



## **Advocacy Card**

# **Addressing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EC Development Cooperation with Ukraine**

**International Gender Policy Network**

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## INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) has made commitments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment outside its borders. As stated in the "2006-2010 Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men", "Gender equality is a goal in itself, a human right and contributes to reducing poverty. The EU is a key player in international development efforts and adheres to internationally recognised principles such as the Millennium Development Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). It has reaffirmed gender equality as one of the five key principles of the development policy in the European Consensus on development."<sup>1</sup> Although the EU's different levels of commitment provide developing countries with opportunities to address gender inequalities on their domestic soil, challenges remain to bring these commitments into effect.

Civil society organizations point at the gap between policy and practice: an overview of the European Commission's annual work, legislative programmes and policy strategy documents reveals a limited integration of gender concerns.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and mainly women's groups in policy discussion and formulation lacks a clear mechanism, despite the obligation of EU institutions to support a political dialogue with them.<sup>3</sup> As an active promoter of gender equality, the International Gender Policy Network (IGPN) intends to engage in a dialogue with the Commission's Delegations in the countries of Eastern Europe, South-eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in the matter of the upcoming revision of the country and regional strategy documents (Country Strategy Papers, Regional Strategy Papers) due to take place in 2009. The IGPN has taken the opportunity of the midterm-review of the country/regional strategy documents to highlight the weaknesses of development cooperation in terms of gender concerns, and to advocate for improvements.

Within the framework of this advocacy activity, the IGPN has prepared twenty two Advocacy Cards for individual countries linked with IGPN, and one common Regional Advocacy Card. The aim of this advocacy work is to remind the European and national representatives of their policy commitments. The Advocacy Card for EC development cooperation with Ukraine firstly provides an overview of EU's commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. Secondly, the Country Strategy Paper for Ukraine is examined in the context of the EU's commitments to gender equality. Next, an assessment of major gender issues in Ukraine is presented. Finally, recommendations are proposed to the actors involved in various degrees in the preparation of the Country Strategy Paper: the EU officials, national government and civil society organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010, *European Community*, (COM 2006) 92 final, p. 9, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0092:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>2</sup> Who decides? Gender mapping the European Union's policy and decision-making in the areas of development, external relations and trade, *WIDE*, 2007, p. 10

<sup>3</sup> For more information see Chapter 2 in Who decides? Gender mapping the European Union's policy and decision-making in the areas of development, external relations and trade, *WIDE*, 2007

## COMMITMENTS TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- ❖ A commitment to gender equality is reflected in a number of politically and legally binding documents of the EU and EC (Treaty of Amsterdam, Maastricht Treaty, Charter for Fundamental Rights of the EU, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women [CEDAW], Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals).
- ❖ The promotion of gender equality outside the EU is outlined as the number 6 priority area of the **2006-2010 Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men** (Commissions' Communication). This priority is further detailed as follows: 6.1 Enforcement of EU legislation in acceding, candidate and potential candidate countries and 6.2 Promotion of gender equality in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), external and development policies. The key actions taken by the Commission will include monitoring and promoting gender mainstreaming and specific measures in the ENP, EU external relations and development policies, at policy dialogue and programming levels (Regional/Country Strategy Papers and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers); at implementation level, particular attention will be devoted to gender mainstreaming in the new aid modalities (budget support and sector programmes).
- ❖ In terms of the EU development cooperation policy, the crucial policy framework for promoting gender equality is the European Consensus on Development, agreed upon in 2005 by the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament, and the representatives of the member states, where gender equality is defined as a cross-cutting issue.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the **2007 Commission Communication on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation"** is the first step towards a coordinated European approach to promoting gender equality and empowering women through development cooperation.<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ Related to the 2007 Commission Communication is the document "Conclusions of the Council of the EU and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States", also known as the **Council Conclusion**. One of the conclusions is the following: "The Council recognizes the Commission's and the Member States' specific responsibility to support developing country partners in eliminating discrimination and gender inequality by increasing visibility and accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation and to promote and engage in an enhanced political dialogue at all levels, including the highest political level, which incorporates gender equality explicitly as a central theme."<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ In line with these documents, the EU has supported a **twin-track approach: gender mainstreaming** (mainstreaming gender issues into all aspects of development policy) and **specific measures** aimed at socioeconomic and political empowerment of women.

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<sup>4</sup> "EU Policy Framework for Promoting Gender Equality," *European Commission*, [http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/crosscutting/genderequ\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/crosscutting/genderequ_en.cfm)

<sup>5</sup> "EU Policy Framework for Promoting Gender Equality," *European Commission*, [http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/crosscutting/genderequ\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/crosscutting/genderequ_en.cfm)

<sup>6</sup> Conclusions of the Council of the EU and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting with the Council on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation, *Council of the European Union*, 15 May 2007, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st09/st09561.en07.pdf>

## **GENDER IN THE COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER FOR UKRAINE**

### **Preface to the CSP**

The Country Strategy Paper (CSP) is the EC's main programming tool which sets the policy objectives and priorities of the EC's assistance to a particular country over a given period of time. The CSPs consist of five main sections: EC cooperation objectives; the partner country's national policy agenda; assessment of the political, economic and social situation; assessment of past and ongoing EC cooperation; and the EC response strategy. Gender equality issues should be reflected in each section of the CSP.<sup>7</sup>

The CSPs are drafted on the basis of a dialogue between the EC Delegation and Brussels, the Member States' embassies, government ministries and civil society in the country.<sup>8</sup> In relation to gender issues, each delegation has a Gender Focal Point, and assistance is also available from the gender desks in Brussels. Furthermore, there are various gender mainstreaming tools available to the European officials, such as Gender guidelines for Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) and the Mid-Term Review of CSPs. The Mid-Term Review process presents an important opportunity to address the mainstreaming of gender equality in the 'first generation' of CSPs and to examine the adequacy of the treatment of gender issues section by section, as indicated in the EC's Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

### **Analysis of the CSP from a Gender Perspective**

The CSP defines gender as a cross-cutting issue along with human rights and environment, which are to be mainstreamed into the design of all programmes and projects to the maximum extent possible. (p. 16) An analysis of Ukraine's social development on p. 8 stresses that sex trafficking, particularly towards Western Europe, continues to involve a significant number of women and children as victims.

Overall, the CSP pays minor attention to gender issues. There are no other remarks on gender equality nor are gender indicators provided. The CSP does not mention gender issues with regards to poverty reduction, employment, HIV/AIDS problems, trafficking in human beings, etc.

In addition, although the EC's Roadmap specifies the promotion of gender mainstreaming at policy, programming and implementation levels, this approach is lacking in the CSP for Ukraine. Goal number 3 of the MDGs is to promote gender equality and empower women; to accomplish this goal, however, gender issues must be addressed in a broader context, and thus, indicators should be available for instance for the education enrolment of girls, poverty monitoring, etc.

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<sup>7</sup> Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EC Development Cooperation, *European Commission*, 2005, p. 34, [http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2004/toolkit\\_on\\_mainstreaming\\_gender\\_equality.pdf](http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2004/toolkit_on_mainstreaming_gender_equality.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 39

## **DIALOGUE WITH THE EC DELEGATION<sup>10</sup>**

In August 2008, the IGPN has made inquiries concerning the Mid-term Review of the CSP; however, no concrete information has been provided either by the Delegation or desk officers in Brussels.

According to the Delegation, the consultations with CSOs will be organized, as it is a standard procedure for the preparation of all important policy documents. The officials added that they would be grateful if IGPN would share with them the assessment of the current state of play on gender issues in Ukraine as such information is extremely useful for our policy and resource planning, as well as reporting to the Headquarters.

The Delegation provided the IGPN representative with information concerning new activities on gender and women's rights issues. As the Delegation points out, there are several new developments in the EC Delegation to Ukraine and Belarus which prove that there is definitely more attention to gender issues in the EU assistance to Ukraine. One of them is appointing Gender Focal Point in the EC Delegation. Another one is a new project devoted specifically to gender issues (budget of 14 mil. Euro) that will focus on a systematic change in 3 areas: elimination of discrimination of women on the labour market, integration of gender issues in secondary education; prevention of violence, legislative changes, promotion of visibility of gender issues and elimination of gender stereotypes in mass media.

## **IGPN'S ASSESSMENT OF GENDER ISSUES IN UKRAINE**

Ukraine has experienced a serious decline in the first decade of its independence. Only since the early 2000s has Ukraine's economy begun to recover. This difficult transition period has had an impact on gender relations in the traditionally patriarchal Ukrainian society, where men are the breadwinners and women take care of the household and children. Traditional gender roles have been undermined by a wide-scale male underemployment and unemployment, affecting the structure of authority and leading to a decline in marriages and fertility rates, and increasing numbers of female-headed households and children living in single-parent families.<sup>11</sup> The inability to live up to role expectations appears related to sharp increases in alcoholism, suicide and mortality rates among men, as well as increased levels of domestic violence.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, for women, gender-based job discrimination, loss of state support for child care, poor maternal health, limited political representation, gender-based violence and a dramatic increase in prostitution and trafficking have also emerged as serious issues.<sup>13</sup> All these gender concerns remain serious issues to be tackled in Ukraine. The EU has committed itself to address gender problems in its development cooperation with Ukraine, and as this brief overview demonstrates, much more effort is needed.

Firstly, as the following citation reveals, the EU is aware of a deficiency with regards to gender and development. As stated in the report of the programme 'EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality for Development and Peace', the Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 and the National Indicative Programme 2007-2010 for Ukraine include gender as cross-cutting issues, which means it should be integrated into the development of all programmes and projects; however, challenges remain with regards to the capacity of staff to translate these

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<sup>10</sup> Information in this section has been obtained through email communication of IGPN with the EC Delegation and desk officers in Brussels

<sup>11</sup> Ukraine Gender Review, *World Bank*, 2002, p. 5,

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECAREGTOPGENDER/Resources/UkraineCGA.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

commitments into reality, and the extent to which the EC engages civil society and women's organizations in developing its programmes and country strategies.<sup>14</sup>

Regarding EC supported projects, during the past four years, there were some projects which specifically concerned gender issues. Among them were "Social nursing and consulting of HIV infected mothers, children with HIV status and children born from HIV infected mothers" (realized by NGO Society of Assistance to HIV infected, Konstantinovka), "Protected maternity as a guarantee of a healthy nation" (realized by NGO Mothers' School, Rivne), "East West Empowerment Disabled Women Advocacy Leadership Programme" (realized by Human Rights Foundation, Kyiv), "Study and Incorporation of International Human Rights Standards for Solving Domestic Violence Problems in Ukraine" (realized by West Ukrainian Centre Women's Perspectives, Lviv). Yet, gender organizations emphasize that the majority of the supported projects, although devoted to women's issues, were with few exceptions (among them Women's Perspective) led by NGOs which do not specialize in women's empowerment and women's rights. Overall, the projects were socially-oriented and supported the traditional roles of women rather than having an impact on policy change in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment (again with the exception of a few projects).

Generally speaking, the work of gender NGOs is affected by various problems when it comes to EC assistance. NGOs in the regions often lack access to information about EC assistance in Ukraine, about new calls for proposals, etc. There should be new strategies developed for that. Furthermore, women's NGOs lack enough experience and expertise to compete with other NGOs in calls for proposals. In addition, these NGOs are often in a much more vulnerable situation in the competition when gender is not a specific priority. Gender is only a cross-cutting issue in the calls for proposals and not a specific priority; in relation to that, previous experience shows that it is difficult to achieve policy change on gender issues if there are no gender-oriented projects. Moreover, there is no gender disaggregated data on the projects and, consequently, it is difficult to evaluate their effectiveness and their gender sensitivity. Frequently, the projects with a women's focus are purely social projects with no emphasis on strengthening civil society and policy change. The EC office in Kyiv emphasizes, though, that this should be addressed by applicants, not by them in the calls for proposals. In addition, there are not many possibilities for regional NGOs to benefit from the projects or bring their experience and ideas to it; to improve this situation, special advisory councils and working groups are needed.<sup>15</sup>

Referring to the EC's new complex project mentioned in the previous section Dialogue with the EC Delegation, there seems to be hope that more attention to gender equality and women's empowerment will be given in the EU assistance to Ukraine. As this brief overview demonstrates, there are a number of gender concerns which should be addressed in the future.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations to the EU:

- To deliver on its promises to international gender agreements
- To integrate gender issues into all stages of country programming and project cycle (formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation)
- To apply gender mainstreaming into the priority areas of the CSP
- To strengthen the EC's internal gender capacity (Gender Desks and Gender Focal Points)

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<sup>14</sup> For more information see Mapping Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality, Global Findings and Key Messages, EC/UN Partnership on Gender Equality and Development for Peace, *UNIFEM*, p. 20  
[http://www.gendermatters.eu/resources\\_documents/UserFiles/File/Resourse/Report\\_Global\\_web.pdf](http://www.gendermatters.eu/resources_documents/UserFiles/File/Resourse/Report_Global_web.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> This is very important for the new complex project on gender issues

- To follow the twin-track approach, and besides having gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, encourage specific projects on women in calls for proposals
- To help ensure the financial sustainability of women's NGOs
- To establish a mechanism which would increase the accessibility of rural NGOs to grants (i.e. information seminars, working groups, etc.)
- To increase the transparency of political dialogue with civil society in partner countries
- To push the Ukrainian government to address gender concerns on the level of policy as well as practice

#### **Recommendations to the National Government:**

- To deliver on its promises to international gender agreements
- To address gender concerns on the level of policy as well as practice
- To give special attention to funds allocation to women's organizations and their initiatives aimed at addressing women's issues
- To organize widespread public awareness campaigns

#### **Recommendations to the CSOs**

- To lobby the national government to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment
- To build alliances among women's organizations in order to strengthen the impact of their advocacy and lobbying activities
- To engage in an active dialogue with the EC Delegation in Ukraine
- To provide shadow reports to the government reports on gender equality commitments
- To monitor gender issues in the EC's development cooperation
- To advocate for the inclusion of projects that specifically target gender issues, apart from having it as a cross-cutting issue
- To raise public awareness of gender equality and keep the public up-to-date concerning the developments in this field (to serve as a link between the government, EU and the general public)

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