



MUNICIPALITY OF VRATSA

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GENDER EQUALITY PLAN OF VRACA MUNICIPALITY

I. Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan is an important tool for promoting equality and eliminating gender discrimination in society.

The current Gender Equality Plan is the main strategic document for the Municipality of Vratsa, which describes the goals, objectives, and specific measures that the Municipality Management will implement to promote gender equality. With it, the management of the Municipality of Vratsa declares its commitment to ensure strict compliance with the principle of equality between women and men and anti-discrimination on the basis of "gender".

II. National and international legal framework

A key factor for the successful performance of the main functions of the Municipality of Vratsa is the creation of an effective working environment. The municipality directs its attention to ensuring the equality of women and men, which, according to the Law on the Equality of Women and Men, is expressed in equal rights and obligations, equal opportunities for realization and overcoming obstacles in all areas of public life, such as women and men are free to develop their personal capacities and make choices without the constraints of the social role of their gender.

Legal guarantees for the equality of women and men have been created in Bulgaria, which are contained in the current Bulgarian legislation - the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria and codes and laws, incl. The Anti-Discrimination Act. National legislation treats women and men equally in all spheres of public relations regulated by law and thus guarantee their equality. The principle of non-discrimination is horizontal and is contained in all

normative acts relevant to the subject. At the national level, the main strategic document of the unified policy on equality between women and men is the National Strategy for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men. It is aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men for full and active participation in all areas of life and not allowing discrimination based on gender. The national strategy corresponds to the relevant European strategic documents. As a member of the UN, the ILO, the EU and the Council of Europe, Bulgaria is committed to the development of policies aimed at promoting the equality of women and men, in accordance with the standards adopted by them, corresponding to national specificities and legislation.

Gender equality is a key priority for the European Commission, driven by the Gender Equality Strategy. In order to strengthen and promote gender equality in the EU, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) was established

III. Methodology

The Municipality of Vratsa works to ensure such equal treatment and equal treatment, which guarantees for all employees a favorable working environment, devoid of any stereotype and prejudice based on gender.

In 2022, the total number of full-time employees in the administration of the Municipality of Vratsa is 179 employees, of which 128 are women and 51 are men. In percentage terms, women make up 72% of the total number of employees to 28% men.

The structure of the composition of employees in the Municipality of Vratsa is in the following ratio:

- Art. 19 A of the Law on Administration incl. mayor 6 women and 21 men - a ratio of 22% to 78%;
- Senior management positions 8 women and 1 man - ratio 89% to 11%;
- Management positions 4 women and 2 men - ratio 67% to 33%;
- Expert positions 73 women and 20 men - a ratio of 78% women and 22% men;
- Auxiliary and technical positions 37 women and 7 men - ratio 84% women and 16% men.

The Municipality of Vratsa strives to maintain a balance of employed staff and gender ratio, although women traditionally predominate in individual areas according to the field of work.

The Municipality of Vratsa creates opportunities for employees to take care of their families if necessary. Numerous projects allow employees to participate in training for additional qualifications, including after returning from extended parental leave. The implementation of the current plan will create conditions for strict observance of the principle of anti-discrimination based on "gender", for the promotion of anti-discrimination awareness and the creation of a work and public environment free of any stereotype and prejudice.

IV. Guiding principles

V. The guiding principles in the plan for equality between the sexes in the Municipality of Vratsa are in line with the principles laid down in the National Strategy for the promotion of equality between women and men for the period 2021-2030.

In the context of the institutional policy of the Municipality of Vratsa, the following are defined as leading principles:

1. Coordination and cooperation

Taking into account the comprehensive nature of the topic of the equality of women and men, the preparation, implementation and reporting of the Plan for gender equality in the Municipality of Vratsa is the result of the coordinated joint efforts and cooperation of all interested parties - Management, directorates, administrative departments.

2. Transparency

In the preparation of the Plan for equality between the sexes in the Municipality of Vratsa, the accompanying documents and the reporting reports, the principle of transparency will be observed, giving the opportunity to all interested parties to take part in the planning and monitoring of the policy on the equality of women and men.

3. Continuity and sustainability over time

With the adoption and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan in the Municipality of Vratsa, the aim is to ensure a long-lasting positive effect of the implemented policy on the equality of women and men in all priority areas of activity.

Performance monitoring and control

The plan for gender equality in the Municipality of Vratsa will be implemented through activities in priority areas for the period from 2023 to 2027.

Progress will be presented in reports that will contain information on the implementation of the set activities.

All participants in the processes related to the policy on the equality of women and men can further develop the basic principles according to the level at which they conduct their activities.

VI. Objective of the Plan and priority areas of intervention

The plan is a natural extension of the Vratsa Municipality's inherent desire to institutionalize the equal treatment of the sexes and builds on it through measures to promote equality. The main objective of the Plan is to preserve the positive trend for a balanced representation of women and men in the Municipality of Vratsa and to introduce good practices to overcome inequalities where they exist.

The Plan highlights priority areas and sets goals as follows:

- 1. Gender balance in the administration of the Municipality of Vratsa in management and decision-making:**

Objective 1.1: Creating conditions and striving for gender equality;

Objective 1.2: Assess the environment and identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to gender balance in management;

Objective 1.3: Achieving and maintaining balance in the administrative structures of the Municipality of Vratsa.

- 2. Equality between women and men in recruitment and in providing career development opportunities for employees:**

Objective 2.1: Assess the environment and identify strengths and weaknesses in relation to recruitment and career development;

Goal 2.2: Achieving and maintaining equality in recruitment;

Objective 2.3: Achieving and maintaining equality and equity in providing opportunities for career development.

