



ANALYSIS OF POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON YOUNG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT IN THE DANUBE REGION

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ABBREVIATIONS and GLOSSARY of TERMS

BWCON	Bwcon GmbH
DR	Danube Region
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EUSDR	EU Strategy for Danube Region
EWC	Women Entrepreneurship Centre
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IRS	Innovation Region Styria Ltd
JS	Joint Secretariat-Budapest
LP	Lead Partner
MA	Managing Authority
MRA	Maribor Development Agency
NSHM	National Stakeholder Group Meeting
PA	Priority Area of EUSDR
PAC	Priority Area Coordinator (EUSDR)
PBN	Pannon Business Network Association
PCTM	Project Coordination Team Meeting
PIMM	Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Constanta
PM	Project Manager
PMCT	Project Management and Coordination Team
PP	Project Partner
ODIMM	Organization for Small and Medium Enterprise Sector Development
RAPIV	Regional Agency for Entrepreneurship and Innovations - Varna

SCOM	Steering Committee
SEBS	School of Economics and Business, University of Sarajevo
SGZ	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Stajerska
SoC	Study of Current State
TG	Target Group
TLE	Transnational Learning Event
TP	Thematic Pole
TPV	Technology Park Varazdin Ltd.
UOC	OVIDIUS University of Constanta
UP	University of Pannonia
VFU	Varna Free University „Chernorizets Hrabar“
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader
YWE	Young women entrepreneurship

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report on the analysis of policies and legislative framework summarizes, and synthesizes the state of the existing policies when it comes to young women entrepreneurship in nine countries of the Danube region: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and Slovenia. Thereby, the report enables project partners and relevant stakeholders to have an overview on the real picture of the legal framework and the existing policies on young women entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, prior to preparing the report, the project partners have prepared and submitted documents containing the information on the current policy and legal framework. At the elaboration stage, we took into account all the information provided by the partners, and these were included in the work below.

Within the Danube region countries, members of EU have already developed certain policies and programmes for gender equality and women support, which are having a positive and steady impact on promoting women's rights and the potential growth of women entrepreneurs in their national economies. On the other hand, the legal framework of the transitional countries is weaker, hence Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova still need to be adjusted to meet the EU standards.

The quality of the paper is based on the countries report regarding their legal framework and the Transnational Study of Current States.

2 INTRODUCTION

Public policy support for women's entrepreneurship dates back to the 1970s as a response to the growing numbers of women entering the labour market. Since this time, women's entrepreneurship policies and programmes have become common in both developed and developing countries. While much progress has been made in helping women overcome barriers to business creation and self-employment, women continue to face barriers, calling for continued public policy action. Within the European Union, this call for action is clearly articulated in the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which calls for awareness raising, entrepreneurship training, improved access to financing, stronger networks and support in reconciling business and family life.

In most countries, regions and sectors, the majority of business owner/managers are male (from 65% to 75%). However, there is increasing evidence that more and more women are becoming interested in small business ownership and/or actually starting up in business. Women are working in this multifaceted world. The organization

scenario changes like a kaleidoscope with every responsibility, accountability and multiple pulls and pushes, which women have faced and came out with success. In addition, rates of self-employment among women are increasing in several countries. Although there are no official statistics relating businesses to the gender of their owner/manager, there is a good deal of evidence to suggest a significant increase in female entrepreneurship. One consequence of this is that women are a relatively new group of entrepreneurs compared with men, which means that they are more likely to run younger businesses. This in turn has some implications for the problems they face and their ability to deal with them.

Overall, women entrepreneurs have made leaps and bounds over the last decade. Women are launching businesses, growing them to new heights, and tackling barriers as they go. Female-run enterprises are steadily growing all over the world, contributing to household incomes and growth of national economies. However, women face time, human, physical, and social constraints that limit their ability to grow their businesses.

Taking into account the specific of the **Women in Business** project and its main goal, the study presents the picture of legal framework and the existing policies in the 9 partners countries in the Danube region, as well as the weaknesses and strengthens that young women entrepreneurs are facing.

The main objectives of the analysis are to:

1. deliver a general overview on the legal framework and existing policies regarding YWE for the nine countries of the Danube region;
2. present the main actors and what has been done so far;
3. identify the main problems of the existing legal framework;
4. identify challenges connected to young women entrepreneurs and policies aimed to deal with them;
5. identify if the policies and the measures have improved or worsened the situation of YWE in the region;
6. suggest steps which need to be undertaken by governments, policymakers, in order to stimulate young female entrepreneurship.

The report can serve as a basis for development of Policy Agenda for the Danube Region and for governments, national public authorities, interested groups, and stakeholders supporting YWE to identify gaps in the policies and opportunities provided by measures for fostering YWE for further development or improvement of the policies.

Main stakeholders on women entrepreneurship in the countries from the Danube region are state institutions represented mainly by: Ministry of Economy, Ministry of

Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Finance. Also, regional public institutions, public agencies and Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In countries where the legal framework on women entrepreneurship isn't very developed the most active stakeholders tend to be associations, non-governmental organizations, women entrepreneurs' clubs, institutes and universities.

It is important to underline that multiple strategies have been adopted and approved by now, but it is complicated to admit their efficiency. Within the Danube region countries, members of EU have already developed certain policies and programmes for gender equality and women support, which are having a positive and steady impact on promoting women's rights and the potential growth of women entrepreneurs in their national economies.

On the other hand, the legal framework of the transitional countries is weaker, hence Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Moldova and still need to be adjusted to meet the EU standards. For this reason, governments and policymakers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova should be concerned with:

- Changing the legal framework and enabling entrepreneurs to have similar conditions for starting a company as in other surrounding and/or European countries;
- Creating a centralized platform related to start-ups where start-ups, investors, educational institutions, accelerators and incubators, students and other interested parties could meet and exchange information (one-stop shop information).

Moreover, by synthesizing the suggestions in all countries, we can conclude that governments and policymakers across all Danube region countries should be concerned with the development or improvement of:

- Specialised programmes for businesswomen start-ups;
- Creating policies that provide fiscal stimulants for women entrepreneurs;
- Providing financial instruments (bank loans, preferential rates, risk capital, etc.) for YWEs;
- Developing successful funding models to be used by national and regional programmes dedicated to women entrepreneurs and promoting them to both public and private persons of interest;
- Government policies to stimulate female entrepreneurship and leadership in business;
- Strategy to harmonize the business environment with the family environment for support and relief for women in their care for children, elderly parents, family life and recreation;
- Fostering of establishment and development of companies in specific sectors production and knowledge-based services, owned and/or managed by women.

3 METHOD OF POLICY ANALYSIS

For the analysis of existing policy on women entrepreneurship in the Danube region qualitative research methods were used. All the partner countries from the Danube region had to answer to a semi-structured interview regarding national policies and legal framework on women entrepreneurship. Collected information was used to conduct a comparative analysis in order to evaluate the level of development of the legal framework and to identify the best practices of the partner countries from the Danube region. Additionally, project partners carried out targeted mapping, scanning and analysis of available EU, regional and national policies and legislative framework that have relevance for promotion and support of young women entrepreneurship, development of practical solutions for increasing of the entrepreneurial culture, skills and competences of young women.

4 EUROPEAN LEVEL REVIEW

Analysis at EU level has shown that a number of measures have already been taken and that equal treatment, entrepreneurship in general and to a limited extend women entrepreneurship are targeted in a wide range of policies. The main ones are summarised below:

Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 strategy is the EU's agenda for growth and jobs for the current decade. It emphasises smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in order to improve Europe's competitiveness and productivity and underpin a sustainable social market economy.

To reach this objective, the EU has adopted targets to be reached by 2020 in five areas:

- Employment
- Research & Development
- Climate change & energy
- Education
- Poverty and social exclusion

The **headline targets** related to the strategy's key objectives at the EU level cover:

- **Employment:**
> 75% of the population aged 20 to 64 years to be employed;
- **Research & Development:**
> 3% of GDP to be invested in the R&D sector;

- **Climate change & energy:**
 - > Greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by 20% compared to 1990;
 - > Share of renewable energy sources in final energy consumption to be increased to 20%;
 - > Energy efficiency to be improved by 20%;
- **Education:**
 - > Share of early school leavers to be reduced under 10%;
 - > At least 40% of 30 to 34 years old to have completed tertiary or equivalent education;
- **Poverty and social exclusion:**
 - > At least 20 million people fewer at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

The ESI Funds are the EU's main investment policy tool and provides the necessary investment framework to meet the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for **smart, sustainable** and **inclusive** growth in the European Union.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, EUR 454 billion have been allocated to the ESI Funds to kick-start growth and job creation. Adding to this figure national co-financing, which is expected to reach some EUR 183 billion, the total investment will amount to at least EUR 637 billion. Using this budget, the ESI Funds are the EU's main investment instruments. ESI Funds are used to boost jobs, growth and investment across Europe, while focusing on the least developed areas and sectors with growth potential.

ESI Funds target key investment areas to enhance growth in Member States and regions. The Funds contribute to smart growth, including research and innovation, information and communication technologies, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) development and the low-carbon economy. Beyond this, they offer an important purchasing power for innovative solutions in other fields such as energy, agriculture, the environment, and transport, which can help innovative firms.

Investing in human capital development through the European Social Fund (ESF) in particular, will play a key role in getting people into jobs, combating poverty and social exclusion and creating the workforce of tomorrow. This will be done by supporting workers, job seekers, and in particular those outside the labour market. The ESF helps people get the right skills for the right job by improving the quality of and access to education from early childhood to later life.

EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is the second EU macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in 2010 and endorsed by the European Council in 2011.

The Strategy brings together 14 countries along the Danube river, and covers an area which is home to 112 million people, or one-fifth of the EU's population.

9 EU Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria), Hungary, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and Romania.

5 non-EU countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine (Odessa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsy and Zakarpatya).

The Strategy focuses on four pillars, and within each pillar, concrete cooperation actions specify priority areas:

CONNECTING THE REGION:

- Improve mobility and transport connections
- Encourage more sustainable energy
- Promote culture and tourism

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT:

- Restore and maintain water quality
- Manage environmental risks
- Preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the air and soil quality

BUILDING PROSPERITY:

- Develop the Knowledge Society
- Support the competitiveness of enterprises
- Invest in people and skills

STRENGTHENING THE REGION:

- Step up institutional capacity and cooperation
- Work together to promote security and tackle organised and serious crime

The Entrepreneurship 2020 [Action Plan](#)¹

The European Commission's Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan aims to reignite the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe' through a range of support actions during the period 2014-2020.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/promoting-entrepreneurship/action-plan_en

It is based on three pillars: developing entrepreneurial education and training; creating the right business environment; role models and reaching out to specific groups. Section 4.2.1 of the Action Plan sets out actions specifically aimed at women entrepreneurs.

To bring Europe back to growth and create new jobs, we need more entrepreneurs. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan is the Commission's answer to challenges brought by the gravest economic crisis in the last 50 years. It is a blueprint for action to unleash Europe's entrepreneurial potential, remove existing obstacles and revolutionize the culture of entrepreneurship in the EU. It aims to ease the creation of new businesses and to create a much more supportive environment for existing entrepreneurs to thrive and grow.

