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**PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD:  
THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS ON EUROPEAN UNION INDUCED  
DOMESTIC CHANGE IN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA**

MA thesis

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**Author's declaration**

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

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## **Abstract**

The Master's thesis examines the European Union's promotion of gender equality through its neighbourhood policy. More specifically, it focuses on the Eastern dimension of the neighbourhood, the Eastern Partnership, and explores neighbourhood Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms. Previous research on Europeanisation has signalled that concerning gender equality, domestic factors are the most influential in regard to European Union influenced domestic change. Therefore, the thesis aims to investigate this observation by determining the impact of domestic constraints on the ability of European Union conditionality to induce domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms. To investigate this, the thesis compares the cases of Armenia and Georgia while triangulating data primarily from official documents, backed by interview data and data from secondary sources. Comparing levels of European Union conditionality, domestic constraints, and domestic change in the context of European Union promoted gender equality reforms in both Armenia and Georgia, the study finds that domestic veto-players such as the church and conservative groups, misperceptions on gender, and gender stereotypes are the domestic constraints that affect domestic change in the context of European Union promoted gender equality reforms. Studying these domestic constraints, the thesis makes the observation that domestic constraints hinder domestic change in the context of European Union promoted gender equality reforms; however, the constraints are only able to lower the level of domestic change but not completely stop it. As a result, the research finds that European Union conditionality would be more effective in inducing domestic change in the context of European Union promoted gender equality reforms if there were fewer or no domestic constraints as the domestic constraints decrease the level of domestic change by delaying the adoption of gender equality reforms.

**Keywords:** gender equality, neighbourhood Europeanisation, conditionality, domestic constraints

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## **Introduction**

The present study is on the topic of the European Union's (EU) promotion of gender equality in the neighbourhood. The research aims to explain the ability of EU conditionality to induce domestic change in gender equality while facing domestic constraints. The study focuses on the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Eastern Partnership, which is a joint initiative of the EU, the EU member states and the six countries of the Eastern neighbourhood: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (Eastern Partnership 2016). The research studies the time period of 2014 – 2019.

The relevance for studying the EU's promotion of gender equality in the Eastern neighbourhood stems from two considerations. First, the study aims to examine EU conditionality in the context of EU-promoted gender equality reforms with a focus on the Eastern neighbourhood. Kunz and Maisenbacher (2017: 132) have noted that the European Union, through its European Neighbourhood Policy, has prioritised gender equality in the Southern neighbourhood in a more substantial way than it has for the Eastern neighbourhood. However, with the adoption of the Gender Action Plan II in 2016, the European Union made the commitment to incorporate the promotion of gender equality in all its external actions (Council of the European Union 2015), this including the Eastern dimension of the ENP. This shift challenges the claim made by Kunz and Maisenbacher and therefore, it merits to be tested whether this change in priorities translates into EU conditionality in the context of gender equality reforms for the Eastern neighbourhood. Therefore, this research investigates the effectiveness of EU conditionality regarding domestic change in gender equality specifically in the Eastern neighbourhood.

Second, the topic expands the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation by highlighting the specifics of the Europeanisation of the neighbourhood in the context of gender equality reforms. With previous research on neighbourhood Europeanisation mostly focusing on reforms regarding democracy (Gawrich, Melnkyowska, Shweickert 2010), rule of law (Schimmelfennig 2010), and corruption (Börzel, Pamuk 2012), this research contributes to the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation by studying the aspect of gender equality.

The research aims to add to the literature by first, highlighting the gender dimension of the Eastern Partnership, and second, determining whether the previous findings on Europeanisation apply in regard to gender equality promotion. Thus, this research aims to expand the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation by analysing the gender dimension of it.

The literature that the research aims to expand on is also the one that it is based on: Europeanisation, with the main focus on its subcategory of neighbourhood Europeanisation. Europeanisation is a phenomenon that has had many explanations offered to (see Radaelli 2004, Bandov and Kolman 2018). The most renowned, however, has been to study Europeanisation as a process that involves the interaction of the EU and the domestic level (Radaelli 2004). The literature on Europeanisation establishes that there are four mechanisms for Europeanisation to occur: conditionality, capacity-building, socialisation and persuasion (Börzel, Hüllen 2011: 7, Schimmelfennig 2015: 7). Therefore, there are four possible ways for the process of Europeanisation to take place. However, due to the ENP being incentive based and functioning on the basis of the ‘more for more’ principle (Publications Office 2018), it is established that conditionality is the dominant mechanism of neighbourhood Europeanisation through the ENP as it is also based on incentives (see Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2004, Börzel and Risse 2012). Therefore, this research explores the effectiveness of the mechanism of conditionality to affect EU-induced domestic change.

Concerning the process of neighbourhood Europeanisation, all the mechanisms are affected by the scope conditions of domestic incentives, power (a)symmetry, statehood, and regime of the state (Börzel, Risse 2012: 10 – 14). Therefore, the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation outlines that there are intervening factors that the occurrence of the process depends on. Regarding neighbourhood Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms, the possible impact of each scope condition becomes clearer. Concerning the promotion of gender equality reforms, the scope condition to affect EU-induced domestic change in that field in the neighbourhood is domestic incentives (see Ketelaars 2019, Htun and Welton 2010). However, as this research aims to explore the factors that impede domestic change in gender equality, the research explores the domestic constraints specifically.

Taking all of the above into account, the research explores the ability of European Union conditionality to affect domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms when faced with domestic constraints. The research question is the following: what impact do domestic constraints have on the European Union's efforts to promote gender equality in the Eastern Partnership countries?

To answer the research question, the research forms its hypothesis as the following: The more there are domestic constraints within the target country, the less does European Union's conditionality regarding gender equality lead to domestic change. To test the hypothesis, the research does a comparative study of Armenia and Georgia, which are two Eastern partners to the European Union under the ENP.

This research uses data triangulation for collecting the data for the analysis. The data is gathered from Action Plans, Implementation reports, EU documents, various reports conducted on the gender issues in the countries, statistical reports, secondary literature, and interviews. The interviews were conducted with Zara Hovhannisyanyan, from Armenia's Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, Artur Simonyan, from the NGO "Right Sustainable Development of United Civil Society", Baia Pataraya, from Union Sapari, and another representative from an NGO in Georgia who requested anonymity in this research.

The research takes the narrow focus on the Europeanisation of the Eastern Partnership countries in the context of gender equality and tests EU conditionality against domestic constraints. Due to the narrow focus on the Eastern Partnership, the study does not draw any comparisons between the Southern and the Eastern neighbourhood in regard to EU-induced domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms. Additionally, as the research focuses only on the Europeanisation aspect of gender equality reforms, it only explores the domestic changes induced by the EU. The research does not provide insight to the measures taken independently from the EU in the countries in the effort to increase gender equality.

The research is divided into three parts. The first part entails the theoretical framework which the research is based on. This part explains the phenomenon Europeanisation and what elements it entails, specifically neighbourhood Europeanisation and the gender dimension

aspect of Europeanisation. The second part of the research is the methodology of the research. The methodology explains the methodological framework used to conduct the research, the data used for the research, and explains in a more detailed way the selection of the cases, as well as the variables. The third part is the empirical section where the findings of the research are analysed. The last section entails the overview of the European Union's conditionality, the domestic constraints present within the countries, and the domestic change that has occurred in the countries.

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# **1. Theoretical framework: Neighbourhood Europeanisation and the transfer of EU gender equality reforms to the Neighbourhood countries**

This section explains the concept of Europeanisation, as well as how and why the process occurs. The section is divided into three parts: Europeanisation, neighbourhood Europeanisation and the gender dimension of Europeanisation. The first part engages more generally with the phenomenon of Europeanisation, developing the conceptualisation and the basic mechanisms of Europeanisation. The second part focuses on neighbourhood Europeanisation and explains how the phenomenon of Europeanisation occurs in the neighbourhood countries. The third part focuses on the gender dimension of Europeanisation, discussing the particularities of the Europeanisation process in regard to gender equality reforms.

## **1.1. Europeanisation**

Europeanisation is one of the more prominent concepts in the research on the EU. Europeanisation is not as much a theory as it is a phenomenon that requires explanation (Kantola 2010: 189). The literature on the Europeanisation of member states, in which scholars explore how member states respond to the EU's policies and why they react the way that they do, is the basis of all literature on Europeanisation as the phenomenon was researched there first (Papadimitrou, Phinnemore 2003: 3). Therefore, unless specified differently, this section explains the member state Europeanisation as this forms the basis for the all subsequent literature on Europeanisation.

First, the literature turns to outline how the literature has conceptualised the phenomenon, starting with the definition of Europeanisation. According to Claudio Radaelli (2004: 4), Europeanisation is

“[a set of] processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things” and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.”

In sum, Europeanisation entails the creation, the spread and the formalisation of certain laws, norms and values which are first created on the EU level and then implemented on the domestic level. Although other definitions have been offered for Europeanisation (see Ladrech (1994 in Graziano, Vink 2013: 37) or Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2001: 3)), Radaelli's description of Europeanisation is most widely renowned for its inclusion of the top-down, as well as the bottom-up approach (Bandov and Kolman 2018).

The top-down approach states that Europeanisation is the direct result of the EU influencing the states to change. Knill and Lehmkhul (2002: 4) distinguish three mechanisms of the top-down approach to Europeanisation: positive integration, negative integration and framing integration. The three top-down mechanisms are different in the way that they function. Bandov and Kolman (2018: 138) explain the differences in the following way: first, positive integration entails the EU setting rules that the states must abide to or implement into their national legislation. Second, negative integration is the EU requiring the national governments to eliminate legislation that opposes the EU conditions (ibid). Third, framing integration is about changing the mindset of the national governments through discussions and recommendations so they would implement the intended changes because they believe it is what is best (ibid). Positive and negative integration is considered as Europeanisation through hard law as there are legal steps to take to comply with European policies (Knill and Lehmkhul 2002: 4 – 9). Framing integration, on the other hand, is considered as Europeanisation through soft law because it does not involve any legal commitments to the countries, it is all about social learning (ibid). The mechanisms vary in their function but are similar in the sense that they are induced by the EU.

However, studying Europeanisation only from the top-down logic has been contested as it portrays the image of the EU having all the power to influence with the states as subjects of said influence. Radaelli (2004: 4) argues that the top-down approach is too linear and static to reflect Europeanisation that occurs in reality. Bandov and Kolman (2018: 138) add that the top-down approach with its focus on pressure coming from the EU does not explain all domestic change.

On the other hand, the bottom-up approach analyses the domestic level's influence in the negotiation process on the European level, not just the influence of the EU on the national governments (ibid). According to Radaelli (2004: 4), the bottom-up approach starts and finishes on the level of domestic actors as it aims to determine if, when, and how the EU has affected domestic change. Radaelli (ibid: 5) argues that this approach prevents researchers from overestimating the role of the EU in domestic change. With the bottom-up approach, the point of view is on the domestic level from start to finish, and the EU's impact is tested but not relied on as the reason behind domestic change.

Returning to the definition of Europeanisation, the incorporation of both the top-down and the bottom-up approach is due to Radaelli (2004: 6) observing that the top-down and the bottom-up approaches are not mutually exclusive. Europeanisation should be regarded as a multi-directional process and research on Europeanisation should include the analysis on the influence on domestic change of both the European level, as well as the domestic level (ibid). Both approaches to Europeanisation must be assessed as Europeanisation is the result of the EU's actions and the conditions of the domestic level. Bandov and Kolman (2018: 140) explain that "With or without the EU's pressure, this system of interactions is the crucial intervening variable explaining the process of Europeanization". Therefore, the domestic level and the interactions on that level must be assessed to first determine the occurrence of domestic change and then to establish whether the domestic change occurred due to the EU's pressure.

As the concept of Europeanisation is determined, the research moves on to the mechanisms of Europeanisation which explain how Europeanisation occurs. The mechanisms are also a concept of the EU's external governance and its external incentives and social learning models (see Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2004); however, this research follows Börzel's (2003: 5) regrouping of the mechanisms under rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism. The mechanisms are conditionality and capacity-building (rational institutionalism), and socialisation and persuasion (sociological institutionalism) (Börzel, Hüllen 2011: 7, Schimmelfennig 2015: 7).

Börzel and Risse (2012: 8) stress that the mechanisms do not presume that the target countries of the EU's policies are passive and adopt European policies without opposition; they argue that

“[...] the adoption of and adaptation to EU norms, rules, and institutional models into domestic or regional structures mostly involve active processes of interpretation, incorporation of new norms and rules into existing institutions, and also resistance to particular rules and regulations.”

Thus, states have to go through an active process of evaluating whether and how to adapt EU policies into their legislative systems. The process differs depending on the policy because some EU policies entail more adaptational costs than others. The mechanisms are not the process of the EU's policies automatically being transposed as national policies; they are the result of the EU's and the national governments' actions. To explain the mechanisms of Europeanisation, the research focuses first on rational institutionalism and its mechanisms of conditionality and capacity-building.

First, conditionality is the notion of the EU offering states rewards (financial aid, market access or institutional ties) in exchange for the governments complying with conditions set by the EU (Schimmelfennig 2015: 8). However, conditionality does not only entail the provision of rewards, it also entails sanctions. Börzel and Risse (2012: 7) explain that “conditionality tries to manipulate the cost–benefit calculations of target actors through creating positive and negative incentives”. Positive incentives are rewards for compliance, negative incentives are sanctions for not fulfilling the conditions set by the EU (Börzel, Risse 2012: 6 – 7). Therefore, there are two sides to conditionality: the opportunity to be rewarded and the possibility to be sanctioned, both dependent on the fulfilment of the EU's conditions.

The effectiveness of conditionality depends on the factors that it comprises of: incentives, and determinacy and credibility. First, the success of conditionality depends on the domestic costs of adaptation having to be lower than the incentives that the EU is offering (Schimmelfennig 2015: 8). This is due to the logic of consequentialism that rational choice institutionalism entails (March, Olsen 1989 in Schimmelfennig 2015: 6). The logic of consequentialism is the concept of actors having a fixed hierarchy of preferences and acting with the goal of maximizing their gains with the resources that are available to them (Börzel

2003: 8). Actors are assumed to act rationally, therefore, they base their choice on the cost-benefit relation when making decisions (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2004: 663). Therefore, the incentives must be higher than the adaptational costs for conditionality to be effective.

Second, for conditionality to have an impact, the conditions must be clear and credible. The credibility of conditionality entails the state trusting that it will receive the benefits the EU is offering by fulfilling the EU's conditions (Schimmelfennig 2015: 8). In short, credibility is the guarantee of the EU providing the incentives after the state has fulfilled the EU's conditions. The determinacy of conditionality means providing clear conditions for the target countries: by outlining specific actions for goals, there is less of a possibility that target countries misinterpret the actions and do not fully implement the EU's policies (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2004: 664). Therefore, the conditions must be clear and the EU must be perceived as credible to increase the effectiveness of conditionality. To sum up conditionality, if incentives and determinacy are high and the EU is regarded as a credible actor, conditionality has a higher probability of inducing Europeanisation.

The other mechanism of rational institutionalism, capacity-building, is a softer mechanism of affecting domestic change, however, it is still a rationalist one. Capacity-building entails the European institutions helping states meet the demands of the EU by providing the governments with additional means (Schimmelfennig 2015: 8). However, even though not categorised as an incentive, research has shown that the EU often uses capacity-building as a reward for domestic change (Börzel, Risse 2012: 7). Capacity-building differs from conditionality by being more of a means to support than a means to have leverage.

As the mechanisms of rational institutionalism have been explained, the research moves on to the mechanisms of sociological institutionalism. Sociological institutionalism's mechanisms of socialisation and persuasion entail the EU introducing EU policies to states, convincing them of the propriety of the policies and influencing states to adopt them (Schimmelfennig 2015: 9). Socialisation and persuasion function on the logic of appropriateness which is the assumption that actors behave according to certain values, norms and morals when making decisions (Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2004: 667 – 668). When actors have a choice, they will opt for the most appropriate variant. In the case of

Europeanisation, the European institutions entail the values, norms and morals according to which the actors – candidate countries, member states, third countries, etc. – behave (ibid: 668). However, it is necessary for the states to be of the belief (be persuaded) that the EU rules are the most appropriate, otherwise, the states opt for another policy to implement (ibid: 667 – 668). The mechanisms of sociological institutionalism depend more on how the EU and its policies are perceived in the target countries, as the domestic change is inflicted by the domestic level's wish to adopt the EU policies due to their appropriateness.

