Gender inequality in the labour market of Ukraine
Challenges for the future

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ABSTRACT

Gender inequality is one of the fundamental manifestations of socio-economic differentiation of the population, leading to different opportunities for self-realisation for women and men in society. This makes it an important topic for analysis even though there may be different views on the matter. The labour market conditions that existed in Ukraine until the end of February 2022 exacerbated the problems of gender inequality in employment. These problems were manifested in unequal opportunities for women and men in public administration, education, employment, income and property. The research uses general and specific scientific methods – dialectical, historical, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction – to study the legislative frameworks governing gender equality in the European Union (EU) and Ukraine in determining the current state of women’s employment in Ukraine and Europe.

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In this context, the purpose of this article is to identify the features of gender inequality in the labour market of modern Ukraine, as well as to identify its causes and solutions.

**KEY WORDS**
Gender inequality, women’s labour, domestic labour law, gender employment, labour market, labour remuneration.

**Introduction**
In modern society, the equal legal status of women and men, as well as equal opportunities for the realisation of gender equality, have long become commonplace in public discourse and politics. Ukraine is one of the countries where the equality of men and women is enshrined in the law. However, in reality, the Ukrainian society continues to remain gender unequal, with more property, power and general influence belonging to men. This is unfair and has negative consequences for economic development. Restrictions on women’s opportunities to engage in certain professions reduce the efficiency of human resources and increase income stratification (Khrystova & Uvarova, 2022).

In addition, cross-national analysis shows that gender equality can be a measure of the level of economic development (Kostruba & Lukianov, 2019). Women make up the majority of the population in any society, so lowering entry barriers for women leads to an expansion of the productive class and is fruitful for the post-industrial economy. The practice of economic reforms has shown that in the absence of an adequate system of state employment regulation measures, the female part of the workforce is the first to be pushed to the periphery of the labour market or even beyond it (Yaroshenko et al., 2021a). As a result, hidden and overt discrimination against women, gender segmentation of the labour market and devaluation of women’s education and qualification potential are increasing. This problem is worsening but very often research into it does not take into account purely economic factors affecting labour relations.

The negative trends in the employment of women, monitored in the period up to the end of February 2022, have a detrimental effect on the demographic situation in the country and on social relations. The main one is the problem of inequality between men and women in the labour market, even though Article 17 of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Ensuring the Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men’ declares: ‘Women and men are provided with equal rights and opportunities in the field of employment, professional development, and retraining’ (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2005). But data show that problems with career and professional development occur more often among women, and the offer of jobs for women is characterised by a much narrower professional range. In addition, women’s chances of losing their jobs are always higher than men’s (Khrystova & Uvarova, 2022). Therefore, the problem of female unemployment, despite theoretical research on it, remains extremely relevant in practical terms since most of the unemployed are women, and women’s wages are significantly lower than those of men in the same positions. In addition, since the
Russian Federation's large-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the female part of the population has faced new challenges in the field of employment.

Researchers into gender inequality in the labour market include Andrusyak (2018), Chichkalo-Kondratska (2019), Alexopoulou (2019), Goncharenko (2019) and Doronina (2018). However, the problem, according to national and world trends, remains unresolved and has a high level of negative inertia. There has been relatively little research on this topic, revealing a significant knowledge gap, which makes it relevant as a subject of research. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to: study the gender problem in the labour market; describe the reasons for women's professional inequality; give a structured assessment of the current state of the labour market of Ukraine, taking into account its gender characteristics, as well as the current armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine; and determine directions and methods of solving this problem in Ukraine, taking into account the experience of other countries in addressing the problem of women's segregation.

**Sources and methods**

The research used general and special methods of scientific knowledge – historical, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction – to study the legislative framework regarding gender equality in the EU and Ukraine, determining the current state of women's employment in Ukraine compared with the rest of Europe. An important component of the research methodology was the use of a comparative method to analyse current policy in the field of employment of women in Ukraine and foreign countries. The abstract-logical and model method was used to determine ways of reforming and improving the current state of legislative regulation of women’s employment in Ukraine.

The system-functional approach is used in the generalisation of the theoretical and methodological aspects of the transformation of the labour market and employment to ensure the equality of men and women in this field and to determine the main mechanisms for the protection of women in the field of employment in Ukraine. The analytical method was applied during the study of the state and trends of changes in state regulation of women's employment. The use of the general scientific dialectical method helped to analyse the issue of the legal protection of women's employment, taking into account its interdependence, integrity, complexity and dynamics. To identify and study the factors affecting the violation of women's rights in the field of employment in Ukraine, structural and functional methods were used.

