



COMMENTARY

A GENDER READING OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S KOSOVO 2025 REPORT

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Summary: Gender Mainstreaming the Report	2
Chapters' Attention to Gender Equality	3
Main Findings of the Report	3
2. The Fundamentals of the Accession Process	3
2.1. Functioning of Democratic Institutions and Public Administration Reform	3
2.2. Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights	4
2.3. Economic Development and Competitiveness	6
2.4. Public Procurement, Statistics, Financial Control	6
5. European Standards.....	6
Cluster 2: Internal Market	6
Cluster 3: Competitiveness And Inclusive Growth	6
Shortcomings and Specific Recommendations for Better Gender Mainstreaming the Report	7
Main Findings of the Report	7
2. The Fundamentals of the Accession Process	9
2.1. Functioning of Democratic Institutions and Public Administration Reform	9
2.2. Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights	9
2.3. Economic Development and Competitiveness	11
2.4. Public Procurement, Statistics, Financial Control	11
3. Good Neighbourly Relations and Regional Cooperation	12
4. Normalisation of Relations Between Kosovo and Serbia	12
5. European Standards.....	12
Cluster 2: Internal Market	12
Cluster 3: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth	13
Cluster 4: The Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity	14
Cluster 5: Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion	15
Cluster 6: External Relations	15
Annex I – Relations Between the EU and Kosovo	15
Annex II - Statistical Data	15
Main Recommendations to the EC	15
Annex 1. Traffic Light Assessment	17

Introduction

Annually, the European Commission (EC) presents its assessment of Kosovo's progress towards joining the European Union (EU) in a report (hereafter, "the Report"). In accordance with EU commitments, all chapters of the Report should be gender mainstreamed. Each year the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), together with KWN member organisations, produces a Commentary on the extent to which the Report has mainstreamed gender.¹ This Commentary discusses the EC's Kosovo 2025 Report from a gender perspective,² examining attention to women, men, girls, boys, and gender equality; and the extent to which recommendations provided by women's rights civil society organisations (WCSOs) were included. It observes where gender was mainstreamed in the report and recommends how the EC could have better mainstreamed gender in various chapters and sections. Annex I contains a Traffick Light analysis of the extent to which each chapter mainstreamed gender.

Summary: Gender Mainstreaming the Report

Generally, the Report mentions women, men, gender equality, and gender significantly less than in prior years, albeit more than in 2024 (96 times).³ The 2025 Report did not fully mainstream gender in any section (0%), partially in 13 (19.4%), and not at all in 59 (80.6%).⁴ It integrated approximately 47.5% of KWN and its members' recommendations, slightly more than in 2024 (43%) but significantly less than in 2023 when 70% of KWN's recommendations were included. Other key findings include:

Term	2022	2023	2024	2025
Women	57	57	29	29
Men	3	8	2	4
Girl	4	5	5	2
Boy	0	0	0	0
Female	12	18	6	9
Male	6	13	6	10
Gender	38	49	36	42
Total	120	150	84	96

- **Five of 113 recommendations (4%) relate directly to furthering gender equality.** Regarding these, the EC tended to state that recommendations from last year were partially implemented and remain largely valid. Other opportunities existed for additional recommendations to refer to gender equality, as elaborated in later sections of this Commentary.
- **Few chapters are gender-mainstreamed:** This year's report did not include attention to gender related to many important issues, as elaborated below. In several sections, regardless of space limitations, one to three words could have been added, making the Report more gender responsive.
- **Insufficient inclusion of sex-disaggregated data** in several chapters.
- **Inadequate intersectional approach:** Related to rural inhabitants, children, minorities (particularly Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians), persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans+, queer, intersex, and other identifying (LGBTQI+) persons, the Report does not disaggregate by gender or sex. Attention to boys is lacking.
- **Minimal overall improvements:** While the 2024 Report demonstrated significant regression in gender mainstreaming, the 2025 Report made minimal progress.
- **Attention to patriarchy:** The EC's use of the word "patriarchy" in this Report importantly illustrates EU commitments to gender-transformative approaches, acknowledging the root causes of gender inequalities.

¹ [KWN](#) is a multiethnic, diverse network of 102 women's rights organisations throughout Kosovo. Nicole Farnsworth, Latra Demaçi, Ebba Hellman, and Mirjeta Ademi wrote this brief for KWN with input from the Kosovar Gender Studies Centre (KGSC), Žensko Pravo [Women's Rights] organisation, and drawing from the writing of Eleta Shala in 2024.

² EC, [Kosovo 2025 Report](#).

³ As observed last year, this is due in part to the revised approach and shortened format of the report, which constrains gender analysis.

⁴ See Annex I.

Chapters' Attention to Gender Equality

This year's Report refers to gender in the following sections, presented in order by section.

Main Findings of the Report

References to gender equality within the main findings section of the Report are important because they encourage government authorities, among others, to prioritise furthering gender equality. The main findings attended to gender equality:

- Related to the **fundamentals of the accession process**:
 - under **public administration reform** (PAR), the EC **recommends** “merit-based recruitments, performance assessment and measures towards gender equality”.
- Under **Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights**:
 - Related to **functioning of the judiciary**, the EC **recommends** to “enhance the accountability and efficiency of judges and prosecutors in handling [...] gender-based violence cases; and ensure consistent enforcement of procedural discipline and stronger case management practices”. KWN commends the EC's for continuing to treat gender-based violence as a rule of law issue.
 - Related to **fundamental rights**, it observed that Kosovo “appointed the head of the Agency for Gender Equality”. Further, repeating recommendations from the 2024 report,⁵ the EC **recommends**: to “strengthen implementation of the Law on gender equality and the strategy on gender-based violence; enhance gender mainstreaming of legislation, regulations and policies; adopt the programme for gender equality and the national action plan for Women, Peace and Security”.
 - The Report noted the key issue that “Adoption of the Civil Code remains pending”, which relates to several gender equality issues though these were not mentioned explicitly.
- Under **Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security**, related to the **fight against organised crime**, the EC **recommended** to “strengthen mechanisms for reintegrating victims of trafficking in human beings”, which has gendered implications though they are not explicitly stated.
- Under **Economic Development and Competitiveness** (which removed the prior year's subtitle of “Inclusive Growth”, potentially raising questions about inclusivity):
 - Related to the **existence of a functioning market economy**, the EC observed that “the labour market continues to face challenges, such as low participation and high unemployment rates as well as a significant gender gap.”
- Under **Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment**, the EC observes that “Kosovo needs to continue aligning with the EU *acquis* on non-discrimination and equality, including gender equality” and, similar to last year, **recommends** to “adopt pending legislation, namely amendments to the Law on labour, a new law on employment and a new law on health and safety at work, making sure to align the legal framework with the EU *acquis*, notably in relation to equality and non-discrimination in employment as well as parental leave”. Still, it does not refer explicitly to maternity, paternity, carers' leave or other aspects of the law affecting gender equality.

