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REPORT

on the gender aspects of the rising cost of living and the impact of the energy crisis
(2023/2115(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the gender aspects of the rising cost of living and the impact of the energy crisis (2023/2115(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2, 3(1) and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 8, 9, 10, 119, 122, 127, 151, 153(2), 156, 157, 191 and 194 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFREU) and, in particular, its provisions on social rights and equality between men and women,
- having regard to the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development, the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’, and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 on ending poverty, SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and improving living conditions for women, and SDG 8 on achieving sustainable economic growth,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0152),
- having regard to Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural gas and repealing Directive 2003/55/EC¹,
- having regard to Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC²,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources³,
- having regard to Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity and amending Directive 2012/27/EU⁴,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility⁵,

¹ OJ L 211, 14.8.2009, p. 94.

² [OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 1.](#)

³ [OJ L 328, 21.12.2018, p. 82.](#)

⁴ [OJ L 158, 14.6.2019, p. 125.](#)

⁵ [OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17.](#)

- having regard to Directive (EU) 2023/970 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms⁶,
- having regard to the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 May 2022 on the social and economic consequences for the EU of the Russian war in Ukraine – reinforcing the EU’s capacity to act⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2022 on women’s poverty in Europe⁸,
- having regard to the European Court of Auditor’s Special Report of 26 May 2021 entitled ‘Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action’⁹,
- having regard to Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1563 of 14 October 2020 on energy poverty¹⁰,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 October 2020 on A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives (COM(2020)0662),
- having regard to the International Energy Agency’s end-use energy prices and taxes data¹¹,
- having regard to the International Monetary Fund’s report of October 2022 entitled ‘The Fog of War Clouds the European Outlook’¹²,
- having regard to Eurostat’s 2022 study entitled ‘Living conditions in Europe’¹³,
- having regard to Eurostat’s briefing paper of 10 February 2022 entitled ‘Energy prices on the rise in the euro area in 2021’¹⁴,
- having regard to Eurofound’s report of 28 October 2022 entitled ‘The cost-of-living crisis and energy poverty in the EU: Social impact and policy responses – Background paper’¹⁵,

⁶ [OJ L 132, 17.5.2023, p. 21.](#)

⁷ OJ C 479, 16.12.2022, p. 75.

⁸ OJ C 47, 7.2.2023, p. 2.

⁹ [European Court of Auditors, ‘Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action’, 26 May 2021.](#)

¹⁰ OJ L 357, 27.10.2020, p. 35.

¹¹ [The International Energy Agency, End-Use Prices Data Explorer, 28 April 2023.](#)

¹² [The International Monetary Fund, ‘The Fog of War Clouds the European Outlook’, October 2022.](#)

¹³ [Eurostat, Living conditions in Europe, 2022.](#)

¹⁴ [Eurostat, Energy prices on the rise in the euro area in 2021, 10 February 2022.](#)

¹⁵ [Eurofound, ‘The cost-of-living crisis and energy poverty in the EU: Social impact and policy responses – Background paper’, October 2022.](#)

- having regard to the Eurofound’s last esurvey, Living and Working in Europe, of Spring 2023,
- having regard to the European Institute for Gender Equality’s 2021 and 2022 Gender Equality Indexes^{16,17},
- having regard to its Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey¹⁸,
- having regard the research from the World Economic Forum of 26 January 2023¹⁹,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘Gender perspective on access to energy in the EU’, published by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union on 18 December 2017²⁰,
- having regard to the briefing entitled ‘Gender Aspects of Energy Poverty’, published by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union on 1 March 2023²¹,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘The Gender Dimension and Impact of the Fit for 55 Package’, published by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union on 6 December 2022²²,
- having regard to the briefing entitled ‘Energy poverty in the EU’, published by its Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 18 September 2023²³,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2020 on maximising the energy efficiency potential of the EU building stock²⁴,
- having regard to the opinion of 12 May 2022 by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on energy efficiency,
- having regard to the report of 7 April 2021 by the Committee on Development on the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations in developing countries and the opinion by the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality of 2 October 2020,

¹⁶ [European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\), 2021 Gender Equality Index.](#)

¹⁷ [EIGE, 2022 Gender Equality Index.](#)

¹⁸ [European Union, EP Autumn 2022 Survey: Parlemeter, January 2023.](#)

¹⁹ [WEF, This is why women are bearing the brunt of the cost of living crisis, according to research, January 2023.](#)

²⁰ [European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Gender perspective on access to energy in the EU, 18 December 2017.](#)

²¹ [European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Gender Aspects of Energy Poverty, 1 March 2023.](#)

²² [European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, The Gender Dimension and Impact of the Fit for 55 Package, 6 December 2023.](#)

²³ [European Parliament, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services, Energy poverty in the EU, 18 September 2023.](#)