The formal-logical method helps in the interpretation of the current legislation of the EU and Ukraine in the field of women’s employment. The method of categorical conceptual analysis played an important role in the research process. It was used to outline the content of the basic research categories to avoid conceptual confusion, which might otherwise lay the foundations for contradictions caused by misunderstandings capable of causing social conflicts. The logical method of cognition was applied during the formation of the methodology, source base and historiography of the study.

The system-structural method made it possible to investigate the phenomenon of gender inequality in the labour sphere comprehensively and from all available aspects.
With the help of a sociological approach, the formation and development of the idea of gender equality and its establishment in the public consciousness are traced. Using the formal-dogmatic method, an analysis of the content and scope of the gender equality concept in labour law in international legal acts and the current legislation of Ukraine was performed. The dialectical method made it possible to analyse the formation and development of the idea of gender equality in the field of labour law to reveal its inextricable relationship with the ideas of the development of progressive society and the connection with the process of national development and self-determination of the nation. Regulatory and strategic documents of international organisations, the EU and Ukraine, monographs, articles, material on scientific and practical conferences and official websites of international organisations and state institutions served as the research information base.

Results
In the 20th century, women became full members of society with their economic activity increasing every year. However, gender inequality persists, which has led to a decrease in the social status of women, making it important to research the issue of gender inequality in the field of employment of women in Ukraine. The negative trends in the employment of women, monitored in the period until the end of February 2022, have had a detrimental effect on the demographic situation in the country, as well as on social relations. Particularly important is the problem of inequality between men and women in the labour market.

Gender inequality is a social phenomenon caused not only by biological differences between women and men but primarily by the unequal distribution of economic, political and social resources. According to the State Statistics Service, women receive an average of 79.3% of men’s wages. The biggest difference – where women’s salary is only 62% of men’s – is in the field of arts, sports and entertainment. For a woman, this 18–20% deficit means that she works for no payment every fifth working day (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021). Additionally, according to the World Economic Forum, the global median annual income for women is US$11,500 and for men US$21,500. Equality in wages is predicted to be achieved in 256 years - in 2277. Even in the EU, the gender gap is currently 14.1% (World Economic Forum, 2019).

On the one hand, this is related to the relatively low-paid fields in which women are most employed – education and healthcare. But this is not the only area where there is a gender wage gap. Paula England, a Professor of Sociology at New York University, analysed data from the US census from 1950 to 2000. She found that the greater participation of women in a certain field was associated with lower wages in that field. This implies that employers devalued women’s work, setting lower wages for it. Even in high-paying fields, women tend to hold lower positions. In the EU, less than 8% of the leaders of leading companies are women. This is not because women do not have the necessary knowledge or skills for leadership (Levanon et al., 2009; Iserman et al., 2019).

Equality of labour rights and the prohibition of discrimination in employment based on gender are guaranteed by national legislation, in particular the Constitution of Ukraine (Articles 21, 24, 43) (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1996a), the Code of Labour Laws of Ukraine (Articles 2-1, 22) (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016b), Laws of
Ukraine ‘On Principles of Prevention and Counteraction of Discrimination in Ukraine’ (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2013), ‘On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men’ and others. Paragraph b of Article 2 of the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women obliges states to take appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions, if necessary, to prohibit all forms of discrimination against women (United Nations, 1979). Article 11 of this Convention emphasises the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment, in particular by guaranteeing the right to work as an inalienable right of all people; the right to equal employment opportunities, including the application of the same selection criteria; the right to freely choose a profession or type of work, promotion; the right to equal remuneration; the right to social security, as well as the right to health and safe working conditions, including the protection of the reproductive function (Gursky, 2018).

Ukraine has ratified important ILO conventions: No. 100 on equal pay for men and women for work of equal value (International Labour Organization, 1951), No. 111 - on discrimination in employment and occupations (International Labour Organization, 1975), No. 156 – on workers with family responsibilities (International Labour Organization, 1999), and others. Thus, it could be argued that national legislation establishes the legal obligations for employers to ensure a gender-friendly environment, namely: creating conditions which allow women to combine work and family responsibilities; guaranteeing equal pay for women and men with the same qualifications and under the same working conditions; creating safe working conditions for the life and health of employees, and adopting measures to prevent sexual harassment at work. But in real life it is necessary to admit that the problem of gender inequality exists. Employers are quite reluctant to hire women who receive so many benefits and social security guarantees (Dvoriak et al., 2020).