Even though rational institutionalism and sociological institutionalism are different, their mechanisms function on the same premise. Börzel (2003: 5) states that the two institutionalisms both entail the same assumptions regarding the possible outcomes of Europeanisation. The first assumption is that there are different degrees of Europeanisation in the member states (ibid). This means that the effect of the EU can be seen at different levels in each of the member states, no member state is influenced by the EU the same way as another; Europeanisation occurs on different levels and at different speeds in all member states.

The second assumption is that the different levels of Europeanisation of member states can be explained by mediating factors and goodness of fit/misfit (Börzel 2003: 5). Starting with mediating factors, they are elements that can facilitate or hinder the process of Europeanisation. It is important to note that the mediating factors for Börzel (2003: 8) are located on the domestic level. Therefore, to know more about the mediating factors, one must study the domestic level. Börzel (2003: 8) distinguishes two of them: “multiple veto-players” and “facilitating formal institutions”. The number of veto-players is important as the more there are influential actors involved, there are more opportunities for the decision to be rejected as it has to get approval from multiple actors who have the capacity to affect the outcome (ibid: 9). Therefore, in a system where power is dispersed among many actors (formally and informally), the probability of a European policy not getting implemented is higher. However, even though Börzel (2003) advocates the notion that the mediating factors are on the domestic governmental level, this paper argues that there are veto-players outside

the government as well. Meaning that there are societal actors who have the power to stop the adoption of EU influenced reforms, just as veto-players in government do.

On the other hand, facilitating formal institutions increase the probability of an EU policy getting implemented. The formal institutions provide the necessary means for a group to mobilise on a national level but to express their demands on the European level (Börzel 2003: 9). When there are organisations that have the capacity to interact with the European institutions directly, the organisations can exploit this opportunity to influence the EU level to adopt certain policies and then the domestic governments would be required to implement the policies as well (ibid). Therefore, the facilitating formal institutions provide the opportunity to circumvent the national governments and invoke domestic change through the EU level.

Besides veto-players and mediating factors, another factor that determines the probability of Europeanisation is the goodness of fit. Goodness of fit is often referred to as misfit (Mastenbroek, Kaeding 2006: 334). The goodness of fit/misfit is a hypothesis according to which the implementation of a European policy depends on the proximity of national policies to the EU ones (ibid: 332). The original hypothesis was developed by Francesco Duina (1997 in Mastenbroek, Koeding 2006: 333) who stated that the more similar the European policies are to what has already been implemented on the national level, the less costly the adaptation of the European policies will be. Meaning that if the domestic policy has a good fit with the EU policy, the less costly it is to incorporate it into the domestic system. However, the original hypothesis has now been dismissed due to Duina's hypothesis being applicable only in a limited number of cases (Mastenbroek, Koeding 2006: 333 – 334). Contrary to Duina's hypothesis, Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2001: 7 – 8) find that for a European policy to be adopted into national legislation, it is essential for the policies of the EU and the domestic policies to have misfit. Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (ibid) dismiss Duina's hypothesis by stating that if a country's policy is not much different from the EU policy, change will not occur because without some difference, there would be no requirement for change. The differences between the European and the national policy are what motivates the national governments to transform. However, Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (ibid: 8 – 9) stress that if

the misfit between the national and the European policy is too high, domestic change will not occur either. Therefore, for European policies to be implemented successfully, there should be moderate misfit between them and the national policies (Börzel 2003: 10). Therefore, misfit is necessary for domestic change to occur, however, there is a limit to the misfit.

The goodness of fit/misfit is in correlation with adaptational pressures. When there is a misfit between the European policies and the domestic policies, the states feel the pressure to change because there is the requirement to comply with the European policies (Börzel 2003: 16). Adaptational pressures are higher when there is a higher misfit between the European and the domestic policies as there are more elements to implement in order to align the domestic policies to the European ones (Graziano, Vink 2013). Therefore, one would expect Europeanisation to occur with high misfit as the pressure to adapt would also be higher.

However, as mentioned before, for domestic change to occur, the misfit cannot be too high. Even though high misfit translates into high adaptational pressures, domestic change will not occur due to the high adaptational costs that implementation entails (Schimmelfennig 2015: 8). This is linked to the logic of consequentialism: a rational actor affects domestic change only when the benefits are higher than the adaptational costs. Schimmelfennig (2015: 18) states that adaptational costs can be economic, as well as political. Economic adaptational costs are the funds that the state has to spend in order to adapt to the EU's policies. Political adaptational costs occur when the domestic public does not support the European policy. In that case, domestic politicians fear that adopting the European policy will cost them electoral support, thus, making the European policy to be politically too costly for them (Schimmelfennig 2015: 18). Therefore, misfit is an indicator of the adaptational costs which are the element that must always be taken into consideration when studying the Europeanisation process.

This chapter has outlined the basic assumptions regarding Europeanisation. First, Europeanisation refers to the phenomenon of domestic change occurring due to the combination of EU influence and the interactions on the domestic level; therefore, the Europeanisation process should be studied through a multi-directional approach as it is not a one-way process. Second, this section outlined how Europeanisation occurs. It introduced

the four mechanisms of Europeanisation through which EU-induced domestic change occurs: conditionality, capacity-building, socialisation, and persuasion. For the mechanisms to be effective, the chapter has outlined that the precondition of Europeanisation is misfit. Misfit determines the level of adaptational costs which must be lower than the benefits offered. However, the mechanisms' effectiveness also depends on the domestic level factors of formal facilitating institutions and veto-players which have the potential to alter the mechanisms, either by enhancing or impeding the process of Europeanisation. Therefore, to determine the occurrence of Europeanisation in any target country, it is necessary to take all these factors into account. However, as this research focuses on the neighbourhood, the next section turns to the subcategory of Europeanisation to explain its specificities.

### **1.1.1. Neighbourhood Europeanisation**

The subchapter explains the phenomenon of Neighbourhood Europeanisation by first, outlining what neighbourhood Europeanisation is and second, explaining the conditions under which neighbourhood Europeanisation occurs.

First, neighbourhood Europeanisation differs from the more general Europeanisation due to the target states. Neighbourhood Europeanisation refers to the adoption of EU rules in the neighbourhood states, most often through the ENP (Gawrich, Melnykovska, Schweickert 2010: 1210). Neighbourhood Europeanisation became a subject of research when the EU started the ENP in 2004 (European Commission 2003). The neighbourhood comprises of 16 countries which are divided into the Southern neighbourhood (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia) and the Eastern neighbourhood (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) (European Neighbourhood Policy 2020). Neighbourhood Europeanisation is one of the goals of the EU's foreign policy as the Council of the European Union (2009: 16) has outlined that it is in the EU's interest to have well-governed states as their border countries. Therefore, neighbourhood Europeanisation is a branch of Europeanisation that looks into EU-induced domestic change in the neighbourhood countries.

The research now turns to explaining how and why the process of neighbourhood Europeanisation occurs. First, the process of neighbourhood Europeanisation is different due

to the lack of EU membership as an incentive (Börzel, Hüllen 2011: 6 – 7). The basis of the ENP was establishing stability and implementing the values of the EU in the neighbourhood without offering membership to the countries (European Commission 2004). Catalano and Graziano (2016: 365) argue that membership is the greatest incentive for countries to start the Europeanisation process; however, when membership is not offered, the countries are less willing to change due to the cost-benefit calculation being less beneficial. The EU has acknowledged this fact and has therefore created the ‘joint-ownership’ principle in its neighbourhood policy (Delcour 2013: 346). Delcour (2013: 346) explains that the principle entails the involvement of the governments more widely into the process of outlining the goals that the EU wants the partner countries to achieve. This provides the national governments with more influence but also more responsibility as they are responsible for fulfilling the commitments they agreed to (ibid). Therefore, the process of neighbourhood Europeanisation occurs without the membership perspective and the conditions for domestic change being agreed to between the EU and the governments.

Another feature of neighbourhood Europeanisation is the relationship between misfit and adaptational pressures. Even though misfit is an essential element in the Europeanisation of the member states, it is less so in neighbourhood Europeanisation. The neighbourhood countries exhibit high misfit with the EU, partly in due to their historic pasts: the Southern neighbourhood countries have a past of being dictatorships and the Eastern neighbourhood countries taut a Soviet past, therefore, the EU’s liberal democracy does not fit with their structure. However, with the neighbourhood countries, the high misfit does not automatically translate to adaptational pressures which would otherwise make countries implement European policies (Börzel, Risse 2012: 15). The absence of adaptational pressures is connected to the lack of a membership offer: without the “big carrot”, the neighbourhood countries do not lose as much if they do not comply, therefore, they do not feel the pressure to comply as much as member states or potential member states would (ibid). Therefore, even though there is misfit, domestic change is less likely due to there not being a compensation to cover the high adaptational costs of domestic change.

The last two of the differences – lack of membership and low adaptational pressures – decrease the probability of neighbourhood Europeanisation in comparison to member state or accession Europeanisation. However, there are additional factors that neighbourhood Europeanisation depends on: scope conditions. Due to the lack of membership and low adaptational pressures, the effectiveness of the mechanisms of Europeanisation depends on scope conditions (Börzel, Risse 2012: 2). The scope conditions are domestic incentives, degrees of statehood, the regime of the state, and power (a)symmetries (ibid: 10 – 14).

The first of the scope conditions is domestic incentives. Börzel and Risse (2012: 11) state that domestic incentives can adhere to the logic of consequentialism, as well as to the logic of appropriateness. Following the logic of consequentialism, domestic actors incorporate the EU's policies into the national legislation in order to gain the benefits that the EU has promised them for compliance (ibid). However, this only occurs if there is a perception that the benefits are greater than the adaptation costs (ibid). On the other hand, following the logic of appropriateness, domestic actors can regard the alignment with the EU policies as the most appropriate path (ibid). In that case, domestic actors change their national policies as they want to have the “appropriate” policy, i.e. the European policy (ibid). Even though Börzel and Risse focus on the domestic incentives which mean facilitating conditions for domestic change, there are also factors on the domestic level that impede domestic change. This paper calls them domestic constraints. Domestic constraints are the factors that disrupt Europeanisation due to the domestic constraints having the ability to increase the adaptational costs. Meaning that there might be an incentive to keep the *status quo* or to move even further away from the Europeanisation framework as the domestic constraints increase the adaptational costs to the level that they outweigh the benefits. Therefore, as this paper aims to determine what hinders the Europeanisation of gender norms in the neighbourhood countries, the domestic constraints are the focus of this research.

Second, there is the scope condition of the degree of statehood. Degree of statehood, which is understood as a state's ability to function, affects Europeanisation due to the fact that domestic institutions are in charge of implementing European policies and for that to be done successfully, the institutions must function properly (Börzel, Risse 2012: 11 – 12). However,

the impact of the degree of statehood on the mechanisms of Europeanisation is not clear. Börzel and Pamuk (2012: 80) state that if a state is fragile, it does not have the capacity to transform to fit with European policies, therefore, the fragile institutions impede Europeanisation. On the other hand, Hüllen (2012: 131 – 132) remarks that states that do not have a strong institutional framework sometimes adopt EU policies in order to fill the gaps in their own policies or to increase their legitimacy. Therefore, the impact of the scope condition of degree of statehood is dependent on the target neighbourhood country's particularities as the both the strength and the fragility of institutions can facilitate Europeanisation.

The third scope condition is the regime of the state due to its effect on the adaptational costs. Democratic regimes are more similar to the EU's liberal democracy; therefore, the goodness of fit between national policies and the EU policies is higher and the adaptational costs of EU policies are lower (Börzel, Risse 2012: 13). Autocracies, on the other hand, might perceive the EU and its democratic policies as a threat to the elite in power, therefore perceiving the political adaptational cost of a European policy to be high, and thus be more reluctant to adopt European policies (ibid). Börzel and Risse (ibid) also mention that autocracies are more inclined to be opposed to pooling their sovereignty as they hold on strongly to the Westphalian order of the world. Therefore, one could expect EU inspired domestic change to occur in a more democratic country than an autocratic one.

The fourth scope condition is power (a)symmetry. Power (a)symmetry is the power balance between the EU and the states. Power asymmetry affects Europeanisation because if one actor is in a higher power position than the other, it can therefore persuade the other to meet its demands, it has bargaining power (Grabbe 2003: 14, Schimmelfennig, Sedelmeier 2019: 3). With the neighbourhood countries, it is usually the EU who has leverage since the EU possesses the benefits which the state desires. However, in some cases, the state possesses something that the EU desires (such as oil or gas), therefore, power asymmetry is not always in favour of the EU (Schimmelfennig 2015: 23). In general, due to the EU's leverage stemming from the power asymmetry, one can expect Europeanisation to occur in states that are more dependent of the EU.

Although the scope conditions affect all mechanisms, there is one mechanism that is dominant in the Europeanisation of the neighbourhood during the time period in focus of this research, 2014 – 2019. In 2014, the EU adopted the European Neighbourhood Instrument for 2014 – 2020 with which the ENP adopted a new approach which is based on incentives and entails the ‘more for more’ principle (Publications Office 2018). This means that the more the partner country fulfils the EU’s conditions, the more rewards it gets. As the mechanism of conditionality is also based on incentives, this demonstrates that the new approach of the ENP functions by employing conditionality. Therefore, with the new ENP, conditionality is the dominant mechanism and thus, the mechanism in the focus of this research.

In conclusion, this chapter has established that neighbourhood Europeanisation differs from member state and accession Europeanisation, first, due to the lack of membership. This decreases the likelihood of Europeanisation occurring in the neighbourhood due to the adoption of EU policies being less beneficial due to the fewer rewards. Second, this chapter has established that the mechanism of conditionality is the dominant one in the neighbourhood as the EU itself has taken the route of offering more rewards for more conditions fulfilled with the new ENP. Third, the success of the mechanism is affected by scope conditions of domestic incentives, power (a)symmetries, regime of the state, and statehood. Therefore, there are factors that affect the success of Europeanisation in the neighbourhood which must be considered when assessing the Europeanisation of any reform in the neighbourhood countries.

As the basic elements of Europeanisation and neighbourhood Europeanisation have been established, the research moves on to the gender dimension of Europeanisation to provide an insight to the specifics of the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms.

### **1.2.The gender dimension of Europeanisation: EU promoted change of gender equality reforms**

This section consists of an overview of Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms. The overview clarifies the concept of the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms and the functioning of the Europeanisation mechanisms outlined above in the context of gender equality reforms. Based on this, the section explains the conditions on

which the adoption of EU promoted gender equality reforms depends. This is elaborated through the analysis of the three dimensions of Europeanisation: member state, accession and neighbourhood Europeanisation. Therefore, this section is divided into three parts. The first part demonstrates member state Europeanisation, the second part is devoted to accession Europeanisation and the third part illustrates neighbourhood Europeanisation, all focusing on the gender equality aspect. With the outline of the chapter having been established, the research moves on to the first part of the Europeanisation of member states in the context of gender equality reforms.

First, throughout its history, the EU has influenced domestic change in gender equality through hard law. Although it has been noted that the EU has not always prioritised social issues, with Caporaso and Jupille (2001: 21) calling social issues “the poor cousin” to the economic aims of the European Community, the EU has had an impact on gender equality in the member states due to the precedence of EU law. The precedence of EU law is the notion of EU law having to be adopted into national legislation (Precedence of European Law 2010). For example, EU was intended to be only an economic union, however, an element of gender equality was nonetheless added into the founding treaty: the Treaty of Rome (1957) included the clause for equal pay for men and women (Hoskyns 1996: 53 – 55). The clause was inserted into the treaty due to France adding it to the agenda of the European Community since France already had the equal pay directive within its legislation (ibid). This is an example of uploading as the clause became “European” after it had already been adopted on a national level. The issue of gender equality became more prominent in the 1990s with the Amsterdam treaty (1997) which institutionalised positive action and gender mainstreaming and came to be as the new legal basis for anti-discrimination directives (Kantola 2010: 13 – 14). In 2009, the Lisbon treaty was adopted. The Lisbon treaty enhanced the importance of gender issues by determining that non-discrimination and equality were fundamental elements of EU law (Giusti 2007: 526 – 527). Additionally, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU was adopted in 2000 and received the same legal status as the founding treaties with the adoption of the Lisbon treaty. The Charter includes seven articles on equality, with Article 23 specifically dedicated to equality between man and woman (Charter

of Fundamental Rights of the EU). These changes represent Europeanisation of gender equality through hard law. These changes are only applicable to member states and candidate countries as one of the Copenhagen criteria is the implementation of the EU's *acquis* (Accession Criteria (Copenhagen Criteria)). Therefore, one way the EU influences domestic change in gender equality in the member states is due to the precedence of EU law.

As the EU's actions in regard to the implementation of gender equality reforms have been examined, the research moves on to examine the domestic factors' effect on the adoption of EU-promoted gender equality reforms in the member states.

