



EXPOSING THE GAP



AN INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION OF THE EU
GENDER ACTION PLAN II
IN LEBANON, JORDAN
AND IRAQ



EVALUATION REPORT

MARCH 2020

 KVINNA
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
RECOMMENDATIONS	8
Recommendations to EUDs	8
Recommendations to EU member states	8
Recommendations to DG DEVCO and DG NEAR	8
Recommendations to CSOS	9
1. INTRODUCTION	11
A. JUSTIFICATION	12
B. METHODOLOGY	13
a. Study Objectives	13
b. Approach and Methods	13
C. LIMITATIONS	14
2. WHAT IS THE GAP II AND HOW IS IMPLEMENTATION ENVISIONED?	17
A. HISTORY, GOAL AND REGIONAL DIVISION	18
B. GAP II COMMITMENTS AND REPORTING MECHANISM	18
a. Thematic Areas	18
b. Reporting and Accountability	20
C. SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SHIFT (THEMATIC AREA A)	22
D. SELECTION OF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVALUATION (THEMATIC AREAS B, C, AND D)	24
E. A NOTE ON ACTIONS AND ACTION DOCUMENTS	25
3. FINDINGS	27
A. LEBANON	28
a. Main EU-Lebanon frameworks and bilateral support	28
b. GAP II Implementation	29
c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Lebanon	36
B. JORDAN	38
a. Main EU-Lebanon frameworks and bilateral support	38
b. GAP II Implementation	38
c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Jordan	44
C. IRAQ	46
a. Main EU-Lebanon frameworks and bilateral support	46
b. GAP II Implementation	47
c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Iraq	53
D. EU SUPPORT FOR GAP II OBJECTIVE 18 IN THE CONTEXT OF SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE	54
a. Implementation of Objective 18 in Lebanon	56
b. Implementation of Objective 18 in Jordan	57
c. Implementation of Objective 18 in Iraq	58
d. Conclusion	58
E. REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS AND OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	59
a. Regional Overview of Reported Actions in 2018	59
b. Overall Conclusions on Institutional Culture Shift Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq	60
4. IMPACT, RELEVANCE, AND CHALLENGES	63
A. IMPACT ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PRACTICE	64
B. RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY	65
C. GOOD PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES	66
a. Good Practices	66
b. Implementation Challenges and Impeding Factors	66

ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSTF	Cross Sector Task Force
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
EAMR	External Action Management Reports
EC	European Commission
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EU	European Union
EUD	EU Delegation
EURF	EU Results Framework
GA	Gender Analysis
GAP/GAP II/III	European Union Gender Action Plans I, II and III/ “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations”
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GM	Gender Marker
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
HQ	Headquarters
ICSP	Instrument Contributing to Security and Peace
IGG	International Gender Group
IO	International Organisations
JNCW	Jordan National Commission for Women
Madad	EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
N/A	Not Applicable or Available
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SSF	Single Support Framework
SWD	Staff Working Document (referring to GAP II)
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WCSSOs	Women’s rights civil society organisations
WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment
WRD	Women Rights Defender
WRO	Women Rights Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through European Union (EU) External Relations 2016-2020¹ (GAP II) translates the EU's policy and political commitments to gender equality into a set of concrete objectives necessary for achieving results for girls and women. This includes the promotion of more efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of EU activities in the area of gender equality. The GAP II was formally adopted by EU member states in October 2015 and its implementation is mandatory. The three GAP II Implementation Reports that the European Commission (EC) has published thus far aggregate results per region and per actor (Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), EU member states, and the EC) but provide little information on GAP II implementation in specific countries.

The **fragmented picture of EU's engagement under GAP II** emerging from the Implementation Reports reflects the various degrees of understanding and implementation of the GAP II in different countries and regions by EU actors. The absence of information and data on country-specific implementation makes it difficult for the EU to quantify its own engagement and assess its own progress towards achieving the objectives of the GAP II in specific countries. Also, as a result, EU actors, EU member states, national stakeholders and civil society organisations (CSOs) have limited knowledge of EU's support to gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries.

To fill the gap on country-specific information, in 2019 the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation commissioned an **assessment of the implementation of the GAP II in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq**. The report provides an overview of actions taken to implement three of the Institutional Culture Shift objectives and selected thematic objectives in these countries, an analysis of best practices and gaps in implementation and an assessment of the impact of such actions in the respective countries. Key challenges and opportunities for furthering implementation are explored, with a focus on strengthening the role of women's rights organisations (WROs) in its actions.

Assessing GAP II implementation in the three countries, some **good practices** were identified. In **Lebanon** the European Union Delegation (EUD) commissioned a gender analysis (GA) in 2017 providing recommendations on issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), women's economic empowerment (WEE) and donor coordination, which were made public. Gender expertise is increasingly used to inform program development, both by building internal expertise and basing various program development processes on CSO consultation. In addition, sex-disaggregated data is being collected. Thematic priority B (physical and psychological integrity) received the most attention (with 32 actions) in Lebanon. In this area, the EU contributed to address GBV through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (Madad), the new Gender Observatory and the finalisation of national strategic action plans for GBV.

The EUD in **Jordan** is the only one among those selected for this assessment that selected specific objectives under each of the three GAP II thematic areas. Also, only in Jordan, the GAP II is explicitly mentioned in the EU's bi-lateral support framework (the SSF 2017-2020). Through the civil society provision, a specific allocation of 5% of EU funding is earmarked for targeted support to the implementation of the GAP II. The EUD Gender Focal Point (GFP) has additionally invested in internal capacity to implement and monitor the GAP. Thematically, the EUD Jordan has contributed considerably to Thematic Area D (Political and civil rights) with a total of 44 actions. In addition, EU support has contributed both to the progress in women's access to the public space and to the availability of alternative measures in the administrative detention of women in cases of honour killing and GBV.

¹ The GAP II document can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/joint-staff-working-document-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-transforming-lives_en

In **Iraq**, a GA was conducted in 2018 and results were disseminated across the EUD and the national partners. The EUD further engages with the national gender equality machinery through consultation with gender units and with selected CSOs. Additionally, the EUD is taking steps to boost internal gender expertise by appointing two new staff members with dedicated gender portfolios. The planned EUD transition from Amman to Baghdad will likely improve coordination and consistency of EU's engagement under the GAP II in Iraq, including by bringing the EUD closer to the national stakeholders and partners, not least CSOs. Finally, the EU's and the Netherlands' contribution to the development of the first and second National Action Plans on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) has provided a platform to strengthen accountability and to promote cross-sector cooperation on women's rights.

In spite of these positive developments, **full compliance with the minimum standards** agreed upon in 2016 to level the playing field on the Institutional Culture Shift objectives in the three focus countries **is yet to come**. For instance, Iraq and Lebanon did not choose specific objectives to report on under GAP II and Jordan did not conduct a GA. Furthermore, recommendations from the completed GAs do not fully inform either the selection of thematic objectives or program development, EUDs and most EU member states still lack gender expertise internally and have limited resources to access it externally and sex-disaggregated data is used sub-optimally. An inconsistent use of the gender marker by different EU actors further contributes to a misrepresentation of GAP II activities in reporting. At present, there is no system in place to ensure that EU actors comply with the minimum standards and no sanction or reward mechanism to encourage implementation.

Most importantly, the evaluation reveals that there is a **general lack of knowledge about GAP II by EU actors and local partners** (both governmental and non-governmental) in the countries selected for this assessment. This also reflects in somewhat limited engagement and reporting by EU member states under GAP II, attributed by respondents to a lack of resources and to the fact that the system is not "user-friendly." Coordination between the EUD and the EU member states in countries seem to focus around the annual reporting while little coordination takes place to streamline its implementation and adopt burden-sharing arrangements.

While the EU is taking important steps to bring gender equality and women's rights higher onto the national agendas in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, the GAP II is not consistently used as an action plan with clearly defined thematic priorities to be selected on the basis of a context-specific gender analysis. **If the potential of GAP II is to be realised in the future**, its implementation would drastically benefit from greater visibility and clarity about the GAP II, its aim, process and tools among EU actors in the given country, greater transparency and consistency of methods used to select the priority objectives, enhanced ability to respond to the needs and priorities of women and girls in the given country, improved capacity to involve national and local actors (both governmental and non-governmental) and clear connected funding streams, all prompted by accurate reporting.

Finally, in spite of recognition by the EU that closing civic space is a concern in the countries in question, the GAP II has not been sufficiently used to understand and address the specific impact of this phenomenon on WROs and activists. Indeed, it is not clear how and if the EU's support to women's and girl's rights organisations and activists in partner countries is based on a specific understanding of the **gendered-impact of closing civic space** and how it is different from general support to civil society and to Human Rights Defenders (HRD). The GAP II could be used, in conjunction with other EU policies and tools such as the Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society, the Human Rights Country Strategies and the countries' Single Support Frameworks (SSF), both to better analyse and address limitations on CSOs working on women's and girls' rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EUDS:

1. **Ensure that the GAP II is more visible and better understood among EU member states and local partners**, including by:
 - a. Being more transparent on the GAP II priorities and the process of selecting them;
 - b. Informing implementing partners about GAP II and its priorities in the country and their role in its implementation;
 - c. Publishing and pro-actively disseminating a summary of the GAP II implementation results of the region or country in Arabic;
 - d. Including the GAP II language and objectives in policy dialogue and in conversation with the Government, national gender equality machinery and CSOs;
2. **Encourage EU member states to report correctly** on GAP II, by clarifying: what the reporting is used for; the use of the Gender Marker; and what meeting the Minimum Standards entail.
3. **Coordinate better with EU member states** in partner countries and adopt burden-sharing measures. These arrangements can cover the GAP II implementation, joint initiatives, information sharing, joint programming, and project development.
4. **Increase human resources (capacity)** to support implementation of GAP II and ensure GAP II responsibilities are included in job descriptions including at senior level. (e.g. Ambassador).
5. **Launch local Calls for Proposals** aiming at contributing to the implementation of selected objectives in the country under GAP II and ensure GAP II requirements are respected in all Calls for Proposals.
6. **Consider more strongly shrinking civic space and the impact it has** on the implementation of the GAP II in the country context and in particular Objective 18. Include adaptive and creative measures on how consultation could still be inclusive in the context of shrinking civic space by allowing for, for instance, virtual meetings.
7. **Consult and involve local actors, including specifically organisations working on women's rights**, in the selection of thematic objectives under GAP II and in implementing them through dedicated projects / programmes.
8. **Include reference to Objective 18** in the Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society and Human Rights Country Strategies and develop measures and responses to address the specific threats faced by women's rights organisations and women human rights defenders in the context of shrinking space

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EU MEMBER STATES:

1. **Report on gender work under the GAP II and familiarise with GAP II objectives**, guidelines and indicators and connect with respective EUD for clarification or explanation.
2. **Coordinate and collaborate pro-actively** with the EUD on GAP II priorities and implementation. Especially when EU member states capacity is limited, adopting burden-sharing measures is key.
3. **Request DG DEVCO and NEAR for guidance on how to apply the Gender Marker** correctly and on what constitutes an "action" under the GAP so to ensure consistent reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DG DEVCO AND DG NEAR:

1. **Simplify the reporting format** and process of GAP II by introducing a simple online tool. Provide guidance on correct use of gender marker and on what constitutes an “action”.
2. Include **an executive summary on actions per country in the annual Implementation Reports**.
3. **Provide technical support to GFPs** to implement all of the GAP II commitments.
4. Ensure more **accountability the Minimum Standards** by, for example, introducing a system of rewards and sanctions.
5. **Urgently update job descriptions** at all levels to include gender equality responsibilities as relevant to all positions.
6. **Consider more strongly shrinking civic space and the impact it has on the implementation of GAP II. Strengthen** the focus on objective 18 in GAP III.
7. **Push for CSO engagement to become an explicit indicator** in the GAP III questionnaire for reporting. This will allow for tracking performance of engagement.

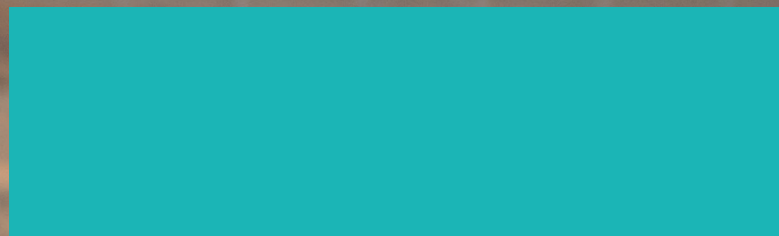
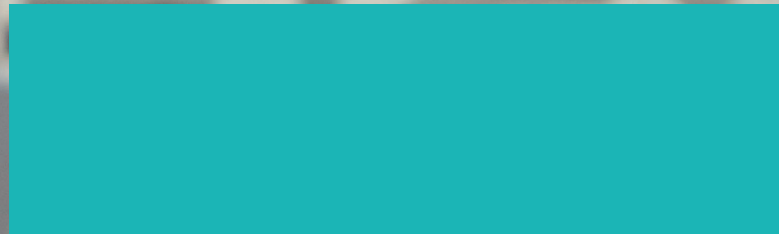
RECOMMENDATIONS TO CSOS:

1. Form **coalitions to create “one voice”** on key issues and to engage nationally with EU member states and the EUD. This also applies to creating strategic partnerships to apply for EU proposals.
2. Regularly **meet with the EUD GFP** and familiarise with the EU’s support to gender equality through GAP II. Prepare joint statements on what is missing and how you can assist the GFP.
3. **Hold the EU to account for the implementation of GAP II** in partner countries including by requesting data on EU funding for gender quality and women’s empowerment channelled to international organisations, national gender equality machinery, international and national CSOs
4. **Consider establishing an independent CSO monitoring system** which communicates to the EUD GFP and Head of Missions through national shadow reporting.
5. Engage **in advocacy at the intersection** of Partnership Priorities, Single Support Framework, Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society and GAP II to show how they mutually reinforce each other.

“Transforming the
Lives of Girls and
Women through
European Union (EU)
External Relations.”



Azraq camp, Jordan.
Photo: Christopher Herwig



1. INTRODUCTION

A. JUSTIFICATION	12
B. METHODOLOGY	13
C. LIMITATIONS	14

A. JUSTIFICATION

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through European Union (EU) External Relations 2016-2020² (hereafter "GAP II") provides the policy framework for the EU's support to gender equality through external action and includes specific commitments and objectives for the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU member states. Its objectives cover all of the EU partner countries, including neighbourhood and enlargement, development, fragile, conflict and post-conflict countries. It translates the EU's policy and political commitments to gender equality into a set of concrete objectives necessary for achieving results for girls and women. This includes the promotion of more efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of EU activities in the area of gender equality and women's rights.

The GAP II includes a monitoring framework and obligation for the EU institutions to report annually on the implementation of the objectives. Three annual reports were published since 2016. The first in 2017, summarising actions and results of the GAP II implementation in 2016³ (hereafter named "2016 Implementation Report"). The second report⁴ in 2018, summarizing GAP II implementation in 2017 (hereafter "2017 Implementation Report"). And, most recently in October 2019, the third report⁵ about GAP II implementation in 2018 (hereafter "2018 Implementation Report"). The reports include information on GAP II implementation aggregated per institution and per region. The absence of information and data on country-specific implementation makes it difficult for the EU to quantify its own engagement and assess its own progress towards achieving the objectives of the GAP II in specific countries. Similarly, EU actors, EU Member States, beneficiaries in partner countries - including WROs (WROs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) - and EU citizens have limited knowledge of EU's support to gender equality and women's empowerment in specific partner countries.

To fill in this gap, in 2017, CONCORD published an analysis⁶ of the implementation of GAP II in Ghana, Rwanda and Vietnam, and in 2018 The Kosovo Women's Network published an analysis⁷ funded by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation on the implementation of the GAP II in the Western Balkans, both gathering information on and providing valuable recommendations for the GAP II and its functioning. In 2019, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation proposed to conduct an assessment of the implementation of the GAP II in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq. This report provides an overview of actions taken to implement selected GAP II objectives in these countries, includes an analysis of best practices and gaps in implementation and an assessment of the impact of such actions in the respective countries. Key challenges and opportunities for furthering implementation are explored, with a focus on strengthening WROs role in its actions.

² The GAP II is available on: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/joint_staff_working_document_gender_equality_and_womens_empowerment.pdf

³ The report can be found on: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/documents/2016-annual-implementation-report-gap-ii>

⁴ The report can be found on: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/documents/2017-annual-implementation-report-gap-ii>

⁵ The report can be found on: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/documents/2018-annual-implementation-report-gap-ii>

⁶ The analysis can be found on: <https://concordeurope.org/blog/2018/09/19/gender-action-plan-two-report/>

⁷ The analysis can be found on: <https://kvinnatillkvinna.org/2018/10/04/mind-the-gap/>

B. METHODOLOGY

a. Study Objectives

The assessment provides an analysis and a strategic advocacy tool for WROs in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq so to be able to influence the work of the EU and EU actors in gender equality in their respective countries. The assignment has 3 main objectives:

1. Provide an assessment of the implementation of selected objectives included in the EU's Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020) by the EU in Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq using Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria (impact, relevance and sustainability) between 2016 and September 2019.
2. Identify best practices and challenges in the implementation of the GAP II in the selected countries.
3. Provide recommendations/suggestions that optimize the implementation of GAP II and contribute to the future development of GAP III.

b. Approach and Methods

A qualitative and investigative approach was taken to compile this report, basing the analysis on as many primary and secondary sources the Research Team⁸ (or "Team") could find within the timeframe of the assessment. See Annex 1 for a full methodology report.

First, the Team conducted a **document analysis** of existing research and studies to make a preliminary assessment of the GAP II effects and results. This analysis helped lay the groundwork for identification of the three country chapters. See Annex 5 for an overview of these documents.

Then the Team conducted interviews with stakeholders in Brussels, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, and over Skype. Questions were compiled in an Interview Guide, one for Brussels, one for remote interviews, and one for the three target countries. A sample of the final questions can be found in Annex 3. The guide was translated into Arabic so to be used by the Consultants in Iraq and Jordan. The interviews in Lebanon were conducted in English. The Team provided preliminary summary information on the GAP II to the interviewees so that they could prepare the interview well informed. The Team **interviewed a total of 54 key informants**,⁹ existing of women's organisations, EU staff, EU member state representatives, national government representatives, international organisations and national CSOs in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and globally.

Finally, **12 CSOs and WROs** provided feedback during two in-country **Validation Workshops** (in Lebanon and Jordan) on effectiveness and challenges of EU action on gender equality in the respective country. The workshops aimed to fill information gaps that were identified during the desk review and the interview phase and represented an opportunity to dive into the aspects of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, and accountability in the process of implementing GAP II in country. For a detailed overview of the stakeholders that were interviewed please see Annex 2. For an agenda of the workshop see Annex 4.

The sources of information on EU actions taken in the three countries that the Team had access to included:

⁸ This study was coordinated by Floor Knoote, Founder of Dimes Consultancy. The study was implemented and the report was written by Floor Knoote and Nafila Maani (Nafila Maani Consultancy), with support from Kvinna till Kvinna and a local consultant in Iraq, Ibtisam Latif. For any further information please contact floor@dimesconsultancy.com

⁹ See Annex 2 for an overview of interviewees.

- The combined qualitative and quantitative information reported in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Implementation Reports.
- Information on EU action provided by interviewed stakeholders (predominantly Gender Focal Points (GFPs) at EU Delegations, but also several EU member states, international organisations, international CSOs and local WROs.
- Some available public Action Documents provided on the Document Repository of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.¹⁰

C. LIMITATIONS

- a) Alongside an assessment of the implementation of selected objectives under GAP, the Team looked at the possible impact of the GAP II in the selected countries. However, it is difficult to establish a causal relation between EU action under GAP II and changes on gender equality and women's rights in the respective countries, because the EU does not exist in isolation. In addition, it was beyond the scope and budget of this assessment to conduct a proper impact evaluation of GAP II in the region (this would have required a counterfactual of what those outcomes would have been in the absence of the interventions.) Instead, the Team applied a qualitative method to assess contributions and focused on reported lasting results or longer-term changes brought about by the GAP II. The information presented in this Impact section portrays a picture of those high-level EU contributions to gender equality that were shared consistently in reports and by the stakeholders that were interviewed.
- b) Many of the stakeholders that were interviewed had limited knowledge of the GAP II implementation process in the region. In fact, over 60% of interviewees were not familiar with the GAP II as a policy or of its process.
- c) The Team had limited access to full Action Documents which could have provided more details on EU actions in the four thematic areas. The Team sent out several requests to EUDs in Brussels and country offices to gain access to a) Action Documents, b) the annual GAP II results per country, and c) the External Assistance Management Report (EAMR), but unfortunately did not gain access to these documents.
- d) The Team did not interview all relevant EU member states or organisations that could have provided insights into this topic, but chose a selected sample, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations (IO's) and governmental institutions.
- e) Compared to Jordan and Lebanon, relatively little information on EU support to efforts on gender equality under GAP II in Iraq is available. There is no public Action Document on Iraq in the EU Repository. Also, the fragmentation of the EUD presence between the Baghdad office, the Amman office and Erbil, the combined Yemen and Iraq portfolios in Amman, staff changes at the time of the study meant that the Team did not get to interview any EUD staff member who had knowledge of the "full picture" of the GAP II process in Iraq.
- f) Throughout the process, the Team has tried to differentiate between "reported" and "non-reported" actions to the best of their ability. However, there is an absence of a complete database of actions implemented under GAP II in the three countries so these may overlap. The actions described in this study therefore combine actions included in the three GAP II implementation Reports, those included in the EU Document Repository, and actions that interviewees have shared. However, it is not possible to ascertain whether the described actions

¹⁰ Find the Repository on: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/key-documents_en?f%5B0%5D=field_document_repository_filter%3A318&f%5B1%5D=field_document_repository_filter%3A274

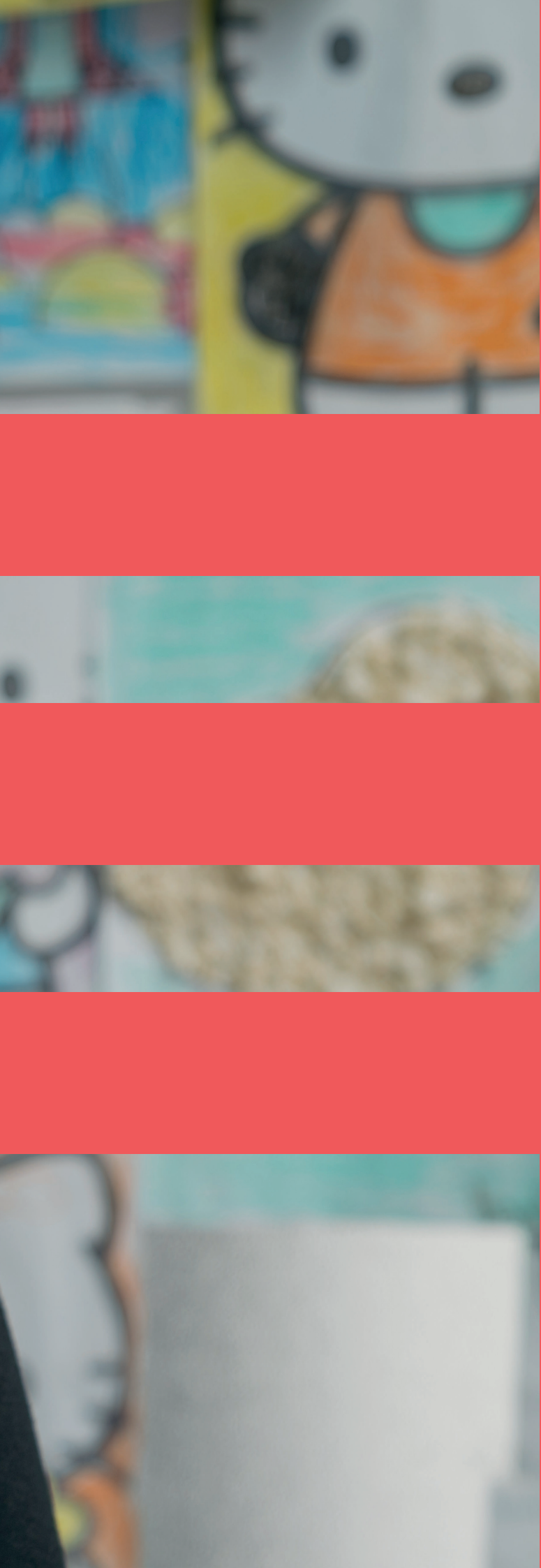
in the study have been indeed reported under GAP II or not. The number of actions that were taken per thematic area or per objective per country remains unclear, as well as the number of actions the EUD or EU member states did or did not report on.

- g) The 2016, 2017 and 2018 Implementation Reports differ in style, data presented and level of analysis, which poses a difficulty to compare information and indeed results from one year to another.

A portrait of a young woman with dark hair tied back, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a black top over a purple shirt. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. The background is a wall covered in colorful, abstract artwork.

“...full use of existing systems in order to streamline reporting and to truly embed gender across the way the EU works.”

Rawan Helou, a teacher and in charge of childcare so that women who participate in workshops in Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW) can focus and participate wholeheartedly.
Photo: Christopher Herwig



2. WHAT IS THE GAP II AND HOW IS IMPLEMENTATION ENVISIONED?

A. HISTORY, GOAL AND REGIONAL DIVISION	18
B. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY	18
C. SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SHIFT (THEMATIC AREA A)	22
D. SELECTION OF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVALUATION (THEMATIC AREAS B, C, AND D)	24
E. A NOTE ON ACTIONS AND ACTION DOCUMENTS	25

A. HISTORY, GOAL AND REGIONAL DIVISION

The EU's current approach to promoting gender equality in partner countries has evolved over a period of nine years, starting from 2005 with the Consensus on Development,¹¹ to the EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them (2008),¹² concluding in the two EU Plans of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010-2015)¹³ and finally the GAP II (2016-2020). Evaluations of the first action plan showed some progress on efforts to promote rights of women and girls by the EU and EU member states but were assessed to be "patchy and poorly documented [...] with a few exceptions, EUDs do not effectively combine gender mainstreaming, gender-specific actions with political and policy dialogue to maximise outcomes".¹⁴

Building on the lessons of GAP I, in 2015, the EC and the EEAS adopted a **Staff Working Document (SWD) titled "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020"** or the "GAP II". "The GAP II consolidates the context, rationale and priorities of a refreshed approach that reaffirms and translates the EU's policy and political commitments to gender equality into more effective delivery of concrete results for girls and women, while promoting more efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of EU activities in this area".¹⁵

GAP II applies to eleven regions¹⁶ plus the EU Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations¹⁷ and Russia. Since EU annual reports include information on GAP II implementation per region, Jordan and Lebanon are reported under the "**Southern Neighbourhood**". Iraq falls and is reported under the "**Gulf region**".

B. GAP II COMMITMENTS AND REPORTING MECHANISM

In the GAP II, the EU includes a range of commitments to strengthen its external services, such as for thematically focused action, implementation, evidence, monitoring and reporting. This chapter summarises the commitments that are relevant to the aim of this study.

a. Thematic Areas

The EU is committed to breaking the vicious cycle of gender-based discrimination and promote equal rights of women and girls. This includes **support to partner countries to establish a more enabling environment** for the fulfilment of girls' and women's rights and to achieve real and tangible improvements on gender equality.¹⁸ "To deliver on this vision, Commission services and the EEAS will **strengthen their efforts to place gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women at the heart of the EU's external actions**. It focuses on four pivotal areas - three thematic and one horizontal, which aims to gradually change the way in which the EC and the EEAS

¹¹ The Consensus can be found on: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf

¹² EU guidelines can be found on: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/eu-guidelines-violence-against-women-and-girls-and-combating-all-forms-discrimination_en

¹³ GAP I can be found on: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-gender/document/operational-framework-enhance-implementation-existing-eu-policy-frameworks-and-ensure-accou>

¹⁴ EC, COWI, ITAD, ADE (2015). Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries Final Report Volume 1: Main Report April 2015.

¹⁵ Joint Staff Working Document- EU Gender Action Plan II (GAP II), p. 1. <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/10102/2017/EN/SWD-2017-288-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

¹⁶ East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa, Caribbean, Central and Latin America, Central Asia and Asia and the Pacific and the Gulf States (in which Iraq falls).

¹⁷ Divided between the Eastern Neighbourhood and Southern Neighbourhood.

¹⁸ European Commission (2018). Joint Staff Working Document. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020, p.4

work on gender equality through an institutional cultural shift and enable the EU to more effectively contribute to the development of equal and inclusive societies in partner countries.¹⁹ These thematic priorities and the 20 specific objectives of GAP II are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overview of GAP II Thematic Areas and Objectives

THEMATIC AREA	OBJECTIVE
A. Institutional Culture Shift	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased coherence and coordination amongst EU institutions and with MS. 2. Dedicated leadership on gender equality and girls and women's empowerment established in EU institutions and MS. 3. Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and member states to deliver on EU gender policy commitments. 4. Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making. 5. Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress. 6. Partnerships fostered between EU and stakeholders to build national capacity for gender equality.
THEMATIC PRIORITY B. Physical and psychological integrity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere. 8. Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated. 9. Protection for all women and men of all ages from sexual and gender-based violence in crisis situations; through EU supported operations. 10. Equal access to quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for girls and women. 11. Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. 12. Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle.
THEMATIC PRIORITY C. Economic, social and cultural rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination. 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages. 15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship. 16. Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women.
THEMATIC PRIORITY D. Political and civil rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels. 18. Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law. 19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes. 20. Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues.

¹⁹ European Commission (2018). Joint Staff Working Document. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020, p.4

b. Reporting and Accountability

GAP II Monitoring Framework

The GAP II was formally adopted by EU member states in October 2015, and **its implementation by the EC, the EEAS and the EU member states is mandatory**. All actors contributing to the implementation of the GAP II are required to report annually on their actions through the **monitoring and accountability framework**, against which to measure progress on girls' and women's rights and empowerment in partner countries. EU thematic and geographical actions are meant to contribute to the overarching four priorities highlighted in Table 1.²⁰

The GAP II makes **full use of existing systems** in order to streamline reporting and to truly embed gender across the way the EU works. The GAP II has drawn extensively on the EU Results Framework (EU-RF) and EAMR process and Thematic objectives will in the most part be gathered through the EAMR and EU-RF systems. **Where this is not feasible, a template²¹** is provided to complete the information. Mostly, the data for these indicators are drawn from EU financed projects and programmes and drawn from reporting by implementing partners (partner countries, international organisations, international financial institutions). They are therefore, supposed to be measured in the most part by the implementing partners' monitoring systems. The results are aggregated year on year to make progress identifiable.²²

Results are only gathered through the project reporting exercise, which means at the end of projects only. However, it is acknowledged that the GAP II progress "needs to be monitored and measured more regularly, as waiting for the end of a project will not be deemed good enough as it doesn't allow for remedial action. Therefore, **every year, EUDs and Operational units report on their identified GAP II objectives, and the accompanying indicators and activities**, along with the baseline and progress against these (e.g. when reviews are carried out)."²³ More specifically, EU actors are expected to **report on all Institutional Culture Shift objectives and at least one objective under each thematic area**.²⁴

A Step-by-step Guidance Note on the EU Gender Action Plan (2016-2020) for NEAR Headquarters and EU Delegation staff²⁵ (hereinafter "the Guidance Note") has been created to provide guidance to staff at different levels with responsibilities to implement the GAP II and to clarify reporting mechanisms. The Guidance Note provides most details on expected efforts for Thematic Area A (Institutional Culture Shift – further explained below), including details on how to carry out and use a GA, how to take into account GAP II in programme development and implementation, budget support and policy dialogue, and how to report on results of GAP II.

Monitoring the Institutional Shift

Institutional Culture Shift Indicators' reporting is mandatory, for all EU actors. Baselines will be used where they exist. Where no baseline exists, the first report will form a baseline to assess year-on-year progress. The EAMR, along with other existing process will in the most part gather the information; where not, the aforementioned template will provide the needed information. DEVCO B1 will collect, and where necessary aggregate, the information provided by EU member states, DG DEVCO and DG NEAR, and the EEAS, to produce a single overview.²⁶

²⁰ Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.18

²¹ Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.27

²² Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.26

²³ Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.26

²⁴ Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.18

²⁵ See Guidance note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020, 08 March 2016

²⁶ Step-by-Step Guidance Note, p.26

To monitor progress in the implementation of the Institutional Culture Shift objectives, **a range of milestones were introduced** to level the playing field. Those are the following: carried out a gender analysis that informs the sectors they prioritise; collaborated with EU member states to identify common ground and/or modalities for collaboration; identified the indicators of GAP II thematic priorities against which they will report; empowered their staff to monitor performance against these indicators; and capacity to demonstrate that all their programmes have been assessed for gender impact. **Performance on the Institutional Culture Shift is tracked** and individual, Unit and Delegation performance is monitored yearly to identify star performers vs. poorer performers. EU institutions and EUDs are expected to report on all 6 Institutional Culture Shift objectives.²⁷

To further push for the implementation of the Institutional Culture Shift Objectives, **5 minimum standards** were introduced to be met by 2016:

1. OECD/DAC Gender Marker 0 needs to always be justified (and do-not-harm principle applied)²⁸
2. A gender analysis (GA) done for all priority sectors
3. Sex-disaggregated data are used throughout the programming cycle
4. Gender expertise is available and used in a timely manner in the programme cycle
5. SWD objectives are selected to be reported (by mid-2016).

This report will include information on whether the focus countries meet these minimum requirements.

²⁷ Step-by-step Guidance Note on the EU Gender Action Plan (2016-2020) for NEAR Headquarters and EU Delegation staff.

²⁸ The DAC gender equality policy marker is based on a three-point scoring system, to qualitatively track the financial flows that target gender equality.

1. Principal (marked 2) means that gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental to its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this objective.
2. Significant (marked 1) means that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme, often explained as gender equality being mainstreamed in the project/programme.
3. Not targeted (marked 0) means that the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker but has not been found to target gender equality.

C. SELECTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SHIFT (THEMATIC AREA A)

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation chose Objective 3, 4 and 5 as primary focus under Thematic Area A “Institutional Culture Shift” for this evaluation. Table 2 describes these objectives in detail. The Team used the Guidance Note as a base to select several key activities under these objectives. This study will focus on this selection in the country chapters. If no information was available for certain activities, or if the Team gathered alternative information, this is mentioned in the text. Those activities marked in blue are equal to the Minimum Standards (see above).

Table 2: Selection of EU suggested activities to meet the Institutional Culture Shift objectives as per the GAP II Guidance Note

CATEGORY	SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AS PER THE EU SWD AND GUIDANCE NOTE	COMMENTS AND EXPLANATION
IMPLEMENTATION (corresponding to Objective 3: Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and member states to deliver on EU gender policy commitments).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Gender Focal Point is present in the head office and has relevant expertise on gender equality and women’s rights. - EU staff in relevant positions (including Heads of Missions) receive training on gender equality. - Technical expertise is provided on gender to EU actors at headquarters and in partner country. - The role of implementing partners is considered in ensuring effective implementation. They may be required to gather additional data and adjust their own approaches (e.g. NGOs or international organisations). This should be clearly communicated by the EU at an early stage. - Call for Proposals and Action Documents should be designed to ensure that, potential implementing partners are able to contribute to GAP II objectives (e.g. GA, sex disaggregated data as requirements for proposals). 	<p>For all actions taken during the Programme and Project Cycle Management (PPCM), the information obtained through a GA needs to be used to inform decision making, programme formulation and monitoring.</p> <p>DEVCO B1 will support EUDs and thematic Units when difficulties arise in their work regarding integration of gender in programmes, this will help to consider mitigation measures.</p>
GENDER ANALYSIS (Corresponding to Objective 4: Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - By June 2016 all EUDs / Units should have a GA at the correct level of intervention (this will be context specific and might be, for example, at sector level, project level or national level). - The GA is expected to help identify which GAP II thematic objectives (minimum of three, one per each thematic priority) that the delegation or unit in question will contribute to over the period of 2016- 20. This is mandatory specific and might be at sector level, project level or national level). - Establish quality assurance processes for project documents; and question spending approval wherever gender is not adequately considered. - Ensure that consultation with National Gender Equality Mechanisms and Civil Society Organisations working on girls’ and women’s rights inform country level programmes, regardless of the sector. 	<p>The European Commission defines a GA as the study of differences in the conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources and development, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc. between girls/ women and boys/men in their assigned gender roles.</p> <p>The GFP, with support from experts in DEVCO B1 where applicable, and in collaboration with key partners, will coordinate. Ultimate responsibility lies with the EUD/ Thematic Unit that must carry out a GA for all future actions.</p>

MONITORING & EVALUATION

(Corresponding to Objective 5: Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress).

- All EU actors **will report annually on all indicators in the institutional culture shift** against the relevant indicators set out in Annex 1 of SWD. Reporting will happen through existing mechanisms. Where existing mechanisms are insufficient, information will be complemented by light touch reports from each actor (including EU Delegations).
- **Coordination at partner country level among EU actors is strongly recommended.** All should be contributing results to the SWD objectives, on the basis of the set of indicators provided. All must **report annually on EU contribution to at least one objective** per thematic priority.
- For the thematic priorities, all EU actors will produce a robust and evidence-based GA at the correct level of intervention (sector, country, thematic etc.).
- Apply systematically the Gender Equality Policy Marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (G-marker) and justify G0 scores to management.
- **New actions / investments** that are in design phase / pipeline will be reviewed **in light of the GA and that all data is disaggregated by sex**. An analysis will be provided that justifies any lack of gender related measurements in existing projects and reassures that gender inequality will not be exacerbated by the intended actions. This will occur through institutional quality assurances process and be integrated into procedures.

For the three thematic priorities (physical & psychological integrity, social & economic empowerment / rights, voice & participation), EU actors are not expected to report against all the objectives; **but they are requested to identify on which of them they will focus** their interventions at country level (or other relevant level dependent on the type of programme; e.g. regional; thematic vs. bilateral). All EUDs and member states with representation in partner countries will select which thematic objectives to contribute to.

D. SELECTION OF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE EVALUATION (THEMATIC AREAS B, C, AND D)

In view of the wide array of objectives of GAP II, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation decided to **narrow down the thematic scope of the evaluation** and focus on a selection of objectives per country. The selection was made by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation based on a consultation with local offices in the respective countries and selected partner organisations. While for the Institutional Culture Shift a decision was made to focus on the same 3 objectives across the 3 countries, for the other thematic priorities the objectives were selected based on their relevance in each country. Two to three objectives per country under each thematic priority were selected.

THEMATIC AREA	COUNTRIES	OBJECTIVE
THEMATIC PRIORITY B. Physical and psychological integrity	Lebanon and Iraq	7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere. 11. Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.
	Jordan	7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere. 8. Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated.
THEMATIC PRIORITY C. Economic, social and cultural rights	All countries	13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination. 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages.
THEMATIC PRIORITY D. Political and civil rights	All countries	17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels. 18. Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law.

