

29 August 2024

Subject: Towards a more gender-responsive 2025 Kosovo Budget

Dear Minister of Justice Albulena Haxhiu,

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) seeks to ensure that funds are budgeted and spent towards addressing the potentially differing needs of diverse women, men, boys, and girls, as identified through gender analysis. According to Kosovo [Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality \(LGE\)](#), GRB is mandatory for all public institutions, including municipalities, ministries, and other budget organisations. The non-implementation of GRB, as stipulated by this Law, constitutes a legal offense and is subject to sanctions. Further, the Government has an interest in implementing gender budgeting in the context of its [commitments to the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG), precisely [SDG 5, indicator 5.c.1](#); the Supplementary Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Framework ([PEFA](#)) for the assessment of gender responsive public financial management ([GRPFM](#)) in the context of ongoing public finance reforms; and, most importantly, as a best practice in financial management. Implementing GRB can contribute to more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent spending of government resources, including towards achieving gender equality. Thus, the Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers, through the budget circular, has requested that all [central level budget organisations](#) provide an addendum to their budget allocation requests for 2025 explaining how their 2025 budget ensures GRB.

Notably, the Government must involve gender equality officials and civil society organizations in public consultations pertaining to the budget, as mandated by Law [03/L-048](#) on the Management of Public Finances and Responsibilities. To support the Government of Kosovo in implementing its responsibilities, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), a network of 141 diverse women's rights organisations, has prepared this letter with recommendations towards improving GRB in the Law on Budget Appropriations for 2025. Recommendations are based on KWN's research and evidence of needs, towards furthering gender equality in Kosovo.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that the Ministry of Justice has allocated adequate resources for a Rape Crisis Centre, treatment for survivors of sexual violence, and an SOS hotline, as per the Istanbul Convention, in line with the new State Protocol for Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases.
- Strongly encourage municipalities to request and the Ministry of Finance, Labour, and Transfers to allocate sufficient budget for Centres for Social Work in the category of Wages and Salaries as part of the Government General Grant to employ more social workers in each municipality, specifically tasked with handling gender-based violence cases. The additional cost of employing two social workers in each municipality to address gender-based violence cases, including sexual and domestic violence, would amount to approximately [€444,000 annually for the Government of Kosovo](#). This amount considers that Prishtina, the largest municipality, would require four such social workers considering its size. This should be required of all municipalities as part of their budgets towards implementing the legal framework and new [State Protocol for Treatment of Sexual Violence Cases](#).
- Ensure that adequate financing for the [National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women](#).



- Ensure that adequate financing is in place for implementing the National Programme for the Treatment of Perpetrators of Violence against Women in Kosovo, including ensuring support for expert service providers from civil society.
- Support municipalities to increase budget allocations for social housing for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Ensure that proper financing of shelters for survivors of domestic violence throughout the year. As previously, KWN strongly believes that longer period contracts with shelters will minimise chances for shelters to close due to untimely distribution of funds or a lack of finances, which often occurs during the three first months of the year.

KWN would be happy to provide further information and evidence to substantiate and justify these recommendations and expenditure calculations, if needed. KWN strongly urges the Ministry of Justice to implement these recommendations, towards institutionalising GRB in Kosovo, in line with existing commitments, and towards a more gender-responsive 2025 Budget.

Sincerely,



Igballe Rogova
Executive Director
Kosovo Women's Network