

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKETS OF THE PILOT REGIONS

WIN

Improving the position of Women in the labour markets of peripheral INdustrial regions

DELIVERABLE INFORMATION	
Project acronym:	WIN
Project title:	Improving the position of Women in the labour markets of peripheral INDUSTRIAL regions
Priority:	3: A more social Danube Region
Program specific objective	3.1 Accessible, inclusive and effective labour markets
URL of project website:	https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/win
Deliverable number:	D1.1.2
Title of deliverable:	Comparative study on the position of women in the labour markets of the pilot regions
Specific objective:	SO1 Women's needs and institutional barriers in labour markets of peripheral industrial regions
Activity:	A1.1: Identifying the position of women in the labour market of peripheral industrial regions
Partners in charge (authors):	LP ZRC SAZU (Jani Kozina, Katarina Polajnar Horvat, Primož Gašperič, Marko Senčar Mrdakovič, Maruša Goluža, David Bole)
Partners involved:	PiNA (PP2), UniGRAZ (PP3), VESTE (PP4), MASS (PP5), CTRIA (PP6), MGK10 (PP7), ZZUP HBZ (PP8), ABW (PP9), NMS (PP10)
Status:	Final
Date:	20. 5. 2025

TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	2
PART I: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS	5
PART II: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS	6
PART III: SWOT ANALYSIS	10
PART I: CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT REGIONS	12
GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PILOT REGIONS	12
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PILOT REGIONS	14
PRESENT LABOUR MARKET PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES IN THE PILOT REGIONS	15
THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET IN THE PILOT REGIONS	16
PART II: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER (IN)EQUALITY IN THE PILOT REGIONS.....	17
GENDER GAP STRUCTURES	17
GENDER GAP TRENDS	19
TERRITORIAL EMBEDDEDNESS	19
PART III: SWOT ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE PILOT REGIONS	21
STRENGTHS OF THE PILOT REGIONS	22
WEAKNESSES OF THE PILOT REGIONS	24
OPPORTUNITIES OF THE PILOT REGIONS	26
THREATS OF THE PILOT REGIONS	27
CONCLUSIONS	30
COMMON PATTERNS ACROSS PILOT REGIONS	30
REGION-SPECIFIC DYNAMICS	30
ACTIONABLE PATHWAYS: SOCIAL INNOVATION AND POLICY	31
ANNEXES	33
ANNEX 1 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF TRBOVLJE, SLOVENIA	33
ANNEX 2 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STYRIAN IRON ROAD, AUSTRIA	37
ANNEX 3 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE LAG SOKOLOVSKO, CZECH REPUBLIC	41
ANNEX 4 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNS OF TATABÁNYA, OROSZLÁNY AND DOROG, HUNGARY.....	45
ANNEX 5 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE HERZEG-BOSNIAN COUNTY, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	50
ANNEX 6 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOZNICA, SERBIA	54
ANNEX 7 – BASIC CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF RADOMIR, BULGARIA	61
ANNEX 8 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE ZASAVSKA REGION, SLOVENIA	67
ANNEX 9 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE STYRIAN IRON ROAD, AUSTRIA	68
ANNEX 10 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE KARLOVY VARY REGION, CZECH REPUBLIC.....	69
ANNEX 11 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE KOMÁROM-ESZTERGOM COUNTY, HUNGARY.....	70
ANNEX 12 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE HERZEG-BOSNIAN COUNTY, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	71
ANNEX 13 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE MAČVA DISTRICT, SERBIA.....	72
ANNEX 14 – NATIONAL STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR THE PERNIK PROVINCE, BULGARIA.....	73
ANNEX 15 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF TRBOVLJE, SLOVENIA	74
ANNEX 16 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE STYRIAN IRON ROAD, AUSTRIA	76
ANNEX 17 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE LAG SOKOLOVSKO, CZECH REPUBLIC.....	78
ANNEX 18 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE KOMÁROM-ESZTERGOM COUNTY, HUNGARY	80
ANNEX 19 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE HERZEG-BOSNIAN COUNTY, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	82
ANNEX 20 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF LOZNICA, SERBIA	84
ANNEX 21 – SWOT ANALYSIS FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF RADOMIR, BULGARIA	86

INTRODUCTION

The WIN project confronts a critical issue in the Danube Region: the systemic and persistent underrepresentation and inequitable treatment of women in the labour markets of peripheral industrial areas. Deliverable D.1.1.2 directly addresses this challenge through a **comparative study of seven pilot regions** in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia. The study explores the gendered dimensions of regional economies and the barriers women face in accessing quality employment.

Drawing on the Gender Equal Cities framework,¹ effective gender equality policies must be informed by nuanced, context-sensitive analysis. **Gender-disaggregated data**—on wages, employment, education, entrepreneurship, and more—provides the foundation for this effort. Peripheral industrial regions—usually marked by historical reliance on heavy industry and male-dominated employment structures—often lack inclusive frameworks to support women’s economic participation. These areas are further burdened by demographic decline, limited infrastructure, and persistent socio-economic challenges. These factors disproportionately impact women, who are frequently overrepresented in lower-paid, precarious sectors, and underrepresented in managerial roles and technical fields. Despite these constraints, the study also highlights examples of resilience and opportunity—such as emerging high-tech sectors, cross-border linkages, and social innovation initiatives—which could be leveraged to close gender gaps. By identifying both structural inequalities and place-based strengths, the study provides a detailed framework for understanding how gender and geography intersect in shaping labour market outcomes.

To provide a comprehensive and multi-faceted understanding, the study employs a three-part methodology:

- 1) **Contextual Analysis** examines the geographical, historical, and economic characteristics of each pilot region, including development trajectories, employment dynamics, and the evolving role of women in the workforce.
- 2) **Statistical Analysis** explores gender (in)equality using official labour market indicators across domains such as population structure, employment, education, wages, entrepreneurship, and managerial representation. The analysis reveals enduring gender gaps and highlights regional differences in trends and territorial embeddedness.
- 3) **SWOT Analysis** synthesizes quantitative and qualitative insights, identifying regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting women's employment. It is grounded in contextual realities and supported by findings from other WIN activities, including study visits, policy analyses, and peer reviews.

The comparative nature of this study allows for the identification of both **common patterns**—such as low female representation in high-paid sectors—and **region-specific dynamics**, including cultural norms, educational barriers, and labour market rigidity. A key contribution of D.1.1.2 is its ability to link empirical findings with actionable policy and social innovation pathways, setting the stage for transformative interventions in subsequent project phases.

Ultimately, this study serves as both a **diagnostic and strategic tool**, laying the groundwork for targeted, place-based solutions to improve women's economic inclusion and empowerment in the Danube Region’s peripheral industrial towns and regions.

¹ URBACT Knowledge Hub, GENDER EQUAL CITIES 2022: <https://urbact.eu/gender-equal-cities-report-2022>

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the comparative study on the position of women in the labour markets of the pilot regions consists of three parts:

- PART I: Contextual analysis,
- PART II: Statistical analysis,
- PART III: SWOT analysis.

Each part contributes to a better understanding of the subject under study, albeit from a different perspective, using different means and techniques. The contextual analysis provides a basic description of the pilot regions, structured around key thematic areas. The statistical analysis outlines gender (in)equality in the labour markets of the pilot regions using official labour market indicators from the national statistical offices in the partner countries. The SWOT analysis rounds off the final picture, taking into account the main findings of the first two steps and applying previous knowledge from other WIN activities (e.g., Study Visit Reports, Transnational Workshop Reports, Employment Policy Analysis & Peer Review Report (eDelphi), WIN Innovation Group Pilot Actions).

The first task before starting the analyses is to define the geographical scope and hierarchical position of the pilot regions according to the **NUTS**² classification and **LAU**³ system of the Eurostat and the **LAG**⁴ directory of the EU CAP Network. The NUTS classification and LAG directory geographically represent the regional level, while the LAU system represents the local level:

- The Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics, abbreviated NUTS (from the French version *Nomenclature des Unités territoriales statistiques*) is a geographical nomenclature subdividing the economic territory of the European Union (EU) into regions at three different levels (NUTS 1, 2 and 3 respectively, moving from larger to smaller territorial units). Above NUTS 1, there is the 'national' level of the Member States also known as NUTS 0. NUTS is used for: 1) collecting, developing and harmonising European regional statistics, 2) carrying out socio-economic analyses of the regions, and 3) framing of EU regional policies.
- To meet the demand for statistics at a local level, Eurostat maintains a system of local administrative units (LAUs) compatible with NUTS. These LAUs are the building blocks of NUTS and comprise the EU's municipalities and communes.
- EU Local Action Groups (LAGs) are partnerships set up as part of the LEADER approach under the European Union's rural development policy. The LEADER approach (an acronym in French for *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale*) aims to foster local development in rural areas by encouraging community-led initiatives. LAG regions are usually made up of several municipalities at LAU level.

For PARTS I and III, each project partner independently selected the pilot region according to the given territorial units at LAG or LAU level (Table 1). For PART II, the lack of availability and

² <https://ec.europa.eu/statistical-atlas/viewer/?config=RYB-2023.json&ch=C01,C02,C03,C04,C05,C06,C07,C08,C09,C10,C11,C12,TRC,NUTS&mids=BKGCNT,NUTS3,CNTOVL&o=1,1,0.7¢er=43.82238,23.50348,4&lcis=NUTS3&>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>

⁴ https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/networking/leader/lag-directory_en

accessibility of statistical data at these two levels and the need to avoid statistical confusion between the local and regional levels dictated the use of the hierarchically higher NUTS 3 level (Figure 2)⁵.

Pilot regions for PARTS I and III are:

- AT → Styrian Iron Road (60,000 inhabitants)
- BA → Herzeg-Bosnian County (77,000 inhabitants, 6 municipalities at LAU level)
- BU → Municipality of Radomir (17,000 inhabitants)
- CZ → Sokolovsko (90,000 inhabitants, 38 municipalities at LAU level)
- HU → Municipalities of Tatabánya (66,000 inhabitants), Oroszlány (12,000 inhabitants), and Dorog (20,000 inhabitants)
- RS → Municipality of Loznica (72,000 inhabitants)
- SI → Municipality of Trbovlje (16,000 inhabitants)

Table 1: The hierarchical position of pilot regions according to NUTS and LAU classifications of the Eurostat and LAG directory of the EU CAP Network

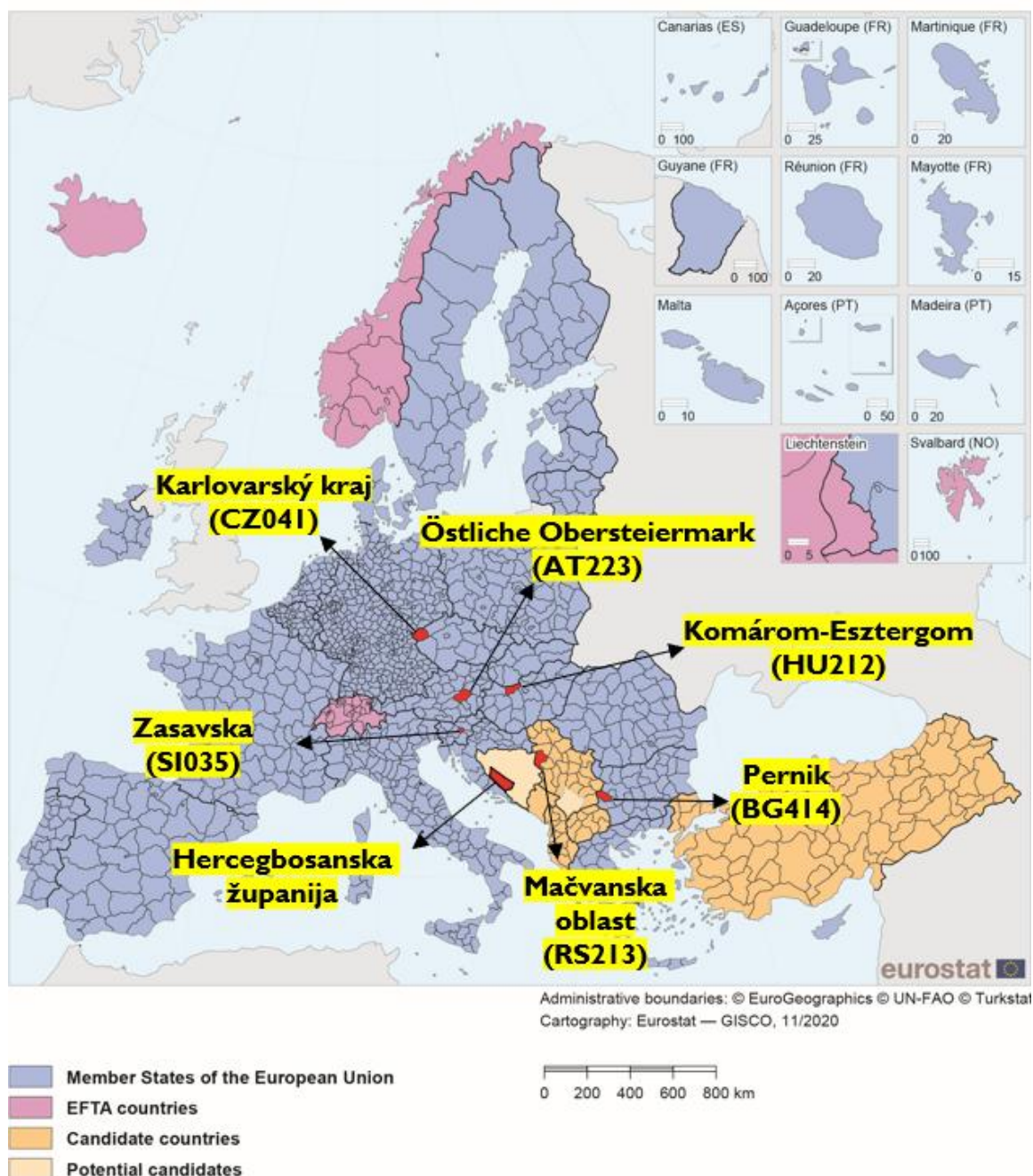
Nr	Country	NUTS classification			LAG directory	LAU system
		NUTS 1 level	NUTS 2 level	NUTS 3 level	LAG level	LAU level
1	Österreich (AT)	Südösterreich (AT2)	Steiermark (AT22)	Östliche Obersteiermark (AT223)	Steirische Eisenstraße (Styrian Iron Road)	/
2	Bosna i Hercegovina (BA)	/	/	Hercegbosanska županija ⁶ (Herzeg-Bosnian County)	/	/
3	Bulgaria (BG)	Yugozapadna i Yuzhna tsentralna Bulgaria (BG4)	Yugozapaden (BG41)	Pernik (BG414)	/	Radomir (PER36)
4	Česká republika (CZ)	Česko (CZ0)	Severozápad (CZ04)	Karlovarský kraj (Karlovy Vary Region) (CZ041)	Sokolovsko	/
5	Magyarország (HU)	Dunántúl (HU2)	Közép-Dunántúl (HU21)	Komárom-Esztergom (Komárom-Esztergom County) (HU212)	/	Tatabánya (18157) Oroszlány (30766) Dorog (10490)
6	Serbia (RS)	Serbia – jug (RS2)	Region Šumadije i Zapadne Srbije (RS21)	Mačvanska oblast (Mačva District) (RS213)	/	Loznica ⁷
7	Slovenija (SI)	Slovenija (SI0)	Vzhodna Slovenija (SI03)	Zasavska (Zasavska Region) (SI035)	/	Trbovlje (129)

⁵ The only exception is the Styrian Iron Road, where the sufficient amount of statistical data exists at district level (District Leoben), which is considered statistically representative for the LAG.

⁶ Bosnia and Herzegovina is not officially included in the system of Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS). However, Hercegbosanska županija (Herzeg-Bosnian County) could be treated as a unit at NUTS 3 level.

⁷ Serbia is not officially included in the system of local administrative units (LAU level) compatible with NUTS. However, the municipality of Loznica could be treated as a unit at this spatial level.

NUTS 3 regions in the Member States of the European Union (EU-) according to NUTS 2021, with corresponding statistical regions in EFTA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates



Note: Regions in the Member States of the European Union (EU) according to NUTS 2021. Statistical regions in EFTA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates according to latest available bilateral agreement. The designation of Kosovo is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/local-administrative-units>

Figure 2: Pilot regions according to NUTS 3 level of the Eurostat's classification⁸

⁸ In case of Austria, the district Leoben, representing the subordinate region Steirische Eisenstraße (Styrian Iron Road), was used instead of Östliche Obersteiermark.

PART I: Contextual analysis

The aim of the contextual analysis is to provide a basic description of the pilot regions, structured around four thematic areas (Table 2). WIN project partners were asked to respond to a short questionnaire providing details of the geographical characteristics, historical development, current employment challenges and the position of women in the labour market of each pilot region. The specific responses for the pilot regions are presented in detail in Annexes 1-7.

Table 2: Main categories of the contextual analysis with questionnaire instructions

1) Geographical characteristics of the pilot regions
In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.
2) Historical development of the pilot regions
Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development
3) Present labour market performance and development challenges in the pilot regions
Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).
4) The position of women in the labour market in the pilot regions
Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

PART II: Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis aims to outline the gender (in)equality in the labour markets of the pilot regions. The objective is to support the contextualisation of the pilot regions in PART I with the **evidence-based approach** by using official population, employment and education statistics. To this end, the WIN project partners contacted the relevant **national statistical offices** to collect the relevant statistical data for the indicators in Table 3.

Table 3: Selected statistical indicators on gender (in)equality in the pilot regions⁹

Thematic fields	Indicators
Population structure	Female share of total population
	Female share of total population by age (0-14, 15-29, 30-64, 65+)
	Female share of employed population by place of residence
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age (15-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65-89)
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of residence (Agriculture = A, Industry = B-F, Services = G-U)
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education (Primary or less, Secondary, Tertiary)
	Female share of unemployment rate
Employment structure	Female share of employed population by place of work
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age (15-29, 30-44, 45-64, 65-89)
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of work (Agriculture = A, Industry = B-F, Services = G-U)
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education (Primary or less, Secondary, Tertiary)
Entrepreneurship	Female share of self-employment by place of work
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence
Wages	Gender wage gap
	Gender wage gap by economic sector (Agriculture = A, Industry = B-F, Services = G-U)
Managerial positions	Female share of employment in senior and middle management
Education and skills	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)
	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)

The selection of the statistical indicators was based on the **Tool 6 – Gender Equality in Manufacturing** as part of the toolkit **Enhancing the Quality of Industrial Policies (EQuIP)**¹⁰. This tool offers a set of indicators to assist analysts in understanding female participation in manufacturing and structural change, as well as their key determinants. The goal is to enable policymakers to identify ways to make the industrialization process more gender-just. Ultimately, the objective is to ensure that both women and men have equal opportunities to contribute to, lead and benefit from structural transformation.

The EQuIP's Tool 6 – Gender Equality in Manufacturing has already been applied and tested in six countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) through the process of Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation of Industrial

⁹ Adapted from [EQuIP Tool 6 – Gender Equality in Manufacturing](#).

¹⁰ The Enhancing the Quality of Industrial Policies (EQuIP) toolkit provides policymakers with a comprehensive overview of the economic, social and environmental performance of their countries' manufacturing sector. EQuIP offers a multidimensional, evidence-based approach to inform the policymaking process and track progress towards achieving an agreed set of industrial development goals. The aim is to enhance countries' capabilities to manage their own future, improve their strategy-setting and policy formulation, and strengthen their engagement with development partners. EQuIP has been developed by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in partnership with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ). Since its inception in 2014, EQuIP has undergone several revisions and expansions. The latest edition, finalized in 2024, represents a significant upgrade in the tools' scientific validity and scope relative to previous versions.

Policies¹¹. As many of these countries are part of the Danube Region, we considered the tool applicable to this statistical analysis. Although it was originally used at the national level, it was a challenge to **adapt it to the regional level**, where less data is available and data confidentiality protocols apply. The final list of the gender (in)equality indicators in the pilot regions is presented in Table 3. They are grouped in six thematic fields: population structure, employment structure, entrepreneurship, wages, managerial positions, and education and skills.

The data were collected for different time periods (2003, 2008, 2013, 2018, 2023) to allow the analysis of trends, and at different spatial levels (NUTS 3, NUTS 2, NUTS 0) to allow comparison with the wider territorial context. The reference of analysis were the regions at NUTS 3 level, except for the case of Austria. For the purpose of this statistical analysis, the Austrian project partner decided to focus on the district of Leoben as an appropriate statistical representation of the Styrian Iron Road in the north-eastern part of the state of Styria.

The analysis of data availability shows that we managed to collect 61% of the requested data. The success rate was highest in Hungary and Slovenia, moderately high in Austria and Bulgaria, average in the Czech Republic and below average in the two Balkan countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. (Figure 3). For this reason, the results of this statistical analysis and comparisons between the pilot regions must be interpreted with some caution, especially in countries with a lower proportion of data collected.

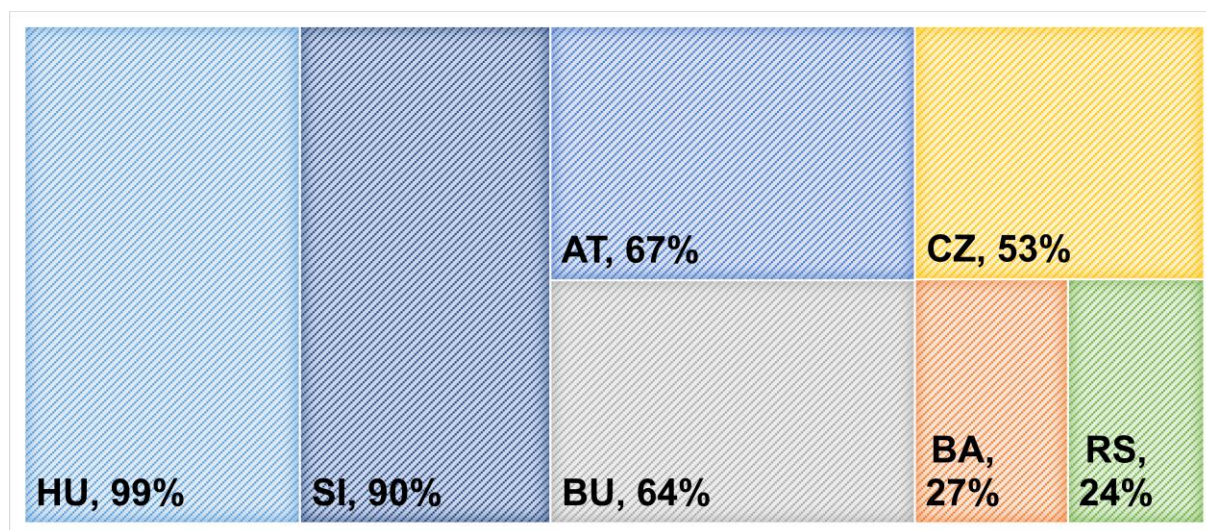


Figure 3: Proportion of data collected per partner country

The statistical analysis of gender (in)equality in the labour markets of the pilot region focused on revealing:

- Gender gap – structures,
- Gender gap – trends,
- Territorial embeddedness.

¹¹ <https://www.equip-project.org/strengthening-monitoring-and-evaluation-of-industrial-policies-in-six-countries-of-the-western-balkans-through-equip/>

In labour economics, the concept of **practical significance** is crucial when evaluating the **gender gap**, particularly when operating with the share of women among all workers in a specific economic activity. Practical significance refers to whether the observed gender difference has meaningful implications in the real world, beyond just statistical differences. We can speak about a gender gap when there is a clear disparity in the representation of men and women in a given economic activity. A gender gap in labour economics usually refers to differences in representation (the proportion of women versus men in a specific occupation, industry, or position), pay (the wage difference between men and women doing similar jobs) and opportunities (access to promotions, leadership roles, or professional development). The gender gap refers to a deviation from gender parity (a 50-50 share), but we have chosen a threshold of $< 40\%$ or $> 60\%$, which is often considered a significant gender gap in many contexts (Figure 4).

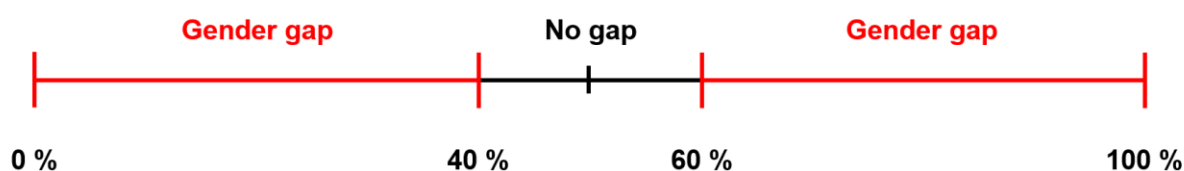


Figure 4: Illustration of the identification of gender gaps in the pilot regions

In addition to the static identification of gender differences, it is also important to identify **trends in the gender gap** (Figure 5). A **widening gender gap** is identified when the value of a particular indicator moves between two periods from the range where no gender gap is observed ($> 40\%$ and $< 60\%$) to the range where it is considered to be a gender gap ($< 40\%$ or $> 60\%$), where the difference between the two values must be greater than 5%. In opposite, a **closing gender gap** is identified when the value of a particular indicator moves between two periods from the range where a gender gap is observed ($< 40\%$ or $> 60\%$) to the range where it is not considered to be a gender gap ($> 40\%$ and $< 60\%$), where the difference between the two values must be greater than 5%.