The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan identifies three areas for immediate intervention:

1. entrepreneurial education and training to **support growth and business** creation;
2. **removing** existing administrative **barriers** and supporting entrepreneurs in crucial phases of the business lifecycle;
3. **reigniting the culture** of entrepreneurship in Europe and nurturing the new generation of entrepreneurs.

The Action Plan and its key actions will be followed up by the Commission through the competitiveness and industrial policy and the Small Business Act governance mechanisms.

Small Business Act²

The Small Business Act is an overarching framework seeking to improve the approach to entrepreneurship in Europe by simplifying the regulatory and policy environment for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The communication 'Think Small First – A Small Business Act for Europe' from the Commission to the Council lists ten guiding principles to promote growth in the small business sector. Principle one focuses especially on women and young people: the European Union (EU) and Member States should "care for future entrepreneurs better (...) particularly among young people and women, and by simplifying the conditions for business transfers."

It aims to improve the approach to entrepreneurship in Europe, simplify the regulatory and policy environment for SMEs, and remove the remaining barriers to their development. The main priorities of the SBA are:

- Promoting entrepreneurship
- Less regulatory burden
- Access to finance
- Access to markets and internationalisation

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/small-business-act_en

Strategic engagement for gender equality

[The strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019](#)³ is the framework for the European Commission's future work towards full gender equality.

The strategic engagement focuses on the following 5 priority areas:

- increasing female labour market participation and economic independence of women and men;
- reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women;
- promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
- combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims;
- promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world;

The strategic engagement sets out objectives in each of these priority areas and identifies more than 30 concrete actions. It reaffirms commitment to gender mainstreaming: a gender equality perspective will be integrated into all EU policies as well as into EU funding programmes.

There are also some legal regulations and resolutions at EU level which support female entrepreneurship. Some relevant ones are mentioned below:

EU Directive on self-employed workers and equal treatment between men and women

Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament extends the right to maternity benefits to self-employed women or spouses, or partners of those who are self-employed. Regarding the first, case studies suggest that women continue to struggle balancing raising a family with the demands of running a business. Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in self-employed activities sets out provisions on combating discrimination when establishing a company. The issues raised include equal treatment and non-discrimination, maternity benefits and social protection.

EU Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and [occupation](#)⁴

Directive 2006/54/EC prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender in the labour market, including conditions of access to self-employment. It stresses the importance of equal treatment in relation to access to employment

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality_en

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006L0054&from=EN>

(including vocational training), working conditions (including pay) and occupational social security schemes.

European parliament resolution on women entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized [enterprises](#)⁵

This 2011 resolution of the Parliament includes background research and recommendations on enhancing the role of women in the small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) sector. The key issues raised include access to finance, educational support, networking opportunities and information and communication technologies.

Gender equality and empowering women in the [digital age](#)⁶

The European Parliament 2016 report on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age, by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, includes recommendations for increasing women's entrepreneurship in ICT-related businesses and digital start-ups.

WIN Women Entrepreneurship [Enhancement](#)⁷

WIN, a capacity building project funded by the Leonardo Da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Programme, aims to develop women's skills to a professional level, understanding the characteristics of women entrepreneurs and their relationship with the geographical and socio-economic context. It also endeavours to promote the establishment and operation of new businesses.

Support tools for female entrepreneurs:

The Commission supports several tools such as networks and an e-platform helping women become entrepreneurs and run successful businesses:

- **The European on-line Platform for women entrepreneurs WEgate.** [The WEgate platform](#)⁸ is a one-stop shop for women of all ages who want to start, run and grow a business. Launched in September 2016, it provides information and links on access to training, mentoring, advice and business networking opportunities.
- **The European Community of Women Business Angels and women entrepreneurs.** The goal of this initiative – funded by the European Parliament - is to support women entrepreneurs in accessing alternative sources of funding. It will do so by raising the awareness of business angels, training women who would like to become business angels and helping women entrepreneurs to present their business ideas to potential investors.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52011IP0367&from=SL>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52016IP0204&from=EN>

⁷ <https://www.win-project.eu/en/>

⁸ <https://wegate.eu/>

The network was created in 2017, by means of 4 projects covering 14 EU countries.

- **The European network to promote women's entrepreneurship (WES).** The WES is a policy network with members from 31 European nations (the EU countries, Iceland, Norway, and Turkey). The delegates represent national governments and institutions. They are responsible for promoting and supporting female entrepreneurship at national level. WES members provide advice, support, information, and contacts regarding existing support measures for female entrepreneurs. They also help identify good practices.
- **The European network of female entrepreneurship ambassadors** **The European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors was inaugurated in 2009.** It is made up of around 270 entrepreneurs from 22 European countries. The aim of the ambassadors is to act as role models by telling their story to raise awareness and encourage entrepreneurship as a career option for women of all ages. Many of the ambassadors have gone beyond this, having also become actively involved in supporting the establishment of new businesses. The Network has been very successful and exceeded its objectives in terms of events organised and audience reached. Over 650 national meetings have been organised, reaching more than 61 000 would-be women entrepreneurs. The ambassadors have supported the creation of more than 250 new women-led enterprises and created 22 networking and business support clubs for women.
- **The European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs.** The European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs was inaugurated in 2011. Seventeen European countries belong to the Mentors Network: Albania, Belgium, Cyprus, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The Mentors Network provides advice and support to women entrepreneurs on the start-up, management and growth of their businesses in the early phases (from the second to the fourth year of existence of a new woman-run and owned enterprise).

New EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027

The EU Youth Strategy focuses on three core areas of action, around the three words: [Engage](#) [Connect](#) [Empower](#), while working on joined-up implementation across sectors. During a 2017-2018 dialogue process which involved young people from all over Europe, [11 European Youth Goals](#) were developed. These goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out challenges.

European Policies on Youth entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurship is high on the EU political agenda as a tool to combat youth unemployment and social exclusion as well as stimulating innovation among young people:

- Fostering youth entrepreneurship is one of the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and its Youth on the Move flagship initiative;
- Entrepreneurship is a key competence in the [European Reference Framework on Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning](#) (2006).

Youth work and non-formal learning play an important role in developing the creative and innovative potential of young people including entrepreneurial skills. Youth policy and programmes at EU and national level support this:

- The EU Youth Strategy [Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field](#) (2010-2018)⁹ includes creativity and entrepreneurship among its eight fields of action;
- The importance of youth entrepreneurship is stressed in the Council Conclusions on promoting youth entrepreneurship to foster social inclusion of young people (2014). Special attention is paid to 'social entrepreneurship' that combines a social and entrepreneurial dimension;
- An expert group report on Developing the creative and innovative potential of young people through non-formal learning in ways that are relevant to employability (2014) highlights the strong need to ensure educators and employers are more aware of the value of non-formal learning, to improve partnership work and cross-sector innovation, and to enhance the ability of adults working directly with young people;
- The study Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union __ (2014) confirms the impact of youth work in areas including entrepreneurship and culture, by developing transversal skills, exercising skills in practice and increasing cultural activities which influence young people's creativity;
- The [Erasmus+](#) programme (2014-2020) has a strong focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly in the Key Action 2 through strategic partnerships and transnational youth initiatives.

⁹ [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009G1219(01))

5 NATIONAL LEVEL REVIEW

5.1 AUSTRIA

99 % of all Austrian companies are SME (around 328,900 SME, of which 120,500 sole proprietors). The Austrian SME sector is extremely diverse and includes traditional family businesses as well as highly innovative, internationally active start-ups. The number of one-person companies and hybrid entrepreneurs - i.e. people who are both self-employed and employed - is growing faster than the number of companies as a whole. This shows that new forms of entrepreneurial activity are gaining in importance and that the business population is becoming more heterogeneous and colourful. It is very pleasing to see that more and more women are taking the step into self-employment. More than a third of SMEs are managed by women. The percentage of women in start-ups is 44 %, for innovative and technology-driven start-ups only 7 %.

The inclination towards developing new entrepreneurial initiatives of young women is in Austria still lower than among young men, also, because childcare is primarily provided by women.

The promotion of entrepreneurship and the improvement of the attitude towards entrepreneurship (generally) is a clear objective of the Austrian government. The review of the implementation of the "Small Business Act" (SBA) shows that Austria has made great progress in the implementation of SME-friendly framework conditions and shows that Austrian SME policy is very successful in an EU comparison. The performance of Austrian SMEs is above the EU average, particularly in the areas of "qualification and innovation", "internal market", "internationalisation" and "sustainability, environment and energy". However, little attention is paid to female entrepreneurship. Apart from the target group youth, entrepreneurship connected with the other target groups (as women) is not explicitly mentioned in national strategies and action plans.

5.1.1 CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Some entrepreneurship policies and programmes are in place to support youth and women in entrepreneurship. They seek to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and to improve access to start-up finance. However, there are no promotion schemes especially targeted to young women entrepreneurs.

In Austria, the Federal Ministries were mandated by Ministerial Council Decision of 12 January 2016 for the coherent implementation of the sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030. The fifth goal is “Gender equality and women’s empowerment”. In Austria, a national action plan (NAP) has been elaborated in the field of gender equality (“NAP Gleichstellung” or “Gender equality in the labour market”) already in 2010 that calls for actions to improve entrepreneurship for women. 55 measures have been formulated such as the followings:

Dismantling role stereotypes, e.g.:

- Gender sensitivity in elementary education
- Gender-appropriate presentation of content in school books
- Push the use of gender-sensitive language

Diversifying education and career choices, e.g.:

- Provide more gender-sensitive information, counselling and guidance for education and career in the 7th and 8th grades, with mandatory measures
- Mandatory incorporation of gender-sensitive career guidance in further and advanced training of teachers and multipliers

Targeted promotion of women’s educational participation and completion of training, e.g.:

- Offer further training for educationally underprivileged women, in particular women from immigrant backgrounds (low-threshold regional educational offers, promote basic and key competences, contribute to the strengthening of autonomy and self-determination)
- Integrate mobile educational measures for women with an emphasis on IT competences, which are offered chiefly in rural regions at the local level, such as the project “learn forever” (supported by multipliers, mayor, local newspaper)
- Continue the labour market policy programme for women run by the Public Employment Service (AMS) (Women in Crafts and Technology, Re-Entry – Fit for the Future)

Infrastructure that facilitates the reconciliation of job and family, e.g.:

- Continue and extend the federal incentive system for the comprehensive development of child care places

- Implementation of an action programme to ensure high-quality childcare (specifically for children up to the age of three)
- Flexible professional childcare by the hour, specifically for babies and toddlers, within a permanent care giving structure, especially in rural areas
- Comprehensive offer for the professional care of sick children especially in rural areas
- Promotion of comprehensive initiatives for childcare in the holidays

Supporting women's self-employment:

- Increase confinement benefit for female entrepreneurs and female farmers

STRAT.AT 2020

In Austria, the implementation and interaction of the ESI funds is described within the framework of the STRAT.AT 2020 partnership agreement concluded with the European Commission. The issue of equality between women and men in terms of gender mainstreaming is a guiding principle of the Austrian ESF programme.

The operational programme of the ESF defines thematic goals on the basis of three priority axes: promotion of sustainable and high-quality employment and the support of workers' mobility, promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty and all kinds of discrimination and investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

The goal of investment priority 1 in Austria – equality for women and men -are defined as improvement in equal opportunities for women and development and implementation of educational offers for women which contribute towards overcoming gender-specific barriers in access to the education system.

