

JOINT PUBLIC STATEMENT

Kosovo's Budget Must Meet Diverse Women and Men's Needs

PRISHTINA, Kosovo — The undersigned coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) calls on the central government and municipal leadership to ensure that any future revisions to the 2026 budget and the next Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) meet the diverse needs of all citizens. Recent research by the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) and Caritas Switzerland confirms that structural barriers currently keep **74% of women economically inactive**.

While male labor force participation is approximately 60%, female participation sits at a mere **26%**. This exclusion creates a self-imposed labor shortage that hinders Kosovo's economic prosperity. We urge leadership to move beyond "paper commitments" and invest in five critical areas:

1. A New Law on Labour.

The current law, under revision for more than eight years, [contributes to discrimination against women in hiring](#). We call for a new Law on Labor—aligned with the **EU Work-Life Balance Directive**—that ensures the state, rather than the employer, pays for maternity, paternity, and parental leave, and provides men with more leave rights.

2. Invest in Care Services.

The lack of affordable, accessible childcare remains a primary barrier to women's employment. In municipalities like Drenas, Malisheva and Kamenica, services are extremely limited. [Investing in a national care network](#) and in easing kindergarten fees for children's education could create **10,000 formal jobs** while allowing thousands of women to enter the workforce.

3. Ensure accessible Rural Transport.

[Unreliable public transport](#) isolates rural women, who are less likely to own cars and more likely to rely on public transport. We call on municipalities to conduct a review of public transportation in rural areas and establish dedicated worker-route subsidies to ensure rural women (and men) can access urban job markets safely and affordably.

4. Institutionalize Gender-responsive Budgeting.

While the government has committed to gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), [implementation has been delayed](#). We call on the government to institutionalise GRB by amending the Public Finance Law and Procurement Law, among others, and to regularly prepare and publish GRB annexes required by budget circulars. Also, Gender Equality Officers must be given sufficient resources for their mandates and programmatic roles in planning budgets, including in sectors like agriculture, transport and economic development.

5. Ensure accountability in the Reform Agenda.

The record **€4 billion national budget** and the **€880 million EU Growth Plan** [must be utilized to foster true equality](#). The government should adopt clear gender indicators regarding its impacts and engage in transparent public consultations with women's rights organizations to inform its implementation.

We remain ready to cooperate with central and municipal authorities to improve the relevant laws and policies and support strengthening gender responsive capacities across institutions that drive inclusive economic development.

Let us work together, policymakers and civil society, to bring solutions and economic development opportunities for the women and men of Kosovo.

Signed,

Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) (103 NGOs)

Caritas Switzerland in Kosovo

Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC)

CEL Kosovo

Kosovo Gender Studies Center

Musine Kokolari Institute

Network of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women's Organizations of Kosovo (NRAEWOK)

NGO "Youth Council of Rahovec"

NGO Center for Equality and Justice

NGO Geo-Environment