



**2021/2003(INI)**

13.7.2021

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the  
Committee on Development

on the EU Gender Action Plan III  
(2021/2003(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Inma Rodríguez-Piñero

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Development, as the joint committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls its previous position on trade and gender as outlined in its resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements<sup>1</sup>; highlights that trade policy can contribute to the development and wealth of women, the reduction of socio-economic gaps between women and men and the realisation of women's rights by ensuring decent work conditions for women and by contributing to sustainable and equitable economic development while expanding opportunities for women entrepreneurship and access to apprenticeships, work and employment; notes that the living and working conditions of women impact on the likelihood of child labour and, in turn, on the overall outlook of poorer countries;
2. Highlights that trade policy has the potential to promote the relevant international standards and legal instruments on gender equality, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals;
3. Calls for the EU to support and introduce trade policies that reduce socio-economic gaps and ensure a high level of protection and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality; calls for the EU to ensure that gender equality is a core concept in all EU trade policies;
4. Welcomes the fact that the new EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) calls for the promotion of gender equality through the EU's trade policy; welcomes the Commission and the Council's introduction of instruments such as gender chapters and gender mainstreaming into the EU's trade and investment agreements, as well as in all aspects of EU trade policy; asks the Commission and the Council to adopt horizontal guidelines for that purpose; underlines that including specific trade and gender actions can lead to more visibility of the problems women face, which can contribute to resolving barriers to trade faced by women;
5. Stresses its previous position calling for a specific chapter on trade and gender equality and women's empowerment in the upcoming modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement; observes with interest the progress made on a trade and gender chapter in the negotiations;
6. Recalls its resolution of 25 November 2010 on human rights and social and environmental standards in international trade agreements<sup>2</sup>;
7. Notes that trade policy is not gender neutral and that better collection of gender-disaggregated data, together with clear indicators, is needed to adequately assess the different impacts of trade policy on women and men; reiterates its call for the EU and its Member States to draw inspiration from the toolkit developed by UNCTAD and to

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 99E, 3.4.2012, p. 31.

include in ex ante impact assessments and in ex post evaluations the country-specific and sector-specific gender impact of EU trade policy and agreements; calls on the Commission to work together with international partners, such as the WTO, and local authorities and organisations to collect data, analyse the impact of trade on women and translate data into concrete proposals to improve women's role in the international trade system and promote inclusive economic growth; stresses that intensified cooperation between international organisations such as the WTO, the ITC and the UN and the creation of networks involving academia, CSOs and parliaments can lead to better sharing of best practices and methods for collecting data, and to the inclusion of a gender perspective in trade; insists that gender issues should not be limited to the TSD chapter;

8. Calls for the Commission to engage actively in the recently established WTO Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender to work towards a strong Ministerial Declaration in the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) that could serve as a roadmap for the implementation of the 2017 Buenos Aires Declaration; underlines that the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender is a first step towards a more permanent platform in the WTO to discuss issues related to trade and gender; calls on the Commission to continue to proactively engage with other WTO members to contribute to the work of the Informal Working Group, and to explore the possibility of establishing a permanent working group;
9. Recalls its demand to the Commission that the composition of the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) be gender-balanced, that their monitoring role be further extended, and that a Trade and Gender Committee be established under each FTA to identify shortcomings;
10. Recognises the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the participation in trade of female entrepreneurs and women; underlines that women are adversely affected as entrepreneurs, employees, and often as the main caregiver in their family; calls for COVID-19 recovery strategies to pay special attention to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which are often run by women, and to sectors with higher female participation (care economy, agriculture, tourism, garment and retail);
11. Welcomes the Commission's commitment to table binding measures on pay transparency, which can be a useful tool to detect gaps and discrimination within the same sector and bridge the gender pay gap; regrets, nonetheless, the delay in publishing this proposal and asks the Commission to put it forward as soon as possible, building on examples such as the one on Switzerland with public procurement policy;
12. Calls on the Commission to carefully evaluate the impact of trade agreements on sectors with a high percentage of women workers, such as the garment sector and small-scale agriculture; recalls that the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 has strongly affected these sectors and exacerbated the risk of increasing inequality, discrimination and exploitation of female workers;
13. Notes with concern the persistent gender gap in digital access and digital skills; notes that women have less access to skills development compared with their male counterparts, preventing them from developing their businesses or their possibilities as

employees; calls for the Commission and the Member States to support female entrepreneurs, traders, workers and employees in acquiring the necessary skills through trade policy, such as the Generalised Scheme of Preferences, Economic Partnership Agreements, development cooperation and Aid for Trade;