²⁴ [OJ C 385, 22.9.2021, p. 68.](#)

- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2021 on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty²⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all²⁶,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2021 on the implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive²⁷,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 October 2023 on ensuring European transportation works for women²⁸,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A9-0430/2023),
- A. whereas inflation has increased sharply since 2021, driven primarily by high energy and food costs, exacerbated by Russia’s unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine²⁹; whereas wages are not projected to increase as fast as inflation, leading to a cost of living crisis; whereas this crisis acutely threatens women’s livelihoods, health, well-being, economic independence and access to housing, while limiting their purchasing power and their ability to purchase basic necessities such as food, preventing them from enjoying a decent standard of living;
- B. whereas prices have risen, in general, by 11.5 % in the EU since October 2021 and food has been particularly affected, with inflation climbing to 17.8 % in October 2022; whereas, in line with the ECB’s September 2023 macroeconomic projections for the euro area, average inflation for 2023 is estimated at 5.6 %, which is an upward revision of previous projections; whereas according to Eurofound, the increases in nominal wage rates in many countries for 2023 were in many cases insufficient to maintain women workers’ purchasing power;
- C. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic, the rising cost of living crisis and the war against Ukraine have intensified a pre-existing crisis and the precarious working and living conditions faced by many women; whereas the gendered implications of such crises further perpetuate systemic gender inequalities across multiple sectors;
- D. whereas women in all their diversity are disproportionately affected by the consequences of the cost of living crisis, as they tend to be among the poorest part of the population, representing 70 % of the 1.3 billion³⁰ people living in conditions of poverty; whereas women are consistently placed at a disadvantage by structural and cultural factors such as traditional gender norms;

²⁵ [OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 62.](#)

²⁶ [OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 145.](#)

²⁷ [OJ C 251, 30.6.2022, p. 58.](#)

²⁸ [Texts adopted, P9_TA\(2023\)0339.](#)

²⁹ [Eurostat, Energy prices on the rise in the euro area in 2021, 10 February 2022.](#)

³⁰ [The gender security project, Can 70 % of the World’s Poor Celebrate International Women’s Day? March 2022.](#)

- E. whereas women are over-represented in precarious jobs, in flexible forms of work, atypical and flexible contracts (part-time work, temporary work, informal jobs) and over-represented among minimum wage workers; whereas women also tend to have lower incomes and wealth as a result of the pay and pension gaps, and are thus more likely to report difficulties in making ends meet and still bear a disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, leaving them with fewer resources to protect themselves against the negative impact of the cost-of-living crisis; whereas women are also particularly impacted by time poverty, defined as the individual's lack of sufficient time for rest and leisure after deducting the time necessary for paid employment and unpaid work, and thus not being able to reduce working hours without falling (deeper) into poverty;
- F. whereas women tend to be the 'shock absorbers of poverty carrying the main responsibility and mental burden for the planning, purchase and preparation of food for their families and the coordination of various other care and household tasks such as the budget management of poor households and are thus much more impacted by the rising cost of living and energy crisis; whereas this role as primary carers in the family puts a disproportionate share of the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women;
- G. whereas successive crises have had negative impacts on women all over the world, hindering progress on gender equality; whereas women are particularly impacted by disinvestment and budget cuts in public services such as education, health and transport and welfare assistance as they are more likely to work in, rely on, and become the providers of these public services when they are withdrawn;
- H. whereas the importance of combating discrimination between men and women in access to employment and work, and promoting equality in careers and professional categories, in vocational training and in salaries is essential, at the same time as strengthening work with rights and protecting collective bargaining and union rights;
- I. whereas the energy crisis in Europe has highlighted the need to reform the European electricity market; whereas, by indexing electricity prices to gas prices, the market has created substantial opportunities for speculation, resulting in significant difficulties for companies, particularly SMEs, and for households, especially those comprising people in vulnerable situations or living in rural areas, including women, who are particularly at risk; whereas this economic speculation has contributed to increasing energy costs; whereas price regulation over the energy sector is one of the key tools to guarantee people's economic and social rights, and ensure everyone has access to electricity, heating and cooling in the green energy transition;
- J. whereas the Council reached an agreement in the electricity market reform that aims to make electricity prices less dependent on volatile fossil fuel prices, shield consumers from price spikes, accelerate the deployment of renewable sources of energy and improve consumer protection;
- K. whereas climate change and climate-related disasters exacerbate the cost of living crisis and have a particular impact on women, since statistically women are at greater risk of poverty; whereas the groups already living on the margins are being hit the hardest by the volatility of the fossil fuel energy system, while major economic groups such as energy and food companies are making record profits;