E. A NOTE ON ACTIONS AND ACTION DOCUMENTS

This report bases its analysis on **documented and reported “action” taken by the EU on gender equality and women’s rights** in the three focus countries. “Action” is the word used by the EU to describe any type of support by the EU to gender equality and women’s rights in the GAP II, in the Guidance Note and in the Implementation Reports. Although there is no official definition of what constitutes an “action” the following definition is used by EU staff in practice:

An action is an intervention that is funded or has a financial commitment. It can be a project, a programme, as long as it has a budget line”.²⁹

There are not many public documents on EU actions contributing to the implementation of GAP II. The research team decided to include in the report **any significant action that an EU body or member state has taken to promote gender equality in the focus countries**, irrespective of whether they are mentioned or not in the Implementation Reports. Also, actions referred to by GFPs and other actors during the interviews are included in the report. Annex 6 includes an overview of the only publicly available EU action documents for Lebanon, Jordan and the region **included in the Document Repository** of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.³⁰ The Annex also indicates how the OECD Gender Marker 0-2 has been applied in each of these available action documents. The Repository does not include any relevant action programme documents on Iraq specifically. Those initiatives marked in the Annex in *Italic* will be discussed in the country chapters.

²⁹ As per DG NEAR and several EU member states

³⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/key-documents_en?f%5B0%5D=field_document_repository_filter%3A318&f%5B1%5D=field_document_repository_filter%3A274



"...mainstream gender
into its efforts and to
bring gender equality
and women's rights
into the policy forums
and higher on the
national agendas."

*Oum Nour received support from Lebanese Council to
Resist Violence Against Women (LECORVAW).*
Photo: Christopher Herwig

3. FINDINGS

A. LEBANON	28
B. JORDAN	38
C. IRAQ	46
D. EU SUPPORT FOR GAP II OBJECTIVE 18 IN THE CONTEXT OF SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE	54
E. REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS AND OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	59

This chapter presents how the EUD and EU member states have contributed to selected objectives³¹ under the GAP II between 2016-2019. It summarises key actions taken under these objectives, underlining the main challenges and gaps in implementation. Because the annual GAP II results per country, the EAMR, and relevant Action Documents were not available to the Team the information in this section is based on interviews, the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Implementation Reports and the Action Documents included in the Document Repository of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

A. LEBANON

This chapter focuses on the selected GAP II objectives in Lebanon and their alignment with national priorities. It summarises key actions under the objectives and analyses the successes and gaps in implementation after a presentation of the main EU-Lebanon support frameworks.

a. Main EU-Lebanon frameworks and bilateral support

In November 2016, the EU and Lebanon adopted **Partnership Priorities for the years 2016-2020** and an annexed **EU-Lebanon Compact**. The Priorities seek to, among others, “promote gender equality through improved participation of women in political and decision-making fora and through fostering growth and job opportunities in municipalities”.³² Alongside this, the EC aims to “strengthen CSOs and to improve local governance.”³³ Specific relevant commitments in the Partnership include: providing support to civil society by funding CSO initiatives, according to Lebanese legislation and building capacities of Lebanese CSOs, and supporting the National Plan to Safeguard Children and Women in Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon commits to promoting participation of civil society in public decision making and supporting a comprehensive programme for Youth and Women empowerment.³⁴

The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is the key financial instrument of the EU for bilateral cooperation in Lebanon, based on the **SSF**³⁵ which defines the areas of focus for EU assistance in line with the Partnership Priorities. For the period 2017-2020, the EU’s bilateral assistance to Lebanon, with an indicative allocation of €186.5 million-€227.9 million, will focus on **three priority sectors**: promoting growth and job creation (addressing needs of youth, women and marginalised groups); fostering local governance and socio-economic development and; promoting the Rule of Law. Regarding civil society the Framework states that: “The EU will support civil society building up momentum on implementing the **EU-Lebanon Roadmap for Engagement with Civil society** [...] as they are central in monitoring implementation of the SSF 2017-2020”³⁶.

Specifically, measures the EU will take in favour of civil society (taking 10% of the total budget) are to:

a) **Channel specific support to civil society** to strengthen capacities and create the conditions for

³¹ See Chapter 2B for an overview of selected objectives per focus country

³² DECISION No 1/2016 OF THE EU-LEBANON ASSOCIATION COUNCIL Of 11 November 2016: Agreeing On EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eu_lebanon_partnership_priorities_2016-2020_and_their_annexed_eu-lebanon_compact.pdf

³³ Footnote 32, p.6

³⁴ Footnote 32

³⁵ EC (2017). Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (2014-2020)-Single Support Framework for EU support to Lebanon (2017-2020) https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/lebanon_c_2017_7179_annex_en.pdf

³⁶ Footnote 35

civil society to contribute to the formulation and monitoring of policies and programmes, including for the promotion of human rights, especially gender equality and women's rights; and:

b) **Build capacities of CSOs** to effectively exercise their watchdog and support role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies, government and donor programmes, under the three priority sectors of the SSF, in areas such as protecting vulnerable groups, enforcing application of law, and effective participation of CSOs in the National Human Rights' Commission.³⁷

The SSF, the Partnership Priorities or the Roadmap mention no specific budget allocations for gender equality or the GAP II specifically.

b. GAP II Implementation

1. Objectives and alignment with national priorities

According to the SWD and the Guidance Note on GAP II, EUDs must select the objectives to implement and report on under the three thematic priorities based on the results of the gender analysis.³⁸ Lebanon's EUD did not identify specific GAP II objectives to report on over the period of 2016-2020 but identified three **general focus areas**. These include:

1. **Gender Based Violence (GBV)** - predominantly through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (Madad Fund) and bilateral funds (e.g. mapping prevalence of GBV, support to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Gender Observatory³⁹);
2. **Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)** – with a focus on relevant articles in the law discriminatory towards women;
3. **Political Participation of Women.**

Overall, there is an alignment of the general EU focus areas with a selection of the broader national gender priorities⁴⁰ from the **National Strategy for Women 2017-2021**.⁴¹ The GA – which was conducted in 2017 - also highlighted the three chosen focus areas as key issues for Lebanon,⁴² providing recommendations on each of the three areas (see Objective 4 and Box 1 below for more information). Also the recommendations for EU support within the framework of the SSF for Lebanon are in line with the priorities identified in the **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2018-2022 (NGS)**, drafted recently by the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (**OMSWA**) with technical assistance provided by the EUD around 12 areas of actions⁴³ and include economic empowerment and GBV.⁴⁴

However, some additional and specific pressing legal needs that require a response from the EU were highlighted by the national gender equality machinery and by the GA. These include: a stronger legislation on **child marriage; legal residency of Syrians** (which are mostly women-headed households); and unified **personal status law** (and nationality laws, from mother to child). National

³⁷ Footnote 35, p.14

³⁸ Guidance note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020. For DEVCO HQ and EUD operational Staff. p.6.

³⁹ The Observatory is an action taken under the Madad Fund aimed to enhance the institutional capacities and cross-sector coordination mechanisms for the improvement of livelihoods, agency, legal and social protection for Syrian women refugees as well as Lebanese women.

⁴⁰ Which include 1. The Legislation, Laws, and Regulations Sector, 2. The Educational Sector 3. The Health Sector, including Reproductive Health 4. The sector of combatting poverty among women 5. The Economic Sector 6. The Sector of political participation and decision-making positions 7. The Sector of combatting violence against women and girls 8. The Cultural and Media Sector 9. The Environmental Sector 10. The Sector of Capacity Building of institutions and organisations 11. The Sector of Protecting women and girls in situations of emergencies, armed conflicts, wars and natural disasters 12. The Sector of Gender Mainstreaming in all fields.

⁴¹ <http://nclw-applications.com/pdf/National%20Strategie.pdf>

⁴² Ferreras Carreras, E. (2017). Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation Analysis Report, November 2017.

⁴³ As per the Lebanon Gender Analysis. The 12 areas of actions are: Poverty; Legal Reforms; Power and Decision-Making; Education; Economy, Employment and Entrepreneurship; Gender Based Violence; Health; Media and Culture; Environment; Peace and Security; Natural Crisis and Disasters and Institutional Mechanisms.

⁴⁴ As per the Lebanon Gender Analysis. Ferreras Carreras, E. (2017). Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation Analysis Report, November 2017, p.

governmental organisations - including the Ministry of State for Social and Economic Empowerment of Youth and Women (EEWAY) and the National Council of Lebanese Women (NCLW), see 3.2 - also highlighted **domestic violence, criminalising marital rape, and abolishing the kafala system** to be pressing areas that the EU could focus on.⁴⁵ In addition, they press that the ratification and full **implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)- to which Lebanon issued reservations- and Istanbul Conventions** need to be a priority for EU actors and members states.

Local and international CSOs add to this that they would like to see the EU provide more support to the **prevention of GBV** (as opposed to a limited focus on GBV protection mechanisms), support to interventions and campaigns **targeting sexual and reproductive health rights**, and support to **women's political participation**, more specifically working with the voter base to introduce more women candidates.⁴⁶ A range of national stakeholders attribute the EU's failure to prioritise some relevant issues to a shift from directing efforts on Lebanon towards **the Syrian crisis**.

Also, a pressing need that comes out of the GA, is that **very limited sex-disaggregated data is available** in Lebanon, particularly regarding land ownership and GBV prevalence. "Expanding household surveys to include questions about GBV; gathering data over a longer period of time and with randomised control groups; and creating a knowledge database that will enable various stakeholders to monitor the progress of advancing gender equality"⁴⁷ are proposed as key solutions for the data gap. The EU could play a bigger role in building capacity on collecting sex-disaggregated data under the GAP, particularly because the GAP II highlights this activity as a main objective (and as a minimum standard).

Finally, WROs state that particularly those organisations that are working on "political and sensitive topics" are facing **increasing restrictions on their space to manoeuvre in Lebanon**.⁴⁸ Even though the perception is that this space is not yet as limited as in the other two focus countries of this study, CSOs do share that the EU could be more vocal about this growing problem.

2. Involvement of gender equality machinery and CSOs

Lebanon has a range of governmental, semi-governmental and non-governmental organisations working towards gender equality. At the institutional level, the **OMSWA** was created in December 2016 and has developed its NGS 2018-2022 with technical assistance from the EUD.⁴⁹ The recently created **EEWAY** coordinates the "National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women", in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Ministry of Social Affairs (**MoSA**) is responsible for the oversight of local Social Development Centres (SDCs). GBV related interventions performed by MoSA mostly fall under the "National Plan for Safeguarding Children and Women in Lebanon. Finally, the **NCLW** acts as the consultative body of the government and works on implementing gender mainstreaming in public administrations and overseeing the implementation of the goals of international conventions which Lebanon has ratified. The NCLW, together with UNFPA, created the National Strategy for Women 2017-2021 (see section B1). Most efforts to combat GBV in Lebanon, however, are non-governmental, including by **ABAAD** and **KAFA** (which means "Enough" in Arabic), who receive funding by the donor community and have established partnerships with the major ministries and United Nations (UN) agencies.

To identify **priority areas of support to gender equality in Lebanon**, the EUD conducted consultations with the national gender machinery and with CSOs. Still, despite this engagement, **most of the actors interviewed show that they have a limited knowledge of what the EU is prioritising in the area**

⁴⁵ As based on interviews with the national gender machinery and confirmed by CSOs during a validation workshop in Beirut, July 25, 2019

⁴⁶ As shared by multiple Cs's in the CSO workshop and in interviews

⁴⁷ As stated in GA pages 6.9 and 10

⁴⁸ As shared in the Validation Workshop

⁴⁹ As per Ferreras Carreras, E. (2017). Gender Analysis in Lebanon, Situation Analysis Report, November 2017.

of gender equality and women's rights.⁵⁰ The EUD particularly consults with the bigger national and international CSOs about new programs and on their implementation. According to the EUD GFP Lebanon, the EUD “never implements a programme without consulting CSOs.”⁵¹ For example, before implementation of the Madad Fund a GA was conducted, independent experts were consulted, and 4 consultation meetings were held with CSOs. The EUD GFP clarifies that as “these parties provide the knowledge on the ground, we need them. For GBV we consulted with, for example, Abaad, KAFA and The Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL).”⁵² For the bilateral EU programme (starting around the date of the writing of this report) one consultation round was held in November 2017. Also, multiple actors were consulted on the creation of the new Gender Observatory⁵³, among which the NCLW and EEWAY.

However, some CSOs interviewed for this evaluation share that while communication with the EU around the drafting of the first GBV Law 293⁵⁴ was considered as strong, engagement over the last 3 years has decreased somewhat.⁵⁵ Stakeholders comment that EU consultation is mainly feeding into funding and programming cycles but rarely targets policy issues. CSOs expressed wishes to be progressively more **involved also on policy issues.**⁵⁶ There is additionally a perceived need to start engagement with CSOs at the beginning of the creation of any framework or programme and throughout the funding cycle in a process that creates more ownership for CSOs. Finally, mostly, those consulted already receive funding from the EU, leaving little room for other (smaller or independent) parties “that take a more critical view towards society [...] For example, a consultation process that includes views of journalists or lawyers could be beneficial for the EU, particularly at times when civic space is more limited”.⁵⁷

3. EU actions implemented under selected thematic objectives of the GAP II

The following sections present a combination of quantitative and qualitative information on actions implemented under the GAP II in Lebanon by the EU and its member states. The section on Thematic Area A focuses on a selection of actions suggested by the Guidance Note as presented in Table 2 in Chapter 2. Sections on Thematic Areas B-D focus on actions that came out most prominently in the three Annual Implementation Reports and during the interviews.

Thematic Area A: Institutional culture shift in the European Union's external relations

Objective 3: Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and member states to deliver on EU gender policy commitments

At the initiation of the GAP II, the EU appointed a GFP in Lebanon that had a minimum of five years' experience working on gender equality.⁵⁸ Both the EUD and member states occasionally engage additional **external gender expertise** on an *ad hoc* basis in Lebanon. The EUD used such experts for the GA conducted in 2017 (See Box 1). However, because of **lack of sufficient resources** available, the EUD cannot always hire expertise throughout the programme cycle. The EUD aims to highlight gender expertise as a requirement in all contracts and **Calls for Proposals** released in Lebanon but does not have the human resources to assess *all* outgoing calls for gender requirements. This is partially attributed to the fact that there is no internal automatic information sharing mechanism in place, so to be able to check if all calls include gender-specific components.

⁵⁰ The EUD shares that – currently – information on gender efforts is shared in the “small grants meeting”; in the Gender Donor Meeting (led by Canada which is every 3 months); and in the Human Rights Focal points meetings.

⁵¹ Interview EUD GFP Lebanon

⁵² EUD GFP Lebanon

⁵³ See footnote 32 and box 2

⁵⁴ On 7 May 2014, the Lebanese Parliament adopted Law No. 293/2014 “on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence.” The law is a positive step towards addressing GBV in Lebanon. It enables a woman to obtain temporary protection measures from the judicial police (article 11) while waiting for a protection (restraining) order against a perpetrator (articles 12-14); assigns a public prosecutor in each governorate to receive complaints and investigate domestic violence (article 4); and establishes specialised units within Lebanon's police, the Internal Security Forces (ISF), to process complaints on domestic violence (article 5).

⁵⁵ Local CSO

⁵⁶ As shared by CSOs

⁵⁷ As shared by CSOs

⁵⁸ 2016 Implementation Report, p.55

Box 1: Objective 4 - Gender Analysis Lebanon

A GA was conducted in October 2017 (published in 2018) which provides a range of recommendations on a number of issues, including GBV and WEE. (Some of which are also described under subchapter 2.1 and 3.1). The document is available online and was written by gender consultant *Elena Ferreras Carreras*. The GA does not include sector-specific analysis, but includes a situation analysis on the institutional and administrative context, protection from GBV, and economic participation of women and political participation.

The GA identifies the key barriers to achieving progress in these two areas which include the following:

- The lack of unity in personal codes regulating personal status matters
- The law does not protect refugee women
- There is no minimum age for marriage defined in Lebanon's civil law
- Limited awareness about the existence of the GBV law
- A gap in labour market participation and high unemployment among women
- It is common practice to limit the transfer of real estate to male children and women face difficulties acquiring land tenure in rural areas

The analysis recommends, among others:

- To consolidate the role of OMSWA as coordinator of the gender equality agenda in Lebanon
- To ensure OMSWA coordinates and consults with civil society on priority issues and with other institutional mechanisms
- To develop a multi-sectoral, comprehensive and holistic response to GBV
- To ensure its national legislation is in full compliance with the CEDAW Convention
- To adopt adequate measures to reduce VAW by adopting multi-sectoral approaches
- To improve coordination between international and national actors on the gender equality agenda
- To establish a formal, efficient and sustainable referral system
- More rigorous and longer-term data collection to understand the impact of programmes and what factors most commonly contribute to the perpetuation of VAWG and gender inequality
- Addressing social norms that act as barriers for women's participation in the public sphere and job market
- Implementing education programmes that provide women, men, youth with better market skills.

At member state level, gender expertise varies extensively. Some EU member states (Belgium, Sweden and Germany) have dedicated gender experts in their embassies, or among cooperation offices in Lebanon, but many others do not have the resources for a designated gender officer. The 2016, 2017 or 2018 Implementation reports and interviews did not generate information regarding the number of staff members trained on gender equality in Lebanon.⁵⁹ Also, no information was shared on whether the EUD or member states require implementing partners to gather additional data, and to adjust their own approaches, if these do not comply with EU gender equality requirements.

Objective 4: Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making

An analysis of all priority sectors was not included in the Lebanon GA. The **GA was also not used to help identify priority thematic objectives** (because these priorities were set previous to the GA). Lebanon's EUD shares that the "results of the GA were not surprising to us and we were

⁵⁹ 2018 Implementation report, p128

already working on the key recommendations.”⁶⁰ Still, it could benefit the GAP II implementation if the EUD and member states pay more attention to the specific recommendations coming out of the GA (see Box 1), particularly around the coordination of stakeholders, data collection on GBV and change of specific legislation, which - at the end of 2019 - are still pressing issues.⁶¹

Overall, the 2018 Implementation Report shows that GA only informed **2 out of 15 reported actions** in Lebanon⁶², potentially because gender expertise at programme level is not always attainable.⁶³ Information on exactly how many new **Action Documents** (or equivalent) have been reviewed and subsequently revised for gender considerations is not publicly available. However, in the last two years, the EUD GFP has encouraged programme managers to at least share Action Documents with the GFP so to allow for “gender expertise input”. It is being considered by the GFP whether **quality assurance processes**, including the sharing of gender tools (such as indicators), would help programme managers to engender their action documents. Even though data on programmes using findings of consultations with the **National Gender Equality Mechanism** is lacking, the EUD shares to consult about EU gender equality programming through dialogue and consultation with local actors.

Objective 5: Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress

The EUD reported to Brussels on all institutional culture shift indicators for 2018 in March 2019. Data is not available on which member state reported on GAP II between 2016 and 2018 for Lebanon. However, interviews demonstrate that **far from all EU member states submitted the reporting** template in 2018 and 2019. For example, the Netherlands, Finland and the UK shared to not have used the reporting template for 2018, illustrated by the following reasons: **“The questionnaire was cumbersome and not tested to allow for a meaningful input”**,⁶⁴ “we have had too limited resources to really do so”,⁶⁵ “there are too many questions that do not apply to us”.⁶⁶ Regarding reporting on thematic areas B-D, the Online Repository of the EU lists **10 action programme documents** of which 2 had no gender focus, 8 had a significant gender focus and none had gender as a primary focus (Gender Marker (GM) 2) (see Annex 6). However, 36 and 15 actions were reported by Lebanon in the GAP II 2017 and 2018 Implementation reports (respectively), indicating that more actions were implemented in reality. Also for the GFP EUD herself it is **difficult to stay informed about the total number of actions** taken on gender equality and women’s rights in Lebanon, as the GFP does not have access to EU member states’ GAP II reporting anymore (member states now send their reports directly to their respective MOFA as opposed to sharing it with the EUD, as in previous years). This lack of information sharing impedes **coordination between the EU member states and EUD**.

No information is available whether the **GM0 “is always justified”** in Lebanon. However, respondents from international organisations and EU member states state that the GM remains a “tick of the box” exercise and that **it is often applied incorrectly**, so it does not reflect the real action that is taken. To illustrate this, one GFP of a member state that reported in 2017 and 2018 states “that it has become clear that the filled **information on actions was incorrect**, as our staff is not aware on how to use the GM system. All staff interpret this marker differently and staff have different ideas on what “an action” is supposed to be”.⁶⁷ In the two action documents marked GM0 that were available to the Team (Supporting Lebanon’s Vision for Stabilisation and Promoting the rule of Law⁶⁸)

⁶⁰ As per EUD GFP Lebanon

⁶¹ As per interviews with international CSOs and international organisations

⁶² 2018 EU Implementation Report, 129

⁶³ EUD GFP Lebanon

⁶⁴ As stated by member state

⁶⁵ As stated by member state

⁶⁶ As stated by member state

⁶⁷ As stated by member state

⁶⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2018_8188_lebanon_aap_2018_merged_document_en.pdf

gender is in fact mentioned as “being pursued at each stage of this action”,⁶⁹ illustrating that at least here the GMO is not applied correctly.

Last, the Lebanon GA specifically recommends **using sex-disaggregated data to inform the development programs**. Lebanon’s EUD GFP shares to indeed ask for and collect this data but is doubtful on how to best apply the data, leading to **sub-optimal data usage**.

Thematic Priority B: physical and psychological integrity

10 actions were reported under GAP II under Priority B: 7 over 2017⁷⁰ and 3 over 2018.⁷¹

Objective 7: Girls and women free from all forms of violence (VAWG) in public and private sphere
2 actions were reported under Objective 7 over 2017 in Lebanon,⁷² data for 2018 is not available.

Among these actions, the EU committed €12.5 million to protection services to children and women victim of GBV in Lebanon in 2019.⁷³ The EUD Lebanon focuses on GBV predominantly through the Madad Fund.⁷⁴ An example of one of these actions is the Gender Observatory⁷⁵ described below in Box 2.

Box 2: Lebanon Gender Observatory

Under the Madad fund, the EU supported the establishment of the Gender Observatory, aimed to enhance the institutional capacities and cross-sector coordination mechanisms in order to ensure the improvement of livelihoods, agency, legal and social protection for women - Syrian women refugees as well as Lebanese women in host communities. It is a partnership between key ministries and actors involved in the response to the Syrian crises, independent gender experts and researchers, national and international women’s rights organisation, hosted at EEWAY. The Observatory is viewed as a hub where key ministries and major actors involved in the response to the Syrian crisis, meet. It addresses legal and social discrimination, raising the needs of the most vulnerable women in Lebanon to policy level in order to let them have better access to comprehensive services and support their active participation in local decision-making. One activity within the Observatory will include the development of plans and methodologies required for an in-depth analysis of women’s status in marginalized communities and women refugees. Several local CSOs and INGOs are involved in this project and those CSOs interviewed for this study share that this will be a promising initiative for Lebanon, particularly with regards to streamlining data and information collection on GBV at a national level.

Objective 11: Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

1 action was reported in 2017 under Objective 11 in Lebanon,⁷⁶ data for 2018 is not available.

Details of this particular actions remain unclear, but the 2017 Implementation Report states that

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 14

⁷⁰ 2017 Implementation Report, p. 87

⁷¹ 2018 Implementation Report, p 208

⁷² 2018 Implementation Report

⁷³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_19_3391

⁷⁴ EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘Madad Fund’

⁷⁵ The latest information can be found here: <http://www.efi-ife.org/press-release-2nd-meeting-steering-committee-lebanon-national-gender-observatory-march-2019>

⁷⁶ 2017 Implementation Report, p.78

there has been “**increasing attention to family planning and sexual rights [in Lebanon]**”.⁷⁷ In addition, “actions targeting Objective 11 on sexual and reproductive health and rights increased significantly in the sub-region [also] in 2018”.⁷⁸ The EUD GFP Lebanon adds to this that **EU efforts focus on SRHR predominantly through regional action** (for Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan combined). In 2018 in Lebanon, the EUD contributed to strengthening protection mechanisms for Syrian refugees and vulnerable communities, including by working to reduce economic barriers to accessing health services.⁷⁹ CSOs add to this information that Sweden and the Netherlands implemented a few efforts on SRHR including a sexuality hotline, podcasts and sexual education and SRHR awareness sessions, in collaboration with CSOs.⁸⁰

Thematic Priority C: economic, social and cultural rights - economic and social empowerment

32 actions were reported under GAP II under Priority C: 21 over 2017⁸¹ and 11 over 2018⁸² for Lebanon.

Objective 13: Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination

8 actions were reported under Objective 13 over 2017 in Lebanon,⁸³ data for 2018 is not available.

Included in actions taken under this objective is the Madad Fund’s support to public education in Lebanon in the context of the EU response to the Syria crisis,⁸⁴ which aims to strengthen the public education system towards inclusive and quality education. Gender-sensitive messaging and equal access of boys and girls to education are a key focus through careful geographic mapping and continued dialogue at technical level amongst UN-Agencies and with Lebanese authorities. The mapping helps to identify where more gender gaps are across the country and how to counter specific stereotypes preventing girls to access education and consequently to access dignified livelihood opportunities.⁸⁵

Objective 14: Objective 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages.

5 actions were reported under Objective 14 over 2017 in Lebanon,⁸⁶ data for 2018 is not available.

These actions include at least: a programme to support the inclusive Education, Training and Career Guidance of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon enhancing the participation of girls and women in the project’s activities, both as target groups and final beneficiaries,⁸⁷ the launch of an action promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in support to Lebanon’s clean energy transition, which seeks to ensure that women can jump on the bandwagon of innovation,⁸⁸ and through support for Lebanon’s Vision for Stabilisation, Growth and Employment, in which both economically and non-economically active women are targeted through investments in transport infrastructure.⁸⁹

⁷⁷ EU Implementation Report 2017, p.167

⁷⁸ 2018 Implementation Report, p.216

⁷⁹ 2018 Implementation, p.31

⁸⁰ As shared in CSO workshop

⁸¹ 2017 Implementation Report, p. 108

⁸² 2018 Implementation Report, p 208

⁸³ 2018 Implementation Report

⁸⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eutf_final_ad_education_lebanon_revised_after_the_june_board_2018.pdf

⁸⁵ See footnote 75, p.15

⁸⁶ 2018 Implementation Report

⁸⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2016_7863_lebanon_part_2_annex_2.pdf

⁸⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2018_8188_lebanon_aap_2018_merged_document_en.pdf

⁸⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2018_8188_lebanon_aap_2018_merged_document_en.pdf

Thematic Priority D: political and civil rights - voice and participation

11 actions were reported under GAP II under Priority C: 10 over 2017⁹⁰ and 1 over 2018.⁹¹

Objective 17: Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.

6 actions were reported under Objective 17 over 2017 in Lebanon,⁹² data for 2018 is not available.

Among these actions, the EU has supported the **participation of women as candidates in national elections** by implementing a fully-fledged mission in Lebanon⁹³ and through the LEAP program.⁹⁴ The LEAP Programme, executed by the UNDP and partially funded by the EU, aims to develop the capacity of national stakeholders for the conduct of credible, periodical, transparent and inclusive elections and to strengthen the public confidence in the electoral process. One of the specific objectives of this project has been to support the participation of Lebanese women as candidates in national elections. In addition, Italy supported Ge.Mai.Sa 2, a programme to enhance gender mainstreaming in sustainable rural development through the participation of rural women (reported under objective 14,17 and 19)⁹⁵, in which “tangible results have been achieved in the actual improvement of rural women’s conditions, through vocational training, trainings to promote awareness of women’s rights, accessing information on available local resources and the creation of local networks and implementation of economic activities.”⁹⁶

c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Lebanon

Based on the GAP II implementation assessment in Lebanon, some **good practices** can be found. First, there is a general alignment of Lebanon EUD’s chosen focus areas with a selection of the national gender equality priorities, such as those included in the National Gender Action Plan 2017-2021. The EUD has also provided technical assistance for Lebanon’s National Strategy for Gender Equality 2018-2022 (NGS). Second, gender evidence was gathered in 2017 through the GA which provided specific recommendations on the thematic areas of GBV, WEE and women’s political participation. Third, there is a concerted effort to collect sex-disaggregated data and an ambition to further utilise it in programme development. The EUD also consults with larger CSOs during the programming and funding cycles. The availability of gender expertise varies, positive examples are Belgium, Sweden and Germany who have dedicated gender experts in their embassies or cooperation offices in Lebanon, and the EUD GFP has increasingly encouraged programme managers to share action documents so as to ensure they comply with gender-responsive requirements.

Regarding implementation of the **thematic objectives, thematic priority C** (economic, social and cultural rights) **received the most attention** (32 total actions reported in 2017 and 2018). Under thematic priority B (physical and psychological integrity) the EU has contributed to creating a more conducive enabling policy environment to battle GBV through the Madad Fund, the new Gender Observatory and through the funding of targeted interventions for the national child marriage action plan with MOSA and the High Council for Childhood, through the finalisation of national strategic action plans for GBV, and through the support for safe spaces in crisis situations.⁹⁷ The EU also actively supports capacity building of CSOs, including women’s organisations in Lebanon, and is seen as a champion in this kind of support by other donors.⁹⁸

⁹⁰ 2017 Implementation Report, p. 117

⁹¹ 2018 Implementation Report, p 208

⁹² 2018 Implementation Report, p. 117

⁹³ 2018 Implementation Report, p.242

⁹⁴ <https://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/projects/LebaneseElectionsAssistanceProjectLEAP.html>

⁹⁵ As shared by CSOs

⁹⁶ http://www.iamb.it/uploads/attachments/558/GEMAISA_BRIEF.pdf

⁹⁷ Shared by international organisation

⁹⁸ As shared by international organisations and CSOs

However, the assessment also shows several **gaps in implementation**, particularly within the institutional culture shift, as none of **the minimum standards** have been fully met. No specific GAP II objectives were chosen to be reported on in Lebanon. The GA was not done for all priority sectors and a GA informed only 2 out of 15 actions in 2018. Though gender expertise is available, not all action documents or calls are informed or checked by a gender expert because of limited resources. Sex-disaggregated data, though collected by the EUD, is used sub-optimally. Finally, only a small selection of EU member states is known to have reported under GAP II in 2018 and 2019 for Lebanon creating an incomplete picture of EU actions supporting gender equality in the country. This misrepresentation is further exacerbated by the conclusion that multiple EU actors do not yet apply the gender marker appropriately.

Finally, GAP II implementation would benefit from greater attention paid to the **recommendations coming out of the GA**, particularly around key areas such as the coordination of stakeholders on the gender equality agenda in Lebanon, the multi-sectoral approach to combat GBV, the compliance of national legislation with CEDAW and data collection issues.⁹⁹ In addition, **recommendations emerging from the interviews held with the national gender equality machinery and civil society organisations** point at the role the EU could play a role in pushing for a stronger legislation on child marriage, legal residency of Syrians (which are mostly women-headed households) and unified personal status law (and nationality laws, from mother to child). Areas such as prevention of domestic violence and the criminalisation of marital rape are also considered key priorities by civil society working on women's and girls' rights.

Overall, the EU in Lebanon is taking steps to implement the GAP II but there is a need to further comply with the requirements under the Institutional Culture Shift objectives, to communicate clearly about the EU's engagement under the GAP II in Lebanon, and to further engage the national gender equality machinery and civil society in these efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUD ON GAP II IMPLEMENTATION IN LEBANON:

1. Ensure compliance with the five minimum standards by 2020, and in particular: identify specific GAP II objectives to report on and carry out sectoral gender analyses to inform specific programming and funding decisions in line with the Guidance Note.
2. Set aside adequate human and financial resources for implementation of selected objectives.
3. Raise awareness on and increase visibility around GAP II locally (on priority areas, implementation, reporting process, role and requirements for implementing partners).
4. Set up a dedicated platform for EU and EU member states in Lebanon to exchange information and coordinate around GAP II implementation and reporting. Potentially use the existing small grants meeting, the Gender Donor Meeting or the Human Rights Focal points meeting.
5. Ensure EU action documents are revised by the GFP for gender-specific requirements.
6. Establish a regular dialogue with CSOs working on women's and girls' rights in Lebanon and explore how the EU can better use its policies and funding streams to support them.
7. Consider enhancing EU's support to prevent child marriage, unified personal status laws, preventing and addressing domestic violence, including criminalising marital rape, and implementing the CEDAW and Istanbul Conventions.
8. Use leverage to tackle shrinking civic space in Lebanon and include the protection of civic space as an explicit objective also within the GAP III objectives, while creating alternative avenues for multiple CSOs to engage in with the EU around the development and implementation of GAP.

⁹⁹ As per interviews with international CSOs and international organisations

B. JORDAN

This chapter focuses on the selected GAP II objectives in Jordan and their alignment with national priorities. It summarises key actions under the objectives and analyses the successes and gaps in implementation after a presentation of the main EU-Jordan support frameworks.

a. Main EU-Jordan frameworks and bilateral support

In December 2016 the EU and Jordan adopted their **Partnership Priorities 2016-2018** and a **Compact**, which seek to strengthen cooperation on regional stability and security, support quality education and job creation, and strengthen democratic governance, the rule of law and human rights.¹⁰⁰ The EU extended the Priorities in December 2018 until 2020.

The **ENI** is the key EU financial instrument for bilateral cooperation in Jordan, based on the **SSF 2017-2020**.¹⁰¹ The SSF defines the areas of focus for the EU in line with the partnership priorities. Priority sectors are: 1) Enhancing Jordan's social and economic development and to contribute to the reduction of income and social inequalities; 2) Strengthening the rule of law and to contribute to the development of a more independent, accountable, and accessible justice system, and; 3) Upgrading border management and preventing violent extremism so to enhance government's efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and support local actors' resilience and capacity for customised approaches and strategies. Focus on youth and a stronger gender balance will be ensured across the different areas of intervention.

Moreover, **the Jordan SSF 2017-2020 document explicitly states that "the EU Gender Action Plan, the EU Jordan Mobility Partnership signed in 2014¹⁰² and the EU Country Roadmap for engaging with Civil Society will be duly taken into account in implementing the SSF."**¹⁰³ Through the Civil Society provision, **"a specific allocation of 5% is earmarked for targeted support to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan and the EU Civil Society Roadmap for Jordan.** This is envisaged through a two-pronged programme aiming at enhancing women economic empowerment and contributing to an active, vibrant and pluralistic civil society in rural areas by strengthening community-based organisations including access to culture".¹⁰⁴ In addition, the EU Heads of Missions adopted the EU Roadmap for its Engagement with Civil Society¹⁰⁵ in Jordan in July 2014 and it is under review for 2018-2020.¹⁰⁶

b. GAP II Implementation

1. Objectives and alignment with national priorities

According to the SWD and the Guidance Note on GAP II, EUDs must select the objectives to implement and report on under the three thematic priorities based on the results of the gender analysis.¹⁰⁷ The EUD in **Jordan selected the following priority objectives in 2016:** thematic priority

¹⁰⁰ EU Jordan Partnership Priorities: Annex to the Joint Proposal for a Council Decision on the Union position within the Association Council set up by the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their member states, of the one part, and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, of the other part, with regard to the adoption of EU Jordan Partnership Priorities and annexed Compact.

¹⁰¹ Single Support Framework for EU support to Jordan (2017-2020). https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/single_support_framework_2014-2020.pdf

¹⁰² Through this partnership the EU and Jordan agree to ensure that the movement of persons is managed as effectively as possible, allowing for concrete actions to further improve the situation in the way migration, asylum and borders are dealt with. Available on: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-1109_en.htm

¹⁰³ Single Support Framework for EU support to Jordan (2017-2020), page 4-5.

¹⁰⁴ Single Support Framework for EU support to Jordan (2017-2020), page 13.

¹⁰⁵ European Union- Capacity4dev- Jordan Roadmap for engagement with civil society.

¹⁰⁶ At the time of writing this report.

¹⁰⁷ Guidance note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020. For DEVCO HQ and EUD operational Staff. p.6.

B: **7 and 8**, thematic priority C: **13, 14 and 15**,¹⁰⁸ thematic priority D: **17 and 18**. The EUD and EU member states selected the objectives for Jordan according to their knowledge of the country's context and priorities, guided by the SSF. As stated in the SSF (see section b), the priority sectors "are fully in line with key objectives in the government's strategic planning documents and the GAP II."¹⁰⁹ An analysis of the three policy frameworks described above shows that there is indeed an alignment between GAP II priorities, Partnership Priorities and the SSF.

There also is alignment between the **Jordanian 2013-2017 National Strategy on Women** and GAP II thematic objectives. The Strategy has eight primary aims¹¹⁰ which broadly speak to GAP II priorities selected in the country by the EUD. The **Jordan National Commission for Women (JNCW) confirms that the GAP II priorities align** with those of the government, attributing this to the fact that JNCW co-chairs the Gender Technical Committee along with the EU and UN Women. This platform allows the three actors along with embassies of the EU member states, Canada, US, and Japan to exchange regularly on gaps and achievements on international support for gender equality.

CSOs interviewed for this assessment, hold however, different opinions on whether the objectives selected under the GAP II by the EUD speak to the needs and priorities of women in Jordan. **Some agree that all priorities are aligned, and some would lean towards selecting other pressing issues.**

Difference in opinion in relation to Objective 8 on trafficking is most prominent (see below for details). CSOs highlight the need for systematic collection and publishing of data and further awareness-raising about GBV in Jordan. They also call for the **criminalisation of new forms of human trafficking**, such as the **marriage of minors under the age of 15, forced marriage, or forcing women to take loans on behalf of family members**.¹¹¹ Overall, the interviewed CSOs share that **access to justice** in relation to promoting gender equality has received little attention from the EU, attributing this to the observation that this field is "beyond the EU's manoeuvring space".¹¹²

WEE and youth employability¹¹³ is a priority of donors in Jordan, but CSOs also identify some gaps here.¹¹⁴ "Many INGOs & NGOs are providing vocational training in Jordan, but unfortunately in specific professions that contribute to stereotyping women such as embroidery, sewing, or hairdressing".¹¹⁵ Therefore, types of vocational training could be studied more carefully to avoid pushing women into stereotypical professions by assessing the market options and employability. Jordan **lacks laws and policies to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace**.¹¹⁶ Jordanian women continue to suffer from obstacles such as **poor public transportation, lack of nurseries in the workplace, discrimination and unequal promotions and training, violence and sexual harassment**. These obstacles are amplified in high risk professions such as hotels or transport services.¹¹⁷ Additionally, women's representation in elected decision-making bodies¹¹⁸ could be accelerated by **addressing discriminatory social norms** and adopting temporary special measures for women outside of the quota.¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁸ Objective 15 was not selected as a focus of this assessment and thus not reported on

¹⁰⁹ SSF Jordan, p. 4

¹¹⁰ These are: 1) increasing women's participation in policy development and decision-making bodies, 2) improving economic participation, 3) directing social norms to support women, 4) promoting gender equality in legislation, 5) building on the achievements of the women's movement, 6) developing gender-specific data to inform reforms, 7) leveraging the role of civil society in improving women's empowerment and access to justice, and finally 8) utilising IT advances to benefit women.

