

Gender Action Plan III Republic of Korea: 2021-2025

Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP)

1. Context for EU action on gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

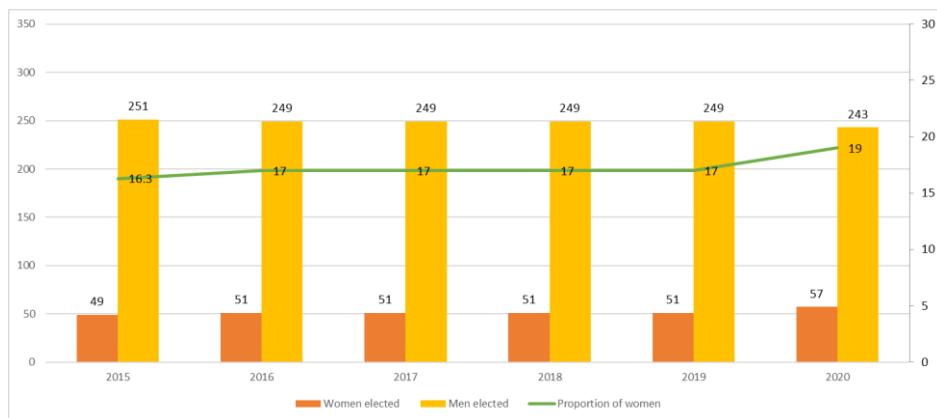
With deeply rooted patriarchy, the Republic of Korea (RoK) has long maintained a social structure that justified the unequal role of women. Following the wave of democracy and social movement including women's movement in the 1980-90s, the government began to address gender equality issues through various institutional mechanisms and legislative acts. In 2001, the Ministry of Gender Equality (present Ministry of Gender Equality and Family) was established, and Gender Equality Offices were set up in 8 ministries (Ministry of Education, Health and Welfare, Culture, Sports and Tourism, Employment and Labor, Prosecutor's Office, Police) since 2018. Legislation to eliminate direct discrimination against women also came into effect, but implementation remains weak. While gender equality has improved greatly over the last few decades, gender inequality in the RoK remains high among OECD countries, especially in the economic and political sphere.

The Republic of Korea ranks 102 out of 156 countries in women's economic participation and opportunity according to the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap Index. While employment opportunities for women have increased steadily in the past few decades, gender segregation persists in the labour market. Women are more likely to be working in low-paying and part-time/ irregular sectors, and are less likely to be promoted to higher managerial positions in the workplace. While women accounted for 56.7% (men 74.8%) of employed workers in South Korea, part-time employment of the total women's employment accounted for 45%. Women made up 3.3% of the board members in the boards of listed companies. For the South Korean workforce as a whole, RoK's gender wage gap stood at 32.5% (2019), the highest among the OECD countries. This divide has been exacerbated by the pandemic as COVID-19 has heavily impacted service sectors, in which the majority of workforce are women. For the first half of 2020, 63.6% of women (compared to 36.4% of men) were on temporary leave since COVID-19 pandemic.

As is the case in the rest of the world, gender divide in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) was noticeable despite growing demand of ICT specialists in the digital economy. The number of women in STEM field has slowly increased over the years, but the share of women graduating from the STEM field was only about 30 %. In the RoK, the women researchers account for only 20% that is much lower than the OECD average (40%).

Women continue to be significantly under-represented in government positions (i.e in parliament, ministerial and high-level positions) despite efforts aimed at increasing representation of women in the political sphere including the introduction of the gender quota system, and government subsidies for women. In 2020 for instance, proportion of elected women in the 21st National Assembly was 19%, and 33.3% for ministerial positions.

[Table: Proportion of women in the National Assembly]



Source: 2020 National Gender Equality Report

The RoK government has stepped up its response to online sexual abuse as recent incidents including telegram sexual abuse and feminicide of a young woman in Gangnam station caused outpour of public outrage. However, more attention is needed on the rapidly evolving methods of digital sex offenders, and shortage of financial and human resources of CSOs helping victims.