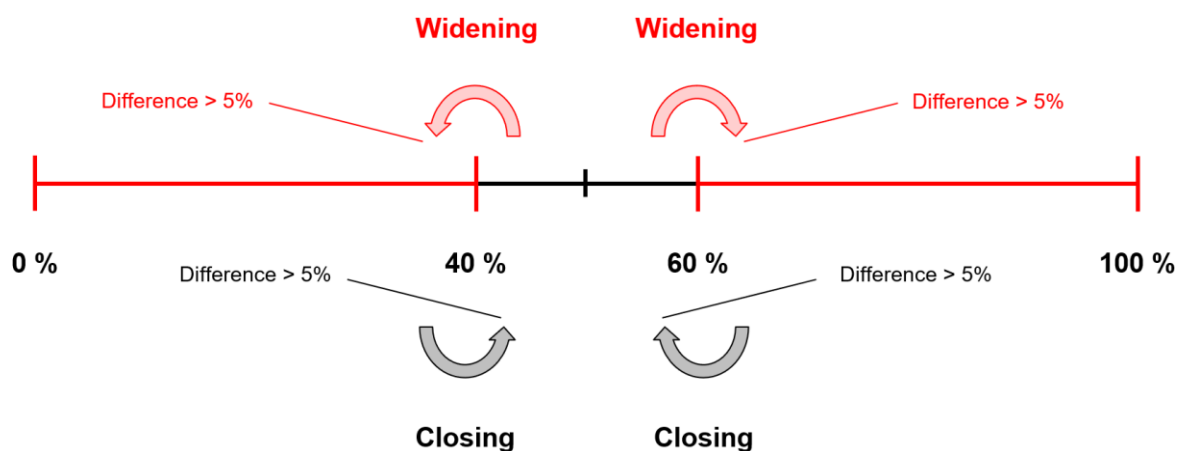


Figure 5: Illustration of the identification of widening or closing gender gaps in the pilot regions

Finally, it is important to determine the so-called **territorial embeddedness** of the pilot regions (NUTS 3 level) by analysing their potential **underperformance** or **overperformance** in relation to the wider regional (NUTS 2 level) and national context (NUTS 0 level) (Figure 6). Underperformance is identified when the value of a particular indicator for the pilot region is below or above the threshold indicating a gender gap ($< 40\%$ or $> 60\%$) and the value for the wider territorial context is within the range where it is not considered to be a gender gap ($> 40\%$ and $< 60\%$), where the difference between the two values must be greater than 5%. Conversely, overperformance is identified when the value of a particular indicator for the pilot region is in the range where it is not considered to be a gender gap ($> 40\%$ and $< 60\%$) and the value for the wider territorial context is below or above the threshold indicating a gender gap ($< 40\%$ or $> 60\%$), where the difference between the two values must be greater than 5%.

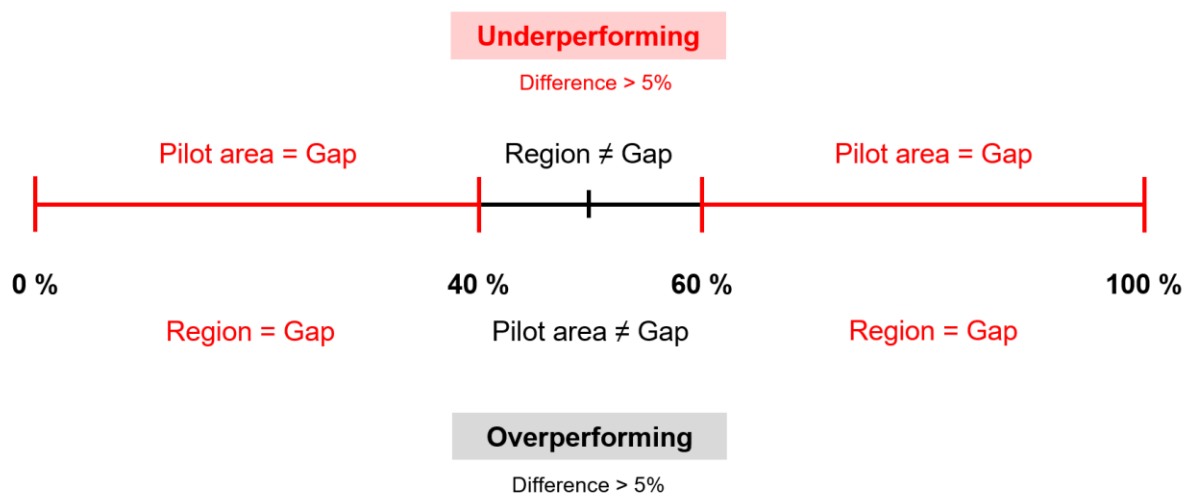


Figure 6: Illustration of the identification of territorial embeddedness of the pilot regions (NUTS 3 level) by analysing their underperformance or overperformance in relation to the wider regional (NUTS 2 level) and national context (NUTS 0 level)

PART III: SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis of women's employment position aims to evaluate the regional **strengths**, **weaknesses**, **opportunities**, and **threats** affecting women's employment in selected peripheral industrial regions. It provides a critical overview by synthesizing previous analyses and incorporating qualitative insights to highlight place-based factors that hinder or enable women's employment. The SWOT analysis builds upon findings from:

- **PART I** – Contextual analysis of the pilot regions (geographical, historical, socio-economic aspects)
- **PART II** – Statistical analysis of gender (in)equality in the pilot regions
- **Other WIN project deliverables** (e.g., study visit reports, policy reviews, and WIN Innovation Group findings):
 - D1.2.1 Study visit reports from Slovenia and Czech Republic
 - D1.2.2 Transnational workshop reports from Slovenia and Czech Republic
 - [D1.3.1 Analysis of local/regional/national employment policies addressing women](#)
 - [D1.3.2 Peer-review report of local/regional/national employment policies addressing women](#)
 - D2.1.2 Report on developed social innovations (all the material collected through the work with the WIN Innovation Groups)

Project partners were asked to prepare a SWOT analysis by completing the form (see Annexes 15–21), while following specific instructions: each finding should be **concise and evidence-based**, referencing concrete results from PARTs I and II or other WIN deliverables; the analysis should highlight **gender-specific barriers and enablers** that affect women's position in the labour market; and it should link strengths and weaknesses to **current regional development**, while associating opportunities and threats with **future development scenarios**.

To support project partners in conducting the SWOT analysis, a set of guiding questions has been developed based on the findings of [D.1.1.1 - Input paper on the position of women in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions](#). This list is not exhaustive, and partners are encouraged to formulate additional context-specific questions that will help uncover relevant insights for their respective pilot regions.

Strengths (link to current regional development)

1. What are the key strengths of the pilot region that support women's employment?
2. Are there any employment sectors where women have a strong presence or perform better than men?
3. Are there existing programs, policies, or infrastructures that successfully empower women and have shown concrete results (and which)?
4. Are there examples of successful female entrepreneurship or leadership in the region?
5. Are there any unique skills, perspectives, or leadership styles that women bring to their businesses or employment sectors?

Weaknesses (link to current regional development)

1. What are the significant barriers for women in accessing or retaining employment in the region?
2. Which industries are traditionally male-dominated, excluding women from high-paying and skilled roles?

3. Are women disproportionately concentrated in precarious, low-wage, or part-time employment?
4. What social infrastructure gaps exist (e.g., childcare, education, transport) that limit women's participation in the workforce?

Opportunities (link to future scenarios)

1. What potential sectors or industries could offer better employment opportunities for women?
2. Are there regional, national, or European policy frameworks that could improve gender equality in the workforce?
3. Could educational reforms or reskilling programs help women access higher-paid or more stable employment?
4. What role could social innovations (e.g., flexible work models, business incubators) play in improving the position of women?
5. Are there emerging partnerships, collaborations, or ecosystems that could amplify the growth of women-led businesses?

Threats (link to future scenarios)

1. Are there demographic or economic trends that exacerbate barriers for women employment?
2. Do automation or technological upgrades disproportionately affect women in certain sectors?
3. Are there cultural or institutional resistances that hinder policy implementation for gender equality?
4. How might external shocks or multiple crises (e.g., economic crises, climate change, political instability) further worsen gender disparities in the labour market?

PART I: Contextual analysis of the pilot regions

Geographical characteristics of the pilot regions

The pilot regions share common geographical challenges and opportunities, which significantly shape their socio-economic dynamics and development potential (Table 4). These areas often consist of a blend of urban centres and extensive rural zones, with many located on the periphery of their respective countries, making them less integrated into national economic networks. Poor transport infrastructure is a recurring issue, particularly in more remote and sparsely populated areas, which hampers economic growth, accessibility, and regional cohesion. Demographic challenges such as declining populations, aging, and high levels of emigration are widespread across these regions, further exacerbating socio-economic difficulties and limiting the availability of skilled labour. These regions also share a history of reliance on natural resources, with industries such as mining and agriculture heavily influencing their geographical and economic landscapes. However, strategic locations near borders or within major economic corridors provide significant opportunities for cross-border trade and regional integration if adequately leveraged.

Despite shared traits, each region exhibits unique geographical characteristics that shape its identity and development trajectory. Trbovlje (SI) is situated in a narrow valley surrounded by hilly terrain, limiting spatial expansion but benefiting from proximity to Ljubljana. Its reliance on railway connectivity rather than highways underlines its transport challenges. The Styrian Iron Road (AT) spans an alpine region characterized by a mix of dense industrial areas and sparsely populated forests. Its excellent railway connections to major Austrian cities like Vienna, Graz, and Salzburg, along with its high concentration of industries in the Mur-Mürz valley, make it a vital economic hub. Similarly, Sokolovsko (CZ) combines dense industrial zones with vast forests and mountainous areas, reflecting a historical reliance on coal mining. Its peripheral location on the border with Germany and lack of a university highlight its development constraints. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) is notable for its high population density and strategic location within the Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava corridor. Although it benefits from proximity to Budapest, its potential remains underutilized due to insufficient infrastructure in some parts. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) is predominantly rural, with 72% of its population living outside urban areas. It suffers from weak transport links and underdeveloped infrastructure, though its proximity to Croatia and other EU countries offers potential for growth. Loznica (RS), located near the Drina River and the Bosnian border, combines rural traditions with efforts to modernize its economy. The city is strategically positioned to benefit from cross-border trade and is working to improve its transport infrastructure, including a high-speed road connection to Šabac. Finally, Radomir (BU) is classified as a medium-urbanized area near Sofia, providing some connectivity to the capital but trying to address economic diversification and the consequences of declining coal-based industries.

Table 4: Basic geographical characteristics of the pilot regions

Pilot region	Spatial unit	Country	Population	Geographical position	Transport accessibility	Socio-economic conditions
Trbovlje	Municipality (LAU level)	SI	16,000	Narrow valley, hilly terrain, 50 km east of Ljubljana	Railway corridor but no national highway	Least developed in Slovenia, shrinking population, slow transformation from mining, high-tech potential
Styrian Iron Route	LAG region (16 municipalities at LAU level)	AT	60,000	North-eastern Styria, mountainous with forests covering 90% of land	Good railway connections to Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, less than 2 hours driving from major cities	Highly industrialized, demand for qualified workers, above-average wages in urban areas, peripheral areas sparsely populated
Sokolovsko	LAG region (38 municipalities at LAU level)	CZ	90,000	Western Czech Republic, peripheral region	Limited transport, especially in sparsely populated areas	Industrial region, mining in decline, high unemployment, weak education, low socio-economic status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tatabánya • Oroszlány • Dorog 	Municipality (LAU level)	HU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 66,000 • 12,000 • 20,000 	Komárom-Esztergom County, north-west Hungary, close to Budapest, part of Budapest agglomeration	Connected to European transport corridors, poor local transport in some towns	Third-highest GDP in Hungary, challenges with labour shortage, strong industrial presence, particularly automotive
Herzeg-Bosnian County	County (NUTS 3 level)	BA	77,000	South-western BiH, bordering Croatia, the Republic of Srpska, and several counties in FBiH	Weak road infrastructure, daily bus lines connect towns	Low development index, significant emigration, negative population growth, 72% rural population
Loznica	Municipality (LAU level)	RS	72,000	Situated in the Mačva District, western Serbia, near the Drina River, close to Bosnia and Herzegovina	Well connected to the regional road network, proximity to Bosnia	Developing industrial sector, challenges with out-migration, focus on improving infrastructure and socio-economic conditions
Radomir	Municipality (LAU level)	BU	17,000	South-West Bulgaria, bordering Serbia and North Macedonia	Road connection between Sofia and Skopje	Medium urbanization, coal mining region, low foreign investment, negative population growth

Historical development of the pilot regions

The historical development of the pilot regions (Table 5) reveals common patterns of industrialization, reliance on natural resources, and challenges from economic restructuring. Industrial heritage is a dominant feature, with coal mining, heavy industry, and manufacturing forming the backbone of local economies. These sectors often drove urbanization, employment, and societal shifts, particularly during the 19th and 20th centuries. The decline of traditional industries and the transition to market economies brought about significant economic challenges, including unemployment and outmigration. Across all regions, the role of women evolved, as industrial opportunities provided limited but transformative access to formal employment.

Regional specificities reflect distinct historical trajectories. Trbovlje (SI), a former mining town in Slovenia, thrived on coal and industrial growth before struggling with post-industrial decline. The Styrian Iron Road (AT) emerged as a European steel powerhouse, modernizing to retain industrial relevance. Sokolovsko's (CZ) post-war displacement of its German population reshaped its demographic and economic landscape. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) transitioned from coal mining to automotive and high-tech industries, supported by privatization. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA), deeply rural, saw slow transitions from agriculture to small-scale industries, hindered by war. Loznica's (RS) industrial rise with Viskoza Factory collapsed in the 1990s, with subsequent efforts focused on economic diversification and recovery. Radomir's (BU) socialist-era heavy machinery projects were marked by inefficiencies, leaving a challenging legacy.

Table 5: Main historical trajectories in the pilot regions

Trbovlje (SI)
Initially a coal mining town with industrialization booming in the late 19 th century, Trbovlje thrived during the socialism with mining and heavy industry as the backbone. The decline of coal mining began in the 1990s, culminating with the closure of the Trbovlje thermoelectric power station. The region struggled with socioeconomic transformation after Slovenia's independence in 1991, experiencing depopulation and unemployment. However, recent developments in high-tech industries suggest a potential economic revival.
Styrian Iron Road (AT)
This region has been known for its iron mining and production for centuries, culminating in the establishment of modern steel plants like Donawitz. The region played a crucial role in providing steel for Austria and beyond. During WWII, the region's production was crucial for war efforts, but after the war, it was largely dismantled and rebuilt with international aid. Modernization and restructuring of the steel industry led to the establishment of cutting-edge production facilities, securing the region's position as a leader in present European steel manufacturing.
Sokolovsko (CZ)
Historically an industrial and mining area, Sokolovsko became highly dependent on coal mining and heavy industry. The post-war period saw the forced displacement of the German minority and the rise of heavy industry, followed by the reclamation of former mining areas. Coal mining began to decline in the 21 st century, with a focus shifting toward services, tourism, and sustainable development.
Komárom-Esztergom County (HU)
The region saw its economic rise in the 19 th century with the discovery of coal. By the early 20 th century, mining became the dominant sector. Post-WWII, heavy industry and mining expanded, but the shift to hydrocarbons in the late 20 th century caused coal mining to decline. The region is now heavily industrialized, with a focus on automotive, electronics, and chemical industries.
Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA)
Historically a rural region focused on animal husbandry and agriculture, the area saw little industrial development until the socialist period. The region suffered significant destruction during the 1990s Bosnian war, leading to economic difficulties. Recent development efforts focus on agriculture and small-scale industries, with a focus on overcoming high emigration and negative population growth.
Loznica (RS)
Initially an agricultural region, Loznica became an industrial hub in the 20 th century, particularly in the textile and chemical sectors. The region faced economic challenges during the breakup of Yugoslavia, including high unemployment and outmigration. Recent efforts have focused on industrial renewal, but the region still faces significant socio-economic challenges.
Radomir (BU)
With a rich medieval history, Radomir had long been an agricultural and craft-based economy. The industrial period saw the rise of coal mining and later the establishment of the heavy machine-building plant "Red Mound" during the communist era. However, this plant operated at a loss. The collapse of the communist regime and the closure of unprofitable industries led to economic difficulties. The region is currently trying to adapt by retraining the labour force.

Present labour market performance and development challenges in the pilot regions

Labour market challenges (Table 6) are consistent across the pilot regions, marked by high unemployment, skill shortages, and reliance on external commuting. Economic transitions from traditional industries have left gaps in local employment, particularly for unskilled workers. Demographic decline exacerbates labour shortages, while inadequate infrastructure and limited access to education constrain opportunities. Gender disparities persist, with women underrepresented in high-paying industrial sectors. Socio-economic issues such as housing deficits, outmigration, and income inequality further hinder local development.

Specific challenges vary by region. Trbovlje (SI) struggles with post-industrial stagnation and reliance on commuting to Ljubljana. The Styrian Iron Road (AT) faces acute skill shortages due to an aging workforce and high outmigration, while Sokolovsko (CZ) suffers from a low level of education and low wages. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) has low unemployment but struggles to meet labour demand. Herzeg-Bosnian County's (BA) predominantly rural economy sees chronic unemployment and emigration. Loznica (RS) is reshaping its industrial identity with foreign investments, but disparities in access to these opportunities persist. Radomir (BU) contends with the fallout from the closure of coal plants and underdeveloped entrepreneurial activity.

Table 6: Main labour market characteristics in the pilot regions

Trbovlje (SI)
Trbovlje has undergone a significant transition from a mining and industrial hub to a region marked by high unemployment and outmigration. The industrial sector's collapse has left limited local job opportunities, with nearly 70% of the workforce commuting to nearby urban centers like Ljubljana and Celje. Although emerging high-tech industries and initiatives like the Katapult business incubator show promise, the region struggles with an aging population, outdated housing, and conflicting visions for redevelopment.
Styrian Iron Road (AT)
The Styrian Iron Road is marked by a strong industrial base, particularly in steel and high-tech sectors, with Leoben as its economic centre. However, modernization and demographic changes have drastically reduced job numbers, creating skill shortages, especially in technical professions. Tourism and agriculture are minor contributors, leaving the region heavily reliant on industry. The aging workforce and population decline are pressing issues, with immigration viewed as critical to sustaining the economy.
Sokolovsko (CZ)
Sokolovsko remains heavily industrialized, with a significant presence of the fuel industry alongside mechanical engineering, chemical, textile and glass, ceramics and porcelain production. However, the region faces significant gender disparities. Women have more limited access to retraining programs due to persistent stereotypes about women as caregivers. Unemployment remains above the national average, compounded by outmigration, low wages, and the challenges of socially excluded communities in rural areas.
Komárom-Esztergom County (HU)
Komárom-Esztergom County boasts a robust labour market, with the automotive and electronics industries dominating. Unemployment is exceptionally low (1.8%), but the county struggles to meet labour demands due to demographic decline and competition from neighbouring regions. Labour shortages have prompted reliance on foreign workers and commuting arrangements, with infrastructure improvements critical to addressing these challenges.
Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA)
The labour market in Herzeg-Bosnian County suffers from chronic unemployment and limited industrial activity, placing it among the lowest-performing cantons in FBiH. High emigration and a predominantly rural economy exacerbate labour shortages, while reliance on agriculture and small-scale manufacturing limits economic diversification. Initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and skill development are vital for addressing these issues.
Loznica (RS)
Loznica is in the process of rebuilding its industrial identity after the collapse of the Viskoza chemical factory. New investments in the automotive and textile industries are creating jobs, but systemic issues such as skill mismatches, unemployment, and disparities in access to opportunities persist. Tourism, leveraging natural and cultural assets, offers additional economic potential, though broader infrastructure and education improvements are needed.
Radomir (BU)
Radomir's economy is transitioning as the region faces the closure of coal plants and a shift toward service and light industry. Unemployment among women has decreased, supported by enterprises like AK Electric, but the overall labour market remains constrained by demographic decline and low entrepreneurial activity. Many residents commute to Sofia or Pernik, highlighting limited local opportunities and infrastructure deficiencies.

The position of women in the labour market in the pilot regions

Women across the pilot regions face shared barriers, including underrepresentation in industrial and high-paying roles, limited access to retraining, and traditional gender norms. Many women are concentrated in low-wage service sectors, with part-time employment and informal work being common. Access to affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and professional development opportunities remains limited, further hindering participation. Gender pay gaps persist, despite significant contributions by women to local economies (Table 7).

Regional nuances illustrate varying degrees of progress and challenges. Trbovlje (SI) boasts above-average female education levels but struggles to integrate women into technical sectors. The Styrian Iron Road (AT) sees cultural barriers preventing women from entering male-dominated industries. Sokolovsko's (CZ) women struggle with low levels of education and self-esteem, exacerbating gender inequalities. Komárom-Esztergom (HU) shows increasing female labour mobility abroad due to local limitations. Herzeg-Bosnian County's (BA) rural character amplifies domestic obligations, restricting women's workforce participation. Loznica (RS) is leveraging tourism and small business initiatives to foster women's entrepreneurship but requires targeted support for marginalized groups. In Radomir (BU), efforts like vocational training and NGO-led initiatives empower women, yet systemic challenges persist.

Table 7: Labour market situation of women in the pilot regions

Trbovlje (SI)
Women in Trbovlje are well-educated, with 59% holding tertiary qualifications, yet they remain underrepresented in technical and high-paying roles. The closure of women's factories during economic transitions in the 1990s has limited opportunities, leaving many women in service-sector jobs with lower wages or outward commuting. Gender pay disparities persist, with women earning 8% less than men. Young women are underrepresented in technical education and emerging high-tech sectors, reflecting cultural barriers and traditional gender roles.
Styrian Iron Road (AT)
Historically male-dominated industries like mining and steel processing have marginalized women in the labour market. While efforts are underway to integrate women into industrial roles, part-time employment remains prevalent, particularly in low-wage service and tourism sectors. In peripheral areas, women face additional challenges such as fewer job opportunities and persistent cultural barriers, contributing to outmigration of young women in search of better prospects.
Sokolovsko (CZ)
Women in Sokolovsko face significant exclusion from male-dominated industries and retraining programs focused on technical skills, provided by the employers. This leaves them with precarious, low-paid jobs in services or informal sectors. Many women commute or emigrate due to limited local opportunities. Traditional gender roles further constrain their participation in the workforce, and systemic changes are needed to address these disparities.
Komárom-Esztergom County (HU)
Women in this county face a narrowing employment gap compared to men, but gender disparities persist in wages and sectoral representation. Many women commute abroad due to limited local opportunities, and female entrepreneurship remains underdeveloped. Traditional gender roles and insufficient support systems hinder their participation in male-dominated sectors like automotive and electronics.
Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA)
Women in this predominantly rural region face barriers including traditional domestic roles, lack of mobility, and limited access to childcare. Employment opportunities are scarce, particularly in high-skilled roles. Entrepreneurial initiatives and training programs are emerging as key strategies for empowering women and addressing these challenges, but systemic cultural and economic constraints persist.
Loznica (RS)
The collapse of the Viskoza factory, a major employer for women, has forced many into low-paying service or tourism roles. Initiatives promoting entrepreneurship, particularly in rural tourism, are providing new opportunities, but challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to industrial jobs created by foreign investments. Traditional gender roles and insufficient support systems for work-life balance further hinder women's workforce participation.
Radomir (BU)
The inclusion of women in the workforce has improved, with enterprises like AK Electric providing opportunities, yet older women and those with limited education struggle to find employment. While local initiatives, including vocational training, empower women, traditional roles and insufficient childcare facilities limit their broader participation. Persistent gender pay gaps and limited access to high-skilled jobs remain barriers.

PART II: Statistical analysis of gender (in)equality in the pilot regions

Gender Gap Structures

Commonalities: Gender gap structures across the seven pilot regions reveal **deeply entrenched inequalities** that reflect both structural and systemic barriers to women's participation in economic activities in seven pilot regions (Table 8). Women are significantly underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as **agriculture** and **industry**, which not only limits their access to stable employment but also excludes them from the more industrialized and higher-paying parts of regional economies. This underrepresentation extends to **entrepreneurship**, where women are less likely to be self-employed or occupy **managerial positions** within larger firms or institutions, curtailing their influence and leadership potential. A key driver of this exclusion lies in women's limited presence in **R&D** activities and **STEM** fields—both as students and graduates—restricting their entry into fast-growing technological sectors that offer higher wages and economic advancement. Consequently, women consistently earn less than men, perpetuating the gender **wage gap** and exacerbating economic disparities. Demographically, **younger and older women**, often considered vulnerable groups, are particularly underrepresented in the workforce, despite older women forming a larger share of the total population due to demographic aging. Paradoxically, women are typically more educated—evident from their overrepresentation in **tertiary education** and the **services sector**—yet they remain concentrated in lower-paid occupations and face wage discrimination, which underscores the persistent devaluation of “feminized” professions. This combination of education, structural exclusion, and wage disparity reveals a cyclical pattern where even higher qualifications do not translate into equitable economic opportunities for women, as societal and economic systems continue to favour male-dominated roles and industries.

Specificities:

- **Komárom-Esztergom County (HU):** Displays broader gender gaps, with female underrepresentation spanning agriculture, industry, R&D, and STEM, but also managerial and entrepreneurial roles. Overall, women earn less than men.
- **Zasavska Region (SI):** Similar trends, portraying broader gender gaps, with female underrepresentation spanning agriculture, industry, R&D, and STEM, but also managerial and entrepreneurial roles. Women are overrepresented in services and tertiary education, but they still earn less than men.
- **Styrian Iron Road (AT):** Women are notably underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as agriculture, industry, and STEM-related roles. Overall, women earn less than men.
- **Pernik Province (BU):** Similar trends, exhibiting underrepresentation in agriculture, industry, and STEM fields, but overrepresentation in tertiary education and services. Overall, industrial employment is less paid among women.
- **Karlovy Vary Region (CZ):** Similar trends, with women underrepresented in agriculture, industry, and R&D. Overall, women earn less than men.
- **Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA):** Underrepresentation focuses on agricultural and industrial sectors, older workers and primary education.
- **Mačva District (RS):** Women in younger and older age groups face significant representation gaps. They are also less represented in industry and entrepreneurship.