2. The Fundamentals of the Accession Process

2.1. Functioning of Democratic Institutions and Public Administration Reform

2.1.1 Democracy

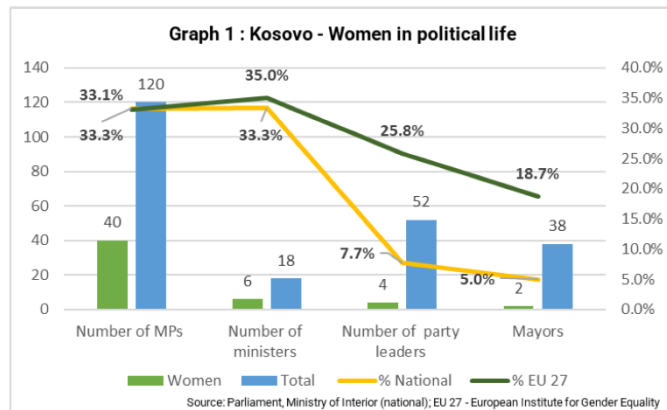
- On **elections**, the Report observes “high compliance with gender representation quotas” and that:

⁵ The 2024 report called for the Government to “strengthen implementation of the Law on gender equality and the Strategy on gender-based violence; appoint a new head of the Agency for Gender Equality; and enhance gender mainstreaming of legislation, regulations and policies”.

Women's participation has been steadily increasing, yet it does not exceed the 30% gender quota as established by the law. Of the 1 279 certified candidates, 443 were women (34.6%), while 45 were elected to the Parliament. In relative terms, 8.8% (39 out of 443) were elected on their own merit before the gender quota was applied. This result reflects persisting structural challenges: male dominance in campaign spaces, limited media exposure for women candidates, fewer campaign resources and a political discourse often marred by misogynistic rhetoric and personal attacks. These barriers, combined with the persistence of patriarchal norms in party platforms and public life, continue to undermine women's equal participation and influence in Kosovo's electoral politics, despite formal quotas and legal commitment.

The section contains a graph on women's participation in politics (Graph 1). KWN welcomes this gender-transformative approach that directly addresses patriarchal norms as a root cause of women's underrepresentation in politics.

- On **governance**, the Report states: "Although Kosovo has made progress in improving gender equality, disparities remain. Women are underrepresented in senior government positions and local decision-making bodies."
- On **civil society**, the Report repeats and expands the suggestion that "Greater consultation with CSOs advocating for non-majority communities' rights, women's rights and rights of persons with disabilities would be beneficial. Consultations at local level and in rural areas should also be improved. Several activists reported being targeted by political figures." This importantly includes the need for better consultation with WCSOs. Related, albeit not specific to WCSOs, the EC importantly notes the impact that U.S. funding cuts has had, alluding to but not outright indicating the need for government action to allocate funds to CSOs.



2.1.2 Public administration reform

- On **policy development and coordination**, it states that, despite a similar recommendation last year: "There has been no progress on either gender mainstreaming or inclusive and evidence-based policy-making. While most of ministries and municipalities appoint gender equality officers, they lack capacity and training to carry out their work meaningfully."
- On **public finance management**, the Report notes: "The legislation does not fully incorporate gender-responsive budgeting rules."
- On the **civil service**, it states: "Representation of non-majority communities and the number of women in senior positions is unsatisfactory".

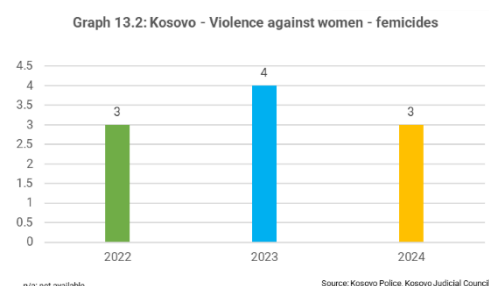
2.2. Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights

2.2.1 Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

- Under **functioning of the judiciary**:
 - Regarding quality of justice, the EC observed: "There are systemic challenges regarding the handling of serious crime and gender-based violence cases, notably linked to inefficient prosecution, deficient indictments and judgments, and inconsistency in sentencing practices".
 - Regarding efficiency, the EC stated: "Gender-based violence cases need more attention and should be handled more efficiently."
 - On domestic handling of war crime cases, progress in investigating and prosecuting sexual

violence cases is observed.