- 3. Work-life balance as part of organizational culture:**

Objective 3.1: Identify the needs of employees in relation to work-life balance;

Objective 3.2: Ensuring a balance between the professional and personal life of employees;

Goal 3.3: Promote a culture of equality in care delivery.

4. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment:

Objective 4.1: Assessment of the environment and identification of needs;

Objective 4.2: Optimization of control mechanisms;

Objective 4.3: Enhance institutional culture.

ACTION PLAN BY PRIORITY AXES/ AREAS OF INTERVENTION

1. Gender balance in the administration of the Municipality of Vratsa in management and decision-making::

Target	Measure/Activity	Deadline/ Target values	Resources and means	Responsible
Creating conditions and striving for gender equality	Formation of a working/expert group to monitor the implementation of the current plan and the goals set in it. incl. to be responsible for the annual reporting based on the indicated indicators.	Deadline for forming a working group: end of 2023. Indicators: Established working/expert group; Number of held working meetings/sessions; Number of prepared annual reports related to the implementation of the Plan;	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the Municipality of Vratsa, Heads of Directorates and Departments
Assessing the environment and identifying strengths and weaknesses in relation to gender balance in management	Systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and compliance/monitoring of the ratio between men and women in all management structures of the Municipality of Vratsa, as well as in all competitions for management positions.	Term: permanent Indicators: Prepared database; Performed monitoring and analysis based on the collected data	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Human Resources Department and/or Working/Expert Group
Achieving and maintaining balance in the administrative structures of the	Encouraging representatives of the gender underrepresented in the relevant field to apply if possible	Term: permanent Indicator: number of informed persons	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the Municipality of Vratsa, Heads of Directorates and Departments

Municipality of Vratsa.	All other conditions and qualities of the candidates being equal, appointment of the candidate from the less represented gender in the relevant direction	Term: permanent Indicator: number of informed persons	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the Municipality of Vratsa, Heads of Directorates and Departments
	Participation in leadership trainings organized by the Municipality of Vratsa	Term: permanent Indicator: Number of organized and conducted trainings; Number of participants	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the Municipality of Vratsa.
	Participation in trainings and seminars organized by the Municipality of Vratsa to promote the pursuit of gender balance and build an institutional culture to recognize and prevent gender-related prejudice and unconscious bias for employees and decision-makers.	Term: permanent Indicators: Number of organized and conducted trainings (minimum 1 training per year); Number of participants;	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the Municipality of Vratsa

2. Equality between women and men in the recruitment of human resources and in the provision of opportunities for career development

Target	Measure/Activity	Deadline/Target values	Resources and means	Responsible
Assessment of the environment and identification of strengths and weaknesses in relation to recruitment and career development	Systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data and periodic tracking/monitoring of the ratio of men to women in administrative positions	Term: permanent Indicators: Prepared database; Performed monitoring and analysis, based on the collected data.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Human Resources Department and/or Working/Expert Group
	Conduct research/surveys to identify weaknesses in relation to the recruitment process and existing career development opportunities and procedures	Term: permanent Indicators: Number of conducted studies/surveys (1 per year); Number of	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Heads of departments and Human Resources Department

		participants.		
Achieving and maintaining equality in recruitment	Participation in gender bias training for all employees in managerial positions on which recruitment and selection depends	Term: permanent Indicators: Number of conducted trainings; Number of participants.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Heads of Divisions/Directors of Directorates
Achieving and maintaining equality and equity in providing opportunities for career development	Information on how to submit complaints in case of discrimination based on gender (to heads of departments for form, email address, etc.)	Term: permanent Conducted information campaigns and/or equivalent; Number of informed participants: Number of submitted and processed complaints.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa, external financing	Management of the municipality of Vratsa
	Regular information campaigns to recognize and counter gender-based discrimination	Term: permanent. Indicators: Conducted information campaigns; Number of informed participants.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa, external financing	Management of the municipality of Vratsa

3. Work-life balance as part of organizational culture

Target	Measure/Activity	Deadline/ Target values	Resources and means	Responsible
Identifying the needs of employees in relation to work-life balance	Systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data and monitoring of the ratio of men to women on parental leave	Term: permanent Indicators: prepared database; performed monitoring and analysis based on	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of Vratsa Municipality Human Resources Department and/or Working/Expert Group

		the collected data; number of men/women taking childcare leave.		
	Participation in a survey of the municipality of Vratsa to identify weaknesses and needs of employees in relation to work-life balance	Term: 2023-2025 Indicator: Conducted survey research; Number of participants.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa
Promoting a culture of equality in caregiving	Informing and encouraging men in the municipality of Vratsa to take leave to look after a child or take care of family members	Term: permanent Indicators: Conducted information; number of informed participants; number of men taking parental leave	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa

4. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Target	Measure/Activity	Deadline/ Target values	Resources and means	Responsible
Environmental assessment and needs identification	Survey among municipal employees for diagnosis and identification of problems and risks	Deadline: 2023 Indicator: Conducted 1 survey/research.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa
Optimization of control mechanisms	Informing the employees of the municipality of Vratsa about the need and their commitment to prepare a protocol for reporting to the heads of departments in the municipality in the presence of cases of	Deadline: 2023 Indicators: Number of informed employees; Number of reporting protocols.	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa

	gender-based discrimination and violence.			
	Informing the employees of the municipality of Vratsa about additions to the Code of Ethics of the municipality of Vratsa	<p>Term: in case of an addition to the Code of Ethics in the period 2022-2028</p> <p>Indicator: Number of informed employees.</p>	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa
Enhancing institutional culture	Participation in trainings and seminars organized by the municipality of Vratsa to build an institutional culture for recognizing and preventing gender-based violence	<p>Terms: 2023, 2025-2028.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <p>Conducted trainings;</p> <p>Number of participants.</p>	Budget of the municipality of Vratsa	Management of the municipality of Vratsa