State of play: implementation of the national gender policies regional/ international commitment

National gender policies

From the 2000s and onwards, many laws were adopted to advance women's rights and gender equality including the Public Official Election Act, Prohibition of Sexual Trafficking Act, Gender Impact Analysis Evaluation Act, and Framework Act on Gender Equality I, II. The RoK Ministry of Gender Equality and Family acts as a gender focal point in all related government bodies to provide policy suggestions for gender mainstreaming. The ministry also interacts with Korean Women's Development Institute, Korea Institute for Gender Equality Promotion and Education as well as women's civil groups that are quite vocal in gender issues in Korea (and powerful in promoting gender equality at the grassroots). However, Gender Equality experts have pointed to a lack of coordination between gender equality focal points in the government as well as to a need to assess the impact of gender legislation. Also, the results of the Gender Impact Analysis Evaluation should be adequately reflected in the gender-based budgeting system.

Regional/International commitment

The RoK supports the global efforts in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It has ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and has been a member of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The RoK has co-sponsored United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and HRC resolutions on the elimination of violence and discrimination against women, and is currently participating in the Executive Board of UN Women (current term: 2020-2022). The country also launched a new initiative of “*Action with Women and Peace*” to join the global community in its efforts to abolish sexual violence in post-conflict situations.

Areas of engagement

The Delegation to the Republic of Korea has consulted with experts from government research think-tanks, academia, and local civil society actors to grasp the gender equality situation in the Republic of Korea, and identify areas of engagement and potential for synergies between the EU and RoK. As the RoK is already quite active from top-down in promoting gender equality, the most feasible areas of cooperation between the EU and the RoK is to strengthen cooperation with CSOs and grassroots organizations.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

The selected areas of engagement and specific thematic objectives on gender equality and women's empowerment in the Republic of Korea are as follows:

- Thematic area of engagement - Advancing equal participation and leadership**

Overall thematic objective	Women, men, girls, and boys in all their diversity, participate equally in decision-making process, in all spheres and at all levels of political, economic, and public life, including online, to take on leadership roles
Thematic impact Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of seats held by women in the National Assembly as well as in high-level government positions• Proportion of women in managerial and leadership positions in the private sector• Proportion of women participating at high-level in events and conferences
Specific objectives	Enabling conditions created for equal participation of women, men, girls, and boys, in all their diversity, in decision-making
Key thematic outcome Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of measures taken to improve women's representation in the National Assembly, and other decision making positions at regional and national level• Number of women participating at high-level in events and conferences
Specific Objectives 2	Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership by women and men fostered at community and individual levels
Key thematic outcome Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extent to which political leaders engage in initiatives to address gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination that is deeply entrenched in the patriarchal culture• Extent to which the government engage/communicate with CSOs and youth to tackle gender stereotypes
Dialogues and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the expansion and creation of networks with pro-youth and pro-women CSOs and groups in Europe to exchange best practices• Support and organize roundtables public events dedicated to encourage women and girls' participation in leadership positions in the political and economic/business sphere

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public diplomacy actions (e.g. support to CSO's statements and demarches) promoting women's rights and women empowerment • Regular meetings with the main Korean stakeholders to fine tune positions and promote Joint actions with the Republic of Korea in UN and international fora. • Incorporate gender equality in actions encompassing every aspects of EUDEL activities
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- **Thematic area of engagement - Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the digital transformation**

Overall thematic objective	Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, can equally participate in shaping the digital world, notwithstanding the new challenge for gender equality in the digital age
Thematic impact Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women participating in events and conferences as speakers related to ICT and R&I (especially those co-hosted with the EUDEL) • Regulatory frameworks and legal measures introduced against online sexual violence • Proportion of women and girls studying and working in the STEM field
Specific thematic objectives 1	Women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity participate fully and equally in the digital economy
Specific thematic impact Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women and girls studying and working in the STEM field • Number of women in leadership positions in areas such as education, employment, entrepreneurship, as well as research and innovation in particular
Specific thematic objectives 2	Address new risks and challenges for gender equality on digital transformation including gender-based violence online
Specific thematic impact Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions and policies that address online sexual violence • Number of cases of online gender-based violence, and cyber-bullying targeting women and girls
Dialogues and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and cooperation with tech companies and local platform providers (in these efforts) • Propose seminars on relevant regulations and best practices in the EU • Address gender issues through Policy Dialogues (e.g. EU-RoK Cyber Dialogue, Digital Dialogue) • Organise public diplomacy activities targeting CSOs (i.e. webinars and working groups) some of which will focus on gender issues and cyber sexual violence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to the R&I related Ministries, funding agencies, research organisations, etc., to encourage more involvement of women researchers with the R&I actions in coordination with the EU, and deploy Gender Equality Strategy to the Korean R&I society
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3. Targeted actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

There is no MIP for Korea. However, EUD will seek to enhance its public diplomacy budget in order to initiate actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment such as women leaders' events.