- Under **fundamental** rights, related to prevention of torture and ill treatment, the Report states that adequate legal guarantees are in place while “further steps are required to ensure that complaints are effectively investigated and implemented in practice”. However, sex-disaggregated data in this section would give a better understanding if the investigation of complaints needs to be more gender-responsive.
- Under **fundamental** rights, related to execution of criminal sanctions, the report states that “additional measures are required to safeguard the rights of prisoners, particularly women, girls, members of non-majority communities and persons with mental health issues”, containing gender-responsive language.
- Under **freedom of expression**, regarding internet, the EC importantly observes: “There is no restrictive legislation on the functioning of the online media nor on the freedom of expression online. Nonetheless, there is a need to formulate policies and establish mechanisms aimed at preventing and safeguarding against all manifestations of cyberviolence, including gender-based cyberviolence and child abuse in line with European standards.”
- Under **freedom of assembly and association**, property rights, the Report states: “The government continued affirmative measures to promote the registration of joint property ownership by both spouses in the property rights registry and extended for three years the sublegal act exempting spouses from paying a fee for joint property registration.” Further, it observed that “Still, the ownership of property by women slightly increased during 2024, to 20.02% compared to 19.82% of properties during 2023.”
- Under non-discrimination, the Report states that the legal and institutional framework on non-discrimination, hate crime and speech is broadly in line with the EU *acquis*. Nonetheless, the Report rightly observes that “Negative sentiments directed towards women engaged in public affairs are particularly pronounced. The election campaign observed some negative and inflammatory language and harsh verbal attacks at public events and online”.
- Under gender equality, the Report addresses several relevant issues, including insufficient enforcement and implementation of the relevant legal framework, the absence of a new Kosovo Program for Gender Equality and Gender Equality Index, inconsistency in gender mainstreaming laws and policies, and weak availability of sex-disaggregated data. Importantly, in the current global context, it recognises that “Women’s rights organisations continued to play a key role in advancing gender equality and provide legal and psychological services to women victims of violence”. It also observes that “Kosovo does not have a valid and standalone National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (WPS)” but commends the President’s work on WPS and Kosovo’s commitment to the WPS Agenda.
- Specifically, the EC observes that gender-based violence “remains frequent, with domestic violence continuing to be its most prominent form”. This phrasing is somewhat misleading as it is based on violence reported to police; incidence may be more widespread, such as for sexual harassment, which is underreported. The EC includes a graph illustrating femicide (Graph 13.2). The EC notes the Ministry of Justice/National Coordinator’s efforts and progress approving by-laws. Meanwhile, it observes that “the current system remains insufficient to effectively prevent and combat gender-based violence – in particular as concerns domestic violence – protect victims and support the reintegration of perpetrators. Deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes and hinder progress towards gender equality.” KWN welcomes this gender-transformative approach to recognising the root causes of gender-based violence in the Report. Additionally, the EC observes that the “integrated database recording cases of domestic violence is now fully functional, with nine institutions obliged to provide data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity”. The EC observes the increase in government funds for



specialised support services, including shelters.

- The section on **LGBTIQ persons** outlines several key issues, including shortcomings in legislation (e.g., Strategy, the Civil Code, Law on Civil Status), lack of shelter, and continued discrimination. While commending the “breakthrough sentence on a hate crime case against an LGBTIQ person, in which the perpetrators were sentenced to prison”, the EC observes the “negative development in public discourse was the formation of an electoral coalition openly opposing the rights of LGBTIQ persons.”
- The section on **Procedural rights and victims’ rights** contains sex-disaggregated data.
- The section on the **Protection of minorities** contains a sentence that “police took some measures to address [...] allegations of sexual harassment of women in Mitrovica North”.
- Under **Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians**, the government survey on “early marriage among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities” was noted, which “emphasises the need for stronger legal enforcement, aligned legislation, support services and educational initiatives to combat early marriages”. Early early/child/forced marriage is also mentioned.

2.2.2 Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

- Under **fight against serious and organized crime**, in reference to the Kosovo Police, the section observes that “86.54% of officers are men, while 13.46% are women”.
- Under Implementation and enforcement capacity, the Report states: “The electronic monitoring system for people accused of domestic violence, envisaged in the 2015 Law on electronic surveillance, was introduced in December 2024. It is an important milestone in protecting the lives and dignity of the victims of domestic violence. There are eight protection orders under electronic monitoring.” While it does not explicitly mention gender differences, the system clearly benefits women.

2.3. Economic Development and Competitiveness

- The initial table includes sex-disaggregated data on activity and unemployment rates.

2.3.1. The existence of a functioning market economy

- The functioning of the labour market section observes that “Despite significant employment gains, the labour market is characterised by still very low participation, high unemployment and large gender gaps.” It observes the “gap between male and female employment rates (55.9% and 21.2%, respectively) widened”.

2.4. Public Procurement, Statistics, Financial Control

Chapter 18 – Statistics

- The section again states that “KAS does not systematically compile gender-disaggregated data.”

5. European Standards

Cluster 2: Internal Market

Chapter 28 - Consumer and health protection

- Under **public health**, the Report observes that “Women’s access to healthcare and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services is legally recognized in Kosovo. However, challenges remain in ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to these services, including children with disabilities.”

Cluster 3: Competitiveness And Inclusive Growth

Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment

- On **employment policy**, the Report observes, “The huge gender gap, however, persists as 60.6% of those active in the labour market are men and only 25.9% are women.”
- On **social protection and inclusion**, it importantly observes that “The capacity of municipalities concerning service planning and delivery, data collection, gender analysis and integrated care is weak.”
- The Report states that “More effort is needed to address **discrimination against women in employment and social policy**, particularly with regard to hiring procedures, promotion and pay”. It further states that “increasing the availability of affordable child and elderly care services can help boost women’s labour force participation [...] The labour inspectors and judges lack the knowledge to better address the issue of gender-based discrimination”. It contains sex-disaggregated data on economic activity and unemployment rates.

Chapter 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy

- Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund loans to women-owned businesses are mentioned.

Chapter 26 - Education and Culture

- The Report includes that “Girls account for 48.4% of all pupils in primary and lower secondary education.”

Shortcomings and Specific Recommendations for Better Gender Mainstreaming the Report

This section suggests where gender could have been better mainstreamed in the Report, presented in order by report sections.

Main Findings of the Report

- Under **the Fundamentals of the Accession Process**, regarding the *Assembly*, in its recommendation for improving the legislative process, the EC could have encouraged requiring gender impact assessments as part of this process.
- On **public administration reform**, the EC could have encouraged revising legislation on public financial management, ensuring that it includes gender-responsive budgeting. It could have called for publishing gender budget statements as part of budget documentation, in line with the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability ([PEFA](#)) [Gender Framework](#) and Sustainable Development Goal ([SDG](#)) [5.c.i](#). The EC could have encouraged inclusive [gender-responsive digitalisation](#).
- In **Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental rights**:
 - Under *fundamental rights*, the recommendation to improve protections for “the rights of persons with disabilities” is welcome and could have mentioned the need to ensure fair pay for personal assistants, including pension contributions, which particularly [affects women](#).
- Under **Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security**:
 - Related to **cybercrime, human trafficking, and firearms controls**, the Report is gender-neutral, though all of these are very gender-related. More sex-disaggregated data could have been included.
 - The EC could have included in its recommendation that the implementation of **migration** policy must be gender- and age-responsive.
- **Functioning of the labour market** it does not include sex-disaggregated data related to “young people (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training (NEET)”.
- [Taxes](#), public investment management, labour market outcomes, and [informality](#) could better attend to gender differences and the need for institutionalising gender-responsive budgeting.
- Related to the **capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU**:
 - References to the weak education system and the affiliated recommendation could have

