

## GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (GEP)

Bursa Metropolitan Municipality  
2024-2027

### Introduction

In local governance, the development of a human rights-based approach is grounded in combating discrimination and promoting equality policies. One of the core principles of human rights-oriented cities is to build anti-discrimination policies to reduce inequalities through gender-based policies and empower vulnerable groups. The Bursa Metropolitan Municipality aims to implement and effectively apply the principle of equality, which is a fundamental right for all.

In line with the 17 goals of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, "gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls" has been adopted as a stand-alone objective. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a significant framework and roadmap for local governments, particularly in ensuring gender equality.

In 2011, Bursa joined the Women-Friendly Cities-2 Joint Program, aimed at incorporating gender into local governance. As part of the Women-Friendly Cities Project, "Gender Equality Commissions" were established in both the Municipal Council and Provincial General Assembly of each partner city. These Equality Commissions not only form one of the fundamental pillars of local equality mechanisms, but they also ensure that draft decisions prepared in councils are examined through a gender perspective.

Bursa Metropolitan Municipality, with its approach of standing against violence, operates a Women's Shelter and Women's Counseling Center, aimed at empowering women. Through the "Bursa Metropolitan Municipality Domestic Violence Prevention and Institutional Policy Guide," the municipality supports employees who are victims of violence and continues to operate the Bursa Family Counseling and Education Center (BADEM) to contribute to the formation of a healthier and stronger family structure. To cover many of the UN's global development goals and ensure women are aware of all the services offered by the city—including education, employment, entrepreneurship, combating violence, participation in social life—a sustainable and interactive mobile application project called "Kadımız Biz" (We Are Women) was launched in November 2022. This project brings together public institutions, local governments, and women's NGOs under one platform. Prioritizing women's needs for empowerment, the project aims to enable access to accurate information, awareness of rights, sharing ideas, solidarity, and participation in local governance, maintaining a continuous institutional memory in the digital space.

Our municipality is taking steps toward building a women-friendly and safe city where women can feel secure in parks and streets at any time, day or night. This includes allowing women and individuals with special needs to disembark from public transportation at their requested location between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Additionally, to foster a gender-sensitive approach in municipal policies, "Equality City" and "Gender Equality" trainings are being continuously provided to all staff, especially those working with vulnerable groups, with the aim of creating a city free from violence against women.

With the establishment of the Equality Unit, the Local Equality Action Plan (2024-2026) has been developed. This action plan focuses on efforts to achieve gender equality and serves as a foundation for anti-discrimination and equality policies. In 2024, we launched the "My Purple Map" Project, which aims to map safe spaces across different areas of the city to ensure that women feel secure, and to improve these areas. Through this project, areas with a risk of violence are identified, and measures are taken to enhance the safety of women. Additionally, under the My Purple Map

project, women will have easy access to essential services such as healthcare, security, shelter, legal aid, and psychological counseling in emergencies.

The European Urban Charter, the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, the Sustainable Development Goals, HABITAT III New Urban Agenda, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ILO Convention 190 (Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work), and national laws, particularly the Turkish Penal Code and Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women, contain provisions that guide local governments in advancing gender equality.

Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey guarantees equality before the law: “Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect, or similar reasons. Women and men have equal rights. The state is obligated to ensure that this equality is realized. Measures to be taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality.”

Considering our national and international legal foundations, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality has prepared the "Gender Equality Action Plan" to promote a culture of equality within the institution, integrate services with a gender equality perspective, and adopt the principle of gender equality as an institutional policy. We aim to create a workplace that is equal, free, safe, transparent, and free from all forms of discrimination and violence, and we are committed to respecting the rights and personal integrity of everyone. With the Gender Equality Action Plan, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality pledges that the principle of gender equality will be reflected in all of the municipality's services in this direction.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is based on seven main goals:

1. Establishing an institutional structure for the systematic collection, monitoring, and evaluation of gender-disaggregated data.
2. Improving the gender balance among civil servants, workers, contracted personnel, and outsourced company staff (including managers).
3. Raising awareness of gender issues among employees, municipal council members, and commission members.
4. Creating formal mechanisms to integrate a gender perspective into relevant service areas.
5. Implementing a gender-sensitive communication strategy.
6. Developing a work-life balance strategy applicable across all departments.
7. Improving existing mechanisms to prevent sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and discrimination.