¹¹¹ As shared by CSO

¹¹² As shared by CSO

¹¹³ Falling under thematic priority C

¹¹⁴ Increasing female participation in employment through vocational education and training in Jordan, European Training Foundation, 2016.

¹¹⁵ As shared by CSO

¹¹⁶ As shared by CSOs

¹¹⁷ As shared by CSO

¹¹⁸ Falling under thematic priority D

¹¹⁹ Women's Political Participation in Jordan, the mission of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Finally, civil society actors agree that they **witness increasing restrictions on their work and space to manoeuvre in Jordan**. WROs state that the EU could play an important supporting role by utilising its leverage in the country to explicitly counter the shrinking space.

2. Involvement of gender equality machinery and CSOs

The institutional framework for coordinating gender issues in Jordan comprises the **JNCW, the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and Gender Units established in seventeen line ministries and government agencies**.¹²⁰ Most ministries have a donor funded GFP and several have a unit or division in charge of gender mainstreaming and/or specifically addressing women's concerns.¹²¹ Through the Ministry of Social Development, the Jordanian government created the **Women Directorate**. Its chief focus is to encourage female participation in the economy.¹²² The EUD Jordan did neither consult with the Jordanian government nor with CSOs when selecting the above-mentioned objectives. The EUD in Jordan engages its governmental counterparts when negotiating bilateral support, however this was not done specifically for GAP II as confirmed by the EUD and JNCW.

As for the involvement of civil society, most of the CSOs interviewed for this assessment were **not aware of GAP II and its implementation process in Jordan**. Some mention that they might have been involved indirectly in GAP II through EU funded projects, hence without a complete knowledge of their actual role. While not directly linked to GAP II, the **EUD holds regular consultations with CSOs**. In these meetings, CSOs are consulted on topics set by the EU especially prior to EU's negotiations with the government. Here, most of the involved CSOs express their desire to be kept informed about the follow-up discussions between the EUD and the government to close the feedback loop. While the EUD considers it important to consult with CSOs on an array of issues, CSOs are seen as a **secondary arm** for implementation and the EU and EU member states **as the main actors** of implementation.¹²³

3. EU actions implemented under selected thematic objectives of the GAP II

The following sections present a combination of quantitative and qualitative information on actions implemented under the GAP II in Jordan by the EU and its member states. The section on Thematic Area A focuses on a selection of actions suggested by the Guidance Note as presented in Table 2 in Chapter 2. Sections on Thematic Areas B-D focus on actions that came out most prominently in the three Annual Implementation Reports and during the interviews.

Thematic Area A: Institutional culture shift in the European Union's external relations

Objective 3: Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and member states to deliver on EU gender policy commitments

The EUD in Jordan has appointed a **GFP** based in Amman. No information is available on the numbers of staff trained up until 2019, but **training on gender equality** across staff of the EUD is still needed as stated by the GFP. In member state embassies, GFPs are generally staff members assigned to other portfolios, such as development cooperation and human rights, who voluntarily take on the responsibility to support implementation of gender-related actions. In Jordan, investment in **gender capacity** of EU member states appears to be connected to internal Embassy policies rather than to the GAP itself. For instance, the Dutch embassy strongly invests in its internal capacity; the staff receive regular trainings and courses, but this is not necessarily spurred by the GAP.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Economic Participation, Agency and Access to Justice in Jordan, the World Bank, July 2013.

¹²¹ USAID/Jordan: GA and Assessment, March 2012.

¹²² Gender Profile Jordan, Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Lebanese American University.

¹²³ As shared by EUD Jordan

¹²⁴ As shared by member state

As part of the activities proposed under this objective¹²⁵, **Calls for Proposals** should be designed to ensure that potential implementing partners can contribute to GAP II objectives. The EUD in Jordan considers this when launching new calls for proposals, but these calls do not systematically refer to GAP II.¹²⁶ No information was shared with the Team on whether **implementing partners are required to gather additional data** and adjust their own approaches, if these do not comply with EU gender equality requirements and standards under GAP II.

Objective 4: Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making

The EUD has **not yet conducted a country GA** for Jordan.¹²⁷ At the time of writing this report, the EUD in Jordan stated that it may resort to the results of the analyses being implemented by UN Women or USAID to avoid duplication in efforts and resources.¹²⁸ The 2018 Implementation Report states that the Jordan GA should be finalised in 2019. Furthermore, the 2016 Implementation report states that “[some] programmes formulated in 2016 at delegation level used a GA to inform design in Jordan”.¹²⁹

Gender evidence is not systematically used to inform EU’s external spending and policy-making across the board.¹³⁰ As no GA was carried out, **identification of GAP II thematic objectives did not spur from gender evidence but** was based on the EUDs’ staff expertise and understanding of the Jordanian context. Also, the EUD did not reach out **to the national gender equality machinery and CSOs** for the selection of thematic objectives to report on. Nonetheless, the EUD and national actors believe in the value of investing further effort to strengthen partnership and meaningful participation of the Jordanian stakeholders in EU policymaking and programming.

No information was available on whether consistent efforts are made through internal **quality assurance mechanisms** to monitor the quality of gender mainstreaming within EU actions at the EUD in Jordan.

Objective 5: Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress

Data is not available on which EU member states reported on GAP II between 2016 and 2018 for Jordan. However, the EUD has shared to **receive regular reporting** from the missions of France, Spain, the Netherlands and Germany. Regarding reporting on thematic areas B-D, the EU Online Repository lists 10 action programme documents of which 1 had no gender focus (GM0), 8 had a significant gender focus (GM1) and 1 had gender as a primary focus (GM2) (see Annex 6). While the EUD in Jordan reports annually on GAP indicators, its team states that reporting on the Institutional Culture Shift objectives remains challenging. The EUD Jordan states to “pay special attention to monitoring the use of the Gender Equality Policy Marker in reporting. Under GAP, we [ourselves] only report on actions with GM 1 and 2 (not 0)”.¹³¹ However, the EUD has noticed that around 70% or more of the reported actions by EU member states hold the gender marker GM1, while the criteria for marker 1 are not fulfilled completely, **casting doubts on the correct use of the GM** and leading to a misrepresentation of EU actions reported under GAP II.¹³²

Finally, even though **sex-disaggregated data** is collected, the EUD and EU member states share that there is a need to go a level beyond the mere collection of sex-disaggregated data, in order to realize effective application and usage of this data.

¹²⁵ Guidance Note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020

¹²⁶ As shared by EUD Jordan

¹²⁷ As of December 2019

¹²⁸ As shared by EUD Jordan

¹²⁹ 2016 Implementation Report, p 55.

¹³⁰ As shared by MS

¹³¹ The 3 G-Marker Scores: G-0: When gender equality is not targeted / G-1: When gender equality is a significant objective / G-2: When gender equality is a principle objective.

¹³² As shared by EUD Jordan

Thematic Area B: physical and psychological integrity

In total, 16 actions were reported under GAP II under priority B in Jordan: 11 over 2017¹³³ and 5 over 2018.¹³⁴

Objective 7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere.

6 actions were reported under Objective 7 over 2017 in Jordan,¹³⁵ data for 2018 is not available.

In January 2019, the EU awarded EuroMed Feminist Initiative a three-year grant to implement “the Regional Campaign to prevent and Combat Violence against Women and Girls in the Southern Neighbourhood Countries”.¹³⁶ One member of the consortium in this project is the Arab Women Organisation.¹³⁷ Another example of the EU’s support under this objective is Action Aid’s “Promoting Feminist Leadership to Combat Sexual and GBV” project.¹³⁸ The EU is also financing **“Alternatives to Administrative Detention for Women at Risk”**, a flagship area of engagement for the EU aimed at establishing shelters for women at risk of violence.¹³⁹ Similarly, the EU has extended its support to the Ministry of Social Development in establishing the Amina Women’s Home. A new action under this objective was contracted in 2018, “Preventing violent extremism: a gender-sensitive approach”, aimed to prevent the rise of violent extremism in Jordan and Pakistan by strengthening the capacities of local actors to address gender dynamics.¹⁴⁰ Finally, and in response to the Syrian crisis, Jordan is one of the EU’s recipients of the Madad Trust Fund. One of the programmes under Madad aims at strengthening the resilience of Syrian Women and girls and host communities.

Objective 8. Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated.

1 action was reported under Objective 8 over 2017 in Jordan,¹⁴¹ data for 2018 is not available.

This objective was addressed by the EUD largely in the framework of initiatives to uphold the rights of migrants and refugees.¹⁴² Mizan for Law cooperates with the Ministry of Social Development to run a shelter for women at risk and trains its staff under the project Alternatives to Administrative Detention for Women at Risk supported by the EU. The EU also supported the government in the adoption and promotion of the **National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Human Trafficking in Jordan (2019-2022)**. The Strategy was developed within the framework of “Support to the Mobility Partnership between the EU and Jordan”, a programme funded by the EU and implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development.¹⁴³

¹³³ 2017 Implementation Report, p.87

¹³⁴ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 208

¹³⁵ 2017 Implementation Report

¹³⁶ Development Assistance Roadmap Portal in the Middle East.

¹³⁷ Arab Women Organisation is a partner organisation of Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation.

¹³⁸ Action Aid

¹³⁹ Jordan, Situation Report on Violence against Women, EuroMed Rights March 2018

¹⁴⁰ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 238

¹⁴¹ 2017 Implementation Report

¹⁴² 2018 Implementation Report, p. 216

¹⁴³ EU Neighbours South, News, Jordan launched new National Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent Human Trafficking with EU Support.

Thematic Area C: economic, social and cultural rights - economic and social empowerment

In total, 37 actions were reported under GAP II under priority C: 26 over 2017¹⁴⁴ and 11 over 2018.¹⁴⁵

Objective 13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.

5 actions were reported under Objective 13 over 2017 in Jordan,¹⁴⁶ data for 2018 is not available. WEE and youth employability fall among the priorities of key donors in Jordan under this objective. Multiple initiatives are implemented in this field which sometimes overlap. No comprehensive assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the implemented initiatives.¹⁴⁷

Among these initiatives is the EU support to quality of Education and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Jordan which supports the implementation of the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and the TVET component of the Human Resources Development Strategy. The action includes measures focused on improving the quality of and access to education and on promoting equity, good governance and management in the education system. This action is marked GM1, and one of its result areas is **“improved access and equity aiming at strengthening inclusive and special education and tackling social inclusion in vocational education, also through a gender lens”**.¹⁴⁸ Another example under this objective is shared by Arab Women Organisation; producing the **“ABC for a gender-sensitive education”** handbook, conducting educational activities in schools, and holding Training of Trainers (ToT) to sensitise teachers on gender-mindful behaviour with the support from the EU and EuroMed Feminist Initiative.

Objective 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages.

4 actions have been reported under Objective 14 over 2017 in Jordan,¹⁴⁹ data for 2018 is not available.

As part of these actions, the 2018 Implementation Report mentions the EUDs collaboration with the International Labour Organisation to monitor the labour aspects of the EU’s “Rules of Origin” implementation,¹⁵⁰ as well as a multi-country programme implemented by the EUD and Italy promoting women’s entrepreneurship in industrial development and sustainable rural development.¹⁵¹ Another important action which is supported by the EU and EU member states is EconoWin, a regional GIZ program, improving the conditions for the economic integration of women.¹⁵² Also, the Eid bi Eid programme, implemented in Jordan as of 2019 by the Zonta International Foundation and UN Women National Committee, which addresses the challenges associated with growing vulnerability by improving women’s access to sustainable and decent employment. This multi-year initiative is supported by the Governments of Australia, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Japan and the EU through the Madad Fund.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁴ 2017 Implementation Report, p.87

¹⁴⁵ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 208

¹⁴⁶ 2017 Implementation Report

¹⁴⁷ Increasing female participation in employment through vocational education and training in Jordan, European Training Foundation, 2016.

¹⁴⁸ Commission Implementing Decision on the multiannual action programme 2019 and 2020 part I, in favour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan- Action Document for ‘EU support to quality of Education and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Jordan’. Available on: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2019_8748_jordan_aap_2019_2020_part_1_commission_implementing_decision_en_merged.pdf

¹⁴⁹ 2017 Implementation Report

¹⁵⁰ 2018 Implementation Report, p.53

¹⁵¹ 2018 Implementation Report, p.48

¹⁵² <https://econowin.org>

¹⁵³ Development Assistance Roadmap Portal in the Middle East.

Thematic Area D: political and civil rights - voice and participation

In total, 44 actions were under GAP II under priority D: 33 over 2017¹⁵⁴ and 11 over 2018¹⁵⁵.

Objective 17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.

20 actions were reported under Objective 17 over 2017 in Jordan,¹⁵⁶ data for 2018 is not available. Promoting women in leadership positions has been a key feature of different EU programmes under this objective,¹⁵⁷ one of which is described in Box 3. Another example under this objective is the “Eye on Women, Ain”¹⁵⁸ project which Sisterhood is Global Institute is one of its implementers in Jordan. The project aims at **increasing Jordanian women’s participation in political life**. It is co-funded by the EU and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation within the framework of the EU Support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development - EU JDID programme.¹⁵⁹

Box 3 - EU Support to Social Protection in Jordan.

This programme is underlined as a priority in the SSF 2017- 2020 under the focal sector 1 and has a budget of EUR 20,000.000 in support for the Ministry of Social Development. Objectives include:

- Supporting women and girls in the realisation of their full human rights through necessary frameworks, which promote and protect the human rights of women and girls; access to services that respond to rights violations; and increased public awareness of the rights of women and girls among the beneficiaries and civil society;
- Advancing the leadership, voice and equal participation of women and girls, as decision makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies;
- Reducing gender inequalities related to access to and control over resources and services.

c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Jordan

Based on the GAP II implementation assessment in Jordan, **some good practices** can be identified. First, as the only country in this report, the EUD in Jordan selected specific 2-3 objectives under each thematic area in GAP II to report on back in 2016, which facilitates annual GAP reporting and programmatic planning. Stakeholders in the country agree that the selected themes represent priority needs and gaps in Jordan and that they are aligned with national priorities represented in main national strategies. Second, the EUD has also invested in internal capacity to implement and monitor the GAP. Third, only in Jordan, the GAP is explicitly mentioned in the EU’s bi-lateral support framework with Jordan (the SSF 2017-2020) and through the civil society provision, a specific allocation of 5% of EU funding is earmarked for targeted support to the implementation of the GAP II and the EU Civil Society Roadmap for Jordan.

Regarding implementation of the **thematic objectives**, Thematic Area D - political and civil rights - received the most attention (44 total actions reported over 2017 and 2018) and the EU contributed to the progress in women’s access to the public space. Under thematic priority B (physical and

¹⁵⁴ 2017 Implementation Report, p.87

¹⁵⁵ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 208

¹⁵⁶ 2017 Implementation Report

¹⁵⁷ As shared by CSOs

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/women-experience-elections-positive-overall—sigi>

¹⁵⁹ <http://democracy-support.eu/jordan/eu-jdid>

psychological integrity) the EU has consistently **supported alternative measures to administrative detention of women** for their protection in cases of risk of honour killing and GBV. The first government **shelter for women at risk of honour killings** was opened with EU support.

However, the assessment also shows **several gaps in implementation**, in particular with regards to the Institutional Culture Shift objectives. Four of the minimum standards are not fully met: the EUD has not yet conducted a country GA; at the EUD and member state level also gender expertise (and staff capacity) is not always available and used in a timely manner; there is an indication that the GM is not used correctly by EU member states, and there is a need to go a level beyond the mere collection of sex-disaggregated data to the effective use of it to inform programming. There is also considerable room for improvement in the involvement of implementing partners in the GAP process, as CSOs are not considered key actors for GAP implementation.

GAP II implementation in Jordan would benefit from a greater involvement of civil society actors who point at a number of obstacles for women's and girl's enjoyment of equal rights and where the EU could play a specific role. In particular, Jordan **lacks laws and policies to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace**. Jordanian women continue to suffer from obstacles such as **poor public transportation, lack of nurseries in the workplace, discrimination and unequal promotions and training, violence and sexual harassment**. Additional attention is also needed to increase women's representation in elected decision-making bodies by **addressing discriminatory social norms** and adopting temporary special measures for women outside of the quota. Last but not least, concerns shared by CSOs who experience a somewhat reduced operating space including on issues pertaining to women's rights, should be addressed.

Overall, the EUD Jordan appears to increasingly use the GAP II as a reference in the design of programmes, such as for the regional Madad Fund and its Theory of Change and is taking steps to mainstream gender into its actions. Greater efforts are needed however to meet the Institutional Culture Shift objectives, improve coordination with EU member states and increase the involvement of national gender equality machinery as well as civil society in the implementation of GAP II objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUD ON GAP II IMPLEMENTATION IN JORDAN:

1. Ensure compliance with the five minimum performance standards by 2020 and, in particular: produce a GA at country and/or sector level to inform the selection of objectives under thematic priorities B, C and D and to feed into programming, funding and policymaking;
2. Set aside adequate human and financial resources for implementation of selected objectives
3. Raise awareness on and increase visibility around GAP II locally (on priority areas, implementation, reporting process, role and requirements for implementing partners).
4. Set up a dedicated platform for EU and EU member states in Jordan to exchange information and coordinate around GAP II implementation and reporting. Potentially use the existing 'Gender Technical Committee' (see section b1);
5. Establish a regular dialogue with CSOs working on women's and girls' rights in relation to GAP II to feed into the selection of key objectives;
6. Use leverage to tackle shrinking civic space in Jordan and include the protection of civic space as an explicit objective also within the GAP III objectives, while creating alternative avenues for multiple CSOs to engage in with the EU around the development and implementation of GAP.

C. IRAQ

This chapter focuses on the selected GAP II objectives in Iraq and their alignment with national priorities. It summarises key actions under the objectives and analyses the successes and gaps in implementation after a presentation of the main EU-Iraq support frameworks.

a. Main EU-Iraq frameworks and bilateral support

Bilateral relations between the EU and Iraq are defined contractually by Unlike the **EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**,¹⁶⁰ signed in May 2012 and fully came into force in 2018. It highlights the long-term engagement of the EU in creating a legal framework for cooperation with Iraq on areas of mutual interest and, in regards to gender, “calls on the Iraqi authorities to prioritise gender equality and the eradication of all violence and discrimination against women and girls, including GBV; stresses in this regard the importance of abolishing the law that exonerates the accused from prosecution for rape, sexual assault, statutory rape, abduction or similar acts if the rapist marries his rape victim”.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the European Parliament’s resolution on the draft Council Decision on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement “calls on the Iraqi authorities to prioritise gender equality and the eradication of all violence and discrimination against women and girls, including GBV.”¹⁶² In addition, it “stresses the need to support the development of Iraqi civil society [...] maintains that particular attention should be paid to the representation of women [...] whose demands need to be addressed”.¹⁶³ Notably, it “**urges the EU and the member states [...] to enhance support for civil society and to prioritise funding for projects that support actors promoting accountability and democratic change.**”¹⁶⁴

In response to the specific challenges Iraq is facing following the territorial defeat of Da’esh - including ongoing humanitarian, stabilisation, early recovery, reform and reconciliation needs - the EU also adopted **Elements for an EU strategy for Iraq**¹⁶⁵ in 2018, identifying priorities for EU action. The Strategy focuses on attaining five strategic objectives aimed at preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, supporting Iraqi efforts to build an accountable and democratic system of government, promoting inclusive growth, supporting reconciliation among different communities, building an independent and effective justice system and address migration challenges. Also, the Strategy calls for a **broad participation of civil society in political reforms processes** and a proper representation of **youth, women and persons belonging to minorities** through adequate platforms. The Strategy does not refer specifically to the GAP II, despite having been adopted after it.

