



# WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW 2026

Benchmarking Laws for Jobs  
and Inclusive Growth

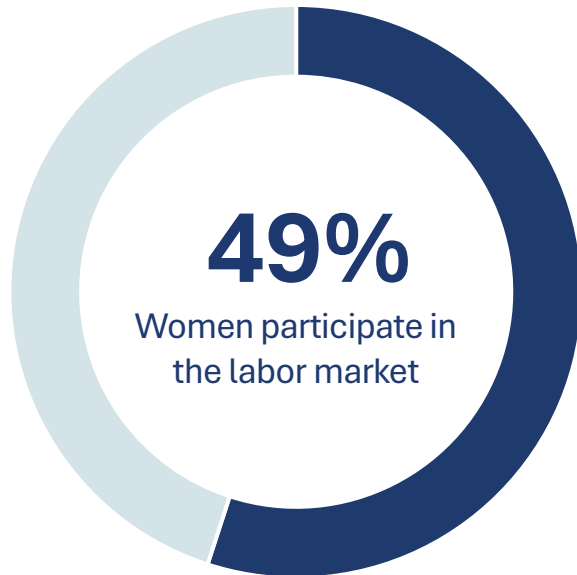


# Agenda

- 1 Overview of the *Women, Business and the Law* project
- 2 WBL 2026 Key Global Findings
- 3 WBL 2026 Croatia in Focus
- 4 Engaging with WBL & Questions



# The global scale of the challenge



**27%**

Share of women in parliament



**23%**

Women in cabinet positions

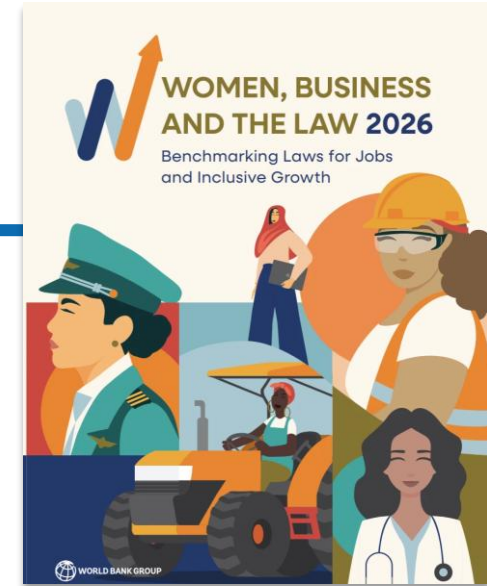
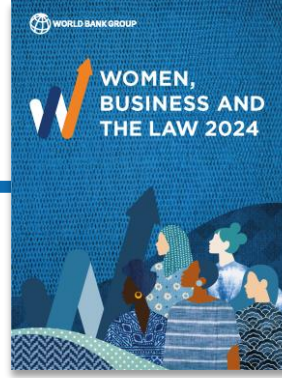
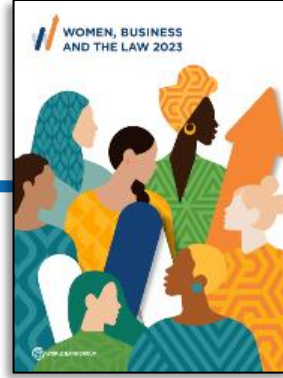
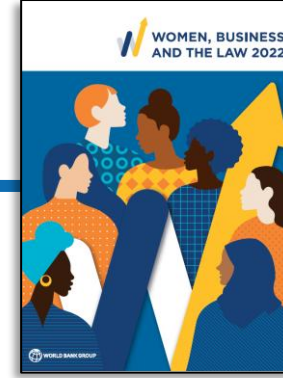
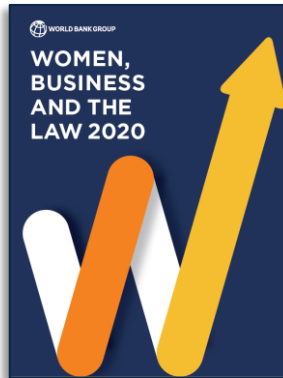
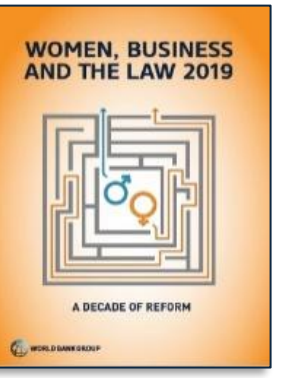
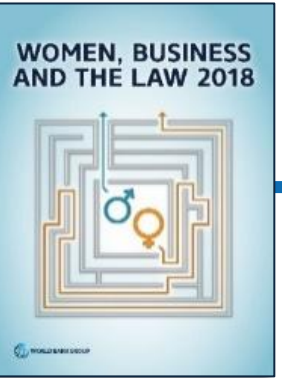
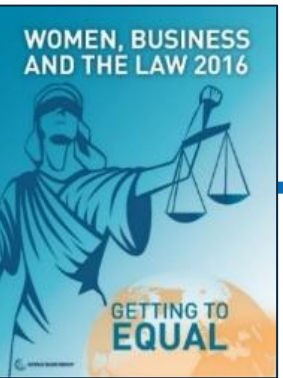
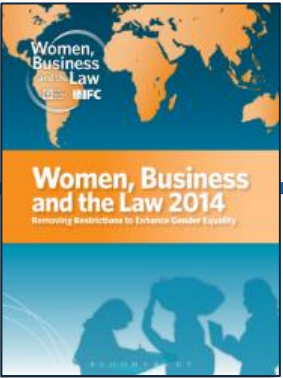
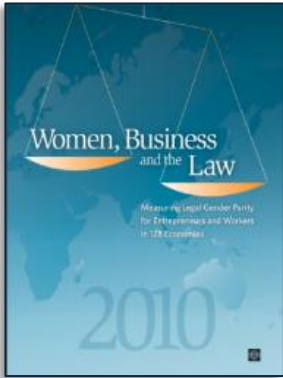


# A smart strategy for economic growth

If 3.9 billion women had equal access to jobs, global GDP could increase by up to 20 percent.



