

# CASE Network Studies & Analyses

## Gender Gap in the CIS Region

**Magdalena Rokicka**

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## List of abbreviations:

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CA	Central Asia
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ENEPO	Eastern Neighbourhood : Economic Potential and Future Development
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
EU-12	Countries that are members of the European Union since 2004
EU-15	Countries in the European Union prior to May 2004
GDI	Gender Related Development Index
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GID	Gender, Institutions, and Development database
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
ILO	International Labour Organization
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LOC	Locus of control
NGO	Non governmental organisation
NMS	New Member States (EU)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RLMS	Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey
ULMS	Ukrainian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank
WDI	World Development Indicators (WB)
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organisation



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## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the issues of gender disparities in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, with a special focus given to countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)<sup>1</sup>. The analysis is conducted in several dimensions: labour participation, economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and demography<sup>2</sup>.

Beside the comparative study of “in region differentials” done for the CIS, I analyze the trends in gender disparities in comparison to: EU-12 and EU-15, using data for the period 1985-2005.

The study confirms the existence of slightly different paths in which gender disparities have evolved over time. While in EU-15 women participation in labour market, their remuneration, and position in public life have significantly increased, in majority of the CIS countries a gradual decrease of female labour activity was reported. In addition female representation in politics and public life has shrunken after and during the transition period. On the other hand in such fields as secondary and tertiary education attainment, health, and demography male population in the CIS region has become more disadvantaged, which also leads to enlarging gender gap.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Neighborhood Policy applies to following CIS members: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia (with certain restrictions) and Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> This is an approach applied by World Economic Forum in the report “Global Gender Gap”.



## Introduction

Gender issues have been given little attention in the CIS region. Even if discussed, they are not approached in a comprehensive way. As a result, gender topics are raised mostly as a consequence of demographers' alerts of dramatic decreases in fertility rates, or in the context of a significant gap in life expectancy figures between women and men.

The CIS region shared a common historical past by having been a part of the USSR. Female labour participation was high in the majority of Soviet republics. Women were also represented in the governmental and party structures, although rather rarely in the highest level. They had equal access to education and were not subject to large earnings disparities. Although those facts indicated formal gender equality, they have not been present during and after the transition. Different paths have been followed by men and women. The economic reforms or their lack have affected men and women in different ways. As a result no single picture of the region in terms of gender equality applies any longer.

This paper is organized as follows. Part I, the literature review, develops a framework that identifies the main dimension of gender inequality, highlights the links between the increase in gender equality and sustainable development and growth. Moreover, it provides an overview of main measures of the gender gap used in international comparisons. Part II presents a gender analysis for the CIS region, while Part III is an analytical study of the gender gap in the CIS countries, especially those which are covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

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## 1. Gender gap: Literature review

It is not the aim of this study to review all available literature on the gender issues. Therefore I focus on the most recent policy research, and particularly on those studies that can be useful in an analysis of gender inequality in the CIS region, and in some comparisons with the EU countries.

There is no homogeneous definition of the term “gender gap”. This expression was first used in relation to differences in women and men voting preferences observed in USA in seventies. Since then it was extended to other areas. In my report the term is mainly used in relation to gender disparity in economic context. Throughout this paper the terms “gender inequality”, “gender gap” and “gender disparity” will be used interchangeably and treated as synonyms in the meaning of disproportionate differences between sexes, as one of the main aims of this study is to present existing disparities without subjective judgments.

After having reviewed a vast array of literature on the subject, I identified several areas for the analysis of gender inequality:

- Main dimensions
- Causes
- Effects on sustainable development and economic growth, and
- Measuring methods

### 1.1. *Main dimensions of the gender gap*

There is a consensus that gender equality should be understood as the equality of chances and opportunities. Therefore gender inequality is basically analyzed as a disparity in women’s and men’s conditions under which they participate in and benefit from development. Gender disparity derives from biological and psychological differences between men and women although social expectations, cultural and legal conditions also contribute to a gender gap. All societies experience gender asymmetries, to various degrees. Although a lot of efforts have been made to eliminate gender inequality, no country has fully succeeded in this endeavour. Nordic countries, followed by New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom have

reduced this gap considerably, and removed the majority of obstacles, while significant gender inequalities still exists in such countries as Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey.

Most frequently, studies on the gender gap are conducted in the context of:

- Schooling and access to education (disparities tend to be greater among the poor)
- Access to health care (mothers' health has consequences for the health of other family members)
- Access to labour market (fair and equal employment opportunities can enhance labour productivity and lead to faster economic growth)
- Remuneration for work (only part of a wage gap can be explained by gender differences in education, work experience, or job characteristics; even when controlling for them we still find gender differences in wages), and
- Legal and political rights (often accompanied by social norms and customs)

Although some progress has been achieved in combating inequalities, the pace of change was not the same in different regions. While most African countries are still trying to provide schooling and education at equal levels for both boys and girls, this is not any more issues of concern in European countries, in which gender disparity are mostly manifested in the area of remuneration for equal work. It seems that this aspect of the gender gap is the most difficult to overcome, as a lot of additional factors other than gender have an influence on the level of salary, for example: sector of activity, experience, level of responsibility, etc.

## **1.2. Explaining the gender gap**

### **1.2.1 Social norms, cultural environment, and psychological differences**

Important impediments to gender equality are social norms, laws, and the cultural environment (*Engendering Development*, 2001). To achieve gender equality, appropriate changes should occur in legal and regulatory frameworks, markets, and organizations. An elementary step is to establish equal basic rights, especially in family law, protection against gender-related violence, property and political rights. These factors, which are often hardly measurable, determine the roles that women and men play in the family, the community and the society and they vary across countries, even those with similar levels of development.

Verheul et al. (2005) examined female and male differences in entrepreneurship. Considered a driving force of economic development, female entrepreneurship still lags

behind that of male's although there are substantial variations between countries. Using data from 29 countries, it was demonstrated that in India, Argentina, and Brazil, female entrepreneurship rates are high, while in Japan, Belgium or Russia they are relatively low. According to Verheul et al. (2005), male and female patterns of entrepreneurship differ not only in numbers but also in their structure: the two groups prefer different sectors, produce different products, and have different market targets and forms of organization.

Linz and Semykina (2005), using a data set for 2,600 Russian employees, found that a gender earning gap could be partly explained by differences in personality. They measured two factors: 1) locus of control (LOC)<sup>3</sup> which refers to a perception of one's behaviour and its consequences, and 2) challenge-affiliation (C-A)<sup>4</sup> to analyze their distribution between gender and their impact on wage differential. Men were more likely to exhibit an internal locus of control and a need for challenge; therefore, their remuneration was higher. Moreover, Linz and Semykina (2005) claimed that earnings of women are more affected by their personalities than men's earnings.

Among other frequently mentioned explanations of a gender gap, especially in relation to earnings, the following factors are mentioned apart from discrimination: ability, educational endowment, and employment segregation.

### **1.2.2 Level of development and trade liberalization**

In general, development and economic growth are believed to narrow the gender gap, as the wage gap between women and men tends to be wider in less developed countries than in industrially advanced economies. These common beliefs are supported by empirical analysis, which apply broader definition of gender gap, not limited to the wage disparity. According to Zhang et al. (1999) perpetual growth has a crucial role in reducing gender gaps in terms of human capital ratio between men and women. On the other hand the direction of causality is not obvious; Klasen (1999) claimed that greater gender equality in education improves human capital and positively determine the economic growth (more in I.3).

Schultz (2006) argued that liberalization of trade policy is linked to the advancement of economic status of women, and that export-led growth in middle- and low-income

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<sup>3</sup> Individuals who are characterized by external LOC believe that the results of their activities are a function of luck, fate and external factors beyond their control. Employees with internal LOC who rely on their own actions are in general more motivated and productive.

<sup>4</sup> Challenge is associated with achieving success, and affiliation is more connected with maintaining good and friendly relationships.

countries is associated with improvement in women's employment opportunities. At the same time, he added that natural resource exports appear to reduce equalization of investment in schooling and health between men and women. His cross-country empirical studies show that liberalization of trade is associated with the growth of female educational enrolment and with an increase in female life expectation.

Slightly different view is expressed by Parpart (2002), specialist in African social issues and labour, who maintains that increase of income or economic development within society with patriarchal institutions will not necessarily lead to gender equality, as cultural factors and social institutions are the most important determinants of women's participation in economic activity.

### **1.3. Consequences of gender inequality**

Consequences of gender inequality in the context of trade performance were studied by Busse and Spielman (2005). On the basis of an empirical analysis of 92 countries, and using a standard Heckscher-Ohlin model<sup>5</sup>, the hypothesis that the gender gap affects the competitiveness of countries by influencing trade flows was tested. Three dimensions were taken into account, namely differences in wages, labour activity, and access to education. The results indicated that countries with a larger gender wage gap were exporting more labour-intensive goods than the others, although the gender gaps in labour activity and educational attainment were negatively associated with countries' comparative advantages in labour-intensive goods. These results provoked a discussion of the role of and the need for fundamental labour standards, including those ensuring equal wages for males and females.

The negative consequences of the gender gap for long term growth were also studied by Klasen (2002). Using cross-country and panel regressions, he analyzed how gender inequality in education affects long-term economic growth. The results suggested that gender inequality in education directly influenced economic growth by lowering the average level of human capital. He also found that growth is indirectly affected by the impact of gender inequality on investment and population growth. He claimed that around 0.4 percentage points of differences in annual per capita growth rates between East Asia and Sub-Saharan

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<sup>5</sup> Heckscher-Ohlin model (H-O model) is a general equilibrium model of international trade. It builds on David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage by predicting patterns of commerce and production based on the factor endowments of a trading region. The model essentially implies that countries will export products that utilize their abundant and cheap factors of production and import products that utilize the countries' scarce factors.

Africa can be accounted for by differences in gender gaps in education between these regions.

Similar views are presented by Morrison et al. (2007). Their paper summarized the evidence from studies on the relationship between gender equality and poverty reduction and growth at the macro level. They pointed out that gender equality affects economic growth through various channels:

- Via increased quality of human capital, which is reflected in the increased productivity of labour and other complementary inputs to the production process
- Via increased efficiency in the allocation of different inputs; obstacles for women's employment in certain occupations may result in allocative inefficiency; if other inputs like land and capital are allocated on a non-economic (e.g. cultural) basis, a similar inefficiency occurs; and
- Via differential marginal propensities to save; although it is questionable they based their assumption on empirical evidence provided by Seguino and Floro (2003)<sup>6</sup> that women may have greater incentives to save than men, reflecting women's role as "principal home builders" and women's intergenerational altruism

## **1.4. Measuring the gender gap**

There are several approaches to measuring the gender disparities across countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the World Economic Forum (WEF) have proposed their own indices to quantify the degree of gender bias.

### **1.4.1 The UNDP approach**

To measure gender inequality across countries, the UNDP composed two indicators, which were incorporated into the Human Development Report for the first time in 1995. These are:

- GDI - Gender Related Development Index, and

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<sup>6</sup> Seguino and Floro (2003), in a cross-country panel study of industrialized countries, found that an increase in women's wage value relative to men's wage value was associated with an increase in the domestic savings rate.

- GEM - Gender Empowerment Measure

GDI is the unweighted average of three indices: equally distributed life expectancy index, equally distributed education index and equally distributed income index<sup>7</sup>. Equally distributed index is calculated as the harmonic mean of the female and male respective indices. It rewards gender equality and penalizes inequality; it ranks lower country with larger inter-group differences in each of the component. (HDR, 1995).

This approach has been criticized because of the fact that the harmonic means approach accounts for all gender inequality, weighing all differences between female and male populations. As a consequence, a country where females achieve a higher level of longevity and of education has a lower GDI score than a country with equal scores both for men and women; further on, an advantageous position of women in a country in one dimension can not compensate for deprivation in another dimension (Oudhof, 2000).