First, Anna van der Vleuten (2005 cited in Kantola 2010: 193) argues that there are 'pincers' that directly influence the compliance with European gender equality policies of member states. 'Pincers' are the pressure from the EU on the member state ("pressure from above") and pressure from national actors on the member state ("pressure from below") (ibid). The idea of 'pincers' follows Radaelli's, as well as Bandov and Kolman's idea of Europeanisation being multi-directional as the pressure from above coincides with the top-down approach and the pressure from below is due to the interactions on the domestic level (see Chapter 1.1. Europeanisation). Van der Vleuten (2005 cited in Kantola 2010: 193) explains that pressure must be exerted from the supranational level and the domestic actors at the same time to inflict domestic change in the member state. Van der Vleuten (ibid) adds that the EU can accelerate Europeanisation by empowering the national players in order to exert additional pressure on the member states to implement the European policies. This can also be seen as a combination of conditionality (pressure from above) and domestic factors (pressure from below) to explain what affects the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms.

In addition, in support of the importance of domestic factors in the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms, Dorte Sindbjerg Martinsen (2007: 3) argues on the basis of the Europeanisation of gender equality in Denmark that societal actors play an important role in the Europeanisation of gender equality. Martinsen (ibid: 11 – 12) remarks that societal actors interpret European policies often in a more liberal way than the member state government. If challenged by the government, they can refer the case to the European Court of Justice who has the ability to enforce the rule on the member state if it finds the

interpretation of the societal actors to be correct (ibid: 10 – 11). In the fear of negative incentives, the member state implements the policy fully. As domestic actors can also hinder domestic change, Martinsen (ibid: 18) remarks that such an instance is the phenomenon of veto-players acting as facilitating players. To sum up Van der Vleuten and Martinsen, this means that when studying the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms, domestic factors must be examined as they affect the process.

The effect is not always positive, however, as there are domestic factors that hinder gender equality reform adoption: domestic constraints. One domestic constraint for gender equality reforms has been observed to be gender stereotypes. Liebert (2003: 483, 489) remarked that in Germany, the reluctance to fully implement the EU's Equal Treatment Directive, stemmed from the traditional view of the man being the breadwinner and the woman being the homemaker. The stereotypes were deeply engrained into the institutional and the cultural framework of Germany as the country had many laws in place that limited women's opportunities in the labour market (ibid: 481 – 482). There was a misfit with the EU's policies and therefore the adaptational costs were higher as well. Liebert (ibid: 489) demonstrates that the traditional views on gender roles are closely connected to the low adoption of gender equality reforms. Rubery (2002: 517) supports this idea in her article about the European Employment Policy, saying that getting more women to the labour market is more "a question of changing and indeed transforming the economic and social structures underpinning the labour market system". This suggests that the gender stereotypes in the social structure hinder domestic change in gender equality. Therefore, when exploring the domestic constraints for the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms, it is important to examine the existence of gender stereotypes as they impact the adoption of the reforms.

To conclude the part about Europeanisation of the member states in the context of gender equality reforms, the process occurs mostly through hard law as member states are subjected to the precedence of EU law. However, domestic actors are an important element to the adoption of gender equality reforms as they can exert pressure on their national governments. Nonetheless, they benefit from the precedence of EU law by being able to circumvent their national governments and demand change on the EU level which in turn translates into

change on the domestic level as well. Thus, the domestic actors can affect the adoption of gender equality reforms, however, they do so by relying on the precedence of EU law. However, at the same time, the domestic constraint of gender stereotypes can hinder the process, therefore, demonstrating that domestic factors can both facilitate and hinder EU-induced gender equality reforms.

As the Europeanisation of member states in the context of gender equality reforms has been discussed, the research moves on to the Europeanisation of the candidate countries, i.e. accession Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms. Regarding the candidate countries, it has been determined that the membership perspective is the motivation for implementing domestic change due to its increasing conditionality. However, this is not the case with gender equality.

There has been the observation that the enlargement process did not include gender equality into the process as much as it could have. First, there is the observation that the process entailed ‘missed opportunities’ which means that the conditions that the EU set for the candidates did not incorporate gender equality promotion into it (Bretherton 2001 cited in Kantola 2010: 201). Kantola (2010: 200) argues further that the EU regards social issues as secondary to the others (such as a weak economy or lack of democracy) and that the lack of gender equality in the accession agenda is due to this as well. Even though the EU brought gender equality to the political agenda with accession conditionality, it has been constituted that the non-implementation of gender equality reforms did not hinder the accession of the candidate countries (ibid: 200 – 201). The addition of gender issues into the accession conditions was not a legitimate inclusion. Thus, regarding gender equality reforms, the credibility of the EU sanctioning the candidate countries for not implementing gender equality reforms is low. This means that regarding Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms, the credibility and therefore, the conditionality, determine the EU’s influence on the adoption of gender equality reforms.

Another feature that has been observed regarding the conditionality in accession Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms is the occurrence of ‘window dressing’. ‘Window dressing’ is used to describe the phenomenon of countries interpreting

differently how the gender equality reforms should be implemented (Kantola 2010: 205). The misinterpretation is a result of low conditionality, specifically low determinacy, as the EU is not clear on the intended actions. What can be concluded from this is that conditionality, especially its element of determinacy, must be high for the process of Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms to occur so the target countries would not be able to misinterpret the required actions.

Having defined the EU's role in the implementation of gender equality reforms in the candidate countries, the research moves on to the role of the domestic level as it was already determined to be important in the member state Europeanisation. Dobrotic et al. (2013: 222 – 223, 233) note, based on the example of Croatia's adoption of the EU's gender equality policies, that the process of Europeanisation depends on national particularities, calling the domestic arena decisive. Therefore, even though the target countries are different with accession Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reform promotion, the domestic factors are still indicated as an essential element to the process.

In the candidate countries, however, it has been observed that the domestic constraints are more influential than the positive domestic factors. Seppanen Anderson (2006: 113) makes the observation in her research comparing gender equality reform implementation in the Czech Republic and Poland, that the different level of implementation is due to the differences in organised opposition instead of the domestic actors who promote gender equality. Seppanen Anderson (ibid) concludes that on the basis of the Czech Republic adopting gender equality reforms much faster than Poland, even though the Czech Republic did not have such feminist mobilisation supporting the gender equality reforms as Poland did. However, there was a difference in the domestic mobilisation against gender equality reforms which ultimately affected the differing domestic change of the countries. In the Czech Republic, there was no organised opposition to gender equality legislation, therefore, the adaptational costs were low which explains the swift implementation of the laws (ibid: 115). In Poland, however, there were anti-feminist movements, led by the Catholic church, which impeded the implementation of the gender equality laws (ibid: 115 – 116). With the majority of the Polish public being Catholic, the Catholic Church is a strong political actor

as opposing their views, such as by implementing gender equality legislation, results in high political costs (ibid: 114). Therefore, it is understood that instead of domestic actors supporting the reforms, the existence of domestic constraints is the decisive factor in the implementation of gender equality reforms. Additionally, one can conclude on the basis of Poland and the Czech Republic that even with the same reward (in this case, membership), the domestic constraints are the element that the success of the mechanism of conditionality depends on. This means that domestic constraints are capable of hindering domestic change by decreasing the effect of conditionality.

To conclude the part about the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms in the accession countries, it is noted that the element of determinacy in the mechanism of conditionality is important to the success of the process. On the other hand, the Europeanisation process can be hindered by domestic constraints, especially the veto-player of religious entities. Therefore, the determinacy of conditions and veto-players must be considered when analysing the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms as both impact the process.

With the Europeanisation of gender equality reforms in member states and candidate countries having been established, the research turns the focus on the external actions of the EU in regard to gender equality promotion. There is not a great number of literature on gender equality promotion in the neighbourhood; however, with the support of the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation and the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms in the member states and the candidate countries, conclusions can be made on what to expect in the neighbourhood countries in the context of the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms.

As was established in Chapter 1.1.1. Neighbourhood Europeanisation, conditionality depends on scope conditions. However, the scope conditions have different levels of impact in the context of gender equality promotion, with domestic constraints prevailing as the most influential scope condition.

First, the scope condition of statehood's impact is reflected through the influence of domestic constraints on gender equality. Htun and Welton (2010: 211) argue that state effectiveness is more important to gender equality promotion than for other policies due to gender equality reforms requiring a transformation of fundamental values and societal norms. Htun and Welton (*ibid*) argue that the weaker the state's institutions, the more willing the state is to succumb to societal pressure (i.e. domestic constraints); the stronger the state's institutions, the more resilient the state is to societal pressure. Determining the effect of the domestic constraints on domestic change is a reflection of the statehood of the country. Therefore, statehood as a separate scope condition is not analysed in this research as the impact of domestic constraints reflects that.

Second, concerning power (a)symmetry, the nature of the issue of gender equality eliminates it as a scope condition. In regard to gender equality, the usual leverage that the EU has in relation to the countries that wish to align themselves closer with the EU, does not exist. In her article exploring the failed ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Ukraine, Ketelaars (2019: 8 – 9) explains that one would expect Ukraine to ratify the Istanbul Convention quickly as it would align Ukraine with the European values, which it strives for, and would distance Ukraine from Russia, whose identity it aims to further itself from. However, this did not happen due to the Istanbul Convention being perceived as unfitting to Ukraine. There was a delay in the ratification process due to the backlash the Istanbul Convention provoked as the Istanbul Convention did not align with the traditional views in Ukraine regarding gender (*ibid*: 9 – 10). This demonstrates two findings. First, it demonstrates that the perceptions on gender is a domestic factor. However, the perception on gender must be negative for it to be a domestic constraint to EU-induced gender equality reforms, therefore, this research calls the domestic constraint misperceptions on gender. Second, domestic constraints are the factor that the success of EU-influenced gender equality promotion depends on due to the perceptions on gender equality being a fundamental value which cannot be bargained over. Therefore, the EU has no leverage and power (a)symmetry does not affect conditionality in the context of gender equality promotion.

However, scope conditions are not the only element different in gender equality promotion in the neighbourhood: Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms in the neighbourhood countries is the least likely to take place due to the nature of the ENP and the EU's view on gender equality.

As was established above, the EU treats gender equality as a secondary issue and that is especially notable in the neighbourhood countries. Ketelaars (2019: 12) discovered through interviews with EU representatives on the promotion of gender equality in Ukraine that the EU believes that gender mainstreaming is the most successful way to increase gender equality in the country. However, the author points out that the EU has committed to gender mainstreaming haphazardly and questions the EU's commitment to it (ibid: 11 – 12). The non-systematic commitment to gender equality promotion illustrates that the EU is not prioritising the issue. Moreover, Ketelaars (ibid: 12 – 13) makes the observation that the EU has not made the ratification of the Istanbul Convention conditional to Ukraine and that the EU treats other issues to be more pressing in the case of Ukraine. What this means is that regarding gender equality promotion, the link between the demand and the reward is not clear. The EU's influence is diminished by the EU itself not outlining the need to implement domestic change regarding gender equality reforms, i.e. the EU itself decreases its conditionality by not making implicitly clear what the state receives for adopting gender equality reforms.

Additionally, the literature on neighbourhood Europeanisation has established is that the lack of membership diminishes the possibility of domestic change due to there not being a big enough incentive to outweigh the adaptational costs (see Chapter 1.1.1. Neighbourhood Europeanisation). This is evident in the case of gender equality reforms as well due to the adaptational costs increasing due to the EU setting conditions that do not reflect the real demands for gender equality on the ground. The EU is criticised for perceiving third countries as being backwards and putting itself in the position of the more developed actor who can show the underdeveloped countries the way, i.e. be European (Kunz, Maisenbacher 2017: 134). Due to this, the EU enforces its policies on the countries, without looking into the particularities of the countries themselves and without incorporating the domestic activists

into the transformations. This is problematic because by doing this, the EU sets conditions from an uninformed position, therefore, unknowingly increasing the adaptational costs as implementation of the outlined actions might be too costly for the country.

In sum, the probability of the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms in the neighbourhood is diminished already by the lack of membership. The probability is further decreased by the EU treating gender equality as a secondary issue. Therefore, the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms is the least likely to occur in the neighbourhood.

With the othering of the neighbourhood countries, the EU implies that there is a high misfit on a deeper level between the EU and the neighbourhood countries which signals the need to study the domestic level. Even though the EU deems gender equality as one of its core values (Council of the European Union 2015: 2), the legislation of the EU does not reflect that. Kunz and Maisenbacher (2017: 136) point out that the EU has added a clause in the ENP that outlines the law on domestic violence as a necessary element for a closer relationship with the EU. However, the EU itself has no legal provisions for combatting domestic violence; the Lisbon Treaty only recommends that member states should adopt laws on domestic violence, therefore, not making it a clear demand (ibid). However, the distinction between the neighbourhood countries having to adopt a domestic violence law and the member states only being recommended to do it, can be interpreted as the EU perceiving that the neighbourhood countries are unable to implement such a law. The EU seems to imply that there are domestic, perhaps cultural, factors in the neighbourhood countries that impact the countries' ability to implement such a law without the pressure of it being a commitment. Therefore, to test this perception of the EU in regard to the neighbourhood countries, the domestic factors must be looked into.

On the topic of domestic factors, domestic constraints are an important factor in Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms in the member states and the candidate countries, therefore, this should be the case in the neighbourhood countries as well. There are two domestic constraints mentioned in regard to member states and candidate countries: gender stereotypes and religious organisations. However, one can expect the

influence of the domestic constraints to be higher due to the EU having less power over the neighbourhood countries.

As was established beforehand, the strength of traditional views on gender roles has posed a problem even inside the EU. In Germany, however, the gender stereotypes were overcome and gender equality policies implemented after the European Court of Justice got involved and threatened Germany with sanctions (Liebert 2003: 490). However, that is not a possibility with the neighbourhood countries as they are not a part of the EU's legal system and there is no precedence of EU law in regard to the neighbourhood countries' legislation. Therefore, one can expect the domestic constraint of gender stereotypes to have a greater impact on the EU-induced domestic change in gender equality in the neighbourhood as there are no legal measures for the EU to contest them.

Another domestic constraint that was mentioned is the veto-player of a strong religious organisation. Seppanen Anderson (2006: 114) demonstrates that in Poland, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Catholic church obtained a great political role as they opposed the Soviets' discourse on equality. Thus, as the Eastern Partnership countries share the same past of being a former Soviet Union state as Poland does, it merits to explore the religious organisations' influence on the implementation of gender equality reforms in the Eastern neighbourhood. The domestic constraint of religious organisations is also underlined by Ketelaars (2019: 7) who discovered that the resistance against the ratification of the Istanbul Convention was led by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and resulted in the failed ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This suggests that if the church is so influential in one of the Eastern Partnership countries, religious organisations might be the reason behind the Europeanisation in the context of gender equality reforms being limited in the other Eastern neighbourhood countries as well.

In conclusion, this chapter has established that the Europeanisation of gender equality differs from the Europeanisation of other policy fields. Firstly, there is the issue of gender equality being a secondary issue for the EU. This means that the EU does not demand gender equality as strictly as other domestic changes which is then reflected in EU conditionality. Second, the success of the EU's gender equality promotion depends on domestic factors, especially

the domestic constraints because they entail high adaptational costs. Therefore, domestic constraints are an important element to analyse when researching the EU's promotion of gender equality. This is evident in the neighbourhood countries as the EU can directly influence only through the conditionality that the ENP entails, unlike by using precedence of EU law or membership as is the case in member states and candidate countries. In short, domestic change in gender equality in the neighbourhood depends on the interplay of conditionality and domestic constraints in regard to the EU's promotion of gender equality reforms. On the basis of this, this research has formed its hypothesis: The more there are domestic constraints within the target country, the less does European Union's conditionality regarding gender equality lead to domestic change. As the hypothesis has been established, the following chapter explains the methodology of the research for testing it.

## **2. Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology of the research.

### **2.1. Case selection and research design**

The research design that will be applied for the research is the most similar systems design (MSSD). Even though the Eastern Partnership comprises of six partner countries, the subjects of this study are Georgia and Armenia.

There are three reasons for picking Armenia and Georgia as the countries to study. First of all, Armenia and Georgia are suitable for a MSSD as the two countries have consistently had low rankings regarding gender equality up until the time period of 2014 – 2019, with little to no change occurring. In 2013, Georgia had the score of 0.675 and Armenia had the score of 0.6634 (World Economic Forum 2013: 10). Therefore, the two countries are ideal subjects to determine the EU's influence on gender equality reforms as one should be able to see it in these two cases.