The Code of Labour Laws of Ukraine establishes certain restrictions on the use of female labour, for example, a ban on business trips and night work (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016). The harmfulness of work is often used to justify such restrictions, for example, women must be protected and not subjected to stress by excessive and difficult work. However, the legislators did not take into account that women might be satisfied with such work because they will be provided with decent working conditions and pay. In addition, legal restrictions apply to all women, including those without children as well as women with adult children.

The ban on engaging women with children under the age of three to work on weekends and sending them on business trips is also controversial. If the employer sends such an employee on a business trip, the state body supervising compliance with labour legislation may impose a fine for violating the provisions of Article 176 of the Labour Code of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2016). It is not considered important that the woman herself might be interested in such a business trip because it is desirable and enhances her career, and one of her relatives might be taking care of the child during this period. In fact, in our society, the legal consequences of having children in a family are related only to women. In the process of employing women, employers ask about this. Men, as a rule, are not asked such questions. It turns out that the employer must change the type of work for a woman after the birth of a child.
An important resource is time, which appears on a par with power or material resources. Women spend much more time on housework than men. Time is limited and is distributed differently between men and women. In particular, women have much less valuable time for activities related to self-development, recreation and study (Yaroshenko et al., 2021b). This time is used for housework. Since, in a patriarchal society, the primary role of a woman is considered to be motherhood, young women are always ‘potential mothers’, those who can become pregnant at any moment. According to this stereotype, women are ‘unreliable’ employees who should not be appointed to responsible positions or given serious assignments. Therefore, employers tend to hire women for supporting, less important, less prestigious and less paid positions (Malysh, 2018).

Employers are more likely to refuse to hire women because they are more likely to request, for example, parental leave. In addition, during interviews, women are still asked personal questions about the birth of children, plans for marriage and childbirth. These questions do not relate to their professional qualifications or skills. Therefore, the refusal to appoint a woman to a job (position) most often occurs due to an employer’s subjective reluctance to hire a woman and is an open sign of discrimination. Of course, motherhood imposes many responsibilities on women, but the legislature has not yet found a balance between providing benefits to working women and ensuring equality between men and women. The introduction of gender aspects into the legislation of Ukraine is a matter of social justice, which is a necessary solution to ensure equal and sustainable development of human potential (Moroz & Luchanska, 2019).

The labour market of Ukraine reveals significant differences between the employment of men and women and discrimination against women. Men are engaged in the highest paying industries, so men's incomes are higher than women's. The main cause of gender inequality is gender segregation. The distinguishing features of this in the labour market are the division of industries in the region into ‘male’ and ‘female’ with a clear advantage of the former and a widening of the income gap between men and women. Thus, it can be said that one of the reasons for limiting women in the labour market is an ineffective leadership system in the main areas of the country’s economic activity (Korotka, 2018).

As already mentioned, a woman receives almost 80% of a man's salary. And the biggest difference is in the field of art, sports and entertainment – where a woman receives 40% less than a man. How does such a difference in wages between men and women come about? Occupational segregation is an important factor. For example, women are working as kindergarten teachers, babysitters, secondary school teachers, nurses and doctors (especially in the field of therapy, because there are almost no women among surgeons), accountants, saleswomen and cashiers. Indeed, women usually work in the service and trade sectors. Instead, which jobs do men do in Ukraine? A firefighter is a job for ‘real men,’ says an advertisement posted in the subway. Men, for example, construct buildings, drive various vehicles, engage in politics, protect the state, negotiate and work as diplomats. The resulting picture is a phenomenon of horizontal segregation – one of the mechanisms of gender inequality in
the labour market, which implies the existence of so-called typical ‘male’ and ‘female’
professions in society (Shevchenko et al., 2020).

Another important factor in the differentiation of wages by gender is working
conditions. This is primarily because the labour legislation of Ukraine prohibits the use
of women’s labour in difficult and harmful jobs. Men working in these industries
receive benefits and compensation, which in turn affects their wage levels. Wage levels
are also significantly affected by working hours, and it is known that women are more
likely to suffer from forced reduced days (or weeks), which directly affects their overall
productivity and thus wages. Less common among women is the desire to open their
own businesses. Yes, it should also be noted that women have significantly lower
incomes from entrepreneurship and independent economic activity. This is because the
predominant areas of female entrepreneurship are usually trade and household
services, which do not yield large profits compared to male self-employment
(Onishchik et al., 2020). However, in Ukraine, in recent years, there have been various
initiatives (mainly from international and non-governmental organisations) to combat
discrimination in the labour market and other areas, for example, the cancellation of
the ‘List of Prohibited Professions for Women’ approved in 2018 by the Ministry of
Health, the launch of the STEM1 Girls Initiative, support for small business owners
through training and grants, the HeForShe Congress, and the information campaign
Happiness in Four Hands Project, which explains why gender equality is as important
for men as it is for women.