- L. whereas energy poverty represents a huge challenge and a serious social problem for the EU; whereas even before the current crisis, in 2021, 6.9 % of all Union households were behind on their utility bills, and 6.4 % indicated that they were unable to keep their homes warm; whereas, in 2020, almost 15 % of all households lived in homes with leaks, broken roofs or rot³¹;
- M. whereas, in 2022, over 41 million Europeans were unable to keep their homes adequately warm; whereas this number is equivalent to the populations of Greece, Portugal, Hungary and Sweden put together, which means that those people have to choose between heating their homes and buying food; whereas it is estimated that the figure could be much higher, with the EU Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) placing the number at more than 50 million households affected; whereas energy poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, considered to be caused by a combination of low income, high energy costs and poor energy efficiency in buildings;
- N. whereas buildings account for 40 % of final energy consumption in the EU and 36 % of its energy-related greenhouse gas emissions, and 75 % of EU buildings are still energy inefficient;
- O. whereas energy poverty is compounded by existing gender inequalities, particularly those relating to income, such as the gender pay, pension and participation gap; whereas the gender pay gap still stands at 12.7 % across the EU³²; whereas the cumulative effect of these gendered income disparities throughout a woman's lifetime leads to women receiving a retirement income which, in the EU, is on average 35 % lower than that received by men; whereas the right to equal pay for equal work is not always upheld and remains one of the biggest challenges in efforts to overcome pay discrimination; whereas considerable disparities persist in the gender pension gap across EU Member States, ranging from 2.6 % in Estonia to 46.1 % in Malta; whereas the gender pension gap leads to women being at a higher risk of old-age poverty and social exclusion;
- P. whereas women, particularly single mothers and those experiencing intersectional discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, race, migration status, sexual orientation, disability or age, are more likely to fall into energy poverty; whereas this means that the ongoing cost of living crisis will exacerbate gendered energy poverty in the EU; whereas further gender and intersectional equality disaggregated data is needed; whereas, according to the UN, the world is facing the largest cost of living crisis for a generation;
- Q. whereas in 2022 more than one fifth of the EU's population living in households with dependent children was at risk of poverty or social exclusion; whereas in late 2022, 44 % of single mothers and 31 % of single women anticipated difficulties affording energy costs over the coming months³³;
- R. whereas the energy crises and the higher share of energy costs in women's total income reduces their financial capacity to build an autonomous existence making it harder for

³¹ [Eurostat, EU statistics on income and living conditions.](#)

³² [European Commission, The gender pay gap situation in the EU.](#)

³³ [Eurofound, The cost-of-living crisis and energy poverty in the EU: Social impact and policy responses – Background paper, October 2022.](#)

women without an income or with a low income to escape domestic violence and abuse from a partner to whom they are financially tied;

- S. whereas energy poverty is associated with significant impacts on human physical and psychological health as, for instance cold room temperatures are linked to increased risks of stress, sleep disruption, respiratory illnesses and circulatory diseases³⁴; whereas women face significant health and safety risks from household air pollution, and from a lack of lighting and, according to a WHO study, women have a higher relative risk than men of developing adverse health outcomes due to exposure to smoke from solid fuels, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer; whereas cold housing and associated health risks have been recognised as one potential cause of excess winter mortality³⁵;
- T. whereas rural, inland, ultra-peripheral areas and areas at high risk of depopulation are particularly exposed to energy poverty, due to the lower relative incomes of households located in these areas and given the specific energy needs of farmers' households; whereas additionally there are fewer investments in improving energy efficiency in housing; whereas women living in these areas are more susceptible to falling into energy poverty and are disproportionately affected by inadequate access to clean and affordable energy as they are often the primary users of household energy;
- U. whereas there is little awareness or data available on the impact of energy poverty on women in the EU; whereas the EU Energy Poverty Observatory does not provide gender-disaggregated data in its publicly accessible set of indicators; whereas only a few Member States have adopted definitions of energy poverty and energy poverty indicators, which usually do not take gender into account;
- V. whereas not only can solar energy offer a solution to the current energy crisis, but it can also have a positive impact on gender equality and equity worldwide;
- W. whereas women in the energy sector tend to work more in firms where wages are lower, more so than in the non-energy sector; whereas just 20 % of senior management roles are held by women in the energy sector and thus women play an insufficient role at the management level of energy companies; whereas women's full inclusion in these positions would help promote innovation, implement new ways of management and promote diversity in the workforce, thus fostering a positive cycle of gender equality contributing to the green energy transition;
- X. whereas according to the UN, women can be powerful agents of change in the clean energy transition; whereas creating an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship and sustainable energy will also require collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders from within the private sector; whereas addressing the existing gender gaps in access to finance, information, technology, goods and services, is important to reduce the investment risks and encourage access to corporate funding for women entrepreneurs in sustainable energy;
- Y. whereas increasing women's access to sustainable energy and opportunities is a prerequisite for poverty alleviation and women's economic empowerment worldwide;