2018 EU Council Conclusions on Iraq¹⁶⁶ called for the full implementation of the **Iraqi National Action Plan on Women and Peace and Security**”.

Since 2014, the EU has provided over a billion euros in response to the crisis: €435.27 million in humanitarian aid, €320 million in development funding, €150.9 million from the **Madad Fund**, €42.6 million in crisis response assistance from the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (ICSP), and €6.5 million from **the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)** and civil society.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ To be found on: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0286_EN.html

¹⁶¹ EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

¹⁶² European Parliament non-legislative resolution of 4 July 2018 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion of a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its member states and the Republic of Iraq (10209/1/2012 – C8-0038/2018 – 2010/0310M(NLE)). Paragraph 21. Available on: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0286_EN.pdf

¹⁶³ EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (resolution). Paragraph 14

¹⁶⁴ EU-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (resolution). Paragraph 8

¹⁶⁵ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/join_2018_1_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v2_p1_961709.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Council of The European Union (2018). Council Conclusions on Iraq Foreign Affairs Council, 22 January 2018. p.4

¹⁶⁷ EEAS (2019). EU and Iraq. Factsheet. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eu_and_iraq_factsheet_updated_.pdf

b. GAP II Implementation¹⁶⁸

1. Objectives and alignment with national priorities

As per the SWD, and based on the results from a GA, the EUD must prioritise at least one objective to pursue in each thematic priority of the GAP II.¹⁶⁹ Iraq's **EUD did not identify specific GAP II objectives** to report on over the period of 2016-2020.¹⁷⁰

Some insight is provided by the GA that was commissioned for Iraq in 2018 (see box 4 and objective 4) which states that the EUD Iraq has two focal areas: "Peace and stabilisation with a focus on women's participation in the political arena and peace negotiations" and "People and livelihoods with a focus on access to and participation of women in economic activities and particularly support to private sector development." And in line with these the **GA recommends a focus on priority areas C (economic, social and cultural rights) and D (Political and Civil Rights)**.¹⁷¹ These priorities however do not fully match with the information presented in the 2018 Implementation Report, which states that the EUD Iraq has focused most actions on Thematic Area C, with particular attention to Objective 13 (training and education) and some on Objective 7 (VAWG - in Thematic Area B).¹⁷²

As it remains unconfirmed which objectives are indeed the selected priorities by the EUD for Iraq, a full comparison to national frameworks and policies would not be meaningful at this point in time. However, some topical alignment¹⁷³ on VAWG exists with the **National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2013-2017**¹⁷⁴ and with the **National Strategy to Combat Gender Based Violence 2018-2030**.¹⁷⁵ Alignment on the topic of education and of political and economic participation exists with the **National Strategy for the Advancement of Women 2014-2018**.¹⁷⁶

The EUD staff in Baghdad notes that the priorities of GAP II in Iraq are well-aligned with the needs in country and "a continuous consultation process with CSOs and government ensures to maintain that".¹⁷⁷ Still, all interviewed Iraqi CSOs, organisations and governmental representatives - except for the GFP at UNDP - have stated that they **are not aware of the implementation of GAP II in Iraq** nor are they aware of its priorities. For example, one CSO states that "we have not succeeded in knowing what are priority targets on gender equality of the EUD in Iraq".¹⁷⁸ The CSOs consultations by the EUD may thus have referred to other policies, or programmatic interventions, and have not referred specifically to the GAP II.

Local and international CSOs identified **some specific pressing needs that would require a response from the EU in Iraq**. They share that the country would benefit from an increased and continuous focus on **longer term projects on VAWG** (Objective 7 and 9), as opposed to short-term

¹⁶⁸ Please refer to the limitation noted on page 6 with regards to the Iraq case study.

¹⁶⁹ Guidance note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020. For DEVCO HQ and EUD operational Staff. p.6.

¹⁷⁰ According to interviewed EUD Iraq staff at the time of writing this report.

¹⁷¹ Particip and Europlus (2018). Gender Analysis in Post-Conflict Iraq August 2018 - December 2018.

¹⁷² 2018 Implementation Report, p. 205

¹⁷³ The report on Implementation of Iraq National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, p. 10. The report can be found at: <http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/Report%20-%20Implementation%20Iraq%20NAP%201325%20English.pdf>. The actual strategies are not available publicly for the Team to review.

¹⁷⁴ This Strategy aims to eliminate all forms of legal discrimination against women and provide them with legal protection, to raise awareness and education of communities about the causes of violence against women and its effects on women, the family, and society, to take measures to provide support and protection for women and girls from all forms of violence, and to improve the quality and level of services provided to victims of violence.

¹⁷⁵ This Strategy aims to create a legislative environment compatible with Articles 8-14 of the Constitution and Iraq's international obligations, to increase enrolment rates of girls in secondary education from 77% to 100%, to develop reproductive health policy, and finally to increase female participation at the labour market and in decision-making positions during peace and conflict.

¹⁷⁶ The strategy can be found at: <https://iraq.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/VAW%20Strategy%20Arabic%20-%20Online%20Version.pdf>

¹⁷⁷ As per EUD Baghdad

¹⁷⁸ As shared by CSO

projects. In line with the information presented in the GA, CSOs also report on a lack of progress **in political empowerment of women** highlighting that political parties seek to exclude women from political participation. The following quote illustrates this: “We do not have the right to attend meetings of the Council of Ministers. We need to address the structure, we need a trained staff, and we need a budget to guarantee us the right of political and civic participation.”¹⁷⁹

2. Involvement of gender equality machinery and CSOs

Several institutions in Iraq focus on women’s rights and gender equality including **the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers - Citizens’ Affairs Department, Women’s Empowerment Directorate, the Higher Council for Women, the Higher Committee on Violence against Women, the Judicial Institute in the Kurdistan Region, the Family Court** (four courts dealing with domestic violence), **the Directorate for Family Protection**, and **the Directorate for Social Welfare at the Ministry of the Interior**. In 2017, the government of Iraq founded the Directorate of Women’s Empowerment to replace the abolished Ministry of Women’s Affairs, but the Directorate has neither a portfolio and nor decision-making power and its recommendations are not binding. There are several Gender Units in Ministries and, on the provincial level, there are Committees on women and departments on women’s affairs in Governorates. At the UN level, in 2017 UN Women founded the **International Gender Group (IGG)**, as a platform for donor community in Iraq. IGG comprises eight bilateral agencies, UN Women and UNAMI Gender Unit.¹⁸⁰

Iraq has adopted several strategies and policies to improve the situation of women and the status of women’s rights, most prominently, the **National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2013-2017** (new version launched 2018), **the National Strategy for Developing Iraqi Women 2014-2018**, and the **National Strategy for Advancement of the Status of Women in the Kurdistan Region 2016-2026**,¹⁸¹ which aims to empower women, improve gender equality and integrate women’s rights in the institutional and governmental structure and policies.

The EUD **engages the gender equality machinery through discussions with the Gender Units** (present in all Iraqi ministries), and the women and children sections in each governorate Council.¹⁸² However, these discussions and consultations are not specifically linked to the GAP II. Interviewees acknowledged that consultations take place between the EUD and some NGOs in Iraq, but that the engagement of local Iraqi CSOs is rather limited. It is important to note that the EUD in **Iraq is fragmented into offices** in Baghdad, Erbil and Amman which makes it difficult to ensure coordination and channel communication and follow up. However, the EUD is planning to transition from Amman to Baghdad during the coming period which will bring the EUD closer to the field and strengthen its day-to-day work and engagement with local stakeholders.¹⁸³

3. EU actions implemented under selected thematic objectives of the GAP II

The following sections present a combination of quantitative and qualitative information on actions implemented under the GAP II in Iraq by the EU and its member states. The section on Thematic Area A focuses on a selection of actions suggested by the Staff Guidance Note as presented in Table 2 in Chapter 2. Sections on Thematic Areas B-D focus on actions reported most prominently in the three Annual Implementation Reports and shared by key informants during the interviews.

¹⁷⁹ As stated by CSO

¹⁸⁰ UN women, Oxfam (2018). Gender Profile- Iraq. A situation analysis on gender equality and women’s empowerment in Iraq.

¹⁸¹ The full text of the three strategies is not available publicly, references to these strategies in this report are derived from secondary sources.

¹⁸² As per EUD Iraq in Erbil

¹⁸³ As per EUD Iraq in Amman

Thematic Area A: Institutional culture shift in the European Union's external relations

The 2018 Implementation Report states that the Gulf States (which includes Iraq and Yemen) have **scored 100% on compliance with the GAP II five minimum performance standards** under institutional culture shift.¹⁸⁴ However, the information shared during the interviews that were conducted for this assessment suggest that this information may be incorrect, as elaborated in the following sections.

Objective 3: Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and member states to deliver on EU gender policy commitments

The 2017 Implementation Report states that the EUD Iraq appointed 2 GFPs at the EUD for Iraq and Yemen, in Amman. In addition, a GFP was appointed in 2019 in Baghdad. No data is available in the 2017 and 2018 Implementation Reports on the number of **gender trainings** provided, or whether programmes and actions in Iraq build on gender expertise. At least one training on gender was conducted in 2018 for all staff of the EUD based in Amman, which aimed at both strengthening internal gender sensitivity and promoting gender mainstreaming in programmes.¹⁸⁵ At the time of writing, the EUD has been taking steps to boost the **gender expertise** in the Iraq-based offices by hiring two staff members with dedicated gender portfolios.¹⁸⁶

No data was available on whether the Iraqi EUD considers **the role of implementing partners** in ensuring effective implementation, or whether **call for proposals refer to GAP II** and are designed to ensure that implementation of partners contributes to GAP II, as suggested by the Guidance Note.

Objective 4: Robust gender evidence used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making

The 2017 Implementation Report states that the EUD to Iraq **"identified priority sectors"**,¹⁸⁷ but it gives no information on what these sectors are. In 2017, a **GA was commissioned by the EUD in Iraq and published** in 2018 (see Box 4 on page 36).¹⁸⁸ The GA was not used to help identify specific priority objectives (because these priorities were supposed to have been set in 2016, previous to the GA taking place). However, the analysis poses that the EUD Iraq has two focal areas: a) peace and stabilisation with a focus on women's participation, and b) people and livelihoods with a focus on access to and participation of women in economic activities. The analysis is meant to guide political dialogue, cooperation strategies, gender mainstreaming and identify entry points for action on gender equality and women's rights. The GA also proposes objectives and opportunities for policy and political dialogue in the sector of politics and economy, and in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda with several clear tangible suggestions (see Box 4 on the next page). The GA provides recommendations on the institutional level, political level, and economic level and, finally, it provides "a gender log frame with a selection of **indicators aligned with the GAP II to enable the EUD to use them in project design and programming of priority sectors in current or upcoming projects or actions**".¹⁸⁹ Even though the GA has been widely disseminated, it remains unclear to what extent its recommendations have been followed up or implemented.

According to the 2018 Implementation Report, in 2018, **GAs were used for the formulation of 12 out of 27 actions in Iraq**. In Iraq and Yemen combined **consultations with stakeholders** informed 37 actions, including with UN agencies, government ministries, civil society and other federal and regional counterparts.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁴ Gender marker 0 is always justified, GA done, sex disaggregated data used throughout project, gender expertise is available, GAP objectives are selected and reported on.

¹⁸⁵ As per EUD Iraq in Baghdad

¹⁸⁶ Interview with EUD GFP Iraq

¹⁸⁷ 2017 Implementation Report, p.66

¹⁸⁸ Particip and Europlus (2018). Gender Analysis in Post-Conflict Iraq August 2018 - December 2018

¹⁸⁹ GA in Post-Conflict Iraq August 2018 - December 2018, p.6

¹⁹⁰ 2018 Implementation Report, P. 124

No information is available about whether **quality assurance processes have been established** in Iraq's EUD and member states.

Objective 5: Results for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress

EU DEVCO encourages all EUDs and member states to systematically track progress on actions taken on gender equality and women's rights. Because of the limited data available, it was difficult to assess to what extent this objective is being met in Iraq. The 2018 Implementation Report states that **only EUD reported on Iraq under GAP II in 2018** and none of the EU member states did (only Germany reported on its works under GAP II in Yemen in 2018).¹⁹¹

The consistent **use of sex-disaggregated data also remained a challenge** in 2018 for Iraq (and Yemen), not least because of the critical situations in the country and the scarcity of national gender statistics. The 2018 Implementation Report reveals that for Yemen and Iraq 38%¹⁹² of reported actions include sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators.¹⁹³

The EU conducted nine **monitoring missions** in Iraq in 2018, comprising programming visits from the EC and embassies' headquarters. Because of the security situation, the missions received most monitoring information from CSOs and local stakeholders in the field.¹⁹⁴

The Team did not gain access to information on the use of the Gender Marker by EU actors in Iraq and whether the (minimum performance standard) **Gender Marker 0** is always justified.

Box 4: Objective 4 - Gender Analysis Iraq

The EUD used senior external gender expertise - in the form of Particip and EuroPlus Consulting and Management - to prepare a GA on Iraq and Yemen, in order to guide political dialogue, cooperation strategies, gender mainstreaming and identify entry points for "making a sustainable difference" [in the areas of gender equality and women's rights]. The GA was not used to help identify priority thematic objectives or sectors (because these priorities were supposed to have been set in 2016, previous to the GA taking place). The results of the GA have, however, been disseminated widely across the EUD departments and partners in country. The analysis is used as a reference on ad hoc basis. The GA report is not available online but is considered a public document.

The GA states that the EUD Iraq has two focal areas and looks specifically into these:

- Peace and stabilisation with a focus on women's participation in the political arena and peace negotiations
- People and livelihoods with a focus on access to and participation of women in economic activities and particularly support to private sector development."

The GA identifies the key barriers to achieving GE in the economic and political sectors in Iraq which include the following:

- that women cannot be part of the political scene unless men and women perceive them as independent political actors. Women are often perceived as a token by their political parties and are not really part of the peace negotiation agreements nor do they address women related specific issues.
- support to women in private sector development is often limited to access and participation and does not tackle control of resources. Women are provided with loans and

¹⁹¹ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 201

¹⁹² Percentage concerns Yemen and Iraq combined

¹⁹³ 2018 Implementation Report, p.124

¹⁹⁴ 2018 Implementation Report, p.124

grants that are often limited to “micro-credit” and burdened by conditions and procedures that are disempowering and that limit their actual participation and empowerment.

The analysis recommends the EUD to adopt five main principles in all EUD interventions:

- Adopt a holistic and comprehensive approach to tackle different issues (multi-layered actions for both political and economic empowerment).
- Be inclusive and context-sensitive involving different communities that are present in Iraq and not focusing on one ethnic group or religion. Providing opportunities for civic engagement of both girls and boys.
- Coordinate interventions with other donors such as GIZ, Canadian government, USAID and UN Women.
- Focus on gender transformative approach: discussing and dealing with perceptions and stereotypes on gender roles involving families, imams and other religious leaders, tribe elders.
- Enhancing positive masculinities: working on and with men and specifically male champions.

The GA recommends the EUD to adopt a number of interventions under the institutional level, political level, and the economic level (GA in Post-Conflict Iraq August 2018 - December 2018 P. 51-55). The GA also identifies two priorities referring to GAP II, related to economic empowerment and political participation: Thematic Priority C: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Economic and Social Empowerment (Objectives 13, 14, and 15) and Thematic Priority D: Political and civil rights - Voice and Participation (Objectives 17, 18, and 19).

Thematic Area B: physical and psychological integrity

Overall, the 2018 Implementation Report shows that in sum, for Iraq, the **EUD reported 21 actions under Thematic Area B-D. 17 actions among these addressed women, peace and security issues.**¹⁹⁵ In 2018, the EUD reported 5 actions for Iraq under priority B, ‘Physical and Psychological Integrity’. In 2017, the EUD to Yemen and Iraq (combined) reported 3 actions under priority B.

Objective 7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere.

According to the Implementation Report, in 2018, the EUD to Iraq gave specific attention to Objective 7,¹⁹⁶ on curbing VAWG, and Objective 9, on protecting women from violence in crisis situations, without indicating how many actions were reported under this objective. It did so through a programme **to expand access to justice for vulnerable groups in northern Iraq, and a programme to protect women and girls from human trafficking, sexual exploitation and GBV.**¹⁹⁷ The latter is implemented by the Organisation of Women’s Freedom in Iraq. Two projects were funded in the framework of the EIDHR programme, aiming to support the rule of law in relation to GBV, the protection of the rights of female inmates and juvenile offenders, and to enhance legal security, arrest procedures, and detention conditions of women and girls.¹⁹⁸ Notably, most actions that addressed Objective 9 on protection from GBV in crisis situations, were supported by Austria. For Iraq, this includes contributions to a woman, peace and humanitarian fund.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ 2018 Implementation Report, p.202

¹⁹⁶ In the 2018 Implementation Report, the table on page 203 states that the EUD itself did not report any actions under Objective 7 over 2018, while some action in these objectives were taken by EU member states. However, in text the report states that “The EU Delegation to Iraq addressed objective 7, on curbing violence against women and girls, and objective 9, on protecting them from violence in crisis situations. It did so through a programme to expand access to justice for vulnerable groups in northern Iraq, as well as a programme to protect women and girls from human trafficking, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence”. (p.204)

¹⁹⁷ 2018 Implementation Report, p.204

¹⁹⁸ 2017 Implementation Report, p.95

¹⁹⁹ 2018 Implementation Report, p.245

Objective 11: Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

No actions were reported under Objective 11 in the 2018 Implementation Report. The 2017 Implementation Report included one regional action under Objective 11 being the Madad Fund for Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. The fund primarily addresses educational, economic and social needs of Syrian refugees while also supporting overstretched local communities and their administrations. The report does not include specific details on actions for Iraq.

Thematic Area C: economic, social and cultural rights - economic and social empowerment

The EUD reported 11 actions for Iraq under thematic priority C in 2018.²⁰⁰ In 2017 only one action in Iraq reportedly contributed to priority C. A description of key actions on thematic area C is presented below based on interviews and the 2017 and 2018 implementation reports.

Objective 13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.

The 2018 Implementation Report states that **Objective 13 was a primary concern in 2018 for the region and Iraq**²⁰¹, without indicating how many actions were taken on this specific objective. In Iraq, the EUD promoted quality primary and secondary education for internally displaced persons and refugees in crisis-affected areas. It also encouraged cultural heritage education for social cohesion, coupled with a programme to strengthen the visibility of women and girls in education to foster gender equality.²⁰² The EUD also supports a gender education project implemented by the Centre for Gender and Development Studies of the American University in Sulaymaniyya.²⁰³ Box 5 describes another prominent EUD funded capacity-building programme for education.

Box 5: EU Delegation to Iraq, Capacity Building in Primary and Secondary Education

In 2017, the EUD to Iraq supported the 'Capacity Building in Primary and Secondary Education: improve quality and equality programme', or the 'Iraq schools Programme', to increase enrolment and reduce dropout rates. It was implemented by the British Council, and the project targets both boys and girls, taking into account that girls are more likely to drop out of school in the country. Within this project, a model of active citizenship was implemented with community leaders and other active community members, such as NGOs, religious leaders, teachers and health personnel.

Objective 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages.

No actions were reported in the Implementation Reports under Objective 14 in Iraq.

