



# OFF-AIR:

## GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE MACEDONIAN TV DEBATE SHOWS DURING THE 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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**Coordinators**  
Simonida Kacarska  
Biljana Kotevska

**Authors**  
Angela Delevska  
Elena Danova

**Proofreading**  
Svetlana Spasovska

**Layout and design**  
Marko Kovacevski

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## Executive summary

The treatment that gender equality-related issues receive in the media, as well as the way in which women are used as sources and/or experts, remains a significant challenge. The coronavirus pandemic continues to have significant ramifications for public health, social welfare and the economy, but it also presents a significant threat for gender equality and further deepens existing inequalities. The media play a significant role in framing these issues and shaping public opinion.

The herein reported research looked at to what extent and on which topics were women used as a source of expertise and how much the media covered gender issues regarding the COVID-19 crisis. The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse debate programs in North Macedonia broadcasted in 2020 and dealing with topics related to the novel coronavirus.

The analysis shows that gender and gender equality are not being treated as relevant categories in discussions on the COVID-19 crisis. The impact of the crisis on gender equality was not part of the dominant shaping of the crisis and women were largely absent as a category or group with particular needs and problems. The percentage of women who were invited to speak within their expertise is very small, even invisible. Almost half of the broadcasted programs are 'manels'. The gender of the program host has no bearing on the extent to which women are used as sources. No other gender is present or talked about, resulting in full invisibility of trans\* persons. Where gender, and especially women, were part of the topics discussed in the debates, the focus was again on the traditional gender roles in accordance with dominant social values. The dominant use of the masculine natural gender form of animate things, although on its face presents itself as gender-neutral language, is, in fact, a form of discursive exclusion of women and a form of annulment of gender differences.

To rectify this situation, we propose a set of recommendations on improving the focus on gender equality and increasing gender sensitivity and awareness of media outlets, editors, journalists and other media workers.

## Introduction

The media of mass communication are among our most powerful social institutions, with the capacity to set the public agenda by attaching salience to particular issues and events they cover. An important dimension of agenda setting is the way in which the media frame the issues and events they present to the public.<sup>1</sup> A study by Gaye Tuchman, indicates that according to reflection hypothesis the mass media reflect dominant societal values.<sup>2</sup> Women, who represent 52% of our population, are relatively absent or seldom present as sources. A number of studies conducted over the last several decades have found women badly underrepresented, symbolically annihilated as sources in newspapers and on television newscasts.<sup>3</sup> And when present, they are in the role of official sources, such as government officials, who are often preferred by journalists.<sup>4</sup>

North Macedonia is not an exception of this trend. The regular annual analyses of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, confirm that the presence in the media of women as source of expertise whose opinion is worth hearing is very small.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in each of the analysed years the television media outlets dedicate an extremely small amount of space to topics that are considered important for the gender issues, i.e. for the topics that are part of the strategic areas specified in the 2013-2020 National Strategy on Gender Equality.<sup>6</sup> There is a significant body of research and data showing a trend of under-representation of gender issues in the media, low level of awareness among media professionals about gender as a legitimate vision for addressing current issues, and significant gender asymmetry in portraying women and men in the programs. In fact, a number of articles in the news covering topics that are important for gender equality were analysed, where it was noted that they are not yet processed in the media from a gender perspective, i.e. they have a "gender-blind" or gender-neutral approach.<sup>7</sup>

With the appearance of the first case of coronavirus in the country,<sup>8</sup> followed by the declaration of the first state of emergency on March 18, 2020<sup>9</sup> the media reported daily on current coronavirus-related developments. Throughout this whole time, different debate programs have been regularly bringing different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the table which, in addition to escalating into a health crisis, turned also into a socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis with strong negative implications for gender equality and further deepening effect of existing inequalities.

1 Lynn M. Zoch and Judy VanSlyke Turk, 'Women Making News: Gender as a Variable in Source Selection and Use', 1998, 762.

2 Gaye Tuchman, 'The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media', in *Culture and Politics: A Reader*, ed. Lane Crothers, Charles Lockhart, and James Benét (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2000), 153.

