



Funded by the
European Union



Government
of Montenegro



GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Attitudes and Perceptions of Citizens of Montenegro and
Public Administration Employees on Gender Equality

Podgorica, 2025



Funded by the
European Union



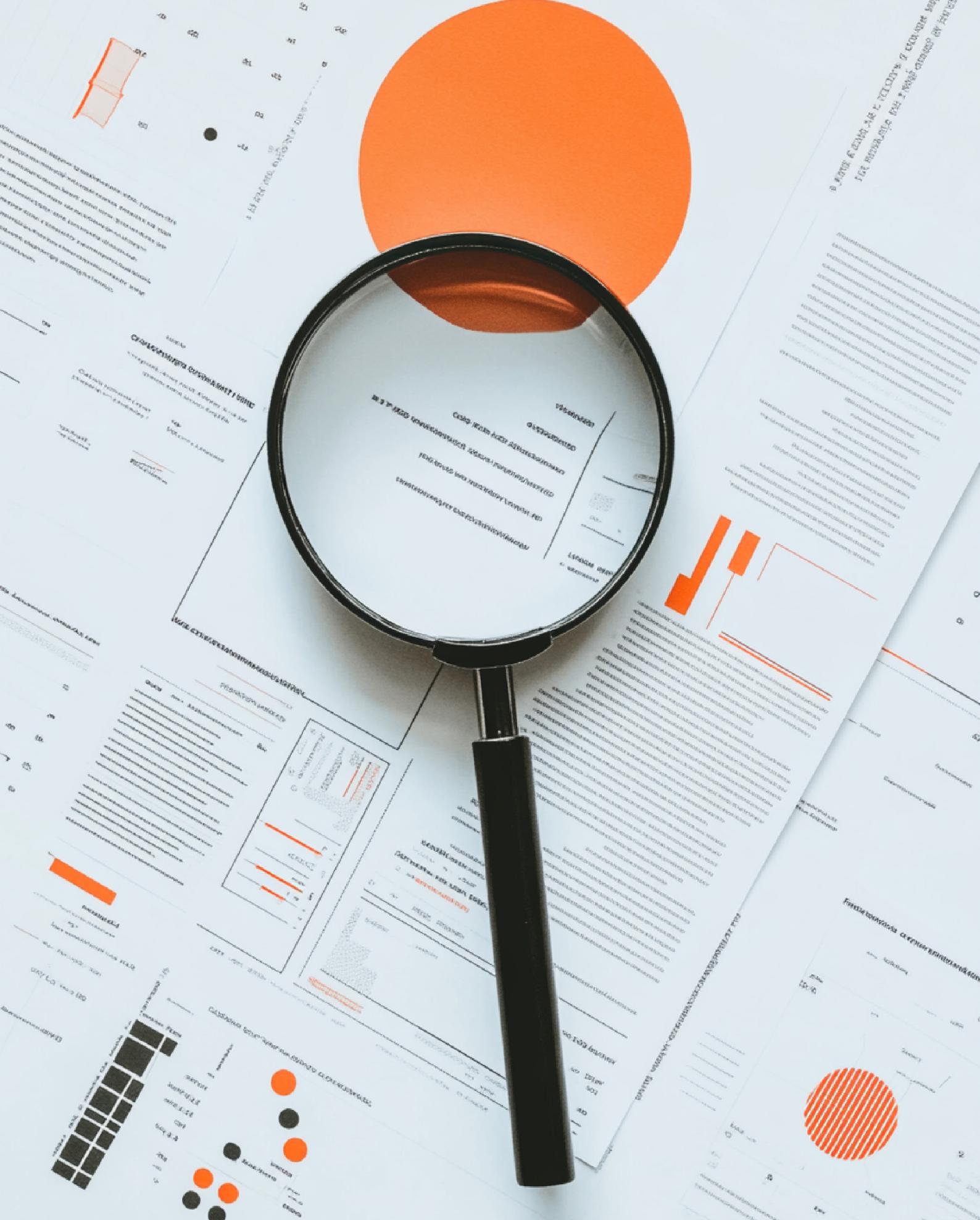
Government
of Montenegro



GENDER MAINSTREAMING

**Attitudes and Perceptions of Citizens of Montenegro and
Public Administration Employees on Gender Equality**

Podgorica, 2025



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union (EU), through the project United for Gender Equality, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Office in Montenegro. Short excerpts from this publication may be reproduced without prior permission, provided that the source is duly acknowledged and the content remains unchanged.

CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Key Findings	9
Recommendations	19
Research Methodology	23
Desk Analysis: Assessment of Gender Equality Integration in Institutions	29
International Framework	30
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	30
CEDAW: Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Montenegro	32
The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	37
Istanbul Convention	39
Legal and Normative Framework	42
Analysis of Gender Equality Representation Across Institutions	49
General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro	50
Office of the Prime Minister	51
The Parliament of Montenegro	51
State Prosecutor's Office	55
Ministry of Public Administration	56
Ministry of Human and Minority Rights	57
Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography	60
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue	61
Ministry of Economic Development	62
Ministry of Finance	63
Ministry of European Affairs	64
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	65
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	66
Human Resources Administration	67
The Capital City Podgorica	68
Municipality of Berane	70
Municipality of Bijelo Polje	71
Municipality of Plav	72

Attitudes and perceptions of Citizens of Montenegro and Public Administration employees on Gender equality	75
Knowledge and Attitudes on Gender Equality	75
Understanding of Gender Equality Among Citizens	75
Understanding of Gender Equality Among Employees in Public Institutions	88
Prevalence of Gender Stereotypes	100
Attitudes of Citizens on the Prevalance of Gender Stereotypes	100
Attitudes of Employees in Public Institutions on the Prevalence of Gender Stereotypes	104
Gender-Based Discrimination	107
Perceptions of Citizens on Gender-Based Discrimination	107
Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Gender-Based Discrimination	109
Perceptions of Gender-Based Violence	122
Perceptions of Citizens on Gender-Based Violence	122
Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Gender-Based Violence	127
Balancing Work and Private Life	141
Perceptions of Citizens on Balancing Work and Private Life	141
Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Balancing Work and Private Life	146
Media Representation of Women	162
Perceptions of Public Institution Employees on Gender Mainstreaming in Policy	165
Gender Equality in Practice: Perceptions, Barriers, and Institutional Capacities for Implementing Equal Opportunity Policies	172
Analysis of Gender Equality Implementation in Municipalities	201
Education in the Field of Gender Equality	215
* * *	
Annex I: Demographic Structure of Public Institution Employees	221
Annex II: Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Citizens	225

INTRODUCTION

Dear reader,

Before you is a study that reflects not only data, **but society as a whole**. It serves as a mirror that reveals how deep and normalised the gap between law and real life remains when it comes to gender equality.

In Montenegro, gender equality has legitimacy, but not power; it has strategies, but lacks consistent implementation. It is recognised in documents, yet rarely reflected in everyday practice. It is precisely within this discrepancy between knowledge and action that one of the country's key development challenges lies.

The key findings of this report have been compiled as a synthesis of empirical data collected through the research. They do not merely summarise results, but provide an analytical interpretation of the causes, patterns, and mechanisms that generate and perpetuate gender inequality in Montenegro. The findings indicate that inequality is not the sum of individual failures, but the outcome of a stable system in which gender equality is accepted in principle, yet operationally neutralised and persistently absent from the distribution of power, resources, and decision-making. Inequality is often perceived as a "normal state". Both society and institutions tend to choose familiar patterns that preserve existing relations as a "line of least resistance" and a semblance of stability and continuity. In this way, collective passivity has developed – a dangerous condition in which it is widely known that the system fails to deliver equality, while there is little readiness to introduce substantive change. Of particular concern is the lack of systemic knowledge on gender equality within public administration. In this context, efforts to integrate gender perspectives into policies are often reduced to a formal administrative requirement, devoid of real impact. Where there is no knowledge, there is no responsibility; and without accountability, change remains slow, fragmented, and largely symbolic.

This study is intended for decision-makers, public policymakers, institutional leaders, the media, experts, and international partners. It is designed as an analytical tool for understanding systemic weaknesses and as a starting point for changing the way decisions are made, planned, budgeted, and managed – with the aim of making gender equality a functional principle of governance, rather than a footnote in public policies.

We owe **special gratitude to the research agency De Facto**, whose methodological rigour, analytical depth, and strong sensitivity to social context enabled deeply rooted patterns of inequality to become visible and measurable. **Outstanding contributions were also made by Marija Blagojević and Bojana Tomović, members of the UNDP Gender Equality Team**, whose expertise, strategic insight, and commitment were instrumental in linking empirical data with the broader institutional framework.

This report opens with a clear message: without knowledge, there can be no change. Data is a tool for more responsible decision-making, and gender equality is a test of institutional maturity and sustainable development. Its effective implementation is possible only when knowledge becomes the foundation of institutional action.

Kaća Đuričković,
Leader of the UNDP Gender Equality Team



KEY FINDINGS

In Montenegro, gender equality exists in law, but not in life

The research findings clearly confirm that gender equality in Montenegro is marked by a profound gap between formal equality before the law and persistent inequality in everyday life. Although the majority of citizens (81.9 percent), as well as a significant proportion of public administration employees, declaratively understand what the concept of gender equality entails, this knowledge is rarely translated into practical understanding or action. Gender equality is predominantly internalised as an abstract, normative value – as something that “exists” because it is enshrined in legislation – rather than as a political and institutional process involving the redistribution of power, resources, and responsibilities. It is precisely within this discrepancy between knowledge and lived experience that a key structural problem emerges: equality is recognised at the level of definition, but not as a systemic challenge requiring active and sustained institutional intervention.

This discrepancy shapes all other research findings. Gender equality continues to be perceived as an external requirement – a topic or project imposed from outside – rather than as an integral component of the social contract and of everyday institutional practice. In the institutional context, this is reflected in declarative support without accountability, as well as in the inertia of a system that does not perceive itself as an agent of change, but rather as administrative structures that respond exclusively to external initiatives.

Gender equality holds the status of an abstract value, not a political responsibility

The gender gap in perceptions of equality further exposes a deep asymmetry of power. While nearly every second man believes that women and men are already equal, a significantly higher proportion of women recognise the inequalities they experience daily through the labour market, unpaid care work, political exclusion, and exposure to violence. Particularly indicative is the finding that almost one in ten men (12.5 percent) believe that women are in a more advantageous position, pointing to a perceptual reversal of privilege – a situation in which the loss of symbolic dominance is interpreted as discrimination. This phenomenon stems from deeply internalised cognitive patterns that frame existing power relations as neutral and “natural”. Socially privileged groups have little incentive to question a system that operates in their favour, as it neither generates vulnerability nor requires changes to established patterns of thought and behaviour. Consequently, corrective measures are perceived not as responses to inequality, but as potential disruptions to the predictability of the social order and overall stability.

An even stronger message emerges from the attitudes of public administration employees, among whom as many as 72 percent believe that gender equality does not exist in Montenegro. This finding represents not only a critique of the broader social context but also an implicit acknowledgement of institutional inefficiency. The system recognises its own shortcomings, yet fails to generate mechanisms for meaningful change. Normative progress, reflected in laws and strategies, has not resulted in institutional transformation because it has not been accompanied by shifts in organisational culture, value frameworks, and behavioural patterns. In such an environment, learned helplessness develops: formal obligations are fulfilled, but without the inner conviction that they can lead to real change.

Narratives of progress are increasingly being replaced by narratives of regression

Perceptions of stagnation and decline in women’s position further reflect a fragmented social reality. Nearly half of the respondents believe that the position of women has deteriorated or has not improved over the past three years. Once again, the gender gap in perceptions is pronounced: more than half of women (55.5 percent) believe that there has been no progress or that conditions have worsened, while more than half of men (53.3

percent) believe that progress has been achieved. This divergence does not stem from differences in access to information, but from fundamentally different lived experiences. Women assess change through the lenses of personal safety, economic security, and everyday pressures, whereas men tend to evaluate the situation through public discourse and formal policy frameworks that do not challenge their own positions of power.

Contradictions in citizens' attitudes are becoming the dominant pattern

A majority of respondents (63.9 percent) identify the strengthening of legislation to prevent violence against women as the most important measure for advancing gender equality, indicating a high level of awareness of the prevalence of violence against women and the need to reinforce institutional protection mechanisms. However, responsibility for change is not primarily attributed to institutions. Citizens tend to view women themselves, women's NGOs, and international partners as the primary drivers of change, whereas institutions are widely perceived as passive and lacking agency.

At the same time, nearly half of citizens (50.8 percent) and 51.2 percent of public administration employees believe that gender equality is "excessively promoted" and does not result in tangible improvements in everyday life. This perception is deeply symptomatic: **the very institutions tasked with ensuring equality have become a symbol of its absence**. As a consequence, trust in the institutional gender equality framework is critically low, both among citizens and within institutions themselves.

Thus, citizens simultaneously acknowledge the existence of the problem while downplaying its importance, as they do not see, or do not wish to see, their own role in addressing it. When institutions fail to deliver visible results, individuals tend to reduce psychological discomfort by relativizing the problem or shifting responsibility to other actors. As a result, expectations for change are predominantly directed towards women, women's organisations, and international partners, while state institutions are viewed as passive and ineffective. Trust in the gender equality system continues to erode, both among the general public and within the institutions themselves. In this process, gender equality becomes depoliticised and displaced from the core of public policy, transformed into a project-based or activist issue rather than a fundamental question of democratic governance.

These findings speak not only to the state of gender equality but also to a deeper crisis of trust in institutions. Without changes in dominant mindsets, entrenched beliefs, and everyday practices, and without aligning legal frameworks with the lived experiences of citizens and public administration employees, the normative framework remains without meaningful social impact.

Gender equality cannot be achieved until it is recognised as a political priority and translated into a process that reshapes the distribution of power, rather than treated as an abstract value or a temporary social concern.

Deeply rooted gender stereotypes significantly slow down processes of social transformation and contribute to the reproduction of institutional inertia

The data unequivocally confirm that **gender stereotypes remain among the most deeply rooted and resilient barriers to social transformation**, operating at the level of beliefs, identities, and "common-sense" assumptions that are rarely questioned. More than half of citizens (51.7 percent) believe that men "naturally" possess superior leadership abilities, biologizing power and authority instead of recognising them as socially constructed and politically distributed resources. At the same time, as many as 80 percent of respondents believe that motherhood is the most important role of a woman, clearly indicating that women's social value continues to be predominantly associated with reproductive roles rather than with knowledge, competencies, or public contribution.

These attitudes do not exist in isolation, but form a coherent pattern reproduced across multiple spheres of social life. Nearly half of men (48.1 percent) consider it "natural" for men to inherit property, thereby symbolically and materially linking economic power to the male gender. In addition, 40 percent of respondents believe that successful women inevitably neglect their families, reflecting a deeply entrenched belief that women's professional success conflicts with their "proper" social role. The normalisation of control over women's identity is also evident in symbolic practices: 60 percent of citizens consider it "normal" for a woman to change her surname after marriage, with this view even more pronounced among men, where it reaches 67 percent.

Six out of ten men (60 percent) believe that the right to abortion conflicts with population policies. This view clearly demonstrates that women's reproductive rights are not primarily understood as matters of autonomy and bodily integrity, but rather as instruments of demographic policy, symbolically positioning official policies above women's individual rights. Such attitudes stem from deeply internalised patriarchal frameworks in which control over reproduction is perceived as a collective obligation rather than a personal choice, often accompanied by emotional responses rooted in fears of disrupting the perceived "social order." These patterns are even more concerning when observed within public administration. Among employees of institutions that should serve as drivers of change, 57.8 percent believe that motherhood is women's primary role, while nearly half (48.3 percent) attribute women's success to physical appearance rather than to ability or effort. These findings make it clear that institutions do not function as correctives to patriarchal norms.

This pattern reveals a subtle yet persistent resistance to change. At the declarative level, the system acknowledges the existence of gender inequality and adopts relevant policies and strategies, while simultaneously diminishing the significance of measures that would fundamentally address it by portraying them as excessive, controversial, or externally imposed. In this way, gender equality is shifted from the realm of public responsibility into the domain of personal attitudes and subjective opinions, thereby losing its political and structural character. Such a discourse allows both institutions and individuals to avoid a genuine re-examination of existing practices while preserving the existing distribution of power under the guise of neutrality.

These data demonstrate that gender stereotypes are not merely cultural remnants, but active social mechanisms that constrain the scope of gender equality. As long as women are primarily valued through motherhood, appearance, and family roles, and men through leadership, tradition, and authority, institutional reforms will remain superficial. Without the systematic dismantling of these deeply embedded beliefs, gender equality will remain a normative aspiration rather than an achieved social practice.

Unpaid women's work represents the hidden backbone and infrastructure of market economies

Data on discrimination in the labour market reveal one of the most resilient forms of gender inequality: the systemic reliance of the economy and society on invisible, unpaid work performed by women, accompanied by the denial of its consequences. The double burden borne by women, which entails both professional engagement and dominant responsibility for family and domestic work, remains an unrecognised foundation of gender discrimination. Twenty-six percent of men do not participate in housework at all, while 37 percent of women spend more than three hours per day performing unpaid domestic work. Despite this pronounced imbalance, a majority of citizens (56 percent) report being satisfied with their work-life balance. This paradox clearly illustrates the extent to which women's invisible and unpaid work is normalised and internalised as a "natural" component of women's identity, rather than recognised as a structural injustice with direct economic and professional consequences. This perception stems from deeply rooted mental models in which women's care work, availability, and emotional labour are not registered as a cost, but are instead understood as an implied social function. The economy does not register unpaid work as a loss because it does not enter formal economic flows, even though it directly shapes labour market productivity and women's career trajectories.

Within the labour market itself, the data further confirm that discrimination is systemic and multi-layered. Nearly half of women, 45.5 percent, believe that men have an advantage in employment, while as many as seven in ten women, or 69.5 percent, believe that family responsibilities pose a serious threat to their professional careers. These perceptions are not the result of subjective impressions, but reflect a rational assessment of the real barriers women encounter in processes of employment, advancement, and retention in the labour market. Discrimination is further intensified by age-related and parenting factors, rendering women's positions economically more precarious across all stages of life.

Of particular concern is the fact that as many as 73 percent of women report having been rejected because of their age, compared to 44.1 percent of men, clearly indicating that gender discrimination is closely intertwined with ageism. At the same time, ageing in men is often associated with experience and stability, whereas in women it is perceived as a decline in market value, particularly in relation to assumptions about their availability for work and family responsibilities. Such patterns reflect a profound economic instrumentalisation of women's time and bodies, in which women are viewed as a "risky" workforce due to potential motherhood, caregiving responsibilities, or older age.

The institutional framework not only fails to neutralise inequality, but often passively reproduces it.

Only 30.2 percent of public administration employees believe that gender equality is taken into account in employment processes, while 41.1 percent explicitly state that this is not the case. This perception from within the system itself confirms that employment procedures, although formally neutral, do not meaningfully integrate a gender perspective. Public administration, rather than setting a standard of equal opportunity, functions as a mirror of broader social inequalities, in which identical rules are applied to structurally unequal positions.

From a political perspective, this situation demonstrates that the labour market is not a neutral space of merit or competence, but a field in which economic policies, cultural norms intersect - and which are not gender-neutral. Without recognising and redistributing invisible work, without policies that frame parenthood as a social rather than an exclusively female responsibility, and without transforming institutional employment practices, gender equality in the labour market remains a formal objective rather than an achieved reality. **As long as women's unpaid work is treated as a private matter rather than as a structural issue of economics and justice, visible barriers to participation in the labour market will remain unchanged.**

Balance for some, burden for others

Data on work-life balance in Montenegro reveal that women's unpaid and invisible work constitutes one of the key, yet systemically unrecognised, pillars upon which the functioning of both society and the economy rests. Women, particularly in rural areas, bear the dominant burden of reconciling professional obligations and family life, a reality clearly reflected in regional disparities. More than half of women in the northern part of the country, 52.8 percent, and more than one-third of women in the general population, 37.1 percent, spend on average more than three hours per day performing unpaid domestic work, continuously depleting their time, energy, and potential outside the formal economy. Men are far less likely to report spending a comparable amount of time on these activities, with only 7.1 percent doing so. Although such work enables the reproduction of the workforce and the stability of households, it remains invisible in economic and political statistics, as if it did not represent a genuine social contribution.

This invisibility has a direct impact on women's perceptions of professional opportunity. Nearly 80 percent of women believe that family responsibilities threaten their work, while approximately 60 percent of men share this view, indicating that caregiving responsibilities continue to be predominantly associated with women, even when both partners participate in the labour market. The difference in perception is not merely subjective, but reflects a realistic and unequal distribution of time and responsibility. Continuous concern and the emotional burden associated with care generate chronic stress, reducing women's capacity for long-term planning, professional development, and decision-making, and placing them at a systemic disadvantage.

Particularly indicative are findings from public administration, where as many as 81 percent of employees state that women more frequently use sick leave to care for children. Rather than interpreting this as a clear indicator of gender inequality and institutional misalignment, it is predominantly accepted as a "natural" consequence of motherhood. Such an interpretation reveals a deeply embedded institutional pattern in which care is framed as a private, female responsibility, rather than as a social function requiring systemic solutions. Almost half of men (45 percent) believe that women's professional success comes at the expense of family life, compared with 35 percent of women.

The system is not designed to encourage an equitable distribution of family and domestic responsibilities between women and men, nor to actively involve employers and institutions in creating conditions for a balanced life. Instead, it tacitly relies on the unpaid contribution of women.

In political and economic terms, this structure produces a self-reinforcing cycle. Women's unpaid work remains invisible, which prevents it from being incorporated into policymaking, while the absence of responsive policies further entrenches the unequal distribution of care. Over time, such a system normalises women's overload and reduces collective sensitivity to injustice, as what is constantly present ceases to be recognised as a problem.

As long as unpaid work is treated as a private family matter rather than as a key pillar of the functioning of the economy and the social protection system, work-life balance will remain a privilege rather than a right, and gender equality will continue to exist as a formal ambition without real transformative power.



A high level of awareness and a weak institutional response to gender-based violence

Data on gender-based violence in Montenegro point to a deep discrepancy between a high level of social awareness of the existence of the problem and a weak, fragmented institutional response. More than 65 percent of citizens believe that violence against women is present in society, which indicates a relatively high degree of recognition of the problem at the declarative level. However, when the data is broken down by gender, it becomes clear that the perception of violence is not evenly distributed. As many as 71.8 percent of women see violence against women as very present, while the same opinion is shared by only 58.3 percent of men. This gap does not arise from differences in information availability, but from differences in power and exposure. Women recognize violence because they live it, anticipate it or witness it in their immediate environment, while men, who are less often its targets, often stand within social power structures that allow them to remain distanced from experiences of violence, while still benefiting from existing gender relations.

This phenomenon can be explained by the selective attention and emotional distance characteristic of privileged groups. Individuals tend to suppress information that threatens their sense of safety or social status, resulting in a lower perception of the severity of violence among those who do not directly experience it. As a result, violence against women remains a "known fact", but not a personally relevant issue that requires active responsibility.

When assessing the level of public attention devoted to this issue, attitudes become further polarised. While 41.9 percent of citizens believe that violence against women receives "just enough" attention, a majority of women, 55.3 percent, believe that the issue receives less attention than it should. This view is shared by only 30 percent of men.

In addition, the data show that women recognise various forms of domestic violence, particularly emotional and psychological violence, to a significantly greater extent. While physical forms of violence, such as beatings and slapping, are widely recognised by both women and men, gender differences become more pronounced with regard to emotional threats, recognised by 84.5 percent of women compared to 73.9 percent of men, and constant belittling, recognised by 82.9 percent of women compared to 71.5 percent of men. A particularly notable difference emerges in the recognition of coercion as a form of violence, which is identified by 77.7 percent of women, compared to 66.4 percent of men. These findings indicate that less visible, yet long-term and deeply damaging forms of violence remain insufficiently recognised, particularly among men.

Institutional patterns of tolerating and normalizing violence

Of particular concern is the strong perception within public administration itself that the institutional response to violence is inadequate. As many as 74 percent of employees believe that the topic of gender-based violence is not discussed sufficiently, indicating a clearly recognised gap between formal obligations and actual practice. However, the problem is not limited to insufficient communication or prevention campaigns. The data demonstrate that institutions are not neutral spaces, but can themselves become environments in which violence and harassment are reproduced.

This is confirmed by data on the personal experiences of public administration employees. As many as 34.7 percent of respondents report having experienced some form of harassment in the workplace, while 17 percent state that such experiences occurred more than once. Furthermore, according to employee testimonies, various forms of psychological harassment (30 percent), political harassment (28 percent), and sexual harassment (5 percent) are present within public institutions, further highlighting the need for more effective institutional protection mechanisms. These figures clearly indicate that institutions are not merely passive observers of violence in society, but active creators of contexts in which gender-based power is abused, normalised, or silenced. When harassment is repeated and the system fails to respond adequately, it becomes embedded in organisational culture rather than remaining an exception.

From a political and institutional perspective, these findings expose a fundamental systemic weakness. Violence is recognised as a problem, but not assumed as an institutional responsibility. The focus remains on awareness and perceptions, while mechanisms for protection, accountability, and sanctioning are applied inconsistently. This dynamic produces a form of collective learned passivity, in which both employees and citizens internalise the message that violence is a phenomenon that is present but unchangeable.

As long as gender-based violence is treated as a social problem without a clear bearer of institutional responsibility, the gap between perception and reaction will remain. A high level of awareness without serious and visible institutional action not only fails to protect women, but further undermines trust in the system, sending the message that rights are formally recognised yet insufficiently protected in practice. Gender-based violence thus emerges as the most explicit expression of a broader crisis of power and responsibility, in which institutions acknowledge the existence of the problem, but fail to act either as accountable actors or as part of the solution.

Media as a platform for violence and the invisibility of women

Data on the role of the media in shaping gender equality point to the profound symbolic invisibility of women and the systemic narrowing of the space in which equality can be meaningfully addressed. Nearly one-third of citizens (28.1 percent) are unable to recall any media content related to gender equality in the previous year, clearly indicating the marginalisation of this topic in public discourse. When respondents do recall media content, it is almost exclusively related to domestic violence, while issues such as women's political participation, economic inequality, and gender stereotypes in the public sphere remain almost entirely absent from dominant media narratives. As a result, gender equality in the media is reduced to a crisis-oriented and victimising framework, rather than being addressed as a structural and political issue.

At the same time, citizens recognise that women are frequently portrayed in degrading ways in entertainment programmes, advertisements, and films, indicating a certain level of awareness of symbolic violence. However, this awareness rarely translates into an articulated social demand for change. This passive perception of stereotypes demonstrates how the media, through the continuous repetition of the same gender clichés, normalise inequality and shape collective perceptions of what is considered acceptable and expected. By reproducing stereotypical images and narratives, the media create automatic patterns of thinking that are activated without conscious reflection and internalised at a subconscious level. In this way, the media do not merely reflect social norms, but actively produce and reinforce them.

In this context, **the media become spaces of symbolic violence, because they shape a reality in which women are at the same time visible as objects of entertainment or victims of violence, but invisible as actors in the spheres of politics and economics and carriers of social change.** The absence of women's voices in analyses of power, economic processes, and decision-making sends a powerful message about who is entitled to speak and whose experiences are considered relevant. This directly affects women's self-perception, as well as broader societal expectations, thereby constraining the space for agency and action.

Women are more likely than men to recognise these negative patterns, and to be exposed to such harmful media messages. Rather than contributing to the emancipation and empowerment of women, the media often reproduce gender stereotypes and thereby reinforce existing patterns of inequality. According to the survey, 42.3 percent of citizens believe that women in politics are insufficiently represented in the media, with this perception more pronounced among women (50 percent) than among men (35 percent).

The role of the media is particularly significant because they not only inform, but also shape norms, values, and emotional responses among audiences. Without gender-responsive journalism, the media remain instruments for the reproduction of patriarchal patterns, even when they formally condemn violence or discrimination. Feminist analysis clearly demonstrates that the struggle for gender equality in the media is not solely about accurate representation, but about redefining narratives of power. It concerns who has the right to be the subject of a story, which issues are addressed, and from which perspective. Without a transformation of these narratives, symbolic violence remains invisible, and inequality continues to be normalised as part of everyday media landscapes.

Institutional patriarchy as a key form of resistance to change

Data on institutional capacities for the implementation of gender equality indicate that knowledge, or more precisely its absence, represents one of the key constraints on social change. As many as 65 percent of employees in public administration have never attended training on gender equality, meaning that the majority of those involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of equality policies lack a basic understanding of the mechanisms required to integrate a gender perspective into public policies.

Such a lack of knowledge not only produces technical failures, but creates what can be described as institutional patriarchy – a system in which gender equality formally exists through laws, strategies, and international obligations, but in practice is reduced to an administrative obligation devoid of substantive content. Institutions acknowledge that inequality exists, yet simultaneously fail to invest in their own capacity to address it, creating a paradox in which the problem is named while solutions are not operationalised. This pattern enables the avoidance and evasion of responsibility. Addressing complex social issues without adequate knowledge creates discomfort among managers, leading systems to adjust to minimal compliance with formal requirements rather than pursuing meaningful change.

At the same time, the fact that as many as 70 percent of public administration employees support quotas for the underrepresented sex demonstrates that formal gender equality mechanisms enjoy a high degree of legitimacy within the system. However, in the absence of gender equality expertise, this support remains declarative and does not translate into effective implementation. Quotas are accepted as a technical measure, without a broader understanding of the structural inequalities they are intended to address. In this way, institutional inertia becomes a key form of resistance to change. This resistance does not take the form of explicit opposition to gender equality, but rather manifests as the passive reproduction of the status quo through inaction, postponement, and superficial implementation.

This situation indicates that gender equality continues to be treated as a peripheral concern rather than as a horizontal principle of governance. Without systematic investment in knowledge, skills, and the transformation of institutional mental models, institutions remain unable to recognise their own role in reproducing inequality. Knowledge, therefore, emerges not only as a technical resource, but as a political issue linked to power, since those who understand the problem possess the capacity to change it. As long as gender equality remains outside the mandatory knowledge base of public administration, institutional patriarchy will persist as the most silent, yet most resilient, form of resistance to social transformation.

In public institutions, equality is formally acknowledged, but power remains gendered

Findings on the perceptions of employees in public institutions reveal a “double truth” within the system. At the level of general attitudes, there is strong formal support for increased women’s participation in decision-making, yet at the level of implicit beliefs and everyday expectations, traditional patterns that limit the scope of change remain strongly entrenched. Nearly two-thirds of employees believe that women should account for 50 percent of representation in the Assembly and the Government, and 70 percent support the introduction of quotas for the underrepresented sex in decision-making positions within government structures. However, when asked whether it is necessary to increase the number of women in managerial positions within institutions, support becomes noticeably weaker and more fragmented. While 49.7 percent of employees support greater participation of women in institutional leadership, 40.2 percent believe that current representation is already adequate, and 10.1 percent explicitly oppose the need to increase the number of women in such positions. A similar pattern is evident in gender dynamics within institutions. Among women employed in public administration, 53.5 percent believe that women should be more strongly represented in decision-making processes, while this view is shared by only 40.1 percent of men. This indicates the existence of different realities of power and experience within the same institutional system.

A key finding is that support for equality often manifests as support for form, while the substance of power continues to be distributed along gender-coded lines. Women remain predominantly associated with sectors such as education, cited by 53.4 percent of respondents, health, cited by 37.4 percent, and social welfare, cited by 36.9 percent. Men, by contrast, are associated with areas perceived as “hard” authority, such as combating corruption and crime, cited by 44.6 percent. This distribution is not neutral. It defines who is perceived as the natural holder of strategic portfolios, budgets, security responsibilities, and political power, and who is associated with care-oriented and service-related policies. In practice, this means that the system can support parity (50 percent) and quotas (70 percent) at the same time, while still reproducing a hierarchy of “important” and “less important” portfolios, thus reducing change to a number rather than a redistribution of influence.

Institutions operate through a combination of explicit attitudes, reflected in what employees state they support, and implicit associations, reflected in what they automatically associate with authority, competence, and risk. This explains how a majority can support parity while simultaneously mapping women to education and social

welfare, and men to corruption, crime, and so-called hard reforms. This is not simply an ideological position, but a cognitive matrix in which employees follow familiar patterns, particularly in complex systems such as public administration.

The system has reached a stage in which equality enjoys legitimacy, but power remains gendered.

Support for parity and quotas demonstrates that institutions understand what is normatively expected, yet the gender-coded distribution of policy areas and the significant proportion of employees who believe that women's representation is already sufficient reveal that inequality is still not recognised as a management problem requiring changes in standards, criteria, and practices. In this sense, the transition from symbolic equality to real power depends on transforming institutional attitudes and incentive structures, including what types of leadership are valued, which portfolios are considered credible, and how pathways to decision-making are constructed. Without such changes, parity risks becoming an aesthetic reform, producing visible improvements in numbers while leaving the underlying distribution of power, decision-making processes, and priorities fundamentally unchanged.





RECOMMENDATIONS

Legislation

- Ensure the consistent application of anti-discrimination legislation, including the Law on Gender Equality, and strengthen sanctions for gender-based violence and discrimination.
- Strengthen the implementation of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination and ensure effective reporting mechanisms.
- Introduce clear procedures for reporting discrimination and provide training on gender equality for employees and management.
- Within political parties, improve internal regulations to increase the representation of women and reform electoral legislation, including quotas, implementation mechanisms, and monitoring of campaign financing.
- Introduce a mandatory portion of parental leave for fathers that cannot be transferred to the mother.
- Introduce tax incentives for employers who actively support the use of parental leave by both women and men.
- Amend the Law on Gender Equality, particularly provisions related to the introduction of sanctions for Article 3, which refers to the obligation to assess the effects of policies on women and men at all stages of policy development.
- Adopt the Law on the Parliament and the Law on the Government, specifying the number of Deputy Speakers/Deputy Prime Ministers, the obligation to represent the under-represented sex, the mandatory percentage of managerial positions reserved for the under-represented sex, and the principles of gender equality on which the work of public administration should be based.
- Prescribe by law the obligation to apply gender-responsive budgeting for the annual state budget, as well as for the budgets of institutions and public enterprises, with clearly defined methodologies and control mechanisms.
- Prescribe the obligation to integrate the gender perspective into all systemic laws, including indicators for measuring the implementation of gender analysis and the integration of gender aspects into legislation, public policies, and planning measures.
- Adopt guidelines on the integration of the principle of gender equality into the work of institutions, to be issued by the Government and the Parliament of Montenegro.

Institutional architecture for gender equality

- Strengthen mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality policies, including oversight of affirmative action quotas and transparent criteria for appointments to public office.
- Improve cross-sectoral cooperation between institutions and non-governmental organisations in the implementation of gender equality policies.

- Strengthen the role of human resources units and equality bodies within institutions, while ensuring confidential and effective reporting systems for gender-based discrimination.
- Improve the national gender equality mechanism by establishing an agency-level institution directly accountable to the Prime Minister, ensuring political visibility, inter-ministerial competence, and stable funding. Reactivate the National Council for Gender Equality to enhance coordination among central and local authorities, independent institutions, and civil society. Require municipalities to establish functional gender equality committees in order to more effectively implement and monitor gender equality measures at the local level.
- Amend the Law on Gender Equality to introduce binding sanctions, more clearly define institutional obligations, and prescribe mandatory gender analysis in policymaking processes.
- Ensure that funding for gender equality mechanisms is integrated into sectoral budget frameworks.
- Introduce affirmative measures, including gender quotas in management boards, advisory bodies, and managerial positions in public administration. Ensure that training on gender equality is mandatory for civil servants, strategic planning officers, and senior managers across all institutions.
- Improve the availability and reliability of gender-disaggregated statistics through stronger cooperation between MONSTAT and administrative data producers, with mandatory reporting to all state authorities.



Capacity

- Strengthen trust in formal mechanisms through more transparent procedures and effective enforcement of the law. Support women's economic empowerment, particularly in rural areas, through employment opportunities and entrepreneurship support.
- Ensure equal conditions in employment, remuneration, and promotion, free from gender-based barriers, and impose sanctions on public and private entities that fail to respect these principles.
- Ensure greater transparency in recruitment and promotion procedures, with measures aimed at fostering equality in the working environment.
- Introduce and promote flexible working arrangements and improved working conditions, particularly for women in rural areas.
- Increase the safety of women in public spaces through concrete protection measures.
- Strengthen a comprehensive institutional response to violence against women and intensify public campaigns aimed at prevention and protection.
- Introduce anonymous channels for reporting harassment and promote a zero-tolerance approach to violence.
- Strengthen trust in formal protection mechanisms through transparent procedures and effective enforcement of legislation.

Changing social norms

- Introduce educational programmes and education system reforms aimed at deconstructing gender stereotypes.
- Promote the equal sharing of family and professional roles through media engagement and public awareness campaigns.
- Actively counter narratives that reinforce discrimination and traditional gender roles.
- Encourage equitable inheritance practices through changes in social norms and strengthened legal protection.
- Improve the representation of women in public life in order to reduce stereotypes and prejudice, through guidelines, training, monitoring, and public campaigns.
- Increase the visibility of women in the media across all sectors, particularly in decision-making roles and in areas traditionally perceived as male-dominated.
- Introduce awards and recognition schemes for media outlets and journalists who contribute to the deconstruction of gender stereotypes.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research on the perceptions of citizens of Montenegro and public administration employees regarding gender equality aimed to assess the state of gender equality and the integration of gender equality principles within the public administration of Montenegro. The study also sought to explore the prevalence of gender stereotypes in society and gain insights into the attitudes of both citizens and institutional employees toward gender equality. This research was conducted within the framework of the project "United for Gender Equality", implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the Government of Montenegro, and funded by the Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro (EU Delegation). The data collected will support the development of more effective strategies for women's empowerment in society.

The research methodology was designed to ensure a comprehensive and rigorous approach, tailored to the local context and project objectives. The study was structured around the following key components:

1. Desk Research: Analysis of the legal, political, and regulatory framework
2. Institutional Analysis: Assessment of capacities for integrating gender equality principles within the public administration
3. Analysis of Citizens' Attitudes: Evaluation of public perception and knowledge among the citizens of Montenegro
4. Recommendations for Improvement

1. Desk research: Analysis of the legal, political, and regulatory framework

Desk research, also known as secondary research, involves the analysis of available secondary data sources, including existing studies, reports, legislative acts, statistical data, and media content. A document analysis was conducted to assess the current legal, political, and regulatory framework governing gender equality in Montenegro. The research team collected and synthesized data from various sources, including government reports and online databases. This approach enabled the acquisition of foundational insights and the identification of research gaps. In addition to analyzing the legal, political, and regulatory framework, a specific analysis was conducted on data from 18 public institutions:

- General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro
- Office of the Prime Minister
- Parliament of Montenegro
- State Prosecutor's Office
- Ministry of Public Administration
- Ministry of Human and Minority Rights
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography
- Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Dialogue
- Ministry of Economic Development
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of European Affairs

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
- Human Resources Administration
- Capital City Podgorica
- Municipality of Berane
- Municipality of Bijelo Polje
- Municipality of Plav

The institutional analysis was carried out through detailed examination of secondary sources, complemented by interviews with relevant officials on issues related to gender equality. This combined approach ensured a deeper understanding and contextualization of gender equality practices and challenges within these institutions.

2. Institutional Analysis: Capacity Assessment for Gender Integration in Public Administration

For the assessment of public administration capacities to integrate gender equality principles, the research team developed a set of indicators enabling an in-depth examination of the structural and functional aspects of gender mainstreaming in public policies. The study of gender representation involved analyzing the balanced presence of women and men in decision-making positions, as well as the overall gender composition of employees within institutions. The research evaluated the application of gender equality principles in recruitment, promotion, and the creation of working conditions, including the existence of policies that support work-life balance and ensure a gender-responsive workplace environment.

Additionally, the implementation of specific policies and mechanisms aimed at advancing gender equality within institutions was analyzed, along with the prevalence of discrimination and harassment at the workplace. The effectiveness of existing prevention and resolution mechanisms was also assessed. Employee participation in gender equality training and the practical relevance of these trainings for daily work were evaluated. Simultaneously, the application of a gender perspective in the development of legislation, programs, and measures was examined, including the implementation of gender impact assessments and gender-responsive budgeting. Finally, the study investigated initiatives promoting equality, awareness-raising activities on gender equality, efforts to enhance the visibility of gender issues, and the development of partnerships among various stakeholders in this field.

The study primarily focused on evaluating the capacities of existing gender equality mechanisms, infrastructure, and bodies within public institutions. Data collection techniques included:

CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing): Data collection conducted via a web link where respondents independently completed the questionnaire online.

CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing): Data collection through face-to-face interviews, where an interviewer asks questions and directly inputs responses into a computer or tablet.

The employee survey explores the capacity for integrating gender equality principles in the operations of institutions and municipalities in Montenegro. Its objective is to assess how gender issues are incorporated into daily policies, processes, and activities within public administration, local governments, parliament, and other institutions. The survey also identifies areas requiring improvement and additional training to enhance the implementation of gender equality.

The research on perceptions of gender equality among employees of state institutions, the Podgorica City administration, and employees in three northern municipalities of Montenegro (Berane, Bijelo Polje, and Plav) was conducted on a representative sample. Data collection commenced in November 2024.

3 Analysis of Citizens' Attitudes: Assessment of Public Perception and Knowledge of Citizens of Montenegro

The survey on the perception of gender equality among citizens of Montenegro was conducted on a sample of 1,005 adult respondents, ensuring representativeness of the entire adult population of the country. The sample was drawn using a multistage random sampling method, which allows for a standard statistical error margin of +/- 3.1% with a 95% confidence interval for a 50% distribution.

The sample stratification process was carried out in two key stages. First, the population was divided into three regions reflecting the geo-economic characteristics of Montenegro: North, Central, and South. Within each region, sample units were further categorized by settlement size into three groups: large, medium, and small. Households were selected using the random walk method, while the number of respondents in each region was proportionally adjusted according to the population structure based on the latest official census from 2011.

The study focuses on gender equality in Montenegro, with particular emphasis on citizens' attitudes, the portrayal of women in the media, and the integration of gender equality principles into public policies. The objective of the research is to identify key barriers and opportunities for improving gender equality, as well as to develop recommendations for policy-making and training programs. Data collection was conducted in December 2024 using the CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) technique. This method involves direct interaction between interviewers and respondents, with responses electronically recorded via specialized devices. Following fieldwork completion, the data were further adjusted through a post-stratification process, accounting for basic demographic characteristics such as gender and age to ensure maximal sample representativeness.

Assessing Knowledge of a Specific group through Public Opinion

Public opinion research is a complex methodological tool used to evaluate the perceptions of a population or a particular group, such as public officials. While primarily focusing on the perceptions and self-assessed beliefs of citizens and/or officials, these responses provide an indirect yet valuable insight into the knowledge held by the group. Researching perceptions to assess the knowledge of a specific group is a central theme in political science, statistics, and psychology. For decades, scientific efforts have aimed to draw clear conclusions on issues such as questionnaire design, the relationship between perceptions and knowledge, determining correlations and dependencies, and making precise inferences based on perception studies.

Below is a concise explanation of how perceptions can be utilized to assess knowledge, with references to established methodological principles.

Theoretical Basis of Public Opinion Research

Public opinion research relies on well-designed questions that examine respondents' attitudes, beliefs, and factual knowledge. Although perceptions may not always align with objective facts, they reveal:

- What Citizens Consider True (Influencing Their Behavior and Decisions).

This aspect focuses not on objective truth but on what citizens perceive as true, which directly affects their behavior and decision-making. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for analyzing research results to identify gaps in public policies and strategies implemented by the state. When research targets a specific group (e.g., by age), it can reveal significant shortcomings in educational policies and the knowledge levels of that particular group.

- Level of Awareness on Specific Topics: Responses often reveal misconceptions or gaps in understanding.
- Perception of Social Issues: How citizens view a given social problem—whether they consider it important, unimportant, or are uncertain about how to respond. Here, carefully designed response scales offer insights into respondents' knowledge. For example, a statistically significant share of answers such as "I don't know" or "I'm not sure" signals not just perception but uncertainty caused by a lack of information or knowledge on the issue.

Each response scale is carefully designed to enable clear conclusions, comparisons, and identification of causes leading to shortcomings in specific public policies. Relevant literature on cognitive processes in questionnaire responses emphasizes how precisely constructed questions uncover meaningful data about respondents' beliefs and knowledge.¹

For example, in a study on gender equality, a question like, "In your opinion, is sufficient attention paid to gender equality during recruitment?" captures not only perceptions and attitudes but also indicates awareness or ignorance. Research by Bishop and colleagues demonstrates that questionnaire items can assess both attitudes and knowledge, showing that respondents' understanding of social issues often correlates with their perceptions.²

Linking Perception with Knowledge

From a methodological perspective, perception serves as an indicator of knowledge. Misconceptions or inaccurate perceptions signal gaps in knowledge, whereas perceptions aligned with factual data suggest a higher level of understanding.

The process of analyzing data and drawing conclusions about the relationship between perception and knowledge is complex but achievable. Several important steps facilitate this analysis.

Comparative Analysis: Responses obtained through the study can be compared with objective benchmarks, such as official statistical data on gender representation, to assess accuracy or deviation from the factual situation. Any deviation from reality indicates perceptions shaped by misinformation or lack of knowledge, which then requires an investigation into the underlying causes.

Pattern Recognition: This method connects perception with knowledge by identifying trends within aggregated data. For instance, if the majority of respondents underestimate the gender pay gap, this points to a widespread lack of awareness about pay inequality. Should this pattern persist or increase compared to previous studies, it reflects a systemic issue.

By identifying recurring patterns within specific subgroups, researchers can pinpoint systematic knowledge gaps and highlight areas requiring educational or policy intervention. Additionally, patterns may reveal broader societal narratives or misconceptions influencing the public's understanding of a particular issue.³

Questionnaire Design for Knowledge Assessment

A questionnaire designed to enable conclusions about respondents' knowledge typically includes factual items (statements containing facts, true/false questions, multiple-choice questions, etc.). In designing such instruments, it is crucial to follow best practices that maximize the reliability and validity of data on self-assessment and perception, allowing for the most accurate evaluation of knowledge possible.⁴

A well-designed questionnaire also includes questions that measure perception. These items explore subjective views on equality and fairness, reflecting both awareness and attitudes.

An effectively constructed questionnaire should enable analysis through cross-tabulation and correlation analysis. This process links certain variables (e.g., education level, occupation) with perception and/or knowledge variables to identify information or knowledge gaps within subgroups.

1 Tourangeau, R., Rips, L. J., & Rasinski, K. (2000). *The Psychology of Survey Response*. Cambridge University Press.

2 Bishop, G. F., Oldendick, R. W., & Tuchfarber, A. J. (1980). "Effects of Question Wording and Format on Attitudes toward Abortion." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 44(2), 223–231.

3 This approach is grounded in established public opinion research methodologies. As noted in the *Encyclopedia of Public Opinion Research Methods*, public opinion research aims to quantify and describe the preferences and beliefs of large groups, thereby providing insight into their knowledge base — Kosicki, Gerald M. *Public opinion research*, in, *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, Sage Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963947.n418>

4 Krosnick, J. A., & Presser, S. (2010). "Question and Questionnaire Design." In *Handbook of Survey Research* (2nd ed.), Emerald Group Publishing.

Public opinion research offers practical insights by quantifying knowledge deficiencies and pinpointing areas requiring intervention. For example, if a significant portion of public officials overestimates the share of women in leadership positions, this signals a need for targeted awareness campaigns to correct these misconceptions.

Public opinion surveys do not assert that perceptions equate to objective knowledge. Instead, this type of research uses perceptions as indicators of what a group knows or misunderstands. Discrepancies between perceptions and facts reveal knowledge gaps, facilitating targeted educational or policy interventions. By integrating factual and perceptual questions, questionnaires provide a nuanced understanding of knowledge levels and sufficient information to develop strategies aimed at addressing inequalities, such as those related to gender equality.





DESK ANALYSIS: ASSESSMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY INTEGRATION IN INSTITUTIONS

There is no doubt that global patterns of inequality between women and men persist, including significantly lower representation of women in decision-making structures, unequal economic opportunities, and the predominance of women among those living in poverty. Restructuring existing power dynamics requires substantial efforts to promote gender equality. This entails implementing transformative strategies at all levels: individual attitudes and relationships, institutions and legal frameworks, as well as political decision-making structures.⁵

Gender mainstreaming implies a set of specific strategic approaches, alongside technical and institutional processes adopted with the goal of achieving gender equality. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995, endorsed gender mainstreaming as a key and strategic approach to fulfilling commitments related to gender equality.⁶

The concept of gender mainstreaming is defined in the 1997 United Nations Economic and Social Council report as follows:

The integration of the gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy aimed at making the concerns and experiences of both women and men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.⁷

The gender mainstreaming strategy emerged as a response to dissatisfaction with previous approaches that focused predominantly on women and specific target initiatives, which proved too limited. The answer lies not merely in increasing women's participation within an unjust system but in changing the system and institutions themselves. Accordingly, the importance of establishing alliances with men is emphasized, to collaboratively redefine gender roles and relations.⁸

Gender equality is no longer viewed as a separate "women's" issue but is integrated into all forms of social and institutional action.

Article 3 of the Law on Gender Equality (**LGE**) obliges state bodies, state administration authorities, local self-governments, public institutions, public enterprises, and other legal entities exercising public authority, as well as business companies, other legal entities, and entrepreneurs, to assess and evaluate the impact of their decisions and activities on the status of women and men at all stages of planning, decision-making, and

5 United Nations, **Gender Mainstreaming**, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, New York, 2002, p. 1. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/e65237.pdf>.

6 United Nations Women, **Gender Mainstreaming**, n.d. Retrieved from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/gender-mainstreaming>.

7 Economic and Social Council, **Gender Mainstreaming**, excerpt from the 1997 report of the Economic and Social Council, UN Women, 1997, p. 2."Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>.

8 United Nations, **Gender Mainstreaming**, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, New York, 2002, p. 9.

implementation, in order to achieve gender equality.⁹ This implies that the aforementioned entities must assess: "what benefits, whether material or non-material, financial or otherwise, the decision-making or undertaking of an activity will bring to men and to women; what effect the decision or other activity will have on women and on men, considering financial resources as well as human and other resources required for their implementation; what the consequences of not making a decision will be; and how women and men responsible for investing resources evaluate the decision-making or undertaking of the activity in terms of costs, benefits, acceptability, and feasibility."¹⁰ However, since the Law on Gender Equality (ZRR) does not include sanctions for non-compliance with the measure defined in Article 3, the majority of public policy documents remain "ungendered".¹¹

International Framework

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The first comprehensive internationally recognized document on women's rights¹² was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979¹³ – **the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**.¹⁴ Since the treaty entered into force on September 3, 1981, it has been ratified by 189 countries, including Montenegro (since October 23, 2006).¹⁵

Ratification of this Convention commits the signatory states to implement policies aimed at eliminating discrimination against women in political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other fields, using all appropriate means available to them without delay. Article 2 of the Convention outlines general measures that the signatory states must observe:

- a) Incorporation of the principle of equality between men and women in national constitutions or appropriate legislation and ensuring practical application of this principle through legal or other appropriate measures;
- b) Adoption of appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where necessary, to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women;
- c) Introduction of legal protection for women's rights on an equal basis with men and ensuring effective protection against any acts of discrimination through competent national courts and public institutions;
- d) Refraining from any discriminatory acts or practices and ensuring that public authorities and institutions act in accordance with this obligation;
- e) Taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization, or enterprise;
- f) Taking all suitable measures, including legislative ones, to modify or repeal existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that constitute discrimination against women;

9 Regulations Catalogue 2021, Law on Gender Equality, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro," No. 046/07 of 31.07.2007, "Official Gazette of Montenegro," No. 073/10 of 10.12.2010, 040/11 of 08.08.2011, 035/15 of 07.07.2015, Article 3, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica, 2021, p. 1. Retrieved from: https://www.ombudsman.co.me/docs/1612165858_zakon-o-rodnoj-ravnopravnosti.pdf.

10 Bajić, S., & Drobnjak, N. (n.d.). *Commentary on the Law on Gender Equality*. Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro and OSCE Mission to Montenegro, p. 81. Retrieved from: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/a/297506.pdf>.

11 Ibid, str. 82.

12 Center for Women's Rights. (2018). *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. NGO "Center for Women's Rights," Podgorica, p. 6. Retrieved from: <https://womensrightscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CEDAW-konvencija-web.pdf>.

13 United Nations General Assembly. (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. United Nations, New York, p. 1. Retrieved from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>.

14 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women - CEDAW

15 United Nations Treaty Collection. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. United Nations, n.d. Retrieved from https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=_en#43.

g) Repealing all internal penal provisions that discriminate against women. Unošenje principa ravnopravnosti muškaraca i žena u nacionalne ustave ili odgovarajuće zakone i obezbjeđivanje praktične primjene tog principa zakonskim ili drugim odgovarajućim mjerama;¹⁶

To monitor the implementation of the Convention in the signatory states, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women was established in 1982. The Committee's role is to continuously assess, based on reports, complaints, and initiated investigations, whether the signatory states adhere to and adequately implement the provisions of the Convention. States that have ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol¹⁷, are obliged to submit periodic reports to the UN Secretary-General: the initial report must be submitted within one year after the Convention comes into force in that state, and subsequent reports at least every four years or whenever requested by the Committee.^{18 19}

The Optional Protocol grants the Committee competence to receive and consider communications and complaints concerning violations of the Convention's provisions — communications may be submitted by or on behalf of individuals or groups of individuals. Specifically, the Optional Protocol enables the Committee to exercise oversight through two procedures: (a) individual complaints alleging violations of rights guaranteed by the Convention, and (b) inquiries into grave or systematic violations of human rights. In both procedures, the Committee issues recommendations.²⁰

Since ratifying the treaty in 2006, Montenegro has submitted three reports to the UN CEDAW Committee:

1. The deadline for submitting the initial report was 2007 (one year after the ratification of the Convention). The initial report was adopted by the Government of Montenegro in February 2010 and submitted to the Committee in May 2010.²¹ The Committee reviewed the report during its 1002nd and 1003rd meetings, held on 6 October 2011.²² The Committee reviewed the report during its 1002nd and 1003rd meetings, held on 6 October 2011. The Committee requested additional information on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 19 to 23, which relate to violence against women, trafficking in human beings, exploitation of prostitution, and participation in social and political life. The prescribed deadline for submission was two years (by the end of 2013). The follow-up report on the implementation of the recommendations (contained in paragraphs 19–23 of the list of issues and questions, CEDAW/C/MNE/Q/1/Add.1)²³, was received by the Committee on 10 February 2014.²⁴
2. The second periodic report²⁵ was submitted within the deadline defined in the Concluding Observations on Montenegro's initial report—by October 2015. ²⁶ The Committee considered the report at its 1512th

16 Center for Women's Rights, *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, NGO "Center for Women's Rights," Podgorica, 2018, p. 17.

17 An international legal instrument that strengthens the Convention's monitoring mechanisms.

18 Article 18 of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW).

19 Center for Women's rights, *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, NGO "Center for Women's Rights", Podgorica, 2018, pp. 6–7.

20 **Center for Women's Rights**, *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, NGO "Center for Women's Rights", Podgorica, 2018, p. 7.

21 **Ministry of Justice**, *First Report on the Implementation of CEDAW in Montenegrin*, Government of Montenegro, 2011. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/fd47aed1-5fde-471b-ac4f-d51a83ab7d72>

22 **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**. *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations, 2011. Retrieved from: <https://www.refworld.org/policy/polrec/cedaw/2011/en/84247>.

23 **Ministry of Human and Minority Rights**. *Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee of the United Nations (contained in paragraphs 19–23 of the List of Issues CEDAW/C/MNE/Q/1/Add.1)*, Government of Montenegro, 2014. Retrieved from: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/b2ae36b5-2fc1-4c23-abb1-3cd59c7d1aba?version=1.0>.

24 **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**. *Concluding observations on the initial periodic report of Montenegro, Addendum: Information submitted by Montenegro in response to the key observations*, United Nations, 2014. Retrieved from: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n14/295/92/pdf/n1429592.pdf>.

25 **Ministry of Human and Minority Rights**. *Second Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, Government of Montenegro, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/5c1f45e6-276f-420e-9274-7b6fff777d79?version=1.0>.

26 **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**. *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, United Nations, 2011..

and 1513th meetings, held on 11 July 2017. It requested information on the implementation of urgent recommendations 21(c), 37, 43(c), and 53(b), to be submitted within two years,²⁷ Montenegro submitted the requested information in June 2019.²⁸

3. The third periodic report²⁹ was submitted within the timeframe outlined in the *Concluding Observations on Montenegro's second report*—by July 2021.³⁰ Montenegro's third periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was presented during the 88th session of the CEDAW Committee, on 15 May 2024. Following the review, the Committee issued its Concluding Observations to Montenegro on 2 June 2024.was submitted within the timeframe outlined in the Concluding Observations on Montenegro's second report—by July 2021.³¹

CEDAW: Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Montenegro

The Committee considered the report at the 2063rd and 2064th meetings, on May 15, 202. In its Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Montenegro³² it welcomed the legislative reforms adopted in Montenegro in the period 2017-2021: Law no. 44/2017 on amendments to the Criminal Code (2017), Article 151a of the Criminal Code regulating the issue of female genital mutilation (2017) and Article 151b of the Criminal Code regulating the issue of forced sterilization (2017).

In addition, the Committee acknowledges the efforts made by the state of Montenegro in the areas of improving the institutional framework and the framework of public policies, with the aim of accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality. The aforementioned efforts are reflected in the adoption and establishment of:

- a) Program „**Women on Boards**“ (2023–2024);^{33 34 35 36}
- b) National Plan for the Implementation of the **Istanbul Convention** for the period 2023-2027;³⁷

27 **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.** *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the Second Periodic Report*, United Nations, 2017. Retrieved from:<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1305056?ln=en&v=pdf>.

28 **Ministry of Human and Minority Rights.** *Report of Montenegro on the Implementation of the Urgent Recommendations of the CEDAW Committee regarding the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, Government of Montenegro, 2019. Retrieved from:<https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/54201ed7-9ab4-43fb-849d-f88517038a3b?version=1.0>.

29 **Ministry of Justice.** *Third Report on the Implementation of CEDAW* (in Montenegrin), Government of Montenegro, 2021. Retrieved from:<https://www.moj.gov.me/izvještaj-o-sprovodenju-cedaw-na-crngorskem-jeziku>.

30 **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.** *Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report*, United Nations, 2017.

31 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Presented Third Periodic Report of Montenegro on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Parliament of Montenegro, 2024. Downloaded from: <https://www.gov.me/clanak/prezentovan-treci-periodicni-izvjestaj-crne-gore-o-sprovodenju-konvencije-za-eliminaciju-svih-oblika-diskriminacije-zena>.

32 Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on the third periodic report, United Nations, 2017, Retrieved from: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/160/09/pdf/n2416009.pdf>.

33 There is no publicly available program description or report on the implementation of the program.

34 PR Service, IRF officially presented the “Women on Boards” leadership development program for positions of economic decision-making in Montenegro, Investment Development Fund of Montenegro A.D., 2023. Source: <https://www.irfcg.me/clanak/irf-zvanicno-predstavio-women-on-boards-program-razvoja-liderki-za-pozicije-ekonomskog-odlucivanja-u-crnoj-gori>.

35 PR Service, Public Call for Participation in the “Women on Boards” Program, Investment Development Fund of Montenegro A.D., 2023. Source: <https://www.irfcg.me/clanak/javni-poziv-za-ucesce-u-women-on-boards-montenegro>.

36 Central Bank of Montenegro, Governor Radović presented certificates to the participants of the first generation of the “Women on Boards” program, 2024. Source: <https://www.cbcg.me/me/javnost-rada/aktuelno/saopstenja/guvernerka-radovic-urucila-sertifikate-polaznicama-prve-generacije-women-on-boards?id=2392>.

37 Government of Montenegro, Draft National Plan for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) for the period 2023–2027

- c) **Action plans** for gender equality for the period 2021–2022 and 2023–2024;^{38 39}
- d) **National gender equality strategies** for the period 2021–2025 (in July 2021);⁴⁰
- e) The Women’s Club in the Parliament (as of March 2021);^{41 42}
- f) The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the **Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** 2019–2024;^{43 44 45 46}
- g) **The Protocol on Prevention and Response in Cases of Domestic Violence** (as of January 2019).⁴⁷

Accordingly, the Committee also welcomes the ratification of Protocol No. 16 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (CETS No. 214) of the Council of Europe.⁴⁸ Below, we provide a brief overview of selected Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee.

SECTION A: LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Although the Constitution of Montenegro stipulates that ratified and published international treaties and generally accepted rules of international law are an integral part of the domestic legal system and have supremacy over national legislation, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is still not directly applied in Montenegro, nor is it invoked in judicial and administrative proceedings. The text of the Convention is not available in the national minority languages of Montenegro, nor in formats accessible to persons with different types of disabilities.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends strengthening efforts to ensure that the Convention and its General Recommendations become an integral part of systematic capacity-building for all judges, prosecutors, and lawyers. The Committee also urges the amendment of the Law on Gender Equality by introducing sanctions for non-compliance.⁴⁹

- 38 Ministry of Justice, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/41e3ee6a-757a-4684-9763-9fee5e933af>.
- 39 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 for 2022 with the Draft Action Plan for the Period 2023–2024, Government of Montenegro, 2023. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/00303903-9045-4c6a-afed-b6e82ebc552b>.
- 40 Ministry of Justice, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/41e3ee6a-757a-4684-9763-9fee5e933af>.
- 41 Women’s Club, Agreement on the Formation of the Women’s Club in the Parliament of Montenegro, 28th Term, Parliament of Montenegro, 2023. Source: <https://api.skupstina.me/media/files/1708350885-sporazum-o-osnivanju-zenskog-kluba-u-skupstini-crne-gore-28-saziva.pdf>.
- 42 Women’s Club, Categories of Activities, Parliament of Montenegro. Source: <https://www.skupstina.me/me/kategorije/zenski-klub>.
- 43 Ministry of Interior Affairs, Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking 2019–2024, Government of Montenegro, 2019. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/dfacceda-573e-4c99-92bd-d4a170cd8a07>.
- 44 Ministry of Interior Affairs, Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking for the Period 2019–2024 for 2022, and Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking for the Period 2019–2024 for 2021, Government of Montenegro, 2022. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/abeb9418-f563-47c1-b844-8ba0aea98af8>.
- 45 Ministry of Interior Affairs, Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking for the Period 2019–2024 for 2023, and Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking for the Period 2019–2024, Government of Montenegro, 2023. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/085972da-50a0-40ac-a598-7f177f8e8580>.
- 46 Ministry of Interior Affairs, Draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking for the Period 2019–2024 for 2024, with the Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking (without discussion), Government of Montenegro, 2024. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/6d09a051-c53a-4f8a-9ac6-bb3228d75e27>.
- 47 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report, United Nations, 2017, p. 2.
- 48 Government of Montenegro, Draft Law on the Ratification of Protocol No. 16 to the European Convention on Human Rights, 2022. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/2ac90ca6-c9c2-4cc6-8f2e-bfe8d7c50bda>.
- 49 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report, United Nations, 2017, pp. 2–3.

SECTION B: INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Committee expresses concern over the downsizing of the Department for Gender Equality to only three staff members, the non-operational status of the National Council for Gender Equality, and the current strong negative trends in budgetary allocations for gender equality. It also highlights the absence of gender-responsive budgeting across government sectors and the lack of sex-disaggregated data on the realization of the human rights of women and girls.

The Committee recommends increasing the human, technical, and financial resources of the Committee on Gender Equality, introducing gender-responsive budgeting, enhancing the technical capacities of the competent ministry for developing gender-responsive budgets, ensuring adequate budgetary resources for the advancement of women's rights, and strengthening the existing data collection systems and coordination mechanisms.⁵⁰

SECTION C: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTIONS, AND TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN

C1. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Although covered under other provisions of the criminal legislation, femicide is not specifically defined in the Criminal Code of Montenegro. In cases of gender-based violence against women, particularly femicide and rape, the Committee expresses concern over the lenient penalties prescribed.

The Committee recommends the criminalization of femicide, the implementation of public educational workshops and awareness-raising campaigns addressing all forms of gender-based violence. Additionally, the Committee urges the adoption of amendments to the Family Law of Montenegro to prohibit marriage before the age of 18 for both women and men, without exception.⁵¹

C2. SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTIONS

According to data from the World Health Organization, Montenegro is a member state that exhibits one of the largest discrepancies in the number of boys and girls born in Europe.

The Committee recommends launching a campaign directed at both the general public and healthcare workers to raise awareness about the negative impact and criminal nature of sex-selective abortions based on fetal sex. Additionally, it advises the member state to strengthen cooperation and information exchange with the countries where Montenegrin citizens are reportedly undergoing sex-selective genetic testing and abortions, with the aim of preventing these harmful practices.⁵²

C3. TRAFFICKING AND PROSTITUTION

Trafficking in human beings reportedly remains a significant issue in Montenegro, where, as the Committee notes, there is a concerning link between prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, particularly affecting Roma women and girls.

The Committee urges the State party to strengthen the implementation of the Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings, criminalize the facilitation of prostitution and the purchase of sexual services from trafficking victims, ensure that women who are victims of trafficking have access to witness protection programs and temporary residence permits, and provide adequate funding for a specialized shelter for victims of trafficking.⁵³

50 Ibid., str. 3–4.

51 Ibid., str. 6–7.

52 Ibid., str. 5.

53 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report, United Nations, 2017, p. 7.

SECTION D: AREAS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

D1. EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

In its observations, the Committee emphasized that not all legislative bodies in Montenegro (the Parliament of Montenegro and local assemblies) meet the minimum quota of 30% representation of the less represented sex – only four out of 23 government ministers and only one out of 26 municipal mayors are women.⁵⁴

Accordingly, the Committee recommends amending the Electoral Law to introduce a “zipper system,” which requires political parties to compile candidate lists by alternating between female and male candidates. It also urges the adoption of these amendments before the 2027 general elections.⁵⁵

D2. EDUCATION

The Committee warns against the reinforcement of gender stereotypes through educational materials in school curricula and also notes deficiencies in education on gender equality, as well as the lack of systematic education on sexual and reproductive health and rights. It further expresses concern over inadequate access to basic water, hygiene, and sanitation conditions—only 52.3% of schools meet hygiene standards, and most schools lack facilities that ensure privacy for managing personal hygiene during menstruation.

The Committee recommends revising curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes by using gender-sensitive materials at all levels of education. It also encourages the introduction of mandatory training for teaching staff at all educational levels on gender-related issues.⁵⁶

D3. EMPLOYMENT

The Committee expresses concern about the low employment rate among women, which it attributes to the unequal distribution of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men. It also highlights the persistent gender pay gap, which stood at 21% in 2023, as well as a 12% gender pension gap.

The Committee recommends the implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender pay gap, through: a) conducting regular labor inspections; b) applying non-discriminatory methods of analytical job classification and evaluation; c) conducting regular wage surveys; and d) encouraging employers to publish reports with data on the gender pay gap, with the aim of better understanding the causes of gender pay and pension gaps and taking appropriate corrective measures. Additionally, the Committee urges the Montenegrin legislature to reintroduce the terms “women and men” in the legislation governing the principle of equal pay.⁵⁷

D4. HEALTH

In Montenegro, transgender individuals are required to undergo involuntary sterilization as a precondition for the legal recognition of gender change. The country lacks a national program for the provision of contraceptives, and only 3 out of 10 women aged 30–49 have undergone early screening for cervical cancer.

In light of this, the Committee recommends:

a) adopting legislative and policy measures aimed at realizing the rights of transgender women, including enabling legal gender recognition and name change in civil registries without the requirement of involuntary sterilization; b) developing and implementing a national program to provide free or affordable contraceptives as part of efforts to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections; c) strengthening public awareness campaigns on early detection of breast and cervical cancer and promoting HPV vaccination for girls.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ This refers to the 43rd Government of Montenegro, elected on April 28, 2022.

⁵⁵ Ibid., str. 7–8.

⁵⁶ Ibid., str. 8–9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., str. 9–10.

⁵⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report*, United Nations, 2017, pp. 10–11.

D5. FAMILY

The Committee welcomes the establishment of the “Alimony Fund” for cases of unpaid child support; however, it notes with concern reports that the Fund is not fully operational and is difficult to access. In practice, sisters still face unequal access to inheritance compared to their brothers, and women often do not receive an equal share of marital property in divorce proceedings.

The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to ensure that the Alimony Fund becomes fully operational and accessible to all single mothers and their children, to formally assess its effectiveness, and to ensure that women may renounce their share of an inheritance only after it has been granted through an inheritance decision and with adequate legal safeguards. This includes the obligation of the State party to ensure that any divorce settlement involving an unequal division of property requires written justification for such a distribution, approved by the competent judge.⁵⁹

SECTION E: MARGINALIZED GROUPS OF WOMEN

E1. WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

Women from rural areas in Montenegro bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid labor, often performed under difficult conditions. Due to the presence of more pronounced traditional and patriarchal norms in rural communities, these women are at greater risk of gender-based violence, while their access to health and social services is frequently limited due to underdeveloped infrastructure compared to central and urban areas. Additionally, women in rural areas are often excluded from political and public life, particularly from decision-making processes concerning the development of their communities, even though their lives are directly affected by such decisions.

The Committee primarily recommended that the State party ensure adequate access for rural women to health and social protection, public transportation, and other basic services. Montenegro should ensure the effective inclusion of rural women at all levels of decision-making—both in the planning and implementation of rural development projects and in the fair distribution of their economic benefits. For the preparation of the next periodic report, the Committee recommended the inclusion of sex-, age-, location-, and socioeconomically disaggregated data, as well as other relevant indicators, on land and farm ownership.⁶⁰

E2. WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Women with disabilities in Montenegro face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, particularly in access to justice, education, employment, and healthcare. They are rarely included in public policy discussions and often lack the knowledge and capacity to advocate for their rights. The Committee welcomed the establishment of the Directorate for the Protection and Equality of Persons with Disabilities in 2021 and simultaneously recommended that Montenegro ensure women and girls with disabilities have access to: justice, the labor market, inclusive education, employment services, healthcare, and sexual and reproductive health services. Montenegro must enable women and girls with disabilities to fully exercise their right to bodily autonomy and decision-making regarding their reproductive rights, custody, and care of their children.⁶¹

E3. ROMA, ASHKALI, AND EGYPTIAN WOMEN

Due to a lack of civil registration documents, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women are at increased risk of abuse and exploitation. The Committee recognized the discrimination they face in access to education, employment, and healthcare. It took note of the adoption of the Minority Policy Strategy 2019–2023 and the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2021–2025.

Montenegro was recommended to improve access to basic services such as education for women from these communities and to take measures to ensure they obtain civil registration documents. Additionally, the

59 Ibid., str. 13.

60 Ibid., str. 12.

61 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report, United Nations, 2017, p. 12.

Committee recommended the implementation of measures aimed at ensuring the sustainability of housing and communities established under the Regional Housing Programme, particularly with regard to basic services and infrastructure.⁶²

E4. WOMEN IN DETENTION

The Committee expressed concern over reports of gender-based violence against women in detention, including sexual harassment and assault, as well as their limited access to literacy and education programs, drug addiction treatment, and reintegration programs.

The Committee recommended aligning conditions for women detainees with the United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems, and ensuring that conditions of detention for women comply with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (“Bangkok Rules”) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (“Nelson Mandela Rules”).⁶³

SECTION F: MONITORING AND REPORTING

F1. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Considering that gender analysis of data is still lacking in many areas of practice, the Committee recommended improving and strengthening capacities for the systematic collection of statistical data in all areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention. This includes data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, geographic location, socioeconomic status, and other relevant factors — with the aim of facilitating the development and implementation of tailored and gender-responsive legislation, policies, programs, and budgets.⁶⁴

F2. FOLLOW-UP TO CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee requested that Montenegro, within two years (by June 2026), submit written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations concerning:

- increasing the human, technical, and financial resources allocated to the Department for Gender Equality and strengthening its capacity to enhance the gender-specific expertise of its staff;
- adopting amendments to the Criminal Code to explicitly criminalize femicide;
- introducing amendments to the Electoral Law before the 2027 general elections to implement the “zipper system,” requiring political parties to alternate between male and female candidates on their electoral lists;
- developing and implementing national programs to provide free or affordable contraceptive methods.⁶⁵

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action represent a comprehensive international framework for global policy and serve as a source of guidance and inspiration for achieving gender equality and the human rights of women and girls. They were adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in 1995 in Beijing, China, by consensus of representatives from 189 governments.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid., str. 12–13.

⁶³ Ibid., str. 13.

⁶⁴ Ibid., str. 13.

⁶⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report, United Nations, 2017, p. 14.

⁶⁶ United Nations Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations, 2014, p. 9. Source: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/PFA_E_Final_WEB.pdf.

The Platform for Action is an agenda for the empowerment of women and covers 12 critical areas of concern relevant to gender equality:

1. **Poverty** – The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women
2. **Education and Training** – Inadequate and unequal access to education and training
3. **Health** – Inadequate and unequal access to healthcare and related services
4. **Violence** – Violence against women
5. **Economy** – Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activity, and in access to resources
6. **Human Rights** – The insufficient promotion and protection of the human rights of women
7. **Media** – Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially the media
8. **Environment** – Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and environmental protection
9. **The Girl Child** – The persistent discrimination and violation of the rights of girls
10. **Power and Decision-Making** – Inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels
11. **Institutional Mechanisms** – Inadequate mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women,
12. **Armed Conflict** – The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.⁶⁷

Strategic objectives and action strategies have been defined for each of the areas listed, which governments and other stakeholders are expected to implement at the international, regional, and national levels.⁶⁸

In 2007, Montenegro adopted the **Law on Gender Equality**, which obliges the Government and the competent Ministry to develop Action Plans for achieving gender equality⁶⁹ – PAPRR, a development document for the implementation of gender equality policy, establishing relevant incentive and positive measures. It is adopted for a four-year period and covers the areas defined by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.^{70 71}

Since the Law on Gender Equality entered into force, three Action Plans for Achieving Gender Equality have been adopted, covering the following periods: **2008–2012**,⁷² **2013–2017**,⁷³ **2017–2021**⁷⁴ and a National Strategy for Gender Equality **2021–2025**.^{75 76}

⁶⁷ Ibid., str. 9, 30–31.

⁶⁸ United Nations Women, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations, 2014, p. 9.

⁶⁹ From now on: PAPRR.

⁷⁰ Official Gazette of Montenegro, Law on Gender Equality, Catalogue of Regulations 2021, 2015. Source: https://www.ombudsman.co.me/docs/1612165858_zakon-o-rodnoj-ravnopravnosti.pdf.

⁷¹ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in Montenegro 2008–2012 for the period August 2008 to December 2009, Government of Montenegro, 2010, p. 2.

⁷² Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in Montenegro 2008–2012 – for the period December 2009 – June 2011, Government of Montenegro, 2011. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/7f6d7b96-8437-46a1-9f9b-2ac5ef04716b>.

⁷³ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality 2013–2017, Government of Montenegro, 2013. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/69af78ab-4033-471f-bec3-d65fe3d97e66>.

⁷⁴ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality (PAPRR) 2017–2021 with the Implementation Program for the Period 2017–2018, Government of Montenegro, 2017. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/75eb5b10-d38e-43ad-8ab3-185080f0c3e4>.

⁷⁵ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/d6af2ee6-9e36-406d-911a-fc700784c6d1>.

⁷⁶ The Action Plan for Gender Equality has been replaced by the National Strategy for Gender Equality.

The National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2021–2025 identifies the following root causes of inequality:

1. Insufficient efficiency and effectiveness of institutional mechanisms for the implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies, particularly in the protection of women and individuals of diverse sex and gender identities from discrimination;
2. Pervasive gender stereotypes, biases, and traditional role divisions between men and women across all segments of society;
3. Insufficient participation of women and individuals of diverse sex and gender identities in areas that ensure equal access to resources and the benefits derived from their use.⁷⁷

Within the framework of the National Strategy, the following **Operational Objectives** have been defined:

1. Improve the implementation of the existing legal framework for the enforcement of gender equality policies and protection against discrimination based on sex and gender;
2. Enhance policies in the fields of education, culture, and media to reduce the level of stereotypes and prejudice against women and individuals of diverse sex and gender identities;
3. Increase the participation of women and individuals of diverse sex and gender identities in areas that enable access to natural and social resources and the benefits derived from their use.⁷⁸

Additionally, in 2019, Montenegro conducted for the first time a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the period 2014–2019: *Montenegro's Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030)*. The Ministry for Human and Minority Rights highlighted that, within this five-year timeframe, significant achievements were made in the following areas: a) improving anti-discrimination legislation, national action plans, and developing institutional mechanisms for gender equality at both national and local levels; b) economic empowerment of women; and c) participation in political and public life.

Violence against women and domestic violence remained recognized as one of the key priority issues in the area of gender equality, particularly given the widespread nature of gender-based violence in Montenegro.⁷⁹

UNECE, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, is responsible for monitoring progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It provides a forum for member states to track progress and identify challenges in applying the Beijing Platform for Action. A periodic review is held every five years, beginning in 2000 — with reviews conducted in 2000, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and 2024. Montenegro submitted its report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action only in 2019.⁸⁰

The Istanbul Convention

In its effort to eradicate violence against women and domestic violence in Europe, the Council of Europe adopted in 2011 the **Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence** — the most far-reaching international treaty of its kind.

The objectives of the Convention are as follows:

1. To protect women from all forms of violence and to prevent, prosecute, and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;

⁷⁷ Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Ibid., str. 4–8.

⁷⁹ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Montenegro's Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), Government of Montenegro, 2019, pp. 6–23. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/a2d80789-bc1f-48dc-a170-2b7f2ff45a11>.

⁸⁰ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Monitoring and Review, n.d. Source: <https://unece.org/monitoring-and-review#:~:text=With%20its%20periodically%20organized%20regional,challenges%20on%20a%20regional%20level>.

2. To contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women;
3. To design a comprehensive framework, policies, and measures for the protection and support of all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;
4. To promote international cooperation in the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence;
5. To support and assist organizations and law enforcement authorities in effectively cooperating to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.⁸¹

To ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention, a monitoring mechanism has been established **GREVIO - Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**. State Parties are obligated to submit reports to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe based on a questionnaire prepared by GREVIO.⁸² Two years after the adoption of the Convention (in 2013), Montenegro enacted the *Law on the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*.⁸³ Among other things, the ratification of this Convention entails the assumption of general obligations defined therein, including the establishment of one or more official bodies responsible for the coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence covered by the Convention.⁸⁴ One of the initial steps in implementing the Convention was the adoption of the *Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence (2016–2020)*.⁸⁵ GREVIO initiated Montenegro's baseline evaluation with a letter and questionnaire sent on 12 January 2017. Montenegro submitted its first national report on 11 July 2017.⁸⁶

In May 2017, Montenegro established a *Coordination Body for the coordination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures for preventing and combating all forms of violence covered by the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*. The body was chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and composed of high-level representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, and Ministry of Health, as well as representatives of the Supreme Court, the State Prosecutor's Office, and the Union of Municipalities. Alongside the Coordination Body, a Working Group was also established to ensure and monitor the implementation of the Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence. In its *Baseline Evaluation Report on the legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Convention in Montenegro* (2018), GREVIO identified two key concerns: A lack of clear division of responsibilities between the Coordination Body and the Working Group; More alarmingly, the functioning of the Coordination Body was found to be dependent on the mandate of the government, which jeopardizes continuity and institutional sustainability.⁸⁷

In 2019, the Council of Europe published a document titled *Recommendations on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Montenegro*, which contains 15 recommendations aimed at improving the implementation of the Convention.

81 Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Council of Europe Treaty Series – No. 210, 2011, pp. 1–2. Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>.

82 Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Council of Europe Treaty Series – No. 210, 2011, pp. 19–21.

83 Government of Montenegro, Decree on the Promulgation of the Law on Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Public Social Work Centres, 2013. Source: <https://www.csrgc.me/propisi/zakoni>.

84 Council of Europe, Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Council of Europe Treaty Series – No. 210, 2011, pp. 4–5.

85 Ministry of Finance, Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence (2016–2020), Government of Montenegro, 2015. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/81ef046d-d1f6-49c8-8f62-266d02b9942c>.

86 GREVIO, Report submitted by Montenegro pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Baseline Report), Council of Europe, 2017. Source: <https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2017-6/168073368f>.

87 GREVIO, GREVIO Committee Report on the Evaluation of Legislative and Other Measures Implementing the Provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), Government of Montenegro, 2018, pp. 24–25. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/39ba6f73-52cd-49ca-8331-b7d2685d5393>.

Some of the key recommendations include: Establishing crisis support centres for victims of rape and/or referral centres for victims of sexual violence; Institutionalizing the competent Coordination Body; Ensuring free legal aid for victims of all forms of violence against women; Guaranteeing the availability of protection orders to all victims of domestic violence.⁸⁸ In the same year, the *National Plan for the Improvement of General Support Services for Victims of Violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention (2019–2021)* was adopted⁸⁹ and the *National Plan for the Improvement of Specialized Support Services for Victims of Violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention (2019–2021)* was also adopted.⁹⁰ In 2020, the Institute for Social and Child Protection prepared a *Report on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Children*, based on data collected from Centres for Social Work.⁹¹ Based on the 2018 GREVIO Report and the 2019 Recommendations, the Government of Montenegro took action and, in 2022, prepared a report on its actions and relevant statistical data (covering the period 2019–2021).⁹² Based on the aforementioned report, the Council of Europe published its conclusions on the implementation of the 2019 recommendations in mid-2022. These conclusions once again focused on persistent issues such as the institutionalization of the competent Coordination Body, the availability and effectiveness of protection orders, and the establishment of crisis centres for victims of violence and rape.⁹³ The SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Nikšić conducted a *study on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Montenegro*, within the framework of the regional program *SMART Balkans – Civil Society for a Connected Western Balkans*. The research included: a) an analysis of the alignment of the national legal and strategic framework with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention; b) an analysis of 15 interviews conducted with national-level decision-makers and representatives of women's NGOs providing specialized assistance and support services; c) an analysis of 55 interviews with staff from local institutions, including the police, centres for social work, misdemeanor courts, basic courts, free legal aid services, prosecutors' offices, and health institutions such as health centers and hospitals. The study highlighted the misalignment between Montenegrin laws and the directives of the Convention, as well as its inadequate implementation. It also emphasized the need to increase penalties for certain criminal offenses, such as: sexual harassment, domestic and family violence, rape, female genital mutilation, forced sterilization, and stalking.⁹⁴

In 2023, the Government of Montenegro, in cooperation with UNDP, adopted the National Plan for the Implementation of the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) for the period 2023–2027*. The National Plan sets out the following objectives:

1. Protect women from all forms of violence and prevent, prosecute, and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.
2. Contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including the empowerment of women.

88 Council of Europe, *Recommendations on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Montenegro*, Secretariat of the Monitoring Mechanism of the European Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2019, pp. 2–4. Source: <https://rm.coe.int/recommendations-of-the-committee-of-the-parties-for-montenegro/pdfa/168092005e>.

89 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, *National Plan for the Improvement of General Support Services for Victims of Violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention 2019–2021*, Government of Montenegro, 2019. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download/4cf1e939-3f83-4f6b-9667-1ceaf2a12c96?version=1.0>.

90 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, *National Plan for the Improvement of Specialized Support Services for Victims of Violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention 2019–2021*, Government of Montenegro, 2019. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download/4cf1e939-3f83-4f6b-9667-1ceaf2a12c96?version=1.0>.

91 Institute for Social and Child Protection, *Report on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Children Based on Data from Social Work Centres*, 2020. Source: https://www.zsdzcg.me/sites/zsdzcg.me/files/2024-02/izvjestaj_o_nasilju_u_porodici_i_nasilju_nad_zenama_i_djecom_podatacima_centara_za_socijalni_rad_sa_fokusom_na_podatacima_iz_2019_godine.pdf.

92 Government of Montenegro, *Report to the Committee of the Parties on Measures Taken to Improve the Implementation of the European Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*, 2022. Source: <https://rm.coe.int/montenegro-reporting-form-cop-2022/1680a5a0e6>.

93 Council of Europe, *Conclusions on the Implementation of Recommendations Concerning Montenegro Adopted by the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention*, 2022, pp. 2–3. Source: <https://rm.coe.int/ic-cp-2022-3-eng-cop-conclusions-montenegro/1680a6d172>.

94 Budislavka Mira Saveljić, *Study on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Montenegro*, SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence Nikšić, 2023, pp. 6–15. Source: <https://sosnk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Studija-o-sprovodenju-Istanbulske-konvencije-u-Crnoj-Gori-4.pdf>.

3. Develop a comprehensive framework, policies, and measures for the protection and support of all victims of violence against women and domestic violence.
4. Strengthen international cooperation in the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence.
5. Provide support and assistance to organizations and law enforcement bodies to ensure effective cooperation and the adoption of a comprehensive approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.⁹⁵

Finally, in June 2024, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare submitted the *Report on the Implementation of the Conclusions on the Implementation of Recommendations concerning Montenegro, adopted by the Committee of the Parties*.⁹⁶

Legal and Normative Framework

Montenegrin legislation recognizes the concept of gender equality and guarantees it through its highest legal act — the **Constitution of Montenegro**. Article 18 of the Constitution explicitly states that the state shall guarantee the equality of women and men and shall *develop a policy of equal opportunities*. The Constitution also establishes the principle of equality before the law, stipulating that all persons are equal regardless of any particular characteristics or personal attributes. From this, the right of every individual under the jurisdiction of the Constitution to equal protection of rights and freedoms arises. This protection is further guaranteed by Article 25, which stipulates that even during a state of emergency, certain human rights and freedoms — including those based on sex — may not be restricted. Additionally, the Constitution prohibits all forms of direct and indirect discrimination on any grounds.⁹⁷

The concept of gender equality is further elaborated in national legislation through the adoption of the **Law on Gender Equality** in 2007, which was last amended in 2015. **This law defines gender equality as: the equal participation of women and men, as well as individuals of different gender identities, in all areas of the public and private sectors; equal status and equal opportunities to exercise all rights and freedoms and to utilize personal knowledge and abilities for the development of society; and the equal enjoyment of the outcomes of that development.** As stated at the outset, state bodies, public administration bodies, local self-governments, public institutions, public enterprises, and other legal entities performing public functions, as well as private companies, other legal entities, and entrepreneurs, are required under this law to **assess and evaluate the impact of their decisions and actions on the status of women and men** at all stages of planning, decision-making, and implementation, *in order to achieve gender equality*. This provision obliges the State of Montenegro to adhere to the principle of **gender mainstreaming in public policy**. Although the law includes certain punitive measures, these do not apply to the obligation of legal entities to assess and evaluate the gender impact of their decisions and activities. However, if a legal entity fails to appoint an officer responsible for coordinating gender equality matters or for preparing and implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, penalties apply: For state bodies, public administration bodies, and local self-government bodies, the responsible person may be fined between €150 and €1,000. For entrepreneurs, the fine ranges from €150 to €1,500.⁹⁸

The Ministry responsible for the protection of human and minority rights oversees the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality. Its responsibilities include: **1) Coordinating activities aimed at establishing gender equality**

⁹⁵ Government of Montenegro, National Plan for the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) for the period 2023–2027, 2023. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/1f031d7b-7220-460a-a48b-bf093b37db6c>.

⁹⁶ Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Report on the Implementation of the Conclusions on the Implementation of Recommendations concerning Montenegro adopted by the Committee of the Parties, Council of Europe, 2024. Source: <https://rm.coe.int/ic-cp-inf-2024-8-montenegro-implementation-report-on-cop-conclusions/1680b08c71>.

⁹⁷ Government of Montenegro, Constitution of Montenegro, "Official Gazette of Montenegro," No. 001/07 dated 25.10.2007, 038/13 dated 02.08.2013, 2013, pp. 2–4. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/9f19ed1f-5b58-4232-9fb7-168f20cb3206>.

⁹⁸ Catalogue of Regulations 2021, Law on Gender Equality, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro," No. 046/07 dated 31.07.2007, "Official Gazette of Montenegro," Nos. 073/10 dated 10.12.2010, 040/11 dated 08.08.2011, 035/15 dated 07.07.2015, Articles 2, 3, 33a, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica, 2021, pp. 1–6.

and participating in the preparation and adoption of action plans for achieving gender equality at all levels; **2)** Monitoring the implementation of international documents and conventions, as well as adopted international standards in the field of gender equality; taking measures for their integration into Montenegro's legal system; developing quality monitoring mechanisms for compliance with these documents; and preparing reports on Montenegro's fulfillment of its international obligations in the field of gender equality; **3)** Cooperating with local self-governments and providing support for the establishment of gender equality mechanisms at the local level; **4)** Establishing cooperation with non-governmental organizations; **5)** Undertaking and promoting activities related to education on gender equality, and organizing the publication of materials aimed at promoting gender equality.⁹⁹

In accordance with the existing Law on Gender Equality, the **Government of Montenegro** is responsible for adopting the **Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality**, as well as programs for its implementation. Since the law entered into force, three Action Plans for Achieving Gender Equality have been adopted, covering the following periods **2008–2012**,¹⁰⁰ **2013–2017**¹⁰¹ and **2017–2021**.

Since 2021, the Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality has been transformed into the National Strategy for Gender Equality.

According to the most recent available report by the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights on the implementation of the National Strategy for Gender Equality **2021–2025**,^{102 103} "Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 for the Year 2023", recommendations for the next phases of the implementation of this strategic document have been defined, including the following key points:

1. Significantly increase budget allocations for gender equality;
2. Create conditions for the consistent application of the Law on Gender Equality, particularly in terms of sex-disaggregated statistics across all sectors and the consistent use of gender-sensitive language in public administration and the media;
3. Establish mechanisms for preserving institutional memory and disseminating acquired knowledge, in order to prevent knowledge loss due to staff turnover;
4. Insist on accountability of lead institutions and partners for unimplemented activities.¹⁰⁴

In 2023, 65% of the activities from the Action Plan were implemented (across all three operational objectives), representing twice the volume of implemented activities compared to the previous Action Plan for the 2021–2022 period. However, this initially positive impression is diminished by the longstanding practice of carrying over unimplemented activities into new action plans.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Catalogue of Regulations 2021, Law on Gender Equality, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro," No. 046/07 dated 31.07.2007, "Official Gazette of Montenegro," Nos. 073/10 dated 10.12.2010, 040/11 dated 08.08.2011, 035/15 dated 07.07.2015, Article 21, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica, 2021, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰⁰ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in Montenegro 2008–2012 – for the period December 2009 – June 2011, Government of Montenegro, 2011. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/7f6d7b96-8437-46a1-9f9b-2ac5e04716b>.

¹⁰¹ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality 2013–2017, Government of Montenegro, 2013. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/69af78ab-4033-471f-bec3-d65fe3d97e66>.

¹⁰² Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/d6af2ee6-9e36-406d-911a-fc700784c6d1>.

¹⁰³ The Action Plan for Gender Equality has been replaced by the National Strategy for Gender Equality.

¹⁰⁴ Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 for 2023, Podgorica, 2024, pp. 76–77. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/7dba3082-6c89-4f34-8459-9f59d9b12be3?version=1.0>.

¹⁰⁵ Kordić, I., Stjepčević, A., MONITORING REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR 2023 OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR GENDER EQUALITY 2021–2025, NGO "Center for Women's Rights," Podgorica, 2024, p. 47. Source: <https://womensrightscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MONITORING-IZVJESTAJ-O-IMPLEMENTACIJI-NACIONALNE-STRATEGIJE-RODNE-RAVNOPRAVNOSTI-SA-AKCIJONIM-PLANOM-ZA-2023-FINAL-.pdf>.

The Current National Strategy **2021–2025**^{106 107} expires in 2025, and a new National Strategy for Gender Equality is currently under development and is expected to be adopted by the end of 2025.

Article 7 of the Rulebook on Internal Organization and Systematization of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights defines the responsibilities of the competent authority for gender equality matters — the **Department for Gender Equality Affairs**. The duties carried out within the Department include:

- Preparing draft proposals for the Law on Gender Equality;
- Coordinating the process of developing the Gender Equality Strategy and activities aimed at establishing gender equality, as well as participating in the preparation of action plans for achieving gender equality at all levels;
- Implementing international documents and conventions, as well as adopted international standards in the field of gender equality;
- Organizing research and analyses on the state of gender equality, and collecting data within the framework of national-level cooperation;
- Cooperating with local self-governments and providing support for the establishment of gender equality mechanisms at the local level;
- Establishing cooperation with non-governmental organizations;
- Promoting activities based on gender equality education and preparing publications aimed at promoting gender equality;
- Submitting an annual report to the Government on the implementation of the gender equality strategy;
- Implementing activities related to regional initiatives in the field of gender equality;
- Performing other tasks related to gender equality, as well as other relevant tasks within the Department's scope of work.¹⁰⁸

The Rulebook on Internal Organization and Systematization of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights stipulates that the Department for Gender Equality Affairs consists of four independent advisors and a head of department.¹⁰⁹

In Montenegro, institutional mechanisms for the implementation of gender equality policy include, in addition to the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, the **Committee on Gender Equality of the Parliament of Montenegro** and the Institution of the **Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms** (Ombudsman). These are supported by *focal points designated within all relevant institutions*, who are obliged to carry out tasks related to the achievement of gender equality at both the national and local levels.¹¹⁰

The Committee on Gender Equality of the Parliament of Montenegro reviews draft laws, other regulations, and general acts related to the implementation of the principle of gender equality, and monitors the enforcement of these rights through the implementation of laws and the advancement of gender equality principles. The Committee also participates in the preparation, drafting, and harmonization of laws and other acts with European Union legislation and programs related to gender equality. In this context, the Committee monitors and assesses the alignment of Montenegrin legislation with the EU *acquis*, and—based on government reports—monitors and evaluates the implementation of laws, particularly those arising from obligations harmonized with EU law. In addition, the Committee cooperates with relevant parliamentary bodies in other countries and with non-

106 Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Government of Montenegro, 2021. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/d6af2ee6-9e36-406d-911a-fc700784c6d1>.

107 The Action Plan for Gender Equality has been replaced by the National Strategy for Gender Equality.

108 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Rulebook on the Internal Organization and Systematization of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Government of Montenegro, Podgorica, 2024, p. 3. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/561c38bf-5a23-4f08-9b67-d6e5a781e513?version=1.0>.

109 Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Rulebook on the Internal Organization and Systematization of the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Government of Montenegro, Podgorica, 2024, pp. 13–14.

110 PR Service, New Institutional Mechanism Established for the Implementation of Gender Equality Policy, Government of Montenegro. Source: <https://www.gov.me/clanak/166259--odrzana-konstitutivna-sjednica-savjeta-za-rodnu-ravnopravnost>.

governmental organizations in this field. It also promotes the ratification of international instruments concerning gender equality and monitors their implementation.¹¹¹

The Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Ombudsperson) is authorized to act on complaints related to the functioning of courts, particularly in cases of delayed proceedings, abuse of procedural rights, or failure to enforce court decisions. The Ombudsperson submits an annual report to the Parliament of Montenegro, which includes: an overview of cases handled, a statistical analysis of the human rights and freedoms situation, recommendations and measures for improvement, and an assessment of the state of affairs in the area of discrimination. In addition, the Ombudsperson has the authority to address issues related to the work of state bodies within their mandate, with particular emphasis on resolving complaints concerning domestic violence and gender-based violence. It is important to note that there is no deputy specifically assigned to gender equality issues.¹¹²

In October 2016, a “new institutional mechanism for the implementation of gender equality policy” was established — the **National Council for Gender Equality**. This body was formed to address the implementation of gender equality policy at both the national and local levels. Its mandate also includes the review and implementation of legislation related to gender equality, as well as the assessment of the impact of such legislation on the position of women and men. To address specific issues of importance to gender equality, eight advisory bodies were formed within the Council. These bodies are tasked with monitoring and advancing equal opportunity policies in their respective areas of focus.¹¹³ In its 2024 Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern over the non-operational status of the National Council for Gender Equality.

Under the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Article 2 (*Prohibition of Discrimination*) prohibits all forms of discrimination on any grounds, including discrimination based on sex and gender identity. Article 19 (Discrimination on the Grounds of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation) defines discrimination as any distinction, unequal treatment, or placing a person in a disadvantageous position on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. The same law grants every person who believes they have been subjected to discriminatory conduct by a public authority, legal entity, or individual the right to seek protection before a court.