Additionally, concerning alternative factors, such as the regime of the state, the two cases are comparable. The regime of the state is similar with both countries being 'Partly free', as assessed by Freedom House in its report Freedom in the World 2014 (2014: 18 – 19). As the regime of the state is one of the scope conditions to affect conditionality in the context of gender equality reforms, the similarity of the two means that domestic change should be similar, unless there are domestic constraints.

Moreover, the domestic constraint of religious organisations is underlined as an important factor to the Europeanisation process of gender equality reforms (Seppanen Anderson 2006, Ketelaars 2019). With both Armenia and Georgia having the same religion (Orthodox Christianity), they are good subjects to study the Europeanisation process of gender equality as it is expected that the similar religious organisation affects gender equality in a similar manner. This also demonstrates that there is already a possible domestic constraint within the countries. This makes the two countries good subjects as they provide the opportunity to test the hypothesis by looking for other domestic constraints and how they affect EU-induced domestic change.

The timeline for the study is 2014 – 2019 as it is the ideal timeline to study EU-induced domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms. First, the timeline is covered by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) as it is intended for the time period of 2014 – 2020 (Publications Office 2018). The ENI is important because it was adopted to increase the ENP's effectiveness in regard to the implementation of EU policies in the neighbourhood after the EU signalled a need for it in its review of the ENP in 2015 (European Commission 2015h: 2). Therefore, with the ENI, one would expect more change in general due to the instrument's increased effectiveness.

Second, this timeline includes the signing of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU (entered into force 2016) (Georgia and the EU 2018), and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU (provisional application in force in 2018) (Armenia 2019). The signing of these documents is significant because it demonstrates that the EU and the two countries have deepened their relations. Therefore, one would expect more Europeanisation to occur in the countries as both have established a closer relationship with the EU which should provoke more change.

Third, this timeline encompasses the Gender Action Plan II (2016 – 2020) which highlights the EU's intention to put a greater focus on achieving gender equality through its external actions. The Gender Action Plan II marks the start of the period where the EU has signalled a greater interest in gender equality, in both its internal, as well as its external actions (see Council of the European Union 2015). Therefore, during the timeline in focus, one should see some change as the EU has committed to promoting gender equality in a more substantial way as well.

All three of these elements combined, one would expect changes in gender equality since the EU has a more effective approach to the ENP, provides more to the countries with the agreements, and commits to gender equality promotion more substantially.

## **2.2.Methods used for the research**

This research uses data triangulation. Data triangulation is “using the same approach for different sets of data in order to verify or falsify generalisable trends detected in one data set”

(Oppermann 2000: 142). Therefore, multiple sources, documents, articles and interviews, are used for collecting the data used for solving the research problem. Using data triangulation guarantees the internal and external validity and reliability, therefore strengthening the conclusions made with the research (Schwartz et al 2009: 502). Additionally, it helps overcome the problem of insufficient data from relying on only one type of source, and according to Oppermann (2000: 143), data triangulation helps avoid data bias by providing the opportunity to cross-validate. Data triangulation is used to collect data for the dependent variable, the independent variable, as well as the intervening variables.

The data is gathered from Action Plans, Implementation reports of the agreements signed between the EU and the countries, EU documents, various reports conducted on the gender issues in the countries, statistical reports, secondary literature, and interviews. Due to the Action Plans themselves not retaining information on the actions planned, the annexes of the plans are analysed as they outline all the activities planned for each year. Therefore, from hereon, when Annual Action Plans are mentioned, what is meant is that the annexes are the elements under analysis.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner (see interview questions in Annex). Concerning the selection of interviewees, the research conducted interviews with representatives of local civil society and human rights or women's rights activists. They were selected as the interviewees as they are able to provide the country context of gender equality and are able to detect the effect of domestic constraints on EU-induced domestic change in their countries. The interviewees were Zara Hovhannisyan, from Armenia's Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, and Artur Simonyan, from the Armenian NGO "Right Sustainable Development of United Civil Society", Baia Pataraiia, from the Georgian Union Sapari, and a representative from another NGO in Georgia who requested anonymity in this research.

The independent variable of the study is the conditionality of the EU. When assessing conditionality, two elements are measured: determinacy and incentives. Even though credibility is also an element of conditionality, this research considers the EU as a credible

actor for Armenia and Georgia, seeing as the countries have become closer with the EU in the time period of 2014 – 2019, thus signalling trust in the EU keeping to its promises.

Determinacy is assessed by determining whether the actions for increasing gender equality are clear or remain vague. Determinacy is evaluated through assessing the cross-cutting nature of gender equality. The EU names gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in the Annual Action Plans, therefore, this should be reflected in the planned actions. Additionally, in the “20 Deliverables for 2020”, the EU names the target for 2020 to be “Gender mainstreamed in public policies with gender disaggregated data available per policy and better gender specific statistics available” (European Commission 2017i: 8). This means that the research looks for how gender has been taken into consideration in the planning of the actions for the partner countries, whether gender has been mainstreamed into all actions and whether gender disaggregated data is used. Determinacy is high when the actions have incorporated gender into all or the majority of its elements and have provided gender disaggregated indicators. Determinacy is low when gender equality is only named as a cross-cutting issue without it being incorporated into the actions and with gender disaggregated data not in use. Determinacy is medium when gender equality has been considered for some actions and there are gender disaggregated indicators for some actions, however, not to most or all actions.

Incentives are assessed through evaluating the Annual Action Plans’ incentives’ relation to the annual budget revenues of the countries. The higher the percentage of the incentives in relation to the annual budget revenues, the higher the incentive element of conditionality as without the additional funds, the deficit of the country increases. Measuring by percentages is important since the budgets for the two countries are different, therefore, judging by amount only would not determine the significance of the EU’s support to the countries. The scale for assessing the level of incentives is determined by calculating the ratios of incentives to total revenues and the scale for measurement is from the lowest percentage to the highest (see Table 1, page 43, and Table 2, page 50, for the incentives and the total revenues).

The scale ranges from 0.9% to 4.0%. The scale is divided into thirds to mark the level of incentives: 0.9% - 1.9% means low incentives, 2.0% - 3.0% means medium incentives, and

3.1% - 4.0% means high incentives. The Single Support Frameworks have a sliding scale of incentives; however, the same scale is used for assessing their level of incentives as well.

Conditionality is measured through the combination of the level of determinacy and the level of incentives. Therefore, if both elements are high/low, conditionality is high/low. If one of the elements is high and the other low or if both elements are medium, the conditionality is medium.

The intervening variable of the study is domestic constraints. The research looks for which domestic constraints exist in the two countries and whether they affect domestic change regarding gender equality. According to the literature on Europeanisation, with regards to gender equality reforms, the domestic constraints are the veto-player of religious entities, gender stereotypes, and the perception of gender. Therefore, these are the domestic constraints that are looked for when analysing the domestic constraints in Armenia and Georgia. As domestic constraints are already determined to be a hindrance to gender equality reforms, the variable is measured regarding the quantity of various domestic constraints. Since the hypothesis tests whether more domestic constraints means less domestic change, the quantity of domestic constraints is important as it provides a comparison between the two countries.

Lastly, the dependent variable of the research is EU-influenced domestic change in the context of gender equality. The specific dimensions that are explored are polity, policy, and politics (see Palonen 2003). Domestic change is assessed in multiple dimensions since gender equality affects many dimensions, as noted by Kunz and Maisenbacher (2017: 131). Additionally, the dimensions of polity, policy and politics are often intertwined, meaning that change in one dimension often means change in the others as well, especially concerning Europeanisation (see Cole, Drake 2000). The overall EU-induced domestic change in gender equality is measured by adding up the domestic changes in policy, polity and politics.

First, to determine the domestic change in policies, the research looks for legislative changes in the countries in regard to gender equality. The changes in policy are looked for in part on

the basis of the objectives of the document “20 Deliverables for 2020”. The objectives are the following:

- 1) Anti-discrimination legislation adopted in remaining Partner Countries;
- 2) Progress in harmonising relevant legislation;
- 3) Track record of equality bodies established and effective monitoring of anti-discrimination law;
- 4) Ratification of the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention by Partner Countries;
- 5) Sexual and gender-based violence/domestic violence legislation adopted in all Partner Countries and effective referral mechanisms are in place (European Commission 2017i: 8).

The research looks for both new legislation that has been adopted, as well as the amendments made to existing laws. For other EU-influenced domestic change, the research looks for EU-influenced domestic change by comparing domestic changes with the EU’s rhetoric to ensure that the domestic changes are influenced by the EU.

Second, to determine the change in politics, the research looks for institutional changes in the countries. As the European Union outlines that gender equality bodies should be created (European Commission 2017i: 8), the research looks for the establishment of bodies that are tasked with solving gender equality issues, such as bodies for combatting domestic violence. Third, to determine the changes in politics, the research looks for changes in female employment and female participation in politics it is the goal of the EU in the Gender Action Plan II to increase women’s economic empowerment, as well as political participation (Council of the European Union 2015: 21, 26). Additionally, the progress of the gender wage gap is looked for as it demonstrates the status of women in employment in comparison to men.

The dependent variable is measured with the measurement of high, medium and low in the dimensions of policy, polity and politics. The level of change in policies is assessed through the number of EU-influenced laws in place, the speed of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the number of amendments affected. A high level of domestic change means that many EU-influenced laws and amendments have been adopted and there was no long

delay in the adoption process. A low level of domestic change means few laws and amendments have been adopted and there was a long delay in the adoption process. The medium level of domestic change falls in between the two.

The level of change in polity is assessed through the number of institutional changes in place, as well as how well the institutions function. A high level of domestic change means that there have been institutional changes and the bodies are effective. A low level of domestic change means that there have been institutional changes, however, the bodies are not effective. The medium level of domestic change falls in between the two.

The level of change in politics is assessed through the change of percentage of women participating in the labour market, and politics, as well as the change in the gender wage gap. A high level of domestic change means that there is growth in the percentage of women participating in the labour market and politics, with the gender wage gap having decreased (at least 6%, counting for a 1% change for each year). A low level of domestic change means that there is little change (1% – 3%) in the percentages. A medium level of change falls in between the two.

This chapter has described the methods used in this study and it has established the data used for the analysis. Therefore, the next chapter moves on to applying these methods on the data and determining the answer to the research question, as well as testing the hypothesis.

### **3. Neighbourhood Europeanisation: EU promoted gender equality in Armenia and Georgia**

This chapter entails the analyses of the variables and the relationship of them to each other. It is divided into three parts which in turn all have two subchapters dedicated to the analysis of the countries in focus, Armenia and Georgia. The first part looks into the independent variable of EU conditionality, the second part focuses on the intervening variable of domestic incentives and the third part examines the dependent variable of domestic change.

#### **3.1. EU conditionality towards Armenia and Georgia in the context of gender equality reforms**

This section outlines the conditionality of the EU for Armenia and Georgia. The section is divided into two subchapters, one on the conditionality regarding Armenia and the other on the conditionality regarding Georgia.

##### **3.1.1. EU conditionality towards Armenia in the context of gender equality reforms**

This section explains EU conditionality for Armenia. First the conditionality of the Single Support Framework and then the Annual Action Plans for Armenia are described.

In regard to the Single Support Framework documents in the time period of 2014 – 2020, there are two of them. The first one is planned for the year 2014 – 2017 and the other one for 2017 – 2020. Neither of the documents pays specific attention to gender equality and even though there are incentives on offer, without gender equality objectives or actions to achieve that not having been envisioned, the conditionality of the Single Support Frameworks is low.

The Single Support Framework for 2014 – 2017 only outlines that “Specific attention will be devoted to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment” (European Commission 2014e: 7). This is the only mention of gender in the document. As there are no conditions that include gender equality, nor are there any objectives or actions outlined for increasing gender equality, the determinacy is low. The indicative amount of incentives for the reforms are €140 million – €170 million (ibid) which is at a medium level at 2.1% - 2.5%. With the low determinacy and the incentives being at the lower spectrum of medium, conditionality for gender equality is low.

Turning now to the Single Support Framework for EU support to Armenia planned for 2017 – 2020. The overall financial support through the Single Support Framework for Armenia ranges from €144 million to €176 million (indicative amounts) (European Commission 2017f: 6) which is at a low to medium level at 1.8% - 2.3%, depending on the final allocation of funds. Although gender equality is determined as a cross-cutting issue, it is not reflected in the funding as there is no allocated funding for the cross-cutting issue of gender equality, nor is the use of sex-aggregated indicators mentioned in the key priority areas, except for the expected result of “Enhanced protection of human rights” where one of the indicators is the Global Gender Gap Index (ibid: 22). Overall, gender equality as a priority cross-cutting issue is not reflected in the Single Support Framework due to gender not having been incorporated into the objectives. Therefore, the conditionality is low due to gender not being outlined in the key priority areas, i.e. determinacy being low, and the incentives being low or medium.

Now moving on to the Annual Action Plans for Armenia. Armenia’s Annual Action Plans entail few elements of gender equality promotion. Even though gender equality is deemed as a significant objective for most years, the Annual Action Plans entail little of it. Gender equality tends to not be incorporated into the objectives, nor the actions envisioned for reaching the goals outlined for each year. The use of sex-aggregated data is low which means that there is no gender-sensitive approach to the actions as the gender element is not taken into account. Therefore, the determinacy is low. The incentives are also low throughout the years, therefore, the conditionality for Armenia in 2014 – 2019 is consistently low. The following analysis explains the low conditionality for gender equality in detail.

As incentives are measured in comparison to the revenue of the state, here is Table 1 illustrating the incentives in relation to the state revenues of Armenia in the time period of 2014 – 2019:

Table 1. State revenue and EU incentives of Armenia in 2014 – 2019.

Year of Action Plan	State revenue (€)	EU incentives (€ million)	Percentage of the annual budget revenues for Armenia (%)
2014	2 162 581 273	19	0.9
2015	2 282 660 737	30	1.3
2016	2 275 563 388	20	0.9
2017	2 315 270 176	34.5	1.5
2018	2 507 090 406	36	1.4
2019	2 877 303 450	46	1.6

(Government approves 2014 State Budget 2013, Armenian Parliament Approves 2015 Budget 2014, Badalian 2015, Government approves 2017, Stepanian 2018, European Commission 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015c, 2015e, 2016a, 2017a, 2017c, 2017e, 2018a, 2018c, 2018d, 2018f, 2019b, 2019c, 2019e).

Concerning conditionality towards Armenia, all of the Annual Action Plans (bar Annex 3 of the Action Plan of 2017) in the period of 2015 – 2019 determine gender equality (including women in development) as a significant objective. To explain, the EU outlines the general policy objectives, which include gender equality, and specifies whether the policy objectives are not targeted, a significant objective or a main objective (see, for example, European Commission 2015a), indicating the level of importance. With gender equality being a significant objective, this demonstrates that the EU is concerned about it in the actions, however, it is not the main aim of the actions.

The Annual Action Plan for 2014 differs from the others as it does not include any assessment to the significance of any objectives. Therefore, starting from 2015, there is a shift towards gender equality being taken into consideration more.

In the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2014, in Annex 1 (Action Document for Support to SME Development in Armenia), gender equality is treated as a cross-cutting issue (European Commission 2014a: 12 – 13). The Annex outlines actions for increasing economic opportunities for women (ibid) which increases determinacy, however, there are no goals in mind to these actions, therefore, the determinacy is low. In Annex 2 (Action Document for Support to Human Rights Protection in Armenia), gender equality is one of the focal areas of the Annex. It is outlined that gender equality is a sensitive topic which could use improvement (European Commission 2014b: 18, 21). Both the objectives and the expected results entail gender equality. For example, one of the expected results is “Effective gender equality mechanisms and protection of victims of domestic/gender-based violence and abuse” (ibid: 24). Therefore, the determinacy of Annex 2 is high. However, overall for 2014, the incentives are low at only 0.9% (see Table 1, page 43). Thus, the overall conditionality in 2014 is low.

In the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2015, in Annex 1 (Action Document for Better Qualifications for Better Jobs), gender equality is taken into account in both the objectives, as well as the indicators. The Annex outlines that one of the objectives is “To improve the labour market intermediation and guidance services in order to ensure better access to employment both for men and women” (European Commission 2015a: 11). This demonstrates that there is a gender-sensitive approach to the actions as the participation of both men and women in the labour market is a target, not just an overall increase in employment. Additionally, statistics and data are collected for both men and women to ensure a gender-sensitive approach (ibid). The Annex highlights the need for a gender-sensitive approach, however, provides no specific targets to reach. Therefore, the determinacy is medium. In Annex 2 (Action Document for Public Finance Policy Reform Programme in Armenia), gender-budgeting is considered as a goal: “the gender dimension will be specifically considered in order to study and to analyse budgetary policy and eventually promote gender budgeting (for example in social programmes)” (European Commission 2015c: 11). However, this is the only approach to gender in the actions. There are no actions outlined for it, nor is there is no detection as to when “eventually” will be. Therefore, the

determinacy is low. In Annex 3 (Action Document for the Civil Society Facility (Armenia)), the gender aspect is deemed as something to take into great consideration (European Commission 2015e: 10). However, this is not reflected in the objectives. One of the assumptions to the actions is “Adequate interest in this intervention is shown by members of the CSOs, including women, environmental and youth organisations” (ibid: 20). However, this does not increase the determinacy as there is no indication as to what adequate means, therefore, the determinacy is low. With the incentives being low at 1.3% (see Table 1, page 43), the overall conditionality in 2015 is low.