GEM is an index based on income share, professional opportunity, and participation in economic decision making and is meant to quantify the economic and political position of women relative to men in a given society. It identifies the percentage of women occupying administrative and managerial posts, working in professional and technical occupations and holding seats in parliaments, as well as the level of women's earned income relative to men's earned income. The scale of GEM values ranges from the worst score of zero to the best score of one.

Some argue that this index, by focusing on women with jobs and those who are active in politics, leaves out the majority of the female population who, in many countries, suffer from high illiteracy, high fertility, and high maternal mortality. An additional concern is that GEM uses absolute values, which could lead to an over-weighted income variable, hence to an underestimation of gender inequality in richer countries.

#### **1.4.2 The OECD approach**

In 2006, the OECD launched a new project with the purpose of constructing the Gender, Institutions, and Development (GID) database which draws on an existing compilation of data from different international sources (UNDP, the World Bank, and the

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<sup>7</sup> It is estimated earned income at purchasing power parity US\$, based on GDP and

United Nations) and supplements them with additional information on social institutions. Information on cultural and traditional practices that impact women's economic development is coded so as to measure the level of discrimination. GID is intended to describe not only the extent of the gender gap, but also the reasons for its occurrence. It follows a hypothesis that the economic role of women depends on various social institutions, women's access to resources, and the overall income of the country. While interactions between these factors are universal, the directions of impact and their intensity vary. Social institutions, such as family code, civil liberties, ownership rights, and physical integrity, not only directly influence the economic role of women, but also affect women's access to resources and participation in a country's economic development.

Given the GID's focus on qualitative and difficult to measure information, many indicators are in the form of ratios rather than absolute values. For measuring the social institutions variable (mostly of qualitative nature) the 0 (better) –1 (worse) scale is used. An electronic GID database, maintained by the OECD, presents wide-ranging comparative data on gender inequality for 161 countries. Currently only the most recent data is available, and no historical records are included.

### **1.4.3 The World Bank approach**

The World Bank's approach to measure the gender gap is essentially based on analysis of the extensive sets of gender-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators on countries. In the majority of the World Bank's reports, female-to-male ratios are used as measures of gender equality in education, health and income. It is assumed that the ratios better capture gender inequality – especially if the comparison is made between countries with substantially different absolute levels of indicators. In relation to gender rights, an index of gender rights is applied. It is calculated as an average of three indices: equality of social and economic rights, equality of political and legal rights, and equality of rights in marriage and divorce proceedings; the three indices are defined on a scale from 1 to 4 (4 being the highest degree of equality).

An electronic database, GenderStats, maintained by the World Bank's Development Data Group, offers statistical and other data in modules on several subjects ranging from health and education to political participation and poverty. Data sources for GenderStats include national statistics, United Nations databases, and World Bank-conducted or funded surveys. Historical and recent data are provided when available.



#### 1.4.4 The World Economic Forum approach

In 2005 a paper published by the WEF presented a new approach to measure the size of the gender gap (Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, 2005). Using available international data, mainly from the World Bank and UNDP, and supplementing them with the results of the WEF Executive Opinion Survey, WEF proposed to analyze gender inequality in five dimensions:

- Economic participation, which concerns not only the actual number of women participating in the labour market, but also their remuneration
- Economic opportunity, which attempts to capture the quality of women's economic involvement, assessing the level of "horizontal occupational segregation" and the level of the "social and economic penalty" for childbirth and child care
- Political empowerment, which measures women's representation in decision-making bodies and their participation in policy formulation
- Educational attainment, seen as the most fundamental prerequisite of equality
- Health and well-being, designed to measure the differences between women and men in their access to sufficient nutrition, healthcare, and safety.

Since the goal of the WEF is to provide for cross-country comparisons, the dimensions of gender inequality listed above are ranked in each of the dimension for particular countries, and then presented in the quantitative order.

Although this approach does not take into account all the issues that affect women, and is limited by the data availability, it provides valuable comparisons across countries in economic, political, health and educational realms, and is used in the current study as a basic tool for assessing the gender gap in the CIS region.

## 2. Previous studies on the gender gap in the CIS region

Several empirical analysis of the gender gap in the different CIS countries have been conducted recently. The major limitation for further studies is a lack of appropriate data sources, while the issues itself is currently acknowledged. Most recent research focus on the transition period and its impact on women's economic and social position. Some of them address gender equality in the context of wages and earnings gaps, especially in Russia and Ukraine. As concerns other CIS members, comprehensive gender assessments covering four central Asian Republics were recently completed as part of a technical assistance project of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). A country gender profile of Georgia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was prepared as part of a World Bank ongoing project. References to the CIS countries are also present in the literature on the gender gap in transition countries, although studies on the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are more widespread. Some partial analyses of the CIS region might be also found in international sources which contain the global overview of the gender gap.

Based on the above-mentioned records, we identified the main findings and obtained a fractional but relatively fresh image of gender inequality in the CIS region.

### 2.1. Gender gap in transition

A comprehensive analysis of the manner in which the transition has affected men and women in Europe and Central Asia (CA) was conducted under a World Bank initiative by Paci (2002). The study covers 27 countries<sup>8</sup> and refers to the period of 1989-2000. Given the high degree of gender formal equality in the previous period, the analysis focuses on the extent of changes rather than on absolute levels of indicators.

The analysis revealed that the process of transformation affected not only the structure of the economy and living standards, but also influenced men and women in a different way. Although in the course of transition unemployment increased, employment in the public sphere declined, and an informal labour market developed, there was no evidence that the situation of women deteriorated as compared to the overall situation. In none of the countries analyzed did the ratio of female to male activity rate decline; only in a few countries

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<sup>8</sup> Former USSR, CEE and former Yugoslavia.

women's unemployment was higher than that of men while the share of women in total employment remained unchanged. Yet, the female position weakened in earnings and formal employment. During transition, earning inequalities grew especially rapidly in Ukraine and Russia which provided the most negative impact on women's wages<sup>9</sup>. Moreover there is evidence that women are more often employed informally or hold part-time jobs. However, in the future, a growing earnings gap may result in a reduction in female work-related benefits, especially pensions. Additionally, the decrease of social benefits, such as state subsidies for nurseries and kindergartens, forced women to spend more time on maintaining diverse household chores and taking care of children and elderly family members.

The evaluation of the impact of poverty on the female population is mixed. In Georgia and Tajikistan, female headed households seem more likely to plunge into poverty. On the other hand, in the majority of countries, this correlation exists mainly in such specific groups as single parents or elderly people.

As concerns the access to basic primary education, gender differences are rather undetectable. Almost the same percentages of girls and boys have access to school. The changes arise when comparing secondary and higher education. In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, girls are at a growing disadvantage in secondary education, while in the majority of other countries, a "reverse gender gap" was revealed, with relatively lower boys' enrolment and school attainment. In higher education, girls' advantage is observed across most of the region, although a falling rate of female enrolment is observed in Central Asia.

A distinctive feature of transition in the CIS region called "adverse development" is linked to the deterioration of health and lowering life expectancy. Male life expectancy dropped in 80% of analysed countries, while and female life expectancy declined in more than half of the countries under this study. The drastic decline was experienced by Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States and Kazakhstan, where average life expectancy declined by 4.5 years from 1989 to 1995. In Russia, male life expectancy drops by 7.3 years to the level of 57.6 years in between 1987 in 1994. The major causes of mortality were: cardiovascular diseases, accidents and violence. As the report claims, the attitudes toward economic instability, poverty and unemployment were often associated with alcohol abuse, stress and poor life style.

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<sup>9</sup> This issue was analysed in a number of studies some of which are discussed in the subsequent part of this document.

When analyzing reproductive health indicators, which are the main characteristics of women's health status, it was observed that some of them have improved: maternal mortality and abortion rates fell while the prevalence of contraceptives increased. However, in other areas some stagnation or deterioration took place: the number of women provided with prenatal care declined, while the number of pregnant women with anaemia increased.

The report refers also to sensitive issues such as human trafficking, violence and juvenile crime. The situation in all these areas worsened, and in many cases has directly affected women.

The World Bank report summary provides us with the following conclusions:

- The impact of transition varied among countries and no regular patterns in gender inequality could be identified.
- Market deregulation and the process of privatization were not equally beneficial for both genders. In the majority of the CIS countries state property was privatized by the governmental or managerial hierarchy. Since women's positions in the top level management had been infrequent, in most cases women were not able to acquire larger assets (also women lacked capital to afford purchasing the privatized property).
- In Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, according to most indicators, the relative position of women worsened.
- In all CIS countries there was a significant gender gap in earnings; however the differences between monthly earnings were shrinking. Although some of the earning disparities might be explained by differences in human capital endowment and differences in job characteristics, part of this gap remained unexplained and might be associated with gender discrimination. The highest proportion of the unexplained earnings gap was observed in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, followed by Russia.
- In the whole region the burden of female household tasks increased leading to "time poverty"<sup>10</sup>, which has implications for women's health and earnings.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> As stated in Bardasi and Wodon (2006), time poverty can be understood as the fact that some individuals do not have enough time for resting and leisure because of long working times both in the labour market and/or domestic chores. Time is a limited resource. More time spent on working in paid or unpaid activities means less leisure, thus greater 'time poverty'.

- In several countries, the process of economic restructuring resulted in a decline in men's health status and their life expectancy, while the female population also experienced a fall in life duration, although the changes were not equally dramatic. An extraordinary increase in mortality coincided with economic instability, growing poverty, and rising unemployment, which were often singled out as the main reasons for hazardous behaviour and premature death.

Gender related issues in Central Asia were given special attention in the ADB's "Regional Synthesis Report" (Gender Assessment, 2006). While the contraction of a generous Soviet social security and distribution system affected both males and females, the changes in the situation of women in the four countries: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan were additionally brought about by the process of building their national identities, based on traditional cultural and religious values

While analyzing official macro level data, the female situation in CA was relatively advantageous in comparison to other countries at similar levels of development, with similar levels of Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP/capita). Two indicators used by the UNDP to assess effects of economic growth, the Human Development Index and the Gender Related Development Index, were at comparable levels, which implies a relatively low gender gap. However the Labour Force Survey (LFS) analyses and field studies present a different picture of women's situation in those countries.

The report claims that women's opportunities in all analyzed cases declined, although the scale of changes varied depending on the local conditions. In all four countries female unemployment rates were higher than those of men; moreover, women were seeking jobs during longer periods of time. Increasing numbers of women leaving the formal labour market were reported in all four republics. As a result, women tended to enter the informal economy or to seek insecure part-time jobs. Furthermore the report demonstrates that women's skills were inappropriate for the emerging market. Women were predominantly employed in such sectors as health services, education, administration, and the textile industry, which underwent budget cuts during the transition. Moreover, vertical segregation resulted in a wage gap and, despite their generally higher competence and education level; women were rarely represented in management positions.

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<sup>11</sup> It might be argued that a technological development, an easier access to different household durables, and availability of goods and products have actually contribute to increased of women free time, decreasing the real time poverty.

Women's access to economic resources such as credit, capital, and land, was limited and there was growing evidence that women were forced to stay in low profit sectors because they lacked capital for investments. This discriminatory gender segregation occurred despite the fact that women, according to the findings of some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Tajikistan, appeared to be less risk averse than men in business decision-making, repaid loans more frequently, and took a longer time perspective in business planning.

In all four countries the primary school enrolment and attendance are balanced by gender, whereas at the secondary and tertiary level a "reverse gender gap" was observed, with more females than males enrolled.

According to the ADB report, an important aspect is the declining role of women in public decision making and in the political process. Reduced personal security, mainly due to increasing female trafficking and sexual harassment in the work place, was also pointed out as forms of gender discrimination.