The Styrian State Government considers gender equality a joint responsibility and a central element for the achievement and maintenance of social justice. The Women's and Gender Equality Strategy 2020 defines the goals for the coming years. With this, it provides an operational framework for the future women's and gender equality policy pursued by the State of Styria. Different fields of action are mentioned, but the strategy does not address a specific issue for women entrepreneurs or young women entrepreneurs.

The Work Programme of the Austrian Government 2013-2018 promotes various measures of entrepreneurship and the Austrian entrepreneurship strategy "Start-up

Country” (Gründerland-Strategie) guides SME and entrepreneurship policy overall. Especially concerning women, it itemizes the challenges and measures to achieve the following objectives: drive towards the development of gender budgeting and the provision of counselling and support services for women, equal treatment of women in the labour market, increase the security and safety of women, Women’s Health Action Plan and further develop equal treatment law and equal treatment instruments.

In addition to these strategies, there are a number of initiatives that seek to support people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups in business creation and self-employment. For example, one of the eight key competences identified in the Austrian Lifelong Learning Strategy “LLL:2020” is “entrepreneurial competences” – it is a cross-cutting issue in all ten action lines that are support learning in all phases of life, from youth, professional career, civil engagement to post-professional life. One of the key target groups of “LLL:2020” is young people and since 2004, the strategy supports entrepreneurship education in schools and awareness raising measures. There is no special focus on girls or young women.

Another strategy related to promoting entrepreneurship for youth, especially through the education system, is the Austrian Youth Strategy (Österreichische Jugendstrategie). One of the eight fields of action is “employment and entrepreneurship”, aiming at producing more company founders under the age of 30. The recommendations in this strategy call for more entrepreneurial learning, an increased use of practice firms, and to increase the number of young people participating in projects and becoming involved in voluntary work. Again, there is no special focus on girls or young women.

Another important policy initiative is the “Platform Entrepreneurship”, which was established in 2013 as a policy dialogue forum in response to the EU’s “Action Plan Entrepreneurship 2020”. The platform focuses on measures for young people between 10 and 19 years old and also on the target group women. It has two key objectives. First, it seeks to identify measures for priority action 1 (“Entrepreneurial Education to promote the growth and creation of businesses”) and priority action 3 (“Role models and reaching specific target groups”) of the “Action Plan Entrepreneurship 2020”. Second, it aims to facilitate future collaborations and projects. This platform brings together key entrepreneurship education stakeholders biannually, including the Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFW), the Ministry of Education (BMB), the Federal Ministry of Families and Youth (BMFJ), the

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), the Federation of Austrian Industry (IV), and the Austrian National Bank (ONB).

There are several entrepreneurship networks in Austria, both at national and regional levels. Many of these initiatives are targeted at specific target groups. For example, the "Women in Business" group (Frau in der Wirtschaft - FiW), which is part of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO), is also active in organising networking events for women entrepreneurs.

In order to break up role models, the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs aims at strengthening different role models in initiatives like "UnternehmerinmachtSchule" (women entrepreneurs present the show the occupational profile woman entrepreneur in school classes), "u:start" (training program on self-employment and business foundation for university graduates and students) and "Zukunft.Frauen" (program for executives to increase the share of female executives). In order to increase the share of female apprentices, projects are promoted that should inspire girls to take on technology-oriented professions, e.g. "Open MINT" (program to support young women on their way to a technology-oriented apprenticeship), or the "Mentoring Project for the expansion of career perspectives" (apprentices provide schoolgirls with practical insights into their working day).

There are also several aids provided for (young) women entrepreneurs: An operating aid for women entrepreneurs with work incapacity of more than 14 days or for maternity leave.

Aspects addressed by current policies and measures are promotion schemes and mentoring programs as well as entrepreneurship networks for women in general and training programs for young women. The current policies/measures are supported by national/regional public institutions and associations in order to strengthen (young) women entrepreneurs, still a disadvantaged group in Austria.

5.1.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

Measures have had a certain effect; more and more young women are getting self-employed and role models are changing. The younger women entrepreneurship is addressed by all kinds of measures, the more effect is generated.

Current policies do not put a stronger emphasis on YWE, either through support and mentoring or financial aid. Furthermore, in order to support YWE, traditional role models should be broken up, existing childcare services should be expanded and

suitable networks should be created. Young women entrepreneurs in general are in favour of changing current policies, as they want to be equally treated and given a fair chance on the labour market.

5.2 BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

In 1995 The Dayton Peace Agreement established Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH) as a sovereign state consisting of two entities, the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and the Republic Srpska (RS). In March 2000, Brcko District (BD) as a neutral, self-governing administrative unit, under the sovereignty of BiH, was created. The FBiH itself is divided into ten cantons (e.g. where each Canton has its government with ministers) which enjoy a high degree of autonomy. Further, the number of municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 143, out of which 79 municipalities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 64 in Republic Srpska. Topics related to innovation, education and social infrastructure for vulnerable group – young women are dispersed among the various levels of governance (sometimes in the conflicting manner), therefore this summary will analyse selected regulations at the highest – national – level.

5.2.1 CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The important issue to be considered is that at the national level, there is a lack of unified policies with traceable budget lines in order to measure and monitor the target sector. At the entity level it is different, in example, in recent years, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the Federation Employment Service, in cooperation with cantonal employment services, has implemented active employment policy programmes aimed at training, vocational employment and advanced training, additional training and retraining, preparing the unemployed for the labour market and creating equal opportunities for all to access the labour market. Support is provided to target groups of unemployed people who are identified by strategic documents as those who face more difficulty in finding employment, especially young people and women. These measures have proved to be short-term and inefficient, as they result in temporary improvements, given that recruits quickly return to the record of the unemployed.

Although there are many important stakeholders (as country is complex in terms of its admin unites), we further identify some major and very relevant institutions for women entrepreneurship and they are briefly elaborated in the following text:

- Agency for Gender Equality of BiH has the main coordination role in the area of gender equality in BiH. The Agency is mandated to: Present and analyze status of gender equality in BiH; Cooperate with institutional mechanisms for gender equality in institutions at the state level; Provide initiative and participate in preparation of laws, by laws and other acts, strategies, plans and programs that are adopted at the state level, in order to determine measures for achieving gender equality in all spheres of social life. Nevertheless, data and analyses related to the young entrepreneurs are non-existent at this level, as is the data on the work of existing associations.
- State level Ministries (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH - Sector for economic development and entrepreneurship and Ministry of Civil Affairs) These are in charged for: macroeconomic analysis and forecasts of economic development of BiH; cooperation with international institutions and organizations; cooperation with domestic and foreign scientific research institutions; preparation of contracts, agreements and other documents for the projects and programs of economic reconstruction and development; programs and projects of bilateral and multilateral grants and loans for economic reconstruction and development; coordination of international economic assistance to BiH except the part relating to the assistance of the European Union; the preparation of bilateral and multilateral agreements and other documents related to the economic reconstruction and development of BiH, development of entrepreneurship, support the development of small and medium enterprises, promotion of small and medium enterprises.
- Ministries at the level of Entities (e.g. The Federal Ministry for development, entrepreneurship and Crafts; Federal Ministry of Education) are taking care about policies and programs that would support entrepreneurship and development in areas of crafts, SMEs, and special target groups (Women, young, rural and urban) but also education and innovations.
- Municipalities – as they decide about subsidies for entrepreneurship
- NGO Sector dealing with education, entrepreneurship, business incubators.

Furthermore, in the area of entrepreneurship and start-ups, there are no special legal encouragement, as they are not representing top priorities. It should be improved and

more aligned with the EU startup regulations and laws. However, there are programs at various levels in the country that encourage and support women and young entrepreneurs. Regional development agencies are rather active in that area. Also, municipalities are also active in support of business development, women and young entrepreneurs in particular. However, despite these programs, youth and women do not receive adequate support for launching their own businesses, and the measures put in place very often do not meet their actual needs.

5.2.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

Various kinds of support should be provided to women entrepreneurs, such as: financial support, training, mentoring, education, skills and knowledge transfer, expertise. Additionally, policy makers should be concerned with:

- Changing the legal framework and enabling entrepreneurs to have similar conditions for starting a company as in other surrounding and/or European countries
- Creating a centralized platform related to start-ups where start-ups, investors, educational institutions, accelerators and incubators, students and other interested parties could meet and exchange information (one stop shop information)
- Starting concrete projects with an aim to (in addition to raising awareness) transfer best practices for employment and business development in these categories, based on the experiences from the Danube region.
- Creating a local start-up eco-system representative (organization) for the territory of BiH, which could articulate the voice of local start-ups, investors, young entrepreneurs toward the decision makers in BiH
- Creating a strong network of mentors - supporting the organisations (accelerators & incubators) who are already building those networks

5.3 BULGARIA

The total number of enterprises in 2017 in Bulgaria is 406 310. Most of them are operating in the wholesale and retail trade sector (141 059), followed by professional, scientific and technical activities (44 394) and manufacturing (31 272). The structure of the Bulgarian companies per their size is given on the largest share have the micro companies – 91.69% (0-9 employees), followed by small-sized companies (10-49 employees) – 6.87% and medium-sized ones (50-249 employees) – 1.25%. In terms of the structure of employment, it is indicative that employment of women on management positions is low, only 34 % in 2016, while it is 66 % for men.

The share of female working owners in 2016 is hardly 30% from the total amount of working owners. This rate for women-managers of the companies for the same period is a little bit higher - 42% and for female CEOs – 31%.

According to the GEM Bulgaria report for 2016/2017, women are less likely to engage in entrepreneurial activity than men. Most studies claim that women face greater difficulties in engaging in entrepreneurship for a variety of reasons:

- higher levels of family responsibility;
- lower levels of education;
- lack of role models women;
- access fewer networks with business focus in their communities;
- lack of capital and assets;
- a culturally lacking self-confidence;
- less confidence in their ability to succeed in business.

These factors can prevent women from realizing entrepreneurial opportunities as well as from acting in relation to them.

Male Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) in Bulgaria is one percentage point above women's TEA, both of which are remarkably low. Women's ratio to men's ratio is slightly higher for Bulgaria than for reference countries, which shows more gender equality in terms of entrepreneurial efforts at the start-up phase. 5.4% of the adult male population in 2016 were engaged in TEA activity while this rate for women is 4.3%.

In addition, in Bulgaria the most entrepreneurially active group is the 25-34-year-olds (8.6%), and the group of 18-24-year-olds shows a participation rate almost as high as the 35-44-year-olds. According to the data from the last study of the demography of the enterprises conducted by NSI, there were 347 962 active enterprises in 2016, 48.7% (169 625) from which are without employees and 36.6% are in the next group (from 1 to 4 employees).

For the period 2012 - 2016, the number of newborn enterprises that did not hire employees is the highest - 29 635 newborn enterprises followed by the '1 - 4 employees' group with 12 291 enterprises. Almost 81.1% of the enterprises born in 2015 survive one year later, as in the group of '10 and more employees' this share is 91.5%. In 2016 almost every second company dealing with trade has gone bankrupted. In 2015 the number of dead enterprises is 34 853 or 10.0% of the total number of active enterprises during the year. As result of their death 2.7% of the employees lost their jobs during the year. The most viable were the enterprises in the following sectors: 'Mining and quarrying', 'Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities', 'Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply', where dead enterprises are less than 1%.

5.3.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Since Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, state policies are almost entirely outlined in strategic documents developed at the request of the EC. The European Structural Funds through national operational programs become the main and almost unique source of state-level governance initiatives and become a key factor for the growth of the national economy. A significant number of policy measures in support of SMEs - e-Justice and e-government strategies, a new Public Procurement Act and a better regulation program (including the impact assessment and impact assessment guidelines) have been adopted in 2014 and the first quarter of 2015.

The gender equality policy is horizontal and unites the actions of the executive at all levels. This policy is conducted via combined implementation of integrated (mainstreaming) approach and temporary stimulation (targeted) measures, requiring an effective national institutional mechanism.

Currently there is no specific law, strategic or other policy instrument for women entrepreneurship support. There are some policy attempts to include the gender issues with different measures for support under Operational Programs but it still not enough.

The main responsible stakeholders are: Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Since the year 2000 the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP) organizes and coordinates at national level the implementation of the state policy of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of gender equality (CMD No 155 dated 2000, promulgated SG, Issue 65 dated 2000), in cooperation with a number of institutions and organizations. Since the year 2004 a specialized unit was set up in the MLSP. Currently this is the "Equal Opportunities, Antidiscrimination and Social Assistance Benefits" Department (EOASAB) with the Directorate "Policy for Persons with Disabilities, Equal Opportunities, and Social Assistance Benefits" (PPDEOSAB). The Department is also the Secretariat of the National Gender Equality Council with the Council of Ministers.

The Law for Equality between Women and Men has been in force since 2016. The experts from the specialized unit of the MLSP provide standpoints during the process of development of correlative normative and strategic documents at the EU level – directives, strategies, conclusions of the Council, and provide information, replies to questionnaires, etc. They participate in the work of key topical bodies and structures (councils, committees, expert groups) in the field of equality of women and men, with the European Commission and the Council of Europe. This provides the possibility for

popularization of the national policy on gender equality, current exchange of good practices and participation in the formulation of the policy on the European level.

The Ministry of Economy is developing a Strategy for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship, together with women entrepreneurs' organizations. Support for women's entrepreneurship by the Ministry of Economy is implemented through the measures envisaged in the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan for Bulgaria, which is part of the strategy.

The promotion of entrepreneurship and in particular women's entrepreneurship is based on the following strategic documents:

- Small Business Act (SBA)
- Innovative strategy for smart specialization of the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2020
- Operational Programme "Innovations and Competitiveness" 2014-2020 (OPIC)
- Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020 (OPHRD)
- National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020
- National Strategy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises 2014-2020
- Entrepreneurship 2020 - Bulgaria Entrepreneurship Action Plan

The main programmes available for youth and women entrepreneurship support are:

- Within OP Innovation and Competitiveness 2014-2020- "Fostering the entrepreneurship". The main goal of the procedure is improvement of production processes, increase of the production capacity and managerial capacity for increase of the export potential of start-ups. Priority to young women entrepreneurs up to 29-years-old is given.
- Within OP Human Resources Development 2014-2020
 - The scheme "Development of policies and instruments for labour conditions improvement in SMEs in the production chain of multinational companies".
 - Implementation of the operation "Entrepreneurship support" also continues in 2018. It provides a complex of trainings and services for business development of the target groups.
 - Another possibility for vulnerable group is the on-going scheme "Fostering of the social entrepreneurship" under OP HRD.
 - Another active possibility is the financial instrument "Microcredit with shared risk".

5.3.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

National culture in Bulgaria is still not supportive enough for women entrepreneurs, does not encourage women to engage in entrepreneurship and advance in their careers. However, for those who are successful, the biggest support is found in their families and inner circle of friends. The main financial obstacle for YWE is the access of finance, followed by lack of savings and high interest rates. The most important competences barrier is the lack of information about how to start business, followed by lack of entrepreneurial skills. Surprisingly, the respondents do not consider that traditional views about role of women in society as a high barrier. The highest “soft” barrier for them is uncertainty about the future in case of starting own business, followed by the risk of losing the balance between work and personal life. As it comes to macroeconomic and policy barriers – the highest one is the high level of corruption, followed by the red tape.

Relevant interviewees have important suggestions and recommendations. There is a need to be developed more tools for YWE support focused to several areas:

- Fostering of establishment and development of companies in specific sectors production and knowledge based services, owned and/or managed by women;
- Improvement of a cooperation between academia and business
- Fostering of internationalization of SMEs, owned and/or managed by women;
- Improvement of entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge and skills of business women;
- Awareness rising of business women;
- Providing of financial instruments (bank loans, preferential rates, risk capital, etc.) for WEs.
- More opportunities for applying for specialized women entrepreneurship projects by NGOs are also needed.

Additionally, policy makers should be concerned with development or improvement of:

- specialized programs for business women start-ups;
- mentorship programs;
- programs for supporting participation in fairs in Bulgaria and abroad;
- women managerial and soft skills.
- government policies to stimulate female entrepreneurship and leadership in business

- strategy to harmonize the business environment with the family environment for support and relief for women in their care for children, elderly parents, family life and recreation;

5.4. CROATIA

5.4.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Strategy for the Development of Entrepreneurship of Women in the Republic of Croatia 2014 - 2020

The Republic of Croatia is one of the rare countries which has that strategy being made, but the new planning period of European Union 2014. - 2020 requires an adjustment of the existing document. The strategy itself highlights the presence of some problems which is why stakeholders need to intensify activities related to gender equality. Those problems are related to higher rates of women's poverty, women are dominant in unemployment rate and males are dominant in entrepreneurial activity. Also, there are some fragmented (partial) and unconnected programs and activities.

The strategy is being founded on strategic frame of European Union, SBA act and Woman charter, as well on strategy Europe 2020, whose goal is achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which means wide and efficient speeding of encouraging of women's economic potential.

A research, which ended with reporting the finds, was conducted between 2010 and 2013. The report includes the analysis of 62 (out of 101) reports of holders and participants of the Strategy - ministries, agencies, institutions, chambers, associations of women entrepreneurs and employers and civil sector. The report shows that the largest share of planned activities is completed (out of 17 measures, 9 of them were performed completely, 7 of them partially and 4 of them were not performed. Also, report showed that there is a need for constant implementation of those activities, they need to be planned and redefined in the planned period of 2014 until 2020.

The strategic goals of the Strategy are: (1) improving poverty and public policy networking, (2) improving systematic support to women entrepreneurship, (3) introduction of women entrepreneurship in total institutional infrastructure, (4) promotion of women entrepreneurship.

Law on Promotion of Small Business Development Current Law on promotion of small business development was adopted in the year of 2002

The law sets out the basics for the implementation of stimulating economic development policies, restructure and market adjustment of small businesses, as well

as an establishment of Croatian agency for small businesses. That same law has been changed and supplemented several times with a goal to modify some of the existing solution or to import new ones

A short overview shows that the results and the growth of small business in Croatia insufficient by dynamics and they are behind comparing with some other countries.

The percentage of new companies entering on the market is below than expected, looking at the level of income and the percentage of innovative start-up entrepreneurs, and is below the percentage observed in comparable EU member states.

The causes of these unsatisfactory results are complex and different. Legislation often impose significant costs on SMEs and act as an obstacle to the development and growth of SMEs. It is expected that the solution has a positive effect on the economy, as well as on the production and employment growth, because that will be a result of decreased regulatory obstacles after the performed SME test. The percentage of founding innovative companies will increase as a result of the offered fiscal incentives. Over time, national productivity and economic growth should be expected. For the implementation of this Law, it is not necessary to provide additional funds in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia.

The provision of tax relief to innovative entrepreneurs and investors in that company will have an impact on the state budget in terms of revenue forecasts. The amount of tax revenue envisaged will depend on the use / absorption by the companies and investors and the level of the approved exemption.

Strategy for Gender Equality of the Council of Europe from 2018 to 2023

The results of regular monitoring and research show very slow progress when it comes to women's participation in politics, their access to justice, and the elimination of harmful gender stereotypes and sexism. Violence against women remains one of the known examples of unequal distribution of power between men and women. Gender stereotypes also negatively affect men and boys.

The main goal of the strategy is achieving gender equality. In the period of 2018, until 2023., the main focus will be on 6 strategic areas: (1) preventing gender stereotypes and sexism, (2) preventing violence against women as well as domestic violence, (3) ensuring equal access to women's justice, (4) achieving a balance between women and men when it comes to decision-making, (5) protection of women's rights, as well as the rights of migrant girls, refugees and asylum seekers and (6) introducing gender equality in all public policies. The main stakeholders in Croatia are various ministries and government agency like Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of science, education and sport, Ministry of Family, Veterans and

Intergenerational Solidarity, HAMAG BICRO), regional development agency, entrepreneurship centers, incubators, technology parks, high education institutions, local and regional government, banks, funds, venture capital, but also various associations that involve business women, employers and artisans.

5.4.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

Some strategies have been adopted for women entrepreneurship and young people employment, but not particular incentives for YWE. Also, there are networks available, but by persons who have personal interest in fostering women entrepreneurship. Educational institutions promote the STEM area as desirable for everyone, regardless of the gender, which results in an increase in interest rates for technical faculties by young women, but still not enough. There are certain private initiatives to promote women's entrepreneurship. Their purpose is primarily - networking. What is missing in Croatia are specific women founding centres, dealing with obstacles and needs that women face. The establishment of funding programmes tailored specifically for women is one of the needs, since they are disadvantaged in terms of getting a funding. Same applies to tax incentives. That should also be approached.

The Strategy for the Development of Entrepreneurship of Women itself, as the main document for women entrepreneurship in Croatia, along with its action plan, has included some of the parts that are related to the empowerment of women entrepreneurship and stimulation of women's economic potential. By 2019, that strategy hasn't got some big visible effect on women entrepreneurship.

Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR) is offering favourable (cheaper) sources of financing the women's entrepreneurship (lower interest rate), but women use those sources of financing when they need it. There are some educations and workshops implemented for women's entrepreneurship so they can be familiar with the opportunities. Because the policies and measures need to be carried and implemented together, there isn't much effect visible because there is still not enough kindergartens, there isn't a lot of good role models available and they mostly lack support because they are manoeuvre between professional and private life, because of the stereotypes that are not yet removed from the value system.

The main errors or limitations of current policies is that the old value system is still present in Croatia, which makes it somehow difficult to achieve goals, because it needs to be put mutual/joint effort, as stated before. Not only between the institutions, but also among people which are (non)citizens of the country, in order to change and remove stereotypes about (young) women entrepreneurs. Also, each sector which is involved into achieving goal of the Strategy has its own problems which institutions are solving, which makes it hard to achieve mutual effort at the same time.

5.5 GERMANY

5.5.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Nationwide Female Founder Agency (Bundesweite Gründerinnen Agentur (BGA))

The nationwide start-up agency (BGA), which has been in operation since 2004, is the first and only Germany-wide competence and service center for the entrepreneurial independence of women in all sectors and phases of business start-ups, consolidation and company succession. The BGA is partner for economics, science, politics, foundresses and bundles contacts and information to experts, studies, advisory facilities and networks in completely Germany. The Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology has launched the "Female Start-Ups Portal" in order to support women willing to set up their own businesses with tailor-made information. The portal not only presents local contact partners and networks, but also offers direct contact possibilities via the start-up hotline and, together with the national female start-up agency (BGA), presents women who have successfully founded their own businesses.

Support (especially for women):

- Consulting: Consulting facilities, forum of experts, founder's hotline, ...
- Networking: Get to know other female founders and entrepreneurs, exchange knowledge and experience, find support, mentors
- Company succession

Initiative: "WOMEN'S enterprises"

The Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy (BMWi) would like to encourage women to use their qualifications and skills to implement their own business ideas and build successful companies. Since 2014, the BMWi has been focusing on women entrepreneurs from almost all sectors with its "WOMEN'S enterprises" initiative.

For the initiative, successful female entrepreneurs act as "role models for entrepreneurs" and voluntarily draw the attention of schoolgirls, trainees, female students and university graduates as well as other women interested in setting up their own businesses to the opportunities and challenges of self-employment. In this way, participants gain a realistic and very personal insight into everyday business life. The entrepreneurs show that an entrepreneurial career can be an attractive career option for women. At the same time, the "WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE" initiative makes the performance of women entrepreneurs visible: their success, their commitment and their contribution to the future of Germany as a business location.

Since 2014, the "Female Start-Ups Breakfast" has also been targeting women interested in setting up a business, bringing them together with successful female entrepreneurs and providing impetus on all relevant issues relating to entrepreneurship.

Introduction of a legal quota for women in management positions

In order to finally significantly increase the proportion of women in management positions, the Act on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Management Positions came into force on 1st of May 2015. Previously, despite many appeals and voluntary commitments, the proportion of women in management positions at German companies had stagnated for years. Two years after the law came into force, it is clear that the quota is having an effect. All companies that are subject to the fixed quota regulation and had to fill new supervisory board positions in 2016 adhered to the fixed quota. Unless a women's share of 30 percent had already been reached, any vacancies on the Supervisory Board were filled by a woman throughout. Currently, only six of the 185 supervisory boards of the DAX, MDAX, SDAX and TecDAX listed companies and the 25 fully co-determined companies have a woman chairperson. And only about a quarter (25.9 percent) of the Supervisory Board members are female. Only 6.8 percent of the positions on the Management Boards are held by women, and the proportion of women in management positions in the federal administration is only 35 percent.

The fact that women hold management positions so much less frequently despite excellent qualifications is also reflected in their salaries: in 2014, female managers in Germany earned an average of 26.8 percent less than their male colleagues (Source: Eurostat). But even beyond the management levels, women are still paid less: for example, the pay gap for comparable qualifications, jobs and careers is still 6 percent (the so-called "adjusted" pay gap). Even though the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value for women and men has been in force for more than 50 years, the so-called wage gap is still part of everyday life in Germany. Against this background, measures to eliminate the pay gap have been agreed in the coalition agreement. In addition to the minimum wage, the further expansion of childcare, Parental Allowance Plus and the Act on Family Care Time, which have an indirect effect on equal pay, the Federal Government introduced two trend-setting laws in the 18th legislative period: The "Act for the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Management Positions" ("Women's Quota") obliges large companies to increase the proportion of women in management positions. In January 2017, the Federal Cabinet also cleared the way for more transparency in salaries with the "Act to Promote the Transparency of Remuneration Structures".

Improving the compatibility of family and career

Family friendliness strengthens employee loyalty: The entire corporate culture must be geared to more family friendliness. This is the only way for women to fully develop their potential in working life and their leadership qualities, as studies show that women continue to take care of children and relatives. Whether flexible working time models, re-entry training, mentoring programs, coaching for female managers or women's networks - all measures must be interlinked. The family-friendly corporate

culture must also be flanked by a high-quality care infrastructure that is close to home, tailored to needs and of high quality.

Improving the compatibility of family and career: The creation of needs-based childcare facilities is an investment in the future. Since 1st of August 2013, every child from the age of one is entitled to a place in a day care center or in day care. The federal government supports the regions and local authorities with massive financial assistance for the expansion and operation of childcare facilities for children under three years of age. The new regulations on family care time also support families if the care of a close relative is added to the work and perhaps child care. With the Act on Better Compatibility of Family, Care and Work, which came into force on 1st of January 2015, employees can be partially exempted from work for up to 24 months for the care of a close relative.

Power for female founders *Measures to mobilize the founding potential of women*

The "Power for Women Entrepreneurs" action programme was an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research with the aim of motivating women to set up their own businesses (duration: 01.01.2007-31.12.2013). The aim of the project was the differentiated motivation of women to start a business as well as the structural improvement of women's access to business start-ups. To this end, 40 sub-projects were funded within the framework of 20 projects. This involved technology-oriented, knowledge-based and non-academic target groups, awareness-raising, methods, training and counselling. The "Power for Women Entrepreneurs" projects analyzed the structures and potential of women setting up in business. In addition, model and innovative measures were developed to mobilize the start-up potential of women. An important pillar of the "Power for Women Entrepreneurs" action program was the establishment of the nationwide start-up agency BGA. On the basis of the "Guidelines for the Promotion of the Establishment of an Information and Service Centre for Women Entrepreneurs", the agency received start-up funding provided jointly by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy and co-financed by the European Social Fund. In order to exploit the potential of women in the economy and to mobilize in the market and to seize the opportunities to take advantage of the opportunities that structural change offers women; Germany promotes the entrepreneurial independence of women.

WomenExist - Entrepreneurial and start-up skills for young women after vocational training

The learning sequence "Business start-up" in the learning system WomenExist was developed for all women who are considering becoming self-employed. Women in management positions, women with or without children are addressed as well as

women returning to work or women whose jobs are threatened or have already been lost. Even if women have just completed their apprenticeship or studies, they will find information here. Core elements of the learning system are video sequences (Documentary films, interviews etc. with decision-makers), which make it possible for learners to experience entrepreneurial thinking and acting in a practical and authentic way, as well as a learning environment that helps to control their own training in a targeted way. The continuing education concept uses modern learning technologies within the framework of a blended learning concept, i.e. the methodical change of e-learning, company training units and attendance phases (e.g. network consulting, mentoring, etc.). The learning program should enable individual, self-organized learning as well as the organization of learning processes within the framework of counselling and mentoring services. It is intended to support existing counselling, further training, coaching and mentoring services for newcomers and start-ups, but also for those target groups that are currently almost completely excluded from education and labor market policy (unemployed women, women returning to work, women on parental leave, etc.).

The project was carried out in cooperation with the Institute for Work and Economy of the University of Bremen (IAW) and the Education Center of the Economy in the Lower Weser Region, (BWU), Bremen. Duration: 01.07.2004 - 30.06.2007. The project was funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the European Social Fund. The platform is still available for the women.

Startup BW Women

An issue close to the hearts of all start-up ecosystems in the country is the increase in the proportion of women. The Bundesverband Deutsche Startups e.V. has also addressed the low proportion of women in the scene (15.1%) and cooperates with the nationwide start-up agency (bga), which is based in Baden-Württemberg's Ministry of Economics.

5.5.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

Overall, Germany has a supportive regulatory environment for entrepreneurship. Family policies are advanced in Germany among European Union countries, offering parental allowances, public childcare services and tax deductions for childcare. These instruments help women participate in the labor market and are also supportive of self-employment. New, young and established businesses are able to access a wide variety of financial supports.

There is a well-developed entrepreneurship support infrastructure that offers a wide variety of supports, including training, coaching and mentoring and business counseling.

Entrepreneurship education is becoming more widespread and is advanced relative to most European Union countries. A number of business associations and women's entrepreneurship networks offer opportunities for peer-learning.

German society continues to ascribe housebound and family-related roles to women, thus implicitly rendering entrepreneurship as a less desirable career choice for women. This is reinforced by tax policies that favor households with a single income earner.

The policy could develop more flexible and needs-based care services like for example a nationwide legal entitlement to all-day schooling to make it easier for young women to become self-employed.

Women are under-represented in the financing industry itself. Mainstream financing programs often implicitly discriminate against female entrepreneurship by focusing on areas where women are less active (e.g. technological innovations) and by not considering the specific characteristics and needs of women-owned businesses.

Where entrepreneurship education exists, it mainly promotes a classic model of entrepreneurship (i.e. full-time self-employment) rather than the full spectrum of possibilities, including social entrepreneurship, part-time self-employment, group entrepreneurship, etc. Also, the specific training programs should take the specific characteristics of women in account.

5.6. HUNGARY

Unfortunately, being an entrepreneur is not the most popular job in Hungary. Most women would like to have a secure job and that's why they choose to go to a favourable multinational company. Being an entrepreneur is also very expensive for women, because most of them don't really have any or just a small amount of savings. However, the government is trying to help young people to become entrepreneurs with various governmental programs (e.g. Széchenyi 2020, GINOP).

Most of the women are afraid, that if they fail or their enterprise is not enough successful, they won't have money for living.

PBN contacted NőiVállalkozói Klub Egyesület (Women Entrepreneurs Club Association), which is a club summing up the local women entrepreneurs, to organize events, trainings and also study visits to develop their skills (e.g. in Audi Hungary factory to Győr). In the project PBN would like to further cooperate with the NőiVállalkozói Klub to provide help for YWE.

It can be said, that there is a lack of women projects, programs for young entrepreneurs, and that's why they aren't motivated enough to start their own business. With beneficial tax reduces and campaigns also the government could force the younger generation to be entrepreneurs. The main concern is that young women

entrepreneurs have to face more challenges than men, because they have to fight for equality and men don't really want a woman, who is more successful than them.

There should be more campaigns about gender equality and conferences to widen women entrepreneurs' network.

The main actors in helping Women Entrepreneurs are private clubs and associations (e.g. NőiVállalkozói Klub), where they "collect" women to share their views, experiences and organizing learning events. However, most of the projects regarding to female in projects.

The government is trying to cooperate with the employment centres and the local town halls and offices to be able to provide chances for more young people to start their enterprises.

When PBN arranged with NőiVállalkozói Klub, they said, that in their opinion these projects and developments need more time, and maybe campaigns about being an entrepreneur would be helpful not only for young people, but also for failed entrepreneurs as well.

5.6.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Many policies and programmes are placed to support youth entrepreneurship. They seek to facilitate the acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and to improve access to start-up finance. However, there are no special programmes and promotions for women and young women entrepreneurs. Currently there are two programmes that finance youth entrepreneurs that are partly from EU subsidies: one for the convergence regions (GINOP 5.2.3) and another for Central Hungary (VEKOP 8.3.1).

A few of GINOP Programmes are the followings:

GINOP-5.1.10-18

Supporting unemployed people to become entrepreneurs:

Governmental program to support unemployed people to become entrepreneurs. In the framework of the call, the Hungarian State Treasury provides support for the start-up activity of jobseekers over the age of 30 who, in the framework of the GINOP-5.1.9-17 call, prepare for business start-ups, business development and have an approved business plan, using a simplified cost accounting method.

GINOP-5.1.10-17

Supporting unemployed people to become entrepreneurs (Closed project)

In the framework of the call, the Hungarian State Treasury provides support for the start-up activity of jobseekers over the age of 30 who, in the framework of the GINOP-5.1.9-17 call, prepare for business start-ups, business development and have an approved business plan, using a simplified cost accounting method.