3 Jane Delano Brown et al., 'Invisible Power: Newspaper News Sources and the Limits of Diversity' (Journalism Quarterly 64, 1987); Debra Gersh Hernandez, 'Are Women Being Annihilated by the Media?' (Editor & Publisher, 1995); M. Zoch and VanSlyke Turk, 'Women Making News: Gender as a Variable in Source Selection and Use'.

4 Lynn M. Zoch and Judy VanSlyke Turk, 'Women Making News: Gender as a Variable in Source Selection and Use', 1998, 763. See more: Charles S. Steinberg, 'The Information Establishment: Our Government and the Media' (New York, Hastings House, 1980).

5 'The Media Do Not yet Report on Gender Issues, but May Be a Factor in the Fight against Violence (Медиумите сè уште малку известуваат за родовите теми, а можат да бидат фактор за борба против насилството)' (SlobodnaTV, 28 January 2021).

6 'Gender in Television Programmes 2017' (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Skopje 2018).

7 'Regulatory Strategy for Development of Audio and Audiovisual Activity for the Period from 2019 to 2023 (Регулаторна стратегија за развој на аудио и аудиовизуелната дејност за период од 2019 до 2023 година)' (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, 14 March 2019).

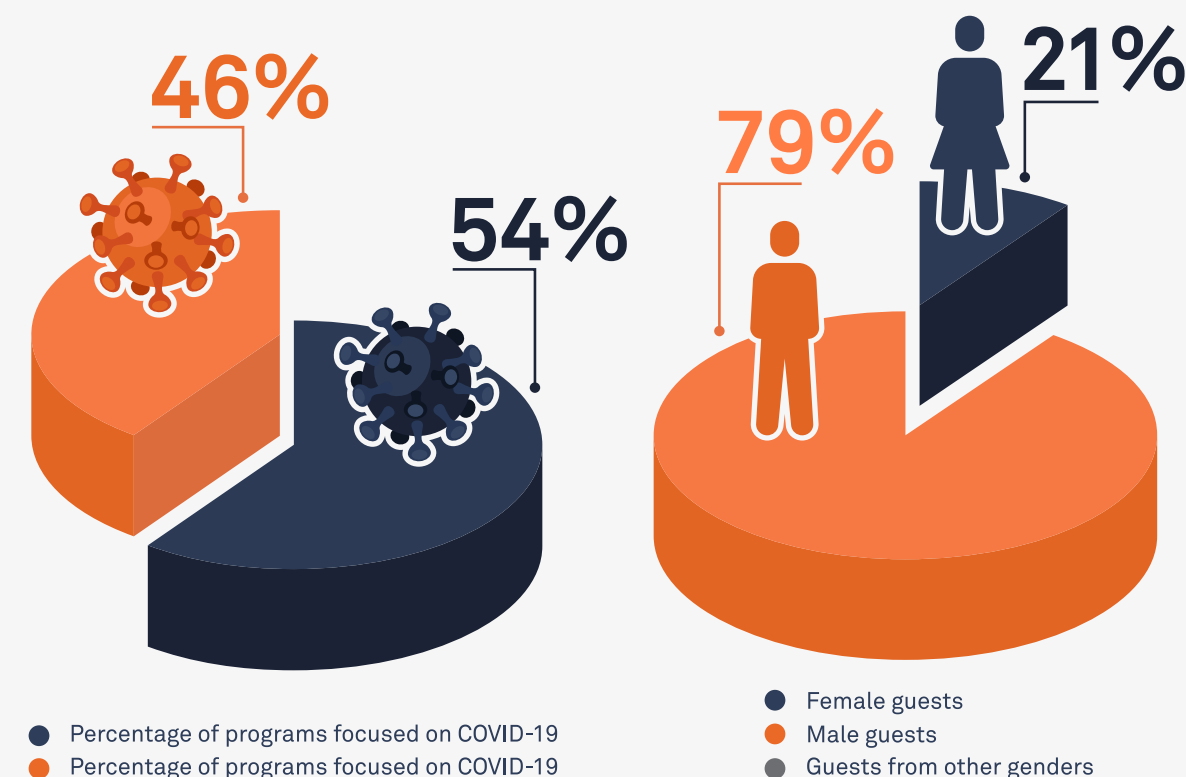
8 'North Macedonia Confirms First Coronavirus Case', MIA - Media Information Agency, 26 February 2020.