## **2.2. Gender earnings gap in Russia and Ukraine**

The earnings gap in Russia was discussed by Dohmen et al. (2008), Linz and Semykina (2005), and also examined by Gerry and Kim Byung-Yeon (2001), Reilly (1999), and Silverman and Yanovitch (1997), while gender differences in occupational mobility and segregation in Russia was the main focus of the research by Maltseva (2005). Ukraine's comprehensive studies were conducted by the UNDP and are presented in the *Gender Issues* (2003). The earnings gap in Ukraine was also reported by Ganguli and Terrel (2005) and Braithwaite et al. (2002).

According to estimates for Russia by Silverman and Yanovitch (1997), in 1994, women earned only 68 percent of what was earned by men; furthermore, women constituted the majority of the working poor. Reilly (1999) reported that in the period from 1992 to 1996, the monthly wage gap in Russia was around 38 percent and remained relatively invariable during this period.

Gerry and Kim Byung-Yeon (2001) found that while from 1994 - 1996, the labour market experienced stabilization, the Russian financial crisis had a significant impact on wage differentials and the burden of the crisis increased women discrimination in the labour

market. During the given period, 88 to 96 percent of women experienced a disadvantage in earnings (measured by average real hourly wages), and the close relationship between gender pay gap and economic situation was observed. To measure the gender wage gap, they applied the Oaxaca-Ransom decomposition using data for 1994-98. Majority of studies analyse wage differences by a decomposition of earning differentials into two components: endowment (which describe workers' productivity-related characteristics: education, experience, etc.) and unexplained component (which is often associated with discrimination). The Oaxaca-Ransom decomposition is an extension of the method mentioned above, but additionally it incorporates the occupational distribution into the earnings estimation.

Further estimation, based on additional variables (age, educational attainment, and type of occupation) revealed that less-educated women (those with vocational training or up to secondary education) faced greater disadvantages in terms of wage distribution. Furthermore, young women aged 18-34 were most exposed to the negative economic shock of 1998. A significant variation of gender pay gap was found between regions, which confirms the regional segregation of the labour market in Russia. Women in Moscow, Sankt Petersburg, and the Ural region experienced the largest earning disadvantage. In-kind payments were provided as some compensation mechanism for reducing the earnings gap, especially among those with the lowest wages.

Some of the differences in remuneration between genders might be explained by sectoral segregation. As revealed by Maltseva (2005), the occupational structure of employment in Russia was vastly segregated: among 27 occupational groups only 6 or 7 could be called integrated, while the majority of occupations were dominated either by men or by women. She further highlighted that between 1985 and 2002, women represented 90 percent of life science and health associate professionals, office clerks, customer service clerks, and teaching associate professionals. On the other hand women were virtually nonexistent in such occupations as metal, machinery and related trades workers, as well as drivers and operators of mobile plants. She found that from 1985 to 1994 the occupational segregation level grew, however the decrease of the segregation level was observed in 1994-2002, with continuing entrance of men into "female" occupations (e.g. clerks, sales and services occupations). Simultaneously in this period there was an evident decrease in the overall employment level in some gender-dominated occupations (e.g. industrial workers).

The differential in wages between men and women could also be explained by vertical segregation: different levels of professional hierarchy with predominantly male or female labour. According to the Ukrainian Population survey of 2002, the female share in top

management positions in industry was 20.2 percent. The highest share of women managers was found in the non-productive sectors (*Gender issues*, 2003). Despite a high representation of women in state administration, they were over-represented in the support staff category, while their participation at decision-making levels and in executive power structures in Ukraine was marginal, i.e. less than 10 percent (Ukraine: Civil Service 1997). This finding was also supported by Ganguli and Terrell (2005). Using the Ukrainian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (ULMS), they reported that the gender pay gap in Ukraine is higher in the top half of the earnings distribution, and a glass ceiling was observed in three of the analysed years: 1986, 1991, and 2003. It was also revealed that the glass ceiling was lower in the public sector than in the private sector.

### 3. Results of data analysis

The aim of this section is to investigate the existence of the gender gap in the CIS countries, especially those which are covered by ENP. While analyzing those issues I intend to compare the CIS region with the situation in the EU countries - both the 'old' members (EU-15), and New Member States (EU-12). I presume that the common historical background of CEE countries and CIS countries may result in similar findings in the area of gender inequality. However, more than 15 years of CEE transformation as well as the EU accession have had a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in this region, so the most recent findings for the two groups may vary.

I attempt not just to find out what the disparities are, but more importantly, why they exist and what measures may help eliminate them, especially in the context of ENP. The study covers the period of 1985-2004. To ensure that I obtain relatively comparable and consistent information, I use data from international sources, mainly from the World Bank, UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO) databases. I adopt the approach of Lopez-Claros and Zahidi, based mainly on the findings of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), who measured the gender gap in five crucial areas:

- economic participation
- economic opportunity
- political empowerment



- educational attainment, and
- health and demography

This study focus mainly on economic participation and opportunity so as to reflect ENEPO research objectives.

### **3.1. Economic participation**

The term “economic participation” indicates the presence of women in the workforce, their remunerations and level of unemployment.

#### **3.1.1 Labour force participation rate<sup>12</sup>**

Although the female population is greater than the male population, female labour market participation, measured as those who have a job or are looking for a job, is smaller. This is a global trend, which is explained by the traditional division of labour and the responsibility of women to maintain diverse household chores, maternity and childcare. When looking at the proportion of female labour force activity, we could easily distinguish two opposite trends: one represents the situation in the EU-15, and the second one the situation in the EU-12 and the other transition countries.

In 1985, the female labour force participation rates in the CIS were very high, ranging between 75 percent (Moldova and Russia) and 65 percent of the working age population (Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan); a similar situation was typical for CEE countries, including Bulgaria, and Romania, and to a smaller extent for the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, average activity rates in the EU-15 varied between 39 percent in Ireland and 80 percent in Sweden with the mean value of 51 percent. Since this time, women’s activity rates have dropped in EU-12 and the CIS but have increased in EU-15.

Glancing at the figures mentioned above, it seems that the economic participation of women declined in the whole the CIS region. However, we can not make this conclusion without first observing the trends in the male labour force activity in the given period, in which a more homogeneous trend is noticeable. In all observed geographical subgroups, the male

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<sup>12</sup> We used data from the WDI database. The labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population aged 15–64 that is economically active, i.e., all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specified period. The labor force participation rates are derived from the ILO database (Estimates and Projections of the Economically Active Population, 1980–2020, fifth edition). The ILO publishes estimates of the economically active population in its Yearbook of Labour Statistics.

labour force activity between 1985 and 2004 declined but the intensity of those changes varied, with the largest decline observed in the CIS and CEE countries.

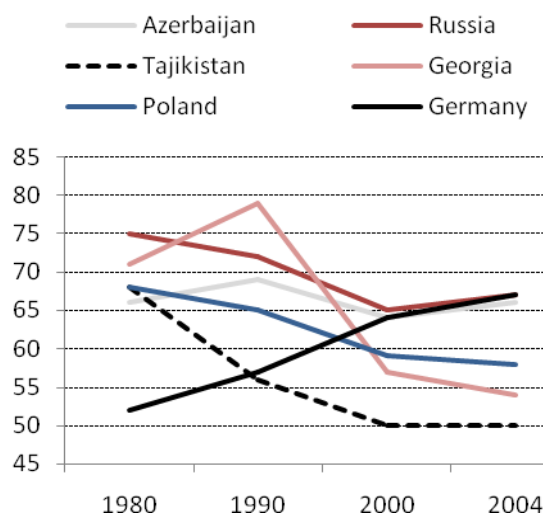
This common shift may reflect global socio-demographic changes common for Europe and Central Asia: a longer period of education, a delay in the moment of entering the labour market, and a reduced male labour force participation rate in the youngest age group (the cohort of 15-25 year olds). Scarce data confirm this hypothesis although in some CIS countries as well as CEE countries, the decline was also observed in other age categories, which reflected a transformation-related disruption in the labour market.

One of the most distinctive features of communist development was the ideologically inspired integration of women into the labour force. Government funded social services and protection schemes released women, to some extent, from many household responsibilities such as child care, so they could enter the labour market relatively easily, without bearing large additional costs, although in many cases this employment was compulsory. Special privileges, like shorter working hours for mothers with young children, a lower retirement age, and other social benefits, as well as a relatively equal system of remuneration encouraged women to enter the labour market. This policy also resulted in changes in the perception of the female role in society. Women were considered lawful workers, and although they were concentrated in specific sectors, they were provided with the possibility to develop their professional careers.

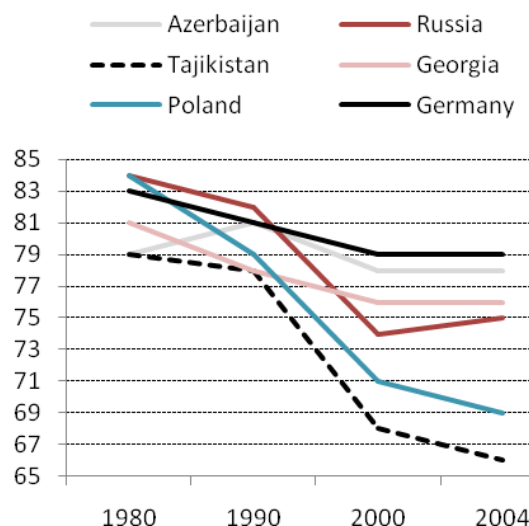
The collapse of the centrally planned economy resulted in a temporary economic decline, especially in the social protection net, which could explain the partial exit of women from the labour force in the CIS. Many women's exit from the labour force was permanent, especially those with the lowest earnings, as their remuneration did not provide them with an appropriate premium for paid child care. As for the other factors which caused the outflow of the labour force, they similarly affected both genders. Some of these changes, which were characteristic of the transition period, may be explained by:

- An increase in informal labour market activity
- Early retirement schemes and disability benefits, and
- Passive unemployment (people who have ceased active job-seeking)

**Figure 1: Female labour activity rates for selected countries, 1980-2004, percent**



**Figure 2: Male labour activity rates for selected countries, 1980-2004, percent**



Source: Own calculations based on the World Development Indicators (WDI) database

It should also be noted that the CIS region is not homogenous in respect to gender participation in the labour market. The differences between the rates of labour activity across the CIS are significant. Women's labour activity ranged from about 70 percent of the rate of men in Georgia to 91 percent in Belarus and Kazakhstan in 2004. We found out that the gender gap was declining over time in the majority of the CIS members, although in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan the gap tended to grow wider. The same trends were observed in Bulgaria and Romania, while in the EU-15 female labour activity increased, reducing the gender gap. Unfortunately, the narrowing of gender discrepancies in the CIS was not an effect of the growth of the female participation in the labour market (as it was the case in EU-15) but resulted in a decline in male labour activity.

