

Municipal Gender Equality Plans for Internal Parity



 Krakow, Poland

Governance

City Strategy

Introduction

Krakow Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a comprehensive internal strategy adopted by the City Hall on August 1, 2022, to promote gender equality through institutional and cultural changes within municipal governance. This initiative spans the City Hall and Municipal Organisational Units, representing a systematic approach to addressing gender disparities in public administration.

The plan was developed under the leadership of Andrzej Kulig, Deputy Mayor for Social and Municipal Policy, and Nina Gabryś, Representative for Equality Policy. A 21-member task force representing various departments collaborated with external experts from Gender Solution consulting company to ensure technical credibility and legal compliance. This multi-stakeholder approach ensured broad institutional buy-in and diverse perspectives in developing the equality framework.

[Problem Statement]

The Krakow Gender Equality Plan did not just come from inside the house, but knocking on the door as it arose suddenly as a critical project. Changes to Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation — established gender equality plans as “eligibility criterion for all public authorities, higher education institutions and research organisations wishing to participate with four main requirements: that the document be public, have dedicated resources for execution, mechanisms data collection and monitoring, and outline training and capacity-building support within the institution.

Krakow's municipal structure exhibited significant gender inequalities that demanded systematic intervention. The diagnosis revealed stark occupational segregation, with 84% of Municipal Social Welfare Centre employees being women, concentrating them in traditionally lower-paid social care roles. Despite women comprising 73% of City Hall staff, they held only 67.3% of managerial positions, indicating a clear glass ceiling effect. Leadership disparities were even more pronounced, with men holding 60% of plenipotentiary positions and occupying the President and three of four Deputy Mayor roles.

Sector-specific imbalances further highlighted systemic issues. In technical units like Climate-Energy-Water Management, while women represented 52.1% of staff, men dominated 69% of managerial positions. Pay disparities existed across municipal units, compounded by outdated regulations and lack of standardized recruitment processes. These challenges were driven by EU Horizon Europe program requirements, Krakow's 2020 commitment to the European Charter for Equality, and the municipal leadership's recognition of their role as a model employer.

[Implementation and Actions]

The Gender Equality Plan addresses these disparities through four strategic objectives. Goal 1 focuses on building awareness and preventing discrimination through anti-discrimination training every five years, establishing a reporting hotline, and providing psychological support for victims. Goal 2 promotes work-life balance by encouraging shared parenting responsibilities, conducting workplace

audits, and campaigning for increased paternal leave uptake. Goal 3 targets balanced gender representation through transparent promotion criteria, gender-balanced recruitment panels, and gender-sensitive job evaluations. Goal 4 emphasizes gender mainstreaming by integrating gender perspectives into city policies, budgets, and public service delivery, including gender-disaggregated budget analyses and research initiatives.

The implementation strategy centres on comprehensive resource allocation and structured methodology. Human resources include the dedicated 21-member task force with defined roles, external expert consultation for technical support, and Deputy Mayor-level oversight ensuring institutional priority. Financial resources encompass dedicated budget allocations within City Hall, particularly through the Department of Organisation and Supervision, unit-specific budgets, and EU funding support.

The 2022-2025 implementation timeline features a phased approach with annual reporting and biennial comprehensive assessments. The methodology emphasises data-driven diagnosis through statistical analysis, participatory processes including employee surveys and sub-team formations, expert integration throughout development, and maintaining safe, confidential working conditions for all participants.

[Lessons Learned]

Key success factors emerged from the implementation process. Strong political leadership at the Deputy Mayor level provided institutional legitimacy and resources, while comprehensive data-driven diagnosis identified specific intervention areas. Multi-departmental engagement ensured buy-in and diverse perspectives, external expertise provided technical credibility, and EU framework alignment created urgency and legitimacy.

The plan addressed several challenges including cultural resistance through systematic training and awareness programs, resource constraints via strategic budget allocation and EU funding identification, regulatory updates aligning with 2019 Polish Labor Code amendments, and policy fragmentation through unified approaches across municipal units. Critical insights included the importance of participatory processes for cultural change, measurable indicators for accountability, institutional integration rather than separate initiatives, and long-term commitment for sustainable cultural transformation.

Without progress and a Monitoring & Evaluation report to ascertain the quantitatives, the target indicators and monitoring mechanisms for 2022-2025 include comprehensive anti-discrimination training coverage every five years, annual gender-disaggregated wage reports published each first quarter, biennial employee satisfaction surveys measuring workplace equality perceptions, increased male participation in parental leave programs, and tracked discrimination complaints through the dedicated hotline.

Expected outcomes encompass pay gap reduction through transparent monitoring, leadership parity increases, improved workplace safety with reduced discrimination incidents, and gender mainstreaming across municipal policies and budget processes.

[Key Takeaways]

The Krakow model offers several replicable elements for other cities. The multi-departmental task force approach adapts to various organisational structures, external consultation for technical credibility, data-driven diagnosis methodology to identify specific equality gaps, and phased implementation for resource management.

The plan's broader policy connections include national integration with constitutional provisions, EU framework synergy for funding opportunities, international standards alignment, and cross-sector learning potential. It demonstrates how local governments can move beyond compliance requirements

to become catalysts for broader social transformation, providing a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable gender equality advancement in public administration through systematic institutional change combining legal compliance, cultural transformation, resource allocation, and measurable outcomes.

[+] Learn more about this Project

- + Krakow Open City Portal, [Krakowianki Project Summary](#) (in English)
- + Krakow Open City Portal, [Towards a Human Rights City](#) (in English)
- + Municipality of Krakow: [Krakow Women's Run](#); [HerStory initiatives](#) (in Polish)
- + Krakowianki: [Entrepreneurial Women mentoring program](#) (in Polish)
- + Constitutional mandate: [Gender Equality enshrined in the constitution of Poland](#).