This GEP is organized into six sections. Actions related to "Data Collection and Monitoring" and "Training" are included in the respective sections:

**SECTION I:** Institutionalization and Capacity Building for Gender Equality

**SECTION II:** Recruitment and Career Development

**SECTION III:** Work-Life Balance

**SECTION IV:** Decision-Making and Leadership

**SECTION V:** Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

**SECTION VI:** Combating Violence Against Women, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination

## SECTION I

### Institutionalization and Capacity Building for Gender Equality

The Bursa Metropolitan Municipality is committed to establishing the Gender Equality Officer (GEO), GEP Unit Representatives, Gender Equality Task Force, and the GEP Committee to ensure the implementation of the plan and sustain the organizational structure changes:

#### 1. Gender Equality Officer (GEO):

The Gender Equality Officer is appointed by the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality (the Head of the Family, Women, and Children Services Branch).

##### Duties:

- Actively participate in gender equality workshops and experience-sharing meetings.
- Design and coordinate training programs on unconscious bias and gender-sensitive language.
- Organize meetings with staff to raise awareness about the GEP.
- Present all data related to the GEP to the GEP Committee.
- Publish annual benchmarking reports for situational analysis.
- Ensure the systematic collection of data on gender equality while maintaining confidentiality.
- Establish tools for data collection, monitoring, and analysis.
- Coordinate and facilitate the implementation of activities in the GEP.

#### 2. GEP Unit Representatives:

GEP Unit Representatives are appointed by the relevant managers and include the Head of the Family, Women, and Children Services Branch, the Women's Services Officer, the Equality Unit Officer, the Family Counseling and Education Center Officer, and the Women's Shelter Officer.

##### Duties:

- Raise awareness about the GEP and support its implementation.
- Collect, coordinate, and monitor gender-related data within the unit and report to the Gender Equality Officer.
- Participate in gender equality training activities.

#### 3. Gender Equality Task Force:

Proposed by the GEP Committee and appointed by the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality, the Task Force meets at least twice a year and consists of equality unit representatives from various departments.

##### Duties:

- Monitor, analyze, and report data related to the GEP.
- Support the development of a general strategy to be presented to the Committee.
- Provide reports and recommendations to the GEP Committee regarding the development and sustainability of the GEP.

#### 4. GEP Committee:

The members of the GEP Committee are appointed by the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality. The committee meets at least twice a year and is chaired by the Head of the Department of Social Services. Committee members include the Head of the Family, Women, and Children Services Branch, the Women's Services Officer, the Equality Unit Officer, and the Women's Shelter Officer.

##### Duties:

- Approve the strategy of the Gender Equality Action Plan.
- Oversee the implementation process of the GEP.
- Evaluate reports from the GEP Task Force members and make decisions regarding actions.

Section	Category	Planning Action	Timeline				Responsible Staff/ Unit/Department	Success indicators
			2024	2025	2026	2027		
1	Data Collection	Review all institutional documents, procedures and decision-making mechanisms from a gender perspective and suggest changes		X	X	X	Gender Equality Officer (GEO), Gender Equality Task Force	Report to be submitted to the GEP Committee
		Systematic data collection, monitoring and analysis on gender equality	X	X	X	X	Gender Equality Officer (GEO), Gender Equality Task Force, GEP Unit Representatives, Human Resources	Data and report disaggregated by gender equality
	Monitoring	Organizing annual meetings for institution staff to raise awareness about GEP and encourage ownership and inclusion.		X	X	X	Gender Equality Officer(GEO)	Attendance of at least 20% of all employees at each meeting
		Taking an active role in gender equality networks, workshops and projects to use external best practices and promote new models for further improvement	X	X	X	X	Gender Equality Officer (GEO), Gender Equality Task Force, GEP Unit Representatives,	Participation in at least one event per year

