

FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - BULGARIA

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 51 of 189 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Gender Inequality Index: 46 of 160 countries (UNDP 2018)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 18 of 149 countries (WEF 2018)
- Lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence: 23%
- Physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in the last 12 months: 6%
- Lifetime non-partner sexual violence: 6%
- Maternal mortality ratio: 11 (deaths per 100,000 live births) (2015)
- Adolescent birth rate: 35.9 (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)
- Seats in parliament: 20.4 (% held by women)
- Literacy rates: Male: 98.75% / Female: 97.98% (UNESCO)
- Population with at least some secondary education: Male: 95.7% / Female: 93.0%
- Labour force participation rate: Male: 59.0% / Female: 47.9%
- Workers in manufacturing of textiles and wearing apparel: 143,000 (2014), Male: 21,300 / Female: 121,700
- The Bulgarian gender pay gap used to be lower than the EU average. After peaking in 2012 (14.7%), it decreased to 13.5% in 2013.

COUNTRY CONTEXT

After the country experienced democratic changes in the beginning of the 1990s, Bulgaria's **industrial relations became decentralised**.

- Since 2011, social dialogue and industrial relations in Bulgaria have been functioning within a complex political and economic climate, **attempting tripartism in making decisions of national importance**, despite the Bulgarian government's tendency to avoid matters of tripartism.
- With an HDI rank of 51, the country belongs to the **high human development category**.
- However, according to one of the leading trade unions, the cost of living in Bulgaria in March 2016 was approximately €285.92 per person. With minimum wage in the first quarter of 2016 at €214.75, it is obvious that **there is a gap between wages and consumption, thus rendering Bulgaria's minimum wage inadequate at the national level**.

Garment industry:

- There is **no union structure in most small companies**, which means no company agreement; additionally, most small companies are not members of an employers' association, making industry-level agreements inapplicable.
- Most of the apparel factories fall into this category, allowing for the conclusion that **the majority of Bulgarian apparel workers are not covered by a company agreement**.
- The garment industry in Bulgaria demands **low-skilled labour, and the majority of workers are women**.
- Wages in the sector appear to **align closely to the national minimum wage**, despite the lack of official statistics on the matter.
- The largest non-compliance issue to date falls under '**payment of a living wage**'. Additional **frequently found violations fall under 'working hours'**.
- Some workers prefer to **work overtime, as it is paid at premium rate** according to the Bulgarian Labour Code, which means workers can add to insufficient wages.

Gender-based violence:

- According to a survey carried out by Alpha Research among 1,000 women, **one woman in four is a victim of violence, in most cases domestic violence**.
- There are no available statistics on the issues of violence and harassment in the workplace, but according to the 2011 European Risk Observatory Report by OSHA, **approximately 2% of workers, both men and women, report bullying or harassment at the workplace**.

Sectorial collective agreements for gender equality:

- Despite the fact that in Bulgaria the key collective bargaining is at company level, there are sectorial agreements, some of which **tackle gender equality in a broader aspect than the Bulgarian Labour Code**.
 - For example, in the light industry the collective agreement includes **access to professional training that supports female career development**.

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- In the transport sector, a job and professional qualities assessment was given to **determine pay levels and to look for hidden discrimination.**
- The transport sector collective agreement (2010) includes the issue of **dealing with violence at the workplace and gender equality.**

Health:

- The **maternal mortality rate** in Bulgaria is 11 deaths/100,000 live births (2015).
- **Abortion in Bulgaria is legal on request during the first 12 weeks** of pregnancy, and at later stages for medical reasons.

Gender-focussed groups:

- There is a strong **NGO presence on issues such as sexual equality and women inclusivity.** A particular focus of these organisations is the ill treatment of women and the problem of domestic violence.
- Among the most significant groups is the **Animus Foundation**, whose mission is to promote healthy communication between the genders in Bulgarian society. Their strategic goals include promoting gender understanding in society, encouraging the role of women as an intermediary between the government and NGOs, and coordinating activities that provide information about violence against women and children.

LEGAL CONTEXT

National Legislation:

- **Bulgarian legislation does not provide for a legal definition of violence against women (VAW),** neither for a definition of gender-based violence (GBV) in general. Definitions on some of the forms of VAW: domestic violence/intimate partner violence, rape, debauchery, sexual assault, sexual harassment and trafficking of human beings are regulated by different laws.
- **The definition of domestic violence** which includes intimate partner violence is given by the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence /LPADV/ of March 2005 (amended in 2009, 2010 and 2015), which defines domestic violence and provides for measures for protection against it, as well as measures for help and support for the victims.
- **Debauchery and rape** are defined by the Penal Code of April 1968 (last amended in September 2015). No specific provisions in the Penal Code criminalising marital rape.
- The Law on Protection against Discrimination of January 2004, as amended in August 2012, **defines sexual harassment and explicitly recognises sexual harassment as a form of discrimination.**
- **Stalking is not regulated by Bulgarian national law.** Instead, Bulgarian legislation regulates harassment.
- The Penal Code **criminalises human trafficking** under offences against the person. The Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act (CTHBA) introduces measures for the prevention and protection of human trafficking victims.
- There are no special legislative measures encouraging **private companies** to be involved in the prevention, protection and reintegration of victims of VAW outside the workplace.
- The Law on Protection Against Discrimination (Art.17) provides for **protection measures against sexual harassment in the workplace**, and regulates that employers must hold inquiries regarding complaints and take measures to stop the harassment.

International Legislation:

- Bulgaria has signed and ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.**
- As an EU Member State since 2007, Bulgaria has **absorbed European legislation into their national legislation, ratifying 100 of the ILO conventions** (of which 63 are in force), including the eight fundamental conventions. These include (among others) the elimination of discrimination against women; civil & political rights; against torture and other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment; economic, social and cultural rights; the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and families; the rights of the child; and the rights of persons with disabilities.

SOURCES:

Animus Foundation: <http://animusassociation.org/en/about-the-organisation/>
[Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\) Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#)
UNDP Human Development Report 2018: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>,
WEF Global Gender Gap Index 2018: <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2018/>