# 16 years of Women, Business and the Law

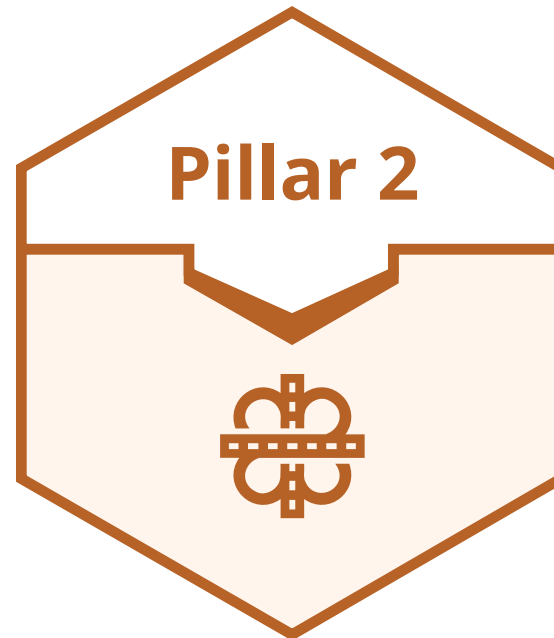


# From laws on the books to implementation in practice



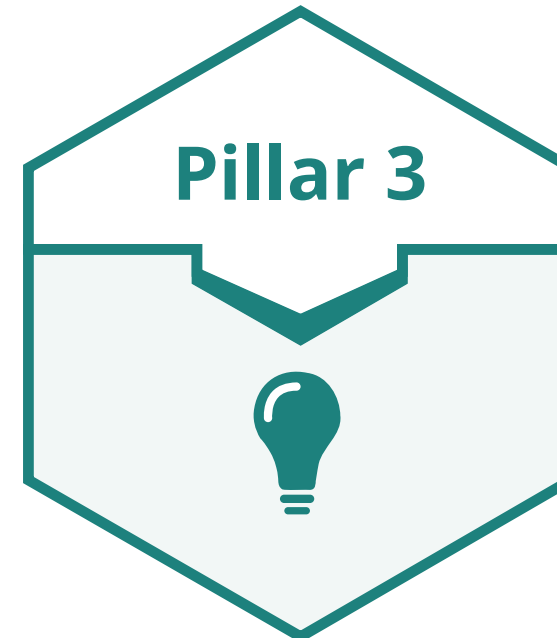
## Legal frameworks

Laws and regulations



## Supportive frameworks

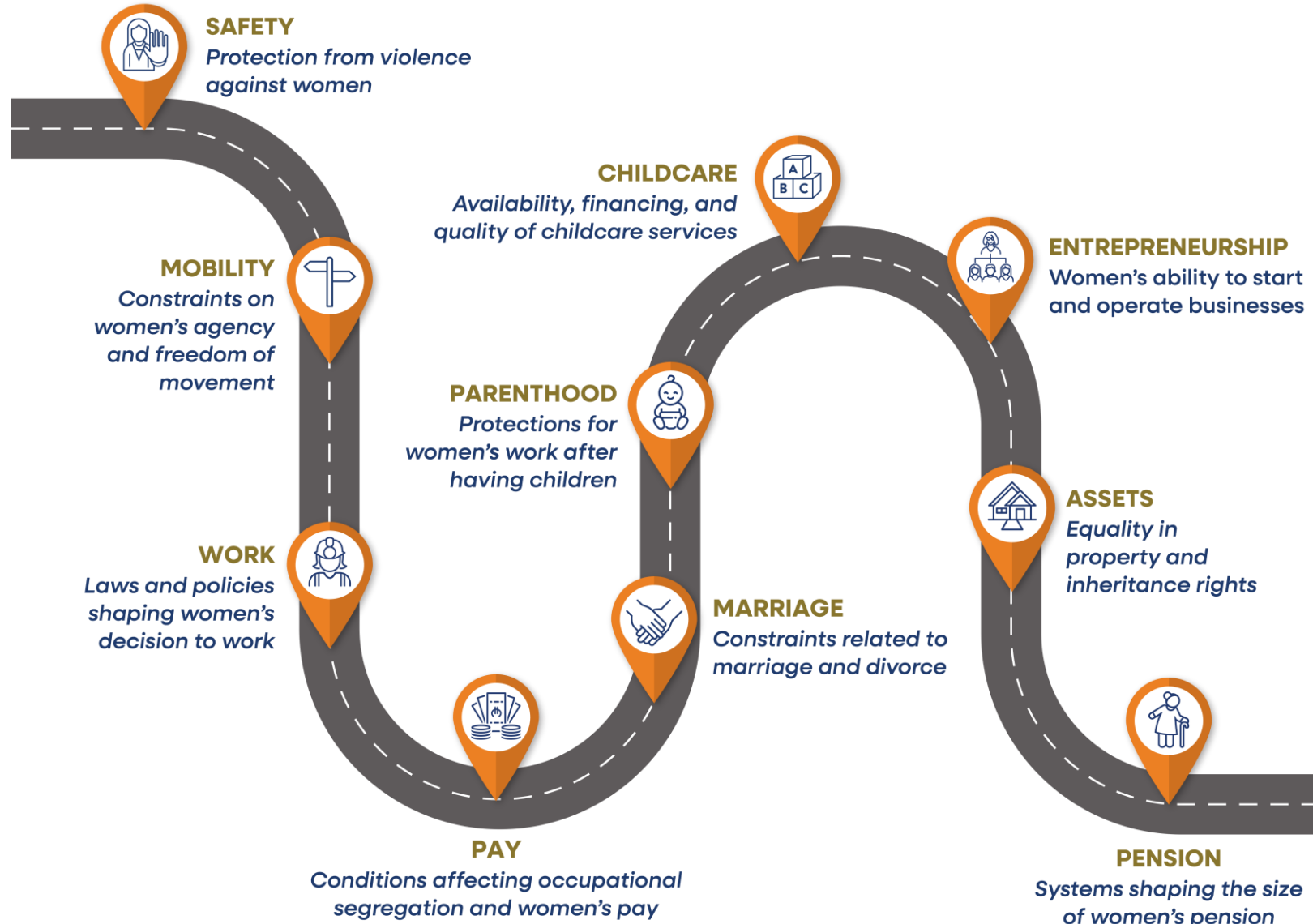
Institutions, policies and programs



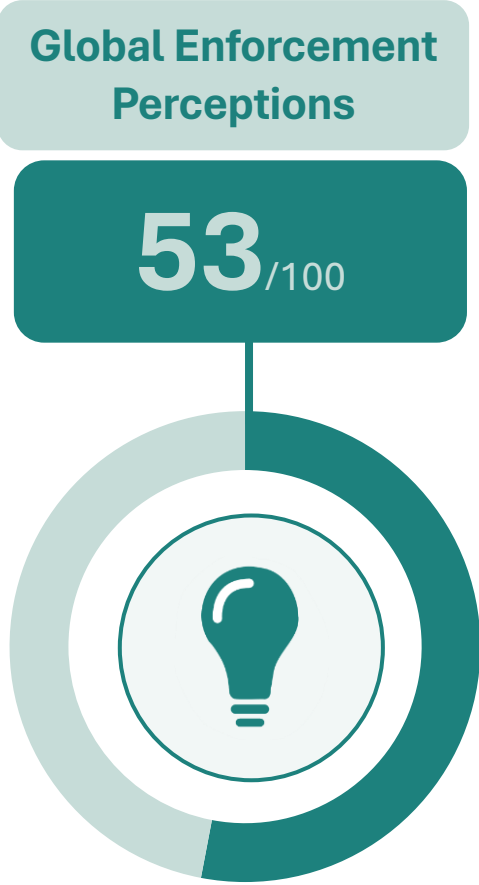
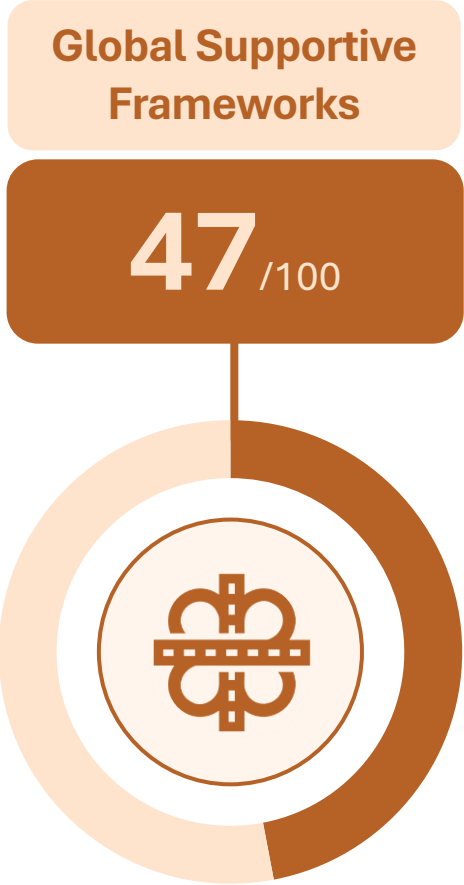
## Enforcement perceptions