³⁴ [EIGE Gender Equality Index 2023.](#)

³⁵ [EIGE Gender Equality Index 2023.](#)

- Z. whereas according to the World Economic Forum the energy sector is battling a regrettable lack of female science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) graduates, which reduces the pool of potential applicants; whereas women make up 52 % of the European population and the majority of tertiary graduates in the EU, yet only represent 17.9 % of full professors in engineering and technology fields³⁶, account for two out of five scientists and engineers and therefore make up only 34 % of the workforce in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers³⁷; whereas the energy transition can gain significantly from women's knowledge and experience;
- AA. whereas the Commission has not delivered on its commitment set out in the Gender Equality Strategy to integrate a gender perspective into all major Commission initiatives, including the European Green Deal and related policies;
- AB. whereas the Commission is obliged to promote gender equality under the Treaties; whereas, however, the European Court of Auditors considers that a gender perspective has not been integrated into the EU budget since key elements, such as gender analysis, gender-related objectives, indicators and accountability through reporting, are largely missing;
- AC. whereas gender equality concerns are largely missing from the green transition and digital transformation pillars of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which represents a missed opportunity to effectively integrate gender equality into climate and environmental objectives;
- AD. whereas a study requested by the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) shows that men are often favoured over women and other marginalised groups when it comes to the design of subsidies and support under the Fit for 55 package, as well as in other policies, programmes and funding for the green transition;
- AE. whereas the gender perspective is missing from the Member States' and EU's policies and measures aimed at countering and alleviating the effects of the cost of living crisis; whereas about two thirds of the measures introduced by Member States to mitigate rising inflation rates are not targeted at particular groups in vulnerable situations and only provide short-term solutions instead of responses that will contribute to a socially fair and green transition such as promoting energy saving or the transition to renewable energy sources;
- AF. whereas EU action should take into account the importance of the concept of climate justice and the commitment of all parties to the Paris Agreement to respect, promote and consider their obligations on human rights, including gender equality, when taking action to address climate change;

Gender-sensitive solutions to energy poverty and the rising cost of living

1. Calls on the Commission to deliver on the positive commitment made by President von der Leyen to promote gender equality in all policymaking and stresses that more needs

³⁶ [European Commission, She figures 2021, November 2021.](#)

³⁷ [European Commission, Towards a manifesto for gender-inclusive STE\(A\)M education and careers, October 2022.](#)

to be done since a gender perspective is lacking in the main climate, energy and environmental initiatives presented; calls for the European Green Deal to ensure a just and socially fair transition that works for all by developing a gender-transformative intersectional strategy to address energy poverty and by increasing public investment in social, affordable and energy-efficient housing, taking into account the specific needs of women, who often significantly contribute towards household energy management, yet lack equal access to resources;

2. Regrets that Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/2407 of 20 October 2023 on energy poverty³⁸ and the accompanying guidance³⁹ fail to recognise the gendered aspects of energy poverty and the essential need for gender disaggregated data to adequately assess the needs of vulnerable households as a key indicator; is concerned that the Commission did not embrace the numerous calls of the European Parliament, civil society and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to develop gender specific indicators to ensure that the green transition is socially fair;
3. Calls for the EU to promote an extraordinary package to support people struggling with skyrocketing costs of living, including EUR 100 billion for families, especially single-parent families – the vast majority of which are headed by women – most affected by energy poverty and at least EUR 20 billion to scale up the European Child Guarantee scheme;
4. Calls for the Member States and the EU to urgently guarantee affordable utilities and food for low-income households and, in particular, for those facing intersectional discrimination; stresses that no one should have to freeze in the depths of winter or overheat in the scorching summer months and calls for the Member States and the EU to ban energy disconnections; stresses that increasing energy efficiency through housing renovation should be a priority across all Member States;
5. Recalls that with more than 50 million people affected by energy poverty in the EU, financial assistance should be provided to support low-income households in compliance with minimum energy performance standards; considers it important that Member States guarantee access to electricity for vulnerable people;
6. Recalls that energy poverty affects women disproportionately throughout the EU and therefore Member States should dedicate the necessary support to alleviate energy poverty among women;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take urgent action to address poverty and increasing inequalities among women, especially among vulnerable groups, including single mothers, women with disabilities, women from racial and ethnic backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ persons, migrant and refugee women, elderly women and women in rural or depopulated areas; calls on the Commission to develop an ambitious 2030 European anti-poverty strategy, including time poverty, with concrete targets for reducing poverty and a focus on ending women's poverty and breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty risks;

³⁸ [OJ L, 2023/2407, 23.10.2023.](#)

³⁹ Commission Recommendation on energy poverty. EU guidance on energy poverty. Accompanying document (SWD(2023)0647).