In the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2016, in Annex 1 (Action Document for Support to Public Administration Reform in Armenia: Better Service Delivery through a More Efficient and Responsive Public Administration), the significance of gender equality as an objective is highlighted in the outline of the Specific Objectives for Armenia. Specifically, in Objective 1 (“To enhance policy and legislative development and coordination, which ensures gender equality dimension, at the central public administration”) and Objective 2 (“To strengthen professionalism and well-functioning of the civil service”) (European Commission 2016c: 18). Objective 1 already includes gender equality within the objective itself, however, for Objective 2, gender equality is expressed in the results of the objective. Namely, the results are having a gender balance in the representation of civil servants and having the training of civil servants linked to gender-balanced human resource planning (ibid: 29). There are numerical targets meant for all objectives and there is a clause saying that sex-aggregated indicators should be used when relevant (ibid). Only one indicator, however, entails gender equality specifically: “greater gender balance achieved in civil service and relevant management positions” (ibid: 30). There is no baseline for it, neither is there a target. Therefore, overall, the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2016 demonstrates high determinacy for gender equality as there are specific objectives and measurable targets which increase determinacy. However, with the incentives being low at 0.9% (see Table 1, page 43), the overall conditionality in 2016 is medium.

For the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2017, Annex 1 (EU4Innovation in Armenia: Enhanced Education focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics) stresses

that the programme aims to have a gender-sensitive approach in the implementation phase (European Commission 2017a: 15). The programme aims to increase the number of women in the ICT sector by focusing on giving girls and women the necessary education to enter the labour market (ibid: 10). The objectives do not entail a gender dimension; neither do the objectives outlined in the Annex contain any set goals in terms of gender equality, they are written as more generic aiming to increase the number of students and workers in the ICT sector (ibid: 15–16). Even the indicators do not include the gender dimension as there is no claim for sex-aggregated data. Therefore, determinacy is low. Annex 2 (Consolidation of the Justice System in Armenia) contains the promise of gender equality being a crucial element to the implementation of the programme. However, the objectives and the indicators do not reflect that since gender equality is not mentioned, although mechanisms for collecting sex-aggregated data are promised to be developed (European Commission 2017c: 9). Therefore, the determinacy is low. As mentioned before, Annex 3 (Action Document for the Armenia Technical Cooperation Facility) does not claim gender equality to be a significant objective (European Commission 2017e). However, the programme is about technical economic reforms for strengthening the economic cooperation between Armenia and the EU with no human involvement envisioned in the actions and is therefore not taken into account when assessing conditionality. Even without taking into account Annex 3, with the incentives being low at 1.5% (see Table 1, page 43), the overall conditionality in 2017 is low.

For the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2018, Annex 1 (Action Document for EU4Armenia – Regional Development), women and youth entrepreneurs are marked as key stakeholders (European Commission 2018b: 7). The Annex also raises the issue of a gender imbalance in entrepreneurship with the aim of taking concrete measures in promoting women entrepreneurs and taking action against barriers that women entrepreneurs face (ibid: 10). Regarding the objectives, gender equality is not mentioned within them, however, the indicators for two objectives mention sex-aggregated data (ibid: 28 – 29). In addition, for the seven outputs, one of the indicators is “30% of supported ventures owned by women or having women in managerial positions” (ibid: 29). The determinacy is high due to the clear targets for gender equality in the field of development. Regarding Annex 2 (Initial Action

Document for EU4Citizens: Deepening Democracy in Armenia), gender equality central to the document, with one of the outputs for Objective 2 (To deepen civic engagement in Armenia) being “Women engagement strengthened” (European Commission 2018e: 44). The document states that the aim of the EU with these actions is to “enhance women's civic participation and empower them politically and economically through investing in access to affordable and qualitative early childhood education and care services” (ibid: 22). The indicators entail the gender dimension within them; however, the targets range between vague and clear (‘Significant improvement’ compared to ‘At least 20% [of innovative civic engagement initiatives] proposed and used by girls and women’ (ibid: 41 – 44)). However, the determinacy is still high. Overall, with the low incentives of 1.4% (see Table 1, page 43), the conditionality is medium.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Armenia for 2019, in Annex 1 (Action Document for CEPA Reform Facility), “Lack of gender equality in project implementation” is deemed as a medium risk (European Commission 2019a: 9). This risk should be mitigated through “a systematic gender mainstreaming in the design and implementation of projects and ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in new government reform programmes, policies and activities” (ibid). However, gender equality is not mentioned within the objectives, the outputs, nor the indicators. Therefore, determinacy is low. In Annex 2 (Action Document for EU4 Energy Efficiency and Environment), sex-aggregated data is collected for the number of relevant central government and local authorities’ employees and specialists in target regions trained in energy efficiency (European Commission 2019f: 25 – 26). The objectives do not entail gender equality; however, due to the actions aiming to solve environmental issues that do not entail a gender dimension (such as Objective 3 “Enhance the environmental protection and water quality in Lake Sevan” (ibid: 25)), this is to be expected. Therefore, this annex is not taken into consideration when assessing the conditionality for 2019. Annex 3 (Action Document for Local Empowerment of Actors for Development (LEAD)), gender equality is marked as crucial to local empowerment (European Commission 2019d: 19 – 20). However, it is not outlined what will be done for establishing gender equality. Even though sex aggregated data is used for measuring objectives 1 and 2 (ibid: 27) and one of objective 1’s

outputs (1.3) targets gender equality specifically as it demands for a gender sensitive approach to regional needs-based strategies, there are no specific targets outlined that include a gender dimension. Therefore, the determinacy is medium. Even without taking into account Annex 2, with the incentives being low at 1.6% (see Table 1, page 43), the conditionality in 2019 is low.

To conclude, regarding EU conditionality for Armenia, gender equality seems to not be a full commitment. The EU signals that it takes gender into account with the intended reforms by calling gender equality a cross-cutting issue, however, there are few specific actions planned for increasing gender equality. Gender equality is mentioned fairly often in the programmes but it is rarely outlined how gender equality will be achieved, with little mention to what the specific actions or specific goals for Armenia are in terms of gender equality. Therefore, conditionality is decreased due to the low level of determinacy. In addition, the incentives offered to Armenia are consistently low throughout 2014 – 2019 which further lowers the level of conditionality. Therefore, in the case of Armenia, the conditionality is low as the determinacy and the incentives are low.

### **3.1.2. EU conditionality towards Georgia in the context of gender equality reforms**

This section explains EU conditionality for Georgia. The conditionality of the Single Support Framework and the Annual Action Plans for Georgia are described.

In regard to the Single Support Framework documents in the time period of 2014 – 2020, there are two of them. The first one is planned for the years 2014 – 2017 and the other one for 2017 – 2020. The incentives for both frameworks are high. There is a shift to the prioritisation of gender equality in the second Single Support Framework. This reflects the EU drawing more attention to gender equality with its Gender Action Plan II. However, due to the first framework entailing gender equality in a limited way, the conditionality overall for the time period is medium.

The Single Support Framework for 2014 – 2017 outlines that “Specific attention will be devoted to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and to the enhancement of statistical capacities” and deems gender as cross-cutting issue but only when

it is relevant (European Commission 2014f: 10). The indicative amount of incentives for the reforms are €335 million to €410 million (ibid: 8) which makes up 4% - 4.9% of the total revenues of the time period. However, without there being conditions that include gender equality, nor there being any objectives for increasing gender equality, the determinacy is low. Therefore, conditionality is medium.

Moving on to the Single Support Framework for EU support to Georgia planned for 2017 – 2020. The overall financial support through the Single Support Framework for Georgia ranges from €371 million to €453 million (indicative amounts) (European Commission 2017g: 6) which makes up 3.5% - 4.3% of the overall budget for 2017 – 2019. Gender issues are taken into consideration throughout the framework. First, for all of the four broader objectives, there is the requirement to use gender-aggregated data as much as possible in regard to the indicators (ibid: 8, 10, 12, 14). The use of gender-aggregated indicators demonstrates that there is an understanding of actions affecting genders differently, therefore, the gender aspect is taken into consideration. Second, one of the expected results of the key priority area of “Strengthening institutions and good governance, including consolidating the Rule of Law and addressing security” is “Gender equality and gender-based violence/domestic violence advanced and mainstreamed into Georgian legislation and its implementation” (ibid: 21). Therefore, this demonstrates that gender equality is outlined as an issue in the country and actions for it are outlined. The Single Support Framework for Georgia (2017 – 2020) incorporates gender as it takes into account the gender aspect of all its objectives and outlines the expected result of incorporating gender equality into legislation, therefore, the determinacy is high. Even though the conditionality for the Single Support Framework 2014 – 2017 is medium, the conditionality overall for both frameworks is high due to three elements being high (incentives for 2014 – 2017 and 2017 – 2020 being high and the determinacy of 2017 – 2020 being high), with one being low (the determinacy for 2014 – 2017).

Now moving on to the Annual Action Plans for Georgia. Georgia’s Annual Action Plans entail few elements of gender equality promotion for 2014 and 2015. However, in 2016 there is a shift towards incorporating gender equality in a more substantial manner to the Action

Plans. This follows the same pattern as the Single Support Frameworks where the adoption of the Gender Action Plan II increased the incorporation of gender equality in the actions for Georgia. The determinacy ranges from low to high throughout the years but incentives are consistently high. Therefore, the conditionality in 2014 – 2019 is medium. The detailed explanation of the Annual Action Plans is outlined next.

As incentives are measured in comparison to the revenue of the state, here is Table 2 which illustrates the incentives in relation to the state revenues of Georgia in the time period of 2014 – 2019:

Table 2. State revenue and EU incentives of Georgia in 2014 – 2019.

Year	State revenue (€)	EU incentives (€ million)	Percentage of the annual budget revenues for Georgia (%)
2014	2 592 328 008	103.2	4
2015	2 800 119 640	100	3.6
2016	2 936 826 151	109.5	3.7
2017	3 289 194 332	96.5	2.9
2018	3 593 436 386	80.14	2.2
2019	3 641 675 751	119.5	3.3

(State Budget, European Commission 2014c, 2014d, 2015b, 2015d, 2015f, 2015g, 2016b, 2016c, 2017b, 2017d, 2018b, 2018e, 2019a, 2019d, 2019f).

Concerning conditionality towards Georgia, all of the Annual Action Plans in the period of 2015 – 2019 determine gender equality (including women in development) as a significant objective (see previous section 3.1.1 for detailed explanation). The Annual Action Plan for 2014 does not include any assessment to the significance of any objectives. Therefore, starting from 2015, there is a transition towards gender equality being taken into consideration more.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2014, Annex 1 (Action Document Support to the Justice Sector Reform in Georgia) entails only one mention of gender equality. The Annex outlines that “...in preparation of activities, attention will be paid to ensure gender

equality” (European Commission 2014c: 13). It is not outlined how this will be achieved, nor are there any objectives regarding gender equality. Therefore, determinacy is low. Annex 2 (Action Document for Support to EU-Georgia DCFTA and SMEs) treats gender equality as a cross-cutting issue; however, it is not incorporated into the objectives besides the mention of women in business being a target group (European Commission 2014d: 25, 35). Therefore, the determinacy is low. With the incentives being high at 4% (see Table 2, page 50), the conditionality is medium.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2015, Annex 1 (Action Document for Support to Public Administration Reform in Georgia (PAR)), gender equality is treated as a cross-cutting issue. It is outlined that “Gender [...] related issues will be tackled through the establishment and implementation of equality-related criteria in the civil service, and in policy making, promoting gender-related issues in the production of data” (European Commission 2015b: 10). Therefore, there is a gender-sensitive approach; however, as the specific actions for that are not outlined, the determinacy is low. In Annex 2 (Action Document for the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia, phase II (ENPARD Georgia II)), gender equality is mentioned as to be incorporated into all of the implementation activities, specifically by supporting with grants activities that promote gender equality and by using gender-sensitive policy and gender-aggregated data (European Commission 2015d: 9). However, this remains vague as there are no specific targets for gender equality. It is also mentioned that specific measures are taken to improve the situation of women and girls (ibid: 3). However, it is not outlined what the specific measures are. Therefore, the determinacy is low. In Annex 3 (Action Document for Civil Society Facility (Georgia)), it is outlined that there are concrete actions which “include gender and equality training for civil society representatives as well as promoting the participation of women in civil society membership, policy advocacy and decision-making at all relevant levels” (European Commission 2015f: 7). However, actions nor objectives for it are not outlined. Therefore, the determinacy is low. In Annex 4 (Action Document for Technical Cooperation Facility), gender equality is treated as a cross-cutting issue (European Commission 2015g: 8). Even though there is not much attention turned

towards gender equality, there is a greater focus on the issues of domestic violence. There is a direct grant of EUR 1.5 million allocated to UN Women for the combat against domestic violence (ibid: 16). Even though the actions for that are not outlined, the conditionality is increased as there is a clear objective to the allocation, the combat against domestic violence. Additionally, as the actions are followed through by UN Women, in this case the level of conditionality is more based on the incentives for this direct action. Therefore, the conditionality for Annex 4 is medium as there is a direct and clear action in one part; however, the other objectives do not incorporate any elements of gender equality which lowers the conditionality. Overall, with the incentives being high at 3.6% (see Table 2, page 50), the conditionality is medium.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2016, Annex 1 (Action Document for the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia, phase III (ENPARD Georgia III)) highlights the issues of rural Georgians, with a specific focus on rural women as they are the most vulnerable group (European Commission 2016a: 5 – 6). In Annex 1, gender equality is specified as an objective: “reducing the gap between rural women and men through [...] actions” (ibid: 12). The annex outlines specific targets and priority activities regarding gender equality (ibid: 12). The EU has also included sex-aggregated indicators for measuring the implementation of the activities (ibid: 23 – 24). Additionally, the annex stresses that the reports on the Action Plan shall include gender analyses, therefore, emphasising the importance of gender equality in agriculture and rural development (ibid: 22). Therefore, the determinacy is high. The objectives of Annex 2 (Action Document for Technical Cooperation Facility II) do not entail gender equality specifically. Gender equality is regarded as a cross-cutting issue (European Commission 2016b: 10), without explaining in depth how gender equality would be promoted in the implementation of the programme. The only clear action within the programme for promoting gender equality is creating “awareness raising campaigns” (ibid). However, the activity of “support to mainstreaming gender issues into national planning and budgeting processes” (ibid) does not include any details on how and through which means this support

would be provided or what this support even entails. Therefore, determinacy is low. With the high incentive of 3.7% (see Table 2, page 50), the overall conditionality in 2016 is high.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2017, Annex 1 (Action Document for Economic and Business Development in Georgia), treats gender equality as a cross-cutting issue (European Commission 2017b: 27). The EU exhibits support to “best practices of gender equality standards” (ibid: 10 – 11), aims to impact “gender imbalances related to business ownership, employability and remuneration” (ibid: 27) and focuses on “facilitat[ing] [women’s] integration in the development of business sophistication models, where digital economy, innovation, and research/industry partnerships will be promoted” (ibid: 27). Specific actions for reaching these goals, however, are missing. Therefore, determinacy is low. In Annex 2 (Action Document for Skills Development and Matching for Labour Market Needs), in addition to gender equality being a cross-cutting issue, women are regarded as special targets for the programme (European Commission 2017d: 17). Throughout the annex, it is mentioned that both men and women are the recipients of support, even specifying that “beneficiaries are to include men and women in equal numbers” (ibid: 17, 22). This demonstrates that the actions pay specific attention to having both men and women benefit from it equally. Additionally, the annex outlines numerical indicators for each activity, specifically mentioning the targets for women in the activity (for example, the goal of increasing women’s activity by 5% by 2020) (ibid: 35 – 36). Therefore, the determinacy is high. With the incentives being medium at 2.9% (see Table 2, page 50), the overall conditionality in 2017 is medium.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2018, Annex 1 (EU4 Security, Accountability and Fight against Crime in Georgia (SAFE)) emphasises the importance of gender sensitivities in the fight against serious and organised crime and cybercrime, and also stresses that gender sensitivities should be reflected in the documents and practices developed within the programme (European Commission 2018a: 4, 14 – 15). The objectives, the indicators, nor the targets reflect any kind of gender dimension for the activity, therefore, determinacy is low. In Annex 2 (Action Document for EU4 Economic Governance and Fiscal Accountability), the gender equality aspect is included in the gender-specific targets of the

objectives. As most objectives are technical, such as “Strengthened medium term and policy planning” (European Commission 2018c: 34), there is not much to measure regarding gender equality, therefore, this Annex is not taken into account when assessing conditionality. In Annex 3 (Support for the Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement), the objectives do not include gender equality but it is stated that when measuring the objectives, sex-aggregated data should be used where relevant (European Commission 2018d: 27). It is specifically mentioned that gender issues are mainstreamed into all reforms that are adopted under the programme (ibid: 14). Additionally, the inclusion of women in decision-making is highlighted as important; however, it is also noted that the “inclusion of gender equality related issues will be defined at a later stage, before contracting” (ibid: 14). Therefore, gender equality is highlighted as an element to the programme but due it being taken into consideration at a later date, the determinacy is low. With the incentives being low at 2.2% (see Table 2, page 50), the overall conditionality in 2018 is low.