Thematic Area D: political and civil rights - voice and participation

5 actions were reported in the 2018 Implementation Report under Thematic Area D: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation for Iraq.²⁰⁴

Objective 17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.

In 2017, the EUD reported one action for Iraq under priority D, which supported **women's**

²⁰⁰ 2018 Implementation Report, p.46

²⁰¹ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 46

²⁰² 2018 Implementation Report, p.46

²⁰³ Iraq and the EU (2016). Available on; https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iraq/690/iraq-and-eu_en

²⁰⁴ 2018 Implementation Report

participation in the 2017 political elections and the increase of the overall number of female candidates. During this round of elections, women made up 28% of the nearly 7000 candidates running for 329 seats in the parliament.²⁰⁵ In 2018, the EU also supported a programme to consolidate media freedom, initiatives to foster dialogue among conflict-affected communities, and efforts to increase the share of women on corporate boards in national and multi-national corporations (indicator 17.2).²⁰⁶ Finally, with the support of the EU Madad Fund and the Netherlands, EuroMed Feminist Initiative partakes in the Cross Sector Task Force (CSTF) and the development of Iraq's Second National Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325, detailing and promoting women's role in peace and security. The CSTF developed the first NAP (2014-2018) and has been responsible for its implementation and reporting.²⁰⁷ A recent study found that, among other results and multiple challenges, the NAP process has at the least "opened the door to mainstreaming and institutionalising the Women, Peace and Security Agenda on ministerial level [...] The NAP has provided a common platform to strengthen institutional, organisational and personal accountability, to promote and enhance cross-sector cooperation and coordination [on women's rights]."²⁰⁸

c. Concluding Analysis: Good Practices, Gaps, and Recommendations for Iraq

Despite the limited information available for Iraq, **some preliminary good practices can be identified**. First, a GA was conducted in 2018 and the results were disseminated among EUDs and its partners. Second, the EUD engages the national gender machinery through discussions with the gender units present in all Iraqi ministries and through sporadic consultation with CSOs on programme development. Third, the EUD is taking steps to boost the gender expertise within the EUD in Baghdad by appointing two new staff members with dedicated gender portfolios. The EUD is planning to transition from Amman to Baghdad during the coming period which will bring the EUD closer to the field and strengthen its day-to-day work and engagement with local parties.

The EUD **prioritised action within Thematic Area C** (with 11 actions) in Iraq, focusing particularly on Objective 13, training and education. In addition, the EU's and the Netherlands' contribution to the development and funding of the CSTF and the development of the second NAP on UNSCR 1325 has been a positive development and has, at the least, provided a common platform to strengthen institutional and organisational accountability, to promote and enhance cross sector cooperation and coordination on women's rights. The EU has also extended its support to develop the capacity of cadres of governmental entities, CSOs on discrimination and elimination of GBV (Objective 7 and 9).

However, the assessment also **shows several gaps in implementation**. It is key to note that many of the gaps are linked to the segmentation of EUD offices between Baghdad, Amman and Erbil, to the separation of the political section (Baghdad) and the operations section (Amman), and to the considerable challenges and competing priorities in a highly volatile context. In relation to the institutional culture shift, while the 2018 Implementation Report states a 100% compliance on the minimum performance standards in the Gulf Region, interviews suggest that, in fact, none of the minimum standards have been fully met in Iraq. Priority sectors and objectives have not been selected to be reported on; a GA was conducted but not sector-specific ones and there is no evidence to suggest that it informs policies and programmes systematically; the consistent use of gender evidence and sex-disaggregated data remained a challenge in 2018 for Iraq; and also further building of gender expertise and capacity of EUD staff is very much needed. There is no information about

²⁰⁵ 2017 Implementation Report, p.114

²⁰⁶ 2018 Implementation Report

²⁰⁷ The Task Force encompasses relevant Ministries and institutions: 15 in Federal Iraq and 8 in Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil. The civil society is represented by two large networks: Alliance 1325 and Network 1325. EuroMed Feminist Initiative IFE-EFI has supported the work of the Cross-Sector Task Force since 2012. <http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/Report%20-%20Implementation%20Iraq%20NAP%201325%20English.pdf>

²⁰⁸ EFI (2018). Report. Implementation of Iraq National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325. 2014 – 2018. <http://www.efi-ife.org/sites/default/files/Report%20-%20Implementation%20Iraq%20NAP%201325%20English.pdf>

the use of the Gender Marker. Finally, national stakeholders appear not to have been informed or consulted in relation to GAP II and its priorities for Iraq.

Overall, despite the logistical and contextual challenges in Iraq, the EUD is taking positive steps to both report and mainstream action on gender equality and women's rights in Iraq under the GAP II but much remains to be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUD ON GAP II IMPLEMENTATION IN IRAQ:

1. Ensure compliance with the five minimum performance standards by 2020 and, in particular: ensure the selection of specific objectives to be reported on under GAP II.
2. Set aside adequate human and financial resources for implementation of selected objectives
3. Raise awareness on and increase visibility around GAP II locally (on priority areas, implementation, reporting process, role and requirements for implementing partners).
4. Establish a regular dialogue with CSOs working on women's and girls' rights in relation to GAP II to feed into the selection of key objectives.
5. Ensure local partners, including gender equality machinery, local and international CSOs, are aware of the selected priorities and can meaningfully contribute to GAP II implementation
6. Coordinate with EU member states on the implementation of GAP II objectives and motivate them to report annually on their actions contributing to GAP II.
7. Ensure gender expertise is available throughout the programme cycle and programming.
8. Train EUD and member state staff on the minimum performance standards and what these entail to ensure correct reporting and prevent conflicting information on compliance.

D. EU SUPPORT FOR GAP II OBJECTIVE 18 IN THE CONTEXT OF SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE

Data from the CIVICUS Monitor shows that basic freedoms are backsliding across the globe. The situation is particularly concerning in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), where in reality 8 out of 10 people are living in countries where governments violate the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression. Across the region, the targeting of women and activists advocating for women's rights remains a particular cause for concern.²⁰⁹

Overall, **the EU has developed a vast range of policy tools for pushing back against restrictions on civil society.** One recent study states that "the most effective part of the EU response has been the protection offered to human rights defenders [...] being slightly more flexible in some of its aid modalities, enabling funds to get to endangered activists".²¹⁰ The EU has funded a particularly notable range of initiatives through the **EIDHR**, also in the MENA region. The EIDHR's Emergency Fund for HRDs at risk channels funds to HRDs quickly when these are facing a moment of acute

²⁰⁹ Middle East and North Africa. 8 out of 10 people in the Middle East and North Africa live in countries that have the worst rating for civic freedoms. London, 4th December 2019. <https://monitor.civicus.org/MENA.PeoplePowerUnderAttack.2019/>

²¹⁰ European Parliament (2017). Shrinking space for civil society: the EU response. Directorate- General for External Policies. Policy Department. April 2017, p. 5

danger. Under this mechanism, a consortium of 12 international NGOs²¹¹ channels and coordinates timely emergency support to HRDs at high risk. One Call for Proposal under the EIDHR in 2016 was aimed particularly at women HRDs, with a focus on enhancing digital security in the face of regime attacks.²¹²

Other instruments frame overall EU's support to civil society and have also been increasingly directed at the shrinking space problem, including the **EU's Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society**. The purpose of the Roadmaps is to develop a common strategic framework for the engagement EUDs and EU member states with civil society at country level, with a view to improving the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions.²¹³ Roadmaps have been drafted for Jordan and Lebanon but are not publicly available.

The objectives of the aforementioned instruments intersect with objectives of GAP II. Under Thematic Priority D the GAP II places specific emphasis on the role of WROs and WRDs through a dedicated objective (18) **which aims to guarantee that "WROs and other CSOs and HRDs working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights are freely able to work and are protected by the law"**²¹⁴ The 2018 Implementation Report does not include complete information on action taken towards objective 18. It states that overall "[the objective] experienced the **greatest increase in support by EUDs and member states in partner countries in 2018**".²¹⁵ However, additional information from the report contradicts this statement as EU member states support for objective 18 represented the smallest proportion of reported actions in 2018 (compared to other objectives).²¹⁶ In total, in the **Southern Neighbourhood, 28 actions were reported on objective 18 over 2017 and only 14 over 2018**.²¹⁷ In 2018, 5 actions were reported for the region on 18.1 and 5 on 18.2, without defining which countries reported on these.

To illustrate the above, Box 6 presents how the EU supports CSOs in the Southern Neighbourhood through the CSO Facility.²¹⁸

Interviews with the EUDs in focus countries, on how engagement with and protection of WROs is operationalised, revealed that **WROs and WRDs are not specifically and systematically singled out as targets for support** but are equally engaged as other HRDs. This suggests that, while there is a broad recognition by the EU of how shrinking space is affecting the role of civil society in different regions and countries, **there seems to be a limited understanding of the specific needs and challenges of organisations working on women's rights and women activists and a limited recognition of the need for targeted support, which should be elicited by Objective 18 of the GAP II.**

²¹¹ Front Line Defenders, Reporters Without Borders, World Organisation Against Torture, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Network, International Gay and Lesbian Association, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights, Protection International, Peace Brigades International, Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders, Forum Asia and East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project.

²¹² European Parliament (2017). Shrinking space for civil society: the EU response. Directorate- General for External Policies. Policy Department. April 2017, p. 15.

²¹³ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-governance-civilsociety/minisite/eu-country-roadmaps-engagement-civil-society-introduction>

²¹⁴ See Objective 18, Annex of SWD.

²¹⁵ 2018 Implementation Report, p.24

²¹⁶ Ibid p. 63

²¹⁷ 2018 Implementation Report p. 225

²¹⁸ A new response to a changing Neighbourhood, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, (COM (2011) 303).

Box 6: Neighbourhood CSO Facility

A key action focused on civil society support, which has gender equality as a main focus, is the 2017 Civil Society Facility Neighbourhood South: Dialogue with Civil Society for Rights and Equality (focused on Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Syria). Its action document is included in the Document Repository of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.²¹⁹ The overall objective of the civil society Facility Neighbourhood South is to strengthen the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in sustainable development and resilience in the Southern Neighbourhood.²²⁰

The Facility has two main components:

1. To provide technical assistance to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and
2. Increased public awareness towards VAWG and increased capacities and number of CSOs promoting legislation criminalising VAWG and its implementation, particularly the Istanbul Convention.²²¹

As part of the Facility the programme “Dialogue with Civil Society for Rights and Equality” will develop **a regional civil society roadmap** which will define the added value of the regional approach for civil society, complementing the support provided to civil society at national level through bilateral funding under the ENI. [This was still being developed at the time of writing]. The roadmap concentrates on providing capacity building to civil society organisations on advocacy and dialogue, with particular focus on women’s rights and encouraging the participation of young women and men in public life.²²²

The EU staff that coordinates the CSO Facility shares that “the Facility has a target of reaching 50% women and women’s organisations, but that the Facility’s activities have **not yet been reported under the GAP II**. So far, the total budget of the Facility amounts to 3 million euros for the whole Southern Neighbourhood for an implementation of three years (which started in January 2019). It has brought together organisations to carry out advocacy campaigns; supported regional network Majalat, for more dialogue; given fellowships for young CSO leaders²²³ and last, set aside an ad hoc demand package for consultation for EUDs.”²²⁴ Some requests towards the Facility have already come from the focus countries. “Lebanon’s CSO focal point has requested support for the monitoring of the EU CSO roadmap and expertise on the role of youth in decision making. The Jordan focal point has expressed need for support to help translate the CSO roadmap into real activities. The biggest challenge in the implementation of CSO support, also in the frame of the Facility, is considered to be the shrinking civic space.”²²⁵

Across countries, the EU is **implementing alternative measures** - such as using secure messaging and choosing different meeting locations - to continue to allow for participation of all civil society, but this has not always been successful. “There are other avenues to be explored so that **the women’s movement can continue to be engaged**.”²²⁶ For good reasons, respondents were unwilling to

²¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2017_7502_regional_south_aap_2017_part_2_2018_part_1_merged.pdf

²²⁰ Action Document for 2017 Civil Society Facility Neighbourhood South: Dialogue with Civil Society for Rights and Equality, p.2 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2017_7502_regional_south_aap_2017_part_2_2018_part_1_merged.pdf

²²¹ Action Document for 2017 Civil Society Facility Neighbourhood South: Dialogue with Civil Society for Rights and Equality, p.3.

²²² Action Document for 2017 Civil Society Facility Neighbourhood South: Dialogue with Civil Society for Rights and Equality, p.3.

²²³ See Facebook site “med-dialogue for rights and equality”

²²⁴ As per the interview with the Brussels based coordinator of the Facility and civil society (at DG NEAR)

²²⁵ As per the interview with the Brussels based coordinator of the Facility and civil society (at DG NEAR)

²²⁶ Interview Brussels EU staff

provide details on these avenues. GFPs (of Lebanon and Jordan) and Brussels based EU staff referred to the Civil Society Engagement Roadmap as their main point of reference for CSO support, including for WROs. A roadmap for Iraq is not available. **The (non-public) roadmaps for Jordan and Lebanon do not apparently include specific references to WROs.**

a. Implementation of Objective 18 in Lebanon

According to CIVICUS's ratings, in Lebanon civic space is "obstructed"²²⁷ and the country is currently on the watch list. The Lebanese authorities continue to crackdown on media freedom and freedom of expression by conducting investigations and filing lawsuits against activists who are critical of the state officials.²²⁸ Still, the **EUD in Lebanon finds that, generally, shrinking space is "not considered an issue for women's organisations in Lebanon, aside from political organisations"**.²²⁹ Alongside the CSO Roadmap, in Lebanon, the EU works with the 'EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders'.²³⁰ Hence, human rights organisations can engage with the EU either as agenda-setters - by influencing the content of the EU's engagement in Lebanon and its dialogue with Lebanese authorities - or as implementers of EU-funded projects promoting human rights.

Regarding the support for WROs, **2 actions have been reported on objective 18 over 2017 in Lebanon. Numbers on 2018 are not available.** Details of reported actions are unknown, but the EU has at the least supported international organisations such as UNICEF, Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and International Rescue Committee (IRC) to further engage with local CSOs. Through these efforts it has supported capacity building of for example Akar and RDFL (all local women's organisations), which are "now applying solid GBV information management systems".²³¹ In addition, with financial support of the EU, UNICEF expanded interventions of local WROs Abaad and KAFA to reach more vulnerable women especially in the regions.²³² Civil society actors, however, expect **the EU to do more and to "voice concerns regarding certain repressive policies and state behaviours [against civil society]"**.²³³

b. Implementation of Objective 18 in Jordan

According to CIVICUS's ratings, in Jordan civic space is "obstructed". In the immediate aftermath of the Arab Spring, and in response to these events, the Jordanian government introduced a number of legal and constitutional amendments aimed at improving respect for individual freedoms, particularly the freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly. In more recent years, however, space for the exercise of public freedoms has reduced, as authorities introduced restrictions under the pretext of the rising threat of terrorism.²³⁴ This has caused the operating space for CSOs in Jordan to shrink considerably, predominantly leading to a constrained freedom of speech. This is confirmed by CSOs interviewed for this study.²³⁵ The EUD Jordan also acknowledges that the closing space is an issue for programme implementation.

²²⁷ There are five ratings for civic space in CIVICUS Monitor: 1) open; 2) narrowed; 3) obstructed; 4) repressed; 5) closed.

²²⁸ CIVICUS, Lebanon

²²⁹ Sd per EUD GFP Lebanon

²³⁰ Ensuring Protection - European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders. https://Eas.Europa.Eu/Sites/Eas/Files/Eu_Guidelines_Hrd_En.Pdf

²³¹ As per an International Organisation

²³² As per an International Organisation

²³³ Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Stabilization via change? The European Union's support for human rights advocacy in Lebanon p.7

²³⁴ As per the Civicus Monitor: <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2016/11/01/overview-jordan/>

²³⁵ As per CSOs interviewed

Regarding the **support for WROs, the EU reports to have taken 9 actions under objective 18 in 2017. Numbers on 2018 are not available.** Most programmes support CSOs under the EIDHR.²³⁶

One notable project that facilitates civic engagement in Jordan is the EU funded programme “EU Support to Jordanian Democratic Institutions and Development, EU-JDID” which supports Jordan’s reform process and intends to enhance women inclusion so to foster a stronger democratic and tolerant political culture. A “Support to CSOs” component is implemented by the Spanish Cooperation Agency, AECID, which provides training assistance to CSOs in the areas of civic education and the promotion of the role of women and youth in political life, domestic election observation, parliamentary monitoring, coalition building, joint advocacy, lobbying, policy making and monitoring the human rights situation.²³⁷

But in Jordan also, local CSOs seek further support from the EU in this regard. CSOs in Jordan are faced with a strict funding approval process which can in many cases jeopardise the timeframe of projects agreed upon with donors. “We would like the EU to take a stand on this, all these restrictions are imposed by the government in the name of security”.²³⁸ In addition, some margins were set for the work of the EUD and international organisations themselves in Jordan, as some human rights topics have been excluded from the focus. The UN shares that as a result “we do few controversial interventions. Projects need to be approved so we cannot break many boundaries.”²³⁹

c. Implementation of Objective 18 in Iraq

According to CIVICUS’s ratings, civic space in Iraq is “repressed” and the country is on the watch list. While the 2005 Iraqi constitution acknowledges the role of civil society and protects freedoms of expression and assembly, relevant legislation in Iraq is outdated and civilian activists remain highly vulnerable,²⁴⁰ as Iraq is witnessing a rise in the targeting of activists.²⁴¹

Regarding the support for WRDs, **no data is available on the number of actions that the EU supported under objective 18 in Iraq in the last few years.** However, the 2018 report states that “objective 18 was supported by measures to engage youth in democratic governance, social cohesion and reconciliation, while protecting for Iraqi HRDs.²⁴² One regional project focused on women journalists and HRDs in Yemen, Iraq, Sudan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In addition, gender equality was a focus of action to support CSOs as actors of governance and development and reinforce women’s role as agents for change in the framework of an initiative promoting women’s participation in decision-making, while strengthening women’s CSOs capacities and their engagement in decision-making.²⁴³ Although Iraqi CSOs are not aware of specific actions taken by the EU to support WRDs - potentially because it is indeed a confidential process only targeting HRDs at risk - some are aware of the Human Rights Defenders Mechanism and consider this as potentially being supportive.

d. Conclusion

While there is some recognition by the EU that shrinking civic space is an issue in the countries analysed and the EU has a number of policies and tools to address this phenomenon in the Southern

²³⁶ GAP II Implementation Report 2017, p 116

²³⁷ <http://democracy-support.eu/jordan/>

²³⁸ As shared by CSO

²³⁹ As shared by a UN body

²⁴⁰ Civilian Activists under Threat in Iraq- Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights and Minority Rights Group International December 2018

²⁴¹ Suffocating the movement- shrinking space for women’s rights- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation 2018

²⁴² 2018 Implementation Report

²⁴³ 2018 Implementation Report

Neighbourhood, **information on specific actions taken by the EU to support WROs and activists under objective 18 of GAP II is limited.** This may be partly explained with the confidential nature of some of the EU support to HRDs. Also, the fact that EU Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society, where developed, are not public and are not shared with civil society in the countries selected for this study, means that the extent, framework and approaches to support civil society, including women's organisations in those countries, are not known. It is clear, however, that **civic space is not explicitly mentioned in the GAP** Implementation Reports aside from a recommendation to "involve and closely consult civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, at the country and regional levels in terms of context and problem analyses in order to enhance the effectiveness of EU actions".²⁴⁴

As a symptom of shrinking space, respondents illustrate to "see a "ghettoising" of topics for discussion",²⁴⁵ referring to restrictions placed on engagement with certain human rights topics. However, "there is agreement that CSO legislation and HRDs will have to be part of the discussion going forward",²⁴⁶ as per the EU's commitments to strengthen civic space. Actions under **Objective 18 should therefore be more strongly rooted in the context of shrinking civic space, recognising that WROs and activists face specific threats to their security, well-being, reputation, families and to the sustainability of their engagement.** Based on the limited data and information collected, this does not seem to particularly be the case in actions implemented by the EU in the region.

E. REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF ACTIONS AND OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

This concluding section provides an overview of regional actions taken by the EU and summarises the findings in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

a. Regional Overview of Reported Actions in 2018

In **the Southern Neighbourhood** sub-region, **292 actions were** reported over 2018 – 14 % fewer than the 340 actions reported in 2017. Reports were submitted by 10 EU Delegations – to Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. It remains unclear exactly which EU member states have reported on the GAP II for 2018, but the 2018 Implementation Report states, that at the least, reports were submitted by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, and Spain²⁴⁷. Table 3 presents an overview of most reported actions per thematic Area (B-D) in 2018.

Table 3: Actions per Thematic Area B-CD– Regional Numbers in 2018 Southern Neighbourhood

THEMATIC AREA	NUMBER OF ACTIONS	OBJECTIVE WITH MOST ACTIONS REPORTED REGIONALLY
B: Physical and Psychological Integrity	87 actions	Objective 15 (Access to finance), 47 actions
C: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment	135 actions	Objective 7 (VAWG), 48 actions
D: Political and Civil Rights	81 actions	Objective 17 (Policy and governance processes), 50 actions

²⁴⁴ 2018 Implementation Report, p. 68

²⁴⁵ Interview Brussels EU staff

²⁴⁶ Interviews Brussels EU staff

²⁴⁷ As per the 2018 Implementation Report

Table 4: Actions per Thematic Area B-D– Regional Numbers in 2018 the Gulf

THEMATIC AREA	NUMBER OF ACTIONS	OBJECTIVES REPORTED ON ¹
B: Physical and Psychological Integrity	87 actions	No information available
C: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment	23 actions	Objective 12 (Nutrition) and 13 (Education) – no number available
D: Political and Civil Rights	13 actions	Objective 15 (access to finance), 16 (Resources) and 17 (Policy and governance) – no number available

¹ Number of actions are not available for the objective, but the text of the 2018 Implementation Report summarizes these are the objectives that these received attention, page 202

Reflecting on the thematic areas from a national perspective, the 2018 Implementation Report and interviews demonstrate that for Iraq, most actions (11) were reported on thematic priority C, with a focus on Objective 13 on promotion of quality primary and secondary education for internally displaced persons and refugees in crisis-affected areas. Both for Jordan and Lebanon, the actions reported reflect that political participation (Objective 17) took a primary focus as well as access to decent work (Objective 14). It is noteworthy that the Madad Fund strongly supports actions tackling GBV and VAWG, among Syrian women refugees (and host communities) in all three countries with a range of interventions (including awareness sessions and specialised treatment), boosting the results on Objective 7.

b. Overall Conclusions on Institutional Culture Shift Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq

This section summarises the contribution of the GAP II to the EU's internal practices on gender equality and women's rights, or "institutional culture shift". This includes whether the GAP II has encouraged actors to step up their game on gender equality (leading to impacts on the ground).

Based on interviews with respondents for this study, we **could make only a partial connection between the GAP II and improved "institutional culture"** to mainstream gender equality into EU activities. This is particularly due to the fact that multiple EU member states perceive the GAP II primarily as a reporting mechanism and only to a limited extent as a guideline with clear political priority areas for EU's and member states' support to gender equality. Explanations for internal action taken in the focus countries are rather attributed to the influence of certain EU member states or the commitment of an Ambassador, to some international conventions, or some IO's, but not necessarily to the GAP II itself. To illustrate this, the EUD in Jordan shared the perception that "60% of the EUDs around the world follow the GAP at the moment. **GAP does not currently influence the work of the EUD but the EUDs work does need to be aligned to it**".²⁴⁸ The lack of dissemination of the GAP II report and difficulties in extracting clear data from it, contribute to the limited influence the GAP II currently has.

However, change can be observed. Though the GAP II is generally not yet used as a guideline, some parties have started to **refer to the GAP II in programme development**. For example, the EUD Jordan used the GAP II as a reference in the design of the regional Madad Fund, and its Theory of Change was aligned with the focus areas of the GAP. Other EUDs may follow Jordan's positive example in programme development processes, allowing for stronger alignment between EU programmatic direction and GAP. Looking at the "institutional cultural shift" that the GAP II primarily aims to achieve with the **minimum standards** (which should have been met in 2016 as per the


²⁴⁸ As per EUD Jordan

SWD), indeed, **considerable efforts were made** in the three countries in the last five years. GAs were commissioned by the EUDs and implemented in Iraq and Lebanon, and the EUD in Jordan is soon to develop one. Jordan has selected specific GAP II objectives to be reported on, which has helped bring specific gender targets to the forefront of the agenda. Also, **sex-disaggregated data** is being collected through log-frames and monitoring in all three countries and more efforts are increasingly invested by Brussels (DG NEAR and DEVCO) in EUD **gender expertise** and capacity. Finally, all three EUDs reported under GAP II in 2017 and 2018.

However, across the board there is not yet full compliance with the minimum standards. Iraq and Lebanon did not choose specific objectives to be reported on under GAP II (leaving targets too broad and leading to “business as usual”). Moreover, recommendations from GAs that were conducted, do not seem to either systematically inform the selection of thematic objectives or programme development. Looking at how data and evidence are used to inform gender equality work, the EUDs and most EU member states in the three country offices still lack gender expertise and capacity to feed into all action documents and calls for proposals. Finally, and most importantly, **there is a general lack of reporting by EU member states under GAP II**, attributed by respondents to lack of resources to do so and to the fact that the system is not user-friendly. There is also a general misunderstanding of how to **use the GM** in the GAP III process. If the GM is applied incorrectly, this means that the whole data set collected under the GAP II is misrepresented, and that **it will mean very little to have achieved or not achieved the 85% target²⁴⁹ in the focus countries**.

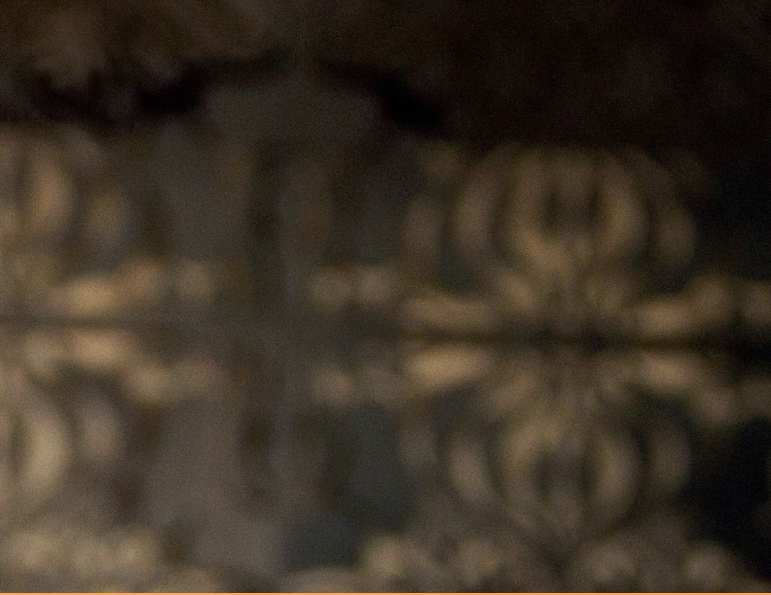
Still, also in the region, the EU is taking important steps to mainstream gender into its efforts and to bring gender equality and women’s rights into the policy forums and higher on the national agendas. The GFPs are key players in this process by connecting local stakeholders and involving WRDs in the debate. Some EU member states share that GAP **has the potential to standardise gender equality work by the EU if it was viewed as a guiding mechanism**. This perspective is shared by missions in Jordan and EU member states in other regions, especially those who have been reporting on GAP steadily throughout the past few years and can build on lessons learnt. As the potential of GAP is significant, its implementation process would drastically **benefit from greater visibility of the GAP II** itself, its national priorities, and its national results, spurred by accurate reporting.

²⁴⁹ Indicator 5.3.2: % of new programmes that score G1 or G2 (Target: 85% of new programmes score G1 or G2 by 2020). Annex 1 of SWD, p. 24

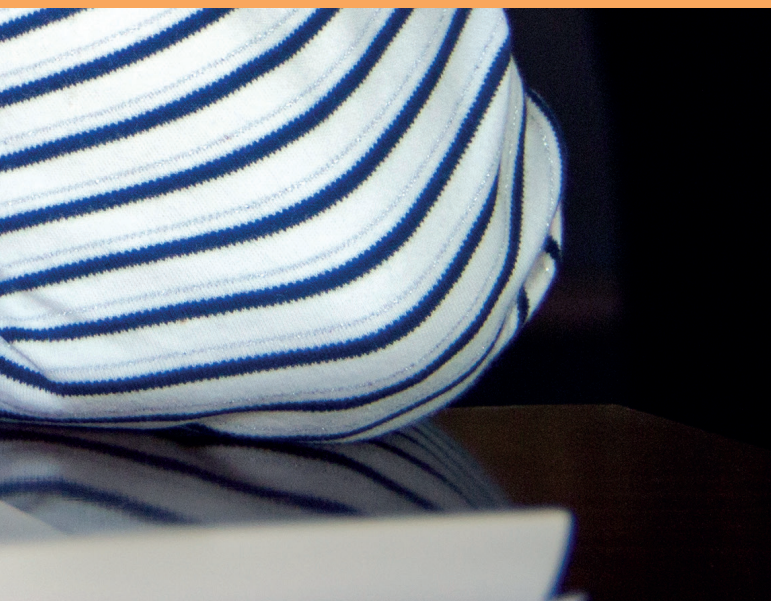
A close-up portrait of a middle-aged woman with grey hair, wearing a blue and white striped turtleneck sweater, gold hoop earrings, and a gold chain necklace. She is resting her chin on her hand. In the foreground, a pair of red-rimmed glasses and some papers are visible on a desk.

“...the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects”

Shamerian M Odisho, head of Iraqi Women's League, one of Kvinna till Kvinna partner organizations in Iraq, Erbil.
Photo: Karin Raghall



4. IMPACT, RELEVANCE, AND CHALLENGES



A. IMPACT ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PRACTICE	64
B. RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY	65
C. GOOD PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES	66

A. IMPACT ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PRACTICE

The OECD/DAC refers to impact as “the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects”. However, it is difficult to attribute changes on gender equality and women’s rights solely to EU action in the region, because the EU does not exist in isolation. In addition, it was beyond the scope and budget of this assessment to conduct a proper impact evaluation of GAP II in the region (this would have required a counterfactual of what those outcomes would have been in the absence of the interventions.) Instead, the Team applied a qualitative method to assess contributions and focused on *reported* lasting results or longer-term changes brought about by the GAP II. The information presented in this Impact section portrays a picture of those high-level EU contributions to gender equality that **were shared consistently in reports and by the stakeholders that were interviewed**. It also includes information on the relevance and sustainability of the GAP II and a number of best practices and challenges in implementation.

There are examples of changes in legislation and policies to promote gender equality which the EU has supported. Changes that the EU has contributed to can **particularly be found in the areas of GBV, demonstrated by EU contributions to removing gender-discriminatory legislation, and the NAP 1325 on women, peace and security**.

In Lebanon, the EU has contributed to **the development of new structures to engage on GBV** such as through the new Gender Observatory (funded by the Madad Fund). It has also contributed to the development of several policies, such as by funding the development of the national child marriage action plan with the MoSA and the High Council for Childhood, through the finalisation of national action plans for GBV, and through the support for “safe spaces” in crisis situations. Several CSOs shared to have been able to benefit from this support. One local CSO shares that “we were able to benefit from the EU’s focus on GBV. The EU put GBV on the agenda as a major issue because of their continuous funding for it.”²⁵⁰ In addition, “the EU largely contributed to reforming legislations [related to GBV] in Lebanon, notably through the AFKAR Fund on Law 293, the Protection of Women and Family Members Against Domestic Violence and on abolishing Article 522, which allowed rapists to evade prosecution if they married their victims (through support of Netherlands and SIDA)”.²⁵¹

In Jordan some concrete outcomes were achieved on advancing protection for GBV, as the **first government shelter for women at risk of honour killings was opened through an EU-funded project**. The EU has consistently **supported alternative measures to administrative detention of women** for their protection in cases of risk of honour killing and GBV. In particular, the EU backs up the ambition to guarantee fair trials and equal treatment for women sentenced to death and those facing that risk in current court cases.²⁵²

In Iraq, the EU support for **the 1325 resolution committee** resulted in the first, as well as the second NAP of the UNSCR 1325. The EU’s and the Netherlands’ contribution to the NAP has, at the least, provided a common platform to strengthen accountability and to promote cross sector cooperation on women’s rights.

Policy dialogue is an explicit component of GAP II implementation because “the EC and EEAS have opportunities to engage with partner governments on issues such as budget support, legislative reform and more, these can be important moments during which gender can be raised”.²⁵³ However, the **impact of the policy dialogue** that the EU has with the governments of Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq remains most difficult to assess. This is illustrated by Lebanon’s EUD. “Through our discussions,

²⁵⁰ As stated by CSO.

²⁵¹ As stated by CSO.

²⁵² European Union External Action - Jordan and the European Union. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/jordan/1357/jordan-and-european-union_en

²⁵³ Guidance note on the EU Gender Action Plan 2016 – 2020, p.21

the Ministry of Labour has formed a Committee on forced labour in which discriminatory laws and articles are part of the discussion. This committee will start the review of the Labour Law [however] this is not visible, because we evaluate projects that we implement, but we do not measure impact of policy dialogue.”²⁵⁴ It would benefit the visibility of GAP II if more information was shared or reported on the outcomes of EU policy dialogues with governments.

B. RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

There appears to be **limited awareness about the GAP II and national GAP II priorities among EU staff** (excluding GFPs), **EU member states staff and national and local, governmental and non-governmental actors**. This lack of visibility impedes the GAP reaching its full potential as an “action plan” in the three countries. The following paragraph presents this process in more detail.

Several EU member states’ staff who are familiar with the GAP II, consider it to be a reporting tool, rather than an action plan with clear thematic priorities. Second, the EU’s support to gender equality and women’s rights in the three countries is not being branded as part of the GAP. For example, several embassies share that they have not heard the GAP being discussed in donor fora. In addition, UNICEF in Lebanon or UN Women in Jordan, who implement several EU gender efforts, share to not be familiar with the content of the GAP II. Third, many actors (particularly CSOs) are not aware that their funded projects to support women’s rights and gender equality, in fact, fall under the GAP. Several international CSOs in Lebanon that implement work for UNDP and UNICEF on GBV and political participation were unaware that their funding originated from the EU and would or should be reported under GAP II.

Interviewed CSO stakeholders named the EIDHR and the Civil Society Roadmaps as more relevant tools to their work than the GAP II, partially because they are more aware of these frameworks’ content and because these documents have been promoted more prominently by the EUD.

In **regard to the engagement of CSOs and human rights defenders**, however, interviewed parties expressed positive views about the EU’s relevance. In spite of criticism about the level and intensity of consultation with CSOs, the EU is among most parties known as an actor that has created policies to systematically engage CSOs in implementation of projects, more so than other donors. Several International Organisations (IOs) and non-EU member states share that they look towards the EU engagement efforts with CSOs and human rights defenders for guidance. This highlights the argument that the EU, the national gender equality machinery and CSOs would benefit if the EU provided better quantitative and qualitative measurement and visibility of these engagement efforts, especially within the shrinking space debate.

With the eye on sustainability, there is agreement among EU member states in the three focus countries that the GAP should, in practice, have **a stronger weight than it currently has**. In order to be a more sustainable and powerful gender guidance in the region, national GAP implementation needs to be made considerably more visible and, consequently, strengthened. In addition, **EU funding cycles** on gender equality and women’s rights projects and programs are short, and not aligned with EU policy cycles including that of GAP II, which affects sustainability in the medium to long-term. According to observations of local CSOs, “if we want to talk of changes there must be a way to look at long term goals.”²⁵⁵ “When funding stops, structures are affected, and important work is discontinued.”²⁵⁶ For example, the EU has supported the national strategy on GBV and gender equality in Lebanon but did not go beyond the creation of the strategy document. Continued funding on implementation could have contributed to greater impact.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁴ As shared by EUD Lebanon

²⁵⁵ As shared by international CSO

²⁵⁶ As shared by CSO

²⁵⁷ As shared by national CSO

C. GOOD PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

From the stakeholder interviews several conclusions can be drawn on good practices and challenges in the implementation of the GAP II in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

a. Good Practices

Some good and promising practices can be found throughout the GAP II implementation process in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq:

- Gender equality and women's rights continue to be **a recognised topic in political and human rights dialogues** between the EU and partner countries.
- Commitment to **gender mainstreaming is gaining a stronger support base** and EUDs are increasingly making use of gender expertise and data. Both the EUD and EU member states also increasingly engage external gender expertise on an *ad hoc* basis.²⁵⁸
- **GFPs** at the EUD in the three countries lead the way in the implementation of GAP in their respective contexts. They play an important role connecting the EU and local stakeholders under GAP, especially when they have a solid overview of who key local CSOs are.
- **There is an increasing understanding of the importance of gender analysis and evidence** to inform EU policy, programming and funding decisions.
- **There is some (although not sufficient) engagement with CSOs** by EUDs. There is, however, room and willingness to develop greater links between the Civil society Roadmaps, other tools and policies supporting CSOs and the GAP II.
- Some **EU member states are committed to reporting on GAP** and fully understand its potential value as a tool to advance gender equality action by the EU (such as the Swedish in Lebanon and the Dutch, Spanish and French missions in Jordan).

b. Implementation Challenges and Impeding Factors

There are also factors and challenges that impede the effective implementation of the GAP II in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, such as:

- **There is limited visibility and fragmented understanding of the GAP** among EU member states, EU staff, CSOs and governments. This includes both limited visibility of the GAP II itself, lack of visibility of the selected objectives, as well as lack of clarity about what falls under the GAP.
- **Reporting under the GAP II** by EU member states is limited as the process is cumbersome and not clearly used to show and use results.
- There is no **accountability for not meeting Minimum Standards**. Currently, minimum standards have not fully been met in either of the three countries, creating missed opportunities.
- **Funding cycles are not aligned with the policy cycle**. As a result, funding decisions are often not sufficiently taking into account thematic priorities selected under GAP II.
- **Funding cycles are short-term and long-term planning is limited**. There is limitation in the continuation of programmes supported by the EU due to short funding cycles which affects the sustainability of interventions.
- **There are limited human resources available to implement GAP** at a national level, including limited gender expertise within the EUD and EU member states. GFPs "wear various hats" within the EUDs which affects their ability to support and streamline implementation of GAP II.
- **Coordination** at country-level between EUDs and EU member states in relation to GAP II is insufficient leading to many missed opportunities in particular where EU member states have the capacity to lead on specific areas.
- A big challenge is the **shrinking civic space which** is not sufficiently acknowledged in GAP II.
- **Consultation processes with civil society in-country on GAP II objectives and implementation is insufficient**. Opportunities are usually particularly limited for smaller and grassroots organisations (including WRDs) to participate in EU consultation (due to various financial and security reasons).

²⁵⁸ 2018 Implementation Report

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