Gender Budget Watchdog Network
for a gender equal region

Gender Analysis of the Transportation Sector Towards Gender and Climate-responsive Policy Solutions

NATIONAL REPORT
Republic of Serbia

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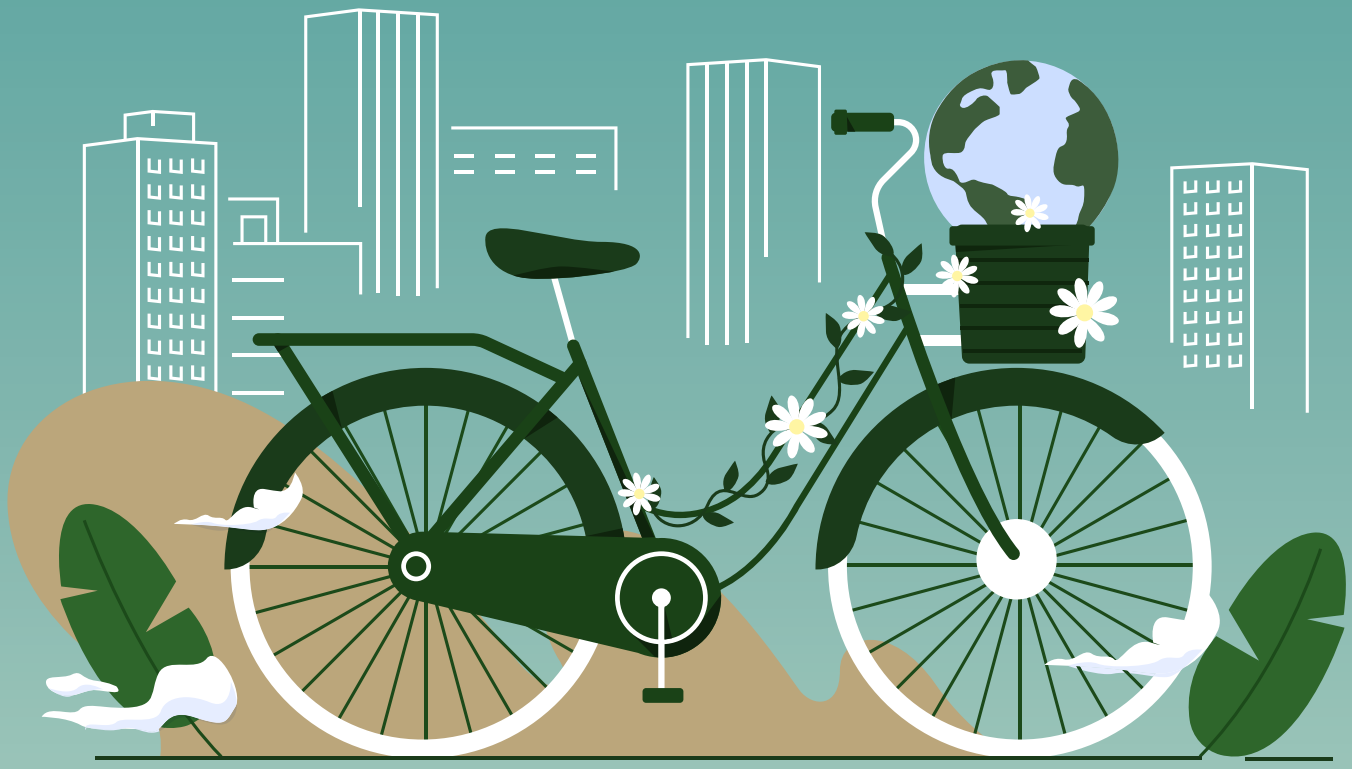


CHAPTER I

Gender, Mobility, and Environmental Sustainability

1. CLIMATE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRANSPORT

Transport is a significant and growing contributor to Serbia's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and environmental challenges. The sector accounts for roughly 14% of national GHG emissions, with emissions from transport rising by over 50% since 1990 (from about 4.5 MtCO2e in 1990 to 6.9 MtCO2e in 2019). Road vehicles overwhelmingly dominate these emissions – about 95% of transport-related GHG in the Western Balkans comes from road traffic – due to near-total reliance on fossil fuels (97–98% oil-based in Serbia's transport energy mix as of 2019). This heavy dependence on petrol and diesel vehicles not only drives up carbon emissions but also links transport to Serbia's air quality issues. Urban air pollution is partly attributable to traffic; for example, road transport produces roughly a quarter of national NOx emissions, contributing to smog and health risks in cities. Reducing transport emissions is therefore central to climate change mitigation and cleaner air in Serbia.

Serbia has acknowledged this in its climate commitments and policy alignment with international frameworks. Under the Paris Agreement, Serbia's nationally determined contribution targets an emissions reduction of 13.2% by 2030 relative to 2010 (33% relative to 1990). Achieving this will require curbing transport emissions growth through improved efficiency and a transition to cleaner modes. In line with the EU Green Agenda for the Western Balkans – which mirrors the EU Green Deal – Serbia is beginning to align its transport and energy policies with long-term decarbonization goals. The government's Low Carbon Development Strategy, for instance, envisions cutting transport-sector GHG emissions by 30–54% by 2050 compared to 2005. These goals reflect recognition that the transport sector must be reformed under global and EU commitments, and an opportunity to achieve co-benefits in cleaner air and sustainable development.

Steps such as promoting electric vehicles (supported by purchase subsidies up to €5,000 since 2021), shifting freight to rail, and expanding public transit are being planned or piloted. However, implementation will need to accelerate to both fulfill international climate obligations and address Serbia's own environmental priorities, such as improving air quality and reducing the health burden of pollution. In sum, the transport sector sits at the nexus of Serbia's climate change strategy – a major emitter that must be reformed under global and EU commitments, and an opportunity to achieve co-benefits in cleaner air and sustainable development.

2. INCREASING RELEVANCE OF TRANSPORT

Transport's importance in daily life and the economy is on the rise in Serbia, underscoring why mobility policies are so crucial. The transport sector already contributes about 4% of Serbia's GDP (2023), and the physical volume of transport activity has been growing across all modes. More people and goods are on the move than ever: between 2016 and 2022, Serbia saw an explosion in vehicle numbers, adding over 418,000 passenger cars to its roads (a ~22% increase), along with tens of thousands of new trucks and vans. By 2022 there were over 2.33 million registered passenger vehicles in the country, plus 11,136 buses and 284,563 freight vehicles, reflecting a steady motorization trend. This growth in vehicle ownership, combined with expanding highway infrastructure (now nearly 953 km of tolled motorways), indicates that personal and commercial mobility demand is surging. A direct consequence has been increased road traffic volumes and congestion in and around urban centers, as more Serbians commute for work and travel for daily needs.

Regional disparities in transport use and needs are notable. Commuting has become especially pronounced in certain regions – for instance, the Šumadija and Western Serbia region accounts for nearly half of all daily commuters in the country. Many residents of smaller towns and rural areas travel considerable distances to reach jobs or schools in regional centers. In fact, as of the 2011 census, about 901,000 people in Serbia (roughly 12.5% of the population) were daily commuters for work or education, and this figure has likely grown alongside urbanization and economic migration. By contrast, the capital city of Belgrade sees a somewhat lower share of outbound daily commuters (around 17% of the national total) because many jobs and schools are within the city – but Belgrade's internal mobility is immense. The public transport system in Belgrade carries approximately 2.5 million passenger journeys each day, illustrating how critical buses, trams, and other transit are for urban daily life. Across regions, rural populations face distinct challenges: villages often have infrequent bus connections and longer distances to key services, making ownership of a car or access to some transport absolutely vital for participation in work and society. This growing reliance on mobility, whether via private cars in remote areas or public transit in cities, means transport is increasingly intertwined with Serbians' livelihoods and well-being.

It is also important to note emerging gender differences in transport access amid this mobility expansion. Men and women do not benefit equally from the rise in vehicle ownership and improved connectivity. For example, about 71% of adult men in Serbia hold a driving license, but only 35% of adult women do. This gap in license holding (and by extension in car ownership and driving)

highlights that many women cannot take advantage of a household car or new highways in the same way men can. As a result, women tend to rely more on public transport or walking to meet daily mobility needs, whereas men more often commute by driving. Such disparities mean that the quality and inclusiveness of transport infrastructure – not just its availability – has become a pressing issue. Transport is more relevant than ever to Serbia's development, but its benefits are unevenly shared, which is why understanding usage patterns across regions and demographics is essential for planning. The next section delves deeper into how gender influences transport access and why it matters for Serbia's social and economic outcomes.

Based on the request for public access to information submitted by Gender Knowledge Hub to the Ministry of the Interior, Directorate of the Police, we obtained the following data on driving licenses and registered passenger vehicles in Serbia: The number of male drivers with a valid driver's license is 2,206,964. The number of female drivers with a valid driver's license is 1,277,084. There are 15,540 driving licenses for which the holder's gender cannot be determined. The number of registered passenger vehicles owned by males is 1,677,356. **The number of registered passenger vehicles owned by females is 584,252.**

3. GENDER AND TRANSPORT

Women in Serbia experience transport very differently than men, and these differences have far-reaching implications for women's economic empowerment, education, health care access, and their disproportionate caregiving duties. Studies consistently find significant gender gaps in mobility patterns. For instance, men drive a car (or motorcycle) on about 40% of all their trips, whereas women drive on only 16% of their trips – instead, women are far more often passengers in cars or users of public transport. In practical terms, this means a man in Serbia is much more likely to have the autonomy of hopping in a car to get to work or run errands, while a woman is more likely to depend on someone else to drive or on the bus schedule. Nearly half of women (46%) report that they frequently have to chain multiple bus rides to reach a destination in their daily travel – a cumbersome routine rarely experienced by men (only 17% of men do the same). Such complex trip patterns often arise from women's dual roles in the workforce and as primary caregivers. A woman taking her children to school, then commuting to work, and later stopping for groceries or accompanying an elderly family member to a clinic, may have to make multiple stops and transfers. If transport options are not convenient, affordable, and safe, these everyday logistics become significant barriers to women's full participation in economic and public life.

