BULGARIAN PLATFORM – EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

БЪЛГАРСКА ПЛАТФОРМА КЪМ ЕВРОПЕЙСКО ЖЕНСКО ЛОБИ

Legal Entity (Non-Governmental Organisation) with Non-Profit Purpose

INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES

for 2025

Information on activities under Art. 38 of the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act

Annual report under Art. 40, para. 2 of the Non-Profit Legal Entities Act

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Association "Bulgarian Platform – European Women's Lobby" was registered with the Sofia City Court, company file No. 699/2016, on 19.10.2016, as a legal entity with non-profit purpose. The Association operates in the public interest. It is registered in the Central Register of Non-Profit Legal Entities at the Ministry of Justice under No. 20170116001, Certificate No. 001/16.01.2017. It is also registered in the BULSTAT Register under code 177095581, as well as in the Commercial Register and the Register of Non-Profit Legal Entities at the Registry Agency, EIK 177095581.

The registered office of the Association is: Sofia, Yavorov district, bl. 12A.

Correspondence address: 17, Fourth Str.; Goritsa, Byala Municipality, Varna Region, 9101, Bulgarai

Email: bulgaria.ewl@gmail.com

Website: http://www.womenlobbybulgaria.org/

Name in English: Bulgarian Platform – European Women's Lobby

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Mission:

Through monitoring, information, advocacy, and support for legislative development, the Bulgarian Platform – EWL works to build a society in which women's contribution in all aspects of life is recognised, rewarded, and valued; where all women and girls are free from violence; and where no woman or girl is left behind by institutions.

Objectives:

To monitor the implementation of the gender equality principle in relation to EU policies at national level, which have a direct or indirect impact on women's lives;

To raise awareness and sensitivity regarding women's rights and contribute to the development of legislation in this field;

To work in the area of prevention and protection of women from gender-based violence, including by providing direct support to survivors of violence;

To explain new trends in EU legislative processes on gender equality and ensure their accurate and adequate implementation at national level.

II. INFORMATION ON IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

During the period 01.01.2025 – 31.12.2025, the Bulgarian Platform – European Women's Lobby worked on the strategic objectives of the organisation, with a focus on women's rights, combating gender-based violence and domestic violence, women's participation in political life, the gender pay gap, combating sexism, women's rights during maternity and pregnancy, women and climate change, as well as providing trainings to Bulgarian civil society organisations in the field of organising advocacy campaigns for women's rights and feminist knowledge.

In 2025, the organisation received two nominations for the "Person of the Year" awards of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee for members of the Bulgarian Platform – EWL, as well as one "Activist of the Year" award. Maya Doneva, individual member of the Bulgarian Platform – European Women's Lobby, was awarded "Activist of the Year", and Stella Kehaiofa, founder of the association "Women of Kazanlak", was nominated for "Person of the Year". For the Bulgarian

Platform – EWL, this is recognition of all our members who work tirelessly for women's rights and never give up despite all challenges.

IMPLEMENTED AND STARTED PROJECTS IN 2025:

1. Within the project under the "Mission Possible" Programme, funded by the Bulgarian Fund for Women and the EU CERV Programme – 22 months – January 2024 – October 2025

Within the framework of the project, the Platform admitted 15 new NGOs working in the field of women's rights and gender equality, as well as more than 15 individual members sharing our objectives and priorities. Thanks to the project, the organisation's communication profile and fundraising capacity improved, and the Platform further consolidated its public presence with a strong advocacy position on issues aligned with its core objectives.

On 16 January 2025, the Bulgarian Platform – EWL sent an Open letter to the 105th Government of Bulgaria, led by Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov, expressing its strong concern that the government included only one woman minister out of a total of nineteen ministers. The letter received wide media coverage.

A General Assembly of the Platform was held, during which a work plan for 2025–2026 was adopted. A "Climate Fresk" workshop was also conducted as part of the "Women and Climate Change" project, in which the Bulgarian Platform – EWL is a partner.

A research study was conducted and a report published on "Gender Equality and the Gender Pay Gap in Bulgaria". In cooperation with the research team of the Zangador Institute, data were provided on differences in average gross annual wages between women and men by economic activity for the period 2008–2022.

In June 2025, the Bulgarian Platform – EWL sent an Open letter to the Executive Director of the Centre for Urban Mobility, the Mayor of Sofia, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, and the Chair of the National Council on Equality between Women and Men at the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, expressing deep concern regarding a public advertisement by the Centre for Urban Mobility for youth travel cards, which became known as the "For 25 leva" campaign. The issue received significant media and public attention, and the Centre for Urban Mobility subsequently withdrew the advertisement.

