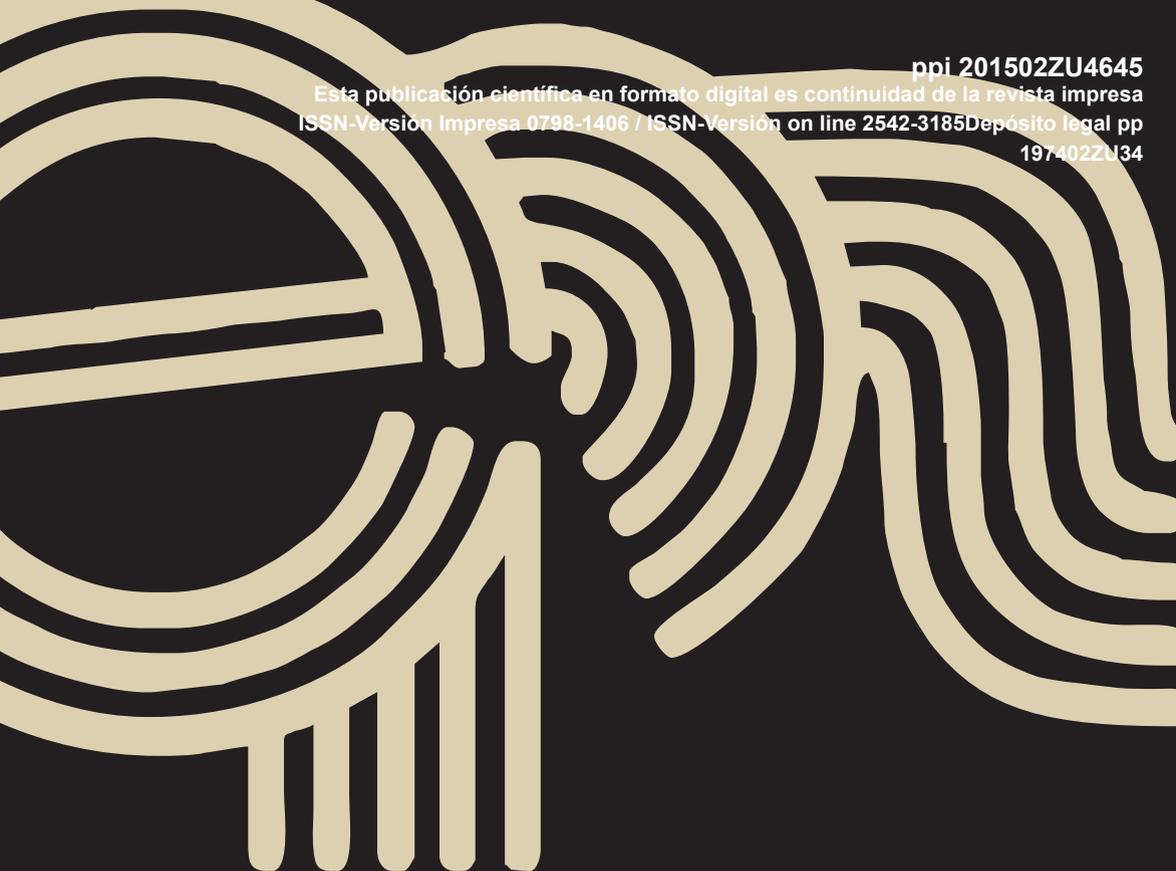


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# Implementation of an effective system for monitoring the application of gender equality policy: Experience from European Union countries

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## Abstract

The European Union has been pursuing the policy aimed at achieving equality between women and men for a long time. The adoption of the Law “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” is an important step forward. However, the aspects of the control of compliance with the legislation in the field of gender policy remain poorly advanced and need to be adapted following the experience of developed European countries. The aim of this article was to outline the legislative mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and to compare it with European legislative experience and practice. During the research, the methods of analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction and comparative analysis were used. As a result of the research, the mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities in Ukraine was determined; the bodies, institutions and organizations empowered in the specified area were described along with the main aspects of gender equality legislation in Ukraine. It is

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concluded that government officials can use the results obtained during the research to improve some legislative aspects of control over gender policy implementation.