Gender inequalities in transport access directly affect women's opportunities and quality of life. Reliable transport can be the difference between accepting a job or being stuck at home. International research cited in a Serbian gender and transport study shows that poor transport access can reduce the probability of a woman seeking employment by about 6% in emerging economies. In Serbia, women who cannot drive or lack local bus services are constrained in how far they can travel for a good job or higher education. Women (especially in low-income or single-car households) may turn down jobs that are too hard to reach or spend excessive time commuting and balancing family duties. Access to education is also at stake: girls and young women in rural areas face challenges getting to high school or university if distances are long and public transport is scarce. This contributes to stark outcomes for marginalized groups – for example, only 18% of women in Roma settlements in Serbia have completed secondary education, compared to 51% of women nationally. While the reasons are multi-faceted, limited transport connectivity from segregated or remote Roma communities to schools is a known factor compounding their educational disadvantage. Health care access similarly suffers when transport is lacking. Rural women and elderly women often must travel to town for medical services, yet distance, irregular bus lines, and high transport costs can delay or prevent these visits. In focus groups, rural women in Serbia have described the difficulty of getting to a doctor or clinic – one must plan around infrequent buses or costly taxi rides, which leads to postponing preventative check-ups and can worsen health outcomes.

Critically, gender disparities in transport intersect with other vulnerabilities. Rural women, as noted, are more dependent on others for mobility – they are far more likely to be driven by a family member or neighbor due to the lack of public transport, compared to women in urban areas. This dependence can reinforce traditional gender roles and isolation. Roma women face even greater hurdles: living in underserved settlements, dealing with poverty, and sometimes discrimination in public spaces. For them, the absence of affordable transport magnifies exclusion, limiting access to jobs, schools, and services that might improve their situation. Elderly women, too, often do not drive and may live alone if widowed; without accessible transport or someone to give a ride, they can become isolated from health services and social life. Additionally, safety and comfort in transport are gendered concerns. Women and girls often feel less safe on public transit – surveys in Serbia show both men and women report unease with public transportation, but it is worse for women. Unfortunately, harassment is not uncommon: about one in twenty women have reported incidents of sexual harassment while using transport, and many more experience verbal abuse or feel threatened, especially at night. Such safety issues can deter women from traveling freely, effectively limiting when and where they can go.

In summary, transport is not just a technical issue of moving people – it is a linchpin for gender equality. If a woman cannot safely reach a job interview, attend classes, or get her child to daycare on time, those are direct hits to her empowerment and well-being. Conversely, well-planned, gender-responsive transport systems (e.g. frequent buses on routes women use, affordable fares, good lighting and security, stroller-accessible vehicles) can open up opportunities for women and alleviate the double burden they often carry. Addressing these gender differences in mobility is therefore essential to ensure that half the population is not left behind as Serbia develops its transport infrastructure and climate policies.

The interconnections between climate change, gender, and transport form a compelling nexus that justifies dedicated focus in Serbia. On one hand, Serbia's transport sector must be overhauled to mitigate climate change – reducing emissions through cleaner vehicles, shifting to public and non-motorized transport, and improving efficiency. On the other hand, how this low-carbon transition is implemented will determine whether it also advances social inclusion or inadvertently widens gaps. A gender perspective is critical: it ensures that policies aimed at cutting emissions (such

as promoting public transit, biking, or electric cars) also respond to the mobility needs of women and vulnerable groups. For example, investments in better public transportation are a climate solution and a gender solution – they can reduce carbon output and improve mobility for women (who rely on buses and trains more heavily than men) if designed with safety and accessibility in mind. Similarly, enhancing rural transport connectivity (through feeder buses, demand-responsive transport, or road improvements) can curb the reliance on high-emission personal vehicles while empowering rural women and men equally to access opportunities.

Ultimately, a gender-responsive approach to sustainable transport planning is a win-win for Serbia's development. It aligns with the country's commitments to inclusive growth, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and EU norms on equal opportunity, all while building climate resilience. By recognizing that women and men experience transport differently, Serbian policymakers and civil society can tailor solutions that maximize benefits across society – cleaner air, reduced greenhouse gases, and greater equity in who can get to work, school, or the market. This approach leads to better outcomes: a decarbonized transport system that is also more user-friendly, safe, and accessible for all citizens. In practice, this means involving women in transport decision-making, conducting gender impact assessments for new projects, and ensuring data is disaggregated to track who benefits from investments. It means viewing a bus route, a bike lane, or a road not just as infrastructure, but as a lifeline that should serve diverse needs and bolster community resilience to climate impacts.


ECO

CHAPTER II

Gender responsiveness of policies and budgets

1. POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Serbia's environmental policy framework has been steadily evolving to address climate change and align with European standards. A cornerstone is the **Law on Climate Change (2021)**, which provides a legal basis for developing and implementing low-carbon strategies and adaptation plans, transposing EU climate legislation into national law. In 2022, Serbia updated its pledge under the Paris Agreement by submitting a more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The updated NDC commits to **33.3% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2030 compared to 1990 levels**, a substantial increase from its initial pledge. This target signals Serbia's intent to contribute to **SDG 13 (Climate Action)** through stronger mitigation efforts. Achieving it will require deep cuts in the energy sector (which accounts for roughly 79% of emissions) and significant action in transport, whose emissions grew by over 50% from 1990 to 2019[1].

To operationalize climate goals, Serbia adopted a **Low Carbon Development Strategy (2023–2030)**, with an Action Plan under preparation, outlining pathways to 2050 and options for an equitable transition. This strategy is closely integrated with Serbia's EU accession agenda: as a candidate country, Serbia is aligning with the EU Climate and Energy Framework (e.g. EU targets for 2030 on emissions cuts, renewables, and efficiency). An **Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan** is also in development, ensuring climate objectives are mainstreamed across energy, transport and other sectors. Importantly, these policies acknowledge the need for a **"socially fair" transition**, recognizing that climate measures must consider social impacts. This opens the door for integrating gender perspectives, since women and men can be affected differently by climate policies and should equitably share in the benefits of green growth.

Environmental governance is supported by institutions like the Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), which monitors environmental indicators. Recent SEPA reports highlight persistent challenges—such as poor urban air quality and waste management—that have gender-differentiated impacts. For example, women (especially caregivers, young children, and the elderly) may be more vulnerable to indoor and local pollution. While Serbia's core environmental laws do not yet explicitly mandate gender analysis, there is growing recognition that **environmental and climate actions need to "leave no one behind"**, echoing the SDGs. The draft **Environmental Protection Strategy – Green Agenda 2024–2033** is a key new policy that is explicitly aligned with the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans** and the EU's Green Deal. This strategy, released for consultation in late 2024, outlines measures toward carbon neutrality, pollution reduction, resource protection

1 1p5ndc-pathways.climateanalytics.org

and overall quality of life improvement for all citizens[2]. It is aligned with the commitments Serbia made in the **Sofia Declaration (2020)** on the Green Agenda, and focuses on five pillars: **(1) climate change and decarbonization, (2) circular economy, (3) pollution reduction, (4) biodiversity and ecosystem protection, and (5) sustainable food systems and rural development**. By following these pillars, Serbia's environmental strategy directly supports **SDGs 13, 15, 12** and others, and implicitly calls for inclusive approaches (e.g. supporting rural women in sustainable agriculture under pillar 5). Although gender is not overtly mentioned in the Green Agenda strategy text, the emphasis on "quality of life for all" and a just transition means that **women's participation and protection of vulnerable groups** should be part of implementation. Notably, international partners are supporting Serbia in this direction – for instance, the EU and bilateral donors (Germany, Switzerland) have aided Serbia's SDG monitoring and the integration of the Green Agenda into national planning.

2. TRANSPORT STRATEGY AND GENDER INCLUSION

Transport is a critical sector for both economic development and climate action in Serbia, and it has become a focus for gender mainstreaming. After a long gap since the previous strategy (which expired in 2015), Serbia has developed a new **National Transport Strategy for 2022–2030** with an accompanying Action Plan. This comprehensive strategy was formulated in cooperation with international partners and with attention to sustainability and inclusion. **Gender-responsiveness is explicitly built into the strategy's preparation**: the Government, with World Bank support, undertook a Gender in Transport Study to identify barriers and needs of women in mobility[3]. According to the strategy's terms of reference, fully realizing the transport sector's potential means addressing "gender-based barriers and other drivers of exclusion" in line with principles of equal access and non-discriminationkoridorisrbije.rs. The **Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE)**, led by Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister, managed this study, ensuring high-level ownership of gender issues in transport policy. The findings were clear: women in Serbia face distinct mobility challenges – for example, **women rely on public transport far more than men and often have**

2 balkangreenenergynews.com

3 koridorisrbije.rs

no alternative means of travel, a situation described as being "captive" transit users. In fact, surveys confirm that **76% of women use public transport, versus 65% of men**, and almost half of women cite lack of other options as the reason. This has both gender equality and environmental implications: currently women have a lower-carbon travel footprint out of necessity, but without improvements in public transport, rising female workforce participation could lead to a surge in car use. The strategy therefore frames public transport upgrades not only as climate-friendly (reducing emissions for **SDG 13**) but also as a gender equality measure (supporting **SDG 5** by improving women's access to opportunities).