Table 8: Structural indicators on gender equality in the pilot regions

		Komárom-Esztergom County (HU)	Zasavska Region (SI)	Styrian Iron Road (AT)	Pernik Province (BG)	Karlovy Vary Region (CZ)	Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA)	Mačva District (RS)
Gender gap – structures	Underrepresentation of women (< 40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger workers (15-29) Older workers (65-89) Workers with primary or less education Workers with tertiary education Workers in agriculture Workers in industry Workers in R&D Self-employed workers (entrepreneurs) Wages in agriculture* Wages in industry* Managerial positions STEM students STEM graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger workers (15-29) Older workers (65-89) Workers with secondary education Workers agriculture Workers in industry Workers in R&D Self-employed workers (entrepreneurs) Wages in industry* Managerial positions STEM students STEM graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in agriculture Workers in industry Wages* STEM students STEM graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in agriculture Workers in industry Wages in industry* STEM students STEM graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in agriculture Workers in industry Workers in R&D Wages* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older workers (65-89) Workers with primary or less education Workers in agriculture Workers in industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger workers (15-29) Older workers (65-89) Workers with secondary education Workers in industry Self-employed workers (entrepreneurs)
	Overrepresentation of women (> 60%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older population (+65) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with tertiary education Workers in services 	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older population (+65) Workers with tertiary education Workers in services 	/	/	/
	Widening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in R&D 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger workers (15-29) 	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in industry 	/	/	/
Gender gap – trends	Closing	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older population (+65) Wages in industry Wages in services 	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in R&D Wages in agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with primary or less education Self-employed workers (entrepreneurs) STEM students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle-aged workers (30-64) Workers with tertiary education Workers in services 	/
Territorial embeddedness	Underperformance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages in agriculture (> 10%) → NUTS 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in services (> 60%) → NUTS 0 level Wages in industry (> 10%) → NUTS 0 level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in agriculture (< 40%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with tertiary education (> 60%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level Workers in services (> 60%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level 	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with primary or less education (< 40%) → NUTS 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Younger workers (15-29) → Country level
	Overperformance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages in services (< 10%) → NUTS 2, NUTS 0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with primary or less education (> 40%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level 	/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wages in agriculture (< 10%) → NUTS 0 level Wages in services (< 10%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-employed workers (entrepreneurs) (> 40%) → NUTS 2 level, NUTS 0 level 	/	/

Source: National statistical offices

* The threshold is set to < 10%.

Gender Gap Trends

Commonalities: Gender gaps are either closing or widening across different dimensions.

Improvements are seen where policy or societal shifts have supported women's inclusion, while gaps widen in areas lacking targeted interventions. A general observation in seven pilot regions is that **gender gaps are closing rather than widening**, indicating positive trends towards higher levels of gender equality.

Specificities:

- Komárom-Esztergom County (HU): Despite notable gender gaps, no significant closures are observed. The negative trends in R&D sector continue to persist.
- Zasavska Region (SI): Gender wage gaps are closing. However, the gaps are widening for younger workers, suggesting challenges in integrating younger women into the workforce.
- Styrian Iron Road (AT): No significant changes observed, implying stagnation in addressing gender disparities.
- Pernik Province (BU): Positive trends in agriculture and R&D, but industrial sector remains a challenge.
- Karlovy Vary Region (CZ): Progress is observed in entrepreneurial activities and STEM education.
- Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA): Middle-aged women with tertiary education are gaining representation in services.
- Mačva District (RS): The lack of data does not allow any meaningful conclusions to be drawn

Territorial Embeddedness

Commonalities: The analysis of territorial embeddedness reveals clear patterns of underperformance or overperformance of seven pilot regions (NUTS 3 level) when compared to their respective cohesion regions (NUTS 2 level) or entire partner countries (NUTS 0 level). The results show **mixed outcomes when classifying pilot regions as underperformers or overperformers** relative to their wider territorial settings (NUTS 2 and NUTS 0 levels). This variation underscores the complex and context-specific nature of gender gaps, as regions often combine elements of both overperformance and underperformance depending on sectoral focus, demographic structures, and historical development. Overall, the results highlight that territorial embeddedness is shaped by systemic gender inequalities and economic conditions, with **no clear or uniform pattern of performance across the pilot regions**. It can be concluded that selected pilot regions do not necessarily have higher levels of gender inequality than their regional counterparts.

Specificities:

- Komárom-Esztergom County (HU): The overperformance of wages in services is matched by the underperformance of wages in agriculture.
- Zasavska Region (SI): The underperformance of wages in industry is clearly evident. The underperformance of workers in services (> 60%) is matched by the overperformance of workers with primary or less education (> 40%), signalling mixed directions for future directions.
- Styrian Iron Road (AT): The region shows underperformance in agriculture-related employment.
- Pernik Province (BU): The region demonstrates the structural imbalance of workers with tertiary education in services (> 60%). However, this is accompanied by an overperformance

of wages in agriculture and services, indicating a better position of women in the regional labour market.

- Karlovy Vary Region (CZ): The region shows overperformance in self-employment and entrepreneurship participation, signalling greater female activity in this domain.
- Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA): Structural gaps in primary or less education limit gender equality and certain aspects of regional development.
- Mačva District (RS): Young female workers face challenges compared to the national level, reflecting broader systemic issues in education and workforce participation.

PART III: SWOT analysis of women's employment in the pilot regions

Table 9 provides a **comprehensive summary of the SWOT analysis** conducted across the seven pilot regions of the WIN project, encapsulating the **key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats** affecting women's employment and economic participation. It captures both common patterns and context-specific nuances by aligning each factor with the relevant countries—Austria (AT), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA), Bulgaria (BU), Czech Republic (CZ), Hungary (HU), Serbia (RS), and Slovenia (SI)—which are shown in grey. This matrix format allows for a comparative view, showcasing how diverse regional realities intersect with systemic enablers and barriers to gender equality. The table serves as a **diagnostic tool**, highlighting where structural support is strong or lacking, and where interventions such as reskilling, childcare, policy reform, or cultural change may be most needed. It reflects not only the current landscape of women's labour market inclusion but also the **potential for transformative action** through targeted strategies and cross-regional collaboration.

Table 9: The summary of the SWOT analysis in pilot regions of the WIN project

STRENGTHS							WEAKNESSES						
1) Women's employment potential in the industrial sector							1) Underrepresentation of women in technical fields						
AT ✓	BA	BU	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
2) Jobs in traditionally women-dominated sectors							2) Gender pay gap and economic insecurity						
AT	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ	HU	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
3) Support programs and initiatives promoting women's employment, entrepreneurship, and career development							3) Lack of women in decision-making and managerial positions						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS	SI
4) The presence of female role models—successful women in business, politics, academia, and other key sectors							4) Lack of accessible childcare services, flexible work arrangements, and support for work-life balance						
AT ✓	BA	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
5) The geostrategic position							5) Entrenched traditional gender roles and weak institutional frameworks						
AT	BA	BU ✓	CZ	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
OPPORTUNITIES							THREATS						
1) Place-based opportunities for women's employment inclusion							1) Youth outmigration and demographic decline						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
2) Reskilling, targeted training and education pathways							2) Cultural barriers and gender norms						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI
3) Policy-driven empowerment and institutional support							3) Industrial dependency and economic vulnerability						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT	BA ✓	BU	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓
4) Social innovation							4) Lack of supportive infrastructure for work-life balance						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI ✓	AT	BA	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU	RS	SI ✓
5) Collaborative networks, strategic partnerships, and regional integration							5) External shocks and technological displacement						
AT ✓	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI	AT	BA ✓	BU ✓	CZ ✓	HU ✓	RS ✓	SI

Strengths of the pilot regions

Women's employment potential in the industrial sector is a notable strength in multiple regions, particularly in those with a strong industrial base or undergoing economic diversification. Styrian Iron Road (AT), Sokolovsko (CZ), Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), and Loznica (RS) all demonstrate efforts to integrate women into traditionally male-dominated industries such as engineering, manufacturing, automotive, and high-tech production. Styrian Iron Road (AT) has implemented targeted initiatives, such as "Women in Production" at voestalpine and gender-focused hiring at the Mining University of Leoben to actively increase female participation in industrial jobs. In this context, Mining University has the highest female share of students among technical universities in Austria (appr. 28%). Sokolovsko (CZ) benefits from a diverse industrial presence, including engineering, chemicals, and renewable energy, with growing opportunities for women in these fields. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) has transitioned from coal mining to high-tech and automotive industries, exhibiting low unemployment rates and providing new employment avenues for women in emerging industrial sectors. Loznica (RS) is seeing investment in automotive and textile industries, with major companies (Minth, Adient, Golden Lady) offering job opportunities for women, especially when inclusive hiring practices are emphasized. While industrial employment for women is not equally developed in all regions, these areas demonstrate a significant potential toward gender inclusion in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

Jobs in traditionally women-dominated sectors such as healthcare, education, administration, and other services are a common strength in multiple regions, particularly Trbovlje (SI), Radomir (BU), Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA), and Loznica (RS). These sectors provide stable employment opportunities for women and contribute significantly to local economies. Trbovlje (SI) has a strong female presence in healthcare, education, and retirement homes, with many women also holding managerial positions in public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and municipal offices. Radomir (BU) similarly has a high concentration of women in education, trade, healthcare, and administrative roles, supported by flexible work options that allow for a better work-life balance. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) benefits from public sector support programs that facilitate women's employment in these fields, alongside growing awareness of gender equality in the workplace. Loznica (RS) has a well-established tradition of women working in hospitality, care, and service industries, sectors where they continue to play a dominant role. These regions demonstrate how employment in traditionally female-dominated sectors remains a strong economic pillar while also benefiting from policies and initiatives that support women's participation and career advancement in these fields.

Support programs and initiatives promoting women's employment, entrepreneurship, and career development are a key strength in many regions, especially Trbovlje (SI), Sokolovsko (CZ), Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA), Radomir (BU), and Styrian Iron Road (AT). These initiatives, often backed by local governments, NGOs, or private sector stakeholders, play a crucial role in fostering economic inclusion and reducing gender disparities in the workforce. Trbovlje (SI) has a wide range of employment support programmes (e.g., Multigenerational Centre, Business Incubator, PONI, career fairs, SPOT Point, active employment policy program (ESS), etc.). Sokolovsko (CZ) has strong regional initiatives, including business mentoring and training programs led by CzechInvest, INION, KARP, and KHK KK, alongside entrepreneurial networks like the "Meeting of Women Entrepreneurs of the Karlovy Vary Region." Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) benefits from public sector programs and international NGO support, including employment subsidies, self-employment initiatives, and the Linnovate Business Park's Start-up Academy and Business Incubator. Loznica (RS) also benefits from national and donor-funded programs that support women's self-employment and entrepreneurship.

These programs include National Employment Service subsidies, SME grants, and training initiatives organised by donors and national/international NGOs (e.g., EU IPA cross-border cooperation) and large companies based in Loznica. Radomir (BU) has local initiatives supporting female entrepreneurs through programs focused on handmade products, beauty, and agriculture, creating networking and business development opportunities. Styrian Iron Road (AT) promotes women in STEM fields through specialized programs like “Yolante” (Young Ladies Network of Technology) and targeted HR strategies at voestalpine to empower female employees, particularly in industrial roles. These regions highlight the importance of structured support systems in facilitating women’s professional growth, whether through training, funding, networking, or tailored policy measures.

The presence of female role models—successful women in business, politics, academia, and other key sectors—is a significant strength in multiple regions, particularly Trbovlje (SI), Styrian Iron Road (AT), Sokolovsko (CZ), Loznica (RS), and Radomir (BU). These role models serve as inspiration for younger generations, demonstrating that women can succeed in leadership positions, entrepreneurship, and traditionally male-dominated fields. Trbovlje (SI) has notable female figures, including a former mayoress, the current vice mayoress, and women entrepreneurs like dr. Maša Jazbec, who have succeeded in the technological sector. Styrian Iron Road (AT) benefits from initiatives such as the “Iron Women” network and highly successful female entrepreneurs and managers who provide visible examples of women thriving in STEM and industrial careers. Sokolovsko (CZ) has women in leadership roles across public and private sectors, including industrial companies, who act as role models and contribute to closing gender gaps in STEM and entrepreneurship. Loznica (RS) promotes female role models through networking events, conferences, and organizations like the Association of Business Women Kreativna vizija Loznica, which enhances visibility for successful women in business and entrepreneurship. Radomir (BU) has prominent female leaders in education, social services, and the judiciary, as well as successful entrepreneurs in sectors like beauty, handmade products, and agriculture, demonstrating diverse career possibilities for women. These regions show that strong female role models can positively impact social attitudes, encourage women’s participation in leadership and business, and contribute to greater gender equality in employment.

The geostrategic position of several pilot regions plays a crucial role in shaping employment opportunities and access to education, particularly in Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), Radomir (BU), and Loznica (RS). These regions benefit from their favourable locations, strong transport connections, and proximity to major economic centres, enabling better job accessibility and cross-border economic integration. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) is strategically positioned within the Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava corridor, providing access to cross-border employment opportunities and integration into major industrial networks, which enhances job prospects for women in diverse sectors. Radomir (BU) is located near major cities like Sofia and Blagoevgrad, benefiting from good transport connections that allow easy commuting for work and studies, increasing access to education and employment. Loznica (RS) is situated near the Bosnia and Herzegovina border, offering economic opportunities linked to cross-border trade, tourism, and industrial development, especially with ongoing infrastructure improvements like the high-speed road to Šabac. These regions demonstrate how a strategic location can improve economic prospects, support regional development, and expand employment opportunities for women through better connectivity and access to diverse job markets.

Weaknesses of the pilot regions

Underrepresentation of women in technical fields such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), R&D, and industry-related professions remains a significant weakness across all pilot regions. Cultural expectations, traditional gender roles, and a lack of targeted support programs often discourage women from pursuing careers in these high-paying sectors. Women in Trbovlje (SI) are underrepresented in industry, R&D, and STEM fields, with persistent gender barriers and traditional roles preventing them from entering technical professions. A male-dominated industrial culture is evident in Styrian Iron Road (AT), with women making up only 16% of employees in the key industry employer (voestalpine) and just 10% of professors at the Mining University of Leoben (MUL). A strong industrial orientation has led to a workforce dominated by men in Sokolovsko (CZ), with women excluded from technical professions and facing barriers in leadership and R&D. Women in Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) are largely absent from high-paying industrial sectors like automotive and technology, limiting their access to well-paid, stable jobs. Women in Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) face strong cultural and social norms discouraging them from entering industrial and technical fields, leading to their exclusion from key economic sectors. Women in Loznica (RS), particularly older workers and those from marginalized backgrounds, lack the skills and retraining opportunities necessary to transition into technical professions. A male-dominated workforce in construction, engineering, and security results in women in Radomir (BU) being systematically excluded from well-paying technical roles.

Gender pay gap and economic insecurity represent systemic economic disadvantages across all pilot regions. Women in Trbovlje (SI) earn lower wages, particularly in industrial sectors, reflecting gendered wage disparities and limited career progression. Styrian Iron Road (AT) has the largest gender pay gap in Styria, with many women in part-time, lower-paid jobs, reinforcing long-term financial insecurity. Women in Sokolovsko (CZ) and Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) are often employed in underpaid, mismatched jobs, with limited flexibility or mobility, contributing to unequal pay and career stagnation. Women in Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) are employed in precarious, informal, or low-wage service jobs, lacking benefits and stability. Rural and marginalized women in Loznica (RS) struggle to access financing for start-ups or business initiatives, limiting their economic autonomy. Despite often having higher education, women in Radomir (BU) are affected by low wages and limited access to stable and high-level jobs, especially in private sectors. In all these contexts, women's financial security is undermined by both visible wage inequalities and invisible systemic barriers. These dynamics restrict women's autonomy and reinforce broader patterns of economic dependence and social inequality. Targeted policies to close wage gaps, support women's entrepreneurship, and promote access to secure employment are urgently needed to reverse these trends.

Lack of women in decision-making and managerial positions is still a common weakness across most involved regions. Despite some successful support programs and initiatives in some pilot regions (see strengths above), women still face significant barriers to entrepreneurship and business development, mainly due to limited financial support, a lack of tailored mentoring and training programs, and insufficient institutional backing. These obstacles prevent women from starting, sustaining, and expanding their businesses, reinforcing gender disparities in economic independence and leadership. Styrian Iron Road (AT) exhibits low percentage of female political decision-makers, while Sokolovsko (CZ) reports a lack of women in senior management positions. Similarly, structural barriers prevent women in Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) from accessing leadership and decision-making positions in key industries. Women in Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) face structural and

cultural barriers, which are reflected in limited employment opportunities for highly skilled female workers, resulting in high unemployment and emigration. Women in Radomir (BU) have limited opportunities in the private sector. These challenges highlight the need for stronger institutional support, targeted funding programs, and networking initiatives to encourage women's participation in business and entrepreneurship.

Lack of accessible childcare services, flexible work arrangements, and support for work-life balance is a major challenge across all pilot regions. These barriers disproportionately affect women, limiting their ability to participate fully in the labour market, advance in their careers, or start businesses. Traditional gender roles, where women are expected to take on the majority of caregiving responsibilities, further reinforce these inequalities. Trbovlje (SI) exhibits a shortage of childcare services, making it difficult for women to balance work and family responsibilities. The availability of childcare services, especially in smaller municipalities, is also insufficient in Styrian Iron Road (AT). In the Austrian case, there is also a lack of part-time and flexible jobs in industry. Inadequate public transport also prevents many women from entering or remaining in the labour market. Women in Sokolovsko (CZ) face limited childcare infrastructure, which affects their ability to take up full-time work. The lack of employer policies on flexible working arrangements and poor transport accessibility exacerbate the problem. Rigid working conditions and inadequate childcare facilities also make it difficult for women in Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) to reconcile work and family responsibilities. This often leads to women working part-time or dropping out of the labour market. In addition, poor transport links in some parts of the Hungarian region limit access to employment opportunities, particularly for women living in rural areas. A severe shortage of childcare facilities forces many women in Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) to stay at home or work in informal, low-paid jobs that allow them to cope with caring responsibilities. A lack of childcare infrastructure, coupled with traditional expectations that women should be the primary caregivers, limits women's career opportunities and financial independence in Loznica (RS). Similarly, a lack of childcare facilities and limited opportunities for part-time work make it difficult for women to maintain stable employment while caring for children in Radomir (BU). Without improvements in childcare availability, flexible work policies, and employer support for work-life balance, women in these regions will continue to face major barriers to economic participation and career advancement.

Entrenched traditional gender roles and weak institutional frameworks continue to impede progress toward gender equality in all pilot regions. These barriers are embedded in regional cultures and social norms and are often reinforced by inadequate policy implementation, limited interinstitutional cooperation, and a lack of targeted action plans. The result is an environment where women have fewer opportunities in education, employment, and leadership. In Trbovlje (SI), traditional attitudes and a lack of gender equality plans hinder women's access to technical education and emerging industries. There is also a lack of coordination between institutions, which limits the effectiveness of existing initiatives. Styrian Iron Road (AT) has a historically male-dominated culture and a predominantly rural lifestyle, which makes it difficult for women to pursue careers in industry and reinforces traditional gender roles. Similarly, Sokolovsko (CZ) has a deep-rooted male-oriented industrial culture and persistent stereotypes, restricting women's career options. The absence of strong political support or tailored career guidance further exacerbates the issue. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) also reflects limited institutional prioritization of gender issues, suggesting similar patterns. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) exhibits strong cultural and social norms, which continue to define women primarily as caregivers, thereby limiting their active participation in the formal labour market. Loznica (RS) copes with cultural stereotypes, especially in rural areas, which reduce women's engagement with support programs and training opportunities,

particularly in male-dominated fields. Radomir (BU) reports discriminatory hiring practices and employer biases, especially against women with young children. These findings highlight that without cultural transformation and institutional accountability, even the best-designed programs will fail to bridge gender gaps. Coordinated efforts involving policy reforms, public awareness campaigns, and institutional training are essential to shift both mindsets and systemic barriers.

Opportunities of the pilot regions

Place-based opportunities for women's employment inclusion are recognised across all pilot regions. Emerging industries, tourism, creative sectors, and digital technologies offer promising avenues for increasing women's participation in the workforce. Common across all areas is the potential to link local development goals with inclusive employment strategies, especially by leveraging underused sectors and regional assets. Trbovlje (SI) can benefit from a high-tech company supporting women in STEM fields and R&D activities. Styrian Iron Road (AT) sees potential in technological advances and labour shortages creating space for women in traditional male-dominated production. Sokolovsko (CZ) identifies renewable energy, IT, and creative industries as high-growth fields. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) focuses on high-tech expansion in STEM fields. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) highlights the potential of rural tourism, local products, and digital tools. Loznica (RS) combines the promising role of investor collaboration in automotive and textile industries with formalizing rural tourism and crafts. Radomir (BU) points to IT, tourism, and creative industries as ways for women to turn skills and hobbies into viable careers.

Reskilling, targeted training and education pathways for women are identified as key levers for improving women's access to better jobs and narrowing gender gaps in emerging sectors. Common to all regions is the recognition that STEM education, digital skills, and tailored learning opportunities in entrepreneurship are critical to enabling women to participate in high-growth and better-paying fields. Trbovlje (SI) focuses on STEM-oriented vocational education and breaking gender stereotypes in ICT. Styrian Iron Road (AT) highlights ongoing reskilling efforts with further potential. Sokolovsko (CZ) emphasises retraining and mentoring programs such as the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) sees digital skills development as a gateway to innovative employment. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) supports educational reforms aligned with labour market needs, entrepreneurship and STEM promotion. Loznica (RS) proposes a mix of upskilling, job fairs, and employer incentives. Radomir (BU) underscores the need for reskilling and STEM-based career diversification. Together, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to equipping women with the tools to thrive in evolving labour markets.

Policy-driven empowerment and institutional support for gender equality represent a strong focus on supporting women's integration into the labour market. A shared feature across all regions is the leveraging of national and EU-level gender equality frameworks, which provide both the strategic orientation and financial mechanisms necessary to enable systemic change. Each region builds upon this foundation with context-specific elements. In Trbovlje (SI), the Just Transition Fund is seen as a vehicle for creating new employment opportunities for women, particularly aligned with the implementation of the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030 (ReNPEMŽM30). Styrian Iron Road (AT) focuses on industrial best practices (e.g., voestalpine) and specialized programmes like 'Frauen in Handwerk und Technik' to attract women into traditionally male-dominated sectors. Sokolovsko (CZ) highlights the importance of EU frameworks and funding as a driver of regional equality initiatives. In Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), the national action plan 'Empowering Women in Family and Society (2021–2030)' underpins a wide range of reskilling and entrepreneurship support activities. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA)

combines EU integration processes with the effective implementation of national gender strategies to foster labour market access. Loznica (RS) benefits from a solid legal and institutional framework, including the 'Law on Gender Equality' and dedicated bodies to combat discrimination. Finally, Radomir (BU) sees EU and national policies as a promising vehicle to stimulate women's participation in the workforce.

Social innovation might emerge as the central pillar of strategies aimed at enhancing women's access to employment and improving work conditions across diverse regions. Common to all contexts is the emphasis on flexible work models, inclusive support structures, and community-driven solutions that align with women's varied needs and life circumstances. In Trbovlje (SI), gender-sensitive innovations like remote work, mentoring, and lifelong learning could improve employment quality for women. Styrian Iron Road (AT) offers a strong example of company-led social innovation, with voestalpine providing childcare solutions even for shift workers, thereby easing work-life balance. Sokolovsko (CZ) combines innovative work models with awareness-raising campaigns to potentially reduce cultural and structural barriers to women's entrepreneurship and employment. In Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), EU-funded initiatives such as the WIN project foster locally tailored innovations like business incubators and flexible job arrangements. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) promotes social change through inspirational female role models and diaspora engagement, linking innovation with cultural transformation. Loznica (RS) blends intergenerational collaboration and social enterprises to support vulnerable women, supported by flexible hours and institutional family-care measures. Radomir (BU) illustrates the need for a holistic approach, combining hybrid work, digital entrepreneurship, mentoring, and expanded access to training information and networks. Together, these initiatives showcase how social innovation could be operationalized as a powerful tool for reshaping regional labour markets and making them more accessible for women.

Collaborative networks, strategic partnerships, and regional integration lie at the heart of emerging opportunities to support women's employment and entrepreneurship. This group underscores the power of ecosystem building, where local, regional, and international stakeholders work together to generate new avenues for female participation in the labour market. Styrian Iron Road (AT) focuses on the integration of industrial employment themes into the female network "Iron Women", showing how thematic networking can focus collective efforts. Sokolovsko (CZ) champions partnerships between local government, NGOs, and the private sector to foster women-led initiatives through a collaborative ecosystem approach. In Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), both cross-border collaboration with Austria and Slovakia and a growing internal support structure for women entrepreneurs open up alternative employment paths. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) leverages its proximity to Croatia and the EU to tap into broader markets and policy support, reinforcing the strategic value of location. Similarly, Loznica (RS) views infrastructure development and trade integration with Bosnia and Herzegovina as means to empower women in business and tourism through expanded market access. Radomir (BU) emphasizes regional partnerships for funding and career advancement, highlighting the importance of network-driven support mechanisms. Together, these initiatives exemplify how regional cooperation and ecosystem strategies can catalyse structural change and unlock new, sustainable opportunities for women across borders and sectors.

Threats of the pilot regions

Youth outmigration and demographic decline pose major structural threats to gender equality and inclusive regional development across all observed regions. The persistent loss of young, skilled individuals—especially women—undermines local labour markets, innovation potential, and the effectiveness of employment-focused gender initiatives. In Trbovlje (SI), over-reliance on a single

employer and insufficient high-skill job opportunities drive daily commuting and emigration, particularly among the educated youth. Styrian Iron Road (AT) reports continued outmigration, notably of young women, which exacerbates gender imbalance and labour shortages. Sokolovsko (CZ) struggles with a lack of dynamic jobs, contributing to talent drain and reinforcing gender disparities in a stagnating economy. In Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), both female outmigration and broader demographic decline hinder workforce renewal. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) faces negative population growth, skilled labour loss, and entrenched poverty among vulnerable groups, while Loznica (RS) experiences a shrinking entrepreneurial base due to youth migration to larger cities like Belgrade. These patterns reflect a deep-rooted challenge to retaining talent and building resilient, gender-inclusive communities.

Cultural barriers and gender norms persist as deeply entrenched threats across multiple regions, limiting women's participation in the workforce, leadership roles, and economic development. These threats are primarily rooted in traditional stereotypes, patriarchal social expectations, and systemic inertia, which collectively restrict progress toward gender equality despite ongoing efforts. In Styrian Iron Road (AT), enduring stereotypes and unequal distribution of care work between genders continue to shape women's professional limitations. Sokolovsko (CZ) highlights the impact of cultural resistance and institutional stagnation, both of which hinder meaningful gender equality reforms. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) identifies persistent gender roles that sustain occupational segregation and restrict women from advancing into leadership or technical fields. In Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA), structural and systemic obstacles continue to undermine the implementation and impact of gender-focused policies and campaigns. Loznica (RS) illustrates how patriarchal norms and low public awareness stall improvements in women's workforce presence and entrepreneurial activities, despite cultural precedents for strong female figures. Finally, Radomir (BU) presents a comprehensive spectrum of challenges: from gender stereotypes, unequal care burdens, and the gender pay gap to workplace discrimination, limited business funding for women, and institutional fragmentation—resulting in a precarious and exclusionary labour market for women. These overlapping issues demonstrate how cultural and societal norms continue to act as a major systemic brake on gender equity and social progress.