9 'Decision to Establish Existence of State of Emergency (Одлука за утврдување на постоење на вонредна состојба)', Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia (Службен весник на Република Северна Македонија) No. 68/2020.



Women have faced many problems in the crisis that were worth noting by the media. First, women in North Macedonia earn 19% less than men.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, 43.8% of employed women and more than 34.8% of employed men work in the sectors that suffered the most losses.<sup>11</sup> In addition, judging by the received complaints, most of the dismissals and violations of workers' rights referred to women.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, with the closure of schools and kindergartens the volume of unpaid care work predominantly performed by women started to be "more visible", but the measures adopted by the government, which were mostly used by women, were difficult to implement in practice.<sup>13</sup> Last, the danger of the existing domestic violence additionally intensifying has increased.<sup>14</sup> However, it seemed that, in line with the previously established practice, issues were rarely considered and conveyed from a gender perspective, and the use of women as sources of expertise in discussions on various aspects of the pandemic was very small.

In this policy brief we examine to what extent and on which topics were women used as a source of expertise during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in North Macedonia and how much the media covered gender issues regarding the crisis. To answer the research questions, we employ a mixed method approach using quantitative and qualitative analysis of key debate programs aired on 5 different TV channels in the country since the outbreak of the pandemic, i.e. in the period between February and December 2020.<sup>15</sup> A total of 535 programs were broadcast, with a total of 1156 guests. Of these guests, only 238 or 21% were women and 918 or 79% were men (see Graph No.1). Out of a total of 535 broadcast programs, 290 covered coronavirus-related topics. This means that 54% of the total broadcasts covered coronavirus-related topics. Six hundred and thirty-six (636) guests took part in programs discussing coronavirus-related topics. Of these, 500 were men, which is the equivalent of 79%, and 136 were women, which is the equivalent of 21%. The number of male hosts in the total number of programs covered in this analysed period is significantly lower than the number of women-hosts. Namely, the programs were hosted by 178 men, or 33%, versus 354 women, or 67%. This confirms the findings from previous analyses that journalism in North Macedonia is mainly performed by women.<sup>16</sup> However, it is interesting to note that out of this number of male hosts, in most cases they hosted programs covering coronavirus-related topics. More specifically, out of these 178 male journalists, 107 hosted programs related to the coronavirus. The program that covered the most coronavirus-related topics was 24 Otvoreno (80%), and the program that covered the least coronavirus-related topics was Win Win (37%).



Graph No.1: Percentage of programs focused on COVID-19 and gender representation of guests in percentages

We applied quantitative analysis to grasp gender representation in the abovementioned debate programs. In order to see if and how programs covering coronavirus-related topics are processed from a gender perspective and whether and how women speakers were used as sources, a random sample was taken for a qualitative analysis of 5% of the programs covering COVID-19 related topics in the given period. We present the findings from the analysis in terms of: crisis framing, gender framing, gender-oriented topics or topics discussed from a gender perspective, topics lacking gender perspective, manner of presentation of women guests and language used. We conclude with a few suggestions addressed to the media outlets, editors, journalists and other media workers that we believe should be taken in consideration in order to improve their focus on women and increase their gender sensitivity and awareness.

<sup>10</sup> 'Women Are Still Paid Significantly Less than Men for the Same Work (Жените се сè уште значително помалку платени од мажите за иста работа)', Akademik, 18 September 2020.

<sup>11</sup> State Statistical Office of The Republic of North Macedonia, 'Employed by Sector of Activity of the Business Entity and Gender, by Years (Вработени според секторите на дејност на деловниот субјект и полот, по години)', MAKStat Database available at: <https://bit.ly/39EVa2>

<sup>12</sup> 'Special Report on the Situation with Human Rights during COVID-19' (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, October 2020).