Climate change considerations are deeply integrated in transport planning. The National Transport Strategy embraces a multimodal approach and is designed to be **sustainable and EU-compliant**, directly supporting Serbia's EU Chapter 14 commitments (Transport policy). It emphasizes investments in railways, public transit, and intelligent transport systems to reduce emissions and congestion. Notably, one strategic goal is transport decarbonization in line with EU Green Deal objectives, which also aligns Serbia with **SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure)** and **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities)**. The World Bank-supported **"Paths to Green Mobility"** assessment highlighted the urgency of this shift, especially in cities. It showed that improving mass transit (e.g. modernizing bus fleets, expanding networks) can simultaneously cut CO_2 and better serve the majority-female ridership. The strategy's action plan contains measures such as promoting **alternative fuels and electric vehicles**, expanding rail freight to reduce road traffic, and developing sustainable urban mobility plans in cities. These measures resonate with the **Balkan Green Agenda's transport decarbonization pillar** and demonstrate Serbia's intent to contribute to regional climate goals.

Gender responsiveness in transport policy is also evident in efforts to make the sector more inclusive for workers and decision-makers. Currently, the **transport sector workforce is heavily male-dominated (around 80% male)**, with women mostly in administrative or professional roles and underrepresented in technical and leadership positions. Women comprise only ~28% of managers and ~34% of engineers/technicians in transport agencies and companies[4]. The Transport Strategy recognizes that diversifying this workforce is not just an equality issue but can help address skills shortages and improve service quality. Sets of measures are proposed to **encourage women's entry into traditionally male roles, close the gender pay gap, and improve working conditions**rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs. By 2023, some progress was noted: for instance, within the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, 5 of 6 State Secretary positions were held by women (an unprecedented 83% share), showing leadership commitment to change rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rsrodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs. The **Gender Equality in Transport in Serbia (GETS) study** provided concrete recommendations, such as increasing women's access to private transport resources, making public transport more safe and user-friendly for women, and attracting more men to use public and shared transit options to reduce car dependence rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rsrodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs.

These recommendations underscore that **gender-responsive transport policy can yield co-benefits**: enhancing women's mobility autonomy, reducing pollution and traffic (benefiting cities and climate), and fostering social inclusion. They are being gradually reflected in Serbian policy – for example, urban transport authorities have started to address safety on public transport (a key concern for women who report harassment risks), and new infrastructure projects must undergo public consultations that include women's perspectives.

4 rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs

3. GENDER EQUALITY FRAMEWORK AND ITS LINKAGES

Serbia's overarching **gender equality framework** provides the legal and institutional mandate for mainstreaming gender in all policies, including transport and environment. The **Law on Gender Equality (Zakon o rodnoj ravnopravnosti)**, adopted in May 2021, is a landmark piece of legislation that aligns with EU standards. It establishes that **all public authorities, employers, and social partners are obliged to integrate a gender perspective in the areas under their responsibility** paragraf.rs. In practice, this means ministries of transport, energy, environment, etc., must consider gender impacts in policy-making and program implementation. The law's basis is an equal opportunities approach, requiring **equal participation of women and men in all phases of decision-making** and consideration of their differing needs and priorities in every public policy decision. For example, when drafting a national climate adaptation plan or a transport investment program, authorities should assess how women might be affected or benefit, and adjust measures accordingly. The law also introduced a **40% quota for women's representation** in certain domains of public life, helping to increase women's presence in decision-making bodies[5]. This quota has already influenced political representation (women's share in the National Assembly is now around one-third or more) and is gradually impacting sectoral governance – for instance, ensuring women are represented in environmental councils or transport project boards.

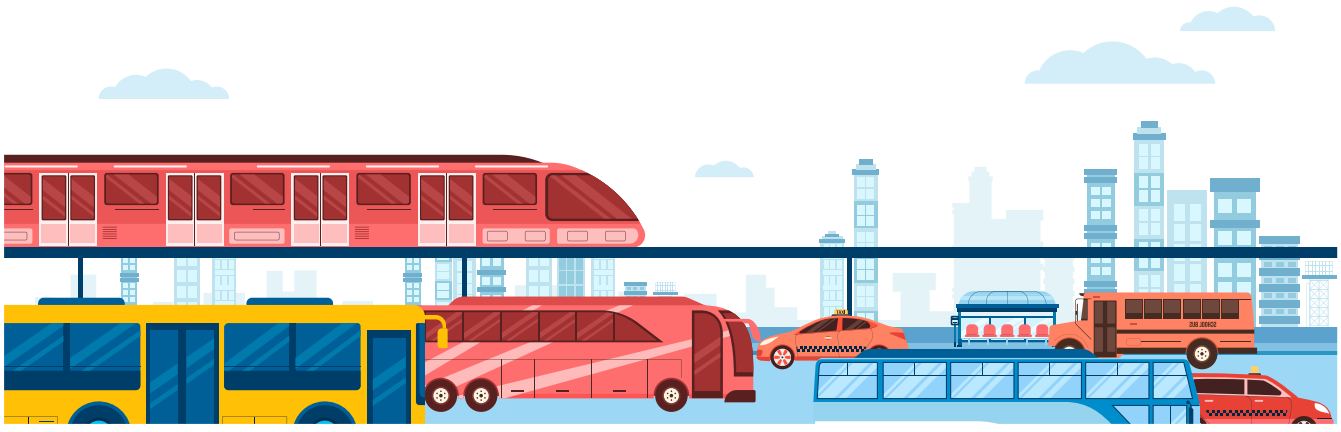
The institutional machinery for gender equality is robust. The **Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE)**, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, works across ministries to implement the law and strategy. Each ministry is expected to appoint gender focal points and develop Gender Equality Action Plans. Notably, **gender-responsive budgeting (GRB)** has been introduced: public bodies with over 50 employees must develop annual plans with special measures for gender equality and report on their implementation doklestic.lawdoklestic.law. Serbia is considered a regional leader in GRB, and this has led, for example, to the Ministry of Environmental Protection earmarking budget funds for projects supporting women entrepreneurs in green businesses, and the transport sector investing in sex-disaggregated data collection (e.g. travel surveys differentiating women's and men's patterns).

In October 2021, Serbia adopted a new **National Gender Equality Strategy (2021–2030)**, which reinforces these obligations. The strategy's vision is a *"gender-equal Serbia in which women and*

5 serbia.un.org

*men…have equal rights and opportunities for personal development, provide equal contribution to sustainable development of society and take equal responsibility for the future."*srbija.gov.rs. This vision explicitly links gender equality to sustainable development, recognizing gender equality as a prerequisite to achieving Serbia's development goals. While the strategy predominantly covers areas like political participation, economic empowerment, education, health, and violence against women, it also touches on environmental and infrastructure issues. For instance, it notes the gender gaps in sectors such as transport and IT, and calls for affirmative measures to involve more women in STEM fields and "green" jobs. It also highlights that women, especially in rural areas, face limited access to services partly due to transport deficiencies – a problem now being addressed through both women-targeted rural transport solutions and the broader transport strategy discussed above.

Crucially, Serbia's gender equality framework benefits from strong **civil society engagement**. Domestic CSOs and experts have provided data and monitoring. They ensure that policies like the Green Agenda or climate plans are not gender-blind – for example, feminist groups have advocated for gender indicators in climate adaptation projects and for women's participation in energy policymaking. This collaboration between government, civil society, and international partners (UN Women, World Bank, EBRD, etc.) helps implement the Gender Equality Law in practice. As Serbia pursues its climate and transport modernization agendas, the gender framework acts as a guide to ensure these agendas are inclusive. **In summary, Serbia now has both the legal mandate and the institutional setup to integrate gender considerations into environmental protection and transport – and these are increasingly being put to work to advance climate resilience and the SDGs.**



4. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENT

Serbia's policies on transport and environment are deeply entwined with regional initiatives and global sustainability commitments. A prime example is the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**, a regional roadmap inspired by the EU Green Deal. Serbia, along with its Western Balkan neighbors, endorsed this agenda through the **Sofia Declaration (November 2020)**. The Green Agenda sets out targets in areas such as decarbonization, clean energy, circular economy, combating pollution, and sustainable agriculture. Serbia's draft Environmental Protection Strategy explicitly **incorporates the Green Agenda goals and EU standards**, ensuring national efforts contribute to regional climate action. This alignment is not just on paper: for instance, under the Green Agenda's decarbonization pillar, Serbia is investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency (with plans to reduce coal reliance), and under the sustainable mobility component, it is electrifying parts of its railway network and improving cross-border transport links. All these actions support **SDG 7 and SDG 13** and prepare Serbia for future EU accession requirements[6].

Transport policy alignment is facilitated by the **Transport Community Treaty (TCT)** – a legally binding framework that Serbia signed in 2017 along with the EU and other Western Balkan states. The TCT extends the EU's transport acquis (safety, interoperability, infrastructure standards, etc.) to the region, effectively creating a **regional transport market**. The **Permanent Secretariat of the Transport Community**, based in Belgrade, coordinates these efforts and monitors the development of the **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) extensions** in the Balkans. Through this mechanism, Serbia's transport projects (highways, rail corridors, border facilities) are planned with regional connectivity in mind, supporting **SDG 9 and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**. It also has a social dimension: the Transport Community has established a **Social Forum** addressing issues like working conditions and gender equality in transport across the region. Serbian representatives (government and civil society) actively participate, sharing experiences like the GETS study as a model for others. This regional partnership underscores that **Serbia's push for safe, sustainable transport is part of a broader Western Balkans effort**, leveraging knowledge exchange and harmonization.