Industrial dependency and economic vulnerability represent critical threats to women's employment opportunities and regional resilience across several regions. These risks are linked to outdated industrial legacies, insufficient adaptation to modern economic trends, and structural underinvestment in skills development—all of which disproportionately impact women. In Trbovlje (SI), economic dependence on a single actor (Dewesoft and Katapult) raises the risk of the town becoming a “company town,” vulnerable to the decisions of one dominant employer. Sokolovsko (CZ) faces stagnation due to reliance on declining traditional industries, with limited transformation towards modern, inclusive sectors, which could further marginalize women from the evolving workforce. In Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), the lack of investment in lifelong learning and reskilling poses a serious threat to women's employability in fast-changing job markets. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) highlights the compounded effects of poverty and precarious employment, particularly for vulnerable populations, as a major barrier to economic security. Loznica (RS) continues to grapple with the legacy of Viskoza's industrial collapse, where long-term unemployment and re-skilling challenges remain prevalent among women affected by the factory's closure. Together, these examples illustrate how economic fragility and historical industrial decline—when combined with underdeveloped support systems—can severely limit progress toward gender-equitable employment and sustainable regional development.

Lack of supportive infrastructure for work-life balance threatens women's participation in the labour market by creating material barriers that limit their ability to pursue or sustain employment. These threats are primarily linked to inadequate housing and childcare services, especially in contexts where gender-sensitive policies remain underdeveloped. In Trbovlje (SI), the shortage of housing and limited available land for construction constrain young people's ability to settle and establish stable living conditions, indirectly affecting women's access to local employment and economic independence. In Sokolovsko (CZ) and Radomir (BU), the absence of childcare facilities for children under the age of three is a direct barrier to mothers' re-entry into the workforce, reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting women's career progression. While data from other regions in this category is not detailed in this selection, the identified threats emphasize how basic infrastructural deficits can significantly impede gender equality goals, particularly when they prevent women from balancing family responsibilities with economic participation.

External shocks and technological displacement pose significant threats to gender equality in employment by increasing the vulnerability of women in already precarious labour market positions. Across the regions, challenges such as global economic crises, political instability, automation, and climate change are identified as major disruptors that disproportionately affect women, particularly those in low-wage, insecure, or gender-segregated sectors. In Sokolovsko (CZ), the potential for worsening gender gaps due to global economic downturns and ineffective policy implementation is a key concern, especially due to the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. Komárom-Esztergom County (HU) warns that automation may displace women in routine roles, while economic shocks could deepen regional inequalities. Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA) notes local and national instability, including the risk of losing EU funding, which jeopardizes long-term gender equality initiatives. In Loznica (RS), political volatility threatens consistent gender-focused support, while economic crises hit women hardest due to their overrepresentation in insecure jobs. Radomir (BU) highlights a complex intersection of threats: automation replacing female-dominated roles, economic instability undermining part-time and low-wage work, and climate change impacting women in rural and agricultural sectors. This convergence of crises underscores how external shocks and technological change can reinforce existing gender inequalities, especially where social and institutional buffers are weak or inconsistent.

CONCLUSIONS

Common patterns across pilot regions

The comparative study across the seven pilot regions—Trbovlje (SI), Styrian Iron Road (AT), Sokolovsko (CZ), Komárom-Esztergom County (HU), Radomir (BG), Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA), and Loznica (RS)—reveals persistent and structural gender inequalities in the labour markets of peripheral industrial areas. These are shaped by intersecting factors of historical industrial dependence, demographic shifts, socio-cultural norms, and limited institutional responsiveness.

Several key patterns emerged:

- **Underrepresentation of women in industrial sectors and STEM:** Women are significantly underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and technology. This is compounded by their low enrolment in STEM education and exclusion from R&D activities, which are critical for accessing high-paying and future-proof jobs.
- **Gender pay gaps and precarious work:** Despite relatively high educational attainment among women in some regions (e.g., Trbovlje, Komárom-Esztergom), wage gaps persist. Women are often clustered in low-paid, part-time, or informal employment within service sectors, which offer less economic stability and limited career progression.
- **Barriers to leadership and entrepreneurship:** Women face institutional and cultural barriers to entrepreneurship and managerial roles, including limited access to capital, mentorship, and supportive networks. These limitations are often reinforced by gendered expectations around caregiving and domestic responsibilities.
- **Inadequate support structures:** Across all regions, the lack of affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and supportive mobility infrastructure consistently hinders women's full participation in the labour force.
- **Cultural norms and institutional gaps:** Traditional gender roles remain deeply entrenched, particularly in rural and post-socialist contexts. Institutional mechanisms for gender equality are either weak or under-implemented, and policies often fail to account for the intersecting challenges women face based on age, education, ethnicity, and caregiving responsibilities.

Region-specific dynamics

While the regions share many similarities, there are important local specificities:

- **Trbovlje (SI):** High female education levels contrast with poor labour market integration, especially in technical sectors. Outmigration of young women and reliance on a single high-tech employer heighten vulnerability.
- **Styrian Iron Road (AT):** The region is a steel production hub with some targeted gender inclusion programmes in industry (e.g., voestalpine), yet strong traditional norms and an aging workforce challenge sustainability.
- **Sokolovsko (CZ):** A legacy of coal mining, low educational levels and low wages, and limited access for women to retraining programs due to persistent stereotypes that view them primarily as caregivers exacerbate social and economic marginalisation.
- **Komárom-Esztergom County (HU):** While the region has robust industrial growth, women are largely absent from decision-making and industrial leadership. Gender gaps persist despite high employment rates.

- **Radomir (BU):** Economic decline during post-industrialisation has led to limited opportunities, yet local initiatives are emerging in vocational training and female entrepreneurship.
- **Herzeg-Bosnian County (BA):** A rural region with weak infrastructure and dominant domestic roles for women. Limited institutional support exacerbates barriers to entry into the formal workforce.
- **Loznica (RS):** With a growing industrial base and revitalised tourism, women face unequal access to new economic opportunities. Entrepreneurship is growing, but unevenly supported.

Actionable pathways: Social innovation and policy

Based on the empirical findings, the study recommends the following strategic directions to improve the position of women in labour markets of peripheral industrial regions:

Social innovation pathways

- **Community-based models:** Foster women's networks, peer support groups, and local innovation labs that help identify and respond to specific challenges faced by women in different regions.
- **Use of storytelling and role models:** Share success stories and role models through campaigns and educational programmes to challenge cultural barriers and inspire new career trajectories.
- **Integrated employment ecosystems:** Pilot holistic models that link reskilling, mentoring, entrepreneurship, and employer engagement in a cohesive local strategy. These ecosystems can be incubated in innovation hubs and expanded through regional action plans.
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration:** Encourage partnerships among municipalities, employers, educational institutions, and civil society to co-create interventions, monitor progress, and share learning across borders.

Policy pathways

- **Mainstream gender in regional and industrial policy:** Gender-sensitive planning must be embedded in regional development frameworks, particularly in policies related to industrial transformation, education, and employment.
- **Strengthen institutional capacity and coordination:** Regional and local authorities should establish or reinforce equality bodies and inter-sectoral working groups to align education, labour, and social policy with gender objectives.
- **Invest in care infrastructure and flexibility:** Expand childcare facilities, promote flexible and remote work options, and incentivise employers to adopt family-friendly practices.
- **Targeted reskilling and STEM education:** Develop inclusive vocational and digital literacy programs tailored for women, especially in high-growth and high-tech sectors. Schools and employers should collaborate to combat stereotypes in STEM pathways.
- **Support women's entrepreneurship:** Provide access to funding, business incubation, and mentoring for women-led enterprises. National and regional governments can develop grant schemes and microloans that prioritize women in underserved areas.

This comparative study not only diagnoses structural inequalities but also presents a foundation for place-based, gender-transformative strategies in the Danube Region. It affirms that inclusive labour markets require both top-down policy reform and bottom-up innovation, particularly in regions often

overlooked in national development agendas. Through the continued collaboration of WIN project partners, these insights can catalyse lasting institutional and social change.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Basic contextual description of the Municipality of Trbovlje, Slovenia

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

Trbovlje is the largest town in the Central Sava Development Region. It is located about 50 km east of the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, connected to a railway corridor, but not to the national highway. Geographically, it is located in a narrow valley surrounded by hilly terrain, which makes road connections somewhat difficult and limits the available space for settlements. The population and all economic activities are centred in the valley of the Sava River. It is considered the regional capital of the smallest administrative region called "Zasavska region" and is also quite small in size, with about 16,000 people in the municipality and 57,000 in the region. Demographically, the town has been shrinking, especially after independence in 1991, when in some years it lost almost 1000 inhabitants per decade. In its peak years (late 1980s, early 1990s), the town had about 20,000 inhabitants.

It is a traditional former mining town that today faces several structural problems: health problems, below-average incomes, environmental problems and others. The state has financially supported the mine closure and economic restructuring, but the process of socioeconomic and environmental transformation from mining and heavy industry is rather slow. However, some high-tech companies suggest that Trbovlje may be on a new path of transformation. According to official statistics, the region is the least developed in Slovenia, with GDP per capita almost half the national average (€14,500 in 2022). The unemployment rate has fallen in recent years, mainly due to daily commuting to the nearby cities Celje and Ljubljana.

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

Coal mining

Coal mining in the Central Sava region developed significantly in the early 19th century despite initial exploitation dating back to the 17th century, primarily hindered by limited coal consumers and inadequate transport links. Its importance surged in the latter half of the 19th century with the advent of railway systems facilitating exports. Post-World War II, the industry peaked, propelling regional industrial development. The closing of the Trbovlje thermoelectric power station in 1999, decided by a national referendum, marked a pivotal decline, leading to the shutdown of the coal mine and associated businesses, which were integral to the town's economic fabric.

Industrialisation

Industrialization in the region spurred population growth and urbanization, reaching 60% by the 1990s. The demand for workers led to significant immigration from other Yugoslav republics during the 1980s. The era also saw the establishment of women's factories to promote female emancipation, a political move that lacked economic foresight, pushing these industries into debt due to obsolete technologies and low productivity. This political planning of the location of industry was uneconomic and eventually pushed the companies into debt. Factories were technically obsolete and productivity was low. The largest factories were Peko (shoe production), Iskra (semiconductor production) and IPOZ (production of protective equipment). Today, mines have been closed, together with past labour-intensive industries (including women's factories) leaving the Central Sava region as one of the most environmentally degraded regions in Slovenia.

Deindustrialisation and multiple crisis

After Slovenia declared independence, the regional economy lost its Yugoslavian market, and the working-class population lost its role in society, leading to economic decline of the region. The region failed to restructure and adapt to the new socioeconomic context. Despite economic crisis and high unemployment rates, people have remained passive and expected incentives (culture of dependency), especially from the state. The region has faced brain drain, increasing social problems. In 2000s brought strengthening of the sustainability discourse and the law of the gradual closure of mines in the Central Sava region which provided state aid for economic restructuring of the region between 2000–2006. Nevertheless, economy in the region has been lagging behind the majority of other Slovenia's regions.

Environmentalism and emergence of new industries

Environmental advocacy grew in the new millennium, particularly against pollution from the Lafarge-owned Trbovlje cement plant which began hazardous waste incineration, sparking a lengthy legal battle concluded in 2014 with the denial of an environmental permit by the state. The second decade of the 21st century was marked by the rise of some high-tech companies (Dewesoft, Diotec Semiconductor, Telekom). Trbovlje nevertheless remains a former mining town with deep structural problems manifested in unemployment, depopulation, poor health of the population and environmental degradation. The weak local response to past economic shocks can be attributed to the former industrial development, which was mainly politically and ideologically driven, rather than the result of industrial culture, tradition and innovation.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

The primary economic driver in Trbovlje and its broader region has been the industrial and mining sectors. During the 1970s, the secondary economic sector, which includes mining and manufacturing, constituted over 65% of all employment opportunities in the area. This dominance waned following the economic downturn of 1991, which resulted in the closure of several labour-intensive factories, reducing the sector's employment share to 55% by 1995. A significant decline occurred with the cessation of coal mining activities in 2000, when the proportion plummeted to

25%, falling below the national average and signalling Trbovlje's transition to a post-industrial status. Concurrently, total employment numbers also decreased from 7,000 to approximately 4,000 from year 2000 to 2015. This reduction in local job opportunities precipitated a marked increase in out-commuting among the workforce; whereas 30% of the local labour force sought employment in other areas in 2000, this percentage escalated to nearly 70% by 2020.

Predominantly, these workers commute to proximate urban centres such as Ljubljana and Celje.

Unemployment has been a consistent issue in the region, with current rates, significantly exceeding the national average. During the economic downturn from 2010 to 2015, unemployment reached a peak of over 20%. The majority of employment is found within the private service sector and several large public institutions, notably in healthcare (regional hospital) and education (secondary schools). Additionally, there is an emerging sector in high-tech industries, led by companies such as Dewesoft and a business incubator named Katapult. These organizations are attracting a younger workforce of engineers and other innovative professionals. A notable intersectoral spillover is occurring between the technological and creative industries, catalysing new economic initiatives in areas such as software development, artificial intelligence, robotics, and related fields.

The town is confronting several urban development challenges. Although the population is gradually declining, the existing housing stock remains largely outdated, and opportunities for new residential construction are limited. There have been efforts to redevelop abandoned industrial sites; however, these initiatives have met mixed reactions within the community, predominantly resulting in the construction of shopping malls and parking facilities. Significant potential is acknowledged in the renovation of older mining housing areas ("mining colonies") but these efforts are hindered by heritage conservation laws. Additionally, the community is divided over its future spatial and socioeconomic development plans. One fraction advocates for removing the remnants of industrial heritage to make way for new developments, while another views these historical elements as integral to the town's revitalization and a foundation for future growth.

The region is characterized by its dense institutional infrastructure, a legacy of its role as a regional NUTS3 centre. It hosts a variety of institutions including the local municipality, a regional development agency, and regional branches of various chambers. Public facilities include a regional hospital and two secondary schools—vocational and general high school. Several enterprises in Trbovlje maintain robust affiliations with public universities and research institutes, most notably Telkom, Diotec Semiconductor and Dewesoft.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

Women's factories were established in Zasavje after the Second World War, during socialism. The 1946 constitution guaranteed women the same right to work and pay as men. Zasavje was an industrial basin where men were employed in large numbers, but women's jobs were infinitely fewer. The decision to establish women's factories in Trbovlje was therefore political and ideological, rather than economic. During Slovenia's independence, the majority of women's factories closed one by one, the last one in 2005. Hundreds of women lost their jobs. The reasons were mainly economic: the price of labour was too high compared to the global market and competition from the Middle and Far East and the companies were highly indebted.

The women's factories in Zasavje were a great help in supporting families and also in the social empowerment of women. The work was arduous. But the women's income made them more independent and self-confident. This was evident even when the women's "factories" were closed down. The most famous is the struggle of women workers in the shoe industry after the factory went bankrupt. The famous Peko's women won this battle with the state and were granted compensation and other benefits after the bankruptcy.

Today, the position of women in the labour market is quite specific. For example, women have an above-average level of education (59% female compared to 41% male in tertiary education). They also tend to commute slightly less than men, perhaps indicating that they are largely employed in local public and private services (health, education, sales...). The wage gap is higher than the Slovenian average, despite their higher average education. Women living in Trbovlje earn 8% less than men (the average pay gap in Slovenia is 6.1%). There is no real difference between men and women in terms of unemployment: in 2023 the unemployment rate for women was 8% and for men 8.3%.

Trbovlje has seen notable advances in its economy and education sectors, particularly at the Trbovlje Secondary Technical and Vocational School. This institution stands out as a leader in technical education across Slovenia due to its innovative approaches and strong ties with the local business community. It pioneered the TRIii conference, promoting innovation in technical education, which has since been emulated by other technical schools in the country. However, young women in the region are not fully utilizing these educational opportunities and the promising career paths in technical fields, with very few enrolling at the school. This underrepresentation is possibly linked to the gendered stigma associated with traditional female-dominated industries in the Central Sava region, like the semiconductor factory, which historically offered low-wage, less skilled jobs and mostly went bankrupt during economic transitions. Addressing these barriers could unlock significant potential for young women in high-value technical careers in Trbovlje.

Annex 2 – Basic contextual description of the Styrian Iron Road, Austria

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

The Styrian Iron Road (Steirische Eisenstrasse) is a unified geographical and historically evolved region and forms a very homogeneous and cohesive whole in economic and social terms. The region is characterised by a number of similar conditions: the common mining heritage, the massive demographic challenges away from the central area, the strong industrialisation in the core zone and the alpine landscape in the sometimes very sparsely populated areas in the periphery. Geographically the region is characterized by the densely populated Mur-Mürz-valley with heavy industry. Beyond that the region is sparsely populated, and forests cover 90 % of the land.

The region comprises 16 municipalities (59.944 inhabitants per 01-01-2023, 1.536 km²) in the district Leoben in the north-eastern part of the state of Styria. The major cities are Leoben (district capital), the city Trofaiach and the mining town Eisenerz. Austria's major cities Vienna, Linz, Salzburg & Graz are all less than 2 hours driving time away. Good railway connections to all of them exist as well.

The educational level of the labour force in general is high, but there's still high demand for more qualified workers. Over a quarter of the 25–64-year-old resident population has a high school certificate ("Matura") or university degree. This puts the NUTS3 region Eastern Upper Styria in second place in a state-wide comparison after Graz. The wage level in the central urban area is also above average, which can be attributed to the strong industry, the university and university-affiliated companies (around 700 jobs in R&D), among other things. In 2020, the district of Leoben had the second-highest gross median income and the second-highest stationary purchasing power in Styria (after Graz).

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

19th century

From the very beginning, the region around the Styrian Erzberg was characterised by the processing of the ironstone extracted there. The blast furnaces in Vordernberg, which still exist today, are a good illustration of the 19th century. With the establishment of the first rolling mill in Donawitz (nowadays part of Leoben) in 1834, the foundation stone was laid in Leoben-Donawitz for the steel industry that still exists in the region today. In 1881, the Donawitz steelworks became the property of Österreichische Alpine Montangesellschaft, and in 1890 it underwent a major reorganisation. Donawitz achieved dominance within the group, largely thanks to the new railway connection across the Prädichl mountain pass. The rapidly growing railway networks with their bridges, the industrial plants and the department stores: everything needed rails, beams and

profiles made of steel in those early days - a huge market that had to be served. Donawitz became the largest steelworks on the continent. During this time, the Donawitz steelworks recruited people from all regions of the monarchy. In 1880, the census registered 5,500 people in Donawitz, ten years later the population had risen to 8,000, and in 1910 to 15,500.

20th century - war and post-war years

The economic crisis in the 1930s hit Österreichische Alpine Montangesellschaft hard and Donawitz was on the verge of bankruptcy. However, Styrian ore and the Donawitz plant became indispensable for Hitler's Germany's war, and production volumes almost doubled. The plant was largely dismantled by the Russian occupying power after 1945, rebuilt with ERP funds (European Recovery Programme, commonly known as "Marshall plan") in the 1950s and was regarded as a prestigious project of "nationalised industry".

1970s until today

In the mid-1970s, the image characterised by the years of reconstruction changed. Donawitz experienced the low point of the steel crisis in the mid-1980s. After difficult restructuring processes, the plant was nevertheless led into a new "steel age". With the development of the HSH rail in 1987, voestalpine AG succeeded for the first time in producing a head-hardened 120 metre rail, the longest rail in the world.

A new era of production began with the commissioning of the compact LD (Linz-Donawitz) plant in September 2000. Donawitz became the site of the world's most modern LD steelworks and took over market leadership in Europe. Today, 1,600 workers produce more steel than 11,000 once did.

In addition to the leading voestalpine plant, the AT&S printed circuit board plant has had one of its main sites in Leoben-Hinterberg since the 1990s and is currently being expanded. Many of the new jobs are intended for women, and there is already a high proportion of female employees at AT&S.

Women & social life in industrial history

The ironworks shaped the lives of thousands of workers for generations, and it also shaped the lives of their wives and children. The industrial ensemble of Donawitz stood in stark contrast to the middle-class town of Leoben. A specific working-class milieu developed with workers' housing estates, inns, canteens, political and social clubs. Life centred almost exclusively around the ironworks. Work was life. And vice versa.

Some women also found employment in the Donawitz ironworks. Not only in the typical female occupations of the time, such as secretarial work, cleaning or catering, but women also performed heavy physical labour in some areas, such as in the finishing shop or in the brick factory in the production of refractory bricks for the lining of the blast furnaces. However, this development was not only visible in Donawitz in this period up to the 2000s, but also in Judendorf-Seegraben, where anthracite coal mining existed until 1964. Here, too, there were women who, as the so-called "Sturzweiber", were still allowed to collect the remaining coal from the heaps by hand and sell it. At the Erzberg, it was the "Klauberweiber" who sorted the ore by hand.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-

migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

After the decline of the iron and steel industry in the 1980s, the regional economy developed quite successfully from the 1990s onwards. Today, the industry around Leoben is the most important economic factor in the region. In addition to the steel sector, companies in the high-tech sector (printed circuit boards, system logistics, paper, wood, etc.) are among the major drivers of innovation and employers. Ten large companies with more than 250 employees account for 45% of the total workforce in the Leoben district. Hundreds of millions of euros are currently being invested in expansion and extension, not only securing thousands of jobs, but also creating many new ones. At the same time, a number of highly innovative technology and research-orientated service companies and start-ups have developed around the villages Traboch, St. Michael and in Leoben.

Due to the high demand for raw materials, the iron ore mining at the Erzberg, on which industrialisation is based, appears to be well secured for the next 30 years; in recent years, massive investments have been made, not least in "green mining". However, the number of jobs has shrunk considerably in recent decades due to modernisation¹².

Tourism plays only a minor role in the overall economic analysis of the region and is primarily a significant economic factor in the northern Eisenstrasse. Agriculture is also underrepresented in the Styrian comparison - the district ranks last after Graz in terms of the number of farms. This situation reinforces the dominance in the internal perception as an industrial region. On the one hand, this can act as a bridge to attract additional economic sectors, but it may also be one of the reasons why other sectors such as the creative industries are finding it difficult to gain a significant foothold.

At 6.2 %, unemployment is in line with the Styrian average (women: 5,7 %, men: 6,6 %), as is youth unemployment at 5 % and the proportion of unemployed foreigners at 10.5% (February 2024). Currently staff is still being sought in all sectors. Most vacancies continue to come from industry and commerce, followed by the service sector, trade, administration, office and healthcare.

Source: [Die aktuelle Arbeitsmarktlage mit Ende März 2024 im Bezirk Leoben \(ams.at\)](https://ams.at/)

All technical professions continue to be in high demand. The fact that there are more apprenticeship vacancies than apprenticeship seekers is evident throughout Styria. Around a third of the labour force in Eastern Upper Styria is aged 50 and over and will retire in the next 10 - 15 years. Given the low birth rate, labour market dynamics could become the biggest obstacle to the success of the regional economy in the coming years.

Demographic development (demographic change, outmigration, braindrain) is the biggest challenge the region faces. The Styrian Iron Route nowadays is Austria's "oldest region" in regard to the average age. This led to a lack of skilled workforce in industry, which is strongly threatening the regional economy. In the stakeholder survey conducted by Regionalmanagement Obersteiermark Ost (SORA 2020), the population decline, the impending decline in the working population due to the imminent retirement of the baby boomers and the associated availability of qualified labour were considered to be the most important challenges for the coming years. In order to counteract the current developments, the issue of "immigration" will be of crucial importance in the coming decades.

¹² It was a crisis, that made Eisenerz the most shrinking city of Austria, the oldest city in Austria in regard to the average age and the city with the highest percentage of retired people. Many workers were offered early retirement, others left to Leoben or left the region.

Measures that ensure an appropriate (living) environment for industry/business as a key pillar of the region must therefore be at the centre of efforts to strengthen the location and its competitiveness (not least in the competition for skilled workers). Available employees are becoming a decisive location factor and expect an appropriate living environment.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

The mining and (steel) processing industry as the economical backbone of the region has historically resulted in a very male-dominated society – in regard to the region's culture, networks and decision making as well as to the labour market. Gender roles are very traditional favouring men in many aspects, e.g., in the cultural traditions of miners and ironworkers. In such an environment it is difficult for women in industry as well as at the mining university to make career and reach higher positions.

The female employment rate is, due to a bundle of historically grown factors, lower than the Styrian and Austrian average, although the gap to men has narrowed over the last ten years. The part-time employment rate among women is just over 50%. The integration of women into male-dominated companies such as voestalpine has slowly begun to take effect - although it is still far from being fully utilised; the University of Leoben has the highest proportion of women among technical universities in Austria with 27% of scientific staff. The picture outside the central region is different: women are often employed in the low-wage sectors of the service and tourism industries, with a high proportion of part-time employment. The peripheral municipalities of the Styrian Iron Road have a below average female employment rate. Both the lack of jobs and traditional patterns of the mining region have an impact here.

Not finding adequate opportunities in the region, women are the main drivers of the ongoing outmigration. Research shows that women have a higher willingness to be mobile at an earlier stage than men. In the age group 15-29, numerous women have decided to leave the region in the past decade – for every 100 men in this group there were only 87 women in the NUTS3 region Östliche Obersteiermark in 2019! Similarly, the proportion of women up to 45 years is far below average.

To fulfil the needs for a skilled workforce in the prospering regional industry, it is essential to attract more women to work in industry or take higher/different positions. Work in mining and steel industry along the Styrian Iron Road used to be very “men-dominated” in the past centuries, and the image of “It's a man's work” is still in the back of the mind of many women. Therefore, many women a) don't qualify themselves for technical jobs in their education/apprenticeship or b) don't opt for a career in industry. A change of this mindset is essential to increase the percentage of female workforce in the regional industry. Among others 'role models' are missing to showcase the potentials of a career in industry. The shortage of skilled workers has been identified by the business community as the greatest problem and the largest obstacle for future development. Higher female labour force participation through better opportunities and framework conditions for women holds great potential in this context.