In cooperation with the Zangador Institute, the first-ever study on "Sexism in Bulgaria" was also conducted. The report examines different forms of sexism- hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and benevolent sexism in the workplace - and presents an analysis based on an online survey

conducted between 21 June and 21 August 2025. On 24 October 2025, a webinar was held on the topic "Public Attitudes towards Sexism in Bulgaria: What Do the Data Show?"

In 2025, the Platform adopted a Child Safeguarding Policy.

The Platform participated in various events organised by its member organisations, including conferences, working meetings, the Roma Children's Festival, and others.

2. Project "Protection and Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls through the Implementation of EU Legislation", Funded by the Bulgarian Fund for Women and the EU CERV Programme – 22 months – January 2025 – October 2026

The project aims to map and analyse Bulgarian legislation and to propose concrete amendments to laws and policies in order to ensure the successful transposition and implementation of Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, for which the deadline for adaptation of national legislation, budgets and resources is 13 June 2027.

In 2025, within the framework of the project, an expert group from the civil society sector was established, which prepared an analysis of all gaps in Bulgarian legislation. Based on this analysis, concrete recommendations for legislative amendments have been developed in line with the Directive. Gender-sensitive guidelines for law enforcement and judicial authorities have also been prepared, as required by the Directive.

The activities are implemented in cooperation with all civil society organisations that are members of the Platform, as well as organisations outside the Platform working for the protection of women's rights and against violence against women. A non-formal advocacy coalition has been established among civil society organisations, experts, and media representatives to support the faster adoption of the proposed amendments in line with the EU Directive.

The analysis and recommendations are in the process of being published on the organisation's social media channels:

https://www.instagram.com/womenlobbybulgaria/

https://www.linkedin.com/company/90834558/admin/dashboard/

https://www.facebook.com/womenlobbybulgaria/

3. Project "Skills and Capacity to Assert the Right to Equality" (Protecting EU Values and Fundamental Rights through Public Participation and Civil Society Assistance in Central Europe – PROTEUS Project) - Funded under the PROTEUS project implemented by TF, in cooperation with the Engaging Central Europe (ECE) programme of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. The PROTEUS project is co-financed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme of the European Union – 12 months – 1 January 2025 – 15 December 2025.

The project aimed to improve protection conditions and consolidate knowledge within civil society in two key areas of the right to equality: protection from violence against women and women's rights during pregnancy and maternity. It strengthened skills for addressing different legal situations and enhanced capacities for protecting these rights through opportunities for strategic litigation.

Main activities:

An analysis of legislation and practices in Bulgaria was conducted https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/gender-based-violence-rights/ ; https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/gender-based-violence-quiet-pandemic/), identifying constraints on the right to equality, with a focus on gender-based violence and the protection of women during pregnancy and maternity.

The legal analysis prepared by experts was based on:

Information provided by a range of institutions under the Access to Public Information Act – the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor's Office, and the National Social Security Institute (NSSI), concerning cases of domestic violence, protection orders, and the use of maternity leave in 2024;

An online survey with 76 respondents, assessing public awareness of women's rights during pregnancy and maternity and collecting data on experiences of discrimination;

Analysis of relevant Bulgarian legislation, integrating institutional data and survey results to form the conclusions.

Legal experts developed training modules for a two-day training held in Kazanlak in June 2025, aimed at strengthening capacity and raising awareness on gender-based violence and the protection of women during pregnancy and maternity. At the end of the training, all participants

received certificates confirming their participation and successful completion of the programme.

Four articles/analyses were published on the following topics:

https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/maternity-labour-contracts/

https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/pregnancy-maternity-rights/

https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/gender-based-violence-rights/

https://womenlobbybulgaria.org/domestic-violence-rights-bulgaria/

These aimed to increase public awareness, with project data and information being regularly disseminated as a measure to counter misinformation in the field of equality. The topics covered included: the right to protection, filing complaints and crisis centres for survivors of domestic violence; specific forms of gender-based violence; the right to civil contracts during maternity; and the right to informed consent.

A national conference was organised, bringing together stakeholders, experts, and non-governmental organisations, representatives of the National Assembly and the European Parliament in Bulgaria, academic representatives from New Bulgarian University and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, among others. The aim was to present results, discuss challenges, and formulate recommendations for future action. The conference provided a platform for discussion and created conditions for outlining an advocacy plan and strategic actions to address identified challenges.

The project also included participation in the "Democratic Mosaic" Festival 2025, a targeted social media campaign with influencers to raise public awareness, website and social media publications, including a carousel "Women's Rights during Pregnancy and Maternity: Test Your Knowledge".

4. Campaign "Joint Leadership", Funded by the European Women's Lobby 2025 Regranting Scheme and European funds, through the EWL Operational Grant (CERV – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme) – 6 months, 1 May – 30 October 2025

The campaign is part of the Platform's efforts to increase visibility of the need for equal participation of women and men in politics as a fundamental principle of sustainable democracy. Through this campaign, the Bulgarian Platform – EWL once again promoted the achievement of parity in political representation.

The campaign was implemented through personal messages from established political leaders in Bulgaria, who provided examples of leadership based on values, vision, and solidarity.

All Bulgarian politicians were invited to complete the sentence:

“Bulgaria needs more women political leaders because…”

The responses received, together with infographics prepared by the Platform presenting data on women’s participation in Bulgarian politics, were disseminated through the organisation’s social media channels.

5. Project “Building Hope in Critical Times for Women’s Rights”, Funded by the European Women’s Lobby 2025 Regranting Scheme and European funds, through the EWL Operational Grant (CERV – Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme) – 6 months, 1 May – 30 October 2025.

The project was implemented in partnership with the Romanian Women’s Lobby and the Network of East West Women – Poland.

The main objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of women and girls from Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland so that they can effectively understand, document, and develop joint and solidarity-based measures to counter reactionary processes and threats against women’s rights and gender equality.

In partnership with the participating organisations, three training sessions were conducted – in Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland – aimed at strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and young women and girls to organise campaigns in defence of women’s rights in times of backsliding on already achieved rights that ensure equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

6. Project “WomenInClimate – Strengthening Gender Mainstreaming in EU Climate Policies”, Funded under the EU programme CERV-2023-CITIZENS-CIV – Citizens’ engagement and participation – 18 months, January 2025 – June 2026

The project is implemented in partnership with the European Women’s Lobby, Romanian Women’s Lobby, Czech Women’s Lobby, the Dutch Council of Women – Nederlands Vrouwen Raad, and the Coalition of Finnish Women’s Associations (NYTKIS).

The aim of the project is to ensure that future EU climate policies are gender-responsive, promote equality between women and men, recognise women as equal and active participants

in climate-related policies, and take into account their collective voices and experiences through civil society organisations.

Activities implemented in 2025:

The organisation developed a dedicated section on the Platform's website providing access to materials published by international organisations and institutions on women and climate change.

On 29 August 2025, a conference was held with participants from across Bulgaria and representatives from four additional countries – Romania, Poland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The event aimed to explore the gender dimensions of climate change and to strengthen cooperation between organisations and institutions working at the intersection of gender equality, environmental justice, and local governance.

The discussion topics were selected based on the results of a survey conducted by the European Women's Lobby at the beginning of 2025 on knowledge and practices related to gender mainstreaming in climate and environmental policies.

The main three themes were:

- Climate change and women's health
- The role of local authorities in climate adaptation
- Gender equality and climate policies

The conference provided a platform for exchange of experiences, discussion of challenges, and formulation of recommendations for future action.

As a result of this event, as well as the Platform's sustained work on the topic over recent years, the Bulgarian Platform – EWL was invited by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation – Bulgaria to prepare a short publication titled "Women and Climate Change", which is expected to be published at the beginning of 2026.

7. Project "Taking Stock – Women's Rights in Nine Countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Baltic States (CEEBBS) – Update", Funded by the European Women's Lobby – 5 months, June 2025 – October 2025.

The aim of the project was to assess the development of women's rights following the European Women's Lobby working group report from 2018, with a focus on 14 countries: Bulgaria,

Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, North Macedonia, Moldova, Slovenia, Estonia, the Republic of Serbia, and Turkey.

In view of the growing backlash against gender equality in the region, the project aimed to assess the actual situation at legislative and policy level at both national and regional levels, to identify emerging challenges, and to provide evidence-based recommendations. This analysis is intended to support policy development, strengthen regional advocacy, and reinforce the role of women's rights defenders.

The Bulgarian Platform served as the lead organisation and acted as consultant to the European Women's Lobby, preparing the methodology of the analysis, collecting and coordinating the national reports, consolidating and editing the information provided by each country, and preparing the final publication – Taking Stock of Women's Rights in 14 Countries.

Sofia

30.03.2025



Iliana Balabanova

Manager of the Bulgarian Platform – European Women's Lobby