Legal proceedings are initiated by filing a lawsuit, which may seek: **1)** A declaration that the defendant engaged in discriminatory behavior; **2)** A prohibition of actions posing a threat of discrimination, or a ban on repeated discriminatory conduct; **3)** Compensation for damages, in accordance with the law; **4)** Publication of the judgment establishing discrimination, at the expense of the defendant, in the media, if the discrimination was committed through media outlets.

A monetary fine ranging from €1,000 to €20,000 may be imposed on a legal entity for committing a misdemeanor, including: **1)** Engaging in any unwanted behavior — including harassment via audio and video surveillance, mobile devices, social media, or the internet — intended to or resulting in a violation of personal dignity, fear, humiliation, offense, or the creation of a hostile, degrading, or offensive environment; **2)** Engaging in any unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical behavior of a sexual nature aimed at violating the dignity of a person or group, particularly if such behavior causes fear or creates a hostile, degrading, intimidating, or offensive environment; **3)** Discriminating against job seekers, employees, or persons performing work for an employer on any basis; **4)** Making distinctions, treating individuals unequally, or placing them at a disadvantage based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or intersex characteristics.¹¹⁴

111 Parliament of Montenegro, Committee on Gender Equality, n.d. Source: <https://www.skupstina.me/me/radna-tijela/odbor-za-rodnu-ravnopravnost>.

112 Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, OSCE, Podgorica, 2021, p. 17. Source: <https://www.zzzcg.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Nacionalna-strategija-rodne-ravnopravnosti-2021-2025.-godine-sa-Akcionim-planom-2021-2022.-godine.pdf>.

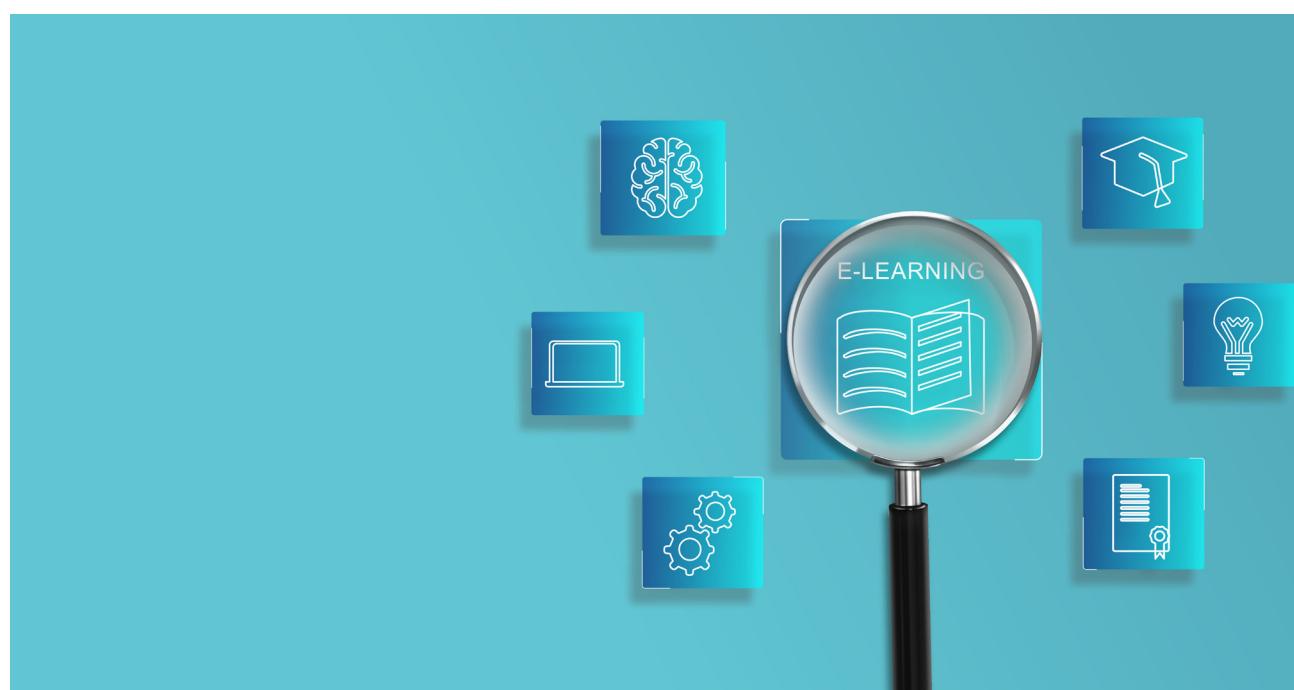
113 PR Service, New Institutional Mechanism Established for the Implementation of Gender Equality Policy, Government of Montenegro.

114 Government of Montenegro, Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, “Official Gazette of Montenegro,” Nos. 046/10 dated 06.08.2010, 040/11 dated 08.08.2011, 018/14 dated 11.04.2014, 042/17 dated 30.06.2017, 2017, pp. 1–10. Source: https://www.ombudsman.co.me/docs/1612165541_zakon-o-zabrani-diskriminacije.pdf.

The Labour Law of Montenegro, last amended in 2024, contains 20 provisions (Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 47, 118, 121, 122, 123, 123, 125, 126, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134, and 138) that represent affirmative measures aimed at achieving gender equality. These provisions regulate issues such as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and define special protective measures for employed pregnant women. Article 99 of the Labour Law guarantees that employees shall receive equal pay for the same work or work of equal value. Work of equal value is defined as work requiring the same level of education or professional qualifications, responsibility, skills, working conditions, and work outcomes. In the event of a violation of the rights outlined in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article, the employee is entitled to compensation in the amount of the unpaid portion of their salary.¹¹⁵

Article 45 of the Constitution of Montenegro, concerning electoral rights, states that every citizen of Montenegro, male or female, who has reached the age of 18 and has resided in Montenegro for at least two years, has the right to vote and to be elected.¹¹⁶ Article 39a of the Law on the Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament introduces gender quotas to promote the principle of gender equality. It requires that at least 30% of candidates on an electoral list must be from the less represented gender. To prevent political parties from circumventing this obligation by placing all women (as the less represented gender) at the bottom of the list, the same article introduces a “zipper system”: Within every group of four candidates on the list (the first four positions, the second four, and so on), at least one candidate must be from the less represented gender.

An electoral list that does not meet these requirements will be considered incomplete, and the list submitter will be invited to remedy the deficiencies. If the deficiencies are not corrected, the election commission will reject the list. Additionally, Article 104 stipulates that if a mandate ends for a councillor or MP from the less represented gender, the next candidate from that same gender on the electoral list shall take the seat.¹¹⁷



¹¹⁵ Government of Montenegro, Labour Law, “Official Gazette of Montenegro,” Nos. 074/19 dated 30.12.2019, 008/21 dated 26.01.2021, 059/21 dated 04.06.2021, 068/21 dated 23.06.2021, 145/21 dated 31.12.2021, 077/24 dated 05.08.2024, 084/24 dated 06.09.2024, 086/24 dated 10.09.2024, 2024. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/adf2208f-f45a-4cdc-8b21-db7db1978119?version=1.0>.

¹¹⁶ Government of Montenegro, Constitution of Montenegro, “Official Gazette of Montenegro,” No. 001/07 dated 25.10.2007, 038/13 dated 02.08.2013, 2013, p. 7.

¹¹⁷ Paragraf Lex, Law on the Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro,” No. 16/2000 – consolidated text, 9/2001, 41/2002, 46/2002, 45/2004 – Constitutional Court decision, 48/2006, 56/2006 – Constitutional Court decision and “Official Gazette of Montenegro,” Nos. 46/2011, 14/2014, 47/2014 – Constitutional Court decision, 12/2016 – Constitutional Court decision, 60/2017 – Constitutional Court decision, 10/2018 – Constitutional Court decision and 109/2020 – Constitutional Court decision. Source: https://www.paragraf.me/propisi-crnegore/zakon_o_izboru_odbornika_i_poslanika.html.

Table 1: Table showing the percentage of women on electoral lists for the 2023 parliamentary elections¹¹⁸

Electoral list for the 2023 parliamentary elections	Total number of candidates	Number of women	Percentage of women	Number of seats won	Number of seats won by women
YES. WE CAN FOR CIVIC MONTENEGRO!	77	43	56%	0	
HGI – On the Right Side of the World	71	29	41%	1	0
It is clear! – Bosniak Party – mr Ervin Ibrahimović	81	33	41%	6	1
TOGETHER! For the Future That Belongs to You (DPS, SD, DUA, LP)	81	32	39,5%	21	5
Movement for Changes – MONTENEGRO FIRST	81	30	37%	0	
EUROPE NOW – Milojko Spajić	81	28	34,5%	24	6
SNP – DEMOS – FOR YOU	81	26	32%	2	0
SDP – FOR OUR HOME	81	26	32%	0	
FOR MONTENEGRO FUTURE (NEW SERBIAN DEMOCRACY, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S PARTY OF MONTENEGRO, WORKERS' PARTY)	81	26	32%	13	3
Turnaround for a Safe Montenegro	54	17	31,5%	0	
"JUSTICE FOR ALL!" – Dr Vladimir Leposavić	55	17	31%	0	
"PEOPLE'S COALITION – TOGETHER AND THAT IS IT"	81	25	31%	0	
ALBANIAN ALLIANCE – ALEANCA SHQIPTARE	67	21	31%	1	0
ALEKSA AND DRITAN – BRAVELY Counts!	81	25	31%	11	2
Albanian Forum – Nik Gjeloshaj "BESA for European Development" Forumi shqiptar – Nik Gjeloshaj "BESA për Zhvillim Evropian"	60	18	30%	2	0

In light of the above, the Parliament of Montenegro should take steps to amend the electoral legislation to align it with the recommendations of the European Commission and the CEDAW Committee. One of the key proposals is the introduction of a minimum quota of 40% for the less represented gender on electoral lists, along with a requirement that at least one person of that gender be included among every three candidates. Additionally, it is necessary to establish an effective system of sanctions for non-compliance with the prescribed quotas, as well as to clearly define the competent authorities for identifying irregularities in both local and parliamentary elections.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, gender quotas continue to face criticism as a form of so-called "reverse discrimination," with claims that they artificially promote women's political engagement at the expense of merit-based competition. However, this measure is not a mere formality, but rather a response to deeply rooted systemic and structural discrimination against women, as well as other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the Roma and Egyptian (RAE) communities. The modern political system still predominantly favors men, while women remain on the margins of political processes, often unrecognized as equal candidates. Patriarchal political culture and the organization of political processes further hinder women's participation in decision-making. However, data show signs of progress — a 2021 study conducted by DeFacto Consultancy revealed that 87% of women respondents had voted in the previous three years, and there was a noticeable increase

118 State Election Commission, Consolidated Electoral List for the Election of Members of Parliament to the Parliament of Montenegro for the Elections to be Held on June 11, 2023, Podgorica, 2023. Source: <https://dik.co.me/images/DIK-media/izbori/parlamentarni/2023/Zbirna-izborna-lista.pdf>.

119 Kordić, I., Nikčević, S., Stjepčević, A. et al., GENDER PERSPECTIVE OF THE 2023 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, NGO Center for Women's Rights and NGO Spektra, Podgorica, 2023, p. 5. Source: <https://womensrightscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/rodna-perspektiva-izbora-cg.pdf>.

in the number of women formally joining political parties. The same study confirmed that greater female representation in leadership positions would motivate a significant number of respondents to actively engage in political activities. More than half of the respondents believe that electoral law reform is necessary to increase women's political participation, while 70.4% believe that women's engagement can bring about real change in society.¹²⁰

The latest 2024 survey by DeFacto Consultancy further confirms public attitudes regarding women's political engagement in Montenegro. According to the results: 62.9% of respondents want to see more women in decision-making positions, while 20.7% hold the opposite view, and 16.4% have no clear opinion on the matter.

Regarding the current representation of women in the Parliament of Montenegro, 39% of respondents believe their representation is insufficient, 45.1% consider it adequate, and 4.5% think the number of women in Parliament is even too high. Additionally, 34.4% of citizens stated that greater female presence in politics would increase their interest in political affairs in the country.¹²¹

Data confirms that there is significant support for greater inclusion of women in political life, yet public opinion on the issue remains divided. Nevertheless, the growing interest of women in political engagement, combined with voter support, highlights the need for further reforms aimed at strengthening their role in decision-making.

In the legislative drafting process, **Article 33 of the Rules of Procedure of the Government of Montenegro** stipulates that the proposer is required to conduct a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Finance. If the proposer determines that an RIA is not necessary during the preparation of a law or regulation, they are obliged to provide a specific justification for that decision.¹²² "When analyzing options, the proposer of the regulation is required to: Explain the positive and negative, i.e., direct and indirect impacts of the proposed solutions; Assess the likely economic, social, and other impacts for each option, including an evaluation of administrative burdens; Specify the social groups, economic sectors, or specific areas that would be affected; and Consider implementation risks and potential obstacles to carrying out the chosen option."¹²³ Local government bodies are also required to prepare and assess Regulatory Impact Analyses (RIA) for decisions and other regulations adopted by the municipal assembly and the mayor. The preparation and assessment of the impact analysis must be carried out in accordance with the act of the state administration body responsible for finance, and must be submitted together with the draft decision or other regulation to the municipal assembly or the mayor.¹²⁴

The Montenegrin legal framework requires that all draft laws and by-laws be subject to **Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA)**, which can place a significant burden on line ministries and the Ministry of Finance. To make the regulatory process more efficient and oriented toward achieving gender equality, it is necessary to revise the scope and model of RIA. One approach involves establishing clear criteria for exemptions from RIA for certain types of legislation and enabling differentiation among RIA types — such as full, simplified, or gender-focused RIAs — thereby directing attention and resources toward regulations that have the greatest impact on gender equality. Such an approach would allow for better allocation of resources and improved quality of analysis. In addition, the legal framework should require periodic evaluation of laws through ex post assessments, which would include a gender perspective, to ensure that laws are effectively meeting gender equality goals and do not produce unintended negative consequences for women and other vulnerable groups.¹²⁵ The state of gender mainstreaming in public policies in Montenegro is outlined in the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 and its Action Plan for 2021–2022. Specifically, a preliminary baseline review conducted for the purposes

120 Ibid, str. 8–10.

121 DeFacto Consultancy, Violence Against Women in Politics, Westminster Foundation, Podgorica, 2024, pp. 13, 23–24. Source: <https://www.wfd.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/WFD%20Publication%20MNE.pdf>.

122 Catalogue of Regulations 2022, Rules of Procedure of the Government of Montenegro, Article 33, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/04972dde-fc60-4a80-b587-f0a3efc1bfdf?version=1.0>.

123 Catalogue of Regulations 2019, Guidelines for Preparing Reports on Conducted Regulatory Impact Assessments, Article 6, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica. Source: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/f79b7806-6e4c-4aba-b876-1c6121b8327c>.

124 Catalogue of Regulations 2023, Law on Local Self-Government, Article 71, Pravni ekspert d.o.o., Podgorica. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/b2130e85-1a91-47a4-9cc6-7080295727c4?version=1.0>.

125 OSCE, Preliminary Opinion on the Legal Framework Governing the Legislative Process in Montenegro, Podgorica, 2024, pp. 21–25. Source: https://legislationline.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2023-10-19_ODIHR%20Draft%20Preliminary%20Opinion%20on%20the%20legislative%20process%20in%20Montenegro%20MNE%20%28003%29_revised.pdf.

of the Strategy revealed that 73.2% of national sectoral strategic documents do not address the issue of gender equality in any way.¹²⁶

Finally, we turn to the issue of gender-responsive budgeting. "A common shortcoming of budgets is their gender-neutral economic framework, coupled with a lack of socio-economic and gender-sensitive statistics, lack of transparency, and insufficient public participation."¹²⁷ **Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)** integrates the principle of gender equality into budgetary processes, enabling a fairer distribution of public finances. It involves analyzing the budget through a gender perspective, adjusting revenues and expenditures to reduce inequalities, and monitoring the effects of policies on women, men, and vulnerable groups. This ensures that policies and programs address the diverse needs of citizens, with equal participation from all social groups. The main objectives of GRB are to: fulfill international obligations, promote social justice, strengthen democracy, and enhance transparency.¹²⁸

With the aim of integrating a gender perspective into the budget-setting process, a **Methodology for Assessing the Impact of the Budget on Gender Equality** has been developed as a form of support for institutions of Montenegro's state administration in implementing gender-responsive budgeting (GRB).¹²⁹ The State Audit Institution (DRI), following a performance audit, assessed that Montenegro has taken initial steps toward introducing gender-responsive budgeting (GRB); however, the key prerequisites for its successful practical implementation have not yet been fully met. The Ministry of Finance has established a normative framework through appropriate regulations, defining the procedures, roles, and guidelines for conducting all phases of GRB. Nevertheless, the Law on Budget and Fiscal Responsibility still does not provide for the integration of the principle of gender equality into the budgeting process.¹³⁰ Supporting this conclusion is the data obtained from the analysis of Montenegro's budgets for 2022, 2023, and 2024, which shows a slow increase in the percentage of gender-responsive budget items.¹³¹

Analysis of Gender Equality Representation Across Institutions

Gender equality is one of the key indicators of democratization and societal progress. The institutional framework and practices of public institutions play a critical role in advancing gender equality through the formulation of policies, legislation, and their implementation in daily operations. This analysis provides insight into the representation of women and men in both leadership and operational positions within state institutions, as well as the existence of specific policies and mechanisms aimed at promoting gender equality.

As part of this research, we analyzed 18 institutions in Montenegro, including the **General secretariat of the Government, the Parliament of Montenegro, the State Prosecutor's office, the Ministry of public Administration, and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights**, as well as other institutions that play a significant role in the development and implementation of public policies. The analysis focused on the employee structure, the representation of women in leadership positions, the existence of strategic documents on gender equality, specific measures aimed at improving the status of women, and cooperation with the civil sector.

126 Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Rights, National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 with the Action Plan 2021–2022, Parliament of Montenegro, 2024.

127 Bajić, S., Drobnjak, N., Commentary on the Law on Gender Equality, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro and OSCE Mission to Montenegro, n.d., p. 33. Source: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/a/a/297506.pdf>.

128 Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council, Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Montenegro 2020–2023, Podgorica, 2024, p. 2. Source: <https://scc.directory/web/publikacije/Ekonomsko%20osnaživanje%20žena/2024/Rodno%20odgovorno%20budžetiranje%20u%20Crnoj%20Gori%202020%20-%202023.pdf>.

129 Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council, METHODOLOGY for Assessing the Impact of the Budget on Gender Equality, OSCE, Podgorica, 2023. Source: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/0094da78-8efc-4763-9c55-b1fb97029356?version=1.0>.

130 Secretariat of the Competitiveness Council, METHODOLOGY for Assessing the Impact of the Budget on Gender Equality, OSCE, Podgorica, 2023. Source: <https://dri.co.me/doc/lzvje%C5%A1taj%20o%20reviziji%20uspjeha%20%E2%80%9Euspje%C5%A1nost%20sprovo%C4%91enja%20rođno%20odgovornog%20bud%C5%BEetiranja%20u%20Crnoj%20Gori%E2%80%9D.pdf>.

131 Women's Action, COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BUDGET OF MONTENEGRO FOR 2024, 2024, p. 1. Source: <https://gbwn.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Montenegro-comments-on-the-budget-srb.pdf>.

General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro

The General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro (GSGM) performs professional, organizational, and administrative tasks in support of the Government of Montenegro, including the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, the Minister without Portfolio, and the Government's working bodies.

As of December 31, 2024, a total of **148 individuals** were employed at the GSGM. Of this number, **97 were women (65.5%)** and **51 were men (34.5%)**. The Secretariat is headed by the **Secretary-General, who is male**, while the **Deputy secretary-general** and the **Acting ssistant secretary-General** are **both women**. Compared to 2021, the number of male employees has remained the same (51), while the number and proportion of female employees have increased from 58% in that year.

Table 2: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro	148	51	97	65,5%	No

The General secretariat of the government of Montenegro (GSGM) currently does **not have an adopted, institution-specific gender equality policy**. Instead, it integrates gender equality principles by aligning its internal policies with national and international laws, strategies, and standards, and applies them through equal opportunities in recruitment, promotion, and professional development

Furthermore, the GSGM has **not implemented targeted measures to promote gender equality**—such as dedicated professional development programs for women, a gender equality body, or a designated gender equality officer within the institution. Additionally, the budget does not allocate resources specifically aimed at advancing gender equality.

Furthermore, the GSGM has not implemented targeted measures to promote gender equality—such as dedicated professional development programs for women, a gender equality body, or a designated gender equality officer within the institution. Additionally, the budget does not allocate resources specifically aimed at advancing gender equality. Given these circumstances, there is significant room for improvement in this area. A key starting point would be the clear definition of gender equality within the institutional structure of the GSGM. This includes outlining specific activities for a unit or individual tasked with gender equality responsibilities, ensuring compliance with the law on gender equality, identifying the need for employee training in this area, facilitating internal communication on gender-related issues, contributing to the alignment of internal procedures with gender equality standards, and supporting the dissemination of best practices throughout the institution.

Within the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro (GSGM), the **Department for Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination** operates as the body responsible for implementing the Methodology for Policy Development, Drafting, and Monitoring of Strategic Documents. This methodology defines the minimum quality criteria for all strategic documents adopted by the Government of Montenegro. In this context, the Department is responsible for issuing opinions on draft strategic documents, assessing, among other things, their compliance with the regulation on the manner and procedure for drafting, aligning, and monitoring the implementation of strategic documents, as well as with the principle of gender mainstreaming in public policies. As a result, institutions cannot receive a positive opinion on a draft strategic document—nor can such a document be adopted by the Government—if the gender mainstreaming criterion is not met. One of the most important strategic plans of the Government of Montenegro is the national strategy for gender equality 2021–2025, which was adopted in July 2021 and received a positive opinion from this Department.

When it comes to professional development in the area of gender equality, employees have the opportunity to attend training sessions organized by the **Human Resources Administration**. Regarding cooperation with the civil sector, the GSGM has indicated that it remains open to collaboration with organizations working on gender equality issues, as well as to initiatives aimed at advancing progress in this area.

Office of the Prime Minister

The Office of the Prime Minister supports the Prime Minister in carrying out his functions and, as such, plays a crucial role in the daily operations of the government. It participates in decision-making and policy implementation processes that have a direct impact on society and the economy.

The Office of the Prime Minister currently employs 29 staff members, of whom 21 are women (72.4%) and 8 are men (27.6%). The Office is headed by the chief of Staff, who is male, while the Deputy chief of staff is female.

Table 3: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Office of the Prime Minister	29	8	21	72,4%	No

This institution does not have a separately adopted gender equality policy or a specific strategic plan. Instead, it operates in accordance with the obligations and objectives arising from the **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025**, the **2030 Agenda**, and international gender equality standards.

Regarding specific measures aimed at promoting gender equality—such as increasing the number of women in leadership positions, developing dedicated training programs for women's professional development or women leaders, gender mainstreaming of existing policies, and budgeting for these and similar activities—**none are currently being implemented**.

It is evident from the above that **there is room for improvement in the current state of gender equality on multiple fronts**. According to representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, they are aware of these gaps and have begun implementing some basic measures, such as establishing a designated contact person for gender equality. Appointing a contact person and clearly defining their responsibilities can be of significant importance for introducing gender-responsive practices within the institution. This is especially relevant given the planned involvement of this contact person in the preparation and implementation of the new National strategy for achieving gender equality, as well as other key documents in this field. Their role will also include promoting and working towards enhancing gender equality within the institution, communicating gender equality policies with other ministries and relevant stakeholders, among other tasks. Additionally, an **important opportunity for the institution lies in the overall enhancement of employees' knowledge of gender equality through the organization and participation in training sessions**. This contributes to raising gender awareness among staff, which ultimately fosters the development of a gender-sensitive institution. Moreover, it strengthens the coordination of government activities related to this issue.

Regarding cooperation with the civil sector, the Prime Minister's Office has indicated that it is open to collaboration with organizations addressing gender equality issues. However, to date, such cooperation has primarily taken place between the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Parliament of Montenegro

The Parliament of Montenegro is a unicameral legislature composed of 81 members of parliament who exercise legislative power in accordance with the constitutionally defined principle of separation of powers. Members of Parliament are elected directly based on universal and equal suffrage through secret ballot. The term of the Parliament lasts four years but may end earlier due to dissolution or shortening of the mandate.

For the purposes of this study, the composition of the 27th and 28th Parliamentary terms has been analyzed, covering the period from 2021 to the present. Additionally, the structure of the permanent and temporary working bodies within the current, 28th term—whose mandate began on July 27, 2023—has also been examined.

As of December 31, 2024, the 28th term of the Parliament of Montenegro includes **22 women, accounting for 27.1%** of the members. This represents an increase compared to the day the current term was constituted, when there were **17 women (21%)**. When compared to the representation of women as of **December 31, 2021 (during the 27th term)**, the percentage remains the same, with **22 women or 27.1%**.

In the 28th term, the **Speaker and three Deputy Speakers of the Parliament are men**, while the fourth Deputy Speaker position is held by a woman. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Montenegro, adopted on December 30, 2020, stipulate that at **least one Deputy Speaker must be elected from the less represented gender**. This effectively guarantees that one of the Deputy Speakers is a woman, marking a definite progress compared to previous terms.

The Parliament has 15 standing committees. Women serve as chairpersons of three committees: the **Constitutional Committee**, the **Gender Equality Committee**, and the **Administrative Committee**, representing 20% of the total number. Men chair the remaining 80% of the committees (see Table 1).

Women have the highest representation in the **Gender Equality Committee at 53.8%**, followed by the **Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the Administrative Committee, both at 46.2%**. They are least represented in the **Committee on Political system, Judiciary and Administration, where there are no women**, as well as in the Commission for Monitoring and Control of the Privatization Process, with only 10%. In addition to the standing committees, there is also a temporary working body—the Committee for Comprehensive Electoral Reform—which has 16 members, of whom five are women (31%).

Table 4: Structure of the working bodies of the Parliament of Montenegro

Committee	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Female Chairperson of the Working Body
Constitutional Committee	13	9	4	30,8	Yes
Legislative Committee	11	8	3	27,3	
Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration	13	13	0	0	
Committee on Security and Defence	12	8	4	33,3	
Committee on International Relations and the Diaspora	13	8	5	38,5	
Committee on European Integration	13	8	5	38,5	
Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget	13	11	2	15,4	
Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms	12	8	4	33,3	
Committee on Gender Equality	13	6	7	53,8	Yes
Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Sports	13	7	6	46,2	
Committee on Tourism, Agriculture, Ecology and Spatial Planning	13	9	4	30,8	
Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare	13	9	4	30,8	
Anti-Corruption Committee	13	11	2	15,4	
Administrative Committee	13	7	6	46,2	Yes
Commission for Monitoring and Control of the Privatisation Process	10	9	1	10,00	

Within the Parliament of Montenegro, there is a **Women's Parliamentary Group, an informal body composed of female members of parliament**. The Group's goals and principles include: promoting gender equality at all levels of decision-making; encouraging greater participation of women in political and public life; improving the status of women across all areas of society; and fostering solidarity, humanity, volunteerism, and mutual support.

Analyzing the composition of parliamentary committees, considering both women's leadership roles and their overall presence in these bodies, women are traditionally most represented in the **Gender Equality Committee**, which is the only committee where women outnumber men. In addition to this committee, women are also predominantly present in the **Committee on Education and Culture**—areas publicly perceived as traditionally feminine. What differs from the previous term is the increase in the number of women in the **Committee on Foreign Affairs and Diaspora**, which can be interpreted as an opening of international cooperation opportunities to women, a field traditionally dominated by men. As noted, there are **no women in the Committee on Political System, Judiciary and Administration, and women are barely represented in the Anti-Corruption Committee**, the body overseeing privatization procedures, as well as in one of the most dynamic committees in the Parliament of Montenegro—the **Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget**. This may indicate limited access for women to positions controlling and allocating resources. On the other hand, there is a noticeable increase in the number of women in the **Committee on Security and Defense**, where there are now four women, whereas there were none in the previous term.

The consequences of the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions are multifaceted. It results in their voices and ideas being unheard, their capacities underutilized, and the concept of gender equality remaining a concern for a limited number of parliamentarians. Insufficient female representation leads to the neglect of important issues within political processes. It is evident that meeting the legally prescribed gender quotas in the Parliament of Montenegro remains challenging, and meaningful change in the composition at the national level can only be expected once political parties are obligated to adhere to these principles. In addition to the current term of the Parliament of Montenegro, the Parliamentary Service and activities related to gender equality have also been analyzed.

The Parliamentary Service performs professional and other tasks to support the Parliament, its committees, members of parliament, and certain duties for parliamentary groups. As of December 31, 2024, the total number of employees in the Parliamentary Service is 210. Unlike the gender representation in the plenary, employee statistics show a different picture—142 women (67.6%) and 68 men (32.3%) work in the Parliamentary Service. The leadership of the Parliamentary Service consists of three men—the Secretary General, the Deputy Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary General—and two women serving as Deputy Secretaries General.

Compared to the situation as of December 31, 2021, when there were a total of 197 employees, the gender structure was similar, with 69% women and 31% men. However, there is a difference in the leadership composition, which at that time **consisted of two men—the Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General—and four women, including two Deputy Secretaries General and two Assistant Secretaries General**.

The Parliamentary Service of Montenegro has adopted a gender equality policy, considering that in 2022 the Gender Equality Committee approved the second **Action Plan for a Gender-Responsive Parliament of Montenegro 2022–2024**, which also applies to the Parliamentary Service. Representatives of the Parliamentary Service participated in the preparation of this plan. The objective of the Action Plan was to raise awareness on gender equality issues and the importance of integrating gender equality policies, as well as to establish mechanisms for achieving gender equality within the Parliament of Montenegro. The 2022–2024 Action Plan for a Gender-Responsive Parliament envisaged the development of a report/study on the use of gender-sensitive language in the Parliament of Montenegro, which would address this issue in the context of the Parliament's role in promoting gender equality and fostering a gender-equal political and institutional culture.¹³²

Additionally, as a result of long-standing cooperation between the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and the Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality, a publication titled "**The Importance and Role of Parliament in Achieving Gender Equality – A Welcome Book for New Members of Parliament**" was produced, along with **Guidelines for Reporting and Processing Cases of Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Based on Gender and Sex in the Workplace**. These Guidelines are part of efforts to create safer working and behavioral conditions within institutions, as well as to strengthen mechanisms for protection against sexual harassment.

¹³² The study was conducted between June and November 2023 and addressed five key research questions: Why is gender-sensitive language important? How does the use of gender-sensitive language promote the implementation of gender equality policies in the Parliament of Montenegro? What are the attitudes and perceptions of Members of Parliament towards gender-sensitive language? To what extent and in what ways is gender-sensitive language used in the Parliament of Montenegro? What strategies can be employed to promote the use of gender-sensitive language in Parliament?

The Parliamentary Service, as an institution committed to the advancement and achievement of gender equality, strives to fully comply with the provisions of the Gender Equality Act in all its activities, particularly in all stages of planning, decision-making, and implementation of actions within its remit, while simultaneously assessing the impact of these decisions and activities on the status of women and men. Acknowledging that employees are the most valuable resource of any institution, the Parliamentary Service has developed a robust strategic approach to human resource development. Consequently, in 2024, a new **Human Resources Development Strategy** was adopted, which is a gender-responsive document outlining defined activities aimed at achieving gender equality.

The General Secretary annually adopts a Training Plan, which includes sessions on management and leadership skills development, as well as specialized trainings on the basics of gender equality, gender-responsive budgeting, ex ante and ex post gender impact assessments of legislation, prevention of hate speech, and related topics. Additionally, employees participate in training programs organized by international organizations and institutions aimed, among other objectives, at educating women on gender equality to enable their active participation in Montenegro's political life.

When examining the budget of the Parliament of Montenegro for the years 2023 and 2024, it is noted that **€4,536,400.43 was allocated for gender-responsive activities and their implementation in 2023, and €4,803,059.04 for 2024**. The explanations in the aforementioned draft budget laws also mention that funds are allocated in total amounts for specific activities according to the inputs of spending units. Therefore, within the program classification, it is not always possible to precisely quantify the exact amount of funds dedicated exclusively to activities addressing the gender dimension.

The segment on the implementation of gender-responsive budgeting is still not part of the explanations in the draft laws on the final accounts of Montenegro's budget. In the reporting process on achieved goals, each budget spending unit that has identified a gender dimension within its activities should specifically highlight the effects achieved in this area when reporting on the execution of the program budget in the section on achieved goals. This is recorded in the part titled "Explanation of budget expenditures by program and organizational classification." The effects achieved in this area have also not yet been included in the explanations of the draft laws on the state budget final accounts established so far.

The Parliamentary Service continuously monitors the results of all undertaken activities and measures realized within a certain period, conducting evaluations of activities foreseen by the mentioned strategic acts or action plans on a semi-annual or annual basis, depending on needs. Additionally, during the annual performance evaluation of employees, attending all trainings held in the previous year is a mandatory part of the process and the performance evaluation form, along with making proposals for attending new trainings as needed.

One of the organizational units within the Parliamentary Service is the **Secretariat of the Committee for Gender Equality**, which performs professional and other tasks for the needs of this working body. This Secretariat represents the main unit dealing with gender equality issues at the Parliamentary Service level. It monitors the implementation of existing laws and policies related to gender equality and cooperates with international organizations and institutions to implement international standards and obligations in the field of gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other relevant international agreements. Furthermore, the Secretariat participates in organizing training sessions and seminars for employees and members of parliament, as well as public campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the importance of gender equality, combating violence against women, and other key topics. Among other responsibilities, the Secretariat communicates issues related to gender equality in cooperation with other units, organizes meetings involving relevant organizational units, and participates in the preparation of strategic and planning documents.

The Parliamentary Service maintains continuous and fairly intensive cooperation with the civil sector. Organizations dealing with gender equality, human rights, and women's protection attend Committee sessions either at the Committee's invitation or on their own initiative. Through this cooperation, the Committee ensures that the opinions and needs of citizens, especially women and other vulnerable groups, are taken into account during the drafting of laws and policies.

In addition, civil society organizations participate in the work of the Women's Parliament, which is organized once or twice a year by the Gender Equality Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro. The aim is to promote

and improve women's human rights in Montenegro, especially in the context of the European integration process. It also seeks to establish a critical approach toward the achieved results in this field, eliminate all forms of discrimination, and increase commitment to the promotion and protection of women's human rights and gender equality, which are essential for the democratic development of society.

State Prosecutor's Office

The State Prosecutor's Office, headed by the Supreme State Prosecutor, consists of 17 prosecutor's offices (the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, the Special State Prosecutor's Office, two Higher State Prosecutor's Offices, and thirteen Basic State Prosecutor's Offices) with a total of 414 employees. Of this number, 286 are women, accounting for 69%, while men number 128, or 31%.

Table 5: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
State Prosecutor's Office	414	128	286	69%	No

As of December 31, 2024, **women hold leadership positions in eight out of the 17 State Prosecutor's Offices, accounting for 47%**. These include two Higher State Prosecutor's Offices — Podgorica and Bijelo Polje — and six Basic State Prosecutor's Offices — Pljevlja, Kolašin, Plav, Berane, Kotor, and Cetinje. **Men occupy leadership roles in nine offices, or 53%**, which include the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, the Special State Prosecutor's Office, and seven Basic State Prosecutor's Offices — Podgorica, Nikšić, Herceg Novi, Bar, Ulcinj, Rožaje, and Bijelo Polje.

Compared to the situation as of December 31, 2021, **the number of women in leadership positions has increased**, from a total of seven women (41%) at that time to the current eight (47%). Meanwhile, the number of men in leadership roles decreased from ten (59%) to nine (53%) over the same period.

Recognizing the importance of gender equality issues, one of the strategic goals of the current Chief State Prosecutor is to advance the State Prosecutor's Office into a gender-responsive institution. To this end, cooperation has been established with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and a cooperation agreement was signed, which includes support for improving gender equality standards in accordance with the Gender Equality Seal. Simultaneously, collaboration with non-governmental organizations focused on gender equality and combating gender-based violence has been strengthened. To improve the institutional response to cases of domestic violence, the **Chief State Prosecutor issued binding Guidelines for the conduct of State Prosecutor's Offices in cases of violence within the family or domestic community**.

Within the State Prosecutor's Office, a **designated gender equality officer is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Law. However, other mechanisms and measures to advance gender equality—such as increasing the number of women in leadership positions, establishing programs to support women's professional development, or allocating specific budget lines for gender equality activities and gender mainstreaming—do not currently exist**. There is potential to maximize the impact of existing mechanisms. For instance, beyond legislative monitoring, the gender equality officer could provide support and input in defining necessary training programs in this field. Additionally, this officer could promote gender equality within the institution by facilitating cooperation across all departments within the State Prosecutor's Office through regular communication and implementation of gender equality policies. What we highlight as positive is **the existence of a plan and the commitment of the State Prosecutor's Office to establish measures for advancing gender equality in the upcoming period. Additionally, gender equality is set to be defined and incorporated into the institution's strategic documents starting from 2025**.

Regarding training and education, these are conducted for employees in judicial bodies through the Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centre. Prosecutors participate in gender equality trainings with a special focus on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Convention) and its practical application.

Additionally, through the cooperation agreement with UNDP, specialized gender equality trainings will be organized in 2025 for employees of the prosecution offices.

As previously mentioned, the prosecutorial organization cooperates with non-governmental organizations dealing with gender equality issues. This cooperation includes organizing regular meetings and supporting projects implemented by NGOs, which certainly provides opportunities to acquire new knowledge and transfer best practices from civil society organizations, thereby facilitating the process of gender mainstreaming within the institution.

Ministry of Public Administration

The Ministry of Public Administration performs administrative tasks related, among other things, to the area of state administration, including the organization, methods, and modes of work, management, civil service relations, accountability, transparency and openness of the work of state administration bodies, as well as inspection oversight concerning compliance with laws and other regulations governing state administration. This also encompasses the rights and obligations of civil servants and employees, the prohibition of discrimination, and the use of gender-sensitive language.

As of December 31, 2024, the Ministry of Public Administration employed a total of **113 staff members, of whom 69 (61%) were women and 44 (39%) were men**. The Ministry is headed by a **male Minister**. Additionally, two **Deputy Ministers and one General Director are men, while the acting female Secretaries, one General Director, and three acting General Directors are women**. This means that women statistically constitute the majority of the Ministry's leadership positions.

Table 6: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Public Administration	113	44	69	61%	No

Compared to the situation as of December 31, 2021, there were even more women in leadership positions. At that time, the **Ministry was headed by a female Minister**, and alongside her, **there were four other women and one man** in leadership roles within the Ministry.

The Ministry of Public Administration recognizes the integration of gender equality principles through ensuring equal access to job positions for all, as well as equal opportunities for professional development and training.

The institution has a **designated contact person for gender equality**, where one official, in addition to her regular duties, also performs tasks related to gender equality. Furthermore, another official has been appointed as a member of the working group responsible for drafting the National Gender Equality Strategy and, in this capacity, coordinates the definition of the Ministry's activities within this strategic document.

In 2022, the Ministry adopted the **Public Administration Reform Strategy 2022–2026**, which forms the basis of the institution's vision. Significant attention is dedicated to issues of inclusivity and accessibility through the implementation of activities in the following areas:

- Policy planning and development (including the supplementation of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) form with questions relevant to assessing the impact of proposed regulations on gender equality, improved strategic planning, reporting, and budgeting);
- Human resource management and training (implementation of training sessions within the Human Resources Administration, expansion of the Training Program for strategic planning in public administration to include modules on gender equality issues);
- Promotion of gender equality principles

The level of implementation of activities and the assessment of their effectiveness are monitored in accordance with the reporting schedule of the Public Administration Reform Strategy, and are reflected in the annual reports on the strategy's implementation.

The Ministry of Public Administration maintains ongoing cooperation with UNDP, within which a Reward Methodology for Excellence of Public Administration Employees in Montenegro was developed to promote gender equality. In this context, on the occasion of the International Day of Public Administration in 2024, the Ministry awarded officials from state bodies and local governments in the category "Support for Empowering Youth and Greater Inclusion of Vulnerable Population Groups in Social Processes, as well as Support for Gender Equality and Gender-Responsive Administration" for their achievements in the field of gender equality.

Based on the available data, it can be concluded that the **principle of gender-responsive budgeting** has not yet been introduced within the Ministry of Public Administration, given that the budgets for 2023 and 2024 do not include specific budget lines or allocated funds dedicated to activities related to gender equality. Regarding other available mechanisms aimed at enhancing the existing capacities of employees, like most state institutions, the Ministry relies primarily on training programs organized by the Human Resources Administration, while also enabling participation in trainings conducted by other institutions or organizations.

The Ministry of Public Administration plays a key role in transforming the public administration into a system that ensures equal opportunities for all citizens. Achieving this requires not only consistent application of legal regulations but, above all, the integration of gender equality principles and tools within its own structure and subsequently throughout the wider public sector.

The introduction of gender-responsive policies and the integration of a gender perspective into their development are prerequisites for meeting the standards set by the EU and international partners for Montenegro. To achieve this, it is necessary to systematically and continuously utilize available tools, wisely introduce new ones, and improve existing mechanisms. For example, the role of the gender equality officer within the Ministry of Public Administration could be elevated to a higher level, starting with prioritizing activities aimed at gender mainstreaming the institution rather than treating them as just another task. This includes providing adequate professional development opportunities, involving the officer in decision-making processes, relying on inputs gathered and prepared through continuous communication between the gender equality officer and all organizational units, and extending to planning activities and securing—or budgeting—the necessary resources.

Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights is an institution responsible, among other tasks, for the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms, the realization of the rights of minority peoples and other national communities, as well as protection against discrimination and the advancement of **gender equality**.

In this context, the Ministry adopted the **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025 (NSGE)**, which serves as the overarching policy framework for advancing gender equality in Montenegro throughout this five-year period. The strategic goal outlined in this document is to achieve a higher level of gender equality in Montenegro by 2025, through three operational objectives:

- **Operational Objective 1:** Improve the implementation of the existing normative framework in enforcing gender equality policies and protection against discrimination based on sex and gender;
- **Operational Objective 2:** Improve public policies and public education to reduce the level of stereotypes and prejudices against women and individuals with diverse sex and gender identities;
- **Operational Objective 3:** Increase the participation of women and individuals with diverse sex and gender identities in areas that enable access to resources and the benefits derived from their use.

The operational objectives of the NSRR are elaborated through specific measures that enable monitoring and evaluation of its implementation progress, with clearly defined main responsible parties for various activities. It is important to highlight that this, as well as all other strategic documents, is formulated in accordance with the **Methodology for Policy Development, Drafting, and Monitoring of Strategic Documents**. This methodology introduces the obligation to plan policies based on verifiable data, which subsequently allows for the formulation

of realistic goals. Consequently, the focus shifts towards performance-oriented policy creation, ensuring that strategic documents remain under comprehensive institutional oversight at every stage of implementation. The detailed implementation of the Strategy is defined through two action plans: the Action Plan for 2021–2022 and the Action Plan for 2023–2024.¹³³

The Ministry emphasized that the quality of implementation of the mentioned Strategy was significantly affected by political, social, economic, and security factors, most of which could not have been anticipated during the development of the NSRR.¹³⁴ It is important to highlight that during the fourth quarter of 2022, an external evaluation of the NSRR and the 2021–2022 Action Plan was conducted. The key findings of this mid-term evaluation indicate that only a small number of activities were implemented compared to those planned, largely due to significant external changes affecting the context for carrying out the activities and measures. The majority of activities were carried out under Operational Goal 1, while the fewest were implemented under Operational Goal 2. The evaluation noted that despite the good quality of the Action Plan, the level of its implementation was not satisfactory.¹³⁵ Therefore, the new Action Plan for 2023–2024 was adopted, whose implementation success will become clearer during its evaluation.

During the preparation and implementation of the budget, laws, and strategic documents within the competence of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, this institution integrates and applies the principle of gender equality at all levels through the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) mechanism, which was introduced into the program budget in 2022. The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights has allocated funds for gender equality in its budgets for both 2023 and 2024, within activities that simultaneously cover human rights protection and management of EU funds. The funds allocated for this activity in 2024 amount to €296,675.96, of which 55.6% is designated for salaries, while only €115,720.96 (39%) is planned for specific activities (services and other expenditures) in 2024.

The total number of employees in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, **headed by a male minister, is 40, of whom 13 are men (32.5%) and 27 are women (67.5%). At the leadership level, there are 4 men — the minister, the state secretary, the secretary, and the acting general director — and 3 women serving as general directors.**

Table 7: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry for Human and Minority Rights	40	13	27	67,5%	No

133 The strategic planning system in Montenegro is based on the Regulation on the manner and procedure for drafting, harmonizing, and monitoring the implementation of strategic documents ("Official Gazette of Montenegro," No. 54/2018), which establishes minimum quality criteria for every strategic document adopted by the Government of Montenegro. This regulation is complemented and further developed by the Methodology for Policy Development, Drafting, and Monitoring the Implementation of Strategic Documents, which is implemented by the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro – Sector for Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination, in accordance with its mandate in the area of policy coordination.

134 More precisely, the Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan for the period 2021–2022 indicates that the pace and progress of the planned activities were slowed down due to several external challenges. These external challenges fall into three categories: (i) political challenges arising from the change of government at the national level following the parliamentary elections in August 2020; (ii) security challenges related to a cyberattack on the Government's website, which resulted in a slowdown of all government-level activities during the last two quarters of 2022; and (iii) the health and social crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which also had a negative impact on the implementation of the planned activities.

135 The two-year implementation of the activities under the NSRR and the Action Plan for 2021–2022 did not resolve the strategic issues faced by women and men, as the execution of measures and activities remained at a low level. Only a small number of activities were implemented compared to those planned, due to significant external changes in the context affecting their realization. The majority of activities were carried out under Operational Goal 1, while the fewest were under Operational Goal 2. A systemic issue affecting the entire public administration is the lack of adequate knowledge transfer and institutional memory, which are lost due to staff turnover and replacement. There is ambiguity regarding the mandate, roles, and responsibilities of certain gender equality mechanisms—primarily the contact persons in ministries and local governments—resulting in these mechanisms being neither efficient nor effective. Frequent changes in personnel responsible for gender equality matters within institutions also significantly impact the implementation of activities.

Considering that this ministry was part of the Ministry of Justice during the previous composition of the Government of Montenegro, it is not possible to perform a comparative analysis of the representation of men and women as of December 31, 2021.

Regarding measures to increase the representation of women in leadership positions, it is important to highlight that in April 2024, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, together with the non-governmental organization Center for Women's Rights, jointly prepared a document entitled "**Joint Position on the Comprehensive Reform of Electoral Legislation.**" This document was submitted to the Committee for Comprehensive Electoral Reform of the Parliament of Montenegro and represents support for electoral reforms aimed at increasing women's participation in politics. The document calls for the introduction of a 40% quota for women on electoral lists, stricter sanctions for non-compliance with quotas, and the achievement of gender equality in the composition of the Government. An identical request was submitted to the same parliamentary committee in early 2023. Additionally, the Ministry proposed to the Ministry of Public Administration that the draft Law on the Government of Montenegro, currently under preparation, should stipulate that the share of women in the Government's composition cannot be less than 40%.

The central body responsible for gender equality within the Ministry is the **Department for Gender Equality Affairs, headed by a Chief. The Department is responsible** for the protection and advancement of equal opportunity policies, preparing proposals, coordinating, and monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Act and the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021–2025, along with its accompanying action plans.

In addition to preparing and coordinating the monitoring of the implementation of the aforementioned draft laws and Strategy, the Department for Gender Equality Affairs also coordinates activities aimed at establishing gender equality. It provides expert support in the preparation of local action plans for gender equality, monitors the implementation of international documents and conventions, adopted international standards in the field of gender equality, promotes activities related to gender equality education, and more.

In cooperation with the OSCE Mission, in December 2021, the Department developed an **Instrument for Assessing the Gender Mainstreaming of Strategic Documents**, intended as a tool for providing feedback on strategic documents prior to their submission to the Government for adoption. The instrument includes clearly defined criteria for evaluating the level of gender mainstreaming. This document was submitted to the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro for further procedure in February 2022.¹³⁶

In this context, the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro, when issuing opinions on draft/proposed strategic documents, assesses, among other criteria, their compliance with the Regulation on the procedure for the preparation, harmonization, and monitoring of the implementation of strategic documents, as well as the principle of gender mainstreaming in public policies. This means that institutions cannot receive a positive opinion on a draft/proposal of a strategic document, and consequently, the document cannot be adopted by the Government if the principle of gender mainstreaming is not fulfilled.

Employees within the Ministry have access to gender equality training conducted by the Human Resources Administration, as well as education and training programs offered by international organizations, the Office of the Protector of Human Rights (Ombudsman), non-governmental organizations, and other partner institutions.

Regarding cooperation with NGOs that contribute to achieving gender equality in Montenegrin society through their capacities, these organizations actively participate in all stages of drafting legal regulations and strategic documents under the Ministry's jurisdiction, starting from working groups for drafting laws and other acts, through participation in monitoring bodies for their implementation, to the realization of activities. Furthermore, the Ministry annually publishes calls for proposals for civil society organizations to co-finance projects that promote the advancement of gender equality.

An additional monitoring mechanism for the implementation of gender equality policies pertains to activities within **Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment, and Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights. In this regard, the Ministry is responsible for coordinating and reporting to the European Commission on alignment with the EU acquis and the implementation of policies that promote equality between**

¹³⁶ Meanwhile, based on this instrument, amendments have been made to the following: the Methodology for Policy Development, Drafting, and Monitoring the Implementation of Strategic Documents; the Training Program for the Professional Development of Civil Servants in Strategic Planning, which now includes a gender dimension; and the Forms for Providing Opinions on Strategic Documents, as well as annual and final reports.

men and women in employment and social security. This also includes policies addressing the prohibition of discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, religion and belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation—i.e., **policies within the domain of fundamental rights and EU citizens' rights.** Within the framework of the EU integration process and activities under Chapters 23 and 19, the Ministry, in cooperation with other competent institutions, has predefined obligations that must be fulfilled. The implementation of these obligations is actively monitored, and regular reports are submitted to the European Commission.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography is one of the 25 ministries within the 44th Government of Montenegro. Among other responsibilities, it handles the preparation of regulations related to social and child protection, family protection, pension and disability insurance, veteran and disability care, and promotes the development of demographic policy. The institution is headed by a minister.

As of December 31, 2024, the total number of employees in the Ministry is 88, of which **69 (78.4%) are women and 19 (21.6%) are men.** Regarding leadership positions, in addition to the aforementioned **male minister, the acting Secretary of the Ministry is also male, while the Deputy Secretary and the acting General Directors are women.**

Table 8: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography	88	19	69	78,4%	No

Given that this ministry was newly established, it is not possible to conduct a comparative analysis of the representation of men and women as of December 31, 2021.¹³⁷

Within the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care, and Demography, gender equality policies are partially incorporated into its operations. In this context, there is a Directorate for Family Care and Protection against Gender-Based Violence, which addresses the protection of women and girls from violence, as well as gender equality issues within its competencies. Additionally, in recent years, efforts have been made to ensure that all strategic documents adopted by this Ministry are gender-responsive, including the institution's budget. Consequently, the Social and Child Protection System Development Strategy, Deinstitutionalization Strategy, **Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence, and the National Plan for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention have all been gender mainstreamed.**

According to data provided by the Ministry, the total budget allocated for gender-mainstreamed activities amounted to €1,616,345.00 annually for both 2023 and 2024.

In the upcoming period, an Intersectoral Team for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of Strategies will be established. This team will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of each of the aforementioned strategies. Regular quarterly meetings are planned to monitor the progress of these strategic documents, with a particular focus on their impact on achieving gender equality. All ministries and institutions will be involved in interdepartmental and intersectoral cooperation, primarily collaborating with the NGO sector and international organizations.

It is important to emphasize that cooperation with civil society organizations engaged in the protection against violence toward women and domestic violence is intensive and occurs on a daily basis. These NGOs provide essential services within the social and child protection system, including shelter services, counseling for victims of violence, and SOS helpline support for victims of violence.

¹³⁷ At the end of 2020, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was split between the Ministry of Finance and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Economic Development, which took over the labour sector. Subsequently, in 2022, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare was re-established, only to be divided again in 2024 into two ministries: the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue, and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Demography and Family Care.

An additional mechanism for monitoring the implementation of gender equality policies pertains to activities under **Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment**. In this area, the Ministry is responsible for coordinating and reporting to the European Commission on the harmonization with the EU acquis and the implementation of policies that promote equality between men and women in employment and social security, as well as the prohibition of discrimination based on racial and ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, and sexual orientation. In this context, through the EU integration process and activities within Chapter 19, the Ministry, in cooperation with other relevant institutions, has predefined obligations that must be fulfilled. The implementation of these obligations is actively monitored, and regular reports are submitted to the European Commission.

Based on the provided response, it can be concluded that the **Ministry has yet to clearly define the mandate and role of the person responsible for gender equality**. The current arrangement entails that issues related to women's rights are referred to the Directorate for Family Care and Protection against Gender-Based Violence, which deals with protecting women and girls from violence, as well as gender equality issues within its scope. However, considering that the Directorate does not cover all gender equality matters within the Ministry, nor does it influence the formulation of all policies where gender equality aspects may be relevant—focusing primarily on gender-based violence—it is necessary to define the position and role of a dedicated gender equality officer. This officer would address gender equality across the entire Ministry and be actively involved in monitoring the gender mainstreaming of activities defined within the program budget.

Given that the process of filling leadership positions remains a matter of political agreement, meaning these positions are considered political appointments, the Ministry views its capacity to implement planned measures aimed at increasing the representation of women in leadership roles as limited under the current circumstances.

Regarding trainings and educational programs, the Ministry does not organize specialized professional development programs specifically for women. Employees, regardless of whether they hold senior or junior leadership positions, occasionally attend training sessions organized by the Human Resources Administration, as do all other Ministry staff. A similar situation exists concerning gender equality trainings, which have been completed by only a small number of employees.

Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue is responsible for tasks related to the preparation of regulations in the areas of labor relations, occupational health and safety, labor market and employment, wages, and other work-related issues. It also manages various registers in these fields and issues relevant permits. The ministry is headed by a **female minister**.

As of December 31, 2024, the Ministry employed a total of 89 staff members, **of whom 67 (75.3%) were women and 22 (24.7%) were men**. Women constitute the majority of the leadership positions. As previously mentioned, the ministry is headed by a female minister; two deputy ministers, the ministry secretary, and five general directors are women, while there is one male general director.

Table 9: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue	89	22	67	75,3%	Yes

Given that this is a newly established ministry, it is not possible to conduct a comparative analysis of the representation of men and women as of December 31, 2021¹³⁸.

¹³⁸ The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Affairs and Demography functioned as a single institution until August 2024 and the restructuring of the 44th Government of Montenegro. Therefore, it is not possible to conduct a comparative analysis as of December 31, 2021.

The Ministry has not adopted specific gender equality policies. There is no dedicated unit within the Ministry that addresses gender equality issues, nor has a gender focal point been designated. However, to support the Ministry in matters related to gender equality, a gender expert has been engaged within the **framework of a project funded by the European Union**.

Data on the budget allocated for gender mainstreaming and the implementation of activities in the field of gender equality **is not available**. Regarding training and education, a portion of the Ministry's staff has participated in gender equality training sessions organized by UNDP.

Given the above, there is **significant room for improvement in advancing gender equality** within the Ministry—starting with the proper appointment of a dedicated gender equality officer or the establishment of a unit responsible for gender-related matters. Additionally, further training is needed on mainstreaming gender in existing policies, particularly in the context of the importance of women's economic empowerment through incentive-based employment policies and continued staff development. As previously mentioned, this Ministry and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family and Demography were previously a single institution. During that time, numerous gender equality activities were implemented, including the gender mainstreaming of several strategic documents. However, following the institutional split, those gender-sensitive documents have remained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family and Demography. On the other hand, in the context of employment policies, the Ministry is the lead institution in developing measures aimed at promoting women's labour force participation and upholding the principle of economic gender equality. Therefore, it is crucial to further strengthen the institutional capacities of this Ministry to enable the gender mainstreaming of both policies and budget planning for their implementation in a sustainable and systematic manner.

Ministry of Economic Development

The Ministry of Economic Development works to enhance competitiveness, improve the investment climate, and foster cooperation with the business community. It strives to improve the business environment, facilitate the operations of small and medium-sized enterprises, and strengthen entrepreneurship. The internal organization of the Ministry consists of five Directorates, the Internal Audit Department, the Minister's Cabinet, the Department for Legal, Human Resources, and General Affairs, the Department for Financial and Accounting Affairs and Public Procurement, and the Information Technology Department.¹³⁹ As of 2025, the Ministry employs a total of 189 staff, **of whom 123 (65%) are women and 66 (35%) are men**. Regarding the leadership structure, the Minister is male, all five General Directors are women, the Ministry's Secretary is a woman, and among the three State Secretaries, two are men and one is a woman.

Table 10: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Economic Development	189	66	123	65%	No

The Ministry of Economic Development does not have an adopted gender equality policy nor a designated person or body responsible for gender equality matters within the institution. However, the Directorate for Enhancing Economic Competitiveness, which is responsible for drafting the Strategy for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy, and the Competitiveness Improvement Program, takes gender equality principles into account during the development of these documents. Through the Competitiveness Improvement Program, in 2023, a total of 147 women-owned SMEs (38.78%) were supported, receiving a total of €831,280.64, which accounts for 34.86% of the total funding, aimed at achieving gender equality in the business sector.¹⁴⁰ In 2024, 38 women-majority-owned SMEs (40.43%) were supported, receiving

¹³⁹ Ministry of Economic Development, Rulebook on Internal Organization and Job Classification of the Ministry of Economic Development, Podgorica, 2024. Retrieved from: <https://wapi.gov.me/download-preview/8c8ba3b7-3a15-4d4b-9336-c41c81750087?version=1.0>.

¹⁴⁰ A total of 379 SMEs were supported with a total amount of €2,384,397.84.

a total of €764,719.04, which represents 28.49% of the allocated funding.¹⁴¹ The Government of Montenegro has so far adopted two strategies specifically addressing the development of women's entrepreneurship. The most recent valid strategy covers the period 2021–2024 and was adopted in 2021, alongside an Action Plan for its implementation for the period 2021–2022.¹⁴² The SME Strategy is aligned with the Strategy for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship.¹⁴³

Ministry of Finance

In the Ministry of Finance, the total number of employees for 2025 is 263, **of which 64 are men (24.3%) and 199 are women (75.7%)**. In leadership positions within the Ministry, there are 6 men and 12 women.

The number of men in leadership roles was 8 as of December 31, 2021, and decreased to 6 as of December 31, 2024. Conversely, the number of women in leadership positions increased from 10 on December 31, 2021, to 12 on December 31, 2024.

Table 11: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Finance	263	64	199	75,7%	No

The Ministry of Finance of Montenegro, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission, is actively working on integrating gender equality into budgetary processes.

The Ministry incorporates gender equality principles through several key mechanisms, especially in the areas of budgeting and financial planning. These principles are applied across all institutional activities as follows:

- 1. Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB);**
- 2. Normative framework and legislative amendments;**
- 3. Training and education of employees;**
- 4. Cooperation with other institutions;**
- 5. Gender analysis in public expenditure policies.**

A methodology for assessing the impact of the budget on gender equality and guidelines for gender-responsive budgeting have been developed and integrated into the Budget Management Information System (BMIS). Additionally, a training manual on gender-responsive budgeting was created. During 2023, the Ministry prepared the state budget based on gender analysis. The process is planned to be finalized by establishing a normative framework through amendments to the Law on Budget and Fiscal Responsibility. These activities highlight the Ministry's commitment to integrating gender equality into budget policies and processes.

In addition to budgeting, the Ministry conducts gender analyses in the areas of public investments, tax policy, and social benefits to ensure that economic measures do not exacerbate gender inequalities.

Although there are no specific data on measures within the Ministry of Finance itself, initiatives to promote gender equality are being undertaken at the national level. For example, the Investment and Development Fund (IRF) launched the "**Women on Boards**" program aimed at developing women leaders for positions of economic decision-making. This program seeks to increase women's participation on boards of directors and in senior management roles within companies.

141 A total of 94 SMEs were supported with a total amount of €2,644,787.13.

142 Strategy for the development of female entrepreneurship for the period 2021–2024. of 2021 is the only strategic document that has been evaluated as updated among 11 strategic documents adopted in 2021. Retrieved from: https://mladiniksica.me/strategija-rазвоја-зенског-предузетништва-једни-ородени-стратешки-документ/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

143 Information was obtained by written request to the contact e-mail address of the Ministry of Economic Development.

Besides the IRF program, other initiatives in Montenegro support the professional development of women. Conferences such as "Women in the Security Sector" are held to empower women in leadership positions across various sectors. Additionally, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights supports programs promoting the economic empowerment of women, recognizing their key contribution to the country's economic development.

The monitoring of results from gender equality measures is carried out through various mechanisms. For instance, strategies and action plans set clear goals and indicators to track progress. Institutions like the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights oversee the implementation of these measures and publish progress reports.

However, specific data on the monitoring of results within the Ministry of Finance are not publicly available. Within the Ministry of Finance, no designated person is assigned to oversee and implement gender equality policies.

The Ministry of Finance of Montenegro integrates gender equality issues into its strategic operations through several key mechanisms:

1. **National Gender Equality Strategy 2021–2025**, adopted by the Government, serves as the overarching framework for advancing gender equality in the country. This strategy covers various sectors, including finance, and defines goals and measures to achieve gender equality.
2. **Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)**, implemented by the Ministry of Finance, involves analyzing budget programs from the perspective of their impact on women and men. This approach ensures that financial resources are allocated in a way that contributes to reducing gender inequalities.
3. On December 26, 2024, the Government adopted the **Financial Technologies Strategy (FINTECH)** for Montenegro 2025–2029, aligned with the Government Strategic Council (GSV) methodology (with positive opinion from GSV). The strategy includes a dedicated section on gender mainstreaming — specifically, section **1.4: Integration of Gender Issues into Public Policies**.
4. The implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy is monitored through regular reports prepared by competent institutions. These reports provide information on activities undertaken, achieved results, and indicators measuring progress in gender equality. Based on these data, the effectiveness of measures taken and their impact on reducing gender disparities is evaluated. Additionally, there is a continuous emphasis on the daily use of gender-sensitive language in official communication.

Through these mechanisms, the Ministry of Finance strives to ensure that gender equality issues are an integral part of its strategic activities, with continuous monitoring and enhancement of their impact on achieving equality between women and men in Montenegro.

Various trainings and educational programs are conducted for employees to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality. Key initiatives include:

1. Training for gender equality focal points (OSCE Mission);
2. Employee education on integrating the gender perspective (OSCE Mission);
3. Training on monitoring the implementation of the National Gender Equality Strategy (OSCE Mission);
4. Trainings organized by the Human Resources Administration on this topic;
5. Trainings conducted by UNDP related to gender analysis and mainstreaming.¹⁴⁴

Ministry of European Affairs

The current composition of the Ministry of European Affairs for 2025 consists of 72 employees, including the Minister. According to gender distribution criteria, women constitute the majority in the Ministry, with **51 employees or 70.8%**, while men account for **21 employees or 29.2%**. The senior management includes 5 men and 3 women (including the head), whereas the expert-management level comprises 5 men and 18 women.

¹⁴⁴ The information was obtained through a written inquiry sent to the official contact email address of the Ministry of Finance

Table 12: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of European Affairs	72	21	51	70,8%	Yes

The Ministry of European Affairs was established in 2022. At that time, the senior management team consisted of 2 women and 2 men, while the expert-management staff included 16 women and 7 men. The Ministry currently does not have a developed gender equality policy, nor a designated body or person responsible for monitoring and implementing such policy. Previous strategic plans have not included guidelines, activities, training, or targets aimed at achieving gender equality.

Working groups formed for the purposes of EU accession negotiation chapters include representatives from NGOs. A member of the working group for Chapter 23, "Justice and Fundamental Rights," is a representative from the Center for Women's Rights. In cooperation with this organization, the Ministry of European Affairs organized a gender equality panel at the beginning of 2024. The panel presented guidelines for improving gender equality and combating gender-based and domestic violence within the EU integration process. These guidelines are based on a Gender Analysis of the European Commission's 2023 report on Montenegro, conducted by the Center for Women's Rights with financial support from the European Union and the Ministry of European Affairs through the EU4ME project.¹⁴⁵

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro does not have a formally adopted gender equality policy; however, it consistently advocates for its promotion and affirmation in accordance with the Constitution of Montenegro, national legislation, and international obligations. At the international level, the Ministry actively promotes gender equality through multilateral and bilateral activities, particularly within the United Nations system, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Council of Europe. In this context, gender equality, women's empowerment, and combating violence against women were prioritized during Montenegro's membership in the UN Human Rights Council for the period 2022–2024. Simultaneously, these issues represent a key part of the efforts to implement the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, both within Goal 5 and horizontally, through the application of the principle of equal opportunities across all 17 goals. Montenegro promotes such a horizontal approach in other multilateral forums as well, making the integration of gender issues a defining feature of the Cooperation Strategy between the Government of Montenegro and the OSCE Mission in Montenegro. Considering the Government of Montenegro's commitment to continuously improving the media environment and freedoms, and acknowledging the additional security risks faced by female journalists, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a voluntary contribution in December 2024 to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media's project titled "Safety of Female Journalists Online" (SOFJO). Within NATO, the Ministry contributes to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, "Women, Peace and Security," focusing on increasing women's participation in decision-making and peace processes, protecting women and girls in conflict situations, and integrating a gender perspective into peace operations. During Montenegro's chairmanship of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in 2022–2023, gender equality issues were included among the priorities, encompassing the fight against gender-based violence and femicide, access to justice for women and girls, economic empowerment of women, and enhanced participation of women in public and political life. The Podgorica Declaration marked a historic milestone by including the fight against gender-based violence and femicide among the commitments of the SEECP participants for the first time.

At the domestic level, in March 2025, the Ministry supported an initiative by its employees to establish the **Network of Women Diplomats of Montenegro**, a consultative forum aimed at promoting inclusion, equal opportunities, and the integration of a gender perspective across all Ministry activities. The Ministry also co-sponsored a resolution proclaiming June 24th as the International Day of Women in Diplomacy. Furthermore, the Montenegrin representative on the Executive Board of UN Women has served as both Vice-Chair and subsequently Chair of that body.

¹⁴⁵ The information was obtained through a written inquiry sent to the official contact email address of the Ministry of European Affairs.

As of March 31, 2025, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employed a total of 263 staff members, **of whom 160 were women (60.8%) and 103 men (39.2%)**. Despite women constituting the majority of employees, leadership positions—specifically the State Secretary and General Secretary—are currently held by men.

Table 13: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	263	103	160	60,8%	No

Training and professional development programs within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are equally accessible to both men and women. The monitoring indicator used is the number of employees attending at least one training program annually, including the percentage of women among them. Specifically, regarding trainings aimed at raising awareness of gender equality, the Ministry relies on sessions organized by the Human Resources Directorate as well as other providers (e.g., Gender Budgeting, Educational Programs for Acquiring Key Gender Equality Skills, etc.). Currently, the Ministry does not have a dedicated gender equality officer or body, but it participates in an inter-ministerial working group tasked with implementing the Action Plan for the Strategy on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence. The establishment of a dedicated gender equality body or the appointment of a responsible person is planned in the near future to enhance the application of gender policies within the Ministry. Furthermore, the integration of a gender perspective is planned as part of the development of Montenegro's Foreign Policy Strategy for 2025, in accordance with the Government's methodology for drafting and monitoring strategic documents.

The Government's 2025 plan foresees the adoption of the Foreign Policy Strategy of Montenegro. In line with the Government's methodology for policy development and strategic document implementation monitoring, the Ministry will ensure the integration of a gender perspective during the preparation and subsequent implementation of this document, with the goal of promoting gender equality and combating discrimination.¹⁴⁶

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management

The internal organization of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management consists of 6 directorates, 5 departments, the Minister's Cabinet, the Service for General Affairs, Human Resources and Free Access to Information, and the Service for Finance, Accounting, and Public Procurement. In 2025, the Ministry employs a total of 219 staff members, including the Minister, of whom 91 are men (41.6%) and 128 are women (58.4%). The leadership team comprises 8 men and 2 women.^{147 148} For the purpose of this analysis, data publicly available at the time of report preparation were used.

Table 14: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	219	91	128	58,4%	No

The Agrobudget, governed by the annual regulation on the conditions, methods, and timing of implementing agrarian policy measures, allocated €100,000 in 2022 specifically to support women's entrepreneurship in agriculture. However, this form of support was omitted from the Agrobudgets for 2023, 2024, and 2025.

¹⁴⁶ The information was obtained through a written inquiry sent to the official contact email address of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁴⁷ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, List of Civil Servants with Their Official Titles, Government of Montenegro, March 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/b438b3f3-6467-4ad1-b4d6-b89da1c08b1a>.

¹⁴⁸ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, List of Public Officials and Payroll Records of Their Salaries, Other Earnings, and Allowances Related to the Performance of Public Functions, Government of Montenegro, March 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/9de02236-771e-45b4-be92-af5418ceb6c6>.

Nevertheless, the last three Agrobudgets include additional financial support measures, providing a higher co-financing rate for investments made by women who are heads of agricultural households compared to other beneficiaries. This applies within the framework of support for: investments in primary crop production; achieving animal welfare standards in livestock farming; construction of wells and cisterns; waste management in livestock production; adaptation of mountain mountain pastures; improving the quality of raw milk; and investments in on-farm processing.¹⁴⁹ ¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹

Human Resources Administration

The Human Resources Administration is responsible for tasks including, but not limited to, conducting internal and public announcements for filling job positions across most state bodies, providing opinions on acts related to internal organization and systematization of state bodies, monitoring the performance evaluations of civil servants and employees, conducting performance assessments, organizing and implementing professional development and training programs for civil servants and employees, as well as maintaining the central personnel registry.

As of December 31, 2024, the total number of employees was 61, of which 45 (73.8%) were women and 16 (26.2%) were men. **The institution's director and two deputy directors are men, while one deputy director is a woman.** In contrast, as of December 31, 2021, the situation was more balanced, with the director and one deputy director being men, and two deputy directors being women.

Table 15: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Human Resources Administration	61	16	45	74%	No

The Human Resources Directorate **does not have a separately adopted gender equality policy** but operates in accordance with existing legal regulations and international obligations. Within its remit, it is responsible for numerous measures and activities from the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy, primarily through training of civil servants and employees at both state and local The Directorate is recognized as a key institution responsible for overall capacity development in Montenegro and has been selected by UNDP for the project "Strengthening Capacities for Gender Equality," which serves as a bridge between the principle of integrating gender equality and the ongoing public administration reform. This project provides an ideal framework for piloting the Gender Equality Seal in public institutions, offering a thorough understanding of current practices and capacities, as well as excellent insight into the opportunities arising from systemic gender mainstreaming. To implement the activities foreseen by the project, a working team was established, which also functions as the gender equality body within the Human Resources Directorate. In addition to the project-specific measures, the team is involved in implementing all measures and activities related to the integration of gender equality principles, including monitoring and reporting processes that engage all organizational units within the Directorate.

The funding of the Directorate is primarily linked to the budget of Montenegro, while resources for implementing certain measures come from projects financed by pre-accession funds. Within the scope of the institution's sector activities, earmarked funds have been identified and allocated specifically for targeted activities related to gender equality. **Accordingly, a budget of €50,000 was allocated for the implementation of gender equality projects in both 2024 and 2025.** However, in 2023, the budget did not include a dedicated item for activities related to gender equality implementation.

¹⁴⁹ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Agro-budget 2023, Government of Montenegro, 2023, pp. 36, 39, 41, 48, 53, 64, 66. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5c832c0e-d5bf-4cfe-9e7b-e5644068d6d2>.

¹⁵⁰ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Agro-budget 2024, Government of Montenegro, 2024, pp. 44, 48, 49, 56, 72, 74. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/7fd65f59-2614-4c44-bdf9-97acb641292d>.

¹⁵¹ Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Agro-budget 2025, Government of Montenegro, 2025, pp. 42, 45, 47, 54, 68, 70. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.me/cyr/clanak/vlada-crne-gore-usvojila-agrubudzet-za-2025-godinu>.

As previously mentioned, this institution serves as a key hub for the education and capacity building of employees in state bodies and local governments. Employees within the Directorate also participate in general and specialized training programs that incorporate topics related to gender equality. It is important to highlight that the Directorate for Human Resources, aiming to create a sustainable system where knowledge and expertise within the public sector circulate and multiply, also conducts an accredited training program for trainers in the field of gender equality.

Regarding cooperation with non-governmental and international organizations, the partnership with UNDP stands out as the most significant. UNDP is the primary partner in the institutional transformation of the Directorate, providing the greatest support in strengthening public administration capacities, with a primary focus on institutional gender mainstreaming.

The Capital City Podgorica

The Assembly of the Capital City – Podgorica adopted the **Decision on Achieving Gender Equality** in 2019, which regulates the manner of **implementing gender equality in the Capital City**, specifically within:

- The Assembly of the Capital City and its working bodies;
- The working bodies of the Mayor;
- The working bodies of the Capital City administration;
- The local government bodies and services of the Capital City and the Assembly Service;
- The governing bodies of public services established by the Capital City;
- The bodies of local communities and local centers within the territory of the Capital City.

Additionally, in September 2022, the Assembly of the Capital City adopted the **Local Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in the Capital City for the period 2023–2025**. As a developmental document of the Capital City of Podgorica, this plan establishes a comprehensive and harmonized municipal policy aimed at improving gender equality.

In accordance with the Decision on Achieving Gender Equality, during the selection, appointment, and placement of local officials, employees, and the formation of official delegations of the Capital City, gender equality is generally ensured proportionally to the representation of that gender in the overall population, with a minimum of 30% representation of the less represented gender.

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that as of December 31, 2024, **the Mayor of Podgorica is male and has one male and one female deputy. The total number of employees in the administrative bodies and services of the Capital City of Podgorica is 859, of whom 437 (50.8%) are women and 422 (49.2%) are men.**

Table 16: Overview of the number of employees in 2024

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Capital City of Podgorica	859	422	437	50,8%	No

The Chief Administrator of the Capital City and the City Manager are men, while the Chief City Architect is a woman. Out of a total of 13 administrative bodies, four (30.7%) are led by women, and nine (69.3%) are led by men (Table 1.1). The same distribution applies to the professional and specialized services within the Capital City (Table 1.2).

Table 17: Management structure of the administrative bodies of the Capital City

No.	Administrative body	Men leaders	Women leaders
1.	Secretariat for Local Self-Government		Yes
2.	Secretariat for Financial Affairs and Budget Analysis	Yes	
3.	Secretariat for Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development	Yes	
4.	Secretariat for Communal Affairs	Yes	
5.	Secretariat for Entrepreneurship and Investments	Yes	
6.	Secretariat for Transport	Yes	
7.	Secretariat for Sports	Yes	
8.	Secretariat for Culture		Yes
9.	Local Public Transport Administration	Yes	
10.	Property Directorate		Yes
11.	District for the Protection of Property and Legal Interests of the Capital City	Yes	
12.	District for Inspection Affairs	Yes	

Table 18: Management structure of the services of the Capital City

No.	Special services	Men leaders	Women leaders
1.	Municipal Police Service	Yes	
2.	Protection and rescue service	Yes	
3.	Internal Audit and Financial Risk Management Department	Yes	
No.	Stručne službe	Men leaders	Women leaders
1.	Mayor's Office		Yes
2.	Chief Administrator Service	Yes	
3.	Office of the Chief City Architect		Yes
4.	International Cooperation and Partnerships Service		Yes
5.	Information System Service	Yes	
6.	Public Procurement and Commercial Affairs Department	Yes	
7.	Citizens' Service	Yes	
8.	Joint Affairs Service	Yes	
9.	Agricultural and Rural Development Support Service		Yes
10.	Public Relations Department		Yes

According to data provided by the Capital City, as of December 31, 2024, there were 13 women and 21 men employed in senior management positions, classified as high-level managerial staff. This compares to December 31, 2021, when there were 13 women and 28 men in similar roles.

Within the Secretariat for Social Welfare operates the **Office for Gender Equality**, established in September 2021. The Office is responsible for promoting gender equality and women's rights, advancing gender-sensitive upbringing and education, improving protection against violence towards women, as well as ensuring balanced

representation of women and men in all segments of social life. It focuses on fostering gender equality in areas such as employment, social and healthcare services, education, media, culture, sports, and more.

The Office cooperates with relevant institutions as well as domestic and international organizations. It is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the **Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality in the Capital City for the period 2023–2025**. A representative from the Office coordinates the reporting process through communication with all bodies and services of the Capital City.

The budget of the Office for Gender Equality is quite modest, amounting to €10,000 for both 2023 and 2024, which is clearly insufficient to implement more extensive and significant measures for advancing gender equality, such as specialized training programs for employees in the field of gender equality or gender mainstreaming of strategic documents. Regarding employee training within the Capital City system, very few participate in training, especially in the area of gender equality, and primarily those organized by the Human Resources Directorate. Employee education in the upcoming period could be very important for raising awareness of the human resources available within the Capital City system, which is a prerequisite for creating gender-sensitive institutions.

The Capital City maintains continuous cooperation with a larger number of NGOs dealing with gender equality issues, with a focus on organizations working on supporting women victims of violence, single mothers, SOS hotlines for women and children, and provides support for various humanitarian actions and other thematic events.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE CAPITAL CITY – PODGORICA

The Assembly is the representative body of the citizens of the Capital City and consists of 59 councilors. The current composition of the Capital City Assembly was constituted at sessions held on November 28 and December 28, 2024, following the elections held on September 29, 2024.

The Assembly of the Capital City is currently chaired by a woman, while the secretary is a man. Out of the total number of councilors, 36 (61%) are men and 23 (39%) are women. In the previous term, the Assembly also had a higher proportion of female councilors than the legally mandated minimum of 30%. Specifically, in the previous assembly of 61 councilors, 23 (37.3%) were women.

Municipality of Berane

According to the latest available data from 2022, the staff composition of the Municipality of Berane (Secretariats, services, and administrations) comprises 244 employees, **of whom 155 are men (63.5%) and 89 are women (36.5%)**. There are 8 women in managerial positions. As a reallocation of functions is currently underway, official data on the current number of employees is not yet available — two deputy presidents have been appointed, one of whom is a woman. Additionally, a woman serves as the head of the local parliament.

Table 19: Overview of the number of employees in 2022

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Municipality of Berane ¹⁵²	244	155	89	36,5%	Yes

The Municipality of Berane has adopted a gender equality policy through several strategic documents. In the past period, the municipality developed two action plans for achieving gender equality (2015–2017 and 2019–2022). The currently valid Local Action Plan for Gender Equality (LAPGE) 2023–2025 was developed with the support of the OSCE Mission to Montenegro. The plan received a positive opinion from the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and other relevant stakeholders, indicating the municipality's commitment to becoming a gender-responsive local government.

¹⁵² The Municipality of Berane emphasized that they do not have official data on the number of employees after 2022 due to the ongoing redistribution of functions.

Employees¹⁵³ working on gender equality issues play a key role in promoting and implementing gender equality policies at the local level. They participate in the development and implementation of local action plans for gender equality and coordinate activities with state institutions, NGOs, and international organizations to ensure effective implementation of gender equality measures. Additionally, they organize trainings and workshops for municipal employees and the wider public aimed at raising awareness about the importance of gender equality and eliminating gender stereotypes. Within the Municipality of Berane, a Gender Equality Council has also been established; however, information regarding the frequency of its meetings and the content of its agendas is not publicly available. The Secretariat for General Administration and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the OSCE office in Montenegro, organized a four-day training for trainers on gender mainstreaming of public policies at the local level. Participants in the training were employees from the secretariats and services of the Municipality of Berane. The training aimed to increase understanding of gender equality issues locally, improving knowledge and skills for designing gender-responsive policies to create a society of equal opportunities. Besides this training, workshops for improving digital literacy were also organized knowledge and skills for developing gender-responsive policies aimed at creating a society of equal opportunities and possibilities. In addition to this training, workshops were also organized to enhance digital literacy.

Budget of the Municipality of Berane for gender equality measures in 2023, the Municipality of Berane allocated €500.00 from its budget for the implementation of measures to promote gender equality. According to information provided by the Municipality, in 2024, €2,000.00 was secured from the municipal budget for this purpose, while the OSCE donated €11,000.00—of which €500.00 has been spent. The Municipality of Berane has established a dedicated budget line to support women's entrepreneurship. In 2024, €20,000.00 was allocated to support 13 women entrepreneurs. For 2025, a public call for proposals was announced, with €30,000.00 earmarked for the same purpose.^{154 155}

As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign against violence against women, the municipality, in cooperation with NGOs including "Crnogorska Iskra," organized roundtable discussions aimed at raising awareness about gender equality and preventing violence against women.¹⁵⁶

Municipality of Bijelo Polje

As of 2025, the Municipality of Bijelo Polje employs a total of 337 staff members, of which **137 are women, representing 41% of the workforce**. Additionally, women hold 16 leadership positions within the municipality.

Table 20: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Municipality of Bijelo Polje	337	200	137	40,6%	No

In 2007, the OSCE Mission to Montenegro and the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with 23 Montenegrin municipalities, with the Municipality of Bijelo Polje being among the first signatories. Since then, three Local Action Plans for Achieving Gender Equality have been adopted (2011–2012, 2014–2017, 2020–2024), alongside the introduction of a gender-responsive budget in the field of sports. **May 19th was established as Gender Equality Day** in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje—commemorating the day the municipality adopted its first Local Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality and formed the Women's Council Club.

153 In responses to the questionnaire, the Municipality of Berane used the term 'employees' without specifying gender. The same formulation has been retained in the text.

154 Municipality of Berane, Decision on the allocation of funds to support women's entrepreneurship, 2024. Retrieved from : <https://berane.me/servisne-informacije/odluka-o-dodjeli-sredstava-za-podrsku-zenskom-preduzetnistvu-2/>.

155 Municipality of Berane, Public competition for the allocation of funds from the budget of the Municipality of Berane for the year 2025 dedicated to supporting women's entrepreneurship, 2025. Retrieved from: <https://berane.me/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Konkurs-zensko-preduzetnistvo.pdf>.

156 The information was obtained by a written request to the contact e-mail address of the Municipality of Bijelo Polje.

In the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, gender equality responsibilities are assigned to the Office for Gender Equality (established in 2012), the Gender Equality Council, and the Women's Council Club (established in 2023, the first of its kind in Montenegro).

The Office for Gender Equality is tasked with promoting gender equality across all areas of social life, enhancing protection against violence toward women and domestic violence, reviewing draft acts related to gender equality, and monitoring the implementation of the Local Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality. Three employees are employed in the Office.

The Gender Equality Council reviews draft decisions and other legal acts related to the implementation of gender equality principles. It monitors the enforcement of these rights through the application of decisions, regulations, and other relevant instruments. The Council also proposes measures aimed at improving gender equality standards and cooperates with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in this area. The Gender Equality Council consists of a Chairwoman and six members.

The goals and principles of the **Women's Councilors' Club** include: promoting gender equality at all levels of decision-making, encouraging greater participation of women in public and political life, improving the status of women and children in all spheres of society, fostering and advancing solidarity and humanitarian values, promoting volunteerism and mutual support. The Club is composed of 13 female councilors from all political parties represented in the local parliament.

The team that worked on the development of the Local Action Plan (LAP) for Gender Equality also monitors its implementation and, in cooperation with the Office for Gender Equality, participates in the organization and execution of specific activities. The Gender Equality Council monitors the implementation of the LAP and is involved in selected activities, while the Women's Councilors' Club implements certain actions and goals in line with its work program. For the implementation of the 2024 Local Action Plan for Gender Equality, the Municipal Budget Decision of the Municipality of Bijelo Polje has allocated €7,000.

Since 2019, the Municipality of Bijelo Polje has maintained a dedicated budget line to support women's entrepreneurship. To date, 43 women entrepreneurs have received financial support totaling €140,000. Employment-related outcomes for women entrepreneurs are monitored through the Revenue and Customs Administration.

In 2024, the Municipality of Bijelo Polje became the second municipality in Montenegro to adopt a highly significant Decision on the Registration and Collection of Sex-Disaggregated Statistical Data, the implementation of which is currently in preparation. Through the ongoing activities of the Office for Gender Equality, and in cooperation with local NGOs from Bijelo Polje, as well as other national and international organizations, municipal employees have opportunities for education and the promotion of gender equality awareness.¹⁵⁷

Municipality of Plav

According to 2025 data, a total of 118 individuals are employed in the Municipality of Plav, of whom **20 are women (17%) and 98 are men (83%)**. In contrast, when it comes to leadership positions, there are 9 men and only 1 woman.

Table 21: Overview of the number of employees in 2025

	Total	Men	Women	Percentage of women	Woman in a leadership position
Municipality of Plav	118	98	20	17%	No

The Municipality of Plav recognizes gender equality as a key component of its development and has undertaken measures at various levels to improve the position of women in society. The designated Gender Equality Focal Point within the Municipality is responsible for cooperating with all municipal employees and promoting activities aimed at advancing gender equality—particularly the equal representation of women and men in leadership and decision-making positions.

¹⁵⁷ The information was obtained by a written request to the contact e-mail address of the Municipality of Bijelo Polje.

To support greater participation of women in social and political life, the Women's Councilors' Club operates as an informal parliamentary body that promotes the role and contribution of women at the local level.

One of the Municipality of Plav's key gender equality initiatives is the support for women's entrepreneurship, as well as backing the activities of the Women's Councilors' Club—thus strengthening the political and social role of women. Gender equality is addressed through action plans and strategies developed within the "Open Government Partnership – OGP Local" project. Additionally, it has been integrated into the Strategic Development Plan of the Municipality of Plav (2025–2032), which includes specific measures to improve the status of women, including women engaged in agriculture. The local government's planning framework seeks to ensure gender-balanced participation in all local-level activities, raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, and promote greater inclusion of women—especially young women—in private business, politics, and socially beneficial projects.

To further institutional awareness of gender equality, employees of the Municipality of Plav have the opportunity to participate in training programs such as "Gender Responsive Budgeting" and "Gender Equality at the Local Level." All members involved in the development of the Local Action Plan for Gender Equality are also active participants in the Multisectoral Forum "Local Government and Society", which contributed to the plan's creation, implementation monitoring, and public promotion. In 2024, €4,000 has been allocated to support women's entrepreneurship, reinforcing the development of women's leadership and the economic empowerment of women in the municipality.¹⁵⁸



¹⁵⁸ The information was obtained through a written inquiry sent to the official contact email address of the Municipality of Plav.



ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF CITIZENS OF MONTENEGRO AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEES ON GENDER EQUALITY

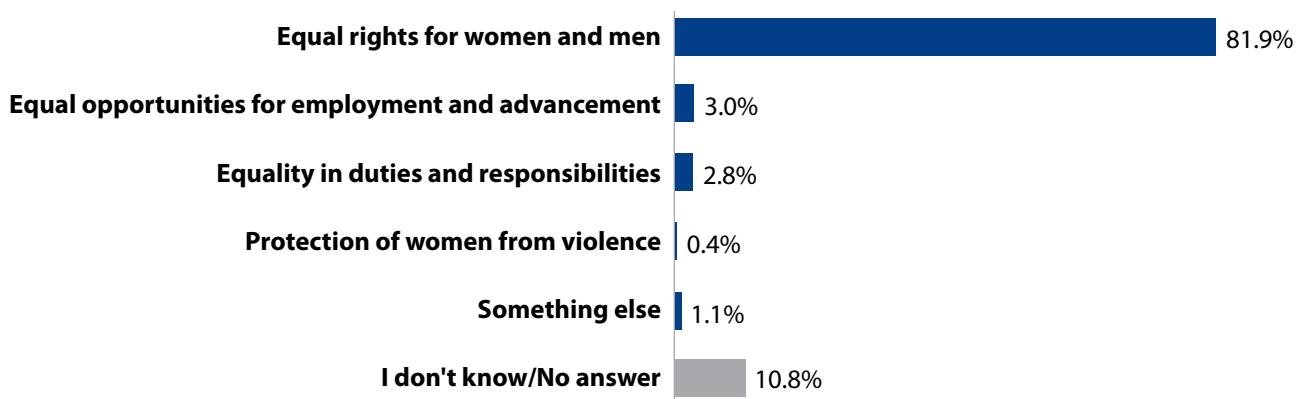
Knowledge and Attitudes on Gender Equality

Gender equality is a key issue in modern societies, referring to the equal treatment of all people, regardless of their gender. This means that women, men, and individuals of all gender identities have equal opportunities and rights in all areas of life, including education, employment, politics, and private life. Although many countries have made progress in this area, gender equality remains a challenge both globally and locally. In this research, through a survey conducted among citizens of Montenegro and employees of public institutions, we aimed to gain insight into their understanding and attitudes toward gender equality.

Understanding of Gender Equality Among Citizens

Respondents were asked what the term "gender equality" means to them, using an open-ended question that allowed them to freely express their answers. The most frequently given responses were grouped during the analysis. An overwhelming majority of respondents (81.9%) understood "gender equality" as equal rights for women and men. A variety of opinions were expressed, mostly relating to equality in rights, respect, and treatment between men and women. The need for equal rights in all areas of life—including family, work, society, and politics—was frequently emphasized. Many respondents pointed out the importance of an equal distribution of household responsibilities and the need to combat violence against women. Concerns were also raised about existing social inequalities and discrimination against women. Views were also expressed regarding equality in the workplace, legal frameworks, and decision-making opportunities. An analysis of the data by gender showed no difference between men and women in how they interpreted the term "gender equality."

Graph 1: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: What do you understand by gender equality? (N=1005)

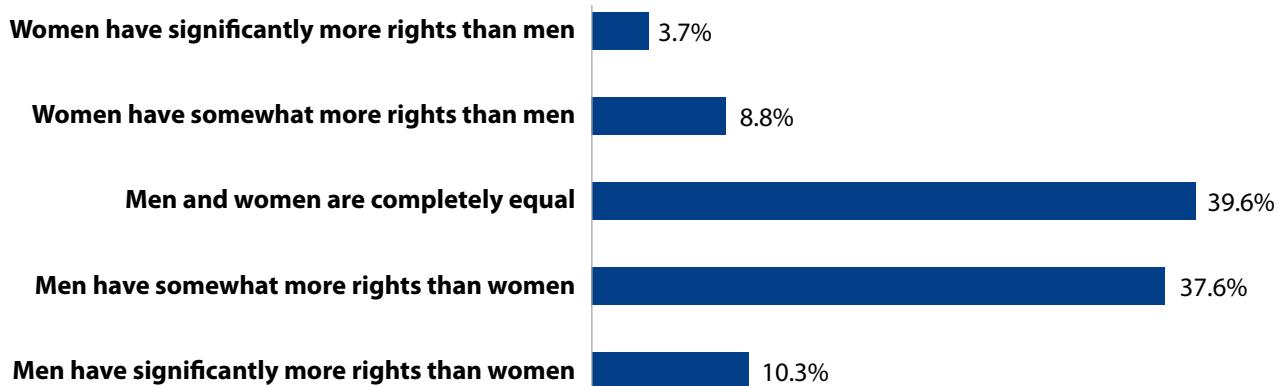


"That men and women have the same rights and can equally participate in decision-making."
(Analysis of citizens' attitudes: N=1005)

"That women are protected from violence and have equal rights with men."
(Analysis of citizens' attitudes: N=1005)

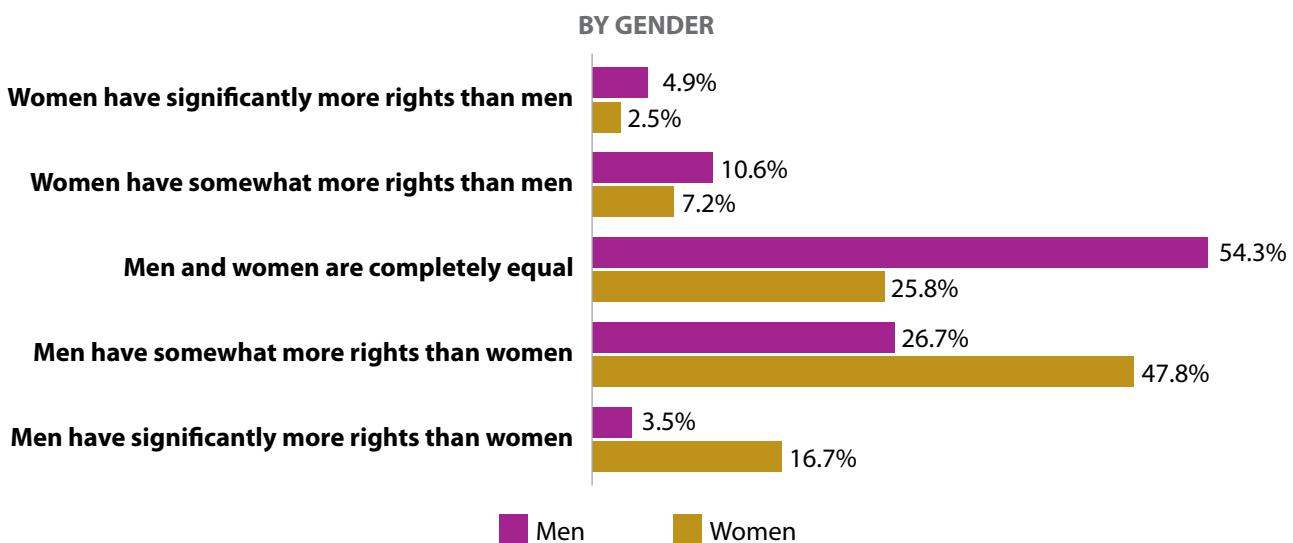
Nearly half of the general population sample (47.9%) believes that men have somewhat or significantly more rights than women. A much smaller portion (12.5%) thinks that women have more rights, while 39.6% believe that men and women are completely equal.

Graph 2: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you think women and men are equal in Montenegro?
(N=1005)



An analysis of the data by gender among respondents from the general population shows that men generally believe that both genders are completely equal (54.3%). On the other hand, among women, the prevailing view is that men have somewhat more rights than they do (47.8%). This difference in the perception of gender equality highlights the actual position of women in society and further indicates the need to encourage change—particularly in shifting men's attitudes—while simultaneously empowering both women and men. One quarter of women (25.8%) state that both genders are equal, while one quarter of men (26.7%) believe that they themselves actually have somewhat more rights than women. The number of respondents from either gender who believe that women have more rights than men is very small.