Annex 3 – Basic contextual description of the LAG Sokolovsko, Czech Republic

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

The area covered by our association LAG Sokolovsko extends to 38 municipalities in Sokolov district and Karlovy Vary district (Karlovy Vary Region) and covers 756 km² with 90,000 inhabitants. The area can be characterized as highly industrial and peripheral. It is located in the western part of the Czech Republic. District Sokolov in the north covers dense forests and mountains, in the south, spreads out a restricted area of Slavkovský forest - as well sparsely populated. On the other hand, in the middle, there is a densely populated and highly industrial area with the biggest towns Sokolov with 22,155 inhabitants and Chodov with 12,683 inhabitants. In this region, the industry has always played a significant role (porcelain, musical instruments, timber, glass, chemical, energy, engineering, brewing, and primarily ore and open-cast mining). In the near future closure of coal mining is expected). Agriculture plays a marginal role and specialises in organic livestock breeding. The development of the population is going through stagnation or a slight decline. Analyses consider the lowest share of the population with a university degree and the highest share of the population with no more than a primary education within Czech Republic as one of the root causes of the high unemployment rate and the associated social and economic phenomena. The Karlovy Vary Region is the only region in the Czech Republic where there is no university. The territory of the Karlovy Vary Region, and thus the entire territory of the Sokolov LAG, falls within the state-defined economically and socially weak area. Transport services are very limited, especially in peripheral sparsely populated municipalities.

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

Deep mines and later also surface coal mining led to the exploitation of the whole central part of the Sokolov district region and also to the disappearance of many villages. The post-war development of the entire region (especially the economic and demographic development) was significantly influenced by the forced displacement of the very large German minority. In the 1950s and 1960s, the systematic reclamation of former deep mine areas, where lignite mining had already ceased in the 1930s and 1940s, began. Forestry (59%) and agricultural (38%) reclamation methods predominated, and hydraulic reclamation, which is becoming more widespread, was chosen for some residual pits. Reclamation work continues to this day.

The major political, social and economic changes at the end of the 1990s, linked to the transition to a democratic state system, led, for example, to transformations in the structure of the economy and the development of the service and tourism sectors. In the Sokolov Basin, there has been a gradual decline in mining, which, combined with reclamation work, has had a positive impact on the quality of the environment. The economy and industry in the Sokolov district have undergone significant changes over the last 50 years. In the past, the region was heavily dependent on coal

mining and heavy industry, which contributed to high male employment. However, with the gradual decline of coal mining and the restructuring of industry, traditional industries have declined.

This development has had a major impact on women's participation in the labour market. With the decline of jobs in traditional industries, women have become more important members of households in seeking employment to sustain family income. The trend towards economic diversification in the region has led to the development of new sectors such as services, tourism and light industry, which has provided women with more opportunities for employment outside the home.

In the 21st century, Sokolov District has begun to diversify its economy, moving away from traditional industries to more modern and technology-oriented sectors. New sectors such as information technology, research and development, and environmentally sustainable industries are beginning to play a significant role in the district's economy. Services are becoming a key element of economic growth in Sokolov. This includes the development of the financial, healthcare, and education sectors. Emerging areas such as tourism and travel are gaining importance due to the natural beauty and cultural sites of the region. Local governments and institutions actively support entrepreneurship and innovation in Sokolov, providing subsidies, tax incentives, and mentoring for small businesses. Incubators and technology centres are established to support start-ups and the development of new technological ideas. With a growing awareness of the environment, Sokolovsko is focusing on sustainable development. Investing in renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting natural reserves are priorities for regional planning. Women are playing an increasingly important role in the economic and social life of the Sokolov region. The transformation of the Sokolov district at the beginning of the 21st century reflects global trends towards modernisation, diversification and sustainable development, with women playing a key role in these processes.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

Our territory has a special and unique environment in many respects (specific economic base, certain occupational profiles, communities at risk of exclusion, specific industrial culture, etc.). Due to the traditional focus on mining, manufacturing and technology sectors, one of the main features remains gender inequality in labour markets. Employers and support systems in the form of education, training programs and career planning predominantly favour a culture of traditional industrial masculinity. Retraining and up-skilling programmes are aimed at men working in mines, e.g. IT, RES electricians etc., so women do not meet the criteria to join those programmes. In extreme cases, the neglect of women in the design of labour markets has led to the emergence of a male-dominated workforce. For these reasons, women often felt excluded from participating in the local labour market, especially outside the engineering sectors. They often ended up in precarious employment without being able to plan a professional career in the region. Such scenarios inevitably lead to higher unemployment among women and forced them to commute to

larger regional centres or to emigrate. Sokolov region thus lost important drivers for future economic, social and demographic development. Lower participation of women in the labour market meant a great loss of potential productivity, economic diversification and social cohesion in all peripheral industrial regions, not just in our territory. Slow growth of GDP per capita, drifting apart in the economic performance of the Czech Republic, stagnation even in times of boom. Low average gross wage and low median gross wage are also major problems. Since 2013, the unemployment rate has been decreasing, but still, the region holds higher unemployment than the Czech average.

Unemployment has been on the rise again since 2020 due to the COVID-19 and Ukrainian crisis. The Sokolov region has long been struggling with the problem of specific socially excluded localities and the accompanying negative phenomena typical of these localities. In the Sokolov region, 16 out of 37 municipalities face socially excluded localities. These are localities in smaller villages with poorly accessible infrastructure, in larger villages they are residential hotels, but also places in ordinary housing estates. Most of the inhabitants of those localities are among the long-term unemployable individuals.

The Sokolov district as a whole is highly industrial. The most numerous industry sector is the fuel industry. In addition, the district has a wide range of mechanical engineering, chemical, textile and glass, ceramics and porcelain industries. Agriculture, on the other hand, is not of significant importance in the Sokolov district. Due to extensive mining activity, the land is not very suitable for agricultural cultivation. Traditional craftsmanship and modern technology combine to produce high quality products. The development of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy is also encouraged in the region.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

Our main challenges are brain-drain, leave of the educated youth, not enough job opportunities with added value and low wages. Our region has the lowest average wages in the whole Czech Republic. The number of unemployed men and women is almost equal and many of those registered in the labour office are long-term unemployable.

In accordance with the information above we will focus our activities on the specific target groups below.

Highly educated women who have achieved success and can thus become a living positive example for both women and men around them. They are often well-known women, active in public or professional life. Their experience will significantly contribute to the understanding and development of the given topic.

Women educated in a certain field (often technical or highly demanding in terms of education), but who, for various reasons, work outside their field of education or in lower-level positions. They often work in areas that are attributed to women, their work tends to be less financially valued and considered less significant or of little perspective. In our predominantly industrial territory, women have low opportunities to work in their male-dominated industry at all or in senior management positions other than HR. Other career barriers arise when they become mothers - difficult reconciliation of personal and professional life, very little possibility of flexible working

hours or teleworking (home office). We would also like to focus on women who are about to return from maternity leave and cannot return to their original job.

Girls (and therefore also boys) who are at the moment of choosing their future profession (last grade of elementary school, last grade of secondary school) are without career counselling that will support girls in choosing a profession that corresponds to their knowledge, abilities, character and character traits, and not according to what is generally expected of them.

Boys are not educated that their involvement in family life should be the norm and not the exception, or are not educated in the field of women's equality, and recognition of their qualities and intellect. This will have an impact not only on greater equality in the field of work but also on the quality of life of our future generations.

Annex 4 – Basic contextual description of the towns of Tatabánya, Oroszlány and Dorog, Hungary

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

Komárom-Esztergom County is situated in the northwest region of the country, in close proximity to the capital. Covering an area of 2264 km², it stands as the smallest county in the nation, yet boasts a population density of 133 persons/km² (as of 2020), ranking second only to Pest County in terms of density. The county is home to approximately 301,000 inhabitants. Following a gradual decline in population since the turn of the millennium, there was a slight uptick observed in 2018 and 2019. While the county's population continues to age, its aging index remains below the national average.

The three cities designated as pilot areas within the county are Tatabánya, Oroszlány, and Dorog. Tatabánya and Oroszlány are located 20 km apart, while Dorog, slightly farther away, lies 45 km from Tatabánya. Tatabánya, the largest among them and in the entire county, has a population of 65,800, while Oroszlány has 12,000 inhabitants, and Dorog is the smallest with 20,000 residents.

From a transportation standpoint, the Oroszlány-Tatabánya-Tata corridor, which traverses the county in a northwest-southeast direction, serves as an urbanization hub increasingly integrated into the Budapest metropolitan area, capitalizing on the M1 motorway. Dorog, resembling the Esztergom area, functions functionally as part of Pest County within the Budapest agglomeration. The proximity to Budapest stands out as a crucial transportation factor. One of the county's most significant assets is its strategic location, intersecting European transport corridors and situated within the Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava-Győr quadrilateral, providing highly favorable macro-regional conditions for the economy, albeit currently underutilized.

In terms of GDP per capita, the county ranks third, following Győr-Moson-Sopron and Fejér counties, but significantly below that of Budapest.

Regarding the pilot cities within the county:

- Tatabánya, serving as the administrative center, emerges as a developing industrial, labor market, and service hub along the evolving Vienna-Budapest axis. Its common industrial park with Környe continues to expand.
- Oroszlány, once a mining town, has proactively shifted its economic structure through the development of its industrial park. However, it still faces challenges due to the lack of direct main road links. Nonetheless, it holds potential as the southernmost member of the urban network, poised to leverage the natural and scenic assets of the Vértes Mountains for recreational purposes.
- Dorog, a small town with a significant industrial and mining heritage, currently hosts vital chemical, pharmaceutical, and waste management industries. Located near Esztergom, it grapples with relative isolation from the transportation network, compounded by the agglomeration effect of the capital, which is definitely a weakness. Access to the transport network of the municipality is poor. The transport network is heavily congested with commuters because of the capital's agglomeration effect.

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

The conquering Hungarians invaded the Danube region and the area of today's Komárom-Esztergom County around 900 AD. The county's area was relatively densely populated. Esztergom, the royal and archbishop's seat, served as the country's centre in the 11th and 12th centuries. Although the county continued to play a prominent role throughout the Middle Ages, Buda eventually assumed the leading role. The region was primarily characterized by agriculture and handicrafts.

Coal was discovered around Dorog in 1781, and production steadily increased in the first half of the 19th century. Production from the mines continued to grow in the 1830s, with coal reaching both Pest and Vienna. From the 1870s onwards, coal mining became the dominant industry in the area. The mining area of Dorog was developed, and in 1896, the first shaft of the Hungarian General Coal Mining Company produced coal in what later became Tatabánya. The coal, of good quality, was cheaply transported by rail to both Budapest and Vienna. In 1910, 46% of the county's earners were engaged in agriculture, 19.3% in industry, and 12.7% in mining. In the pilot towns, miners accounted for 26.6% of earners. By 1920, more than a third of the population was employed in the mining and industrial workforce. Workers, especially miners, frequently resorted to strikes in the 1920s and 1930s, with production being halted for up to 10 weeks at times. The Communist Party made constant efforts to maintain a relationship with the mine workers.

During the years of the Second World War, there was a high demand for coal mining, leading to intense mining activity. However, the war's end brought devastation, with a three-month front passing through the county. Most mines were incapacitated, transportation infrastructure was destroyed as retreating German troops blew up railway and road bridges, paralyzing traffic.

Post-war reconstruction and industrial development prioritized the expansion of the mining and industrial workforce in the county. Until the late 20th century, the county and pilot towns were primarily industrialized, with large-scale lignite mining, briquette production, and coal-based electricity generation as the main economic sectors. After the change of regime, the vast majority of large state-owned companies were privatised. The coal mines that remained in state hands have been steadily condemned to closure. One reason for this is the transformation of the energy sector. The rise of hydrocarbons has increasingly marginalised coal, which was not of such high quality in this area anyway. The other reason is that the easily exploitable coal deposits have been exhausted, making extraction increasingly uneconomic. Only Dorog remaining active until 2003. Recultivation work commenced in 2004. Economic restructuring led to high unemployment rates, prompting municipalities to attract labor-intensive industries to cities through the creation of industrial parks and logistics centers. Since the regime change, modern companies, particularly in automotive, chemical, mechanical engineering, and electronics sectors, have played a crucial role in the county's GDP production.

From the perspective of women in the early 19th century, their roles included child-rearing, managing households, and maintaining family cohesion. However, economic pressures increasingly compelled them to work. The leather and textile industries provided employment opportunities, albeit with significantly lower pay compared to men. Following the Second World War, placing women in settlements dominated by heavy industry, especially in mining districts, posed a challenge. Few women secured employment in heavy industry, mostly in administrative

and support roles. However, their presence in education, healthcare, social services, culture, trade, and the service sector steadily increased, although job opportunities remained limited. Female unemployment rates remained consistently high in the region. The deteriorating labor market conditions post-regime change further exacerbated this situation. Nonetheless, the establishment of industrial parks and associated enterprises offered women improved employment prospects through lighter manual work. While employment opportunities have increased significantly, the wage gap between women and men persists.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

The most significant sector within the industry in the county is the automotive industry (39%), followed by electronics (15%), and then rubber, plastics, and construction materials (14%).

The county's labour market indicators are more favourable to the national average, both in terms of employment and unemployment. The national occupation rate was 74.8% in 2023. In the county, the figure was 78.9%. The unemployment rate nationally was 4.1% in 2023. In the county, the figure was 1.8%. The most significant challenge for economic growth and investment in the labour market is meeting the economy's labour needs. There are not as many workers as there is demand from companies. Unfortunately, a significant proportion of the unemployed are long-term unemployed and unfit for work.

From the early 2000s until the 2008 economic crisis, there was increasing and robust labour migration from southern Slovakia to Hungary. After the crisis migration has not resumed due to increased wages in Slovakia, the introduction of the euro, and the extraordinary development of the Bratislava region, where the automotive industry plays a vital role.

The Slovak labour force is either unavailable or limited, while domestically, the available labour supply is also restricted by the employment of Hungarian workers abroad. The county's current employment rate is 79.6%, with the highest number of people employed in its history. The employment rate is calculated as the ratio of the number of people in employment to the population of the corresponding age group (15-64). It is an indicator defined by the OECD and used by Eurostat. There is of course a correlation between the employment rate and the unemployment rate, but the sum of the two ratios is never 100%. For example, in this age group, there is obviously a significant proportion of people who are still studying, for example, but they are not considered unemployed. A particular challenge for all firms is to uncover hidden labour reserves. The number of registered job seekers has long been below the number of job openings offered by businesses.

Newer ways of meeting labour demand have also emerged, such as the organised travel of workers from the still accessible Hungarian populated areas (e.g. Transcarpathia, Ukraine), and the deployment of larger numbers of workers from the countries of the parent companies operating subsidiaries in the Far East (Indonesia, South Korea, etc.) to the county for shorter periods of time. These people mostly staying in workhouses, not daily commuters.

Regarding the pilot cities:

- Tatabánya:** The city government's primary goal, besides reducing unemployment, was to prevent Tatabánya from experiencing the same situation as in the years following the regime change. After the regime change, the mining industry collapsed in Tatabánya and the whole economy of the town was built on it. Obviously, this led to huge unemployment. The city administration has learned from this and wants to avoid this happening again. It is therefore looking to diversify the economic structure and create more fully-fledged sectors and industries. Currently, the city has less than 2% of jobseeker the working-age population (15-64 years) of just over 47,000 people. To address the labour shortage, the municipality has built workers accommodation and launched the Tatabánya, Where You Find a Home program. There has also been considerable labour competition with Székesfehérvár and Győr. Despite Győr being further away (70 km), its accessibility via the motorway and railway line makes it easier to reach by road (about 40-45 minutes) and public transport (40-50 minutes) than Székesfehérvár, which is closer (60 km) (50-60 minutes by road and nearly one and a half hours by public transport).
- Oroszlány:** The dynamic development of the Industrial Park in Oroszlány (mainly between 2015 and 2020) have led to spectacular economic development, making the Oroszlány district one of the dynamically growing centers of Komárom-Esztergom county. The town's and the micro region's economic development is primarily driven by large and medium-sized enterprises operating in the Industrial Park of Oroszlány. New enterprises, mainly in the automotive and chemical industries, utilize modern production technology to produce world-class, marketable products with high added value, primarily sold abroad (69% of exports). According to official public statistics, the town's population is slowly but steadily decreasing, aging consistent with the national trend. A significant proportion of the population commutes rather than finding suitable jobs locally. Majority of the people commute to Budapest or Győr, which are within 1 hour and pay higher wages. There are also people who commute to Slovakia. The labour market situation is characterized by increasing employment levels and decreasing unemployment rates, mirroring the trends in the county.
- Dorog:** Formerly a centre of the extractive industry, Dorog has experienced employment loss with the closure of the mines and SANYO Ltd. Its chemical industry enjoys worldwide renown. The manufacturing industry now dominates the sub-region, with most large enterprises located in the Esztergom sub-region. Large and medium-sized enterprises have significant foreign presences. In the Dorog sub-region, small and micro enterprises with Hungarian ownership account for the majority of employment. The most significant labour shortages currently occur in the transport, electronics, and IT sectors. As the county heavily relies on manufacturing (including machinery and vehicles), labour demand also trends towards higher engineering and intermediate vocational qualifications on one hand, and skilled and semi-skilled workers on the other, given the nature of industrial production. One of the factors hindering the improvement of the labour market situation is the relatively high labour absorption capacity of the capital, Győr, the county capital (Tatabánya), and other large companies in neighbouring towns and cities.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

Specific data on the labour market situation of women in the pilot cities is not yet available. We can infer it from national and county trends.

According to Eurostat data, the gap between the employment rate of men and women (the so-called employment gap) decreased in Hungary in 2021 and 2022: with minor fluctuations, but with a higher increase in the employment rate of women than men in the years under review, the gap between the employment rates of the two sexes decreased, reaching 9.8 percentage points in 2022. This achieved a more favourable average in 2022 than the EU average (10.7 percentage points), and the gap between women and men was smaller than in several countries in the region, including Romania, the Czech Republic, and Poland.

The pay gap between men and women in Hungary fell from 20.1 percent in 2012 to 17.5 percent in 2022, with greater fluctuations, but ahead of Austria (18.4 percent) and Germany (17.7 percent), among others. Part of the gender pay gap can be explained by the fact that women tend to concentrate in low-paid sectors of the economy such as education and health, while men tend to work in the financial and IT sectors. Similarly, men are more likely to be promoted to managerial positions than women. The gender pay gap and interrupted and shorter working lives mean that women earn less than men over their lifetime, and employment and pay gaps also have a large impact on the gender pension gap.

In county terms, the trends are very similar to national trends. However, in the case of Komárom-Esztergom County, an interesting trend can be observed when looking at the share of commuters abroad (mostly Austria, but Slovakia also has a potential for absorption). In ten years, the number of women commuters has increased for 8 times, reaching some 8,000 persons, and their share of commuters has risen from 20 to almost 30%. Several factors can influence the commuting of workers: unfavourable local labour market conditions, the availability of jobs abroad, and the difference in wage levels and living standards between home and abroad. Among the possible reasons, differences in wage levels are likely to be the most important factor. Indeed, at the time of the 2011 census, the vast majority of commuters (83%) were working in Austria, which has a more favourable labour market and average wage level than Hungary.

Another important factor is the proportion of female entrepreneurs, which can be both a form of self-employment and, if they employ more people, can improve the proportion of women in management and higher-ranking jobs. In the ranking list of the 19 counties and Budapest, Komárom-Esztergom County is only modestly ranked at number 15. There is still a significant gap between men and women in the start-up sector. In Central and Eastern Europe, 94% of investment flows into businesses founded exclusively by men, and the problem is also present in Hungary. So there is definitely room for improvement in this area.

Annex 5 – Basic contextual description of the Herzeg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

The Herzeg-Bosnian County is situated in the south-western region of BiH, bordering four counties of the FBiH, the Republic of Srpska, and the Republic of Croatia. In relation to the country, it lies in the periphery, however, being between Croatia (EU) and the rest of BiH places it in a favourable geostrategic and transport position. These advantages have not been sufficiently exploited, i.e. are neglected in terms of developmental investments. Compared to the overall situation in FBiH, road infrastructure remains relatively weak as regards regional and main roads. On the local level, daily bus lines connect the towns of each municipality, with the exception of Glamoč.

According to the Development Programming Institute of FBiH, the development level index for our County in 2022 was 0,27, which places it in the 9th, i.e., the second to last place in FBiH. Indicators used to calculate the development index are: income from income tax per capita, level of employment, population movement, share of older population in the total population, and the level of education of the workforce.

According to the last estimate of the Institute for Statistics of FBiH from June, 2023, the Herceg-Bosnian County has a population of 77.249 inhabitants. As regards structure, there are 39.172 males and 38.077 females. Since the last official population census in 2013 (84.251 inhabitants), the County has lost 7.002 inhabitants. In addition to ongoing emigration, the County has also been experiencing a negative natural increase to the extent of twice as many deaths than births (in 2021 the natural increase was -507). It is also important to note that approximately 72% of the population lives in rural areas. According to the latest estimate of the Federal Institute of Statistics from June 30, 2023, the largest towns and their inhabitants are: Livno (31901), Tomislavgrad (29708), Drvar (5622), Kupres (4747), Glamoč (3274) and Bosansko Grahovo (1997).

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

The climatic and natural-geographical characteristics of the Herceg-Bosnian County were suitable for the development of animal husbandry, and thus dairy farming, dating back to the 1st century and the record of *caseus delmaticus* (delmataen cheese) produced by the indigenous Illyrian tribe. During the Middle Ages, urban and rural areas began to form, and the extent of their differences would become visible in the 20th century. The traditional way of life revolving around animal husbandry and agriculture for personal needs would last for generations, with the exception of trade and stonemasonry in more urban areas. The Austro-Hungarian Empire brought about changes mostly for more urban areas, as regards public administration, education and healthcare. In the beginning of the 20th century, trade and crafts were a significant economic sector (e.g. in

1938, Livno had 136 trade and 158 craft shops, known across Europe for encrustation (*Livnoer Arbeit*), as well as cheese production (*roquefort* and *Vollkäse*). In the first half of the 20th century, the education of women was encouraged in urban areas and discouraged in rural areas. In rural areas, women were responsible for the household and family and their role changed very slowly. During the Second World War, urban centres were destroyed, and with the arrival of communism, a way out of economic underdevelopment was sought in labour-intensive industry. Workshops turned into smaller industrial plants, mainly wood and textile processing activities. The textile industry relied on the unskilled female labour force and also often ran into difficulties and crises during its development stages. The mining industry primarily served local needs, with mineral wealth based on brown coal and lignite reserves awaiting more extensive exploitation. Forests are the greatest wealth of the mountainous part of our county, which led to the development of the wood industry. The Homeland war in the 1990s also represents a turning point for both the economy and the position of women from rural areas, who afterwards began pursuing higher education and taking on a more significant role in the labour market, while also retaining most of their traditional obligations in the family.

In the 21st century, animal husbandry has become an exception rather than a rule. At that time, in 2005 for instance, most registered business entities were in the sectors of trade, other service activities, manufacturing industry, hospitality, and the sector of agriculture, hunting and forestry. The development of agriculture experienced its largest growth only recently, due to substantial investments and institutional support for agriculture and rural development.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

In 2022 most registered business entities in the Herceg-Bosnian County were in other service activities, trade, manufacturing, agriculture/hunting/forestry, arts/entertainment/recreation, and hospitality. For comparison, according to the indices of the volume of industrial production by cantons for 2022, our county occupies the second to last place. According to the financial analysis the portal Akta.ba, the main employers in our County in 2021 were: ŠGD Hercegbosanske šume d.o.o. 863 (forestry); Županijska bolnica Livno 320 (healthcare); Pavić d.o.o. 181 (manufacturing, trade, hospitality); Kamensko d.o.o. Tomislavgrad 141 (trade); Livnopotovi d.o.o. Livno 124 (road infrastructure); Dom zdravlja Tomislavgrad 113 (healthcare); JP Komunalno Livno 98 (utility company); Dom zdravlja Livno 91 (healthcare); Brina d.o.o. 65 (manufacturing, trade, hospitality); Zabrišće B&M d.o.o. Livno 64 (trade, hospitality); Gradel d.o.o. Drvar 59 (construction).

As regards detailed information concerning labour market problems in our county, we are awaiting the results of the labour market analysis by an external expert. On the level of the Federation, according to the labour market research from 2023, the main problems ordered according to the highest percentage are: lack of staff with the required profession, individual's lack of interest in working at a specific workplace, lack of staff with sufficient work experience, lack of staff with the required professional knowledge and skills necessary for a workplace, tax policy, general economic circumstances, dissatisfaction with the offered salary, working hours and

working conditions, etc. According to a questionnaire for employers from the private sector of the City of Livno, 85% expressed the need for new hires and 62% of employers expressed the need for workers with secondary vocational education.

In 2023, 5568 unemployed people (2846 women) were registered at the Employment Office of the Herceg-Bosnian County. Due to the structure of the EO and the services it provides, not all registered persons are actively seeking new employment, but are registered to obtain health insurance, the addition of seniority, financial compensation for the unemployed, etc. An anonymous questionnaire is planned this year in order to discern the actual number of persons actively looking for employment. Unreported employment also represents an unaddressed issue in our county.

Throughout history, our county has been an area of continuous emigration, which became especially pronounced during the last twenty years, due to the fact that whole families started emigrating, instead of only able-bodied men which was the case in previous decades (Germany's *Gastarbeiter*). This trend is slowly waning after the Covid-19 epidemic, with families returning in search of a slower pace of life and more personal freedom.

Education encompasses primary and secondary schools, with one institution licenced for adult education, but no institutions for higher education.

The regional authority is the Government of the Herceg-Bosnian County or Canton 10, which in its structure also has a Service for the Coordination of Development and Coordination. The founding of a Development Agency is also envisioned by the City of Livno. The County Board for Development and the Partner Group for Development were established in 2014 by a Memorandum of Understanding between the President of the County Government and the Development Program of the United Nations. Together they developed the Development Strategy of the Herceg-Bosnian County and defined its main strategic goals: accelerated economic development, improvement of social infrastructure, modern infrastructure and preserved environment, integral sustainable development.