Regarding the Annual Action Plan for Georgia for 2019, Annex 1 (Action Document for EU4 Human Rights in Georgia) outlines actions regarding human rights. The actions that the EU, Georgia and other international actors have taken in order to improve gender equality are detailed (European Commission 2019b: 17 – 18, 20 – 21). Women living in vulnerable situations and women survivors of domestic violence and violence against women are specifically mentioned as one of the main beneficiaries of the actions outlined in the Annual Action Plan (ibid: 13). There is a focus on the combat against domestic violence as two of the expected results entail progress in that area (ibid: 25, 38 – 39). The indicators used for measuring are sex-aggregated which depicts the gender dimension of the actions. Therefore, the determinacy is high. Annex 2 (Action Document for EU4 Integrated Territorial Development) does not include objectives, indicators, nor targets that include the gender dimension (European Commission 2019c). Therefore, in terms of gender equality, determinacy is low. Annex 3 (Action Document for the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development in Georgia, phase IV (ENPARD Georgia IV)) follows the same line the Annex 1 of the Annual Action Plan of 2016 with the objective being “reducing the gap between rural women and men” (European Commission 2019e: 30).

Even though the objectives themselves do not entail gender equality in their wording, the use of sex-aggregated data as indicators signals the inclusion of the gender dimension (ibid: 42 – 45). As the targets are to be determined but sex-aggregated indicators are used, the determinacy is medium. With the high incentive of 3.3% (see Table 2, page 50), the overall conditionality in 2019 is high.

In conclusion, Georgia has medium conditionality. Even though Georgia has high incentives the majority of the years in focus, this is counterbalanced by the determinacy mostly ranging between low and medium. Therefore, the EU provides the incentives for domestic change, however, as it does not incorporate gender into all the actions outlined, the conditionality is assessed to be medium in the period 2014 – 2019.

When comparing Georgia and Armenia, the first finding that is observed is the difference in EU support, i.e. the incentives. By the incentives alone, Georgia's conditionality is higher. In regard to the determinacy of conditions, Armenia's determinacy is mostly low while Georgia ranges between low and medium determinacy. In both cases, this is a reflection of the critique that the EU treats gender equality as secondary issue. Taking into account the determinacy of the conditions, the conditionality is medium in Georgia and low in Armenia. Therefore, Georgia can be expected to fulfil more of the EU's conditions than Armenia due to Georgia having higher conditionality.

However, as was established in the first chapter, domestic constraints can impede domestic change, therefore, the domestic constraints within the two countries are explored in the following section.

### **3.2.Domestic constraints influencing the implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Armenia and Georgia**

Concerning the domestic constraints that impede the Europeanisation of gender equality reforms, gender stereotypes, the veto-player of religious organisations and misperceptions on gender were identified. During the research, however, another domestic veto-player was discovered: conservative groups. Therefore, in the following sections, the existence of the four domestic constraints outlined above are studied in Armenia and Georgia.

### **3.2.1. Domestic constraints influencing the implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Armenia**

In Armenia three types of domestic constraints are present: misperceptions on gender, veto-players (conservative groups and the Armenian Orthodox church) and gender stereotypes stemming from traditions.

First, the misperceptions on gender affect the efforts to enhance gender equality in Armenia. The misperceptions stem from there not being information about the concept of gender – Armenians do not have the knowledge about what gender is due to it not being taught to them. Anna Harutyunyan (2017) explains that a survey conducted by NGOs revealed that the respondents were not aware of what either gender or social construct meant. The lack of knowledge, however, causes misinformation. The information on what constitutes gender, is often misconstrued and creates a hostile position towards all ideas that entail the concept of gender. Therefore, there is the idea that “gender itself is a bad choice” ((Interview Simonyan 2020). This misperception on gender is proven by the fact that, in 2013, when the Armenian government tried to pass the gender equality law, there was so much backlash in regard to the use of the word “gender” in the law, that the law eventually was passed as an equality law between men and women (Abrahamyan 2017). The former prime minister of Armenia Hovik Abrahamyan supported the opposition to the concept of gender and said that “when we are talking about gender, we are talking about equality between a woman and a man in the parliament of Armenia” (Interview Simonyan 2020). Additionally, opponents of the law perceived the law as promoting non-traditional gender roles (Abrahamyan 2017). The lack of knowledge on the concept of gender results in misconstrued ideas on the meaning of gender from which the opposition to elements including the word “gender” arises from.

Another one of the misperceptions on gender is that the term is associated with homosexuality which is unacceptable to most Armenians. In a survey conducted in 2017, 97% of respondents expressed that homosexuality should not be accepted (Pew Research Centre 2017: 106). Being linked to homosexuality, gender is as unacceptable to Armenians as homosexuality itself. In 2013, when the gender equality law was supposed to be ratified, a Facebook Group called “No to ‘Gender’ Law! No to National Treason.” was created and it

equated gender with homosexuality, transvestism and perversion (Martirosyan 2013). The group already demonstrates the ideas on gender prevalent in the country, however, another example of how widespread the negative views on gender are is illustrated by the media subscribing to this notion. There were multiple articles and news stories supporting the idea that gender is some sort of concept which forces people to change their sex or change their sexual orientation (Martirosyan 2013). Additionally, when an NGO promoting gender equality was attacked by neonationalist groups in 2018, the media condemned the NGO instead of the attackers (Nikoghosyan 2015: 25). The fact that the media, and not just independent media, distributed the misinformation, demonstrates that misperceptions on gender are common in Armenia. These cases demonstrate that misperceptions on gender are widespread in the Armenian society which makes it more difficult for the people to accept ideas containing the term. This means that the misperceptions on gender equality are a domestic constraint since there are high political costs in regard to the adoption of gender equality reforms as the electors do not support reforms that include the concept of gender.

Second, the misperceptions on gender are connected to the veto-players as they use them as rhetoric against gender equality laws. One of these veto-players are conservative groups. One conservative group is the Pan-Armenian Parental Committee which spreads anti-gender propaganda, saying that gender equality represents “perversion, pedophilia, homosexuality, threat to demography” and is a Western idea that enforces marriage equality on Armenia (CEDAW Task Force Armenia: 6). The influence of conservative groups is evident in regard to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. The conservative groups present the Istanbul Convention as a perversion that aims to introduce a “third sex” and destroy the traditional Armenian values (Khachatrya 2019). One conservative group Kamq started a petition against the ratification of the Convention and garnered thousands of signatures, including from prominent politicians (Khachatrya 2019). Another example of the conservative groups’ power is in regard to the law on domestic violence. The conservative groups stated that the law goes against the “traditional Armenian family” (Koltsova 2020). Some pro-Russian groups spread misinformation on the draft law beforehand, implying that the law on domestic violence would destroy the traditional Armenian family (Simonyan et al 2017: 25). The

pressure of the conservative groups was so great that the law underwent multiple changes before being adopted in parliament. The parliament justified the changing of the law with the need to take into account various opinions on the law; however, this resulted in the law taking a more conservative approach that aims to maintain family harmony and to preserve the traditional Armenian family (Koltsova 2020). The ability of conservative groups to pressure governments into changing laws according to the conservative groups demands suggests that adopting reforms that are unacceptable to conservative groups entails high political adaptational costs for the government.

The other veto-player is the Armenian Orthodox church. Armenia's dominant religious organisation is the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is a part of Eastern Orthodoxy. In the Gender Barometer Survey of 2015 (Center for Gender and Leadership Studies 2015: 14), 94% of respondents responded that being a good Christian is rather important or very important. The survey demonstrates that Christianity is widespread in Armenia and that religion is an important element to everyday life. For many people, the Armenian church and its apostles constitute the rule (Interview Simonyan 2020). Therefore, the church is a domestic constraint as defying them entails high political costs for the politicians in power.

Additionally, the Armenian Orthodox church as a domestic constraint is illustrated by the fact that the church has impeded gender equality reforms and laws from being adopted. The Armenian Orthodox church has expressed negative views on the Istanbul Convention, saying that "There are extremely concerning points in the Convention from the perspective of our national-spiritual identity and security, we urge our authorities to refrain from ratifying the document" (Mejlumyan 2019). The argument, therefore, is that the Istanbul Convention does not align with the Armenian identity, that the Istanbul Convention does not fit with the Armenian way of life. The Armenian Orthodox church was "the first to be against [the Istanbul Convention] ... not on the highest level but at least on middle and low level, they were promoting these actions against Istanbul Convention" (Interview Simonyan 2020). Therefore, the Armenian Orthodox church encourages anti gender equality ideas which are already widespread in the Armenian society. The Armenian Orthodox church's "[p]riests often go out against gender equality groups and human rights activists and take part in rallies

and rallies by conservative aggressive groups” (Interview Hovhannisyan 2020). Therefore, the Armenian Orthodox church not only demonstrates its discontent with gender equality in their discourse but also through taking active part in rallies against gender equality. The influence of the Armenian Orthodox church is illustrated by the fact that the church was consulted when the ratification of the Istanbul Convention was discussed in the government. In July 2019, the Ministry of Justice of Armenia started talks with the Armenian Orthodox church to alleviate the worries in regard to the Istanbul Convention and its perceived intent to “create a third sex” (Armenia Justice Minister on why Istanbul Convention needs to be ratified 2019). This demonstrates that the government pays attention to the opinions of the Armenian Orthodox church. This is connected to the fact that the majority of Armenians follow the church and its views, therefore, without having the approval of the church, the government might lose the support of the voters, i.e. face high political costs.

Third, there are gender stereotypes in Armenia. Nikoghyan (2015: 23) calls Armenia a patriarchal society where gender stereotypes are passed on through generations. The gender stereotypes have a direct impact on gender equality as gender stereotypes and gender-based traditions have hindered the progress of gender equality in Armenia (UNFPA 2016: 14). There is a division of gender roles: “the woman's territory is the home, the family, the care of children and the elderly, and men are active in public life – politics, leadership positions and are considered the head of the family” (Interview Hovhannisyan 2020). The gender stereotypes are further illustrated by Armenians cherishing independence, confidence and persistence in boys and obedience and self-expression in girls (Center for Gender and Leadership Studies 2015: 18). This demonstrates that women are expected to be obedient and demure, while men are expected to have the characteristics needed for a successful career. Women are perceived as carers and homemakers while men are seen as natural leaders who women should obey. This point of view is exemplified Armenians believing that household chores are only for the woman to do (UNFPA 2016: 23). Therefore, gender stereotypes are also widespread in Armenia which puts women in a less advantaged position as they have to overcome the gender stereotypes.

The gender stereotypes create specific obstacles for women in their professional life. There are occupational stereotypes which hinder women's broader participation in the labour market (Asian Development Bank 2019: 19). There are two prevalent issues regarding the stereotypes. First, due to the stereotypes, women opt for jobs that fit with the traditional female roles better, therefore, staying in sectors that have lower salaries: agriculture, education, and health (Asian Development Bank 2019: 19). Therefore, gender stereotypes stop women from pursuing careers that are not in accordance with the stereotype of a woman. Second, the stereotypes affect the employers' willingness to employ women into higher positions. Nikoghosyan (2015: 23) remarks that in a survey conducted by the NGO Society without Violence in 2010 – 2011, 60% of men and 37% of women did not find women to be good leaders. This illustrates that there is a bias against women in regard to higher positions. Additionally, as women are regarded as (future) mothers and caretakers, the employers do not want to put women in higher positions as they are not deemed to have the traits necessary for such responsibility (Asian Development Bank 2019: 24). Therefore, the gender stereotypes affect women's situation and prevent them from having economic empowerment. The gender stereotypes entail high adaptational costs as the stereotypes are a reflection of the values of Armenia, therefore, any change working against the stereotypes is more costly to adopt as it opposes the norm followed by the majority of Armenians.

In sum, the domestic constraints present in Armenia are misperceptions on gender, veto-players and gender stereotypes. The misperceptions on gender and veto-players are connected to one another as the veto-players strengthen the negative ideas about gender shared by a majority of the population. The veto-players use the misperceptions in their rhetoric and, in turn, the misperceptions become more widespread in society. Therefore, there is more opposition to gender equality due to the misunderstanding as to what it entails which results in the high adaptational costs of gender equality reforms. Additionally, the negative stereotypes hinder EU-induced domestic change in gender equality as the norm in Armenia is the inequality between genders, thus, any domestic change in politics entails high adaptational costs due to the domestic changes working against the norm. In sum, the

adaptational costs of gender equality reforms are high in Armenia due to the presence of multiple domestic constraints.

### **3.2.2. Domestic constraints influencing the implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Georgia**

In Georgia two domestic constraints are displayed: veto-players (the Georgian Orthodox church) and gender stereotypes. The literature also suggested misperceptions on gender as a domestic constraint. Two interviewees mentioned the misperceptions on gender: “Some people still think that gender is not a real problem and it is just a Western agenda being pushed by the NGOs and feminists in Georgia” (Interview Patariaia 2020) and “there is no understanding of what gender is” (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). However, sufficient information on the misperceptions on gender acting as a domestic constraint was not found, therefore, the misperceptions on gender are not displayed as a domestic constraint in Georgia. One interview also pointed out conservative groups as a domestic constraint (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020), however, sufficient information on their influence on gender equality was not found, therefore, they are not displayed as a domestic constraint in Georgia.

First, regarding gender equality, there is the veto-player of the Georgian Orthodox church in Georgia. Even though Georgia is a secular state, the influence of the Georgian Orthodox church is notable in the country. The strength of the Georgian Orthodox church is highlighted in the interviews, saying that “they are very strong, even though I think that they are losing their power in a way, they still have a lot of followers and they have a lot of influence” (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). Due to the number of followers that the Georgian Orthodox church has, the church plays a prominent role in society and by extension, in politics. For example, 74% of people have expressed that they would not vote for a party whose leader made negative comments on the Georgian Orthodox church (NDI: Public attitudes in Georgia 2016). Therefore, if the Georgian Orthodox church has reservations regarding the ruling party, the possibility that the party will not be re-elected increases. Politicians have to assess the political cost of adopting laws in regard to the acceptance of the law by the Georgian Orthodox church. This is exemplified by the following statement:

“Considering that most of the population is following [the Georgian Orthodox church] and they are believers and they have this very strong community of believers; they also easily influence the politicians. Because if they manipulate the big amount of people, the politicians who are against religion will lose votes so I think the church in Georgia is a political actor, a very strong political actor” (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020).

Therefore, the first power that the Georgian Orthodox church has as a domestic constraint is reflected in the political adaptational costs that going against the church might inflict on a political party.

Additionally, the church has a distinct political role in the state. Georgian Orthodox church has a special standing in the Georgian society: “the funny thing is that we do not have the official religion in Georgia but orthodox Christianity has special status in legislation” (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). The Constitution of the Republic of Georgia contains an article dedicated to the relationship between the Georgian state and the Orthodox church, stating that “the State shall recognise the outstanding role of the Apostolic Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Georgia in the history of Georgia” (Constitution of Georgia). Additionally, the Georgian Orthodox church has signed a constitutional agreement with the Georgian state which outlines the church’s and state’s willingness to cooperate for the wellbeing of the Georgian people (Margvelashvili 2018: 2). Therefore, not only does the Georgian Orthodox church have a special status in the country, it can be regarded as a consultative body to the government.