### 3.1.2 Unemployment<sup>13</sup>

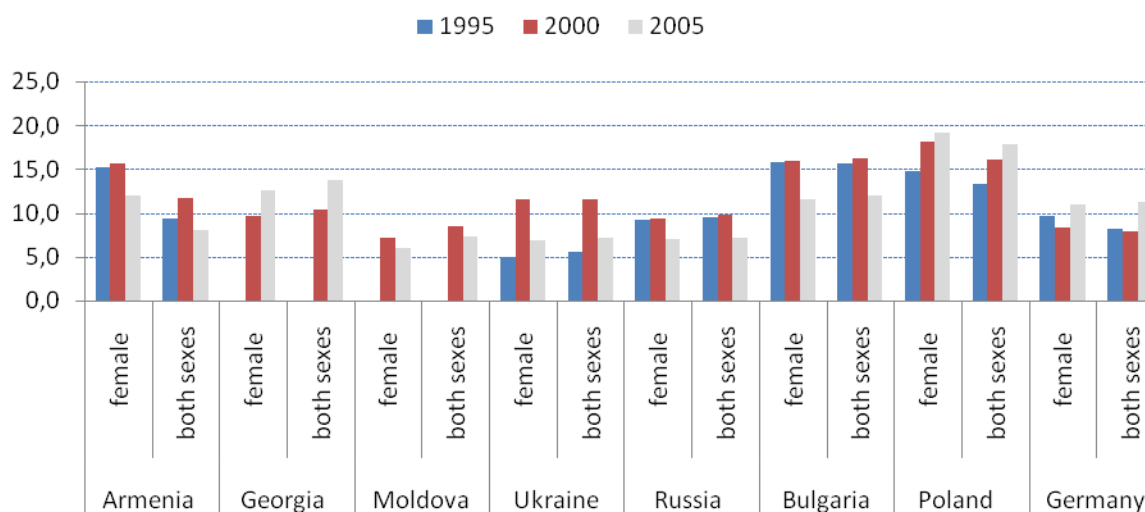
Market transformation has led to unemployment and the reorganization of production in most of the CIS region; however changes in unemployment rates varied across countries. As argued by Boeri and Terrell (2002), the CIS region and the CEE countries experienced two different paths of transformation. While in the CEE countries the first response of the companies for economic problems was a reduction of employment, in most CIS countries

<sup>13</sup> We used data from the UNECE Statistical Division Database. The unemployment rate represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the civilian labour force (persons employed plus those actively seeking jobs).

the labour force was kept in place but real wages decreased. This resulted in lower unemployment figures in the CIS compared to other transition countries. Nevertheless the lack of relevant data available for all CIS countries makes the analysis complicated. Based on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) sources, we can observe that between 1995 and 2000 the number of unemployed in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Russia was rising, whereas since 2000 a slight decline in the unemployment rate has been noticed in these countries. According to official statistics, in 2005, in the CIS the highest unemployment rate was observed in Georgia (13.8 percent), while Moldova recorded only 7.3 percent.

However, the reliability of this data is questionable. The official data for the CA countries seems to be underestimated, showing only registered unemployment, which covered only a part of the people seeking jobs. For example, in Azerbaijan 1.4 percent of the labour force was registered as unemployed (in 2005, UNECE), while study of the Asian Development Bank (*Gender Assessment ...*, 2006) estimated the rate of unemployment in Azerbaijan in 2006 at 40,5 percent for women and 16,4 percent for men.

**Figure 3: Unemployment rates for selected countries, by gender, 1995-2005, percent**



Sources: UNECE Statistical Division Database

There is no single trend in unemployment in the CIS area. In Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan unemployment is higher among women, but the gender disparities reduced between 1995 and 2005. Higher female unemployment compared to male was also a common feature of the EU-15 countries: in 2005 in 10 out of 15 countries the unemployment rates for women were higher than those calculated for both sexes together.

On the other hand in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine female unemployment was lower than male unemployment in 2000, and this tendency sustained as well in 2005. During the analyzed period, female activity rates also decreased in this group of countries, particularly in Georgia, where rates fell from 73 percent in 1995 to 54 percent in 2004, which could partly explain the obtained results.<sup>14</sup>

As regards female and male access to the labour market, the situation in the CIS region is not homogenous. In several countries women seeking jobs outnumbered men, while in some other countries men seeking jobs outnumbered women. Moreover, we could distinguish two opposite trends as regards female unemployment. Between 1995 and 2005, the number of unemployed women decreased in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Russia, while in Azerbaijan and Georgia this number increased. In Ukraine, between 1995 and 2000 the number of women actively searching for jobs increased, while between 2000 and 2005 it declined.

Generally, our study gives a mixed picture of gender differences in the labour market. We can not conclude that the transformation deteriorated the situation of women in the entire CIS, nor can such a statement be made in regard to men. We did observe that labour market changes had a negative impact on both sexes. Furthermore, more specific analysis reveals that larger inequalities can be found between different age groups (older vs. younger generation), sectoral and occupational groups, rather than between the two genders.

A more detailed analysis based on additional information such as duration of unemployment, its sectoral characteristics, unemployment compensation, etc. should be conducted to receive a more comprehensive picture of gender aspects of labour market participation. Unfortunately, the lack of appropriate data and reliable sources of information makes such a task difficult.

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<sup>14</sup> Unemployment rate is calculated as a proportion of people looking for a job to those who have or are looking for a job. Such definition implies that inflow from unemployment into inactivity might artificially reduce the unemployment rate.

### 3.1.3 Income<sup>15</sup>

Although income does not measure all aspects of life quality, it is generally associated with the level of wealth, or derivative of wealth. One of the important issues is income distribution among members of the society, as several studies claimed a negative relationship between income inequality and economic growth.

According to estimates of earned income<sup>16</sup> in the CIS region, EU-12 and EU-15, the gender gap existed in all countries during the entire period of 1997-2004. However, its size and extent were different. In 1997, the largest gender income gap in the CIS region was observed in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, where the level of women's income was some 40 percent lower than that of men. For comparison, in the same year the gender income gap<sup>17</sup> in EU-15 varied between 40 percent in Ireland and Luxembourg to 80 percent in Sweden. Among the EU-12 countries, Malta had the largest gap, and Latvia the smallest one. The CIS region was generally more homogenous, and the gender wage gap in most countries in this region was around 50-60 percent, while in EU-12 and EU-15 larger differences among countries were observed. As was expected, the absolute female income in EU-15 and EU-12 was higher than in the CIS region.

To a certain extent, these results are influenced by the method of construction of the indicator, which was calculated on the basis of the female/male wage levels in each sector, and male and female shares in the economically active population. Generally, a higher CIS's female participation in the labour market affected the estimation of income gained by women.

Contrary to the majority of EU-15 and EU-12 countries where the level of female income was relatively high and continued to grow slowly but constantly, insufficient economic reforms in the CIS region have led to an increase in poverty and gender inequalities. Since 1997, till 2004 the gender gap in earned income in all CIS countries was widening, as increases in incomes were not affecting women equitably. In Georgia the gap increased by 9.7 percentage points (in 2004 compared to 2003); in Moldova and Ukraine the differences between the incomes earned by men and women increased in 2004 respectively by 5.4 and 3.3 percentage points compared to the previous year.

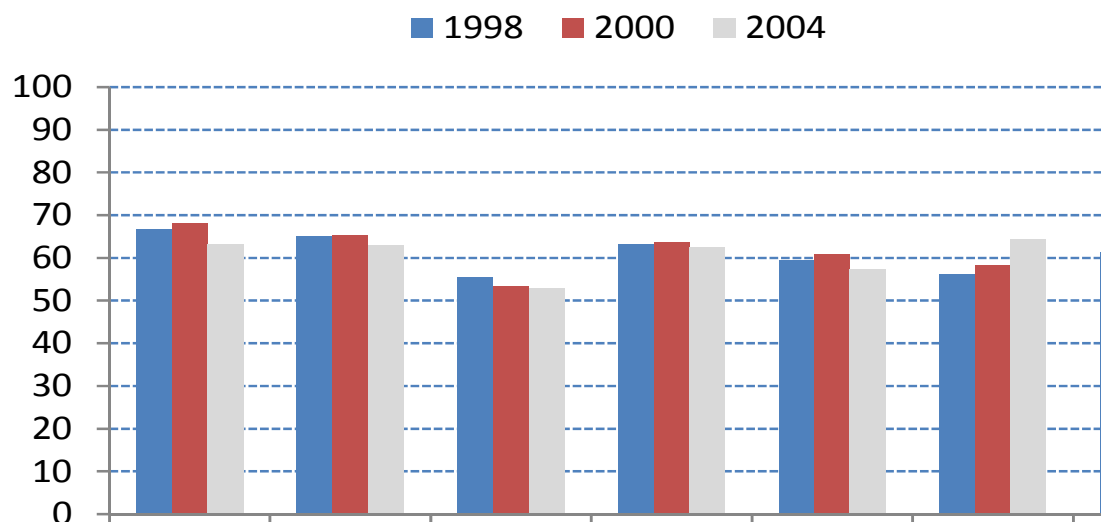
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<sup>15</sup> All data used in this section are based on UNDP sources (Human Development Report; Indicators, different years).

<sup>16</sup> Following UNDP calculation, because of the lack of gender-disaggregated income data use female and male earned income estimation. female and male earned income are estimation on the basis of data on the ratio of the female nonagricultural wage to the male nonagricultural wage, the female and male shares of the economically active population, the total female and male population and GDP per capita in PPP US\$.

<sup>17</sup> Gender gap in this case is defined as the ratio of female to male income generated yearly.

**Figure 4: Gender gap in earned income for selected countries, 1997-2004, female earnings as percent of male earnings**



Source: Own calculation based on HDR Indicators, UNDP

On the contrary, in NMS between 2001 and 2004 the income gap has tended to narrow, with the lowest inequality in Latvia where female income equalled 67 percent of male income and 64 percent in Hungary. (However, none of the EU-12 countries reached the level of Nordic countries, especially that of Sweden (80 percent in 2004)).

To sum up, we have noticed a considerable income gap between genders both in 1997 and 2004 in the CIS region. Since 1997, this disproportion tended to grow over time although at a slow pace. An increase of gender income disparity was also registered in Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia. However, the reverse trend was observed in Hungary and Romania. In 2004, female income ranged from 62 percent of male income in Kazakhstan to 37 percent in Georgia.

Among factors explaining the gender income gap, the sectoral and vertical gender segregations are often mentioned. Concentration of female labour in the less profitable sectors and in the public sector (mainly in education, healthcare, and administration) resulted in lower remuneration, given women's qualifications or workloads. Vertical segregation, a less than proportional women's representation in management structures, could also be associated with female preferences, such as defined work time or part-time employment. However, these factors could only partly explain the existing income disparity.

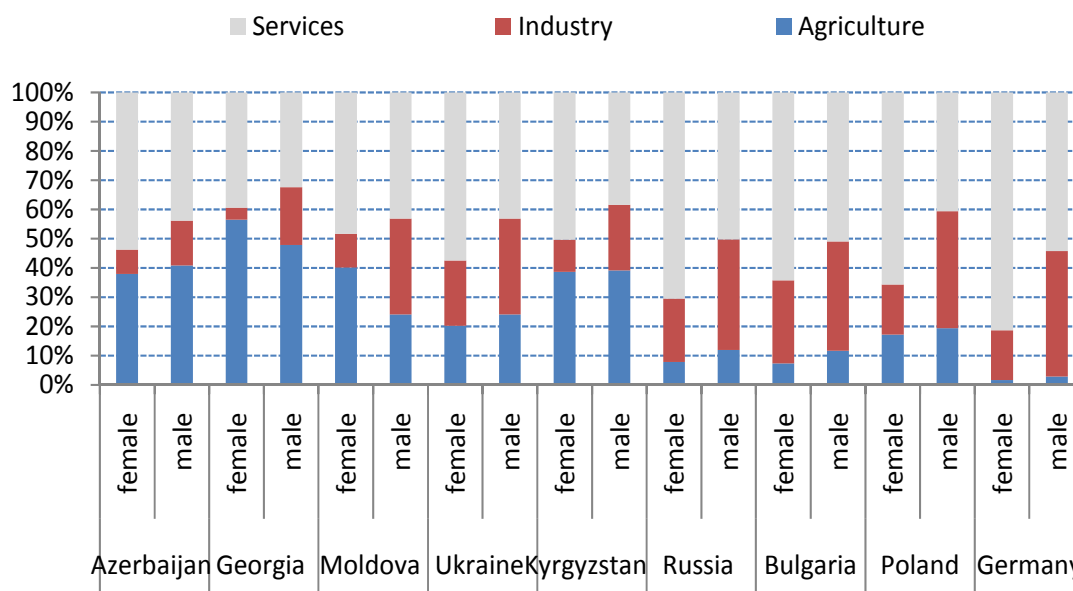
### 3.2. Economic opportunity

Following WEF approach I employ term economic opportunity to describe quality of women economic involvement, i.e. sectoral distribution of employment, sectoral differentials in earnings, impact of maternity laws on women hiring, etc. Studying these aspects can help to identify basic reasons of the existing gender gap.