In addition, the business support organisation, Linnovate Business Park, includes a business incubator and start up academy, supporting entrepreneurship and self-employment. The importance of entrepreneurship lies not only in its significance for the local economy, but also in the opportunity for employment in one's native area.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

The target group of our pilot region consists of all unemployed women, able-bodied and women with disabilities, regardless of age, education level and previous working experiences, with more or less family commitments, interested in any type of work, that reside in both urban and rural areas of the Herceg-Bosnian County.

In 2023, 51% of the total number of unemployed persons in our county were women. Out of this number of 2846 women, the majority, 949 with secondary education, 847 are qualified and 651 are non-qualified, 63 are semi-qualified, while 197 and 139 women represent the two levels of higher education. This data, together with the labour market research data, suggest that education, training and re-training programmes could prove beneficial for the inclusion of more women in the labour market. In addition, given the success of federal employment programmes,

as well as the rise in female entrepreneurship in our county, employment programmes on county level could also prove beneficial.

Challenges in women's employment in our pilot region:

- Family obligations: The traditional role of women as the primary caregivers in their families is not easily adjustable with an 8-hour work schedule.
- Domestic obligations: Household chores are primarily done by women. A local proverb says: The woman holds three corners of the house – which says much about the amount work women have at home. Animal husbandry and vegetable gardening for personal use are common activities not only in rural areas, but also for women from urban areas who possess a piece of land in nearby villages. The people in our county take great pride in the good-quality organic food they produce.
- Rural areas: The majority of people live in rural areas and have to commute to urban centres for work. Private companies, e.g., in trade, manufacturing, or hospitality, rarely provide transportation to and from work, bus connections exist, but cannot accommodate all required hours or destinations, which combined with minimum wage and the previously mentioned obligations at home, make employment not worth their while. Limited mobility due to not having a driver's licence (especially older women) or a personal vehicle.
- Lack of a support system: Not all women, i.e., families, have someone who could help with the care for children, the elderly, housework, or have the means to pay for additional help.
- Lack of information: Although the Employment Offices announces job competitions, employment and self-employment programmes on its website, social media, and notice board, not all women use the internet or have the ability to visit the premises of the EO on a regular basis. Employers also use other channels in search for new workers and 80,7% rely on personal contacts, by way of acquaintance or recommendations.
- Traditional understanding of the role of women: The belief that women should not work, that is, are primarily supposed to take care of the family and the home is still widespread.
- Personal factors: Fear, low self-esteem, low motivation, passivity, learned helplessness, etc.
- General economic circumstances, lack of employment opportunities, and low salaries.

Annex 6 – Basic contextual description of the Municipality of Loznica, Serbia

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

Loznica is a city located in the Mačva District of western Serbia, Southeast Europe. It lies on the right bank of the Drina River, and it is a border city with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It covers an area of 612 square kilometres, at the foot of Gučevo Mountain, at 142 meters above sea level. The number of registered households is around 26.300. In addition to the city of Loznica, as the centre, the municipality consists of 54 other inhabited places (settlements). In 2022 the city had a total population of 23.988, while the administrative area had a population of 72.062. According to the statistical reports from 2022, Mačva district had population of around 265.377 people, 131.188 (49,43%) of men and 134.189 (50,57%) of women and the city of Loznica had population of 72.062, 35.252 (48,92%) of men and 36.810 (51,08%) of women. Its name stems from the word "loza" (vine), originally, its name was *Lozica*, but it later became *Loznica*. The majority of the population is made up of Serbs with 94,1%, and smaller numbers of Roma, ethnic Muslims, Yugoslavs, Montenegrins and other. Loznica is connected to the rest of Serbia by bus and train lines, and the construction of the Šabac-Loznica high-speed road is projected to be completed by the end of 2024. Although Loznica does not geographically belong to central Serbia, it is important as the centre of the peripheral industrial region. It should be noted that the city of Šabac is located nearby, in the northwestern part of central Serbia, on the right bank of the Sava River, and is the administrative, economic and cultural centre of the Mačva district, as well as the biggest city in this area. A major industrial turning point in Loznica was the Viskoza factory, an ex Yugoslav chemical giant *factory* producing viscose rayon and other cellulose-based products. This production complex started operating in 1957 and greatly influenced the further development of Loznica itself. According to unofficial data, the settlement of only 6,000 inhabitants tripled its population in just three decades. The general level of socio-economic development was facing major problems, since Chemical industry Viskoza Loznica was closed when, like most of the companies of that time, it was affected by the decline during the nineties, and in 2005 the last plant was closed. New investors brought new chances for employment. It seems that Loznica is building a new industrial profile with new investors opening business and factories, but there must be vigilance to give women equal opportunities for employment. The new industrial profile implies opening of three major factories in this region: MINTH Automotive Europe d.o.o, Chinese company for the production of auto parts provided around 3,000 new jobs in Loznica, the American- Belgian company Adient Automotive and the Italian company Golden Lady. We must ensure that women have equal working conditions, regarding education opportunities, as well as accessible child care, possibility to have flexible hours and the same opportunities for employment and payment. Therefore, the City of Loznica is interested in preventing this situation by integrating women into the labour market under favourable conditions. Local educational institutions have begun collaborating with these companies to provide training programs tailored to the skills required in these industries. However, there is still a need for more targeted initiatives to ensure women can fully participate and benefit from these programs.

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes, and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

Loznica was mentioned for the first time in the charter of King Milutin, when Katarina, the wife of Milutin's brother Dragutin, built the nearby Tronoša monastery (year 1317). For a long period during the Middle Ages, it was not mentioned much. Loznica and Jadar (an area in Serbia that stretches around the Jadar River) became part of the Principality of Serbia during the time of Miloš Obrenović. With the annexation of Loznica and Jadar to the territory of the Principality of Serbia, after 1834, the Turkish ownership of the land was abolished, and it was declared a free peasant property, which abolished feudal relations. The Jadar county became part of the Podrinje district, and Loznica simultaneously became the seat of the county, and it remained so until the end of the 19th century, when Šabac took over that primacy. In the 1930s, Loznica had 295 houses with 1203 inhabitants. Loznica is where the administrative and political power of the Podrinje is concentrated, education is developed, a hospital is opened (in 1882), and industrial facilities begin to be built, crafts, trade, and even banking developed. One of the most prominent women of this era is Jovanka Bončić Katerinić (1887-1966), the first woman to obtain an engineering degree in Germany. Her unique project is the construction of the Mud Bath, and it also participated in the design of the famous Kur-salon in Banja Koviljača.

As well as Staka Pejić (1838-1916), an educational and humanitarian benefactor from Lešnica, who built an elementary school, a medical centre, a clinic and renewed the work of the church in that place near Loznica, and built a building for the treatment of the poor in Banja Koviljača.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the railway Šabac - Loznica - Banja Koviljača was built. The small town of Loznica is growing from a Turkish village into a modern city centre. The wars of 1912 - 1913, and especially the First World War of 1914 - 1918, halted economic development for some time and significantly reduced the number of inhabitants of Loznica and its surroundings. After the end of the First World War, Loznica remains the centre of the county with about 5,000 inhabitants. Several post-war years were a short-lived period of reconstruction and relative economic progress, which characterized most of the cities of the former Kingdom.

The world economic crisis of 1929-1930 was also felt in Jaderski srez and Loznica, mainly through the drop in prices of agricultural products. The economic rise began in the mid-1930s, with the opening of several trade and craft shops in Loznica. The takeover of the antimony mine in Loznica by German industrialists in the 1930s contributed to a certain strengthening of the economy. However, the growth of the economic development of Loznica and Jadar stopped after the outbreak of the Second World War (1941 - 1945). Women from Loznica also participated in wars, one of them is Vera Blagojević (1920-1942), a national hero from World War II.

In the first post-war years, intensive changes were made in the economic and social composition of the population in Loznica. Radical changes in the structure of the economy of Loznica occurred at the end of the 50s, with the construction and beginning of regular production of Viskoza - the industry of viscose products and cellulose. Due to the nature of this industry, many women started to work in the factory, which was certainly a breaking point. The volume and importance of the industrial production of Viskoza accelerated the development of other economic areas in Loznica (transport, trade, construction, crafts, banking, etc.), which become an important factor in achieving further economic development in Loznica and improving the living standards of citizens. The rapid industrial development of Loznica had a positive impact on the living conditions, structure and employment of the population.

In January 2008, according to the Serbian law, Loznica received the status of a city.

Along with the development of industry and the construction of commercial facilities, the city of Loznica, with its suburban settlements, is developing. In the period from 1945 to 1975, about 3,500 individually owned apartments were built. 5 primary schools, 4 secondary schools, a music school and three kindergartens were built or reconstructed. The Vuk House of Culture was reconstructed (Vuk Karadžić was a reformer of the Serbian language, born near Loznica in Tršić, which is one of the central tourist spots in the Loznica region today), the Sports and Recreation Center "Lagator" and the Health and Medical Center "Dr. Milenko Marin" were built. Loznica, which after the war had only a few thousand inhabitants, grew into a modern city according to the general urban plan from 1964. In the 70s and 80s, Loznica's industry and culture were on the rise.

Loznica has undergone significant changes from the 1960s/70s to the present day. Overall, Loznica's journey from the 1960s/70s to the present day reflects broader regional trends of industrial rise and decline, political upheaval, and gradual recovery and diversification. The town continues to adapt to changing economic conditions, striving to build a more resilient and diversified economy. Here's a brief summary of its journey through these decades:

1960s/70s to the 1990s: Economic development (industrial growth) - Loznica experienced substantial industrial growth, notably with the establishment and expansion of the Viskoza chemical company. This company became a significant employer and economic driver for the town, producing various chemical products and contributing to the overall prosperity of the region. In the mid-70s, a new project was completed and another route of the railway Valjevo - Loznica was determined. The oldest cultural manifestation in Serbia, Vukov sabor (Vuk's Assembly), which has been held since 1933 in honor of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, acquired a republican character instead of a local one in the early 1970s. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić was declared a "citizen of the world" by a UNESCO resolution in 1985, where it was noted that he was "one of those conditions that most contributed to the spiritual unity of mankind".

1990s: Disintegration of Yugoslavia (political and economic impact) - The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s had profound effects on Loznica, as it did on the entire region. The ensuing conflicts, economic sanctions, and political instability severely impacted the local economy. Many industrial activities slowed down, and the town faced economic hardship. The Yugoslav Wars led to a decline in industrial production, disruption of trade routes, and general economic stagnation. Additionally, Loznica, being close to the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, experienced an influx of refugees and increased military presence.

Post-1990s: Collapse of Viskoza and economic transition (industrial decline): The Viskoza company, once a pillar of Loznica's economy, struggled through the 1990s and eventually collapsed in the early 2000s. In the 90s the development of Loznica and entire Serbia stopped due to the war and disintegration of Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, like most of the companies of that time, Viskoza was affected by decline during the nineties, and in 2005, the last plant was closed. This collapse was due to a combination of factors, including mismanagement, loss of markets, and the broader economic decline in Serbia post-Yugoslavia. The collapse of Viskoza led to significant job losses and contributed to economic difficulties for the town. Many former employees and their families faced economic hardship, and the local economy struggled to find new sources of growth and employment. Many women and men lost their jobs, these events greatly affected the further development of the city.

Efforts at economic diversification: In response to the collapse of Viskoza, Loznica has worked to diversify its economy. Efforts have been made to attract new industries and investments, including in the fields of agriculture, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing. The town has also focused on

improving infrastructure, such as roads and public services, to create a more favourable environment for economic development.

Recent developments: In recent years, Loznica has seen some positive changes. The local government and various stakeholders have initiated projects to boost tourism, leveraging the town's historical and natural attractions. There have been efforts to modernize the local economy and improve the quality of life for residents through various development projects and investments.

Loznica started building its industrial identity again, mainly through investments of foreign factories, but also through smaller interventions such as small business, projects and tourism. It is witnessing significant growth in health tourism, driven by its natural resources, historical spa resorts, and expanding wellness facilities. This sector is becoming a cornerstone of the local economy, attracting both domestic and international visitors. Banja Koviljača is one of the oldest and most renowned spa resorts in Serbia. Located near Loznica, it has a history of over 150 years. There are thermal Springs and the spa is known for its therapeutic thermal mineral springs, which are believed to have healing effects, offering treatments for various conditions, including rheumatic diseases, post-traumatic conditions, neurological disorders, and respiratory issues. There is a modern rehabilitation centre, wellness facilities, and specialized medical treatments, attracting both local and international tourists. However, there is a lot of space for developing this industry and tourism, enabling more women to be involved in economic development of the city.

Located in western Serbia near the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Loznica has been impacted by the broader migration trends affecting the Balkan region. The city has become a transit point for migrants and refugees, primarily from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, who are traveling along the Balkan route towards Western Europe. The situation for migrants in Loznica is part of a broader regional challenge that requires coordinated efforts at local, national, and international levels. The city has established facilities to support migrants and refugees who are traveling through or seeking asylum.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

Due to its geographical location, Loznica has many natural resources. From the Drina and the Jadar River to thermal waters, groundwater and springs, as well as arable land, this region has great potential. We must not forget tourism, which has a perspective due to the large number of sights that the region possesses. Today, the city of Loznica represents the regional centre of dynamic economic activities in which develops competitive business. In the last few decades intensive development of small and medium entrepreneurship was recorded. Considering the nature of this area, business activities and small and medium-sized businesses are often related to tourism - cafes, hotels, inns, tourist organizations, shops, as well as businesses that are not specific to the area, such as medical, dentist and veterinary clinics, pharmacies, hair and beauty salons, banks, private schools and kindergartens, etc.

According to the Serbian business registers agency report from 2014, the city of Loznica had around 2,680 business shops and 913 companies.

The main industrial branches are: textile industry, food and confectionery industry, wood processing, metal processing, construction industry, hotel and hospitality industry and machine industry.

Carriers of economic development in the city of Loznica are: Golden Lady, ASEINT, Minth, STIM import, Nelly, Radaljic company, DIV Chabros, Zajača mines and smelter, Company MN, Special Hospital Banja Koviljača, and numerous medium and small companies. Some of the major problems that residents of the region are facing are financing, lack of education for particular jobs, as well as unemployment.

Three new major investors are present in this region, firstly the Chinese multinational Minth for the production of car parts, then the American- Belgian company Adient Automotive producing car seat covers, and the Italian textile company Golden Lady producing woman socks and tights. It seems that Loznica is building a new industrial profile, which gives new opportunities for the residents.

Tourism represents a great potential opportunity, since this region has many historical, cultural and natural treasures. Famous personalities such as Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (Serbian language reformer), Jovan Cvijić (Serbia's most famous geographer), Mića Popović (painter and film director), Aleksandar Saša Petrović (film director), Anta Bogičević (Serbian duke) make up the rich cultural heritage of the region. The territory of the city is rich in cultural heritage from prehistory, the Middle Ages, but also cultural heritage from wars during the 20th century. Drina regatta, paragliding competition, Mushroom Days in Spa Koviljača and other cultural and tourist events complement the natural and cultural-historical resources of Loznica and make it an interesting tourist destination. In the past few years, a large number of projects were implemented in all areas of the city's development. If compared to other centers in Serbia today, Loznica is a city with a high quality of life, efficient administration, which, in addition to the business infrastructure made up of industrial zones, built roads connecting the city with Corridor 10 and communal infrastructure, which is the most significant factor for the epithet of a city with a favourable business environment.

Even though Loznica has great potential, there are some problems that have to be addressed. Some of them are linked to the sources of financing for start-up businesses, lack of skilled labour force and differences in job opportunities for women from marginalized groups, as well as lack of awareness about entrepreneurship and the private sector among population.

According to research from 2002, which are publicly available (in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the RS, we will provide relevant new data) there is a large percentage difference between the business-active female and male population who perform a profession, with 42,81% of professionally active men out of all active population of the municipality, and 27,95% of professionally active women. This data indicates that there are some gender related problems in regards to employment opportunities in the city of Loznica and its region.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

The City of Loznica with its surroundings is the most populous part of Western Serbia with 72,000 inhabitants. Most of the women in Loznica were employed in ex-industrial giant – the Viskoza factory and are now trying to find a new field of activity in tourism and handicrafts. Both the City of Loznica and the Tourism Organisation of Loznica have already invested some resources in promoting this category of women, while giving young people the chance to develop in creative sectors. More and more women in the Loznica region are choosing entrepreneurship, including women involved in tourism and hospitality. Often this is rural tourism and more and more women are registering farm households, opening ethno-villages and engaging in glamping. Some of the major problems that women are facing are financing, lack of education for particular jobs, as well as unemployment. Therefore, it is our interest to bring together the younger and the older generation of women in our region through the project WIN to offer them a better perspective in the local labour market. A considerable number of women from Loznica and the surrounding municipalities and villages in the peripheral region of Western Serbia will be economically empowered and equipped with skills that will enable them to better position themselves in the local labour market and increase their employability. Their capacity to be involved in the ecosystem will be strengthened, as well as local recognition among the actors of the local economy. The City of Loznica will support the empowerment of women in the local labour market through the project WIN. In cooperation with the Tourism Organization of Loznica, the City of Loznica will provide facilities for organizing meetings/seminars and access to a database of rural women who want to transform themselves from farmers to entrepreneurs and thus significantly improve their status in the labour market. This is the way to address and overcome some issues connected to unequal opportunities for women in this region. In addition, both organizations will promote intergenerational collaboration between younger women and girls who want to learn about digital marketing and improve their soft skills, and older women producers of home-grown products with weak access to the market. Also, both organizations will support the recruitment of women for the activities envisaged in the project, primarily in the recruitment of the target group, the majority of whom are employed ad hoc by ethno-tourism operators and have insecure incomes, but have also been successful in organizing various economic empowerment projects in the area.

Three new major investors are also the great opportunity for women in this region- the Chinese multinational Minth, the American- Belgian company ASEINT and the Italian company Golden Lady. With new industrial profile comes the risk that women could be excluded from the economic mainstream. Therefore, the City of Loznica is interested in preventing this situation and integrating women into the labour market under favourable conditions.

One of many ways in which the city of Loznica encourages women, is by organizing various events under the name World of Women, which take place in March every year. This year during this manifestation, at Meeting of Female Entrepreneurs organized by the Association of Business Women Loznica Creative Vision, one of the themes of the event was the presentation of the European project Improving the position of women in the labour markets of peripheral industrial regions – WIN and the pilot that will take place in Loznica.

Employment opportunities: although new industries are creating jobs, women, especially from marginalized groups, often face barriers in accessing these opportunities. Efforts are needed to ensure equal employment opportunities and conditions for women in these new factories and businesses.

Work-life balance: many women struggle to balance work and family responsibilities. Ensuring access to affordable childcare, flexible working hours, and family-friendly workplace policies can help women participate more effectively in the workforce.

By supporting women's employment, education, entrepreneurship, and work-life balance, Loznica can ensure that women are active contributors to and beneficiaries of its economic progress.

Annex 7 – Basic contextual description of the Municipality of Radomir, Bulgaria

1) Describe the basic geographical characteristics of your pilot region (max. 250 words).

In your description, please provide some basic information about the population size and structure, geographical position, transport accessibility, centre/periphery relation in the country, the general level of socio-economic development, etc.

According to the general classification for statistical purposes of NUTS territorial units and the Law on Regional Development of the Republic of Bulgaria, the municipality of Radomir (PER36) is located in South-West Bulgaria (NUTS I, BG41), on the territory of Pernik District (NUTS III, BG414), South-West Region (NUTS II). It borders to the west with the municipalities of Zemen and Kovachevtsi (PER22), to the north and northeast – municipality of Pernik (PER19), to the east – municipality of Samokov (SFO39), to the south and southwest – municipalities of Bobov dol (KNL04) and Kyustendil (KNL29). The South-West Region (NUTS II) borders the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece. According to the INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST REGION for the period 2021-2027, Radomir is a medium-urbanized municipality that falls into the category of "peripheral municipality without a prominent city center".

The territory of the municipality is 540,488 km² and constitutes 22.84% of the territory of the Pernik district. Municipality of Radomir takes 2nd place among the 6 municipalities of the Pernik district.

The municipality includes 32 populated areas (171 in the district). The municipal center, the town of Radomir, is 13 km from the town of Pernik (with 71 504 population), 44 km from the capital of Bulgaria - the town of Sofia (with 1 280 334 population), and 46 km from the town of Kyustendil (with 73 604 population). First-class road I-6 passes through the municipality of Radomir, which provides a connection between the capitals of Sofia and Skopje, the capital of the Republic of North Macedonia.

One of the two thermal power plants in Bulgaria (TPP "Republika") is located in the Pernik region, which use coal as the main fuel and occupy a significant share in the total electricity production in the country. Coal mining is mainly located in the municipalities of Pernik, Radomir, Kyustendil, etc. According to the Just Transition Plan signed with the European Commission, in 2026 the thermal power plant "Republika" must be closed. This is expected to result in the loss of around 4,400 jobs in the South West region by 2030. The Radomir Municipality Integrated Development Plan for the period 2021-2027 states that the workers from the coal mines in Radomir who have lost their jobs have work habits established over the years and there are serious risks that they cannot be retrained, which in turn may lead to a decrease in foreign investments on the territory of the municipality.

The population of Radomir municipality as of 31.12.2022 is 16,851 people, of which 8,102 are men and 8,749 are women. The share of the urban population is 11,734 (69.63%); of which 5,610 are men and 6,124 are woman. The rural population is 5,117 people (30.37%), of which 2,492 are men and 2,625 are women.

2) Describe the historical development of your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please give an overview of how the region has developed throughout history: which industries or economic sectors have developed and why, when were there shocks/crises that led to new changes,

and what were the consequences for development. Please structure the results in time sequences, from the past to the present. Pay particular attention to the role of women in certain periods, especially the role they played in (industrial) development.

XV – XIX century

Radomir is a medieval town built over a prehistoric, ancient settlement and necropolis. The town never changed its name. The first cell school was founded in 1826 in the village of Radibosh. In 1916, on the 190th anniversary of the establishment of the school in Radibosh, the photo documentary exhibition "The School" was opened at the initiative of Milena Simova from the State Archives - Pernik and Elena Sotirova - a resident of the village of Radibosh and former secretary of the community centre (chatkalite) in the village.

There are folk songs and beliefs that during the Ottoman slavery of Bulgaria, women from Radomir were famous as "irreconcilable women".

The local people on the territory of Radomir in this period were mainly farmers and animal breeders, but the craft also went along with them. Very famous were the so-called "catars", who produced wooden barrels known all the way to the White Sea. In the village of Dren, there were woodcarvers of unparalleled skill.

XX century

The first decades of the 20th century, one of the main livelihoods of the local population is the bozaji craft. In 1918, the town of Radomir became the centre of Military Uprising. From the town, on September 27, 1918, Bulgaria was first proclaimed a Republic.

In 1976, near the town, construction began on one of the last major projects of the socialist period – the remaining unfinished Plant for Heavy Machine Building – Radomir, also called Kombinat "Red Mound". It was not fully completed when the communist regime collapsed. The plant for heavy engineering, which is considered a phenomenon in Bulgaria, is located on an area of 1,600 acres and houses the best machines in the world. The plant is considered a phenomenon because its production is always at a loss - despite the high share of state subsidies, the enterprise has a negative financial profitability. Initially, the Bulgarian government planned for the plant to be equipped by the Japanese company "Kobe Steel", which should have provided the production technology, based on its similar plant, managed the Bulgarian plant for 5 years and organized the export of the production. The first production facilities started operating in 1985. Shortly after, at the end of 1985, there was a change in the behaviour of the Bulgarian government - contacts with "Kobe Steel" were terminated due to pressure from the Soviet Union. The purpose of the plant is to provide employment for workers after the planned closure of the unprofitable coal mines "Mini-Pernik" and the amortized engineering plant "Struma". Together with the plan for the construction of the plant, in the mid-1980s, a Complex program for the development of the area was developed. The Complex program envisaged the construction of facilities in several directions - a housing program for the town of Radomir and Pernik and the surrounding areas; heating plant in Radomir; modernization of an existing hospital and construction of a new one. At the beginning of 1985, the Bulgarian government sent over 200 people to Japan for specialized technical training.

According to financial reports from the early 1990s, BGN 1.4 billion (715 808 800 Euro) was invested in the plant, almost entirely from loans from the state budget. At the same time, the total volume of production for 1980-1990 was only 602 million BGN, with the main part of the enterprise's capacity unused - in 1989, the load on the production facilities was 12.5%, and in 1990 it was 5.8%. In the process of designing and building the plant, women engineers also participated, and in its production activity, women were appointed to administrative positions, assemblers and

workers. In 1991 the Plant for Heavy Machine Building – Radomir was divided into 5 independent enterprises.

3) Describe the current performance of the labour market and the challenges of development (max. 500 words).

Please provide some basic descriptions that summarise the current status in the region, focusing on the performance of the labour market. The description should clearly indicate: a) the main economic sectors today; b) labour market problems (lack of skilled labour, daily commuting, unemployment, precariousness, discrimination, etc.); c) other socio-economic problems/issues (housing, out-migration, infrastructure, etc.); d) organisational/institutional framework (education, public administration, development institutions, etc.).

The municipality of Radomir is an important economic centre in the Pernik region with a regional share of 11% of production and 16% of net sales revenue. Enterprises and companies of the processing industry, trade and repair, construction, hospitality and catering, transport and communications, agriculture, property operations, business services, represent the sectors of the economy of the municipality. A high share of industry, followed by the service sector and a relatively lower share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries characterize the economy¹³.

The number of reported non-financial enterprises¹⁴ for the period 2015-2022 is characterized by the following dynamics - from 649 to 691 (an increase of 6.5%). The majority (75.7%) are in the service sector. This number determines relatively low entrepreneurial activity in the municipality (39 registered enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants, 2020), below the average for the district (46 enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants) and the country (48 enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants), considering that the municipality is dominated by small and medium-sized companies.

Over 50% of the enterprises in Radomir municipality are in the field of trade, transport, hotels and restaurants. In agriculture, forestry and fishing, the reported enterprises are 11.6%, in industry - 7.6% of all enterprises reported in the non-financial sector¹⁵.