## SECTION II

### Recruitment and Career Development

In order to ensure gender balance among employees of Bursa Metropolitan Municipality and its subsidiaries, especially in managerial positions, assignments have been made to improve female representation. Recent assignments have increased the ratio of female branch managers from 22% to 32% and the ratio of female department heads from 4.55% to 34.78%. Bursa Metropolitan Municipality plans to develop and implement strategies to eliminate gender imbalances within the framework of the Local Equality Action Plan, covering the years 2024-2026. The plan aims to create gender equality-based policies at every stage, from recruitment processes to career development, and to strengthen mechanisms that ensure greater representation of women in management levels. These strategies are

designed to enable female employees to have a greater say in the institutional structure, open career paths, and permanently eliminate gender imbalances.

Section	Category	Planning Action	Time Table				Responsible Staff/Unit/Department	Key Performance indicators	
			2024	2025	2026	2027			
2	Data Collection Monitoring	Developing a systematic gender-disaggregated data collection tool on recruitment and career progression			X	X	X	GEP Committee, Human Resources	Improved data collection tool
	Meeting-Training	Including gender equality in orientation training for new employees			X	X	X	Gender Equality Officer (GEO), Human Resources Education Branch Directorate	Curriculum
	Career Advancement	Ensuring gender balance among middle and senior managers			X	X	X	GEP Committee	Reporting disaggregated data during the assignment process
		Taking into account the leave periods (maternity or other care leaves) of female personnel in performance evaluations.			X	X	X	Human Resources	Measures implemented for women and men after any type of care leave, with priority given to maternity leave

### SECTION III Work-Life Balance

Bursa Metropolitan Municipality fully complies with the provisions of Labor Law No. 4857 regarding maternity leave. This law grants both male and female employees the right to work part-time until their children reach school age. In addition, the municipality offers breastfeeding breaks for nursing mothers. Moreover, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality provides nursery

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support for its staff with preschool-age children. Women often face more challenges in achieving their professional and personal goals due to the double workload they carry. This situation highlights the need for a conducive environment not only for women but also for both men and women to pursue fulfilling professional careers, regardless of gender.

Section	Category	Planning Action	Time Table					Responsible Staff/ Unit/Department	Key Performance indicators
				2024	2025	2026	2027		
3	Working methods	Conducting surveys among employees to collect data to identify and address needs and issues related to work-life balance			X	X	X	Gender Equality Task Force, Human Resources	At least 40% of employees participated in the survey and the survey results addressed the needs and issues related to work-life balance.

#### SECTION IV Decision-Making and Leadership

The aim is to develop institutional mechanisms to prevent unconscious or implicit gender bias that may influence decisions during career development. Current data indicates that governance mechanisms established for decision-making processes (e.g., group management boards and advisory boards) and other decision-making positions in certain departments suffer from gender imbalances. As a result, there is a need to enhance governance mechanisms and promote gender equality in these roles.

Section	Category	Planning Action	Time Table					Responsible Staff/ Unit/Department	Key Performance indicators
				2024	2025	2026	2027		
4	Decision Making and	Develop a policy to recognise the benefits of gender balance and increase the number of women in management and			X	X	X	GEP Committee	Gender Equality Sensitive Strategic Plan and Budget

Section	Category	Planning Action	Time Table				Responsible Staff/Unit/Department	Key Performance indicators	
				2024	2025	2026			2027
	Data Collection	Monitoring of personnel exposed to mobbing, sexual harassment and discrimination, while paying attention to confidentiality.			X	X	X	Women's Solidarity Center, Gender Equality Officer,	Reporting of disaggregated data with due attention to confidentiality
		Monitoring personnel exposed to violence, while paying attention to confidentiality			X	X	X	Women's Solidarity Center,	Monitoring personnel exposed to violence, while paying attention to confidentiality
	Education-Meeting	Increasing awareness of the Notification Mechanism for all male and female personnel exposed to mobbing within the institution.			X	X	X	Human Resources, Inspection Board	Reporting of disaggregated data
		Violence against women, types of violence			X	X	X	Human Resources and Education Department, Gender Equality Officer.	At least 50% participation rate