8. Calls on the Member States to adopt specific measures to combat the risk of poverty in old age and take a gender sensitive approach when reforming pension systems, adapting the retirement age and strengthening pensions and social benefits and services such as long-term care, taking into account women's under-representation in the labour market, as well as labour market segregation and gender-based discrimination;
9. Calls on the Commission to assess and propose, where appropriate, new legislative acts to stop speculators from making access to energy unaffordable for women;
10. Highlights that access to electricity plays a fundamental role in poverty reduction and in ensuring full and equal participation in society;
11. Calls on the Commission's Directorate-General for Energy to develop a gender action plan that ensures that all EU energy legislation, including the right to energy sharing as mentioned in Directive (EU) 2018/2001, integrates the gender dimension and develops specific measures, indicators and targeted funds to combat energy poverty, and in particular its gendered consequences;
12. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the inclusion of gender and intersectional dimensions in all schemes for energy efficiency and renewable electricity, including the right to energy sharing, so as to support those citizens most affected by energy poverty; recognises the contribution of women-led initiatives to sustainable energy solutions and the instrumental role of women in the design of such solutions at all levels, including the household, community, local, national and European levels;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to mainstream gender equality into all policies in order to achieve the best response to the energy crisis, which disproportionately affects women; in this respect, calls on the Commission to prepare a report on the gender-related consequences of the rising cost of living due to the energy crisis, including a gender assessment of the implementation of its recommendation on energy poverty; calls on the Member States to monitor the prices of energy, transport and other essential goods in view of developing specific measures to combat the risk of social exclusion and poverty, focusing on access to affordable housing, transport, justice and energy;
14. Calls on the Commission to require the Member States to conduct mandatory gender impact assessments in national energy and climate plans, including when reporting on energy poverty;
15. Calls on the Commission to develop specific guidelines on how to ensure that Member States correctly apply gender mainstreaming and gender analysis when designing National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP), including measures and actions to alleviate energy poverty; considers that incorporating a gender analysis with an intersectional perspective in NECPs is key to promoting a socially fair energy transition;
16. Calls on the Member States to increase public investment in policies that aim, directly or indirectly, to counteract the negative effects of the cost of living crisis on women in all their diversity, protecting victims of gender-based violence and to guarantee access to high-quality public and free services for care, education, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, and affordable housing, transport and energy, as well as access to decent employment; calls on the Member States to pay special attention to

rural, inland, ultra-peripheral regions and regions at risk of depopulation that often lack adequate provision of these services;

17. Highlights that the impact of high inflation and energy costs are undermining public services, which women are more likely to rely on and in which women are more likely to work; stresses the fact that cuts in the Member States' budgets for childcare, education and preschool activities and carers have direct implications for women who take on the majority of the additional tasks entailed; calls on the Member States to increase funding for the social infrastructure in particular for healthcare and care services and prioritise social housing and the investment in retrofitting homes to reduce energy costs;
18. Stresses that the cost-of-energy crisis, together with the cost-of-living crisis, is having a negative impact on women's economic and social inclusion, health and fundamental rights including sexual and reproductive health and rights; highlights that around one third of people say they gave up medical treatment in 2022, and more are reporting being forced to give up medical care owing to rising costs, longer waiting times, and shortages of doctors and medication;
19. Calls for an adequate minimum income to be ensured, following the European recommendations, with a view to promote gender equality, income security and the economic independence of women; recalls that adequate minimum wages are a necessary safeguard to ensure a fairer wage distribution and to guarantee a basic wage floor that protects women; highlights that the above-mentioned instruments need to respect the rights established in collective agreements;
20. Calls on the Commission to refrain from promoting any policy recommendation that would lead to an increase in precarious working relations, the deregulation of working hours, a reduction in salaries, an attack on collective bargaining or the privatisation of public services and social security;
21. Calls for a public transport policy that takes account of gender equality, in particular by expanding and improving the public transport service and offering effective mobility so that women can find work and participate more actively in the labour market (and achieve a better work-life balance);
22. Calls on the Member States to ensure that no artificial speculative bubble is created to the detriment of women's welfare;
23. Recalls that adequate housing is a fundamental right that must be protected and be recognised as a precondition for the exercise of, and access to, other fundamental rights and a life in dignity; regrets that as a result of discrimination and inequality in housing, many women live in insecure, undignified and unsafe conditions, and are at increased risk of homelessness and violence; stresses that forced evictions and other violations of the right to housing disproportionately impact women and reinforce existing inequalities, representing a significant barrier to gender equality; calls on the Commission to assess and propose, where appropriate, new legislative acts to mitigate the financialisation of housing markets and to stop speculators from making housing unaffordable;
24. Calls on the Commission to give local authorities, including city authorities, the option to tighten their control over online housing rental platforms; calls on the Member States