#### 3.2.1 Employment and sectoral changes<sup>18</sup>

The analysis of gender economic opportunities should focus on labour market segregation, which contributes considerably to income and wage disparities.

**Figure 5: Employment in selected countries, by gender and by sector, 2004, percent**



Source: Own calculations based on UNECE Statistical Division data/ change legend – just agriculture, etc

In 2004 patterns of female employment in the CIS differed significantly from those observed in EU-15 and EU-12 but this reflected region's underdevelopment rather than specific gender issues. Apart from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, in the other of the CIS countries there was a high representation of women in agriculture. In 2004, agriculture was the main sector of female employment in Georgia, and the second source of employment in Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Kyrgyzstan (Fig. 5). In Armenia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, and Russia women were more often employed in services than men while the opposite proportion

<sup>18</sup> Provided data are from UNECE Statistical Division Database



was observed in industry. This representation is similar to the typical image of EU-15 and EU-12 where female employment in services prevailed.

### **Agriculture**

The gender structure of employment in each of the major economic sectors differed across all CIS countries. In 2000 (for which the most comprehensive data are available) more than a half of female labour force of Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova were engaged in agriculture, while in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus this share was below 20 percent. In the majority of EU-12 members apart from Romania female employment in this sector was below 20 percent of total with the highest level in Poland (18.3 percent) and only 3.7 percent of female labour working in agriculture in the Czech Republic.

Since 1995 we could observe some changes in the pattern of female employment in agriculture, although they were not uniform for the whole CIS region. Since then female employment in agriculture has increased in Armenia, while in Ukraine an increase of the female employment in agriculture was noticed just in 2004<sup>19</sup>. In Georgia and Kazakhstan the percentage of female employed in agriculture remained at a high, almost constant, level between 2000 and 2004. Whereas in Russia, Moldova and Azerbaijan female labour participation in agriculture, measured by the real number of employees fell down<sup>20</sup>. In Russia we noticed the shift toward employment in services and industry, while in Moldova mass migration was responsible for female outflow from agriculture. The lack of gender disaggregated data for Turkmenistan and Tajikistan makes the analysis for these countries unfeasible.

In Russia, Moldova and Ukraine changes in female employment in agriculture were parallel to those observed among men. While the directions of changes remained the same, their scopes varied.

In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan some gender specific factors resulted in different paths of changes for women and men. For instance, more Kazakh men quit work in agriculture, due to new employment opportunities especially in mining oil and gas industries. In general the structural changes in Central Asia shifted production from

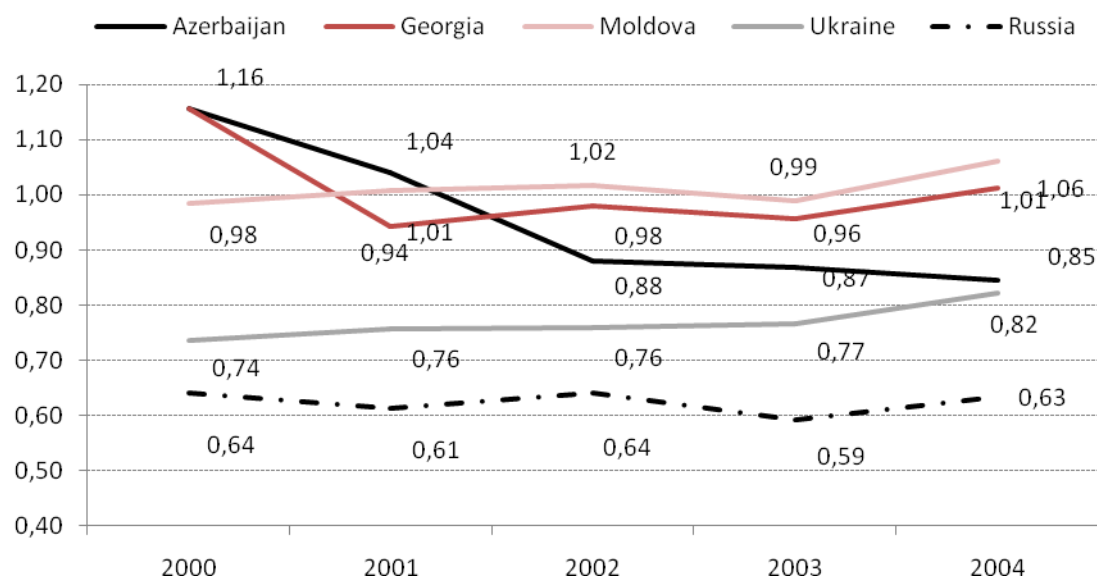
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<sup>19</sup> This observation is based on UNECE indicators, although data from FAO did not confirm this fact, showing a gradual decrease of employment in agriculture between 1999 and 2004. ([http://www.fao.org/ES/ess/compendium\\_2006/pdf/UKR\\_ESS\\_E.pdf](http://www.fao.org/ES/ess/compendium_2006/pdf/UKR_ESS_E.pdf))

<sup>20</sup> Because more men than women left agriculture in the analyzed period in Fig. 6 the proportion of female employed in this sector in comparison to men increased.

agriculture towards minerals and manufacturing which is reflected by the changes in the employment structure. In particular, between 1998 and 2004, the industry's share in GDP rose from 36 percent to 54 percent in Azerbaijan and from 31 percent to 39 percent in Kazakhstan (Dowling and Wignaraja, 2006). The relative changes are presented below in Fig. 6.

**Figure 6: Female/male employment ratio in agriculture in selected CIS countries, 2000 - 2004**



Source: Own calculation based on UNECE Statistical Division data

### **Industry**

Strong differentiation of female employment in industry can be observed across the CIS countries. In 2000, the highest participation ratio was registered in Belarus (30 percent of working females were employed in industry), whereas in Georgia this ratio was only 4,1 percent. This reflected differences in levels of industrialization among individual CIS countries, rather than gender-related specificities of the labour market.

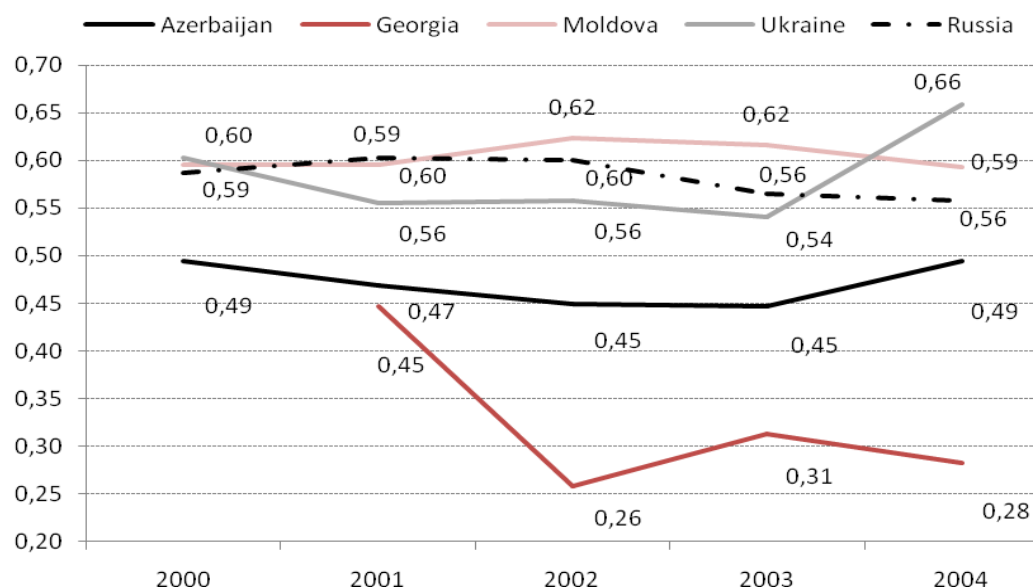
Female employment in industry in the CIS region remained relatively high in comparison to EU-15, ranging from 22 percent of the corresponding total employment for both sexes in Georgia to 39 percent in Ukraine (in 2004). Similar proportion of female employment was observed in EU-12, especially in the countries from the former USSR – in Lithuania and Latvia (respectively 35 percent and 36 percent).

In 2000-2003 apart from Georgia, in the CIS the level of female employment in industry remained relatively stable. In Russia there was a slight decrease in number of women working in industry which was accompanied by growth of female participation in services. While in Azerbaijan some female labour inflow into industry was most likely an effect of an outflow from agriculture.

In the same period, men's participation in industry increased, especially in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan. This increase can partly be explained by the growing importance of mining, oil and gas sectors. A reduction of women's jobs in industry reflected a decrease in numbers of clerical positions and restructuring of light industries, such as textiles shedding labour, mostly females as opposed to male-dominated industries.

The abovementioned outflow of the female labour force from industry in Moldova was accompanied by similar changes for males. Both genders were leaving the country looking for job opportunities abroad.

**Figure 7: Female/male employment ratio in industry in selected CIS countries, 2000-04**



Source: Own calculations based on UNECE Statistical Division data

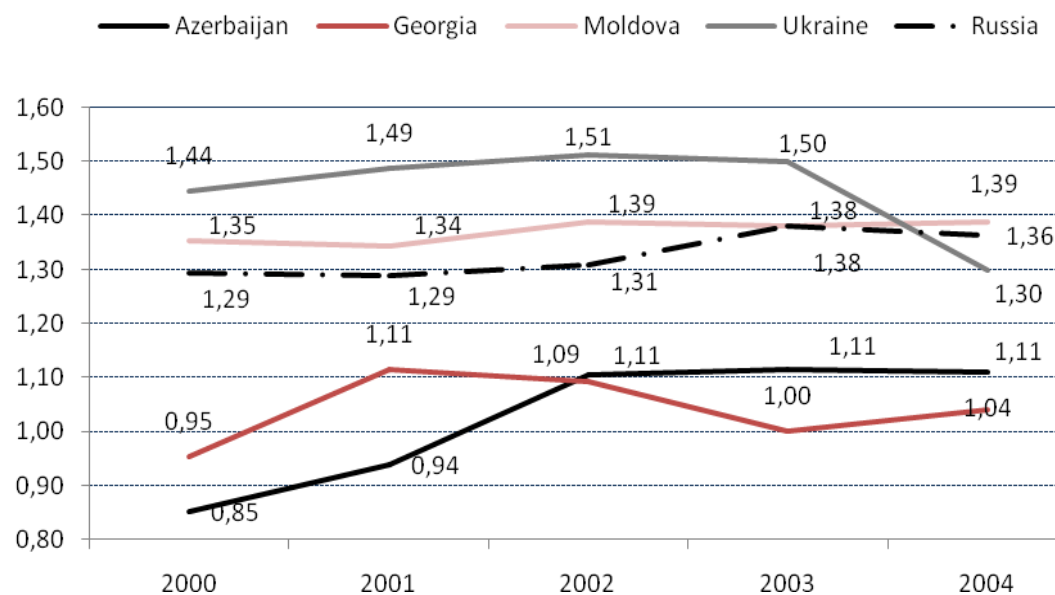
## **Services**

The level of employment in services was generally lower in the CIS countries than in the majority of EU-12 and EU-15 countries, but also the dispersion among the CIS was significant. In the majority of the CIS countries, employment in services has expanded over the last decade at the expense of agriculture.