International financial and development institutions have been instrumental in Serbia's sustainability journey. The **World Bank** in particular has a strong footprint in the transport and green

agenda space. It financed the technical assistance for Serbia's Transport Strategy and the Gender in Transport Study, and it supports major projects like the **Western Balkans Trade and Transport Facilitation Project** (which provided $35 million for Serbian transport reforms and infrastructure upgrades). The World Bank has also produced analytical work linking gender and climate – for example, a recent World Bank report highlighted that addressing women's mobility barriers is *"vital…for a just transition to the decarbonization of transport"*[7]. This perspective is shaping projects on the ground, such as pilot programs to improve public transport safety for women and to encourage women's employment in rail companies. Another major initiative is the **Safe and Sustainable Transport Program (SSTP)** for the Western Balkans, funded by the European Commission and managed by the World Bank. Launched in 2021 following the EU Green Deal, SSTP has **€80 million** in grants to blend with World Bank financing across the region. It explicitly supports the **Green Agenda's transport component** – e.g. funding rail modernization, road safety, alternative fuel infrastructure – and emphasizes resilience and climate adaptation. Through SSTP, Serbia has accessed grants for projects like smart traffic management to reduce emissions in Belgrade, and greener public transport fleets. The World Bank, European Commission, and the **Transport Community** coordinate closely under this program, exemplifying **SDG 17's multi-stakeholder partnerships**. As the World Bank's Western Balkans Director noted, building modern, green transport networks "significantly improves the overall quality of life" and requires joint effort with the EU and regional bodies.

Serbia's alignment with international frameworks extends to the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Serbia was among the first countries in the region to **volunteer for an SDG review (VNR)**, presenting its progress in 2019, and it has institutionalized SDG monitoring through the Statistical Office (SORS). By integrating SDG targets into national strategies – for instance, the Transport Strategy references sustainability principles that correspond to SDGs 9, 11 and 13, and the Gender Equality Strategy explicitly cites the 2030 Agenda – Serbia signals its commitment to the global goals. The **Balkan Green Agenda** itself is seen as a vehicle for achieving SDGs in areas of climate (SDG13), clean energy (SDG7), sustainable cities (SDG11), responsible production (SDG12), and biodiversity (SDGs14 and 15). Regionally, Serbia cooperates with UN agencies and donors on initiatives like **SDGs for All**, which raise public awareness and involve civil society in SDG implementation. This collaborative approach ensures that climate action and gender equality are pursued not in isolation but as part of a unified development agenda.

In summary, Serbia's transport and environmental policies are closely knit into regional and international frameworks. The **Green Agenda and EU integration push Serbia toward greener, more inclusive practices**, while partnerships with organizations like the World Bank and UN provide technical know-how and funding. These external alignments reinforce domestic reforms: when Serbia improves an air quality monitoring system or adopts an electric bus fleet, it is simultaneously addressing local needs and contributing to broader SDG outcomes. Conversely, Serbia's experiences – such as its success in adopting a gender equality law or piloting women-friendly transport services – serve as valuable lessons in the international arena, enhancing Serbia's profile as a committed actor on climate and gender issues.

Serbia stands at the intersection of robust **gender-responsive policy development** and ambitious **climate and transport reforms**. The narrative of its transport and environmental policies is increasingly one of integration: integrating climate action with economic development, and integrating gender equality with technical sectors traditionally seen as gender-neutral. National policies, such as the new Transport Strategy and environmental plans, explicitly acknowledge that

7 documents1.worldbank.org

outcomes will be stronger and more just if they address the needs of all citizens – women and men alike. Backed by a progressive gender equality law and strategy, Serbia is embedding gender considerations (from safety in public transit to women's green jobs) into the fabric of climate and infrastructure projects. This not only helps fulfill international commitments like the SDGs and the Green Agenda, but also ensures that Serbia's response to climate change is socially inclusive.

The **Western Balkan context** adds impetus and support: regional cooperation through the Green Agenda and Transport Community means Serbia is not moving alone, but in step with neighbors, sharing knowledge and resources facilitated by the EU and World Bank. Such partnerships amplify impact, whether it's cutting carbon emissions or improving a rural woman's daily commute. Challenges undoubtedly remain – from securing the financing needed for the green transition, to changing cultural norms in male-dominated industries, to improving data for monitoring progress. Yet, Serbia's recent reporting on SDGs and its policy updates shows a candid recognition of these gaps and a resolve to address them.

CHAPTER III

Gender patterns and gender dimension of transport behaviours

1. GENDER PATTERNS IN TRANSPORT IN SERBIA

Gender analysis of data from the survey on:

- Accessibility of transport means
- Affordability of transport
- Frequency of using transport means
- Reasons why not using transport means
- Reasons for choosing a type of transportation
- Security and safety perceptions

The data highlight differences in access to various types of transportation between men and women. Private cars are most commonly owned and used by both men (78.9%) and women (70.5%), though men have slightly greater access to cars. A similar pattern is observed with bicycles, used by 67.8% of men compared to 57% of women.

Graph 1: Gender-Based Access to and Use of Transportation Modes

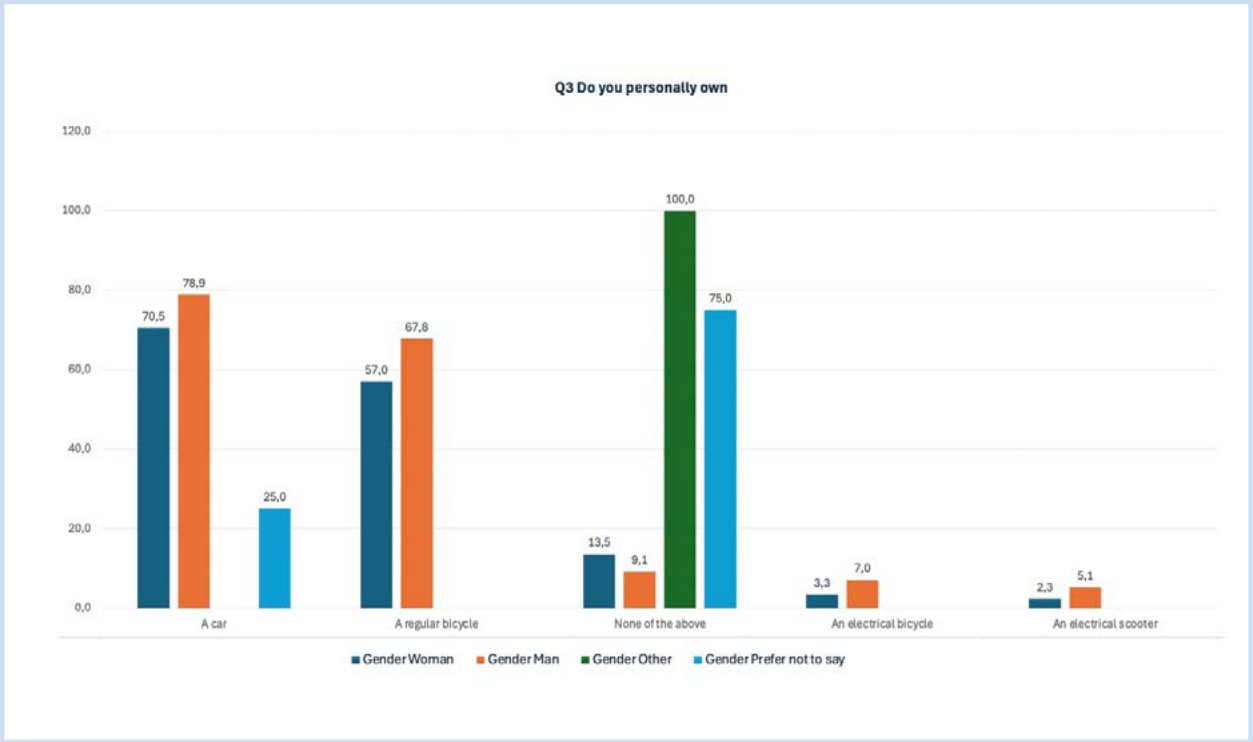


Table 1. Gender Differences in Preferred Modes of Transportation

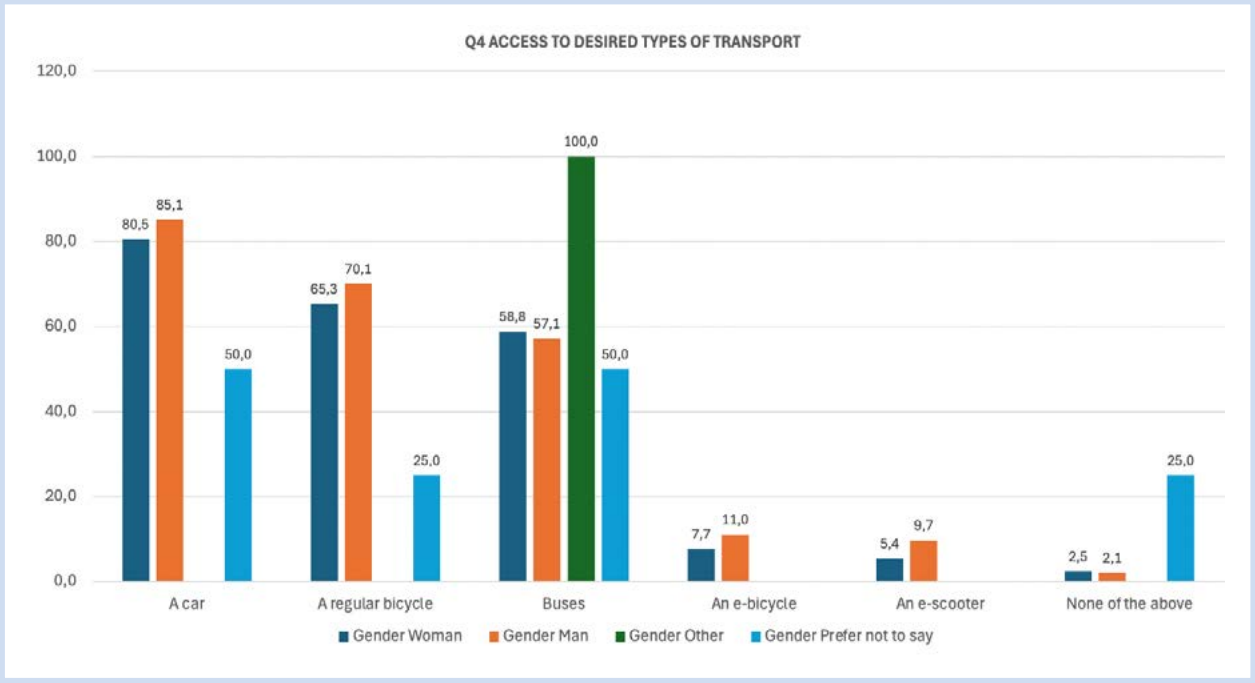
Transport Mode	Men (%)	Women (%)
Private Car	78.9	70.5
Bicycle	67.8	57
E-bike	7	3.3
E-scooter	5.1	2.3
None of the above	9.1	13.5