GINOP-5.2.3-16

Support Young Entrepreneurs to start their enterprise

Unfortunately, as mentioned before, in Hungary being an entrepreneur is not a popular choice. Those, who choose this option are mostly forced: to make money or they are coming from entrepreneurial families and that is the only option they have. Also, an option is to promote the self-employment career among young people could stop the emigration trend and help to strengthen the country's economy. Important support from governmental side that they really focus on creating a successful entrepreneurial culture by supporting business development centres or business incubators that provide help for micro and small enterprises.

The roles of women have gone through a subsequent transformation. Gender inequalities are moving in the right direction in Hungary. More women are willing to start their own enterprises and because of the promotional events, they have the chance to see and learn from the western European good practices. In addition, one of the most successful multinational company (MAM) has a female CEO in their Hungarian factory for 20 years.

Women entrepreneurs tend to have a wide circle in Hungary, and they are more supportive with each other than men. Usually they attend events, make networking and later connect, organize events and study visits together to help other females. There are also special balls for female entrepreneurs, one of the most known is based in Szombathely, it is organized by NőiVállalkozói Klub and they choose the "Female Entrepreneur of the Year" in each year.

A major challenge is that low-skilled young female entrepreneurs do not have the proper professional skills to set up and sustain the business.

Services for entrepreneurs are wide. There is no difference between men and women. Serious improvements have been carried out to make administration simpler. The administrative apparatus has expanded their services in order to be faster and more successful in case management. The region is modernized in this respect. Almost every administration can be handled via an internet client portal.

Young female entrepreneurs have priority on the market in some areas: beauty care, child care, medicine, education, training, beauty industry, miscellaneous business services, counselling, law and accounting etc. In other fields, they have the same opportunities to enter the market. Every year new surveys show out the labour market situation for women and men, which is not surprising as reducing gender

inequalities are increasingly emphasized at European and global level. There is, however, limited data on young women entrepreneurs.

According to current data, there is a steady increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises established by women. The effectiveness of government economic and family policy can also be observed in this regard. The Ministry of National Economy also compiles statistics on this subject. The Central Statistical Office, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the local governments act as data providers.

Vocational Training Centres regularly or occasionally cooperate with statistical agencies and with reporting agents relevant to this topic.

5.6.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

After over viewing the existing national strategies and policies, the women entrepreneurs cannot be fully satisfied. The reason is that there have been no actions on governmental level, which would specifically focus on young women.

The EU and also Hungary have attempted to support young entrepreneurships, however, women have not really taken their part. On the one hand, this can be derived from the general characteristics of women, on the other hand, the national culture and the strategic programs are not tailored enough to females. Although there have been different initiatives and policies aiming to support young entrepreneurs, the women are not really aware of them. Stereotypes referring to gender differences didn't totally disappear; furthermore, the lack of courage does not help the situation, either. In spite of their skills and knowledge, women face more difficulties on the market. The main difficulty for young women is to access finance, followed by the cost of business registration and the lack of savings.

Also, a barrier is the lack of information about how to start a business (e.g. rules and regulations), followed by the lack of entrepreneurship skills.

5.7. MOLDOVA

Moldova's economic freedom score is 58.4, making its economy the 105th freest in the 2018 Index. Its overall score has increased by 0.4 point, with improvements in property rights and judicial effectiveness outweighing declines in government integrity and trade freedom. Moldova is ranked 40th among 44 countries in the Europe region, and its overall score is below the regional and world averages.

With a moderate climate and productive farmland, Moldova's economy in theory should be more prosperous. The domestic political impasse caused partly by Russia

undercuts structural reform and realization of the country's potential. The government has tried to address weaknesses in the financial sector, but growth is hampered by endemic corruption and a Russian ban on imports of Moldova's agricultural products. The economy remains vulnerable to weak administrative capacity, vested bureaucratic interests, higher fuel prices, Russian political and economic pressure, and unresolved separatism in the Transnistria region. Trade is extremely important to Moldova's economy; the combined value of exports and imports equals 115 percent of GDP. The average applied tariff rate is 3.4 percent. Nontariff barriers impede trade. Government openness to foreign investment is below average. The financial sector is relatively stable, but the level of financial intermediation remains shallow, and government interference is significant.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the economy in the Republic of Moldova and have significantly contributed to job creation and economic prosperity over the last decade. In the Republic of Moldova, SMEs account for 98% of all businesses and represent 58% of the country's employment in 2017. SMEs were particularly affected by the global financial crisis which diminished international capital flows, bank lending, foreign direct investment, and consumer demand.

Major institutions relevant from the perspective of "women in business"

In Moldova, the development of female entrepreneurship is one of the objectives of state policy. Support activities developed by Government are reflected, first of all, in Action Plan for the years 2015-2017 on the implementation of the development of the SME sector for years 2012-2020 (Priority 7, DEVELOPMENT THE FEMININ ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA) as well as in THE FEMALE PROGRAM IN BUSINESS made by ODIMM and intended for women which plans to initiate or expand business, especially in rural areas

SMEs are unequally distributed across the country, with about 64.9% operating in Chisinau, the capital, and 4.7% in Balti, the second largest city. Entrepreneurial activity is significantly more pronounced in Chisinau, with 42 SMEs per 1 000 inhabitants versus just 6.7 SMEs per 1 000 inhabitants outside of Chisinau.

The number of SMEs has remained relatively stable over the past three years despite the country's volatile economic growth. In 2015 were registered 52 000 enterprises. However, the total number of active SMEs in Moldova has been estimated at around 35 000, which suggests that one in three registered SMEs might be inactive (EconomistiAssociati, 2015).

Since 2015, the Ministry of Economy introduced "Priority VII: Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Moldova," as part of the SME Sector Development Strategy 2012-2020, as well as an associated action plan for implementation in 2015-2017. At that time, ODIMM added a targeted strategy, to encourage women to start and grow businesses. ODIMM's ambition is to raise the percentage of female entrepreneurs to 40-50 percent; therefore, program targets should be gradually

increasing to achieve this. ODIMM spent its first three years targeting women in outreach efforts that allowed them to gain a deep understanding of the economic situation of women in Moldova, especially as regards to business start-up and ownership. They also appear to have built an extensive network that can be used effectively for outreach, organizing, and information collection.

From 2016, ODIMM is implementing the first National Programme "Women in Business" that aims to boost women entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas, and presents an integrated 3-stage approach to address business development needs in the following stages:

- Plan to start a business;
- Start-Up support;
- Support to business growth.
- The business environment, in particular the institutional milieu in supporting the new businesses as well as their growth

Generally female-owned businesses are less likely than male-owned businesses to claim that the business environment is favourable. Thus, while 13 percent of male-owned enterprises find the business environment favourable, just 3 percent% of female-owned businesses declared the same. In fact, 51 percent of female-owned businesses perceive the environment as unfavourable and another 46 percent find it neutral. Female-owned SME's in retail, hotel/restaurant, other services but retail, wholesale and construction are the least likely to declare the business environment as favourable. In fact, 58 percent of retail businesses, 98 percent of hotel/restaurant businesses, and 77 percent of companies in other services declare that the business environment is unfavourable. Up to 96 percent of female-owned companies in construction and wholesale say that the business environment is neutral. Among female-owned companies, companies in wholesale, construction, and manufacturing are the least likely to say that the business environment is unfavourable. Nonetheless, significantly more (about 23 percent) male-owned companies from these industries consider the business environment to be favourable. Furthermore, geographical differences were found. It appears that female-owned businesses in the north of the country struggle the most. The data shows that 89 percent of companies considered the business environment to be unfavourable and just 2 percent found it to be favourable. In the centre region, 67 percent female-owned companies found business conditions to be neutral and 6 percent found them to be favourable.

5.7.1 CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The main national Policy framework containing provisions related to women's entrepreneurship includes:

- Law no.5 from 09.02.2006 ensuring equal opportunities for women and men;
- National Development Strategy „Moldova 2020”;

- Small and Medium Sized Enterprise Sector Development Strategy 2012-2020 approved by Government Decision no.685 from 13.09.2012 and the action plan for 2015-2017;
- Government Commission for Equality between Men and Women established according to Government Decision no.350 from 07.04.2006;
- National Implementation Plan of Association Agreement (approved by Government Decision no. 808 from 07 October 2014);
- Action Programme of the Government of the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2018;
- Strategic Development Program of the Ministry of Economy for the years 2015-2017;
- Small Business Act for Europe;
- National Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2014-2020.

Within the SME Sector Development Strategy 2012-2020, and the associated action plan for implementation 2015-2017, it was introduced the chapter “Priority VII: Developing the women entrepreneurship in the Republic of Moldova”, that contains the following objectives:

- Facilitate the access of women entrepreneurs to trainings and informational resources,
- Promote entrepreneurship spirit among women,
- Facilitate the access to finance of young women entrepreneurs.

In Moldova there are several initiatives and support programs related to youth women entrepreneurs, such as:

- Program for Attracting Remittances in the Economy PARE 1+1;
- Credit Guarantee Fund;
- National Program for Economic Empowerment of Young People (NPEEY);
- “Efficient business management” continue training Programme;
- „Women in business” Program, EBRD Business Advisory Service (BAS) Moldova;
- „Economic empowerment of women through increasing the employment opportunities in the Republic of Moldova”, UN Women;
- „Better opportunities for Youth and Women”, UNDP;
- Competitiveness Enhancement Project, grant component, World Bank;
- International Fund for Agricultural Development;
- Program for Development of Business Incubators.

The most directly related Pilot initiatives is the ‘Women in Business’ Program, coordinated by the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprise Sector

development is providing integrated financial and non-financial support to women in business through grant support for investment, and associated business development services. The support contributes towards sustainable maintenance of employment in women's businesses, and creation of new jobs. The Program is targeting women in business with potential for growth through market expansion, export and/or innovation.

5.7.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

Just like in many countries of the region, Moldova has no clear and well-formulated definitions for the "female entrepreneurs" term and no estimations of what is the share of the "female entrepreneurship" in the total entrepreneurial activity. The entrepreneurship in our country represents a very dynamic area. Moldova, being a state with a transitional or a developing economy based on the market economy principles, experiences the emergence of a large number of new businesses, on the one hand, and the cancellation of a considerable number of companies from the register or suspension and interruption of their activities for various reasons, on the other hand. As compared with other countries from the region, the female entrepreneurship from the Republic of Moldova is growing rapidly and is gaining more and more ground at all structural levels and residence areas.

The businesses that are run by women, mainly young, are concentrated in urban areas, 65% being registered in Chisinau. In the capital city, for example, the concentration of companies per 1,000 inhabitants is 36, while in the rural areas there are localities with up to four companies. This indicator suggests that more attention should be paid to the rural development and especially to the entrepreneurial development. It is necessary to implement certain programs geared towards promoting youth entrepreneurship within villages, as well as priority areas characterized by a deficiency of services and production.

It is essential that the National Employment Agency from Moldova develop and reinforce a system of consultation with the various gender equality bodies to ensure greater consistency and co-ordination between employment policies and other related policies, such as education, entrepreneurship, family and social protection policies. This would enhance both the general effectiveness of employment policies and women's employability.