In 2000, in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan the female/male ratio of employed in services was slightly below one. The proportions of women in total employment in this sector were 46 percent, 48,5 percent, and 46,2 percent respectively. Similar proportions were registered in some of EU-15, and EU-12 countries, namely in Greece, Spain, Cyprus and Malta. In the other CIS member countries, the number of women working in services exceeded the number of male employees, which was also a general pattern in the majority of EU-15 and EU-12 countries.

Between 2000 and 2004 the share of females in total employment in services modestly increased, from 0.7 percentage points in Moldova to 6.9 percentage points in Azerbaijan. In certain countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Russia) women shifted from agriculture to services, although as mentioned by Rutkowski (2006), this did not necessarily imply that female labour moved directly from agriculture to services. An alternative scenario was also possible: agricultural labour moved to manufacturing and manufacturing labour moved to services. However, the period covered by data is rather short and available data is excessively aggregated so those remain only a hypothesis about the real character of changes.

**Figure 8: Female/male employment ratio in services in selected CIS countries, 2000-04**



Source: Own calculation based on UNECE Statistical Division data

Historically, more women than men were employed in the services sector in the CIS region and their employment in this sector has been growing during the transition period, being in line with EU-15, EU-12, and other developed countries' changes in the labour structure. On the other hand, fewer women than men were employed in agriculture and in industry, also corresponding to the situation in EU-15 and EU-12. Services generate growth and new jobs worldwide, and the share of this sector may serve as an indicator of structural changes.

More detailed data on Russia and Ukraine confirm that there was a certain disparity inside the services sector with respect to gender structure of employment. Statistics for Ukraine for 1999-2002 reveal a high percentage of women in the wholesale, retail and real estate trades, with education and healthcare on the top of the list. Women were also frequently employed in the financial, legal and social services, while typical male activities included transportation and construction. Also, a high proportion of women were employed in the information and accounting services (64.8 percent in 2000) (*Gender issues...*, 2003). In Russia we can observe similar trends: in 1994-96, 79 percent of economists, 94 percent of accountants, and 98 percent of bookkeepers in Russia were women (Ogloblin, 1999). Such structure is relatively favourable for women, as it is linked to the post-industrial sectors, with bright prospects for rapid further development. Conversely, in both countries women are excessively employed in the state sector, while a significant number of men shifted into the private sector.

### **Gender wage structure by sector<sup>21</sup>**

Although it is evident that the wage gap is a major problem of gender inequality, the lack of meaningful and consistent gender wage data series for the majority of countries makes the comparison difficult. According to several LFS conducted in the CIS countries, the largest earnings gaps were registered in Russia and Ukraine.

Data on Ukraine's agriculture sector demonstrate remuneration gender differences only slightly larger than in the majority of EU-15 and quite similar to some of the EU-12 countries, both in 1993 and 1998-2000. In 1993, Ukrainian females employed in agriculture received 79 percent, and 91 percent of male's earnings in 2000, while in Sweden the respective ratio reached the level of 89 percent and 94.8 percent for the same time periods.

In industry these differences were larger. Ukrainian women were paid roughly 58 percent of men's salaries in 1993, and 64 percent in 2000, whereas e.g. in Belgium women could expect 65 percent and 84 percent of men's salaries.<sup>22</sup> The Ukrainian proportion was significantly lower than that in Sweden<sup>23</sup> (89 percent and 90 percent, respectively).

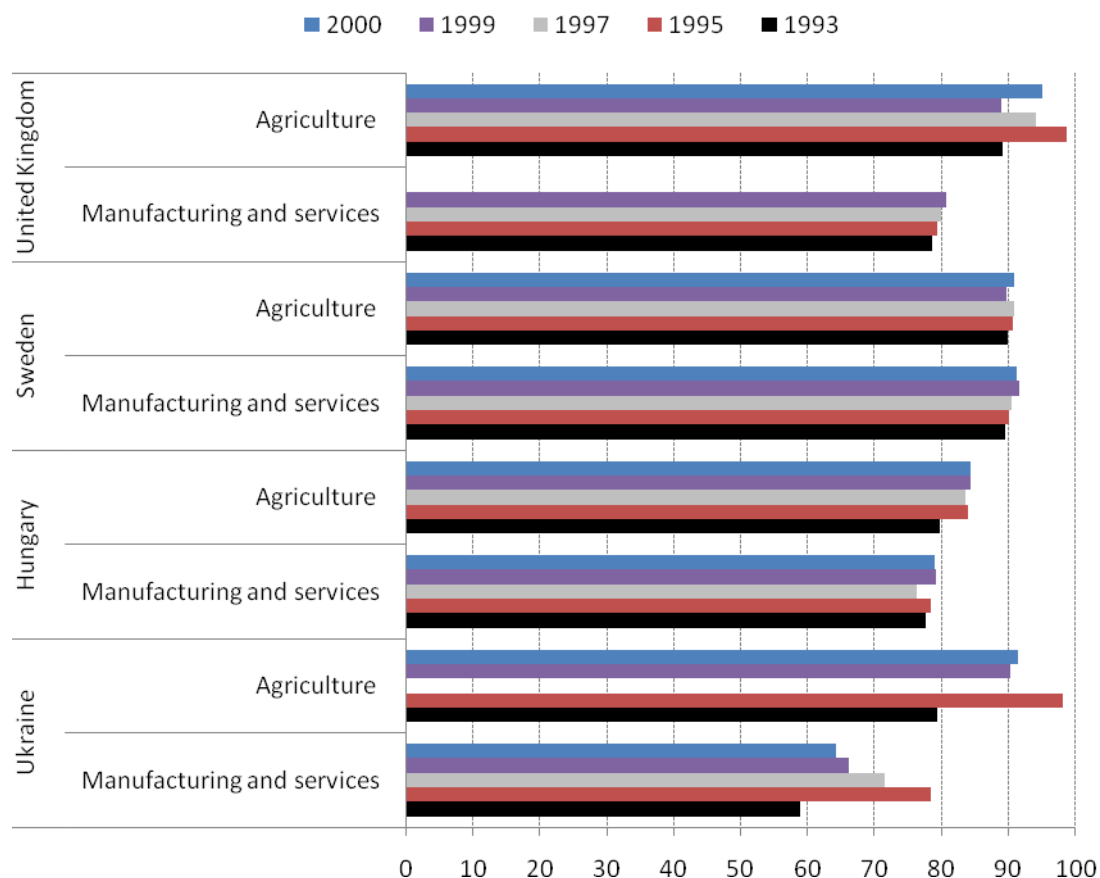
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<sup>21</sup> Data used in this section are coming from the ILO database, unless specified otherwise.

<sup>22</sup> For Ukraine, an indicator for "wage in industry" is calculated as average monthly earnings in sectors 2-9 (ISIC-Rev.2).

<sup>23</sup> For Sweden, the wage in industry is calculated on the basis of average earnings per hour in manufacturing (ISIC-Rev.3, section D).

**Figure 9: Gender pay ratios in selected countries, by sector, 1993-2000, average female wage as percent of average male wage**



Source: Own calculations based on ILO data

According to estimates of the Asian Development Bank (*Gender Assessment...*, 2006) in 2004 Azerbaijani women earned 54 percent of men's earnings in health and social services sectors, while in Tajikistan women earned 46 percent of men's wages. A somewhat better situation was reported in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where women's wages were respectively 62 percent and 65 percent.

Wage differentials can result from several factors, such as level of skills and education, differences in productivity, and occupied positions within the sectors. Women tend to be employed in low-pay positions<sup>24</sup>. For example, in Kazakhstan only 3 percent of managerial positions are held by women, despite a high female participation in the labour market and a relatively higher level of their education. Moreover, the largest wage gap between men and women in Kazakhstan was observed in a mining region with the highest regional product because 90 percent of workplaces in mineral extraction and mining are occupied by men (*Gender Assessment...*, 2006)

<sup>24</sup> Women are often not in the lowest paid jobs, nor are they in the highest paid ones.

Before 1989 females in the CIS, as well as in other transition economies, were frequently employed in education, health services and public administration, which experienced large cuts of salaries in the 1990s.

Gender segregation is often used as a factor, which can explain the earnings gap. According to Paci (2002) labour market segregation may lead to a gender income gap for a number of reasons, in particular:

- Women are concentrated in a limited number of occupations, resulting in an oversupply of labour in certain market segments and low salaries, and
- Women face more family commitments so are less mobile than men and this can lead to wage discrimination
- At the same time, women's concentration in low pay occupations in the CIS countries was lower than that in Western Europe.

Unfortunately, data at the desirable level of desegregation are difficult to obtain for the whole region. On the basis of secondary sources, we can just point out that earning differences in Russia in 1994-96 were relatively low but tended to increase after the financial crisis of 1998 (Gerry and Kim Byung-Yeon, 2001). In Ukraine, it is claimed (Ganguli and Terrell, 2005) that the gender wage gap was greater for higher pay jobs (the upper 50 percent) and lower for the low pay jobs (the lower 50 percent), from 1986 to 2003 gender gap in the lower paid jobs has decreased, partially due to improved women productive characteristics.

### **3.3. Political empowerment<sup>25</sup>**

This part of the report refers to women's representation in political bodies and their role in policymaking. *Gender pay gap* (2006) reported an average a 15.6 percent share of women among MPs worldwide (in both houses of parliaments).

In 1997 the share of women in the lower chambers of parliaments in the CIS, ranged from 1 percent in Kyrgyzstan to 13 percent in Kazakhstan, while the respective indicators for the countries that joined the EU in 2007 amounted to 7 percent (Romania) and 13 percent (Bulgaria). Although in the CIS there are no legislative provisions that can be considered explicitly discriminatory, the difference between the CIS and EU-15 countries is evident. In

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<sup>25</sup> In this section we use data from the World Development Indicators database and the UNECE Statistical Division database.

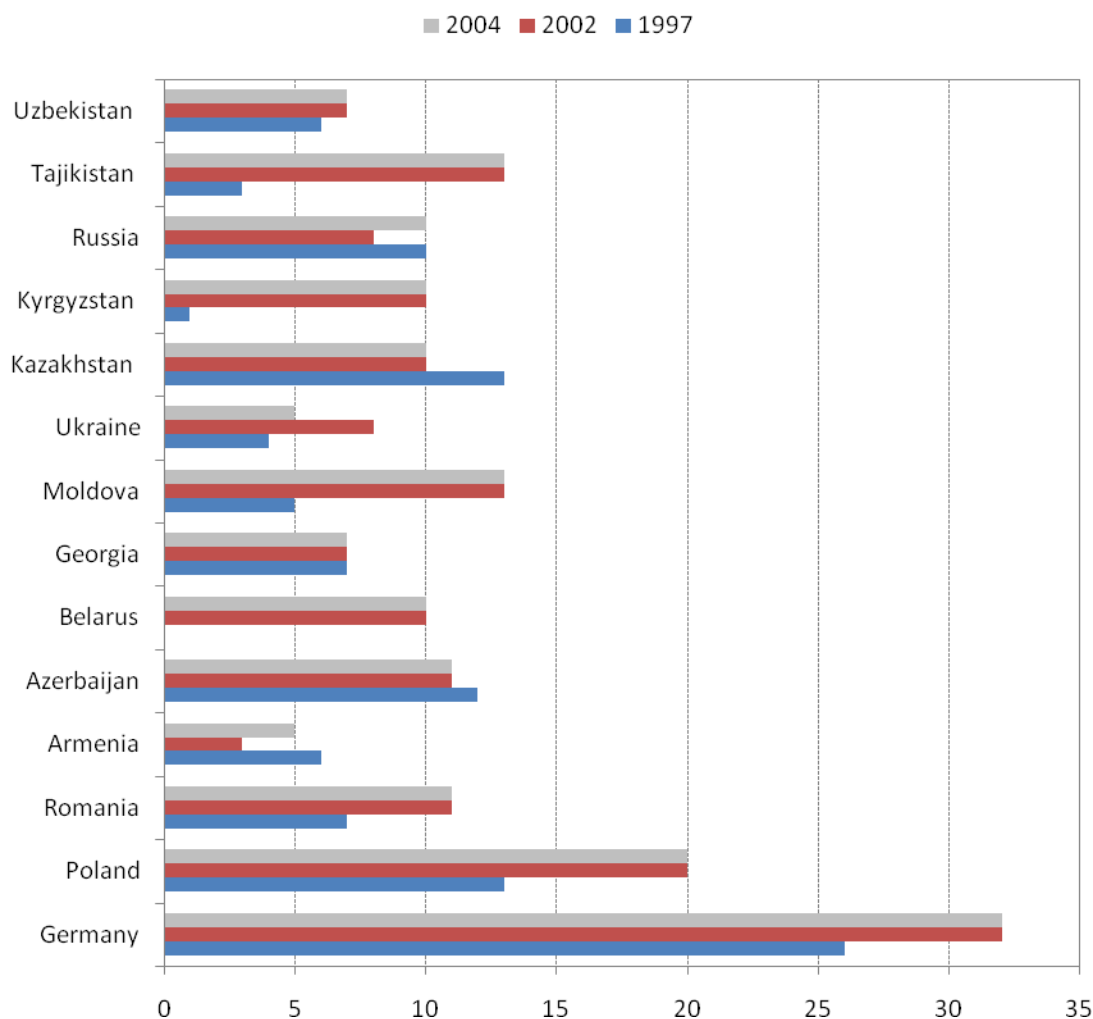


1997 among EU-15, the largest female representation in parliament was recorded in Sweden (40 percent) and Finland (34 percent).