An essential measure characterizing the development of the working population is the demographic replacement¹⁶. The reproduction of labour resources is carried out in the conditions of the deteriorated demographic situation in the country. While in 2011, 100 people leaving the working age in Bulgaria were replaced by 70 young people, in 2020 the value of this indicator for the country is 67 people (people entering the working age population per 100 leaving). For the Pernik region, the coefficient of demographic replacement changed from 54 in 2011 to 50 in 2022, for the Southern Region - from 71 to 70, for the municipality of Radomir - from 49 to 48, following

¹³ The Radomir Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2021-2027, page 16

¹⁴ A non-financial enterprise is an institution that does not provide financial services. It can include businesses such as retailers, manufacturers and technology companies. Although they may not be involved in the direct provision of financial services, they play an important role in supporting the financial sector by generating economic activity. In addition, many of the non-financial enterprises are large employers, providing jobs and income to the workforce. As a result, non-financial enterprises are an important part of the national economy and play a key role in supporting the country's economic growth.

¹⁵ The Radomir Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2021-2027, page 14

¹⁶ The coefficient of demographic replacement is the ratio between the number of the population in the entering age group 15-19 years and the leaving age group 60-64 years of the working age population

the general downward trend for the country. This means that there is no complete replacement of the workforce in the municipality¹⁷.

The category "economically active population" includes persons in the age groups above 15 years. It includes both employed and unemployed persons. The data for the last quarter of 2023 show that of the population over 15 years old (16,851), the total number of the economically active population in the municipality of Radomir is 9,014, and the economically inactive – 7,775. The coefficient of economic activity for the municipality of Radomir is 53.7%. For comparison, the coefficient of economic activity for the Pernik region is 57.7% (2022), for the South-West region - 58.5, for the country - 55.5%¹⁸.

Due to the proximity to the regional town of Pernik and the capital of Sofia, temporary labour mobility is high and thousands of residents of Radomir municipality travel to both cities to work every day.

The following challenges have been identified in the Radomir Municipality Integrated Development Plan for the period 2021-2027:

- Presence of underdeveloped rural areas in the municipality and agriculture with low labour intensity.
- Demographic problems and the depopulation of the region put the issue of Roma integration and their inclusion in the labour market on the agenda.

On the territory of the municipality of Radomir during the academic year 2023/2024, the following education institutions were functioning: Kindergartens – 3; Secondary school – 1; Vocational high schools – 2; Primary schools – 4; Elementary school – 1. The technical vocational high school "Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov" - Radomir is the first electrotechnical school in Bulgaria with a 95-year history. Prepares students in the specialties: "Electrical Engineering and Energy", "Electronics, Automation, Communication and Computer Engineering" and "Applied Informatics". Since 2016, the high school has a partnership for the education of students in a dual form with AK Electric AD, Radomir. The enterprise is part of the global Swedish company AQ Group AB - one of the leaders in the design and production of electrical panels and complex metal components for industrial customers.

The main specialties in the vocational high school of transports "Yuri Gagarin" are "Automotive Engineering"; "Transport and warehouse logistics"; "Electrical engineering and road transport"; "Management of the transport enterprise". The specialty "Automotive Engineering" is conducted in a dual form of training, and local enterprises and businesses were involved in the development of the curriculum in order to ensure continuity between training and the labour market.

4) Describe the position of women in the labour market in your pilot region (max. 500 words).

Please specify the challenges you see in your pilot region in terms of women's employment/economic empowerment. Indicate the main types of women (e.g., young women, older women, single mothers, female managers, unemployed women) that are relevant to these challenges.

In recent years, unemployment among women in Radomir has been decreasing. One of the main factors for this is the plant "AK Electric" AD, Radomir, which is part of the global Swedish company AQ Group AB. The enterprise is among the leaders in the design and production of electrical panels and complex metal components for industrial customers with high requirements. The

¹⁷ The Radomir Municipality Integrated Development Plan 2021-2027, page 31

¹⁸ It refers to the population over 15 years of age.

enterprise, which was established more than 50 years ago, is among the few in the country that remained unaffected by the economic crisis and is increasing its production. The production facilities of the plant are located on an area of 50,000 sq.m. in Radomir, Pernik and Kyustendil locations. The company employs over 1,100 workers¹⁹. The company has established a Professional Training Centre "Akademiya Electric" at "AK Electric" JSC, which provides training opportunities for obtaining a degree of professional qualification in 16 specialties from 9 professions. The company is looking for new workers, including women, as it is constantly expanding its production. In February 2024, the Ministry of Innovation and Growth awarded a class "A" investment certificate to the "AK Electric" AD, which plans to create 120 new jobs.

Unemployment among women in Radomir is low. Women over 55 with secondary or no education have the hardest time finding work. Other active players on the labour market in Radomir are "VETPROM" AD with 209 workers by 2021 (production of medicinal products, nutritional supplements and cosmetics) and Work and Wear with 79 workers by 2021 (tailoring company). A large part of the job seekers from Radomir municipality finds employment through vacancies announced by employers in Pernik and Sofia.

In 2018, the non-governmental organization "Solidarity in Action" Foundation²⁰ was established in the village of Drugan, municipality of Radomir. The purpose of the organization is the empowerment of women, legal advocacy, prevention against domestic violence and violence between intimate partners. In 2024, the Foundation organizes for the third time a competition for the most inspiring women in the territory of Radomir. Nominations are made transparently and publicly through the organization's website. Teachers, local historians, women who take care of sick children and relatives, etc. have been nominated in the competitions held so far. On March 8, 2021, in the square in the town of Radomir, within the framework of the first edition of the contest, 11 women were awarded "Inspirers of the Municipality of Radomir". Within the framework of the second edition of the competition in 2022, the Foundation created 8 short video films dedicated to the award-winning women with a high contribution to the development of local communities²¹. A "Handbook for public recognition of women with public contribution at the regional level"²² was created, which was distributed to more than 500 municipalities and civil organizations throughout the country in an effort to inspire other communities to organize similar

¹⁹ According to the Plan for the Integrated Development of the Radomir Municipality 2021-2027, the structure-determining enterprises in the municipality are: 1. "Foundry-Forge Machine Building Complex" Ltd. (production of steel and cast-iron castings, steel casting, forgings, rolling mills, rolling mills, etc.); 2. "Galko" JSC (production of metal structures and their parts); 3. "AK Electric" AD is the third company in Radomir by annual turnover.

²⁰ <https://solidarityworks.eu/en/faq/>

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOstHgRD5pQ&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNdKrJI4pyg&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=3>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-g2w8gvCHE&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=4>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJtvBUgeyco&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=5>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIE2kZEXoAY&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=6>;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_eq9ep_ktg8&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=7;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDQhR3-ksg&list=PLKzfEvCd-yLYr73pivLPSESA7QSNn58h3&index=8>;

²² <https://www.scribd.com/document/606505495/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%8A%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%8F%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D1%81-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BE>

initiatives. The Foundation's initiatives are implemented with the support of the EU's European Solidarity Corps.

Annex 8 – National statistical indicators for the Zasavska Region, Slovenia

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness		NUTS 3 - Zasavska Region					NUTS 2 - Eastern Slovenia					NUTS 0 - Slovenia				
					NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	51	51	51	50	51	50	50	50	49	51	51	50	50	50
	0-14 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	48	47	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	48
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	48	48	49	47	46	49	48	48	47	46	48	48	48	48	47
	30-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	50	49	49	49	49	48	48	48	48	49	49	49	49	48
	65+ years	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	equal	64	62	61	58	56	63	61	60	57	56	63	61	60	58	56
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	no	no	equal	equal	44	44	47	47	46	NA	NA	44	45	44	45	43	45	45	45
	15-29 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	41	38	42	40	39	NA	NA	38	37	37	43	39	40	38	38
	30-44 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	47	47	47	46	46	NA	NA	46	45	45	48	46	47	46	46
	45-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	41	45	49	49	48	NA	NA	45	46	46	41	42	45	47	47
	65-89 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	30	22	27	27	29	NA	NA	31	26	28	29	27	28	27	29
	Agriculture = A	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	33	30	33	31	30	NA	NA	32	31	34	33	30	32	30	32
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	29	28	29	28	26	NA	NA	28	28	26	31	27	27	27	25
	Services = G-U	/	no	no	equal	equal	58	58	58	57	57	NA	NA	56	56	57	55	55	55	55	55
	Primary or less	/	no	no	over (> 40 %)	over (> 40 %)	44	42	50	47	42	NA	NA	40	40	36	41	36	40	40	36
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	40	41	41	39	38	NA	NA	39	37	36	42	40	39	37	37
	Tertiary	/	yes (> 60%)	no	equal	equal	57	58	60	61	61	NA	NA	59	60	60	56	58	59	59	59
Employment structure	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	no	no	equal	equal	56	55	47	49	48	53	54	50	53	51	52	53	48	51	50
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	no	no	equal	equal	45	45	47	48	46	44	43	45	44	44	45	43	45	45	45
	15-29 years	/	yes (< 40%)	yes (widening)	equal	equal	42	38	42	39	36	43	38	38	37	37	43	39	40	38	38
	30-44 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	47	48	48	48	47	48	46	46	45	45	48	46	47	46	46
	45-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	43	45	49	51	50	40	41	45	47	47	41	42	45	47	47
	65-89 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	34	20	23	32	29	27	30	32	26	27	29	27	28	27	29
	Agriculture = A	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	32	29	33	31	29	33	30	32	31	34	33	30	32	30	32
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	30	31	30	28	32	29	28	28	26	31	27	27	27	25
	Services = G-U	/	yes (> 60%)	no	equal	under (> 60 %)	62	62	62	62	61	57	57	58	58	59	55	55	55	55	55
	Primary or less	/	no	no	over (> 40 %)	over (> 40 %)	47	44	49	49	43	41	36	40	41	37	41	36	40	40	36
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	41	41	41	40	38	42	40	39	38	37	42	40	39	37	37
	Tertiary	/	yes (> 60%)	no	equal	equal	58	59	61	63	63	58	59	60	61	61	56	58	59	59	59
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	yes (< 40%)	no*	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	23	17	NA	NA	NA	33	33	NA	NA	NA	35	36
	Female share of self-employment by place of work	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	28	32	33	33	30	29	32	33	33	29	28	32	33	33
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	27	32	32	32	NA	NA	32	33	33	29	28	32	33	33
Entrepreneurship	Gender wage gap	/	no	yes (closing)*	equal	equal	9	12	6	4	4	6	7	5	7	5	7	7	5	7	6
	Agriculture = A	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	15	16	12	7	11	13	14	10	5	9
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (> 10%)	yes (closing)*	equal	under (> 10 %)	24	25	16	15	12	18	18	13	14	9	16	15	10	11	6
Wages	Gender wage gap by economic sector	/	no	yes (closing)*	equal	equal	9	12	6	3	3	7	8	4	5	5	12	12	8	9	9
	Services = G-U	/	no	yes (closing)*	equal	equal	9	12	6	3	3	7	8	4	5	5	12	12	8	9	9
Managerial positions	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	NA	31	35	34	36	NA	31	34	34	34	NA	29	31	33	34
	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	25	29	28	29	28	23	27	30	29	29	30	32	31	29	30
Education and skills	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	25	21	32	24	36	25	24	32	34	30	25	26	31	35	31

Source: National statistical office in Slovenia

Annex 9 – National statistical indicators for the Styrian Iron Road, Austria

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness		Statistical district level - Styrian Iron Road					NUTS 2 - Styria					NUTS 0 - Austria				
					NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2006	2013	2018	2023	2003	2006	2013	2018	2023	2003	2006	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	52	52	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	52	51	51	51	51
	0-14 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	49	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	48	47	46	44	44	49	49	48	48	48	49	49	49	48	48
	30-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	50	50	50	50	49	50	50	50	50	49	50	50	50	50	50
	65+ years	/	no	no	equal	equal	60	59	58	58	58	61	59	58	57	56	61	59	58	57	56
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	46	46	46	46	NA	46	46	46	46	NA	46	46	47	47
	15-29 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	44	43	44	44	NA	46	46	46	45	NA	46	46	46	46
	30-44 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	46	47	46	47	NA	47	47	47	47	NA	47	48	48	48
	45-64 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	47	47	47	47	NA	46	46	47	47	NA	46	47	47	47
	65-89 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	48	52	46	44	NA	41	51	46	41	NA	41	47	44	41
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	42	45	47	39	NA	49	53	52	46	NA	48	52	50	44
	Agriculture = A	yes (< 40%)	no*	under (< 40 %)	equal	equal	NA	24	19	20	21	NA	22	21	22	22	NA	23	23	23	23
	Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	57	58	58	59	NA	56	56	56	56	NA	54	55	54	55
	Services = G-U	no	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	NA	53	52	50	NA	NA	53	51	48	NA	NA	51	48	46
	Primary or less	no	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	NA	44	44	45	NA	NA	44	44	44	NA	NA	45	45	45
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	NA	48	48	48	NA	NA	52	53	53	NA	NA	53	54	54
	Secondary	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Tertiary	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	45	49	49	47	NA	46	46	46	46	NA	47	48	49	48
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	44	45	46	45	NA	44	46	46	46	NA	45	46	46	46
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	41	43	44	43	NA	44	44	45	44	NA	44	45	45	45
Employment structure	15-29 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	44	45	46	46	NA	46	46	46	46	NA	46	46	46	46
	30-44 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	44	45	46	46	NA	46	46	46	46	NA	46	46	46	46
	45-64 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	46	45	46	46	NA	47	47	48	48	NA	46	47	47	47
	65-89 years	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	45	51	45	43	NA	42	51	46	41	NA	41	47	44	41
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	42	44	45	38	NA	49	53	52	46	NA	48	52	50	44
	Agriculture = A	yes (< 40%)	no*	under (< 40 %)	under (< 40 %)	under (< 40 %)	NA	23	19	20	22	NA	22	21	22	22	NA	22	22	22	22
	Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	56	57	57	57	NA	56	56	56	56	NA	54	54	54	54
	Services = G-U	no	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	NA	51	50	49	NA	NA	53	50	47	NA	NA	51	48	45
	Primary or less	no	no*	equal	equal	equal	NA	NA	43	45	44	NA	NA	44	44	44	NA	NA	44	44	44
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	NA	45	47	46	NA	NA	51	52	52	NA	NA	51	53	53
Entrepreneurship	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of self-employment by place of work	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	36	40	41	40	NA	39	42	41	39	NA	38	40	40	38
Wages	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	no	no*	equal	equal	NA	36	40	40	40	NA	39	42	41	39	NA	38	40	40	38
	Gender wage gap	/	yes (> 10%)	no*	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	24	22	NA	NA	NA	18	15	NA	NA	NA	15	13
Managerial positions	Agriculture = A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Industry = B-F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Education and skills	Services = G-U	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	15	14	29	25	26	29	32
	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	21	23	25	23	28	19	20	20	22	25	20	20	21	24	26
	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	8	16	28	25	29	15	22	21	20	21	16	19	20	22	23

Source: National statistical office in Austria

Annex 10 – National statistical indicators for the Karlovy Vary Region, Czech Republic

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness		NUTS 3 - Karlovy Vary Region					NUTS 2 - North West					NUTS 0 - Czech Republic				
					NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	50	51	51	51	51	51	51
	0-14 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	48	48	49	49	49	36	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	49
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	48	48	49	49	48	48	48	49	49	48	49	49	49
	30-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	50	50	50	49	50	50	50	49	49	49	50	50	50	49	49
	65+ years	/	no	no	equal	equal	61	60	58	57	58	62	60	58	58	61	61	60	59	58	58
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	15-29 years	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	30-44 years	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	45-64 years	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	65-89 years	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Agriculture = A	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Industry = B-F	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Services = G-U	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Primary or less	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Secondary	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Tertiary	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment structure	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	no	no	equal	equal	46	49	46	51	54	49	52	49	54	56	50	52	49	51	53
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	no	no	equal	equal	52	51	51	51	50	52	51	51	51	50	52	51	51	51	51
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	48	48	51	49	48	48	48	51	49	49	49	49	51
	30-44 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	49	49	46	49	49	48	48	46	49	49	49	49	46
	45-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	50	50	49	47	50	50	50	49	48	51	50	50	49	47
	65-89 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	59	58	57	56	56	59	58	57	56	55	59	58	57	56	58
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age	/	no	no	equal	equal	25	33	9	23	16	29	39	31	29	25	31	31	34	28	28
	Agriculture = A	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	29	30	28	31	27	28	28	25	26	26	29	28	32	28	26
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	56	53	55	56	58	54	52	54	56	56	54	54	28	55	55
	Services = G-U	/	no	no	equal	equal	64	62	60	57	56	63	63	64	60	59	66	65	64	62	60
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of work	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	equal	47	49	49	49	48	47	47	47	47	46	49	49	49	49	48
	Primary or less	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	equal	44	42	48	54	52	46	47	51	55	55	42	46	50	52	53
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	no	no	equal	equal	NA	34	42	14	30	NA	34	31	30	33	NA	33	32	30	31
	Tertiary	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	28	32	33	41	41	27	28	33	39	34	28	28	32	33	31
Entrepreneurship	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	no	yes (closing)	above (> 40 %)	above (> 40 %)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Gender wage gap	/	yes (> 10%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	18	17	11	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	22	20	18
Wages	Agriculture = A	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Industry = B-F	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Services = G-U	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Managerial positions	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	equal	32	32	40	41	42	34	36	41	42	42	34	37	41	43	43
Education and skills	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	40	38	42	45	46

Source: National statistical office in Czech Republic

Annex 11 – National statistical indicators for the Komárom-Esztergom County, Hungary

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness NUTS 2	NUTS 0	NUTS 3 - Komárom-Esztergom County					NUTS 2 - Közép-Dunántúl					NUTS 0 - Hungary				
							2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	52	52	52	52	51	52	52	52	52	51	26	53	52	52	52
	0-14 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	24	49	49	49	49
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	48	24	49	49	48	49
	30-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	51	51	51	49	51	50	51	50	49	26	52	51	51	50
	65+ years	/	yes (> 60%)	no	equal	equal	63	63	62	62	62	62	63	62	62	61	31	63	63	62	61
	Female share of total population by age	/	no	no	equal	equal	41	41	43	44	44	43	45	45	44	44	45	44	46	45	45
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	no	no	equal	equal	39	37	39	42	40	42	40	41	42	41	44	42	42	43	42
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	41	41	40	44	41	44	46	43	44	41	45	43	45	44	43
	30-44 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	44	44	48	47	47	47	47	47	46	47	48	47	47	48	48
	45-64 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	33	35	32	32	37	35	31	31	29	36	34	34	35	33	39
	65-89 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	30	30	30	32	33	25	24	25	25	24	21	21	21	22	23
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	36	36	37	33	33	34	35	34	33	32	30	31	31	30	30
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of residence	/	no	no	equal	equal	52	54	52	54	53	53	55	55	54	53	52	51	52	53	52
	Agriculture = A	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	30	24	20	17	13	29	23	20	16	13	29	23	19	17	13
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	55	56	55	57	53	54	56	54	57	52	55	56	52	53	53
	Services = G-U	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	15	20	25	26	34	16	22	27	27	35	17	20	28	30	33
	Primary or less	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	42	43	41	38	33	48	43	42	39	35	45	42	39	35	34
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	yes (< 40%)	yes (widening)	equal	equal	43	46	46	48	47	43	47	46	49	47	43	47	46	49	47
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	no	no	equal	equal	43	43	43	43	43	45	46	45	45	45	45	45	45	45	45
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	no	no	equal	equal	38	38	38	38	38	41	41	40	41	40	43	43	43	43	42
Employment structure	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	42	42	42	42	40	45	47	45	44	42	44	44	44	44	43
	15-29 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	46	46	46	47	48	49	49	49	49	49	47	48	48	48	48
	30-44 years	/	no	no	equal	equal	32	34	32	32	38	34	31	32	31	39	32	34	34	33	39
	45-64 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	31	31	31	32	26	26	25	25	25	21	22	22	22	23
	65-89 years	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	35	35	36	36	35	35	34	34	34	34	31	31	30	30	30
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	53	53	53	53	55	55	56	56	57	57	53	52	50	52	52
	Agriculture = A	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	25	20	17	13	30	24	20	17	13	28	23	20	17	13
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	53	55	54	56	51	54	55	54	56	51	54	55	55	55	52
	Services = G-U	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	16	21	26	27	35	16	21	26	27	36	16	21	26	29	35
	Primary or less	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	44	45	42	40	34	47	44	40	38	34	46	43	39	35	33
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	yes (< 40%)	yes (widening)	equal	equal	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	8	8	8	9	9	8	8	8
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	9	9	9	8	8	9	9	9	8	8	9	9	8	8	8
Entrepreneurship	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	20	20	19	18	17	20	20	19	19	18	16	16	16	15	15
	Gender wage gap	/	yes (> 10%)	no	equal	equal	18	18	18	17	20	11	11	10	10	10	8	8	8	7	8
Wages	Agriculture = A	/	yes (> 10%)	no	equal	under (> 10%)	23	22	22	21	18	23	22	22	21	19	18	18	17	17	16
	Industry = B-F	/	yes (> 10%)	no	equal	equal	6	4	4	3	4	11	11	11	9	11	17	17	16	16	17
Managerial positions	Services = G-U	/	no	no	over (< 10%)	over (< 10%)	33	33	32	32	32	33	35	35	36	36	35	35	36	37	36
	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	NA	23	23	27	23	NA	23	23	25	23	NA	24	25	25	25
Education and skills	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	NA	28	31	31	28	NA	27	27	31	25	NA	28	29	31	28
	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal															

Source: National statistical office in Hungary

Annex 12 – National statistical indicators for the Herzeg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness		NUTS 3 - Herzeg-Bosnian County					NUTS 2					NUTS 0 - Bosnia and Herzegovina				
					NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	NA	50	50	50	49	49	51	51	51	51	51	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		0-14 years	no	no	equal	NA	49	49	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		15-29 years	no	no	equal	NA	47	48	48	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		30-64 years	no	no	equal	NA	48	48	48	47	48	51	51	51	50	50	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		65+ years	no	no	equal	NA	60	59	58	56	54	58	58	58	58	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of total population by age	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		15-29 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		30-44 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		45-64 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		65-89 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Agriculture = A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Industry = B-F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Employment structure		Services = G-U	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Primary or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Secondary	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Tertiary	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	36	39	43	45	37	38	40	42	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		15-29 years	no	no	equal	NA	43	37	46	44	43	44	40	41	41	42	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		30-44 years	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	37	40	45	47	39	39	41	42	46	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		45-64 years	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	33	34	36	40	44	32	37	40	41	43	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	NA	11	36	39	29	32	16	27	35	53	35	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		65-89 years	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	NA	37	20	18	18	24	18	17	16	20	23	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Agriculture = A	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	NA	37	19	15	16	20	27	23	25	26	28	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	NA	37	19	15	16	20	27	23	25	26	28	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Wages	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of work	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	47	51	54	57	46	48	49	49	52	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Services = G-U	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	40	38	57	38	40	44	47	56	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Primary or less	yes (< 40%)	no	under (< 40%)	NA	37	40	38	57	38	40	44	47	56	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	30	33	35	40	34	33	34	35	38	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Secondary	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	48	53	43	57	46	52	54	48	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Tertiary	no	yes (closing)	equal	NA	37	48	53	43	57	46	52	54	48	57	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of self-employment by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Gender wage gap	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Agriculture = A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Industry = B-F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Gender wage gap by economic sector	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		Services = G-U	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Managerial positions	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Education and skills	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
		/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: National statistical office in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Annex 13 – National statistical indicators for the Mačva District, Serbia

Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	Gender gap < 40% or > 60%	Gender gap trend 2003-2023	Regional embeddedness		NUTS 3 - Mačva District					NUTS 2 - Šumadija and Western Serbia					NUTS 0 - Serbia				
					NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Population structure	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	50	50	50	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
	0-14 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	15-29 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	30-64 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	65+ years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of total population by age	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	45
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	35	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	42
	15-29 years	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	under (< 40 %)	NA	NA	NA	NA	44	NA	NA	NA	NA	45	NA	NA	NA	NA	46
	30-44 years	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	48	NA	NA	NA	NA	45	NA	NA	NA	NA	46
	45-64 years	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38	NA	NA	NA	NA	41	NA	NA	NA	NA	39
	65-89 years	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	41	NA	NA	NA	NA	45	NA	NA	NA	NA	40
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	37	NA	NA	NA	NA	32	NA	NA	NA	NA	32
	Agriculture = A	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	53	NA	NA	NA	NA	53	NA	NA	NA	NA	53
	Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	51	NA	NA	NA	NA	47	NA	NA	NA	NA	43
	Services = G-U	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	41
Employment structure	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	52	NA	NA	NA	NA	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	55
	Secondary	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	41
	Tertiary	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	52	NA	NA	NA	NA	56	NA	NA	NA	NA	55
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	53
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	no	no	equal	equal	44	44	49	NA	46	44	45	46	45	45	44	44	47	44	46
	15-29 years	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	37	NA	NA	NA	NA	40	NA	15	37	NA	42
	30-44 years	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	46	NA	NA	NA	NA	46	NA	37	44	NA	46
	45-64 years	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	49	NA	NA	NA	NA	46	NA	42	43	NA	47
	65-89 years	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38	NA	NA	NA	NA	41	NA	6	NA	NA	38
	Female share of employed population by place of work and age	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	42	NA	NA	NA	28	45	NA	46	NA	27	40
	Agriculture = A	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	36	33	NA	34	NA	36	33
	Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	55	NA	NA	NA	55	53	NA	NA	NA	55	53
	Services = G-U	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	54	NA	NA	NA	26	47	NA	NA	NA	44	43
	Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education	/	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	41	NA	NA	NA	50	40	NA	NA	NA	39	41
Wages	Secondary	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	24	57	NA	NA	NA	54	55
	Tertiary	no	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	50	NA	NA	NA	24	57	NA	NA	NA	54	55
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	NA	NA	52	51	53	NA	NA	51	51	51	NA	23
	Female share of self-employment by place of work	/	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	15	NA	NA	NA	NA	17	NA	NA	NA	NA	23
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	yes (< 40%)	NA	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	NA	15	NA	NA	NA	NA	17	NA	NA	NA	NA	23
	Gender wage gap	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	9	10	NA	NA	NA	9	14	14
	Agriculture = A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Industry = B-F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Services = G-U	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Gender wage gap by economic sector	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	31	NA
	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	39	NA	NA	NA	NA	43	NA	NA	NA	NA	42	NA	NA
	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	42	NA	NA	NA	NA	43	NA	NA	NA	NA	42	NA	NA

