


Validated by:

~~/Ivan Portnih – Mayor of the Municipality of Varna/~~

Съгласно Зап. № K-055/01.08.22

Plan of the Municipality of Varna for Equality between Men and Women

Period 2022-2027

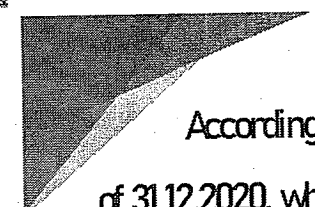


Varna is the third largest city in Bulgaria. The concentration of population and functions determine its role for the national development, since the big cities are the major promoters of growth and competitiveness, as well as transmission for an incremental diffusion of its development in the surrounding territory.

Varna fulfills various functions, which are supra-urban and prompted by its role within the European city system, the various axes of development and cooperation on an international scale, but also nationwide.

The impact of the city along a number of functions covers north central and northeast, and even southeast Bulgaria. Varna is the centre of a large agglomeration area. These parameters define Varna's major role within the national hierarchy of the urban network, as well as a stabilization point on the framework of the urban network through the triangle Sofia – Varna – Burgas and a counterbalance to Sofia to the east.

The Municipality of Varna is situated in the Northeast of Bulgaria and in the east of Varna Region. The regional and municipal centre – the city of Varna, stands 465 km away from the capital Sofia. To the east, the Municipality borders the Black Sea, to the north – the Municipality of Aksakovo, to the west – the Municipalities of Aksakovo and Beloslav, to the south – the Municipality of Avren. The city of Varna is the administrative centre of the Municipality of Varna and Varna Region, and centre of the Northeast Region from level 2 (within the meaning of the Regional Development Act).



According to the data of the National Statistical Institute (NSI), the population of the Municipality of Varna is 341 516 people as of 31.12.2020, where, for the period 2014-2019 there was an increase registered by approximately 0,11% (in absolute values from 344 775 to 345 151 people), or in average, by 53,7 people a year. That shows a stable trend, though minimal, of increase of the inhabitants of the Municipality. The distribution by gender of the population of the Municipality of Varna for the last completed statistical year of the NSI – 2020 shows that the females prevail with 51,8% compared to 48,2% for the males. In the beginning of the studied period (2014), this difference was lower: 51,43% (females) compared to 48,57% (males). That represents a diverging variation of 0,37% for the period 2014-2020. From a statistical point of view, it should be pointed out that for the period 2014-2020, in average, there were nearly one and a half times more women (661,42 per year) involved in the mechanical migration flow to/from the Municipality of Varna than men (442,7 per year).

Gender equality in research and innovations is considered priority of the European Research Area /ERA/ and of the framework programmes. The goal is to remove the barriers to recruiting, retaining and career development of female researchers, as well as to overcome the imbalance between the genders in decision making. This priority has been kept also in the European Commission's strategic documents for the new ERA. A Plan for Equality between Men and Women has been elaborated in this relation as one of the most important steps for reinforcing the gender equality policy within the policies and activities of the Municipality of Varna.

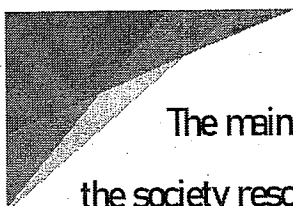
The principle of equal gender status is an integral part of the national legislation and of the regulations for the activities of the

Municipality of Varna

Legal framework

- Act for the Equality of Men and Women – State Gazette, 21 16.
- Act for the Protection against Discrimination – promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 86 of 30 September 2003, with latest amendment in the State Gazette, issue 7 of 19 January 2018.
- Act for the Protection against Domestic Violence – promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 27 of 29 March 2005, with latest amendment in the State Gazette, issue 101 of 27 December 2019.
- Regional Development Act – promulgated in the State Gazette, issue 50 of 30 May 2008, with latest amendment in the State Gazette, issue 21 of 13.03.2020.
- Ethical Code for the Employees at the Municipality of Varna – 2020.
- Labour Code
- Employment Encouragement Act

The Plan for Equality between Men and Women is a set of commitments and actions aimed at encouraging the equal gender status in an organization through institutional and cultural changes.



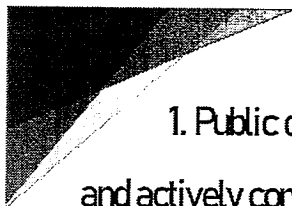
The main goal of the Plan for Equality between Men and Women is providing guarantees for equal treatment, equal access to the society resources and equal participation in decision making of the men and women in the Municipality of Varna in view of their successful personal and social realization, as well as fostering the equal status of the males and females in all fields of the social, economic and political living of the community.

The equal opportunities will be achieved also through enhancing the public sensitivity and intolerance to any cases of unequal treatment and discrimination on the basis of gender, or to any unfavourable, stereotypical or humiliating representation of women and men in the media.

In respect to its content, the Plan of the Municipality of Varna for Equality between Men and Women has been developed following the directions of the Guidance of the European Institute for Gender Equality for elaborating and implementing such plans /GEP/, published on the European Commission's website: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

GEP is a set of commitments and actions, which are aimed at encouraging gender equality in an organization through institutional and cultural changes. There are some core elements – “building blocks” – that have to be included in the elaboration of GEP.