- included the need for gender-transformative education, towards transforming [occupational stereotypes and segregation](#), preparing diverse women and men to engage in different sectors.
- While observing progress related to digitalising the economy, the EC could have called for more [gender-responsive digitalisation](#).
 - Observations of challenges faced by small and micro-firms in competing could have explicitly noted women's tendency to have small firms that [struggle to compete](#).
 - **Chapter 5 – Public procurement** could have referenced briefly failures to employ gender-responsive procurement, using legally foreseen affirmative measures. The recommendation should have included integrating gender-responsive budgeting into the new law on public procurement.
 - **Chapter 18 – Statistics** could have recommended improving availability of administrative data and improved capacities in gender analysis at KAS. Unfortunately, the recommendation to complete the Gender Equality Index was not included in this section, which would have emphasised the need for KAS to address this issue. Also, given that statistics generally collect sex-disaggregated data (not gender-disaggregated data), it may have been more accurate to use this term in this section.
 - Previously, in 2024, under **Chapter 25 – Science and research** the EC recommended to integrate women and girls and scientific research, but this has been removed albeit still relevant.
 - **Chapter 32 – Financial control** could have noted the need for improved parliamentary oversight of gender-responsive budgeting, integrating gender-responsive budgeting in the new law on public finance management, and ensuring parliament and budget managers, respectively, have sufficient capacities for reviewing implementation of gender-responsive budgeting obligations.
 - Under **Cluster 2: Internal Market**, the **Chapter 8 – Competition policy** discussion on state aid could have observed the need for a gender-responsive approach.
 - **Chapter 28 – Consumer and health protection** could have referenced the need for a gender-responsive approach to consumer protection, universal health coverage including for persons performing unpaid work at home (primarily women) in line with the Law on Gender Equality (LGE), and improved health services.
 - **Chapter 16 – Taxation** could have included in recommendations the need for gender-responsive [tax](#) policy, gender-responsive address of the [informal economy](#), and for the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) to have gender-balanced recruitment using affirmative measures, gender-responsive performance evaluation and promotion, and to further capacities for gender-responsive inspections.
 - **Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy** could have mentioned gender-responsive budgeting related to macroeconomic forecasting in the budgetary process.
 - **Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment** importantly recommends the need to amend the *labour law* to attend to non-discrimination and parental leave in employment, but it could have mentioned paternity and carers' leave as well. The call for adopting the *employment law* and *law on health and safety at work* could have encourage that these are gender-responsive.
 - **Chapter 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy** could have included the recommendation for a gender-responsive strategy and small and medium enterprises (SME) support.
 - **Chapter 26 – Education and culture** could have mentioned briefly the need for gender-responsive education, particularly early education, curricula, and teacher training towards transforming norms and furthering gender equality.
 - Under **Cluster 4: the Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity**, **Chapter 14 – Transport policy** could have referred to the need for a gender-responsive, inclusive mobility strategy and action plan; and gender-responsive law on roads, inspections, crash data, action plan on intelligent transport, and passenger rights. The transport system still faces several challenges in terms of gender-responsive safety, insufficient maintenance, and weak administrative capacity of regulatory institutions.
 - **Chapter 15 – Energy** could have recommended ensuring all new laws and strategies are gender-responsive.
 - **Chapter 21 – Trans-European Networks** could have called for gender-responsive infrastructure projects.

- Chapter 27 – Environment and climate change could have recommended gender-responsive laws, strategies, and human resource capacities.
- Under **Cluster 5: Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion**, Chapter 11 – Agriculture could have recommended gender-responsive laws and included gender expertise related to capacities.
- Chapter 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy could have referenced gender balance among staff and gender expertise among them.
- Chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments could have recommended gender-responsive programming, management, monitoring and evaluation of EU funds; gender-responsive public investments; and donor coordination, including in financing towards gender equality.

2. The Fundamentals of the Accession Process

2.1. Functioning of Democratic Institutions and Public Administration Reform

2.1.1 Democracy

- The **Parliament** section does not refer to the need to ensure that gender impact analyses are conducted by the Government as part of the legislative process; or for gender-responsive oversight.
- Under **Democracy**, specifically **governance**, in 2024, information was provided on progress made in adopting gender equality plans in 16 municipalities. No update was provided in 2025, though this would have been useful. Further, the EC could have commented on the extent to which municipalities have budgeted for and implemented these plans.

2.1.2 Public administration reform

- On **public financial management**, the need to publish gender budget statements and impact assessments could have been clearer, as per PEFA Gender Framework and SDG 5.c.1.
- On **capacity and professional development**, the Report observes shortcomings and dependence on donor support for training on central and local levels. However, it does not explicitly reference insufficient budget allocations and the need to oblige attendance of basic gender equality training using the existing Kosovo Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) curricula.
- Related to **service delivery**, while the Report observes inefficiencies when it comes to “those in vulnerable situations, including people with disabilities”, it could have specifically encouraged a gender-responsive, inclusive approach to the digital transition.

2.2. Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights

2.2.1 Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights

- Under **functioning of the judiciary**:
 - The Report observes that the “**Case Management Information System (CMIS)** enables the random assignment of cases to judges and prosecutors”. This does not include how this can negatively impact the treatment of gender-based violence cases when untrained judges and prosecutors are randomly assigned to such cases. The CMIS needs to include criteria for minimum qualifications of judges and prosecutors when randomly assigning cases that require specialised knowledge and training by justice providers.
 - Under quality of justice, the table on justice professionals should include gender-disaggregated data. The section refers to merit-based recruitment and challenges recruiting minorities but not to affirmative measures towards ensuring a gender balance.
 - Under efficiency, the Report mentions the need for improved interoperability among CMIS and the National Centralised Criminal Records System but does not mention the need for interoperability with the case management system for domestic violence and its expansion to include gender-based violence. Nor do the graphs on the efficiency of courts include sex-disaggregated data, such as on victims or perpetrators.