At the same time, a general assessment of the gender problem in the labour market
made based only on the analysis of the ratio of general data on the number of
unemployed and the number of the economically active population, will not be
exhaustive. After all, this problem has an age component: women, depending on their
age, play a more or less active role in the labour market. A comparison of the structural
shares of different age groups of men and women has revealed two important features
that reflect the age dynamics of social roles and the economic activity of men and
women in the labour market. The number of employed men in the first four selected
age groups (15–24 years, 25–29 years, 30–34 and 35–39 years) is consistently higher
than that of women. On the other hand, for the next three selected age groups (40–49
years, 50–59 years and 60–70 years), similar stability is already characteristic of the
female segment of the labour market. That is, in the domestic labour market we are
dealing with a clearly expressed age asymmetry of employment with the following
dynamics: up to 39 years of age, the weight shares in the structure of employed ‘young’
age groups of men exceed the same for women (Kochkova & Dei, 2020).

This situation clearly outlines the gender component of unemployment in Ukraine.
The male-dominated age group coincides with the period when women give birth to
children and care for them. It will not be surprising if this dynamic does not involve a
hidden gender problem in employment. After all, it is known that in most cases when
employers decide to hire a candidate for a job, they reject female applicants precisely
because they might take leave at a young age. This leave is usually related to the birth of

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1 STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.
a child and subsequent care for it. For the employer, this entails very real inconveniences and personnel management problems (Siletska & Tarasova, 2018).

Today, gender stereotypes in the economic sphere, which are faced by almost every woman, are quite common. The most common stereotypes are: a man must provide for the family and, therefore, for the same work, he should receive a higher salary than a woman; women by their nature are less oriented towards professional activity, but more towards family and children; a man by nature is a much better leader than a woman; women are less active in the job search; professions are divided into ‘male’ and ‘female’, female professions are easier, so they have lower wages; it is more difficult for women to compete with men in the labour market because they are less qualified and have a lower level of professional education (Andrusyak, 2018; Samoilenko et al., 2020).

According to evidence-based job advertisements and interviews, Ukrainian employers discriminate against female applicants by giving preference to men. Age, marital status and appearance are important. A typical example of a gender-oriented job advertisement is the phrase ‘young woman 18–30 years old, attractive appearance.’ Most of the ‘women’s’ jobs are in the service sector (waiting staff and housekeepers) and low-paid management positions such as secretaries and book-keepers. In addition, the age limit (30–35 years) is very strict. Furthermore, the main factors determining the attractiveness of the female workforce are cheapness and flexibility.

Even before an interview with a potential employer, a woman is already discriminated against. In particular, many job advertisements that appear in the media mention the age, gender and even the appearance of the desired employee. Gender screening is common when it comes to high-paying and prestigious positions. Such advertisements can usually be found in private employment agencies or even in public employment centres. The practice of refusing employment based on a woman’s marital status and age is very common. In particular, unmarried women, women with minor children, and women over 40 are discriminated against in employment. At the same time, education, experience and professional qualities are usually not considered (Moroz & Luchanska, 2019).

However, recently there have been positive changes in the legislation of Ukraine, evidenced in the adoption of Law No. 1750 (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021). Through Part 3 of Article 24-1 of the Law on Advertising, changes have been made that regulate the employer’s liability for discrimination based on human origin, social and property status, race, nationality, sex, education, political views, attitude to religion, language, gender, character, occupation or place of residence in a vacancy announcement. Regulations also apply to adverts that discredit other people’s goods (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1996a). In case of a violation of this law, the advertiser pays the state budget a fine, which is an amount ten times the minimum wage established by law at the time of the violation.

