

Questionnaire
Gender-responsive migration legislation, policies and practices
Ireland's response

1. How does your Government define “gender responsiveness”?

The Irish government does not have a specific definition for ‘gender responsiveness’ in this context. There are individual pieces of legislation which cover gender equality including the Employment Equality Act 1998, which outlaws discrimination on the basis of gender in employment, and the Equal Status Acts (2000-2015), which prevent discrimination on the basis of gender in the provision of goods and services.

2. Please provide information on any existing or forthcoming good practices or initiatives of gender-responsive migration legislation, policies or practices in your country. (Should you provide information on legislation or policy, kindly submit the original text, accompanied by an English translation if it is in a language other than the six official UN languages.)

Ireland launched its second National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2015. This concluded in 2018 and Ireland is now working on the third iteration. The Government is committed to ensuring that Ireland continues to play its role, both nationally and internationally, in furthering the cause of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In the area of migration, the strategy aimed to strengthen outreach to women and girls in Ireland who have been affected by conflict, including migrant women, diaspora communities, and those seeking asylum. Outreach was planned and implemented to increase awareness of healthcare and support services available amongst migrant women from conflict areas. The Government published the National Strategy for Women and Girls in 2017 and Objective 5 of this Strategy is concerned with tackling violence against women and as part of Ireland's commitment thereunder, the Government ratified the Istanbul Convention.

Under the Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-2020), Communities Integration Funding targeted initiatives for women and girls.

As mentioned above, the Government is currently working on the Third National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace and Security Agenda), which is an ambitious vision for how women's participation can transform the dynamics of conflict: both preventing it from impacting women's lives and ensuring that peace is forged on the basis of women's needs and priorities. Outward looking actions relate to our international development policy, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, security policy and diplomatic engagement. Inward looking actions relate to migrant women affected by conflict living in Ireland, and women affected by the Northern Ireland conflict.

The Action plan will be drafted based on the findings of a rigorous consultation process which has been led by a Working Group appointed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney, TD. It is made up of 50 per cent government and 50 per cent civil society and its chair is Salome Mbugua, who is a member of the board of the Irish Human Rights Commission and the founder of Akidwa, an organisation which advocates for the rights of migrant women in Ireland.

The Consultation process included 49 written submissions which were received following a public call launched by the Tánaiste and Minister of Foreign Affairs in November 2018 and two Consultation Workshops.

The workshop in Cork took a best practise approach through its capturing of both rural women's voices and those of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers living in Ireland from conflict and post-conflict affected areas. Childcare and transport were provided in order to facilitate attendance and while this had a focus on service provision in the relief and recovery element of the plan, it also highlighted the need to see migrant women as agents of change and as a source of expertise in our understanding conflict prevention and fragile states. The phrase "nothing about us without us" should be noted as the cornerstone of the implementation of the Agenda.

3. Please indicate any challenges and/or obstacles in the implementation of gender-responsive migration legislation and/or policies?

The key challenge is to retain an ambition for gender equality in the context of competing demands for action on other equality issues. A mistaken impression that women's equality has essentially been achieved has served to sap energy and attention from the issues still needing to be addressed. There is a renewed need to make the case, particularly among the young, for continued action on gender equality. There are particular challenges in the area of leadership and decision-making, access to employment and education / vocational training. Cultural differences and expectations are also challenges.

4. Based on the experience accumulated with these interventions so far, as well as the lessons learned, what would you have to do differently to maximise the gender responsive impact of these interventions?

More public awareness and outreach would maximise the gender responsive impact of these interventions.

5. What support could other stakeholders (other than your Government) provide to make your migration policies, legislation, and practices more gender responsive?

The Government welcomes input from NGOs, local authorities and other stakeholders working with the migrant community in terms of providing research and highlighting current gender-based issues for various migrant groups in order to aid in the formulation of effective public policy.