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		Municipal Council Members on “Gender Equality Impact Analysis Methods and Tools”							
	Veri Toplama	Creating a database of ŞÖK (Complaint Suggestion Contribution) notifications by gender at the Alo 153 center			X	X	X	Public Relations Department, Family, Women and Children Services Department	Reporting of disaggregated data

## SECTION VI

### Combating Violence Against Women, Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination

Although sexual harassment and discrimination are recognized as crimes under the Labor Law No. 4857, sufficient awareness about what constitutes sexual harassment and discrimination among employees has not yet been achieved. Generally, employees lack adequate information about procedures and behavioral rules to follow in cases of assault, discrimination, violence, and harassment. Instead, there is misinformation, disinformation, and in some cases, a lack of trust in effective complaint and support mechanisms. Bursa Metropolitan Municipality is committed to operating according to a social state principle based on a gender equality understanding that is sensitive to human rights, respects human dignity, and does not tolerate gender discrimination, as outlined in the “Family Violence Prevention and Institutional Policy Guide.” Additionally, it has pledged to provide all possible support mechanisms (security, psychological, legal) to individuals affected by violence and to work under the principle of protecting the right to a violence-free life. These efforts are committed to adopting a women-centered approach. In this context, the Bursa Metropolitan Municipality has developed the Local Equality Action Plan for the years 2024-2026, with a focus on raising awareness and combating violence against women, sexual harassment, and discrimination. The Action Plan aims to address all municipal services through a gender equality perspective while enhancing the safety and well-being of women and girls. As part of the Action Plan, the “Purple Map” project has also been launched. This project has been developed to ensure that women can access critical services they might need, especially in emergencies, quickly and safely. The Purple Map allows women to easily locate legal support centers, health services, and emergency helplines on the map. Additionally, this map contributes to identifying areas with high levels of gender-based violence and implementing preventive measures to increase security in those areas. Through these projects and efforts, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality continues to strive towards creating a city where violence against women is eradicated, and equality and safety prevail. To enhance the gender perspective in institutional policies, training on “Equality-Oriented City,” “Gender Equality,” and “Types of Violence and Mechanisms for Combating Violence” is provided to all personnel, especially those working with vulnerable groups.



	Leadership	decision-making positions at all levels.						
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## SECTION V

### Integration of Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

Bursa Metropolitan Municipality has adopted the principle of a social state based on gender equality that is sensitive to human rights, respects human dignity, and does not tolerate gender discrimination in all its work. The perspective of equal opportunities for women and men has been embraced as part of the organizational culture, and spreading this understanding among stakeholders and partners is of great importance. The goal is to ensure equal access to services in the city, to address the impacts of gender-based needs and expectations on service delivery, and to recognize gender inequalities within the equality-oriented urban approach. In this context, it is aimed to conduct research and planning on the Municipality's existing services from an egalitarian perspective. Additionally, the preparation of a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) tool is planned. GIA allows for the analysis of local government policies and services from a gender perspective. This tool will help understand the needs of both genders and the barriers they face in accessing services, and it will clearly show the status of the institution's integration of gender equality into mainstream practices. The budget prepared to address social needs aims to eliminate gender inequalities in fundamental areas such as education, health, social security systems, employment, and transportation, and planning will be carried out accordingly.

Section	Category	Planning Action	Time Table				Responsible Staff/Unit/Department	Key Performance indicators
			2024	2025	2026	2027		
5	Education	Increasing the knowledge and awareness level of relevant unit employees on Gender Sensitive Budgeting		X	X	X	Relevant strategy and budget representatives of all departments	At least 60% participation rate
		Informing the municipality staff (All Units) and the		X	X	X	GEP Committee, GEP Unit Representatives	At least 50% participation rate

		and mechanism s to combat violence  Raising awareness about sexual harassment (mobbing) and discriminati on,  Providing information training to all institution personnel							
		Providing gender equality training to drivers working within the municipalit y			X	X	X	Human Resources and Education Department, Gender Equality Officer	At least 50% participation
6		Organizing gender equality and egalitarian city trainings			X	X	X	Human Resources and Education Department, Gender Equality Officer	Ensuring the participation of all personnel

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