Graph 3: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent, in your opinion, are women and men equal in Montenegro?
By gender (N=1005)



Respondents who believe that men and women are not fully equal were given the opportunity to suggest what they consider to be the most important measure for achieving gender equality in Montenegro. Based on their answers, the greatest focus is placed on improving the legal framework and combating violence against women. **According to the results, as many as 63.9% of respondents believe that “stricter laws to prevent domestic violence and harassment of women” is the most important measure. This highlights a recognized need**

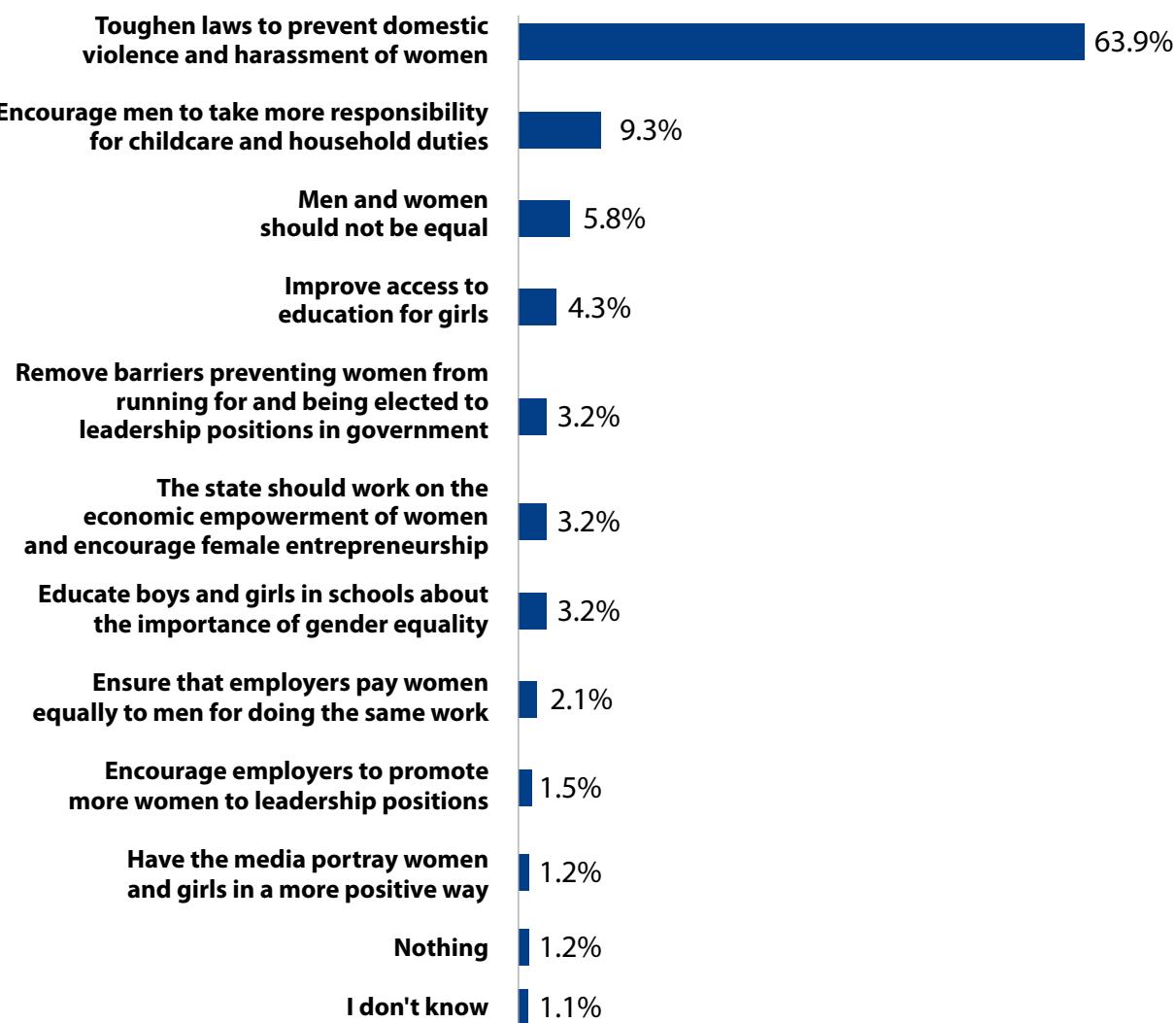
for stronger legislation and better protection of women from violence, which remains a key societal challenge. It also reflects a perception of the law as the most important—if not the only—mechanism for change, which relates to a broader cultural worldview.

On the other hand, this finding suggests that citizens are either not sufficiently informed about or do not believe in the effectiveness of so-called “soft” measures, such as education, training, school curriculum reform, or changes in employer attitudes toward women. All of this points to the continued need for strategically targeted campaigns and work with specific population groups.

The second most frequently mentioned measure (9.3%) relates to increasing men’s responsibility for childcare and household tasks. This response reflects the importance of an equal division of parenting and domestic responsibilities between men and women, which can contribute to reducing gender stereotypes and improving gender equality in household roles, as well as achieving a better work-life balance for women.

Other measures—such as improving education, economically empowering women, and increasing the number of women in leadership positions—were also recognized as important, but were mentioned less frequently. The data show that there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of which measure they consider the most important for achieving gender equality in Montenegro.

Graph 4: Analysis of citizens’ attitudes: In your opinion, what is the most important measure that should be taken to achieve equality between men and women in Montenegro? (N=608)



Significant disparities in the level of gender equality remain across various aspects of life. When asked about access to higher education, **76.5% of respondents from the general population believe that both genders have equal standing**, while only 6.1% think women are in a more favorable position and 17.4% believe men are privileged—indicating a general perception of equality in access to education.

In terms of average earnings and personal income, 65.4% perceive gender equality, but 29% believe men hold an advantage in this area.

When it comes to career advancement opportunities, 61.4% of respondents believe chances are equal, while one-third (32.3%) think men have a more favorable position. This suggests a perception of greater equality in professional settings, although the sense that men are “privileged” still persists.

A majority (60.4%) believe that men and women are equal in making financial decisions within households, yet 30.3% feel that men dominate this area.

Regarding **representation and participation in social and political life, 56.8% see gender equality**, while 37.8% think men have the upper hand.

The most pronounced inequality is observed in inheritance rights, where more than half of respondents (56.5%) believe men are favored, and only 5.7% see women as having an advantage.

Gender-based violence is also widely recognized, with 50.3% of respondents stating that women are more often victims, compared to only 13.2% who believe the opposite.

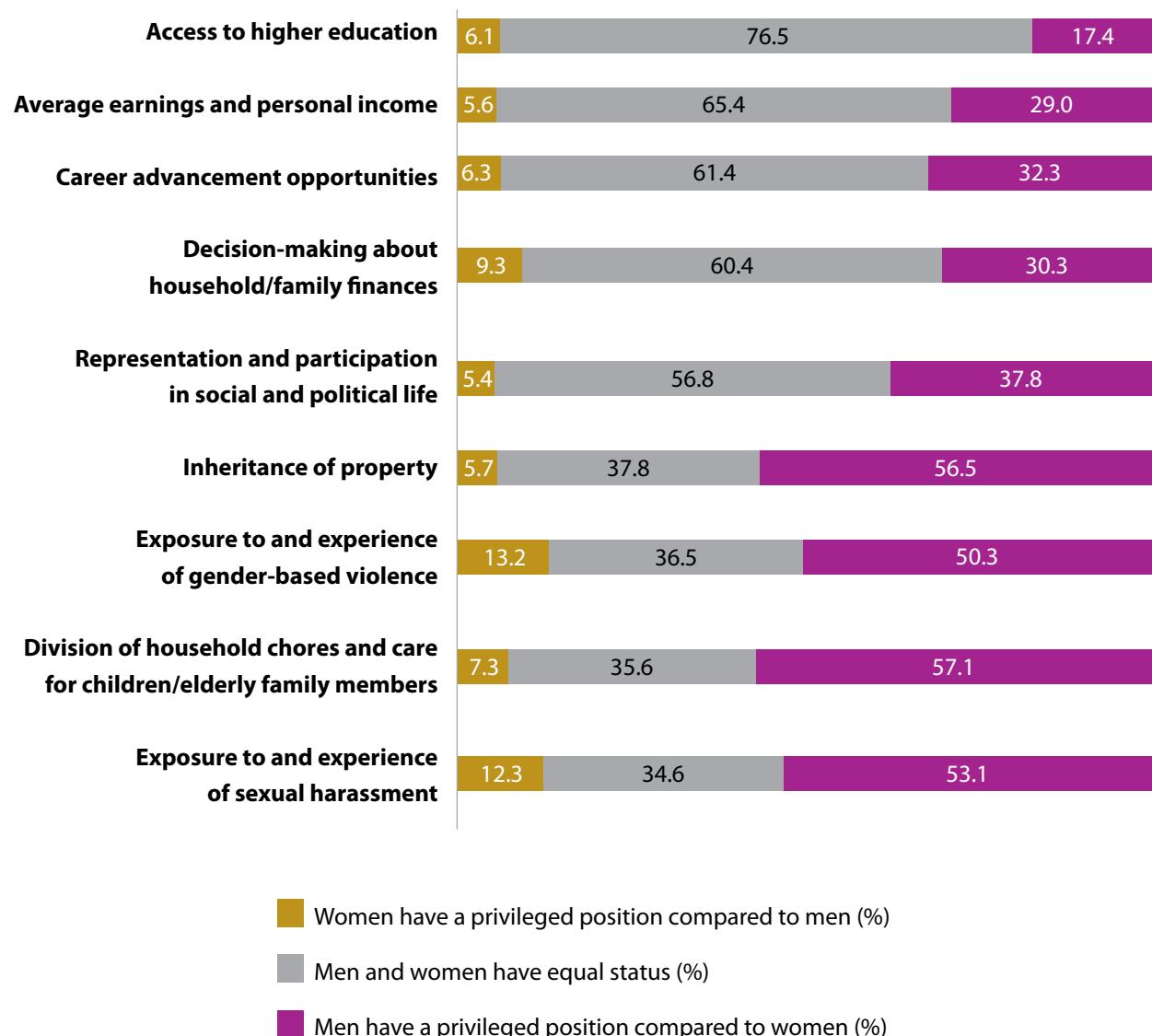
Unequal distribution of household chores and care responsibilities further underscores gender inequality as **57.1% believe women are overburdened with these duties**, while only 7.3% think men are in a less favorable position.

A similar trend is noted in exposure to sexual harassment, with **53.1% of respondents saying women are more disadvantaged in this regard**, compared to 12.3% who believe men face greater harm.

Overall, the responses point to a recognized inequality between women and men—particularly in areas of violence, sexual harassment, and household responsibilities. While there is a perception of equality in education, decision-making within households, and career advancement, men continue to enjoy a more favorable position in most other areas of life.



Graph 5: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Rank the opinions based on whether people think that women have a privileged position compared to men, men and women are equal, or men have a privileged position compared to women? (N=1005)



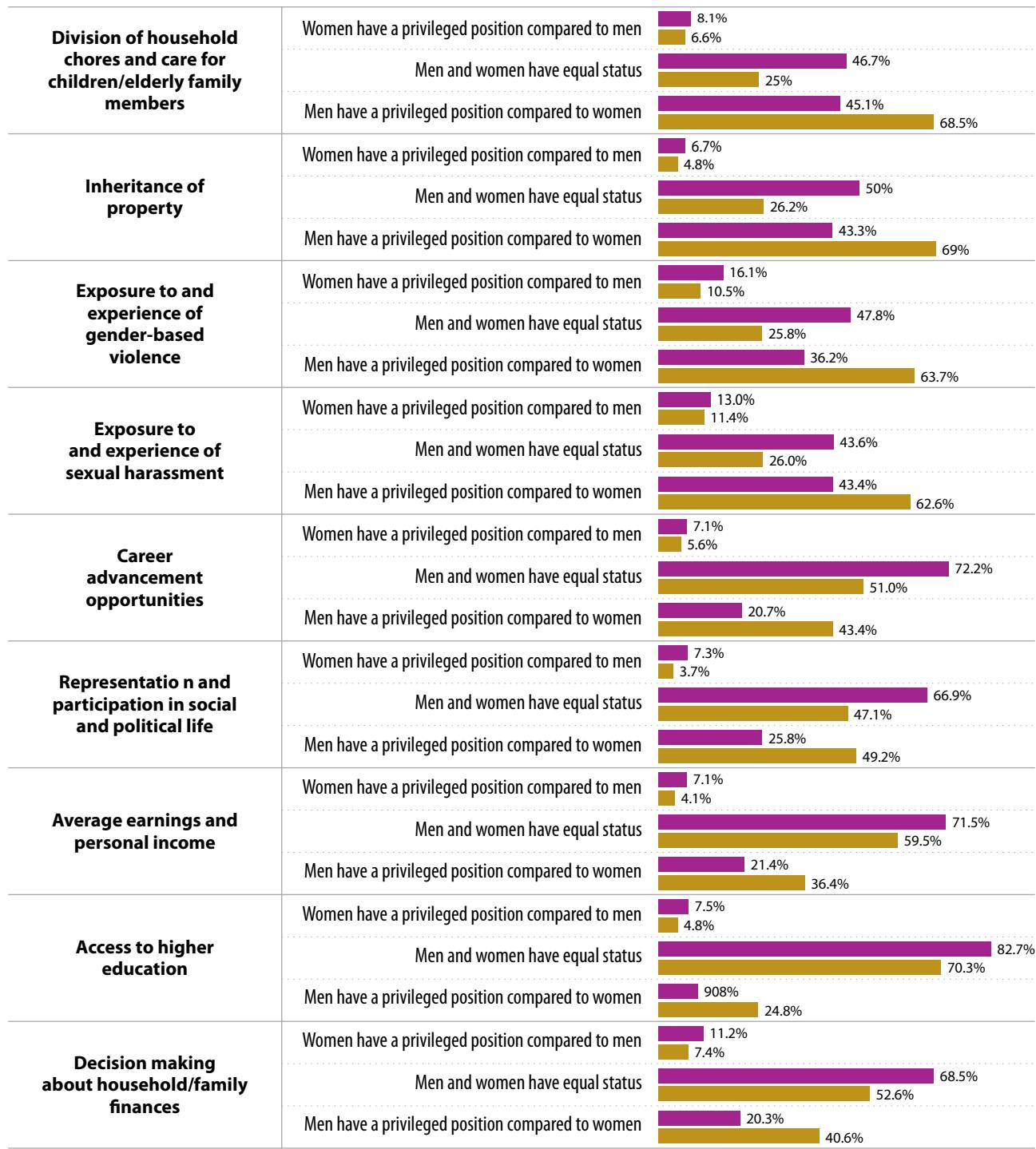
Based on the presented data, significant gender differences are evident in the perception of privilege across various areas of life and society. **Women, to a much greater extent than men, believe that men hold a privileged position—particularly in matters of inheritance (69.0%), exposure to gender-based violence (63.7%), sexual harassment (62.6%), and in terms of average earnings and personal income (36.4%). Conversely, men are more likely to state that positions are equal—most notably in access to higher education (82.7%), average income (71.5%), and career advancement opportunities (72.2%).**

When it comes to financial decision-making within households, men more often perceive balance (68.5%), while 40.0% of women still believe that men have a privileged position. In the realm of political and social participation, perceptions are divided: 49.2% of women believe that men have the advantage, while 66.9% of men assess participation as equal.

These results point to pronounced gender differences in the perception of equality and fairness, with women more frequently recognizing inequality in key areas such as property rights, violence, and economic opportunities.

Graph 6: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Rank the opinions based on whether people think that women have a privileged position compared to men, men and women are equal, or men have a privileged position compared to women — by gender (N=1005)

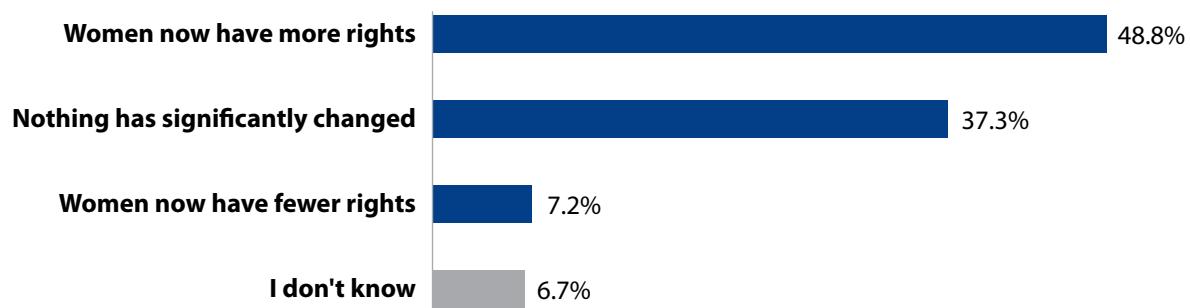
BY GENDER



 Men  Women

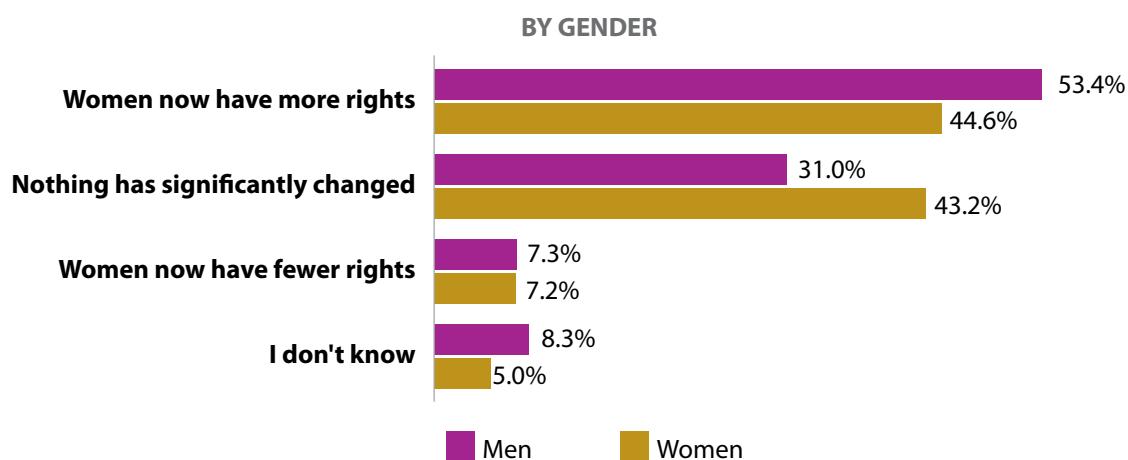
Looking at the past three years, 48.8% of respondents from the general population believe that women's rights have improved, while slightly more than one-third (37.3%) do not perceive any significant changes. A smaller percentage (7.2%) believe that women's rights have diminished, and 6.7% have no clear opinion on the matter.

Graph 7: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Looking at the past three years, would you say that the situation in Montenegro has changed when it comes to women's rights? (N=1005)



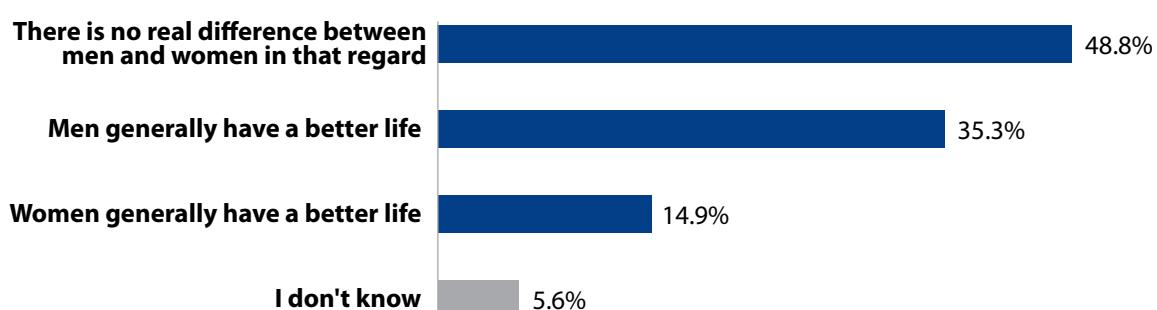
The results show that a significant portion of respondents recognize progress over the past three years; however, **nearly half of the women (43.2% of women** from the general population sample) **do not perceive any significant changes. Men are more likely to see improvements in the status of women in society**—more than half of male respondents (53.4%) **believe that women's rights have improved.**

Graph 8: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Looking at the past three years, would you say that the situation in Montenegro has changed when it comes to women's rights? By gender (N=1005)



Nearly half of the respondents from the general population (44.2%) believe that there is no real difference in the quality of life between men and women in Montenegro, while a **significant portion thinks that men generally have a better life (35.3%)**. A smaller percentage of respondents (14.9%) believe that women have a better life.

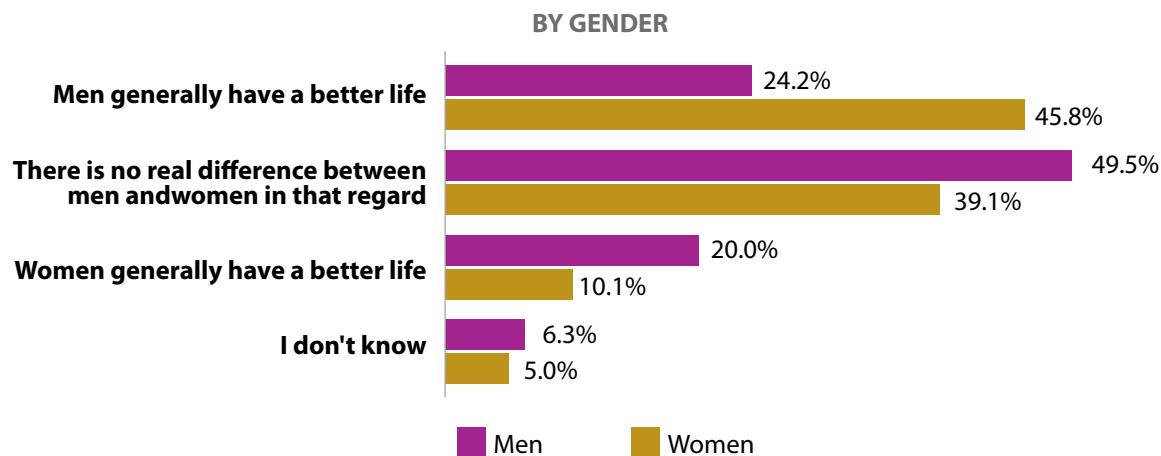
Graph 9: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Speaking generally about the quality of life of men and women in Montenegro, would you say that women or men have a better life, or do you think there is no real difference? (N=1005)



The data reveal notable differences in how men and women perceive the quality of life in Montenegro.

The largest share of men (49.5%) believe there is no real difference in quality of life between men and women, while that percentage is somewhat lower among women (39.1%). **At the same time, 45.8% of women believe that men have a better life, compared to only 24.2% of men who share that view—indicating a stronger perception of gender inequality among women.** Additionally, 20% of men believe that women have a better life, whereas only 10.1% of women from the general population think the same. These findings suggest that men are more likely to believe in equality—or even female advantage—while women are more likely to recognize inequality in quality of life. Moreover, men's perceptions may point to possible gaps in awareness or knowledge of real-life conditions—something that could be confirmed by comparing these survey results with official statistical data.

Graph 10: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Speaking generally about the quality of life of men and women in Montenegro, would you say that women or men have a better life, or do you think there is no real difference? By gender (N=1005)



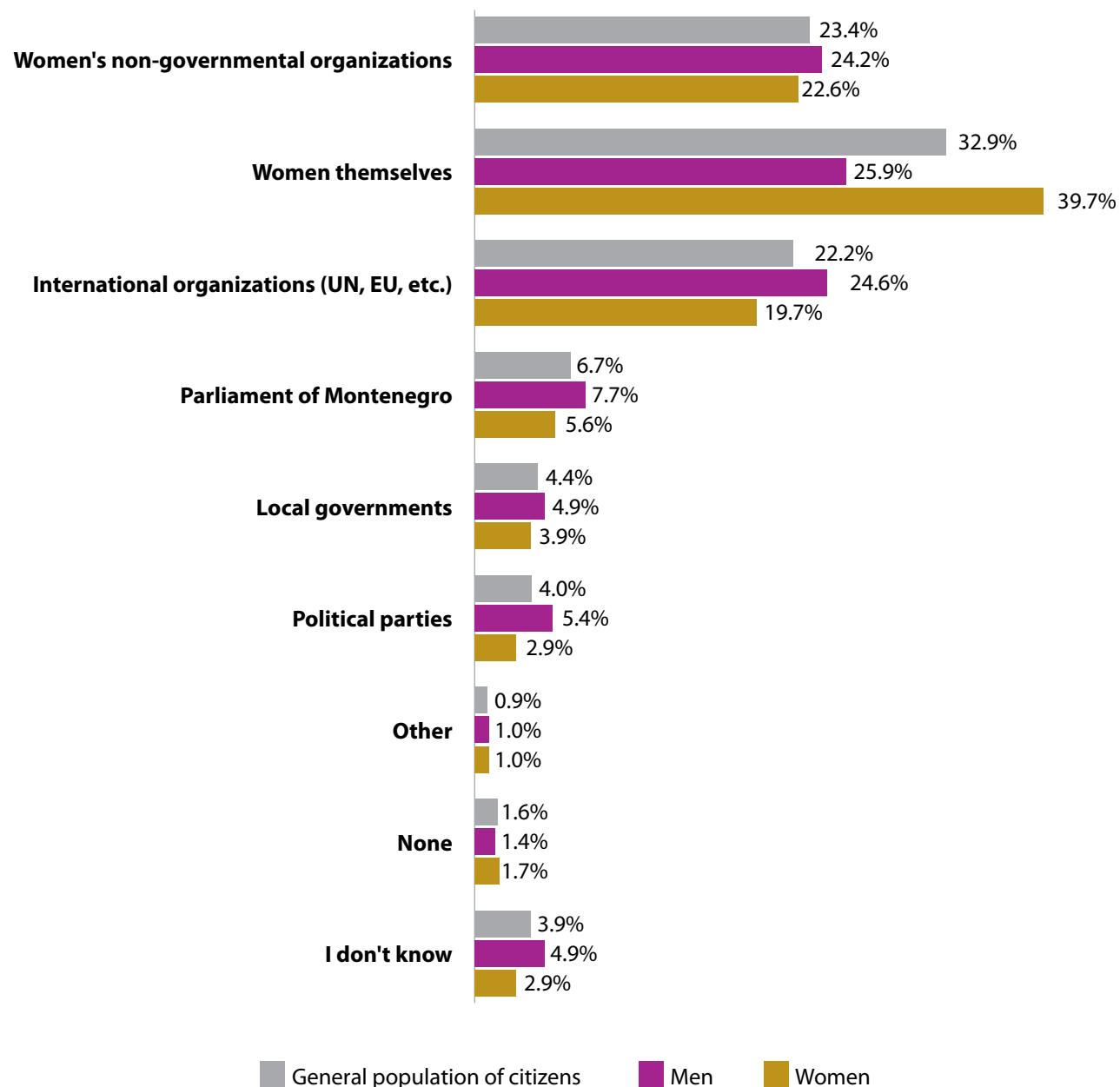
The data shows that the general population of Montenegro recognizes women's non-governmental organizations as key actors in improving the lives of women, with 23.4% of the general population believing they have the greatest impact. **A significant role is also attributed to women themselves, according to 32.9% of respondents.**

International organizations (UN, EU, etc.) are likewise recognized as important actors, with similar levels of support (22.2% of the general population). The data shows no difference between the opinions of men and women on this issue.

Overall, the results suggest that non-governmental organizations, women themselves, and international organizations are seen as the main drivers of change, while there is less trust in state and political institutions. These findings highlight the need to strengthen institutional support and demonstrate a stronger commitment to fulfilling internationally assumed obligations related to gender equality, as well as ensuring the proper implementation of the legislative and strategic framework in this area.

A significant difference in responses between women and men is evident in that women are more likely to perceive women themselves as the group contributing the most to improving the lives of women (39.7% compared to 25.8% of men), while men are more likely to perceive international organizations as the main contributors (24.7% compared to 19.7% of women).

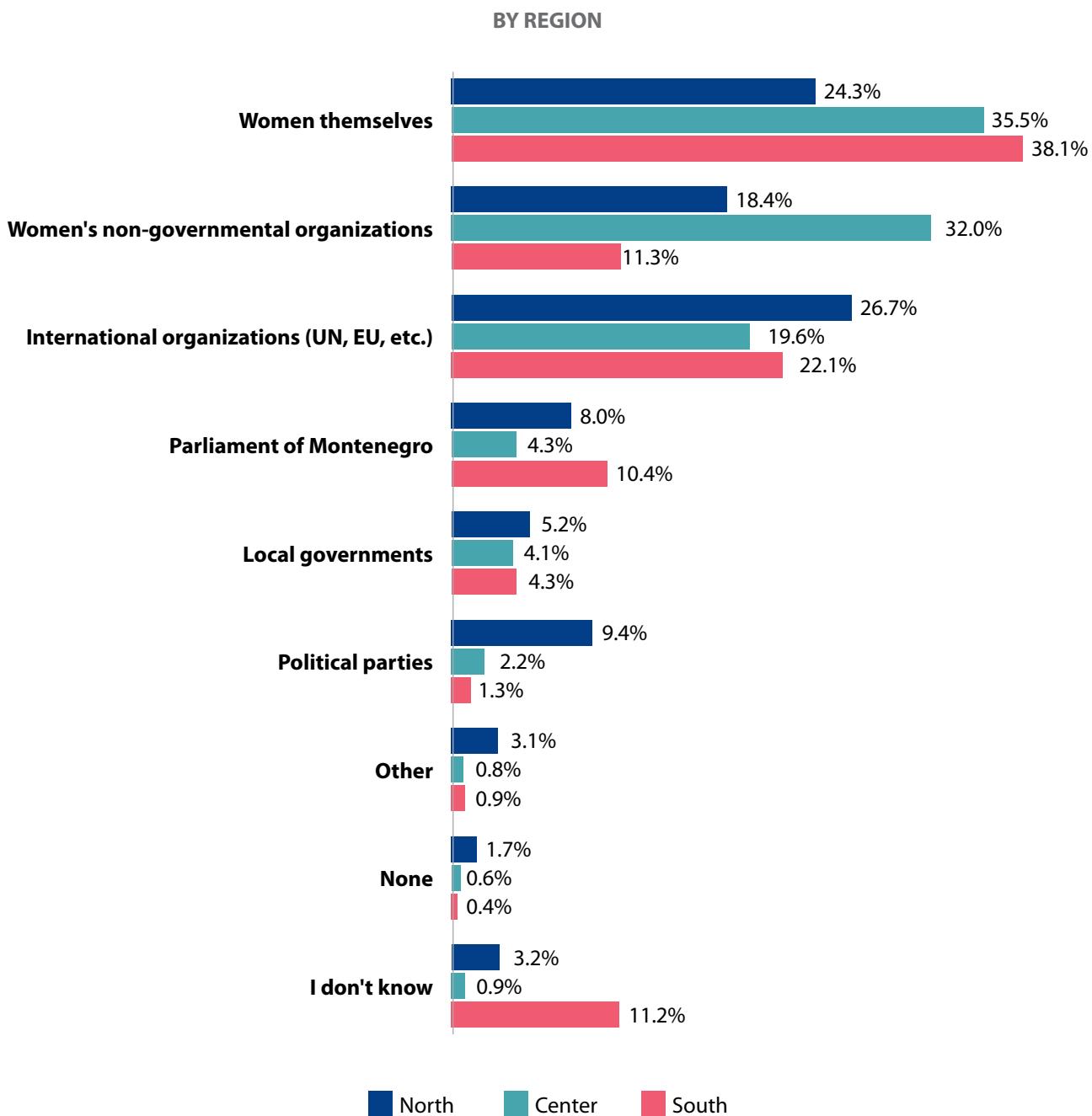
Graph 11: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Which of the following institutions, organizations, or groups contributes the most to improving the lives of women in Montenegro? By gender (N=1005)



The regional analysis of the general population sample shows that respondents from the south (38.1%) and central regions (35.5%) most strongly believe that women themselves contribute the most to improving their own position.

Women's non-governmental organizations are also recognized as important actors in the central part of the country (32%). **More than one-quarter of citizens from the northern region perceive international organizations as making the greatest contribution to improving the status of women.**

Graph 12: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Which of the following institutions, organizations, or groups contributes the most to improving the lives of women in Montenegro? By region (N=1005)



The results show divided opinions among citizens on whether the issue of gender equality is overly pushed without actual improvement in the position of women in Montenegro. While 39.3% of respondents disagree with this statement, a significant portion of the population (50.8%) agrees with it. These findings indicate that there is concern that gender equality is being imposed as a topic, but also that a substantial percentage of citizens recognize its importance.

Graph 13: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro? (N=1005)

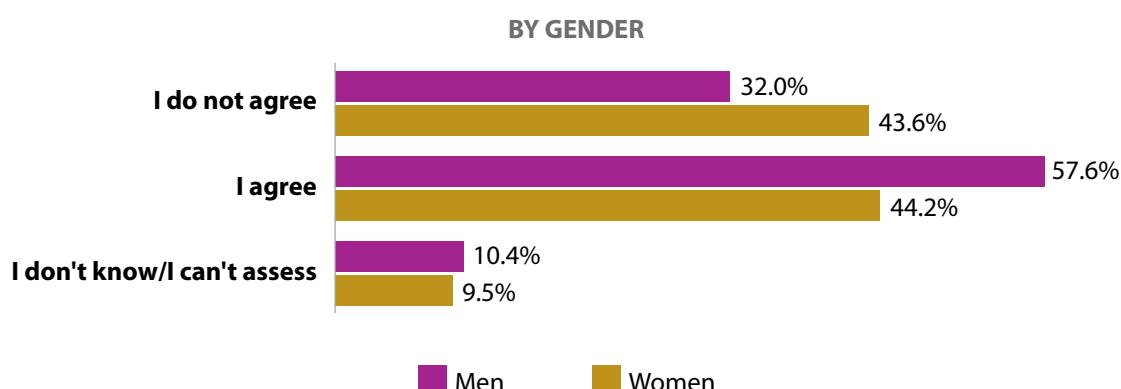
Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro



The analysis shows differences in perception between men and women. When asked whether the issue of gender equality is overly emphasized today without real improvement in the position of women, 57.6% of men and 44.2% of women agreed with the statement. In contrast, 46.3% of women disagreed with this statement, compared to only 32% of men. **This difference indicates that women are more likely to believe that gender equality remains an important issue and that its emphasis is not excessive, while men are more likely to express the view that the topic is being pushed without concrete results.**

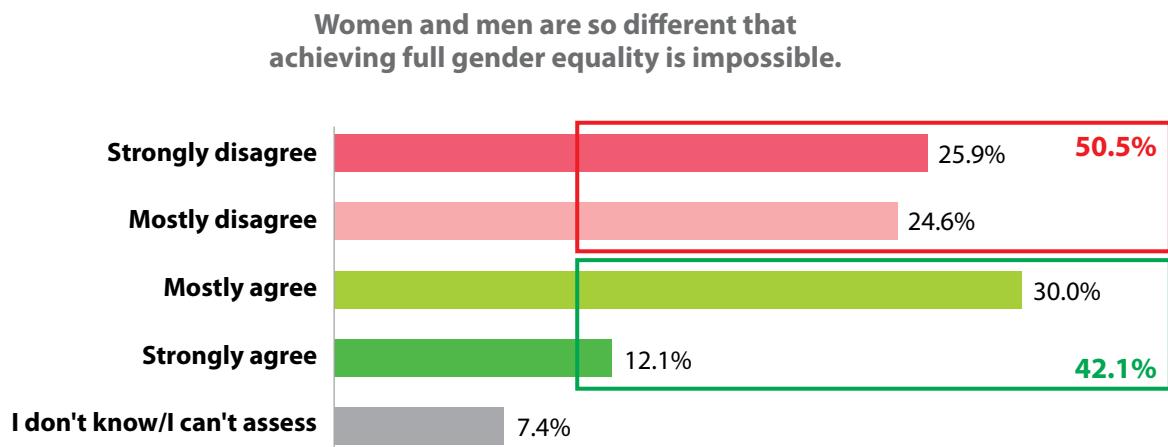
Graph 14: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro? By gender (N=1005)

Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro.



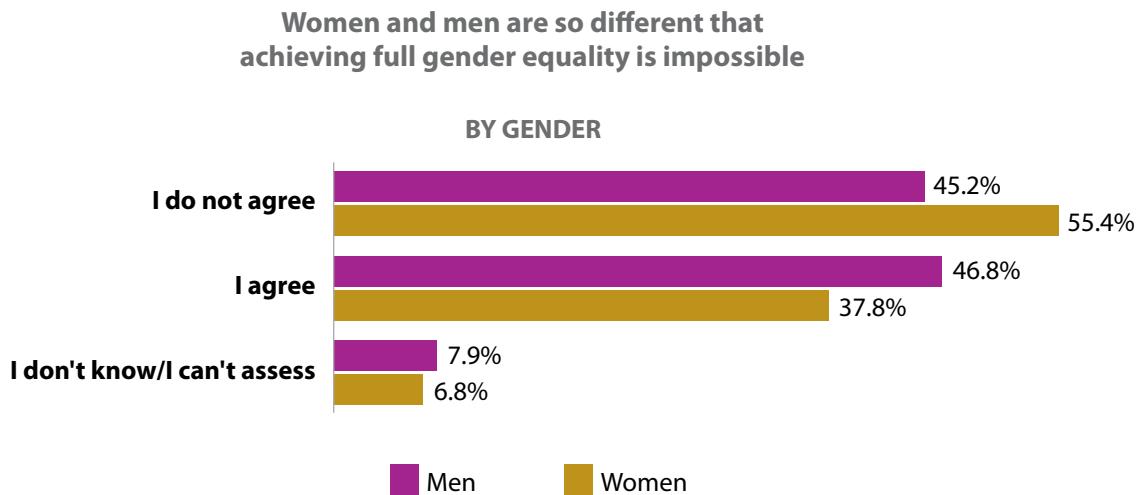
Citizens have divided opinions on whether the differences between men and women are so great that full gender equality cannot be achieved. Half of the respondents (50.5%) disagree with this statement, while a significant portion (42.1%) believes that gender differences pose a barrier to achieving full equality.

Graph 15: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Women and men are so different that achieving full gender equality is impossible? (N=1005)



The results show that the attitudes of men and women differ slightly when it comes to the possibility of achieving full gender equality. The data indicates that women are more likely to believe in the possibility of full gender equality – 55.4% of them express this view. In contrast, men are almost evenly split – 46.8% agree, while 45.2% disagree.

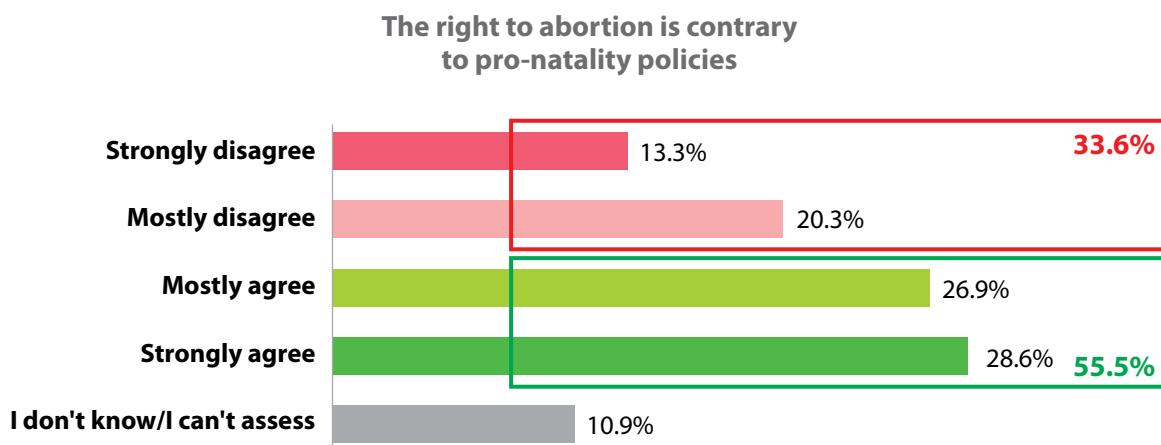
Graph 16: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Women and men are so different that achieving full gender equality is impossible? By gender (N=1005)



The analysis of data on attitudes toward the right to abortion and its connection with pro-natalist policies shows that there are divided opinions among respondents, as well as gender differences in perception. At the level of the general population, **every second person (55.5%) believes that the right to abortion is in conflict with policies aimed at encouraging childbirth, while one-third of respondents (33%) disagree with this view.**

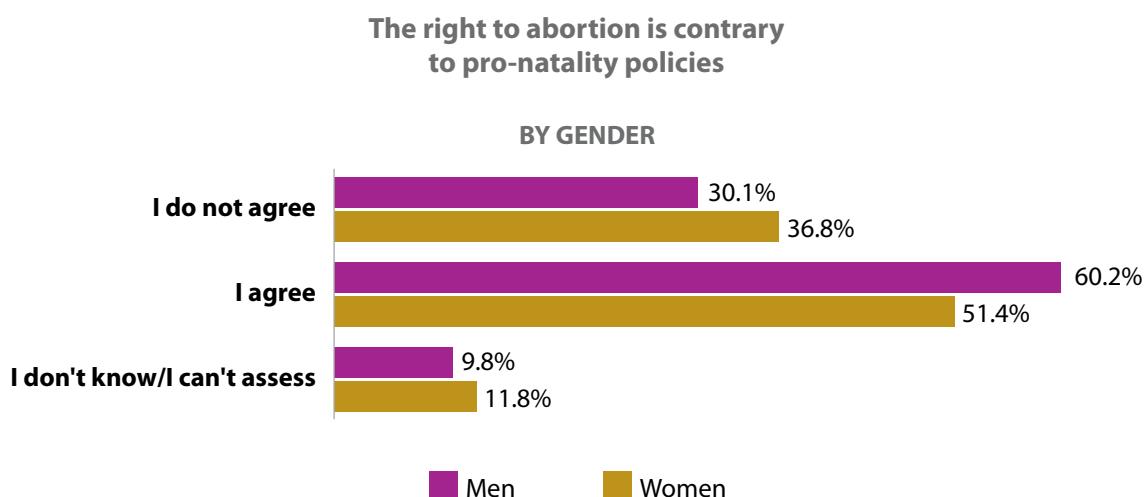
The data points to another open issue that has not been adequately addressed by the strategic framework in Montenegro. It highlights shortcomings in informing the general public about this topic, which is often used as a tool for manipulating information and fostering discrimination.

Graph 17: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natality policies? (N=1005)



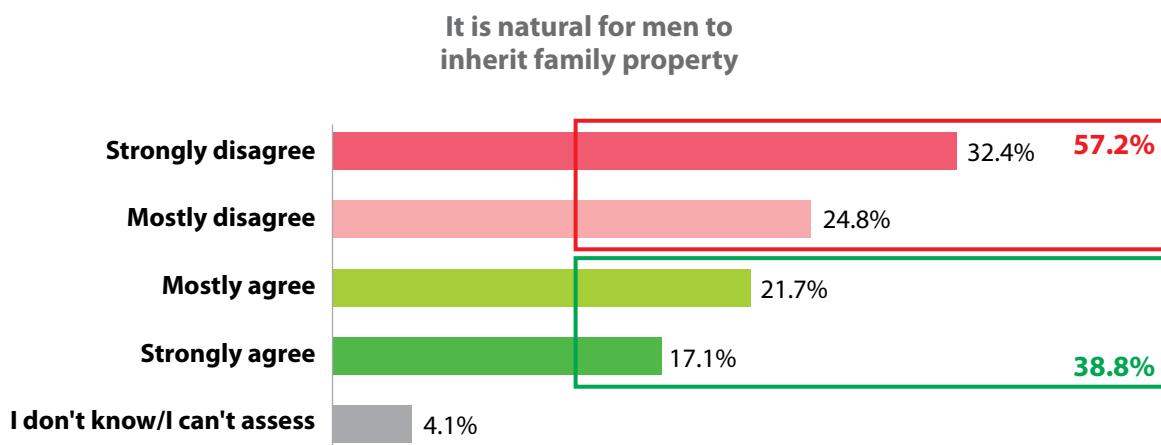
Men are more likely than women to believe that the right to abortion is in conflict with pro-natalist policies – 60.2% of men hold this view, compared to 51.4% of women. On the other hand, more women (36.8%) than men (30.1%) disagree with this statement, indicating that women are more likely to support the right of women to make decisions about their own bodies.

Graph 18: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natality policies? By gender (N=1005)



The results show that citizens of Montenegro have divided opinions on the statement that it is natural for men to inherit family property. Although the majority of respondents express disagreement (32.4% completely and 24.8% mostly), totaling 57.2%, a significant portion of the population still supports this view — 21.7% mostly agree, and 17.1% completely agree. This distribution points to the presence of deeply rooted gender norms in parts of society, despite the majority opposing traditional male-line inheritance.

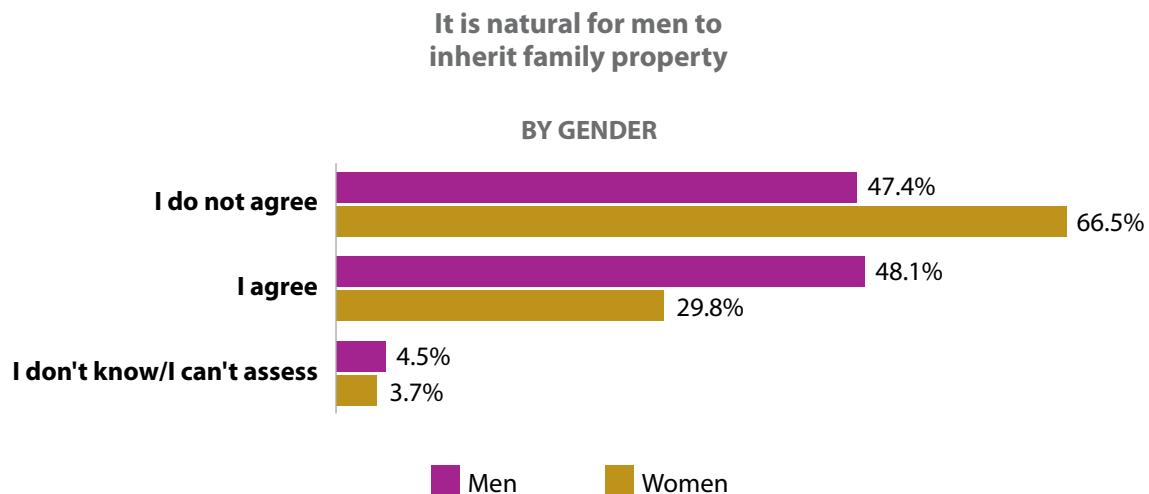
Graph 19: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is natural for men to inherit family property? (N=1005)



The gender-based analysis reveals significant differences in the attitudes of men and women in Montenegro regarding the statement that it is natural for men to inherit family property. Two-thirds (66.5%) of women oppose this statement.

In contrast, the level of disagreement among men is lower, totaling 47.4%. These results clearly indicate a gender gap in the perception of inheritance rights, with women more strongly rejecting the patriarchal model of property transfer, while men are more inclined to accept it.

Graph 20: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: It is natural for men to inherit family property? (N=1005)



Understanding of Gender Equality Among Employees in Public Institutions

Gender equality represents one of the key pillars of a democratic society and sustainable development. Although the legal framework in Montenegro is aligned with international standards and guarantees equality between women and men, social and institutional practices often reflect a different reality.

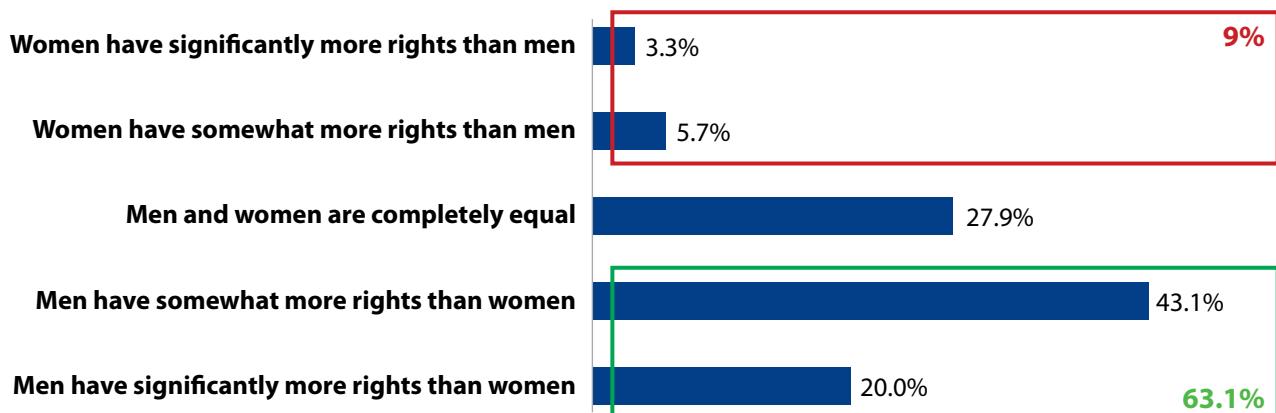
In order to assess the perception of public sector employees regarding the state of gender equality, a study was conducted analyzing key aspects of gender relations in the areas of work, politics, economy, and family life.

The research results provide insight into how employees in the public sector perceive the distribution of rights and opportunities between men and women, as well as which areas are recognized as the most problematic in terms of gender inequality. Special focus was placed on issues such as economic opportunities, political participation, inheritance of property, and exposure to gender-based violence. The study also explored employees' opinions on the need to strengthen or redefine gender equality policies in Montenegro.

The results show that two-thirds of employees in public institutions (63.1%) believe that men have more rights than women in Montenegro — a higher percentage compared to the general population, where less than half of respondents share the same opinion (47.9%). Of those, 43.1% believe that men have somewhat more rights, while 20% believe the rights are significantly greater. These figures point to a perception that women still do not have an equal position in society, despite the formal legal frameworks that guarantee equality.

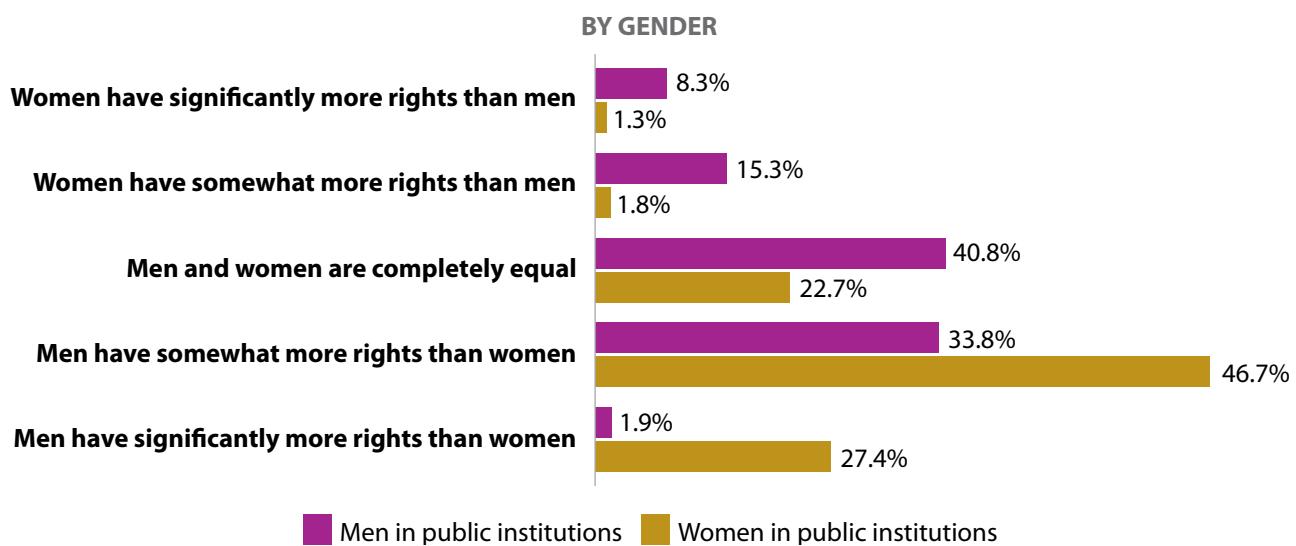
In contrast, 27.9% of respondents believe that men and women are completely equal, while a smaller percentage believes that women have somewhat more rights — 5.7%, and only 3.3% believe that their rights are significantly greater.

Graph 21: Employees in public institutions: Generally speaking, to what extent, in your opinion, are women and men equal in Montenegro? (N=545)



The analysis of public administration employees' perceptions of the level of gender equality in Montenegro reveals clear differences in the attitudes of men and women. **While 40.8% of men employed in public administration believe that men and women are completely equal, only 22.7% of women share this view.**

Graph 22: Employees in public institutions: Generally speaking, to what extent, in your opinion, are women and men equal in Montenegro? By gender (N=545)

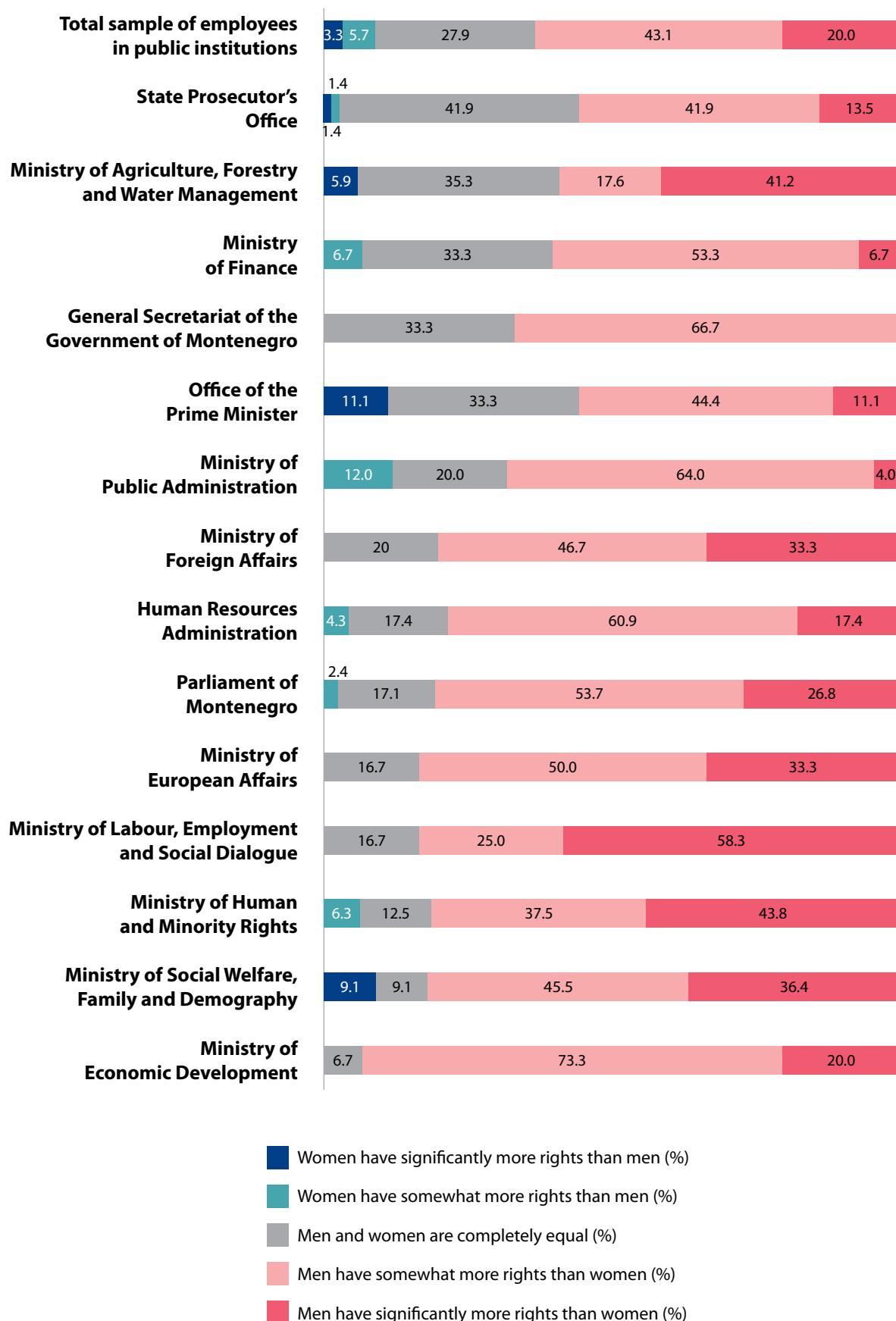


The analysis of perceptions among employees in public institutions and local governments in Montenegro shows that the majority of respondents believe that gender equality has not been fully achieved. In the overall sample, two-thirds of employees state that men have somewhat or significantly more rights than women, while only 27.9% believe that women and men are completely equal. **These views are particularly pronounced in certain institutions, such as the Ministry of Economic Development, where as many as 93.3% of respondents believe that men are in a more favorable position.**

A similar perception is present in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, where more than two-thirds of respondents stated that men have more rights. On the other hand, the highest level of perceived gender equality was recorded in the State Prosecutor's Office, where 41.9% of employees believe that women and men are equal.

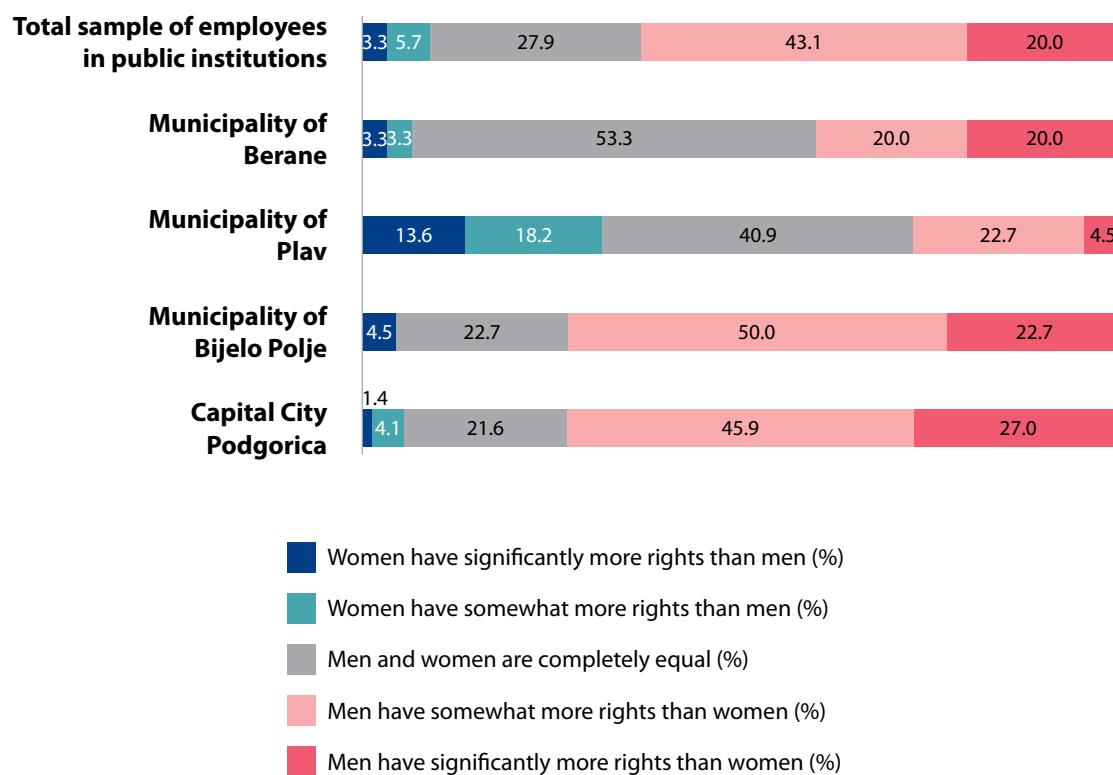


Graph 23: Employees in public institutions: Generally speaking, to what extent, in your opinion, are women and men equal in Montenegro?



When it comes to local self-governments, the attitudes also point to a dominant perception of male superiority in terms of rights. **In the Capital City of Podgorica, 72.9% of respondents believe that men have more rights, while in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, that percentage is 72.7%. An exception is the Municipality of Berane, where more than half of respondents (53.3%) believe that gender equality has been achieved. The Municipality of Plav stands out as the local community with the highest share of employees (31.8%) who believe that women have more rights than men.**

Graph 24: Employees in public institutions: Generally speaking, to what extent, in your opinion, are women and men equal in Montenegro?



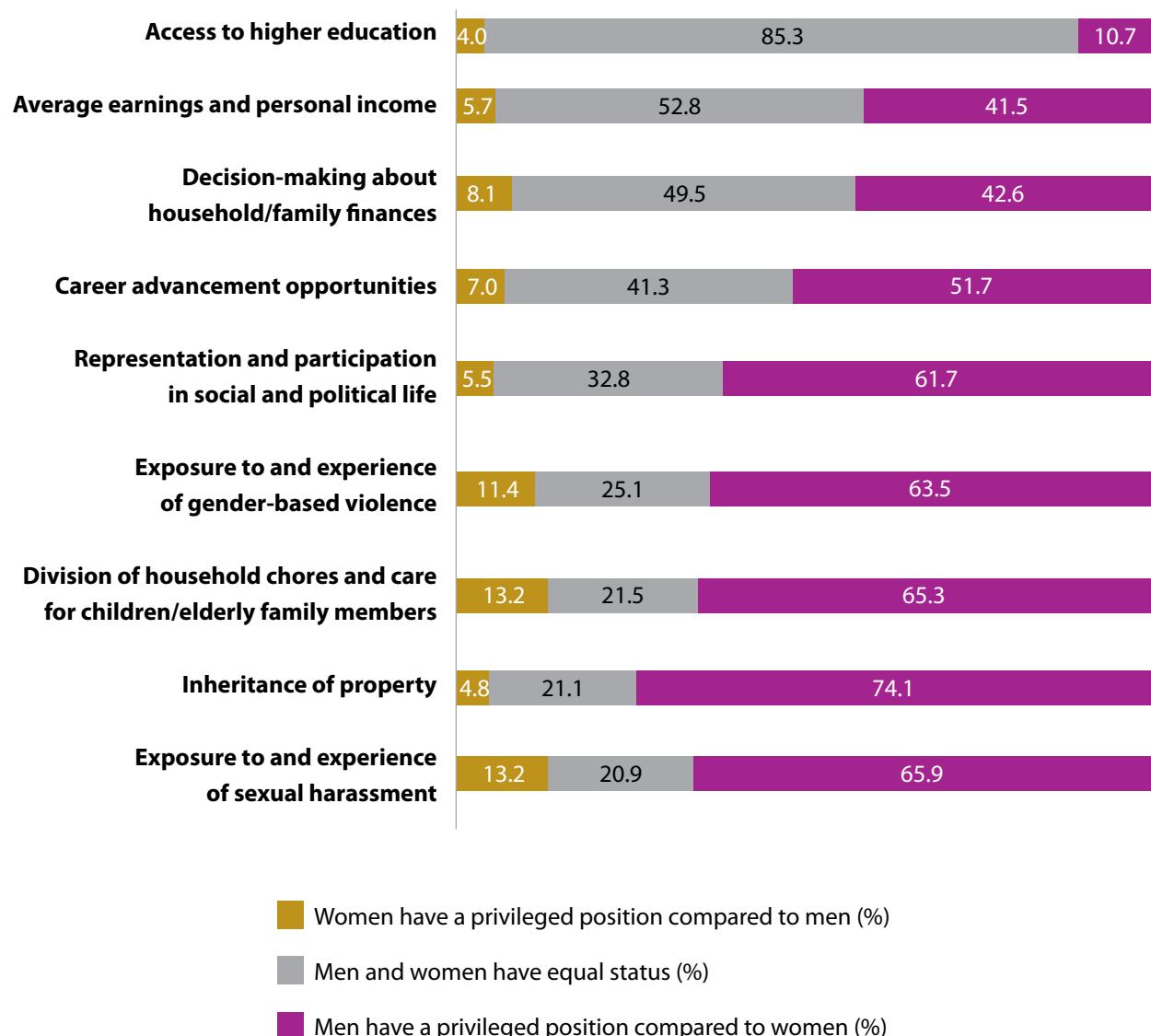
Although some institutions and local communities show more balanced views, the results indicate that the majority still perceive men as having an advantage when it comes to exercising rights. This highlights the need to further strengthen measures that will enable real—not just formal—equality between women and men in the public sector.

These findings confirm that the perception of gender inequality persists, with a significant portion of respondents believing that men occupy a more favorable social position.

The research results show that employees in public institutions in Montenegro recognize significant gender inequalities across various areas of social and professional life. In most aspects analyzed, respondents believe that men hold a privileged position compared to women, while perceptions of full equality are more commonly observed only in certain spheres.

Nevertheless, there are areas where respondents recognize relative gender equality. A **dominant majority (85.3%) believes that men and women have equal access to higher education, while 52.8% state that salaries and personal income are generally distributed equally.**

Graph 25: Employees in public institutions: Please rank the following aspects based on whether you think women have a privileged position compared to men, men and women are equal, or men have a privileged position compared to women. (N=545)



In response to the statement that the issue of gender equality is overly emphasized today without contributing to real improvement in the status of women in Montenegro, just over half of the respondents (51.2%) agree, while 40.4% disagree. This indicates divided opinions: while some believe the topic receives too much attention, others still see a need for continued efforts to achieve equality. It is important to note that there is no difference in the views of men and women on this issue.



Graph 26: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro? (N=545)

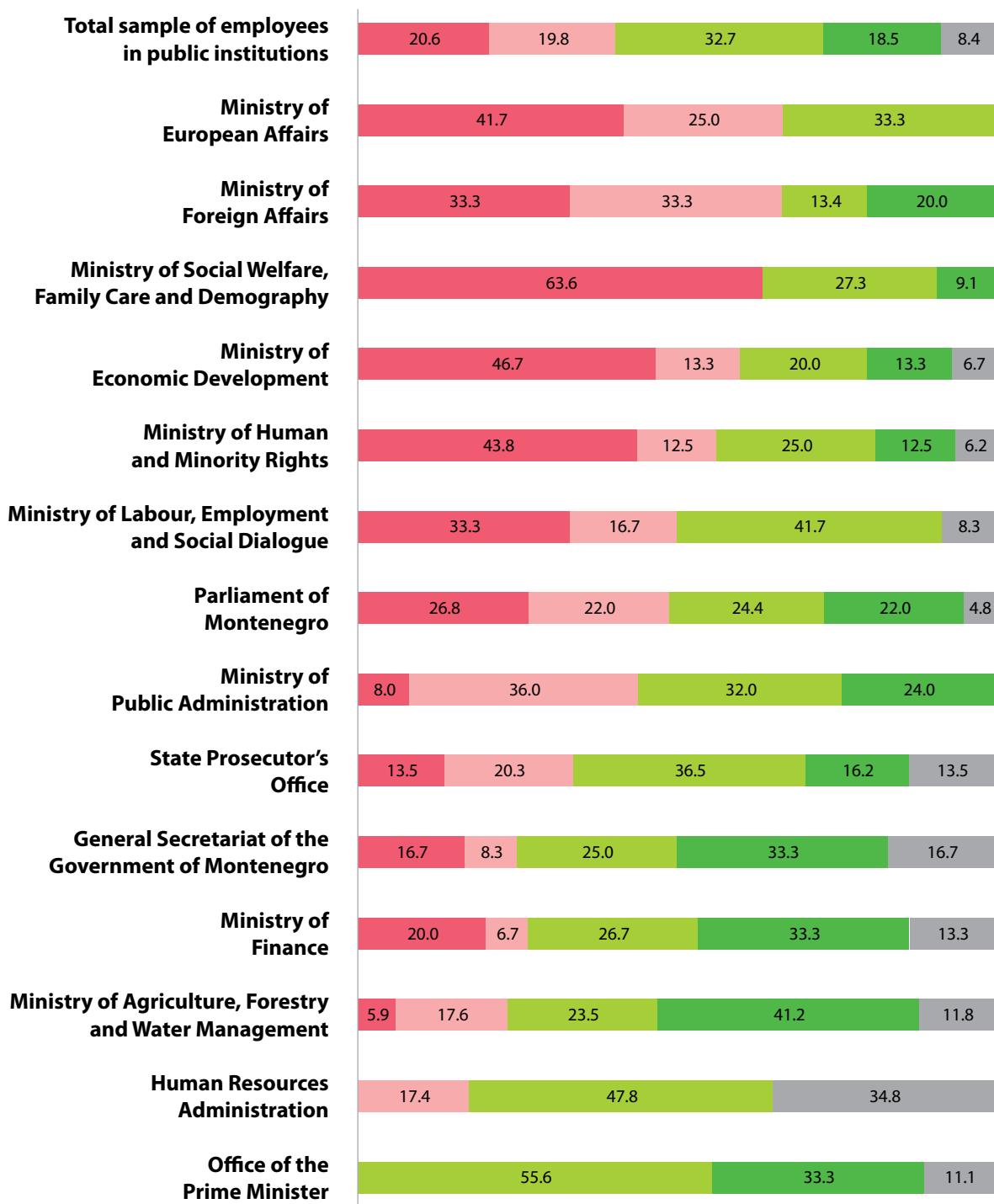
Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro



The highest share of employees who completely disagree with the statement that the issue of gender equality is overly emphasized today without actually improving the position of women in Montenegro (63.6%) was recorded in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family and Demography. On the other hand, nearly 90% of employees in the Office of the Prime Minister agree with this statement. These results highlight clearly expressed differences between institutions — while some sectors strongly support gender equality and reject the notion that it is being promoted without effect, others show greater skepticism toward current approaches in this area. The lack of a clear consensus underscores the need for continued education and the promotion of concrete measures to improve the status of women.

Graph 27: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro?

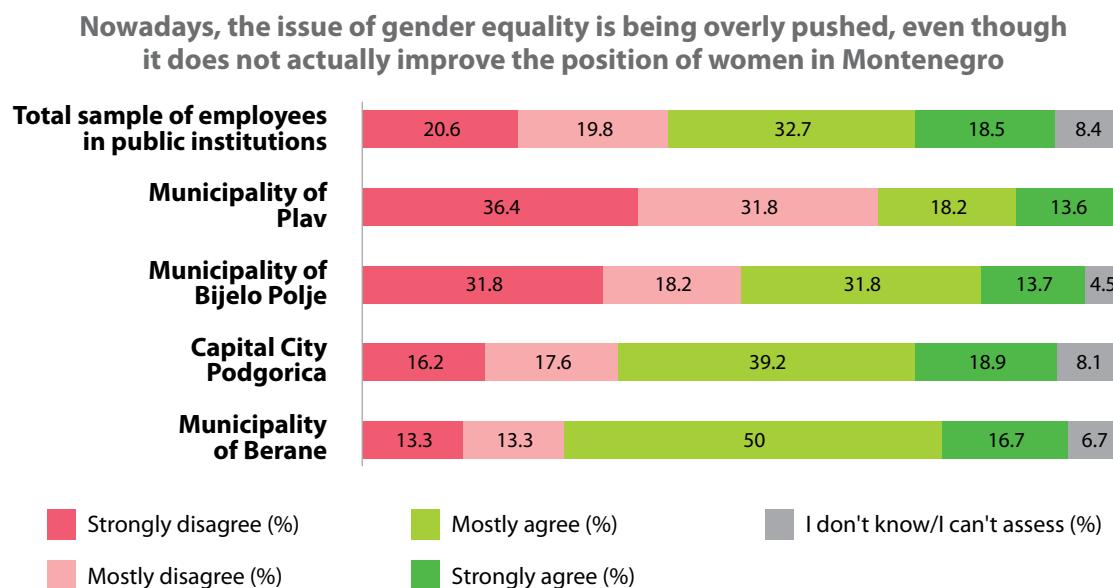
Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro



Strongly disagree (%) Mostly agree (%) I don't know/I can't assess (%)
 Mostly disagree (%) Strongly agree (%)

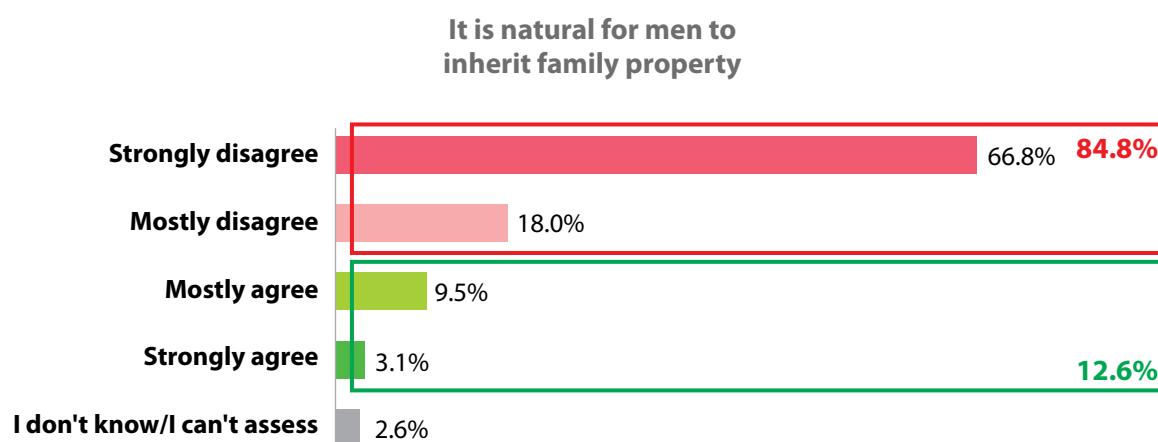
In the Municipality of Plav, more than two-thirds of employees (68.2%) disagree with the statement that gender equality is overly emphasized today without actually improving the position of women. In contrast, in the Municipality of Berane, nearly two-thirds of respondents (66.7%) agree with that statement. These findings point to differing local perspectives and varying levels of sensitivity toward gender issues.

Graph 28: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: Nowadays, the issue of gender equality is being overly pushed, even though it does not actually improve the position of women in Montenegro?



It is particularly significant that the vast majority of respondents (84.8%) disagree with the statement that men should naturally inherit family property. In contrast, only 12.6% of employees in public institutions believe that such a practice is justified.

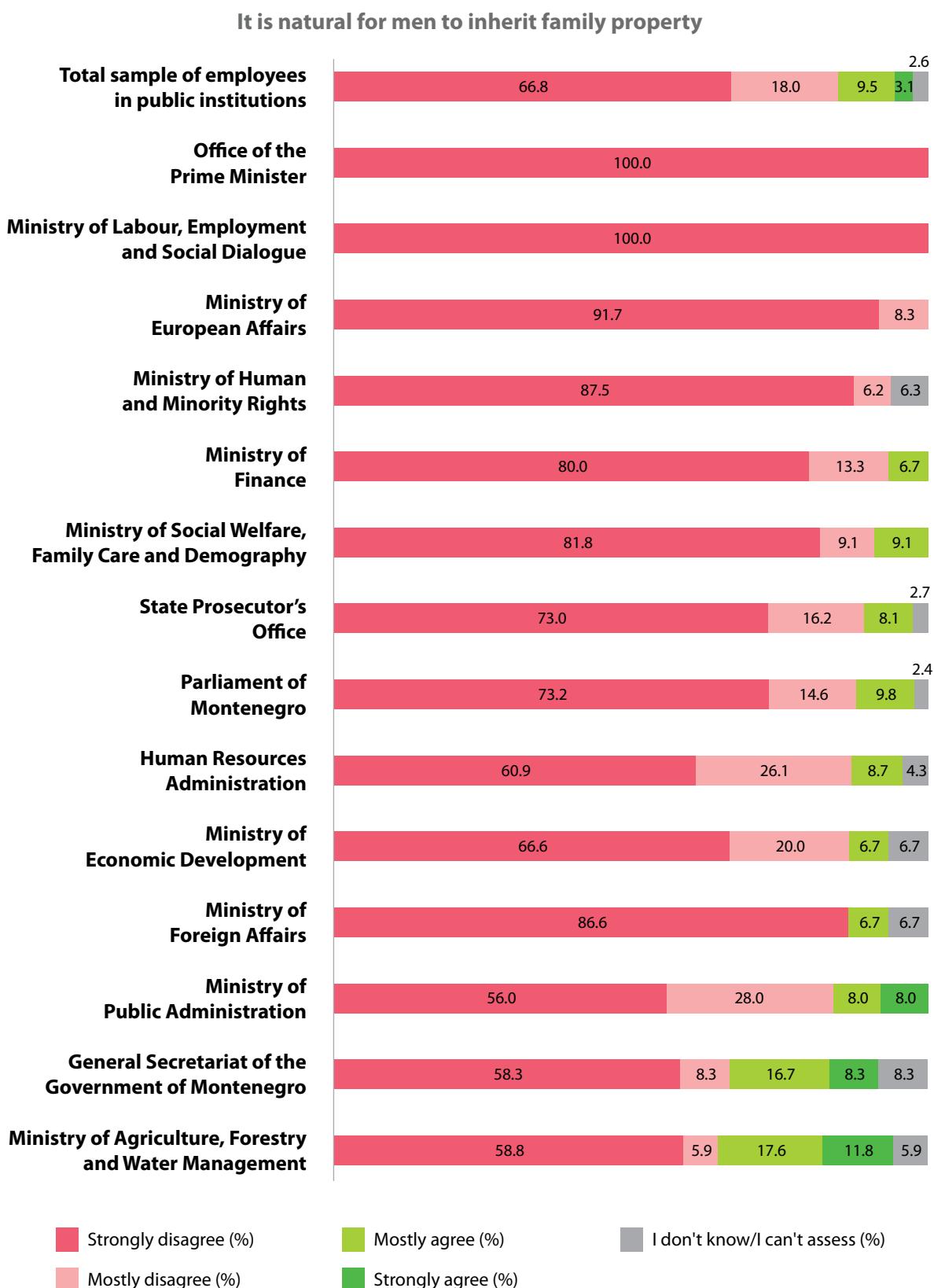
Graph 29: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: It is natural for men to inherit family property? (N=545)



Particularly notable are institutions such as the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue, where 100% of respondents expressed complete disagreement with the statement. Similarly high levels of disagreement were recorded in the Ministry of European Affairs (91.7%) and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (87.5%). In contrast, institutions such as the General Secretariat of the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture show somewhat more diverse opinions. Overall, the results indicate

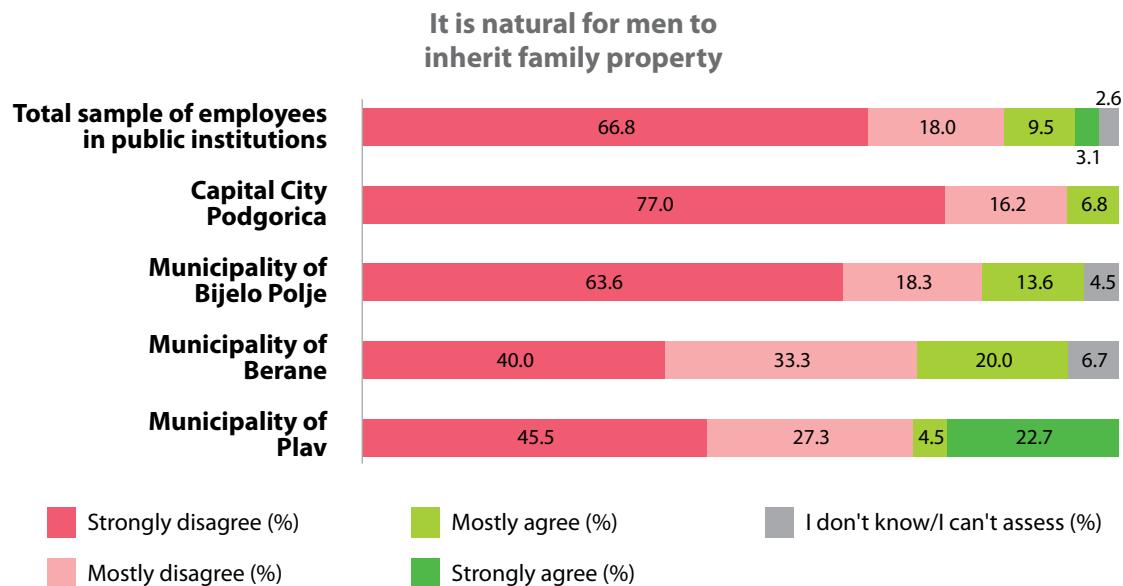
a predominantly negative stance among public administration employees toward the practice of men naturally inheriting family property.

Graph 30: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: *It is natural for men to inherit family property?*



The results show that employees in local self-governments also predominantly disagree with the idea that it is natural for men to inherit family property. The highest level of disagreement is recorded in the Capital City of Podgorica, where as many as 77% of respondents completely reject the statement. On the other hand, the Municipalities of Berane and Plav show more diverse views — in Berane, a higher percentage of partial disagreement was recorded (33.3%), along with 20% who mostly agree with the statement. In Plav, 22.7% of employees fully support the statement, which is the highest level of full agreement among the analyzed local administrations.

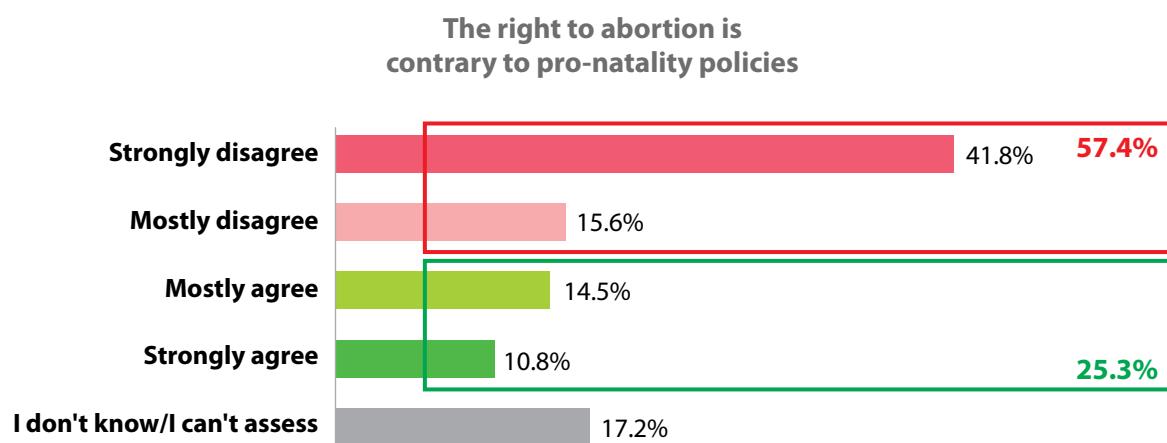
Graph 31: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: It is natural for men to inherit family property?



In response to the statement "The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natalist policies," the majority of employees in public institutions in Montenegro express disagreement. Nearly half of respondents (41.8%) completely disagree, while an additional 15.6% mostly disagree with the statement — totaling 57.4%.

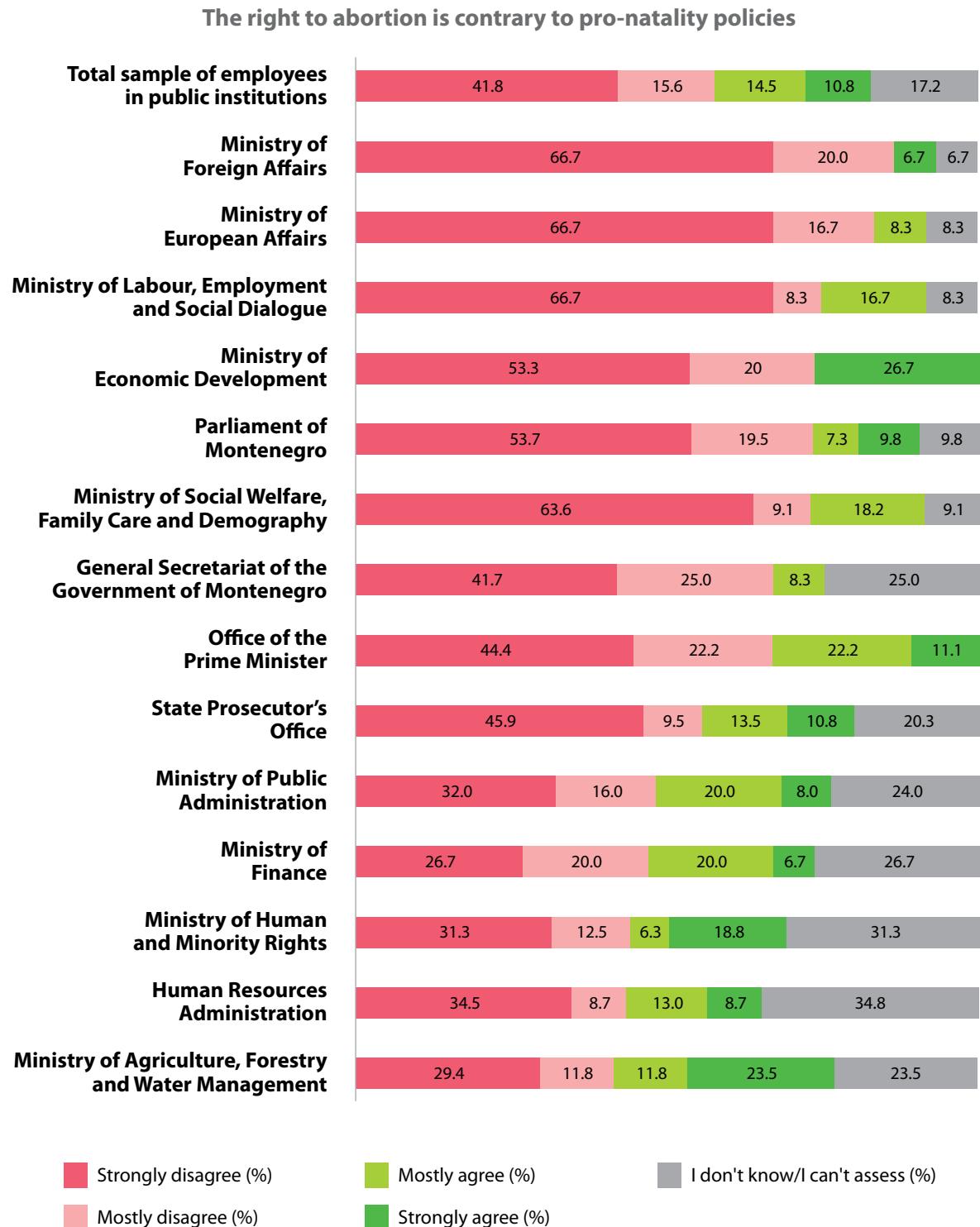
On the other hand, one-quarter of employees believe that the right to abortion is indeed contrary to pro-natalist policies (14.5% mostly agree, and 10.8% completely agree), which is a lower percentage compared to 55.5% of respondents from the general population who also agree with this statement. A notable portion of respondents — 17.2% — stated that they do not know or cannot assess the issue, indicating a level of uncertainty or lack of formed opinion.

Graph 32: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natality policies? (N=545)



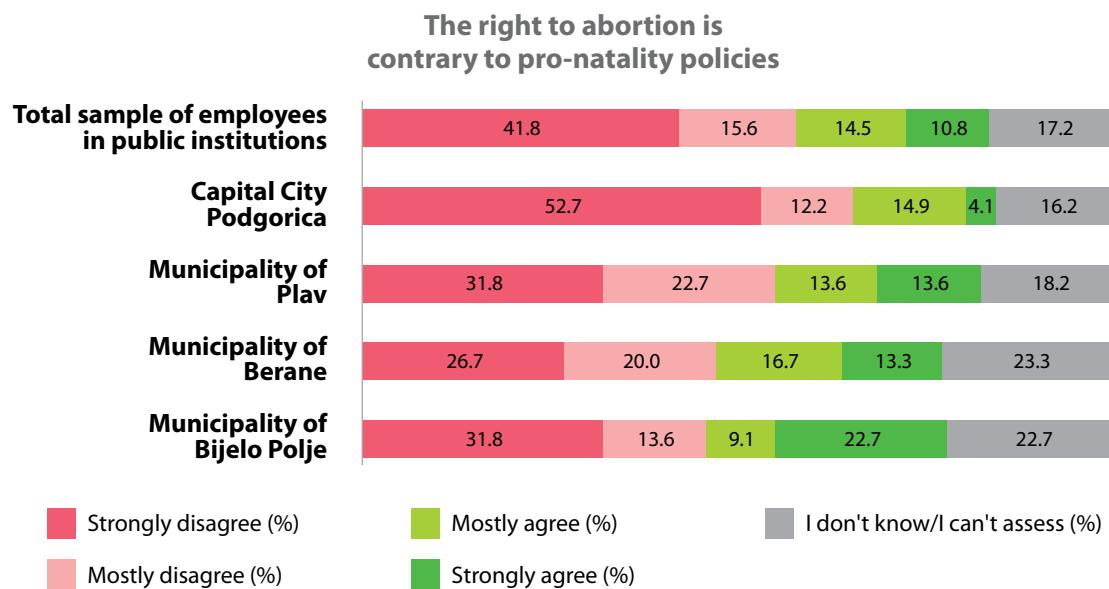
The attitudes of employees in public institutions toward the statement that the right to abortion is contrary to pro-natalist policies vary significantly across institutions, even though overall results show that the majority (57.4%) do not share this view. The highest level of disagreement is recorded in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of European Affairs, and the Ministry of Labour, where two-thirds of employees completely reject the statement. In contrast, more divided opinions are observed in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, where a higher percentage of agreement with the statement was noted, along with a considerable share of undecided respondents (over 23%).

Graph 33: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natality policies?



Employees in the Capital City of Podgorica mostly disagree with the statement that the right to abortion is contrary to pro-natalist policies, with 64.9% stating that they completely or somewhat disagree. In Plav and Berane, although disagreement still prevails, it is less pronounced (a total of 54.5% and 46.7%, respectively). The Municipality of Bijelo Polje shows the highest level of complete agreement (22.7%) among the analyzed municipalities, along with a similarly high percentage of undecided respondents (22.7%). These results suggest that attitudes in local governments tend to be more divided and often more conservative compared to central institutions, with a greater degree of uncertainty and acceptance of the statement. This indicates a need to raise awareness and improve the knowledge of employees in local self-governments regarding gender equality and reproductive rights.

Graph 34: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statement: The right to abortion is contrary to pro-natality policies?



Prevalence of Gender Stereotypes

Attitudes of Citizens on the Prevalence of Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes and perceptions of gender equality significantly influence social norms and relationships in Montenegro. This analysis presents how citizens view the roles of men and women in various spheres of life, including leadership, family responsibilities, and professional opportunities. The research results show divided opinions — **while part of the population supports gender equality and changes in social norms, there are still those who maintain traditional views on the roles of men and women**. The data reflects the level of acceptance or rejection of certain gender stereotypes, providing insight into existing social barriers as well as potential directions for the further development of gender equality policy in Montenegro.

The results show that citizens' attitudes toward the traditional gender division of roles in the family — where the man works and the woman is dedicated to the family — are split. **Nearly half (46.3%) do not believe this model is good for the family and children, while 48.5% somewhat or fully support the idea. These results indicate that traditional gender roles still have a strong foothold in society, but also that a significant number of people are beginning to question them.**

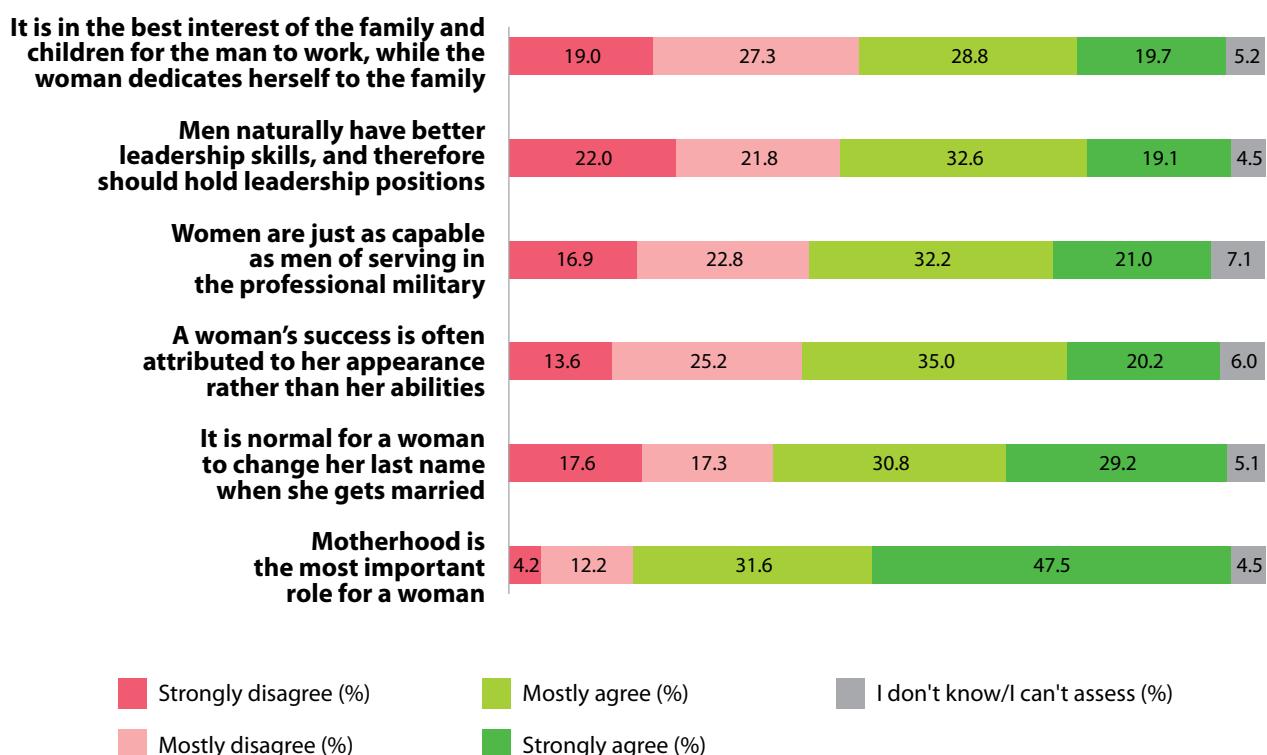
Cumulatively, the data shows similar levels of agreement with the statement: "Men naturally have better leadership abilities and therefore should hold leadership positions." Slightly more than half of respondents (51.7%) agree with this statement, while slightly fewer (43.8%) disagree. The cumulative percentages indicate that citizens of Montenegro are slightly more inclined to believe that a woman's success is often attributed to her appearance rather than her abilities.

A similar trend is evident in perceptions of women's capabilities, especially in the context of their involvement in the professional military. Public opinion is divided, **with half of respondents believing that women are equally capable as men in serving in the professional military, while approximately two-fifths do not share this view.**

The data reveals a high level of adherence to traditional values regarding women's roles in society. **A dominant majority of respondents (79.1%) see motherhood as the most important role for women.** When this data is considered alongside the percentage of those who believe the right to abortion contradicts pro-natalist policy, a broader picture emerges of the deeply rooted traditional role of women in society.

Most respondents support the view that it is normal for a woman to change her last name after getting married, with 60% agreeing with this statement. One-third (34.9%) disagree. These results indicate that surname change remains a widely accepted social norm.

Graph 35: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (N=1005)

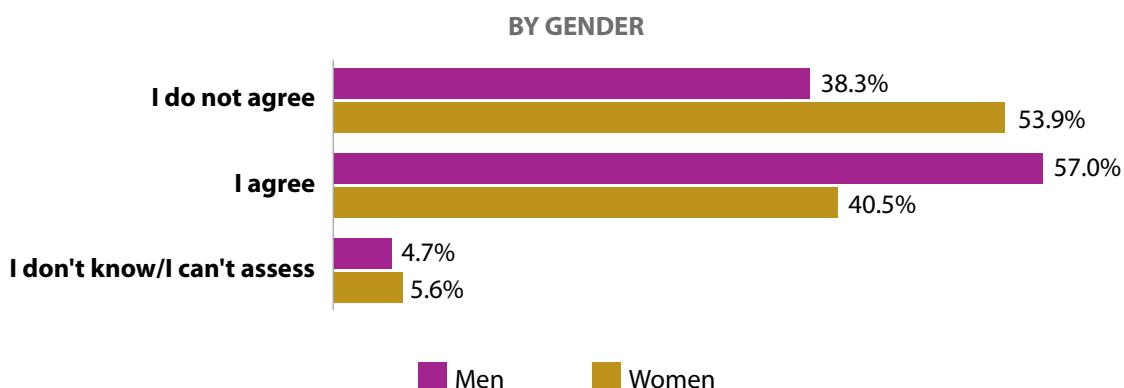


These data points reveal gender differences in attitudes toward traditional and gender roles in society.

The results show significant gender differences in views on the traditional division of roles within the family. **The majority of men (57%) agree with the statement that it is better for the well-being of the family and children if the man works and the woman dedicates herself to the family**, while 38.3% of men disagree with this view. **In contrast, the majority of women (53.9%) reject this model**, while 40.5% of women express agreement.

Graph 36: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)

It is in the best interest of the family and children for the man to work, while the woman dedicates herself to the family

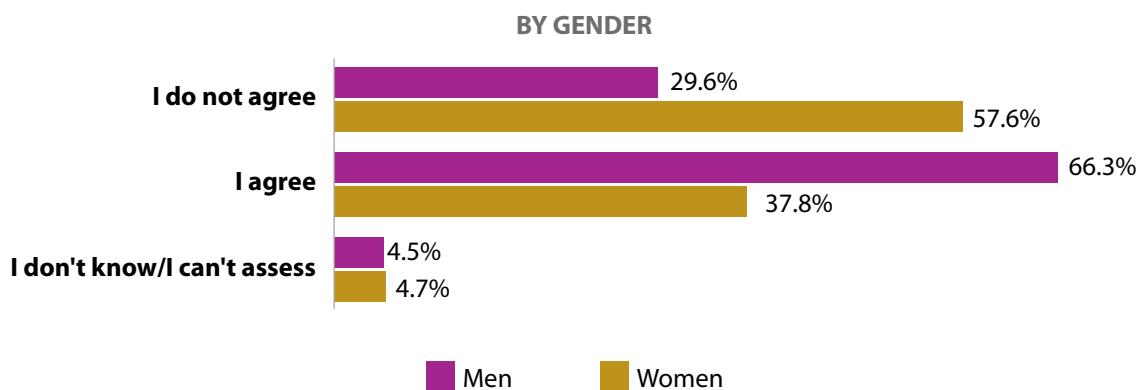


These data points clearly indicate that men are more likely to support traditional family roles, while women, who are directly affected by such expectations, are more likely to question their validity. This also confirms the existence of a gender difference in the perception of balance between professional and family life, as well as the need for further promotion of equal sharing of family and professional responsibilities.