<sup>13</sup> Natasha Petkovska, 'Overview of the Government Measures for Prevention of and Protection against the Corona Virus and Their Impact on Labour Rights' (Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia, November 2020).

<sup>14</sup> See more: 'Special Report on the Situation with Human Rights during COVID-19'; Reactor - Research in action, 'Paid and Unpaid Work and Gender-Based Discrimination and Labor Rights in the Time of Covid- 19 (Платена и неплатена работа и родо- базирана дискриминација и работнички права во време на Ковид- 19)', April 2020.

<sup>15</sup> The programs analysed include: Top Tema, Samo vistina, 360 Stepeni, 24 Analiza, 24 Otvoreno, Detektor and Win Win. The analysed period was: 28.02.2020-31.12.2020.

<sup>16</sup> 'Collection of Annual Surveys on the Treatment of Gender Issues and the Way of Presenting Women and Men on National TV Stations (2012-2016) with Comparative Indicators (Збирка на годишни истражувања за третманот на родовите прашања и за начинот на претставување на жените и мажите на националните ТВ станици (2012-2016) со споредбени показатели)' (Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services), 13.

## Framing the crisis

The gender perspective, i.e. the impact of the crisis on gender equality, was not part of the dominant crisis framing. Speakers predominantly framed the crisis as a threat to the economy, as a political crisis, as a risk to public health and as a threat to human rights. First, in framing the COVID-19 crisis as a crisis and a threat to the economy, speakers placed the most emphasis on its impact on the economic well-being of citizens, the layoffs it produced and is likely to further produce and the sustainability of companies. Emphasis was often placed on the great debt the country is facing - taking into account the need for funds to address the previously highlighted issues. A gender perspective was absent. Second, when framing the COVID-19 pandemic as a political crisis, speakers placed the most emphasis on the possibility that the ruling political parties/government might (mis)use the crisis for their own benefit, but also on the impact it has on regular political processes. Third, in framing the pandemic as a risk to public health, most emphasis was placed on the daily epidemiological situation and the capacity of health institutions and the government to address current challenges. Last, although the pandemic was framed by some speakers as a threat to human rights, the gender perspective, i.e. the impact of the crisis on gender equality, was not part of the dominant framing. In addition, the human rights aspects on the basis of which the crisis was framed were largely related to the right to privacy and were discussed through a security prism, which further indicates absence of a gender perspective.

## Framing gender

As already stated, gender and gender equality were largely disregarded in the debate programs. This depicts gender as an unimportant category within the context of the crisis and/or the public discourse. To begin with, women were largely absent both as a category or a group participating in the programs and as specific individuals, such as public figures/ decision (policy)-makers, to whom references were made. While the later was more frequently the case, the former was largely confined to the private sphere, with women being framed as, for example, mothers and victims of domestic violence. Within the context of labour, while women were mentioned as health care workers, textile workers and as informal workers, there was no further discussion about horizontal segregation or any other possible consequences stemming from the gender inequality axis. Finally, it did not transpire from any of the discussions that gender does not refer only to women, resulting in complete disregard also for gender diversity. One of the direct outcomes of this was full invisibility of trans\* persons.

## Topics discussed

None of the analysed programs dealt with the topic of gender and/or gender (in)equality and the COVID-19 crisis. While gender, and more specifically women (with complete absence of trans\* persons), were part of the topics discussed in the debates, the topics were again focused on the traditional care-giving responsibilities being attributed to women and on women and reproduction. For example, in the September 22<sup>nd</sup> Top Tema episode focused on the re-opening of kindergartens, while certain issues of importance for gender equality were mentioned, such as differences and different needs of women as working mothers in the various sectors (such as the textile industry), the debate did not identify and discuss the deeply structural nature of gender division in care and did not raise the issue of equal distribution of care responsibilities between partners, and/or the particular needs of single parents in such contexts. Another similar example is when a discussion on challenges for labour rights of film workers during the COVID-19 pandemic did identify the important issue of uncertainty in relation to maternity leave contributions, but, again, did not open the discussion for shared parenting responsibilities and shared parental leave. The deep-seated issue of structural discrimination of Roma and its specific impact on Roma women was touched upon when the problem of the lack of general practitioners in certain municipalities in North Macedonia was discussed. Last, the possible escalation of domestic violence during the coronavirus restrictive measures was discussed; women were identified as the most frequent victims.