The difference becomes more significant with modern and alternative modes of transport, such as e-bikes and e-scooters. E-bikes are used by 7% of men and only 3.3% of women, while e-scooters are used by 5.1% of men and just 2.3% of women. These figures may indicate lower interest or fewer opportunities for women to use these means of transport, as well as potential barriers such as availability or safety concerns.

Finally, 13.5% of women have no access to any of the mentioned forms of transport, which is significantly higher than the percentage of men (9.1%). This suggests that women are more likely to be left without transport options, pointing to gender inequalities in mobility and infrastructure access.

These differences highlight the need for gender-sensitive transportation planning, taking into account the specific needs and obstacles women face in order to improve their access to various modes of transport.

Graph 2: Access to desired types of transport



Private car ownership: 85.1% of men and 80.5% of women Bicycle: 70.1% of men and 65.3% of women Bus usage: 100% of individuals who identify as "Gender Other," 58.8% of women, and 57.1% of men E-bike: 11% of men and 7.7% of women E-scooter: 9.7% of men and 5.4% of women None of the above: 25% of individuals who prefer not to disclose their gender, 2.5% of women, and 2.1% of men

The data highlight differences in access to various types of transportation across different gender groups. Private cars are the most commonly accessed form of transportation, with 85.1% of men and 80.5% of women having access. A similar pattern is observed with regular bicycles, accessed by 70.1% of men compared to 65.3% of women. Bus usage is notably high among individuals identifying as "Gender Other" (100%), a significant contrast to 58.8% of women and 57.1% of men. E-bicycles and e-scooters also show a gender gap, with men having slightly greater access to both. Lastly, 25% of individuals who prefer not to say their gender have access to none of the above transportation options, which is substantially higher compared to women (2.5%) and men (2.1%).

A large majority of respondents—**66.0% of women and 64.8% of men**—report commuting for less than 30 minutes on an average day. An additional **26.5% of women and 26.3% of men** travel between 31 and 60 minutes. Only a small fraction of the population (**1.4% of women and 1.1% of men**) report commutes longer than one hour but shorter than two.

Table 2. Comparison of Daily Travel Time Between Women and Men

Travel Time	Women (%)	Men (%)
Less than 30 minutes	66	64.8
31–60 minutes	26.5	26.3
More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours	1.4	1.1

These figures suggest **broad parity in commuting time between genders**, pointing to generally equitable access to destinations such as work, school, and services. From an urban planning and

infrastructure perspective, short commuting times can be interpreted as a positive indicator of transport efficiency, particularly in urban areas.

The majority of respondents live in urban areas—**84.9% of women and 86.1% of men**—with a smaller share in rural areas (**15.1% of women and 13.9% of men**). This **urban bias in population distribution** aligns with better-developed transport infrastructure in cities and likely contributes to the short average commute times reported above.

However, the **15% of women living in rural areas** may still face disproportionately high transport-related barriers. Despite having similar travel times, rural women often encounter more fragmented or less frequent services and have fewer alternative mobility options, particularly if they do not own a car. These differences warrant **targeted transport planning for rural areas**, especially in light of climate resilience and social inclusion goals.

The data show **high levels of access to private transport modes**, though with notable gender differences. **85.1% of men** and **80.5% of women** report having access to a car, making it the most accessible form of transport for both. Bicycles are next, used by **70.1% of men** and **65.3% of women**. These figures reflect the enduring reliance on personal transport modes in Serbia, with relatively **narrow but consistent gender gaps**.

However, newer and more sustainable mobility solutions such as **electric bicycles and e-scooters** reveal more pronounced disparities. E-bikes are accessible to **11.0% of men** compared to **7.7% of women**, and e-scooters to **9.7% of men** versus **5.4% of women**. These disparities could be attributed to multiple barriers faced by women, including affordability, safety concerns, lack of infrastructure (e.g. protected bike lanes), and societal norms discouraging women from adopting new technologies.

The survey results offer important insights into how men and women perceive the affordability of various transportation modes in Serbia. Overall, the data demonstrates notable gender differences in economic accessibility, particularly when it comes to newer or higher-cost forms of transport.

Table 3. Gender differences in economic accessibility

	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Bus	5.4	6.5	27.5	33.5	61.4	50.3	0	0	0	0
Bicycle and Skateboard	8.6	6.7	16.1	13.7	54.4	60.2	0	0	0	0
Car	15.4	13.7	51.9	54.1	27.7	29.9	0	0	0	0
Taxi	36.8	42.9	47.5	38.5	0	0	0	0	12.5	11.8
E-scooter	36	28	16	17.9	10.2	15.6	35.3	35.8	0	0

Public buses stand out as the most widely accessible and affordable mode of transport for both genders.

- **61.4% of women** and **50.3% of men** reported buses as *very affordable*.
- A smaller proportion found them *somewhat expensive* (27.5% of women, 33.5% of men), while only a minority (5.4% of women and 6.5% of men) reported them as *unaffordable*.

This reflects the crucial role public transport plays in ensuring inclusive mobility, especially for women who are more likely to depend on it for daily activities such as caregiving, commuting, and

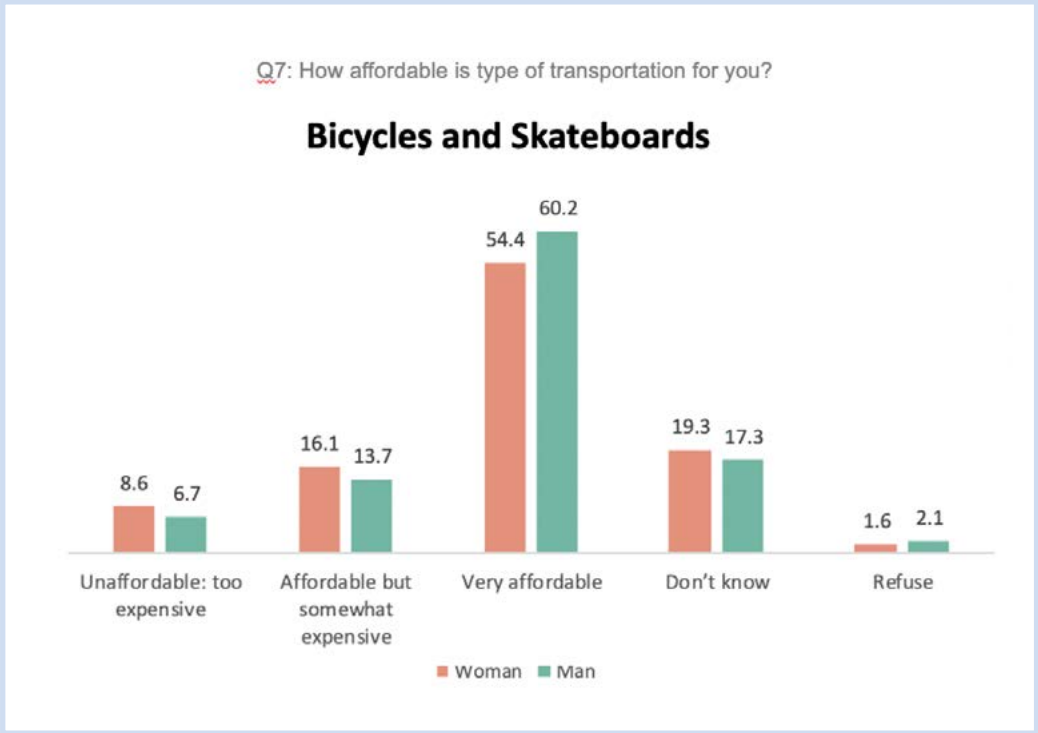
access to services. Men, while also reliant on buses, show slightly more cost sensitivity, perhaps due to more frequent car usage or differing expectations of service levels.

Bicycles and Skateboards are generally affordable, with gender gaps:

- **60.2% of men** and **54.4% of women** found them *very affordable*, while a smaller share of both groups considered them *somewhat expensive* (13.7% men, 16.1% women).
- A slightly higher proportion of women (8.6%) than men (6.7%) reported these options as *unaffordable*.

These results suggest that although bicycles are generally cost-effective, women may face additional financial or contextual barriers (e.g., cost of safety gear, less suitable infrastructure, caregiving duties that limit their use).

Graph 3: Perceived Affordability of Different Modes of Transportation



Despite being a dominant mode of transport, cars remain a financial burden for many:

- More than **half of respondents**—**51.9% of women** and **54.1% of men**—consider car use *somewhat expensive*.
- **15.4% of women** and **13.7% of men** find it *completely unaffordable*.
- Only **27.7% of women** and **29.9% of men** rate car ownership and use as *very affordable*.

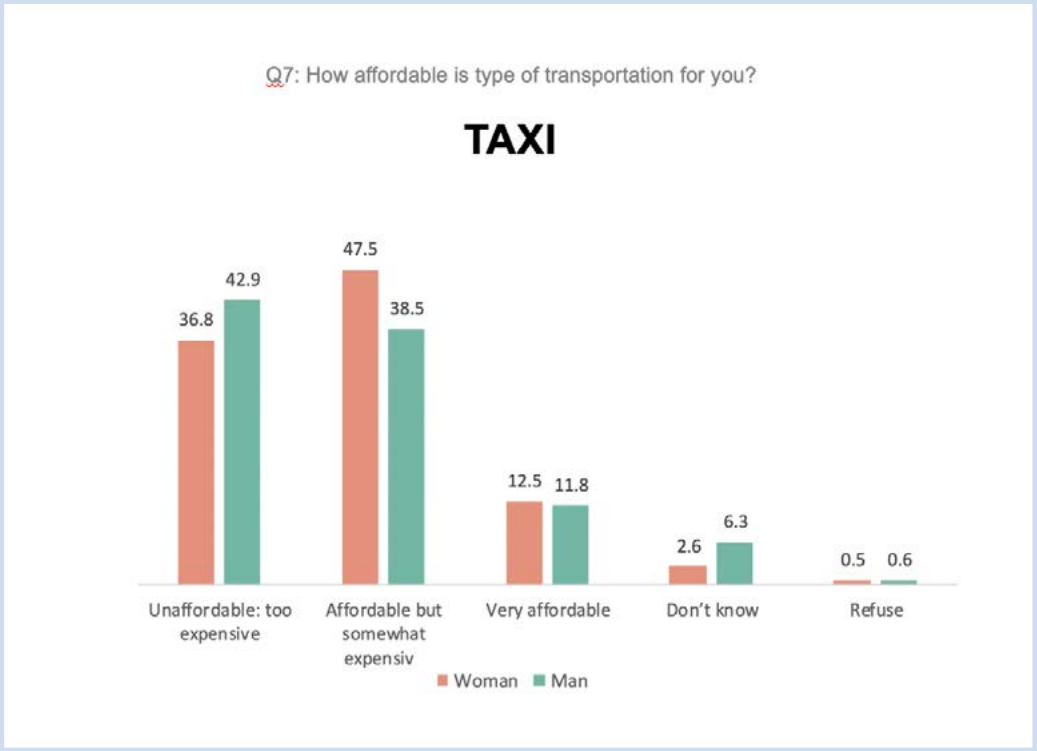
This suggests that even though cars are frequently used, cost is a significant barrier, particularly for women. These findings highlight the importance of policies that reduce dependency on private cars and promote more accessible alternatives.

Taxis are widely perceived as unaffordable by both men and women:

- **36.8% of women** and **42.9% of men** rate taxis as *unaffordable*.

- A majority find them *somewhat expensive* (47.5% of women, 38.5% of men), and a small portion (around 12% for both genders) consider them completely *inaccessible due to high cost*.

Graph 4: Taxi - Affordability of Different Modes of Transportation



The perception of taxis as prohibitively expensive reinforces their role as a luxury or emergency option rather than a regular mode of transport—especially for low-income users and rural residents.

E-scooters are the most controversial option in terms of affordability and familiarity:

- Over one-third of women (**36.0%**) and **28.0% of men** found them *unaffordable*.
- Only **10.2% of women** and **15.6% of men** consider them *very affordable*.
- A large percentage (**35.3% of women** and **35.8% of men**) reported *uncertainty or lack of knowledge* about their affordability.

These figures point to a combination of financial and structural barriers—such as limited availability in non-urban areas, lack of safe infrastructure, or unfamiliarity—that disproportionately affect women. These gendered gaps highlight the importance of including newer mobility services in public policy discussions, especially when designing inclusive, green transport systems.

- **Buses and bicycles** remain the most accessible and affordable transport modes, particularly important for women's mobility.
- **Cars and taxis**, although widely used, present considerable economic barriers—especially for women—suggesting the need for structural affordability measures.
- **E-scooters**, despite being promoted as a modern urban solution, are not yet widely accessible or perceived as affordable, particularly by women.

Access to **buses** is roughly equal across genders (**58.8% of women and 57.1% of men**), indicating that **public transportation remains a vital and relatively gender-equitable resource**.

When it comes to advantages or disadvantages or reason of using or avoid different means of transport, below are presented the findings for various options:

Bus:

- The most cited reason for not using buses is slowness/lack of schedule regularity, especially by men (29.0%).
- Inconvenience is a major issue for women (27.3%), suggesting their mobility needs aren't well supported.
- Bus inaccessibility is a greater concern for men (27.5%) than women (17.7%).
- Service unavailability affects more men (12.5%) than women (8.1%).
- Safety concerns are minimal but slightly higher for men.
- A large proportion of both genders simply do not like using buses.
- Lack of access and knowledge affect men more than women.

Graph 5: Bus - Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Transportation Modes

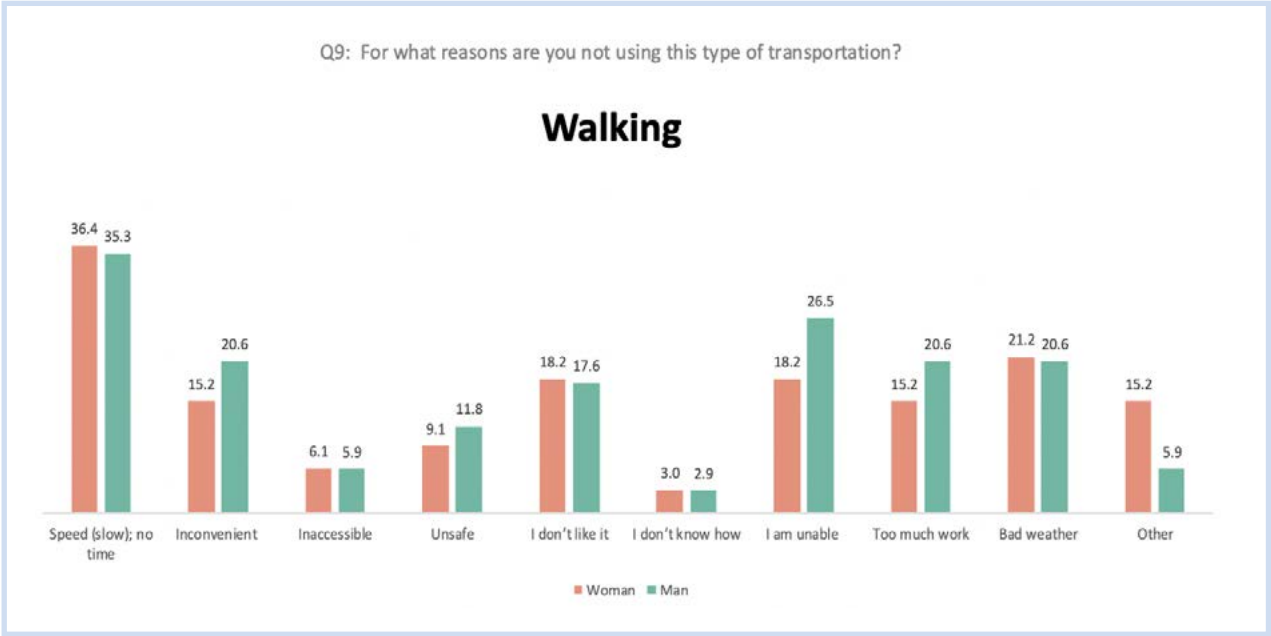
Gendered experiences with bus transportation show that women are more affected by practicality and flexibility issues, while men are more affected by availability and access. Strategic improvements in schedules, route design, and user experience could close these gaps.

Walking

- Speed is the dominant reason walking is avoided by both genders.
- Inconvenience is more significant for men.
- Safety is a concern for both, with a slight increase for men.

- Dislike of walking and bad weather affect both genders similarly.
- Women more frequently cite physical limitations and lack of knowledge.

Graph 6: Walking - Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Transportation Modes

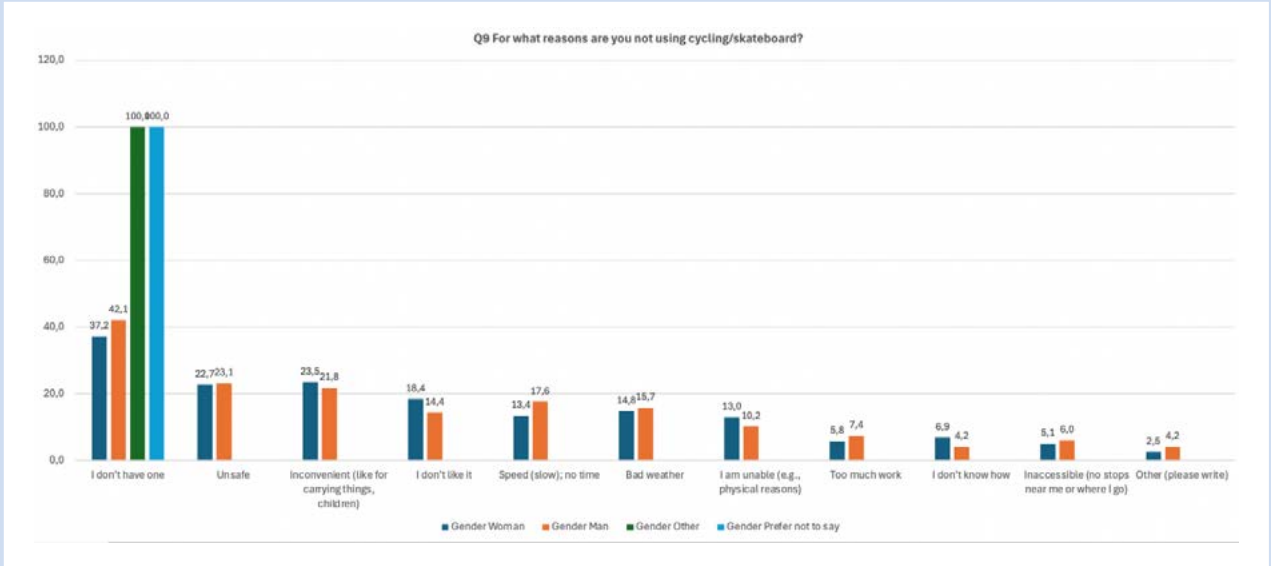


Walking is not hindered by infrastructure alone but also by perceptions of efficiency, safety, and physical ability. Addressing these requires urban design sensitive to time constraints, accessibility, and public awareness.

