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## FINAL EVALUATION

# Combatting Discrimination, Furthering Women's Labour Rights

### Introduction and Methodology

The objective was to evaluate achieved results and provide recommendations to inform the regional Coalition against Gender-based Discrimination's future planning to address gender-based discrimination (GBD) and to further women's labour rights. The evaluation applied an utilisation-focused and participatory approach. Data was collected through a review of available documentation, key informant interviews, self-assessment questionnaires and an online survey targeting stakeholders, implementing partners (IPs) and sub grantees (SG) supported by the Action. In total, 33 stakeholders (29 women, 4 men) have been consulted, including IPs, SGs, governmental actors and non-governmental entities linked with the Action, aiming at capturing their perspectives and experiences.

### Key Findings

Overall, the Action is assessed as highly relevant, successfully implemented with a sound level of effectiveness and efficiency. The Action is considered as very important to women rights groups/CSOs as it further increased their capacities to use anti-discrimination legislation, research, monitoring (specifically on GBD and labour rights), advocacy, citizen engagement and networking. The Action has facilitated learning and supported the exchange of experience. There is a high ownership of the intervention by most stakeholders, CSOs and public bodies, which are deeply involved and dedicated to the cause of fighting for women's rights and anti-discrimination in labour. **17 changes** are evidenced as a result of CSOs' advocacy initiatives. **199 anti-discrimination cases** were brought to relevant institutions and monitored towards proper address. **183 diverse CSOs** engaged in advocacy initiatives, decision-making processes and reforms related to women's labour rights. **30** legislative and policy amendments related to the gender equality acquis were put forward. **23** actions were undertaken by relevant institutions (e.g., National Gender Equality Mechanisms, Ombudspersons, Labour Inspectorates) that supported CSOs' efforts to enable implementation of anti-discrimination legislation. **14** research reports (7 baseline in 2019 and 7 end line in 2022) were published, including two in each country and two regional reports; these were the first such gender analyses published on GBD in the Western Balkans (WB). Media covered issues relating to discrimination against women at work **558** times, and **299** awareness meetings were successfully used to improve GBD understanding.

**Relevance:** The Action is highly relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups, key stakeholders and final beneficiaries in the current countries' contexts.

**Effectiveness:** The Action fully attained its outcome level results, and there are not any differential results across groups. The Coalition exceeded its targets on most indicators. The partners have established very effective partnerships with the relevant institutions in each country. A very effective sub-granting approach is applied by KWN, reaching 14 diverse local CSOs. Better planning of human resources, enhanced partnerships with the business sector and trade unions, in depth analysis and follow up on country advocacy strategies, and involvement of more women beneficiaries in advocacy initiatives at national and regional level were identified among the main factors within the partners' control that could have contributed to more effective advocacy.

**Efficiency:** The Action is assessed as highly efficient. Resources were used according to the goals set. The Coalition partners responded timely and accordingly to the COVID-19 pandemic. They

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managed to successfully coordinate and cooperate with each other, other CSOs working in the same field, government authorities, and international actors. The main components that make the Action efficient and competitive, include: its regional dimension, its length, the wide involvement of a significant number of local CSOs, relevant institutional and non-institutional actors and partners, evidenced-based advocacy and the fact that it is the first Action targeting GBD at country and regional level by informing advocacy and discussions in Brussels and EU delegations and offices in WB countries.

**Impact:** Policy and legal changes supported by the Action will have a lasting impact in promoting and protecting women's labour rights. The Action led to litigations in cases of GBD in labour, in some countries for the first time, which directly impacted the establishment of court practice. The Action had a visible regional networking feature and an extensive impact in terms of establishing good partnerships, and transferring know-how from previous, current, and future EU and other donor-funded projects. The Action directly impacted the establishment of relevant data on GBD at work.

**Sustainability:** The Action has produced sustainable results at different levels: (i) Regional advocacy, (ii) National Policy (system), (iii) Organisational development and stability, and (iv) Community end beneficiaries. The Action's results at these levels have varying degrees of sustainability with the highest likelihood of maintaining achieved results at regional advocacy, national policy, and organisational development levels. Sustainability of IPs' and SGs' work at the national level and direct service provision to beneficiaries remains the most critical due to dependency on donors' funding and insufficient public funding at central and local levels, albeit this varies from country to country.

**Coherence:** This Action can be considered *unique* since very few, similar initiatives existed in addressing GBD at work. The EU's added value is in the full regional approach combined with the sector-specific approach, which were both directly linked to the EU accession process and using the process to facilitate and support CSOs' advocacy.

**Other issues:** The understanding of GBD and gender equality rights and practices have been promoted through the Action's activities. In addition, the Action advanced understanding of sexual harassment at work. The pandemic restrictions had a positive impact on the environment due to decreased use of transportation. An inclusive, leave no one behind and rights-based approach was applied throughout the entire Action.

## Key Recommendations

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- Conduct consultations from a feminist and *Do No Harm* approach with beneficiaries in the design of future actions, ensuring a participatory approach (Coalition).
- Provide consistent support to CSOs to further increase awareness regarding labour rights and GBD towards sustaining the attention of governments (EU and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida).
- Further assist women's CSOs in developing capacities to support women who are victims of GBD at work, provide legal aid, and cooperate with courts in monitoring cases and advocacy at all levels (Coalition).
- Continue support of such Coalitions that directly support grassroots CSOs that serve directly, more efficiently, and in a sustained way the most in-need groups. Sub-granting via CSOs experienced in and qualified for sub-granting is important for reaching CSOs that struggle to apply directly for EU funds (EU).
- Continue supporting CSOs' capacity-building through similar grants. Longer term projects for SG and more funding are recommended, if possible, with EU funds and within sub-granting limitations, which can enable local CSOs to better deliver results and reach more sustained and long-term changes (Coalition, EU and Sida).
- Further foster interactive, constant, and evidenced-based advocacy for changes towards sustainably aligning national laws with the EU Gender Equality *Acquis* (Coalition).
- Best practices, knowledge gained, learning, and research methodologies should be further developed and replicated in future similar programming (Coalition).

*This document was prepared by the Evaluation Team, composed of Mirela Jonuzaj (Team leader), Edlira Ngjeci Shima and Maida Cehajic-Campara. This product does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of KWN or its partners, nor of the European Commission or of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, which financed this evaluation.*