14. Expresses its concerns about the possibility of an increase in the digital gender gap in developing countries and regions in the current COVID-19 crisis; stresses the importance of promoting digital proficiency, digital accessibility and digital affordability for women and girls as instruments to obtain gender equality in development strategies; stresses the need to channel development funds into the promotion of the digital education of women and girls, and to support female-led projects in the digital sector, especially those with a social impact;
15. Notes that e-commerce has the potential to connect more female entrepreneurs with international markets; calls, however, for the Commission to support women in adopting new technologies such as blockchain that, due to its peer-to-peer nature, anonymity and efficiency, can help certain women to overcome some discriminatory legal and cultural barriers to trade, improve their access to finance and help them to integrate into global value chains;
16. Recalls that women with disabilities, women who are members of ethnic and minority groups, women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, older women and women in rural areas, as well as refugee and migrant women, may face difficulties in accessing digital services and related infrastructure; stresses the importance of an intersectional approach to all gender mainstreaming initiatives as regards increasing women's access to and use of digital services, and to education and employment in the digital economy and society; calls on the Member States to tackle the digital exclusion of all vulnerable groups in society and to make ICT education accessible to them by adapting teaching methods and timetables to take account of the different factors determining women's access to education;
17. Calls on the Commission to ensure that sufficient resources are available, and to disclose the resources allocated, to promote the core value of gender equality in its trade and investment policies and to ensure that the secretariats of the EU institutions responsible for trade policy and negotiations have the knowledge and technical capacity to incorporate the gender perspective into the entire process of trade negotiations and policy formulation, by appointing gender focal points in the EU institutions and delegations;
18. Calls for the inclusion of enforceable provisions in all TSD chapters based on the respect of ILO core labour standards and relevant conventions, in particular Convention No 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, Convention No 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 (CEDAW), Convention No 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, Convention No 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and Convention No 190 on Violence and Harassment, and for these conventions to be included in the list of conventions in the GSP+ review;

19. Recalls that access to finance is essential in order to take advantage of new export opportunities; underlines that women often lack access to finance compared with their male counterparts, which negatively affects women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses; calls on the Commission to address the gender gap in access to finance of women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses;
20. Welcomes the ISO International Workshop Agreement (ISO/IWA 34) on global definitions related to women's entrepreneurship, which aims to facilitate policymaking, data collection and access to capacity building, finance and markets for women's economic empowerment.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	13.7.2021
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 33 -: 2 0: 7
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Jordi Cañas, Miroslav Číž, Arnaud Danjean, Paolo De Castro, Raphaël Glucksmann, Markéta Gregorová, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Herve Juvin, Karin Karlsbro, Maximilian Krah, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Gabriel Mato, Sara Matthieu, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Massimiliano Salini, Helmut Scholz, Liesje Schreinemacher, Sven Simon, Dominik Tarczyński, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Marek Belka, Markus Buchheit, Seán Kelly, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Manuela Ripa

**FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR  
OPINION**

<b>33</b>	<b>+</b>
NI	Tiziana Beghin, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Arnaud Danjean, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Seán Kelly, Gabriel Mato, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Simon, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Renew	Barry Andrews, Jordi Cañas, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
S&D	Marek Belka, Miroslav Číž, Paolo De Castro, Raphaël Glucksmann, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Mihai Tudose, Kathleen Van Brempt
The Left	Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz
Verts/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Sara Matthieu, Manuela Ripa

<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>
ECR	Dominik Tarczyński, Jan Zahradil

<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>
ECR	Geert Bourgeois
ID	Markus Buchheit, Herve Juvin, Maximilian Krah, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Danilo Oscar Lancini
Renew	Liesje Schreinemacher

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention