

Institutional mechanism

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The Ministry of Welfare (since 1999) is the responsible institution for the development of gender equality policy in the government. Since 2003 gender equality issues have been the responsibility of the Department of European and Legal Affairs, of which the Gender Equality Unit was part of. Since December of 2009 gender equality is a part of policy field of the Equal opportunities division, as well as equal opportunities for disabled people and social inclusion policy.

Ministry's responsibilities in the field of gender equality contain coordination of the gender equality policy, monitoring and assessment of gender equality promotion programmes and projects, monitoring of the overall situation and the assessment of the political impact from gender equality perspective.

Line ministries, as well as the Secretariats of Ministers for Special Assignments are responsible for the coordination of integration of the gender equality principle into the already existing and future policies, normative acts and programmes, preparation of proposals for the gender equality implementation, and information of the society about activities undertaken in the area of gender equality in accordance with their competence. All line ministries have nominated a person responsible for gender equality issues at the highest level (from understate secretary to department director). These persons are now serving as focal points in order to mainstream gender into their particular field.

By the decree of 10 May 2010 of the Minister of Welfare, U. Augulis, the committee of Gender equality was established that would substitute the former council of Gender equality. The committee is a coordinating institution in the field of gender equality policy, that is promoting the cooperation and involvement of ministries, non-governmental organizations, social partners, self-governments and other involved representatives in order to facilitate implementation, supervision and development of the gender equality policy. The committee consists of both the State, and Non-governmental organizations as well as the representatives of social associates. The committee is managed by Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Welfare, I. Alliks.

[Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia](#)

According to the Ombudsman Law (Section 11, point 2) one of the main Ombudsman's functions is: "to promote the compliance with the principles of equal treatment and prevention of any kind of discrimination".

Any person can turn to the Ombudsman's Office - the national equality body in Latvia, about the breach of equal treatment and breach of principle of non-discrimination.

The Ombudsman:

- accepts and examines complaints towards any kind of discrimination of private persons. The process is free of charge. In the examination of a verification procedure of the submission, the conciliation between the parties at a dispute shall be promoted. If the parties are unable to agree on the conciliation, the Ombudsman shall provide an opinion containing the evaluation of the facts established in the verification procedure;
- gives legal protection to the victims of discrimination - legal consultations; the processing of the case and representation in the court;
- makes independent researches and analysis about the discrimination issues;
- examines possible solutions and gives recommendations;
- informs society about the rights of non-discrimination.

As well, the Ombudsman participates in the drafting of normative acts and provides recommendations on amendments of normative acts.

According to the Ombudsman Law (section 4, point 1): „The Ombudsman shall be independent in his or her activities and shall

be governed exclusively by the law. No one has the right to influence the Ombudsman in the performance of his or her functions and tasks."

[State Labour Inspectorate \(SLI\)](#) is a state administrative and supervisory institution, that works under supervision of the Ministry of Welfare. The main task of SLI is to take measures to ensure effective implementation of State policy in the field of labour legal relations, labour protection and the technical supervision of dangerous equipment. Inspectorate had approx. 100 inspectors throughout the country in 2005. Currently in frames of projects inspectors receive training on gender and employment issues so that in the future all inspectors would be able to handle cases involving discrimination on grounds of sex.

Women's' Parliamentary Cooperation Group for Cooperation with other Parliaments' Female Deputies was set up in November 2007.

Almost all women parliamentarians are involved in this group. The main idea behind establishment of such a group was to highlight gender equality issues and to pay specific attention to the women's socioeconomic situation and role in society. Women parliamentarians having different party background formed this group two months after last parliament elections.

[The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia](#). The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia collects statistical data disaggregated by sex and main data is also presented by sex (e.g. Statistical Yearbook). More specific data are collected but not necessarily presented by sex. In this situation if the ministry is interested in some data, they can easily have the data and carry out and include the analyses in their publications. Statistical Bureau performs also some research (e.g. Workforce Survey, Statistical bulletin on Household Budget, statistical data collection on Time Use of the Population of Latvia, etc.) that include data and analyses from gender perspective and these researches are published. But there are still some governmental institutions that do not collect data on their services disaggregated by sex.

Mass media, non-governmental organisations, experts and research institutions, which promote the public awareness about gender issues and the change of gender roles and stereotypes, are an important partner for governmental institutions in the development of gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming.

[The Employers' Confederation of Latvia](#) (LDDK) is the biggest organization representing the interests of employers. LDDK acts as a partner in socioeconomic negotiations with Saeima, the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Latvia and Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia.

LDDK unites 42 branch and regional associations and federations that take a significant place in Latvian economics, as well as enterprises that employ over 50 people.

The members of LDDK employ at large 35% of employees in Latvia.

[The Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia \(LBAS\)](#) is the biggest non-governmental organisation in Latvia, which protects the interests of professional trade union members and employees on the branch and inter-branch level. [LBAS Gender Equality Council](#) was established in March, 1996 and it is a coordinating, consultative trade union institution, the main objective of which is to attain equality between the women and the men and to broaden the social opportunities for women.

Functions of LBAS Gender Equality Council:

To analyse the situation as regards the area of gender equality in Latvia;

To set up working groups for researching and solving the problems of gender equality and equal opportunities;

To organise and conduct public polls, other researches;

To organise seminars, discussions, conferences and other activities on the problems of gender equality;

To participate in international campaigns and activities;

To cooperate with those non-governmental organisations, which deal with gender equality problem solving;

To cooperate with LBAS affiliates and regional trade union centres as regards the issues of gender equality and equal opportunities.

<https://www.lm.gov.lv/en/institutional-mechanism>