**Keywords:** gender policy; discrimination; control system; equal rights; stereotypes.

## Implementación de un sistema efectivo para el monitoreo de la aplicación de la política de igualdad de género: Experiencia de los países de la Unión europea

### Resumen

La Unión Europea ha seguido la política destinada a lograr la igualdad entre mujeres y hombres durante mucho tiempo. La aprobación de la Ley «sobre la garantía de la igualdad de derechos y oportunidades para mujeres y hombres» es un importante paso adelante. Sin embargo, los aspectos del control del cumplimiento de la legislación en el campo de la política de género siguen estando poco avanzados y deben adaptarse siguiendo la experiencia de los países europeos desarrollados. El objetivo de este artículo fue esbozar el mecanismo legislativo para garantizar la igualdad de derechos y oportunidades para mujeres y hombres, y compararlo con la experiencia y la práctica legislativa europeas. Durante la investigación se utilizaron los métodos de análisis y síntesis, deducción e inducción y análisis comparativo. Como resultado de la investigación, se determinó el mecanismo para garantizar la igualdad de derechos y oportunidades en Ucrania; se describieron los órganos, instituciones y organizaciones empoderados en el área especificada junto a los principales aspectos de la legislación sobre igualdad de género en Ucrania. Se concluye que los funcionarios gubernamentales pueden utilizar los resultados obtenidos durante la investigación para mejorar algunos aspectos legislativos del control sobre la implementación de la política de género.

**Palabras clave:** política de género; discriminación; sistema de control; igualdad de derechos; estereotipos.

### Introduction

Equality between women and men is defined as one of the fundamental principles in the European Union (EU). It follows that the introduction and observance of an effective gender policy is one of the keys to the successful

integration of Ukraine into the EU, which, among other things, makes the subject of this study current and relevant.

However, the main task of gender policy in the Ukraine and other countries is to achieve real equality between women and men, as well as other groups of variable identity for the sake of comfortable coexistence without gender discrimination, dignified treatment, respect and security, which will ultimately lead to economic growth through the use of the potential of all population groups and raising the standard of living.

Aspects of gender equality are widely covered in a number of studies conducted by Ukrainian and foreign researchers. The equality of rights and opportunities of women and men were studied in the context of their impact on virtually all aspects of socio-political life, in particular in the field of science, medicine and health, social and economic spheres, in the field of education and employment, etc (Semenyshyn *et al.*, 2020). Most of the researchers outline the aspects of gender policy making, as well as the main problems in this area, and barriers to the development. However, issues related to the mechanisms and ensuring the appropriate level of control over the implementation of gender policy remain poorly studied.

So, the aim of this study is to outline the legislative mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and to compare it with European experience and legislative practice to determine the main problems, in particular those related to the control system, regarding the achievement of gender equality in Ukraine and the ways of their overcoming. The aim involved the fulfilment of the following research objectives:

- outline the mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine;
- describe the bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine, as well as their main functions and powers;
- identify the main aspects of legislating gender equality in Europe in the context of the study of historical documents and recommendations to member states.

## 1. Literature review

Problems of gender equality policy implementation, in particular in the context of Ukraine's integration into the EU and the need to bring national standards into line with international norms, are a relevant subject for research by Ukrainian and foreign researchers. The researchers study a

large number of legislative documents related to this problem, because the issues of gender equality have a long history and developed gradually and unevenly depending on the cultural and political characteristics of different countries.

Shcherbak (2020) mentioned the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2015) as the first document in the context of ensuring gender equality, the main provisions of which testify to the growing importance of issues related to institutional support and ensuring the implementation of gender policy in the state. The article is focused on the mechanisms of the gender policy making in Ukraine, in particular, the functions of the policy-making bodies.