Additionally, is essential that the National Employment Agency establish a gender focal point or gender and employment unit and develop the expertise, know-how and tools (gender equality methodologies and evaluation procedures, training and awareness efforts, etc.) required to design gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive employment policies. Adequate financial and human resources should be assigned to this end.

The entrepreneurial culture in the field of young women in Moldova requires an important effort in order to raise awareness of the target group. Also, new insights into how correctly and efficiently increase young women participation at the local economy and public management should be shared.

Creating new businesses amongst women needs to be encouraged by promoting entrepreneurship success stories, supporting entrepreneurship, and improving existing mechanisms by which SMEs benefit from training, and financial and logistical support.

5.8 ROMANIA

Romania's economy has seen the greatest economic growth in the last 9 years, last year growing by 7% compared to 2016, however the annual inflation rate, index that measures the evolution of consumer prices, has seen a substantial rise in the last year.

Romania's economy is represented by services (55,8% of the GDP), industry (24,2% of the GDP), constructions (6% of the GDP), agriculture (under 5% of the GDP). Romania is doing well when it comes to economic growth, however statistics aside, doing business in Romania is full of challenges because of the legislative and fiscal instability, bureaucracy, corruption and hard-to-obtain business loans.

According to data from National Trade Register Office (ONRC), approximatively 117.000 Romanian companies have closed their doors, suspended their activity or declared insolvency or bankruptcy within the first 10 months of 2018, 5.600 more companies than the same period in 2017.

However, there are still enough Romanians willing to join the business world. ONRC data shows that in the first 8 months of 2018 92.030 judicial entities (stock companies, limited liability companies, etc) were registered, 10,59% smaller than the same period in 2017, when the number of registrations was 102.936.

Even though the entrepreneurial spirit represents an important motor that has contributed to the development of Romanian economy after the 1989 revolution, the biggest issue remains the lack of access to financing.

It can be said that 70% of entrepreneurs that start a business on their own do so with their own funds, as business loan requirements are high enough that most entrepreneurs (young men and women) that wish to start a business are not able to meet the requirements.

Few banking institutions develop products destined for YWE, even though one third of romanian companies are owned by women. On the other hand, those that do

manage to get approved for a financing plan are in constant stress that they cannot make the payments in time.

There is no connection between the educational system and the business environment, leading to the main issue regarding entrepreneurship, the lack of entrepreneurial education in Romania, as such entrepreneurial courses should be added in the educational curriculum.

5.8.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Unfortunately, regarding public policies, we notice that the state does not actively encourage entrepreneurship, and the measures taken, especially regarding fiscal obligations and requirements, are seen by entrepreneurs as a major barrier in business development.

In 2019, employers from Romanian SMEs can obtain non-refundable funds from the Romanian state, through 11 national support programmes for SMEs, however the allocated budget is much lower than last year. 2019's budget proposal, allocates 545.520.000 RON for national financing schemes for SMEs, and another 545.520.000 RON for budgetary financing schemes for The Ministry of Business. In 2018 these programmes were funded with 1.865.293.000 RON.

Regarding women entrepreneurship, we can say that public policies are highly lacking. The regulatory framework and the programmes that support and foster entrepreneurship do not seem to take into account the specific needs of women in general and the specific needs of women entrepreneurs, like the high degree of difficulty of achieving a balance between work and family life.

There are 11 national support programmes for SMEs, and only one programme is destined for women entrepreneurs, respectively The Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme, launched in 2005 through which training courses and seminars for young women entrepreneurs are organised. For this year, this programme is to receive 1.000.000 RON. In 2018, 80 Romanian women entrepreneurs were able to take part in the entrepreneurial courses in Romania and abroad, through this programme.

As such, more programmes dedicated to women are necessary, and training and/or educational programmes should be a priority. In Romania, gender equality in the field of employment is addressed by the establishment, in 2004, of the National Agency for Equal Chances, The Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity being the institution responsible for this project.

According to EGO Nr. 61/2008 regarding the implementation of the equal treatment principle between women and men regarding the access to goods and services and supplying goods and services, through the equality principle it is understood that no direct gender-based discrimination will take place, including less-than-favourable treatment towards women on grounds of pregnancy and maternity leave, and that no indirect gender-based discrimination will take place.

On the other hand, according to Law Nr. 202/2002 regarding equality in treatment and chances between women and men (republished), through equality in treatment and chances between women and men it is understood that the different capacities, needs and aspirations of both men and women are taken into account as well as the equal treatment of both. This law insured the legislative harmonization of international and community rules and regulations, while a series of relevant community judicial acts in the field of gender equality were transposed in Romanian law.

5.8.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

According to the stakeholders a link should be established between the public educational system and business environment, and the educational curriculum should be adapted to the needs of the business environment.

On the other hand, the state should simplify the current legislation and administrative bureaucracy as well as keep fighting against corruption. The interviewees consider that both the public and private sector can contribute to the development of women entrepreneurship if there is involvement on both sides.

5.9. SLOVENIA

5.9.1. CURRENT POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In Slovenia, equal opportunities for women and men are enshrined by law in the **Slovenian constitution** (Article 14)¹⁰ as well as the **Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act**¹¹ and the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act (ZUNEO-UPB1). The provisions of the **Employment Relationships Act**¹² are also important for employment and promotion. Based on the Protection Against

¹⁰ Art. 14 (Equality before the Law) In Slovenia everyone shall be guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status or any other personal circumstance. All are equal before the law. Source: OJ RS, no. 33/91-I.

¹¹ OJ RS no. 59/02, 61/07 - ZUNEO and 33/17 - ZVarD

¹² OJ RS, no. 21/13; important articles that ensure equality of employees are 1st, 6h, 27th and 133th article.

Discrimination Act¹³ Slovenia established as a separate and independent authority the Advocate of the principle of equality¹⁴.

The Republic of Slovenia's strategic document for achieving gender equality in various areas of the lives of women and men in Slovenia is the **Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2015**.

The Slovenian Government adopted in 2016 guidelines on gender mainstreaming in ministries for the period 2016 - 2020. Based on it the ministries prepare two-yearly report (first edition 2016 - 2017). In addition, within the Interdepartmental Commission on Human Rights, an interdepartmental expert subcommittee was set up, which prepared National Action Plan for Respecting Human Rights in the Economy (adopted in August 2018).

MAIN DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

The **Slovenian Development Strategy 2030**¹⁶ declares Decent life for all (eliminating all forms of discrimination, particularly through eliminating all forms of violence against girls and women and domestic violence, providing conditions for access to basic goods and through the fight against hate speech and racially motivated violence). Under the Inclusive labour market and high-quality jobs, the promotion of employment of both sexes in gender atypical and deficient professions is proposed. As SDS states, the level of education among young people is rising sharply, which is a positive trend from the perspective of providing for the needs of the economy, which is forecasted to generate increasing demands for a highly educated workforce.

The Slovenian Development Strategy 2030 is monitored through the yearly Development Report (UMAR)

According to the Development Report (UMAR, 2019) is Slovenia among the best performing EU countries for a long time in terms of various indicators that measure gender equality/inequality: for example: in terms of Gender Equality Index (GEI) is above the EU average. According to the Global Gender Gap Index Slovenia lost 4 places and is among the EU on 11th place due to the decline in the number of women members of parliament¹⁷ and increased wage gap between women and men. In 2018 Slovenia also remained at the top of the EU according to the three UNDP indices of gender (in) equality. According to the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Gender

¹³ OJ RS no. 33/18 and 21/18

¹⁴ More info:

¹⁵ OJ RS 83/15

¹⁶ gov.si/assets/vladne-sluzbe/SVRK/Strategija-razvoja-Slovenije-2030/Strategija_razvoja_Slovenije_2030.pdf

¹⁷ Equality ratio has max divide 40% : 60%.

Development Index (GDI), it is ranked 5th in the EU. According to the human development index for women (HDIw), Slovenia is in 9th place in the EU¹⁸.

From the perspective of EU Cohesion funds, the basis for its implementation in Slovenia is the Partnership Agreement between European Commission and Slovenia (further PA)

The PA states that Slovenia has fully respected the horizontal principles of gender equality, the prevention of all forms of discrimination and respect for equal opportunities and accessibility from the very beginning of the 2014-2020 document programming for ESI Funds.

In the 2014-2020 programming period, more attention will be given to:

- training and capacity building for the relevant actors on mainstreaming gender equality and non-discrimination,
- ensuring a balanced representation and participation of women and men in decision-making, planning and monitoring,
- planning and ex-ante criteria for mainstreaming the above-mentioned horizontal principles.

PA further stresses that training and capacity building to mainstream the principle of gender equality and the aspect of gender incorporation into the budget will be dealt with under the support structure providing guidelines and assistance for the implementation of gender equality in ESI funds. The funds for operating this structure will be allocated from the technical assistance fund.

Operational Programme for the Cohesion Policy 2014 - 2020

Operational Programme for the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the Period 2014 - 2020 (CCI 2014Si16MAOP001) in its priority axis 8 states that the **Equal opportunities will be promoted through the measures envisaged within all three investment priorities, especially the investment priority Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people.** The measures will target **unemployed women with tertiary education**, as the unemployment records show that the share of women with tertiary educational attainment who are unemployed is at a high level. Measures to promote reconciliation between work, family and private life throughout the life cycle, which will be implemented in the context of investment priority Active and Healthy Ageing. Gender equality will be implemented as a cross-cutting element, as the projects that promote equality between men and women in accessing employment and in reconciliation of work and private life throughout the

¹⁸Source:

http://www.umar.gov.si/fileadmin/user_upload/razvoj_slovenije/2019/angleski/POR2019_ANG_splet.pdf

individual's life span will be treated as a priority. Although the gender mainstreaming is a horizontal principle, the measure for women entrepreneurship is firstly, not under the priority 3, which is dedicated to entrepreneurship and secondly, as such is described as measure of employment policy (targeted is self-employment).

SECTORAL POLICIES

Gender and youth-related policy documents

Current strategic document “**Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2015-2020**” outlines an approach to gender mainstreaming. This strategy is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology who are carrying out programmes aimed at promoting new employment opportunities by encouraging female entrepreneurship (e.g. a programme promoting the professional advancement of women and other programmes to develop equal employment opportunities funded by the European Social Fund).

For youth, Slovenia has a national youth policy. **The National Youth Programme 2013-2022** is the thematic guide to policy and programmes. It focuses on five key areas: Employment and Entrepreneurship; Housing; Health and Wellness; Society and the Youth Sector; Culture, creativity, heritage and the media.

Employment Policy

Active Employment Policy (AEP) is one of the measures by which Slovenia increase employment and thus reduces unemployment in the labour market. Labour Market Regulation Act (LMRA) provides guidelines for the implementation of active employment policy measures.

Industry, R&D

Slovenian Industrial Policy 2014 - 2020 (SIP) puts as a guideline no. 30: Promoting entrepreneurship for young people, women, social entrepreneurs and micro-entrepreneurs for which the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology is responsible. Slovenian Industrial Policy 2014 - 2020 (SIP)

Smart specialization (S4) is a platform for concentrating development investments in areas where Slovenia has the critical mass of knowledge, capacities and competencies and where there is innovation potential for placing Slovenia within global markets and thus enhancing its recognisability. There is no gender-specific measures foreseen.

Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2011-2020

In terms of age and gender, the structure of Slovenian researchers is satisfactory since the share of researchers aged 34 years or younger is increasing. This share amounted to 34 % in 1990, and already to 39 % in 2008. At the same time a program of "Young researchers" includes an increasing number of women, especially in the field of biotechnical science, medicine, social sciences and humanities, where women also have a majority share. The current share of women among the researchers amounts to 34 % for Slovenia and exceeds the EU 27 average (30 %). However, in the academic sector, there were only 17 % of women with the title of full professor in 2007. Through the professional body **Commission on Women in Science**, promotion activities will be supported, following the principle of balanced representation of both genders when appointing working bodies within the competence of MVZT, and when preparing legal acts and other strategic documents.

MEASURES

In response to the gender gap in entrepreneurship, a programme was launched in 2016 to boost women entrepreneurship named Subsidy for Self-employment. The purpose of the programme is to promote the entry of unemployed women with tertiary education into an independent entrepreneurship path in the form of subsidies for self-employment, having previously completed training for this purpose. The goal of the programme is to maintain the self-employment continuously for a period of 24 months. The training programme involved 16 mentors and trainers with extensive knowledge in the field of individual training modules. The participants in all locations rated the training programme with the highest marks. The programme was also approved and evaluated by the Employment Service of Slovenia, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. It is a partnership between several institutions, which proved to be very effective and could serve as an example to other programs across Slovenia. Unfortunately, in 2019 the programme with excellent results abruptly ended (formally due to the decreased level of unemployed women with tertiary education). The Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs carried out different programmes aimed at promoting new employment opportunities by encouraging the self-employment of women and female entrepreneurship also in the past (e.g. a programme promoting the professional advancement of women and other programmes to develop equal employment opportunities funded by the European Social Fund).

5.9.2. CRITICAL REFLECTION

The young women entrepreneurs are complex in nature and need the cross-sectoral cooperation on different governance levels. For effective and efficient cross-sectoral cooperation, a governmental group should be set up to foster women entrepreneurship. It should be chaired by the ministry, responsible for

entrepreneurship (current: Ministry of Economic Development and Technology). One of the priority tasks of the WE group would be to prepare (in cooperation with other relevant ministries, women entrepreneurs and their representatives such as chambers, employers' associations etc.) a national strategy for women entrepreneurship development that would be followed by the two-yearly implementation plan with defined timeline, objectives, indicators of success, budget, roles and responsibilities of involved actors. In order to have the evidence base the Statistical Office of the Republic Slovenia should collect women entrepreneurs' related data (no. of companies, owned or managed by women, they survival rate, profitability and internationalisation). The minister, responsible for economy, who should be also responsible for adequate budgetary planning, should adopt the documents. Therefore, the focus of measures (from self-employment within the labour market policy) should shift to set-up and growth of the women entrepreneurship. Special focus should be on one-stop-shop or at least joint platform for diverse initiatives in women entrepreneurship, based on mapping of services and organisations that would ease the young women to get the right information and advice and select appropriate support services and/or institutions. The gender specific entrepreneurial training, mentoring, coaching and counselling should be developed further and financed through the implementation plan. Not only the women start-ups but also the female entrepreneurs in the whole life cycle of their entrepreneurial endeavours should be supported. The young women entrepreneurs should receive assistance in the first few years (subsidies, grants) that would enable them to focus on their own product/service development. The need for gender specific instruments should be enhanced. In order to enhance the supporting environment for women entrepreneurship the female specific incubators as well as coworking spaces should be set up and finance within the measures of the ministry of economy. Several women entrepreneurship networks (national as well as regional ones) should be supported by the ministry of economy on the long run. More, the cooperation with the female entrepreneurs 'networks should be encouraged within and beyond the Danube region countries. The networks of women entrepreneurs should be encouraged as well - not only to exchange their experiences but also to provide needed services to successfully run the businesses (e.g. book-keeping, taxation, legal frameworks). The support to internationalisation activities should be more proactive, among others also by enhancing the cooperation with international platforms such as WEGATE.

All above-mentioned challenges should be coordinated by the respective governmental body that would include also the female entrepreneurs, their associations, networks and other forms of groupings.

6 MAIN FINDINGS

In order to support the development of women entrepreneurship the state has to take over some of their roles and create a functional and efficient system that will give women the opportunity to do business more freely and focus on the developing of it.

Each partner country from the Danube region offers some kind of support for women entrepreneurs. Germany is, without doubt, a very good example of a well-developed entrepreneurship support infrastructure, but here also the housebound and family-related roles are more related to women than men, which influence their choice of a more stable job over the choice of being an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is a form of self-employment this is why all of the partner countries from the Danube region mentioned that they have a law, a strategy or an action plan on Gender equality. This aims to ensure the equal rights of women's participation in several fields but also in entering the labour market and entrepreneurship.

An example of a national policy that addresses the specifics of women's entrepreneurship is the National Strategy for Development of Women Entrepreneurship 2014 – 2020 from Croatia. By 2019, several gaps in this strategy have been identified. First of all, the measures and activities aimed at enhancing women entrepreneurship are slowly setting in. Second, the Strategy does not specify customized approaches to address the barriers to rural women's entrepreneurship and other more vulnerable categories. Finally, a major issue was the lack of collaboration among different ministries, which narrowed the outreach of the implementation of the planned activities. No reports on implementation results of the Action Plan are publicly available.

The Ministry of Economy of Bulgaria is currently developing a Strategy for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship, but it is not expected to be finalized till the end of the current programming period.

From the Analysis made, it is obvious that there is a huge diversity in the type of entrepreneurship support among project countries. In some cases, like Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, availability of supporting programmes for young entrepreneurs but not specifically for young women entrepreneurs is noticed. In others, like Germany, Moldova and Romania, there are programmes for supporting women entrepreneurs, but not specifically young ones. It is even observed that in Germany the mainstream financing programs often implicitly discriminate against female entrepreneurship by focusing on areas where women are less active (e.g. technological innovations) and by not considering the specific characteristics and needs of women-owned businesses.

Some of the countries, like Austria and Croatia, put a specific focus on supporting girls to participate in STEM for to achieve gender equality through educational programmes.

Entrepreneurial education is very important in the development of women's entrepreneurship. Countries like Germany and Moldova have already implemented entrepreneurship education programmes for women; in the other countries there is a lack of this kind of support.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report shows that although there are many differences in the countries across the Danube region when it comes to YWE, there are several similar positive and negative issues. In order to improve the current state of affairs, different stakeholders (i.e. national, regional, local governments, educational system actors, business support organizations, NGOs, employment service institutes and labour unions) need to come together with their efforts and shape the positive environment for YWE growth. In this way, a real impact and an actual increase in the number of successful young women entrepreneurs can occur.

The rationale for targeted policies and programmes to promote women's entrepreneurship and to support women in business creation and self-employment is generally based on three arguments. First, women are under-represented in entrepreneurship relative to men and closing this gap would result in welfare gains for the economy, society and for individual women. Second, there is evidence that women are held back in entrepreneurship by institutional and market failures. This includes social attitudes that discourage women from creating businesses, as well as market failures that make it more difficult for women entrepreneurs to access resources (e.g. finance, skills). Finally, there is some evaluation evidence to suggest that women have a lower awareness of public support programmes and that in-take mechanisms favour men entrepreneurs.

Various kinds of support should be provided focused on young women entrepreneurs. There is a need develop more tools for YWE support focused on several areas:

- Changing the legal framework and enabling entrepreneurs to have similar conditions for starting a company as in other surrounding and/or Danube region countries
- Fostering of establishment and development of companies in specific sectors production, knowledge-based services, social entrepreneurship, part-time self-employment, group entrepreneurship, etc. owned and/or managed by women;
- Improvement of entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge and skills of business women;
- Awareness rising of business women;

- Providing of financial instruments (bank loans, preferential rates, risk capital, etc.) for WEs on competitive base.
- Improvement of cooperation between academia and business - educational curriculum should be adapted to the needs of the business environment.

Additionally, policy makers should be concerned with:

- Development of government policies to stimulate female entrepreneurship and leadership in business, also on international level.
- One-stop-shop for young women entrepreneurs – through creating a centralized platform related to start-ups where start-ups, investors, educational institutions, accelerators and incubators, students and other interested parties could meet and exchange information.
- Development of specialized programs for business women start-ups;
- Development of mentorship programs and supporting the organisations (accelerators & incubators) who are already building those networks;
- Development of supporting tools for ensuring of trainings for business, digital and soft skills taking into account the specific characteristics of young women;
- Development of a strategy and taking concrete actions to harmonize the business environment with the family environment for support and relief for women in their care for children, elderly parents, family life and recreation;
- Ensuring a joint support of diverse networks to set up eCommerce platform or at least assist YWEs in eBusiness. Encouragement of networking to cooperate in Danube region and so contribute to the visibility of women entrepreneurship on global scale.

Overall, the report is providing a holistic view with factors which affect the growth of women entrepreneurs through a comprehensive review of the available information on women entrepreneurship in Danube Region.

The identification of these factors guides us on the identification of new policies and support instruments needed to be put in place for entrepreneurship development among women and will represent the main issue in the Policy Agenda.

The women entrepreneurs should be able to have a good understanding of the financial assistance available to them and they must also understand the importance of social and business networking to their business success. They must take the initiatives to participate in training program organized for them. Besides this, it is imperative for government to do more in providing specialized assistance to women entrepreneurs on a continuous basis.

From the financial perspective, the young women entrepreneurs must understand the advantages of external sources of financing for their businesses. Understanding the limitation of grants that could be provided by the government even by increasing the

allocation, the government should encourage more banks and micro institutions through tax incentives to provide a wider range of financial services with flexible terms and conditions so as to assist women in establishing and expanding their own enterprises. Besides government grants and loans from financial institutions, the associations of women entrepreneurs and NGOs should continue playing important roles in providing financial schemes to young women entrepreneurs.

Additional support and services (co-working places, stimulation to increase the number of men taking over paternity leave, awareness-raising about double burden on women, one-stop-shop place/platform etc.) should be made available to women in view of the additional constraints they face, particularly the dual role they play in running a business while at the same time taking care of their households. The government should think of an effective mechanism to motivate more women entrepreneurs to support the national programmes designed for women in business.

Women entrepreneurs must realize the importance of networking in gaining access to capital and information from various stakeholders. The government, associations of women entrepreneurs and NGOs should cooperate closely and formulate strategies to enable informal mentoring supportive relationship among the women entrepreneurs. This will definitely help the new young women entrepreneurs to bypass the obstacles which impede growth, success, and personal fulfilment.

In addition, more training opportunities for young women entrepreneurs should be provided by engaging successful women entrepreneurs as trainers. More efforts are needed to improve the scope and quality of affordable, accessible entrepreneurial and management training and seminars targeted to women.

The training programmes should focus on marketing, accounting, participation in fairs and exhibitions, product quality and business opportunity identification. The associations of women entrepreneurs play important role in getting their members to participate in the training programmes.

Finally, the success of the recommendations above will not be forthcoming without the support from all the parties involved. The society should encourage the development of more women entrepreneurs and see them as key enablers in the nation's economic development agenda.

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