Between 1997 and 2004, the number of female active policymakers increased in the analyzed country groups, however, still the differences between the CIS and EU, both the old and new member states, remained significant. Yet the gap was narrowing: in the CIS countries, except Armenia and Azerbaijan, the number of female parliamentarians increased or stood the same in 2004 compared to 1997. In Russia and Georgia women's representation in the parliament remained almost unchanged. Women were poorly represented in the Georgian and Uzbek parliaments.

A similar picture can be observed in respect to female representation in the government. In 1998, no woman took a ministerial position in Moldova and Armenia, while in Russia and Azerbaijan respectively 8 percent and 10 percent of appointed ministers were women. The lack of appropriate time series makes it impossible to find the trend of changes. However, female representation in the ministerial level positions in the CIS remained low in comparison to the CEE countries, such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where the share of female ministers was 17-19 percent.

**Figure 10: Women in parliament in selected countries, 1997-2004, percent of total seats occupied in lower or single house**



Sources: Own calculation based on UNECE data

Bearing on a scanty data on breakdown of judges by gender for the CIS region, we could point out a relatively high female representation in Georgia and Moldova, where respectively 37.5 percent and 33.2 percent of employed on this position were women (2001), and these numbers were even higher than the averages for UK (15.6 percent) or Ireland (16.4 percent) for the respective year.

Women's participation in public life and politics in the CIS remains low. After 1997 in some CIS countries women's presence in political life has revived, for example in Moldova. It is also noticeable that the representation of women is much higher in local governments than at the national level.

In EU-12 we could observe a high women's participation in political life only in a few countries: in Bulgaria, where in 2002-05 women accounted for 26 percent of members of

parliament, and Latvia where respectively 21 percent of members of parliament were females, (2003-2006).

### **3.4. Educational attainment<sup>26</sup>**

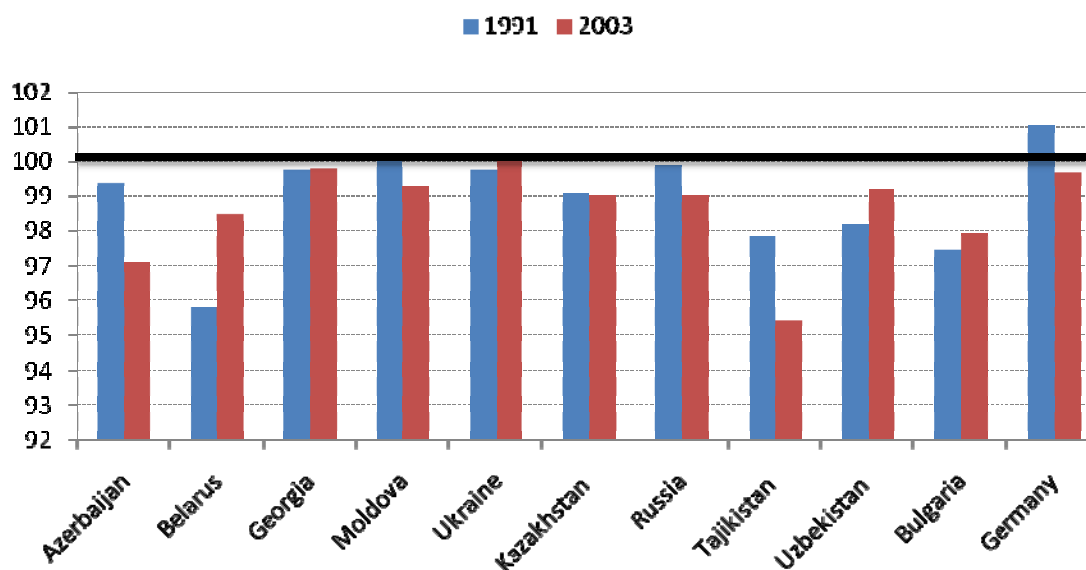
Many gender inequalities, especially in respect to economic opportunities originate from unequal access to education. The former Soviet system attempted to secure universal access to education both for men and women, so we can expect that this particular aspect may not be a major obstacle to gender equity in the CIS.

In 1991 the gross enrolment rate (the share of children of a given age group enrolled) in primary school in the CIS ranged from 81 percent in Uzbekistan to 110 percent in Azerbaijan, while in EU-15 the lowest level of primary school enrolment was observed in Luxembourg (90,3 percent), in EU-12 - in Cyprus (90 percent) and in Romania (91,3 percent). Although in the majority of the CIS countries female primary enrolment rates were generally lower than those of males, these differences were rather insignificant. The picture was not so uniform in EU-15 and EU-12 but gender parity in primary school enrolment - calculated as the ratio of female gross enrolment rate to male gross enrolment rate - stood around 100 percent in 1991 (see Fig. 11).

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<sup>26</sup> Data used in this section are coming from WDI database

**Figure 11: Gender parity in primary school gross enrolment in selected countries, 1991 and 2003, percent<sup>27</sup>**



Sources: Own calculations based on the UNECE data

From 1991 to 2003 we observed among the CIS countries two opposite trends. In Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Moldova, Russia, and Kazakhstan the gender disparity in primary school enrolment enlarged. While in others countries: Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan positive changes were reported toward equal proportion of girls and boy attending primary schools.

However on average female-to-male ratio of primary school enrolment was higher in the CIS countries than in Bulgaria and Romania, and at a comparable level with the EU-15 members.

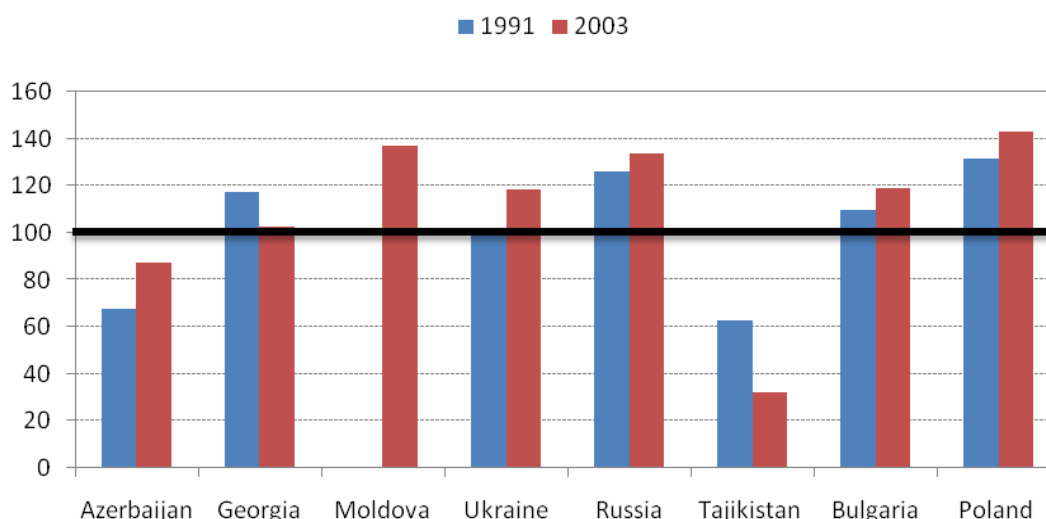
In line with the Millennium Development Goals, which include the introduction of universal primary education, we have compared the gender gap in primary completion rate<sup>28</sup> in the CIS with its levels in EU-15 and EU-12. In 1995 this rate was lower in Belarus, Moldova, and Russia than in most EU-15 and EU-12 countries. However, after 1995 the level of completion was growing in all CIS countries except Georgia and Tajikistan. By 2004, the situation changed a bit in the majority of EU-15 where female graduates outnumbered the male graduates. In the CIS region, gender parity was still in favour of male population, although this difference was rather negligible; in 2004, 96.5 percent of girls and 97.2 percent of boys from the CIS region successfully completed the last year of their primary schools.

<sup>27</sup> Gender parity is calculated in the following way :  $100 * (\text{Female GER} / \text{Male GER})$ , where GER stays for the gross enrolment rate (share of children enrolled in primary education in total number of children of the respective age).

<sup>28</sup> The primary completion rate is measured by the total number of students who successfully completed the last year of primary school in a given year divided by the total number of children of official graduation age.

Data on secondary and tertiary education enrolment demonstrate a higher number of female students, and disadvantage of boys in secondary and especially higher education in a large number of countries.

**Figure 12: Gender parity in tertiary school gross enrolment in selected countries, 1991 and 2003, percent<sup>29</sup>**



Sources: Own calculations based on UNECE data

In 1991, the CIS region scored relatively well in terms of average post-secondary educational attainment. In 1991, the gross female enrolment rate in tertiary education in the CIS varied between 18 percent of the appropriate female age group in Tajikistan to 58 percent of the appropriate group in Russia. None of the EU-15 countries had such a high proportion of female enrolled in tertiary education (Finland –52 percent of the female age group). The same was also true for the EU-12 members. On the other hand, in the CIS the largest dispersion occurred between two groups of countries: Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (female enrolment rate below 15 percent) and Russia, Belarus and Ukraine (female enrolment rate above 50 percent). Yet these differences can not be assigned only to gender discrimination as the male enrolment rate in tertiary education also varied extensively between those two groups in 1991.

<sup>29</sup> Gender parity is calculated in the following way:  $100 * (\text{Female GER} / \text{Male GER})$ , where GER stays for the gross enrolment rate, here the enrolment in tertiary education.

During the period of 1991-2004, female enrolment in post-secondary education declined in Azerbaijan to 14 percent, and in Tajikistan to 8 percent of the respective age groups. Similar changes were observed within male population, especially in Azerbaijan, where this indicator for male students dropped from 28 percent (1991) to 16 percent (2004), while in Tajikistan the gender gap increased as male students greatly outnumbered the female students.

Enrolment declines may be partly related to growing poverty and can be associated with changes on the demand side rather than on the supply side, yet this pattern is not the same for all low-income CIS countries. Some other country-specific factors may be responsible for this. For example, in Tajikistan the drop in the number of girls enrolled in secondary education and consequently in the tertiary education is a result of the reduction of a period of compulsory education (from 11 to 9 years) and a revival of traditional cultural preferences. In universities, the percentage of female students has decreased mostly because of families' preference to educate boys during periods of financial distress. It is also reported that some girls are not allowed by their parents to attend secondary school because of religious beliefs.