The paper notes that institutional mechanisms for improving the status of women are one of the priority areas for further action, defined by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which were adopted at the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women in 1995. Shcherbak's (2020) research, as well as the work of Manlosa *et al.* (2019), are evidence that increasing the representation of women in the highest levels of state power makes the state's policy much more socially oriented, as well as highly humane and tolerant.

Bila-Tiurina (2022) also notes the Beijing Conference as a starting point for launching the process of creating institutional mechanisms in the field of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine. The researcher emphasizes that the institutional mechanism in Ukraine is at the development stage and is currently weak.

Bila-Tiurina (2022) considers the establishment of the institutional mechanism for the implementation of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men" (2018) as the main achievement. According to the author, another important step of Ukraine in the context of European integration is the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2022 (On the Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2022), which was signed back in 2011.

Dmytrenko (2021) studies the aspects of building gender strategies by foreign countries in order to determine the positive aspects of the experience for Ukraine. The researcher defines the gender strategy as the main document that outlines the key goals, objectives and principles of the state's gender policy. The author noted that the most popular gender strategy in the world is mainstreaming, which consists in introducing gender aspects into the activities of state management bodies at all levels.

Besides, the researcher emphasizes the importance of such a strategic task within the implementation of gender policy as the introduction

of gender quotas. Gender quotas can be defined as a type of “positive discrimination”, which involves the introduction of a system of benefits, compensations, prohibitions and incentives in order to increase the social status of women.

Regarding the concept of “mainstreaming”, Saienko (2020) notes that the creation of this concept was provided by the Beijing Action Platform, which was discussed in the works of Shcherbak (2020) and Bila-Tiurina (2022). At the current stage of development, the concept of mainstreaming is often criticized, in particular for the fact that it further opposes women and men, ignoring the differences between other population groups and a number of other problems.

However, some researchers, such as Vorchakova (2019), consider adherence to the principles of mainstreaming as a positive aspect. She emphasizes the observance of such principles in state programmes on gender policy, noting, on the other hand, that the main problems lie in the field of women’s political representation.

In addition to the aspects outlined above, Dmytrenko (2021), as well as Vorchakova (2019), note the possibility of using positive aspects of the experience of Scandinavian countries —Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland — in Ukrainian practice. Vorchakova (2019) states that the principles of gender equality have been an integral part of EU policy since its creation, and EU countries are leaders in terms of the number of women in national parliaments. In the researcher’s opinion, the main positive aspect of the experience of these countries for Ukraine is the attention paid not so much to constitutional guarantees, but to the equal employment policy, which is achieved through centralized collective lobbying, as well as through a balanced social policy.

Foreign researchers also widely cover the issue of gender equality, in particular in the countries mentioned above, which have overcome the gender gap as much as possible and can be a worthy example for Ukraine. Urinbojevna and Rustamova (2021) note that Norway, Switzerland and Finland rank first according to the criteria of safety, equality and the ability of women to fully participate in the life of society. Husu (2019) finds that, gender studies and gender studies programmes in universities of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have significantly more influence than in most other European countries.

Schulstok and Wikstrand (2020) write on the specifics of career guidance in the context of gender equality in the Scandinavian countries. The researchers summarize the main goals of gender policy in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden in the course of their study. Besides, they explain how gender and gender equality affect career guidance in science and politics and career practice.

Foreign researchers also pay much attention to the issue of gender mainstreaming. Minto *et al.* (2020) examined aspects of policy evaluation and gender mainstreaming in the EU. Lomazzi and Crespi (2019, 2019a) study legislative and social changes in the EU in the context of mainstreaming. Some studies focus on issues of gender mainstreaming and gender policy related to the educational process (Lempesi, 2019; Rosa *et al.*, 2020).

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Research design**

The study was conducted in stages. The first stage involved outlining the mechanism of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine through the analysis of the legislative framework. This mechanism is provided in Chapter II of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, and contains a description of the bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine.