In response to the statement that men naturally have better leadership abilities and should therefore occupy leadership positions, 66.3% of men express agreement, while only 37.8% of women agree. On the other hand, 57.6% of women disagree with this statement, indicating a significant difference in the perception of abilities based on gender.

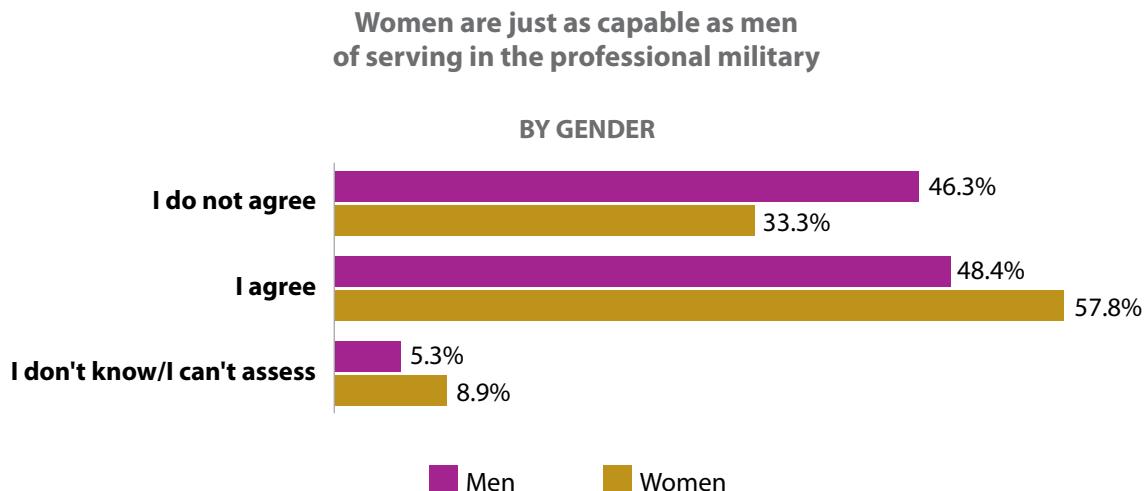
Graph 37: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)

Men naturally have better leadership skills, and therefore should hold leadership positions



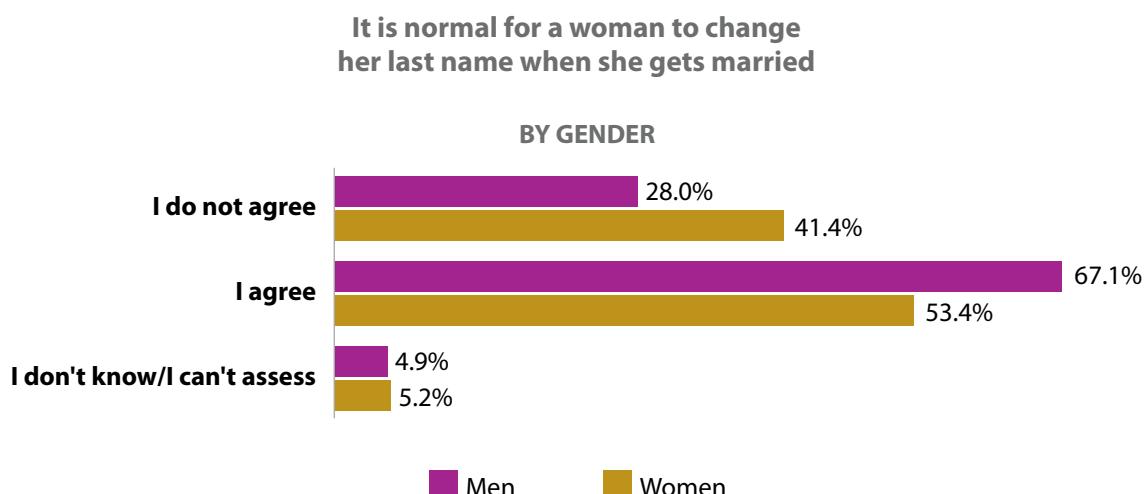
When it comes to professional engagement in the military, the majority of both men (48.4%) and women (57.8%) agree that women are equally capable as men, although women show a slightly higher level of agreement. However, it is noticeable that more men (46.3%) do not share this view compared to women (33.3%), which still reflects the presence of stereotypes about the physical or psychological "natural" unfitness of women for the military profession.

Graph 38: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)



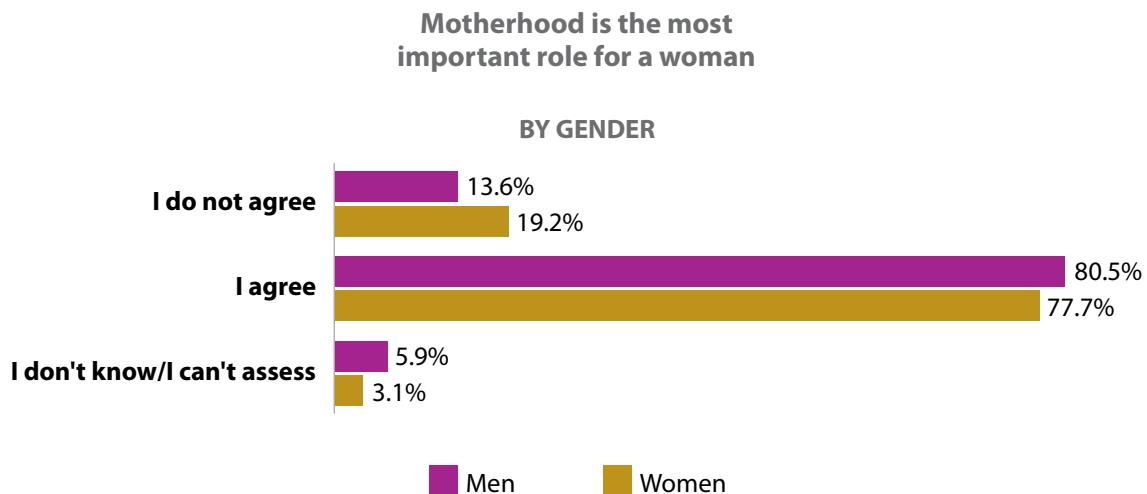
When it comes to changing one's surname after marriage, the majority of men (67.1%) and women (53.4%) consider it normal. However, a higher percentage of women (41.4%) compared to men (28.0%) express disagreement.

Graph 39: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)



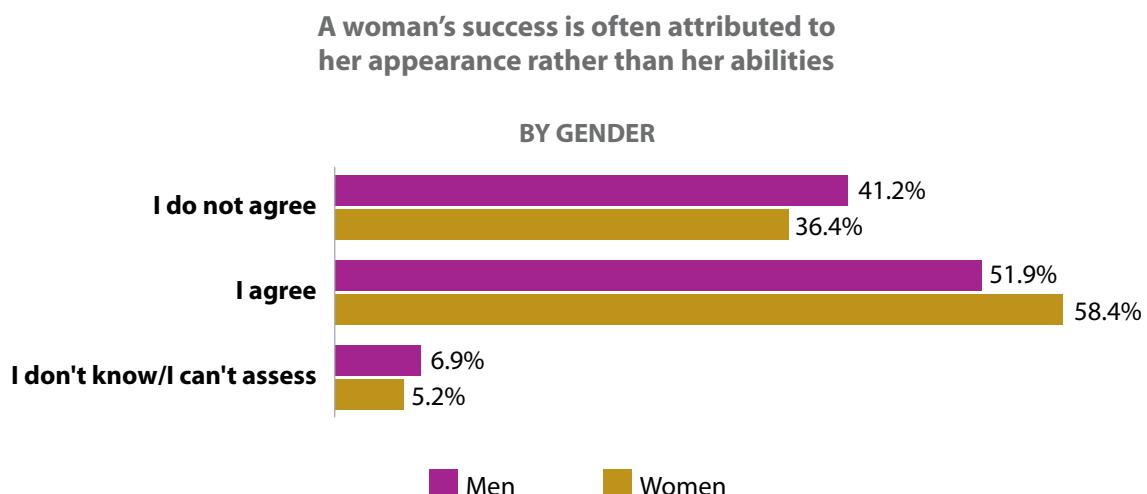
In response to the statement that motherhood is the most important role of a woman, both men and women mostly agree – 80.5% of men and 77.7% of women. However, it is notable that a higher percentage of women (19.2%) than men (13.6%) disagree with this statement, which may indicate increasingly changing attitudes among women toward traditional gender roles.

Graph 40: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)



It is important to note that there are no statistically significant differences between the responses of women and men regarding the statement "A woman's success is often attributed to her appearance rather than her abilities."

Graph 41: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)



All in all, the results indicate that men tend to lean more toward traditional views on gender roles, while women are more likely to question established norms and express openness to greater equality and changes in expected societal roles.

Attitudes of Employees in Public Institutions on the Prevalence of Gender Stereotypes

The research results show that the majority of employees in public institutions in Montenegro **do not support traditional gender stereotypes that favor men in leadership and professional roles, but there is still a significant portion of respondents who partially accept them.**

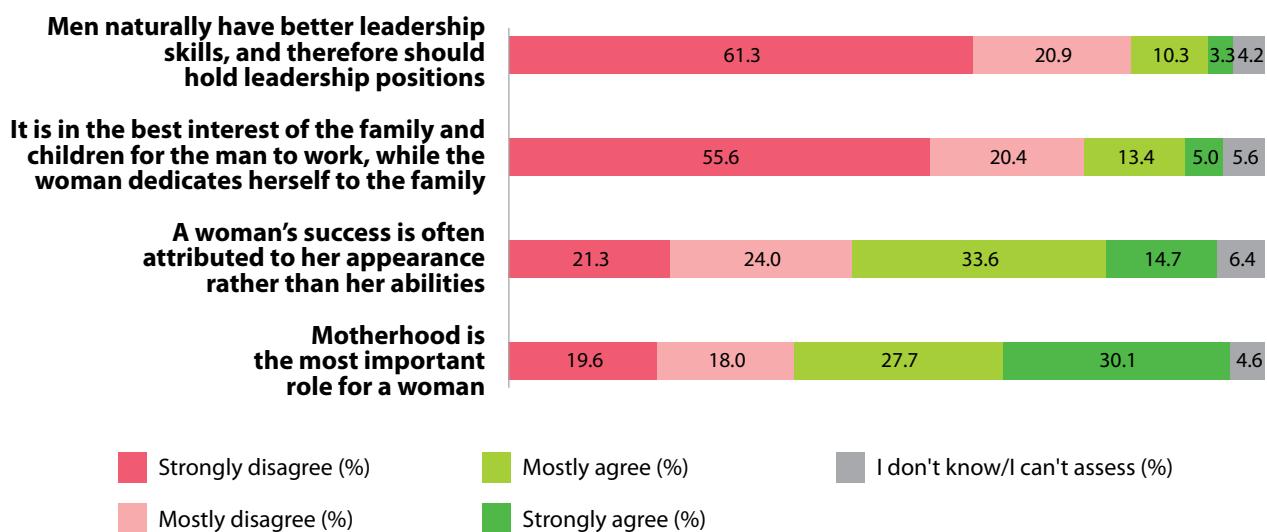
The highest level of disagreement was recorded regarding the statement that men naturally have better leadership abilities and should therefore hold leadership positions – as many as 61.3% of respondents completely reject this statement, while an additional 20.9% mostly disagree. This indicates a positive shift in the perception of leadership abilities between women and men, with the majority of employees disagreeing with the idea that

leadership positions should be reserved for men. However, 13.6% of respondents somewhat support this view, showing that certain gender biases still persist. Similarly, most respondents disagree with the statement that for the well-being of the family and children, it is better for the man to work while the woman devotes herself to the family – 55.6% completely reject this claim, and 20.4% mostly disagree. However, 18.4% of respondents believe that men should be the primary breadwinners.

On the other hand, views on motherhood show a somewhat different trend. The statement that motherhood is the most important role of a woman is supported by a total of 57.8% of respondents, while 19.6% completely disagree and 18% mostly disagree. This suggests that although slightly more than one-third of employees in public institutions (37.6%) recognize other roles of women in society, there is still a deeply rooted perception of motherhood as a woman's primary and most important social role. There are no statistically significant differences between the responses of men and women regarding the statement "Motherhood is the most important role of a woman."

When it comes to the perception of women's success, the results show that this stereotype is relatively present. The statement that women's success is often attributed to their appearance rather than their abilities is supported by a total of 48.3% of respondents, while 21.3% completely disagree and 24% mostly disagree. This indicates that nearly half of public sector employees believe that women are not always valued based on their competencies, which may point to the presence of discrimination and bias in the workplace.

Graph 42: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements? (N=545)



The data show gender differences in the attitudes of employees in Montenegro's public administration regarding gender stereotypes and traditional roles.

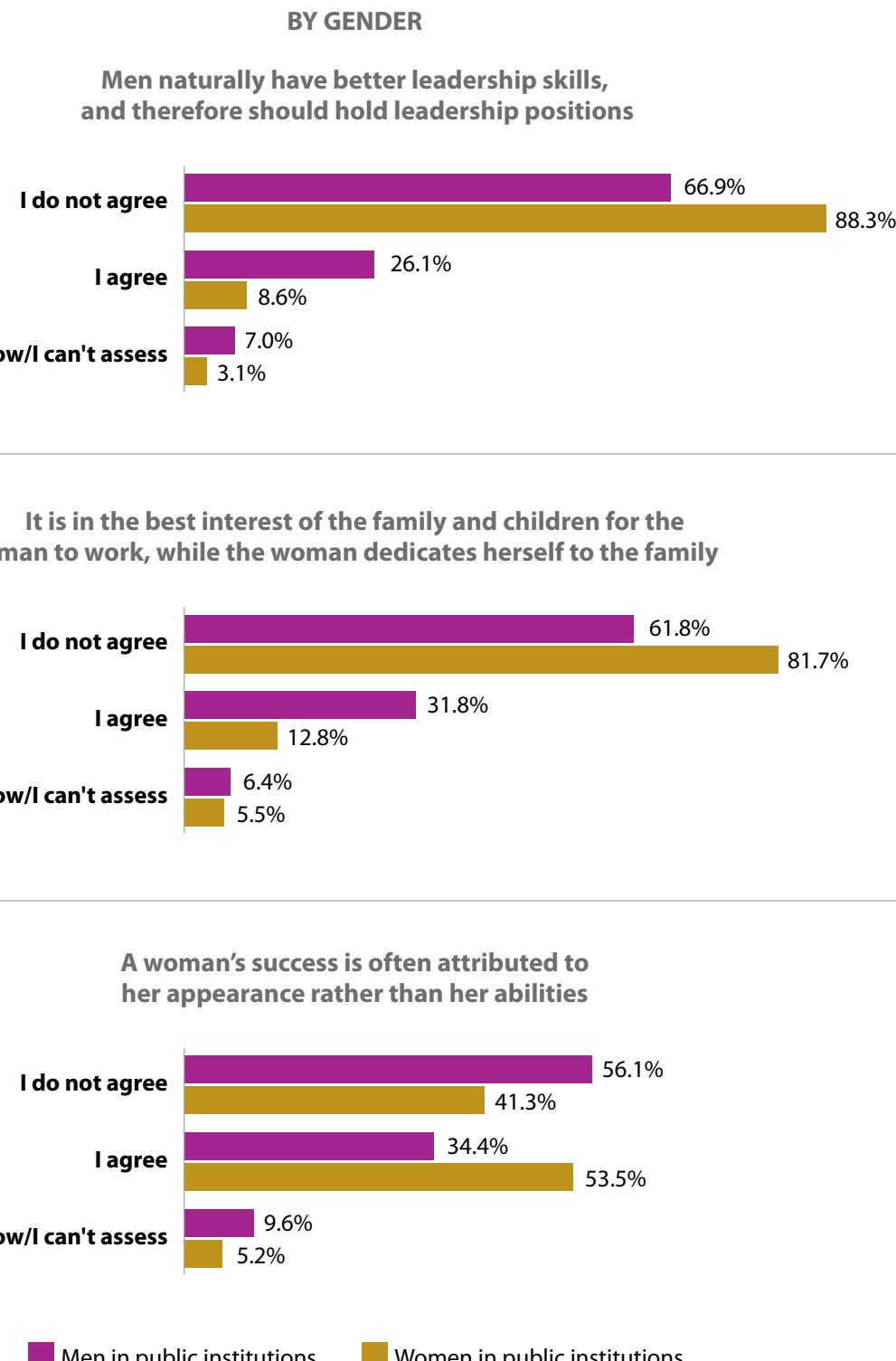
The majority of women in public administration (88.3%) disagree with the statement that men naturally have better leadership abilities and should therefore occupy leadership positions, while the percentage among men is significantly lower – 66.9%. At the same time, as many as 26.1% of men support this statement about traditional gender roles, compared to 8.6% of women.

A similar pattern is observed regarding attitudes toward the division of labor within the family and household. Most women (81.7%) do not believe that it is better for the family's well-being if the man works and the woman devotes herself to the family. Among men, that percentage is slightly lower – 61.8% do not share this view, while 31.8% agree with it.

More than half of women (53.5%) believe that women's success is often attributed to their appearance rather than their abilities, while the majority of men (56.1%) disagree with that view. These findings open space for further exploration of gender differences in understanding the factors that influence professional success.

These findings confirm the need for continuous education and sensitization of employees, especially men, in order to dismantle entrenched stereotypes and create a more gender-equal institutional environment.

Graph 43: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements? By gender (N=545)



Gender-Based Discrimination

Perceptions of Citizens on Gender-Based Discrimination

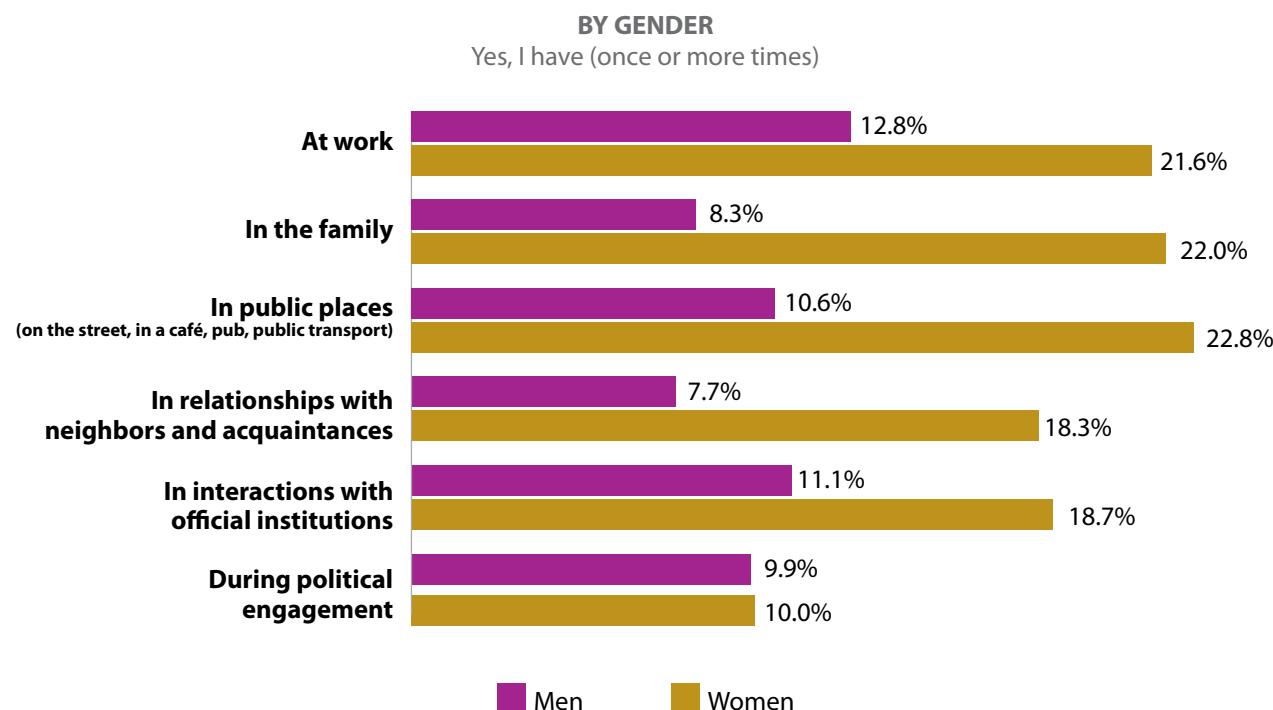
The research results show that women in Montenegro are significantly more exposed to unequal treatment in various areas of life compared to men.

Almost one-quarter (22%) of women from the general population report experiencing unequal treatment within the family, while a significantly smaller percentage of men – 8.6% – report the same. A similar pattern is observed **in the workplace, where 21.6% of women state they have experienced unequal treatment, compared to 12.8% of men.** These figures point to existing gender barriers in both professional and private settings.

When it comes to public spaces, nearly one in four women (22.8%) has experienced unequal treatment on the street, in cafés, pubs, or public transport, highlighting the need to strengthen safety and protection for women. Additionally, **18.7% of women report experiencing unequal treatment when interacting with official institutions**, emphasizing the need to reinforce institutional protection mechanisms and increase the gender sensitivity of public services.

Unlike women, men from the general population report unequal treatment less frequently in all areas—except when it comes to political engagement.

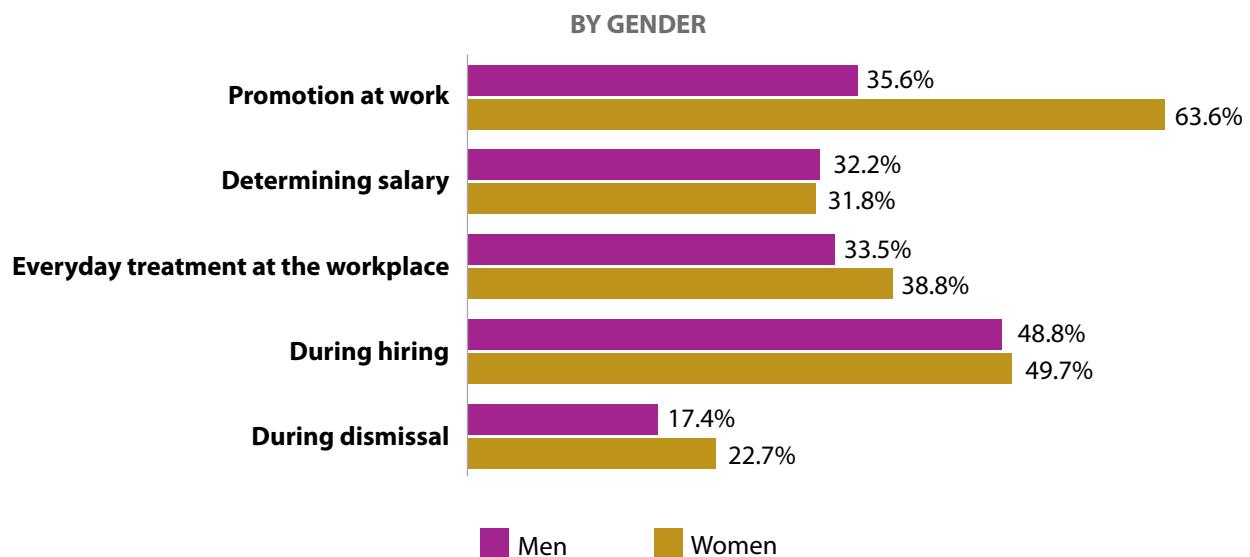
Graph 44: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Have you ever personally experienced being treated unequally because you are a woman/man?



The research results show that among respondents who reported experiencing unequal treatment, the most commonly identified area is career advancement. **Two-thirds of women (63.6%) state that they were placed in an unequal position because of their gender, while one-third of men (35.6%) share the same experience.** A similar pattern is observed in hiring, where **49.7% of women report having been placed at a disadvantage, compared to 27.7% of men.** In terms of everyday treatment in the workplace, 48.8% of women report experiencing unequal treatment, compared to 33.5% of men.

These data points clearly indicate the existence of gender-based discrimination in various aspects of employment—particularly in hiring, promotion, and day-to-day work—highlighting the need to strengthen protection mechanisms and implement equal opportunity policies.

Graph 45: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: In which specific situations have you experienced being put at a disadvantage at work based on your gender? Multiple answers possible

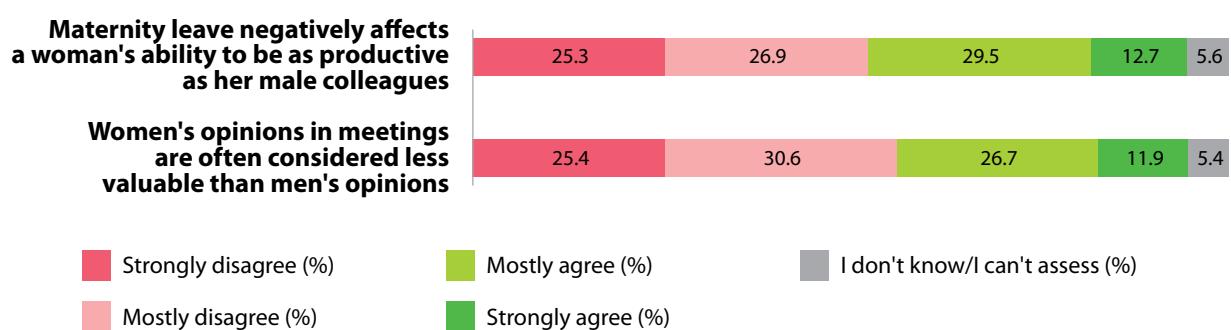


The results show that society is divided when it comes to perceptions of gender equality in the professional environment, particularly regarding maternity leave and the valuing of women's opinions.

More than half of the respondents (52.2%) do not share the view that maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues throughout her career. However, a significant portion — 42.2% — believe that maternity leave does impact a woman's productivity, indicating that part of the population still sees motherhood as a barrier to active participation in the labor market.

Similarly, regarding the statement that women's opinions in meetings are often less valued than those of men, 56% of respondents disagree (25.4% completely, 30.6% mostly), while 38.6% partially or fully agree with the statement. This result points to awareness of the issue, but also to the persistence of stereotypes and experiences that indicate unequal treatment of women in communication and decision-making.

Graph 46: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (N=1005)



Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Gender-Based Discrimination

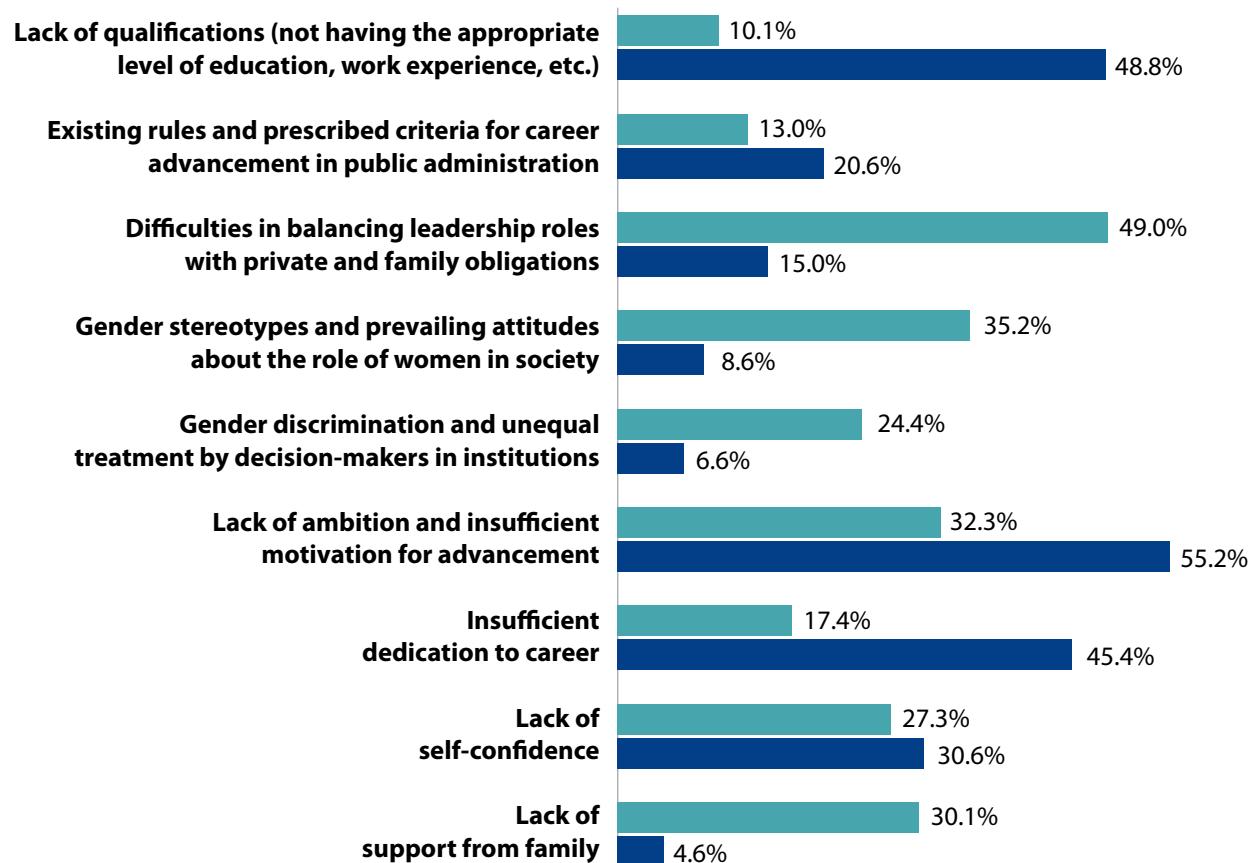
Based on a survey conducted among employees in public institutions in Montenegro, key barriers to career advancement for women and men were analyzed. The research results indicate significant differences in the perception of factors that hinder professional development depending on gender.

Employees in public institutions believe that the most common barrier to women's career advancement is the difficulty of balancing leadership roles with private and family responsibilities, cited by 49% of respondents. The second most frequently mentioned barrier relates to gender stereotypes and prevailing attitudes about women's roles in society, highlighted by one-third of employees (35.2%). In addition, 24.4% of respondents identified gender discrimination and unequal treatment by decision-makers in institutions as one of the main challenges to women's career advancement.

On the other hand, when asked about barriers to men's advancement, respondents predominantly emphasized factors related to individual motivation and professional qualifications. **As many as 55.2% of survey participants considered lack of ambition and motivation as the main barrier for men, while 48.8% cited insufficient qualifications as a limiting factor.** Additionally, 45.4% of respondents believe that men pay less attention to their careers, which may affect their advancement in public administration.

Graph 47: Employees in public institutions: What are the three most common obstacles to career advancement for women/men in public administration? Up to 3 answers possible. (N=545)

- What are the three most common obstacles to career advancement for women in public institutions?
- What are the three most common obstacles to career advancement for men in public institutions?



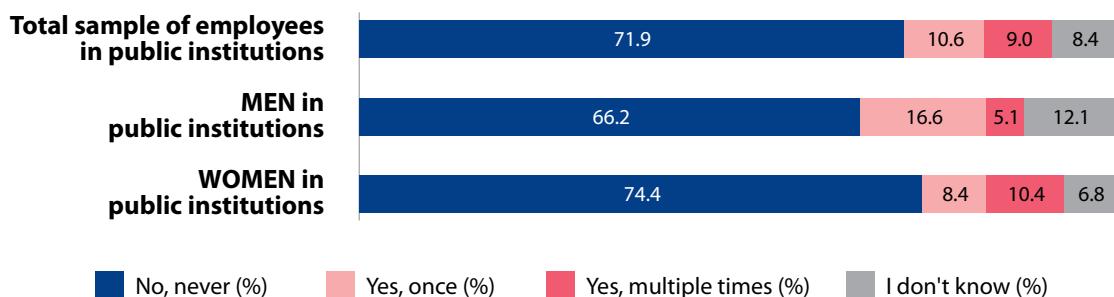
What stands out in this analysis is the clear mismatch in the perception of barriers for women and men. **While the obstacles listed for women are mostly related to social norms, expectations, and structural barriers, the barriers for men are more associated with personal factors such as motivation, commitment, and qualifications.** Another significant difference lies in the perception of gender-based discrimination—while **24.4% of respondents identified discrimination as a barrier for women, only 6.6% mentioned it as a challenge for men.**

These findings point to the need for further analysis and the development of policies that would enable a better understanding of gender differences in career advancement. While women need better conditions for balancing professional and private life, it is also necessary to work on changing perceptions and expectations related to career development for both genders, in order to create a more inclusive and equitable working environment in Montenegro's public administration. The results show that the majority of employees have not experienced unequal treatment based on their gender—nearly three-quarters of respondents (71.9%) stated that they have never had such an experience. However, there is also a portion of respondents who reported that they have been treated unequally due to their gender at least once.

An analysis of responses by gender reveals certain differences in the perception and experiences of men and women. **Among men, two-thirds stated that they have never experienced unequal treatment based on gender, while that percentage is higher among women, with three-quarters of female respondents saying they have not had such an experience.** On the other hand, 16.6% of men stated that they had felt discrimination based on gender at least once, while that percentage is lower among women at 8.4%. When it comes to those who experienced it multiple times, 10.4% of women and 5.1% of men reported facing this issue more than once.

These results indicate that men report having been treated unequally in the workplace due to their gender slightly more often than women (21.7% of men reported experiencing unequal treatment compared to 18.8% of women). However, it is important to emphasize that a significant percentage of respondents (8.4% overall, 12.1% of men and 6.8% of women) did not know how to answer this question, which may suggest a lack of knowledge and understanding of what constitutes gender inequality in the professional environment.

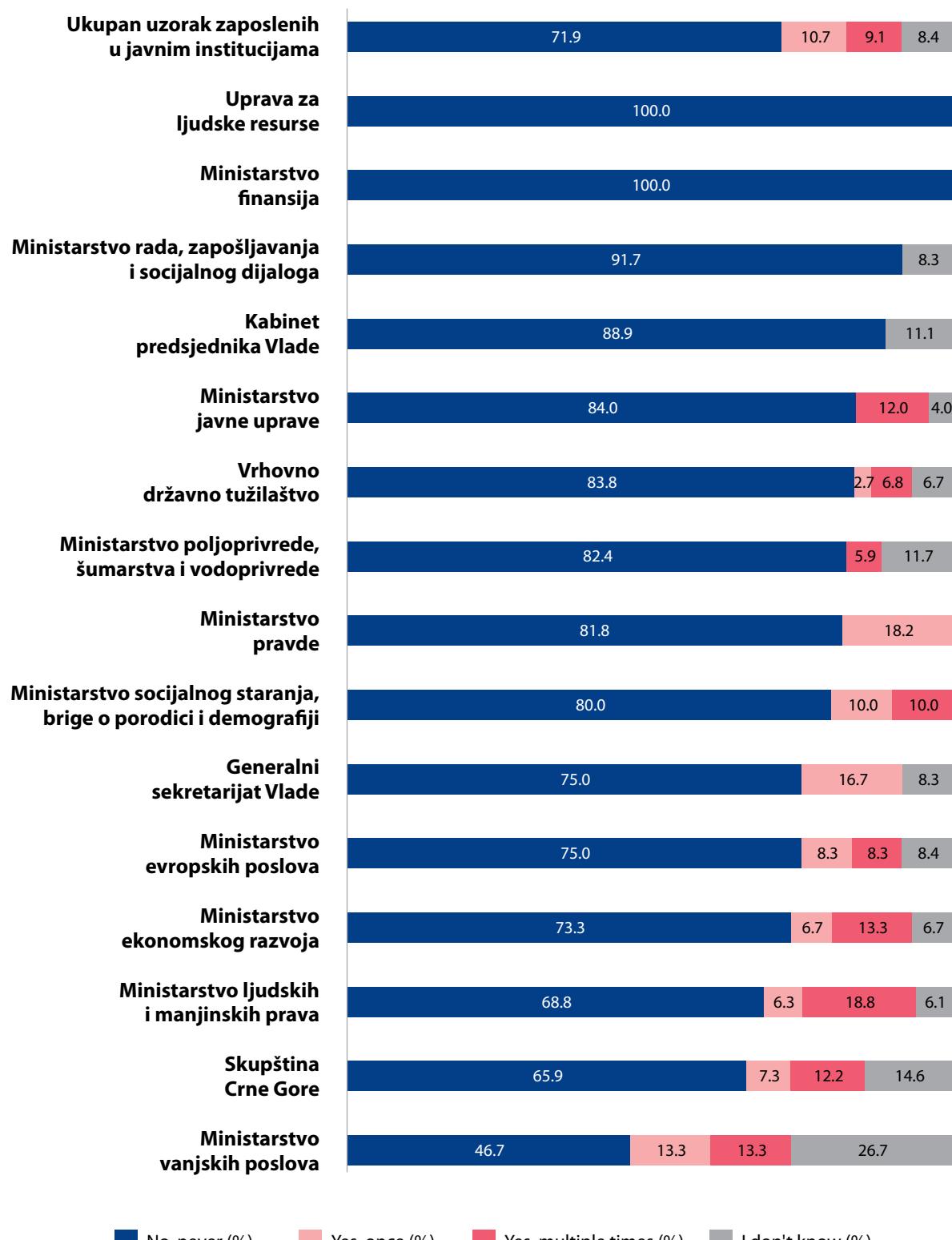
Graph 48: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced being treated unequally in the institution where you currently work because of your gender, i.e., because you are a woman/man? (N=545)



Research on the perception of unequal treatment based on gender in state institutions shows that the majority of respondents have not experienced gender-based discrimination. However, there are significant differences among institutions. While some institutions, such as the Human Resources Administration and the Ministry of Finance, report a 100% rate of responses stating that no unequal treatment has occurred, such results raise the question of whether this reflects a genuine absence of discrimination or a lack of awareness and understanding of what constitutes discrimination.

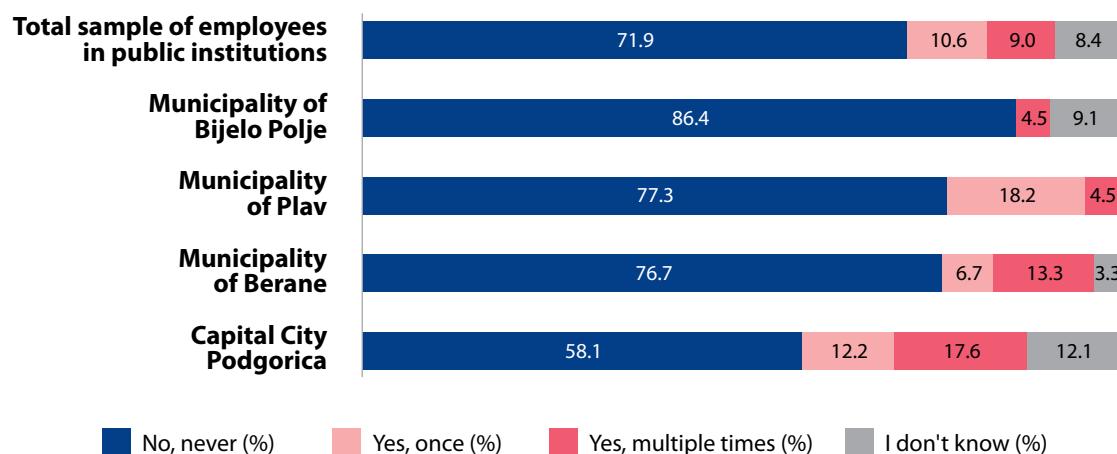
In contrast, institutions such as the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (18.8%), and the Parliament of Montenegro (12.2%) show a higher percentage of employees who recognize and report unequal treatment, which may indicate a higher level of awareness and understanding of gender discrimination. This claim is further supported by data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where as many as 26.7% of respondents state that they do not know whether they have been discriminated against, pointing to a high level of uncertainty and possible failure to recognize forms of gender inequality.

Graph 49: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced being treated unequally in the institution where you currently work because of your gender, i.e., because you are a woman/man?



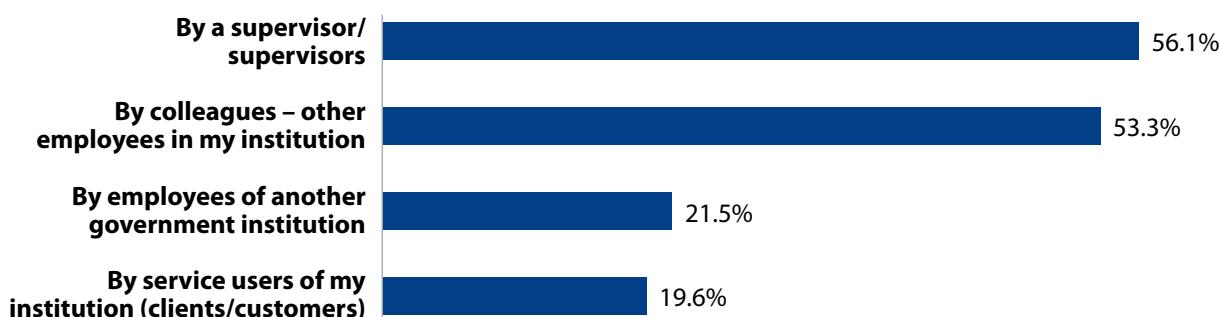
Research on the perception of unequal treatment based on gender among employees in public institutions at the local level also shows that the majority of respondents have not experienced discrimination. However, the results vary between municipalities. The highest percentage of respondents who have never felt unequal treatment is recorded in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje (86.4%), while the lowest is in the Capital City of Podgorica (58.1%), where the highest percentage of respondents who reported being treated unequally multiple times was also recorded (17.6%).

Graph 50: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced being treated unequally in the institution where you currently work because of your gender, i.e., because you are a woman/man?



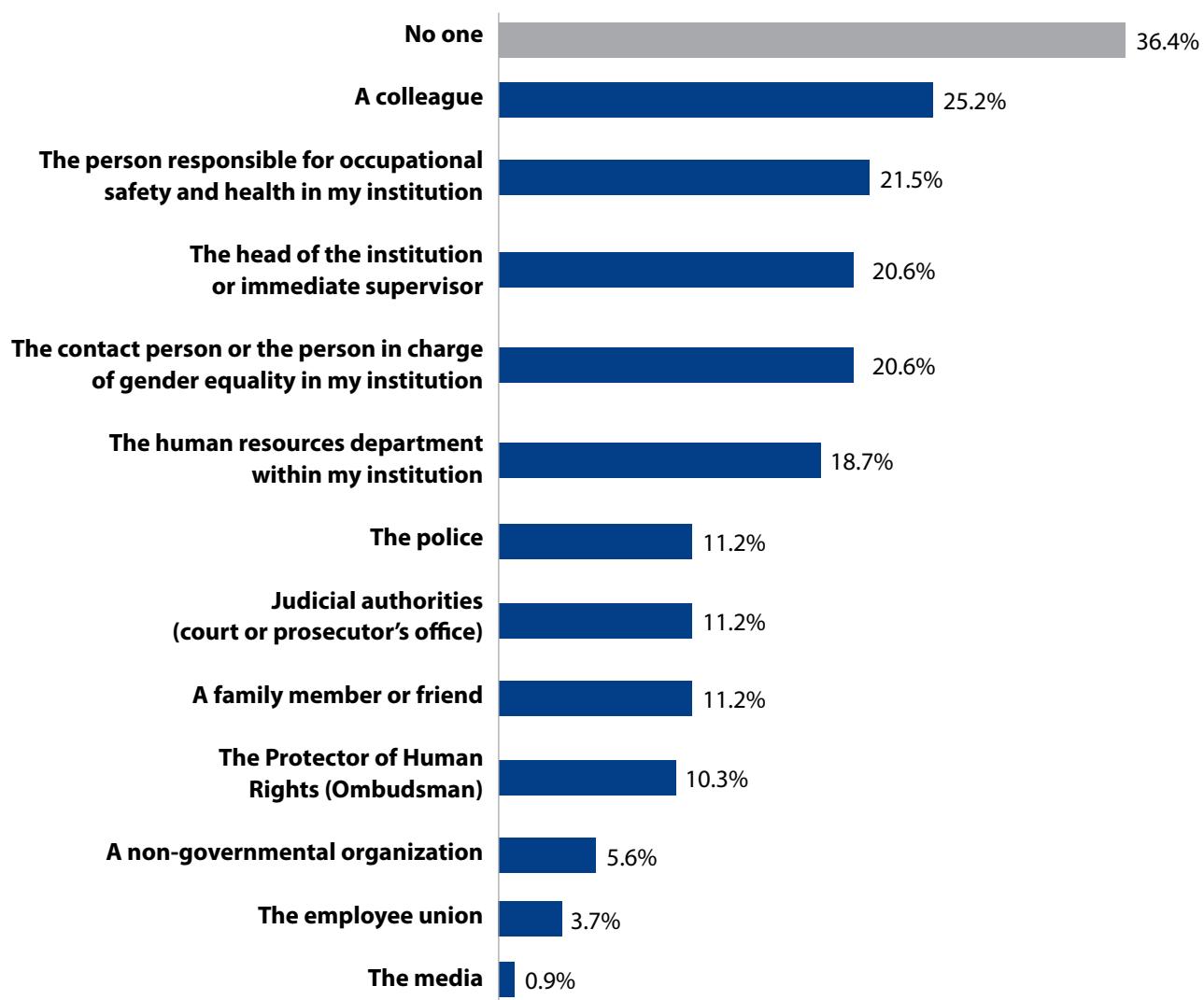
Among employees who reported experiencing unequal treatment based on gender, the majority identified supervisors (56.1%) and colleagues within the same institution (53.3%) as the main sources of discrimination. A smaller, but still significant percentage of respondents (21.5%) stated that they experienced unequal treatment from employees in other state institutions, suggesting that gender (in)equality is not an isolated issue within a single institution but may also occur in inter-institutional interactions. The smallest percentage of respondents (19.6%) reported experiencing discrimination from the institution's service users (clients/citizens), indicating that although less frequent, gender inequality can also be present in interactions with the public.

Graph 51: Employees in public institutions: By whom were you treated unequally? Multiple answers possible. (N=107)



Among employees who experienced unequal treatment, one-third (36.4%) did not seek protection or support from anyone. The largest number of those who did seek help turned to colleagues (25.2%), while slightly more than one-fifth of employees reached out to the person responsible for security and integrity (21.5%), the head of the institution (20.6%), or the person in charge of gender equality (20.6%). These data suggest that employees primarily seek support within their work environment but are not always certain whom they can specifically turn to. A smaller percentage of employees sought help from formal protection institutions, such as judicial authorities (11.2%), the police (11.2%), or the ombudsman (10.3%).

Graph 52: Employees in public institutions: Whom did you turn to for protection and support when you were treated unequally? Multiple answers possible. (N=107)



Research shows that in most institutions there are no concrete procedures for reporting gender-based discrimination — as many as 55.8% of respondents state that such sanctions do not exist. Among the institutions that do have formalized procedures, only one-quarter (25.9%) of respondents believe they are applied in a consistent and non-selective manner, while 18.3% say that procedures exist but are not implemented consistently.

Graph 53: Employees in public institutions: Are there specific procedures and an action plan in your institution for reporting cases of gender-based discrimination, and if so, are they implemented in a consistent and non-selective manner? (N=545)





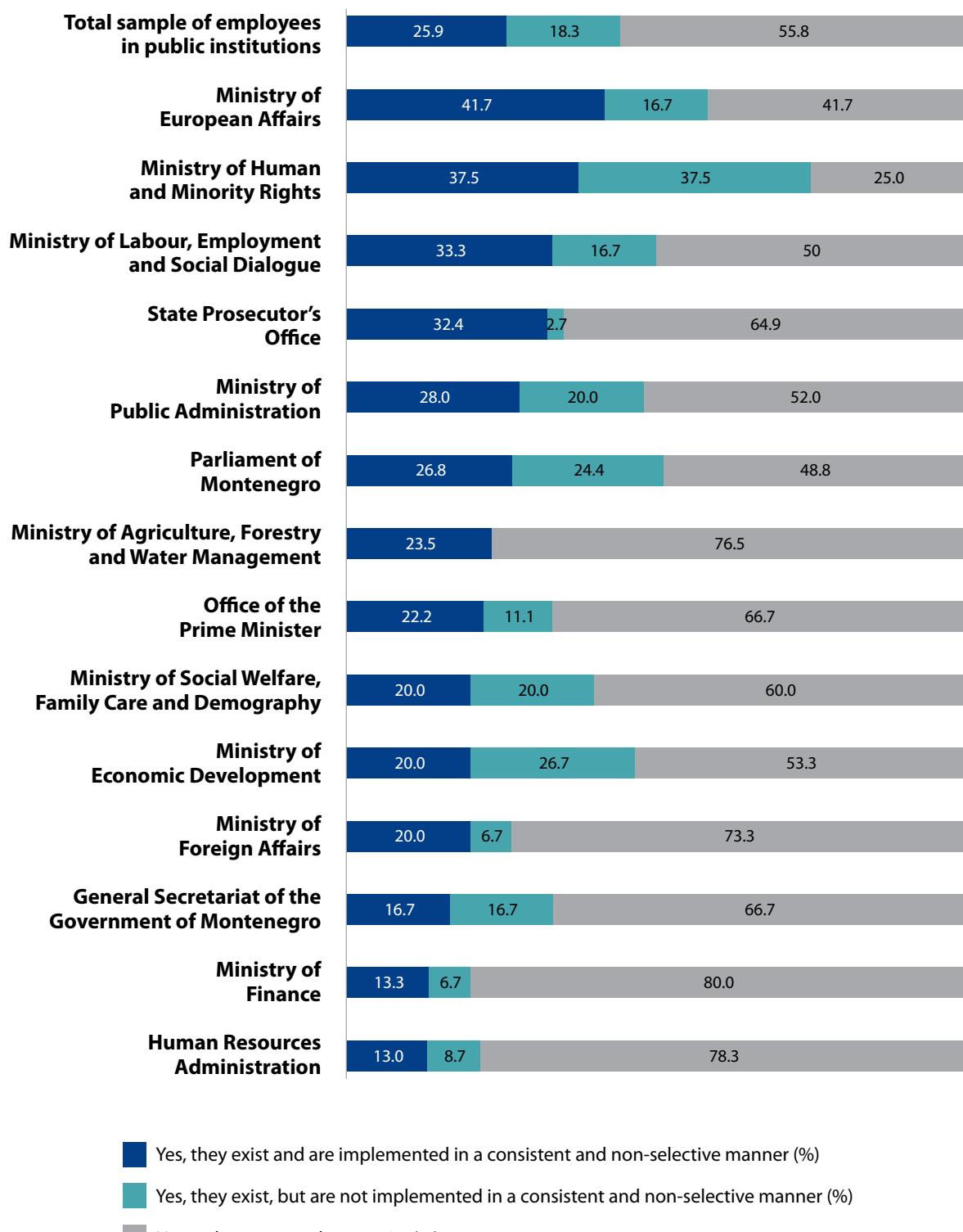
The analysis of the existence and implementation of procedures for reporting gender-based discrimination in public institutions reveals significant differences between various sectors. The highest percentage of respondents who confirm that procedures are applied consistently and non-selectively is found in the Ministry of European Affairs (41.7%), the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (37.5%), and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (33.3%). These institutions are leading in establishing and implementing measures to protect employees from discrimination.

On the other hand, a significant number of institutions have formal procedures, but respondents point to problems with their consistent application. This is particularly evident in the Ministry of Economic Development (26.7%), and the Parliament of Montenegro (24.4%), where there is a recognized need to strengthen mechanisms for enforcing protective measures.

The greatest challenges are identified in institutions where the majority of employees report that no sanctions exist for discrimination. This is the case in the Human Resources Administration (78.3%), the Ministry of Finance (80%), the Ministry of Agriculture (76.5%), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (73.3%).

These results highlight the need for comprehensive reforms in the area of protection against gender-based discrimination in the workplace. It is recommended to introduce clear and transparent reporting procedures, strengthen institutional protection mechanisms, and educate employees about the importance of gender equality and the necessity of consistent application of existing rules.

Graph 54: Employees in public institutions: Are there specific procedures and an action plan in your institution for reporting cases of gender-based discrimination, and if so, are they implemented in a consistent and non-selective manner?



The analysis of the existence and implementation of procedures for reporting gender-based discrimination among employees in municipal administrations shows significant variations depending on the local government. An exception is the Municipality of Plav, where as many as 68.2% of respondents state that procedures exist and are

applied consistently and non-selectively, while an additional 22.7% confirm their existence but note occasional issues with implementation. Although these figures may at first glance suggest a high level of institutional commitment to protection from discrimination, considering the known weaknesses in the functioning of gender equality mechanisms in that municipality, such a high rate of positive responses is unlikely to reflect the actual situation. Instead, it is more likely that these results point to a limited understanding of procedures and the concept of protection from discrimination, as well as a tendency to give socially desirable responses.

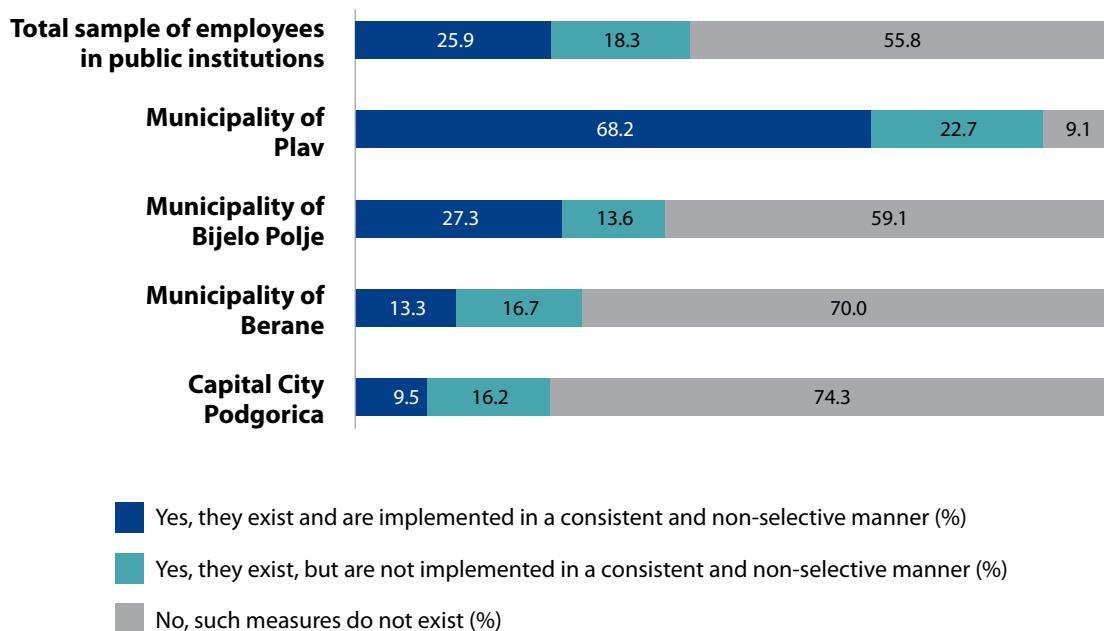
The analysis shows that the Municipality of Plav stands out for its reported positive practices, with 68.2% of respondents stating that procedures are consistently and non-selectively implemented, and another 22.7% acknowledging their existence despite occasional problems. This appears to reflect a high level of institutional commitment to anti-discrimination protections.

However, it is important to note that the research was conducted using a quantitative survey method, which leaves open the possibility that respondents gave socially acceptable answers. The results may therefore reflect limited knowledge among employees about existing procedures and their practical application, further emphasizing the need for continuous training of municipal staff to improve understanding and recognition of gender-based discrimination protection mechanisms.

In contrast, the greatest challenges are observed in the Capital City of Podgorica, where three-quarters (74.3%) of respondents state that such sanctions do not exist, as well as in the Municipality of Berane (70%), indicating a need to establish or strengthen formal procedures for protecting employees from discrimination.

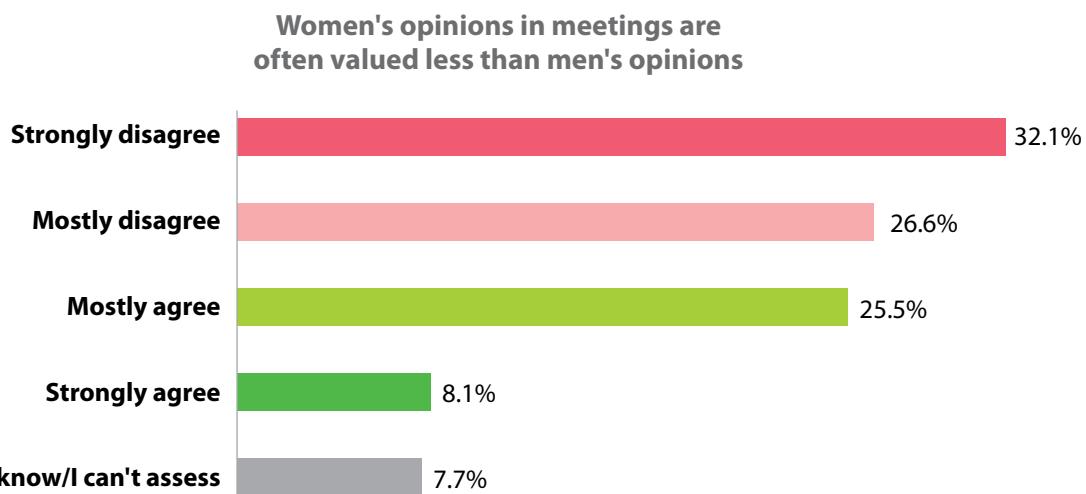
The Municipality of Bijelo Polje reports more moderate results, with one-quarter (27.3%) of respondents stating that procedures are consistently implemented, while 13.6% say they exist but are not always consistent. Still, a significant percentage of employees (59.1%) report that sanctions for discrimination do not exist.

Graph 55: Employees in public institutions: Are there specific procedures and an action plan in your institution for reporting cases of gender-based discrimination, and if so, are they implemented in a consistent and non-selective manner?

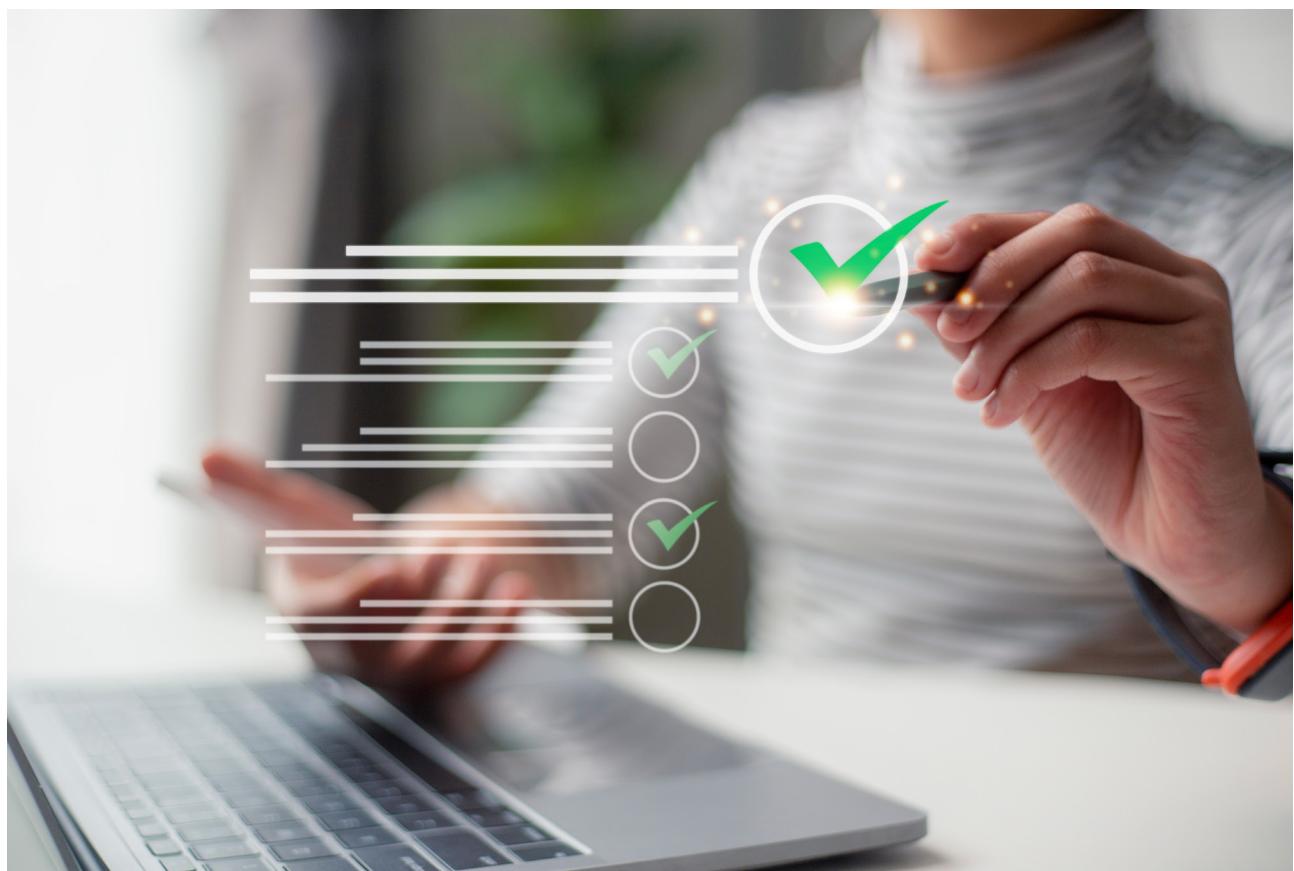


Employees in public institutions in Montenegro have divided opinions on the statement that women's opinions in meetings are often valued less than men's. Almost 59% of respondents disagree with this statement (32.1% completely, and 26.6% mostly), while just over one-third agree (25.5% mostly, and 8.1% completely), indicating a significant portion of employees who recognize gender inequality in everyday professional communication. An additional 7.7% of respondents had no clear opinion on the matter.

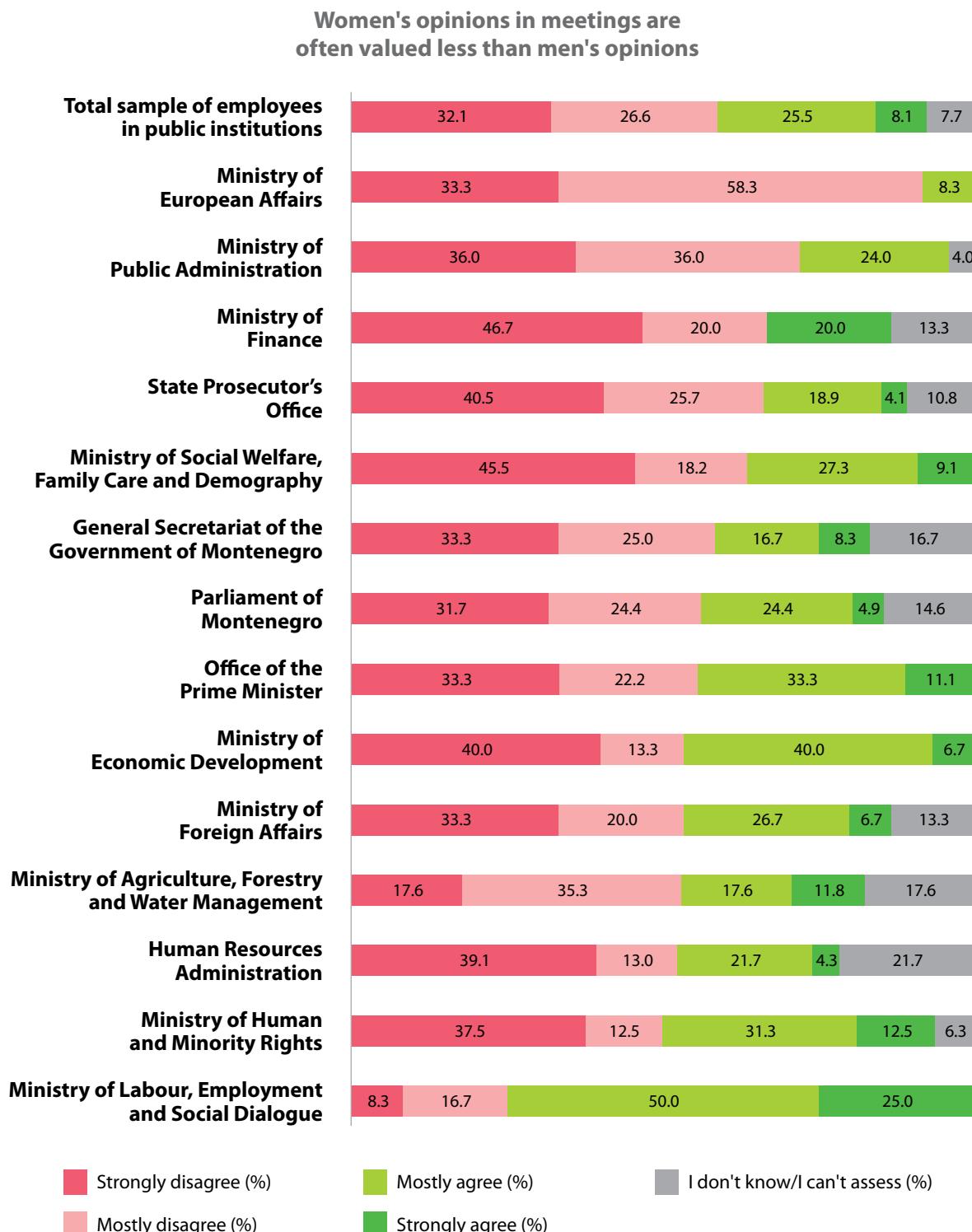
Graph 56: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Women's opinions in meetings are often valued less than men's opinions? (N=545)



While in the Ministry of European Affairs and the Ministry of Public Administration almost all respondents disagree with this statement, in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue the majority (75%) recognize it as true. In the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Welfare, more than 60% of respondents disagree with the statement, whereas in the Ministry of Economic Development as many as 46.7% agree with it. Data from the State Prosecutor's Office, the Parliament, and the General Secretariat of the Government show divided opinions, and in several institutions (e.g., the Human Resources Administration), a higher share of respondents were unable to assess the statement.

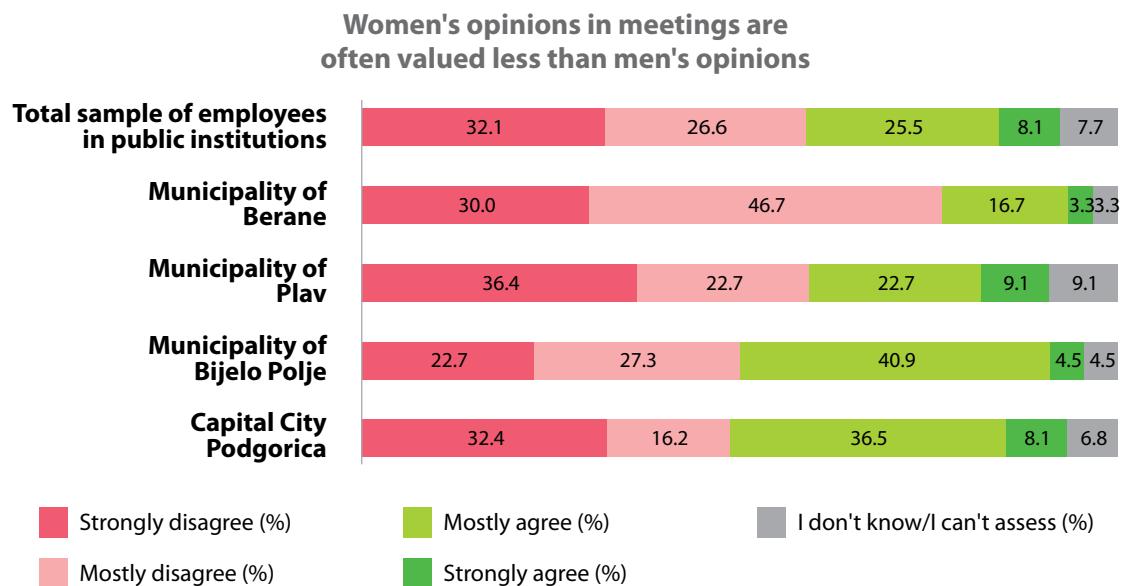


Graph 57: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Women's opinions in meetings are often valued less than men's opinions?



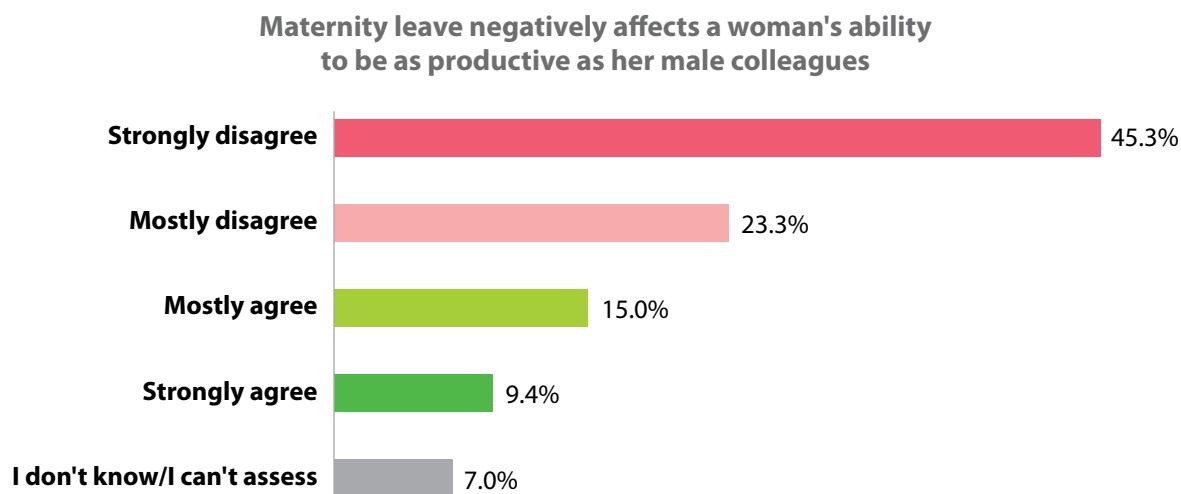
In the Municipality of Berane, disagreement with the statement that women's opinions in meetings are valued less than men's is dominant — as many as 76.7% of employees do not support it (30% completely, 46.7% mostly). A similar situation is observed in the Municipality of Plav, where the majority also disagree (59.1%). In contrast, in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, employee opinions are divided, with 45.4% agreeing with the statement and 50% disagreeing. A similar pattern is seen in the Capital City of Podgorica, where 44.6% of respondents agree with the statement, while 48.6% disagree.

Graph 58: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Women's opinions in meetings are often valued less than men's opinions?



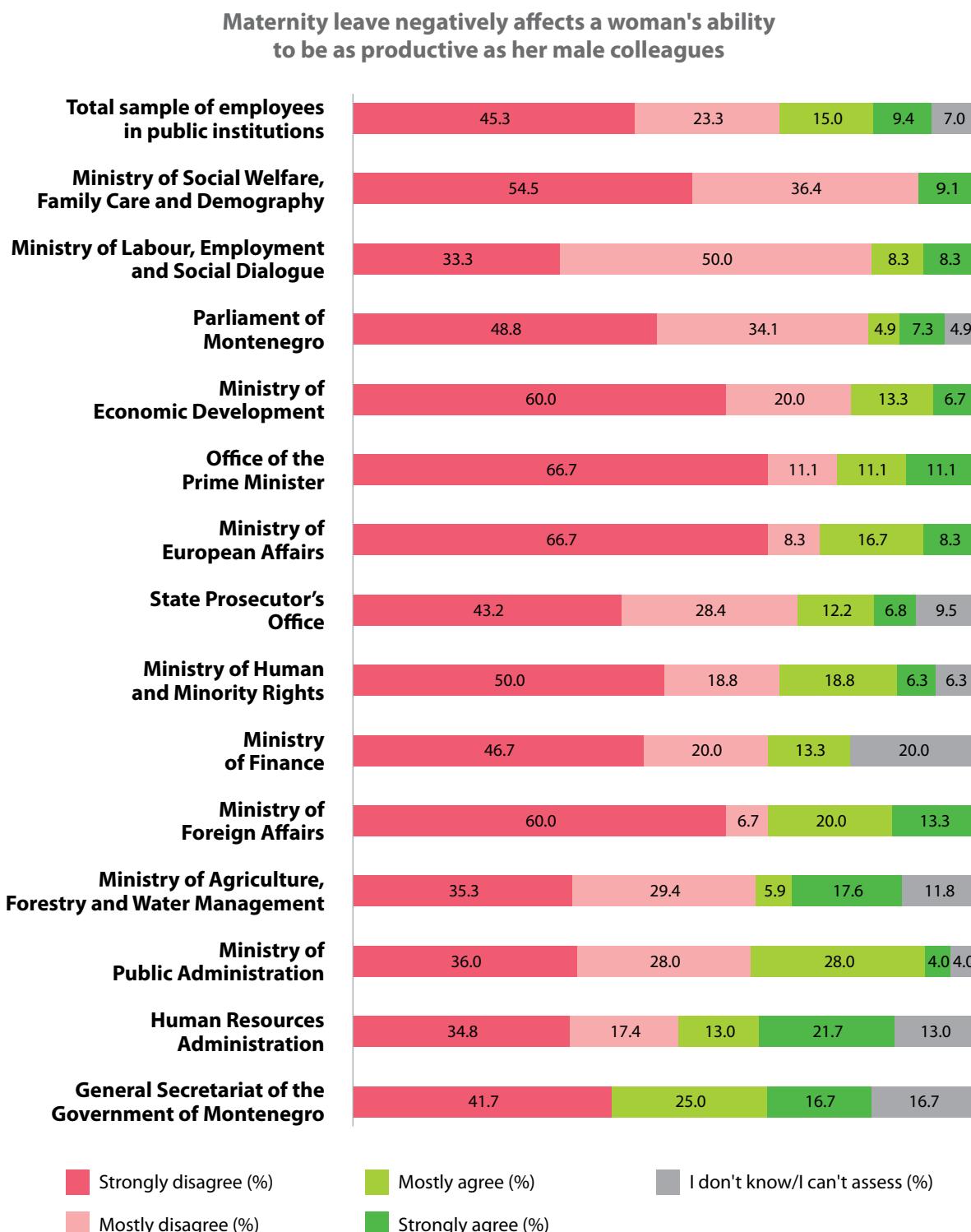
The majority of employees in public institutions in Montenegro disagree with the statement that maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues — as many as 68.6% of respondents hold this view (45.3% completely disagree, 23.3% mostly disagree). On the other hand, nearly one-quarter (24.4%) of respondents believe that maternity leave has a negative impact on women's productivity (15% mostly agree, 9.4% completely agree), while 7% do not know or cannot assess.

Graph 59: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues? (N=545)



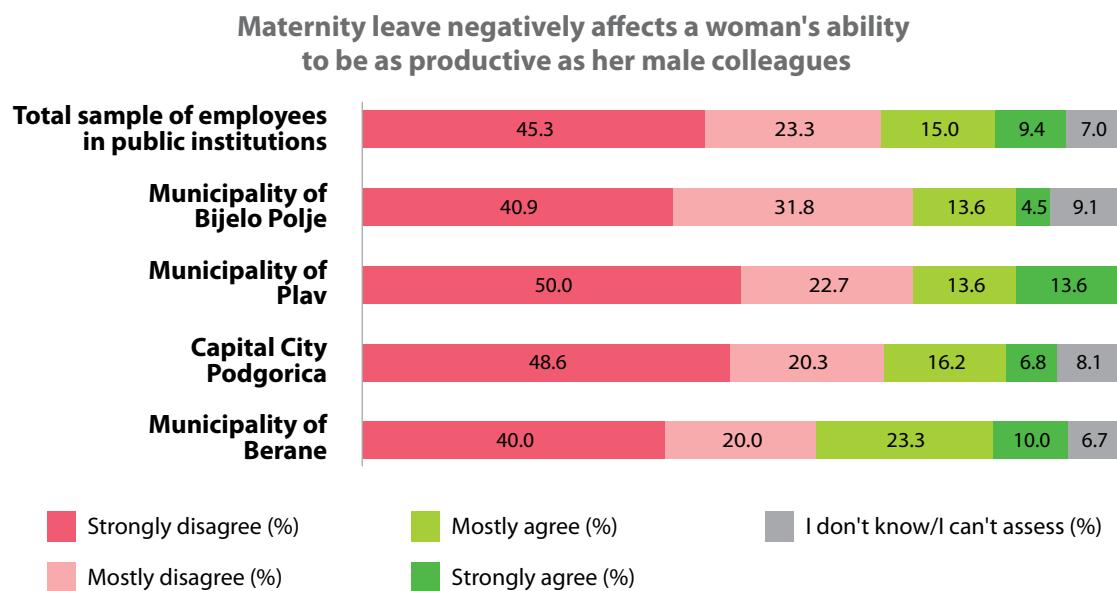
The analysis by institution shows that the majority of employees in almost all institutions disagree with the statement that maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues. In the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Labour, nearly all respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, which may indicate greater sensitivity to gender equality issues within these sectors. Similarly high levels of disagreement are present in the Ministry of Economic Development (80%). Particularly strong disagreement was recorded in the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of European Affairs, where around 75% or more of respondents completely or mostly disagreed with the statement.

Graph 60: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues?



The analysis by municipalities shows that the majority of employees do not share the view that maternity leave negatively affects women's productivity. The strongest disagreement is recorded in the Municipality of Plav, where 72.7% of respondents reject this statement. Similar views are present in the Capital City of Podgorica (68.9%) and the Municipality of Bijelo Polje (72.7%). In the Municipality of Berane, the percentage of disagreement is slightly lower (60%).

Graph 61: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Maternity leave negatively affects a woman's ability to be as productive as her male colleagues?



Perceptions of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence represents one of the most severe forms of human rights violations and remains a serious social issue in Montenegro. The research examined the perceptions of citizens and employees in public institutions regarding the prevalence of gender-based violence, the level of attention it receives in public discourse, and the recognition of various forms of violence.

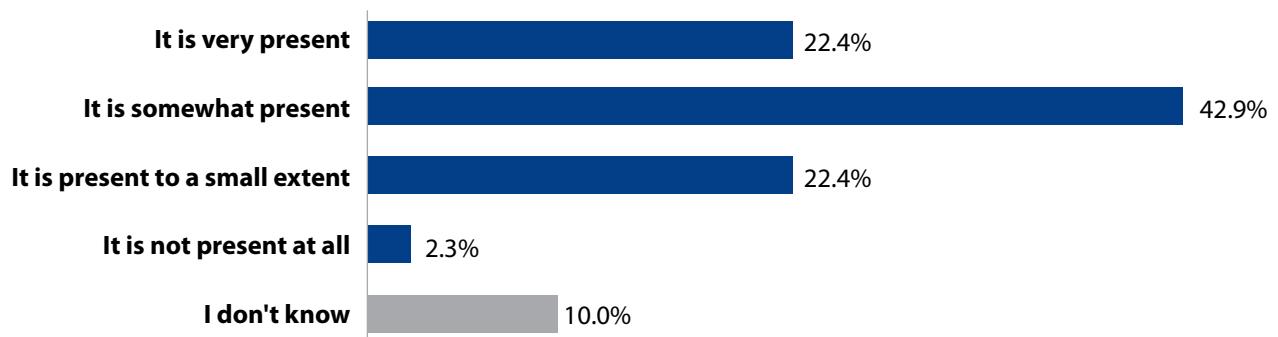
The results show that the vast majority of respondents recognize gender-based violence as a present issue, with women expressing a higher level of concern and awareness about the topic. Additionally, significant gender differences in perception were observed, with men being less likely to recognize the widespread nature of the problem. The study also explored the extent to which this issue is addressed in society and which forms of violence are most recognized by citizens.

These findings provide important insights for the further development of strategies aimed at combating gender-based violence, as well as for improving institutional and media responses to this problem.

Perceptions of Citizens on Gender-Based Violence

The research results show that the majority of respondents recognize gender-based violence as a serious problem in Montenegro, but opinions differ regarding its perceived prevalence. Two-thirds of respondents (65.3%) believe that gender-based violence is present.

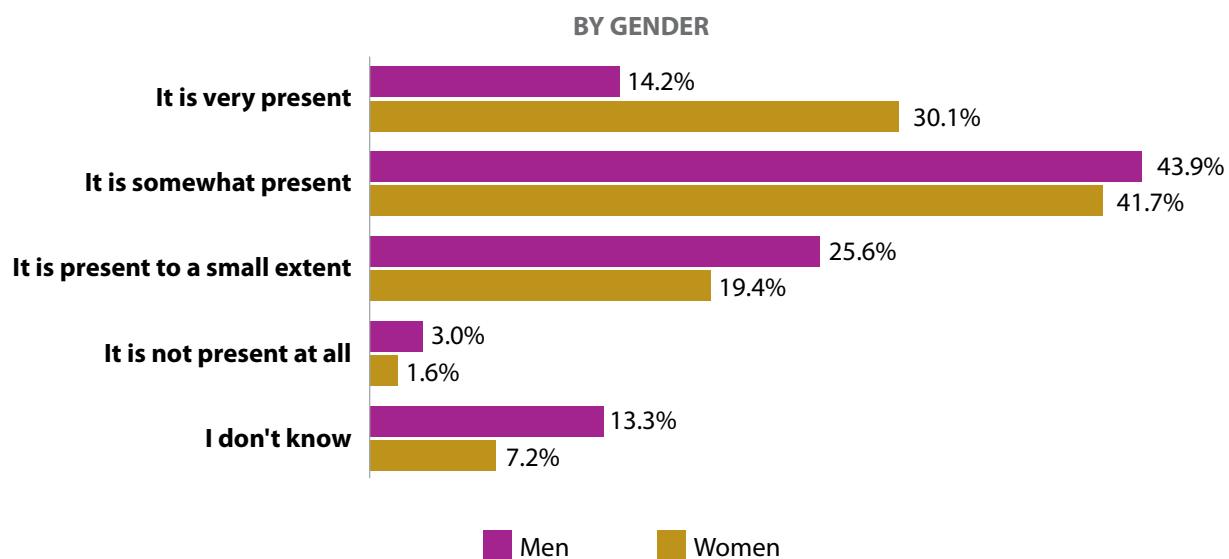
Graph 62: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent is gender-based violence present in Montenegro? (N=1005)



The results indicate significant gender differences in the perception of the presence of gender-based violence in Montenegro. Looking at the general population sample, **women are significantly more likely to recognize gender-based violence as a serious problem—71.8% of women believe it is present, compared to 58.1% of men who share the same view**. This data suggests that women have a heightened awareness of the prevalence of gender-based violence, likely stemming from personal or indirect experience, especially considering the World Health Organization's finding that one in three women is exposed to some form of violence in her lifetime.

These differences highlight the need for additional educational campaigns and awareness-raising activities on gender-based violence, particularly among men, to ensure greater recognition of the problem and to improve the institutional response. They also point to the importance of taking a systematic approach to addressing gender-based violence and working continuously to strengthen institutional responses in order to improve both perceptions and knowledge of this issue within society.

Graph 63: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent is gender-based violence present in Montenegro? By gender (N=1005)

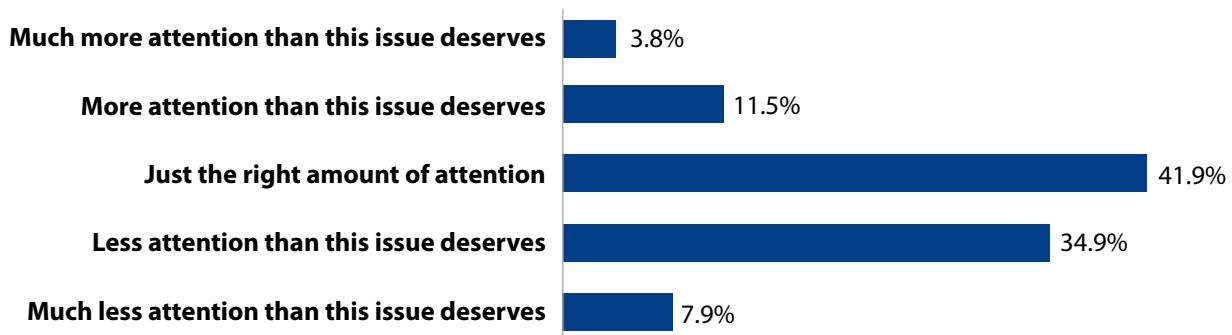


The analysis of perceptions regarding the level of attention given to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence in Montenegro reveals divided opinions among respondents. **The largest percentage of the total sample (41.9%) believes that “just the right amount” of attention is devoted to this issue.**

On the other hand, a relatively small percentage of respondents think that the issue receives more attention than necessary (15.3%).

These data points suggest that there is significant room to improve the media and institutional focus on gender-based violence, with women more often feeling that the problem does not receive sufficient attention. There is a need to further raise awareness of these issues through informational campaigns, public discussions, and systemic support for victims of violence.

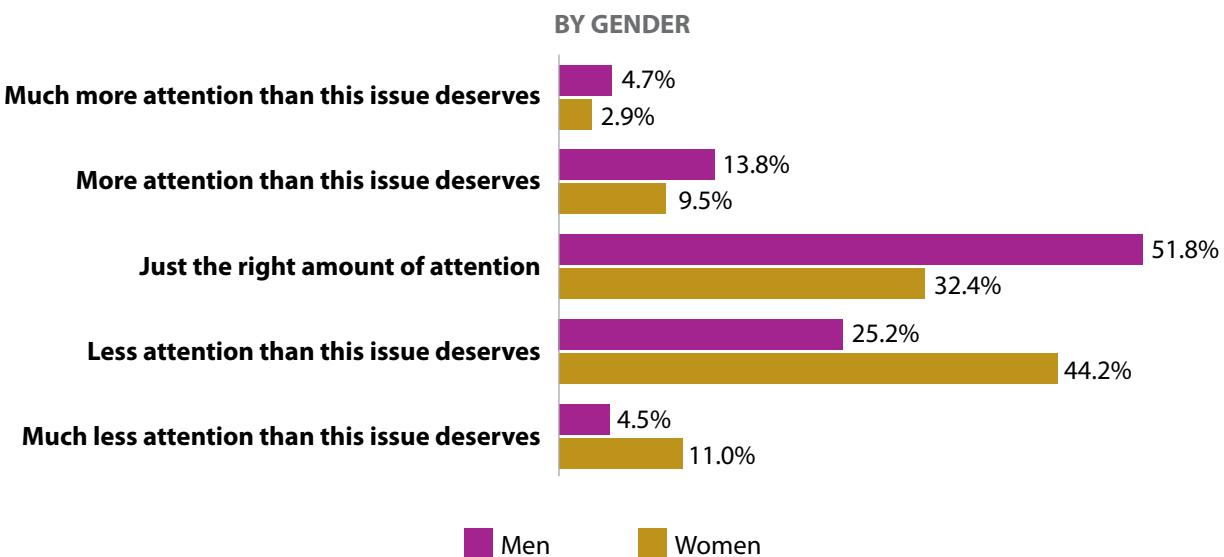
Graph 64: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: How much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence? (N=1005)



The results show differences in the perception of men and women regarding the level of attention given to gender equality in public discourse. **The majority of men (51.8%) believe that the topic receives just the right amount of attention, while a significantly smaller percentage of women (32.4%) share this view.** In contrast, as many as 55.2% of women (of which 44.2% believe it receives less, and 11.0% much less attention) feel that the issue is insufficiently represented, indicating a strong sense of neglect regarding gender equality among women.

This difference in perception may stem from differing everyday experiences and levels of awareness of discrimination, further confirming the need for deeper dialogue, education, and the sensitization of all social actors on the issue of gender equality.

Graph 65: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: How much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence? (N=1005)

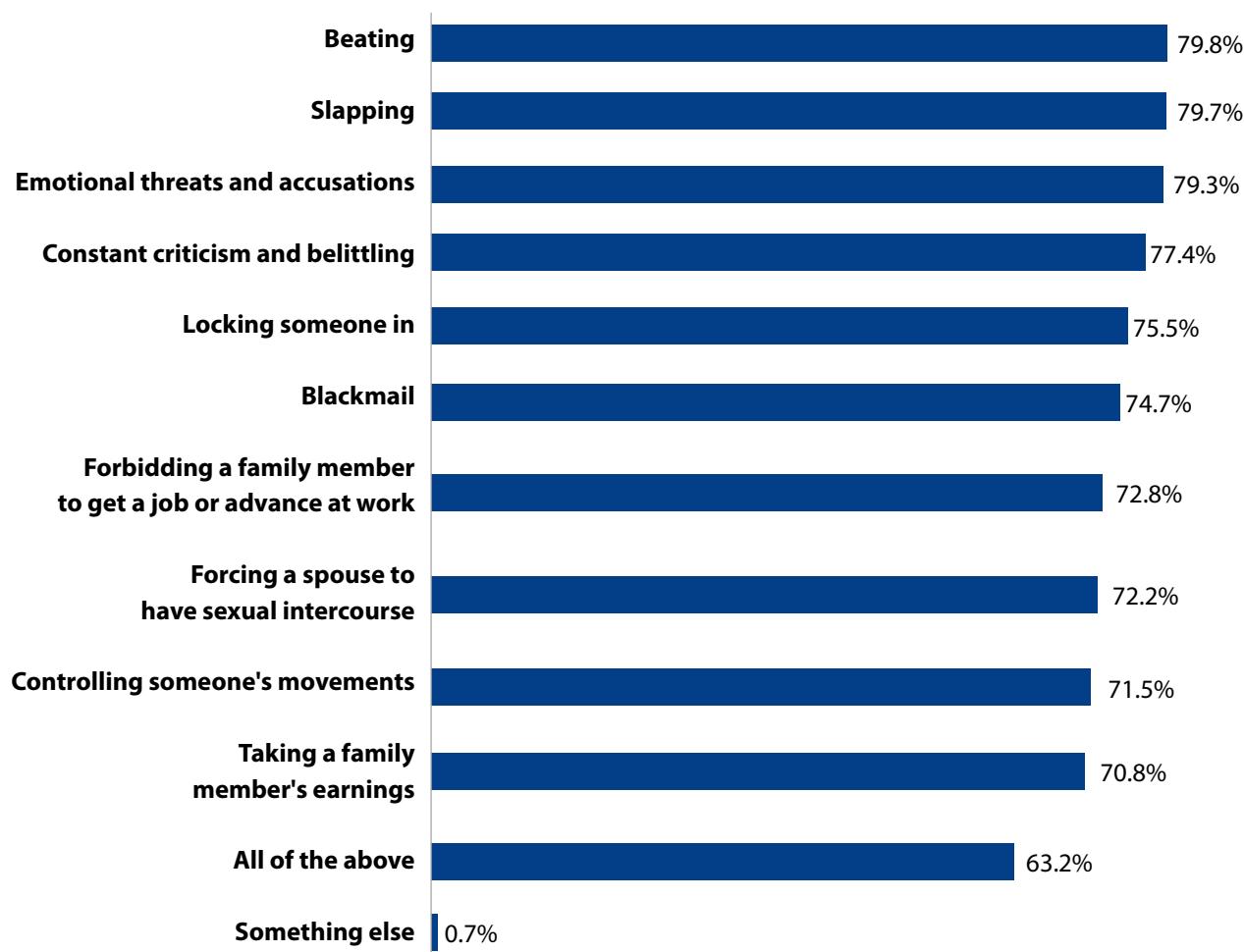


The research results show a high level of recognition of various forms of domestic and gender-based violence among respondents. **The most recognized forms of physical violence are slapping and beating. Slapping is recognized as a form of violence by 79.7% of the general population and 79.8% of the overall sample.** Emotional threats and accusations are recognized by 79.3%, while constant criticism and belittling are identified by 77.4% of the general population. Control of movement (71.5%) and blackmail (74.7%) are also identified as significant forms of violence. These findings indicate that respondents most clearly recognize physical violence as a form of domestic abuse, while also highlighting the need to further raise awareness of all forms of violence.

It is concerning that fewer than two-thirds of the general population (63.2%) selected "all of the above" as forms of violence, which may suggest that certain types of violence are not taken equally seriously or that there is selective recognition of abusive behaviors. This finding is particularly important as it points to a serious lack of knowledge about what constitutes violence—likely the result of deeply rooted social norms that normalize certain violent behaviors. Failure to recognize violence in its various forms poses a serious barrier to prevention and protection and clearly indicates the need for intensive and systemic education and a shift in societal attitudes.

These findings point to a relatively high level of awareness of the most visible and socially recognized forms of domestic and gender-based violence. However, there is a need for further education, particularly in recognizing more subtle and systemic forms of psychological and economic violence, which often go unnoticed but can have serious and long-term consequences for victims. **Especially concerning is the fact that one-third of respondents do not recognize controlling movement and withholding income as forms of violence, highlighting entrenched social norms and a lack of understanding of the breadth and complexity of gender-based violence.**

Graph 66: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Which types of behavior from the list can be classified as forms of domestic and gender-based violence? Please select all that apply. (N=1005)



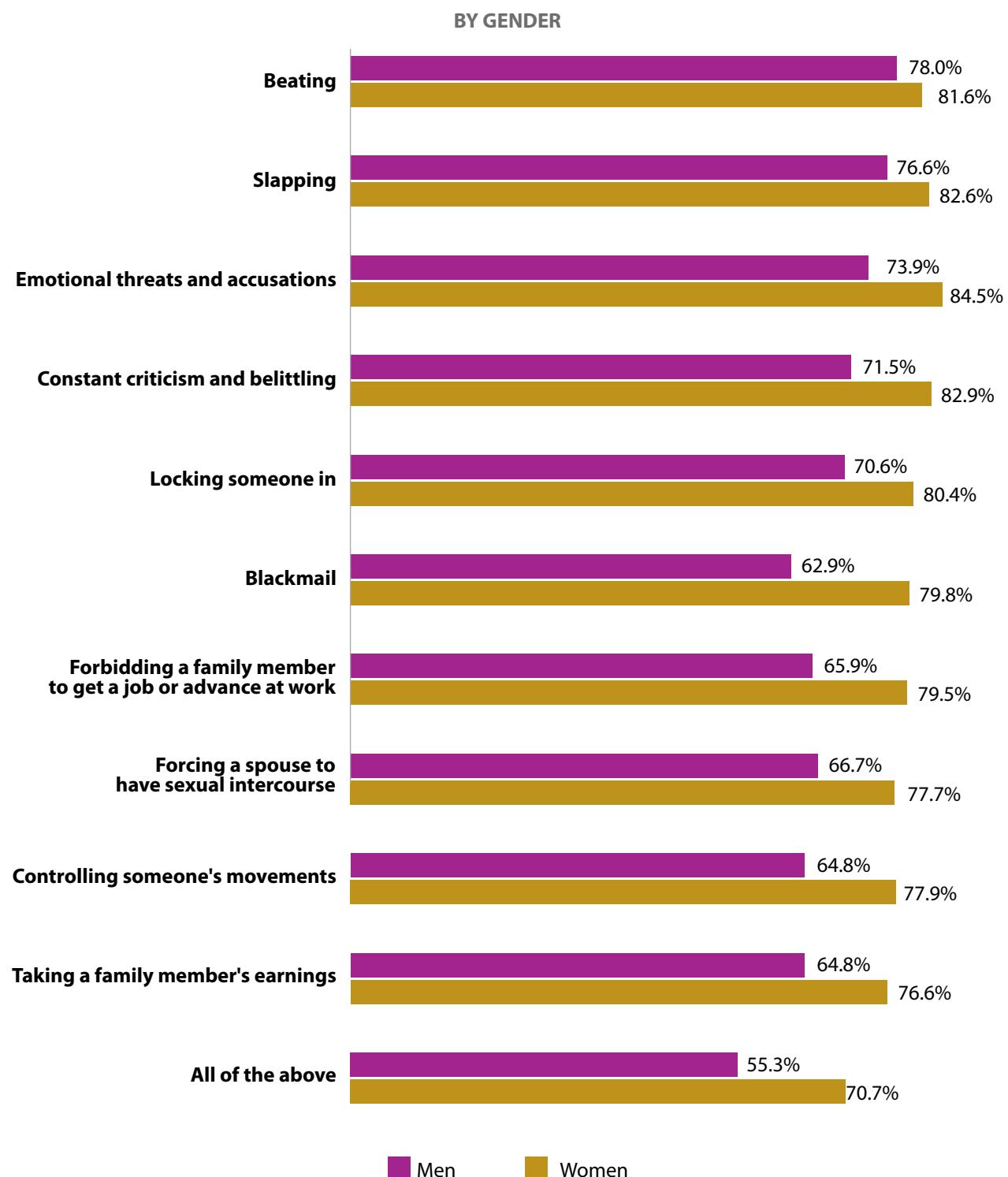
The data show differences in the level of recognition of various forms of violence between men and women, with women consistently identifying behaviors as violent at higher rates. **More than half of men in Montenegro (55.3%) recognize the listed examples as forms of violent behavior, while nearly three-quarters of women (70.7%) share this view, indicating a greater level of sensitivity among women toward this issue.**

Physical forms of violence, such as beating and slapping, are the most widely recognized among respondents of both genders (78.0% of men and 81.6% of women for beating; 76.6% of men and 82.6% of women for slapping). The greatest differences are observed in the perception of emotional and psychological violence. For instance, 84.5% of women recognize emotional threats and accusations as violence, compared to 73.9% of men, while 82.9% of women and 71.5% of men recognize constant criticism and belittling as a form of violence.