The negative impact of gender segregation in a ‘horizontal’ form (between different professions and types of economic activity) consists in reducing the flexibility of the labour market and limiting the opportunities of individual employees (both women and men) to work in certain professions, which reduces human resource efficiency and contributes to strengthening population stratification by income level. Women’s employment has traditionally been dominated by sectors with the lowest average
income, such as social security, education, healthcare, domestic services and culture, where women make up more than 70% of the workforce (Khrystova & Uvarova, 2022). At the same time, the highly paid sectors, such as heavy industry, transport, construction and entrepreneurship, remain ‘male’ types of activity.

We now turn to an examination of the labour market of Ukraine from the point of view of important positions. Who mostly holds the top management positions and directorships? The highest legislative body – the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – is characterised by an almost continuous dominance of men. According to the results of the last elections, women occupy only 12% of seats. A comparison of statistics with those of other countries clearly shows that our country is lagging in terms of the number of women in parliament, ranking 107th in the international ranking. A similar trend can be observed in the civil service in general concerning access to management positions. This is evidenced by the data of the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine on civil servants. In general, about 65% of managers are men and 35% are women. The general trend in Ukraine is that women are not in the highest levels of decision-making. These examples make it possible to highlight another important aspect of labour market segregation, which is related to the previously considered horizontal segregation – vertical segregation. Vertical segregation refers to inequality between men and women in terms of career ladders (Dei et al., 2020).

Gender segregation by professions consists of the inequality of opportunities for professional training and retraining of men and women, their access to production resources and control over them (Melnyk & Tsesarsky, 2019). The proportion of women in managerial positions in the public sector of the economy (in the ranks of small civil servants) is 72%, and in managerial positions is only 8%. In addition, women lead the list of unemployed people with higher education (about 80%). The imperfection of the legislative framework encourages the development of gender contradictions. The law prohibits women from occupying certain positions and performing certain jobs. Women are unattractive to employers during pregnancy and the first three years of motherhood. Employers also seek to avoid giving them the maternity benefits they are entitled to (Levanon et al., 2009).

The problem with the Ukrainian labour market is gender asymmetry, with women concentrated in sectors of the economy with low incomes and limits on their upward professional mobility. This is bad for the economy as a whole. Overcoming gender inequality in the labour market ensures higher efficiency of labour markets and an increase in the number of employed women contributes to increased competition and growth in the income tax base, while also helping to increase the birth rate. Due to the gender mechanisms of the labour market, men and women move into two polar currents of economic activity. This division is dictated by the phenomenon of horizontal segregation, which results in women being concentrated in sectors of the economy with a low-income level (the phenomenon of ‘glass walls’ and ‘glass basement’), as well as vertical segregation, which confines women to the lower rungs of the professional ladder (‘glass ceiling’ and ‘sticky floor’).

One mechanism that can be used to break the ‘glass ceiling’ is gender quotas. France has passed a law that introduces women to leadership positions in business using this method. The law requires all companies with more than 1,000 employees to
have at least 30% women in senior management by 2027 and 40% women by 2030. Companies that fail to comply with this law face financial sanctions. The Minister for Gender Equality, Elizabeth Moreno, is convinced that there will be women with sufficient experience and competence to fill these leadership positions (Alexopoulou, 2018; Zaitsev et al., 2020).

To achieve equality between men and women, Ukraine and many other countries can adopt a model that ensures a country’s commitment to this common goal. Sweden has used this model and is one of the countries with the highest indicators of equality between men and women. The main goal of the Swedish gender equality policy is that men and women should have an equal right to shape society and live in it. To achieve this goal, several state bodies were created to ensure the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities for both sexes (Melnik and Tsesarskyi, 2019).

In general, it can be said that European countries are considered effective in the implementation of positive actions in the following areas:

- achieving equal economic independence of women and men (reduction of differences in wages, development of female entrepreneurship, social protection);
- putting in place measures to promote a harmonious combination of work, personal and family spheres of life (mobility of employment contracts, increasing the number of services for the care of children and the elderly);
- involvement of men and women and equal participation in the decision-making process (political activity, in the economy and business, science and modern technologies);
- eradication of violence against women;
- elimination of gender stereotypes in all spheres of social interaction (education, labour market, mass media); and
- promotion of gender equality in non-EU countries. To solve the problem of inequality faster, Ukraine needs to adopt the models of highly developed EU countries in the practical implementation of gender equality principles in national and international legislation (Chichkalo-Kondratska, 2019).

The EU has already made significant achievements in ensuring gender equality. For example, since 2010, the number of women in the labour market has increased from 52% to approximately 60%. Young women aged 20–24 constitute 59% of all students at European universities. However, a gender gap remains. Thus, in the labour market, many women are still performing low-paid jobs and are underrepresented in managerial positions. Their average salary in the EU is still 15% lower than that of men. Only 33.2% of self-employed people are women.