In order to meet the eligibility criteria of Horizon Europe GEP, GEP should meet the four obligatory requirements related to the process:

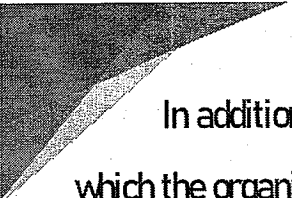


1. Public document: GEP should be an official document, published on a website of the institution, signed by the top management and actively communicated within the institution. It should demonstrate commitment to gender equality, clearly set goals and detailed actions and measures for achieving them

2. Specialized resources: GEP should have special resources and experience in gender equality for the plan implementation. The organizations should consider the type and amount of the required resources in order to maintain a continuous process of a sustainable organizational change.

3. Data gathering and monitoring: organizations should gather gender-disaggregated data about the personnel (and about the students for the relevant establishments) with annual reporting on the basis of indicators. The organizations should consider how to choose the most appropriate indicators, how to gather and analyze the data, including earmarked resources therefore, and it should be guaranteed that the data is published and monitored on an annual basis. These data should inform the goals and tasks of GEP, the indicators and the ongoing assessment of progress.

4. Training: GEP should include also activities for enhancing the awareness and training about gender equality. Those activities should involve the entire organization and should be evidence-based, in an ongoing and long-term process. The activities should comprise focused training on gender bias, targeted on the personnel and decision makers, while it can also include communication activities and gender equality training, which is concentrated on specific topics or addresses specific groups.



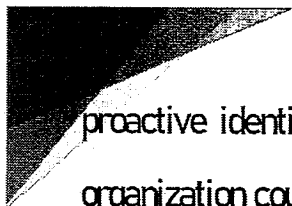
In addition to these four obligatory requirements, there are also five recommendable (thematic) fields related to the content, which the organizations may wish to explore in their GEPs:

1. Balance between professional and personal life and organizational culture: GEPs are aimed at encouraging gender equality through sustainable transformation of the organizational culture.

The organizations should apply the necessary policies in order to guarantee openness and inclusion of the work environment, the visibility of women in an organization and their external expression, as well as that women's contribution is properly appreciated. Policies and practices involving balance between professional and personal life could also be considered in GEP, including maternity and paternity leaves, policies and arrangements for flexible working time and support for care responsibilities.

2. Gender balance in leadership and decision making: Increasing the number and share of women on management and decision making positions concerning all the aspects in GEP. Measures to guarantee that women can assume and retain leadership positions, which may include the provision of targeted trainings to the decision makers, adapting the staff selection and recruitment processes in the commissions, ensuring gender balance through gender quotas and transparency in forming the selection commissions.

3. Gender equality in staff recruitment and career development: Critical review of the selection procedures and overcoming any partiality could guarantee that men and women will have equal opportunities for development and career growth. Creating behavior models for staff recruitment, which shall include members of the Committees on Gender Equality in Recruitment and Promotion, the

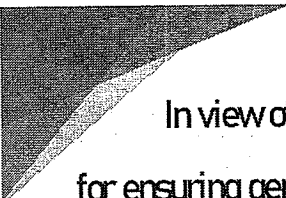


proactive identification of women in underrepresented areas and reviewing the models for planning work load throughout an organization could be an important measure, which can be explored in GEP.

4. Integrating the gender dimension in research and teaching content: it should be considered in GEP how to integrate gender and gender analysis into the research or educational results of an organization. That can determine an organization's commitment for integrating gender and gender analysis in its research priorities, the processes for guaranteeing that the gender dimension is taken into account in research and teaching, and the support and capacity provided to researchers for elaborating methodologies, which include gender analysis. Both the activities of financing research and carrying out research work have their role in providing that.

5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment: the organizations creating GEP should consider undertaking steps to guarantee that they have clear institutional policies concerning sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence. The policies should establish and codify the expected behavior of the employees, outlining how the members of an organization can report cases of gender-based violence and how such cases will be investigated and sanctions imposed.

The plan includes fulfillment of the three main goals of ERA about equality, i.e. overcoming the barriers for women's career development, managing the gender imbalance in the processes related to decision making and enhancing awareness on gender issues.



In view of the aforesaid, the present Plan of the Municipality of Varna for Equality between Men and Women includes activities for ensuring gender equality, diversity management and balancing the engagements at work and in the family.

The main strategic areas covered by the Plan of the Municipality of Varna for Equality between Men and Women are:

Area of intervention 1: Balance between professional and personal life

Area of intervention 2: Designing and encouraging institutional changes in favour of the equal status of men and women

Area of intervention 3: Data gathering and analysis

Area of intervention 4: Countering sexual harassment and gender-based violence

Area of intervention 5: Gender balance in leadership and decision making

Area of intervention 6: Gender-neutral (and/or gender-sensitive) language in institutional communication and dissemination

I. BALANCE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
1	Creating opportunities for a flexible working mode – physically present /Home office/ Remote work	Employees of the Municipality of Varna and the Municipal enterprises	2023	Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna Directorate "Human Resource Management and Administrative Services" (HRMAS) the Municipal enterprises

2	Studying the satisfaction with personal development and the balance between obligations and personal life	Employees of the Municipality of Varna and the Municipal enterprises	2024 – 2025	- Number of questioned employees - Number of discussions held	Directorate HRMAS, Directorate “Information and Administrative Service” (IAS)
3	Organizing trainings and providing guidance for achieving a balance between professional and personal life	Employees of the Municipality of Varna and the City District administrations	2025 – 2026	Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS, the City District administrations

II. DESIGNING AND ENCOURAGING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN FAVOUR OF THE EQUAL STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
1	Making the equal status of men and women an integral part of the municipal policies related to observing the professional ethics	Employees of the Municipality of Varna, the city district administrations	2022 - 2027	- Evidence for the integration	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS, the city district administrations
2	Conducting regular consultations between the employees under Art.7, par.2 of the Labour Code and the senior management of the Municipality of Varna on issues	Employees and senior management of the Municipality of Varna, the city	2022 - 2027	- Number of participants	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, the city district administrations

	related to equality between men and women	district administrations			
3	Supplementing / changing Municipal statutory documents concerning the equal rights of men and women	Senior management of the Municipality of Varna	2023 -2027	Revised statutory documents	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna
4	Conducting seminars on topics about gender equality	Employees of the Municipality of Varna, the city district administrations and the Municipal enterprises	2024 -2026	Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS, the city district administrations and the Municipal enterprises

III. DATA GATHERING / AND ANALYSIS

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
1	<p>Data gathering about the men/women ratio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees of the Municipality of Varna; - Employees in the City district administrations; - Employees in the Municipal enterprises. 	<p>Employees of the Municipality of Varna, the city district administrations and the Municipal enterprises</p>	21 23 - 2024	Number of involved employees	<p>Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS, the city district administrations and the Municipal enterprises</p>
2	<p>Analysis of the reasons for the absence from work – gender equality</p>	<p>Employees of the Municipality of Varna and the Municipal enterprises</p>	20 24 - 2025	Number of involved employees	<p>Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS</p>

3	Making an Analysis with the gathered information and bringing forward measures for the preparation of a plan for the next programming period	N/A	2027	Analysis made	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate "European and National Operational Programmes"
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IV. COUNTERING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
1	Gathering information about received complaints/ applications over the last 3 years regarding	Citizens and employees of the	2024 – 2025	Number of identified cases	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna

	violence based on gender differences	Municipality of Varna			
2	Organizing trainings and dissemination of information materials to provide guidance for countering violence based on gender differences	Employees of the Municipality of Varna, the Municipal enterprises and the City district administrations	2025 – 2026	- Number of involved employees - Number of conducted trainings or disseminated information materials	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate "Preventions", the Municipal enterprises and the City district administrations

V. GENDER BALANCE IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
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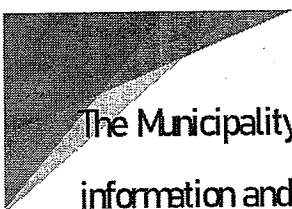
1	Obtaining information about the ratio in the management staff	Employees of the Municipality of Varna and the city district administrations	2023 – 2024	Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS, the city district administrations
2	Organizing trainings regarding the gender balance in leadership and decision making	Employees of the Municipality of Varna	2025 – 2026	- Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS

VI. GENDER-NEUTRAL (AND/OR GENDER-SENSITIVE) LANGUAGE IN INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Nb	Actions	Target group	Deadline	Indicators	Supervising authority
1	Identifying the employees who should join a training	Employees of the Municipality of Varna, the city district	2023 – 2024	Number of involved employees	Secretary of the Municipality of Varna, Directorate HRMAS,

		administrations and the Municipal enterprises			the city district administrations and the Municipal enterprises
2	Organizing trainings regarding the use of gender-neutral language in the communication with citizens and colleagues	Employees of the Municipality of Varna	2026 – 2027	-	Number of involved employees Secretary of the Municipality of Varna

The Municipality of Varna will offer its employees increasingly better opportunities for personal and career development through the activities envisaged in the Plan for Equality between Men and Women. The Municipality will prepare its employees for the new challenges, conducting trainings and seminars in view of improving their communication skills and competences. Recommendations for encouraging diversity and gender-sensitive communication culture will be offered within the framework of annual trainings, which will provide guidance how the equality of opportunities can be applied in the services for the citizens.



The Municipality of Varna will continue providing targeted support for gender projects in researches. On the basis of the gathered information and the Analysis made, it will bring forward the main problems related to gender equality and the relevant measures for overcoming them

In view of the requirements and upon validating the Plan, the latter will be published on the website of the Municipality of Varna, so that it could be available to all the employees and citizens. Its implementation will be reviewed on an annual basis, and a Report thereof will be drawn up and published.

The official who will exercise control over the implementation of the Plan for Equality between Men and Women is the Secretary of the Municipality of Varna / the Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Varna.