Bicycle and Skateboard

- Not owning a bicycle/skateboard is the main barrier for both genders.
- Safety concerns are high and almost equal for both groups.
- Women report more lack of knowledge and physical limitations.
- Men more frequently cite speed and work obligations.

Graph 7: Cycling/skate - Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Transportation Modes



Ownership and safety are central. Gender-responsive solutions should include affordable access programmes and improved cycling infrastructure, along with safety campaigns and confidence-building activities especially for women.

Car

- The most common barrier is not owning a car, with men slightly more affected.
- Lack of knowledge and experience driving is more significant among women (12.9% vs. 3.9%).
- Women cite disliking car usage more often, while men more often cite professional constraints.

Socio-economic barriers and gendered driving skills gaps must be addressed, alongside affordability programmes and driving education targeting women.

E-Scooter

- Not owning one is the most cited barrier across both genders.
- Safety concerns and dislike are shared by both.
- Women more often report lack of knowledge and access.
- Men more often cite weather and work-related limitations.

Promoting e-scooters as a gender-equal alternative requires addressing affordability, improving infrastructure and safety, and offering training targeted at women to boost adoption.

While both women and men share key reasons for not using specific modes of transport (ownership, safety, and speed), gendered differences highlight the need for tailored interventions. Women often face more structural and educational barriers, while men's decisions are more frequently influenced by availability and time constraints.

A detailed comparison of transportation usage by purpose reveals that while men and women often share similar transport needs, notable gender differences persist in specific contexts.

Table 4. Comparison of transportation usage by purpose reveals

Transport Mode	Purpose	Difference
Taxi	Commuting to work/school	11.2% more then men
Car	Commuting to work/school	7.7% More men than women
Walking	Taking children to school	7% more women then men
Bicycle	Health/social service access	5.6% men than women
E-scooter	Sports and health	5.8% more women then men

The most prominent gender gap is observed in taxi use for commuting to work or education. Women report using taxis for this purpose significantly more than men—46.3% versus 35.1%—suggesting a stronger reliance on this mode for navigating daily obligations. This might reflect safety preferences, lack of alternatives, or caregiving-related time constraints.

Conversely, men use cars more frequently for commuting, with 66.1% compared to 58.4% of women. This could point to higher car ownership among men or differences in income and employment patterns that make private car usage more feasible.

When it comes to walking children to school or kindergarten, the data show a clear gendered pattern: 22.5% of women versus 15.5% of men report using walking for this purpose. This reinforces traditional caregiving roles, with women still disproportionately responsible for school-related mobility.

An interesting reversal appears in the use of bicycles to access health and social services, where 16.5% of men report using bikes compared to 10.9% of women. This could reflect physical access differences, comfort levels, or availability of infrastructure that affects women's willingness or ability to cycle longer distances.

Finally, the use of electric scooters for sports and health activities is more common among women (29.5%) than men (23.7%), suggesting that women are engaging with micro-mobility options for wellbeing purposes, possibly in more flexible or recreational contexts.

These examples show that gender roles, responsibilities, and access to transport shape how and why different modes are used. Transport policies must consider these gaps and design services that reflect the needs and realities of all genders to promote inclusive and sustainable mobility.

2. SECURITY AND SAFETY PERCEPTIONS WHILE USING A TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION

The majority of respondents feel safe when using **buses**. A significant portion of women (43.8%) and men (53.0%) feel "very safe," while 49.2% of women and 41.9% of men feel "somewhat safe." Only a small percentage of respondents report feeling unsafe: 5.6% of women and 4.1% of men.

Table 5. Security and Safety Perceptions While Using a Type of Transportation

Transport Mode	Safe (Women)	Safe (Men)	Unsafe at Night (Women)	Unsafe at Night (Men)	Unsafe during Day (Women)	Unsafe during Day (Men)
Bus	62.2	75.6	25.3	12	15.6	15
Walking	45.3	67.7	46.3	17.9	17.4	19
Bicycle	32.8	55.2	49.3	22.9	22.3	23.2
Car	67.5	74.3	21.9	15.2	14	16.6
Taxi	59.1	71.4	31.9	20.6	10.2	10.7

3. PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY BY TRANSPORT TYPE AND TIME OF DAY

Walking is widely seen as the safest transport mode. A majority—57.9% of women and 63.3% of men—reported feeling *very safe* while walking, with only 5–6% feeling unsafe. However, safety perceptions drop sharply at night: 46.3% of women and 17.9% of men feel unsafe walking alone after dark. This highlights a significant gender gap in nighttime mobility.

Bicycles are generally perceived as *somewhat safe*, with 53.6% of women and 57.6% of men selecting this option. Yet, 16% of women and 11.3% of men feel *not safe at all*, suggesting concerns about road safety and infrastructure, particularly among women. At night, nearly half of women (49.3%) report feeling unsafe when cycling, compared to 22.9% of men.

Cars are viewed as a safe option by most users, with 44–45% feeling *very safe* and nearly 49% feeling *somewhat safe*, across genders. Still, more than 20% of women feel unsafe driving alone at night, compared to 15% of men.

Taxis are similarly considered safe by around half of respondents. However, 31.9% of women report feeling unsafe at night in taxis—substantially more than men (20.6%). Daytime concerns are minimal.

E-scooters trigger the most concern. While 50.5% of women feel *somewhat safe*, only 19.6% feel *very safe*. Notably, 24.2% of men and 16% of women feel *not safe at all*, highlighting safety gaps and limited public confidence in this transport mode.

Gender differences are most visible at night across all modes. Women consistently report higher levels of insecurity, especially when walking, cycling, or using taxis. E-scooters stand out as the least trusted transport option for both women and men, while walking and public transport are generally considered safe—though still marked by a substantial gender gap. These findings underscore the need for better infrastructure, improved lighting, gender-sensitive urban planning, and public safety initiatives to support inclusive and secure mobility for all.

The question about the accessibility of sidewalks for people with disabilities or strollers revealed that 8.2% of women and 11.2% of men consider sidewalks to be very accessible, while 45.6% of women and 54.7% of men rate them as somewhat accessible. However, a significant number of respondents, 44.2% of women and 32.6% of men, believe that sidewalks are not accessible at all. These findings indicate significant barriers to the accessibility of public spaces for people with special needs and parents with children in strollers.

The research examined the impact of poor or unavailable public transportation on employment and participation in policy development over the past five years. When asked whether they had to refuse a job due to poor or unavailable transportation, 27.7% of women and 23.0% of men answered affirmatively, while the same percentage of women and men (27.7% of women and 23.0% of men) stated that they did not have to refuse a job for this reason.

When asked whether they had not participated in policy development due to a lack of transportation in the last five years, 16.7% of women and 17.1% of men responded positively, while the majority, 83.3% of women and 82.9% of men, indicated that they had not faced this issue. These findings highlight the significant impact of transportation problems on employment opportunities and participation in policy-making processes, particularly for certain segments of the population.

The research on participation in policy development due to lack of transportation highlights several key barriers affecting people's ability to engage in this process. A significant number of respondents, 44.2% of women and 45.6% of men, identified the lack of nearby public transportation as the main obstacle. Additionally, 38.9% of women and 43.3% of men reported the need to use more than one mode of transportation to get to work as a challenge. High public transportation costs relative to salaries were also a concern for 36.8% of women and 37.8% of men.

Moreover, 28.4% of women and 34.3% of men expressed dissatisfaction with the type of service and routes available. Time spent in transport was another important factor, with 41.1% of women and 38.9% of men noting that long commute times hinder their participation in policy processes.

Security concerns in public transportation were cited by 18.9% of women and 20.0% of men, while 34.7% of women and 30.0% of men indicated that they were unwilling to use public transport daily. Additionally, 21.1% of women and 22.2% of men highlighted the inaccessibility of public transport for people with disabilities as a barrier to inclusive participation.

These findings underscore the significant impact that inadequate public transportation has on citizens' ability to participate in important societal processes, such as policy development. They point to the need for improvements in public transportation systems to make them more accessible, affordable, and secure for all individuals, fostering greater participation in public life.

The survey conducted in Serbia reveals a significant gender difference in perceptions regarding the contribution of cars to air pollution at the municipal level. A large majority of women (70.9%) and just over half of men (51.8%) believe that cars significantly contribute to air pollution. In contrast, 39.4% of men think cars contribute only marginally, compared to 24% of women. A small minority—1.4% of women and 6.5% of men—believe cars do not contribute at all. These results point to a broader concern about the environmental impact of cars, with women demonstrating a stronger perception of their harmful effects on air quality.