- Related to domestic handling of war crime cases, civil society engagement is observed but not explicitly related to the WPS Agenda or WCSO engagement.
- Under **fight against corruption**, the graphs and analysis could have included sex-disaggregated data.
- Under **fundamental rights**:
 - Related to promotion, protection and enforcement of human rights, the Report does not mention any issues related to women's rights as human rights. Nor is the graph on cases treated by human rights bodies disaggregated by sex. The Report could have stated the need to further empower an equality body to address discrimination, including based on gender and intersecting factors.
 - As part of the execution of criminal sanctions, the need for institutionalising mandatory corrections that transform gendered power relations to prevent recidivism is not mentioned.
 - On protection of personal data, no sex-disaggregated data is provided in the graph; nor is the need for gender-responsive data protection and awareness-raising mentioned.
- Under **freedom of expression**, the EC could have called for the Independent Media Commission to adopt policies and measures to prohibit sexist stereotypes and hate speech; address online violence against women; address online harassment and stalking; require more transparent reporting of news; and include gender responsive media indicators when monitoring press and audiovisual media.
 - The section on intimidation of journalists no longer contains gender-responsive language, as in 2024, and is gender neutral.⁶
- While KWN welcomes the section on **gender-based violence**, the EC did not include that several services are still not established or adequately financed in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, such as the 24-hour SOS hotline, Rape Crisis Centre, Sexual Violence Referral Centre, and specialised services for groups like persons with disabilities and women in northern Kosovo who have insufficient access to services. It lacks a detailed assessment of service coverage, quality, or municipal roll-out. The Report could have explicitly noted the ineffective institutional protection in the north where Kosovo-Serb judges, prosecutors and Centre for Social Work employees still work outside the Kosovo institutional system, which contributes to uneven application of the law and hinders access to justice for victims. Regarding the database for logging domestic violence cases, the EC did not highlight issues that exist with accurate, timely data entry by all institutions, particularly courts and prosecutors; nor does the Report note the need to include all forms of gender-based violence in the database in accordance with legal amendments.
- The section on the **rights of the child** unfortunately does not distinguish between issues faced by girls and boys and lacks gender analysis.
- On **persons with disabilities**, the EC unfortunately removed the text from last year, which observed the need to improve access to health services for women and girls with disabilities. The section is now gender neutral, lacking attention to the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities. The call to adopt the Law on the Status Recognition of Persons with Disabilities lacks a gender dimension. The section should have included the need for secondary legislation outlining the minimum qualifications for personal assistants and ensuring they receive at least minimum wage, fair working hours, and pension contributions.
- The section on the **Protection of minorities** is generally gender neutral, without gender analysis and sufficient attention to diverse ethnic groups, such as Gorani, Turks, and Bosnians.
- The section on **Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians** is gender neutral. It mentions early marriage but not how it affects girls and boys differently due to power relations. While the Report recognises the issue of early/child marriage, it does not adequately address pervasive discrimination against Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women who face unique challenges due to the intersection of race, gender, and class. The section on minorities also lacks attention to various ethnic groups.

2.2.2 Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security

- While the section on the **fight against serious and organised crime** mentions trafficking in human

⁶ In 2024, it stated: that “women journalists are more often targeted by attacks than male journalists”.

beings and includes sex-disaggregated data on police, it could contain additional attention to gender differences such as in the ownership of small arms (and how this impacts gender-based violence), the gendered nature of trafficking, gender (and ethnic) balance in the police and prosecution, and the need for [gender-responsive attention](#) to cybercrime and digitalisation. The section and graphs could provide sex-disaggregated data on perpetrators of organised crime, police inspectorate cases, **criminal assets confiscated**, and **drugs cases**.

- The section on **trafficking in human beings** lacks attention to gender differences.
- **Cooperation in the field of drugs** and **fight against terrorism** lack gender analysis related to preventing crime, violent extremism, and radicalisation, as well as sex-disaggregated data on inmates. Nor are gendered impacts of ethnonational and far-right movements discussed in the context of anti-gender movements. The report could mention the need for gender-responsive preventive, rehabilitation, and reintegration measures.
- The **legal and irregular migration**, **asylum**, and **visa policy** sections do not call for a gender-responsive approach to legislation, programs, and their implementation. No sex-disaggregated data is provided. The need for upgraded IT to ensure that [AI does not include racial or gender bias](#) that contributes to discrimination could have been mentioned.

2.3. Economic Development and Competitiveness

- The initial table could have included sex-disaggregated data on employment of the population aged 15-64.

2.3.1. The existence of a functioning market economy

- Most subsections lack attention to gender. Economic governance lacks attention to gender, such as related to policies (tax) and programs (Economic Reform Programme). Macroeconomic stability does not contain any gender analysis, such as related to remittances, energy subsidies, or state budgets. Generally, Gross Domestic Product ([GDP](#)) is a poor indicator of inclusive, gender-responsive development because it obscures inequalities among people, including women and men. Related to this section, or governance, the EC could have observed that the 2025 Budget Law was not shared for public consultation. Moreover, timing and public information on municipal public consultations was poor.
- Functioning of the labour market could have included sex-disaggregated data related to NEET young people (aged 15-24). The need for gender-responsiveness in the pilot means-tested social assistance scheme is not mentioned.

2.3.2. The capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU

- On education and innovation, the Report does not refer explicitly to the need for quality education that transforms gender norms via improved curricula (undermining occupational stereotypes and norms that contribute to violence), teacher training, and ensuring a gender balance of teachers at all levels.
- Physical capital and quality of infrastructure could have referred to gender-responsive security in transport, energy, and digital transformation.
- Sectoral and enterprise structure does not mention that women tend to primarily run SMEs or discuss their gender-specific challenges in accessing finance.

2.4. Public Procurement, Statistics, Financial Control

Chapter 5 – Public procurement

- On institutional set-up and legal alignment, the EC could have noted the need for the law on public procurement to incorporate better definitions and guidance on implementing gender-responsive budgeting in procurement. The law should require a gender-balance in procurement bodies.

- Related to implementation and enforcement capacity, the EC could address poor knowledge in applying public procurement inclusive of affirmative measures towards furthering gender equality, as foreseen by the LGE.