## Mapping presence

From all the analysed programs, it can be concluded that the percentage of women who were invited to participate as experts is very small, even insignificant. Six hundred and thirty-six (636) guest speakers took part in programs discussing coronavirus-related topics. Five hundred of them (500) were men, or 79%, and 136 were women, or 21%. Of the total number of women who participated as guest speakers in all 2020 programs, most are participants in the Top Tema program (61), but when it comes to coronavirus-related topics, women mostly appeared on the Otvoreno studio program (44). Although the percentage of female guests in the Detektor program is lower compared to the male guests, all the women who were invited to appear on the program were invited in reference to coronavirus-related topics. Women were the least invited as guests on the Samo vistina program, where out of 284 guests on coronavirus-related topics, only 17 were women (or 15%). It is an interesting fact that from all the programs hosted by both male and female journalists, women mostly appear as hosts of coronavirus-related debates in Samo vistina (89%). This confirms the fact that the gender of the journalist does not make a difference in the extent to which women are used as sources.<sup>17</sup> Women almost always spoke in the context of their work as public office holders and presidents of particular organizations/associations, compared to men who sometimes, regardless of position or affiliation, were perceived and presented as experts, and were subsequently invited to present and debate their views. Finally, we were also interested to see whether and to what extent the globally wide-spread practice of ‘manels’ – i.e. all male panels – was present in debate programs in North Macedonia. So, we looked at how many of the programs were manels. Our findings reveal that out of the 535 programs that were broadcast in this period, a staggering 248 (46%) were manels. The most manels overall were broadcast by 24 Analiza (56%), whereas the least manels by 360 Stepeni (23%). There were a total of 121 (42%) manel in coronavirus-related broadcasts. The most manels in coronavirus-related broadcasts were aired by 24 Analiza (56%), whereas the least such manels were aired by Detektor (27%).

Table No.1: Findings per observed category and program in numbers and/or percentages

SEPARATE FINDINGS FOR EACH PROGRAM								
TOTAL NUMBER OF:	Top Tema	Samo vistina	24 Analiza	24 Otvoreno	Otvoreno studio <sup>18</sup>	360 Stepeni	Win Win	Detektor
<i>Broadcasts for each program separately</i>	113	180	67	5	92	34	30	14
<i>Coronavirus-related broadcasts</i>	73 (65%)	76 (42%)	34 (51%)	4 (80%)	67 (73%)	14 (41%)	11 (37%)	11 (79%)
<i>Guests</i>	278	311	149	17	239	67	59	36
<i>Women guests</i>	61 (22%)	44 (14%)	24 (16%)	8 (47%)	56 (23%)	17 (25%)	18 (31%)	10 (28%)
<i>Women guests in coronavirus-related broadcasts</i>	35 (20%)	17 (15%)	10 (16%)	4 (31%)	44 (24%)	7 (26%)	7 (37%)	10 (34%)
<i>Men guests</i>	217 (78%)	267 (86%)	125 (84%)	9 (53%)	183 (77%)	50 (75%)	41 (69%)	26 (72%)
<i>Men guests in coronavirus-related broadcasts</i>	139 (80%)	99 (85%)	52 (84%)	9 (69%)	139 (76%)	20 (74%)	12 (63%)	19 (66%)
<i>Guests from other genders</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Women hosts</i>	90 (80%)	154 (89%)	40 (60%)	0	26 (28%)	0	30 (100%)	14 (50%)
<i>Women hosts in coronavirus-related programs</i>	58 (79%)	68 (89%)	25 (74%)	0	20 (30%)	0	30 (100%)	14 (50%)
<i>Men hosts</i>	23 (20%)	26 (14%)	27 (40%)	5 (100%)	66 (72%)	34 (100%)	0	14 (50%)
<i>Men hosts in coronavirus-related programs</i>	15 (20%)	8 (11%)	9 (26%)	5 (100%)	47 (70%)	34 (100%)	0	14 (50%)
<i>Hosts from other genders</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>‘Manels’<sup>19</sup></i>	43 (38%)	97 (54%)	38 (56%)	2 (40%)	40 (43%)	8 (23%)	14 (47%)	6 (42%)
<i>‘Manels’ in coronavirus-related broadcasts</i>	31 (42%)	28 (37%)	19 (56%)	2 (50%)	30 (45%)	4 (28%)	4 (36%)	3 (27%)