Legal experts' views on the extent of enforcement of the law

# Measuring equal opportunity in every walk of life



# Women's economic participation remains incomplete in law and in practice



Source: *Women, Business and the Law 2026*

# Reforms are gaining momentum where they are most needed

113 reforms across 68 economies



## Safety

22 economies | 24 reforms

Cyber harassment protections now cover women in 90 economies



## Entrepreneurship

19 economies | 21 reforms

Most reforms strengthened women's representation in **corporate boards**



## Parenthood

13 economies | 16 reforms

Most reforms introduced or increased the duration of **paid leave** for fathers

## Top Reforming Economies

- Egypt
- Madagascar
- Somalia, Fed. Rep.
- Oman
- Jordan
- Kyrgyz Republic

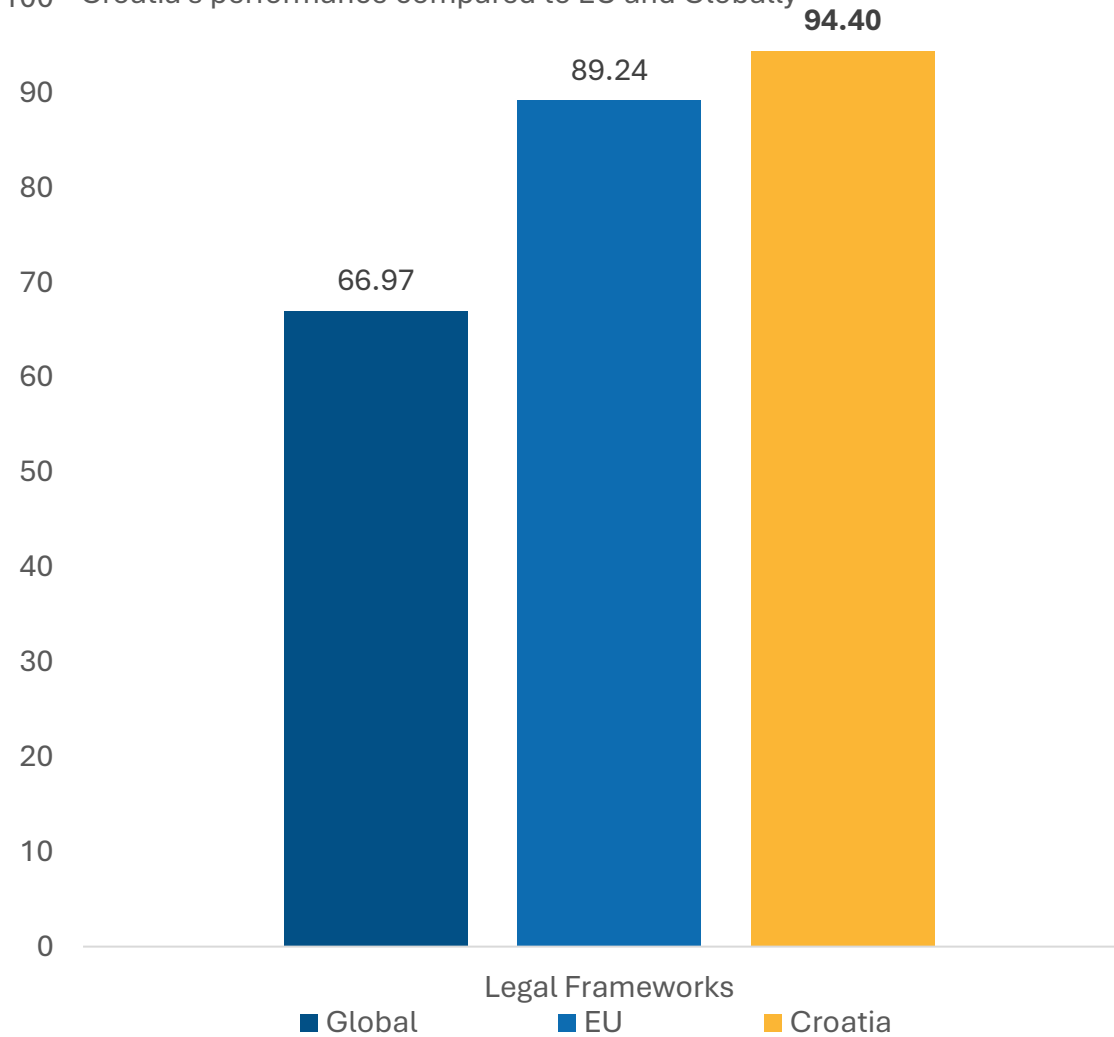
# WBL2026 Findings for Croatia



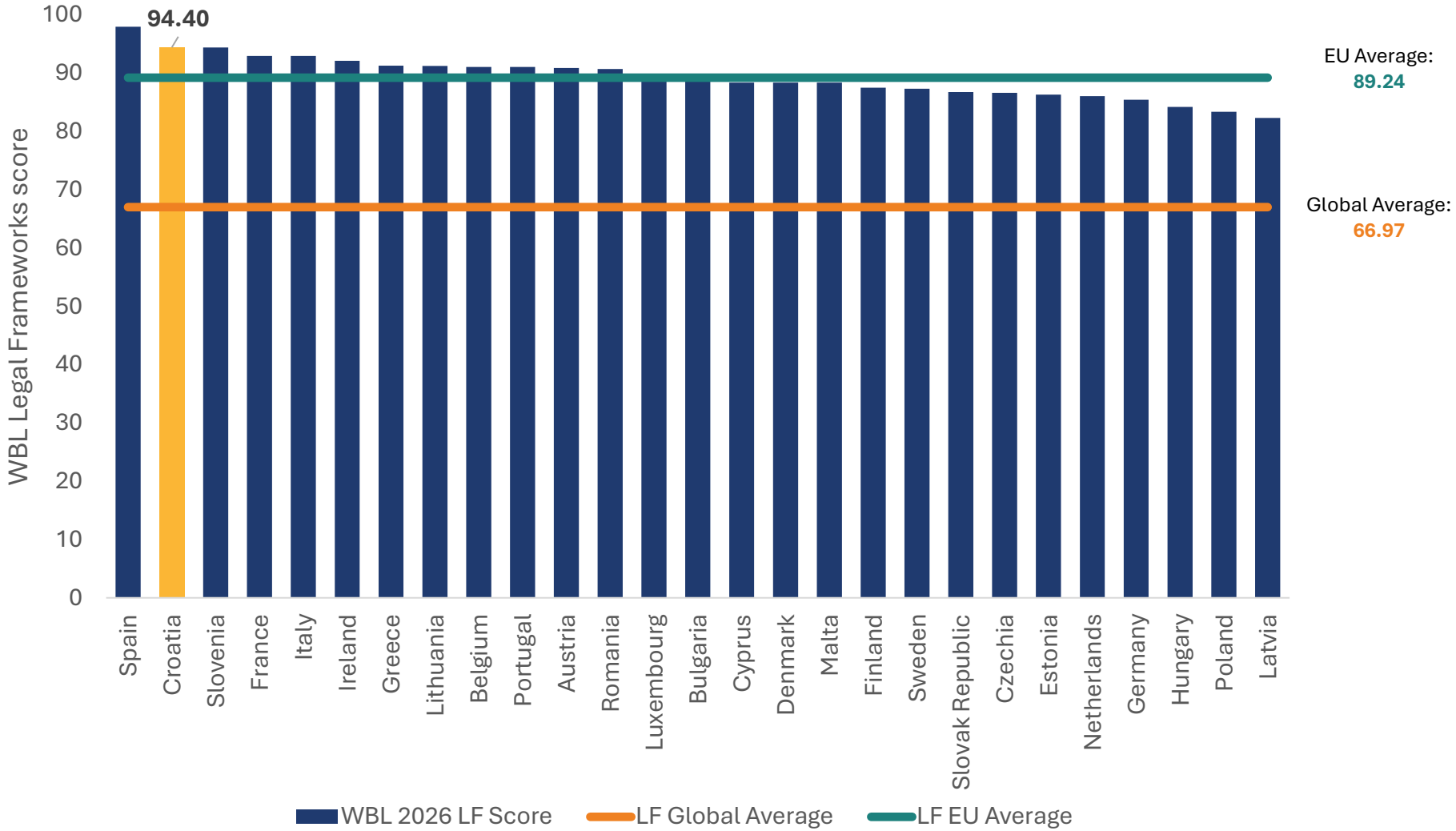
# Croatia's main results on Legal Frameworks