Chapter 18 – Statistics

- The chapter could have referenced the lack of capacities in gender analysis at KAS and poor availability of sex-disaggregated statistics, explicitly in terms of administrative data, and insufficient disaggregation of data by sex *and* other social and demographic categories (e.g., ethnicity, age, rural location).

Chapter 32 – Financial control

- Under public financial internal control, the Report should have stated that the Law on Public Financial Management (PFM) and related policy framework on public internal financial control need to incorporate gender-responsive budgeting in line with the [PEFA](#) Gender Framework and [SDG 5.c.i](#). Also, capacities for implementing these must be furthered.
- It could have stated that while gender-responsive budgeting in external audit has improved, further progress is needed.

3. Good Neighbourly Relations and Regional Cooperation

- While the chapter mentions the issue of missing persons, which is of great importance to many women, it does not attend to gender per se. It could have been mentioned related to the Berlin Process and Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue.

4. Normalisation of Relations Between Kosovo and Serbia

- This chapter does not mention the WPS Agenda, women's insufficient participation in the Dialogue, or contain any gender-responsive conflict analysis. The EC could have encouraged government engagement of more, diverse women in Track 1 and 2 Dialogue. The Report ignores the key role of WCSOs in contributing to peace; it does not emphasise the urgent need for their involvement in peace-making and reconciliation processes, as per the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on WPS, despite EU commitments to this. The Report fails to address the insufficient government consultations with diverse women and men.

5. European Standards

Cluster 2: Internal Market

Chapter 1 – Free movement of goods

- The EC's call for sufficient staffing could have mentioned a gender balance.

Chapter 2 – Freedom of movement for workers

- **Access to the labour market** could have included sex-disaggregated data on work permits.

Chapter 8 – Competition policy

- On state aid, the EC could have mentioned that legislation [should](#) be based on gender analysis and gender responsive.

Chapter 9 – Financial services

- On **sustainable and digital finance**, the EC could have included sex-disaggregated data on guarantees and loans for energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture.

Chapter 28 – Consumer and health protection

- Under [consumer protection](#), insufficient gender-responsiveness of consumer rights outreach and data management related to digital reporting could have been mentioned.
- [Public health](#) could have contained sex-disaggregated data on expenditures in line with gender-responsive budgeting, health outcomes, life expectancy, child mortality, and health [inequalities](#). It could have noted the need for publishing regularly sex-disaggregated data from the [digital health information system](#) and cancer registry. The section lacked gender analysis on how health inequalities and high out-of-pocket expenses disproportionately affect diverse women and men.

Cluster 3: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth

Chapter 10 – Digital transformation and media

- On **digital services, digital trust, and cybersecurity**, the EC could have mentioned the need for [gender-responsiveness](#). While the need to develop a safer online environment for children, including responding to online child sexual abuse is mentioned, the differential impact on girls and boys is not.

Chapter 16 – Taxation

- The EC could have included the need for tax policy reforms to be [gender-responsive](#) and for implementation of the strategy for combating the informal economy to be [gender-responsive](#), ensuring a “do no harm” approach for the most vulnerable.

Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy

- On **economic policy**, the EC could have noted the need to make the budget and medium-term budgetary framework more gender-responsive in line with gender-responsive budgeting commitments.

Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment

- The Labour Inspectorate could have been encouraged to improve investigations related to discrimination based on gender and other factors, as well as to address the informal economy using a [gender-responsive approach](#).
- On **employment policy**, while the EC mentions a persisting gender gap, it could have more explicitly mentioned the importance of gender-responsive implementation of the new law on employment, employment and labour market strategy for 2024-2028 and in finalising the new draft regulation on active labour market measures.
- On **social protection and inclusion**, the need for proxy means testing to include gender-responsive criteria, among other sociodemographic indicators, could have been observed.
- The Report lacks a section on the **quality of social services** (previously in the 2024 Report). In such a section, the EC could have encouraged municipal authorities to allocate funds for more to social workers for treating gender-based violence cases and particularly sexual violence cases requested by the [State Protocol for treatment of sexual violence cases](#).
- On persons with disabilities, the need to pay [personal assistants](#) (primarily women) minimum wage, ensure their labour rights, contribute to their pensions, and improve their qualifications for caretaking could have been mentioned. Additionally, the EC could have noted the need to better protect the rights of women and men with disabilities by implementing the Law on Recognition of Status, Services, and Participation, improving coordination among ministries to enforce related laws on disabilities, paraplegia, and tetraplegia.

Chapter 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy

- Ensuring gender-responsive implementation of **enterprise and industrial policy** could have been stated.
- Under **policy instruments**, gender-responsive [digitalisation](#) of e-government services could have

been mentioned as well.

- The EC could have included gender analysis pertaining to barriers women face in accessing finance, and the percentage of Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund loans provided to women-owned businesses.

Chapter 25 – Science and research

- Related to **Horizon Europe**, the EC could have included sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries.

Chapter 26 – Education and culture

- **Early childhood education and care** could have referred to the need for [gender-transformative curricula](#) and expansion of availability of early education and care.
- The recommendation for the new law on textbooks could have referred to the need for all textbooks to be reviewed to ensure an inclusive, non-discriminatory, and gender-transformative approach.
- Related to digital literacy, the EC could have incorporated further gender analysis towards [gender-responsive digitalisation](#).
- The EC could have mentioned the need for a gender balance among teachers at all levels, obligatory certification of all teachers in pedagogy that challenges gender norms and stereotypes, and gender-responsive performance evaluation that attends to this.
- The need for improving publicly available data on attendance and completion, disaggregated by sex *and* ethnicity, rural/urban area, and educational level is not mentioned. Nor did the EC include sex-disaggregated data related to Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian children's attendance.

Cluster 4: The Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity

Chapter 29 – Customs union

- On administrative **and operational capacities**, the EC could have mentioned the need for gender-responsive practices when recruiting new customs officers.

Chapter 14 – Transport policy

- On **transport matters**, the EC could have referred to the need for strategies and programs that “improve transport climate resilience” and for sustainable urban mobility plans to be inclusive and gender-responsive.
- **Road transport** could have referred to the need for gender-responsive security and safety measures.

Chapter 15 – Energy

- On **internal energy market**, the EC could have noted the need for the register of vulnerable consumers, as well as objectives and targets for supporting “energy poor households and vulnerable groups” to include gender considerations and sex-disaggregated data.
- On **energy efficiency**, the EC could have noted the need for a gender-responsive approach.