Source: National statistical office in Serbia

Annex 14 – National statistical indicators for the Pernik Province, Bulgaria

			Gender gap	Gender gap trend	Regional embeddedness		NUTS 3 - Pernik					NUTS 2 - Yugozapaden					NUTS 0 - Bulgaria					
Thematic field	Indicator	Groups/categories	< 40% or > 60%	2003-2023	NUTS 2	NUTS 0	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023	
	Female share of total population	/	no	no	equal	equal	51	52	51	51	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	53	53	53	52
	0-14 years	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	48	48	48	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	50	50	50	49	
	15-29 years	no	no	equal	equal	49	49	47	47	49	49	49	49	49	49	49	50	50	50	50	48	
	30-64 years	no	no	equal	equal	51	51	49	49	50	52	51	51	50	50	52	52	52	52	52	50	
	Female share of total population by age	65+ years	yes (> 60%)	no	equal	equal	56	58	59	59	61	59	60	60	60	61	59	60	60	60	61	
	Female share of employed population by place of residence	/	no	no	equal	equal	49	46	47	47	54	49	48	49	48	49	47	47	47	47	47	
	15-29 years	no	no	equal	equal	56	33	40	34	48	47	44	45	45	48	46	42	43	42	44		
	30-44 years	no	no	equal	equal	48	47	45	45	54	49	49	48	47	48	48	48	47	46	46		
	45-64 years	no	no	equal	equal	50	51	53	54	55	50	50	52	51	51	47	48	50	49	49		
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and age	65-89 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	38	32	40	44	48	30	31	37	42	42		
	Agriculture = A	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	42	37	31	31	33	36	36	32	30	30		
	Industry = B-F	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	42	35	37	32	37	41	37	39	35	33	41	37	37	35	34		
	Services = G-U	yes (> 60%)	yes (widening)	under (> 60 %)	under (> 60 %)	58	56	54	55	66	53	54	53	53	54	53	55	54	54	55		
	Female share in broad economic sectors by place of residence	Primary or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	43	42	41	41	40	42	41	42	38	38		
	Female share of employed population by place of residence and level of education	Secondary	no	no	equal	equal	49	43	42	45	49	45	43	42	43	43	44	43	42	42	41	
	Tertiary	yes (> 60%)	no	under (> 60 %)	under (> 60 %)	63	65	70	57	70	57	57	59	57	57	58	58	59	59	59		
	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Female share of unemployment rate	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Female share of employed population by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
		15-29 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
30-44 years		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
45-64 years		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Female share of employed population by place of work and age		65-89 years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Agriculture = A		yes (< 40%)	no	NA	equal	29	38	29	31	33	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	32	33	27	29	30		
Industry = B-F		yes (< 40%)	yes (widening)	NA	equal	42	31	45	33	31	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	43	38	40	39	37		
Services = G-U		no	no	NA	equal	63	58	58	59	60	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	57	52	52	52	52		
Female share in broad economic sectors by place of work		Primary or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Female share of employed population by place of work and level of education		Secondary	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Tertiary		NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		
Employment structure	Female share of total R&D personnel by place of work	/	no	yes (closing)*	equal	equal	NA	NA	NA	32	45	52	50	51	47	48	53	50	52	47	48	
Entrepreneurship	Female share of self-employment by place of work	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
	Female share of self-employment by place of residence	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	36	34	34	35	38	36	37	35	34	36	
Wages	Gender wage gap	/	yes (> 10%)	no	equal	equal	26	23	10	17	11	18	17	19	21	21	19	18	20	20	19	
	Agriculture = A	no	yes (closing)	equal	over (> -10 %)	32	10	-7	4	-9	14	6	10	4	5	17	16	15	12	12		
	Industry = B-F	yes (> 10%)	no	equal	equal	35	37	17	25	22	28	24	25	22	22	31	27	29	25	24		
	Services = G-U	no	no	over (> -10 %)	over (> -10 %)	2	-12	-2	3	-3	15	19	21	23	25	13	18	19	21	22		
Managerial positions	Female share of employment in senior and middle management	/	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	30	32	38	40	45	31	32	37	39	42	
Education and skills	Female share of STEM students (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	31	30	32	31	34	34	32	31	29	30	32	31	30	29	30	
	Female share of STEM graduates (by place of residence)	/	yes (< 40%)	no	equal	equal	25	29	27	36	31	35	36	35	34	32	32	32	32	33	31	

Source: National statistical office in Bulgaria

Annex 15 – SWOT analysis from the Municipality of Trbovlje, Slovenia

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong presence of women in health care, education and retirement homes • Managerial positions in public institutions (schools, hospital, municipality, etc.) mostly held by women • Existing role models (e.g., former mayoress, current vice mayoress, women entrepreneurs, such as Maša Jazbec and others that succeeded in technological sector) • Prevailing opinion of local population that women have equal access to employment or that the situation is improving • Tradition from the socialist era of employing female labour (e.g., women's factories) • Accessibility of lower paid jobs for less educated women • Wide range of employment support programmes (e.g., Multigenerational Centre, Business Incubator, PONI, career fairs, SPOT Point, active employment policy program (ESS), etc.) • Changing attitudes among younger generations who see a better future for working in the region • Strong place attachment, strong personal networks, improved quality of life, peace and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underrepresentation of women in industry • Underrepresentation of women in R&D activities and STEM fields • Underrepresentation of women in managerial positions, especially in companies • Underrepresentation of women in entrepreneurship (self-employed) • Underrepresentation of younger and older women in the workforce • Lower wages for women, especially in industry • Women's lack of knowledge about different career opportunities • Women's lack of confidence in entrepreneurship • Lack of willingness to work among women due to receipt of social benefits and cultural constraints among migrant women (e.g., language, administrative barriers) • Persistent gender barriers or cultural attitudes and traditional roles hinder women's participation in emerging industries and technical education • Less employment opportunities for more educated women • Absence of gender equality plans and other action plans to improve women's employment • Lack of interinstitutional cooperation • Lack of flexibility for organised care for children and the elderly and free of charge activities to foster women's work life balance
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above-average female education levels • Presence of a successful high-tech company, enabling women's employment in R&D activities and STEM fields • Well-renowned vocational school (STPŠ) – good access to education in STEM fast-growing sectors; few female students, but the number is increasing • Just Transition Fund – opportunity for investments in new workplaces for women • Breaking gender stereotypes, especially among young girls by raising interest in ICT or STEM jobs (e.g., S.O.S. school and robotics for young people) • Transposition and implementation of the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2023-2030 (ReNPEMŽMŽM30) at regional and local level • Gender-sensitive social innovations (e.g., working from home, job shadowing, mentoring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependency on one big actor, threat of becoming some kind of a “company town” (Dewesoft and Katapult owned by Jure Knez) • Lack of jobs (70% of the workforce commutes), especially for the more educated, can lead to emigration to other employment centres • Trbovlje can develop into residential town with daily commuters to near towns (Ljubljana, Celje); lower cost of apartments in Trbovlje, good connection to larger towns (train) • Lack of housing for young people and space for building • High outmigration, especially of skilled young people • Aging population

<p>scheme, life-long learning) have a positive impact on women's employment and working conditions</p>	
--	--

Annex 16 – SWOT analysis from the Styrian Iron Road, Austria

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region has 2nd highest gross median salary in Styria. • Mining university has highest female share of students among technical universities in Austria (appr. 28 %). • Largest industrial company voestalpine: since 2022 – HR follows special strategy for raising the proportion of women (empowerment of staff, positioning as an attractive employer for women, childcare, flexible working hours, shared shift, etc.). Special emphasis on “women in production”). • The measure of actively searching for women to fill positions in the academic field is consistently implemented at the mining university Leoben in all personnel procedures for academic university staff. Furthermore, a women support programme called “Yolante” (Young Ladies Network of Technology) was implemented. • “Girls’ Day” or FiT Powerday/Powerweek for career guiding - motivate girls and women to do an apprenticeship/take a career in STEM professions. • Existing network “Iron women” • A few highly successful regional female entrepreneurs and managerial employees (role models) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry + mining university Leoben MUL is male-dominated – e.g., voestalpine: proportion of female employees is only 16%, 14,5% in leadership positions; MUL: only 10% of professors are female, 26% of total scientific staff. • The labour market is strongly industry-oriented. Too few job opportunities in alternative sectors. • Apart from voestalpine no specific programmes in other industrial companies for female empowerment • Childcare still not sufficient, especially in smaller municipalities • Local politics: low percentage of female political decision-makers • Difficult to address immigrated women • Mindsets in the region “Steirische Eisenstrasse” incl. culture are (due to historical reasons) still male-dominated which leads to traditional gender roles as well as a difficult environment for female careers in industry. • Largest gender pay gap in Styria (see Kleine Zeitung) • Women work mostly part time, lower-wages are prevalent. • Insufficient public transport except city region Leoben – Trofaiach • Predominant rural lifestyle (except in urban areas)
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes such as “Frauen in Handwerk und Technik” (women in technology) can encourage women to seek jobs in industry. • Childcare organized by companies (best practise: voestalpine) could make jobs for women more attractive (even for shift workers if overnight stay is offered – see voestalpine Linz). • Reskilling & educational efforts are already carried out and are slowly working though there is still more potential. • The voestalpine strategy could act as “best practise” for other industrial companies. • Due to ongoing technological advances, more and more jobs in industry don’t require that much physical strength, which favours the integration of women into male-dominated companies and production units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing outmigration (which is predominately driven by young women) • Continuing stereotypes • Continuing gap in the distribution of care work between men and women

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skilled workforce forces industry to look for new sources for their workforce - all technical professions continue to be in high demand. • Integration of the focus “work and industry” in the existing female network Iron Women 	
--	--

Annex 17 – SWOT analysis from the LAG Sokolovsko, Czech Republic

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial base: the region has a diverse industrial presence, including engineering, chemicals and renewable energy sectors that can be used for inclusive employment. • Emerging sectors: the growth of services, tourism and technology offers opportunities for women outside traditional roles. • Examples of successful women: the presence of successful women in the public and private sectors, including in the industrial companies, who can serve as role models. • Supporting innovation: incubators and technology centres support entrepreneurship that women can take advantage of. • Reclamation projects: environmental sustainability efforts could involve women in emerging (green) industries. • Entrepreneurial networks: initiatives such as the "Meeting of Women Entrepreneurs of the Karlovy Vary Region" support budding aspiring entrepreneurs through networking and skill-building seminars. • Strong regional initiatives: partnerships between CzechInvest, INION, KARP and KHK KK agencies to provide business mentoring and training are steps towards economic inclusion. • Changes in entrepreneurship and STEM: Gender gaps are closing in these areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender inequality: Prevalence of male-oriented industrial culture excludes women from many opportunities, minority representation of women in senior management positions, low representation in R&D. • Limited training programmes: employers' programmes for retraining and up-skilling are often designed more for men, as a result of their employee base. • Less promising jobs: women are concentrated in low-wage jobs, often outside their field, which limits their career prospects. • Infrastructure gaps: Lack of childcare, transport and flexible working conditions limit women's participation in the workforce. • Cultural barriers: stereotypical roles for women and limited career guidance for girls to promote their equality. • Low level of education: low proportion of the population with university education, and on the contrary high proportion with primary education, absence of university education. • Lack of political support: no direct regional policies addressing women's employment; limited awareness and implementation of national and European strategies. • Unequal pay and opportunities: persistent gender pay gap, inflexible working hours and little opportunity for teleworking (home office). • Social composition of the population: The presence of socially excluded localities worsens the image of the region, which is perceived as an unattractive environment for family life. This creates a cycle of limited opportunities and poor infrastructure, which disproportionately limits women's access to stable employment and economic development.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging industries: renewable energy, IT, creative industries and sustainable tourism could provide higher-paying roles for women. • Retraining programmes: tailored educational reforms could enable women to access the roles in lucrative fields. • Social innovation: flexible and innovative work models and business incubators could reduce barriers to women's entrepreneurship and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic decline and transformation: decline and dependence on traditional industries with weakening demand and limited adaptation to modern industries can widen employment gaps and could aggravate unemployment among women. • Cultural resistance: persistent stereotypes and institutional inertia could hinder progress towards gender equality. • Young talent drain: the lack of exposure to skilled and lucrative jobs in the region affects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative ecosystems: Partnerships between local government, NGOs and the private sector could amplify support for women-led initiatives. • Policy leverage: European frameworks and EU funds promoting gender equality could drive regional initiatives to support women in employment • Retraining and mentoring: programmes like the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs can improve skills and entrepreneurial ambitions. • Awareness-raising campaigns: campaigns targeting the general public can improve understanding of gender equality principles and promote cultural change. 	<p>the inflow of young talent, exacerbating women's employment problems, limiting innovation and further entrenching gender gaps in an ageing and less dynamic labour market.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the crisis: the economic downturn, the global crisis or lack of effective policy enforcement could widen the gender employment gap.
---	--

Annex 18 – SWOT analysis from the Komárom-Esztergom County, Hungary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location and economic integration: The county benefits from its position within the Vienna-Budapest-Bratislava corridor, offering access to cross-border economic opportunities and integration into major industrial networks. • Industrial transition and diversification: Transition from coal mining to automotive and high-tech industries has created new employment sectors, with potential for women's participation in emerging fields. • Low unemployment rates: The region has relatively low unemployment, reflecting a stable job market that could support increased female workforce participation. • Educational attainment: Women in the region are increasingly mobile and educated, with potential to leverage these skills in higher-paying roles. • Strong manufacturing base: The county's robust manufacturing sector provides diverse employment opportunities across different skill levels. • Regional innovation potential: Emerging high-tech industries create opportunities for skill development and career progression for women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underrepresentation in high-paying sectors: Women remain underrepresented in male-dominated industries such as automotive and technology, limiting their access to stable and lucrative employment opportunities. • Gender wage gap: Persistent wage disparities between men and women exacerbate economic inequalities and discourage full participation by women in the labour market. • Lack of childcare and flexible work options: Insufficient childcare facilities and limited availability of flexible work arrangements hinder women's ability to balance work and family responsibilities. • Infrastructure gaps: Poor transport connectivity in some parts of the region limits access to employment opportunities, particularly for women living in rural areas. • Limited career advancement: Structural barriers prevent women from accessing leadership and decision-making positions in key industries. • Skills mismatch: Existing training and education programs may not adequately prepare women for emerging technological and industrial roles.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy support for gender equality: National initiatives like Hungary's "Empowering Women in Family and Society (2021–2030)" Action Plan provide frameworks for improving gender equality through targeted programs such as reskilling and entrepreneurship support. • Emerging industries: Growth in high-tech sectors offers opportunities for targeted reskilling programs aimed at integrating women into STEM-related fields. • Social innovation initiatives: EU-funded programs like WIN encourage the development of local social innovations, including flexible work models and business incubators tailored to women's needs. • Cross-border collaboration: Proximity to Austria and Slovakia opens avenues for international partnerships that could promote female entrepreneurship and workforce integration. • Digital skills development: Increasing focus on digital skills training can create new pathways for women's employment in innovative sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural barriers and gender norms: Traditional gender roles continue to limit women's participation in leadership positions and technical fields, reinforcing occupational segregation. • Automation risks: Technological advancements may disproportionately affect women employed in routine or low-skilled jobs, increasing vulnerability to job displacement. • Economic volatility: External shocks such as economic crises or geopolitical instability could exacerbate existing inequalities, particularly in peripheral regions like Komárom-Esztergom County. • Outmigration of skilled women: The ongoing trend of young, educated women seeking opportunities abroad poses a challenge to retaining talent within the region. • Demographic decline: Aging population and low birth rates may further strain workforce participation and economic development. • Limited access to continuous learning: Insufficient investment in lifelong learning and



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship support: Growing ecosystem of support for women-led businesses and start-ups can create alternative employment and economic opportunities. 	<p>reskilling programs may leave women behind in rapidly evolving job markets.</p>
--	--

Annex 19 – SWOT analysis from the Herzeg-Bosnian County, Bosnia and Herzegovina

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from the public sector: regional and local authorities and institutions support women's access to the labour market with various employment, self-employment and subsidy programmes. • Growing awareness about the benefits of entrepreneurship: the foundation Linnovate Business Park organises a Start-up Academy and Business Incubator, and has initiated the start of a local network of female entrepreneurs. • Promotion and advocacy of women's rights and issues: local NGOs (supported by international NGOs/foreign authorities) contribute and raise awareness through numerous activities and various topics. • Increase in the number of women with tertiary education. • Natural resources and potential for rural development, especially rural entrepreneurship, tourism and outdoor-tourism. • Readiness for continuous learning and adaption to new technologies, particularly of younger generations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and social norms: traditional understanding of women's role in society and lack of support limit women's participation in the labour market. • Limited access to tertiary education: the County has no institutions that offer higher education, students have to pursue tertiary education in other cantons or abroad. • Lack of job opportunities: a predominantly rural economy with limited employment options (also for high-skilled roles) resulting in high unemployment and emigration. • Social infrastructure gaps: lack of transportation options, access to child-care facilities, and flexible work arrangements. • Precarious employment: a significant number of women is engaged in low wage service sectors, informal work, and fixed-term employment. • Underrepresentation of women in agriculture and industry.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location near the border: the proximity to Croatia and the EU market. • EU integration and funding programmes: not only for co-financing of strategic interventions, but also for policy reforms that would improve gender equality and labour market access. • Promotion of positive change: attracting diaspora investments and/or encouragement of return migration. • Inspiring change by example: promoting examples of good practice and female success-stories. • Growing trends in the demand for healthy food, herbs and traditional products, as well as rural and outdoor tourism, and especially digital technologies could foster female employment within the County. • Efficient implementation of existing policies and strategies on gender equality. • Educational reforms: improvement of secondary and tertiary education in accordance with the needs of the labour market, promotion and implementation of STEM programmes, subsidized entrepreneurship trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and political instability: not only on the local, but also regional and national level. • Blockade of EU funds due to failure to fulfil the conditions in the EU integration process. • Continuation of negative population growth • Continuation of emigration resulting in the loss of skilled labour force. • Poverty, especially of socially vulnerable categories of the population, due to scarce employment opportunities and precarious employment • Structural and systemic barriers limit both the implementation and effect of gender equality policies, initiatives and campaigns.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social innovations combined with awareness raising campaigns to foster and improve women's participation in the labour market. 	
--	--

Annex 20 – SWOT analysis from the Municipality of Loznica, Serbia

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favourable location & tourism potential: The city's geographical position (near the Drina River and Bosnia-Herzegovina border) offers rich opportunities for rural tourism, craftsmanship, and spa resorts (e.g., Banja Koviljača). • Tradition in tourism & services: Many small/medium businesses, especially in hospitality, care, and service industries, are well-aligned with women's skillsets and already have a strong female presence. • New industrial profile: Major investors in automotive and textile (Minth, Adient, Golden Lady) are creating fresh job opportunities for unemployed women when inclusive hiring practices are prioritized. • Supportive policy framework: National Employment Strategies (2021–2026), Action Plan (2024–2026), and the Gender Equality Strategy (2021–2030) provide a favourable backdrop for advancing women's employment and bridging gender gaps. • Active awareness & networking: Regular events, conferences, and workshops (e.g., <i>World of women</i> in March), as well as the <i>Association of Business Women Kreativna vizija Loznica</i>, promote entrepreneurship, skill-building, and visibility for female role models. • Strategic positioning: Loznica is a peripheral industrial centre with ongoing modernization efforts (e.g., a high-speed road to Šabac). The combination of rural traditions and infrastructural development can stimulate both industrial growth and tourism expansion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills gap & unemployment: Many women, including ex-Viskoza employees, lack the necessary education or retraining to transition into modern industrial or service-sector roles. • Limited financing for start-ups: Rural and marginalized women often face significant hurdles accessing loans, grants, or subsidies, stifling entrepreneurial potential. • Underestimation of unemployment: Some women remain unregistered with the National Employment Service (NES) – particularly in rural areas – thus losing out on training and support while misrepresenting official statistics. • Underutilized NES programs: Younger or geographically isolated women may decline offered trainings due to travel, family obligations, or low awareness of program benefits. • Work-life balance challenges: Childcare is limited, as well as flexible work arrangements, making it difficult for mothers (and other caregivers) to maintain stable employment. • Gaps for older women: There is a self-employment subsidy path for women aged 60+, but awareness and practical skills to utilize it remain low, limiting older women's participation. • Absence of social enterprises: There is no known social enterprise in Loznica that systematically employs vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed women, etc.). • Representation gaps: Women in younger and older age groups are underrepresented in industry and entrepreneurship, reflecting cultural stereotypes and insufficient targeted support for entering male-dominated fields.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational collaboration: Combining young women's digital skills with older women's crafts/agricultural knowledge can spark new ventures (e.g., ethno-villages, glamping, online marketing of local products). • Collaboration with major investors: Bringing female entrepreneurs together with automotive and textile investors could foster mentorship, supply-chain partnerships, and tailored recruitment initiatives that prioritize gender inclusion. • Skill-building & policy innovations: Possibilities include in-person upskilling, <i>Meet your new</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing effects of Viskoza's collapse: Decades after the factory closure, women affected by workforce reductions still experience long-term unemployment and diminished opportunities for re-skilling. • Centralization & out-migration: Younger, skilled individuals increasingly move to larger urban centres (e.g., Belgrade), eroding Loznica's local talent pool and entrepreneurial base. • Political/institutional instability: Changes in government structures or unstable political climates may undermine consistent support for

<p><i>employer</i> job fairs, e-learning platforms, and research on employer incentives to hire marginalized women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism & crafts formalization and education: There is unrealized potential in formalizing rural tourism (ethno-villages, spa services) or expanding local handicrafts, particularly if women receive marketing, branding, and digital sales support or education (e.g., circular economy training). • Strengthening visibility & networking: Annual gatherings such as World of women, plus regular regional conferences, can highlight successful role models, shift norms, and encourage stakeholder collaboration. • Childcare & family-friendly measures: Introducing affordable daycare, flexible hours, and broader work-life balance policies would significantly boost women's labour force participation. • Laws & institutions: The Law on gender equality, along with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality (today active in Vojvodina region) and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality, provides a solid institutional base to tackle discrimination and support women's rights. • Cross-border development & infrastructure: Enhancing transport links (e.g., the high-speed road to Šabac) and leveraging cross-border trade with Bosnia-Herzegovina can open markets, boost tourism, and support female entrepreneurs. • Potential for social enterprises: Establishing social enterprises to employ vulnerable groups (older women, women with disabilities, unemployed women, young women, women from rural areas, minority groups, etc.) could secure donor/institutional backing and strengthen community-based empowerment. 	<p>gender equality measures or reduce funding for women's initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic crises: National or regional economic shocks (often tied to political uncertainty) affect women, who are more likely to work in insecure or low-wage roles. • Cultural barriers: Despite historical examples of strong female figures in this region, patriarchal norms and low awareness of gender equality persist – slowing improvements in women's workforce participation, leadership, and entrepreneurship.
--	--

Annex 21 – SWOT analysis from the Municipality of Radomir, Bulgaria

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic location near major cities provides access to education and jobs. • Good transport connections enable easy commuting for work and studies. • Opportunities for higher education in Sofia and Blagoevgrad. • Flexible work options allow women to balance work and family life. • Strong female presence in education, trade, healthcare, and administrative roles. • Local initiatives support women through entrepreneurship programs and events. • Successful female entrepreneurs in beauty, handmade products, and agriculture. • Women in leadership positions in education, social services, and the judiciary. • Diverse skill set including creativity, persistence, and effective communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited job opportunities within the municipality, especially in the private sector. • Few chances for career growth as most public sector positions open only upon retirement. • Lack of business development support makes entrepreneurship difficult for women. • Skills gap prevents women from accessing better-paying jobs. • Limited access to information on how to acquire new qualifications. • Low wages in both the private and public sectors, even for highly educated women. • Workplace insecurity due to employers disregarding workers' rights. • Discrimination in hiring against women with young children or in childbearing age. • Unfair employer practices such as wage deductions and contract violations. • Gender pay gap persists despite women having higher education levels than men. • Precarious employment with many women working in low-wage, part-time, or informal jobs. • Male-dominated industries exclude women from high-paying roles in construction, engineering, and security. • Lack of childcare services for children under three limits women's workforce participation. • Rigid workplace expectations discourage women from negotiating for better conditions. • Limited awareness of gender equality policies and available support programs.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential growth in IT and technology sectors could provide better job opportunities for women. • Reskilling and educational programs can help women access higher-paying jobs. • Flexible work models like remote work and hybrid jobs can support women's employment. • Business incubators and mentoring programs could encourage female entrepreneurship. • EU and national policies on gender equality could improve women's workforce participation. • Better access to information on training programs and job opportunities. • Development of social enterprises could create more job options for women. • Stronger networking and collaboration among women-led businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender role stereotypes limit women's career choices and professional growth. • Household and childcare responsibilities disproportionately fall on women, reducing work opportunities. • Lack of childcare facilities for children under three hinders mothers from re-joining the workforce. • Gender pay gap discourages women from pursuing high-level careers. • Workplace discrimination against women in childbearing age leads to job insecurity. • Economic crises disproportionately affect women in low-wage and part-time jobs. • Automation and technological advancements may replace jobs where women dominate. • Limited access to business funding makes it difficult for women to start or expand businesses.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of local markets and tourism could open new job opportunities. • Growth in the creative industries allows women to turn hobbies into businesses. • Digital platforms and e-commerce provide new ways for women to enter the market. • Increased public awareness campaigns could help change workplace attitudes towards women. • Support for women in STEM fields could diversify employment options. • Regional partnerships for funding and supporting women's career development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political resistance to gender equality policies slows progress. • Lack of coordination between institutions, employers, and educational bodies in supporting women's employment. • Male-dominated industries continue to exclude women from high-paying positions. • Climate change and environmental challenges impact women in agriculture and rural businesses. • Social expectations push women towards low-paid, flexible jobs instead of career progression. • Unstable labour market increases job insecurity for women in precarious employment.
--	--