### The Issue

Decades of advocacy efforts led by the women’s movement and grass-roots organizations across the Western Balkans and Turkey have led to a recognition that violence against women and girls is a manifestation of systematic gender discrimination and inequality, a violation of human rights, and a detriment to development. The adoption of the 2011 Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (also known as the Istanbul Convention) and the agreed conclusions of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2013, have increased attention given to violence against women in international and regional agendas, and built the momentum for investing in additional efforts to achieve gender equality.

The regional Beijing +20 review for Turkey and the six Western Balkan countries highlighted areas that require concerted attention: the pervasiveness of multidimensional discrimination, the re-emergence of strong patriarchal structures and unequal power relations between women and men, and the rising prevalence of different forms of violence against women and girls.

UN Women’s preliminary assessment of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Turkey and the six Western Balkan countries, conducted at the end of 2014, revealed that – despite the adoption of legislation to advance gender equality in all countries – strong patriarchal structures, unequal power relations between women and men, and the lack of political will of governments remain major obstacles to the full implementation of legislation. While Turkey and the six Western Balkan countries are at different stages of accession into the European Union, there is an opportunity and a necessity to advance the implementation of norms and standards outlined in European Union laws and policies – also known as the ‘acquis communautaire’.

### Our Solutions

The three-year programme, ‘Implementing Norms, Changing Minds’, aims at ending gender-based discrimination and violence against women in the six Western Balkan countries and Turkey, with a particular focus on the most disadvantaged groups of women.

The adoption and full implementation of frameworks aligned with international normative standards – including those standards outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Istanbul Convention and the European Union acquis communautaire – are essential for addressing gender-based discrimination and violence against women. The programme will strengthen women’s organizations’ capacity to hold governments accountable, advocate for effective implementation, and monitor prevention of and response to violence against women. Beyond the full implementation of legislative frameworks, the programme also addresses structural causes of gender inequality – and one of its most pervasive expressions, violence against women – through a transformation of gender discriminatory stereotypes, perceptions and beliefs. Lastly, protection, prevention and response to violence against women is closely interlinked with the availability of and access to comprehensive, multi-sectoral services for survivors of violence.

Acknowledging the structural inequalities that lie at the intersection of gender and factors such as age, disability, ethnicity and nationality, the programme will place a strong emphasis on tackling multiple discrimination where gender aspects are involved. The primary method of implementation is through partnerships with women’s organizations. The programme will build on UN Women’s and the European Union’s links with civil society organizations in the region to assist women in their drive to ensure their rights as citizens.

---

1. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this document shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.
2. Beijing +20 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a roadmap for achieving gender equality.
Where we work

The specific objectives of the programme are:
1. To create an enabling legislative and policy environment, in line with international standards on eliminating violence against women and all forms of discrimination
2. To promote favourable social norms and attitudes to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination and violence against women
3. To empower women and girls who have experienced discrimination or violence, including those from disadvantaged groups, to advocate and use available, accessible and quality services

How We Make a Difference: Step by Step

- Influencing laws and policies through work with governments and other stakeholders to align national frameworks with international human rights standards and the EU acquis communautaire
- Strengthening the capacity of women’s organizations and enhancing their positions as leaders for change
- Challenging norms and exclusionary practices through the Gender Lab, an innovative incubator for determining and developing effective advocacy strategies
- Addressing gaps in service provision and increasing access to quality services for survivors of violence against women through full implementation of standards of the Istanbul Convention

How We Operate

At least 60 per cent of the overall programme budget will be allocated to women’s organizations. Thirty per cent of these funded interventions will be channeled through organizations working with and/or representing the most disadvantaged groups of women.

The programme will launch a series of Calls for Proposals to select civil society organizations, networks and platforms working to achieve gender equality and end violence against women to implement selected activities.

Following the assessment of proposals, UN Women will sign Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with selected Implementing Partners.

The maximum amount of funding for organizations awarded PCAs is €60,000.

For more information please contact:
Yolanda Iriarte, Regional Programme Manager
Email: eca.evawproject@unwomen.org
Web: http://eca.unwomen.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/unwomeneuropecentralasia
Twitter: www.twitter.com/unwomeneca
#changingmindstoEVAW

This project is funded by the European Union

This programme is implemented by UN Women. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.