Thus, despite the progress made so far, gender inequality still exists in the EU labour market. The adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on care work is evident. Many women have been absorbed into the unpaid and unrecognised care work, and the few conciliation measures proposed by the EU and national governments have not led to a real difference. The health crisis has negatively affected the deficient domestic care system, which consumes most of the women’s time and lives (Mazureenko, 2022).
Care work is inevitable and essential, but it is linked to precariousness and it overburdens women. This has been evidenced by domestic workers, cleaners and nursing home workers, very low-income jobs that are mainly performed by women. While women healthcare workers are currently on the frontline of the COVID-19 response (they represent 76% of the healthcare and social care workers in the EU), they still face discrimination and wage disadvantages. Since the Russian invasion, they have seen an unprecedented rise in workload, health risks and challenges to their work-life balance (Mazurenko, 2022).

The EU has acknowledged the differential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and is progressively taking action on the matter through diverse policy initiatives, which is positive. We will have to wait to see the effect of this initiative once implemented in the Member States. However, full gender equality is far from being achieved, and the care crisis has a long-term impact that will not be easily alleviated. The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the situation. It has created an urgent need for conciliation policies and work-life balance measures within the Member States. Therefore, further and binding measures are needed, both at the European and national levels, to progressively balance care work and promote effective gender equality in the EU (Eyes on Europe, 2021).

For a long time, scientific studies on migration processes assumed that the absolute majority of labour migrants were men acting as the main breadwinners of families, while women were responsible for children and domestic work. Traditionally, women were not considered subjects of migration at all or were considered ‘dependent’ and ‘secondary’ migrants who accompany their families or husband (Iserman et al., 2019). However, over the past decades, radical changes have been observed in the gender structure of international labour migrants – women, both married and single, often better educated than men, have started migrating to ensure an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families. According to the UN Population Division, at the end of the 20th century, the flow of women migrants into countries that are the most important recipients of labour migrants grew faster than that of men. A new trend of feminisation of international migration has emerged which is a consequence of modern changes in the structure of employment and the segmentation of the world labour market (UN Population Division, 2022).

This is due to the general emancipation of women, the expansion of their opportunities, the increase in the level of education and professional qualifications, and the expansion of the scope of the labour market offer. The accelerated development of the service sector, which now provides up to two-thirds of the world’s jobs, creates an ever-growing need in the economies of developed countries for migrant women who can perform unskilled work in services.

The combination of low levels of wages in traditionally female fields of activity, limited opportunities for career advancement due to gender stereotypes and the less favourable position of women in the labour market forces them to look for additional ways to improve their standard of living through migration abroad. The connection of gender aspects of migration with the problem of poverty is also of great importance. Women dominate in the composition of the socially vulnerable population and
temporary migrations to earn more money can sometimes become the only strategy for ensuring an adequate standard of living (Klimenko, 2021).

Migrant men are employed in various fields of activity – from unskilled labour to positions requiring high qualifications. Additionally, female labour migration is characterised by concentration in a very limited number of 'female' professions associated with traditional gender roles. By participating in international migration, women mainly provide cheap labour in the services sector, including public services (staff of hotels, restaurants, bars, etc.); domestic services (nannies, domestic workers, care for the elderly and the sick) and the entertainment industry. Also, migrant women experience more discrimination as participants in labour relations since they find work in informal, 'shadow' and criminalised employment segments. Without the appropriate documents, migrant women get informal jobs, where the employers, without any legal obligations, can set wages much lower than the market rate.

In general, the main features of female labour migration are that women are more vulnerable compared to men. In particular, they are more at risk of being victims of human trafficking. Accordingly, paternalistic orientations are more common among women. The earnings of Ukrainian women are usually lower than those of men, which is primarily related to the predominance of Ukrainian citizens in low-skilled jobs (hard 'male' work is usually paid better than those unskilled jobs traditionally performed by women). For women, labour migration or economic tourism often becomes a means of survival rather than a source of ensuring a decent standard of living, especially for single mothers (Mazurenko, 2022).