A similar pattern is observed in views on controlling movement, withholding income, forbidding employment, and locking someone in—all of which are more frequently recognized by women as forms of violence.

The difference is particularly pronounced in the recognition of forced sexual intercourse—77.7% of women recognize it as violence, compared to 66.4% of men. These findings point to the need for further education, especially among men, to broaden understanding and rejection of all forms of violence, including those that are often socially normalized or insufficiently recognized.

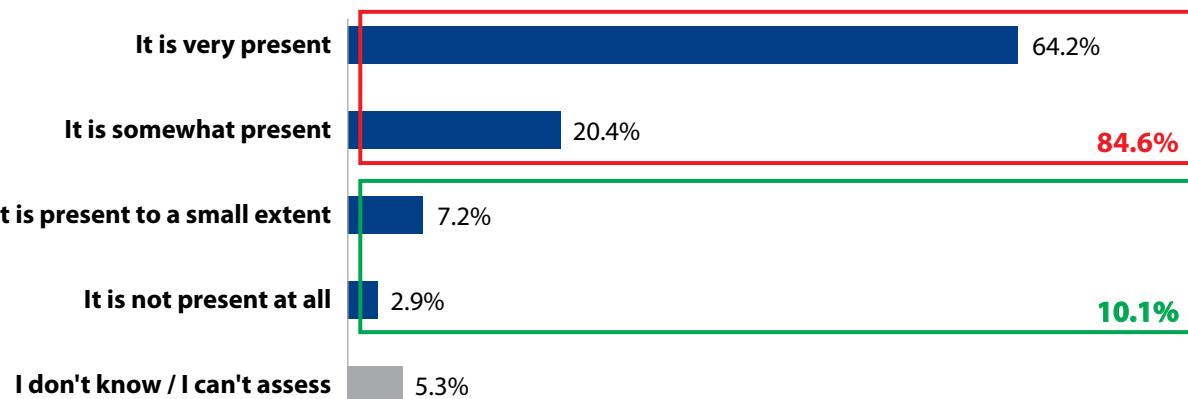
Graph 67: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Which types of behavior from the list can be classified as forms of domestic and gender-based violence? Please select all that apply. (N=1005)



Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Gender-Based Violence

The research results clearly show that the majority of employees in public institutions in Montenegro recognize domestic and gender-based violence as a serious social issue. The fact that a dominant number of employees (a cumulative 84.6%) believe that violence is present indicates a high level of awareness on this issue, but also highlights the need for continued efforts in combating violence. A smaller number of respondents believe that violence is present to a lesser extent or do not recognize it at all (a total of 10.1%).

Graph 68: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, to what extent is domestic and gender-based violence present in Montenegro? (N=545)

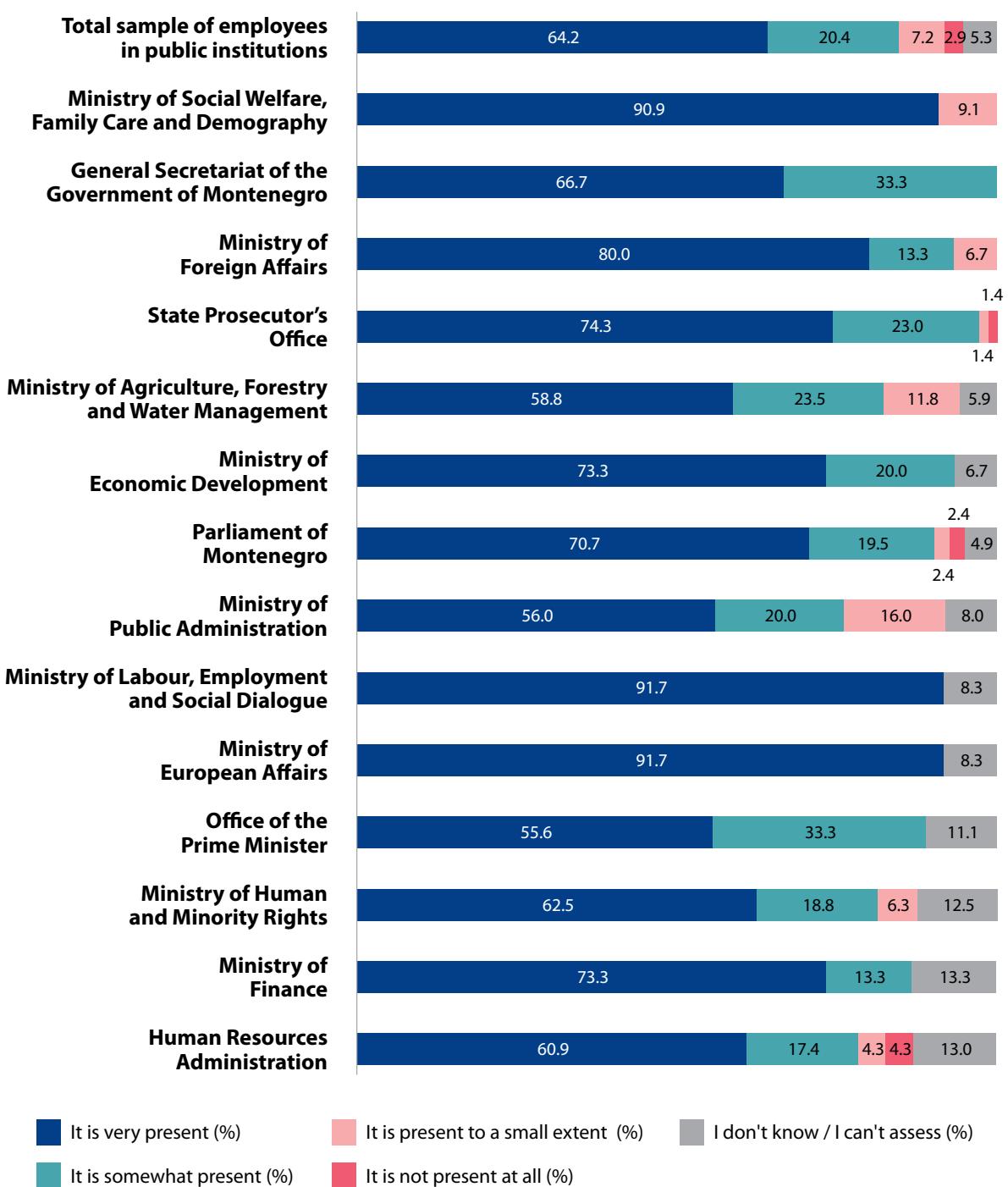


The analysis of the perception of employees in public institutions and local governments shows that domestic and gender-based violence in Montenegro is recognized as a serious and widespread social issue. A particularly high level of awareness about the presence of violence was recorded in institutions that directly deal with social issues and human rights.

In the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Welfare, and the Ministry of European Affairs, an overwhelming majority of employees believe that violence is highly prevalent. A similar trend was recorded in the State Prosecutor's Office, where 74.3% of respondents share the same view.

In other institutions, the results are somewhat more varied but still indicate a high level of awareness. For example, in the Ministry of Finance, 73.3% of employees state that violence is highly prevalent, while in the Parliament of Montenegro that percentage is 70.7%. In the Ministry of Public Administration, where a slightly higher percentage of respondents believe that violence is "present to a lesser extent" (16%), the majority – 56% – still recognize its prevalence.

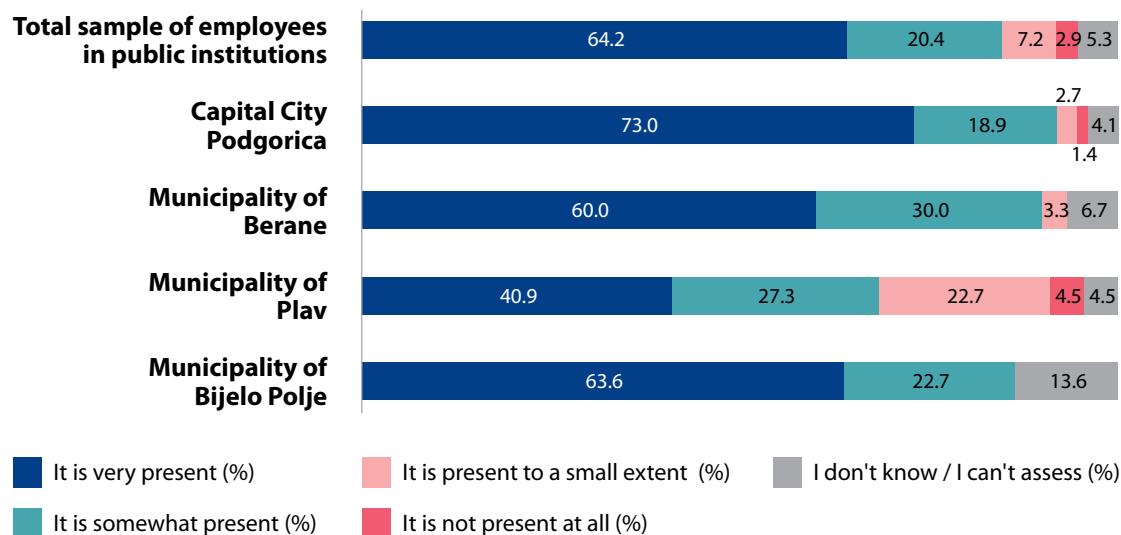
Graph 69: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, to what extent is domestic and gender-based violence present in Montenegro?



When it comes to local governments, perceptions are largely aligned with those at the national level. In the Capital City of Podgorica, 73% of respondents believe that violence is highly prevalent, while in the municipalities of Berane and Bijelo Polje a similar opinion dominates – 60% and 63.6%, respectively. **However, the Municipality of Plav stands out with a significantly lower percentage – only 40.9% of respondents consider violence to be highly prevalent, while as many as 22.7% believe it is present only to a lesser extent, and 4.5% state that it is not present at all.** Cumulatively, 90.9% of employees in this municipality recognize that gender-based violence exists to some extent in Montenegro, which is consistent with the overall results from other municipalities (Capital City Podgorica 94.6%, Municipality of Berane 93.3%, Municipality of Bijelo Polje 86.3%).

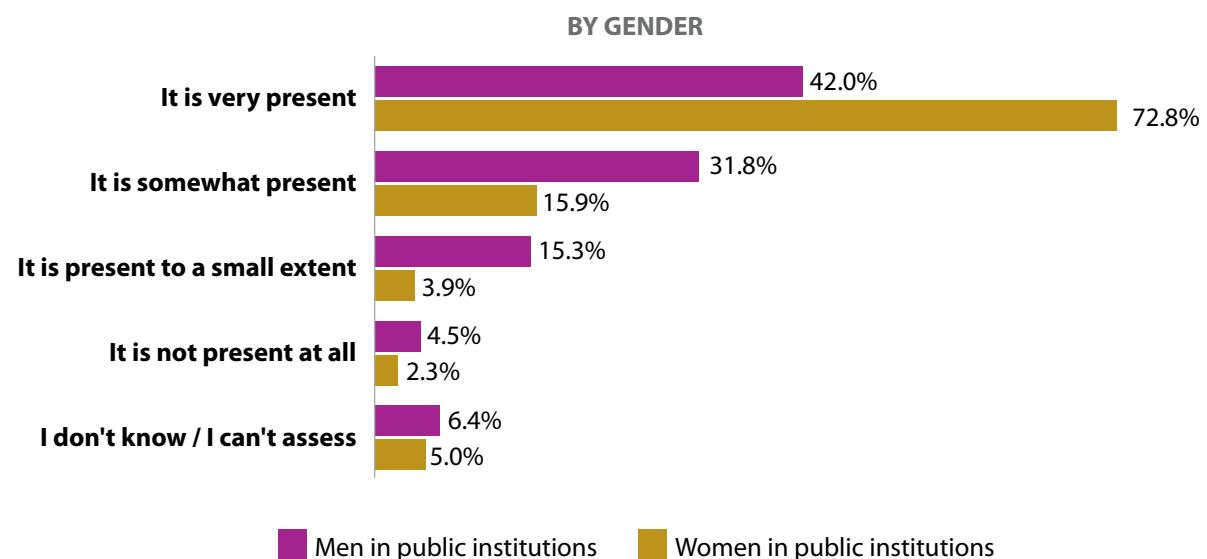
However, the difference lies in the perception of intensity – in the Municipality of Plav, fewer respondents perceive violence as a seriously widespread issue. One possible explanation could be the belief that, due to existing procedures and protection mechanisms, this problem is not as prominent in their community as in others, or that additional efforts are needed to educate employees on what constitutes gender-based violence.

Graph 70: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, to what extent is domestic and gender-based violence present in Montenegro?



The results reveal pronounced differences in the perception of the prevalence of domestic and gender-based violence between men and women employed in public administration. **While 72.8% of women believe this type of violence is highly prevalent, only 42% of men share that view, indicating a greater sensitivity and awareness of the issue among women.** The majority of men (73.8%) do acknowledge that violence exists to some extent, but significantly more often than women they believe it is only mildly present (15.3%) or not present at all (4.5%). These findings confirm that women are considerably more likely to recognize the seriousness and prevalence of gender-based violence, which may result from different life experiences and everyday exposure to this issue. They further highlight the need for education and sensitization of employees, especially men, within public administration institutions.

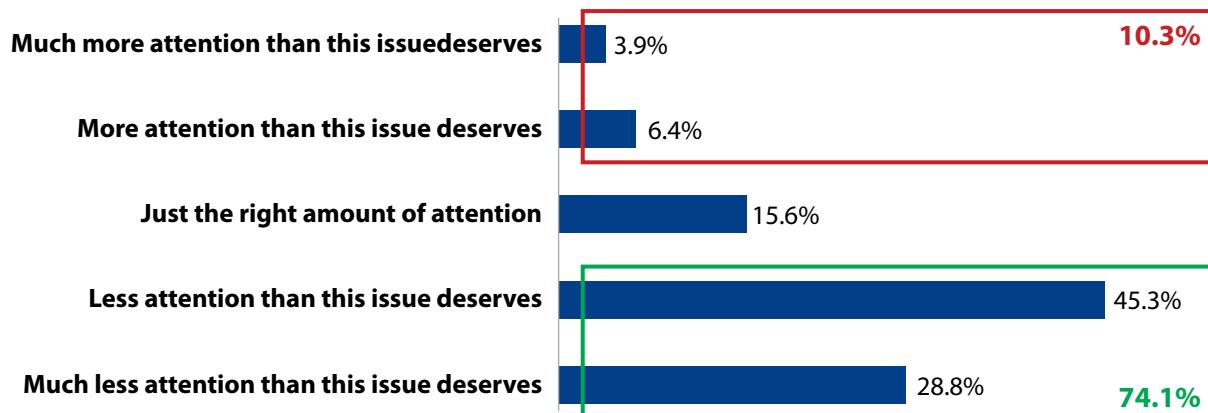
Graph 71: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, to what extent is domestic and gender-based violence present in Montenegro? By gender (N=545)



Gender-based violence is one of the key societal issues in Montenegro, and the perception of public sector employees regarding the attention given to this topic can serve as an indicator of the effectiveness of institutional responses and public policies. Research findings show a strong consensus among employees that this issue does not receive sufficient attention, which may point to shortcomings in existing strategies and protection measures.

According to the survey, **three-quarters (74.1%) of public sector employees believe that gender-based violence receives less attention than it should in Montenegro**. Only 15.6% of respondents consider the level of attention to be adequate, while a smaller percentage (10.3%) believe the topic receives more attention than necessary.

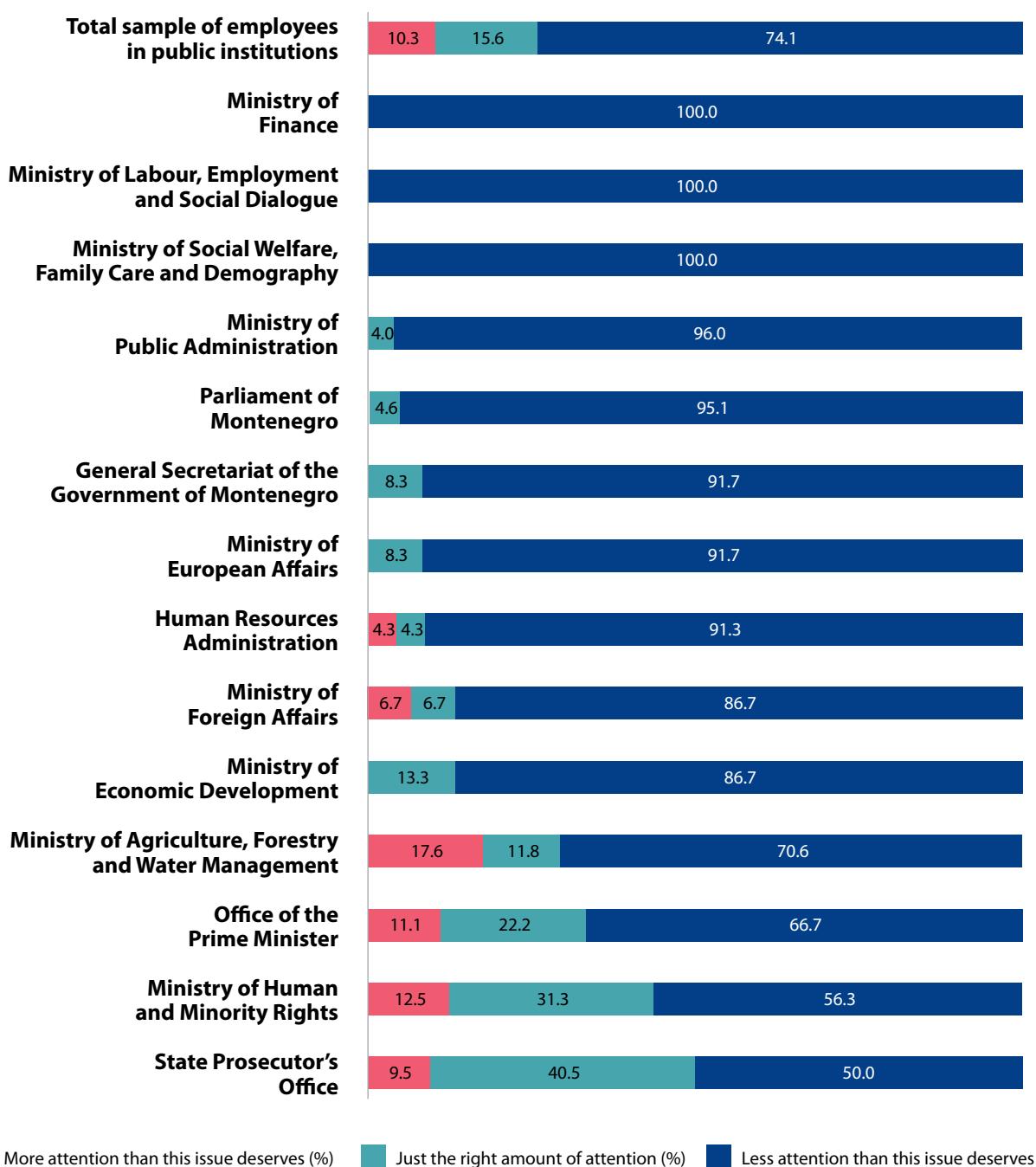
Graph 72: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence? (N=545)



Employees in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Social Welfare are unanimous in their view that issues of domestic and gender-based violence do not receive enough attention—100% of respondents from these institutions share this opinion. A similar perception is observed in the Parliament of Montenegro (95.1%), the General Secretariat of the Government (91.7%), and the Ministry of European Affairs (91.7%).

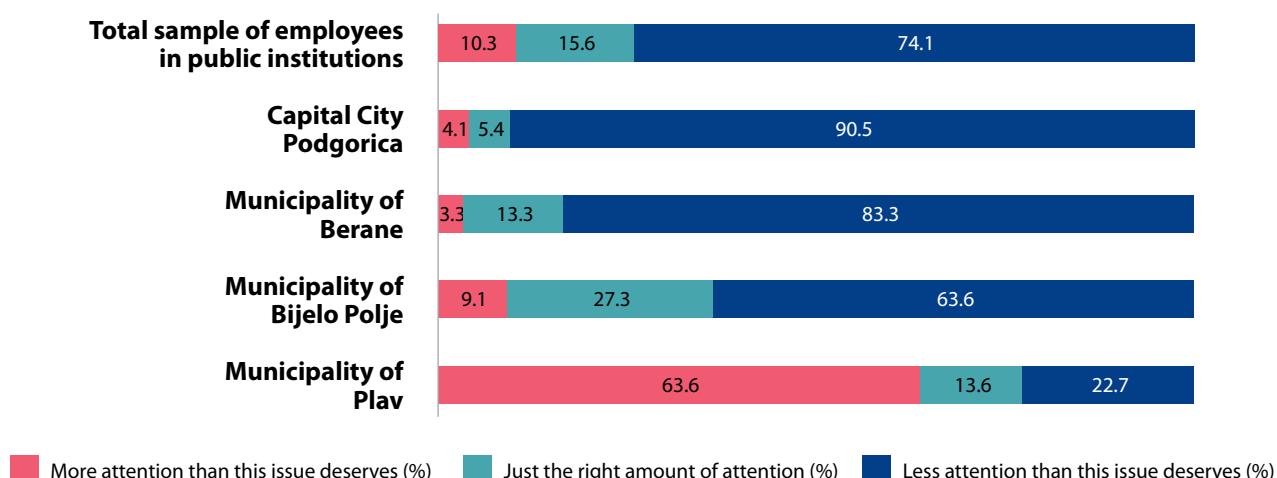
Although perceptions differ slightly in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, a majority (56.3%) still believe that this issue receives insufficient attention, while 31.3% consider the approach to be adequate. Views are more divided in the State Prosecutor's Office, where 50% of respondents think too little attention is given, and 40.5% believe it receives just the right amount.

Graph 73: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence?



At the local level, the results are generally similar. In the Capital City of Podgorica, 90.5% of respondents believe that too little attention is paid to violence, while in the Municipality of Berane, the figure stands at 83.3%. In the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, although slightly lower (63.6%), the majority still express dissatisfaction with the level of attention the issue receives. The only significant deviation is seen in the Municipality of Plav, where as many as 63.6% of respondents believe that this issue receives more attention than necessary—an exception compared to the rest of the sample.

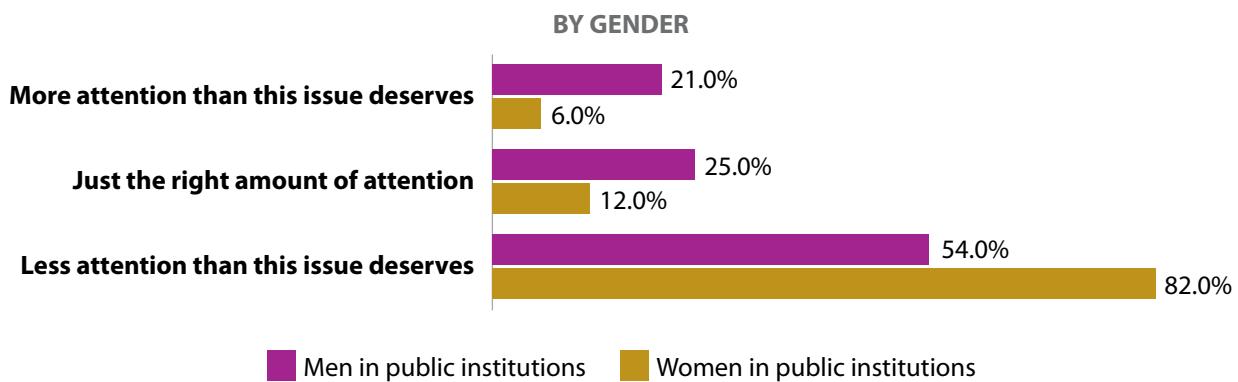
Graph 74: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence?



According to the results, 82.2% of women in public administration believe that this issue currently receives less attention than it deserves, compared to 54.1% of men who share the same view. On the other hand, 21% of men believe that the issue receives more attention than necessary, in contrast to only 6% of women. Additionally, 24.8% of men think that “the right amount of attention” is being paid to the issue, while only 11.7% of women agree with that assessment.

These findings clearly indicate that women in public administration, significantly more than men, feel that the issue of domestic and gender-based violence is not receiving sufficient institutional attention.

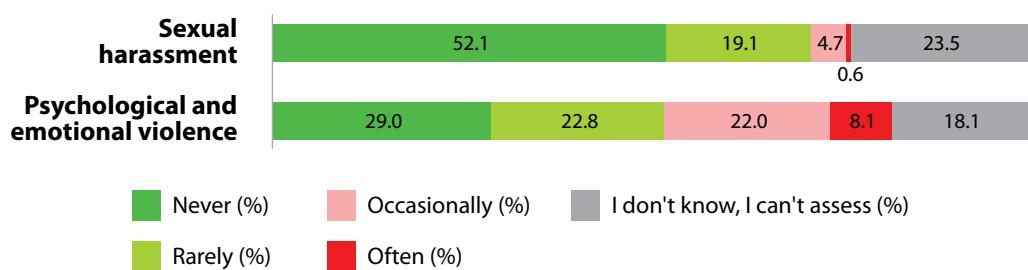
Graph 75 Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how much attention is currently given in Montenegro to the issues of domestic and gender-based violence? (N=545)



Data analysis shows that employees in public institutions have differing perceptions regarding the frequency of various forms of violence and harassment in the workplace. When it comes to sexual harassment, more than half of respondents (52.1%) believe that employees never encounter this issue. However, a portion of respondents (19.1% say rarely, 4.7% occasionally, and 0.6% frequently) do indicate the presence of this form of harassment. A high percentage of those who are unable to assess (23.5%) may point to a lack of information or awareness, suggesting a need for increased education and improved reporting mechanisms.

In terms of psychological and emotional violence, just over a quarter of respondents (29%) believe that employees never face such behavior. However, a significant number (22.8% say rarely, 22% occasionally, and 8.1% frequently) report that this form of violence does occur to some extent, highlighting the need for further investigation and interventions to reduce its prevalence.

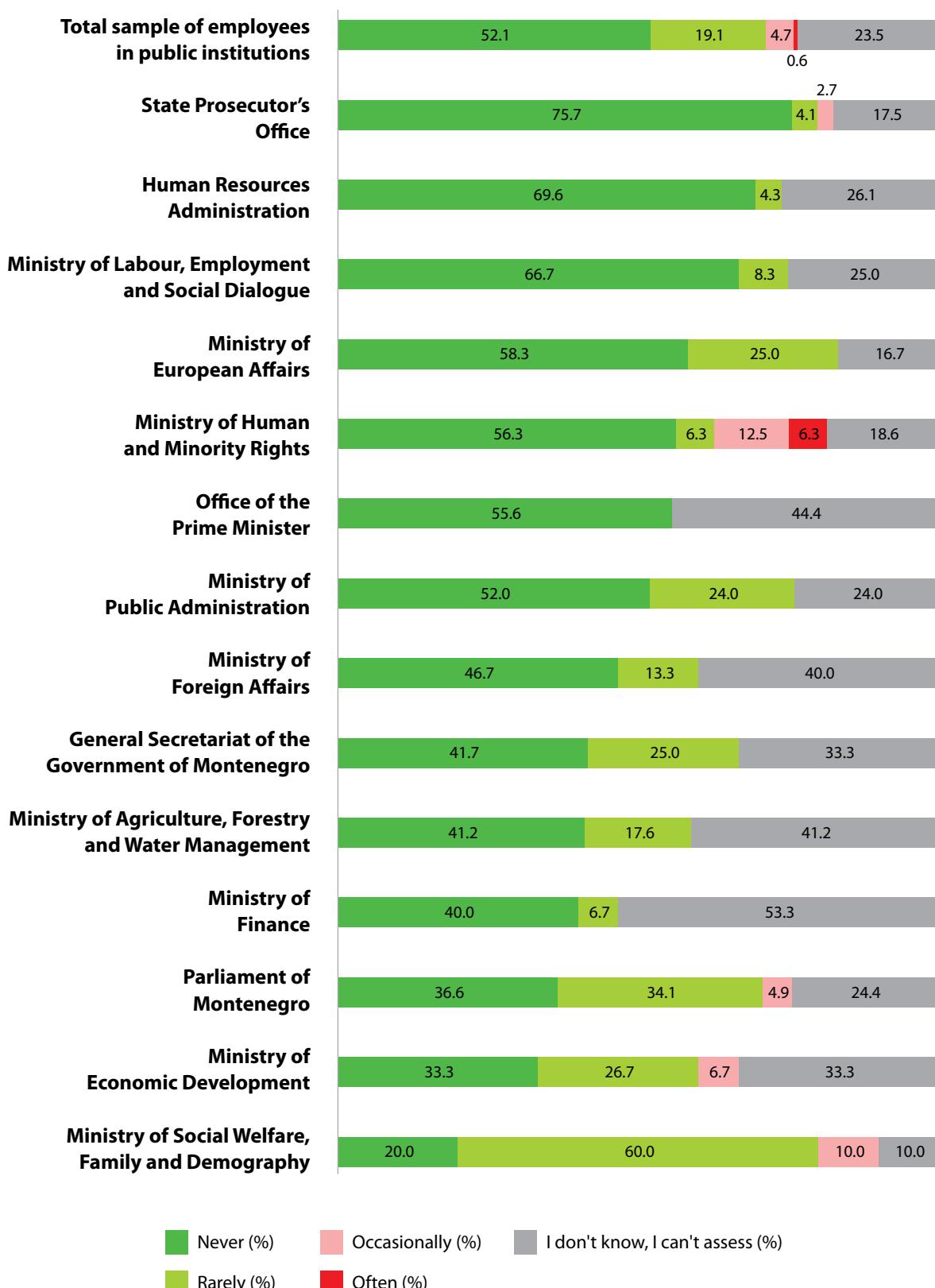
Graph 76: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how often are employees in your institution exposed to the following? (N=545)



Research findings on the perceived frequency of sexual harassment in public institutions show that the majority of employees do not observe this form of violence in their work environment. In certain institutions, such as the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office (75.7%), an especially high percentage of respondents stated that sexual harassment does not occur. At the same time, a significant number of respondents answered "I don't know, I can't assess," which may indicate a lack of awareness about what constitutes sexual harassment, as well as limited knowledge of protection mechanisms. These findings suggest that perceptions of the presence of this problem may not accurately reflect its actual frequency, but rather reflect the level of awareness and understanding of the issue among employees.



Graph 77: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how often are employees in your institution exposed to the following? Sexual Harrasment

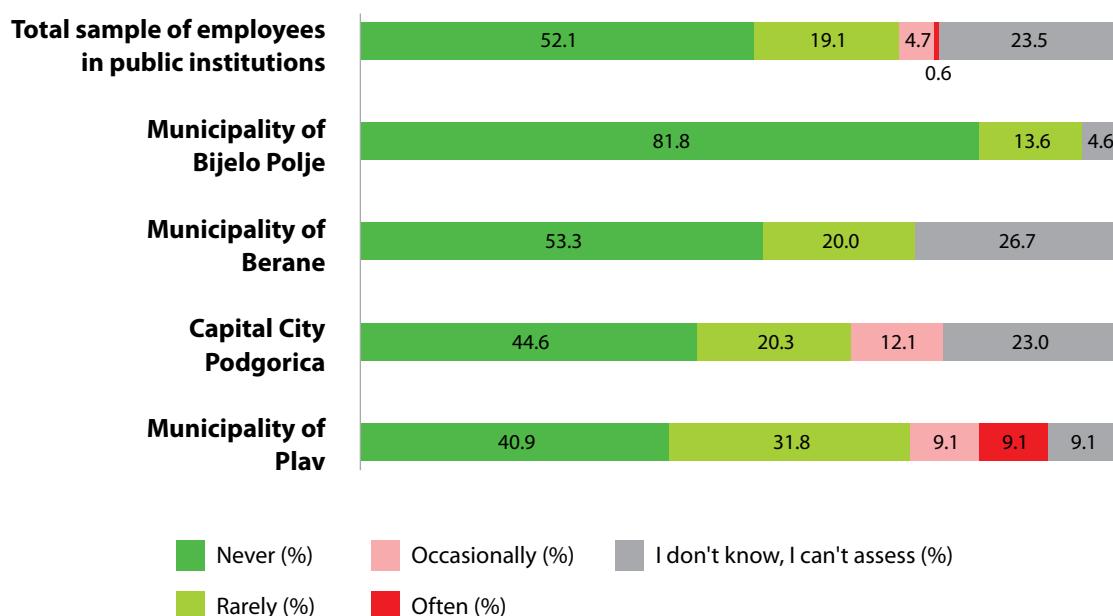


Analysis of employees' perceptions in local self-governments regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment reveals seemingly positive results; however, these findings require a more critical reflection from a gender-sensitive perspective. For example, in Bijelo Polje Municipality, 81.8% of respondents state that sexual harassment never occurs, while the remaining percentage refers to rare cases. Similarly, in Berane Municipality, 53.3% report that sexual harassment does not occur, but a notable 26.7% of respondents were unable to assess the situation. Such findings may not necessarily reflect reality, but instead point to insufficient understanding or lack of recognition of what constitutes sexual harassment in an institutional setting.

In contrast, Podgorica Capital City (12.1%) and Plav Municipality (9.1%) recorded somewhat higher awareness of the presence of sexual harassment, with respondents stating it occurs occasionally or frequently. Although these percentages are relatively low in absolute terms, they may indicate a greater level of problem recognition, possibly due to higher awareness or greater openness among employees to speak about this issue.

Therefore, high percentages of responses claiming harassment is "never present" should not automatically be interpreted as absence of the problem, but rather as a potential indicator of the need for systematic education on what sexual harassment entails, how it manifests, and what protection mechanisms institutions should ensure. These findings also underscore the importance of a gender-responsive approach in analyzing institutional culture and practices that often remain invisible in official data.

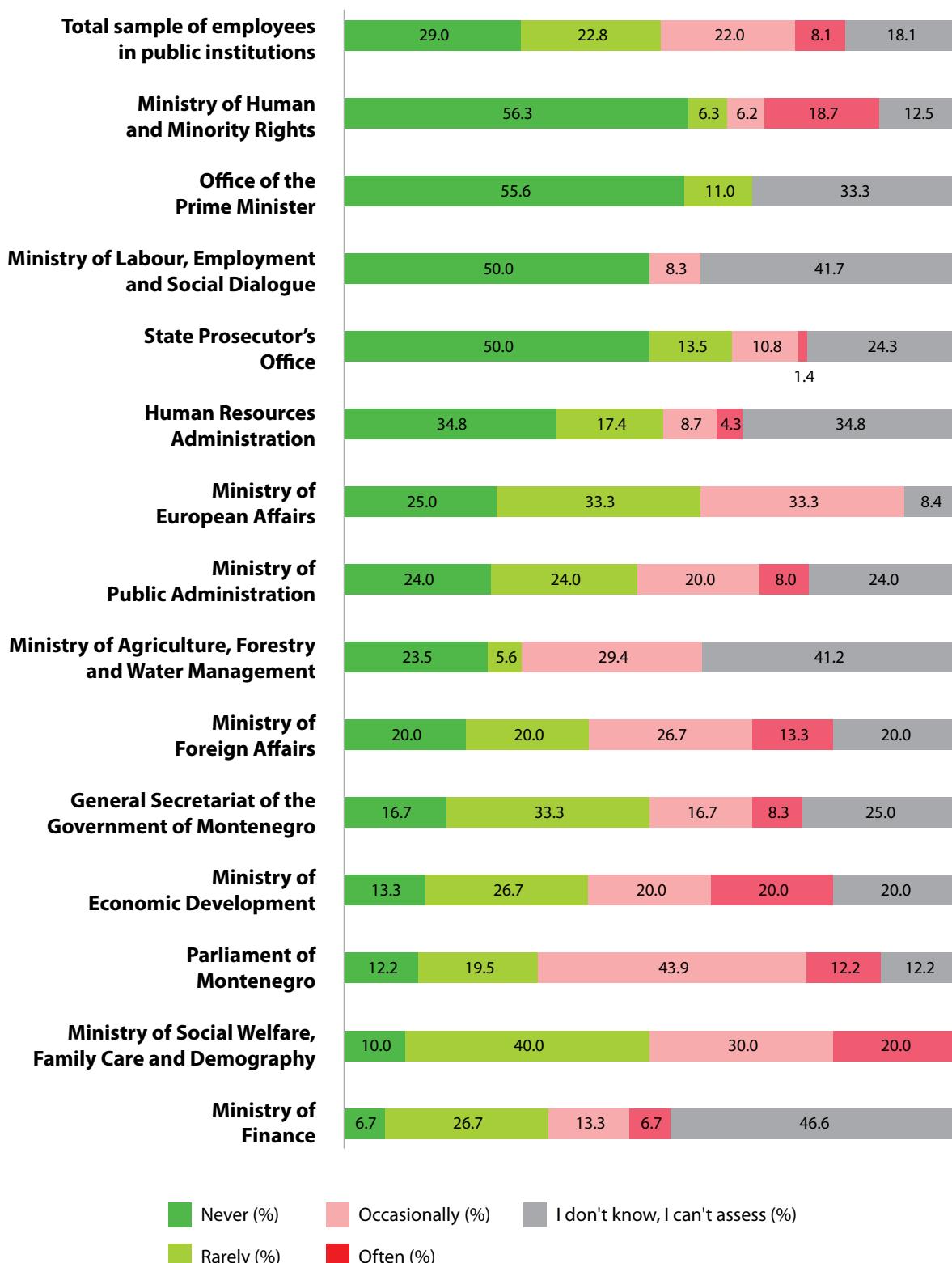
Graph 78: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how often are employees in your institution exposed to the following? Sexual Harrasment



Analysis of employees' perceptions regarding the frequency of psychological and emotional violence in public institutions shows that this issue is present in a significant number of institutions. A total of 29% of respondents believe that employees are never exposed to this form of violence, while more than half (52.3%) believe it occurs in some form – either rarely (22.8%), occasionally (22%), or frequently (8.1%).

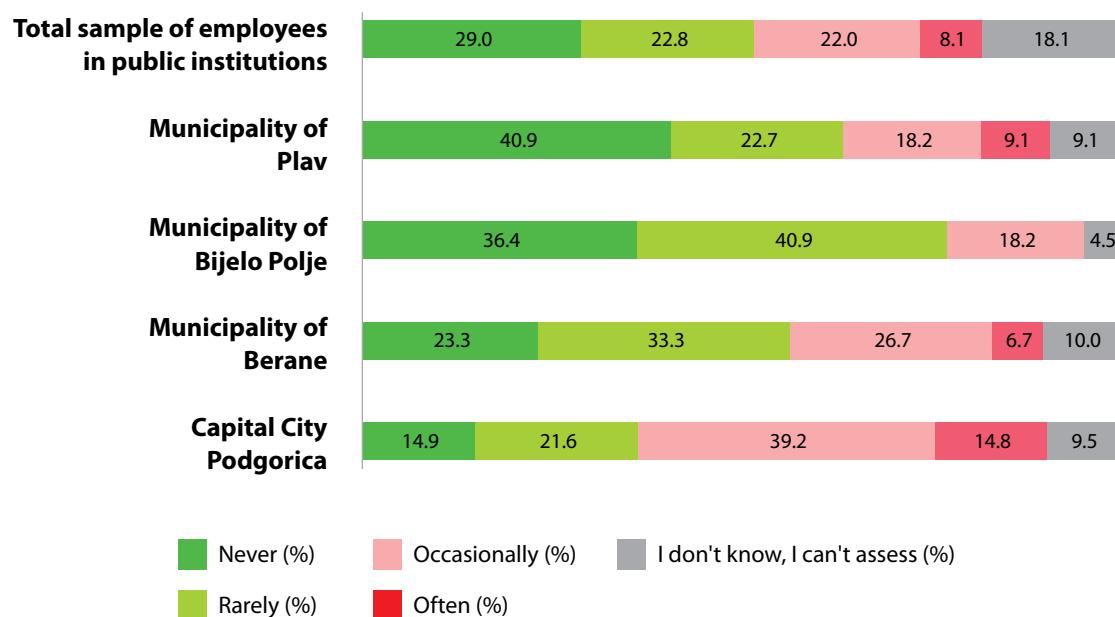
The lowest perception of the presence of psychological violence was recorded among employees in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (56.3%), and the Prime Minister's Office (55.6%), where the majority of respondents believe that such cases do not exist. On the other hand, in institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (20.0%), the Ministry of Economic Development (13.3%), and the Parliament of Montenegro (12.5%), a higher percentage of employees report that staff are frequently exposed to psychological and emotional violence.

Graph 79: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how often are employees in your institution exposed to the following? Psychological and emotional violence



At the local level, in the Municipality of Plav, 40.3% of respondents believe that psychological violence is never present. Employees in the Capital City of Podgorica and in the Municipality of Berane report higher percentages of respondents indicating that psychological and emotional violence is present within the workplace environment.

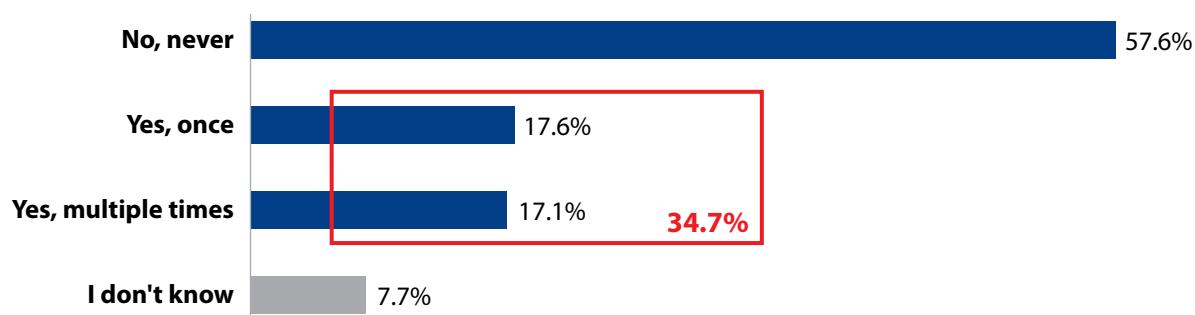
Graph 80: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, how often are employees in your institution exposed to the following? Psychological and emotional violence



Research on the personal experiences of employees with various forms of harassment in public institutions shows that more than half of the respondents (57.6%) have never experienced harassment. However, a significant percentage of employees report the opposite — 17.6% of respondents state that they have been exposed to harassment at least once, while 17.1% claim they have experienced such situations multiple times.

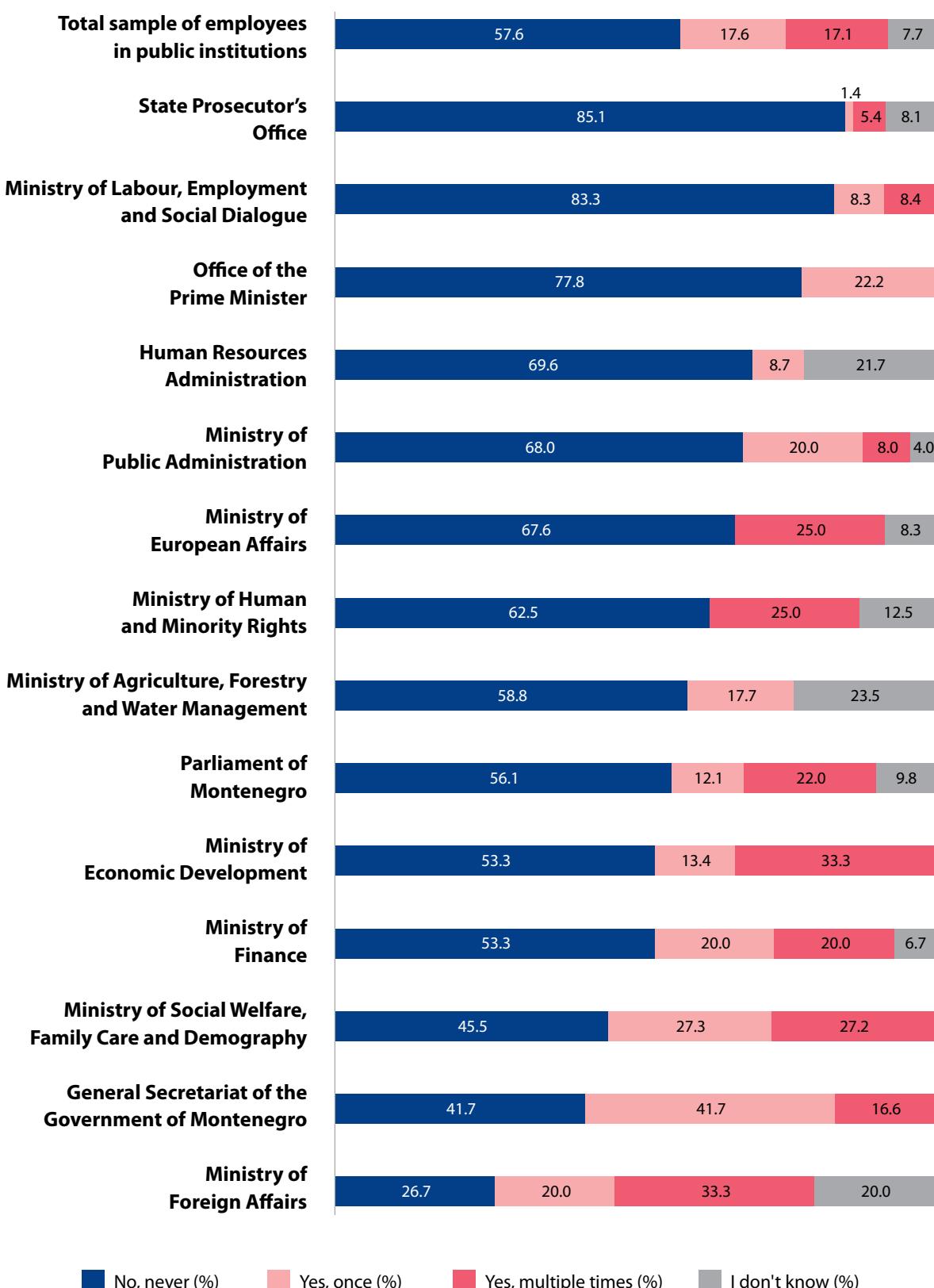
These findings confirm that, although the majority of employees do not report direct experience with harassment, nearly one in three (34.7%) indicate that they have been exposed to some form of harassment in the workplace at least once. This highlights the need for stronger institutional protection mechanisms, effective reporting procedures, and training aimed at recognizing and preventing such incidents.

Graph 81: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced any of the listed types of harassment? (N=545)



Among the institutions with the lowest reported levels of harassment are the State Prosecutor's Office (85.1% "no, never") and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (83.3%). On the other hand, the highest level of reported harassment was recorded in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where only 26.7% of respondents stated that they had never been harassed, while as many as 33.3% reported experiencing harassment multiple times, and 20% said they had experienced it once.

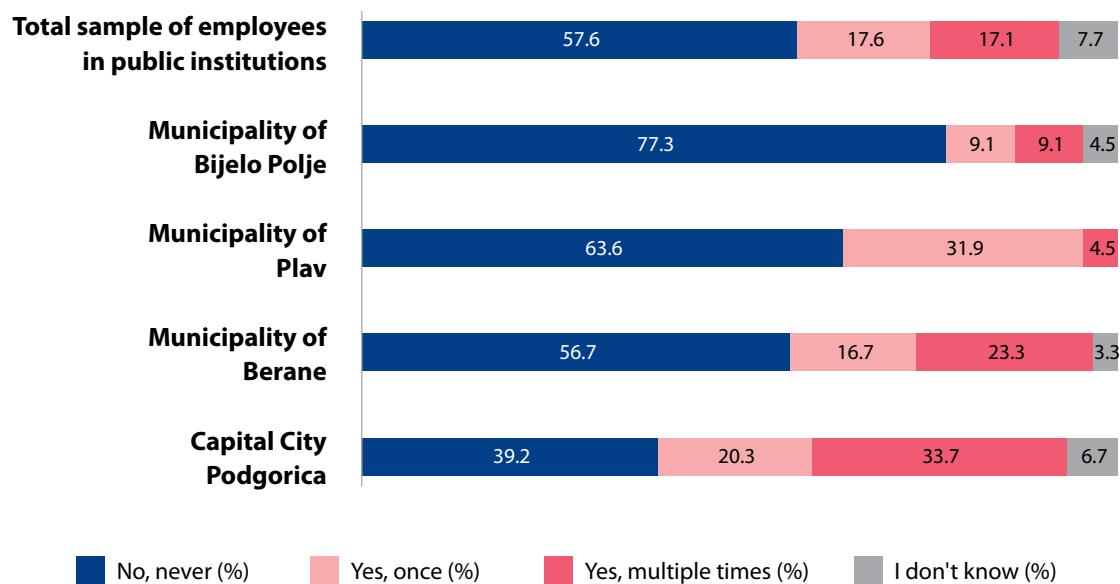
Graph 82: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced any of the listed types of harassment?



In the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, more than three-quarters (77.3%) of employees state that they have never been subjected to harassment, with the lowest percentages reporting having experienced it once (9.1%) or multiple times (9.1%).

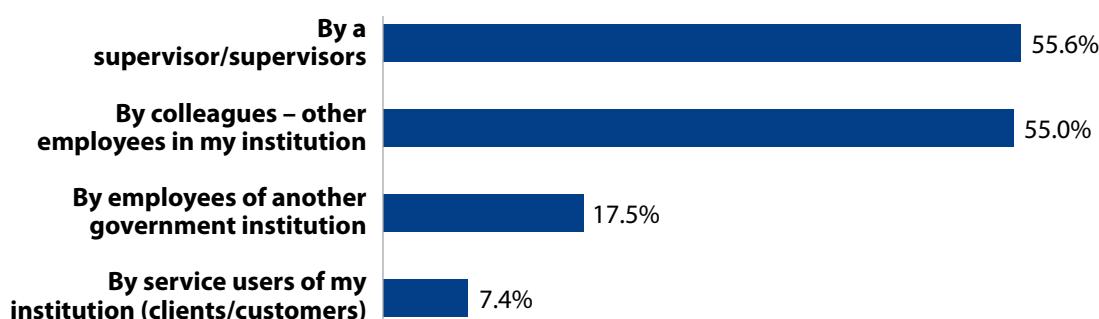
On the other hand, the Capital City of Podgorica records the most unfavorable results – only 39.2% of respondents say they have never been harassed, while as many as 33.8% report experiencing harassment multiple times, and 20.3% once. Additionally, in the Municipality of Plav, 31.9% of respondents report having been harassed once, and another 4.5% more than once. The Municipality of Berane is close to the average, with 56.7% stating they have not experienced harassment and a total of 39.9% reporting that they have (16.7% once, 23.3% multiple times).

Graph 83: Employees in public institutions: Have you ever personally experienced any of the listed types of harassment?



Employees in public institutions who have experienced some form of harassment report that the most frequent sources were their superiors or managers (55.6%) and colleagues within the same institution (55%), indicating serious issues in hierarchical and collegial relationships. A smaller percentage of respondents (17.5%) reported harassment by employees from other state institutions, while 7.4% experienced harassment from service users, highlighting the challenges of working with the public.

Graph 84: Employees in public institutions: By whom did you experience harassment? Multiple answers possible.
(N=189)

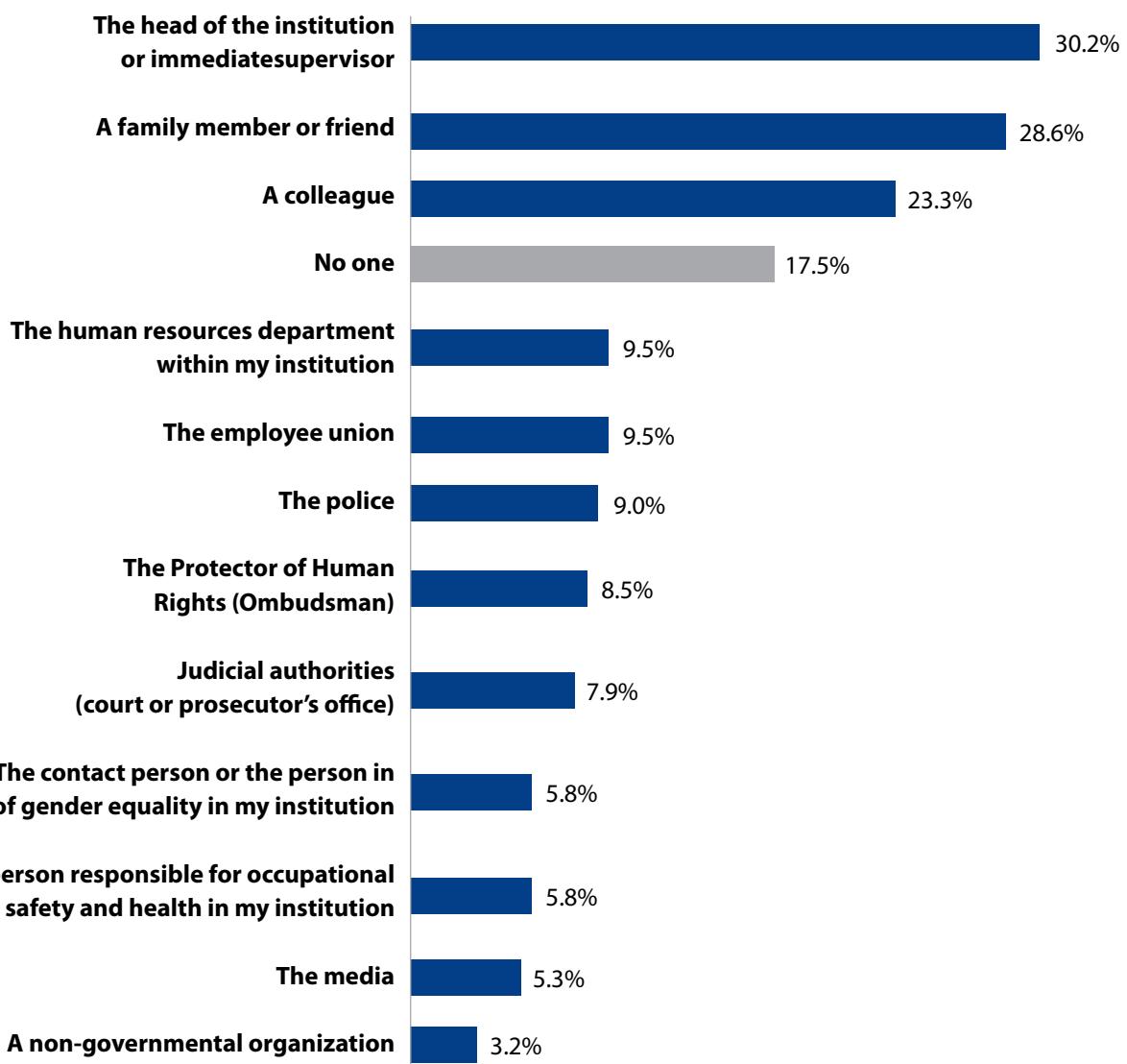


Public institution employees who experienced harassment were asked whom they turned to for protection and support. Nearly one-third (30.2%) reported seeking help from the head of their institution or an immediate supervisor, while a quarter (28.6%) turned to a family member or friend, highlighting the importance of personal

support in such situations. Less than a quarter (23.3%) approached colleagues, whereas 17.5% stated they did not seek help from anyone—suggesting fear or lack of trust in the protection system. Institutional protection mechanisms were used significantly less often: HR departments (9.5%), trade unions (9.5%), the police (9%), and the Ombudsperson (8.5%). Only 7.9% contacted judicial authorities (courts and prosecutors). Very few respondents sought support from gender equality focal points (5.8%), occupational safety officers (5.8%), the media (5.3%), or NGOs (3.2%).

These findings point to the need to strengthen institutional support mechanisms, build trust in formal reporting channels, and empower employees to report harassment without fear of repercussions.

Graph 85: Employees in public institutions: Whom did you turn to for protection and support when you experienced harassment? Multiple answers possible. (N=189)



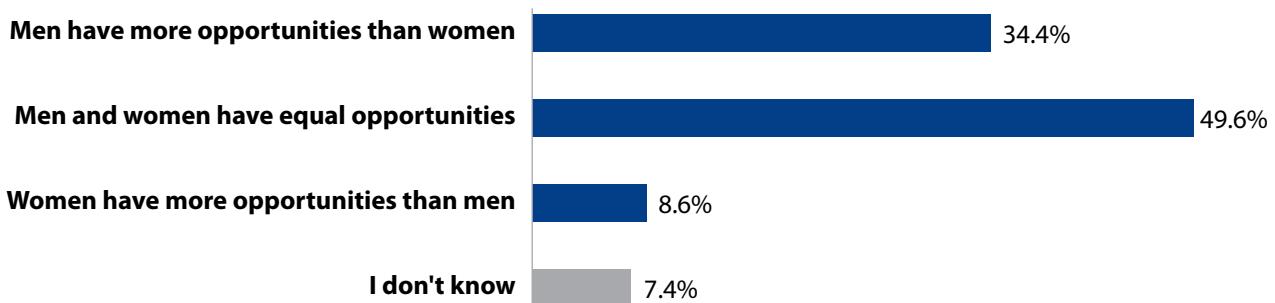
Balancing Work and Private Life

Gender equality in the labor market and the balance between work and private life represent key aspects of social and economic inclusion of women in Montenegro. This analysis explores citizens' perceptions of equal employment opportunities, the challenges women face in professional settings, as well as the distribution of unpaid household and family responsibilities. The research results provide insight into gender inequalities and highlight the need for further institutional and societal measures to ensure a fairer and more equal position of women in the labor market.

Perceptions of Citizens on Balancing Work and Private Life

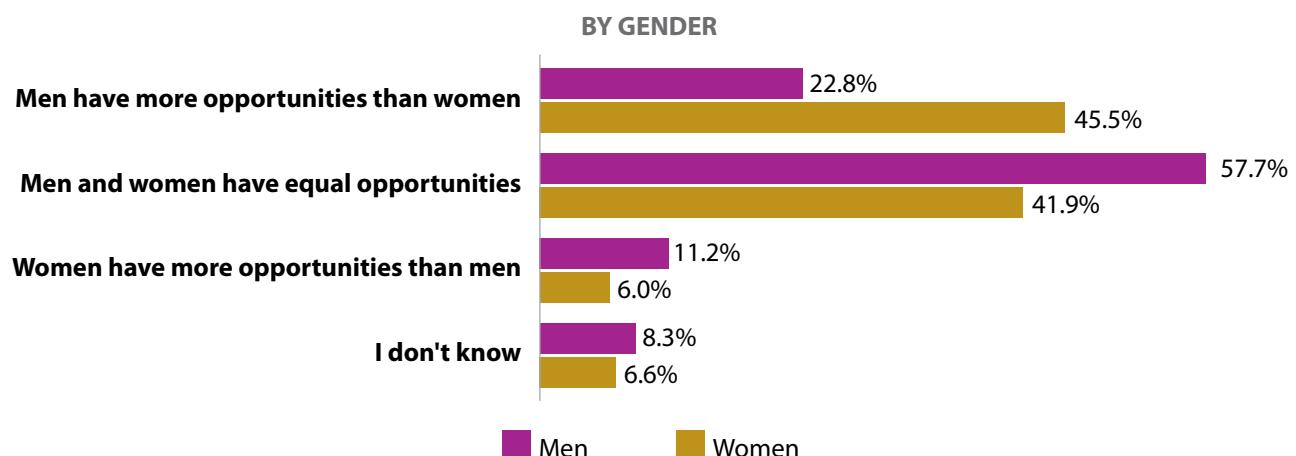
Almost half (49.6%) of citizens from the general population believe that men and women have equal employment opportunities.

Graph 86: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: In your opinion, do men and women have equal opportunities to get employed/find a job in Montenegro? (N=1005)



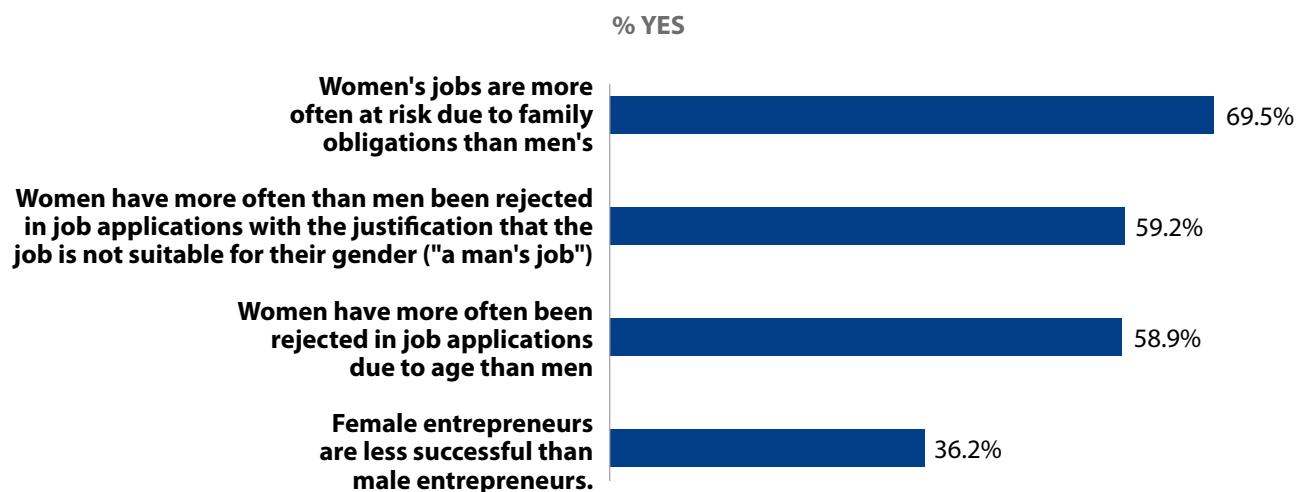
While the majority of men (57.7%) believe that employment opportunities are equal, a significantly smaller percentage of women share this view — only 41.9% of women from the general population. On the other hand, nearly half of women (45.5%) believe that men have an advantage in employment, indicating a considerable gender gap in the perception of equality. A very small percentage of both men and women believe that women have more opportunities, with men being more likely to express this view (11.2%), which may point to a distorted perception or unconscious bias. These results clearly show that women feel inequality in the labor market, highlighting the need to raise awareness about gender equality and to recognize the real barriers women face in accessing employment.

Graph 87: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: In your opinion, do men and women have equal opportunities to get employed/find a job in Montenegro? By gender (N=1005)



Citizens of Montenegro recognize significant gender inequalities in the labor market, with women often facing obstacles in employment and career advancement. More than two-thirds (69.5%) of respondents from the general population believe that women's jobs are more frequently at risk due to family responsibilities, reflecting strong societal norms that place additional burdens on women. Additionally, 59.2% of citizens believe that women are more often rejected in job competitions under the pretext that certain roles are "for men." Age-based discrimination also affects women, with 58.9% of the general population noting this practice.

Graph 88: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Based on your experience so far, in your surroundings, is it: (N=1005)



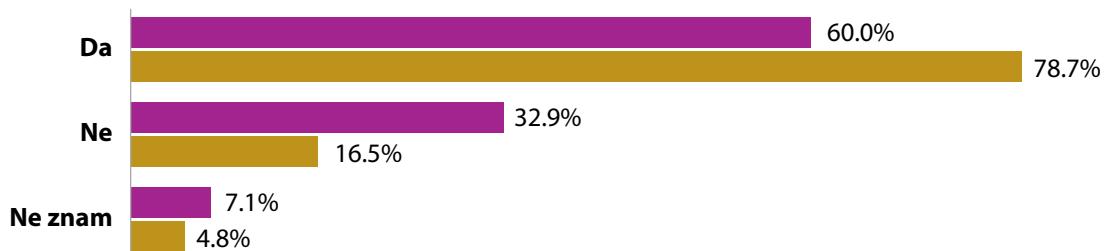
The data indicate gender differences in the perception and experience of discrimination against women in the labor market. A large majority of women (78.7%) believe that women's jobs are more often at risk due to family responsibilities, compared to 60.0% of men, which points to a heightened awareness among women regarding the burden of gender roles.

When it comes to being rejected in job applications with the justification that the "job is not for women," 69.9% of women report such experiences, while only 48.0% of men share that view. The gap is even more pronounced regarding rejection based on age—73.1% of women believe that women are more often rejected for this reason, compared to 44.1% of men. It is important to note that the analysis did not show significant differences between men and women in their views on the success of female entrepreneurs.

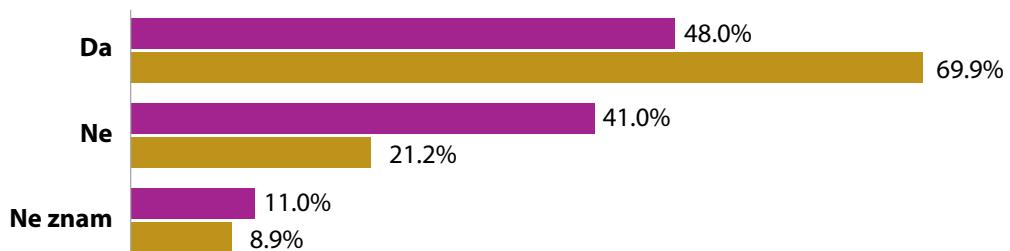
Graph 89: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Based on your experience so far, in your surroundings, is it: By gender (N=1005)

BY GENDER

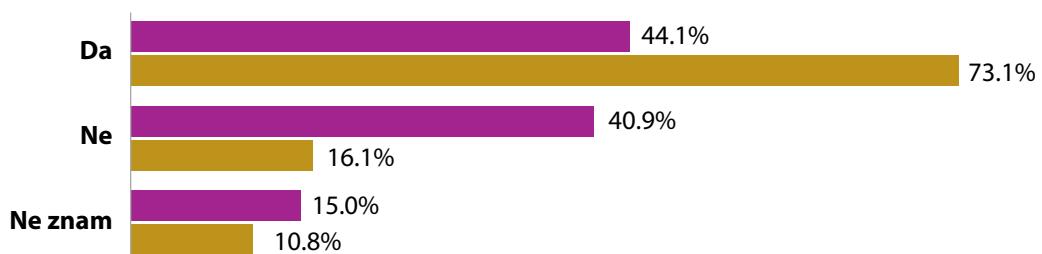
Women's jobs are more often at risk due to family obligations than men's.



Women have more often than men been rejected in job applications with the justification that the job is not suitable for their gender ("a man's job").



Women have more often been rejected in job applications due to age than men

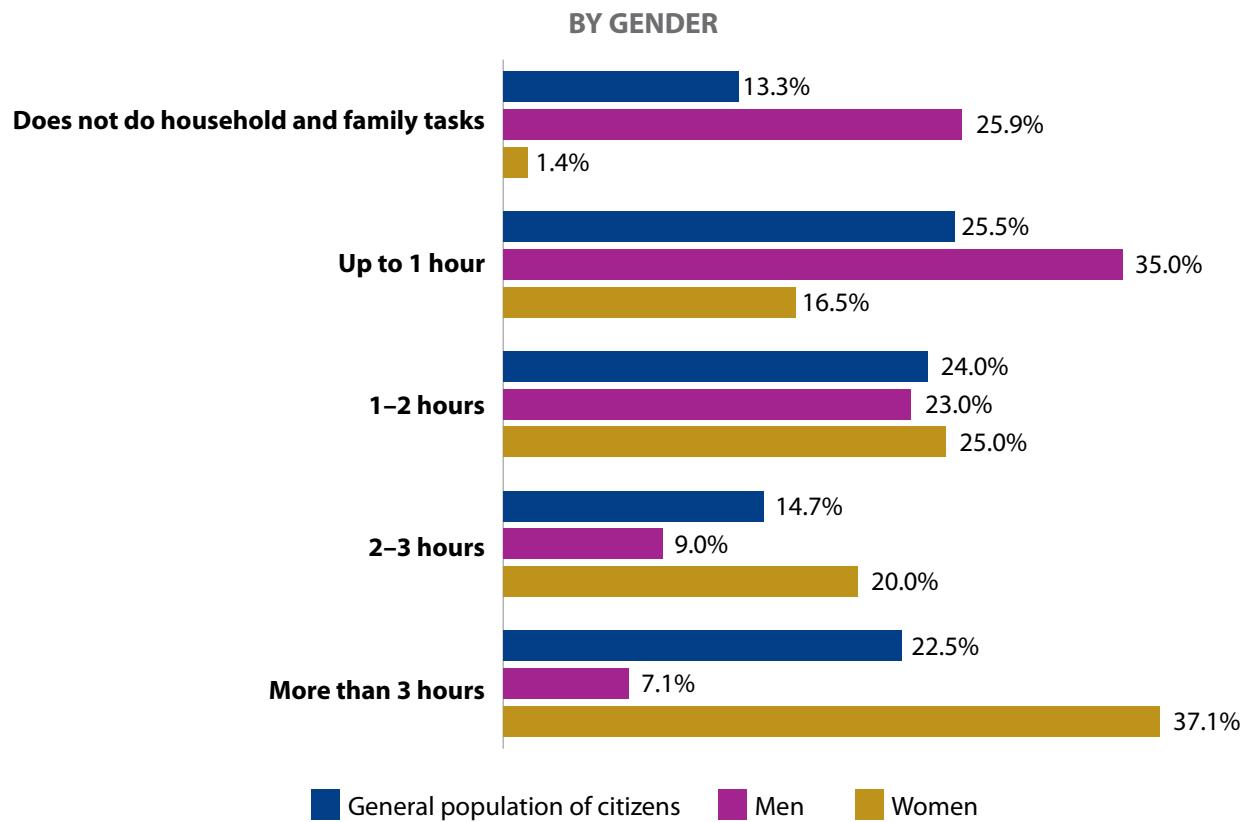


Men Women

The overload of women with family responsibilities is reflected in the fact that more than one third of women from the general population (37.1%) spend more than 3 hours a day on household and family duties. In contrast, significantly fewer men report spending the same amount of time on these tasks (only 7.1%).

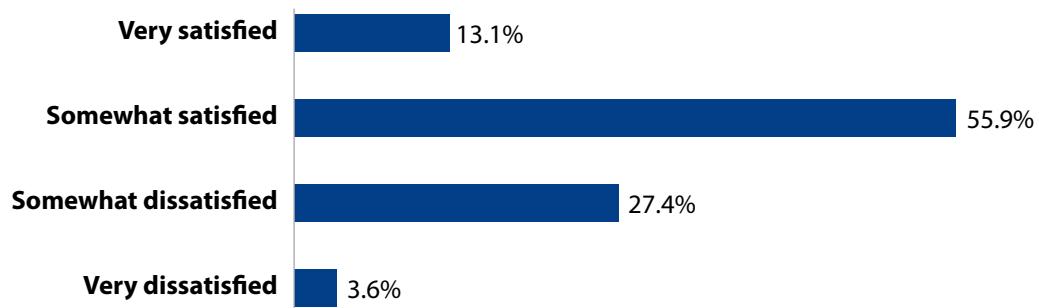
On the other hand, men are much more likely not to engage in household and family tasks at all (25.9%) compared to women in the general population (1.4%). These findings clearly indicate the existence of gender inequality in the distribution of unpaid household and family responsibilities, which can have long-term consequences on women's economic and social inclusion.

Graph 90: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: On average, how much time do you spend on household and family duties during the day? By gender (N=1005)



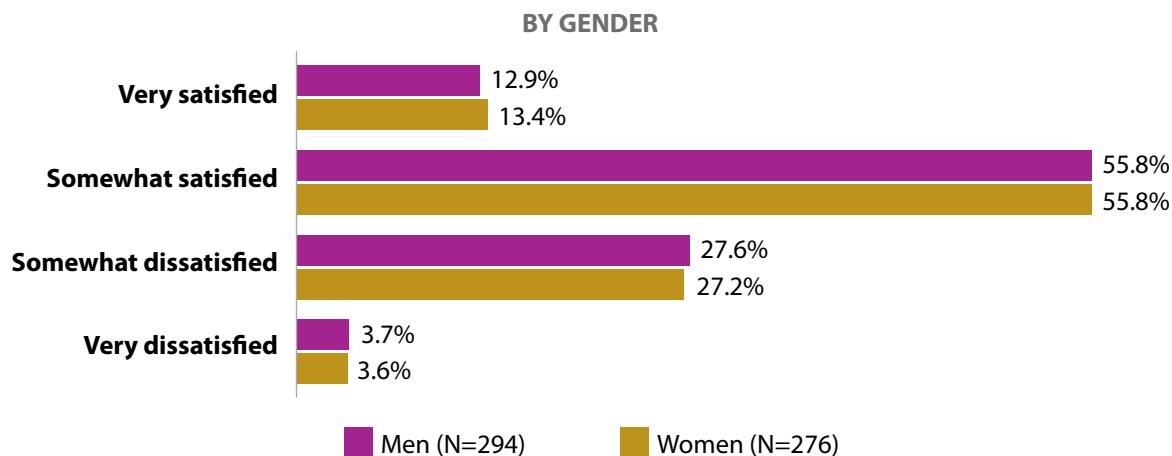
Employed citizens report being mostly satisfied with the balance between their private and professional life (a cumulative 69% state they are very or somewhat satisfied).

Graph 91: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Considering the job you currently have, to what extent are you satisfied with the balance between your private and professional life? (N=569)



The analysis showed that there are no statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of satisfaction with the balance between private and professional life – both express a similar level of satisfaction in this area.

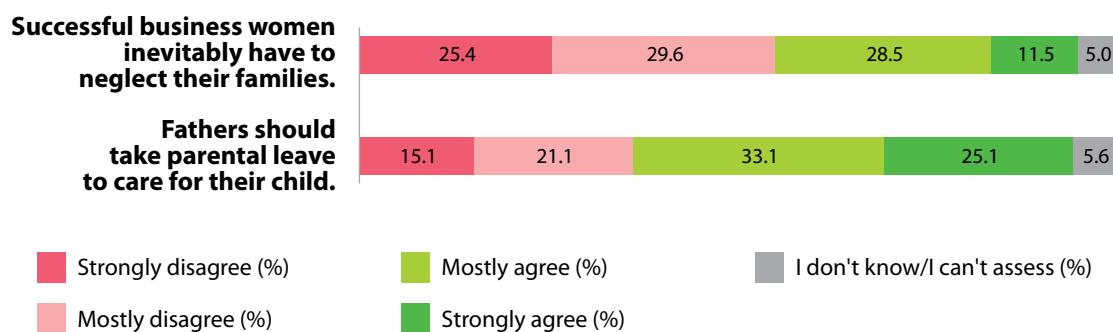
Graph 92: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Considering the job you currently have, to what extent are you satisfied with the balance between your private and professional life? By gender



The results point to contrasting attitudes toward gender roles in the context of professional and family life. Regarding the statement that successful businesswomen inevitably have to neglect their families, the majority of respondents disagree (25.4% completely, 29.6% mostly – a total of 55%), while 40% express some level of agreement. These data highlight persistent stereotypes about the incompatibility between women's professional success and family commitment, but also a significant portion of people who reject such views.

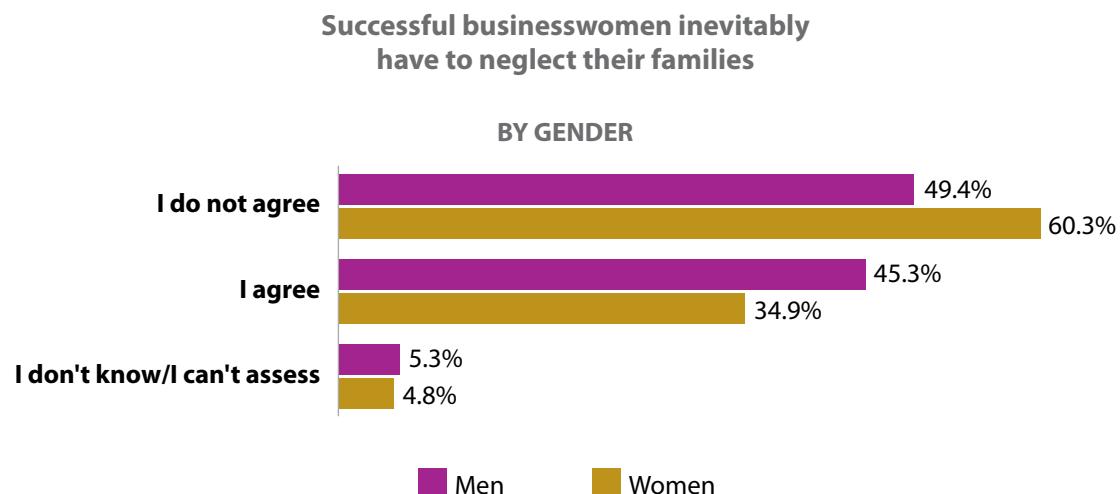
In contrast, when it comes to the statement that fathers should take parental leave to care for their children, there is stronger support – 58.2% agree (33.1% mostly, 25.1% completely), while 36.2% disagree. This may indicate growing awareness of the importance of fathers' involvement in childcare and the need for a more balanced sharing of parental roles.

Graph 93: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (N=1005)



Rezultati pokazuju jasnu rodnu razliku u stavovima prema balansu između profesionalnog uspjeha i porodičnih obaveza žena. Većina žena (60,3%) ne slaže se s tvrdnjom da uspješne poslovne žene neminovno moraju zanemariti porodicu, dok je taj procenat niži kod muškaraca (49,4%). S druge strane, gotovo polovina muškaraca (45,3%) vjeruje da poslovni uspjeh žene dolazi po cijenu porodičnih obaveza, dok takav stav dijeli samo 34,9% žena.

Graph 94: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? By gender (N=1005)

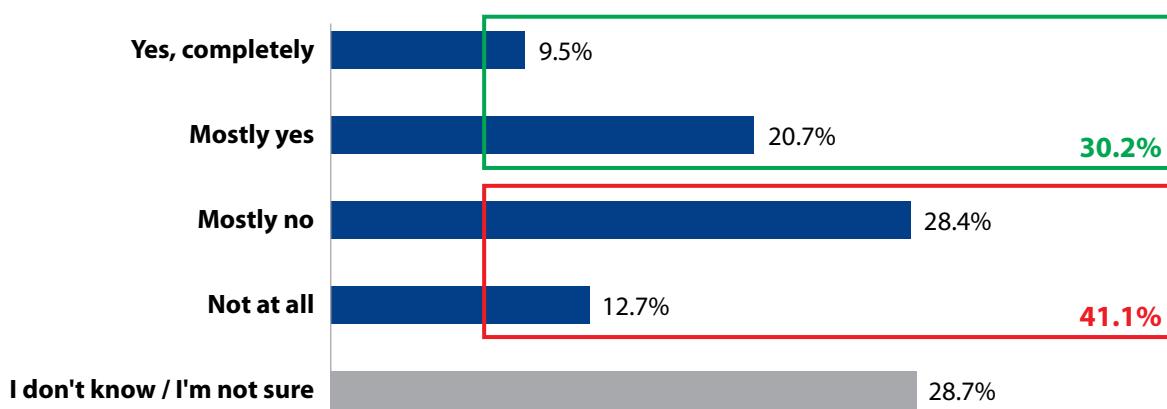


It is important to emphasize that there are no statistically significant differences in the attitudes of men and women regarding the statement that fathers should take parental leave to care for their child – both genders express a similar level of agreement on this issue.

Perceptions of Employees in Public Institutions on Balancing Work and Private Life

The research results show a divided opinion among employees in public institutions regarding the extent to which gender equality is taken into account in the process of recruitment, selection, and hiring in public administration. Close to one-third of respondents (30.2%) believe that attention is paid to gender equality. However, a larger number of employees (41.1%) believe that not enough consideration is given to this issue. A significant percentage of respondents (28.7%) are unable to assess, which may indicate a lack of transparency in these processes.

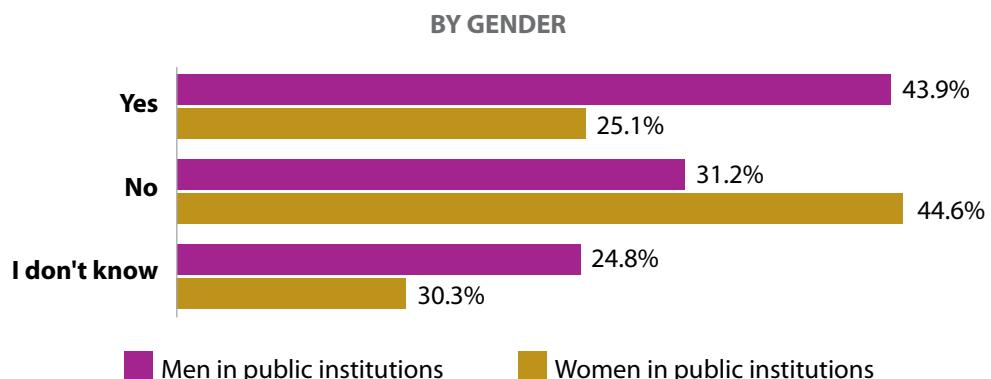
Graph 95: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, is sufficient attention given to gender equality in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration? (N=545)



The analysis of the perceptions of public administration employees regarding whether sufficient attention is paid to gender equality in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes reveals a significant divide in opinions, with pronounced differences by gender, institutions, and local governments.

Men in public administration are more likely (43.9%) to believe that gender equality is taken into account during hiring, while only 25.1% of women share the same view. At the same time, 44.6% of women believe that not enough attention is paid to gender equality, compared to a lower percentage of men – 31.2%.

Graph 96: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, is sufficient attention given to gender equality in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration? By gender (N=545)

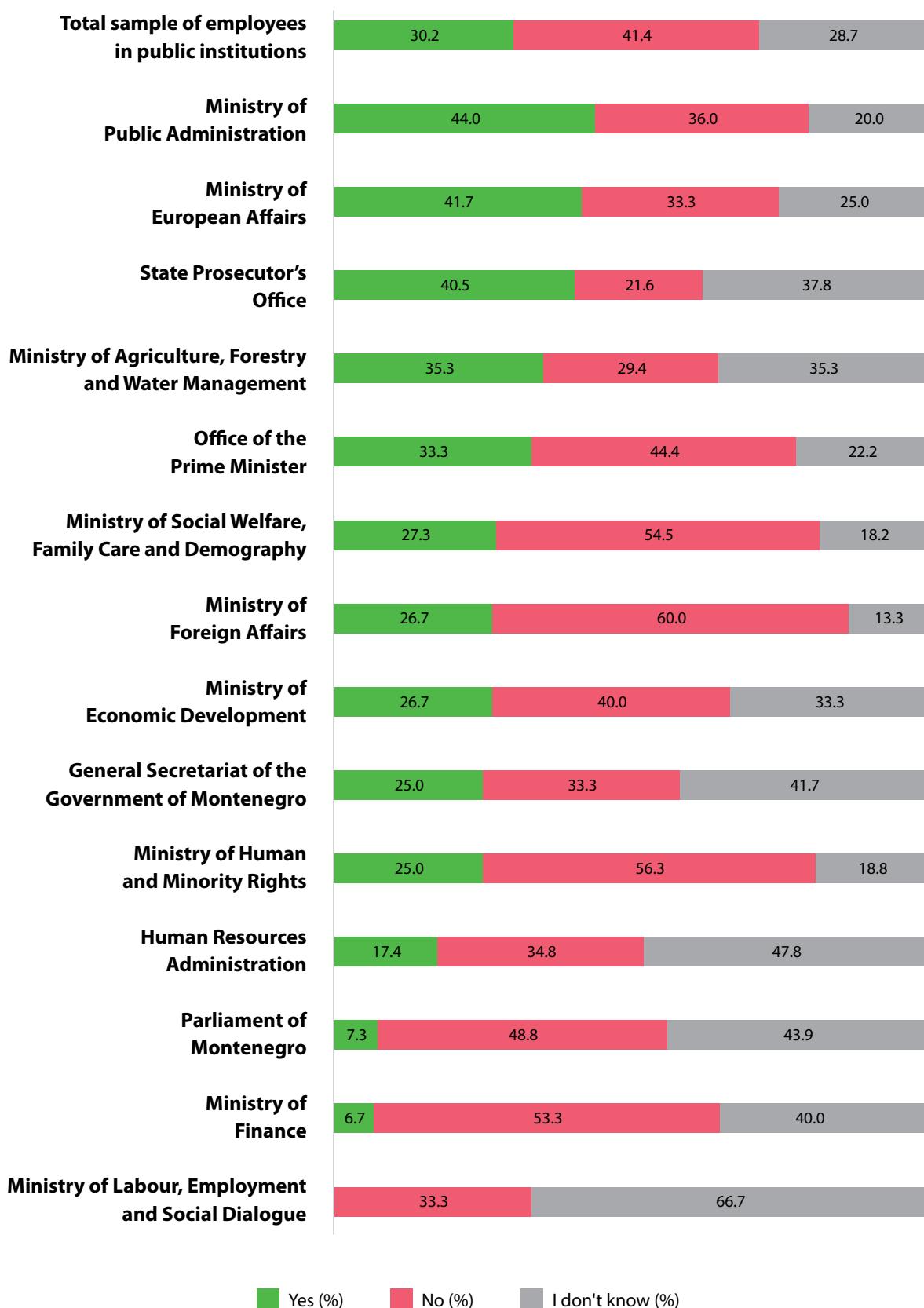


At the level of individual institutions, the results show that in most ministries, the perception of gender equality is extremely low. The Ministry of Finance stands out in particular, where only 6.7% of employees believe that attention is paid to gender equality, while 53.3% think it is not addressed, and as many as 40% do not know. In the Ministry of Labour, not a single respondent believes that sufficient attention is paid to gender equality, while 66.7% stated they cannot assess the situation. The most positive result was recorded in the Ministry of Public Administration (44% answered "yes"), which, as the body responsible for system reform, may have implemented internal measures to strengthen equality.

On the other hand, institutions such as the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (25% "yes," 56.3% "no") and the Parliament of Montenegro (7.3% "yes," 48.8% "no") show a low perception of gender sensitivity.



Graph 97: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, is sufficient attention given to gender equality in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration?



At the local level, results vary between municipalities. The Municipality of Plav stood out positively, with as many as 68.2% of employees believing that gender equality is taken into account, and not a single respondent answered "I don't know." In contrast, in the Capital City of Podgorica and the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, over 50% of employees believe that insufficient attention is paid to this issue. Additionally, in all three municipalities analyzed—except Plav—a relatively high percentage of respondents said they could not assess the situation, which may indicate low transparency or a weak institutional framework for promoting equality.

Graph 98: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, is sufficient attention given to gender equality in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration?

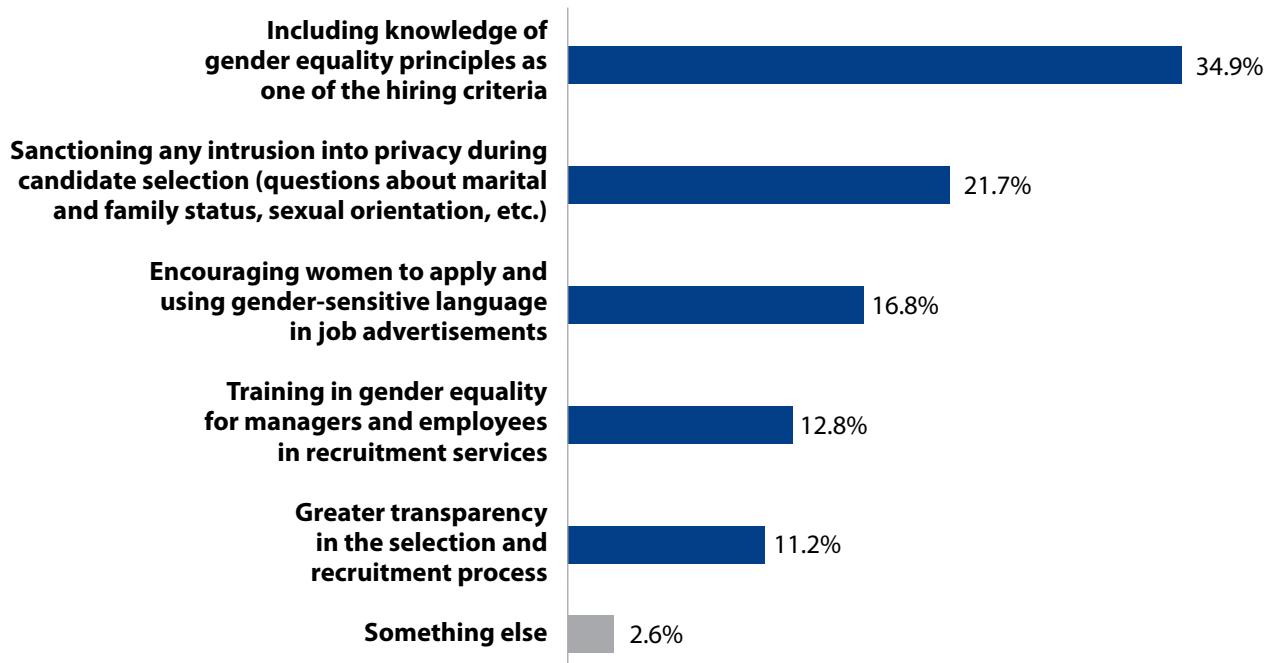


One third (34.9%) of employees in public institutions believe that penalizing any intrusion into candidates' privacy during the selection process would be the most effective measure for increasing the inclusion of gender equality principles in public administration hiring practices. Nearly one quarter (21.7%) of respondents think that gender equality training for managers and staff in employment services would be helpful.

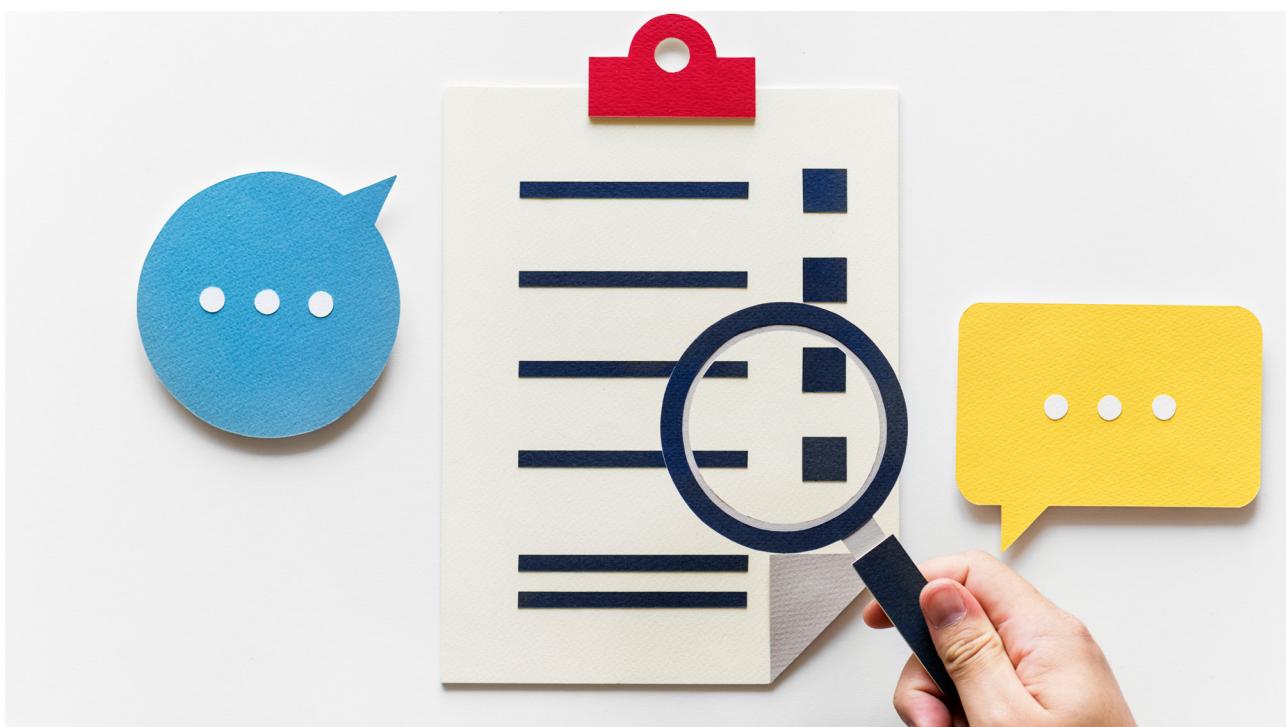
A smaller percentage of employees (16.8%) believe that greater transparency in the selection and recruitment process would contribute to fairer hiring. Additionally, 12.8% of respondents see encouraging women to apply for jobs and using gender-sensitive language in job postings as important steps toward greater gender equality, while 11.2% believe that candidates should be informed about gender equality principles when applying for public positions.

These findings highlight the need for a combination of legal measures, education, and increased transparency in recruitment processes to ensure a fair and gender-sensitive work environment. Implementing these measures could help reduce discrimination and strengthen equal opportunities for all candidates, regardless of gender or other personal characteristics.