When asked about the potential to influence climate change through personal transport choices, responses indicate a moderate sense of individual agency. Around 38.1% of women and 41.3% of men believe they can do only a little, while a similar share—36% of women and 32.6% of men—feel they can make a meaningful impact. However, only a small percentage—9.8% of women and 9% of men—believe they can contribute significantly. These findings reflect a general awareness of the issue and a willingness to act, yet also reveal a perceived limitation in individual capacity to drive substantial environmental change.

CHAPTER IV

Transport Solutions Through a Gender Lens: Actions and Expenses

RECOMMENDATIONS

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT PRIORITIES: ENHANCING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Based on the survey data, the following key findings and recommendations are grouped according to thematic priorities. These provide insight into gender-specific patterns of access, perception, and preferences around transportation, and suggest directions for improving gender-responsive transport and climate policies.

INVESTMENT PRIORITIES IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Public transport improvements are widely supported by both women and men, particularly in relation to cleaner and more efficient mobility solutions. Electric or hybrid buses are the top priority for both genders, cited by 15.4% of women and 15.8% of men, underscoring a shared concern about environmental sustainability. Women tend to place slightly higher value on frequent bus services (14.4%) and improvements in public safety infrastructure, such as lighting at stops (8.8%), compared to men (12.2% and 7.8% respectively). Men, on the other hand, are more likely to prioritise investments in cycling infrastructure and trams. Affordable transport is also a mutual concern, with over 12% of both men and women emphasising the need to reduce public transport costs.

Recommendations:

- Ensure a gender-balanced investment approach, combining safe and frequent bus services, affordable options, and improved cycling infrastructure.
- Prioritise safe public space design, especially around bus stops, with an emphasis on lighting and security measures.
- Expand infrastructure for trams and bikes with universal design principles, considering both urban and suburban contexts.

ECONOMIC ACCESS TO TRANSPORT

While both women (63.2%) and men (64.2%) report similar access to household income for transportation, income distribution reveals notable gender disparities. Women are overrepresented in the lower-income brackets, with nearly 40% earning between 301 and 800 EUR and 8.1% reporting

no income. Men are more likely to fall into higher income categories, with 14.2% earning more than 1000 EUR compared to 9.8% of women. This economic inequality can translate into reduced transport choices and autonomy for women.

Recommendations:

- Increase support for subsidised or free public transportation options, especially for low-income groups.
- Explore transport voucher schemes targeted at women, particularly those in caregiving roles or rural areas.

GENDERED MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION USE

Mobility patterns in Serbia are strongly gendered. Women more often walk or use public transport, while men more frequently use private cars and bicycles. Women's transport choices are shaped by caregiving roles and access to services, such as taking children to school and attending healthcare appointments. Concerns about safety significantly affect women's transport behaviour: they consistently report feeling less safe at night across all modes of transport. Safety concerns also discourage women from cycling or using e-scooters.

Recommendations:

- Improve safety in public transport and walking infrastructure with gender-sensitive urban planning.
- Introduce integrated mobility services that account for multi-stop trips typical of women's daily routines (e.g. combining childcare and shopping).
- Promote awareness and safety campaigns targeting nighttime mobility.

PERCEPTIONS AND CLIMATE ACTION

There is a significant gender difference in perceptions of environmental impact from car use. While 70.9% of women believe cars contribute significantly to air pollution, only 51.8% of men share this view. Moreover, 39.4% of men believe cars contribute only a little, compared to 24% of women. These differing views may influence personal behaviour and support for climate policies. Additionally, both genders report moderate levels of perceived personal impact on climate change through their transport choices—most believe they can do "a little," while fewer feel they can do "a lot."

Recommendations:

- Promote climate literacy with a gender lens by integrating eco-mobility messages in public campaigns.
- Strengthen women's roles as agents of change in sustainable transport and climate action.

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED

BROADER CONCLUSION: GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE-RESPONSIVE MOBILITY

The gendered dimensions of transport access, affordability, safety, and environmental perception point to systemic barriers that limit women's mobility and economic opportunities. Women's higher reliance on public and shared transport, coupled with lower income levels and safety concerns, requires structural interventions.

To advance both gender equality and climate goals, it is essential to:

- Build inclusive, accessible, and low-emission transport systems.
- Close the income and accessibility gap by linking gender-responsive mobility planning to broader social and economic policies.
- Ensure gender-disaggregated data collection and use it for evidence-based planning.

Adopting these recommendations will enhance transport justice and support Serbia's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 11 on sustainable cities) and the Western Balkans Green Agenda.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM GOOD LOCAL PRACTICES

A review of the measures taken in transport area in the last 5 years that have positive environmental / climate change impact

Over the past five years, Serbia has implemented several measures in the transport sector aimed at reducing environmental impact and addressing climate change. Key initiatives include:

1. National Commitments to Emission Reductions: In August 2022, Serbia enhanced its climate ambitions by adopting revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), pledging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 33.3% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. This commitment encompasses key sectors such as energy production, agriculture, transport, industry, waste management, and forestry.

Serbia has made significant commitments to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and combat climate change. In August 2022, the country submitted its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), setting a target to reduce GHG emissions by 33.3% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

Achieving these emission reduction targets will require substantial investment, particularly in the energy sector. Estimates suggest that an additional $10.4 billion over the next 25 years is necessary for Serbia to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, focusing primarily on transforming the power sector.

To support these commitments, Serbia has undertaken several legislative and strategic initiatives:

Climate Change Law (2021): Establishes mechanisms for transparent and accurate reporting on climate actions, facilitating the integration of climate considerations across various sectors.

Low Carbon Development Strategy (2023–2030): Focuses on decarbonizing the economy, particularly the energy sector, which relies heavily on fossil fuels. The strategy outlines investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Climate Change Adaptation Program (2023–2030): Identifies impacts of climate change on vulnerable sectors and defines measures to mitigate these effects, enhancing resilience and preparedness.

2. Legislative Framework for Climate Action: The adoption of the Law on Climate Change in March 2021 established mechanisms for transparent and accurate reporting on climate actions. This law facilitates the integration of climate considerations into various sectors, including transport, ensuring that environmental impacts are systematically addressed. [8]

3. Development of Low-Carbon Transport Strategies: Serbia has been developing a revised Transport Strategy that incorporates climate change aspects into transport and mobility development. This strategy emphasizes the promotion of public transportation, improved urban planning, and investments in sustainable transport infrastructure to reduce emissions. [9]

4. Investment in Sustainable Infrastructure: The “EU for Environment and Climate Action” initiative has contributed to environmental protection and energy efficiency in Serbia. This program focuses on upgrading water and wastewater infrastructures and reducing CO_2 emissions through the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy-efficient systems, indirectly benefiting the transport sector by encouraging cleaner energy use.

5. Promotion of Cycling and Non-Motorized Transport: There has been a growing movement advocating for improved road safety for cyclists and the inclusion of bicycle traffic in public transport systems. These initiatives aim to reduce reliance on motor vehicles, thereby decreasing urban emissions and promoting healthier lifestyles.

8 https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Second%20Biennial%20Update%20Report%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Serbia.pdf?utm

9 https://www.ekologija.gov.rs/sites/default/files/2023-11/low_carbon_development_strategy_of_the_republic_of_serbia_for_the_period_2023-_2030_with_projections_until_2050.pdf?utm

These measures reflect Serbia's commitment to integrating environmental considerations into its transport policies, contributing to the global effort against climate change.

Assessment of the gender-responsiveness of the local measures/policies and budgets in the last 5 years in transport area that have positive environmental / climate change impact, using the traffic lights method of analysis;

Over the past five years, Serbia has made efforts to integrate gender considerations into its transport policies and budgets, aiming to achieve positive environmental and climate change outcomes. The "traffic lights" method of analysis—categorizing measures as green (fully gender-responsive), yellow (partially gender-responsive), or red (not gender-responsive)—provides a framework to assess these initiatives.

Green: Fully Gender-Responsive Measures

Gender Equality in Transport Study (2020): This comprehensive study analysed gender disparities in Serbia's transport sector, leading to recommendations such as adjusting public transport vehicles to accommodate mothers with strollers and individuals with disabilities and enhancing the safety and accessibility of bus stops. These measures address both gender equity and environmental sustainability by promoting public transport usage.

UNECE Support for Gender Mainstreaming (2019): The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe advanced its support to Serbia in mainstreaming gender into environmental policies. This initiative emphasizes that incorporating gender considerations can enhance the effectiveness of environmental policies, including those related to transport, by better understanding target groups and ensuring that policy measures meet the needs of both women and men.

Yellow: Partially Gender-Responsive Measures

Urban Planning and Gender Perspectives (2023): Research conducted in Belgrade highlighted efforts to integrate gender perspectives into urban planning and transport policies. While some progress has been made, the study found that gender integration remains limited, suggesting a need for more robust inclusion of gender expertise in planning processes to fully address diverse mobility needs.

Paths Toward Green Mobility Report (Date not specified): This report emphasizes the importance of user-centric and gender-responsive rail services in Serbia. While it aligns with governmental plans to expand rail transport, the practical implementation of gender-responsive measures is still in development, indicating partial responsiveness.

Red: Not Gender-Responsive Measures

National Climate and Transport Policies: Despite overarching commitments to environmental sustainability, many national policies in Serbia lack explicit integration of gender perspectives, particularly in transport-related climate actions. This omission suggests a gap in addressing the specific mobility needs and challenges faced by different genders.

In summary, while Serbia has initiated several measures that consider gender in transport policies with positive environmental impacts, the degree of responsiveness varies. Fully gender-responsive initiatives are present but limited, partially responsive measures indicate progress with room for improvement, and some policies still lack gender considerations entirely. Enhancing the gender-responsiveness of transport policies and budgets is crucial for achieving equitable and sustainable environmental outcomes.

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