Currently, due to the Russian Federation-instigated war in Ukraine, many women have been left without work, and income and forced to move to European countries or become internally displaced persons fleeing the war. This forces them to take on low-skilled and low-paid jobs, for example in the private sphere of the home, and take on more responsibilities, since they do not have a European education and do not know the languages of host countries. Another problem is that they are often forced to work as undeclared workers in the informal economy and, therefore, without state protection. The working conditions of most Ukrainian migrant women abroad do not meet the standards established either in their homeland or in the host countries (Mazurenko, 2022).

The problems of regulating external migration trips of Ukrainian women should be solved in the context of reforming the state policy of labour migration. At the same time, women's migration requires special attention from state structures and, accordingly, the development of specific measures aimed at strengthening the social security of migrant women and 'post-migration' support for women in terms of adaptation to Ukrainian society, which has changed during the period of their absence. The legalisation of labour migration is of primary importance since the employment of women working abroad, as a rule, is relegated to the sphere of informal, illegal and sometimes even criminal relations. Accordingly, further development of official channels of employment, which would focus on traditionally 'female' types of employment (public services, domestic service, care for children, the sick and the elderly, etc.) is required.
It is necessary to strengthen control over the activities of organisations of labour recruiters to avoid cases of human trafficking and protect the rights of Ukrainian citizens working abroad. In addition, to identify and prevent cases of discrimination and exploitation of migrants, it is necessary to monitor the most common areas of informal employment, such as agriculture, domestic services and the entertainment industry. This requires the cooperation and coordination of efforts of domestic and foreign government institutions, international structures, and public organisations. In addition, it requires the initiation of an active negotiation process with the recipient countries of the Ukrainian labour force, directed against discriminatory methods of immigration policy and practices that violate human rights.

Discussion
On 30 September 2019, the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 722/2019 'On Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period until 2030' adopted a decision to ensure the implementation of all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals for Ukraine by 2030 (President of Ukraine, 2019). The fifth goal is to ensure gender equality and expand the rights and opportunities of all women and girls. Its goal is to ensure gender equality in the political sphere and the labour market in Ukraine. Achieving this goal of sustainable development is possible by fulfilling several key national tasks. The first of these is the creation of conditions that accelerate the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls. Second, there is a need to reduce the level of gender-based and domestic violence, ensuring effective prevention of its manifestations and timely assistance to victims. The third task is to encourage shared responsibility for managing and raising a child. The fourth is the need to ensure equal opportunities for representation at the highest levels of decision-making in political and social life. The fifth measure is to expand the population's access to family planning services and reduce the teenage birth rate. Taken together, these would lead to the empowerment of women. In sum, ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is not only a basic human right but also crucial for accelerating sustainable development.

It is important for Ukraine that the state not only gives legal force to the necessary international documents on gender equality but also conducts a gender analysis of national legislation on this issue. Such initiatives will gradually change the old and form a new system of social relations, based not only on gender but a socio-legal component. The introduction of gender approaches to the analysis of the labour market should include not only quantitative characteristics, namely the level of economic activity or employment but also the transition to studying the conditions, forms and employment status of men and women. It is also necessary to create a network system of permanent gender monitoring of inequality in the labour market through employment centres. Gender employment issues are not only women’s or men’s problems but are also society’s problems, so their successful solution will benefit the population of Ukraine as a whole (Alexopoulou, 2019).

One step in the legislative field would be to enact a law that allows parents to take paid paternity leave, as in Lithuania. This step can help to establish a more balanced division of family responsibilities, and more involvement of both parents in the care of
the child, not only after birth but also in the following years. The possibility of alternative forms of employment (part-time, flexible, remote) may also contribute to reducing the disparity in the representation of women and men in the labour market in Ukraine to reach a level closer to the EU average (Yaroshenko et al., 2021a).

An additional step could be to support the inclusion of women in the labour market through programmes that develop and support small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This can be achieved through training, giving grants, mentoring, the dissemination of best practices and the creation of a network of mutual support for women entrepreneurs. To achieve a similar level of gender equality in the labour market as in Finland, or even Lithuania, the main direction of state policy in the legislative sphere and information campaigns should be to overcome gender stereotypes and prejudices against women or men. The implementation of EU directives should occur simultaneously with the destruction of the ‘glass ceiling’ not only in public administration (where today we see a ratio of 60/10 men and women in public positions) and business but also in other areas of employment (Goncharenko, 2019).

