administration data by the European Institute of Gender Equality. <https://eige.europa.eu/>



and Belarus (44 percent). At the lowest level of decision-making measured, managers within the civil service, women make up 43 percent of members across only four countries with available data. Women reach parity in three of these four countries (Albania, Belarus, and Ukraine). Across all three levels, women are least represented in Turkey, where they make up only eight percent of top leaders and senior managers and 22 percent of managers.

## COVID-19 Leadership and Policy Response in Europe and Central Asia<sup>10</sup>

### Women's representation on national COVID-19 task forces<sup>11</sup>

COVID-19 task forces are any executive branch institution created by the national government in response to the pandemic. In Europe and Central Asia, there are 21 COVID-19 task forces in 16 countries with gender-disaggregated data, including 14 task forces with membership data and 20 task forces with leadership data. In the region, women's average participation in COVID-19 task forces stands at 19 percent and women lead just five of the 20 task forces. Overall, women are best represented in Turkey (43 percent) and Georgia (37 percent), but there are no task forces in the region that achieve gender parity. Further, there are three task forces made exclusively of men, in Armenia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. Consistent with global trends, women are better represented in public health task forces (27 percent) than in multi-sectoral task forces (18 percent). Women make up just 19 percent of both decision-making and expert task forces in the region.

### Gender sensitive COVID-19 policy response<sup>12</sup>

The UNDP/UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker identifies policy measures taken by governments in response to COVID-19 and analyzes them with a gender lens. In Europe and Central Asia, 465 measures have been identified across 18 countries and territories. Of these, 152 (33 percent) are gender sensitive and there has been at least one gender-sensitive measure registered in every country in the region. In total, 91 measures tackle violence against women (17 countries/territories), 41 address women's economic security (16 countries/territories), and only 20 measures (13 countries/territories) focus on unpaid care work. Notably, 11 countries and territories in the region have a holistic gender-sensitive response to the pandemic with at least one measure across each of these three dimensions: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Kosovo.<sup>13</sup>

### Piloting the Gender Equality Seal Award for Public Institutions in the Republic of Moldova<sup>14</sup>

In 2016, UNDP in Moldova worked with six Local Public Administrations (LPAs) to adapt the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions to local contexts. The initiative supported the National Strategy on Ensuring Equality between Women and Men (2017-2021). The LPAs promoted institutional change in public administration by updating important human resource policies to make them gender-sensitive. They also developed draft budgets for 2019 and mid-term projections for 2020-2021, which included allocations (two percent of the salary fund) for continuous staff professional development, including on gender equality. Furthermore, the participating LPAs have prioritized gender mainstreaming in their local development strategies and supported the creation of Gender Focal Teams. The LPAs all received diplomas from UNDP in recognition of their efforts to achieve transformational gender equality.

<sup>10</sup> For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 task forces and policy responses, visit <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/>.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP-UN Women-UPITT. 2021. "COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Task Force Dataset." Living database, version 2 (November 11, 2021). Accessible at <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/>.

<sup>12</sup> UNDP-UN Women. 2021. "COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker Policy Measures Dataset." Living database, version 3 (November 11, 2021). Accessible at <https://data.undp.org/gendertacker/>.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 5.

<sup>14</sup> Finkel, Müge Kökten, Melanie M. Hughes, and Joanna Hill. 2021. *Gender Equality in Public Administration*. New York, NY: UNDP and University of Pittsburgh. <https://www.undp.org/publications/global-report-gender-equality-public-administration>.



## Appendix

### Women's participation in public administration in Europe and Central Asia<sup>15</sup>

Country or territory	Percentage of women in public administration overall	Decision-making positions		
		Top leaders (percent)	Senior managers (percent)	Managers (percent)
Albania	54 (2018)	55 (2018)	43 (2017)	49 (2017)
Armenia	28 (2018)	15 (2018)	-	-
Azerbaijan	28 (2018)	33 (2018)	13 (2018)	-
Belarus	56 (2017)	-	44 (2018)	50 (2018)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	53 (2015)	45 (2019)	-	-
Georgia	29 (2019)	32 (2015)	22 (2013)	22 (2013)
Kazakhstan	56 (2018)	-	-	-
Kosovo <sup>16</sup>	21 (2019)	21 (2019)	26 (2014)	-
Kyrgyzstan	31 (2018)	-	9 (2015)	-
Montenegro	42 (2018)	44 (2018)	-	-
North Macedonia	55 (2019)	44 (2018)	38 (2013)	-
Republic of Moldova	44 (2018)	37 (2014)	-	-
Serbia	45 (2019)	40 (2019)	27 (2014)	-
Tajikistan	31 (2018)	-	-	18 (2014)
Turkey	19 (2019)	8 (2018)	8 (2015)	22 (2015)
Ukraine	75 (2008)	29 (2015)	-	52 (2016)

## Acknowledgments

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<sup>15</sup> Table includes data for the most recent year available.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 5.