This provides the church the opportunity to accumulate even more power over political actors. The Georgian Orthodox Church is so powerful and influential that all the political parties try to have good relations with them (Interview Pataria 2020). This is exemplified by the Orthodox church getting involved in the process of adoption of the anti-discrimination law. The Orthodox priests participated in protests in front of the Tbilisi and the Kutaisi parliaments against the anti-discrimination law (Sakellaraki 2014, New anti-discrimination law: Challenges and achievements 2014). The authorities took measures to convince the Georgian Orthodox church of the necessity of the law (New anti-discrimination law: Challenges and achievements 2014), which demonstrates further the important role of the church in Georgian politics. Additionally, when the law was being adopted, there were two

groups in parliament listening to the adoption: women's rights defenders and Orthodox priests (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). Apparently, the priests were there to influence the lawmakers to not adopt the law since the Georgian Orthodox church deems it a "LGBT law which only protects the rights of the LGBT people" (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). The Georgian Orthodox church has an important societal and political position due to the high number of followers and their special status in the Georgian constitution. They constitute veto-players to gender equality promotion due to the church's opposing views on the subject. With the power that the church has in the Georgian society, it can impact gender equality promotion, as it increases the adaptational costs of the gender equality reforms.

Second, the Georgian society's views on gender roles have an effect on gender equality promotion. There are deeply rooted stereotypes about gender within the Georgian society (Simonyan et al 2017: 13, Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). Traditionally, the man is seen as the breadwinner of the family while the woman is supposed to be the caretaker and the housewife (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). The gender stereotypes are taught from a young age: children learn that there are certain toys, games, songs for boys and then there are different ones for girls (Corso 2014). The gender stereotypes deepen gender inequality as there are set societal roles for men and women which put women at a more disadvantaged position in various fields.

The gender stereotypes affect women's economic empowerment. Due to the gender stereotypes, women face discrimination when applying to jobs, often being dismissed for their gender, which in turn makes women accept job positions that have lower salaries (Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia 2018b: 6). The discrimination comes from the gender stereotypes. There is the stereotype that men are the breadwinners of the family and should find success outside of the home, while women can have jobs but not unless they cannot devote most of their time on the family (UNDP Georgia 2013: 40). With the woman's realm perceived to be the household, there is little motivation for women to participate in a more substantial way in the labour market. This, however, decreases women's economic empowerment.

The gender stereotypes also affect women's political participation. There is the gender stereotype that women are inherently weaker and should therefore not participate in politics (UNDP Georgia 2013: 48). The gender stereotype contributes to the low level of participation of women in Georgian politics as women are not perceived as competent as men are. When women do get involved in politics, they face discrimination. Women who are in power or have higher-ranking decision-making position are attacked because of them being a woman (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020). This is illustrated by the following quote:

“Very recently, one of the high-ranking women was making her announcement on the coronavirus and she was judged just because she is too young to be talking on TV. Another male politician said that she needs other men standing next to her so that whatever she is saying is confident enough” (Interview Representative of Georgian NGO 2020).

This demonstrates that there is the stereotype that women are not fit to be politicians and are not to be taken seriously. In this regard, the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia (2018a: 39) even recommends implementing gender quotas in the electoral law to encourage a change regarding how female politicians are perceived. The low number of women in politics affects gender equality promotion as in a male-dominated environment, gender issues are more often than not cast to the side as they are not deemed important. Therefore, the existence of strong gender stereotypes affects gender equality promotion directly as without female politicians getting elected, gender equality is not fought for as hard as it would be if there were women in higher roles in politics. Overall, the gender stereotypes act as domestic constraints since any change that opposes the gender stereotypes would be seen as inappropriate, and therefore create political costs.

In sum, in Georgia the domestic constraints of the veto-player – the Georgian Orthodox church – and gender stereotypes are present. The Georgian Orthodox church is a strong veto-player as it has political and societal power. It is a domestic constraint to EU-promoted change regarding gender equality due to its negative views on gender equality and due to many people following the church, which increase the adaptational costs of the adoption of gender equality reforms. The gender stereotypes strengthen the idea that a woman's place is in the house, taking care of the children, while the man is the breadwinner. The stereotypes

hold women back from participating in a meaningful way in the economic and political sphere and make women not demand for gender equality as they follow the stereotype of what a woman should be. The gender stereotypes hinder EU-induced domestic change in gender equality since the norm in Georgia is the inequality between genders due to their characteristics, thus, any domestic change against the gender stereotypes entails high adaptational costs as it would be working against the norm.

When comparing the cases of Armenia and Georgia, it is observed that there are more domestic constraints present in Armenia than in Georgia. The domestic constraints of the church and gender stereotypes are present in both countries. However, in addition to the two, in Armenia the misperceptions on gender, and conservative groups are also present. As there are more domestic constraints present in Armenia, one would expect Armenia to have less EU-influenced domestic change than Georgia. The EU-induced domestic change in Armenia and Georgia is explored in the next chapter.

### **3.3.Implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Armenia and Georgia**

This section describes EU-induced domestic changes in Armenia and Georgia. As this research is interested in the EU-induced domestic changes in policies, polity and politics in the countries, these dimensions are the ones analysed in the following sections on the domestic changes in Armenia and Georgia.

#### **3.3.1. Implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Armenia**

This section outlines the EU-induced domestic changes in policies, polity and politics affecting gender equality that have taken place in Armenia in the time period of 2014 – 2019. First, the research turns to the EU-induced domestic changes in policies in Armenia.

The first EU-induced domestic change that has occurred was the amendment to the electoral law. On 1 June 2016, Armenia adopted a new electoral law which includes an increase of the gender quota from 20% to 25% and an additional increase of 5% by 2021 (European Commission 2018f: 5). The gender quota concerns the representation of women in elective bodies. Although not outlined as an objective in the Action Plans, the Gender Action Plan II

(Council of the European Union 2015: 26) includes the goal of “The EU will continue to contribute in a measurable manner to an increase in girls’ and women’s agency, voice and participation in social, economic, political and civil life”. Additionally, the EU marked it as a positive change in its Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia (European Commission 2019g: 5). Thus, this domestic change in policy follows the EU’s wider goal of increasing the participation of women in politics.

In 2016, Armenia also made amendments to a law regarding women’s health. The amendment to the Law on Human Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights prohibits sex-selective abortion (Asian Development Bank 2019: 11). Even though this is not a requirement in the Action Plan for Armenia, the EU has supported the UNFPA in eliminating sex-selective abortion in Armenia (ICHD 2018). This suggests that the EU deems the elimination of sex-selective abortion to be an important issue in Armenia, therefore, the policy change follows this EU goal. However, although a ban on sex-selective abortions is positive in the sense that female foetuses do not get aborted just because of their sex, the amendment poses other issues. The amendment puts in place the requirement of counselling, as well as a three day wait period before the procedure which might discourage women from seeking medical help in regard to their reproductive health (Asian Development Bank 2019: 11). On the one hand, the amendment aims to solve a gendered issue. On the other hand, it poses restrictions that might stop women from seeking professional medical help. Therefore, the amendment does not increase the level of domestic change in gender equality due to the hidden consequences of it.

In 2017, the law on domestic violence (“Law on the Prevention of Family Violence, Protection of Persons Subjected to Family Violence and the Restoration of Family Cohesion”) was adopted in Armenia (European Commission 2019g: 5). However, the EU, in its Partnership Implementation Report on Armenia (ibid), has pointed out that the law requires additional secondary legislation and amendments for effective implementation. Additionally, in the conference outcome paper “Combatting Violence Against Women In Armenia And Georgia: Sharing Experiences And Strategizing On Further Cooperation” (Simonyan et al 2017: 25), the Women’s Support Centre critiques the law due to it entailing

the clause of providing mediation mechanisms, although they are not recommended by international organisations nor are they safe. Therefore, even though there is a domestic violence law in place as the EU required, in this case, the EU-induced domestic change cannot be considered high as the EU also notes that the law does not fit the EU's requirements.

Armenia has made progress in incorporating the Istanbul Convention into its legislation. Armenia signed the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) in January 2018 (Armenia signs the Istanbul Convention). However, this is only the first step in the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention as the Convention must also be ratified. Armenia was supposed to ratify the Convention in the autumn of 2019, however, that process has been delayed (Chilingaryan 2019). Therefore, there is a lack of domestic change in this aspect as the law has not been fully implemented since the ratification process has not been completed.

The anti-discrimination law has not been adopted in Armenia, however, progress has been made regarding this law. The Justice Ministry of Armenia has submitted the Draft Law on Ensuring Equality Before the Law of the Republic of Armenia to OSCE for inspection in November 2018 (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2018: 3). The updated draft law was submitted again in September 2019 with the OSCE giving its final opinion in December 2019. In the final opinion, the OSCE commends Armenia for the updated draft law but has further recommendations for amendments, this including a change in the name of the law to clarify the anti-discrimination principle of the law (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights 2019: 4). In the Human Rights Dialogue between Armenia and the EU, the EU urged Armenia to promptly adopt the anti-discrimination law (Joint Press Release – EU and Armenia hold 10th Human Rights Dialogue 2019). Therefore, the anti-discrimination law is in the process of being incorporated into Armenian legislation.

Overall, the domestic change in policy is low. Amendments were made to two laws in the context of gender equality and the Istanbul Convention was signed which suggests a higher level of EU-promoted domestic change. However, there was only one law adopted in the

time period and that law requires amendments. Additionally, the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the adoption of the anti-discrimination law have stalled which further decreases the level of domestic change. Therefore, in the policy dimension in Armenia, the level of domestic change is low.

When it comes to polity, there have been EU-induced domestic changes in Armenia during 2014 – 2019, however, not all of them have had the longevity that changes in society would require, nor have they all been around for a sufficient amount of time to assess their success.

The law on domestic violence resulted in domestic change in the sphere of polity as well. In July 2018, the prime minister established the Council of Prevention of Domestic Violence (European Commission 2019g: 5). The Council, sometimes referred to as the Council on Prevention of Violence in Family, is intended to act as a consultative body to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and provide recommendations on the national strategy in regard to domestic violence, various programmes, reforms in legislation and actions for raising public awareness on the issue (Gender Network of Eastern Partnership 2019: 9). The Council convened for the first time in December 2018 (ibid). The Council is a direct result of policy change as the new law required an additional institution to oversee its implementation. The establishment of the Council increases the level of domestic change.

Furthermore, another body for gender equality has been established. In 2014, the Council on ensuring equality of rights and opportunities between women and men was created (Asian Development Bank 2019: 12). However, the mere creation of a gender equality is not enough for gender equality to progress, the body must be active as well in their work. That is what was missing for this council, however. The council had one meeting and although it comprised of representatives of the government ministries, the Parliament, Yerevan Municipality, and National Committee of TV and Radio, the council did not put in any effort to progress gender equality (Asian Development Bank 2019: 6). Thus, although there was domestic change as a gender equality body was established, due to it not functioning, it decreases the domestic change in the polity dimension.

In 2019, a new body with the objective of increasing gender equality in the country was established. In November 2019, the prime minister established the Council of Women's Issues which brings together representatives from both the government, as well as the public sector (The Armenian Lawyers' Association is a Member of the Council on Women's Issues established by the Decision of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia 2019). The council's mission is to take measures to increase gender equality in the society, specifically to abolish gender-based violence and discrimination and improve women's economic empowerment (Armenia Deputy PM chairs first session of Council for Women's Affairs 2019). As it is a new body, there is not much assessment regarding its work as it has not had time to establish many actions yet, however, the establishment of the body is a positive change in polity for Armenia.

The dimension of polity is observed to have medium EU-influenced domestic change. In the six years under analysis, three new institutional frameworks were established. Even though one of them did not function, there was a positive change in the quantity of gender equality bodies, therefore, the domestic change in polity is medium.

Regarding changes in politics, the economic dimension has faltered while the political dimension has made some steps in the direction of gender equality. Regarding the political dimension, there has been positive progress which has mostly occurred in response to changes in policies. There has been improvement in the dimension of politics and women's representation. In the elections of 2018, there were 1,444 candidates of which 32% were female (Asian Development Bank 2019: 15). From all of the female candidates, 32 were successful and obtained a seat in the parliament of Armenia, making up 24.2% of all parliamentarians, 0.8% off from the quota of 25% (ibid: 15). In comparison, the parliamentary elections in 2014 resulted in a significantly lower representation of women in the parliament. There were fourteen female members elected into the 131-seat parliament, thus, female representation in the parliament was 11% (Shahnazaryan 2015: 9). Therefore, women's representation has more than doubled in the legislative branch of Armenia. On the other hand, the situation is not as bright in the executive branch where the number of female ministers has decreased. In 2015, there were two female ministers: the Minister of Culture

and the Minister of Diaspora (ibid: 11). In comparison, in 2019, there is only one female minister out of the fourteen ministerial positions (Asian Development Bank 2019: 15). Therefore, in some aspects women's position in politics is stronger, however, in others, there have been no steps forward.

From the economic aspect of change in politics, there has been low domestic change. In 2013, women made up 55.9% of the labour market with men making up 72.8% of the workforce (National Statistical Service of Republic of Armenia 2014: 96). In comparison, in 2017, women's participation in the workforce was 51.4% and men's participation being at 70.6% (Asian Development Bank 2019: 19). The difference between the percentage of women and men employed has increased from 16.9% to 19.2% in the four years, taking a step back in regard to gender equality. Additionally, Armenia struggles with the gender pay gap. In 2013, women earned 63.7% that men were earning, making the gender pay gap 36.3% (National Statistical Service of Republic of Armenia 2014: 133). In comparison, in 2018, the gender pay gap is 35.3% with women earning 64.7% as much as men do (The Statistical Committee of The Republic of Armenia (Armstat) 2019: 84). There is a slight progress but the gender pay gap remains large. The pay gap is this large in part due to women not being in as highly paid positions or fields as men are (Asian Development Bank 2019: 24). Therefore, this demonstrates that the changes in politics in regard to the economic empowerment of women have stalled in Armenia.

The domestic change in the dimension of politics is low. Even with more women being elected into parliament which would increase the level of domestic change, women are not in many ministerial seats. Additionally, the economic situation of women has not changed as they are not participating in the labour market as much as men and the gender wage gap is large. Therefore, one can conclude that domestic change is low.

In sum, Armenia has had EU-induced domestic change in policies, polity and politics in 2014 – 2019. The most domestic change was observed in the polity dimension as Armenia established three gender equality bodies during this time. Concerning the policy dimension, the domestic change is low since Armenia is in the process of implementing domestic change and the amendments required for the legislation have not been adopted, therefore, signalling

a delay in the process. Lastly, the domestic change in the dimension of politics is low as women are underrepresented in politics and their position in the labour market is weak. Therefore, with all of these dimensions combined, EU-induced domestic change is low in Armenia.

### **3.3.2. Implementation of EU promoted gender equality reforms in Georgia**

This section outlines all the EU-induced domestic changes in policies, polity, and politics regarding gender equality that have occurred in Georgia in the time period of 2014 – 2019. First, the EU-induced domestic changes in policies in Georgia are discussed.

In 2014, Georgia adopted the law on the elimination of all forms of discrimination (Sakellaraki 2014). However, the law was not fully effective when it was adopted. In the Human Rights Dialogue between the EU and Georgia, the EU stated that it “encourage[s] Georgia to continue effective implementation of its anti-discrimination law” (Joint Press Release on the EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue 2016). This was also noted by the European Commission (2017h: 3) in the Joint Staff Working Document Association Implementation Report on Georgia that there is a need for amendments for the law on anti-discrimination. The amendments were eventually implemented in May 2019 (European Commission 2020: 4). Therefore, even though there was a delay in the amendments, it is observed that they were induced by the EU, therefore, the level of EU-induced domestic change increases due to that.

In June 2014, Georgia signed the Istanbul Convention (Recherche dans la base de données). However, it took another three years for the Istanbul Convention to be ratified. During these three years, there was pressure coming from the EU for Georgia to ratify the convention. The EU External Action Service made a statement after the Human Rights Dialogue with Georgia in 2016 in which it “encourage[s] the country to proceed with the ratification of the Istanbul convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence” (Joint Press Release on the EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue 2016). The pressure resulted in Georgia ratifying the Istanbul Convention in May 2017 (Recherche dans la base de données). A direct consequence of the adoption of the Istanbul Convention were the amendments made to more than 20 laws which were necessary for the laws to be in

accordance with the Istanbul Convention (Simonyan et al 2017: 10). Therefore, Georgia has signed and ratified the Istanbul Convention and amended its legislation accordingly, however, there was a delay of three years between the signing and the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

Regarding domestic changes in policy, Georgia displays EU-induced domestic change through amending its previous laws. In 2017, Georgia started amending its law on domestic violence. The law was adopted in 2006, however, it was only meant to protect women from domestic violence which was distinguished as violence that occurred within the family environment (described in broad terms) (Simonyan et al 2017: 10). The amendments served to include all types of gender-based violence against women, both within and outside the family environment (ibid). The law underwent a change in its name as well to reflect the internal changes: at the time of its creation, the law was named the Law on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence which in 2017 was changed to the Law on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and/or Domestic Violence, Protection and Support of Victims to exhibit that the law covers all forms of violence against women (ibid: 8). Even though the law was adopted independent from EU influence, the amendments were induced by the EU. Therefore, the level of EU-induced domestic change increased with the amendments.