Chapter 21 – Trans-European Networks

- Planning for the trans-European Transport Network could have noted the need for gender-responsive environmental impact assessments.

Chapter 27 – Environment and climate change

- The EC could have included the need for gender-responsive strategies and plans related to environmental protection, **air quality**, **waste management**, **water management**, **civil protection** from disasters, and climate change adaptation and mitigation; as well as for gender-responsive Environmental Impact Assessments.

Cluster 5: Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion

Chapter 11 – Agriculture

- The EC could have referenced the need for gender-responsive policy and sex-disaggregated data.

Chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments

- The EC could have noted the need for improved coordination between the National Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) Coordinator, ministry officials responsible for IPA programming, the Agency for Gender Equality, and ministerial gender equality officers towards planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating more gender-responsive IPA programming.

Cluster 6: External Relations

Chapter 30 – External relations

- The EC could have encouraged Kosovo's **trade, development policy, and humanitarian aid** to be based on gender analysis and in line with the WPS Agenda.

Annex I – Relations Between the EU and Kosovo

- The EC could have included information on EU financing for civil society, disaggregated by gender, to facilitate monitoring and reporting on the EU Gender Action Plan III.

Annex II – Statistical Data

- The table could provide sex-disaggregated data on population, active enterprises, enterprise births, enterprise deaths, people employed, population (natural growth rate), infant mortality, employment rate for persons aged 55–64, employment by main sectors, youth unemployment rate, long-term unemployment rate, average nominal monthly wages and salaries, poverty, passenger cars, and mobile phone subscriptions.

Main Recommendations to the EC

- *Continue* seeking to mainstream gender in all relevant chapters.
- *Ensure* sex-disaggregated data, where available, is included throughout the Report.
- *Ensure* an inclusive, intersectional approach throughout the Report that attends to gender/sex and ethnicity, age, rural/urban location, disability, and other socio-demographic factors. Ensure data on minorities and persons with disabilities, among others, are always disaggregated by sex.
- *Reinforce* accountability by ensuring that recommendations on gender equality, gender-based violence, and non-discrimination are specific, measurable, and time-bound.
- *Pressure* the government to ensure all institutions submit data to KAS in a timely manner and that KAS publishes this and other sex-disaggregated statistical data regularly, facilitating gender analysis.
- *Continue* encouraging the Government to institutionalise gender-responsive budgeting as part of ongoing public administration and public finance reforms, including by reflecting government responsibilities for gender-responsive budgeting at all levels clearly in forthcoming amendments to the laws on public finance, public procurement, and local government finance. Encourage the government to make publicly available in a timely manner information pertaining to gender-responsive budgeting in line with SDG 5, indicator 5.c.1. and PEFA Gender Framework.
- *Encourage* the Government to ensure a gender-responsive approach to the digital transition, as well as to address gender-based cyberviolence, based on WCSOs' [recommendations](#).
- *Ensure* that sections reporting on security, report on security threats experienced at the local level, by WCSOs, and by diverse women and men in Kosovo and Serbia. Consult and draw from the

expertise of grassroots and other WCSOs that can provide relevant input.

- *Encourage* women's participation in peacebuilding and dialogue processes under Chapters 23, 24, and Good Neighbourly Relations.
- *Promote* gender-responsive approaches to digital and green transitions, including measures addressing gender-based cyberviolence and the gendered impacts of environmental degradation.
- *Encourage* the government more explicitly to take action to allocate funds to CSOs through apolitical, independent, accountable, and transparent mechanisms designed in close consultation with civil society, towards addressing global funding cuts that threaten the continued provision of the expertise, advocacy, and service provision.
- *Continue* consulting CSOs, particularly WCSOs, to gather timely evidence to inform future reports, including on key issues related to gender equality. Include their inputs more.

Annex 1. Traffic Light Assessment

The table in this annex uses the “traffic light” approach to assessing the extent to which each section and chapter of the Report have been gender mainstreamed. Green indicates gender-mainstreaming, orange partial gender-mainstreaming, and red the absence of attention to gender.

Chapter	Section	Gender Mainstreamed	Partially	Not
Main Findings				
Fundamentals of the accession process	Democracy			Elections; Assembly; Governance; EU integration; civil society
	Public administration reform	Civil service recruitment		Digitalisation of services; public financial management
	Ch. 23 Judiciary and fundamental rights	Functioning of the judiciary	Fundamental rights	Fight against corruption; rights of the child; freedom of expression; persons with disabilities; minorities
	Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security			Cybercrime; human trafficking; police; firearms controls; fight against organized crime; illegal and irregular migration
Economic development and competitiveness	The existence of a functioning market economy			Tax; public investment management; labour market outcomes; informality
	The capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU			Education; digitalisation; small firms
	Chapter 5 – Public procurement			
	Chapter 18 – Statistics			
	Chapter 25 – Science and research			
	Chapter 32 – Financial control			
Cluster 2: Internal market	Chapter 1 – Free movement of goods			Product safety; inspections
	Chapter 2 – Freedom of movement for workers			
	Chapter 3 – Right of establishment and freedom to provide services			
	Chapter 4 – Free movement of capital			
	Chapter 6 – Company law			
	Chapter 7 – Intellectual property law			
	Chapter 8 – Competition policy			State aid
	Chapter 9 – Financial services			
	Chapter 28 – Consumer and health protection			Consumer protection; universal health coverage