<sup>18</sup> 24 Analiza and 24 Otvoreno are broadcast as separate programs on Television 24. However, since the declaration of the first state of emergency on March 18, 2020, these programs have merged into the so-called Otvoreno studio or 24 Analiza- Otvoreno studio, which each episode lasted for about two hours and was usually divided into two parts, where almost always one part covered a topic related to the coronavirus. This way of program broadcasting took place until July 23, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Herein, we understood ‘manels’ as programs with only male interlocutors (regardless of host).

<sup>17</sup> M. Zoch and VanSlyke Turk, ‘Women Making News: Gender as a Variable in Source Selection and Use’.



## Mapping absence

In a context with limited gender awareness and presence, it becomes increasingly important to map the absences of gender and gender equality-centred debates during the analysed period. Such glaring absences were noted in debates on the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus, the epidemiological situation and the crisis management on the part of health authorities, as well as on the restrictive measures taken by the President of the country and the government to suppress the virus.

First, the economic crisis was most often discussed in terms of the packages of economic measures adopted by the government to help citizens and companies, without a specific consideration of the impact of any of the discussed aspects on the different genders. Some of the debates focused on political confrontations between representatives of the ruling party and the opposition party. Others featured economic experts, but the focus was mainly on companies and how the adopted measures can help businesses. For example, the assistance provided by banks to companies and citizens was discussed as well as the announced targeted deferral of loan instalments, which would cover only those who really lost their jobs and whose income was reduced by more than 10%, but it was never discussed who these people are who need help the most. Rather, the focus was on vulnerable categories of citizens, citizens receiving social assistance and citizens who are part of the informal economy, without any gender considerations. The Gender Equality Index for North Macedonia has shown that inequalities are particularly prominent when it comes to economic status and access to financial resources. Women on average have lower net incomes and lower earnings compared to men,<sup>20</sup> whereas more than half of the inactive persons in the labour market are women (64,4 %) and thus are at higher risk of poverty.<sup>21</sup>

Second, particular crisis management aspects from the perspective of medical workers, and the acknowledgment of the fact that they are mostly women, were also neglected. So, when discussing the epidemiological situation in the country and the management of health authorities, topics covered included conditions in health care institutions and preparedness of doctors and nurses. Questions were also raised in relation to other aspects of the normal functioning of the health care system, such as the problem with the lack of general practitioners in certain municipalities in the country, which, as an unresolved problem from the past escalated precisely during this crisis. Although the largest percentage of employees in the public health sector in North Macedonia are women (i.e., out of the total number of employees, 72.33% are women and 27.67% are men),<sup>22</sup> these topics were generally reviewed.

20 Marija Bashevska, 'Gender Equality Index of North Macedonia' (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, State Statistical Office, EIGE, UN Women, 2019).

21 See more: State Statistical Office, 2018, Labor Force Survey 2017, available at: <https://bit.ly/3eHLoR8>; Eurostat, 2020, Employment and Unemployment Rates for North Macedonia, 2019, available at: <https://bit.ly/3eHTAkn>, accessed on 20 June 2020.

22 Ministry of Information Society and Administration, 'Annual Report on the Data from the Register of Employees in the Public Sector 2019' (Годишен извештај за податоците од регистарот на вработените во јавниот сектор 2019), March 2020, 42.