In addition, in March 2018, Georgia approved the final amendments to its Constitution which from thereon include additional provisions on gender equality (European Commission 2019h: 2). Even though the Constitution already contained the clause on men and women being equal, the amendments are more proactive since they entail substantive equality which aims to combat structural inequalities and tasks the State with taking necessary measures for women to have the same opportunities as men (Georgia's new constitution guarantees substantive gender equality 2018). The amendments were proposed to the Georgian government by the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (Simonyan et al 2017: 10). Therefore, even though the legislative elements were adopted without the EU's influence, however, amendments were made in response to it, therefore, increasing the level of EU-induced domestic change in Georgia.

Overall, the domestic change in policy is high in Georgia. There was one law adopted and three laws amended, in addition to the Istanbul Convention both getting signed and ratified. Even though some of the amendments were made many years after the first adoption of the laws, the amendments occurred during the time when the EU had outlined that all relevant legislation should be amended in regard to gender equality, therefore, one can observe the EU's influence on the amendments. On the other hand, the Istanbul Convention was ratified three years after its signing and the amendments for the anti-discrimination law were implemented five years after the adoption of the law. However, even with the delays in these legislative elements, the EU-influenced domestic change in policies is assessed to be high.

Second, there have been changes in the dimension of polity. In 2017, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was established in Georgia (European Commission 2017h: 3). The Commission aims to solve issues of gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions "Women, Peace, Security" and the empowerment of women (Bureau of Gender Strategies and Budgeting, Ukraine 2019: 18). However, in 2019, the Commission did not receive enough additional staff to improve its efficiency and performance and the head of the Commission resigned in April 2019 as well (European Commission 2019). Therefore, although the level of domestic change increases with the establishment of this institution, due to the lack of adequate support and a leader for it, the institution's inability to function effectively lowers the domestic change in polity.

As a direct result of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, Georgia created the Human Rights Protection Department in January 2018 in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Department is tasked with increasing the capacity to investigate domestic violence, human trafficking, and hate crimes, amongst other tasks (Enhanced mandate of Human Rights Protection Department 2019). The Department has gained praise for its re-training programmes which have raised trust in police and led to more reports being made regarding domestic violence and violence against women (European Commission 2019h: 3, European Commission 2020: 3 – 4). Between 2017 and 2018, the number of restraining orders in place against perpetrators of gender-based violence increased by 75% and the amount of

convictions of the perpetrators increased by 65% (European Commission 2020: 3 – 4). This demonstrates that the change in polity has been successful, especially considering that in a survey conducted in 2009, 78% of the women who answered said that domestic violence is a private matter (One in seven women in Georgia experiences domestic violence, new national study finds, 2018). The progress in domestic violence legislation and the creation of an institution to oversee the legislation has resulted in an increase of confidence in the law enforcement and diminished the fear of repercussion which in turn has contributed to the number of reports made regarding domestic violence and violence against women. Therefore, the Human Rights Protection Department increases the level of domestic change in the polity dimension in Georgia.

In polity, the EU-induced domestic change in polity has been medium. There were two institutions established during the six years under analysis with one of them being successful and the other lacking resources to function properly, therefore, the level of domestic change is medium.

In regard to changes in politics, there have been some changes but gender equality is still a goal that has not been reached yet. One of the goals that need additional efforts is reaching gender equality in politics. In 2014, women made up 12% of the Georgian parliament (Pataraiia 2015: 2). In comparison, in 2019, women made up 15% of Georgian parliamentarians (European Commission 2020: 4). Thus, in five years, there has been a slight progress in this field, however, women remain to be underrepresented in parliament. The under-representation does not only entail the parliament, however. Out of the 59 local self-governing communities, only one of them has a female mayor (Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia 2018a: 9). Therefore, concerning the political dimension of politics, there has been low domestic change as women continue to be underrepresented.

Another dimension of politics is employment where there has not been significant improvement. Women are not participating in the labour market as much as men are, there has even been a backslide in the percentage of women who are employed. In 2014, 51% of women and 67% of men were employed (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2015: 41). In comparison, in 2018, 49% of women and 63% of men were employed (National Statistics

Office of Georgia 2019: 47). It is observed that there is a general issue with unemployment in Georgia as there are both less men and women in the workforce in 2018, however, only close to half the women have jobs. The economic aspect of gender inequality is also exhibited in the wage gap in Georgia. In 2014, the gender pay gap was 37% (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2015: 49). There has been only low domestic change in four years. In 2018, the gender pay gap was 35% (National Statistics Office of Georgia 2015: 63). The gender gap has decreased by 2%, however, it is still wide. The gender pay gap is partly due to women working in positions that have lower salaries, however, even in similar job positions, women earn less than their male counterparts (Asian Development Bank 2018: 18). Employment is the dimension which has had the least progress in regard to politics. Overall, the change in politics is low in Georgia, there is a low level of domestic change in terms of gender equality both in the political and the economic sphere of politics.

Concerning the EU-influenced domestic changes in policies, polity and politics, Georgia has made progress in all dimensions but on different levels. The domestic change in the dimension of policies has been the highest as Georgia has adopted and amended many laws in regard to gender equality. Second to that is the dimension of polity at a medium as Georgia has established gender equality bodies, however, one of them is not functioning effectively which decreases the level of domestic change. The dimension where Georgia falters is politics, having a low level of domestic change. Georgian women are underrepresented in the political field and are in a weaker position in the economic sphere as well. Therefore, with the EU promoted domestic change being high in policy, medium in polity but low in politics, the overall domestic change is medium.

Both Armenia and Georgia have undergone domestic transformations in response to the EU's efforts to promote gender equality through the Eastern Partnership. However, when comparing Armenia to Georgia, Armenia has a low level of domestic change while Georgia has a high level of domestic change in the policy dimension. In polity, the two countries are on the same level as both have established gender equality bodies (Armenia three, Georgia two) but both have difficulties in the effectiveness of the bodies created which decreases the level of domestic change. Politics is the dimension that neither one has made much progress,

although Armenia is ahead of Georgia due to the gender quotas in its electoral law. Overall, Georgia's domestic change considering all the dimensions is medium and Armenia's is low.

## **Conclusions**

This research aimed to answer the research question: what impact do domestic constraints have on the European Union's efforts to promote gender equality in the Eastern Partnership countries? To find an answer to the research question, the research formed the hypothesis of 'The more there are domestic constraints within the target country, the less does European Union's conditionality regarding gender equality lead to domestic change' and tested it by comparing the cases of Armenia and Georgia.

It was observed that Armenia has had a low level of EU-influenced domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms, while Georgia was observed to have had a medium level in the same category. The low level of domestic change in Armenia is due to the combination of low conditionality and four domestic constraints, while the medium level of domestic change in Georgia is due to the combination of medium conditionality and two domestic constraints. The research verified its hypothesis as it was discovered that domestic constraints lower the level of EU-induced domestic change in the context of gender reforms. The lower level of domestic change is due to the domestic constraints delaying the implementation process of the gender equality reforms that the EU has set as objectives through its conditionality. However, the domestic constraints do not completely halt the effect of the EU conditionality.

In regard to EU conditionality, the research discovered that EU conditionality for Armenia is low, compared to Georgia's medium level of conditionality. The incentives, as well as the determinacy of the conditions were low for Armenia, therefore, the total level of conditionality was low. On the other hand, Georgia had high incentives and low to medium determinacy of the conditions, therefore, the total level of conditionality was medium.

From the two elements of conditionality, determinacy of the conditions was revealed to be the sphere where the EU was found to be most lacking. The gender dimension is not incorporated into all actions that the EU outlines for Armenia and Georgia, which certifies the notion of the EU considering gender equality as a secondary issue. However, one feature that was discovered through the research is that there was an increased adoption of gender equality reforms in polity and policy after the EU signalled its commitment to gender equality

promotion with the Gender Action Plan II and the “20 Deliverables for 2020”. Since then, both Armenia and Georgia have taken steps towards implementing more gender equality laws and have established gender equality bodies. Georgia had a high level of EU-induced domestic change in policy with most of the domestic change occurring from 2016 when Georgia amended its anti-discrimination law, its Constitution and its domestic violence law, as well as ratified the Istanbul Convention. Although Armenia had a low level in the same dimension, more progress in the policy dimension was also observed from 2016 onward as Armenia made progress regarding the anti-discrimination law, made amendments to a healthcare law in regard to sex-selective abortions and signed the Istanbul Convention. Both countries also had a medium level of EU-induced domestic change in polity with both countries creating gender equality bodies, however, not all of them were effective which results in the medium level. The changes in polity were also observed to start after the adoption of the Gender Action Plan II and the “20 Deliverables for 2020”. Therefore, although the EU still regards gender equality as a secondary issue, this demonstrates that EU conditionality has an impact on domestic change; however, the EU must commit to promoting gender equality in a more significant manner for the domestic change to meaningfully occur, i.e. increase the conditionality through increasing determinacy.

With EU conditionality and domestic change being low in Armenia, as well as EU conditionality and domestic change being medium in Georgia, one could argue that the level of EU conditionality determines the level of domestic change in the context of gender equality. However, this research demonstrates that the level of domestic change would be higher if there were fewer or no domestic constraints as the domestic constraints delay the process of the implementation, which decreases the level of domestic change or if the EU’s conditionality were higher.

Regarding domestic constraints, the research uncovered them to be veto-players, gender stereotypes, and misperceptions on gender. Armenia and Georgia both have the veto-player of the Orthodox church and gender stereotypes. Armenia also has the domestic constraints of misperceptions on gender and the veto-player of conservative groups. The higher number

of domestic constraints results in the lower level of domestic change that Armenia has in comparison to Georgia.

The research discovered that gender stereotypes impact EU-induced domestic change in the dimension of politics, veto-players impact EU-induced domestic change in the dimension of policies and polity, and misperceptions on gender impact EU-induced domestic change in all dimensions of policy, polity and politics as misperceptions impede all elements that include the concept of gender.

Concerning gender stereotypes, they are the domestic constraint for the dimension of politics. The gender stereotypes keep women from participating in the labour market and politics as the notion of it not being fitting for women to prioritise their career as their realm is the household. Additionally, the gender stereotypes restrict women from participating in politics as much as men since the stereotype is that women are not meant to be leaders due to their characteristics. The existence of gender stereotypes increases the adaptational costs of gender equality reforms in politics. For there to be domestic change in politics, the gender stereotypes must be dismantled. However, gender stereotypes reflect the values of the society and trying to change them can be interpreted as a challenge to the values and therefore entails high adaptational costs. Due to both Armenia and Georgia displaying the domestic constraint of gender stereotypes, the level of domestic change in politics is also low for both.

In regard to veto-players, they affect the dimension of policy and also the dimension of polity due to the domestic changes in the polity dimension being a result of the domestic changes in the policy dimension. The veto-players affect policies in particular since the veto-players take direct action against the domestic changes in policy by organising rallies and expressing their opposition through campaigns. For example, the respectable country specific Orthodox churches have opposed the Istanbul convention law in both Armenia and Georgia. Their influence as a domestic constraint is illustrated by the fact that it took three years for the Istanbul Convention to be ratified in Georgia and that the Istanbul Convention has not been ratified six years after its signing in Armenia. They decrease the EU-induced domestic change in the context of gender equality reforms in the dimensions of policy and polity by inflicting high adaptational costs in the form of the governing party losing electoral support.

Regarding misperceptions on gender, this domestic constraint affects all of the dimensions of polity, policy and politics. The misperceptions on gender affect the dimension of politics since any change that includes the concept of gender is opposed to due to the negative views on gender. The inclusion of the concept of gender into the reforms increases the adaptational costs of the gender equality reforms, therefore, decreasing domestic change. The domestic constraint of misperceptions on gender affect policy and polity due to being connected to the domestic constraint of veto-players of the religious entities and the conservative groups. The misperceptions on gender are observed to be the origin for the veto-players of conservative groups as the groups mobilise against gender equality laws, and with many people subscribing to the idea of gender being unacceptable, the groups are a more influential veto-player due to the number of people agreeing with them. The connection between the misperceptions on gender and the veto-player of conservative groups is demonstrated by the fact that Armenia has both misperceptions on gender and conservative groups as domestic constraints, while Georgia has neither. The widespread misperceptions on gender strengthen veto-players, but also *vice versa*. As the rhetoric of the veto-players is based on the misperceptions on gender, the veto-players strengthen the misperceptions by spreading the misperceptions through the population. However, the misperceptions on gender strengthen the veto-players as well as they garner support from the public who also regard gender as a negative concept. Therefore, the misperceptions on gender and veto-players as domestic constraints are connected as the influence of one reflects the impact of the other on gender equality reforms.

The misperceptions on gender as a domestic constraint is also demonstrated by the fact that in Armenia, there are widespread misperceptions on gender which affect the adoption of laws that entail the concept of gender. For example, there was mobilisation in the form of conservative groups against the Istanbul Convention and the gender equality law due to the concept of gender in them. Due to the misperceptions on gender which induced the mobilisation, the Istanbul Convention has not been ratified and the gender equality law was pressured to not include the notion of gender from the law. On the other hand, laws that do not entail the concept of gender, such as the electoral law that aims to increase specifically

women's participation in politics, does not. This suggests that misperceptions on gender as a domestic constraint does not demonstrate opposition against gender equality itself, but the opposition to gender equality reforms stems from the inclusion of the concept of gender into the reforms. As the EU promotes gender equality reforms that entail the concept of gender, the reforms have high adaptational costs in countries that have widespread misperceptions on gender due to the concept of gender being unacceptable and creating opposition to the reforms.

The main reason behind conducting this research was to fill the gap in the literature on the Europeanisation of neighbourhood countries in regard to gender equality. The research has provided insight into the relationship between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries of Armenia and Georgia. The research has demonstrated that gender equality is a more complex issue than the other reforms that the EU is aiming to implement in the Eastern Partnership countries, such as democracy or rule of law. Gender equality is a societal issue and therefore reforms trying to implement it have a societal response. Therefore, the research contributes to the literature by demonstrating the intricacies of the Europeanisation of gender equality, highlighting the need for higher conditionality, as well as a low number of domestic constraints.

Even though the research reached its objective of assessing the effect of domestic constraints on EU-induced domestic change, there were limitations to the research. First, the research was able to conduct only a limited number of interviews, therefore, the research had to mainly rely on secondary sources and documents. While data triangulation increases the reliability of the analysis and conclusions to answer the research question could be made based on the various data collected, the research would have gained more insight into how the EU's influence on domestic change in gender equality is regarded. Future research could explore this feature to assess the EU's actorness regarding gender equality promotion.

Second, the research was able to conduct interviews only with the domestic actors. While sufficient to establish the findings, the research would have gained more detailed insights into the EU's point of view regarding the goal of increasing gender equality if it had been possible to conduct interviews with EU representatives as well. Future research could explore

the reasons behind the EU treating gender equality as a secondary issue in the neighbourhood countries.

Concerning avenues for further research, this research could be expanded in the future in regard to the Southern Neighbourhood to determine whether the findings regarding the Eastern Partnership also apply to the Europeanisation of the Southern Neighbourhood countries. In addition, future research could incorporate the domestic actors' actions for gender equality into the research to not only examine at the domestic constraints of gender equality, but also the domestic incentives.

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## **Annex**

### Interview questions

1. How is gender equality regarded in society? Is it seen as an issue or not?
2. What are the main obstacles for gender equality in the country?
3. What is seen as a traditional role for a man and for a woman? Are the traditional roles respected?
4. What is the role of religion in the society? What is the influence of religious groups on politics?
5. What is the government's view on gender equality? Is it a priority?
6. What has been the response to the adoption of gender equality policies? What are the positive responses, what are the negative responses?
7. How have gender equality laws affected the women's situation in the country?
8. What is the relationship between NGOs and the government? How are NGOs involved in making policies?
9. What is the position of women in politics? What is the opinion on female politicians?
10. How would you describe the EU's role in achieving gender equality?
11. In 2017, the European Commission promised to cut funding if Armenia did not adopt the law on domestic violence. Have there been other moments like this in Georgia where the EU persuades the country to change its policies for gender equality?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the gender equality in the country?

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