In contrast to these two countries, the majority of CIS members have experienced growth in the numbers of female and male students. This growth was the most spectacular in Kazakhstan where, according to the official statistics, the number of females enrolled in tertiary education more than doubled. Growth in female enrolment rates was also registered in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. Similarly, the number of male students in the CIS region has increased albeit at a slower pace, which resulted in the narrowing gender gap.

Overall, the CIS member countries scored relatively well in terms of their education indicators. Since 1991, the trends in gender disparity in enrolment rates in primary education varied across the CIS. While in Belarus, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan gender inequality seems to have contracted over time, in Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Russia fewer girls than boys were enrolled in primary schools since 1991.

As regards the post-secondary education, there is a visible "reverse gender gap" in the majority of CIS, except Tajikistan and Azerbaijan; it is particularly large in Kazakhstan, Moldova, and Russia. The "reverse gender gap" in tertiary education is also typical for the majority of EU-15 (except Cyprus) and EU-12. As a result, significantly more women hold degree-level qualifications in the youngest age group (up to 35 years) than men do.

Furthermore, in Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan this “reverse gap” has been widening over time. The collapse of the secondary and post-secondary vocational education system, which previously served mostly male students, may have also influenced the trend.

### **3.5. Demography and health<sup>30</sup>**

In the most CIS countries, the total population in the last few decades has been declining as a result of falling fertility and growing mortality rates, with the largest decreases registered in Russia and Ukraine. Insignificant changes have been registered in Georgia and Belarus. Population decline was also observable in EU-12 members, especially in former USSR republics: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

On the contrary, in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan the total population grew, mainly because of high fertility rate, which well exceeded the rates observed in the other CIS, CEE countries, or EU-15. In all analyzed countries, the female population prevails, due to its higher life expectancy.

According to the official data, an average life expectancy for both men and women in the CIS in 1980 remained slightly below the level characteristic for most of the EU-15 countries, and was similar to the level observed in EU-12. An average life expectancy varied between 65 years in Kyrgyzstan and 71 years in Belarus and Armenia. Due to a better state of health care and living conditions as compared to the CIS, an average female life expectancy in EU-15 in 1980 varied between 75 years in Ireland and 79 years in Sweden, while in Tajikistan a newborn female infant would live, if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of her birth were to stay the same throughout her life, only 65 years. The gap existed also when comparing male life expectancy figures: those born at the beginning of the 1980s could expect to live on average from 60 to 68 years in the CIS, while those born in EU-15 had 68-73 years ahead of them.

Since 1980, the gap between the CIS, on one hand, and EU-15 and EU-12, on the other hand, has widened. In EU-15 and EU-12 an average life expectancy has increased while in CIS it has decreased.

According to the official data, a long-lasting decline in life expectancy has been observed in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan, while in Armenia and Azerbaijan an

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<sup>30</sup> Data used in this section are mainly coming from the World Health Organization (WHO) database.

average lifespan shortening has been smaller and only temporary. It is believed that different reactions of men and women to new economic and social situations contributed to this gender gap in the region. Brainerd (2005) tested several hypotheses in respect to the high mortality trend in Russia, which might be also true for countries with similar problems:

- Deterioration of healthcare
- Changes in the diet
- Alcohol consumption, especially related to external causes of death (homicide, suicide, and accidents)
- Stress associated with a poor outlook for the future

She found that although health system in the former Soviet Union deteriorated significantly, there was no evidence that this deterioration played a major role in demographic changes. Smoking, obesity and malnutrition were not the major problems. Her results point to two factors: consumption of alcohol and stress associated with a poor outlook for future. She claimed that these two factors were of equal importance in accounting for the dramatic increase in mortality in Russia but she also admitted that a large residual remains to be explained. There was evidence that an increase of mortality was mainly due to mortality of men younger than 65 years, which could be still economically active. The main reasons of death were cardiovascular problems, and the second in importance were the external causes of death. Some evidences imply that mortality rates increased the most among lower socioeconomic groups (Brainerd, 2005).

Trend in female life expectancy was similar but less dramatic. As a result, in the CIS the average female life expectancy fell from 73 years in 1980 to 72 years in 2004. In Kazakhstan it declined from 73 years in 1981 to 71 years in 2004. On the contrary, life expectancy for women in EU-12 remained stable and has increased since 2001. In general, a gender gap in the CIS is noticeable but with a considerable disadvantage on the male side.

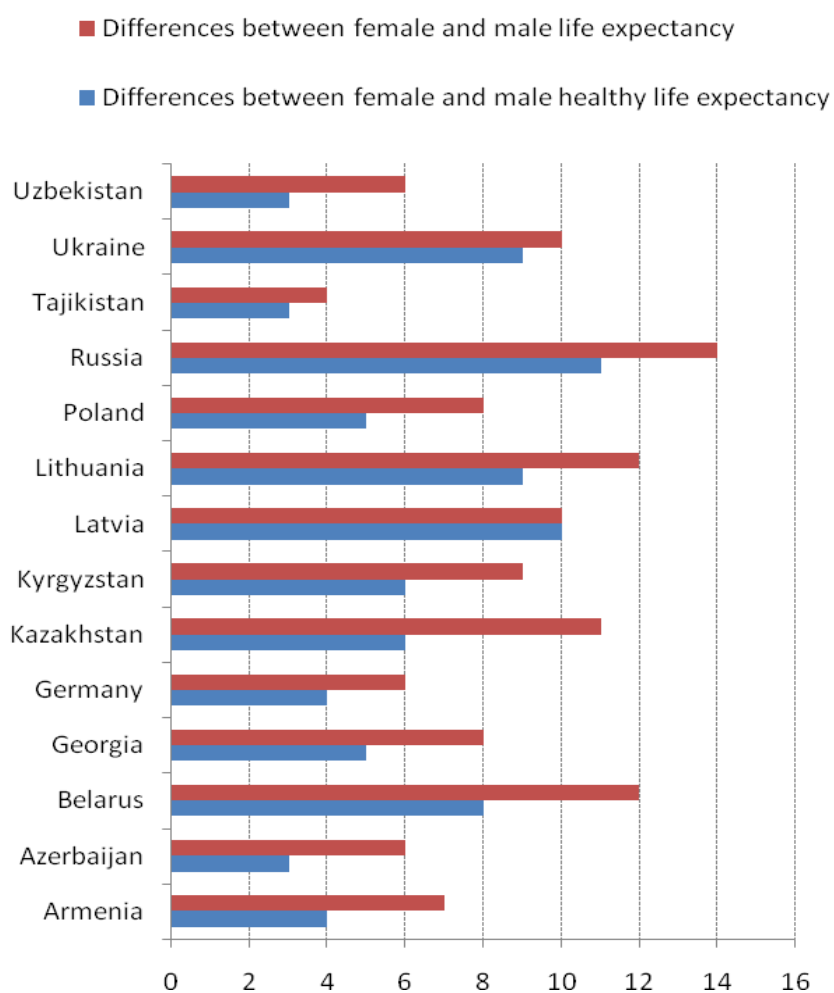
We might doubt if the longer life expectancy of women could be treated as their advantage. When comparing the healthy life expectancy<sup>31</sup> we could find out that the differences between men and women are still significant. However while considering expected number of life in a good health we found out that there is a smaller gender gap in all countries. In Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan and Lithuania although still women could expect longer vitality, their bad health condition limit their advantages over male population.

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<sup>31</sup> Healthy life expectancy is an indicator estimated by World Health Organization. It is define as an average number of years that a person can expect to live in "full health" by taking into account years lived in less than full health due to disease and/or injury.



**Figure 13: Differences between life expectancies for females and males in selected countries, 2003, years**



Sources: Own compilation based on WHO data

## 4. Summary and conclusions

This paper explores the key dimensions of women's status in the CIS region, and compares these to findings for EU-15, and EU-12.

Transition process has had different impacts on women and men across the CIS region. High female education level and their sound participation in labour market resulted in relatively high initial GDI ranks. After 1995, GDI values have been constantly growing, and these changes were accompanied by parallel, yet greater in scope, adjustments in HDI. Thus in 2004 the CIS countries demonstrated similar ranks for HDI and GDI – the pattern characteristic for advanced Western economies. Still, while interpreting these indicators, one should be aware that official statistics may not reveal the real situation, and some additional, possibly more reliable, unofficial information should possibly supplement the picture.

When examining trends in gender development in the CIS during the last decade in details, we mostly failed to identify clear common patterns for the entire region. Some substantial differences still remained, conditional upon vastly different economic, historical and cultural factors. Nevertheless some general conclusions can be drawn from this study:

### ***Economic participation***

- Female labour force participation rates have decreased in almost all CIS members. Only in Kazakhstan the female labour market activity increased.
- Some part of female work force has dropped out of the labour market to work in household and informal economies.
- Since 1995, the number of unemployed women decreased in Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, and Russia.
- Since 1995, in Azerbaijan and Georgia female unemployment increased. Ukraine was atypical: in 1995-2000, more women were actively searching job while after 2000 their number has diminished.
- Females are over-represented among unemployed in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus; in the other CIS countries unemployment is larger among men than women.

### ***Economic opportunity***

- In 2000-03 apart from Georgia, in the majority of the CIS members the level of female employment in industry remained relatively stable, while in the same period men participation in industry increased especially in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan
- Along with a broad pattern of decline in agricultural employment and growth of employment in services, an increase of female employment in agriculture was registered only in Armenia, while in Georgia and Kazakhstan the percentage of female employed in agriculture remained at a high, almost constant, level between 2000 and 2004.
- Historically, women in the CIS region were more often working in services, and their representation in this sector has increased; those changes were in line with EU-15, EU-12 and other developed countries' structural changes
- Income gap exists in the whole region; the most significant disparity was registered in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan; the smallest gap was observed in agriculture
- From 1997 to 2004 the gender gap in earned income in the all CIS has been widening, as increase in income has not been reaching women on an equal basis
- According to different estimates women in the CIS earned from 46 percent in Tajikistan (2004) to 72 percent in Ukraine (2002) of men's earnings; remuneration adjusted per hour gave smaller disproportions: female wages represented on average 71 percent of male's wages in Russia (2005) and 78 percent in Ukraine (2002) respectively.<sup>32</sup>
- Some of the differences in remuneration between genders may be explained by sectoral and vertical segregation; concentration of female employment in the low pay sectors, including the public sector (mainly in education, healthcare, and administration) can not provide them with wages on the par with men's wages (even taking into account women's qualifications or workloads), since men's employment is concentrated in several highly profitable and rapidly developing industries.

### ***Political empowerment***

- In all CIS countries except for Armenia, the number of female parliamentarians has increased since 1997

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<sup>32</sup> Own calculation computed from RLMS data (2005) and ULMS (2002) data 14 for women aged 18-55 and men aged 18-60.

- Women in the CIS are more likely to participate in political life through an active participation in local self-governments.
- Women were poorly represented in political bodies in Armenia, Georgia, and Uzbekistan
- Relatively high female representation among judges is registered in Georgia and Moldova

### ***Educational attainment***

- A high and increasing level of educational attainment among women has been observed in the majority of the CIS (except for Azerbaijan and Tajikistan)
- In general, the completion rate of primary school has been higher for boys than for girls
- An “adverse gender gap” is characteristic for secondary and tertiary education, with a disadvantage for men

### ***Health and demography***

- Total population has been declining across most of the CIS region; the transition period has differentially affected men’s and women’s health status
- Although health-related problems and excess consumption of alcohol reduced both female and male life expectancies, the decline has been more dramatic among males, especially in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus
- The healthy life expectancy also indicates male disadvantages, in particular in the cases of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus

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