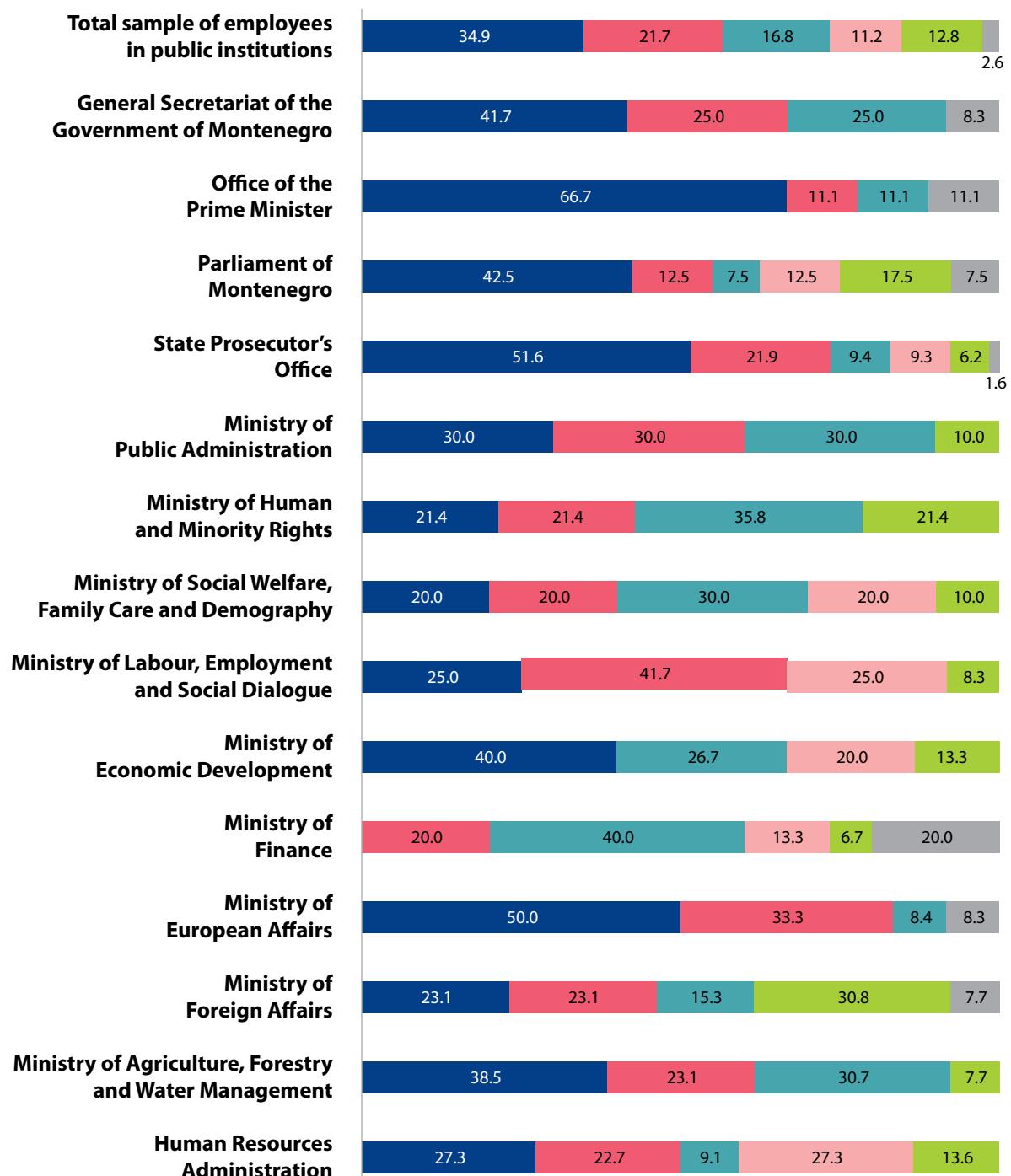
Graph 99: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, what would be the most effective measure to ensure greater inclusion of gender equality principles in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration? (N=545)



According to the presented data, the majority of employees in public institutions in Montenegro believe that the strongest contribution to greater inclusion of gender equality principles in recruitment, selection, and hiring processes would come from penalizing intrusions into candidates' privacy through questions about marital, family, or sexual status. This view is especially emphasized in the Office of the Prime Minister, where 66.7% of respondents support such a measure.



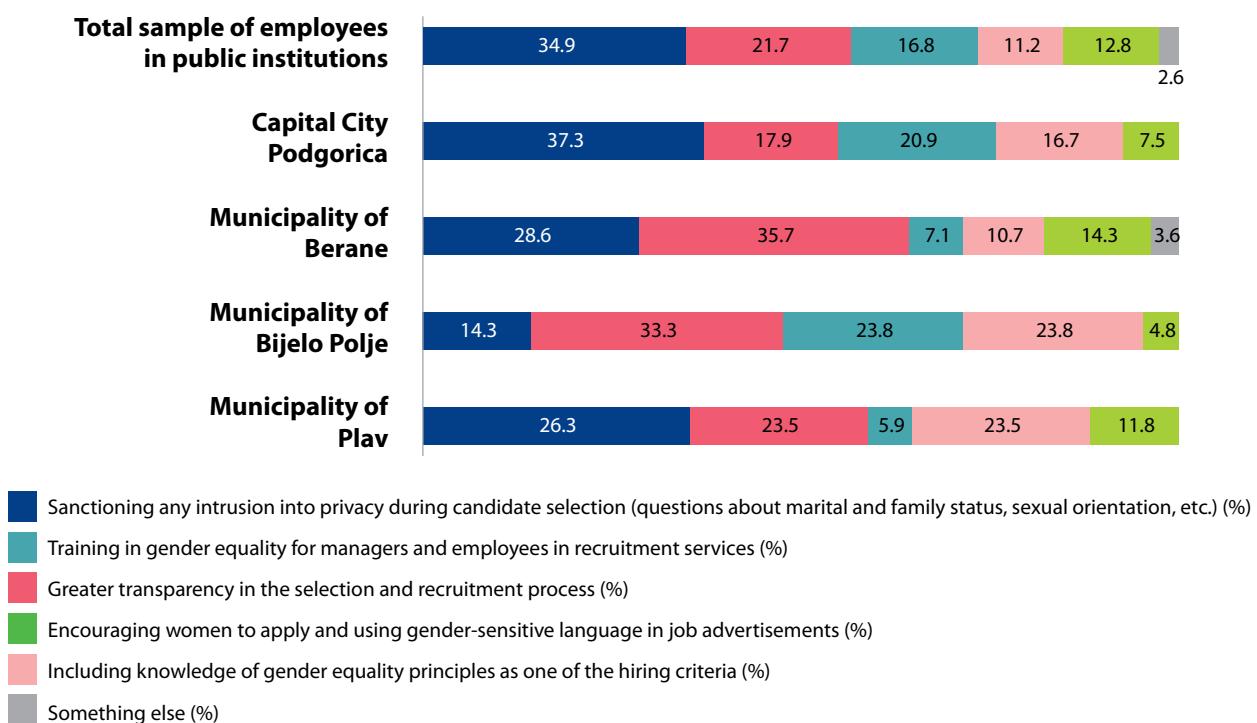
Graph 100: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, what would be the most effective measure to ensure greater inclusion of gender equality principles in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration?



- Sanctioning any intrusion into privacy during candidate selection (questions about marital and family status, sexual orientation, etc.) (%)
- Training in gender equality for managers and employees in recruitment services (%)
- Greater transparency in the selection and recruitment process (%)
- Encouraging women to apply and using gender-sensitive language in job advertisements (%)
- Including knowledge of gender equality principles as one of the hiring criteria (%)
- Something else (%)

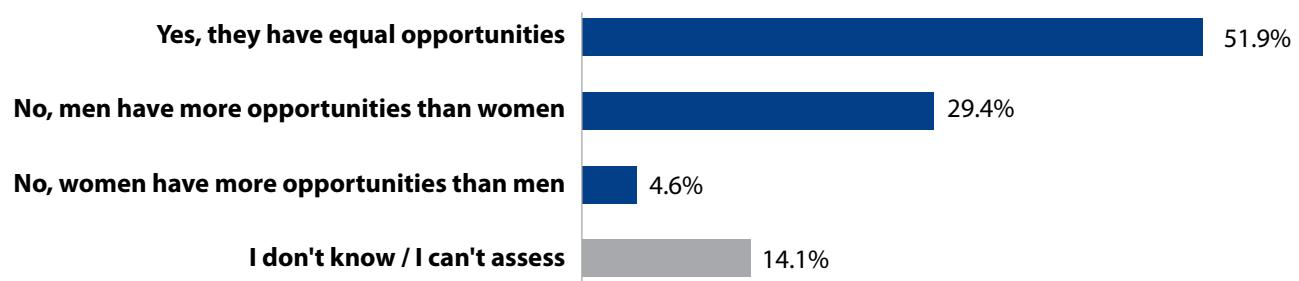
In the Capital City of Podgorica, the majority of employees (37.3%) believe that penalizing intrusions into candidates' privacy during the selection process is the most effective solution. In the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, however, the prevailing opinion is that training in the field of gender equality is the most important measure (33.3%). In the Municipality of Plav, the largest number of employees (35.3%) also support penalizing privacy intrusions, while in the Municipality of Berane, responses are almost equally divided between support for training (35.7%) and penalization (28.6%). Interestingly, both Bijelo Polje and Plav show significantly greater support for measures such as process transparency and the use of gender-sensitive language, indicating specific local needs and attitudes.

Graph 101: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, what would be the most effective measure to ensure greater inclusion of gender equality principles in the recruitment, selection, and hiring processes in public administration?



When it comes to career advancement opportunities, research results show that just over half of respondents (51.9%) believe that men and women in their institution have equal chances of advancement. However, more than a quarter (29.4%) believe that men have more opportunities than women, while a significantly smaller percentage of respondents (4.6%) think that women have an advantage over men in career advancement. Additionally, 14.1% of respondents were unable to assess the situation, which may indicate a lack of transparency in promotion processes.

Graph 102: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, do men and women in your institution have equal opportunities for career advancement? (N=545)

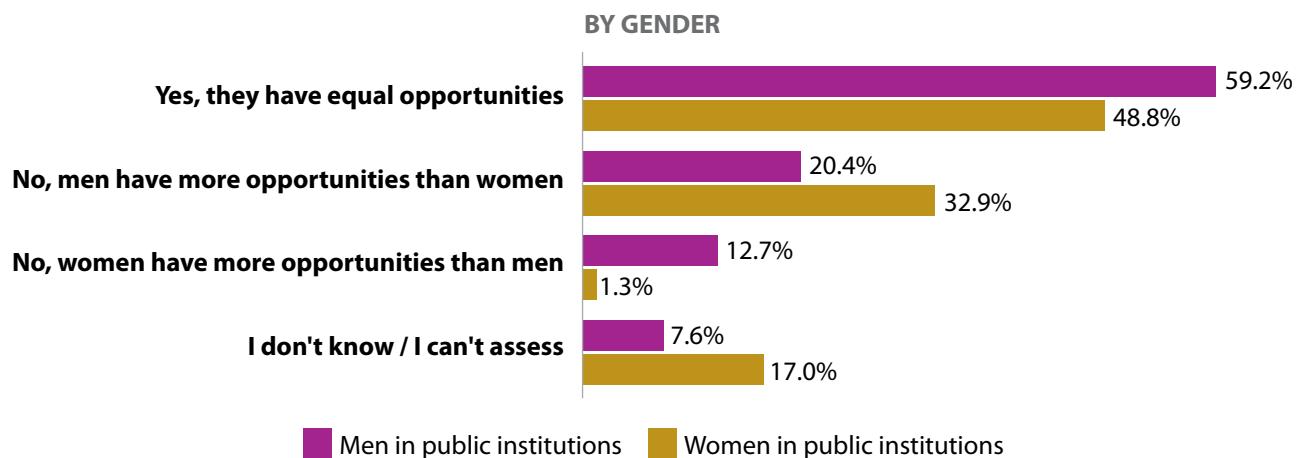


The majority of men (59.2%) believe that men and women have equal opportunities, while less than half of women (48.8%) share that view.

Interestingly, a third of women (32.9%) believe that men have better chances of advancement, which is a higher percentage compared to men (20.4%) who think the same.

On the other hand, 12.7% of men believe that women have more opportunities, while almost no women agree with this (only 1.3%). Additionally, more women (17%) than men (7.6%) say they cannot assess the situation.

Graph 103 Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, do men and women in your institution have equal opportunities for career advancement? By gender (N=545)

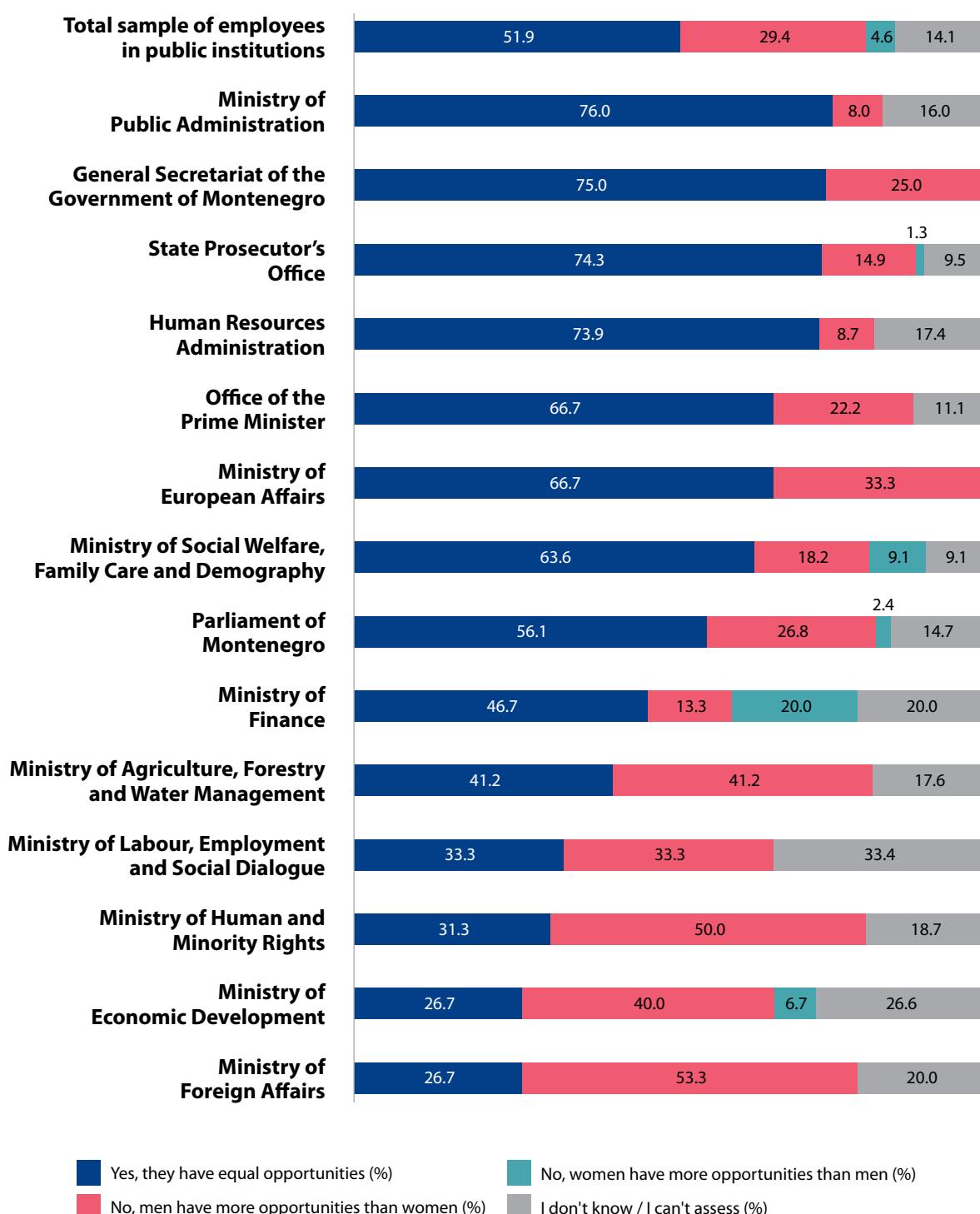


The data shows significant differences among institutions regarding the perception of gender equality in career advancement. The highest levels of belief in equal opportunities are recorded in the Ministry of Public Administration (76%), the General Secretariat of the Government (75%), and the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office (74.3%).

On the other hand, institutions such as the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (33.3%), the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (31.3%) show the lowest percentages of employees who believe that opportunities are equal, with a high percentage of respondents in these institutions believing that men have more chances for advancement.

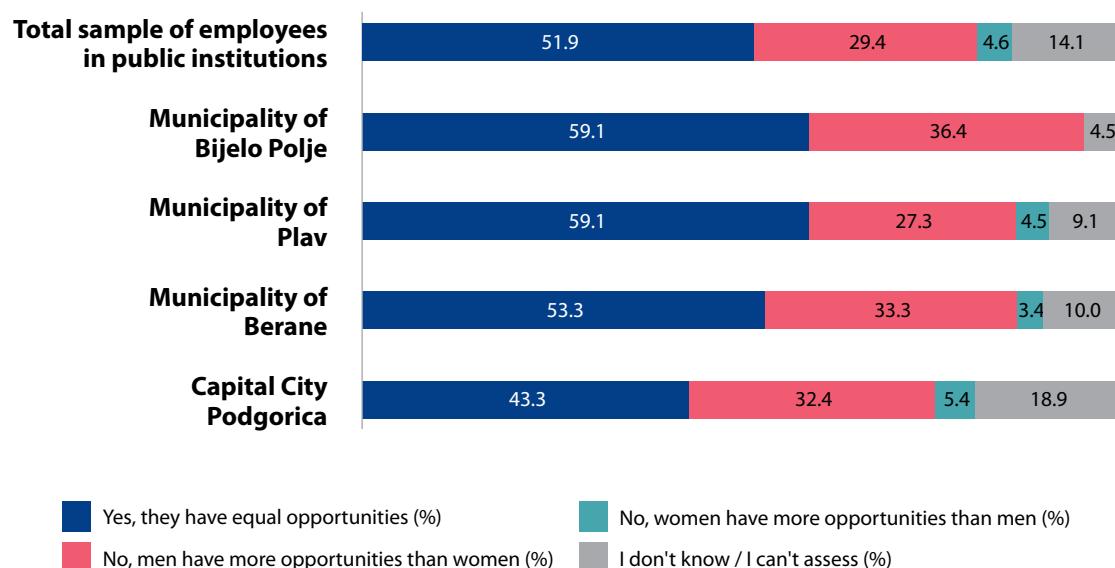
These findings indicate that the perception of equal opportunities varies depending on the institution, with some ministries showing a dominant belief that men have an advantage. Greater transparency in advancement processes and strengthening mechanisms for gender equality could contribute to creating fairer conditions for the career development of all employees.

Graph 104: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, do men and women in your institution have equal opportunities for career advancement?



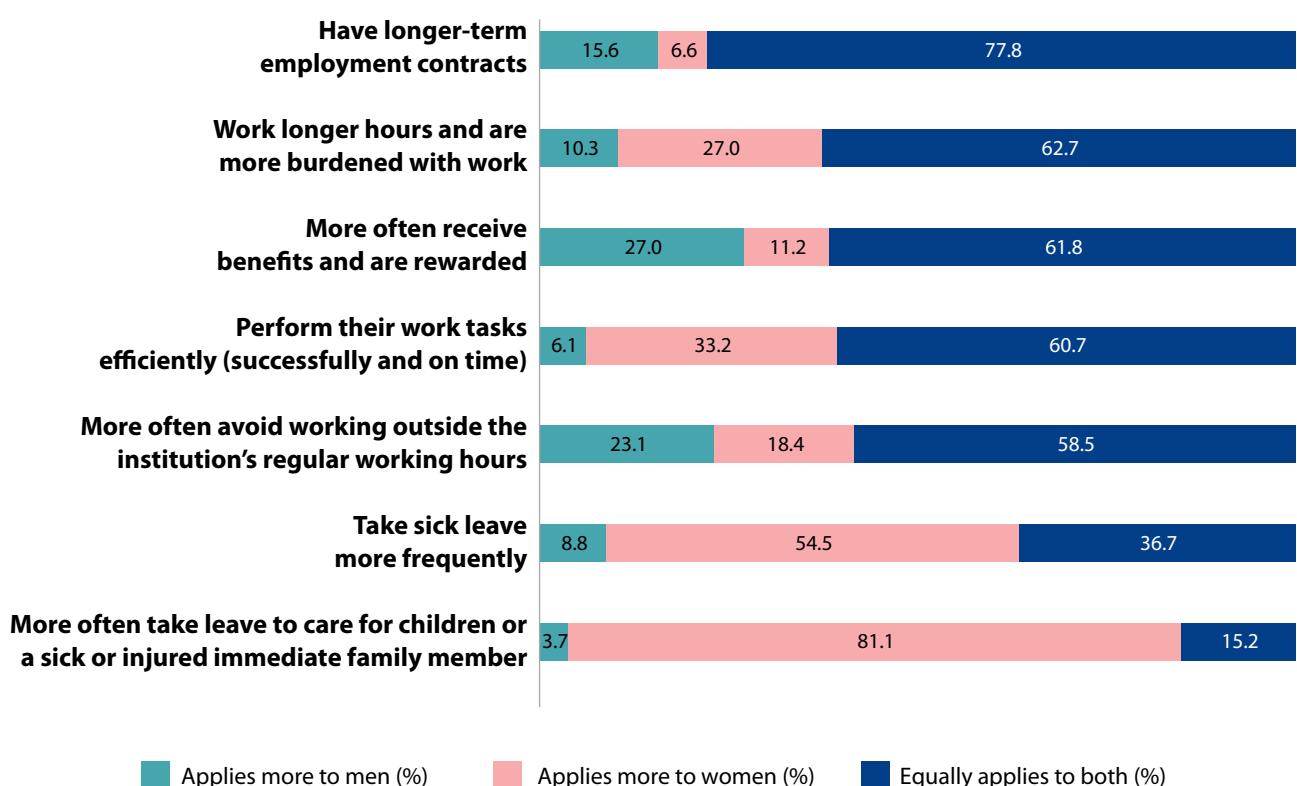
Employees in local self-governments reveal that the highest percentage of respondents who believe in equality comes from Bijelo Polje and Plav (59.1%), while this perception is lowest in Podgorica (43.3%), which also records the highest percentage of those uncertain in their assessment (18.9%). Berane lies in between, with 53.3% of employees perceiving equal opportunities, while one third (33.3%) believe that men have the advantage. These results indicate that, although most employees perceive equality, there is still a significant perception that men have greater opportunities for advancement.

Graph 105: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, do men and women in your institution have equal opportunities for career advancement?



Three-quarters of employees in public institutions (77.8%) do not perceive significant gender differences in terms of the length of employment contracts. Two-thirds believe there is no difference in workload between men and women (62.7%), and that both genders are equally rewarded with workplace benefits (61.8%). **However, there is a perception that women more frequently take sick leave (54.5%) and leave due to family obligations (81.1%).**

Graph 106: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate whether it applies more to men, women, or whether you believe there is no difference in this regard in your institution. (N=545)



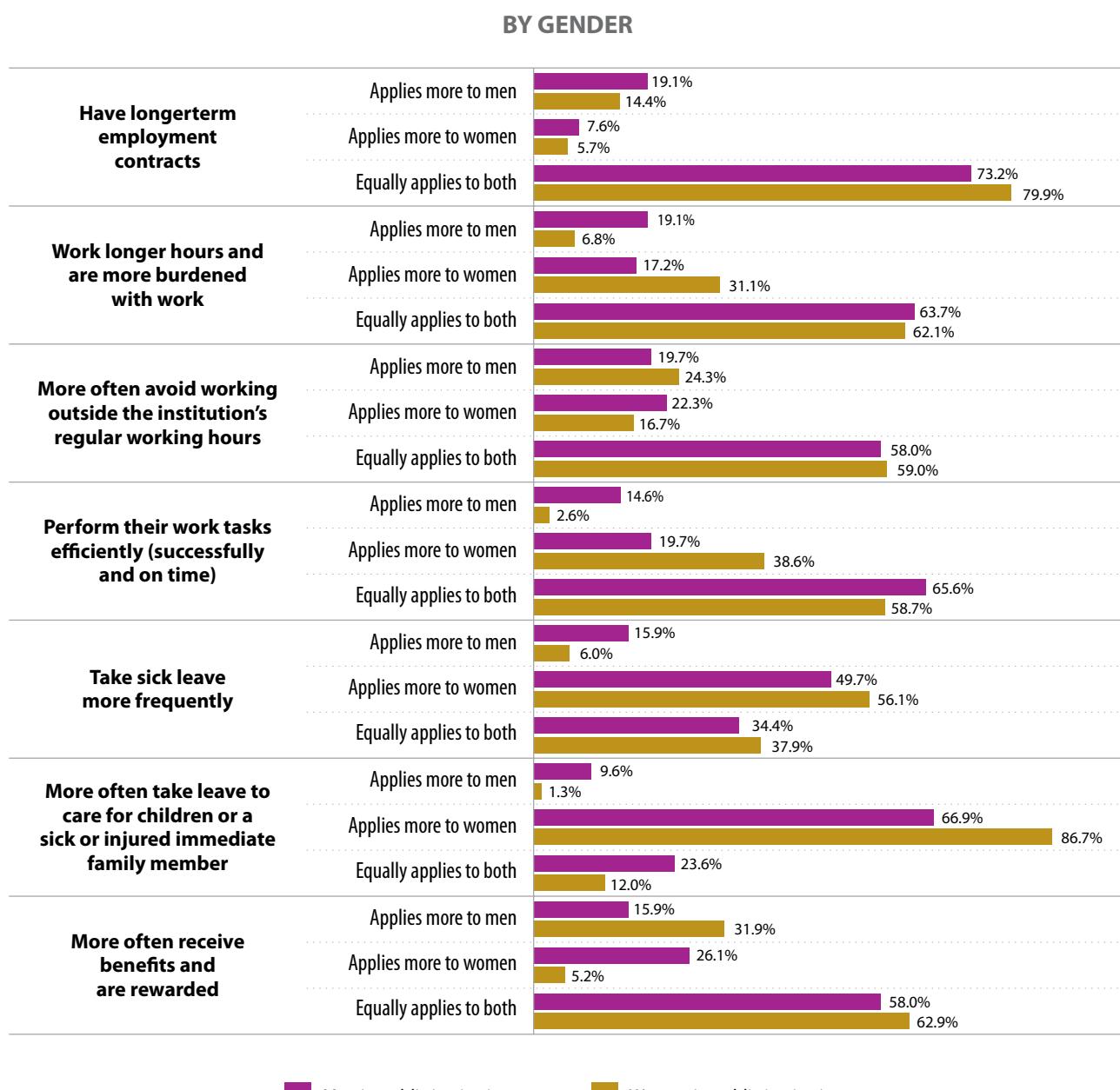
Most respondents, both men and women, believe that employment contracts are evenly distributed between the sexes (73.2% of men and 79.9% of women), indicating a general perception of equal formal employment conditions.

However, regarding workload, women significantly more often than men believe that they themselves are more burdened (31.1% of women compared to 17.2% of men), while men are more likely to see the burden as their own.

In terms of work efficiency, a large proportion of women consider themselves more efficient (38.6% of women compared to 19.7% of men), while men mostly believe both sexes are equally efficient (65.6%).

There are also notable differences in the perception of sick leave and leave for childcare—women much more frequently report that women are the ones who use these types of leave more (56.1% and 86.7%, respectively). Overall, women more strongly recognize gender inequalities, particularly in terms of workload, rewards, and family care, whereas men more often perceive balance or see women as having an advantage in certain aspects.

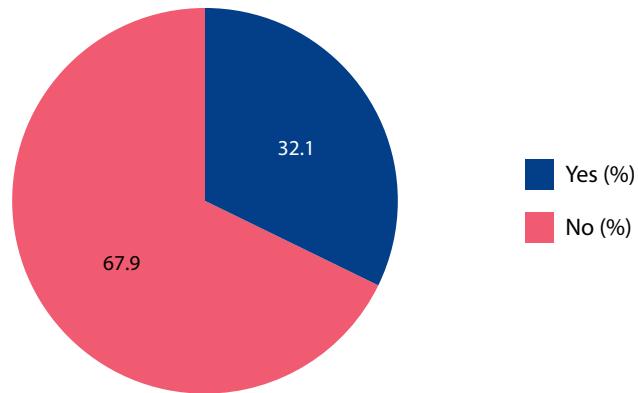
Graph 107: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate whether it applies more to men, women, or whether you believe there is no difference in this regard in your institution. By gender (N=545)



In the past three months, one third (32.1%) of employees in public institutions have taken sick leave or personal days off. Data analysis shows no statistically significant differences between women and men regarding taking time off—both report doing so at similar rates. This discrepancy between perception and actual data may indicate the presence of gender stereotypes, namely the entrenched belief that women are more likely to take on family responsibilities, regardless of the actual distribution of absences.

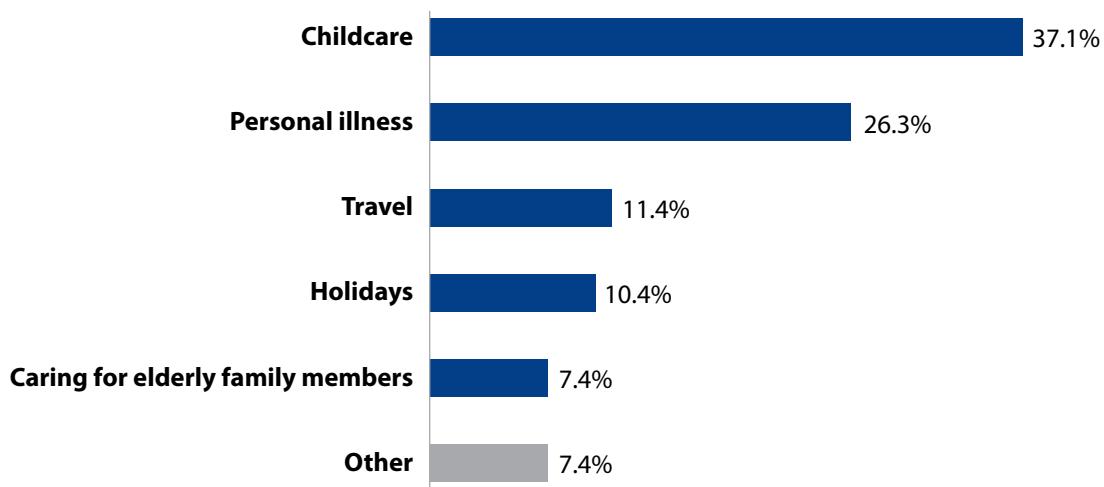
It is also possible that no significant gender differences appeared in this specific sample, even though broader practices and numerous other studies suggest that women more frequently take on the care of children and the elderly. Together, these findings suggest that, in addition to collecting data on behavior, it is crucial to understand how gender norms influence perceptions within work environments.

Graph 108: Employees in public institutions: Have you taken sick leave or days off in the past 3 months? (N=545)



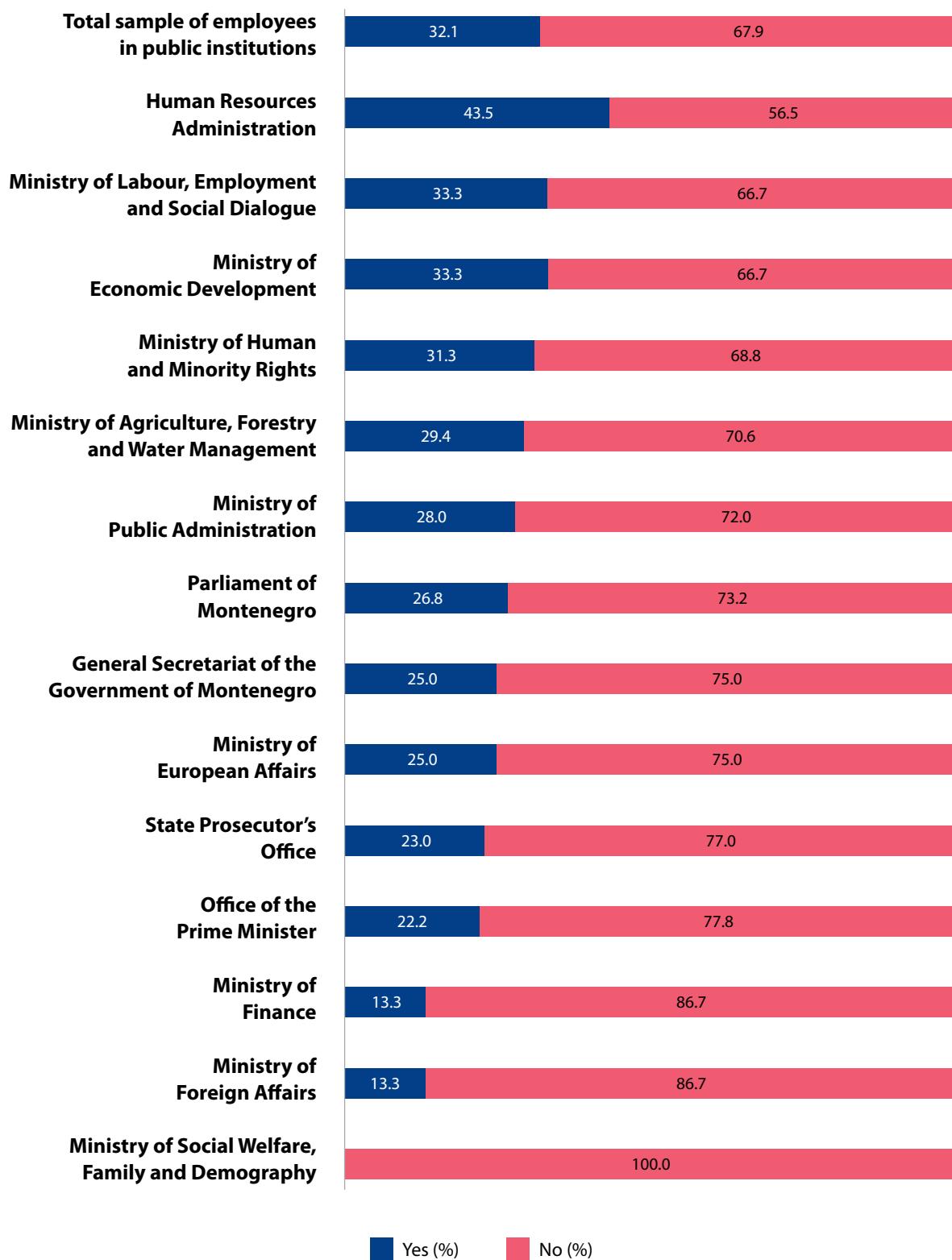
Respondents who took time off or sick leave most commonly cited childcare as the main reason for their absence from work (37.1%). One quarter reported their own illness as the reason (26.3%), while a smaller number mentioned travel (11.4%), holidays (10.4%), and caring for elderly family members (7.4%).

Graph 109: Employees in public institutions: If you took days off or sick leave, what was the reason? (N=175)



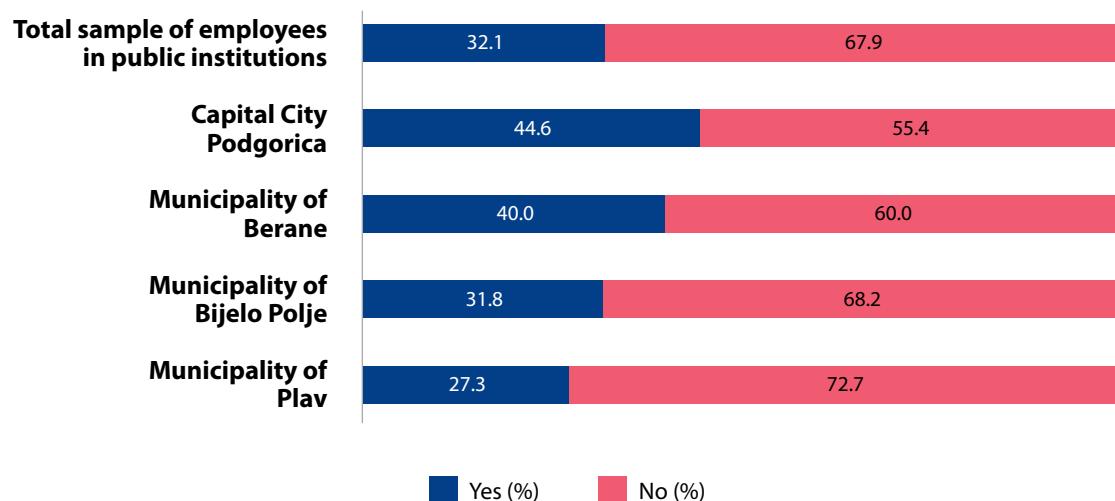
The highest percentage of employees who took time off in the past three months was recorded in the Human Resources Administration (43.5%), followed by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Economic Development, each with 33.3%.

Graph 110: Employees in public institutions: Have you taken sick leave or days off in the past 3 months?



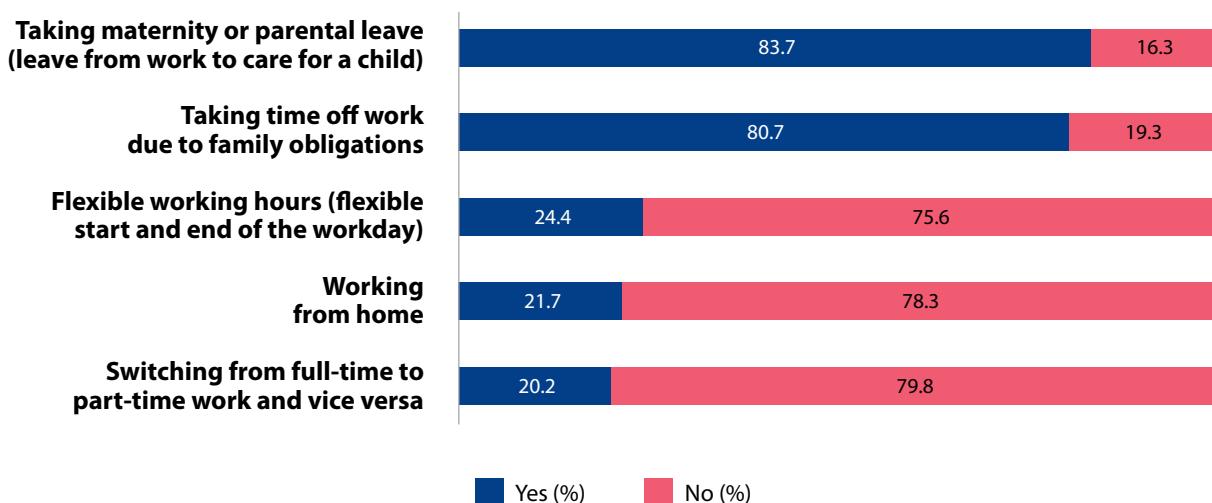
According to the presented data, the highest percentage of municipal employees who took sick leave or time off in the past three months is in the Capital City of Podgorica, with 44.6% of employees doing so. In the Municipality of Berane, this percentage is 40%, followed by 31.8% in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje. The lowest percentage was recorded in the Municipality of Plav, where only 27.3% of employees took sick leave or time off.

Graph 111: Employees in public institutions: Have you taken sick leave or days off in the past 3 months?



The vast majority of employees in public institutions have the possibility to take parental leave (83.7%) and time off work due to family obligations (80.7%), indicating a certain level of flexibility regarding family needs. However, opportunities for flexible work arrangements are significantly more limited—only one quarter (24.4%) of employees have the option of flexible working hours, while working from home is available to 21.7%, and the possibility to switch between full-time and part-time work is available to just 20.2%. These findings suggest that although there is support for family obligations through leave policies, options for flexible work formats are very limited, which may hinder the balance between work and private responsibilities.

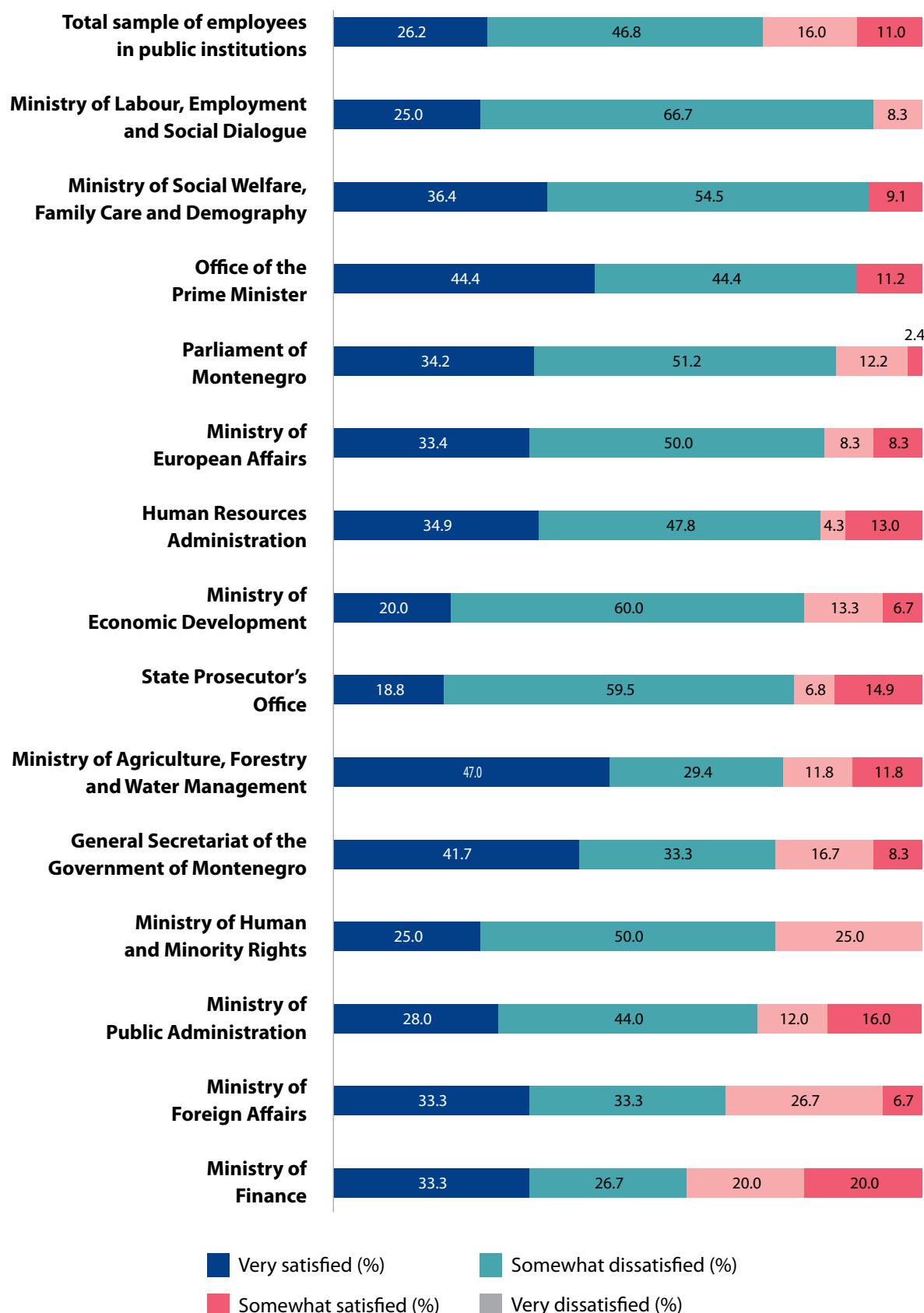
Graph 112: Employees in public institutions: Regarding the job you currently perform, do you have the possibility to: (N=545)



Three quarters (73%) of all employees in public institutions report being satisfied with their current work-life balance. The highest satisfaction levels are recorded among employees in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography (91.7% very or somewhat satisfied), the Prime Minister's Cabinet (90.9%), and the Ministry of European Affairs (90.9%).

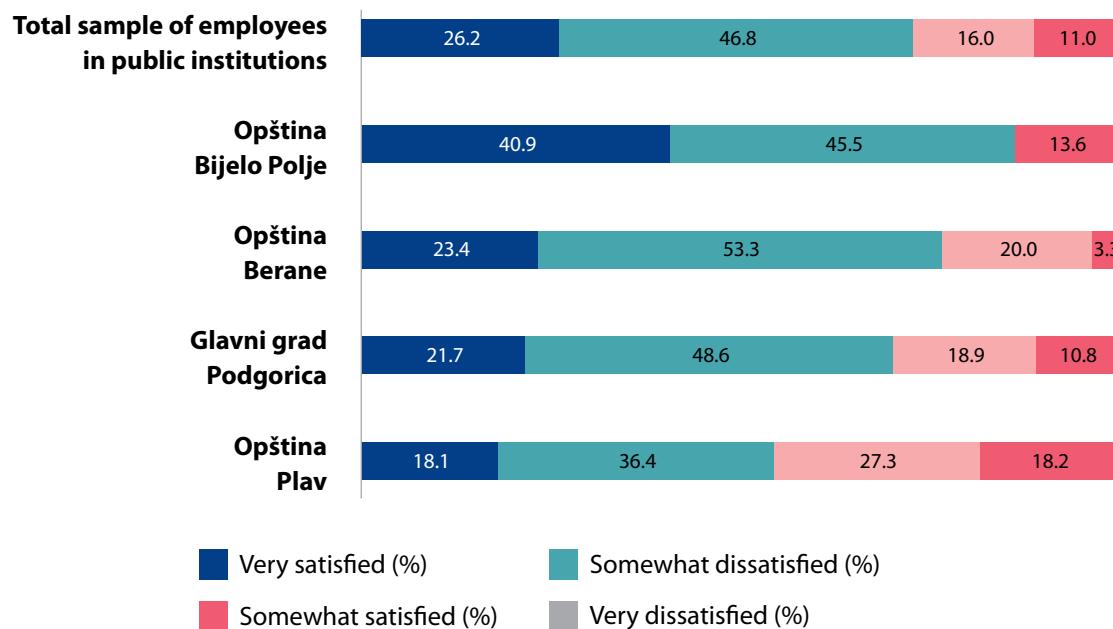
On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance has the highest percentage of dissatisfied employees (a total of 40% very or somewhat dissatisfied), while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Public Administration also report high levels of dissatisfaction (a total of 33.4% and 28%, respectively).

Graph 113: Employees in public institutions: To what extent are you satisfied with your current work-life balance?



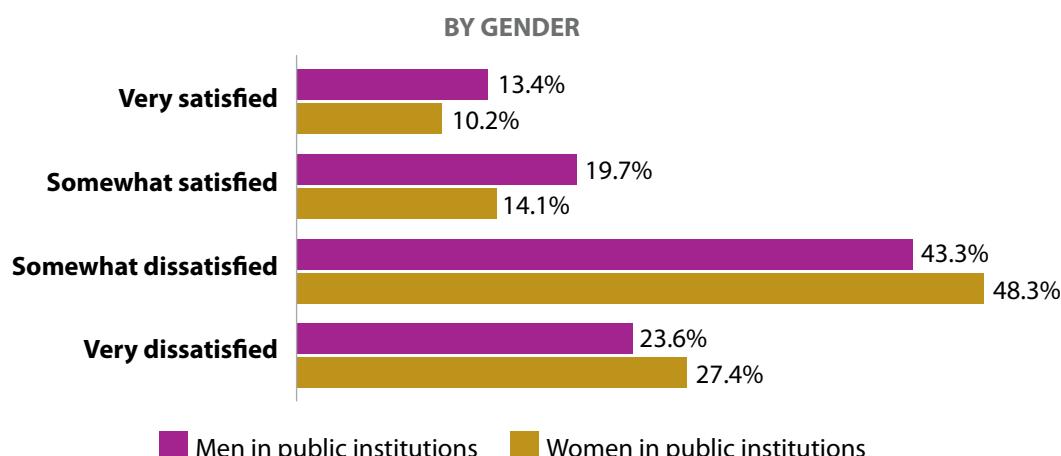
Looking at individual municipalities, the Municipality of Bijelo Polje shows the highest level of satisfaction, with 86.4% of employees being very or somewhat satisfied. The Municipality of Plav records the lowest percentage of very satisfied employees, with a total of 54.5%.

Graph 114: Employees in public institutions: To what extent are you satisfied with your current work-life balance?



Data shows that women in public institutions are somewhat more satisfied with the balance between private and professional life compared to men. A total of 75.7% of women are very or somewhat satisfied, while that percentage among men is 66.9%. At the same time, dissatisfaction is more pronounced among men – one third of men are somewhat or very dissatisfied, compared to one quarter (24.3%) of women.

Graph 115: Employees in public institutions: To what extent are you satisfied with your current work-life balance? By gender (N=545)



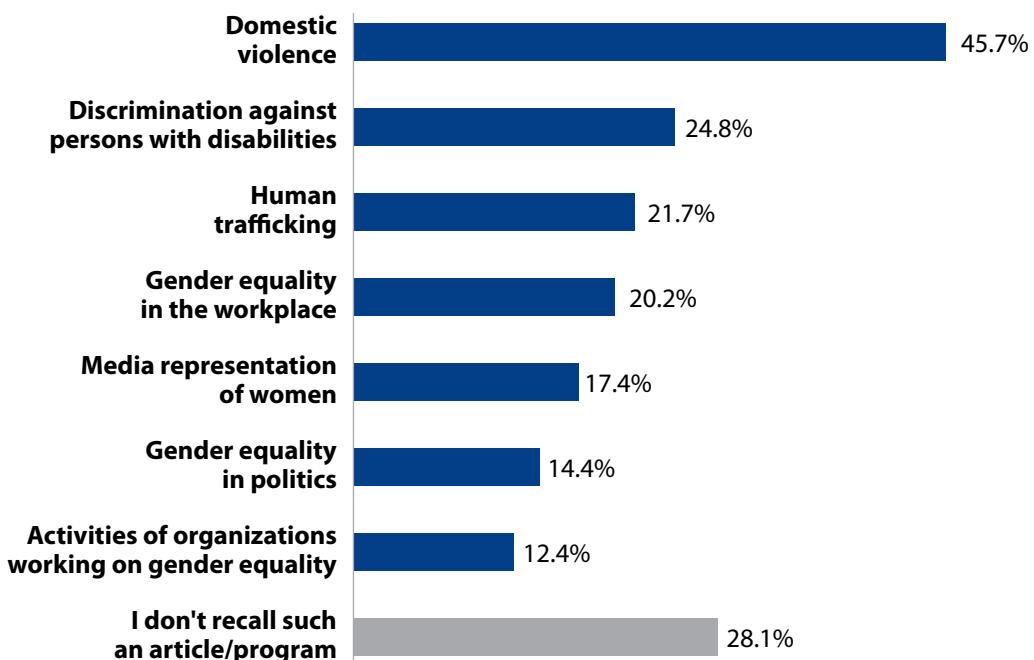
Media Representation of Women

As part of the research on gender equality in Montenegro, one of the questions posed to citizens focused on their recollection of media content related to gender equality over the past year. The aim of this question was to assess the extent to which women from these communities have been exposed to public discussions on gender equality through the media, and to identify which aspects of gender equality have been most prominent in the media space.

The results show that the most frequently mentioned topic was domestic violence, identified by 45.7% of respondents. This finding indicates that violence against women continues to dominate media narratives on gender equality. **It is particularly concerning that as many as one-quarter (28.1%) of citizens do not recall seeing or hearing any media content related to gender equality at all.**

The findings suggest that domestic violence remains the prevailing theme in media coverage of gender equality, while other important topics—such as political and economic equality—are less visible or less recognized by citizens of Montenegro. It is important to note that there are no statistically significant differences between the responses of men and women to this question.

Graph 116: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Do you recall, in the past year, any article or broadcast related to gender equality? Multiple answers possible (N=1005)

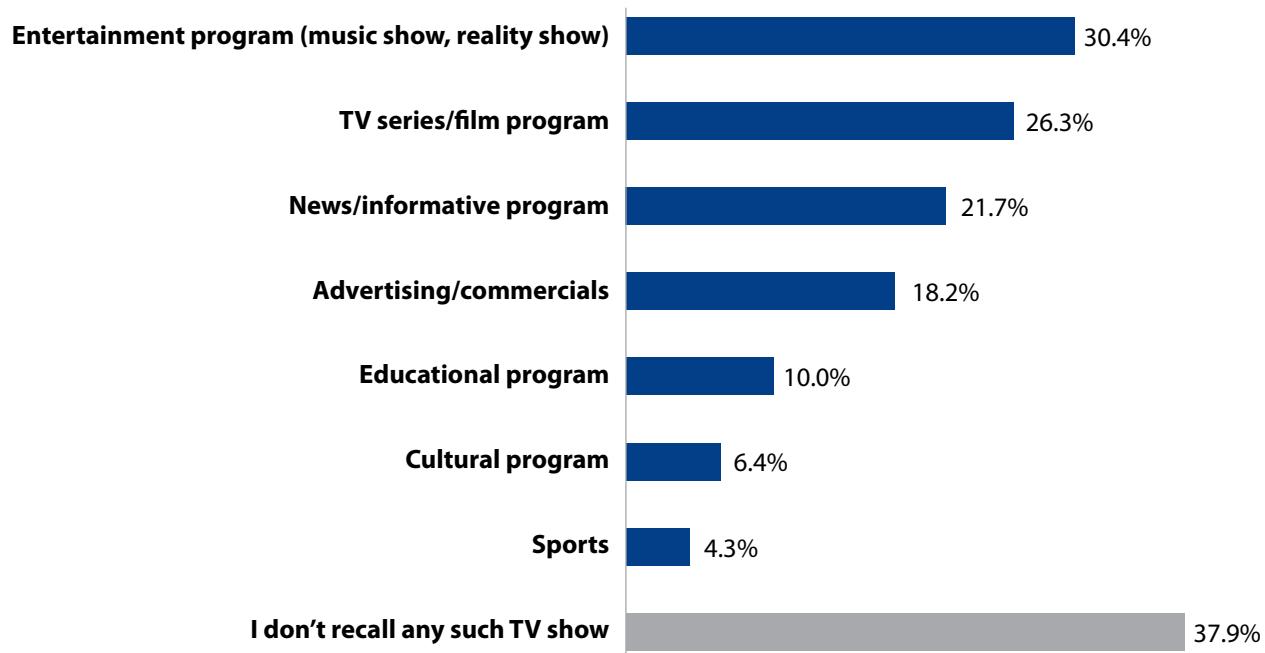


Just over one-third (37.9%) of the total sample reported that they do not recall any domestic television programs in which women were portrayed in a degrading or stereotypical manner. The analysis shows that citizens most commonly noticed stereotypical representations of women in entertainment programs (such as music shows and reality television), with 30.4% of respondents identifying this type of content as problematic.

Additionally, one-quarter of respondents (26.3% of the general population sample) cited television series and films as formats in which women are often portrayed in ways that reinforce gender stereotypes.

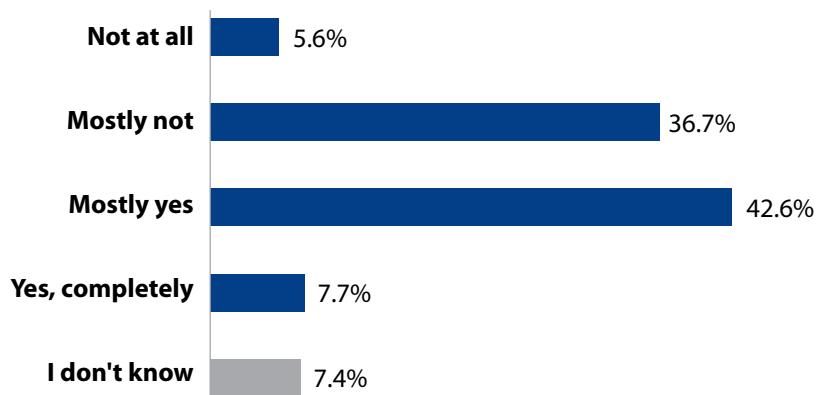
News and informational programs were also recognized as spaces where women are inappropriately represented, with 21.7% of the total sample pointing to this type of content. It is important to highlight that no statistically significant differences were observed between the responses of men and women regarding this question.

Graph 117: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Do you recall any domestic TV show in which women were portrayed in a degrading and stereotypical manner? What type of program was it? Multiple answers possible (N=1005)



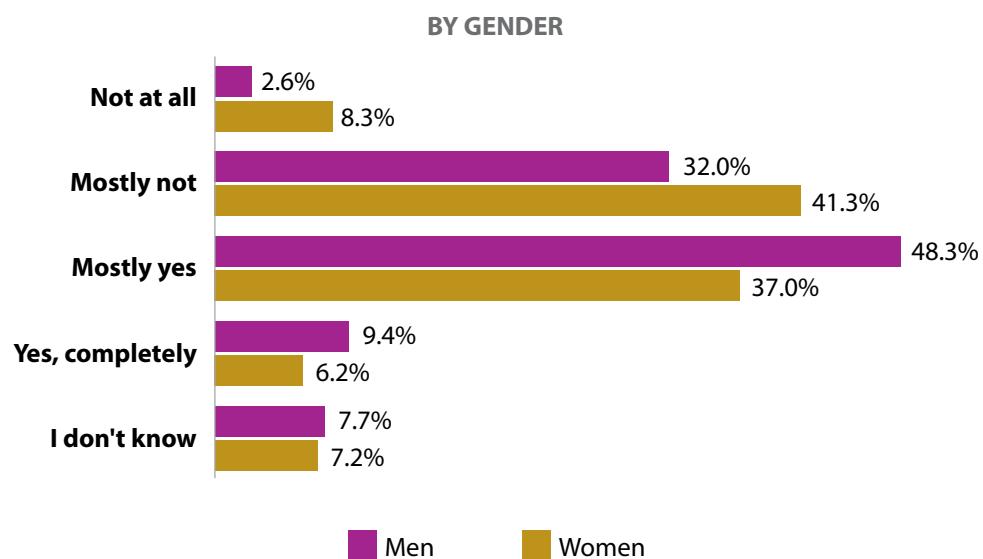
The representation of women in politics in the media reveals that, overall, respondents generally believe that women are mostly represented (42.6% of the total sample), while one-third believe that women are mostly not represented (36.7% of the total sample). The data suggest that, although a majority of respondents recognize the presence of women in politics through media coverage, this visibility is not perceived as sufficient.

Graph 118: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Are women involved in politics sufficiently represented in the media in Montenegro? (N=1005)



The results reveal noticeable differences in perception between men and women. A higher percentage of men (48.3%) believe that women in politics are mostly represented, compared to 37.0% of women who share that view. At the same time, nearly half of the female respondents (49.6%) believe that women politicians are mostly or entirely underrepresented in the media, compared to 34.6% of male respondents. These findings indicate that women are more likely to perceive inequality and the media's neglect of women in politics.

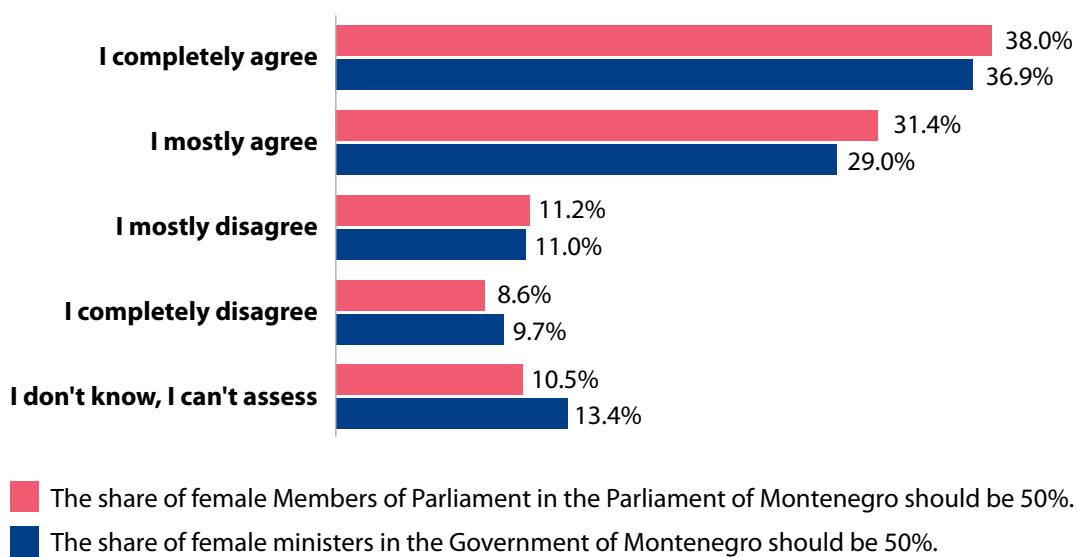
Graph 119: Analysis of citizens' attitudes: Are women involved in politics sufficiently represented in the media in Montenegro? By gender (N=1005)



Perceptions of Public Institution Employees on Gender Mainstreaming in Policy

The attitudes of employees in public institutions in Montenegro regarding gender equality in political and executive functions show significant support for increasing the number of women in the Parliament and Government of Montenegro. When asked whether the proportion of women MPs in the Parliament of Montenegro should be 50%, more than one-third of respondents (38%) fully agreed, while 31.4% mostly agreed—amounting to a total of 69.4% who support this idea. Similarly, support for increasing the number of women ministers in the Government of Montenegro stands at 65.9%, with 36.9% of respondents fully agreeing and 29% mostly agreeing with this proposal.

Graph 120: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you personally agree or disagree with the following statements? (N=545)



Public institution employees' perceptions of the areas where female and male politicians can make the greatest contributions reveal clear differences in how their potential impact is viewed. The findings indicate that women politicians are most often associated with making greater contributions in the field of social policy, while male politicians are more closely linked to the economic and infrastructure sectors.

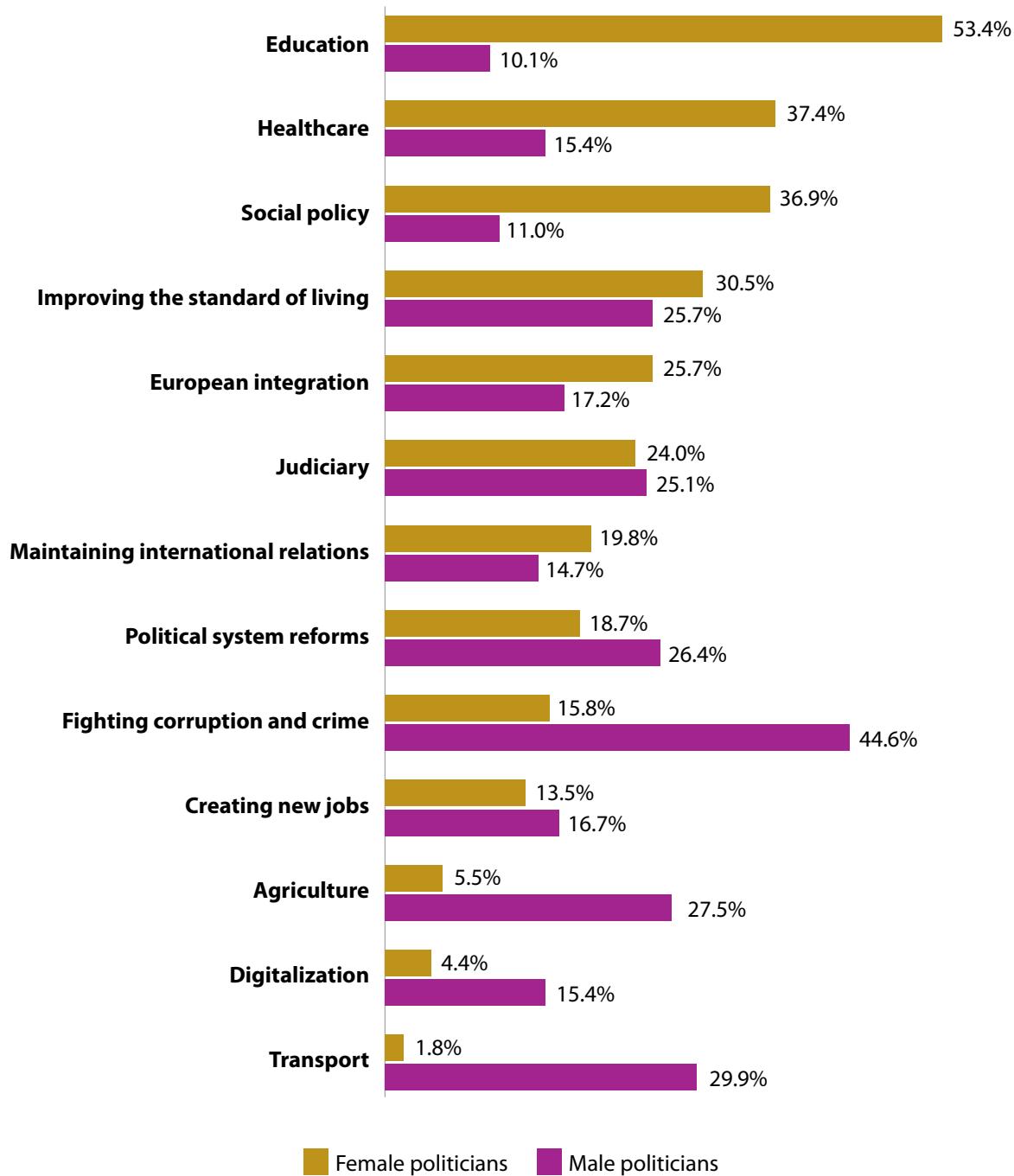
The highest percentage of respondents believe that women politicians can contribute the most in education (53.4%), healthcare (37.4%), and social policy (36.9%). These areas are traditionally associated with care, support, and the improvement of the social system. In addition to these, women are also seen as playing a significant role in improving living standards (30.5%) and contributing to European integration (25.7%). On the other hand, male politicians are perceived as key actors in areas more closely associated with infrastructure, the economy, and security.

The highest percentage of respondents believe that male politicians can contribute most to combating corruption and crime (44.6%), followed by agriculture (27.5%) and transportation (29.9%). Political system reform (26.4%) and job creation (16.7%) were also identified as areas where male politicians are expected to play a leading role.

These findings reflect gender stereotypes embedded in perceptions of the roles of women and men in politics—where women are more frequently associated with social policy and education, while men are expected to contribute more in areas such as security, the economy, and infrastructure. This division not only limits the space for equal political engagement, but also reinforces the notion that women are still viewed through the lens of traditional gender roles, which link them to supportive and caregiving professions.

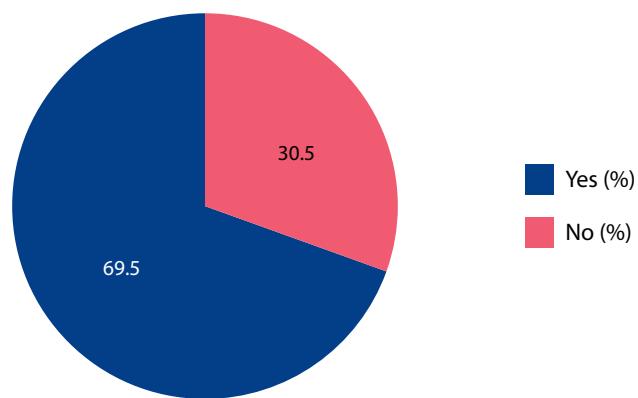
The results point to the need for increased awareness of gender equality in political engagement, as well as for systemic support to enhance the visibility and participation of women in areas not traditionally associated with their influence. This requires challenging deeply rooted perceptions of the "natural" roles of women and men in public life.

Graph 121: Employees in public institutions: Please select 3 areas from the given list in which, in your opinion, Montenegrin female/male politicians can contribute the most. (N=545)



The analysis of support for introducing quotas for the less represented gender in decision-making positions within the Government of Montenegro shows that a majority of public sector employees are in favor of this measure, although significant differences exist between institutions. At the level of the overall sample of public institution employees, more than two-thirds (69.5%) support the introduction of quotas, while 30.5% do not support this idea.

Graph 122: Employees in institutions: Would you support the introduction of quotas for the less represented gender in decision-making positions in the Government – ministerial, director, and head positions? (N=545)



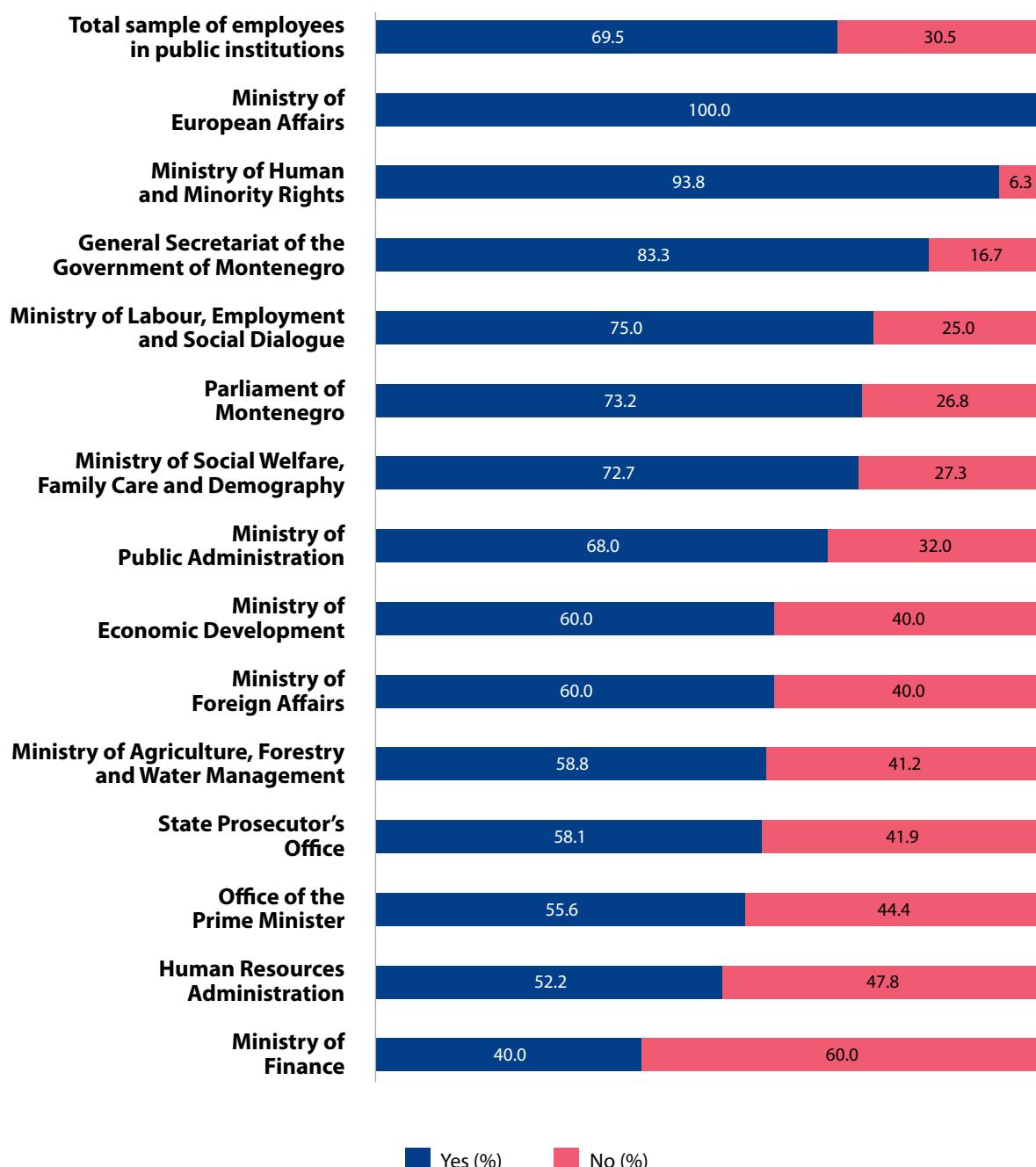
The highest levels of support for gender quotas were recorded in the Ministry of European Affairs (100%) and the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (93.8%). This suggests that these institutions are more oriented toward promoting gender equality and systemic measures to ensure equal opportunities in decision-making. A high level of support was also observed in the General Secretariat of the Government (83.3%) and the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Dialogue (75%).

On the other hand, the lowest level of support was observed in the Ministry of Finance, where as many as 60% of employees oppose this measure, and only 40% express support. A similar trend is visible in the **Human Resources Administration (52.2% in favor, 47.8% opposed)**, the Prime Minister's Cabinet (55.6% in favor, 44.4% opposed), and the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office (58.1% in favor, 41.9% opposed). These results may indicate a greater degree of skepticism toward gender quotas.

Although there is broad support for quotas as a mechanism for advancing gender equality, certain sectors still display notable resistance to this measure. Differences in attitudes across institutions may reflect their organizational culture, the degree to which gender policies have been integrated, as well as a lack of knowledge and capacity to understand the purpose and rationale behind quotas.

It is important to emphasize that quotas, as an affirmative measure, have significantly contributed to increasing women's participation in decision-making roles, particularly in political and institutional contexts. Resistance to quotas often stems from narratives that challenge gender equality policies, placing quotas in a misleading context and overlooking their positive effects. These findings highlight the need for ongoing educational and awareness-raising activities aimed at building institutional capacity and shifting perceptions of quotas as a temporary, yet essential, mechanism for achieving gender equality.

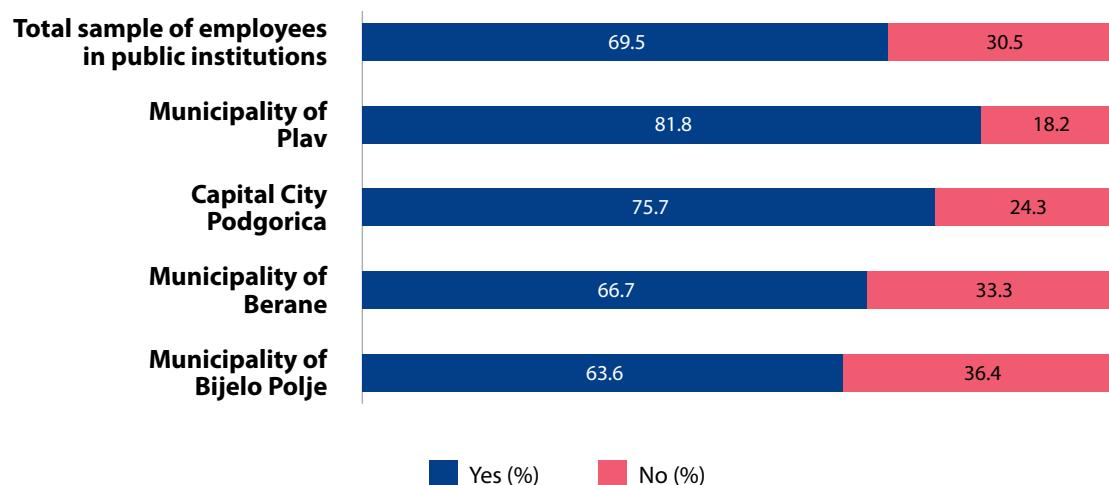
Graph 123> Employees in public institutions: Would you support the introduction of quotas for the less represented gender in decision-making positions in the Government – ministerial, director, and head positions?



When analyzing responses by local self-governments, the highest level of support for quotas was recorded in the Municipality of Plav, where as many as 81.8% of employees expressed agreement with this measure, while only 18.2% believe that quotas are not necessary. A high level of support is also evident in the Capital City of Podgorica, where three-quarters of employees support the introduction of quotas.

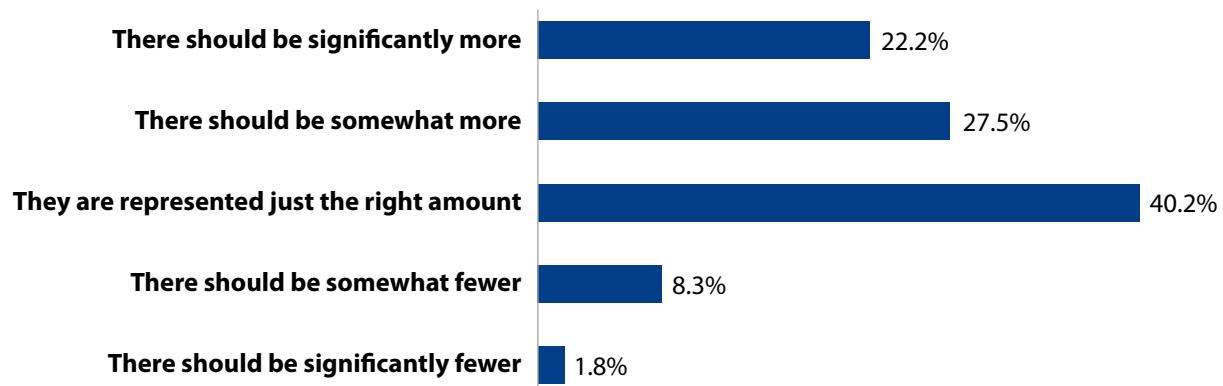
Lower, but still majority support for quotas was observed in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, where nearly two-thirds (63.6%) of employees are in favor of the measure. A similar trend is seen in the Municipality of Berane, where support is slightly higher at 66.7%. These findings indicate that the idea of introducing quotas for the less represented gender in decision-making positions is generally accepted across all the analyzed municipalities, with the strongest support expressed by respondents from Plav and Podgorica.

Graph 124: Employees in public institutions: Would you support the introduction of quotas for the less represented gender in decision-making positions in the Government – ministerial, director, and head positions?



Half of the employees (49.7%) believe that there should be more women in positions where they play a significant role in policymaking and decision-making—of whom 22.2% think there should be significantly more women, and 27.5% believe there should be somewhat more. These findings indicate a prevailing view that gender equality in decision-making processes has not yet been achieved and that there is a need to strengthen the role of women in key positions. On the other hand, 40.2% of employees believe that the current representation of women is adequate, suggesting that a portion of employees does not perceive an imbalance in the distribution of power within institutions. A smaller percentage of employees expressed the view that there should be fewer women in decision-making positions—8.3% believe there should be somewhat fewer, while 1.8% believe there should be significantly fewer. Although this group represents a minority, the results indicate the presence of some level of resistance to greater participation of women in decision-making processes.

Graph 125: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, are women sufficiently represented in the bodies within your institution that play a significant role in policymaking and decision-making? (N=545)

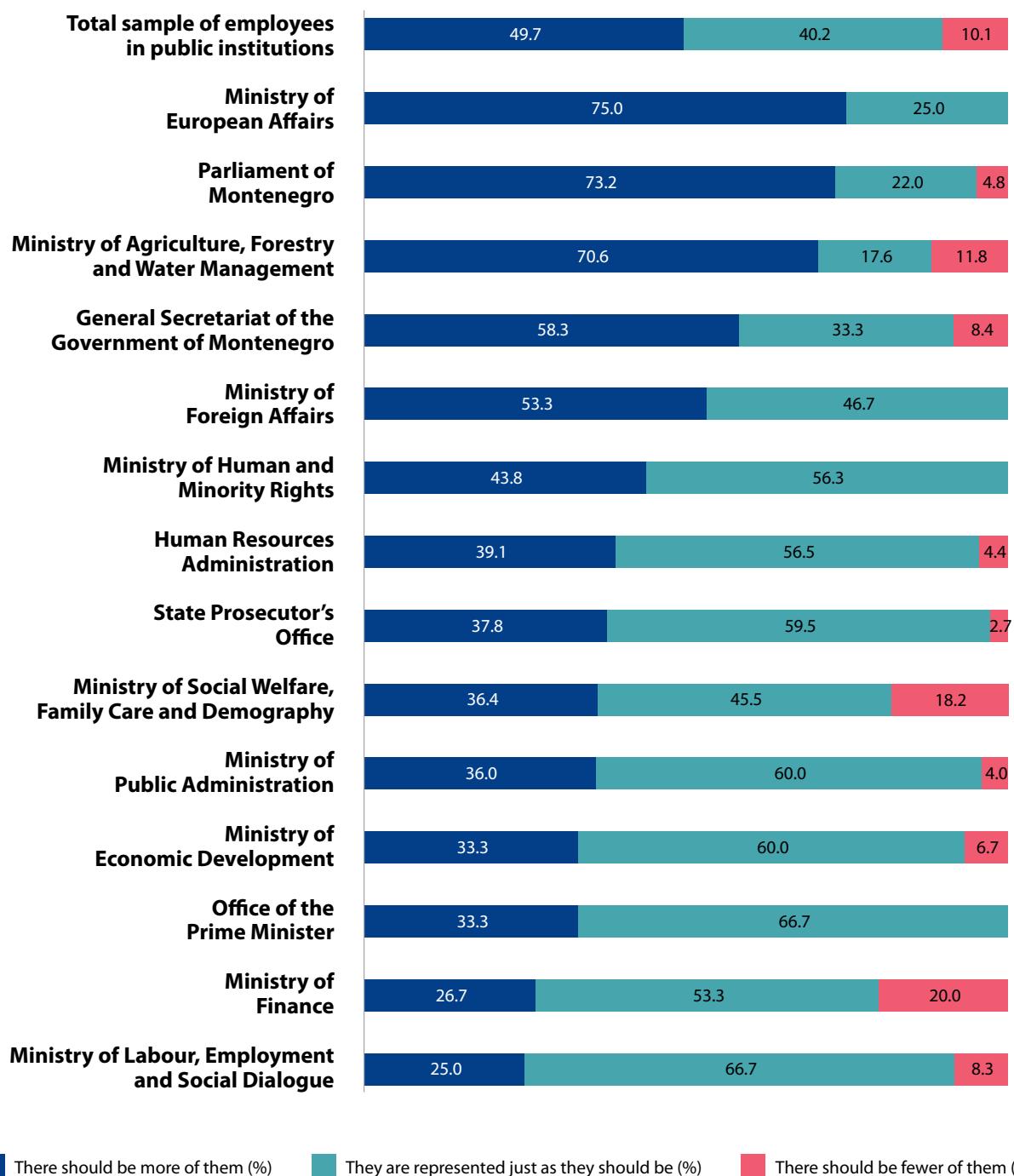


The highest percentage of employees who believe that women should be better represented was recorded in the Ministry of European Affairs (75%), the Parliament of Montenegro (73.2%), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management (70.6%).

Institutions such as the General Secretariat of the Government (58.3%) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (53.3%) show a slightly lower, but still significant, share of employees who support greater participation of women. However, this finding should be interpreted in a broader context. Approximately 90% of respondents from this ministry are women, which suggests that this attitude most likely does not reflect ideological opposition to the presence

of women, but rather a perceived imbalance in gender representation. In other words, it is possible that some employees, including women themselves, are expressing the opinion that gender composition should be more balanced, rather than suggesting that women should not be represented. This interpretation highlights the need for a more nuanced analysis of institutional structures and the promotion of gender balance policies that focus not only on the quantitative representation of both genders but also on the quality of their equal participation. It is important to compare this data with the fact that over 90% of employees in the Ministry of Justice support the introduction of quotas, which are a significant mechanism for increasing women's participation. The difference likely arises from the perception of the quota system as a mechanism used exclusively in electoral processes and in increasing the representation of women in Parliament, rather than as an affirmative measure that, through amendments to existing legislation, can be applied to other areas as well.

Graph 126: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, are women sufficiently represented in the bodies within your institution that play a significant role in policymaking and decision-making?





The highest level of support for greater participation of women was recorded in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, where the vast majority of employees (86.4%) believe that there should be more women in decision-making positions, while 13.6% consider the current level of representation to be adequate. Similarly, in the Municipality of Plav, 77.3% of employees support greater representation of women, while 9.1% believe the current representation is sufficient. However, 13.6% of employees in this municipality think that there should be fewer women in such positions, indicating a certain level of resistance to improving gender balance.

In the Municipality of Berane, two-thirds of employees believe there should be more women in key positions, while one-third believe the current representation is adequate. This result shows that, although the majority supports increased participation of women, a significant portion of respondents does not see a need for changing the current situation.

In the Capital City of Podgorica, 50% of employees believe there should be more women in decision-making roles, while 41.9% think that the current representation is adequate.

Graph 127 Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, are women sufficiently represented in the bodies within your institution that play a significant role in policymaking and decision-making?



■ There should be more of them (%) ■ They are represented just as they should be (%) ■ There should be fewer of them (%)

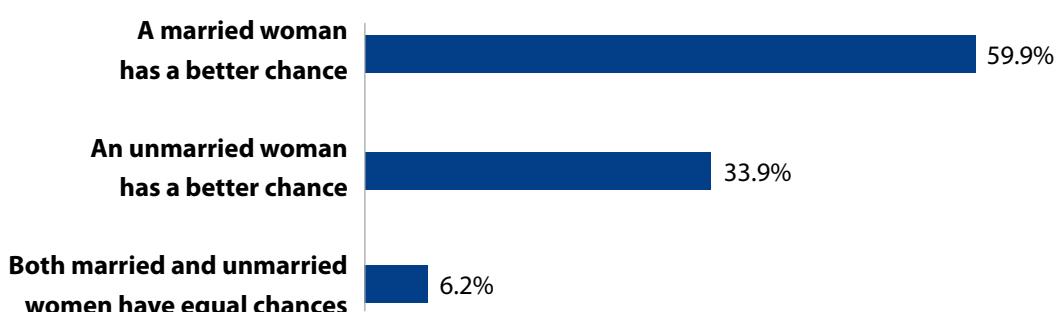
Gender Equality in Practice: Perceptions, Barriers, and Institutional Capacities for Implementing Equal Opportunity Policies

Gender equality in public institutions in Montenegro is not only a normative requirement but also a reflection of the maturity of institutional culture and the capacity to respond to the needs of all employees, regardless of gender. The overall research indicates that, although formal frameworks for gender equality are in place, everyday practices, attitudes, and employee perceptions reveal numerous obstacles that hinder their full integration. From persistent gender stereotypes and limiting views on women's roles in the professional context, to inconsistent institutional responses, it is evident that the capacities and knowledge necessary to implement gender equality in practice remain underdeveloped.

These findings, when viewed alongside previously analyzed responses, clearly demonstrate that barriers to the implementation of gender equality are not solely a matter of policy or leadership will, but also of knowledge, institutional support, employee awareness, and deeply rooted gender roles that shape how women and men perceive their professional positions and relationships within the public administration.

The analysis also explores how public institution employees in Montenegro perceive who has better chances of being hired in the public sector—married or unmarried women. A majority of respondents (59.9%) believe that married and unmarried women have equal opportunities, which suggests a perception of formal equality in recruitment processes. However, one-third of respondents (33.9%) believe that unmarried women have an advantage, which may point to the existence of certain social or institutional factors that favor this group. Conversely, only 6.2% of respondents think that married women are more likely to be favored.

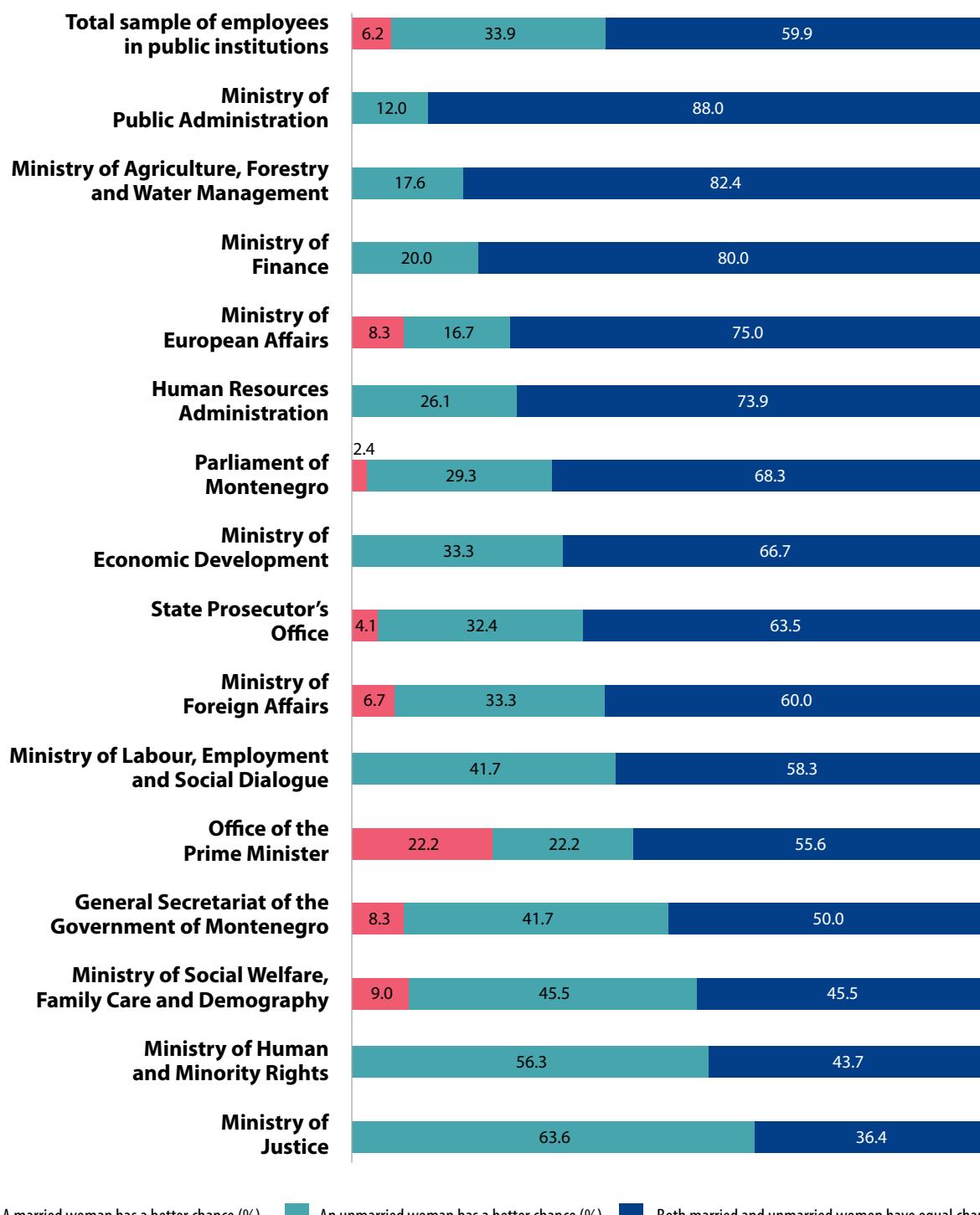
Graph 128: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of getting employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried woman? (N=545)



Perceptions of women's employment opportunities in the public administration—depending on marital status—vary across institutions. In some institutions, such as the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (56.3%), there is a stronger belief that unmarried women have better chances of being hired. **On the other hand, institutions such as the Ministry of Finance (80%) and the Ministry of Public Administration (88%) predominantly believe that marital status does not influence employment.** Particularly noteworthy is the Ministry of Labour and Social Dialogue, where a relatively high proportion of respondents (41.7%) believe that unmarried women are favored. These results point to potential inequalities in perceptions of women's employability, which vary across institutions and may be linked not only to internal policies and organizational culture, but also to deeply rooted social norms.

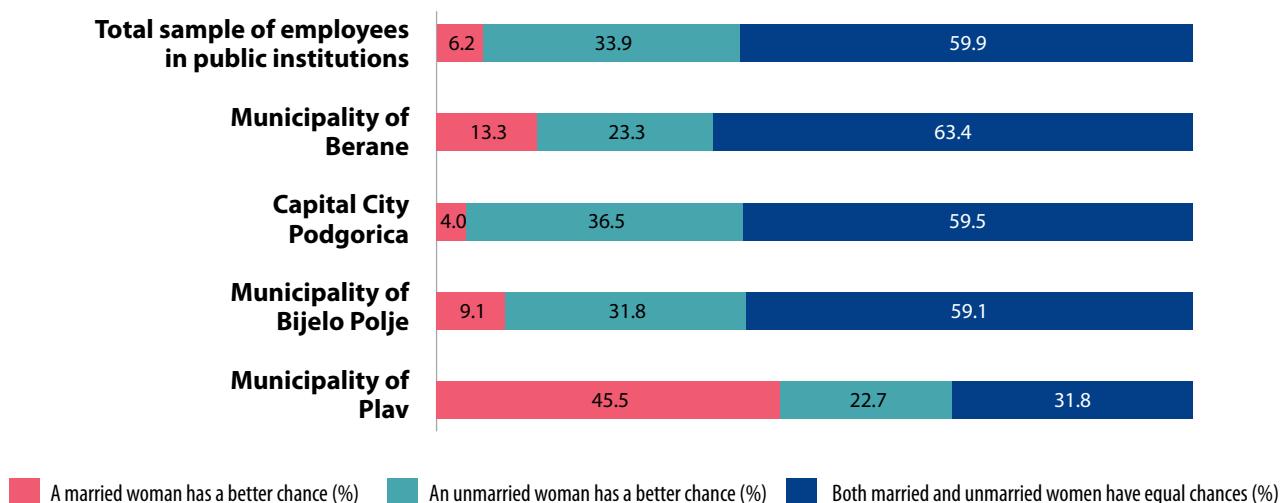
Specifically, attitudes suggesting that women are more likely to take sick leave or time off due to childcare and family responsibilities reflect dominant societal expectations that women should primarily assume caregiving roles. Such perceptions can, in turn, affect evaluations of women's professional availability and reliability, creating barriers to their employment or advancement—especially in institutions where these gender stereotypes are not actively recognized and addressed.

Graph 129: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of getting employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried woman?



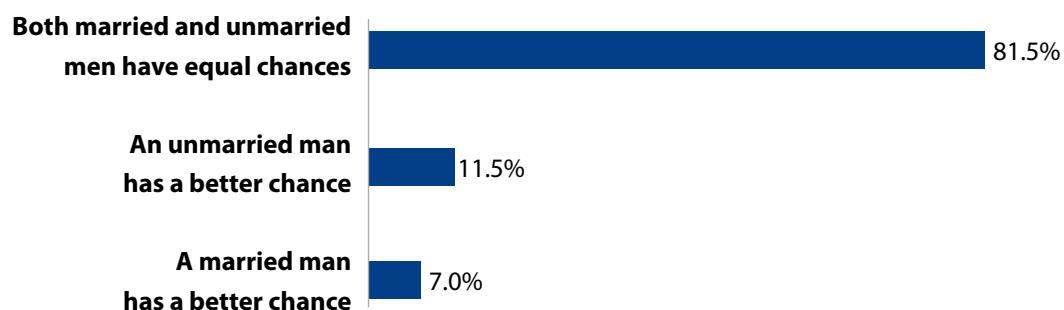
Perceptions of how women's marital status affects their employment opportunities in the public administration vary across municipalities in Montenegro. In most of the analyzed municipalities, the prevailing view is that married and unmarried women have equal chances, with the highest percentages recorded in the Municipality of Berane (63.4%) and the Capital City of Podgorica (59.5%). In contrast, the Municipality of Plav shows a markedly different pattern—45.5% of employees believe that married women have an advantage, which represents a significant deviation from the overall trend. At the same time, the highest perceptions of unmarried women having an advantage in employment were recorded in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje (31.8%) and Podgorica (36.5%).

Graph 130: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of getting employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried woman?



Perceptions regarding employment opportunities in the public administration between married and unmarried men show that the dominant majority of respondents (81.5%) believe that marital status does not affect men's chances of employment. This suggests a perception of gender neutrality in this context. However, 11.5% of respondents believe that unmarried men have better employment prospects, while only 7% think that married men are in a more favorable position. These findings indicate a significantly lower perception of discrimination based on marital status among men compared to women, where previous results revealed greater disparities in perceptions. The absence of a clear advantage for either group may suggest that marital status is not considered a relevant factor in the employment of men in Montenegro's public administration.

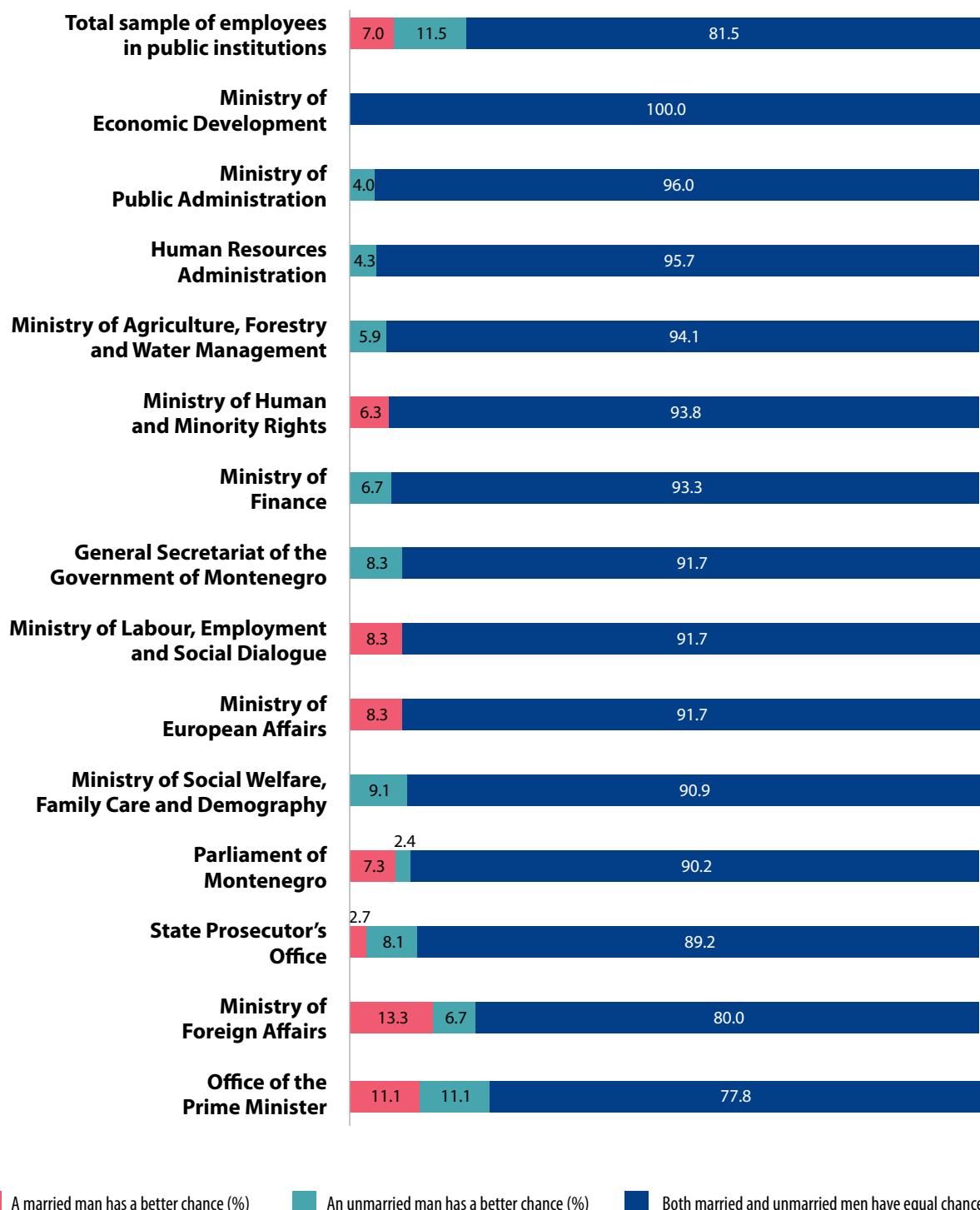
Graph 131: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of being employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried man? (N=545)



Data show that in nearly all institutions, the majority of respondents believe that married and unmarried men have equal chances of employment in the public administration. This perception is especially strong in the Ministry of Economic Development (100%), the Ministry of Public Administration (96%), and the Human Resources Administration (95.7%). This view likely reflects a reality in which a man's marital status is not seen as a barrier to employment, as men are not typically expected—within the prevailing social context—to bear significant family or domestic responsibilities that could impact their professional engagement.