- to take steps to regulate prices, increase the supply and choice of public housing available and address the impact of interest rate hikes caused by inflation;
25. Calls on the Commission to urge the Member States to safeguard energy supplies in areas far from urban centres so that rural areas provide the minimum comfort conditions for women and families;
 26. Stresses that the burden placed on the most vulnerable consumers caused by energy market volatility can be significantly reduced by enhancing the energy efficiency of buildings;
 27. Calls on energy companies to take a proportional approach to disconnecting users from power, taking into account the needs, challenges and other difficulties of women, single mothers, disabled women, older women, girls, as well as women living in rural and inland areas during a cost of living crisis, which is inherent to the energy crisis;
 28. Calls for the EU and its Member States to integrate a gender and intersectional perspective in their definitions of energy poverty, so as to enable comparison and monitoring of this reality in a way that goes beyond the general concept of ‘vulnerable households’, thereby allowing a better understanding of the different situations within each household;
 29. Reiterates its calls on the Commission, Eurostat and the Member States to further develop and improve the collection of gender-disaggregated and intersectional data, statistics, research and analysis, as this is the only way to ensure that specific situations are not overlooked and serve as basis for informed policymaking;
 30. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to request gender-disaggregated data on energy poverty from Eurostat; calls, in this respect, on the EU Energy Poverty Observatory to use such data to develop and select gender-specific indicators that would allow evidence-based policy development in that area, in consultation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Environment Agency;
 31. Believes that Member States should make more effort to include gender-disaggregated data in their national building renovation plans in order to better target policies and measures;
 32. Underlines the importance of fostering continuous gender-sensitive research and innovation in the renewable electricity industry;
 33. Calls for the Member States and the EU to urgently ensure affordable utilities for women-led SMEs, in particular, for those facing intersectional discrimination; recognises that female driven enterprises and local enterprises with a high percentage of women workers are often a vital part of the production of essential goods; stresses that women entrepreneurs should not assume a disproportionate burden of economic speculation and be granted equal access to the opportunities the green transition offers, while mitigating its unequal impact;

34. Stresses that the principles of equal treatment and gender mainstreaming should lie at the core of the ‘energy efficiency first principle’ and be reflected in policy, planning and investment decisions;

Towards a gender-inclusive green transition

35. Recalls that a just green transition is necessary to avoid severe future crises and increased poverty; recalls, furthermore, that the green transition will only be socially fair if it includes a gender perspective and guarantees equal opportunities for women and those experiencing intersectional discrimination as well as their meaningful inclusion in the policymaking process; calls, therefore, on the Commission to appoint an EU gender and climate coordinator with sufficient staff and funding, and to introduce gender impact assessments in all EU policies and legislation, in particular in European Green Deal initiatives;
36. Recalls that extending access to green energy and promoting its affordability is central to achieving a more inclusive and sustainable development; recognises how rapidly falling renewable energy technology costs and new business models offer energy solutions that hold great promise to accelerate sustainable energy access for women in all their diversity;
37. Stresses that women have a strategic and beneficial role to play in the green transition as they are key actors in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns as well as in business and policymaking at all levels; highlights the immediate need to recognise their potential in fostering sustainable energy and to contribute towards the achievement of multiple SDGs;
38. Regrets that according to the UN, the potential of women as entrepreneurs in the energy sector is underutilised; calls on the Commission to support female sustainable-energy entrepreneurs and on Member States to close the existing gender gaps and to improve their access to information, technology, goods and services, markets and finance particularly by strengthening traditional and innovative financial intermediation services such as integrated web-based platforms;
39. Commends local/national governments or private companies that are putting great efforts into addressing the social, economic dimensions of energy poverty and would urge them to continue this work by incorporating a gender perspective wherever possible and ensuring that the language/communication used is gender inclusive and offered in Braille to those who need it;
40. Deplores the fact that women are significantly under-represented in key policymaking positions on climate change, the energy transition and the environment, and calls for the EU and the Member States for positive action measures such as temporary quotas to ensure equal and diverse representation in decision-making positions across the EU institutions, government bodies and public authorities at all governance levels and associated public bodies; calls on the Member States to promote the meaningful participation of women in gender-responsive planning, policies and programmes, including its fiscal planning and to ensure that such policies take into account the differential impacts of climate change and energy crises on women and men;

