



Directorate for EU Affairs

Gender Equality Plan-GEP

2025-2027

This document outlines the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs (DEUA). Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs¹ endorsed the purpose and targets of the plan, which is set to advance gender equality within the Directorate. A thorough understanding of the legal background of this concept in Türkiye would be conducive for the development of the frame of the gender equality and creation of well-framed gender equality plan within the Directorate.

About Directorate for EU Affairs

Directorate for European Union Affairs was established on July 4, 2000, in charge of the coordination of activities regarding the process of Türkiye's full membership to the European Union (EU). DEUA, which is the main institution responsible for carrying out Türkiye's accession process to the EU, has been tasked with directing, coordinating and monitoring the preparations for Türkiye's membership to the EU and coordinating post-membership duties. Since its establishment and as part of its mission, the Directorate for EU Affairs has been responsible for conducting reform studies that will carry our country to EU membership, ensuring compliance with the EU acquis, as well as for coordinating the programming and monitoring of Türkiye-EU Financial Cooperation. DEUA continues the communication and information activities, executed within the scope of the EU Communication Strategy, uninterruptedly to inform the public opinion of our country and other European countries about the works carried out in this process.

¹ Hereinafter Director.

Over the years, alignment with the EU acquis in the field of Gender Equality has been achieved to a large extent. In this process, DEUA has been coordinating national efforts to align with the EU acquis and best practices in gender equality such as introducing provisions regarding equal treatment in employment, equal pay, and the protection of pregnant and nursing women; extending parental leave; establishment of the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye (TİHEK) as the equality body.

By DEUA, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is considered essential for realizing equality envisaged in the Constitution. DEUA is one of the four pilot institutions which will analyse its budget programme in line with GRB approach within the framework of IPA Project titled “Implementing Gender-Responsive Planning and Budgeting in Türkiye”.

In DEUA, one of the two Directorate General positions, the highest position after the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, is occupied by a top female manager. The number of women at the head of the department level is 11, while 5 of the seats at this level are occupied by male managers. Concerning the number of female experts, the number is higher than those of male experts. Among 119 experts, 65 of them are females, and 54 are male experts.

Contextual Legal Background

The Constitution is the aggregate of fundamental principles that constitute the legal basis of the all institutions. In addition to the Constitution, the primary legal documents regulating gender policy in terms of human resources management policy in the DEUA are Civil Servants Law No. 657, Labour Law No. 4857 and Law on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye.

Turkish Constitution

In Türkiye, gender equality is guaranteed by the Constitution. Article 10- “Equality before Law” of the Constitution prohibits all discrimination and states that all individuals are equal without discrimination before the law, irrespective of “(...) sex, (...) or any such considerations. Article 10 reads as:

“Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds.

Men and women have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality.

Measures to be taken for children, the elderly, disabled people, widows and orphans of martyrs as well as for the invalid and veterans shall not be considered as violation of the principle of equality.

No privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class.

State organs and administrative authorities are obliged to act in compliance with the principle of equality before the law in all their proceedings.”

Civil Servants Law No. 657

The Law deals with service, appointment, promotion requirements, and features of civil servants in addition to their rights and responsibilities while acting as civil servants. Article 10/2 of the said Law provides that senior officials shall treat the civil servants in their charge “equally and fairly”. Article 7 states that civil servants must be impartial. While fulfilling their duty, civil servants are forbidden from making any discrimination based on language, race, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion, sect, etc. The Law regulates the maternity and parental leave rights of the civil servants. The remuneration system in Turkish civil service is based on the principle of equality.

Labour Law No. 4857

Labour Law No. 4857 regulates the working conditions and work-related rights and obligations of employers and employees working under an employment contract. Article 5 of the Labour Law regulates the principle of equal treatment and explicitly outlaws the gender pay gap, which is the difference between men’s and women’s pay based on the average difference in

gross hourly earnings of all employees. The Labour Law also prohibits termination of employment contracts due to sex or pregnancy justification of termination with a valid reason. Maternity, paternal and parental leave rights of the employees regulated by the Law.

Law on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye

The Law on the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Türkiye regulates the non-discrimination in employment. The Article 6 reads as:

“(1) An employer or a person authorized by an employer shall not discriminate against an employee or a person applying to be employed, a person acquiring practical work experience at an undertaking or a person applying for this purpose or against a person willing to receive information on the undertaking or the work for the purpose of working or acquiring practical work experience there in any stage of the work including getting information, application, section criteria, hiring criteria and working and termination of the employment.

(2) First paragraph shall also cover vacancy announcements, workplace, working conditions, access to all levels and kinds of occupational guidance, occupational training and retraining, promotion and access to all levels of professional hierarchy, in-service training, social benefits and similar issues.

(3) An employer or a person authorized by an employer shall not reject an employment application for reason of pregnancy, maternity or child care.

(4) There shall be no discrimination in terms of admission into, licence, registration, discipline and similar issues of self-employment.

(5) This Article also covers all kinds of contracts of work and performance not falling into the scope of the Labour Law dated 22/5/2003 and no 4857.

(6) Employment in public institutions and agencies is subject to the provisions of this Article.”

Gender Equality Plan

Objective 1: Institutionalization

Directorate for EU Affairs has a well-established policy of non-discrimination concerning gender for all staff. Directorate for EU Affairs is aware that institutionalization of a gender perspective occurs when this approach is integrated into a habitual practice regarding the implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the gender policy of the Directorate, a Gender Equality Committee (GEC) is to be established as detailed below:

Action: Gender Equality Committee (GEC)

- GEC is a standing committee for identifying, monitoring, and coordinating plans related to the issues of gender, diversity, equality, and inclusion.
- The committee consists of one member from each department.
- The committee reports to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs. Each committee member is designated by the Director.
- Head of Department for Administrative Services chairs the committee.
- Department of Administrative Services is entrusted with the function of secretariat of the committee.
- The committee's structure, functioning, and duties are determined by an administrative regulation (such as circular) approved by the Director.
- This committee works as a liaison unit with the departments of the Directorate to propose plans for its mission and measure outcomes.
- This committee works in collaboration with other relevant units in the Directorate for training and capacity-building purposes, as well as to receive feedback. The committee is slated to be formed in 2025.

Objective 2: Data Collection and Monitoring

Gender equality actions must be supported by continuous data collection and monitoring. With the goal of constant data collection and monitoring regarding gender equality in the Directorate, the following steps are to be taken:

Action 1. Collection of official gender-related indicators (conducted annually)

- Gender distribution of employees including EU counsellors and executives at all levels including Deputy Permanent Delegate of Türkiye to the EU.

- Gender distribution of career progress of all employees.

Action 2. A survey for staff to monitor the perception among employees (conducted every year)

- The survey assesses the perception among the employees on issues such as whether the Directorates have a gender-equal and inclusive environment, whether harassment has occurred, and whether the gender is perceived to affect the career paths.
- Regular surveys will be conducted to monitor work-private life balance.
- The data is gender disaggregated and is collected across all staff categories.
- The survey is taken voluntarily.

Action 3. Publishing and monitoring the data

- Annual progress reports, summary results for gender-related indicators and actions are will be accessible to all staff.
- The Annual Report is prepared by the Gender Equality Committee and presented to the Director.

Objective 3: Training and Capacity Building

Implicit bias is an essential impediment to gender inclusivity, meritocracy, and fairness. For this reason, there is always room for improvement regarding awareness raising and training for gender equality. In this context; the following actions are to be taken:

Action 1. Organization of sessions during the orientation program for incoming staff to raise awareness of gender equality and to highlight unconscious gender biases.

Action 2. Holding trainings on gender issues to the whole staff annually.

Objective 4: Organizational Culture and Work-life Balance

Organizational culture and work-life balance are key factors that contribute to creating an enabling environment for members of all genders in a public institution. Implicit or explicit biases are detrimental factors against gender equality, as they have an impact on the Directorate's activities. According to Civil Servants Law No. 657, the weekly working hours of civil servants are 40 hours, and in Labour Law No. 4857, the working time is 45 hours. Therefore, the Law per se enhances the work-life balance. To combat potential biases, the following actions are to be taken:

Action 1. Transparency

- Directorate's position regarding gender equality is explicitly stated in the strategic documents, such as the annual budget and strategic plan.
- Directorate's position regarding gender equality is explicitly stated on related web pages.
- Commitments and actions related to gender equality are shared with all staff and the public.

Action 2. Integrating the Gender Dimension into All Projects Implemented by the Directorate

- Organization of seminars on gender mainstreaming in project preparation.
- Communication of training programs for staff to enable them to incorporate the gender dimension.

Objective 5: Combating Against Gender-Based Discrimination

The Directorate for EU Affairs is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and productive working environment and space for all staff. For this purpose, the Directorate is committed to promoting equity and improving the existing policies and mechanisms for combating gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment. The following action is to be taken concerning this topic:

- Development of an Employee Grievance Mechanism which is a formal complaint process providing a systematic method for receiving, recording and responding to complaints made by employees, in case of need.
- Revision of the procedures and processes of existing complaint and support mechanisms for preventing gender-based discrimination, violence and harassment and make improvements where necessary.

Objective 6: Gender Equality in Recruitment, Career Progression, and Leadership

Gender balance is desirable for institutions to fully realize their employees' potential values. DEUA adopts and applies an equal opportunity perspective in all of its functions, including recruitment and career progression.

- The policy to provide gender equality in recruitment, career progression, and leadership will be continued.
- Gender balance will be ensured in forming panels and committees, and in cases where gender balance cannot be achieved, the ratio will be adjusted to provide numeric equilibrium.


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