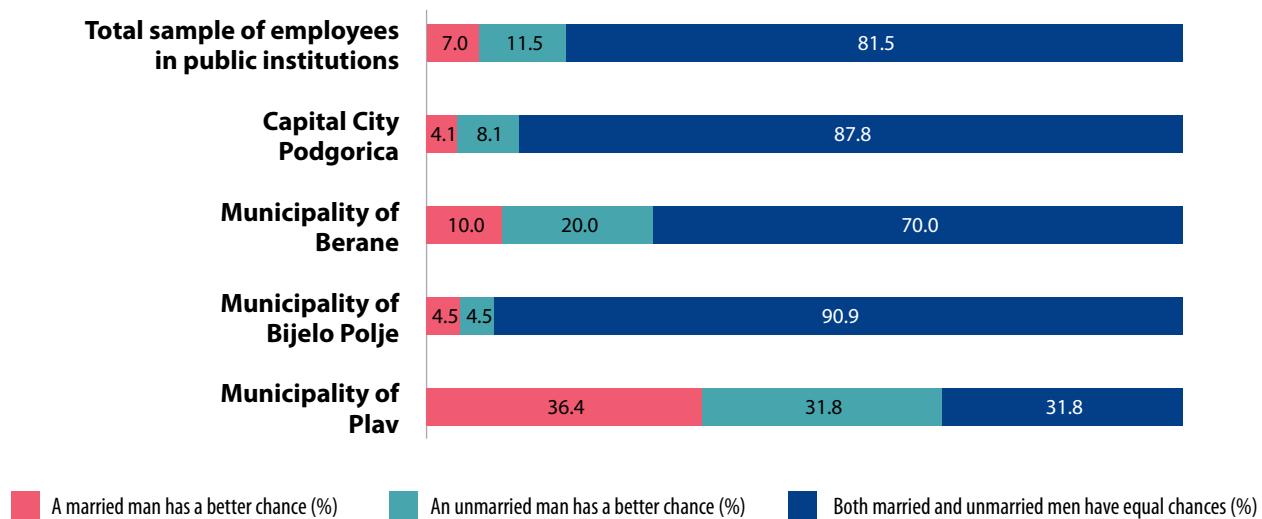
In contrast, perceptions regarding women differ. As previously analyzed, women—particularly those who are married or mothers—are more often associated with family obligations that may affect their availability and commitment to work. In this context, unmarried women are often perceived as "more desirable" candidates, pointing to the presence of gender-based expectations that influence equality in hiring practices.

Graph 132: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of being employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried man?



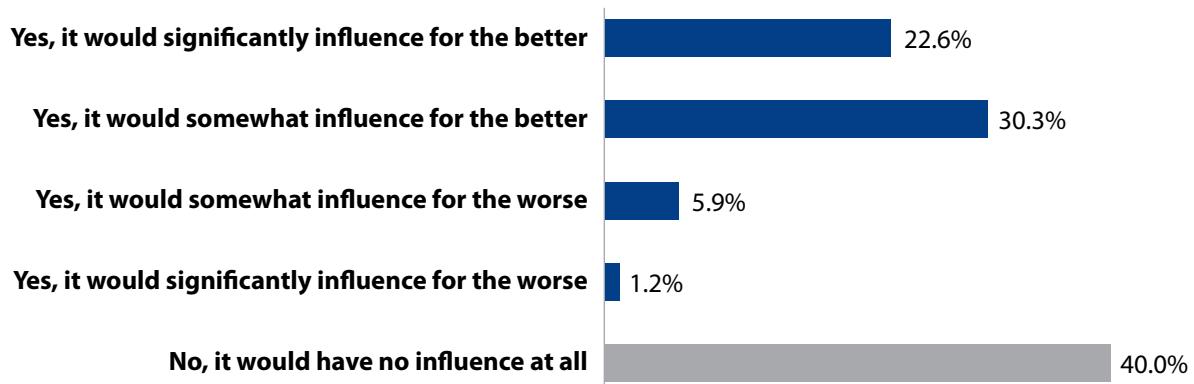
Data indicates that the majority of employees in the municipalities of the Capital City Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, and Berane believe that married and unmarried men have equal opportunities for employment in the public administration, with this belief being particularly strong in Bijelo Polje (90.9%) and Podgorica (87.8%). However, the situation in the Municipality of Plav is significantly different—only 31.8% of respondents believe in equal opportunities, while 36.4% think that married men have an advantage, and an additional 31.8% believe that unmarried men are favored. In Berane, 20% of employees believe that unmarried men have better chances of being hired.

Graph 133: Employees in public institutions: In your opinion, who has a better chance of being employed in public administration – a married or an unmarried man?



Perceptions of the impact of having a greater number of women in decision-making positions within public administration institutions in Montenegro vary across institutions. More than half of respondents (52.9%) believe that such a change would have a positive effect, with 22.6% expecting a significant impact, and 30.3% anticipating partial improvement.

Graph 134: Employees in institutions: In your opinion, would an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in your institution influence the existing institutional culture and policies? (N=545)

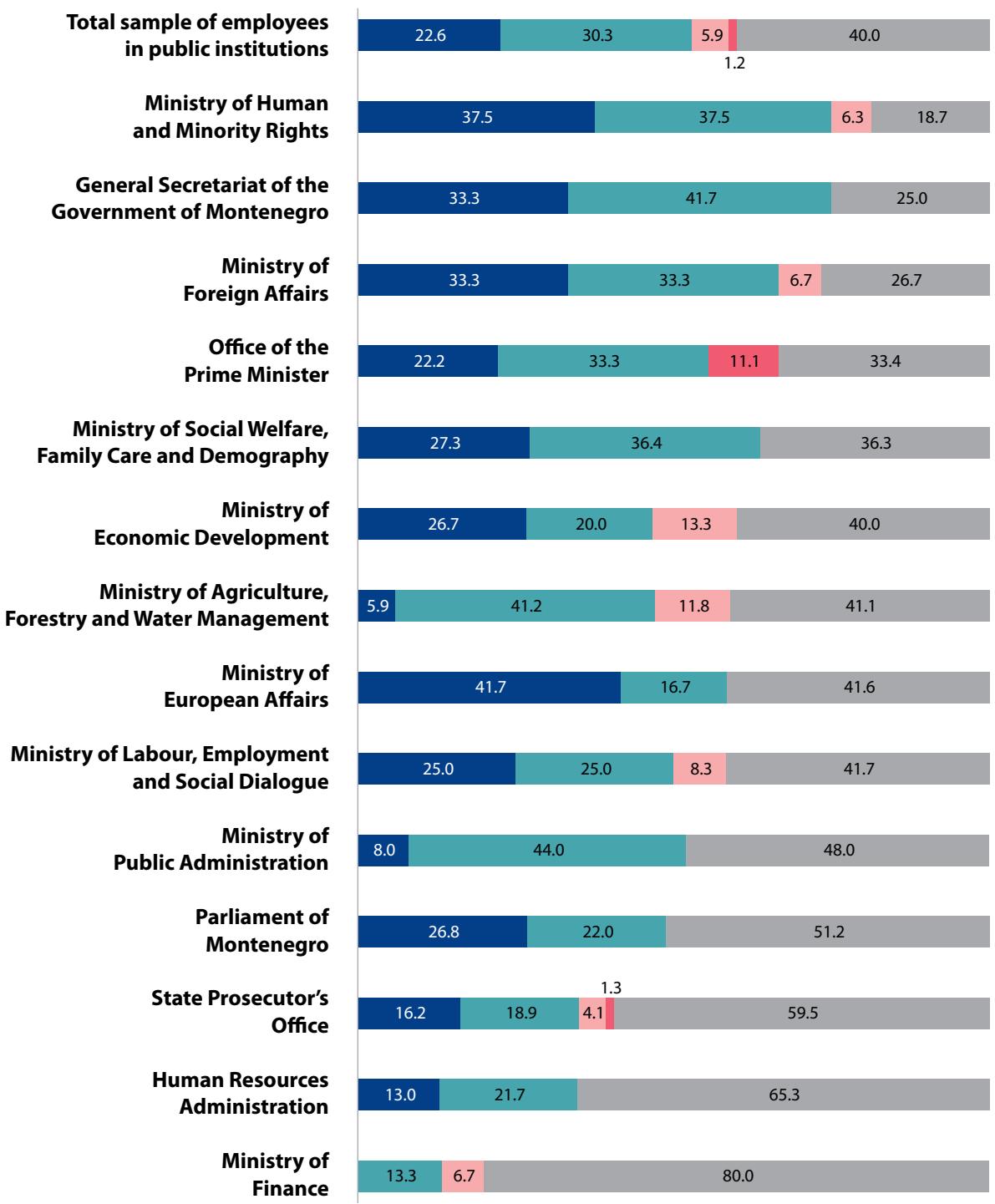


The highest percentage of those who believe that increasing the number of women would significantly improve institutional culture was observed in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (37.5%), the General Secretariat of the Government (33.3%), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (33.3%), and the Parliament of Montenegro (26.8%). On the other hand, the Ministry of Finance (80%), the Human Resources Administration (65.3%), and the Ministry of Public Administration (48%) had the highest number of respondents who believe that increasing the number of women would have no impact. A negative perception of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions was observed in the Prime Minister's Cabinet (11.1%), and the Ministry of Economic Development (13.3%), where some respondents believe that such a change would partially or significantly worsen the situation.

These findings indicate that support for greater representation of women in decision-making roles exists across most institutions, but that certain sectors—particularly finance and human resources—do not perceive this shift as a factor that would meaningfully affect institutional functioning. At the same time, the presence of a small share of respondents who believe that increasing the number of women would have negative consequences

highlights the need for further education on the benefits of gender equality in leadership structures. It is important to note that in the samples from the Ministry of Finance and the Human Resources Administration, women were more represented than men, which should be taken into account when interpreting these results.

Graph 135: Employees in institutions: In your opinion, would an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in your institution influence the existing institutional culture and policies?



█ Yes, it would significantly influence for the better (%)
█ Yes, it would somewhat influence for the better (%)
█ Yes, it would somewhat influence for the worse (%)
█ Yes, it would significantly influence for the worse (%)
█ No, it would have no influence at all (%)

Perceptions of the impact of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in public institutions also vary across municipalities in Montenegro. In the Municipality of Plav, the majority of respondents (50%) believe that this trend would partially improve institutional culture, while 27.3% believe the impact would be significant. However, 18.2% of respondents think that increasing the number of women would have a partially negative effect—the highest such percentage among the municipalities analyzed.

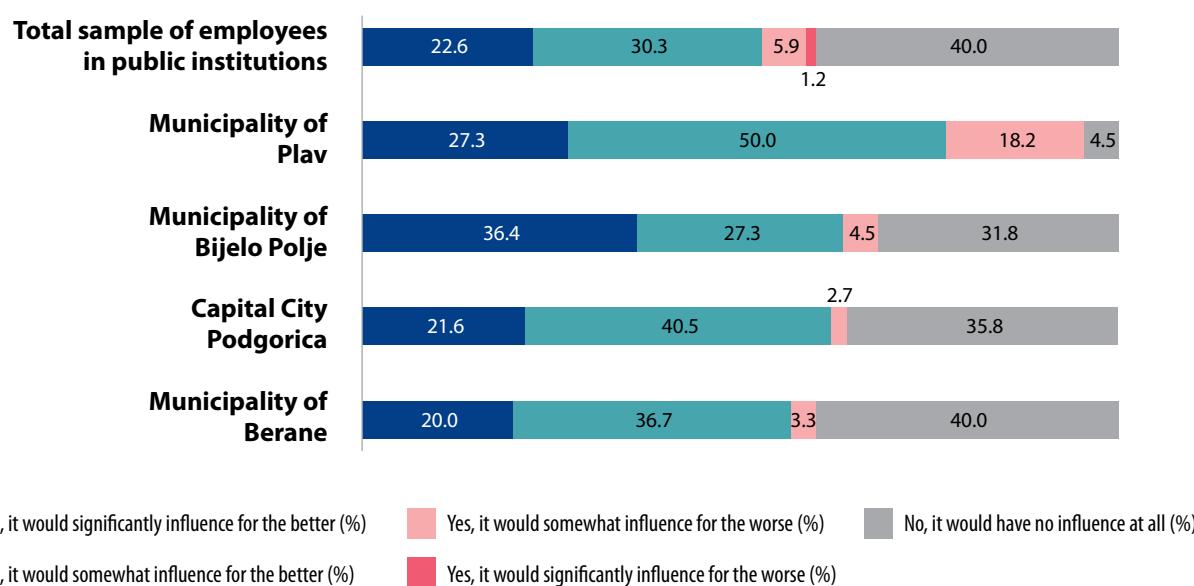
In the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, support for positive change is even more pronounced—36.4% of respondents believe that increasing the number of women would significantly improve institutional culture, while 27.3% believe the effect would be partially positive. On the other hand, less than one-third (31.8%) believe there would be no impact, while the share of those who anticipate negative consequences is relatively low (4.5%).

In the Capital City of Podgorica, 40.5% of respondents believe that increasing the number of women would partially improve institutional culture, while 21.6% expect a significant improvement. About one-third (35.2%) believe there would be no effect, and 2.7% anticipate a partially negative outcome.

In the Municipality of Berane, one-third of respondents (36.7%) foresee a partial improvement in institutional culture, while 20% believe the impact would be significant. However, as many as 40% of respondents believe that increasing the number of women would have no effect—consistent with the overall average across public institutions. A small share (3.3%) believes the effect would be partially negative.

These findings indicate that most respondents across municipalities recognize the positive effects of greater female participation in decision-making, with Bijelo Polje standing out for the strongest belief in significant improvement. At the same time, the Municipality of Plav shows more skepticism, with a higher number of respondents who believe the impact could be negative.

Graph 136: Employees in institutions: In your opinion, would an increase in the number of women in decision-making positions in your institution influence the existing institutional culture and policies?

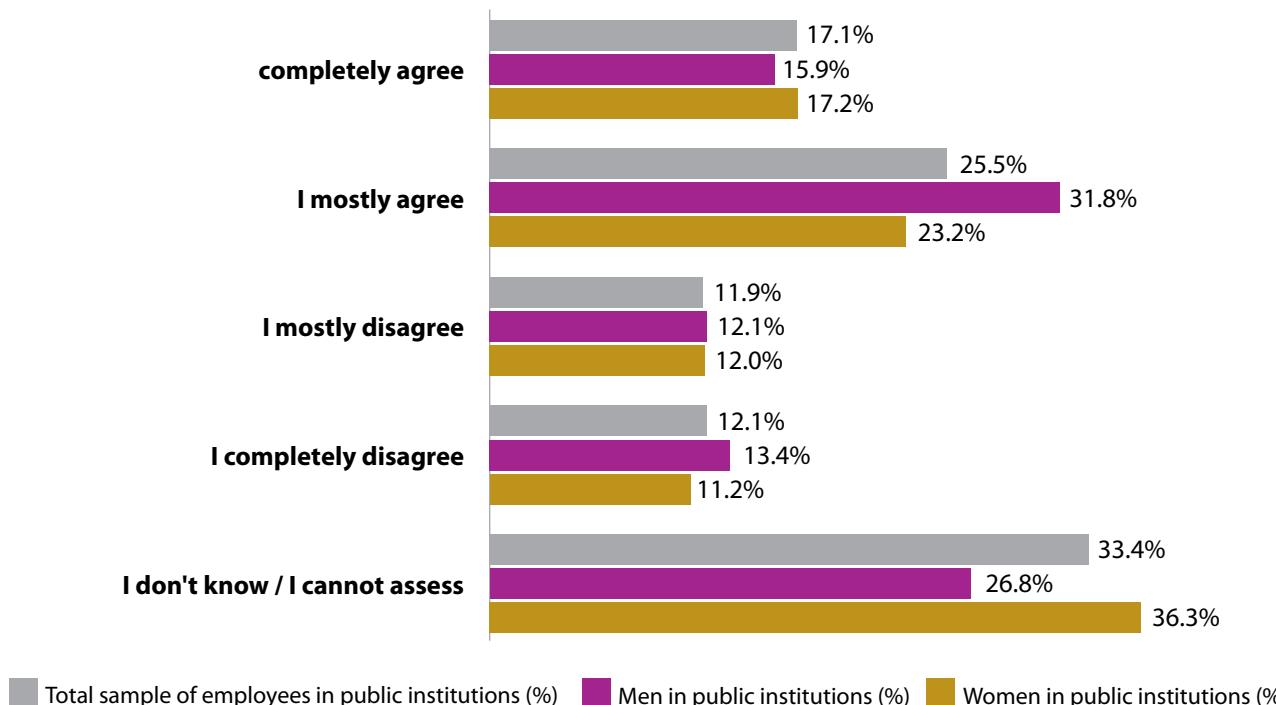


The analysis of perceptions of gender equality and institutional policies in public institutions reveals that there is considerable room for improvement in the areas of women's participation in decision-making, the integration of a gender perspective, and the implementation of anti-discrimination measures.

One-third of respondents (33.4%) working in public institutions stated that they are unsure whether clear procedures exist for incorporating gender equality principles into the development of laws, strategies, and plans. This indicates a significant level of unawareness and lack of knowledge. A total of 42.6% of employees agree (either fully or mostly) that such procedures exist, while 24% disagree. Interestingly, men are more likely to express agreement (47.7%) compared to women (40.4%), while women are more likely to report that they are unable to assess (36.3% versus 26.8%).

Graph 137: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are clear procedures and guidelines on how to incorporate gender equality principles in the development of laws, strategies, and plans. (N=545)

In my institution, there are clear procedures and guidelines on how to incorporate gender equality principles in the development of laws, strategies, and plans.

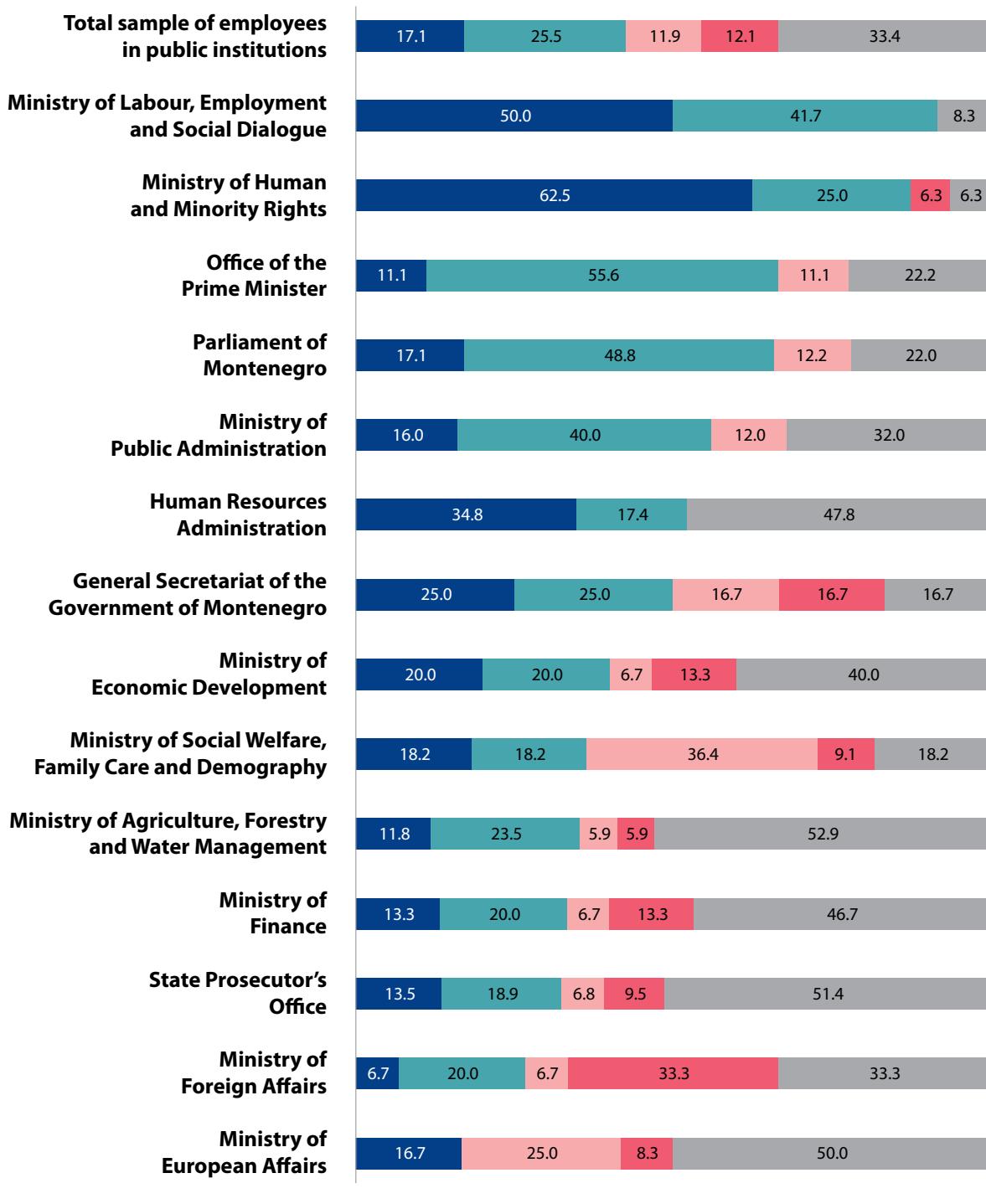


The data reveal significant differences between institutions regarding the existence of clear procedures for incorporating gender equality into the development of laws and policies. The highest levels of agreement were recorded in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (87.5%) and the Ministry of Labour (91.7%). Conversely, very low levels of agreement were observed in the Ministry of European Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (16.7% and 26.7%, respectively), with a high proportion of employees in these institutions indicating they are unable to assess (50% and 33.3%).

In some institutions, such as the Human Resources Administration and the State Prosecutor's Office, uncertainty and lack of awareness dominate, with more than 50% of respondents stating they "don't know or cannot assess." These results point to the need for further education and the standardization of procedures across institutions.

Graph 138: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are clear procedures and guidelines on how to incorporate gender equality principles in the development of laws, strategies, and plans

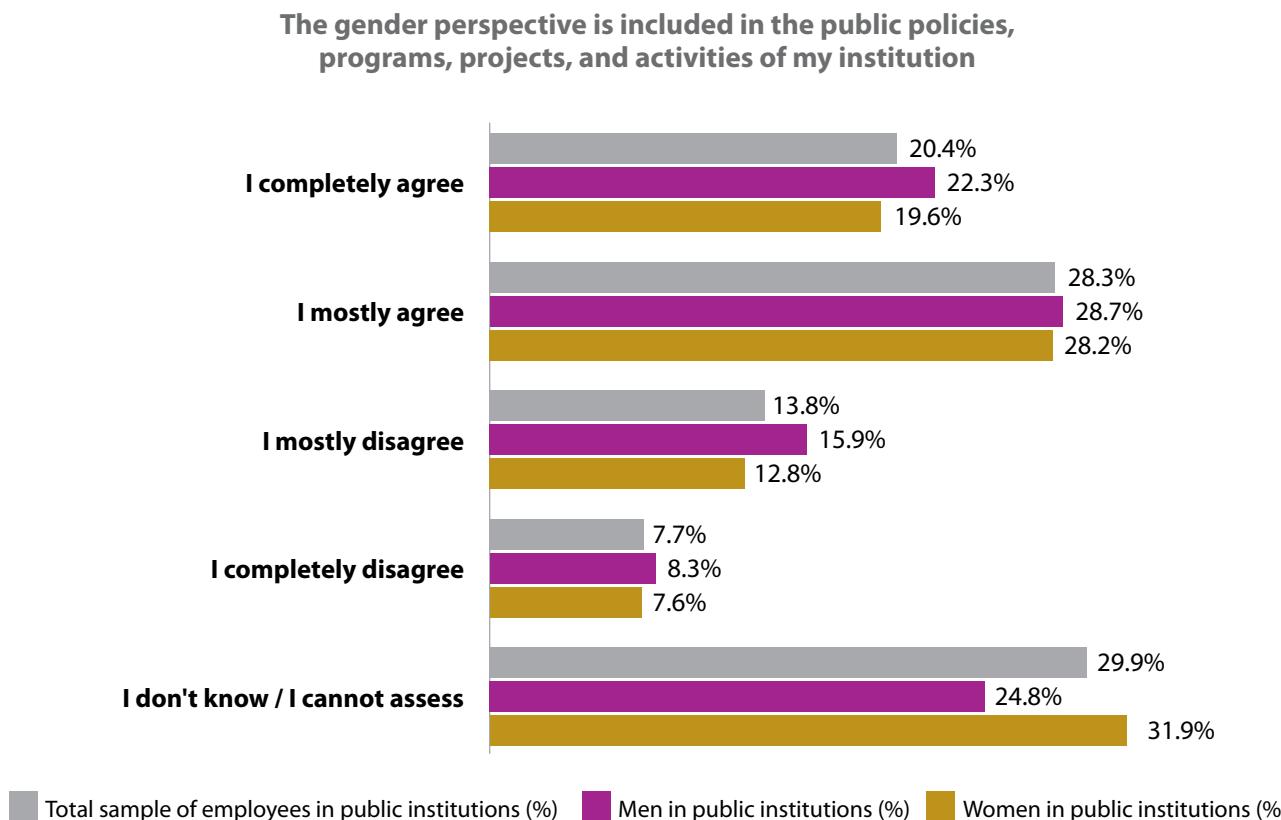
In my institution, there are clear procedures and guidelines on how to incorporate gender equality principles in the development of laws, strategies, and plans.



█ I completely agree (%)
 █ I mostly disagree (%)
 █ NI don't know / I cannot assess (%)
█ I mostly agree (%)
 █ I completely disagree (%)

The data show that the majority of respondents (48.7%) believe that a gender perspective is included in the public policies, programs, and activities of their institution (28.3% mostly agree, 20.4% fully agree). However, nearly one-third (29.9%) are unable to assess, indicating a certain level of unawareness or lack of information. There are no significant gender-based differences in the perception of gender mainstreaming. However, men are somewhat more likely to express full agreement (22.3% compared to 19.6%), while women are more likely to state that they do not know or cannot assess (31.9% compared to 24.8%). This may indicate a need for improved internal visibility and more concrete examples of how gender equality is being integrated into the work of institutions.

Graph 139: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: The gender perspective is included in the public policies, programs, projects, and activities of my institution. (N=545)



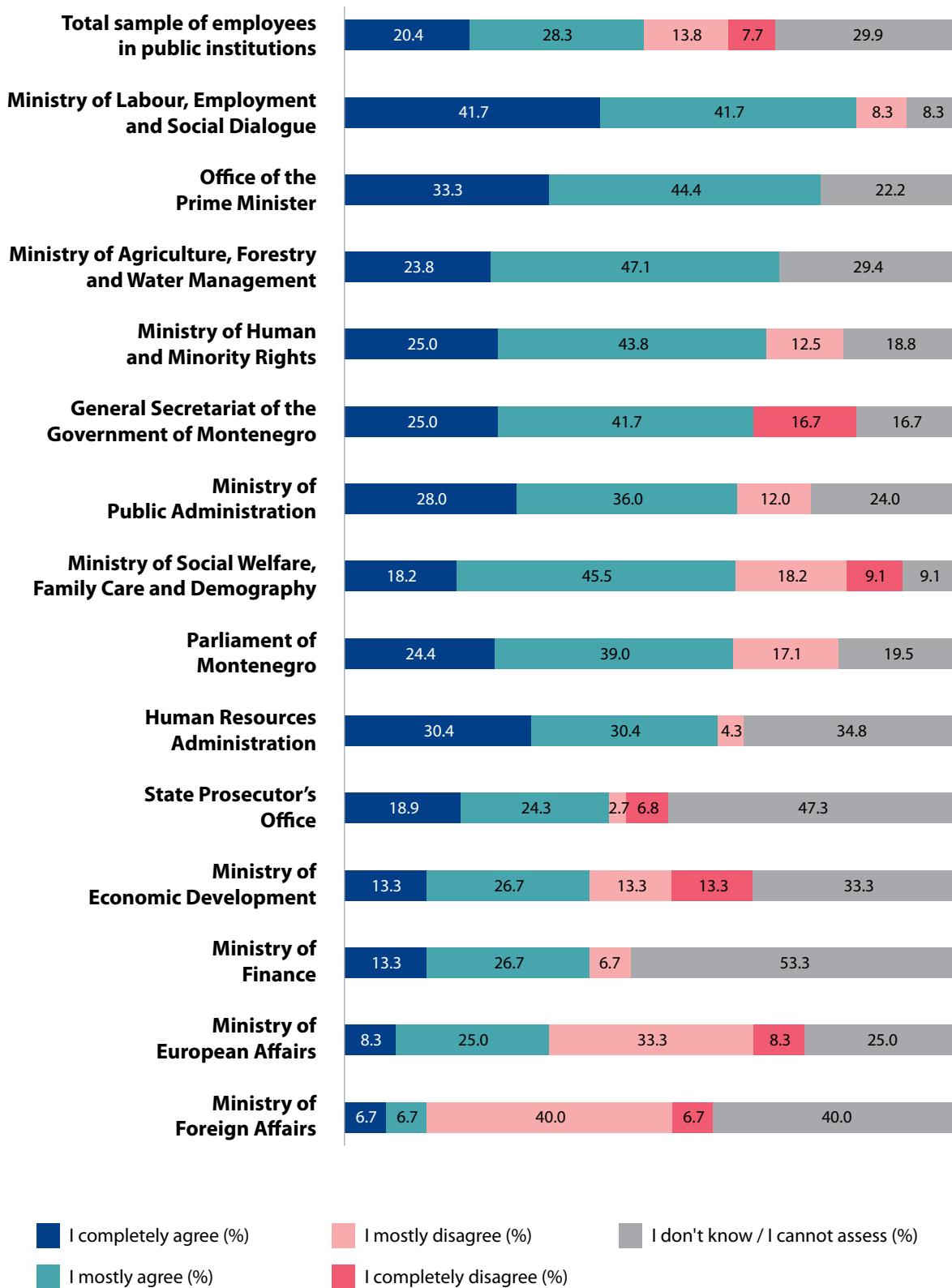
The analysis shows that perceptions of the inclusion of a gender perspective in institutional work vary significantly across sectors. The highest levels of agreement were recorded in the Ministry of Labour and the Prime Minister's Cabinet, where over 80% of respondents believe that a gender perspective is included.

In contrast, the lowest levels of agreement—and the highest proportions of disagreement or uncertainty—were observed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of European Affairs, where more than 65% of employees believe that a gender perspective is not included or are unable to assess.

The State Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Finance also show particularly high percentages of employees who are uncertain about the presence of a gender perspective (47.3% and 53.3%, respectively). These findings highlight the need for targeted education and strengthened institutional mechanisms for gender equality, particularly in sectors where lack of information or skepticism is most prevalent.

Graph 140: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: The gender perspective is included in the public policies, programs, projects, and activities of my institution.

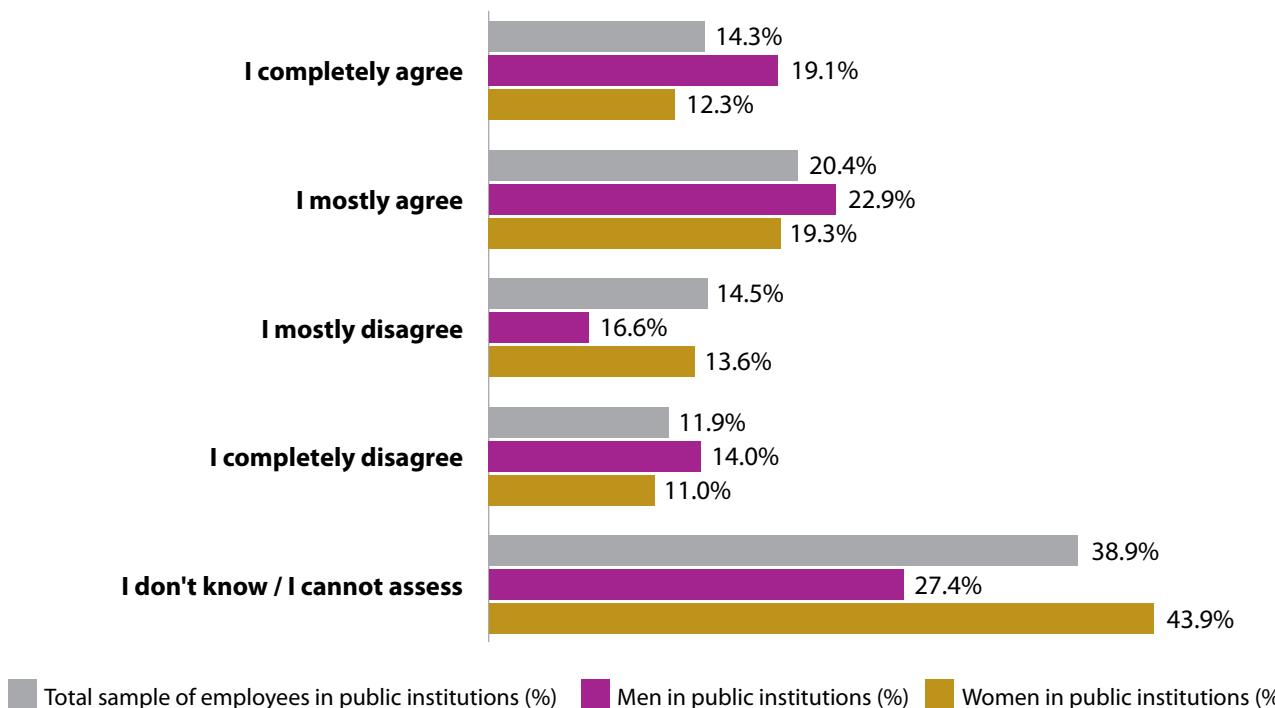
The gender perspective is included in the public policies, programs, projects, and activities of my institution



One-third of employees in public institutions (34.7%) believe that clear guidelines for including a gender perspective exist within their institution, while nearly 39% state that they do not know or cannot assess—indicating a lack of awareness about procedures or weak internal communication. Men are somewhat more likely to express agreement (42%) and less likely to be uncertain (27.4%) compared to women, of whom as many as 43.9% report being unable to assess.

Graph 141: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are clear instructions on the steps that need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in every policy, project, program, and activity. (N=545)

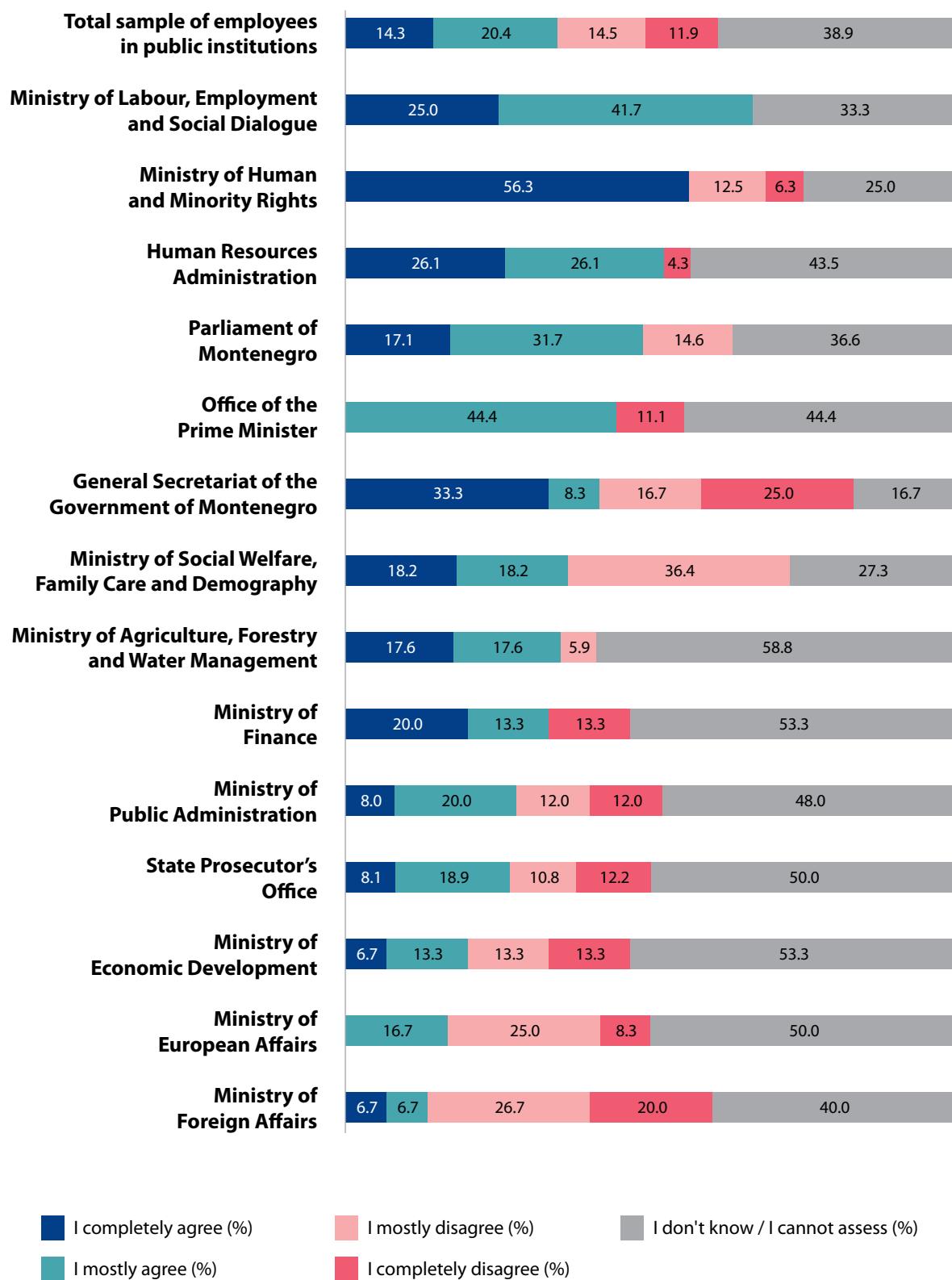
In my institution, there are clear instructions on the steps that need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in every policy, project, program, and activity



The highest share of those who believe that such guidelines exist is recorded in the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (56.3% “fully agree”) and the Ministry of Labour (25.0% “fully agree” and 41.7% “mostly agree”). On the other hand, in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the State Prosecutor’s Office, half or more of the employees report that they do not know or cannot assess whether such guidelines exist.

Graph 142: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are clear instructions on the steps that need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in every policy, project, program, and activity.

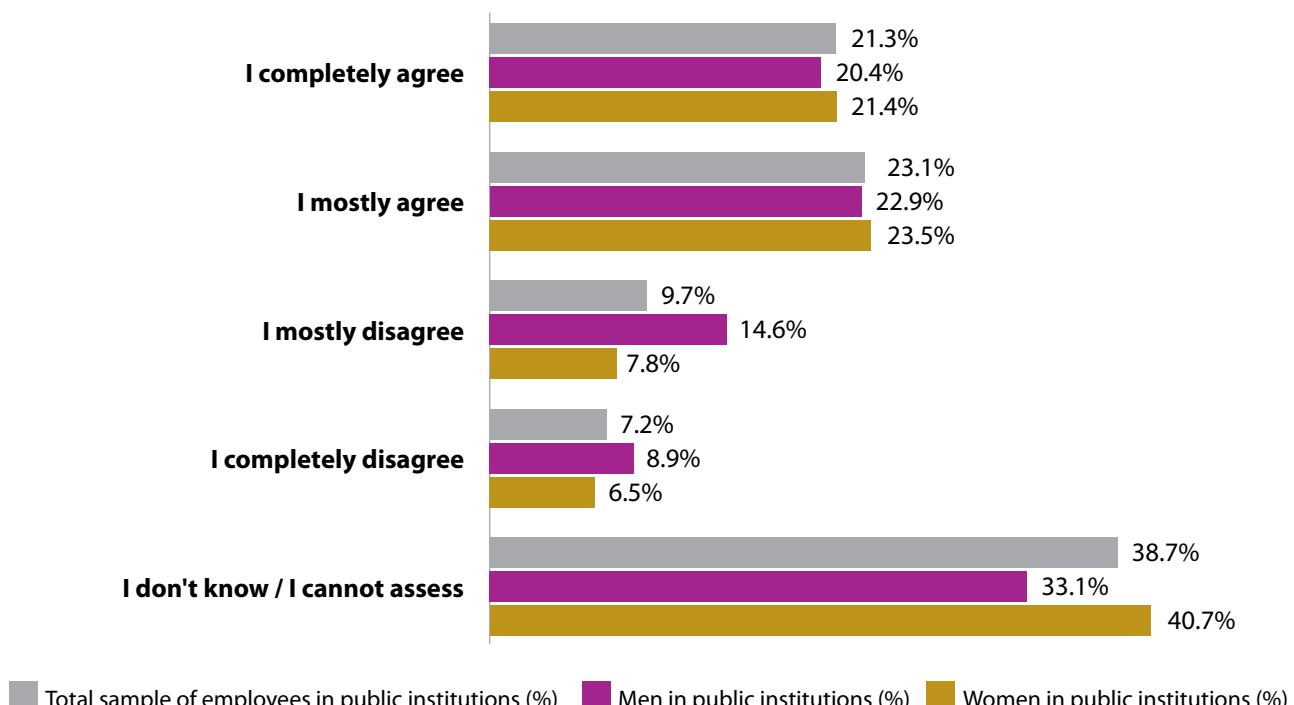
U In my institution, there are clear instructions on the steps that need to be taken to ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in every policy, project, program, and activity



The majority of employees in public institutions believe that their institutions contribute to fulfilling the obligations undertaken through international conventions such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the Beijing Platform for Action. However, a significant proportion—38.7%—are unsure or unable to assess this contribution. A gender-based analysis shows that men are somewhat more skeptical, with a higher percentage expressing general or complete disagreement (23.5%) compared to women (14.3%), while women were more often undecided in their assessment (40.7% compared to 33.1% of men). These results highlight the need for additional information and increased awareness of the role of institutions in meeting international commitments.

Graph 143: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution, through its work, contributes to fulfilling obligations undertaken by international conventions – CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Platform for Action, and similar. (N=545)

My institution, through its work, contributes to fulfilling obligations undertaken by international conventions – CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Platform for Action, and similar



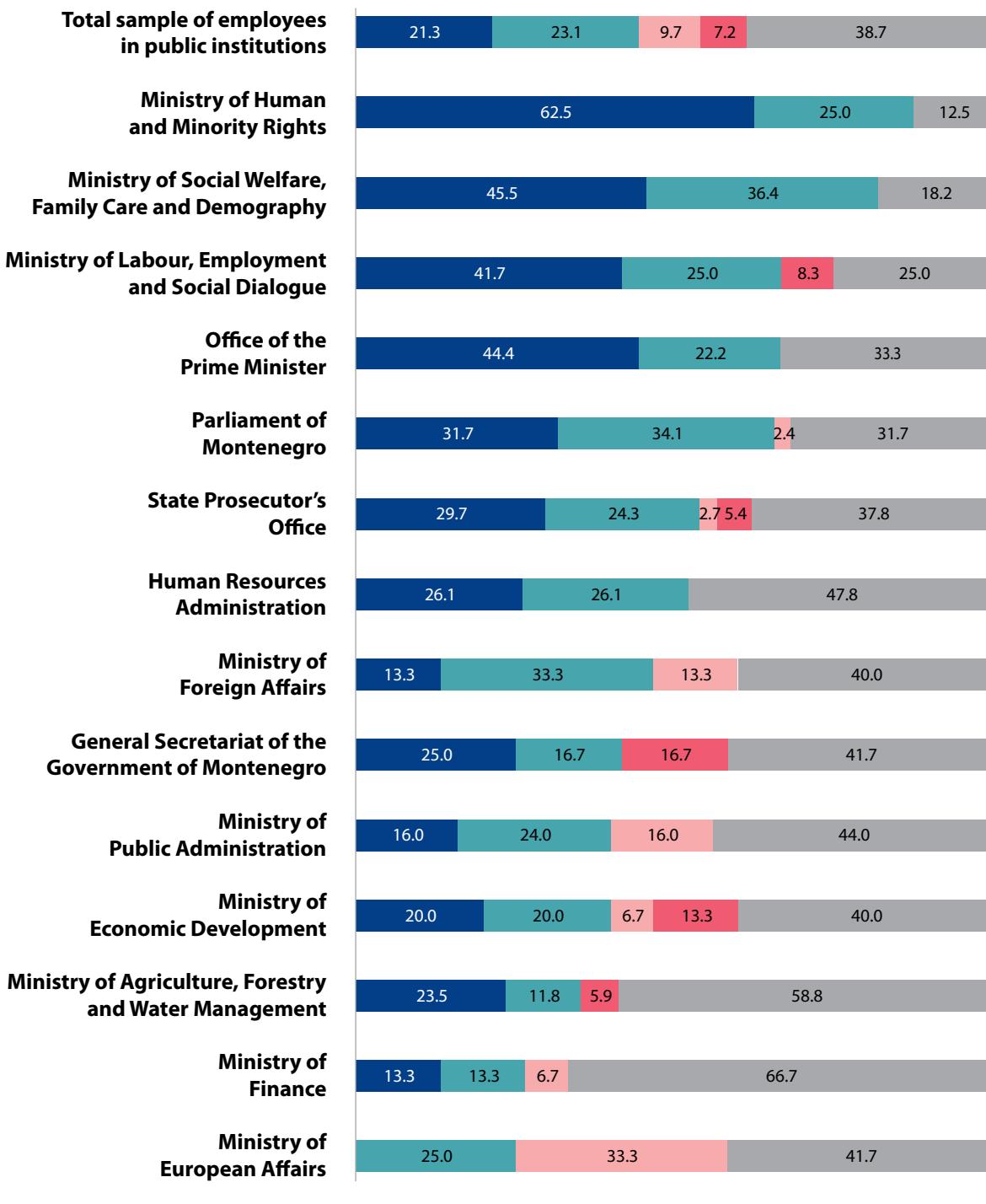
While 44.4% of respondents in the overall sample agree with the statement, the highest levels of agreement are recorded in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights (87.5%) and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography (81.9%). A high level of agreement is also present in the Office of the Prime Minister (66.6%) and the Parliament (65.8%).

In contrast, institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of European Affairs, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management show low levels of agreement and a high share of employees who do not know or cannot assess the situation (ranging from 58.8% to 66.7%).

These findings suggest that institutions whose mandates are directly related to human rights and social policy are more familiar with international obligations and their own contributions to fulfilling them, while in other institutions there is a need to strengthen knowledge and awareness of this issue.

Graph 144: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution, through its work, contributes to fulfilling obligations undertaken by international conventions – CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Platform for Action, and similar.

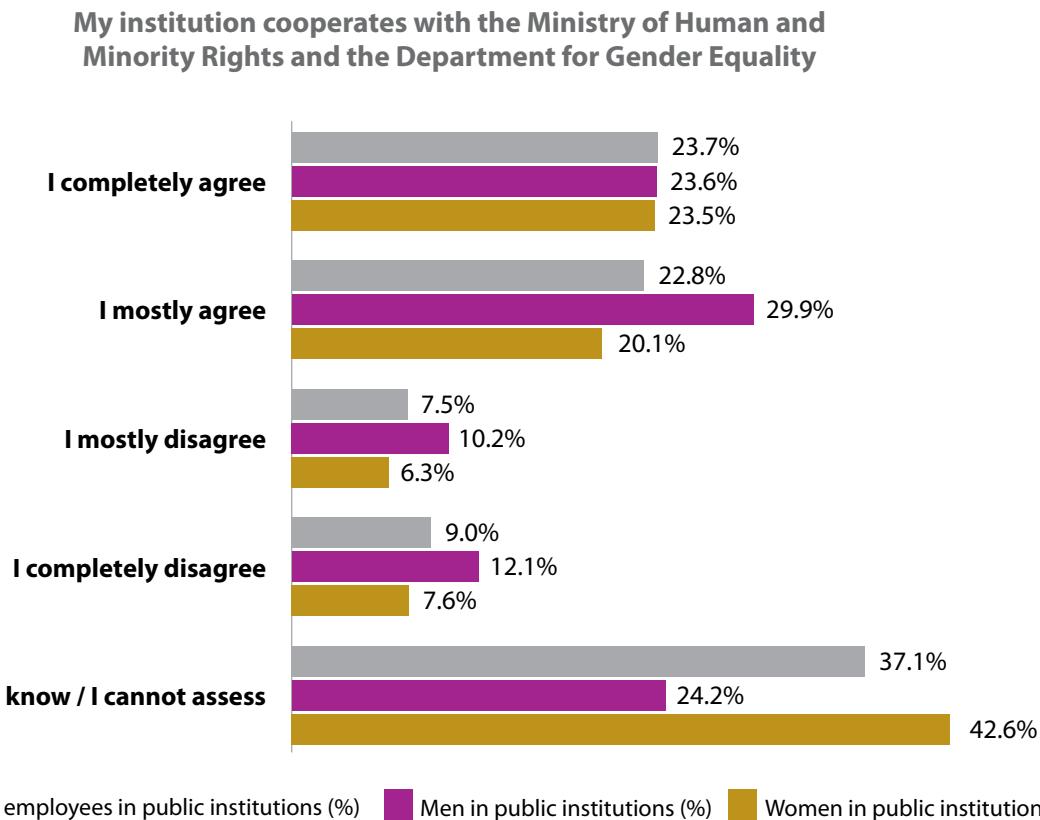
My institution, through its work, contributes to fulfilling obligations undertaken by international conventions – CEDAW, Istanbul Convention, Beijing Platform for Action, and similar



█ I completely agree (%)
 █ I mostly disagree (%)
 █ I don't know / I cannot assess (%)
█ I mostly agree (%)
 █ I completely disagree (%)

Almost half of the respondents (46.5%) from public institutions believe that their institution cooperates with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Gender Equality Department, while 37.1% are unsure or unable to assess this cooperation. Women more frequently express uncertainty (42.6%) compared to men (24.2%), while men slightly more often report that such cooperation exists (a total of 53.5% compared to 43.6% among women).

Graph 145: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution cooperates with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Department for Gender Equality. (N=545)

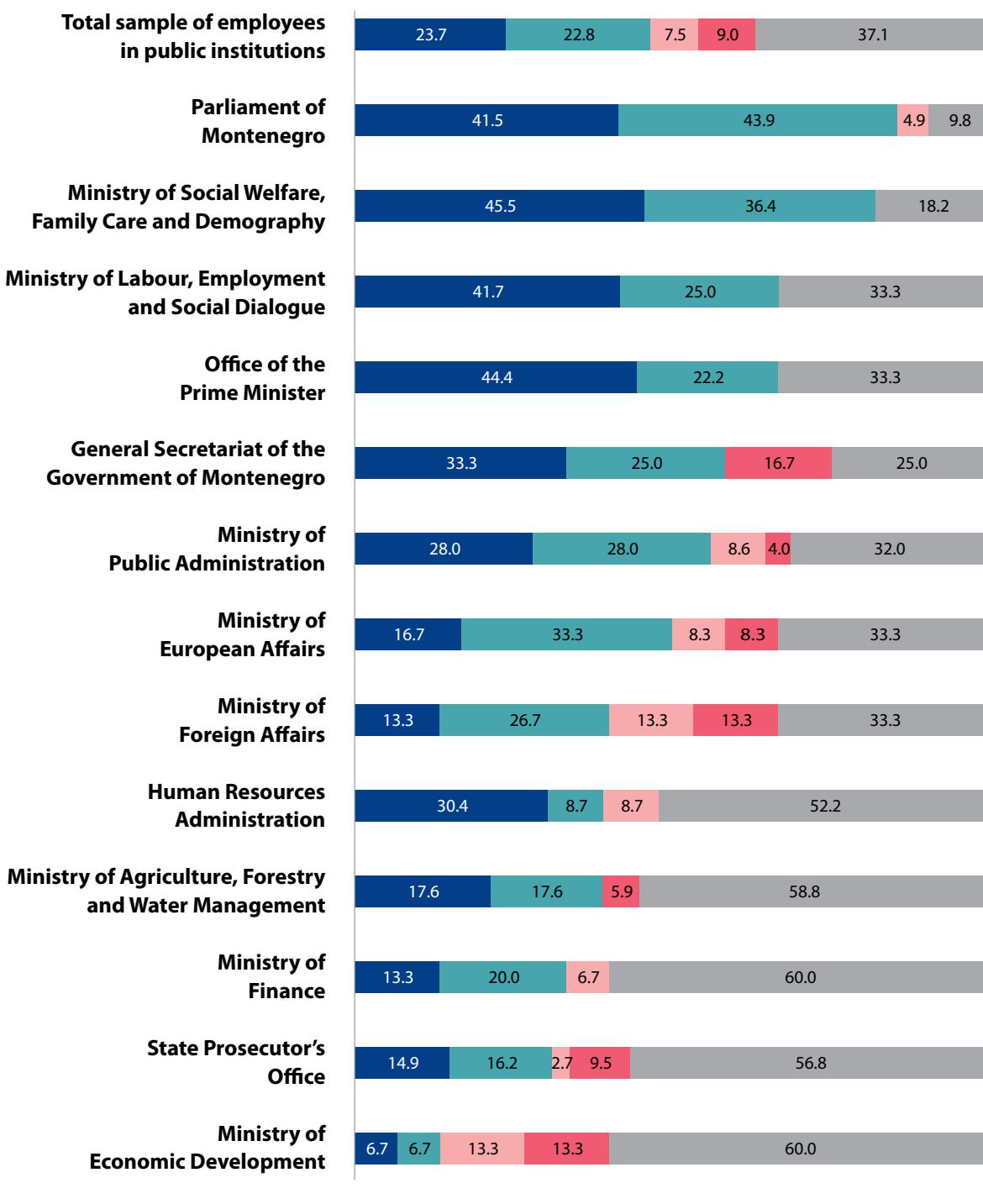


The data show that the perception of cooperation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Gender Equality Department varies significantly across institutions. The highest levels of perceived cooperation are reported in the Parliament (85.4%) and the relevant ministries for social affairs and labour (81.9% and 66.7%, respectively).

On the other hand, a large percentage of employees in institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the State Prosecutor's Office state that they do not know or cannot assess whether such cooperation exists (ranging from 56.8% to 60%), indicating low visibility of this cooperation within those institutions.

Graph 146: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution cooperates with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Department for Gender Equality.

My institution cooperates with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Department for Gender Equality

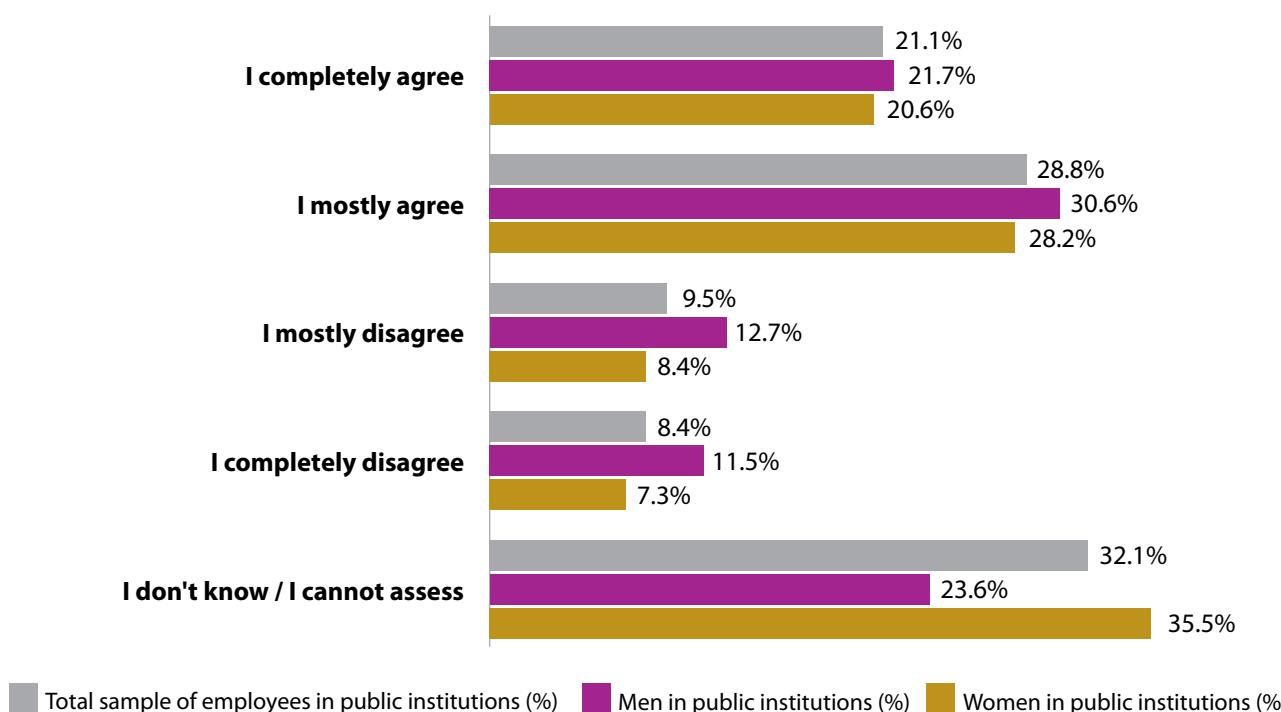


█ I completely agree (%) █ I mostly disagree (%) █ I don't know / I cannot assess (%)
█ I mostly agree (%) █ I completely disagree (%)

Half of the employees in public institutions (49.9%) believe that their institution closely cooperates with the civil sector working on gender equality, while one-third (32.1%) are unsure or unable to assess this cooperation. Women are more likely to report being unable to assess (35.5%) compared to men (23.6%). These findings suggest that, although cooperation with the civil sector exists to some extent, it is not sufficiently visible to all employees, highlighting the need to improve communication and transparency regarding this aspect of institutional engagement.

Graph 147: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution closely cooperates with the civil sector dealing with issues of gender equality. (N=545)

My institution closely cooperates with the civil sector dealing with issues of gender equality

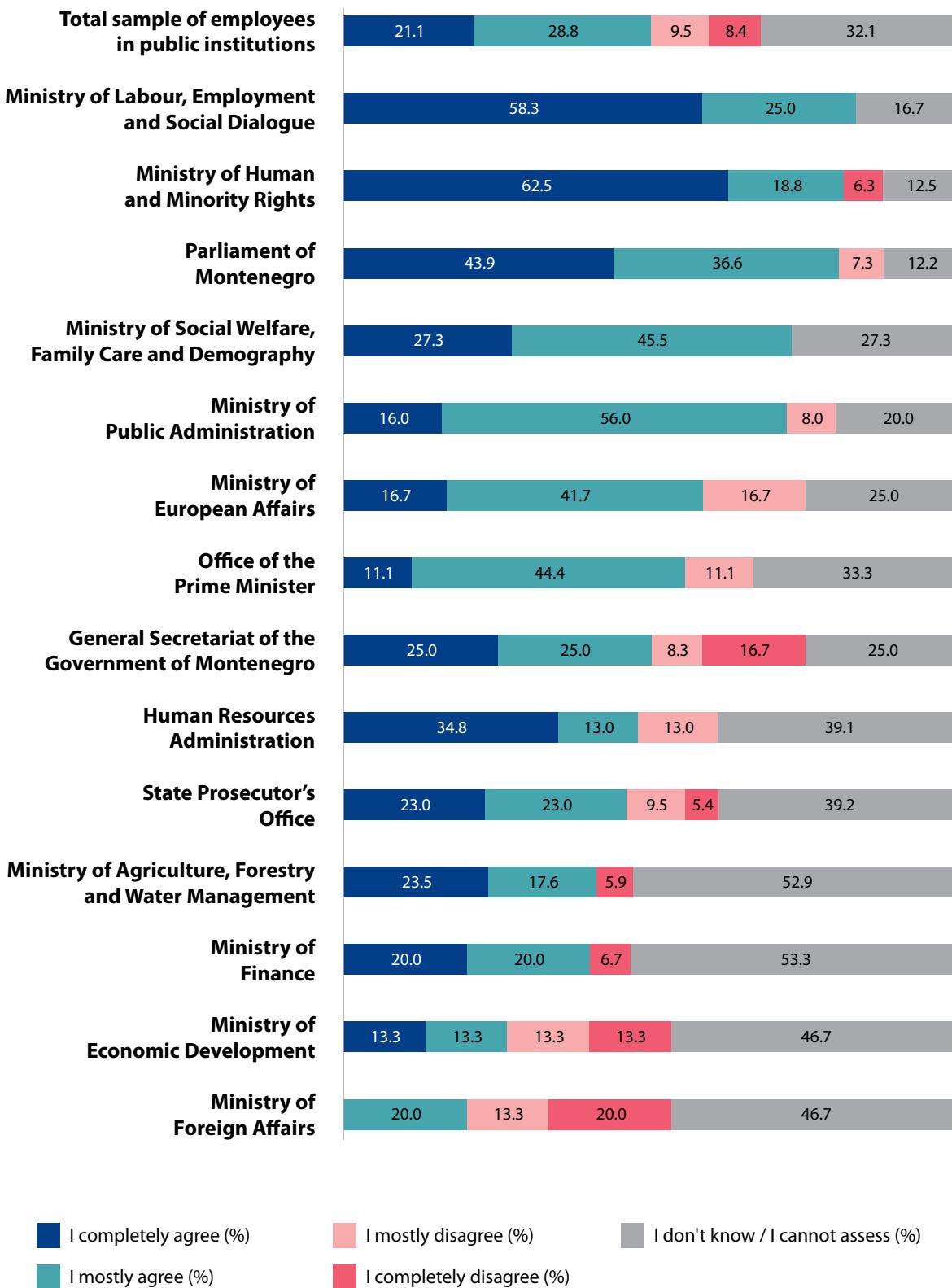


The data indicates that the perception of close cooperation with the civil sector in the area of gender equality varies across institutions. The highest levels of agreement are recorded in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights (81.3%) and the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (83.3%). The Parliament and the Ministry of Social Welfare also report high levels of agreement (over 70%).

In contrast, institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Economic Development show low levels of agreement and a high percentage of respondents who are unable to assess this cooperation (around 47%–53%), indicating low visibility and a lack of awareness regarding collaboration with the civil sector.

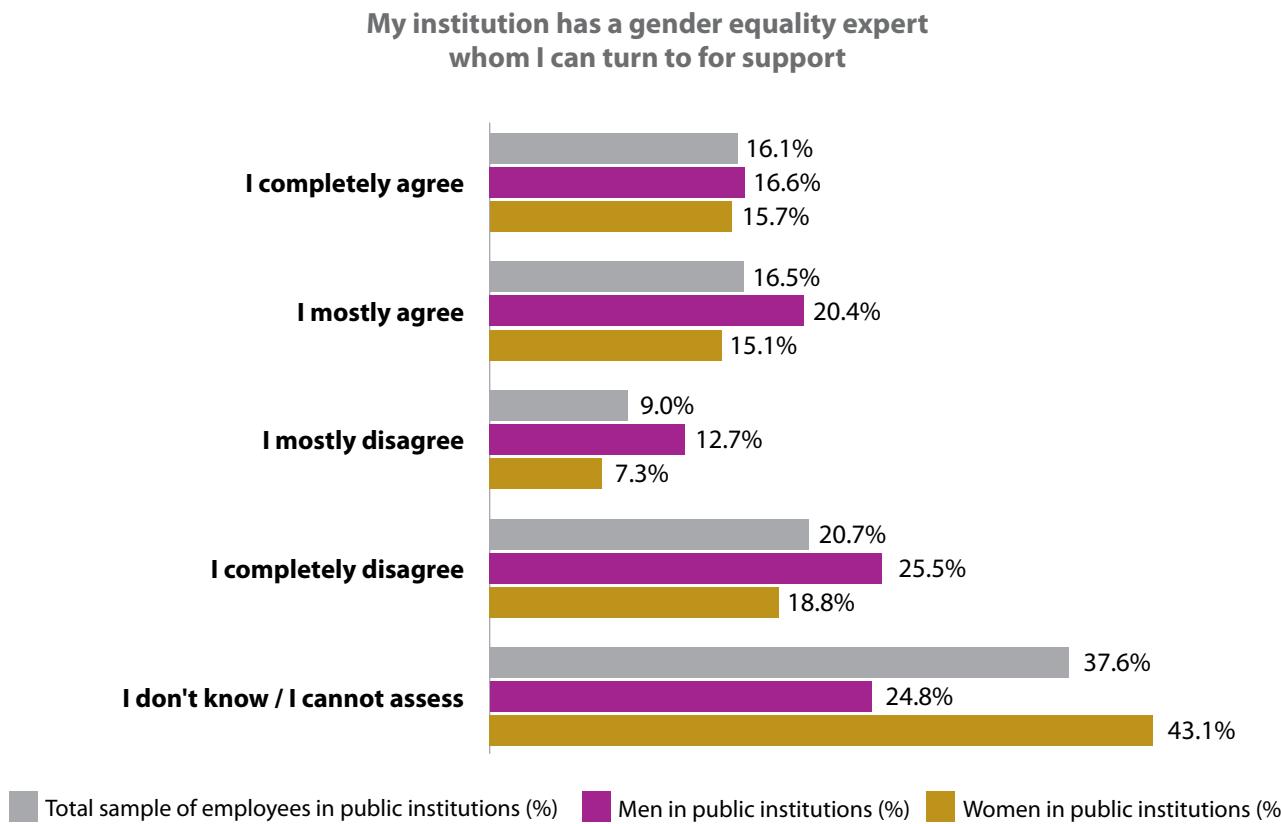
Graph 148: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution closely cooperates with the civil sector dealing with issues of gender equality.

My institution closely cooperates with the civil sector dealing with issues of gender equality



One-third of respondents (32.6%) believe that their institution has a gender equality expert to whom they can turn for support. However, as many as 29.7% were unable to assess whether such experts exist, while another 29.7% believe that no such experts are present.

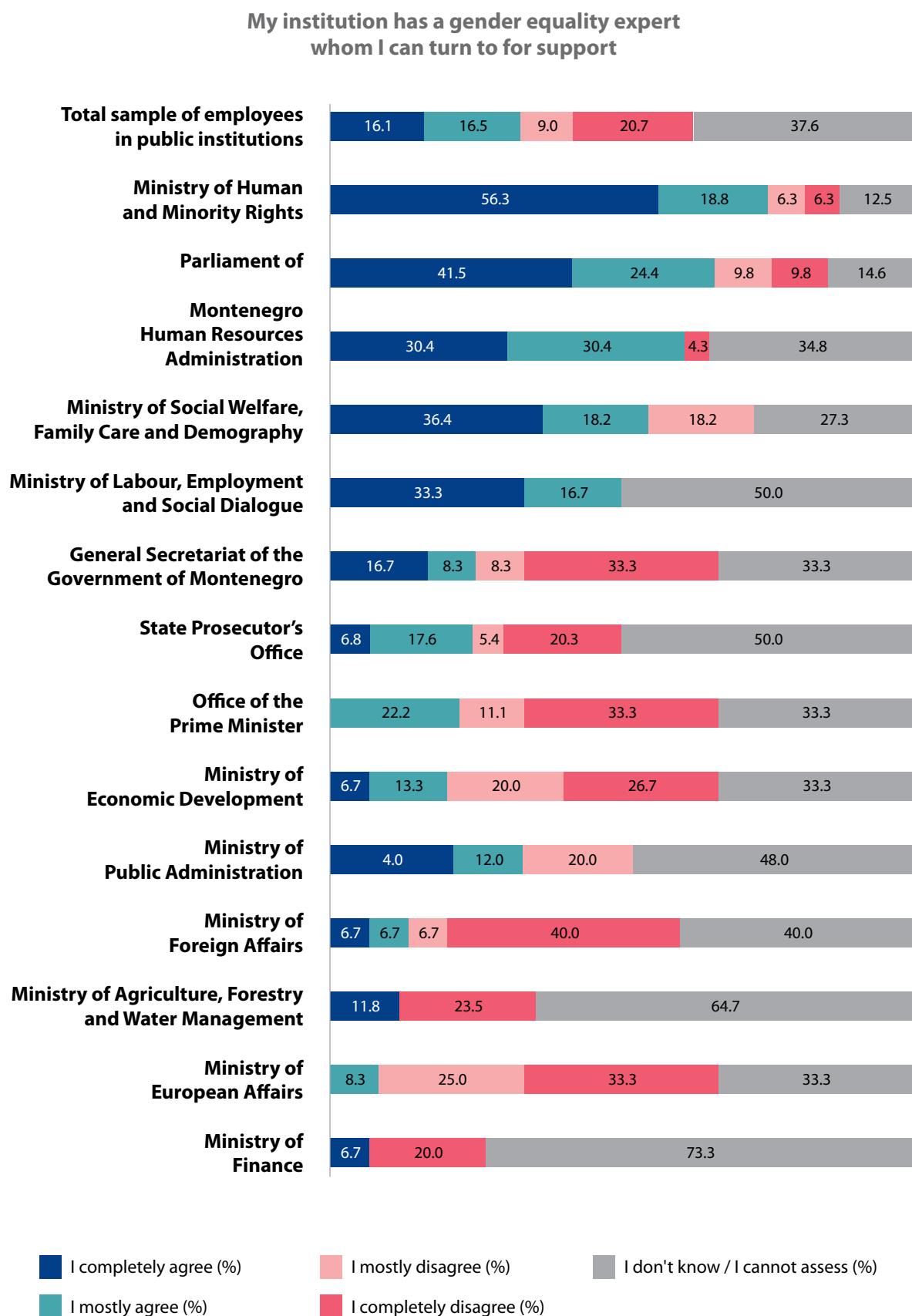
Graph 149: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution has a gender equality expert whom I can turn to for support. (N=545)



The highest levels of recognition of expert support are reported in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights (75.1%) and the Parliament (65.9%). In contrast, most other institutions show a prevailing lack of information or the belief that such support does not exist, particularly in the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of European Affairs, where the level of recognized expertise is notably low.

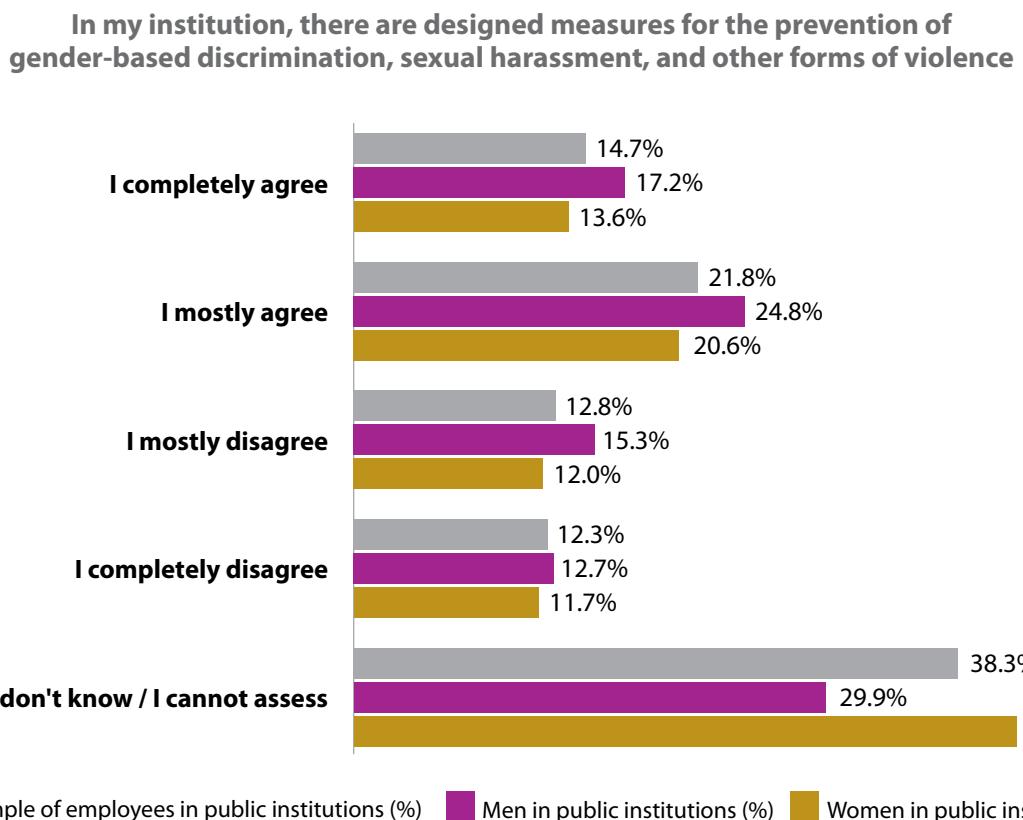
These findings highlight the need for clearer identification and greater visibility of gender equality focal points within the public administration.

Graph 150: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution has a gender equality expert whom I can turn to for support. (N=545)



Only one-third of respondents (36.5%) believe that their institutions have established measures to prevent gender-based discrimination, while one-quarter state that such measures do not exist.

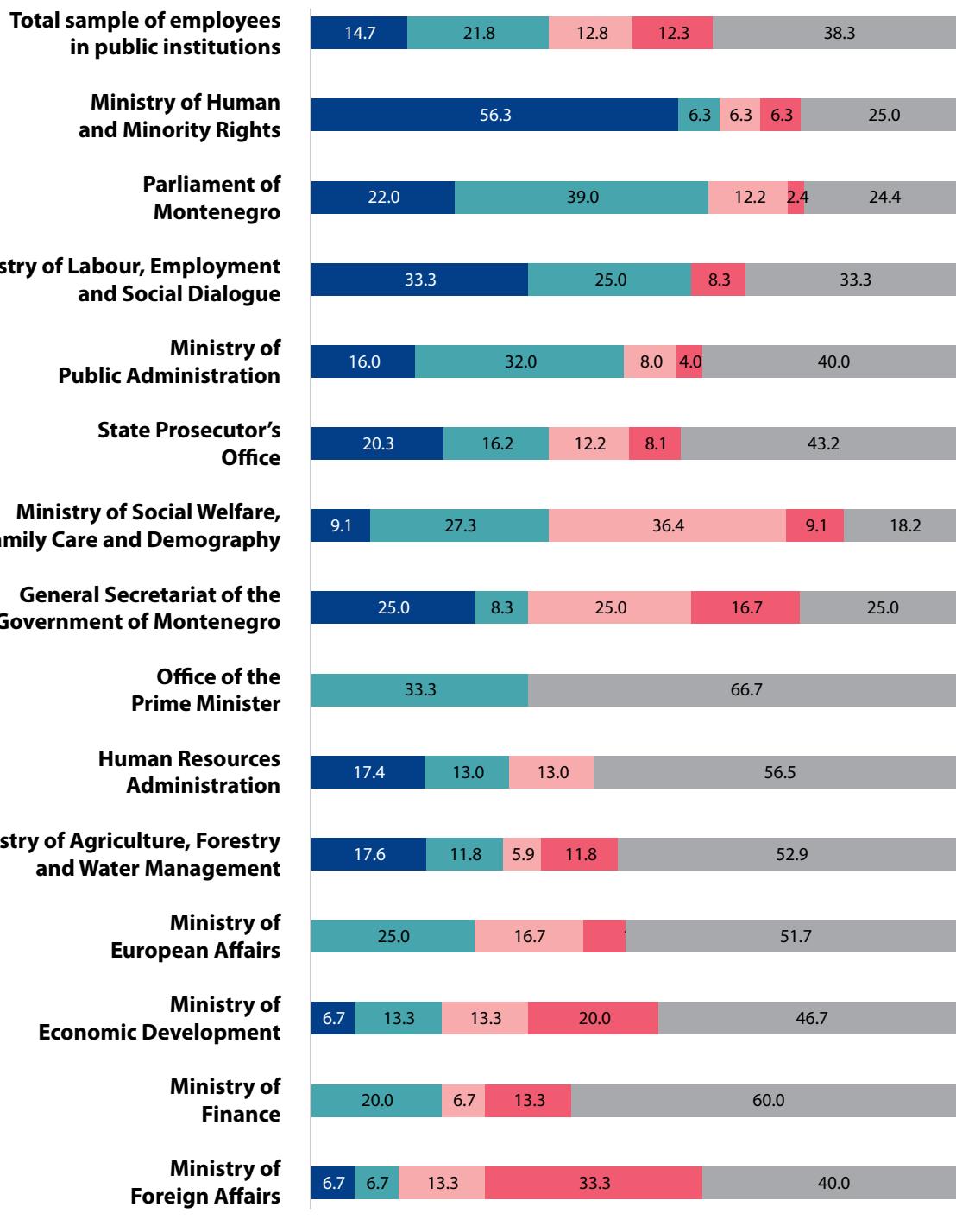
Graph 151: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are designed measures for the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence. (N=545)



In most institutions, the majority of respondents report not knowing whether measures for the prevention of gender-based discrimination are in place, indicating a lack of knowledge and awareness among employees in this area.

Graph 152: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: In my institution, there are designed measures for the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence

In my institution, there are designed measures for the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence

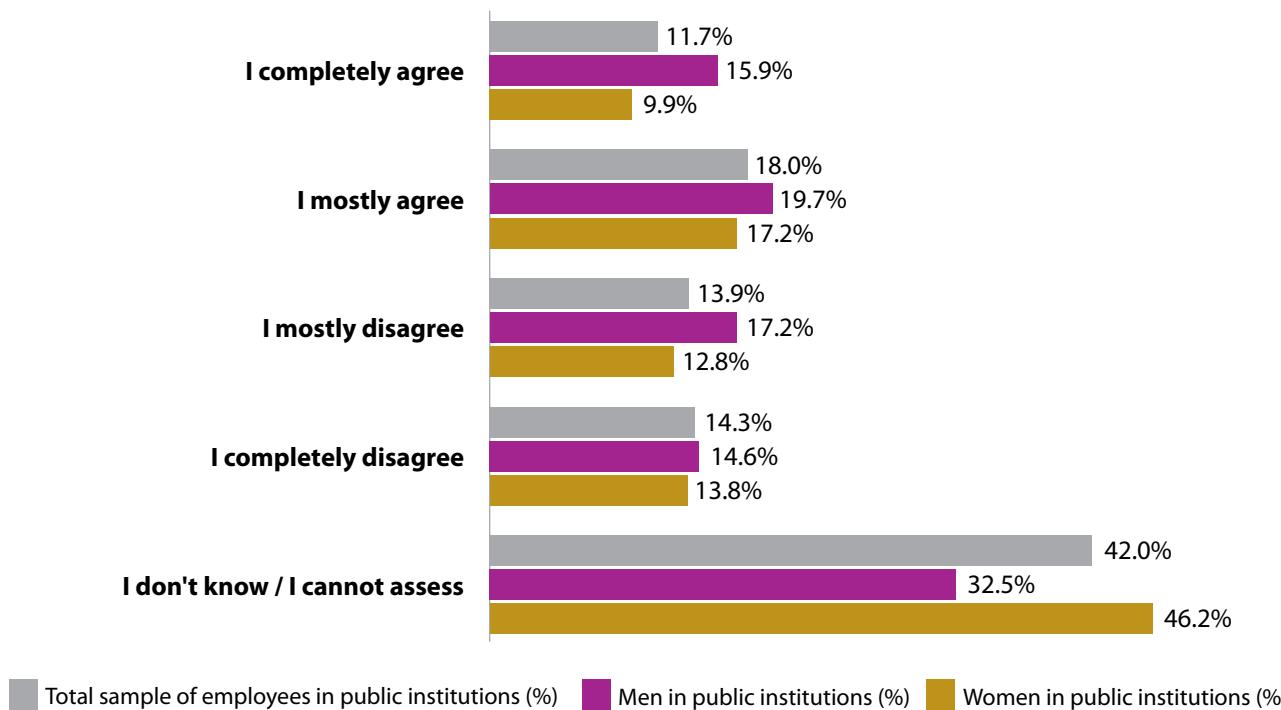


█ I completely agree (%) █ I mostly disagree (%) █ I don't know / I cannot assess (%)
█ I mostly agree (%) █ I completely disagree (%)

The majority of employees in public institutions (42%) report that they do not know whether their institution allocates sufficient financial resources for work in the field of gender equality, indicating a lack of transparency and insufficient awareness regarding budgetary commitments in this area.

Graph 153: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution ensures sufficient financial resources annually for work in the field of gender equality. (N=545)

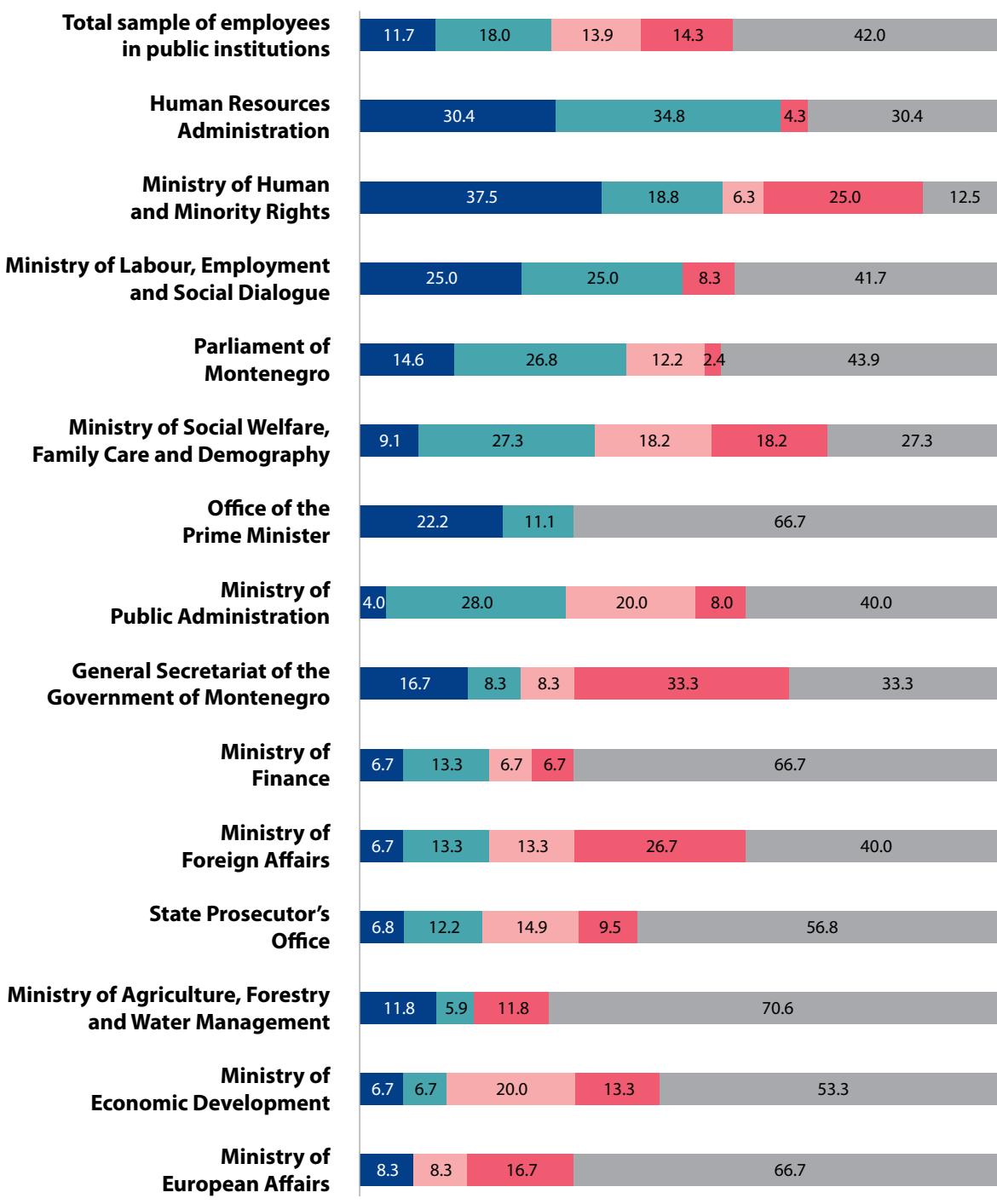
My institution ensures sufficient financial resources annually for work in the field of gender equality



The majority of institutions report that they do not know whether funds are allocated annually for work in the field of gender equality.

Graph 154: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution ensures sufficient financial resources annually for work in the field of gender equality.

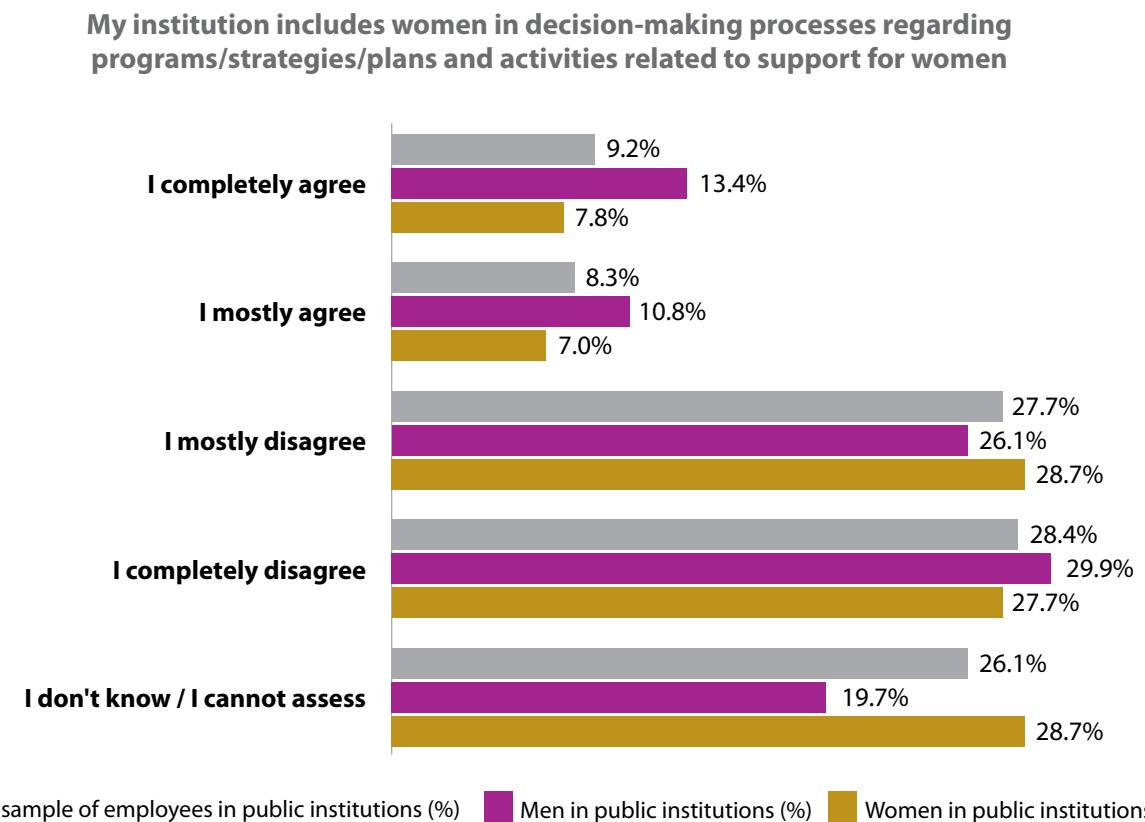
My institution ensures sufficient financial resources annually for work in the field of gender equality



█ I completely agree (%)
 █ I mostly disagree (%)
 █ I don't know / I cannot assess (%)
█ I mostly agree (%)
 █ I completely disagree (%)

Just over half of the respondents (56.1%) believe that their institutions include women in strategies, plans, and support activities aimed at women—of whom 28.4% fully agree and 27.7% mostly agree with this statement. However, 17.8% of respondents disagree, while one-quarter (26.1%) were unable to provide an assessment, indicating potential shortcomings in the visibility and implementation of these policies.

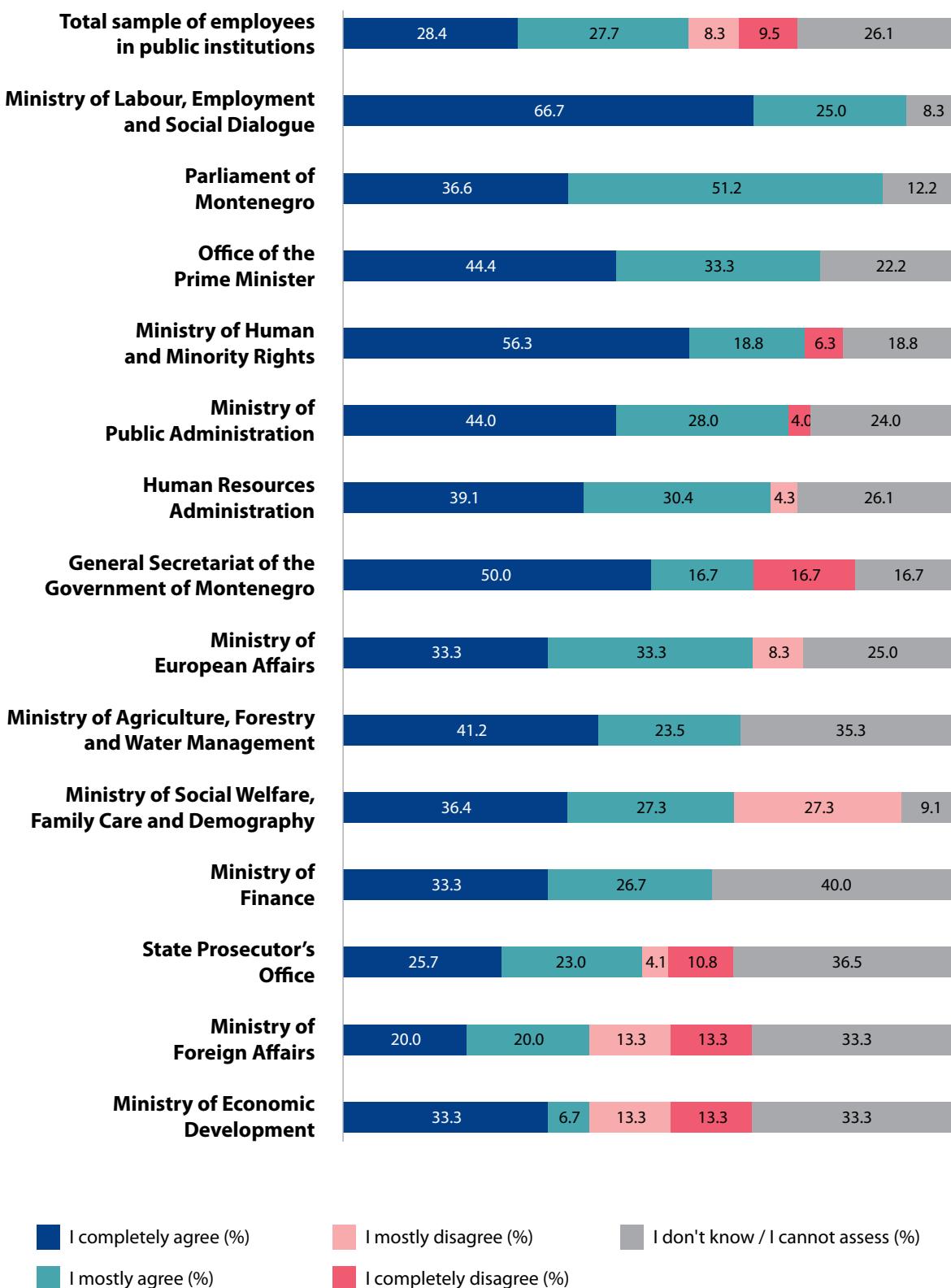
Graph 155: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution includes women in decision-making processes regarding programs/strategies/plans and activities related to support for women. (N=545)



Although there is a general perception across most institutions that women are included in decision-making processes, a high level of uncertainty and lack of awareness among employees persists in many institutions. This may point to either a lack of clearly defined procedures and communication, or to formal inclusion that is not sufficiently visible in practice. It is essential to further strengthen institutional capacities, transparency, and participatory approaches in order to ensure genuine and equal participation of women in decision-making.

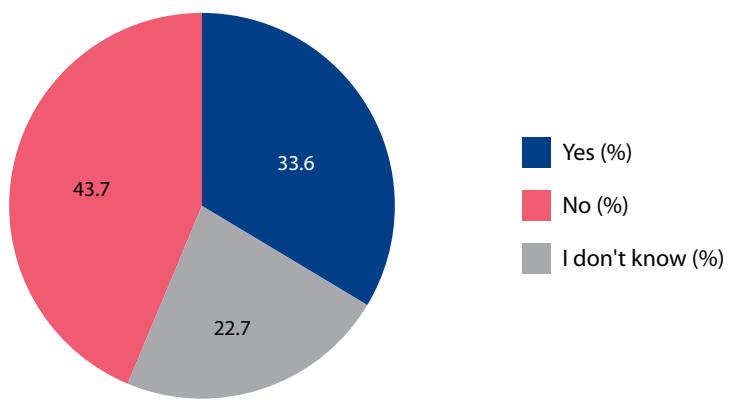
Graph 156: Employees in public institutions: For each of the following statements, please indicate the extent to which you agree that it applies to your current job: My institution includes women in decision-making processes regarding programs/strategies/plans and activities related to support for women.

My institution includes women in decision-making processes regarding programs/strategies/plans and activities related to support for women



These findings indicate that, although certain institutions are making efforts to promote gender equality, there is a lack of transparency and an absence of systematic measures for preventing discrimination. Particularly concerning is the high percentage of respondents who were unable to assess key issues, pointing to the need for greater visibility and improved communication of institutional policies in this area. The presence of bodies, departments, or units responsible for gender equality policies within public institutions suggests that these structures are neither sufficiently established nor adequately recognized by employees. Only one-third of respondents (33.6%) stated that such a body exists in their institution, while 43.7% believe no such unit is in place. Nearly one-quarter (22.7%) are unsure whether their institution has such a structure, indicating not only a lack of visibility or awareness but also that, in many institutions, there is indeed no designated person or unit responsible for gender equality. This further illustrates the problem of insufficient institutional expertise in gender equality. Individuals formally tasked with these issues are often primarily recognized for their core duties, as gender equality responsibilities are typically assigned as an additional—not primary—role. As a result, they often lack the necessary expertise and resources to effectively lead gender equality policy efforts.

Graph 157: Employees in public institutions: Does your institution have a body/department/unit that deals with gender equality policies? (N=545)



The highest level of institutionalized gender equality is recorded in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, where as many as 93.8% of respondents confirm the existence of a body dedicated to this area. As expected, this ministry plays a key role in coordinating gender equality policies at the national level, and the results are consistent with its mandate.