41. Notes that in order to ensure that the EU's workforce is fully prepared to actively work towards the achievement of its climate objectives, Member States should aim to reduce the gender disparity in the construction and building sector, including through their national energy and climate plans;
42. Welcomes the fact that, as the leading environmental and gender equality agencies in the United Nations system, UNEP and UN Women have joined forces to develop a Global Programme to promote Women's Entrepreneurship for sustainable energy; calls on the Commission and relevant EU agencies to take note of this programme and promote similar sustainable entrepreneurial energy objectives within the EU;
43. Underlines that digital technology and platforms are becoming key in the overall process of providing education and training for women and girls as well as in many work selection processes; regrets the negative impacts of unequal access to technology, which may hinder the development of women's and girls' digital literacy and calls on the Commission to ensure that women and girls in all their diversity, including single women and elderly women and those women living in rural areas, inland areas and areas at high risk of depopulation are not disproportionately affected by energy poverty;
44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to reduce the gender gap in the energy sector by tackling the under-representation of women in STEAM careers and to ensure that women have equal access to vocational training courses and awareness-raising courses in STEAM subjects including those on energy efficiency and sufficiency and to create a positive link between acquiring knowledge and developing skills essential for emerging job opportunities in the digital and green transition;
45. Recognises that the ultimate objectives of inclusion, equality and achieving gender balance in the energy sector remain unmet; calls on the respective education authorities within Member States to particularly encourage girls to take an interest in the energy sector by fighting gender stereotypes in educational choices and to foster their confidence about possessing the needed skills to become employees, innovators and pioneers in the energy sector;
46. Stresses that the energy sector is one of the most gender imbalanced industries in the EU, with women accounting only for 24 % labour force⁴⁰, as well as regarding its occupational and hierarchical gender segregation; calls on private and public energy companies to eradicate any form of discrimination on a gender basis or any other grounds as set out in Article 21 CFREU; stresses the need to fight against the persistence of structural gender inequalities that perpetuates the obstacles to entry and retention of workforce in the energy sector, including respecting and promoting the use of maternity and paternity rights; underlines that energy companies which promote equality represent more appealing working environments for all their employees and potential employees;
47. Welcomes the initiatives promoting women to become solar, wind power, geothermal and hydroelectric energy entrepreneurs, as this benefits the women involved as well as the wider community, and calls on the Member States to identify any barriers that prevent women working in these sectors; calls on private companies within the energy

⁴⁰ [EIGE, Gender Equality Index 2023.](#)

sector to ensure that solar, wind power, geothermal and hydroelectric energy technology, and its female innovators, are empowered to support the energy transition;

48. Notes the Commission's key objectives within its EU solar energy strategy, which seeks to make EU solar energy systems more competitive and resilient; recognises how solar, wind power, geothermal and hydroelectric energy is giving more women access to energy, particularly in rural areas; highlights the need to integrate women's safety concerns in relation to the use of lighting when designing and planning urban and mobility policies in view of promoting public spaces that are safe and free of harassment;
49. Calls on the Commission and the Council to commit to gender budgeting and to ensure that it is applied to the entire EU budget, and that the European Court of Auditor's recommendations are fully implemented, including in the mid-term review of the current multiannual financial framework and the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility;

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50. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The cost of living and energy crisis – women are hardest hit

Europe is currently experiencing a cost of living and energy crisis to an extent that is almost unparalleled in recent history. Across the continent, people are struggling to make ends meet and having to choose between “heating or eating.”

At the start of 2022, after the COVID pandemic, the European Union was geared up ‘to get to work, to make Europe greener, more digital and more resilient’¹. However, on 24 February, Russia invaded Ukraine.

In addition to the tremendous human suffering caused by the war waged by Russia on Ukraine and its people, the war has massively impacted supply chains, causing energy and food prices to surge, and inflation to skyrocket. In 2022, the inflation rates triggered the European Central Bank to increase interest rates for the first time in 11 years.

Unfortunately, the inflation hike happened before the most vulnerable social groups could recover from the COVID pandemic, and this further compounded the living conditions for many European citizens.

Millions of households are now in need of help due to this increase in the cost of living and energy price hikes. However, looking behind the numbers poverty has a female face.

Women across Europe are facing more socio-economic challenges and higher poverty levels than men. In general, women have jobs that are more precarious, their pay is lower, and they are more likely to do unpaid childcare work. When it comes to accessing education, healthcare, employment, and social services, some groups of women face intersecting forms of discrimination. These include women over 65, women with disabilities, and women from ethnic minorities.

Since COVID-19, the inequalities between men and women have increased and the current cost-of-living crisis disproportionately affects women due to their lower average income, poor and inefficient housing, and dependency on social benefits. In 2021, before the crisis, over 20 million more women than men lived below the poverty line index in the EU. At the current rate of progress, the EU is at least 60 years away from achieving gender equality².

Ursula von der Leyen promised to leave “no one behind” but forgot the Green Deal

We know that women are at a greater risk of falling into energy poverty – a lack of access to affordable energy resources. The problem is a recognised challenge at the EU level. According to the European Commission, “energy poverty is a widespread problem across Europe, as between 50 and 125 million people are unable to afford proper indoor thermal comfort.”