The second stage of the study provided for the description of bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine. Their main powers and functions were determined by applying methods of analysis and synthesis. The methods of deduction and induction were used at this stage in order to identify key aspects related to monitoring the implementation of gender equality policy, as well as related problems.

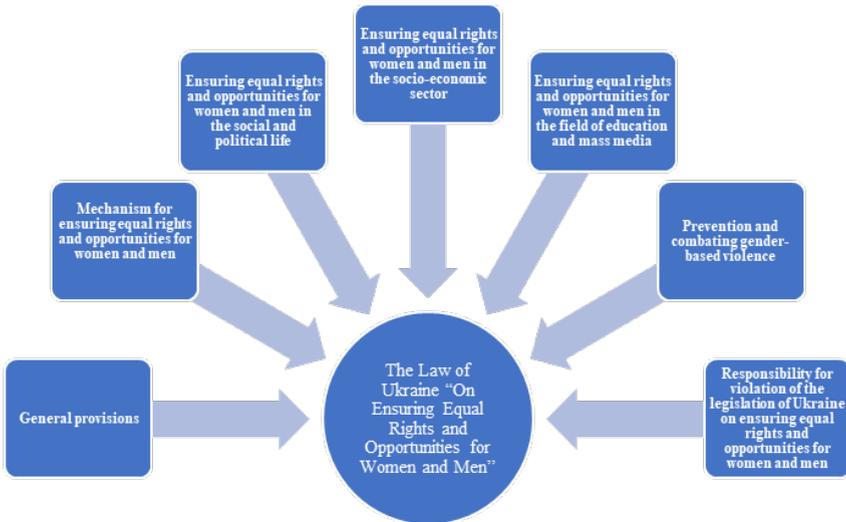
The third stage focuses on coverage of legislating gender equality in Europe, in particular in the context of citing the main historical documents and recommendations to member states. The comparative analysis was used to assess the achievements of Ukraine in relation to the gender equality policy and the introduction of a system of control over the implementation of such policy, and to compare them with European experience and practice.

The methods of analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, and comparative analysis were used in the course of the research.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. The mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine**

The introduction of an effective system of monitoring the implementation of the gender equality policy should first of all be ensured at the state level by enshrining the relevant provisions in the legislative framework. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” (2018), the structure of which is shown in Figure 1, was an important step in this regard.



**Figure 1: Structure of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” (2018).**

A particularly important section of this Law is Chapter II “Mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men”, which establishes the bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, as well as their powers and functions. This mechanism should ensure the introduction of appropriate measures for the development of gender equality policies, as well as control over the implementation of such policies should be carried out within its limits.

**3.2. Bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine**

The functions of implementing and monitoring the implementation of gender policy in Ukraine as part of the mechanism for ensuring equal

rights and opportunities for women and men are entrusted to a number of bodies, institutions and organizations empowered in this area. Table 1 lists the bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, as well as their powers and functions.

**Table 1. Bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men, their powers and functions.**

<b>Name of the body, institution or organization</b>	<b>Performed functions</b>
Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU)	1) outlines the key principles of the country's gender policy; 2) uses the principle of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in legislative activity; 3) exercises parliamentary control over the implementation of legislative acts on ensuring gender equality
Voluntary Association of People's Deputies of Ukraine Inter-factional Deputies Association (IDA) "Equal Opportunities" established in 2014.	Its main goal is to improve the position of women in society, as well as to stimulate public dialogue on gender equality issues in all spheres of life. The priority areas of activity are combating domestic violence, protecting the rights of children and women, creating conditions for ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in various fields.
The Public Council on Gender Issues operating under the IDA	Improves the coordination of programmes supporting gender equality, in particular by balancing work to address gaps in certain areas and duplication in others.
Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights	Monitors the observance of equality in ensuring the rights and opportunities of women and men; considers appeals regarding gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence etc.