Last, when discussing restrictive measures, the gender dimension was missing, as well. Discussions centred on the adequacy of adopted measures, whether they give the desired results and if not, whether they should be eased. Although restrictive measures brought specific difficulties and threats for women, such as work from home, which further imposed difficulties on women due to the fact that unpaid work in the home (i.e., cooking, cleaning, laundry, household maintenance, etc.), childcare, as well as care for adults and people in need of care and support, is predominantly performed by them, this issue was never raised. When the police curfew was discussed, there was a recommendation from a guest for pardon all those citizens who were charged for walking outside during the curfew hours because they probably had a reason, like mental health challenges and other health reasons, not mentioning domestic violence from which women suffer the most and are often put in a position to run away from their home and in times when the number of reports of domestic violence in the Ministry of Interior had increased by 17% only in the first three months of 2020 compared to the same period last year.<sup>23</sup> This number may be even higher according to the findings of the UN Women field research which show that during the pandemic almost half of people who had experienced violence or had knowledge of a case of violence did not seek help from relevant institutions, services or the police. This is more often the case with women compared to men.<sup>24</sup>

## Language

The use of the masculine gender form of animate nouns is dominant. While at first sight this is presented as a gender-neutral language, it is, in fact, a form of discursive exclusion of women and a form of annulment of gender differences. This becomes particularly apparent since the feminine plural form of some nouns, although part of the standardised Macedonian language, was used only in reference to certain professions that follow the horizontal segregation patterns, such as teachers, nurses, hygienists, textile workers.

23 'In the First Three Months, the Number of Reports to the Ministry of Interior for Domestic Violence Increased by 17 Percent (Во првите три месеци за 17 проценти е зголемен бројот на пријави во МВР за семејно насилство)', Meta.Mk, 13 May 2020.

24 See more: Marija Bashevska, 'Rapid Gender Assessment: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men in North Macedonia' (UN Women North Macedonia, June 2020), 35.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The research findings show that gender and gender equality are not treated as relevant categories in the crisis framing and are largely disregarded in debate programs. Women were largely absent both as a category or as a group. The percentage of women who were invited to speak within the area of their expertise is very small, even insignificant; the gender of the program host has no bearing on the extent to which women are used as sources. Where gender, or especially women, were part of the topics discussed in a debate, the focus was again on the traditional gender roles assigned to women as responsible for care-giving and reproduction. The analyses showed a picture of gender and gender issues through the binary prism of cis-men and cis-women, rendering all others and issues of relevance to them invisible, including trans\* persons. The language used was not gender-sensitive, and this omission was obscured by the use of an apparently gender-neutral language i.e., the use of the masculine form of all animate nouns as a standard.

On the grounds of these research findings, we developed the following key recommendations for media outlets, editors and media workers:

- Capacity building efforts need to raise journalists' and producers' awareness of gender equality, gender awareness, gender representation, gender-sensitive speech, and this should be done, in particular, by organizing trainings at which topics would be covered/ approached from a gender perspective;
- Media organisations should adapt their self-regulatory acts, such as internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal supervision procedures, in order to include clear and effective gender representation and gender equality clauses that will also be taken into consideration in program developing, as well as in their administrative and financial planning;
- Producers, editors and journalists should strictly avoid programs where there is no gender balance representation (such as 'manels'), and should aim to identify and break their own biases towards and/or practices of seeing women as lesser sources of expertise compared to men. This should be done through trainings, by engaging gender advisors and/or by employing a regular practice of tracking gender representation in their respective program;
- In discussions of gender equality and gender issues and in striving to resolve their own gender representation challenges, the media should be persistently aware of the plurality of gender and should avoid the practice of centring on cis-men and cis-women, thus normalising and opening the floor to persons from other genders, for example trans\* persons;
- Develop and regularly update lists of experts, employing due effort to identify experts that are not cis-men, and

- Seek advice and/or support of organisations (such as CSOs) working on gender equality to identify important topics, interlocutors and ways of approaching the issues.
- These recommendations will improve gender representation in the media and re-shape the public perception of which topics are important and/or worthy of a discussion and of being "topics of the day", ultimately leading towards a more just and equitable society for all.

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