100 Croatia's performance compared to EU and Globally

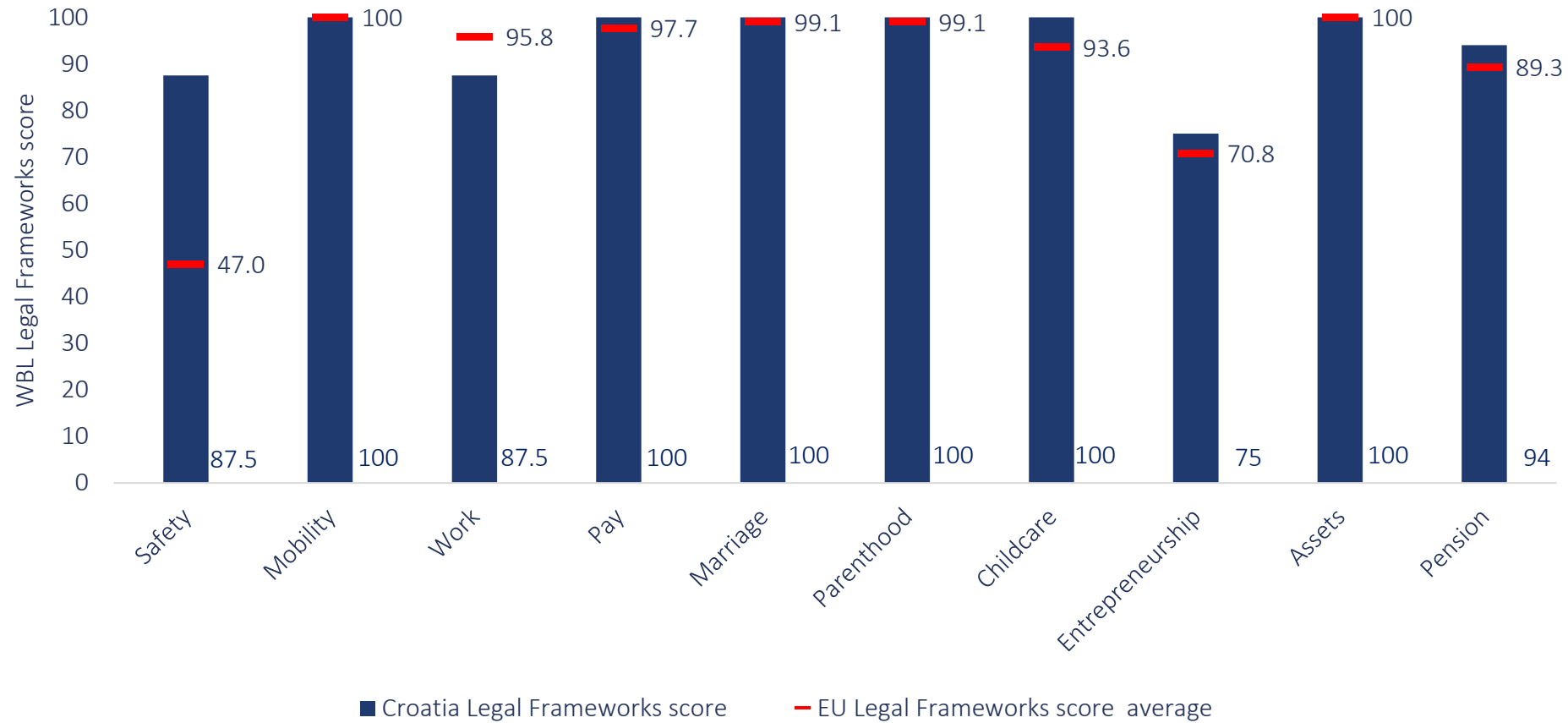


# Legal Frameworks: Croatia's score is second in the EU



Source: Women, Business and the Law 2026

# Legal Frameworks: Croatia ahead on Safety, slightly behind on Work



# Most recent legal reforms relevant to WBL



## Entrepreneurship

Act on Amendments to the Companies Act of 2024

Large listed companies are required to **ensure that at least 40% of non-executive board members, or 33% of all directors, are women.**  
*December 2024*



## Safety

Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code NN 36/2024

**Femicide** became a **criminal offense** with aggravating penalties under the Criminal Code.  
*March 2024*

# Remaining gaps in Legal Frameworks



## SAFETY

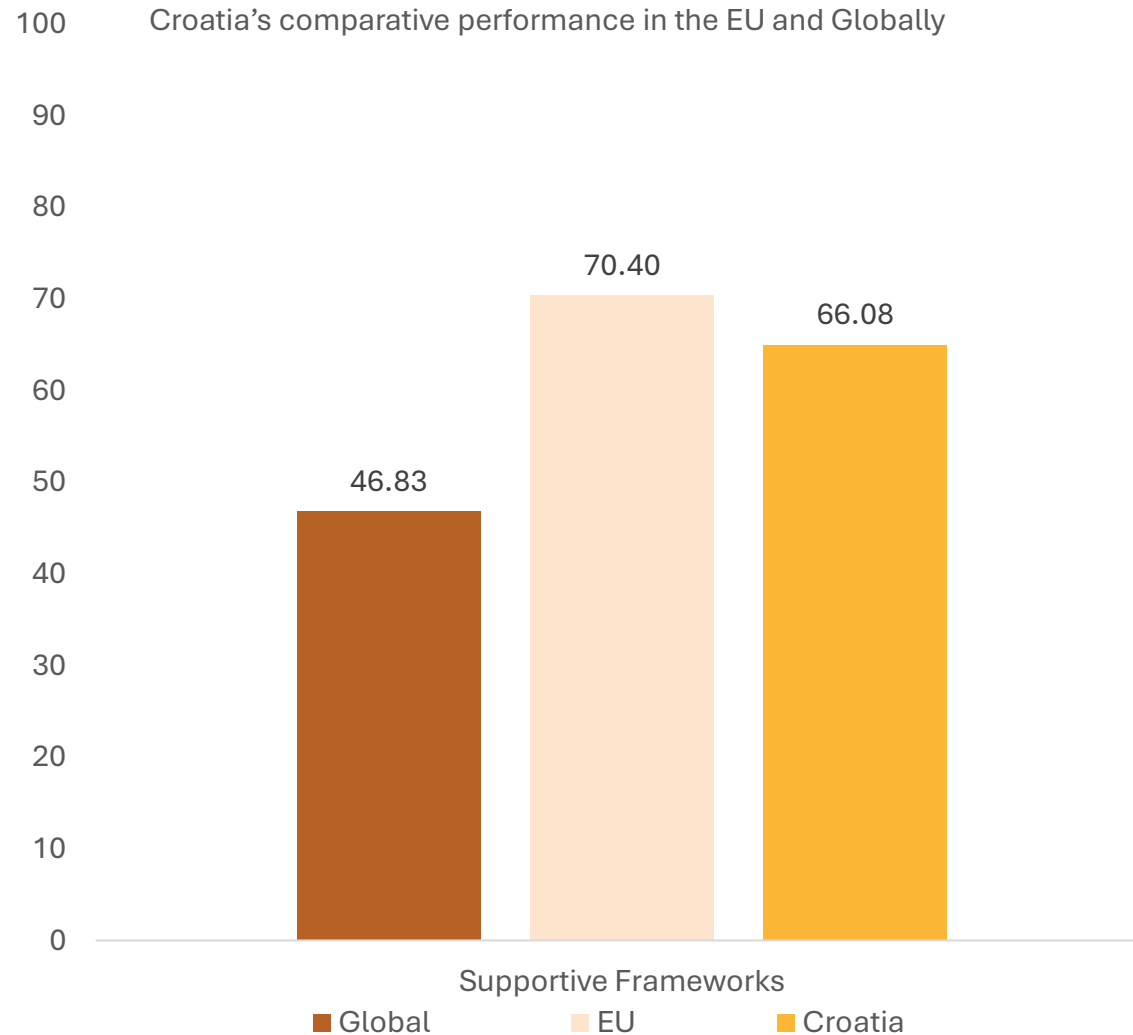
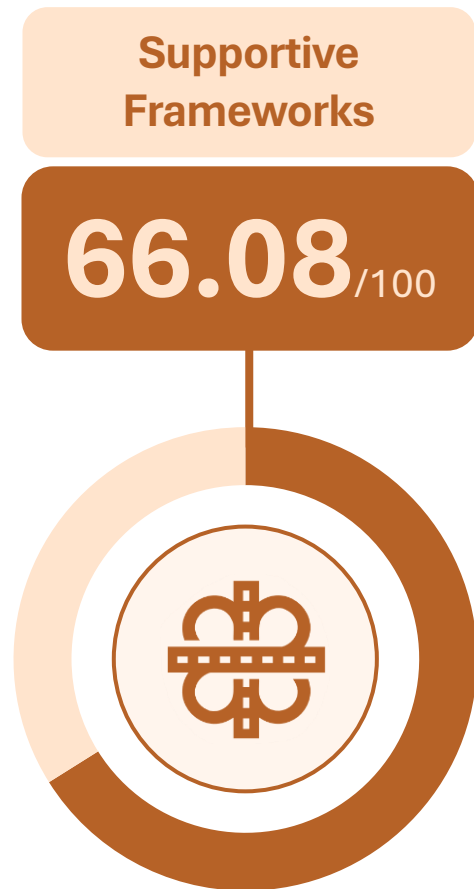
Without **legal recourse for harassment in public spaces and online**, women face barriers that existing workplace protections alone cannot address — with tangible consequences for their presence at work, productivity, job retention, and participation in public and professional life.



