



Gender equality in public administration
Europe and Central Asia
Summary of progress on data availability (2017-2020)

Gender equality in public administration

Europe and Central Asia

Summary of progress on data availability (2017-2020)

UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub
September 2020

UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub has undertaken this regional research on gender equality in public administration (GEPA) as part of the UNDP GEPA global initiative in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. We thank Rebecca Holland, University of Pittsburgh research fellow with UNDP IRH, for her work on this update and are grateful to Muge Finkel and Melanie Hughes for their substantive review and guidance.

Copyright © 2020
United Nations Development Programme

Istanbul Regional Hub, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS

Cover Photo: UNDP Ukraine/Artem Getman, Improving access to quality administrative and social services for the conflict-affected population in Mykolaivka

Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
Discussion of data gaps.....	6
Intersectional data.....	6
Salary data.....	6
Subnational data.....	7
Potential factors driving data gaps.....	8
GEPA status in ECA: a regional summary.....	10
Total public administration employees.....	10
Decision-making level data.....	11
Ministry-level data.....	12
Recommendations to enhance GEPA data availability and quality.....	13

Introduction

Since the release of the UNDP [Global Report - Gender Equality in Public Administration \(GEPA\)](#) in 2014, a research team at the Gender Inequality Research Lab (GIRL) at the University of Pittsburgh has been tracking publicly available GEPA data collected by each country. Data presented here as of August 2020 include and build upon previous data tracking efforts in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, such as [Gender Equality in Public Administration: A snapshot of Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#) (2017).

This overview is three-pronged: first, it offers an update of the publicly available sex-disaggregated public administration data in the region; second, it focuses on gender parity in decision-making levels across different sectors of public administration; and third, it presents the gaps in sex-disaggregated data in public administration as a means to set the stage for [SDG 16.7.1b](#) reporting, which will be required of member states within the next calendar year.

Since the 2017 report and stock-taking exercise, there has been a notable increase in the availability and the quality of sex-disaggregated public administration data in the ECA region. The majority of countries and territories currently provide multiple years of sex-disaggregated decision-making level data, which allow for comparative analyses of where women are in their respective public administrations (i.e., glass ceilings) as well as sex-disaggregated data across different ministries, which allow for analyses of the policy areas and government sectors where women are better or worse represented (i.e., glass walls).

This update includes sex-disaggregated public administration data from all countries and territories in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo¹, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan². With the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, all countries and territories currently make sex-disaggregated public administration data publicly available.

Such progress notwithstanding, there remain concerns related to the quality of reported GEPA data across the countries and territories in the region. First, most countries and territories do not yet prioritize intersectional public administration data, i.e., sex-disaggregated data by education levels, disability status, ethnicity, age, salary levels. Only a handful of countries – Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey – report sex-disaggregated intersectional public administration data on one or more of these categories.

Moreover, sporadic reporting of intersectional sex-disaggregated public administration data in the region (i.e., some countries make education data available while others make disability data available, on irregular timing) makes it difficult to analyze the effects of intersecting inequalities on women's ability to access decision-making positions within their respective public administrations. It also hampers the efficiency of potential policy solutions as these solutions cannot comprehensively address intersectional discrimination women may face as

¹ Any references to Kosovo are made in the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

² Except for Bulgaria and Romania, all are programme countries for UNDP.

they seek public employment. Well-intentioned efforts to collect and report GEPA data may still continue to fall short of what is necessary to promote inclusive public administrations³.

A second challenge in the ECA region, which is also common to others, stems from the fact that countries and territories define public administrations differently. Public administration as a category includes different positions. Depending on the country/territory, public administration employees could include doctors, teachers, and/or military personnel, or may be limited to administrative employees in line ministries and specific government agencies.

Compounding this complexity, countries and territories in ECA (similar to some other regions) use different sources for sex-disaggregated public administration data, including data from labour force surveys, personnel management systems, and civil service censuses. In a handful of cases, reports from different agencies present discrepant data.

³ The Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, in comparison, report consistently more sex-disaggregated public administration data both at decision-making and ministry levels. A significant number of countries in the Asia-Pacific region also report intersectional data, with eight of them reporting at least three categories of intersectional data for multiple years. A handful of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Paraguay) report at least three different categories of intersectional data.