However, there is little data available on the impacts of energy poverty on men and women in

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/recovery-plan-europe_en

² <https://sdgwatcheurope.org/cost-of-living-crisis-exacerbates-poverty-for-women-in-europe/>

the EU. Only few Member States have adopted definitions of energy poverty and energy poverty indicators, but they do not usually consider gender.

Already in 2016, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on access to energy calling for a gender dimension in all energy policies. Unfortunately, little progress has been made despite numerous calls by the European Parliament and the promise of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that the European Green Deal would leave “no one behind”.

Despite the commitment of the current commission to mainstream gender into all its major initiatives, the links between gender equality and the European Green Deal policy areas, as well as in the Recovery and Resilience Facility, are inadequate.

In practice, what the European Commission has delivered in so far on the Green Deal, can be described as an EU-funded gender-blind green transition, threatening to magnify existing gender and intersecting inequalities.

The European Court of Auditors special report 10/2021: *Gender Mainstreaming in the EU budget. Time to turn words into action* also confirms the fact that the Commission is not respecting its treaty-based obligation to promote equality between women and men in all areas of policy making and implementation. The report concludes that indicators and gendered disaggregated data often are lacking in policy development and hindering analysis of gender mainstreaming³. In consequence, the Green Deal initiatives and the Recovery and Resilience Facility fail to ensure gender equality.

In addition, EIGE’s *Gender Equality Index 2023: Gender Equality and the European green deal*, also emphasise the lack of high-quality data and states that the current indicators are not fit for purpose. Too often data is not gender-disaggregated and indicators not gender-responsive. In consequence, available EU statistics do not measure issues that are relevant from an intersectional gender perspective.

The lack of evidence is a key challenge for the Commission if they are serious about delivering on their commitment to “leave no one behind”. Having intersecting facts on the table is necessary for successfully mainstreaming the diverse needs and concerns of both women and men into the policies delivering the European Green Deal. This is imperative to ensure equal access to the historically unmatched funding and to the great opportunities that the green transition offers.

The Green Deal must prioritise social fairness to address gendered poverty

Europe is once again in emergency mode, facing a significant energy crisis due to our dependency on fossil fuels and a volatile energy market.

The social aspects of the European Green Deal and our energy policies are critical to meeting the EU climate targets and mitigating the socio-economic impacts of Russia’s war against Ukraine.

Currently the most vulnerable EU citizens are paying the price for the volatility of our fossil dependent energy system. Poverty has a female face and already in 2021, before the current crisis, over 20 million more women than men lived below the poverty line index in the EU.

³ <https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications?did=58678>

Several strong statements have been made by the European Parliament relating to gender equality and the energy transition. In its resolution of 17 February 2022, the Parliament recognised that women still face structural and cultural barriers to participation in all aspects of delivering the energy and climate transition⁴.

Structural problems require structural solutions. Therefore, intersecting data and a gender-responsive approach must be reflected in EU policy making to counter the rise of gendered poverty. The implementation of the European Green Deal provides an opportunity to deliver on the commitment to mainstream gender and an intersectional perspective in all the EU's activities, including in the EU budgeting process.

The report presents several measures to combat the rise of gendered poverty and reiterates the European Parliament's numerous calls on the Commission to deliver on its promise to ensure a green energy transition that works for all.

In conclusion, ensuring a socially fair green transition is an absolute prerequisite for the success of the Green Deal and for achieving gender equality in the European Union.

⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-02-17_EN.html

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that she has received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the report, until the adoption thereof in committee:

Entity and/or person
European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND)
-
The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	30.11.2023
Result of final vote	+ : 20 - : 2 0 : 3
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Frances Fitzgerald, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Radka Maxová, Johan Nissinen, Maria Noichl, Carina Ohlsson, Pina Picierno, Maria Veronica Rossi, Christine Schneider
Substitutes present for the final vote	Abir Al-Sahlani, Marina Kaljurand, Aušra Maldeikienė, Silvia Modig, Susana Solís Pérez, Pernille Weiss, Angelika Winzig
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Helmut Geuking, Pär Holmgren, France Jamet, Grace O'Sullivan, Tomáš Zdechovský

**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL
IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE**

20	+
PPE	Adinolfi Isabella, Fitzgerald Frances, Geuking Helmut, Maldeikiene Ausra, Schneider Christine, Weiss Pernille, Winzig Angelika, Zdechovský Tomás
Renew	Solís Pérez Susana
S&D	Biedron Robert, Blinkeviciute Vilija, Gálvez Muñoz Lina, Kaljurand Marina, Maxová Radka, Noichl Maria, Ohlsson Carina, Picierno Pina
The Left	Modig Silvia
Verts/ALE	Holmgren Pär, O'Sullivan Grace

2	-
ECR	Nissinen Johan, de la Pisa Carrión Margarita

3	0
ID	Jamet France, Rossi Maria Veronica
Renew	Al-Sahlani Abir

Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstentions