



**INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL ANALYTICS**  
**ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ГЛОБАЛНИ АНАЛИЗИ**



## **Gender Equality Plan, 2023-2026**



+359 887 760 787



info@globalanalytics-bg.org



<https://www.globalanalytics-bg.org>



InstituteforGlobalAnalytics



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/79841057>

## Introduction

Gender equality is a fundamental constituent principle in a democracy within society and at the workplace. The Institute for Global Analytics traces its foundation and ongoing functioning to female entrepreneurship. Ingrained as the commitment to women leadership is in its very inception and mission as a start-up enterprise, IGA benefits from the absence of in-built, structurally determined gender biases and is therefore well-positioned to confidently and persistently promote and defend gender equality. Moreover, it is our conviction that by fostering an internal, gender equitable environment, we will be able to conduct wider advocacy within Bulgarian society in order to improve the economic, social and political status of women.

And that status has been defined by worrying trends, whereby Bulgarian women's participation in political and economic life faces challenges. For instance, in the sphere of politics, women generally take around 35% of government posts and make up only roughly 27% of MPs in Parliament.<sup>1</sup> In parallel to this institutional underrepresentation, female attitudes to democracy have been shown to differ negatively from those of their male counterparts. That is, 31% of Bulgarian women – as opposed to 41% of Bulgarian men, have been found to prefer a liberal democratic form of government over a 'strongman', authoritarian model of leadership.<sup>2</sup>

As regards economic activities, the share of women members of the boards of directors of the largest companies listed on the Bulgarian stock exchange amounts to approximately 14%, while the share of female managers reaches about 27%. Moreover, women continue to lag behind men in terms of employment (in 2019, women constituted 46% of all of the employed population) as well as levels of salaries and pensions. There is also female concentration in sectors of the economy deemed traditionally feminine such as education and social care.<sup>3</sup> A range of international indices additionally demonstrate Bulgaria's comparative lag regarding women's business participation and entrepreneurial predispositions, more generally. The World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Gap Report<sup>4</sup> shows that Bulgaria ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 146 countries in its gender gap index. Although this is a relatively high position internationally, Bulgaria is behind many of its EU counterparts, with scores for female educational attainment and health and survival being much higher than women's economic participation and political empowerment. Overall, the European Commission's studies<sup>5</sup> of (digital) entrepreneurship point that Bulgaria is entrenched in the last position among all EU countries. Market conditions and cultural predispositions receive particularly low scores in the assessment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country. Moreover, a growing digital divide between men and women has been one of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenge to develop much more gender-sensitive urban infrastructure still remains.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> National Strategy for Promoting Equality between Women and Men, 2021-2030 ([Национална стратегия за насърчаване на равнопоставеността на жените и мъжете 2021-2030 г.](#)), p. 11-12

<sup>2</sup> Filipova, R., et al, 2020, '[Democracy in Bulgaria: still fragile after 30 years of transition](#)', Globsec, p. 3

<sup>3</sup> National Strategy for Promoting Equality between Women and Men, 2021-2030 ([Национална стратегия за насърчаване на равнопоставеността на жените и мъжете 2021-2030 г.](#)), p. 5, 10

<sup>4</sup> World Economic Forum, 2021, [Global Gender Gap Report](#), p. 137

<sup>5</sup> Autio, E., et al, 2020, [The European Index of Digital Entrepreneurship Systems](#), JRC Technical Report, p. 49

<sup>6</sup> The effects of gendered power structures in urban planning (e.g. the restriction of urban mobility and gender separated labor markets) as well as the gender bias in the AI technology powering smart cities have been subject to analysis and related action in cities around the world. Yet, the gendered aspects of city planning remain largely unexplored in the Bulgarian context.

Dellenbaugh-Losse, M., 2020, [GenderedLandscape. Action Planning Network Baseline Study](#), URBACT

Morgan, N., Lazar, S., Weber, S., 2019, [Gender Equal Cities](#), URBACT

Given the challenging national context for female inclusion, IGA stands firmly committed to defending and implementing the principles of gender equality. The present document codifies this commitment and aligns the Institute fully with the promotion of gender equality as a fundamental value.

The action plan outlined below represents the product of a collaborative analysis carried out by IGA's board in consultation with its employees. It sets out the Institute's strategy with respect to gender equality over the course of three years (2023-2026), which will be subject to annual review, monitoring and evaluation of achieved progress. The plan is permanently available on IGA's website, additionally being circulated among its staff, and receives the full endorsement of the organization's leadership.

Dr. Rumena Filipova

Chairperson, Institute for Global Analytics

## Baseline analysis, monitoring and training

IGA's board has taken on the responsibility to conduct regular analysis and review of the state of gender equality in the organization via the indicator of gender identity as regards 1) staff numbers; 2) numbers of female and male representatives in decision-making positions; 3) numbers of applicants for job positions and internships.

The data compiled as of 2023 according to these indices demonstrates that:

- 2/3rds of staff members are women. IGA has further contracted on a shorter-term project basis an exactly equal number of men and women.
- The primary decision-making body (the board) consists of women.
- An equal number of male and female candidates have applied for job positions and internships.

The overall state of affairs therefore shows that women and men are equally represented in hiring decisions and the ongoing operation of the Institute. IGA commits itself to further maintaining achieved levels of gender equality through annual monitoring scheduled for December 2023, December 2024, December 2025, December 2026. In addition, IGA will continue to carry out induction sessions on countering (implicit) gender bias for all new staff as well as implement annual/ongoing trainings, discussions and surveys on the topic to coincide with the annual progress monitoring.

The following 5 objectives and related measures, indicators, targets, timeline and responsibilities inform the core of IGA's gender equality strategy, goals and target outcomes.

### Objective 1: Work-life balance and organizational culture

A viable work-life balance contributes to individual staff well-being and thus promotes organizational productivity and an ethical work environment based on the equitable allocation of responsibilities. To achieve these goals, IGA carries out 3 main measures:

*1.1. Implementation of flexible office presence with the option of online work.* IGA recognizes that the efficient and timely fulfilment of job tasks, particularly in the area of research and the conduct of regular staff meetings (other than events and conferences), is not necessarily dependent on physical presence in the office space and remote work can boost productivity and a better reconciliation between private and professional responsibility. Hence, the Institute undertakes to continue to publicize the opportunity for online work as part of the announcement of job vacancies and offers.

*Indicator:* Number of employees who have opted to work remotely.

*Target:* Provision of opportunity for remote work for all projects that allow for it: i.e., which focus on research.

*Timeline:* Over the course of the duration of a given employee's contract.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

1.2. *Counselling on work-life balance.* On occasion, staff may need mentoring and advice as to how to forge an effective balance between their professional and personal lives. IGA encourages an open discussion culture with active feedback channels so that employees share their concerns. In particular, we aim to foster the understanding that emotional challenges are not extraneous to and irrelevant to the work process.

*Indicator:* Number of employees who ask for counselling.

*Target:* Clear and constant communication to all staff, which encourages the discussion and resolution of personal concerns, whenever they pose a challenge to the employee's well-being.

*Timeline:* Over the course of the duration of a given employee's contract.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

1.3. *Facilitating parenthood.* Women continue to tend to be disproportionately burdened by parenting responsibilities, including the need to take breaks from their work. In recognition of that, IGA will support the career reintegration of staff returning after parental leave (men or women).

*Indicator:* Number of employees who are reintegrated into the organization following a parental leave.

*Target:* All staff who may be subject to this provision.

*Timeline:* Over the course of the duration of a given employee's contract.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

## **Objective 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**

In general, the need to foster more inclusive leadership environments in politics and the wider economy that feature a greater number of women represents a challenge both for Bulgaria and many other countries on an international scale as the gender gap is still to be evened out. In academia and research, women remain underrepresented with respect to authorship as well as the assumption of scientific leadership positions. IGA benefits from the fact that board membership is inclusive and consists of women, thus avoiding conscious or unconscious female exclusion that can be observed in men-dominated governing bodies. To sustain the conceptual and practical commitment to the encouragement of female leadership, the Institute lays out the following measures:

2.1. *Promotion and continued maintenance of the active participation of women in the decision-making of the organization.*

*Indicator:* Number of women in executive positions at IGA.

*Target:* Consistent high-number representation of women on governing bodies and committees.

*Timeline:* Permanently and ongoingly as part of IGA's functioning in general and within the 3-year gender equality plan.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board and general assembly will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

2.2. *Encouragement and dissemination of the value of female entrepreneurship both within and outside of the organization.*

*Indicator:* Participation in networks uniting women leaders/entrepreneurs in Bulgaria. Conduct of awareness-raising campaigns both within IGA (in order to correct a potential ingrained bias in women against the assumption of active roles) and outside among youth in the country, for example.

*Target:* Impactful outreach and building alliances with like-minded institutions and women-focused organizations. Willingness of female employees to take on leading research responsibilities.

*Timeline:* Permanently and ongoingly as part of IGA's functioning in general and within the 3-year gender equality plan.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

### **Objective 3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression**

Implicit or explicit bias and skewed, non-transparent recruitment decisions represent a major barrier to career success and promotion. IGA will continue to uphold the highest standards of quality and transparency in the selection of its staff.

*3.1. Recruitment process informed by merit, which does not disadvantage anyone on the basis of personal characteristics such as gender identity (but also race, nationality, disability).*

*Indicator:* Unbiased and transparent recruitment criteria and selection process open to review and justification. Public advertisement of new vacancies. Female representation on decision-making committees.

*Target:* Hiring the most qualified candidates for all job postings that can be justified against the pool of applicants. Evidence of public promotion and posting of new vacancies on website on social media channels. Presence of at least one woman on the decision-making committee.

*Timeline:* Permanently and ongoingly as part of IGA's functioning.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board and general assembly will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

### **Objective 4. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content**

In-depth research of gender is critical to debunking established stereotypes. Academic studies therefore have a vital role to play in political and social debates about the positions of men and women in society. IGA notes with concern the overall trends in Bulgarian public discourse, which imparts negative connotations to the concept of 'gender' equating it with a 'dangerous ideology' that threatens traditional, conservative values (based on stereotypical and oppressive understandings of relations between women and men justifying established power dynamics and hierarchies).

*4.1. Raising awareness of the negative connotations forged in relation to the use of the concept of 'gender'.*

*Indicator:* Conduct of public interviews, focus groups and research that clarify the notion of the English-language term 'gender' and why and how it is misused and misinterpreted in the Bulgarian political context.

*Target:* Significant number of appearances and discussions.

*Timeline:* In an ongoing manner.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

*4.2. Incorporation of the gender dimension in research designs in order to provide an equal weight to women's perspectives and experiences.*

*Indicator:* Female participation in methodological set-ups, including research interviews during fieldwork, focus groups and expert discussions.

*Target:* A fair and balanced inclusion of women as part of research designs.

*Timeline:* In an ongoing manner and with respect to the implementation of projects.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.

## **Objective 5. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment**

The prevention of gender-based violence is of crucial importance to the creation of an equitable and rights-based work environment. IGA treats with utmost seriousness all instances of such violence (verbal, written or physical) and expresses concern about the trend of trolling and online harassment that individuals outside of the organization can mount against members of the Institute.

*5.1. Encouragement of active reporting of cases of behavior that does not observe ethical standards and legal provisions enshrined in Bulgarian and EU legislation with respect to the regulation of gender-based violence.*

*Indicator:* Awareness-raising trainings about what constitutes gender-based violence and how it can be reported within the organization.

*Target:* Annual awareness-raising trainings and induction sessions for new staff. Reporting in case of gender-based violence.

*Timeline:* In an ongoing manner.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure and a designated ethical compliance officer will monitor any cases of gender-based violence.

*5.2. Taking action against trolling and gender-based online harassment aimed at IGA staff as a part of a trend in Bulgaria of targeting NGOs and research organizations that stand for liberal democratic, European values.*

*Indicator:* Conduct of advocacy campaigns against gender-based violence, including participation in public debates about the harms of trolling and calling for the institution of tighter legal-policy and media regulatory measures against harassment in the online space and in commentary sections of news outlets (particularly through a more robust application of the provisions in the EU's Digital Services Act).

*Target:* Media interviews, organization of discussions with policy-makers.

*Timeline:* In an ongoing manner.

*Responsibilities:* IGA's board will oversee the fulfilment of the measure.