Representative of the Commissioner for Human Rights	Ensures implementation by Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights of parliamentary control over compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and gender equality, as well as individual rights of citizens
Expert Council on Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality under Representative of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights on Non-Discrimination and Gender Equality	In the field of ensuring non-discrimination and gender equality: monitors the state of ensuring the right to freedom from discrimination and the gender equality principle; participates in the analysis of compliance of national legislation and law enforcement practice with Ukraine's international obligations; participates in the preparation of proposals and opinions regarding the regulatory legal acts etc.
Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU)	In the field of gender policy: takes measures to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men; ensures the implementation of the state gender policy; supervises the activities of ministries and other executive authorities.
The Government Office for Coordination on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration established by the CMU in 2017	In the field of state policy for ensuring gender equality: coordinates measures for the implementation of state policy for ensuring gender equality and empowering women in the security and defence sector in accordance with NATO standards and recommendations.
Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy (the position was established by the Government in 2017)	Participates in the coordination of actions for the implementation at the state and local levels of recommendations and comments of international monitoring missions and international organizations, informs the public about ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, etc.
Interdepartmental Council on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development, Prevention of Domestic Violence and Combating Trafficking in Human Being	It includes both government representatives and leading specialists, scientists, representatives of enterprises, institutions, individual organizations (both national and international, etc.
The Ministry of Social Policy	In the field of gender equality: develops measures to ensure gender equality in all spheres; forms the National Action Plan; summarizes the implementation of state programmes etc.
Ministry of Justice of Ukraine	Ensures legal examination of legislation for observance of gender-related principles.

Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine	Involved in the process of fulfilling the main international obligations of Ukraine regarding the establishment of gender equality, and plays a leading role in the implementation of gender policy on combating sexual harassment, prevention of domestic violence, child abuse, combating human trafficking.
Authorities of the Prosecutor’s Office	Receive and consider complaints about facts of gender-based discrimination
Courts	Consider lawsuits on gender-based discrimination

Note: created according to (Issues of legal examination of legislation for observance of gender-related principles, (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2019); On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2018); On Approval of the Regulation on the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022); On Approval of the Regulation on the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022); On the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022); On the Consultative and Advisory Body on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development, Prevention and Counteraction to Domestic Violence and Combating Human Trafficking (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2019); On the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2022); On the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2017; Shcherbak, 2020).

In addition to the bodies, institutions and organizations mentioned in Table 1, there are 2 parliamentary committees, as well as authorized persons (coordinators) empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men; advisers on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men; consultative and advisory bodies; responsible structural subdivisions which ensure the formation and implementation of gender policy in the executive and local self-government bodies (“On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, 2018).

Local state administrations and local self-government bodies also have the right to form consultative and advisory bodies, to appoint advisers on issues of ensuring gender equality, preventing and countering gender-based violence (Shcherbak, 2020).

Table 1 gives grounds to conclude that the establishment of the principles of gender equality has a strong support at the legislative level, and the main aspects of ensuring gender equality should be controlled at all levels of public administration.

However, the problem of gender discrimination continues to exist, which is primarily related to stereotypes rooted in the minds of citizens themselves. In particular, a large proportion of women themselves believe that they “should” perform certain “female duties” due to various reasons: education, ignorance, social insecurity, fear of condemnation from society, etc.

Besides, there are certain “workarounds” that enable you to disregard the rules of the law through certain agreements. It often happens that, for example, when hiring, it is difficult to prove that the choice in favour of a male candidate was made for gender reasons. Therefore, the mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men should include, among other things, measures to control the observance of gender policy, such as regulation — establishing clear proportions that ensure equality of women and men in the field of employment, access to power, in politics, etc.

It is also appropriate to enhance social work and raise citizens’ awareness of the need to achieve gender equality. It is particularly important to further improve the norms in the field of determining responsibility for violations of legislation in the field of ensuring gender equality. It is well known that the fear of punishment is an effective tool in combating crimes.

At the same time, the lack of punishment leads to the spread of crimes, living proof of which is, among other things, the crimes of the Russian occupiers during the war. A large proportion of these crimes are gender-related, and their massiveness indicates impunity. The Government of Ukraine is actively working on measures and mechanisms to prevent such crimes and bring war criminals to justice.

### **3.3. Legislating Gender Equality in Europe: Historical Documents and Recommendations to Member States**

The European Union is, in fact, the “cradle” for the main provisions on gender equality, actively developing aspects of gender policy over many decades. Therefore, the experience of European countries in ensuring gender equality, in particular, regarding the development of the legislative framework, is one of the main examples for Ukraine.

During the period of development of legislation in the field of gender policy, numerous laws were adopted regarding its general and specific aspects. Figure 2 shows key documents with a concise definition of the main focus of the document.



**Figure 2: The main standards for ensuring gender equality enshrined in European regulatory legal documents.**

**Note:** created on the basis of (The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1999); European Convention on Human Rights (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021); Protocol No. 12 to European Convention on Human Rights (ETS N 177) (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2006); Treaty establishing the European Community (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2005); Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Liga 360, 2000; Zadoienko, 2019).

Figure 2 presents only few documents that had a particularly strong impact on the further EU policy making in the field of ensuring gender equality. The full list of such documents is much broader. However, in the context of Ukraine's integration into the EU, it is also appropriate to mention the list of the main Directives of the Council of the EU, the provisions of which must be enshrined in the legislation of the member states:

75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on equal pay;

76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on equal treatment in the workplace;

92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding;

96/34 EC dated 3 June 1996 on the parental leave;

96/97/EC of December 20, 1996 on equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes;

2010/41/EU of 7 July 2010 on equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity (Roos, 2021; Argren *et al.*, 2023; Silander, 2019).

A number of recommendations and resolutions have been developed in order to improve the effectiveness of changes in the gender policy of the EU member states:

Recommendation Rec (2003)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making (Council of Europe, 2003).

Recommendation 148(2004) of the Congress on the gender approach at the local and regional levels (Council of Europe, 2004);

Recommendation CM/Rec (2007)17 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on standards and mechanisms for gender equality (Council of Europe, 2007);

Congress Resolution 391(2015) on fighting the growing poverty among women (Council of Europe, 2015);

Congress Resolution 405(2016) on gender-responsive budgeting (Council of Europe, 2016);

It should be noted separately that in 2018 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 (Council of Europe, 2018).

The document includes six strategic goals, in particular: preventing and combating gender stereotypes and sexism; preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; ensuring women's equal access to justice: balanced participation of women and men in making social and political decisions; protection of the rights of migrant women and girls, refugees and asylum seekers; implementation of the strategy for achieving gender equality in all policies and measures (Council of Europe, 2018).

Enshrining the main provisions of the above-mentioned documents in the legislative framework of Ukraine will contribute not only to increasing the effectiveness of gender policy and improving control over its implementation, but also to bringing the national framework in line with the European one, which is especially important in the context of Ukraine's integration into the EU.

#### 4. Discussion

One of the main problems in achieving gender equality in Ukraine is an imperfect system of control and monitoring of compliance with the standards of ensuring gender equality in all spheres of social and political life. Although the institutional mechanism for ensuring gender equality presented in the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men" is a significant positive step in this matter, the legislative framework needs further improvement.

A number of researchers focus on the problems of ensuring the implementation and control of the gender equality policy in Ukraine and ways to solve them (Kopotun *et al.*, 2022; Prokopenko *et al.*, 2023). According to Shcherbak (2020) and Manlosa *et al.* (2019), attention should be paid to ensuring balanced access of women and men to state decision-making, creating conditions for equal representation of the interests of all social groups in state authorities, and cooperation between the state and citizens on gender equality issues.

The experience of the Scandinavian countries is taken as an example in the work of Urinboyevna and Rustamova (2021), where the achievements of Norway, Switzerland and Finland in the field of gender policy are associated with a high level of security and life, life expectancy, and freedom of choice in these countries. In the study of Husu (2019) the sample consists of the same countries, and an important aspect of effective gender policy is identified as the introduction of gender research programmes in education, as well as the corresponding funding.

Schulstok and Wikstrand (2020) systematized the main goals of gender policy in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. A comparison of the goals of some of the listed countries found that, despite their common success in implementing an effective gender policy, the Scandinavian states use different approaches and focus on different goals of such a policy.

Denmark focuses on general aspects such as ensuring the freedom of individuals, improved use of talents and resources and global activities. In Finland, attention is focused on aspects of employment, as well as equality in the fields of education and sports, elimination of violence against women,

etc. In Iceland, the primary goal of gender policy is to achieve equality in political representation.

Other goals of this country mostly coincide with the goals of Finland, in addition, both countries pay attention to the issues of gender equality in relation to men. A wide range of gender policy objectives is available in Norway: it covers aspects of child care and education, elimination of violence, employment, business, health, etc. In Sweden, equal distribution of power is at the top of the gender policy goals, and equality must be achieved in the economic sphere, health care, education, unpaid leave and childcare.

The goal of eliminating violence against women in this country is the most specific and unambiguous: “Men’s violence against women must be stopped”. The positive experience of these countries should be applied in Ukrainian practice during the development of a gender equality strategy.

Minto *et al.* (2020) subject the gender mainstreaming policy in the EU to some criticism due to the discrepancy between the existing assessment standards for gender mainstreaming and the requirements for effective assessment of progress in achieving gender equality. In contrast to this view, Lomazzi and Crespi (2019) note that despite the shortcomings of the gender mainstreaming approach, it is the most important transnational strategy. Researchers define gender mainstreaming as a significant legislative and cultural shift that contributes to the achievement of gender equality in European policy.

Lempesi (2019) expresses a very interesting view on gender equality in education in Greece. The author notes that the country was “forced” to follow the Community guidelines, having no previous traditions in gender policy, so aspects of gender policy remained fragmented in it. If we consider the introduction of gender policy from this point of view, it can be noted that in a certain period, most countries also did not have previous traditions of gender policy. However, most European countries have chosen a progressive approach that takes into account the need to introduce and develop gender policy.

In this context, it is worth noting the role of control and monitoring of EU member states’ compliance with the political aspects of gender equality, which contributes to gradual transformation even in countries without previous traditions of gender policy. Rosa *et al.* (2020) also focus on the problems of gender equality in education, and, unlike the previous study, emphasize the positive aspects of ensuring gender equality.

The researchers note that creating a gender-sensitive university requires behavioural and attitudinal changes that can be driven by both innovative thinking and a legislative framework and commitment to change through data collection, monitoring, training, leadership, networking and synergies of the most unexpected kinds.

The conducted discussion can indicate that positive changes in the implementation of gender policy should be ensured in the context of two main directions: legislative (change and adoption of relevant normative documents) and socio-cultural (change in attitude, behaviour, stereotypes). However, the maximum efficiency of work in both directions cannot be achieved without the introduction of a system of effective control and monitoring both at the state level and by citizens and their organizations.

### **Conclusions**

The article presents the key achievements of Ukraine in the development of legislation on gender equality policy issues, in particular, the structure of the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” is described. Special attention is paid to Chapter II of the Law, which provides a mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The bodies, institutions and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Ukraine and their key functions were described within such a mechanism. It was determined that this mechanism is intended to increase the effectiveness of the gender equality policy, and also provides for monitoring the implementation of such policy.

The list and main content of the key standards for ensuring gender equality defined in the regulatory and legal documents of the EU are provided. A comparison of the national and foreign legislative framework identified the main problems related to the achievement of gender equality in Ukraine and to form key directions for improving gender policy.

One of the main problems regarding the achievement of gender equality in Ukraine is an imperfect system of control and monitoring of compliance with the standards of ensuring gender equality in all spheres of social and political life. The institutional mechanism for ensuring gender equality, provided in the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men”, is a significant positive shift in the investigated issue, however, it was noted that the legislative framework needs further improvement, expansion and adaptation to international standards.

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