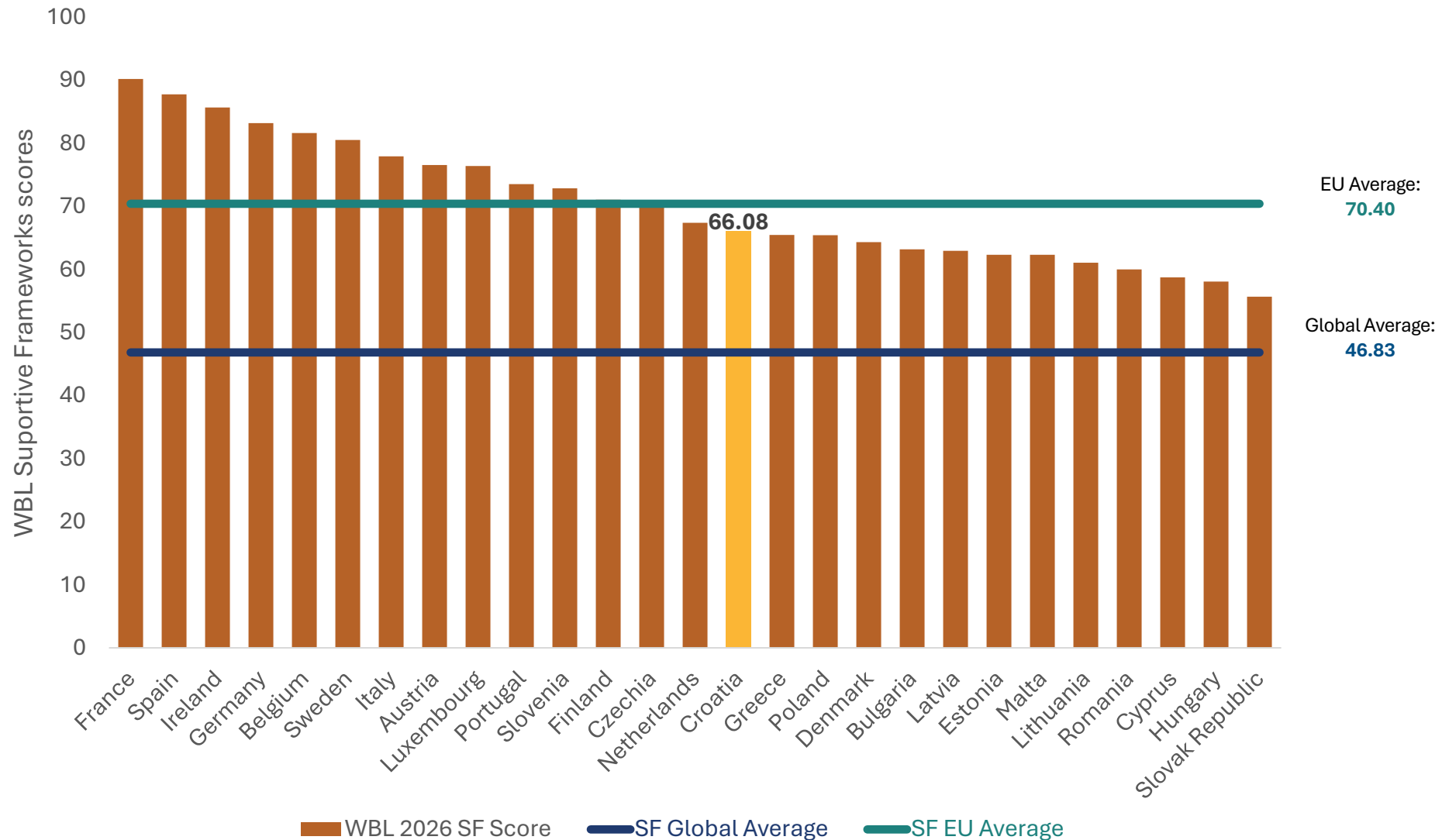
## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Introducing **gender-responsive procurement provisions** would improve women-owned businesses' access to public procurement — one of the largest drivers of economic activity — where they remain largely underrepresented, winning just 1 percent of contracts globally.

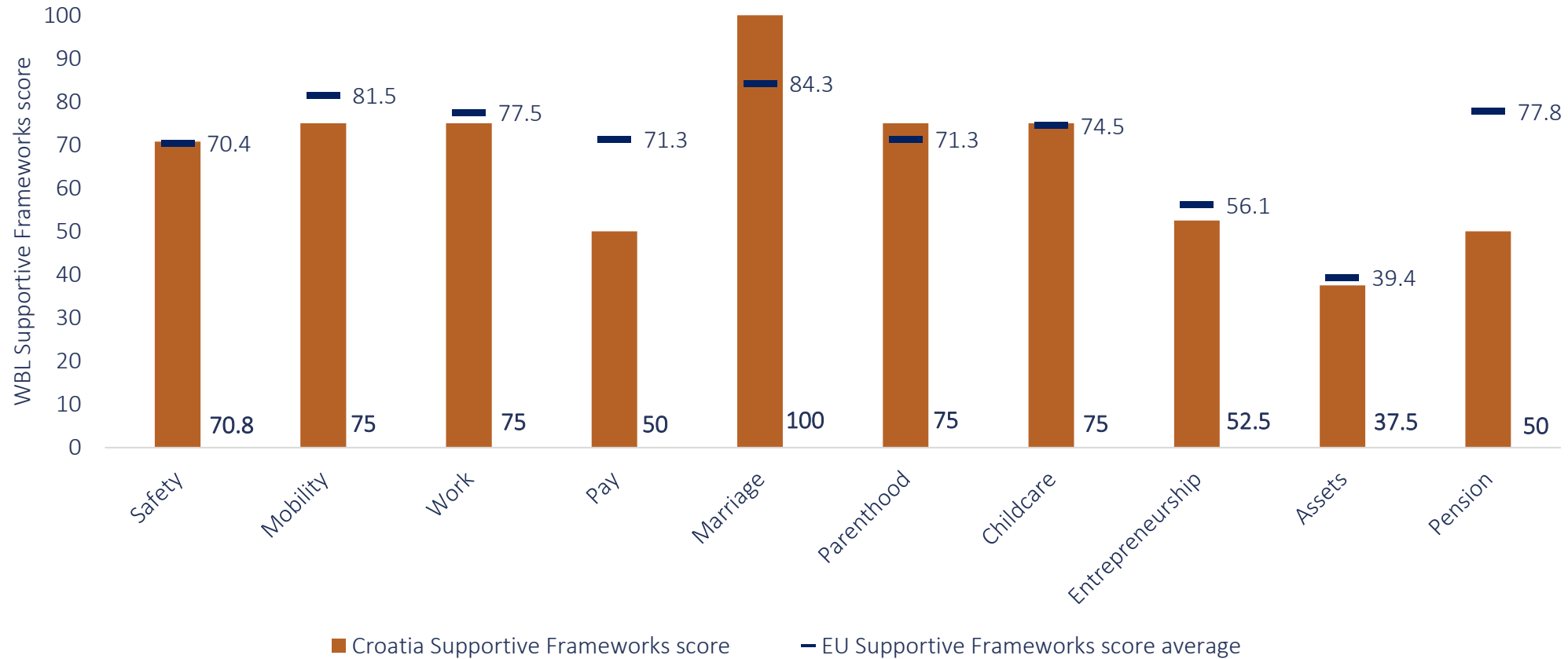
# Croatia's main results on Supportive Frameworks



# Supportive Frameworks: Croatia scores below the EU average



# Supportive Frameworks: Croatia ahead on Marriage, behind on Pay and Pension



# Remaining gaps in Supportive Frameworks



## PAY

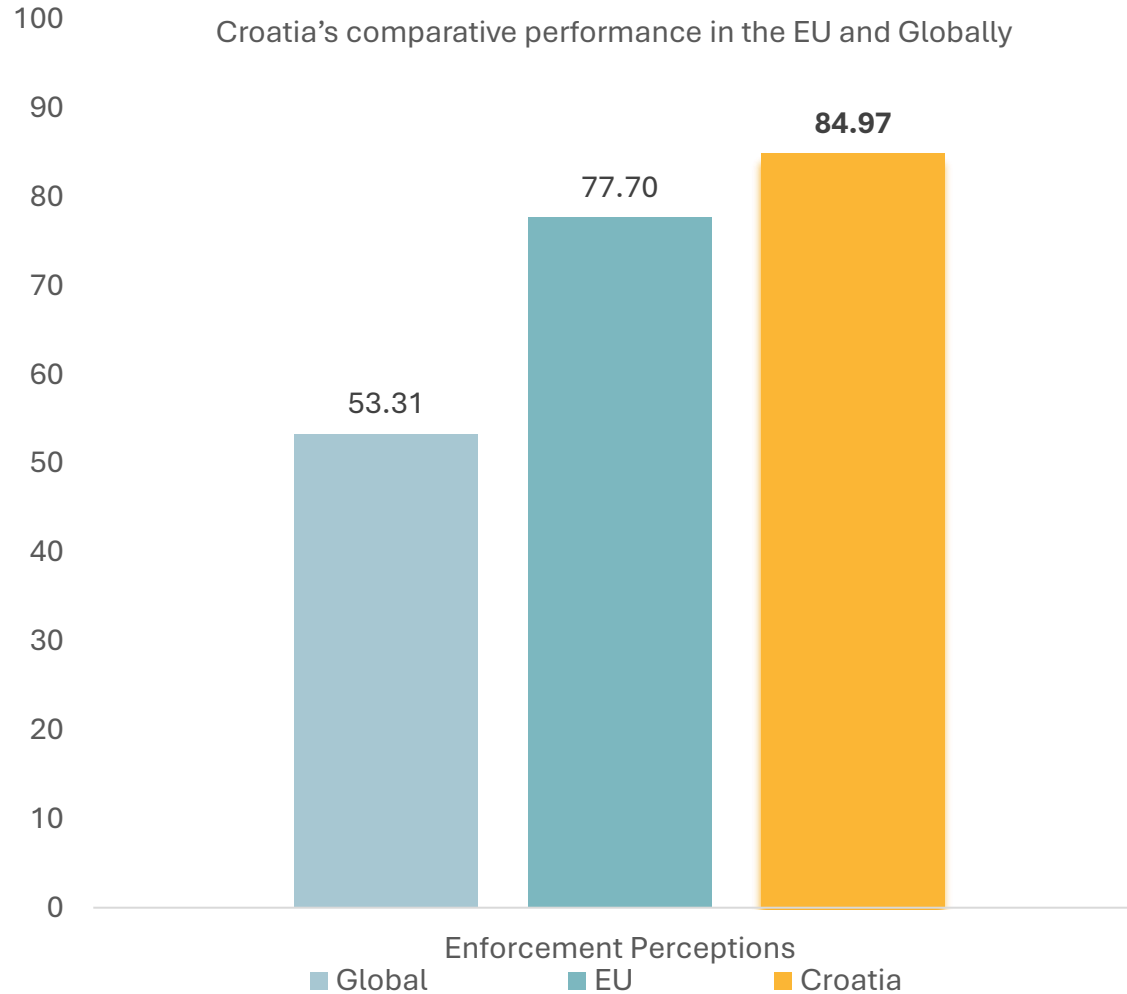
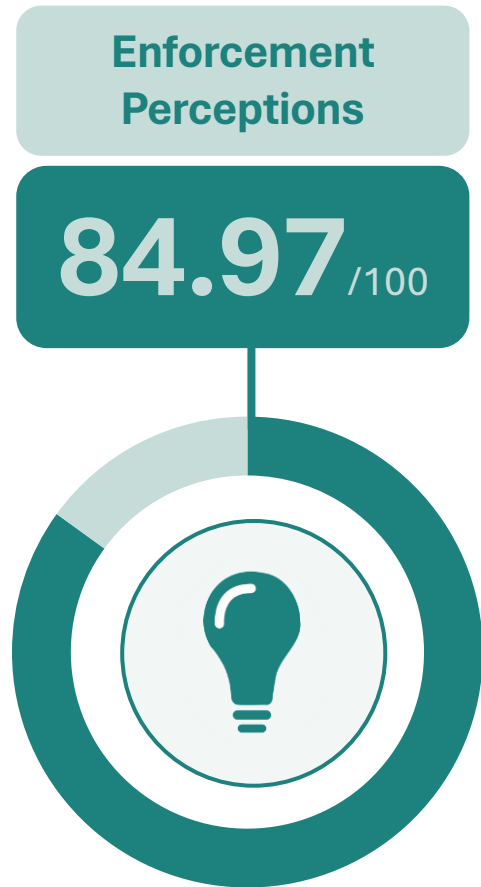
**Pay transparency measures and gender-sensitive occupational safety and health policies** are two practical mechanisms that ensure women can identify wage discrimination and work under conditions that account for their specific needs — with direct effects on their ability to negotiate fair pay, enter and remain in higher paying sectors, and participate in economic life on equal terms.



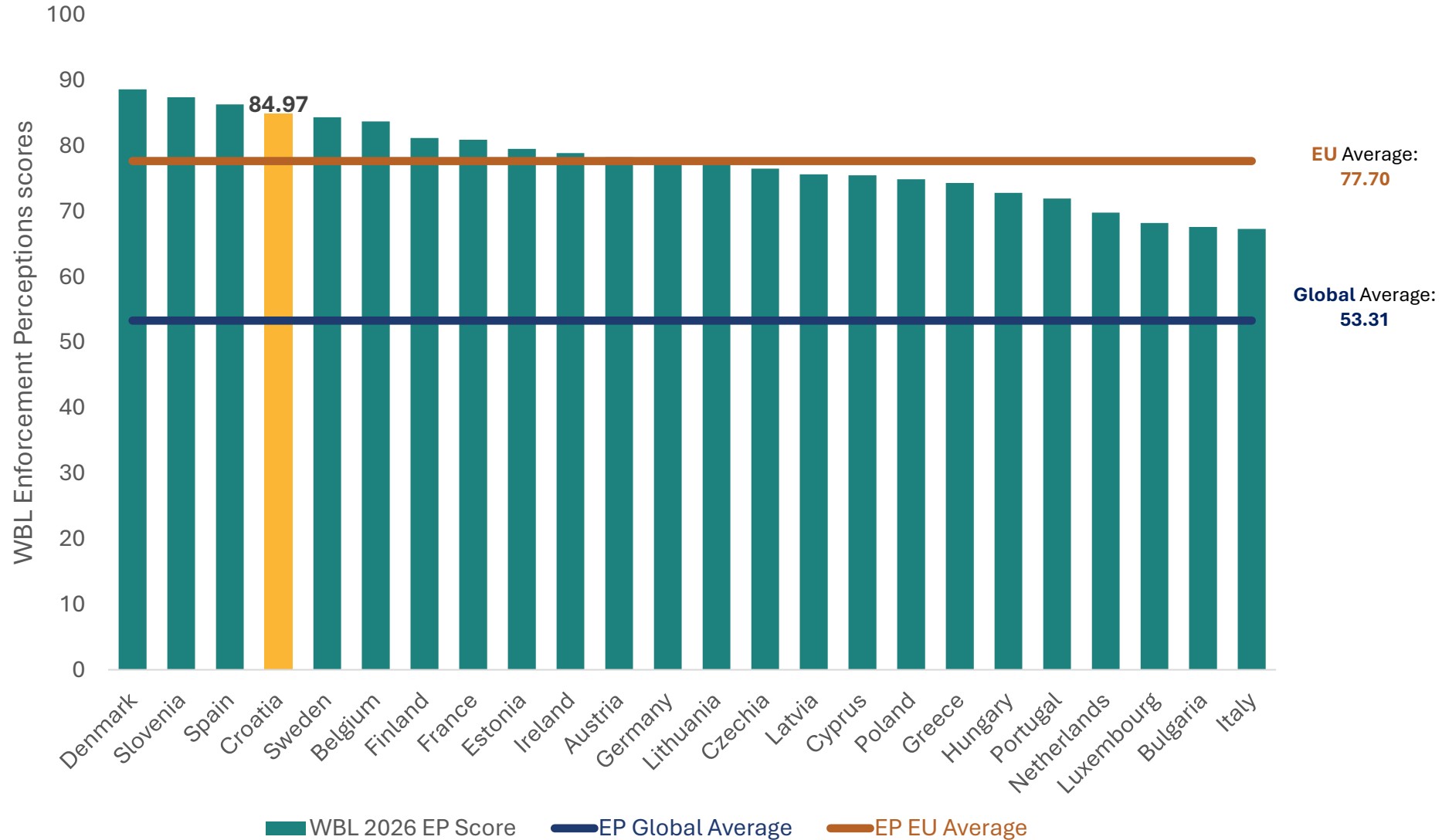
## ASSETS

**Incentives to register property, sex-disaggregated data on ownership, and a legal mandate or presumption of joint titling** are practical mechanisms that ensure women can access, exercise, and retain the property rights the law grants them — building economic security, improving access to finance, and strengthening their bargaining power within households.

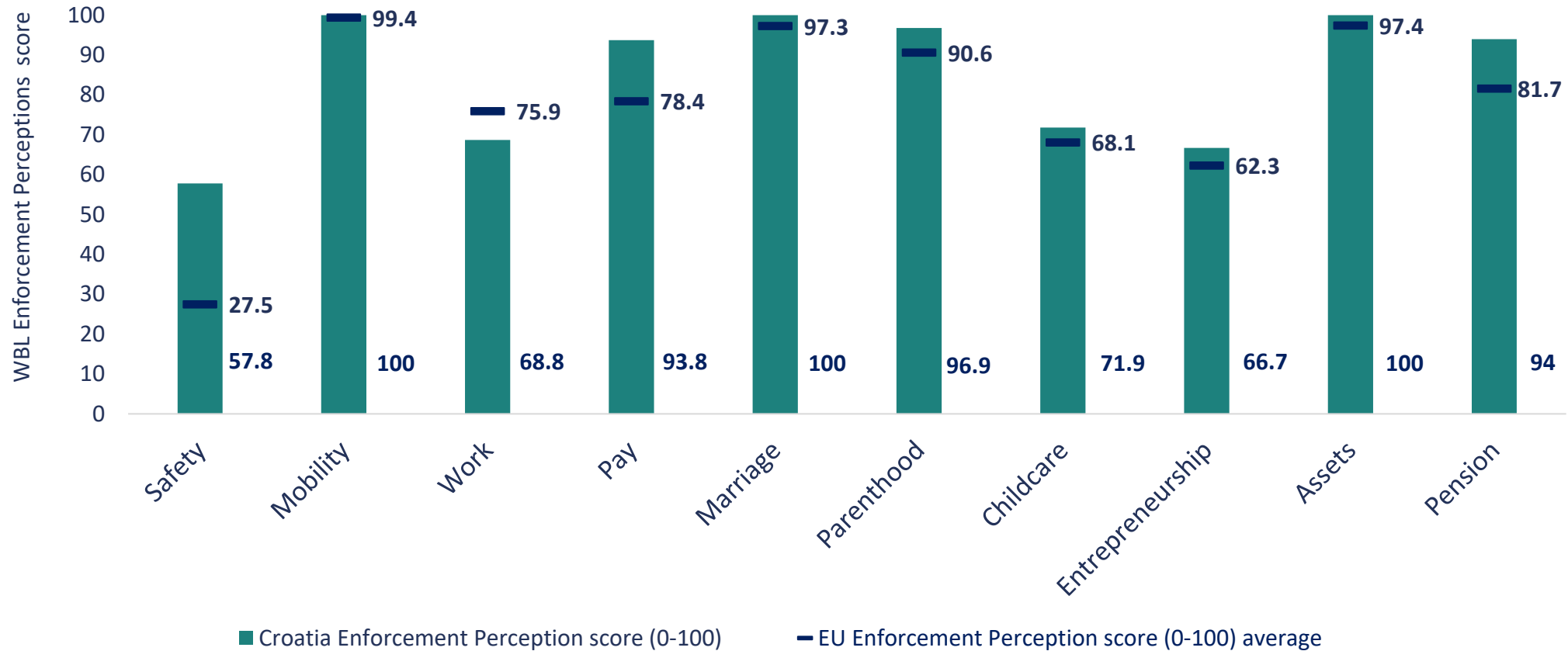
# Croatia's main results on Enforcement Perceptions



# Enforcement Perceptions: Experts perceive Croatia's enforcement above average



# Enforcement Perceptions: Croatia ahead on Safety and Assets, behind on Work and Childcare



# Croatia at a Glance



Safety



Mobility



Work



Pay



Marriage



Parenthood



Childcare



Entrepreneurship

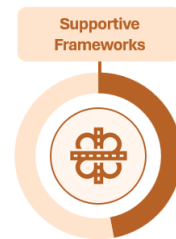
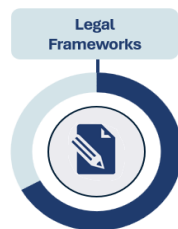


Assets



Pension

# Safety: The Implementation and Enforcement Gap

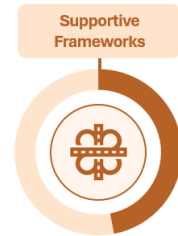


Does the Law Address Child Marriage?	1/1
Does the Law Address Sexual Harassment?	0.5/1
Does the law Address Domestic Violence?	1/1
Does the Law Address Femicide?	1/1

Is There an Action Plan or Strategy on Violence against Women?	1/1
Are There Mechanisms to Facilitate Access to Justice for Cases of Violence against Women?	0.33 /1
Does the Government Provide or Fund Services for Women Affected by Violence?	0.5/ 1
Is There an Institutional Mechanism to Monitor the Implementation of Legislation, National Plans, and/or Programs on Violence against Women?	1/1

Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Addressing Child Marriage, in Practice?	3/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Addressing Sexual Harassment, in Practice?	0.75/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Addressing Domestic Violence, in Practice?	2.5/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Addressing Femicide, in Practice?	3/4

# Childcare: Focus on the quality of childcare services is needed



Does the Law Establish the Provision of Center-Based Childcare Services?	1/1
Does the Law Establish Any Form of Support for Families for Childcare Services?	1/1
Does the Law Establish Any Form of Support for Nonstate Childcare Providers?	1/1
Does the Law Establish Quality Standards for the Provision of Center-Based Childcare Services?	1/1

Is There a Publicly Available Registry or Database of Childcare Providers?	1/1
Is There a Clearly Outlined Application Procedure to Request Financial Support from the Government for Childcare Services by Parents?	1/1
Is There a Clearly Outlined Application Procedure to Request Financial Support from the Government for Childcare Services by Nonstate Childcare Providers?	1/1
Does the Government Publish Reports on the Quality of Childcare Services?	0/1

Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Establishing the Provision of Center-Based Childcare Services, in Practice?	3/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Establishing Any Form of Support for Families for Childcare Services, in Practice?	3/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Establishing Any Form of Support for Nonstate Childcare Providers, in Practice?	3.5/4
Do Public Authorities Enforce Existing Legislation Establishing Quality Standards for the Provision of Center-Based Childcare Services, in Practice?	2/4

# The action agenda for women's economic opportunity

## ADOPT

equal opportunity laws



## INVEST

in implementation and enforcement



## CREATE

jobs, growth, and shared prosperity



### Ensure

equal opportunities at every age and every stage through coordinated, cross-sector action

### Turn

legal rights into lived realities by strengthening enforcement and investing in implementation systems

### Use



the data and share the evidence to design reforms, track progress, and hold institutions accountable

# Become an Expert Contributor



*I contribute because **better data is essential to understanding and advancing women's economic participation.** WBL turns research into awareness, helping policymakers and practitioners act on evidence rather than assumptions."*

**Federica Cristani**  
Institute of International Relations  
Prague  
Switzerland



HOME ABOUT US DATA PUBLICATIONS PARTNERS NEWS & EVENTS

Home > Partners > Expert Contributors > Experts

## Explore Expert Contributors by Economy

Women, Business and the Law relies on the generous contributions of experts from 190 economies. If you are interested in contributing to our research and World Bank's flagship report, join our network of more than 20,000 contributors.

### Croatia

SOS Rijeka <a href="https://sos-rijeka.org">https://sos-rijeka.org</a>	<b>Andrej Žmikić</b> Divjak, Topić, Bahtjarević & Krka Law Firm Tel: 15391600 <a href="https://dtb.hr">https://dtb.hr</a>
<b>Darija Zeljko Mrljak</b> University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law <a href="https://pravo.unizg.hr/">https://pravo.unizg.hr/</a>	<b>Daša Musulin</b>
<b>Dora Horvat</b> Ilej & Partners <a href="https://ilej-partners.com/">https://ilej-partners.com/</a>	<b>Ivan Šimović</b> University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law
<b>Kristina Mihaljević</b> Women's Room Tel: 38516119-174 <a href="https://zenskasoba.hr/">https://zenskasoba.hr/</a>	<b>Mario Vinković</b> University of Osijek, Faculty of Law <a href="https://pravos.unios.hr/">https://pravos.unios.hr/</a>
<b>Mate Lovrić</b> Lovrić Novokmet & Partners	<b>Valeria Kirac</b> Divjak, Topić, Bahtjarević & Krka Law Firm

Scan to join our network of more than 20,000 contributors.