In our opinion, for society, women’s work is an important reserve, essential for the effective development of production during the period of structural and economic restructuring of the economy. Therefore, to overcome the socio-economic negativity caused by gender asymmetry in the labour market, it is necessary to:

- legally justify the problem of gender inequality and conduct a permanent gender examination of the legislation. Today there is a complete absence of an anti-discrimination block in the legislative regulation of employment;
- form a qualitatively new mental culture of society, which ensures not declarative but real equality of both social sexes in general and in the labour market in particular;
- create a network system of permanent gender monitoring of inequality in the labour market through employment centres; and
- ensure the implementation of the principle of targeted support for women in the labour market through the development and implementation of special employment programmes, professional orientation and professional training, and the introduction of new socially oriented technologies for working with people.

A report that states that the world needs at least 100 years to completely overcome gender discrimination was presented at the World Economic Forum. Currently, gender equality, as already mentioned, is better in Iceland. The overall equality index in this country is 87.8%, and it has been leading the WEF ranking for the ninth year in a row. Iceland is the only country where the participation of women in politics is more than 70%. The top five countries in gender equality include Norway, where the overall level of equality was 83%, Finland (82.3%), Rwanda (82.2%) and Sweden (81.6%) (Melnyk and Tsesarskyi, 2019).

If women, who make up half of the world’s working population, do not realise their full economic potential, the world economy will suffer. According to a McKinsey Global Institute report, the ‘best in the region’ scenario, where all countries match the pace of better gender equality in the fastest growing country in their region, could add
up to US$12 trillion, or 11% to the annual GDP of 2025. This figure is equal to the current GDP of Germany, Japan and Great Britain combined. Under the 'full potential' scenario, where women play the same role in the labour market as men, US$20 trillion or 26% would be added to the global annual GDP by 2025 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2022). This is equivalent to the size of the combined economies of China and the United States today. From a strategic perspective, reducing gender inequality in the labour market in Ukraine will address the problems of income inequality between men and women, and will contribute to the equalisation of intra-family positions and the improvement of the standard of living in general.

**Conclusion**

The problem of gender inequality at the current stage of the development of society is a very important component of the socio-economic development of the state. Gender inequality is one of the factors inhibiting the country’s development. One of the reasons affecting the disproportionate structuring of the labour market in Ukraine, as of the end of February 2022, is gender segregation, which concentrates women and men in different professional fields. This contributes to the status quo where men occupy more prestigious and highly paid positions, and women are more represented in the public sector (education, healthcare, social services, etc.). Gender segregation and gender stereotypes create obstacles to the proportional filling of vacancies by men and women and make the labour market inefficient. Gender development cannot be understood only as a struggle for women’s rights. It requires achieving equal and broad opportunities for the full development and full realisation of the human potential of both men and women to promote overall justice and maximise human social and economic progress and eliminate gender discrimination in income, including wages.

In today's world, the problem of discrimination is widespread in the labour market. Although the legislation recognises and prohibits various forms of discrimination in principle, this is not reflected in real life. The equal participation of women and men in the functioning of the labour market and the achievement of gender equality in access to decent work should be an important part of the state employment policy and be supported at appropriate levels to achieve practical implementation. One of the most important tasks is the creation and implementation of an effective mechanism for the protection of rights in the field of labour, as well as reforming the labour market to prevent discrimination in the labour market. Therefore, solving the problem of discrimination in Ukraine is possible through purposeful, systematic and coordinated actions both at the level of theory and with the provision of an appropriate level of practical implementation, which requires further research.

For the effective development of Ukraine as a legal, democratic and social state, citizens must be equal. Due to persistent gender stereotypes, the lack of equal opportunities and vulnerability of women to many forms of discrimination remain. This is also prevalent in access to work, professional development and remuneration.

Only a balance between guaranteeing, providing and granting benefits can eradicate discrimination and improve statistics in the internal labour market. This emphasises the need to spread the European experience in promoting youth employment,
strengthening state control over compliance with legal norms and guarantees in the field of labour, gender quotas and other measures.

The main direction of the implementation of a gender strategy in the labour market of Ukraine should be the development of a new concept of employment, which should be aimed primarily at overcoming gender asymmetry in the labour market, in particular regarding the distribution of spheres of activity. This could be achieved by equalising wages across different sectors and reducing differences in content and pay by gender; increasing the level of employment based on the principle of gender equality; promoting small business development, and constant monitoring of compliance with labour legislation by employers to prevent gender discrimination. The reduction of occupational inequality by gender will be facilitated by targeted state policy measures aimed at increasing the prestige and level of wages in traditionally ‘female’ industries, combating gender stereotypes that narrow the choice of professions for both women and men, starting with education and expanding learning opportunities throughout an individual’s life.

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