Discussion of data gaps

Since 2015, the availability of sex-disaggregated public administration data in ECA for total employees and decision makers across line ministries has improved. Most countries and territories have standardized reporting and publication of national overviews of sex-disaggregated statistics in the form of *Women and Men Reports*. This and the incorporation of the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE) data in the current GEPA database, built and maintained by the Gender Inequality Research Lab at the University of Pittsburgh, attest to the availability and accessibility of public administration data across the region.

This section of the overview highlights the implications of specific data gaps for the pursuit of inclusive and diverse development priorities in the region.

Intersectional data

Intersectional data enable the design and implementation of human resources policies that promote inclusive public administrations. Women are not a monolithic group and face different obstacles to employment both in the private and public sectors, shaped by age, ethnicity, levels of education, and disability status, among others. Intersectional data can help identify the sources of resistance to women's hiring and promotion to decision-making levels and promote gender equality in public administration.

Intersectional sex-disaggregated data in public administrations are generally missing in the ECA region. Across categories of age, ethnicity, and disability status, a handful of countries and territories in the region have a few years of sex-disaggregated data, which often predate 2017. Sex-disaggregated data by age are the most widely available type of intersectional data. Seven⁴ of the 20 countries and territories report at least two years of sex-disaggregated public administration data by age, with Moldova and North Macedonia reporting consistently since 2012. It is also promising to note that Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Kyrgyzstan report data that are collected recently, from 2015 to 2017.

Sex-disaggregated data by ethnicity and disability are rarer. Only Kosovo and North Macedonia report data by sex and ethnicity. Similarly, only Kosovo and Turkey report sex-disaggregated public administration data by disability status. Turkey's sex-disaggregated public administration data by disability status are most consistent and recent (from 2018 and 2019).

Salary data

Nine⁵ of the 20 countries and territories in the region report salary data for men and women employed in public administration ranging from one to four years. This is a noticeable improvement since the issue of the 2017 regional report, which identified only six⁶ countries as having sex-disaggregated salary data. When salary data are available, they are provided

⁴ Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, Moldova, and Serbia.

⁵ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Serbia.

⁶ Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, and Serbia.

at inconsistent time intervals. For example, Kyrgyzstan makes sex-disaggregated salary data available for years 2007, 2011 and 2015, Kazakhstan records for 2008, 2010-2012 and 2014, and Albania and Belarus for 2016 and 2018 respectively. Georgia, on the other hand, makes six years of data available between 2007-2012, but then stops reporting in 2012.

Subnational data

Nine⁷ countries and territories report sex-disaggregated public administration data at subnational levels of public administration. But similar to previous challenges with data, most of them only report two to four years of data and only do so for 2017 or before. Kazakhstan remains an exception with its record of annual data for 10 years at subnational level.

⁷ Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Potential factors driving data gaps

A significant complication for the collection and reporting on sex-disaggregated public administration data in the region stems from the definition of public administration employees. Multiple sources of definitions could complicate who is included and hence counted among public administration, and the inclusion of different sectors of public administration in different countries and territories makes comparisons difficult.

For example, in Albania, the numbers of public administration employees vary by source. The ILO collects data on public administration, defence, and social security, and in 2018 it reported that 67,100 people worked in these three sectors, 30 percent of them women. However, the National Women and Men Report⁸ tracks public administration, community, social services, and other activities as the public administration category, and in 2018 it reported that 212,295 people worked in these sectors, 54 percent of them women. With these two definitions at hand, it becomes difficult to assess gender parity in Albania's public administration.

A second difficulty arises from the use of the [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#)'s regional database for sex-disaggregated public administration data tracking. This autonomous body of the European Union collects national-level administrative data from each country and territory as it aims to support EU member states', candidates', and potential candidates' progress towards gender equality.

As concerns decision-making level data, EIGE reports on [Women and men in decision-making](#), including public administration. EIGE data include top two tiers of administrators in national administrations by function of government: Level 1: "all administrative (non-political) positions from the head of the ministry down to the level of head of directorate or similar, where a directorate is a major section within the ministry", and Level 2: "all positions below the head of directorate down to the level of head of division/department, where a division/department is the first level of organization below the directorate (i.e. the second level of functional organization)."

EIGE also categorizes ministries into four functions: Basic, Economic, Infrastructure, and Socio-Cultural (BEIS) in an effort to allow for standardized definitions of public administration and decision-makers in the region.

Nine⁹ countries and territories report data directly to EIGE, while the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) undertake a similar data-reporting effort using EIGE's know-how¹⁰.

An additional set of problems arises from countries and territories reporting to EIGE.

⁸ [Women and Men in Albania](#), [Women and Men in Azerbaijan](#), [Women and Men in Belarus](#), [Women and Men in Georgia](#), [Women and Men in Kazakhstan](#), [Women and Men in Kosovo](#), [Men and Women in Kyrgyzstan](#), [Women and Men in Moldova](#), [Women and Men in Montenegro](#), and [Men and Women in Tajikistan](#) [accessed June 2020].

⁹ Bulgaria, Romania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

¹⁰ [Women in Power and Decision Making in Eastern Partnership Countries](#).

First, to enable comparisons across the region, all countries and territories would need to report to EIGE or replicate its methodology. For those that do not follow EIGE's methodology, definitions of decision-making are often wider, including a much broader cross-section of public administration decision-makers.

Second, EIGE's ministry-level data do not include numbers of overall public administration employees. This makes it impossible to know whether women's share of leadership positions in a ministry is proportional to their representation in the ministry as a whole.

Third, EIGE's measure of decision-making focuses only on the top leadership positions, so it is impossible to know whether women are serving in lower and middle levels of decision-making within public administration. Without gender equality data at multiple levels of decision-making, it is difficult to locate leaks in the leadership pipeline.

Overall, the problems caused by reporting from multiple national sources as well as the use of EIGE data continue to present difficulties for comprehensive and systematic GEPA efforts since 2014. While there has been some progress in standardizing the definition of decision-making levels, GEPA data in the ECA region therefore have limited comparability within and across the countries and territories.

GEPA status in ECA: a regional summary

Total public administration employees

Eighteen countries and territories out of 20 in the ECA region report sex-disaggregated data on total public administration employees (Table 1). However, the number of years for which a country/territory makes total public administration employee numbers available ranges widely, from between a single year of data in Ukraine to 26 years of data in Romania. The overall percentage of women working in public administration also varies widely across the region. Four¹¹ countries and territories have not yet reached the threshold of 30 percent of women in public administration, reaffirmed in the [Beijing Platform for Action \(1995\)](#), while 14 countries¹² have surpassed it. Notably, Tajikistan has increased the percentage of women in public administration from 22 percent in 2014 to 31 percent in 2018. In six¹³ of the 14 countries, the representation of women in public administration exceeded 50 percent as of 2018.

Table 1: Total employees in public administration

Country/Territory	Percent of men	Percent of women
Under 30% women		
Turkey (2019)	81%	19%
Kosovo (2019)	79%	21%
Armenia (2018)	73%	27%
Azerbaijan (2018)	72%	28%
Between 30%-49% women		
North Macedonia (2019)	71%	*29%
Georgia (2019)	71%	*29%
Kyrgyzstan (2018)	70%	30%
Tajikistan (2018)	69%	31%
Albania (2019)	68%	32%
Montenegro (2018)	59%	41%
Moldova (2018)	57%	43%
Serbia (2019)	54%	46%
50%+ women		
Bulgaria (2018)	49%	51%
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015)	48%	52%
Kazakhstan (2018)	45%	55%
Belarus (2017)	44%	56%
Romania (2018)	42%	58%
Ukraine (2008)	25%	75%

* These countries were in the range of 27%-32% between 2015-2019.

¹¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kosovo, and Turkey.

¹² Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

¹³ Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Romania, and Ukraine.

Decision-making level data

Seventeen countries provide sex-disaggregated data in decision-making levels across their respective public administrations (Table 2). Five¹⁴ of them only report EIGE's decision-making data, while 12 countries report decision-making data from their own national sources. Seven¹⁵ record less than 30 percent women in leadership positions, a target endorsed by the [United Nations Economic and Social Council](#) (1990) and reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

Ten¹⁶ countries have reached the goal of 30 percent of leadership positions held by women, with four¹⁷ of them exceeding parity. However, in Belarus, while national sources report parity in decision-making, the EIGE data report that only 30 percent of decision-makers are women. This discrepancy stems from the fact that the EIGE data capture only the highest levels of decision-making, while national data presumably include women in lower levels of management.