# Download Croatia's Economy profile here:



**WOMEN, BUSINESS AND THE LAW**  
DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS • POLICY INDICATORS

**Croatia**  
Main Business City: Zagreb

Scan the QR code to explore economy comparisons and engage with us.

**Legal Frameworks** 94.40  
**Supportive Frameworks** 66.08  
**Enforcement Perceptions** 84.97

**Female Labor Force Participation: 66.5%**  
Source: World Development Indicators (WDI)

---

**Key Findings**

- Gaps between law and practice**  
In Croatia, legal frameworks score is 94, supportive frameworks score is 66, and enforcement perceptions score is 85, showing that gaps still persist between law and practice.
- Topic performance**  
Croatia outperforms the regional average in Work, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood and Childcare across all pillars.
- One of the few**  
Croatia is one of three economies in the Europe and Central Asia region with laws that prescribe a gender quota for corporate boards.
- Reforms**  
From October 2, 2023, to October 1, 2025, Croatia enacted two reforms promoting gender equality in employment and Entrepreneurship, including one under the Entrepreneurship topic and one under the Safety topic.

---

**Pillars** Score Range: 0 - 100

**94.40**

**Legal Frameworks**  
measures laws affecting women's work and entrepreneurship.

**66.08**

**Supportive Frameworks**  
measures policies and institutions supporting the implementation of women's economic rights.

**84.97**

**Enforcement Perceptions**  
measures the extent to which women's economic rights are enforced in practice.

- LEGAL FRAMEWORKS:** Croatia scores higher than both the global average (66.97) and the Europe and Central Asia regional average (80.62). At the topic level, it has higher scores than the regional average in all topics.
- SUPPORTIVE FRAMEWORKS:** Croatia outperforms both the global average (46.83) and the Europe and Central Asia regional average (55.61). At the topic level, it scores above the regional average in Work, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood and Childcare.
- ENFORCEMENT PERCEPTIONS:** Croatia's score is above both the global average (53.31) and the Europe and Central Asia regional average (64.87). At the topic level, it scores higher than the regional average in all topics.

**Full Economy Data (WBL 2026)**

Topic Indicator Questions

Note regarding the Enforcement Perceptions Pillar: "-" indicates that a score could not be computed for the Enforcement Perceptions pillar due to an insufficient number of responses from contributors. It should not be interpreted as zero or as evidence about enforcement conditions in that economy. Enforcement levels (0-4 scale) are categorized as follows: 0.00-0.49 Not at all enforced; 0.50-1.49 Rarely enforced; 1.50-2.49 Moderately enforced; 2.50-3.49 Mostly enforced; 3.50-4.00 Fully enforced.

	Score/Max	Legal Basis or Source
<b>Safety - Legal Frameworks</b>	<b>87.50/100</b>	
1.1 Does the Law Address Child Marriage?	1/1	
1.1.1 Is the legal age of marriage 18 or higher for boys and girls?	Yes	Family Law, Art. 25(1)
1.1.2 Is the law free of parental consent exceptions to the legal age of marriage (or is the age of marriage with parental consent 18 or higher)?	Yes	No applicable provisions could be located
1.1.3 Is marriage under the legal age void or voidable?	Yes	Family Law, Art. 29
1.1.4 Are there penalties for adults who authorize, celebrate, register, or enter into child marriage?	Yes	Criminal Law, Art. 168
1.2 Does the Law Address Sexual Harassment?	0.5/1	
1.2.1 Is there legislation on sexual harassment in employment with criminal penalties or civil remedies?	Yes	Labor Law, Art. 134; Anti-Discrimination Act, Art. 3, 8(1), 11 and 25-26
1.2.2 Is there legislation on sexual harassment in education/schools with criminal penalties or civil remedies?	Yes	Anti-Discrimination Act, Arts. 3, 8(2), 11 and 25-26
1.2.3 Is there legislation on sexual harassment in public places (or on transportation) with criminal penalties or civil remedies?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
1.2.4 Is there legislation on cyberharassment or cyberstalking with criminal penalties or civil remedies?	No	No applicable provisions could be located
1.3 Does the law Address Domestic Violence?	1/1	
1.3.1 Is there a law or legal provision on domestic violence?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence; Criminal Law, Arts. 87(B-9) and 179a
1.3.2 Does legislation on domestic violence establish criminal penalties?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, Art. 22; Criminal Code, Arts. 87(B-9) and 179a
1.3.3 Does legislation on domestic violence provide for protection orders?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, Arts. 11-19; Code of Criminal Procedure, Arts. 98-98a
1.3.4 Does legislation on domestic violence address physical, sexual (including marital rape), psychological, and financial/economic violence?	Yes	
Does legislation on domestic violence address physical violence?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, Art. 10; Criminal Law, Arts. 87(B-9) and 118-119
Does legislation on domestic violence address psychological violence?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, Art. 10; Criminal Code, Arts. 87(B-9) and 179a
Does legislation on domestic violence address financial/economic violence?	Yes	Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, Art. 10
Does legislation on domestic violence address sexual violence, including marital rape?	Yes	Criminal Code, Arts. 87(B-9), 153, 154 and 156

Page 3 of 14



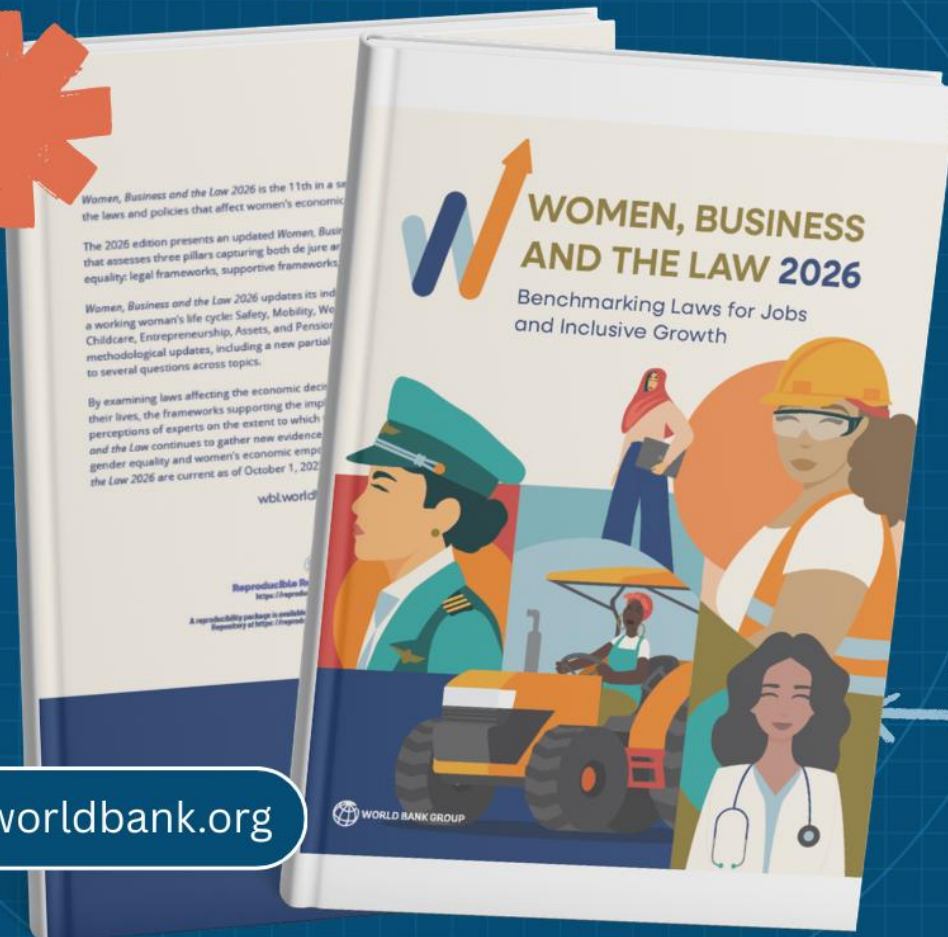
# Thank you!



Scan to read the 2026 report



## Find the full analysis in the new *Women, Business and the Law*



 [wbl.worldbank.org](http://wbl.worldbank.org)