Chapter	Section	Gender Mainstreamed	Partially	Not
				and services
Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth	Chapter 10: Digital transformation and media			E-governance; cybersecurity
	Chapter 16 – Taxation			Tax policy; informal economy; TAK recruitment, performance; promotion and capacities
	Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy			Macroeconomic forecasting in the budgetary process
	Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment		Labour law; non-discrimination and parental leave in employment	Employment law and strategy; Law on health and safety at work; personal assistants for persons with disabilities
	Chapter 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy			Strategy
	Chapter 25 – Science and research			
	Chapter 26 – Education and culture			Early childhood education, quality, curricula, teacher training
Cluster 4: The green agenda and sustainable connectivity	Chapter 14 – Transport policy			Mobility strategy and action plan; law on roads; inspections; crash data; action plan on intelligent transport; passenger rights
	Chapter 15 – Energy			Laws, strategies, and investments
	Chapter 21 – Trans-European Networks			Infrastructure projects
	Chapter 27 – Environment and climate change			Laws, strategies, capacities
Cluster 5: Resources, agriculture and cohesion	Chapter 11 – Agriculture			Laws, capacities
	Chapter 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy			Number, expertise of staff
	Chapter 13 – Fisheries and aquaculture			Number, expertise of staff
	Chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments			Programming, management, monitoring and evaluation of EU funds; public investments; donor coordination
Cluster 6: External relations	Chapter 30 – External relations			Action plan and development and humanitarian aid policy
2. THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE ACCESSION PROCESS				
2.1. Functioning of democratic institutions	2.1.1 Democracy	Elections	Governance; Civil society	Hate speech in the Assembly; Parliament; EU integration ; municipal budgeting and implementation
	2.1.2 Public administration		Public financial	Capacity, professional

Chapter	Section	Gender Mainstreamed	Partially	Not
and public administration reform	reform		management; Policy development and coordination; civil service	development; service delivery: e-government
2.2. Rule of law and fundamental rights	2.2.1 Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights	Case Management bodies; sexual violence crimes; <u>prevention of torture and ill treatment</u> ; execution of criminal sanctions; freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and association ; <u>property rights</u> ; <u>gender equality</u> ; gender-based violence; <u>LGBTIQ persons</u> .	Civil Code and Civil Procedure Code; <u>non-discrimination</u> ; <u>rights of the child</u> ; <u>persons with disabilities</u> ; <u>Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians</u>	CMIS, quality of justice: table on justice professionals, recruitment; interoperability with case management system for gender-based violence, efficiency of courts; civil society engagement in the WPS Agenda; fight against corruption ; <u>promotion and enforcement of human rights</u> ; <u>execution of criminal sanctions</u> ; <u>protection of personal data</u> ; <u>legislative environment</u> ; <u>protection of minorities</u> ; <u>cultural rights</u>
	2.2.2 Chapter 24: Justice, freedom and security		Fight against organised crime; trafficking in human beings	Criminal asset confiscation; cooperation in the field of drugs; fight against terrorism; legal and irregular migration; asylum; visa policy; Schengen and external borders, IT systems
2.3. Economic development and competitiveness	2.3.1. The existence of a functioning market economy	<u>Functioning of the labour market</u> ; gender employment gap	Initial data on activity and unemployment rates	Economic governance policies, including on taxes; macroeconomic stability related to remittances, energy subsidies, state budgets, functioning of labour markets in relation to NEET and social assistance scheme
	2.3.2. The capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU			Education and innovation; physical capital and quality of infrastructure; sectoral and enterprise structure
2.4. Public procurement, statistics, financial control	Chapter 5 – Public procurement			Institutional set-up and legal alignment; implementation and enforcement capacity
	Chapter 18 – Statistics		Poor availability of sex-disaggregated	Disaggregation by gender and other social and demographic factors;

Chapter	Section	Gender Mainstreamed	Partially	Not
			statistics	capacities
	Chapter 32 – Financial control			Public internal financial control; External audit
3. Good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation				
			Missing persons	Berlin Process
4. Normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia				
				WPS Agenda, Dialogue, gender analysis of security
5. European standards				
Cluster 2: Internal market	Chapter 1 – Free movement of goods			Sufficient staffing; sectoral legislation
	Chapter 2 – Freedom of movement for workers			Access to the labour market
	Chapter 3 – Right of establishment and freedom to provide services			
	Chapter 4 – Free movement of capital			
	Chapter 6 – Company law			
	Chapter 7 – Intellectual property law			
	Chapter 8 – Competition policy			State aid
	Chapter 9 – Financial services			Digital and sustainable finance
	Chapter 28 – Consumer and health protection		Public health	Consumer protection; digital health information system and cancer registry.
Cluster 3: Competitiveness and inclusive growth	Chapter 10 – Digital transformation and media			Digital services; digital trust and cybersecurity
	Chapter 16 – Taxation			Tax policy; new strategy for combating the informal economy
	Chapter 17 – Economic and monetary policy			Economic policy
	Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment		Employment policy	Labour Inspectorate; employment policy; social inclusion and protection; social services; child labour; persons with disabilities
	Chapter 20 – Enterprise and industrial policy		Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund loans to women-owned businesses	Enterprise and industrial policy; policy instruments; data; digitalisation
	Chapter 25 – Science and research			Horizon Europe ; sex-disaggregated data on fund beneficiaries; Law on innovation and entrepreneurship and the Smart Specialisation Strategy.

Chapter	Section	Gender Mainstreamed	Partially	Not
	Chapter 26 – Education and culture	Sex-disaggregated percentages on enrolment in primary and secondary education		Enrolment rate; early childhood education and care; quality of education; inclusion; data on children in schools; sports; culture
	Chapter 29 – Customs union			Custom officers recruitment
Cluster 4: The green agenda and sustainable connectivity	Chapter 14 – Transport policy			Transport matters; road safety; rail transport
	Chapter 15 – Energy			Internal energy market; energy efficiency
	Chapter 21 – Trans-European Networks			Transport Network
	Chapter 27 – Environment and climate change			Environment; horizontal legislation; air quality; waste management; water management; civil protection; climate change; Environmental Impact Assessments
Cluster 5: Resources , agriculture and cohesion	Chapter 11 – Agriculture			Horizontal issues
	Chapter 12 – Food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy			Inspectors
	Chapter 13 – Fisheries and aquaculture			Inspection
	Chapter 22 – Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments			Financial management; administrative capacity; monitoring and evaluation
Cluster 6: External relations	Chapter 30 – External relations			Staffing; trade; development policy and humanitarian aid.
Annex I – Relations between the EU and Kosovo				National Programme for European Integration for 2024-2028; EU financing for civil society
Annex II - Statistical data		Employment rates aged 20-64, unemployment rate		Population, active enterprises, enterprise births, enterprise deaths, people employed, population (natural growth rate), infant mortality, employment rate for persons aged 55–64, employment by main sectors, youth unemployment rate, long-term unemployment rate, average nominal monthly wages and salaries, poverty, passenger cars, mobile phone subscriptions



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