

Europe & Central Asia

Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is a World Bank Group flagship initiative providing comparable data on laws and policies impacting women's economic participation to drive jobs, productivity, and economic growth. Economies with higher WBL scores tend to have higher female labor force participation rates, more women business owners and managers, and narrower gender wage gaps.

Women in the Europe and Central Asia region have more than three quarters (80.6%) of the economic rights afforded to men. Only about half (55.6%) of mechanisms are in place to support the implementation of laws. Experts in the region perceive that more than half (64.8%) of women's economic rights are enforced.

Reform Highlights from October 2023 to October 2025



Eight economies in the Europe and Central Asia region have enacted reforms to provide women with greater access to economic opportunities.



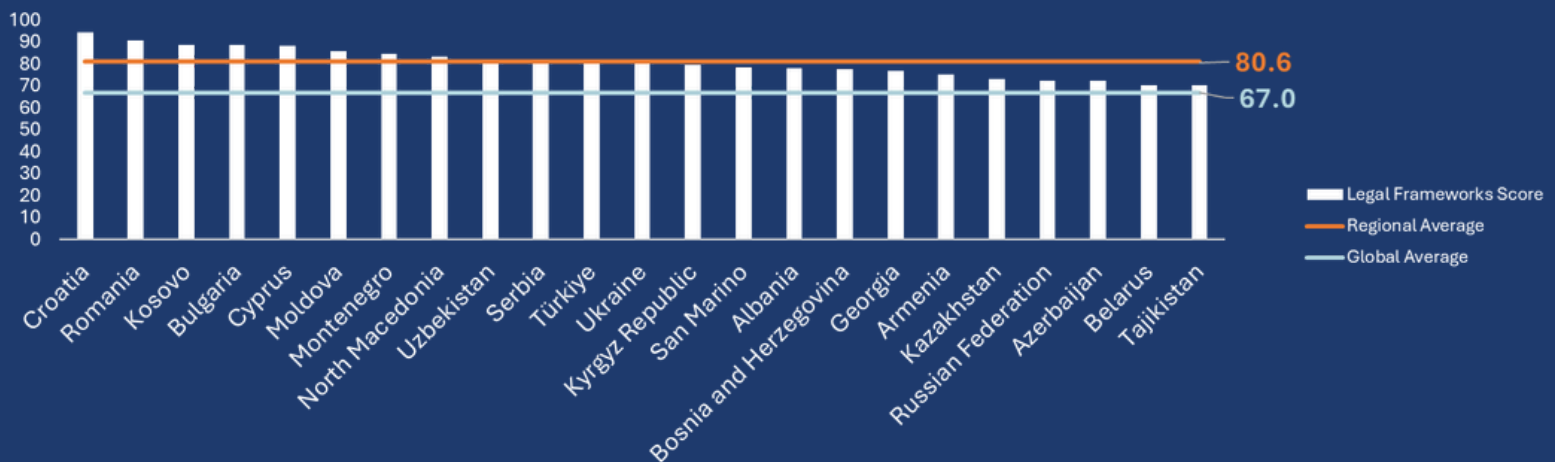
In January 2025, the **Kyrgyz Republic** removed restrictions on a woman's employment in mining, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, energy, and water as well as in jobs deemed dangerous. It also mandated equal remuneration for work of equal value.



In December 2023, **Bulgaria** enacted legislation making child marriage voidable.

[Click here for a full list of reforms](#)

Legal Frameworks Index Scores for Europe and Central Asia - WBL 2026



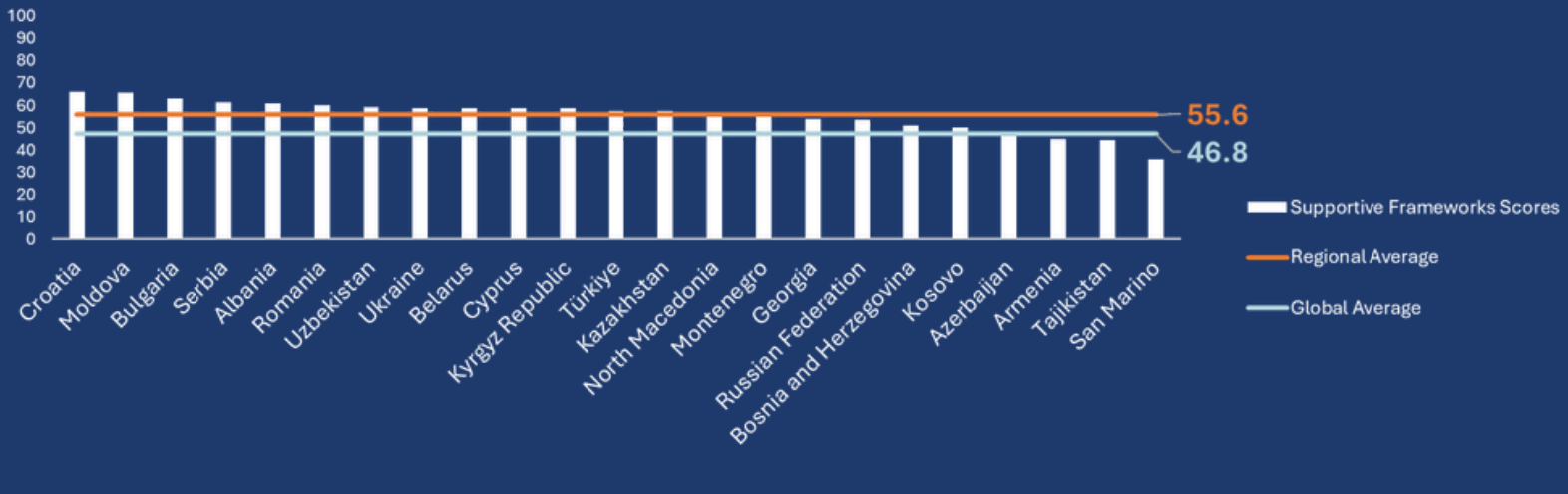
Legal Frameworks: Measuring equal rights and explicit restrictions on women's work and entrepreneurship

- Across the region, **Croatia** performs above the global average, indicating relatively strong legal frameworks promoting women's access to economic opportunities.
- The **Mobility** and **Assets** topics perform well with average regional scores of 100.
- The **Safety** and **Entrepreneurship** topics show the most room for improvement with average regional scores of 50.5 and 50.0, respectively, indicating persistent gaps in laws protecting women from violence and female entrepreneurship. To close such gaps, economies could introduce laws protecting from sexual harassment and criminalizing femicide, and adopt gender-sensitive procurement provisions for public procurement processes and laws prescribing a minimum representation of women on corporate boards.

Good Practice Legal and Policy Frameworks

- **Kosovo** is the only economy in the region with gender-sensitive procurement provisions for public procurement processes.
- **Türkiye** is the only economy in the region that put in place policies and services needed to support the implementation of gender-based violence legislation and female entrepreneurship.

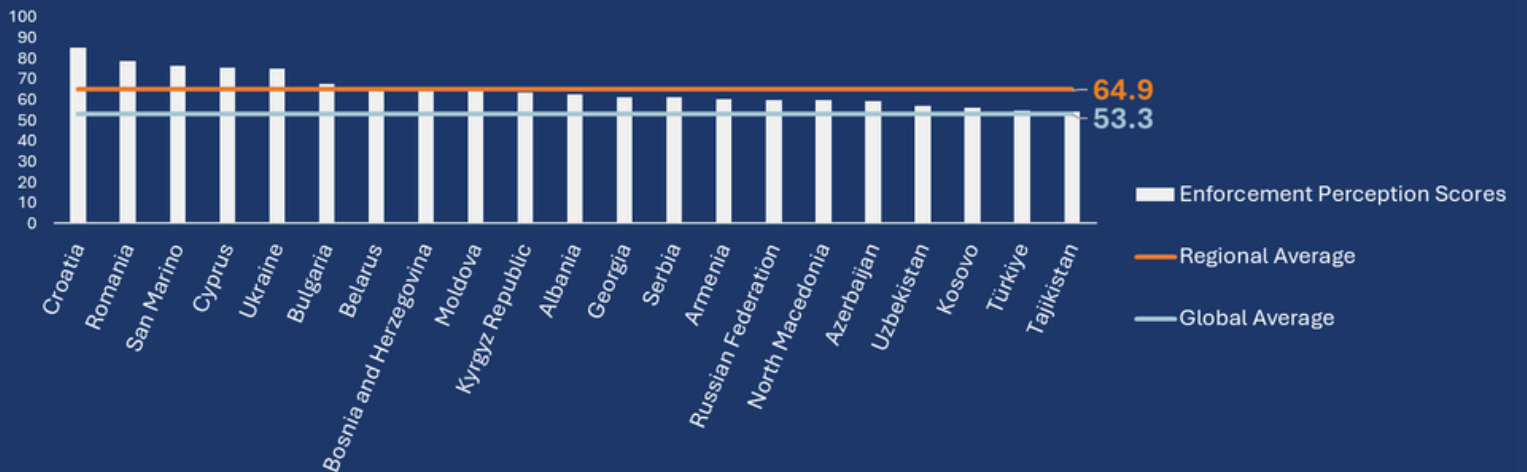
Supportive Frameworks Index Scores for Europe and Central Asia - WBL 2026



Supportive Frameworks: Examining policy instruments designed to support the implementation of laws

- Across the region, policies and institutions to implement equal opportunity laws are strongest in **Croatia** and **Moldova**. Most room for improvement remains in **Tajikistan** and **San Marino**.
- The **Mobility** and **Safety** topics perform relatively well with average regional scores of 76.1 and 74.1, respectively.
- The **Pay** and **Childcare** topics show the most room for improvement with average regional scores of 37.0 and 43.5, respectively, indicating gaps in policies and practices needed to promote equal pay legislation and to support the availability of, public finance for, and quality of center-based childcare. To close such gaps, it is recommended that the government adopt gender-sensitive occupational safety and health in most economies in the region.

Enforcement Perceptions Index Scores for Europe and Central Asia - WBL 2026



Enforcement Perceptions: Evaluating expert views of how well public authorities enforce laws in practice

- **Croatia** is the highest scoring economy (84.9%), suggesting that laws protecting women’s economic rights are enforced more than half of the time. Lowest enforcement levels are perceived in **Türkiye** and **Tajikistan**.
- Across the region, experts assess the enforcement of women’s right to **Safety** at only 25.9% of their full potential and the enforcement of **Entrepreneurship** laws at only 43.4 % of their full potential.