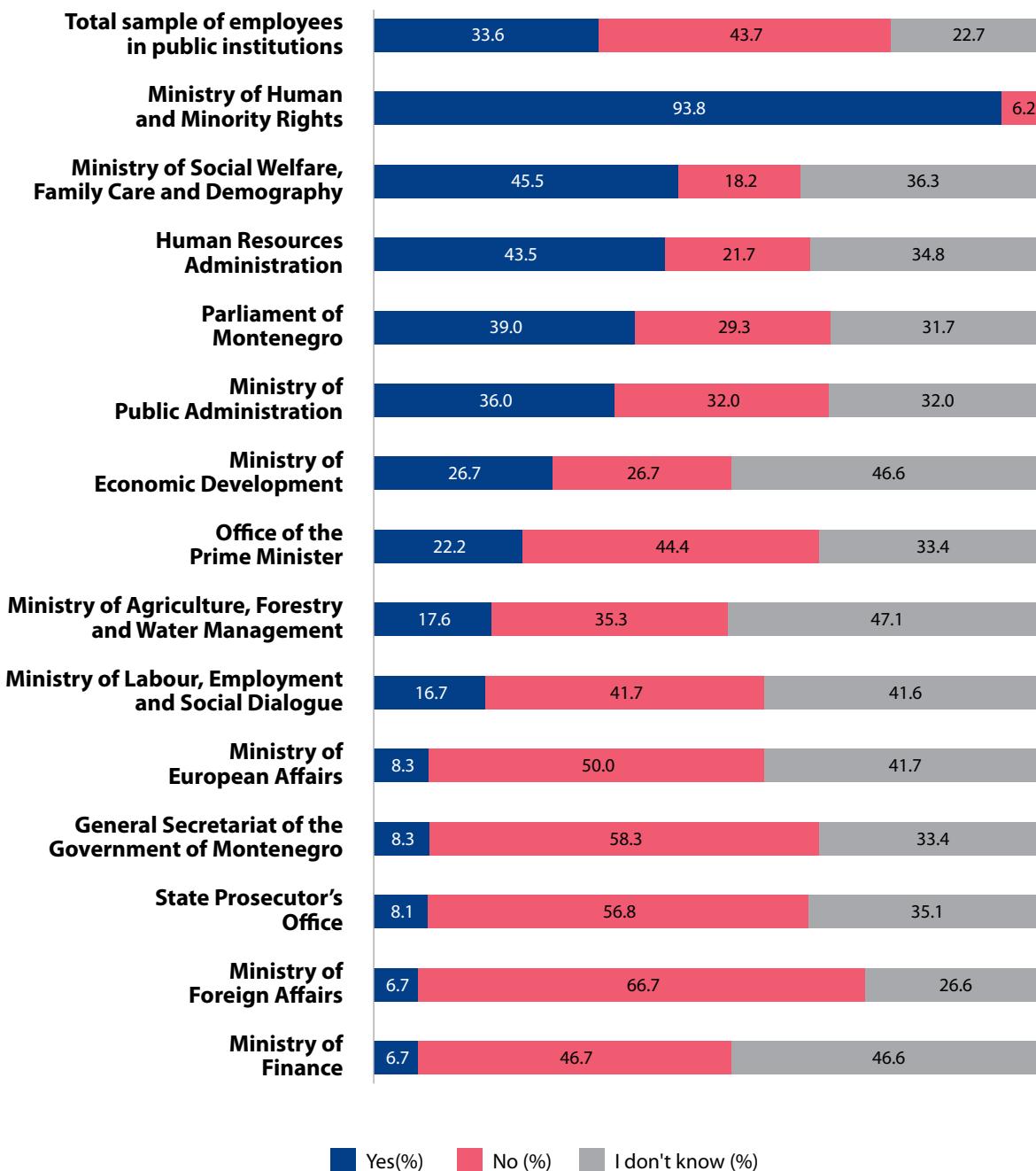
The Ministry of Social Welfare, Family Care and Demography also stands out with a high level of institutional support, with 45.5% of employees recognizing the existence of a gender equality body. Similarly, the Human Resources Administration (43.5%) and the Parliament of Montenegro (39%) also report a relatively high percentage of employees aware of such structures. However, it is important to note that the recognition of a gender equality body does not necessarily imply that gender equality policies are actively and systematically integrated into the work of these institutions.

Therefore, these results should be interpreted with caution, and further research is needed to assess the actual extent of implementation and the impact of gender equality policies within these organizations. On the other hand, the data show that some institutions report significantly lower levels of organized support for the implementation of gender equality policies. For example, as many as 72.7% of employees in the Ministry of Justice believe that their institution does not have a body addressing this issue. A similar perception is observed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (66.7%), the Ministry of Finance (46.7%), and the Ministry of Economic Development (46.6%). Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the lack of recognition of such bodies does not automatically mean that gender equality policies are not integrated into the institution's work, but it does suggest a potential lack of awareness and capacity for their effective implementation and visibility.

The General Secretariat of the Government (58.3% negative responses) and the State Prosecutor's Office (56.8%) also demonstrate a clear need for the institutionalization and strengthening of gender equality mechanisms within their structures. A significant number of respondents—particularly in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Dialogue (41.6%), the Ministry of European Affairs (41.7%), and the Office of the Prime Minister (33.4%)—were unable to confidently assess whether a gender equality body exists within their institution.

This high level of unawareness indicates not only insufficient visibility of these structures but also limited knowledge and a lack of capacity among employees to recognize and support the implementation of gender equality policies within their institutions.

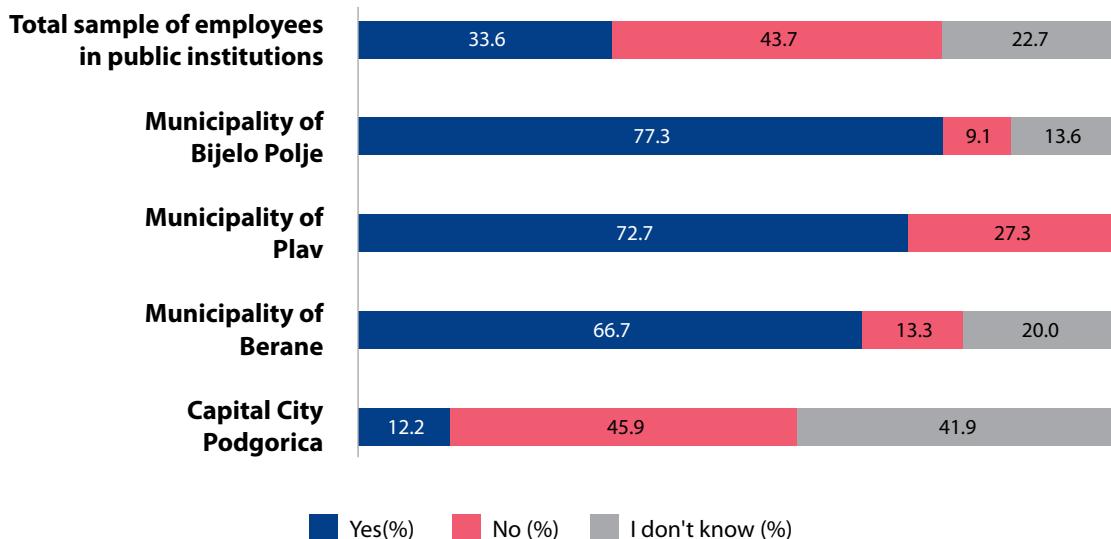
Graph 158: Employees in public institutions: Does your institution have a body/department/unit that deals with gender equality policies?



The highest level of recognition of gender equality bodies is recorded in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje, where 77.3% of respondents confirm the existence of such a structure. A similar situation is observed in the Municipality of Plav, with 72.7% of respondents reporting the presence of a gender equality body, while the Municipality of Berane also records a high percentage of positive responses, with two-thirds of respondents confirming the existence of such a body. However, it is important to emphasize that the recognition of a gender equality body does not necessarily reflect the overall level of institutional support, which also includes adequate investment,

expertise, resources, and capacities required for the effective implementation and integration of gender equality policies into the institution's work. In contrast, the Capital City Podgorica shows the lowest level of institutional support in this area, with only 12.2% of respondents confirming the existence of such a body. At the same time, 45.9% of employees state that no such structure exists, while as many as 41.9% are unable to assess its existence.

Graph 159: Employees in public institutions: Does your institution have a body/department/unit that deals with gender equality policies?



Analysis of Gender Equality Implementation in Municipalities

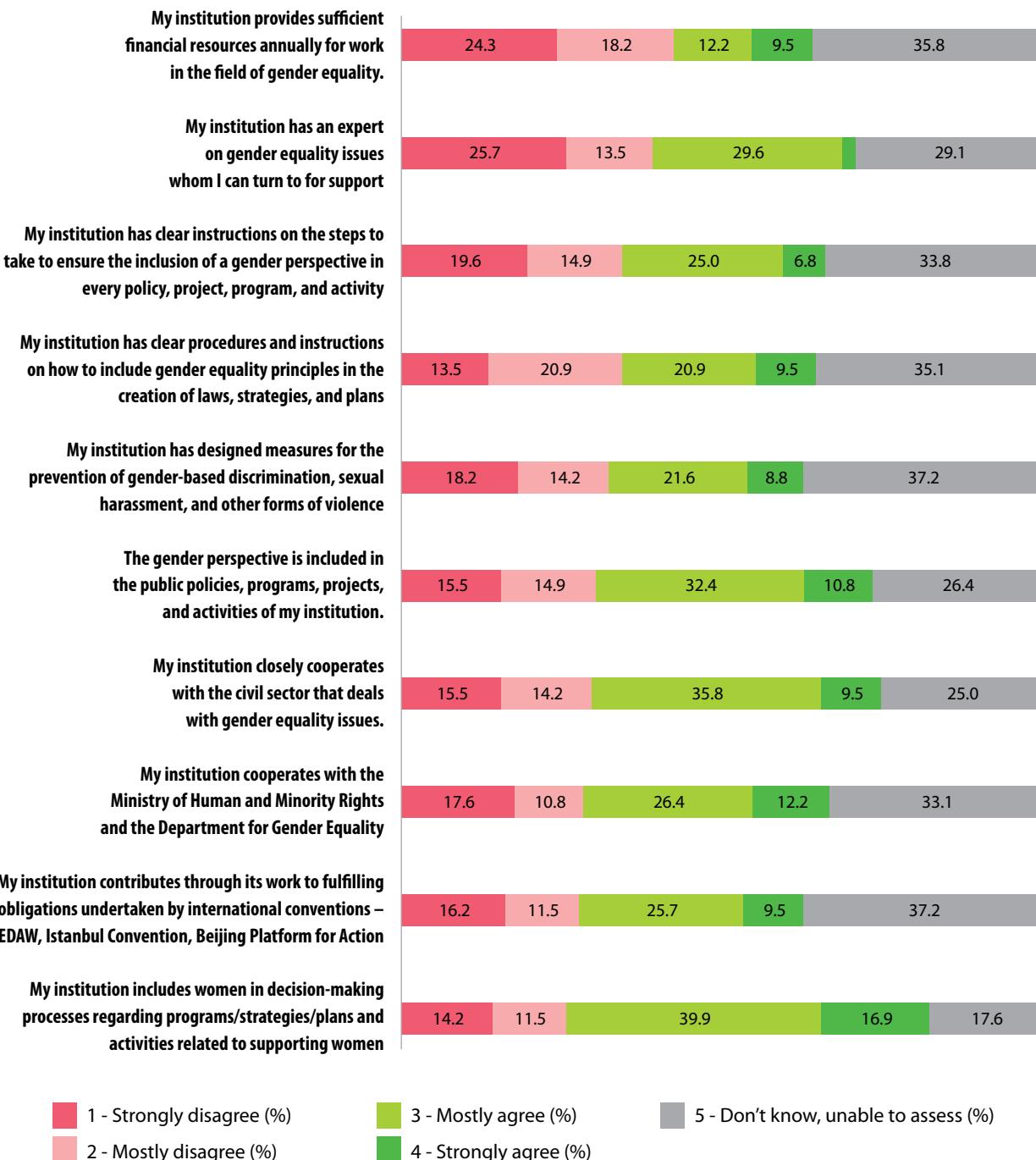
At the level of all municipalities included in the research on the opinions of employees in public institutions (Berane, Bijelo Polje, Plav, and Podgorica), the results indicate that only 21.7% (Rating 3 – Mostly agree and Rating 4 – Fully agree) of employees believe that their institutions provide sufficient funds for activities that contribute to gender equality, while a total of 42.5% believe that the funds are insufficient (respondents who gave Rating 1 – Strongly disagree and Rating 2 – Mostly disagree). Additionally, a significant percentage of respondents, 35.8%, were unable to assess the financial allocations of their institution in this regard. Similarly, a total of 31.8% of respondents believe that their institution has a gender equality expert they can approach, while 39.2% believe that such an expert does not exist. When it comes to the existence of clear instructions for including a gender perspective in policies, projects, and programs, a total of 31.8% of respondents state that such instructions exist, while 34.5% believe they are not defined.

Similar results were observed regarding the existence of clear procedures for gender equality in laws, strategies, and plans, where 30.4% of respondents confirm their existence, and 34.4% believe they do not exist. Measures for the prevention of discrimination and violence against women are recognized by a total of 30.4% of employees, while 32.4% believe that such measures have not been established in their institutions. However, a slightly higher percentage of respondents (43.2%) believe that the gender perspective is actively included in public policies, projects, and activities, while 30.4% do not see this practice in their institutional environment.

Regarding cooperation with the civil sector, 45.3% of respondents state that their institutions engage in this type of cooperation, while 29.7% do not observe such practice. One-quarter of respondents (25.0%) were unable to assess the level of cooperation with civil society organizations. Additionally, 38.6% of respondents believe that their institutions cooperate with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and its Gender Equality Department, while 28.4% state that such cooperation does not exist, and 33.1% do not have enough information about it. When it comes to the contribution of institutions to fulfilling international obligations in the field of gender equality—such as CEDAW, the Istanbul Convention, and the Beijing Platform—35.2% of respondents

believe that institutions actively contribute to these processes, while 27.7% state the opposite, and 37.2% were unable to provide an assessment. The most positive results were recorded regarding the inclusion of women in decision-making processes related to support for women, where a total of 56.8% of respondents believe that women are adequately represented in such processes, while 25.7% believe they are not.

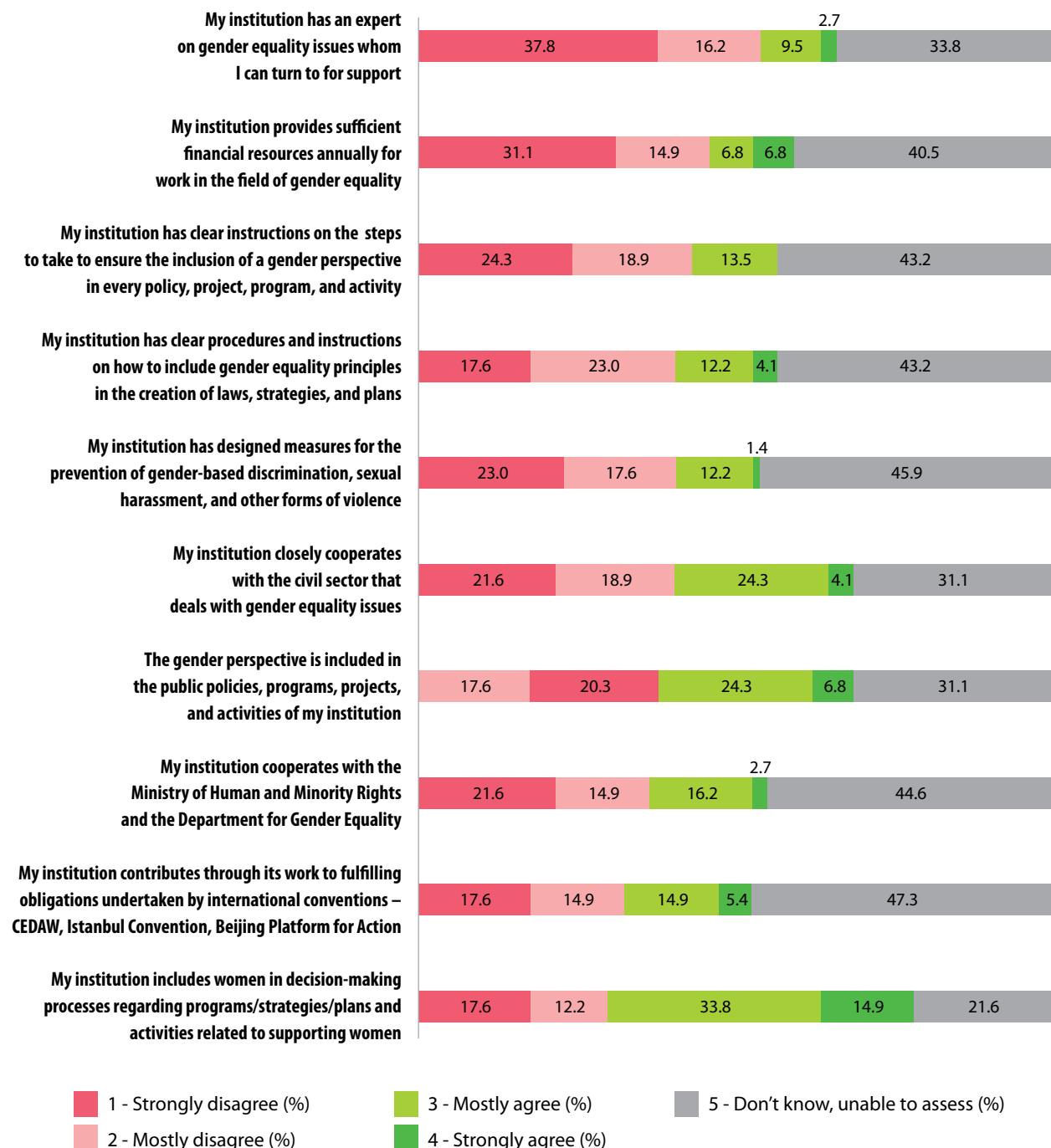
Graph 160: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each of the following statements applies to your current job by rating them on a scale from 1 to 4. (At the municipal level: Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav, N=148)



Looking at the research results in Podgorica, it can be observed that employees in the Capital City give the lowest ratings across almost all analyzed aspects. Only 13.6% of respondents believe that financial resources for activities contributing to gender equality are adequate. A similar percentage (13.5%) report the existence of clear instructions

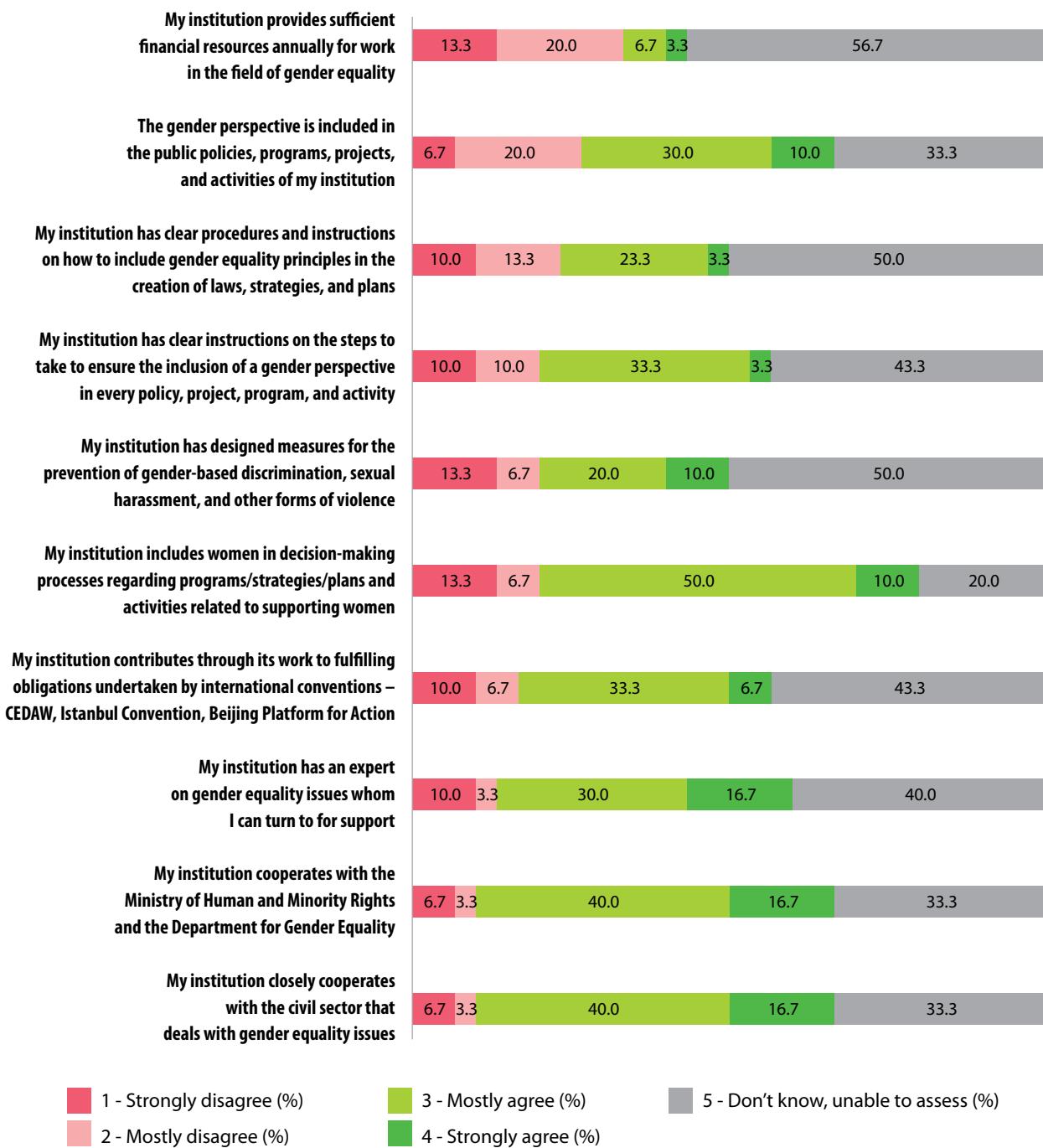
for including a gender perspective in policies, projects, and programs. The presence of a gender equality expert within institutions is recognized by only 12.2% of respondents, while as many as 33.8% are unsure whether such an expert exists. Additionally, only 13.6% of employees in the Capital City believe that there are clear measures for the prevention of discrimination and violence against women. In terms of cooperation with the civil sector, 18.4% of respondents confirm that their institutions engage in such cooperation. Furthermore, 32.4% of respondents believe that their institutions cooperate with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and its Gender Equality Department. The most positive result in Podgorica was recorded in relation to the inclusion of women in decision-making processes concerning support for women—43.2% of respondents believe that women are adequately represented, while 31.1% believe they are not, and 25.7% were unable to assess the situation.

Graph 161: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each of the following statements applies to your current job by rating them on a scale from 1 to 4. (Capital City Podgorica, N=74)



In the Municipality of Berane, the level of perceived financial support for gender equality is slightly higher compared to Podgorica, yet it remains low and insufficient. Only 10% of respondents believe that institutions provide adequate funding. Regarding the presence of a gender equality expert, 46.7% of respondents believe there is a person they can turn to, while 26.7% believe no such expert exists. Concerning the existence of clear instructions for incorporating a gender perspective, 36.7% of respondents believe such instructions are in place, while 33.3% believe the opposite. Similarly, 36.7% of respondents believe there are clear measures for the prevention of discrimination and violence, while 30% report that such measures do not exist. The best results in Berane relate to cooperation with the civil sector and with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and its Gender Equality Department, recognized by 56.7% of respondents, as well as the inclusion of women in decision-making processes, where 60% of respondents believe that women are adequately represented.

Graph 162: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each of the following statements applies to your current job by rating them on a scale from 1 to 4. (Municipality of Berane, N=30)



Bijelo Polje stands out as the municipality with the most positive results in this regard. Particularly strong outcomes are observed in the inclusion of gender equality in institutional policies, programs, projects, and activities; in cooperation with the civil sector; and in collaboration with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and its Gender Equality Department—72.7% of respondents indicate that they somewhat or fully agree with these statements. Additionally, 72.8% of respondents state that their institution includes women in decision-making processes related to programs, strategies, plans, and activities supporting women, and that clear procedures and instructions exist for incorporating gender equality principles in the development of laws, strategies, and plans.

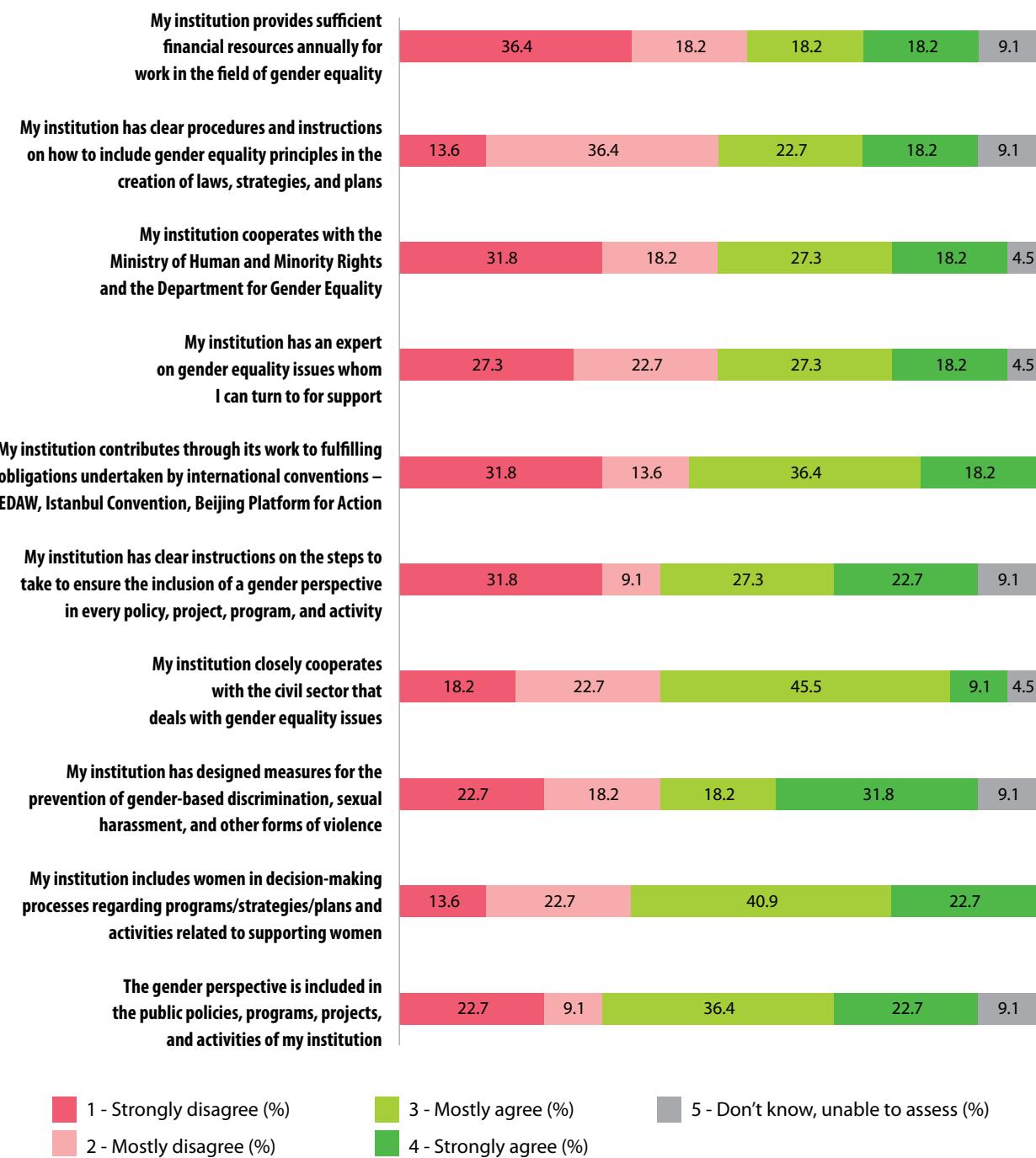
Graph 163: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each of the following statements applies to your current job by rating them on a scale from 1 to 4. (Municipality of Bijelo Polje, N=22)



The results in the Municipality of Plav show slightly lower ratings compared to Bijelo Polje, but still more positive than those recorded in the Capital City and the Municipality of Berane.

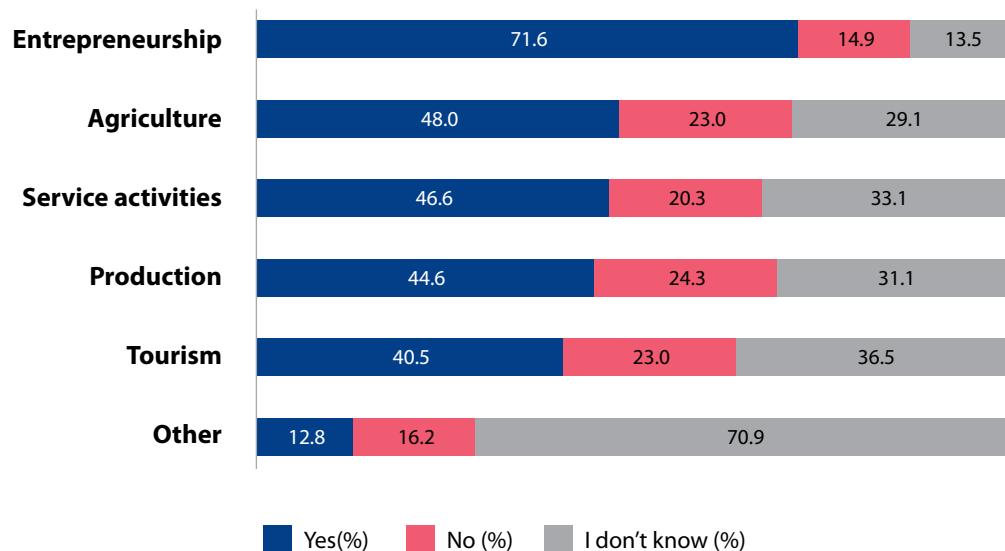
The presence of a gender equality expert is recognized by 45.5% of respondents, while 27.3% state that such an expert does not exist, and another 27.3% were unable to respond. The most positive ratings were given in response to the statement, "My institution includes women in decision-making processes related to programs/strategies/plans and activities that concern support for women," with 59.1% of respondents indicating at least some level of agreement. A similar positive response was recorded for the statement, "My institution includes women in decision-making processes related to programs/strategies/plans and activities that concern support for women," where a total of 63.6% of employees expressed agreement.

Graph 164: Please indicate the extent to which you agree that each of the following statements applies to your current job by rating them on a scale from 1 to 4. (Municipality of Plav, N=22)



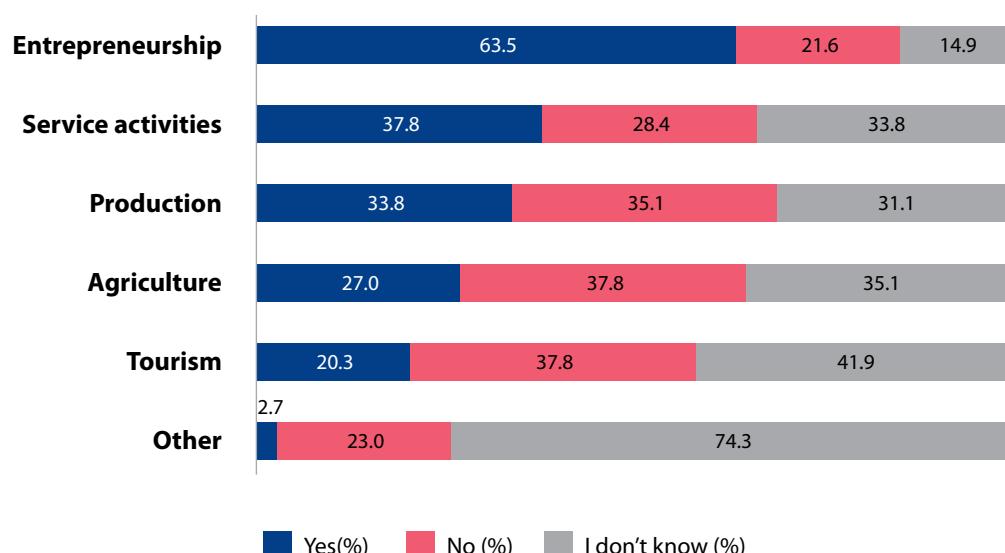
The research analyzed the existence of programs and funds aimed at supporting women across various sectors in the municipalities of Podgorica, Berane, Bijelo Polje, and Plav. The results reveal significant differences among municipalities regarding the availability of these programs. At the overall level, the highest availability of programs and funds is reported in the area of entrepreneurship (71.6%), while the lowest level of reported support is directed toward tourism (40.5%).

Graph 165: Does your institution have programs or funds intended to support women in the following fields? (At the municipal level: Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav – N=148)



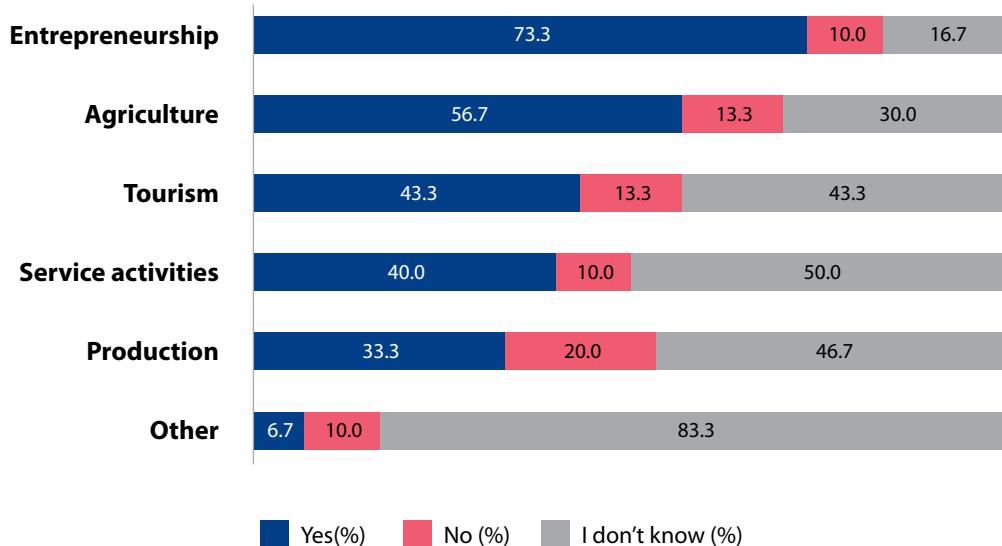
Podgorica records the weakest support for women across almost all analyzed sectors. The highest number of programs is reported in the field of entrepreneurship (65.3%), while the other categories receive significantly less support. Only 37.8% of respondents recognize programs for service activities, 33.8% for manufacturing, and just 27.0% for agriculture. Tourism is the least supported sector, with only 20.3% of respondents confirming the existence of relevant programs.

Graph 166: Does your institution have programs or funds intended to support women in the following fields? (Municipality of Podgorica, N=74)



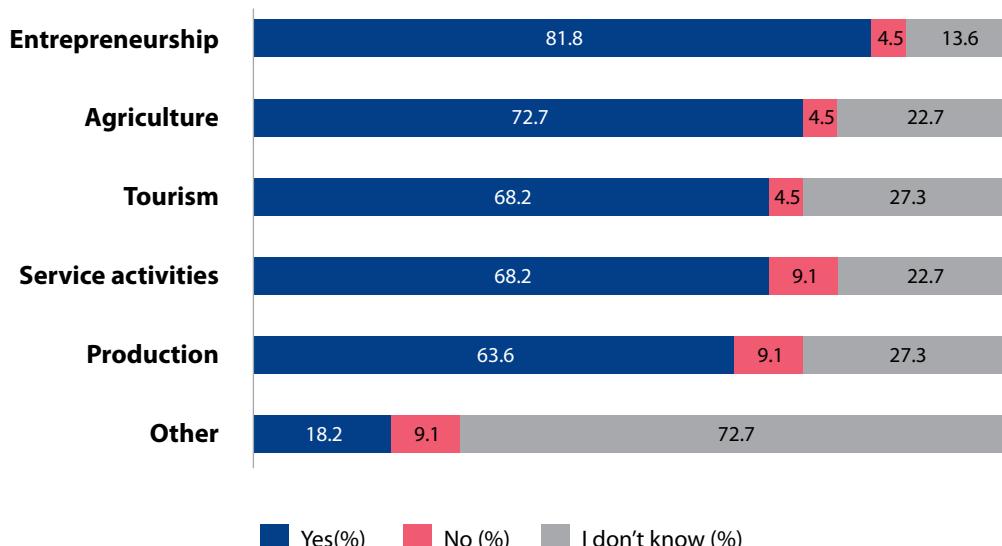
In the Municipality of Berane, programs supporting women in the field of entrepreneurship are recognized in 73.3% of cases, followed by programs in agriculture at 56.7%. Tourism ranks third with 43.3%, while support programs for women in service activities and manufacturing are recognized in 40.0% and 33.3% of cases, respectively.

*Graph 167: Does your institution have programs or funds intended to support women in the following fields?
(Municipality of Berane, N=30)*



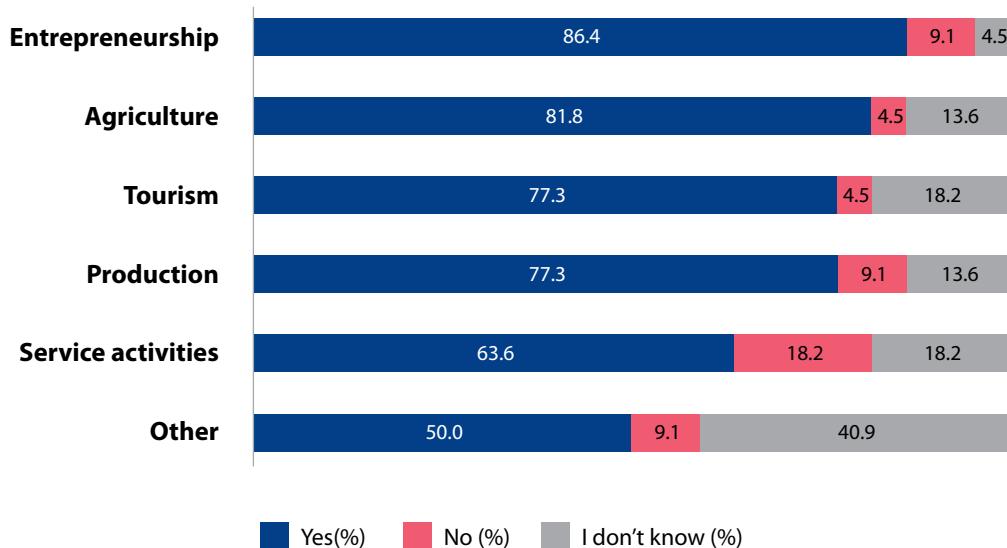
The Municipality of Bijelo Polje stands out as a municipality with a high perceived presence of programs supporting women across various sectors. In the field of entrepreneurship, employees perceive such programs to be present in 81.8% of cases, while in agriculture, the perceived presence is 72.7%, and in tourism, 68.2%. Women in service activities are perceived to be supported at the same rate as in tourism—68.2%—while support in the manufacturing sector is recognized in 63.6% of cases. It is important to note that this data does not reflect the actual presence or number of support programs, but rather represents employees' perceptions of how accessible these programs are in specific sectors.

*Graph 168: Does your institution have programs or funds intended to support women in the following fields?
(Municipality of Bijelo Polje, N=22)*



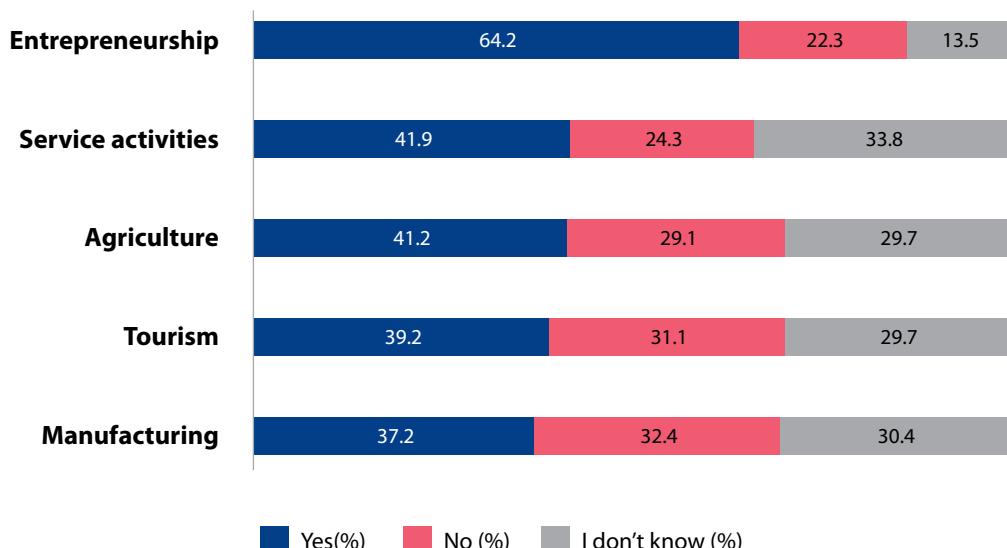
The Municipality of Plav shows the highest levels of perceived support for women across all sectors. Entrepreneurship records 86.4% perceived support, followed by programs in agriculture (81.8%) and tourism (77.3%). A high level of support is also reported in the manufacturing sector (77.3%), while support in service activities is recognized in 63.6% of cases.

Graph 169: Does your institution have programs or funds intended to support women in the following fields?
(Municipality of Plav, N=22)



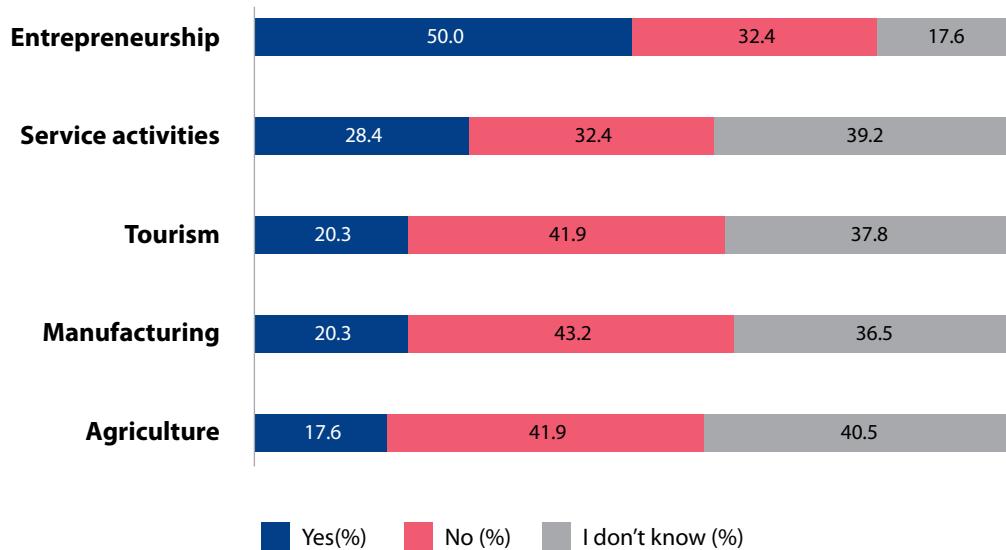
At the level of the analyzed municipalities, the results indicate that employees most commonly perceive institutions as being focused on supporting women in the field of entrepreneurship—64.2% of respondents state that training is organized or supported in this area. Service activities and agriculture are also recognized as relatively equally supported sectors (41.9% and 41.2%, respectively), while tourism (39.2%) and manufacturing (37.2%) are perceived as somewhat less represented when it comes to institutional support for women.

Graph 170 Does your institution organize and/or support training sessions and workshops intended for women in the following fields? (At the level of the municipalities of Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav – N=148)



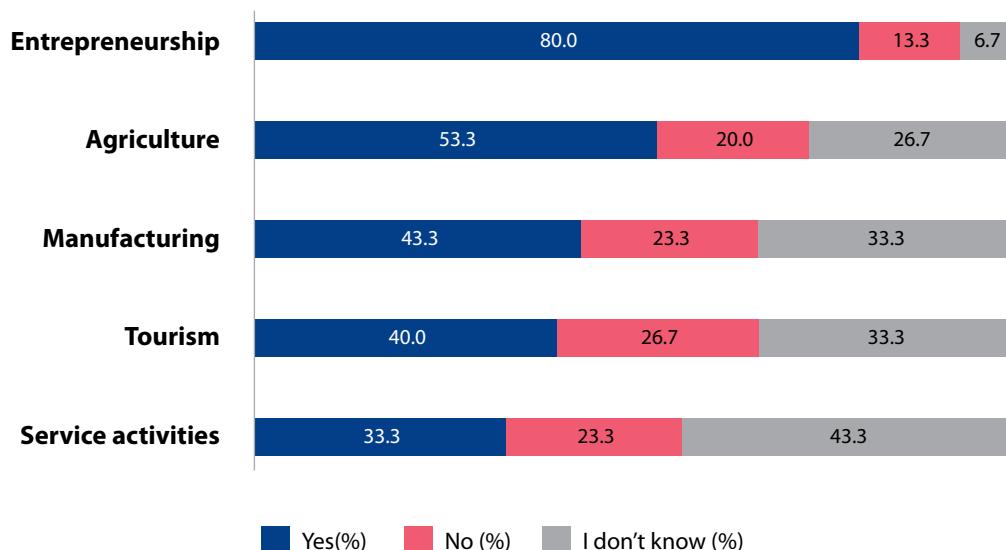
The Capital City shows the weakest support for trainings and workshops for women across all sectors compared to the other municipalities. The highest percentage of institutions (50%) support training in entrepreneurship, while service activities (28.4%), tourism (20.3%), manufacturing (20.3%), and agriculture (17.6%) are significantly less represented.

Graph 171: Does your institution organize and/or support training sessions and workshops intended for women in the following fields? (Municipality of Podgorica, N=74)



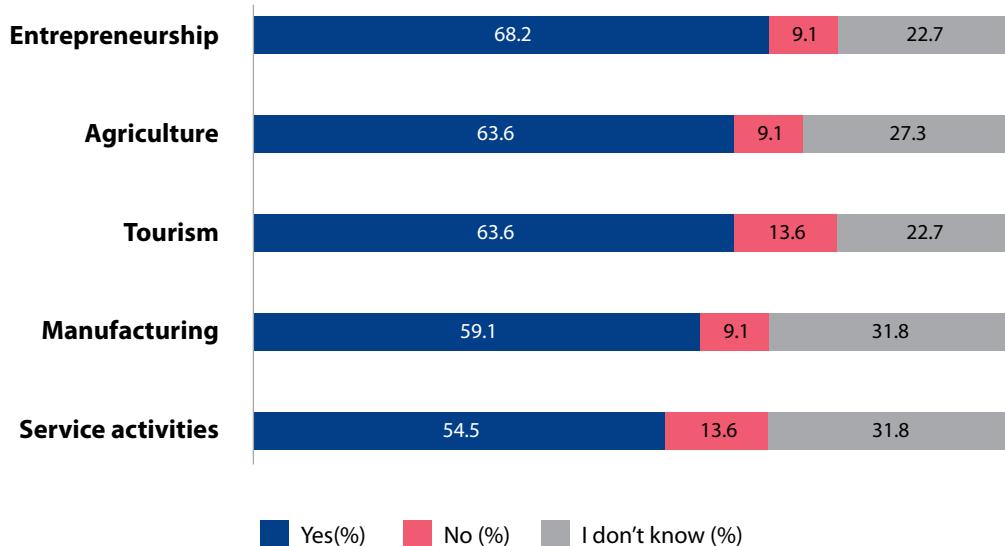
In the Municipality of Berane, trainings are most frequently focused on entrepreneurship (80%), indicating significant institutional support for women in this area. Agriculture (53.3%) and manufacturing (43.3%) are also relatively well represented, while tourism (40%) and service activities (33.3%) are somewhat less supported sectors.

Graph 172: Does your institution organize and/or support training sessions and workshops intended for women in the following fields? (Municipality of Berane, N=30)



The Municipality of Bijelo Polje stands out for its more diversified approach to supporting training programs for women. Entrepreneurship programs are the most represented (68.2%), while agriculture and tourism receive similar levels of support (63.6%). The manufacturing sector (59.1%) and service activities (54.5%) are also highly ranked, indicating a broader range of opportunities for women in this municipality.

Graph 173: Does your institution organize and/or support training sessions and workshops intended for women in the following fields? (Municipality of Bijelo Polje, N=22)



Plav leads in the support and organization of training programs for women across all sectors. The most represented areas are entrepreneurship and service activities (each at 86.4%), while agriculture (81.8%), tourism (77.3%), and manufacturing (63.6%) are also significantly present.

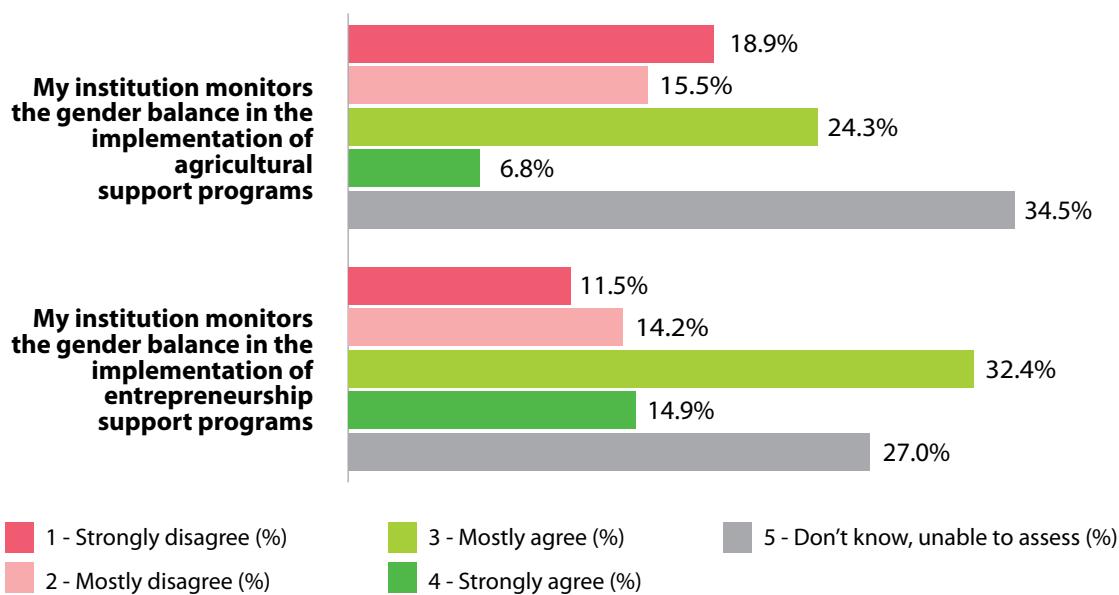
Graph 174: Does your institution organize and/or support training sessions and workshops intended for women in the following fields? (Municipality of Plav, N=22)





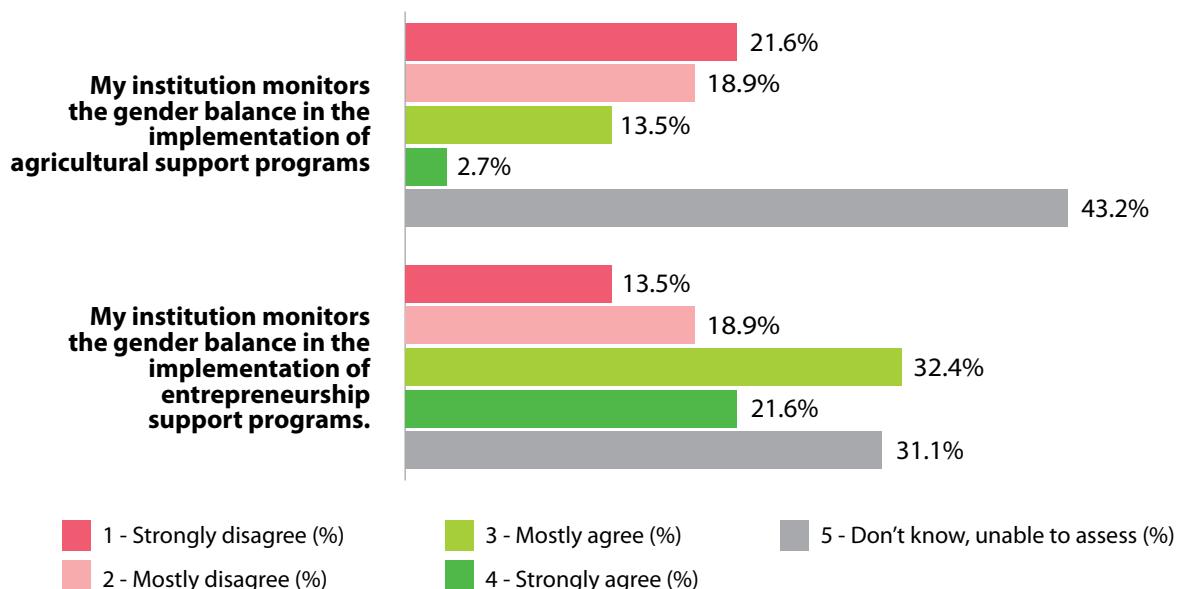
At the level of all municipalities, 24.3% of respondents mostly agree that their institutions monitor gender balance in agricultural support programs, while 6.8% fully confirm this. However, there is a high percentage of disagreement—18.9% completely disagree, and 15.5% mostly disagree—indicating shortcomings in the implementation of gender-sensitive policies in this area. When it comes to entrepreneurship, the results are somewhat more positive—32.4% of respondents mostly agree that their institutions monitor gender balance, while 14.9% fully confirm this. Nevertheless, 11.5% of respondents do not recognize such activities at all, and 14.2% mostly do not recognize them.

Graph 175: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (At the level of the municipalities of Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Berane, Plav – N=148)



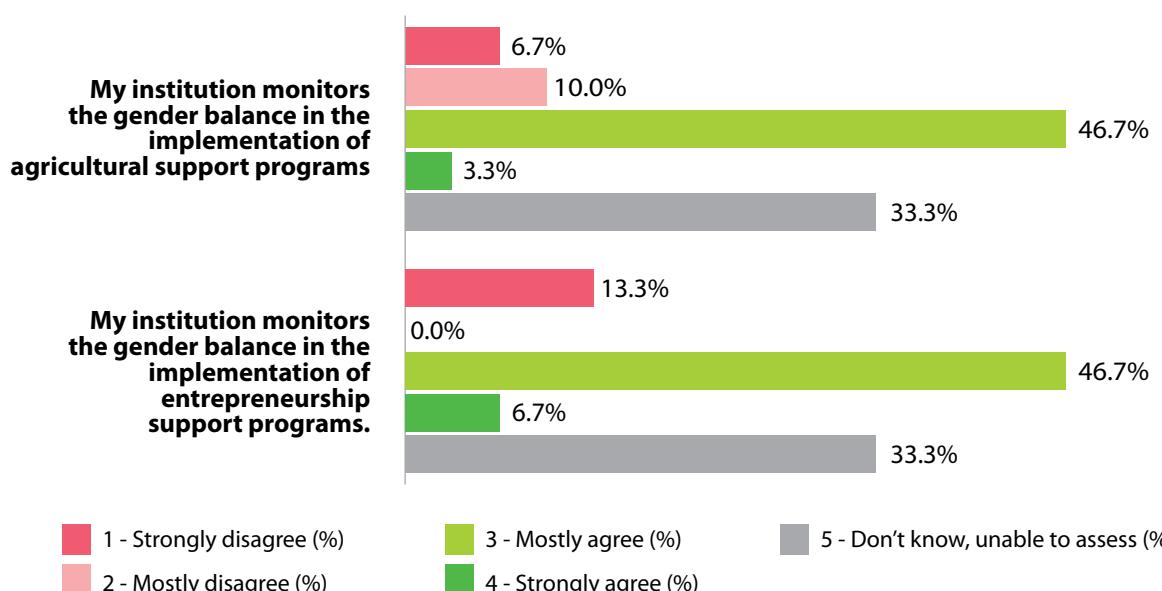
The Capital City shows the lowest level of monitoring gender balance in the field of agriculture, with only 13.5% of employees mostly confirming this practice, and just 2.7% fully confirming it. Conversely, a high 21.6% of respondents completely disagree that the institution monitors gender balance in this sector, while an additional 18.9% mostly do not recognize such activities. When it comes to gender balance in the implementation of entrepreneurship support programs, 21.6% of respondents mostly agree that gender balance is monitored, while 14.9% fully confirm this. However, there is also a significant percentage of respondents who do not recognize such practices in the Capital City—13.5% completely disagree, and 18.9% mostly disagree.

Graph 176: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Municipality of Podgorica, N=74)



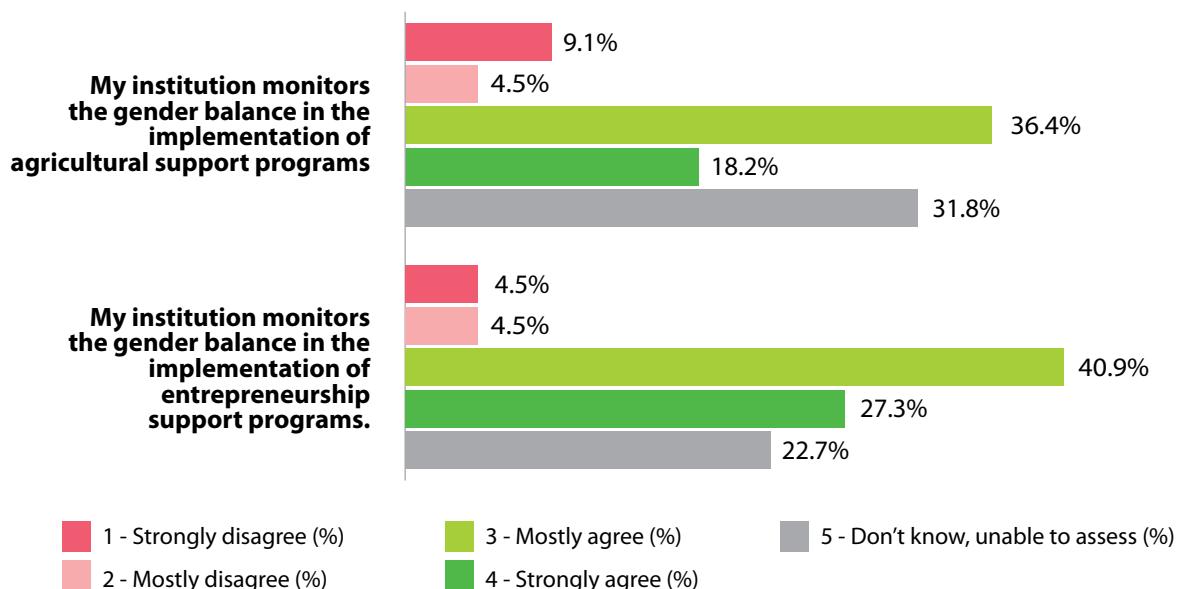
The Municipality of Berane shows better results compared to Podgorica, particularly in the agriculture sector, where 46.7% of employees mostly confirm that gender balance is being monitored, and 3.3% fully confirm it. A similar trend is observed in the area of entrepreneurship—46.7% of respondents mostly recognize these activities, while 6.7% fully confirm them.

Graph 177: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Municipality of Berane, N=30)



Bijelo Polje also demonstrates a relatively high level of gender balance in the implementation of support programs. In the field of agriculture, 36.4% of respondents mostly agree that the institution monitors gender balance, while 18.2% fully agree with this. In the area of entrepreneurship, 40.9% of respondents mostly confirm the monitoring of gender balance, while 27.3% fully acknowledge it.

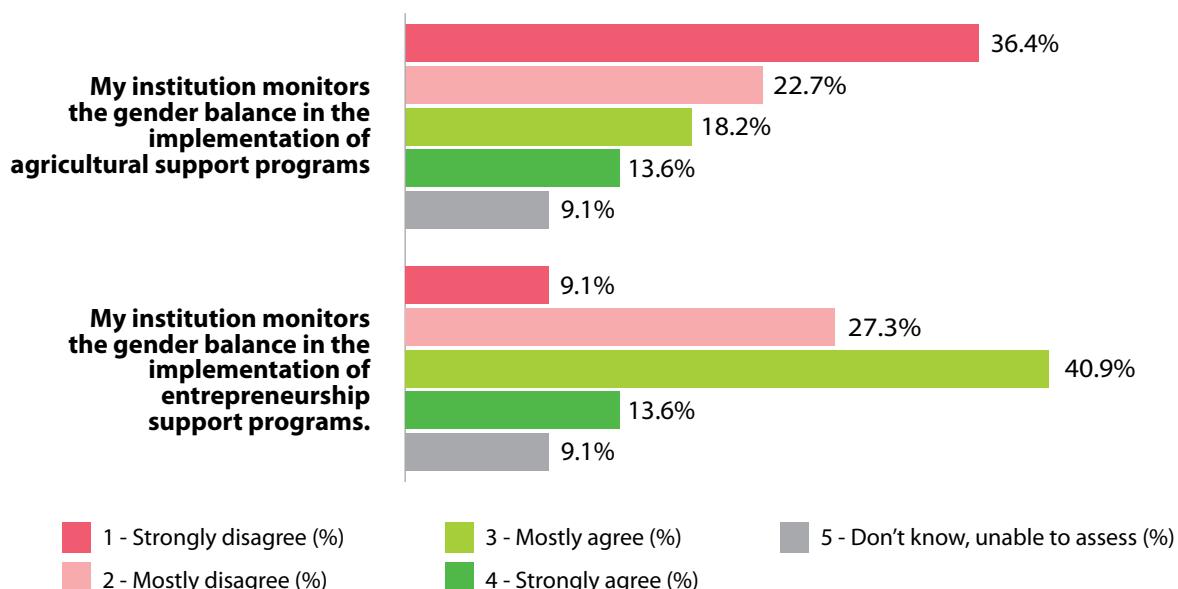
Graph 178: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Municipality of Bijelo Polje, N=22)



Plav shows the weakest results in the field of agriculture—36.4% of respondents do not recognize any activities related to monitoring gender balance, while an additional 22.7% mostly disagree with this statement. Only 18.2% of respondents mostly confirm this practice, and 13.6% fully recognize it.

Regarding gender balance in entrepreneurship, 40.9% of employees mostly recognize that it is being monitored, while 13.6% fully acknowledge it. However, there is also a high level of disagreement—9.1% completely disagree, and 27.3% mostly disagree with the statement.

Graph 179: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Municipality of Plav, N=22)

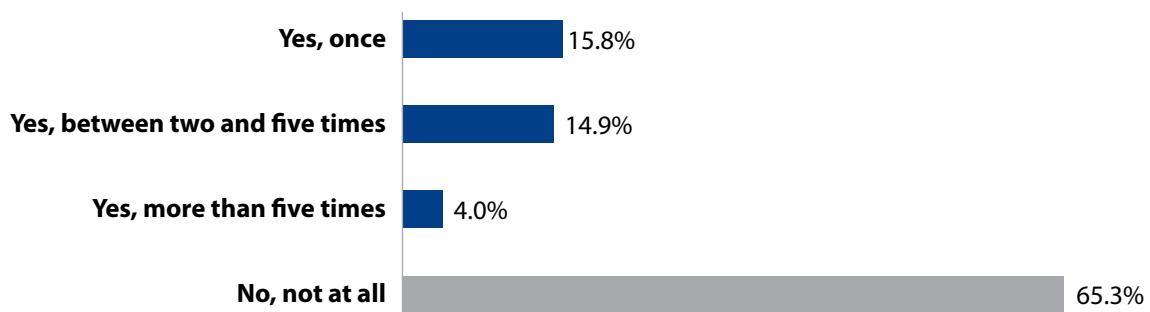


Education in the Field of Gender Equality

The education of employees in public institutions plays an important role in advancing gender equality. Through seminars, trainings, and workshops, employees can acquire essential knowledge about incorporating a gender perspective into decision-making, preventing discrimination, and promoting equal opportunities for all citizens. However, despite the importance of such educational activities, their availability and frequency often vary across public institutions. By analyzing the data collected in the research, we aim to assess to what extent employees in Montenegro have had the opportunity to participate in these programs and what this reveals about institutional commitment to gender equality.

Based on the research conducted among employees in public institutions in Montenegro, it is evident that the majority of respondents have not participated in gender equality or gender-related training organized by their institutions in the past 12 months. **Specifically, 65.3% of employees did not attend a single training, seminar, or workshop on this topic. On the other hand, 15.8% of respondents participated in training once, while 14.9% attended between two and five such events. Only 4% of respondents had the opportunity to participate in more than five educational activities related to gender equality.**

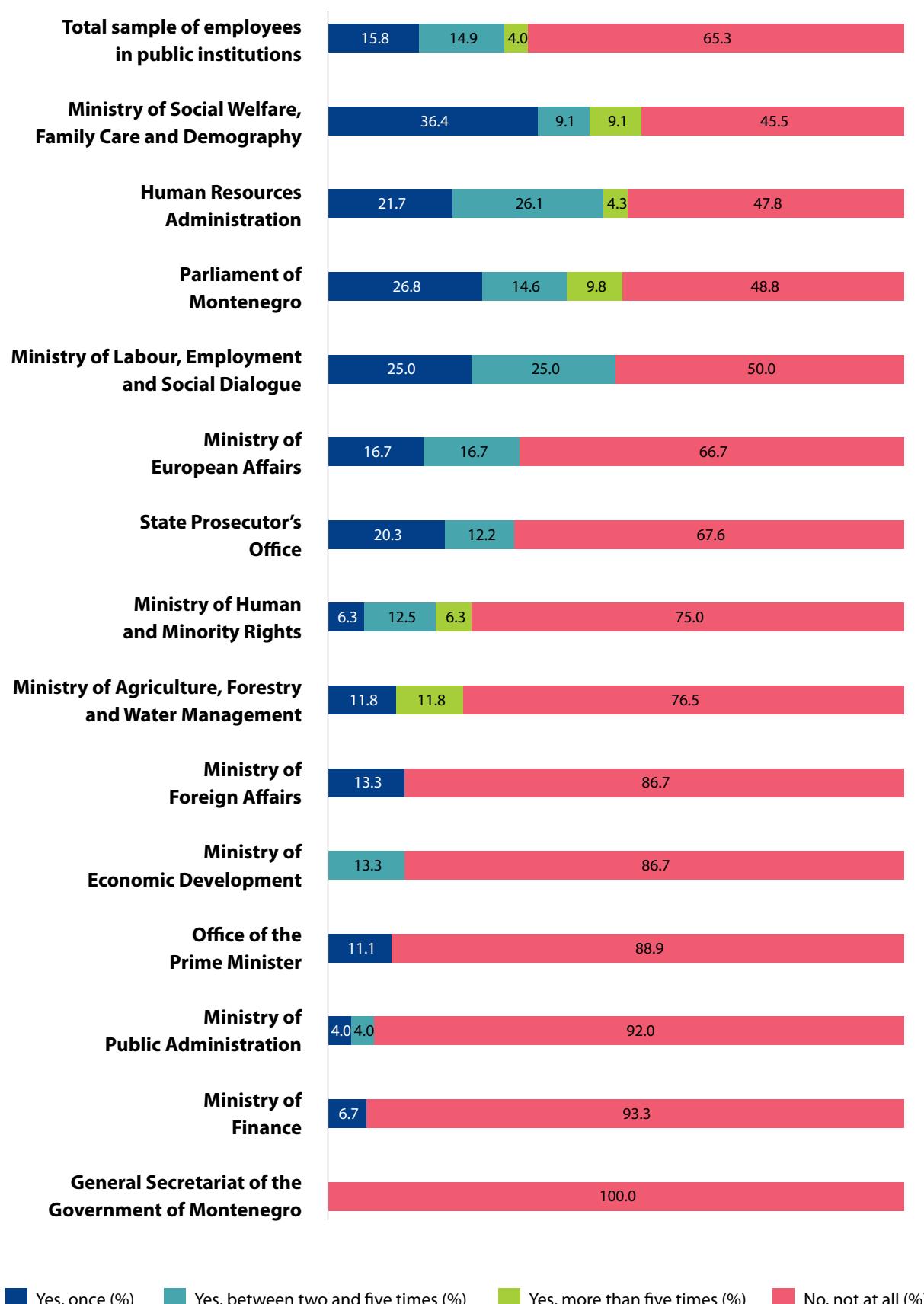
Graph 180: Employees in public institutions: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any training/seminar/ workshop on gender equality and gender issues organized by your institution? (N=545)



Looking at individual institutions, **the lowest level of participation was recorded in the General Secretariat of the Government of Montenegro**, where all respondents stated that they had not taken part in any training. **Similarly low levels of participation were observed in the Ministry of Finance (only 6.7% attended once, with no one attending more than once), as well as in the Ministry of Public Administration, where 92% of respondents reported never having participated.**

Significantly higher participation rates were recorded in the Ministry of Social Welfare, where 36.4% of employees stated they had attended at least once, and an additional 18.2% had participated more than once.

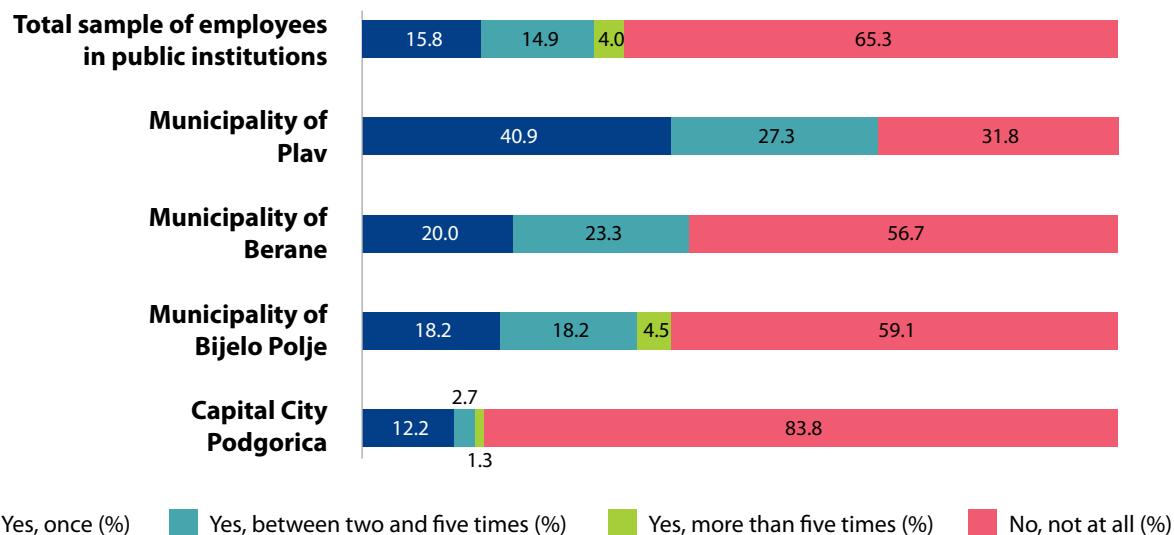
Graph 181: Employees in public institutions: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any training/seminar/workshop on gender equality and gender issues organized by your institution?



■ Yes, once (%) ■ Yes, between two and five times (%) ■ Yes, more than five times (%) ■ No, not at all (%)

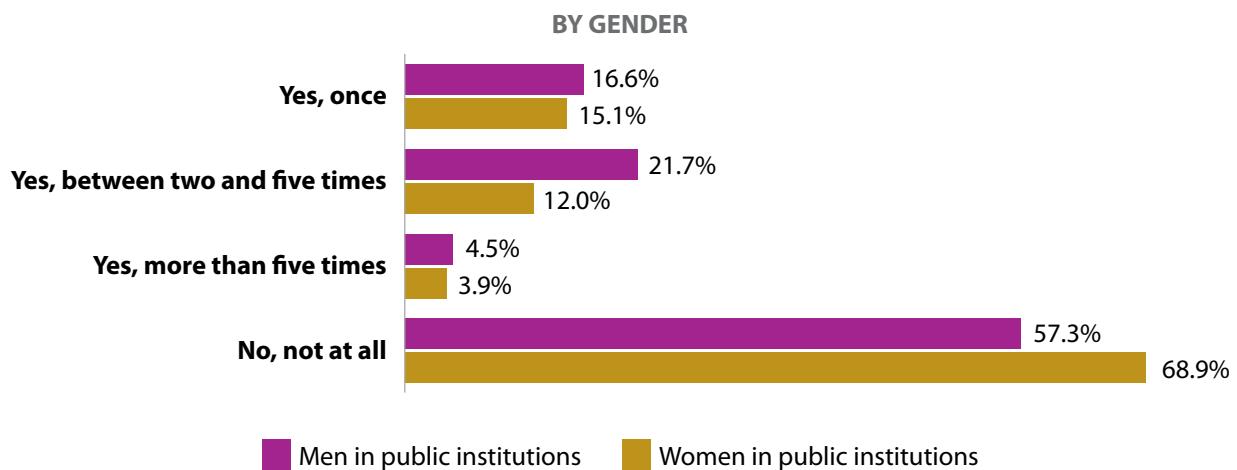
On the local level, the Municipality of Plav stands out significantly—68.2% of employees report having participated at least once, and as many as 27.3% have attended multiple times. In the Municipality of Berane, more than 43% of employees have experience participating in seminars more than once.

Graph 182> Employees in public institutions: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any training/seminar/workshop on gender equality and gender issues organized by your institution?



When it comes to gender differences, men report participating in seminars more frequently than women—42.8% of men stated they had attended at least once, compared to 31% of women.

Graph 183: Employees in public institutions: In the past 12 months, have you participated in any training/seminar/workshop on gender equality and gender issues organized by your institution? By gender (N=545)



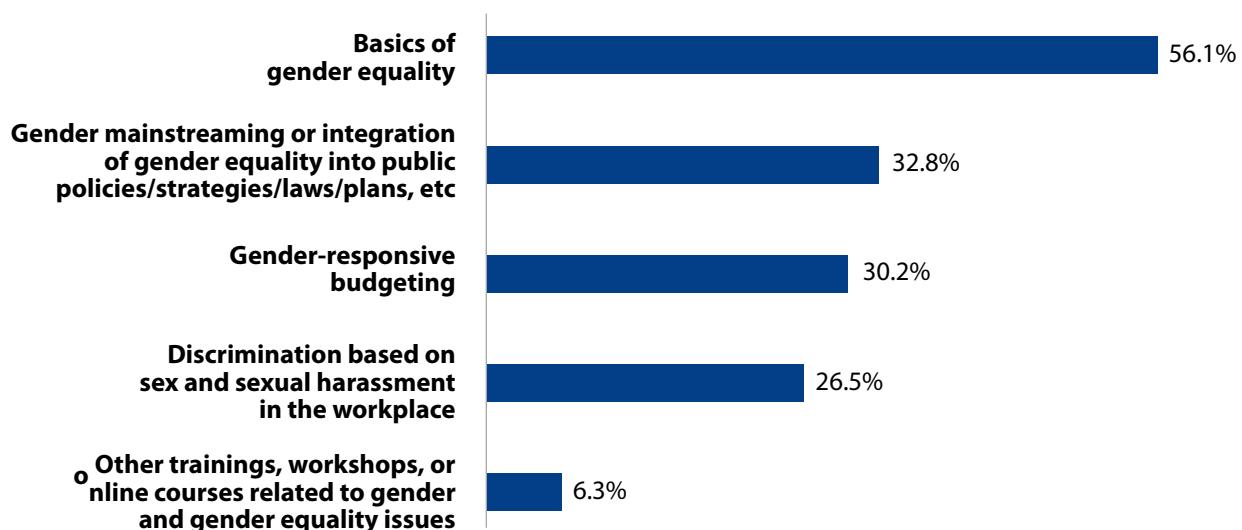
These findings highlight the need for further research into the transparency and accessibility of recruitment processes in public administration, as well as for strengthening mechanisms that ensure equal access to employment, taking into account potential gender-based and local barriers.

The research shows that employees in public institutions in Montenegro who have participated in gender equality training most frequently attended sessions on the basics of gender equality (56.1%). This indicates that basic concepts of gender equality and the legal framework are the most common topics in training programs organized within the public sector.

The second most prominent training area relates to gender mainstreaming, or the integration of gender equality into public policies, strategies, laws, and plans, with one-third of respondents (32.8%) stating that this was the focus of their training.

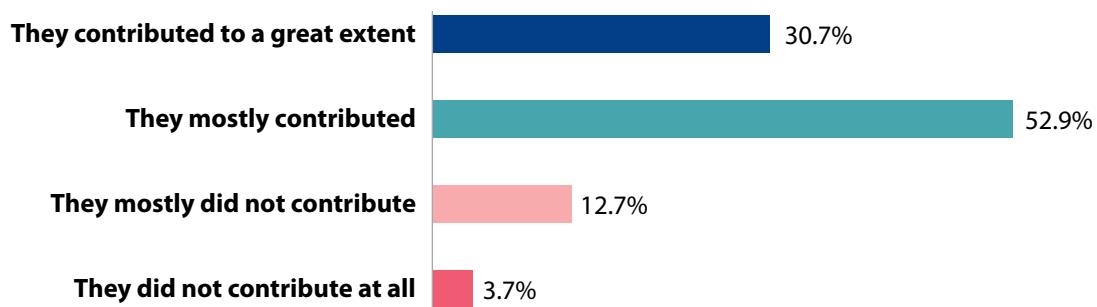
Next in frequency are trainings on gender-sensitive budgeting (30.2%), indicating that a number of institutions are addressing financial equity and the fair distribution of resources based on gender-specific needs. Training sessions on gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace were attended by one-quarter of respondents (26.5%).

Graph 184: Employees in public institutions: What were the topics of these trainings/seminars/workshops? Please mark all areas in which you received training within your institution in the past 12 months. Multiple answers possible (N=189)



The research results show that the majority of employees who participated in gender equality training believe that the skills and knowledge they acquired had a positive impact on their work within their institutions. Cumulatively, 83.6% believe that the acquired skills contributed to improving their work. These findings indicate that such training is recognized as useful and relevant for the professional development of employees in the public sector.

Graph 185: Employees in public institutions: To what extent do you believe that the skills and knowledge you gained from these trainings, seminars, and workshops have contributed to the improvement of your work within the institution? (N=189)

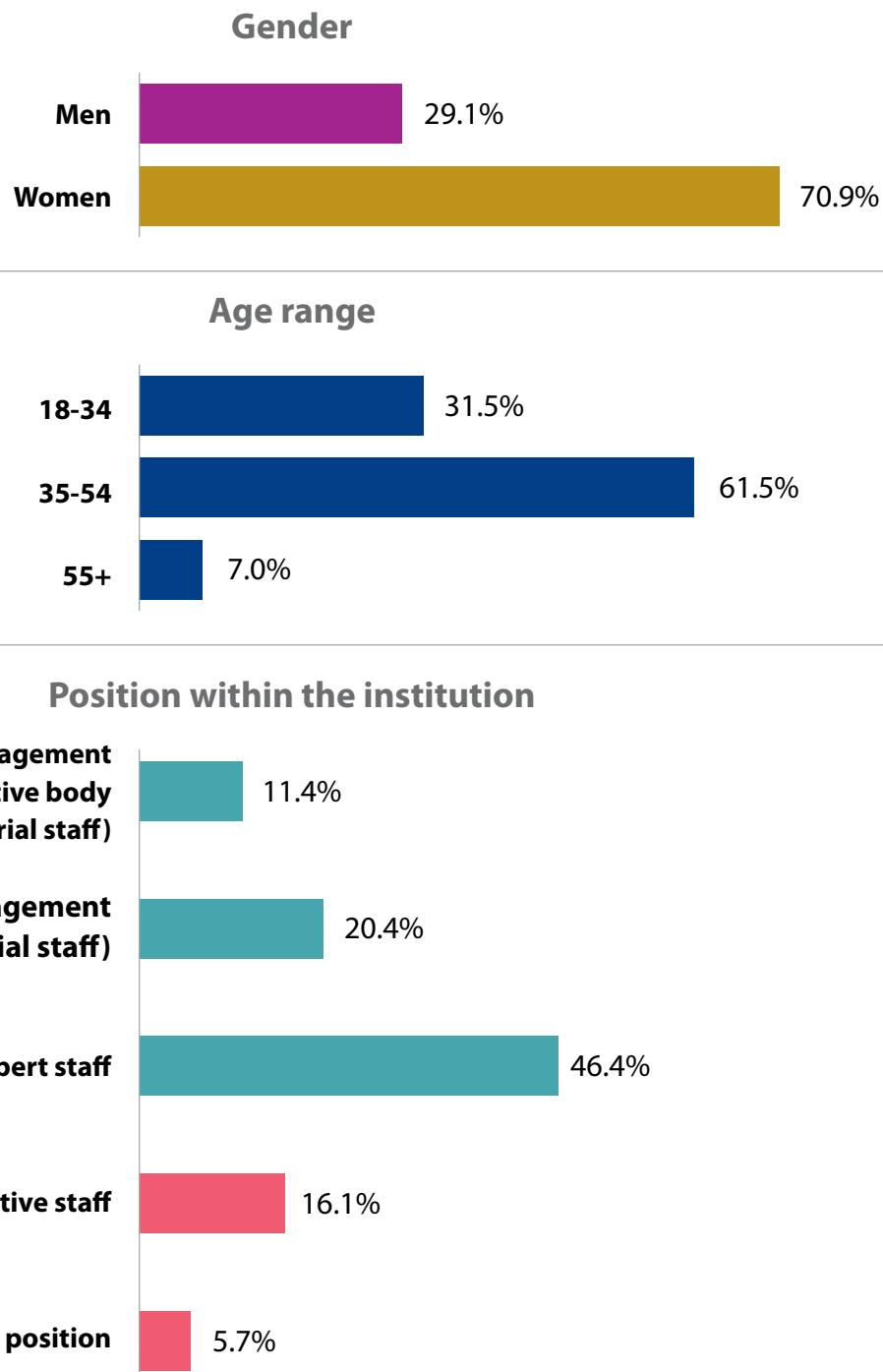




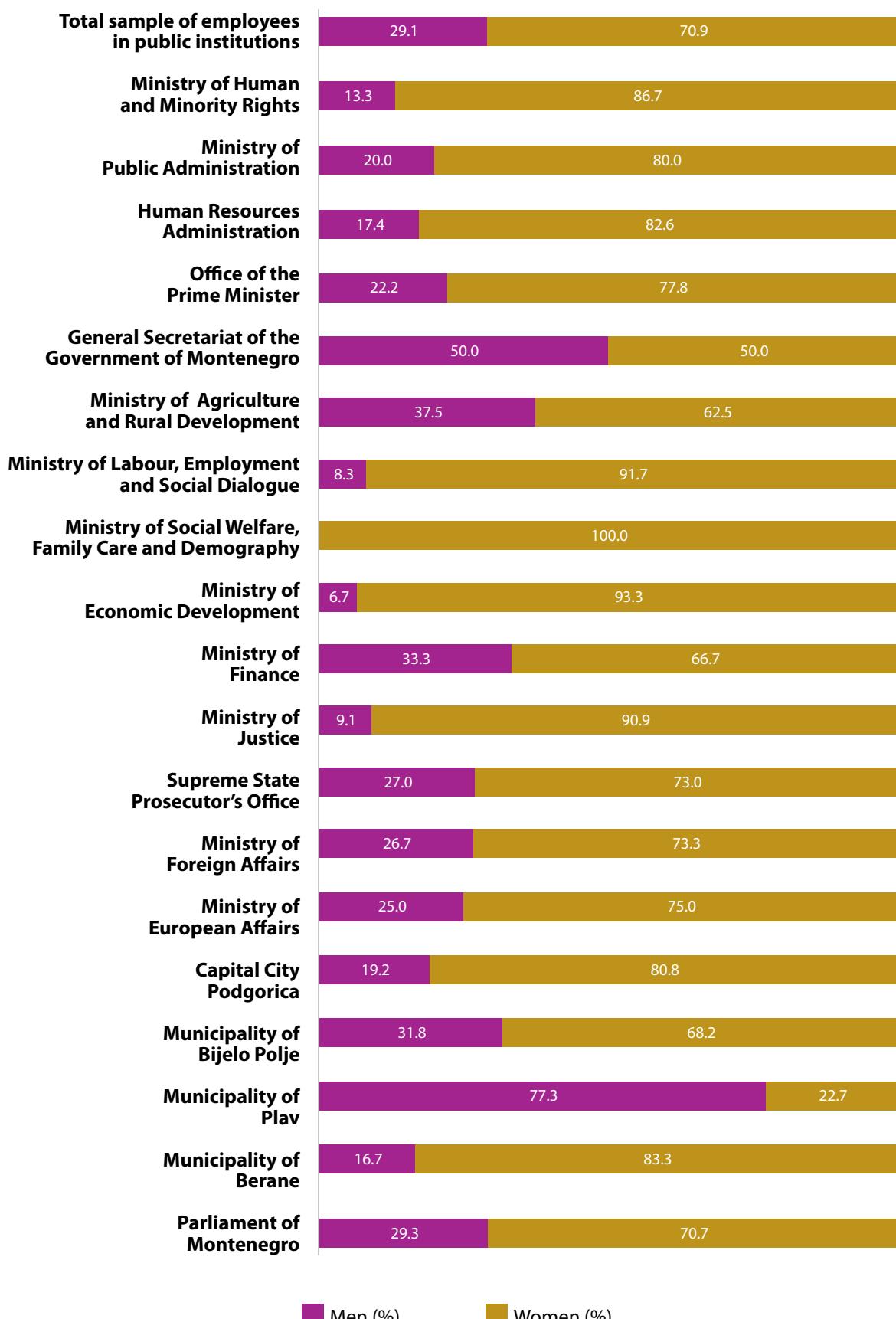


ANNEX I: DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTION EMPLOYEES

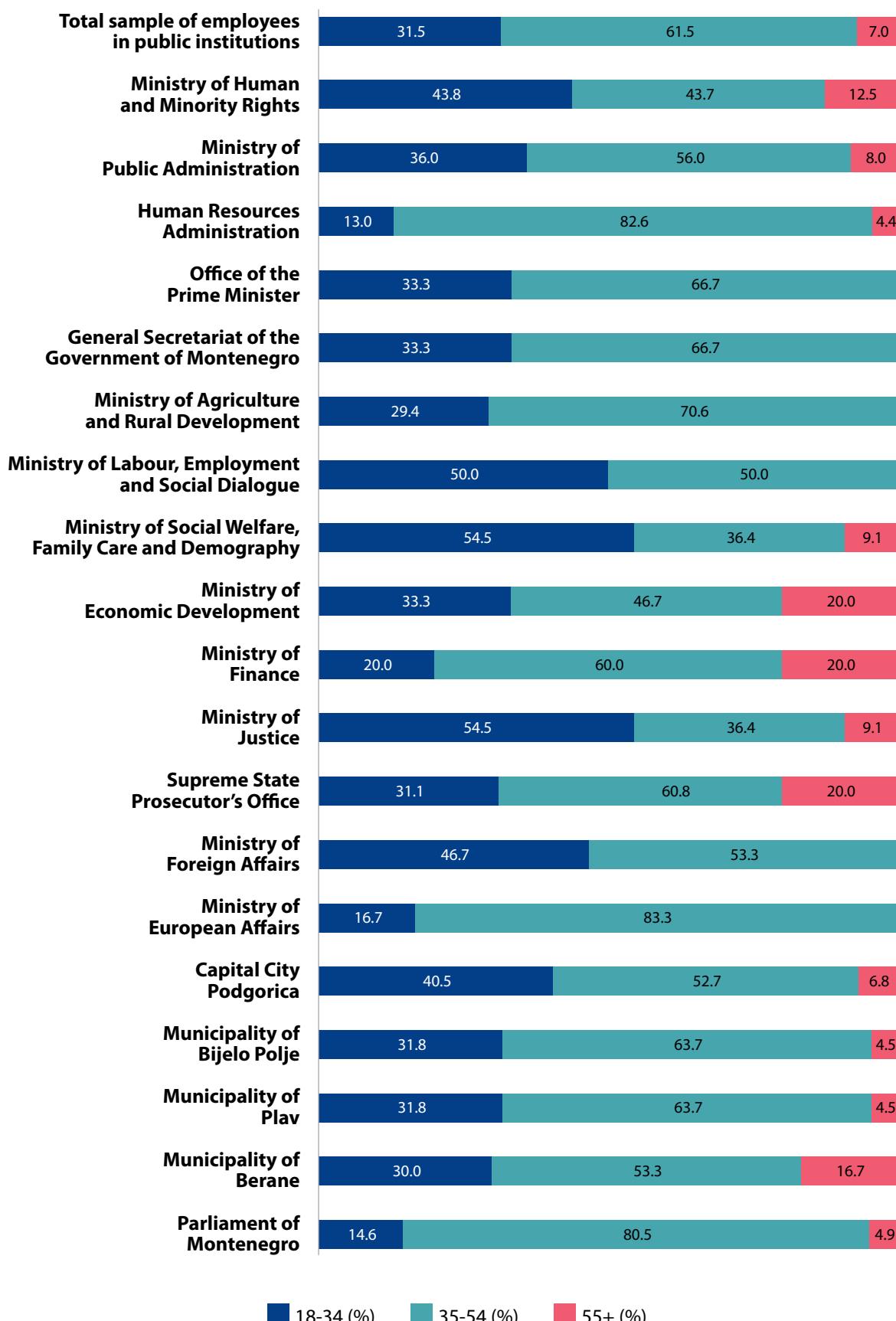
Graph 186: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of employees in public institutions: Gender, age, position of employees within institutions (N=545)



Graph 187: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of employees in public institutions: Gender by institution

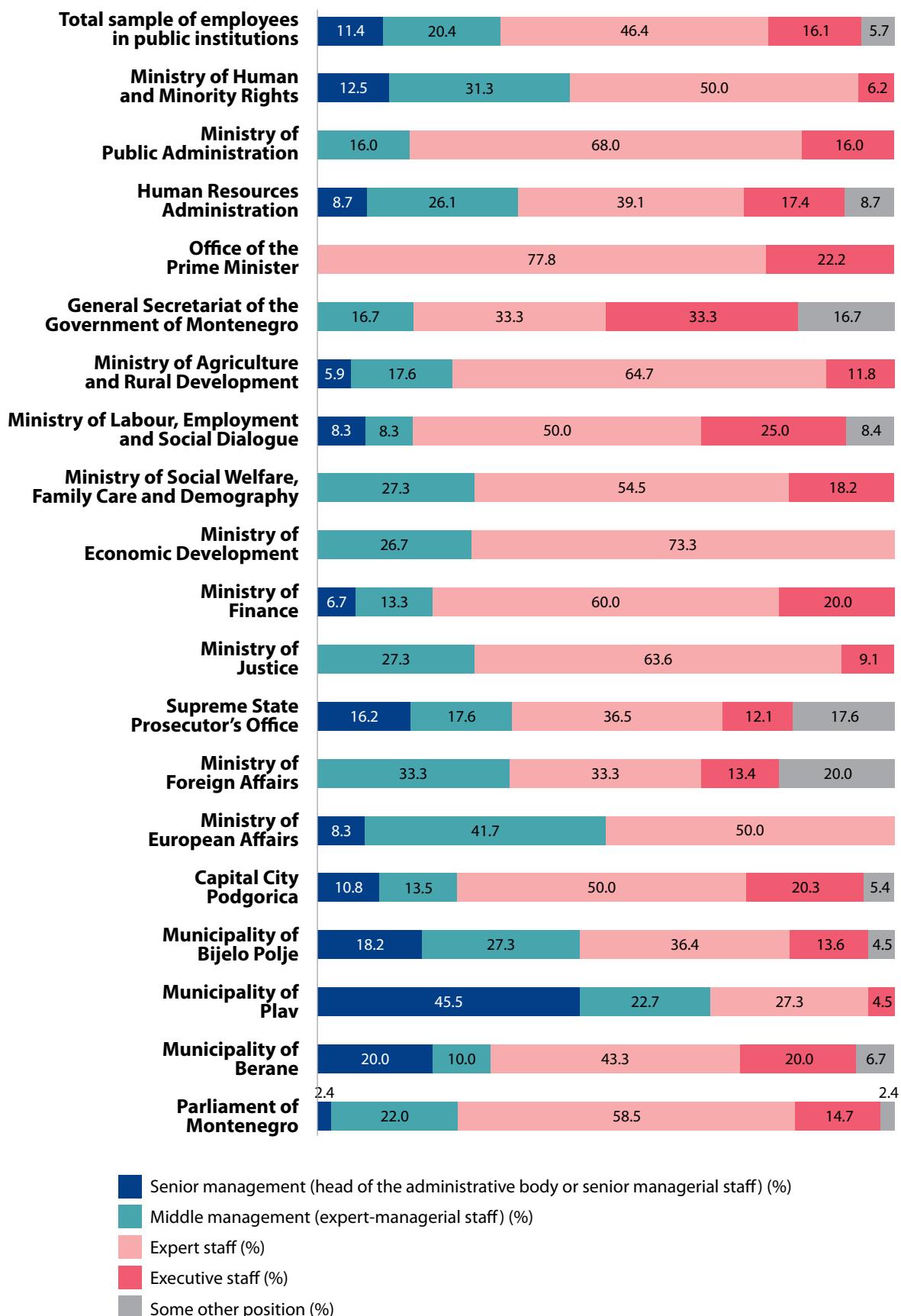


Graph 188: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of employees in public institutions: Age by institution



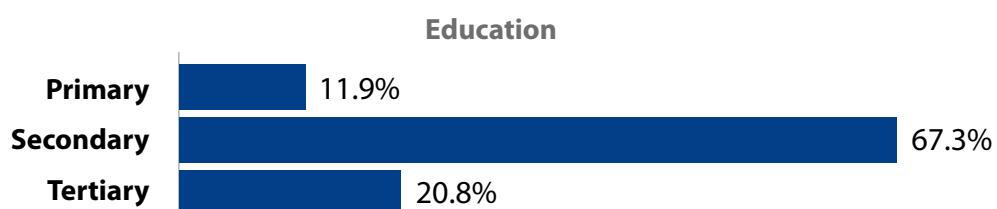
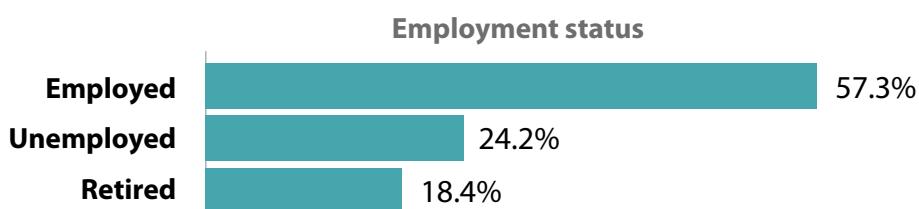
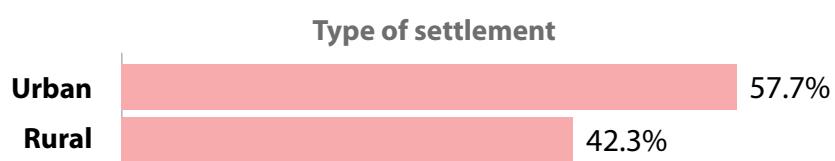
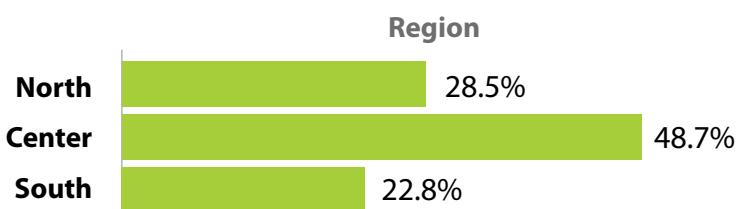
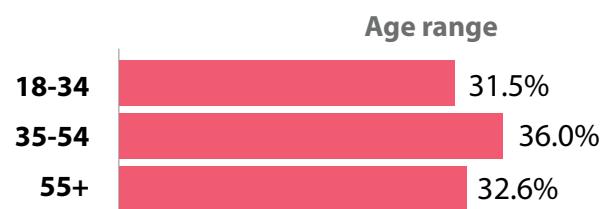
■ 18-34 (%) ■ 35-54 (%) ■ 55+ (%)

Grafik 189: Demografske i socio-ekonomske karakteristike zaposlenih u javnim institucijama: Pozicija zaposlenih prema institucijama



ANNEX II: DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CITIZENS

Graph 190: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of citizens: Gender, age, region, type of settlement, employment status, education (N=1005)



Graph 191: Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of citizens: Marital status, parental status, monthly household income, ethnic affiliation (N=1005)