The action that supports gender equality and women's empowerment is the EU policy and outreach partnership EUPOP- Ref. below section 5.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

The EUD organises specific events that aim at engaging Government/institutional and civil society actors on Gender Equality and women empowerment. This is done both via the Press and Information actions/financial resources as well as via Public diplomacy activities. The EUPOP action enables dialogue and engagement with women's organisation and female activists committed to advance women empowerment. Ref. to section 5

EUD will seek to mainstream gender in our thematic dialogues. Gender equality is a central part of our Human Rights Consultations.

EUD will maintain regular dialogue with RoK on UN and other international initiatives, where both sides are strong likeminded and active partners.

5. Outreach and other communication/ public diplomacy activities

The Delegation to the Republic of Korea is managing one public diplomacy action (EU Policy and Outreach Partnership/EUPOP) funded by the Foreign Policy instrument (Partnership Instrument, about EUR 0.64 million). This two years project (2020-2021) aims at promoting Human Rights and societal resilience by supporting activities of EU and/or EU-ROK mutual interest. The project specifically addresses topics falling under the umbrella theme of 'discriminations', raises awareness about EU and international Human Rights frameworks, and broadly addresses Gender Equality across its activities. The project targets Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the youth. In particular, it aims at increasing dialogue between the EUD and local CSOs as well as foster networking among small Korean CSOs and with their peers in Europe. Between June 2020 and April 2021, the project organised 6 local events - mostly on-line and/or hybrid workshops and webinars combining on-line and off-line formats. Through such activities, the EUD can carry out targeted outreach, dialogue and communication actions and explore concrete partnerships with local CSOs i.e. for co-hosting outreach events. For instance, on occasion of the International Women's Day on 08 March 2021, a hybrid workshop was organised focusing on gender equality and women's rights. It was co-hosted by the Korean Gender Equality Training Center (Hyojae) and saw the participation of about 27 CSOs (mainly women organisations) both from the ROK and the

region. It triggered further communication between European Networks and Korean CSOs focusing on Gender cyber-sexual-violence and is emblematic of how the EUPOP action can help to build trust and better understanding, among Korean CSOs, about key EU policies and actions plans, e.g. on issues of Human Rights and Gender Equality. In 2022-2023 the EUD will manage a follow-up EUPOP project which has integrated GAP III Gender Objectives and foresees dedicated outreach events on selected thematic areas of engagement and Gender objectives in line with section 2 of this CLIP.

In terms of the Press and Information (P&I) action, the engagement is not specifically targeted at civil societies in the EU and the ROK, but rather at the broader general public, which includes students, youths, media, activists, CSOs, NGOs and the government. The purpose of the P&I action is to further develop public relations on the issue of gender equality in the ROK, while introducing and promoting the EU policies in this field. One of the public outreach action themed around gender is its engagement on the International Women's Day, which has varied each year. In 2021, female EU Ambassadors representing the EU, the Netherlands, Greece and a DG from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family representing the ROK invited the general public to the "Coffee with Europe" Talk Concert. They addressed the issue of gender inequality, exchanged opinions and discussed the current gender policies in the EU and the ROK. The trilateral talk between the EU, ROK government officials and the Korean public served the purpose of better promoting the EU's active role in propagating gender equality and women's empowerment globally. Last year, as P&I action, the EUD interviewed the #MeToo movement trailblazer and former prosecutor Seo Ji-hyun and two other high-profile women celebrities known for voicing women's rights. They shared their experiences and assessed gender equality status in the EU and the ROK in their own perspectives. The EUD is planning a social media campaign together with the EUMS on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

No TA. For the period 2022-2023, the EUD will rely on financial resources stemming from the PI AAP 2020. A EUPOP action (max EU budget EUR 0.75 million) will be locally managed which takes into consideration GAP III objectives and which will address gender issues at G1 level (OECD, marker 'significant objective') building on processes and partnerships established via previous EUPOP projects.