Since 2017, there has been a considerable increase in the availability of sex-disaggregated decision-making data in the region. Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine have made decision-making data available. Both Georgia and Serbia have now surpassed the 30 percent threshold for women's representation in leadership positions: Georgia reported 36 percent and Serbia 39 percent in 2019.

Table 2: Decision-makers in public administration

Country/Territory	Percent of men	Percent of women
Under 30% women		
Kyrgyzstan (2015)	91%	9%
Kazakhstan (2009)	91%	9%
Azerbaijan (2018)	90%	10%
Armenia (2018)	85%	15%
Moldova (2011)	84%	16%
Turkey (2019)	83%	17%
Kosovo (2019)	80%	20%
Between 30%-49% women		
Georgia (2019)	64%	36%
Serbia (2019)	61%	39%
North Macedonia (2019)	58%	42%
Albania (2019)	56%	44%
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019)	54%	46%
Montenegro (2019)	54%	46%
50%+ women		
Belarus (2017)	50%	50%
Ukraine (2008)	48%	52%
Romania (2018)	47%	53%
Bulgaria (2019)	46%	54%

¹⁴ Bulgaria, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia.

¹⁵ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkey.

¹⁶ Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine.

¹⁷ Belarus, Bulgaria, Romania, and Ukraine.

Ministry-level data

Ministry-level data are sometimes reported by ministry, enabling assessment of the ministries/areas of policymaking where women are represented better ('feminized' sectors). For countries and territories that report to EIGE, ministries are aggregated into four categories – Basic Functions, Economic, Infrastructure and Socio-Cultural – which enable cross-country comparisons. Fifteen out of 18 countries and territories report some form of sex-disaggregated data at the ministry level. Seven¹⁸ only report EIGE ministry-level data, while eight¹⁹ report ministry-level data from their own national sources.

Existing ministry-level data reveal substantial variation in women's inclusion across public administration sectors. All but two countries, Armenia and Montenegro, report having higher percentages of men than women in Basic Functions ministries, which include Defence, Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Internal Affairs. Similarly, in all but two countries – Bulgaria and Montenegro – men also outnumber women as a percentage of total employees in Infrastructure ministries. This category of ministries includes Transport, Energy, Environment, and Infrastructure.

However, women are not outnumbered by men across all ministry types. Indeed, more women than men are in Economic ministries in six ECA countries: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. This category of ministries tends to include Finance, Agriculture, and Economy. Women are also consistently represented at a higher percentage in decision-making as well as a percentage of total employees in Socio-Cultural ministries. These ministries include Health, Education, Youth, and Culture.

The exceptions to this trend are Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine, where men outnumber women in the Socio-Cultural ministries. In Serbia, between 2014 and 2018, women outnumbered men in top leadership positions in Economic ministries.

In Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine, on the other hand, women are generally underrepresented across all ministry categories. Tajikistan alone reports the total number of employees in each ministry, while Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine report the number of decision-makers.

Sex-disaggregated data from Socio-Cultural ministries, in particular, can shed light on the benefits of including women in high-level decision-making, particularly during the public health crisis arising from COVID-19. Armenia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan report two or more years of sex-disaggregated data from Ministries of Health. Moldova and Montenegro also each report one year of data on women in decision-making positions in the Health and other relevant ministries. Ministry-level sex-disaggregated public administration data are essential to understand and evaluate the extent and the effect of women's participation in decision-making levels in COVID-19 response bodies across the ECA region.

¹⁸ Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

¹⁹ Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, and Tajikistan.

Recommendations to enhance GEPA data availability and quality

To increase the availability and quality of GEPA data, and thereby their utility in informing policymaking, countries and territories in ECA should:

- Promote systematic collection and reporting of intersectional sex-disaggregated public administration data: **all countries and territories**
- Continue to regularize and standardize existing efforts to collect and report intersectional sex-disaggregated public administration data: **Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova and Turkey**
- Promote systematic decision-making and ministry-level data collection outside of EIGE data tracking: **all countries and territories**
- Continue to regularize and standardize currently sporadic reporting of sex-disaggregated salary data: **Georgia and Kyrgyzstan**
- Promote countries not currently included in EIGE to generate comparable statistics on decision makers: **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**
- Promote reporting at multiple levels of decision-making: frontline managers, middle managers, top leaders: **all countries and territories**