



TEXTS ADOPTED

P10_TA(2024)0075

Recommendation to the Council on the EU priorities for the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

European Parliament recommendation of 19 December 2024 to the Council concerning the EU priorities for the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2024/2057(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the UN declaration of 15 September 1995 entitled ‘Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action’ and the outcomes of its review conferences,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- having regard to Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the principle of ‘leaving no one behind’ and, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality,
- having regard to the UN Secretary-General’s report of 13 December 2019 to the UN Commission on the Status of Women entitled ‘Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly’,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 November 2020 entitled ‘EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III: an ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action’ (JOIN(2020)0017) and the accompanying joint staff working document of 25 November 2020 entitled ‘Objectives and Indicators to frame the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-25)’ (SWD(2020)0284),
- having regard to the EU gender equality strategy for 2020-2025 of 5 March 2020,

- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU Gender Action Plan III¹,
 - having regard to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women 2024 Inquiry concerning Poland, conducted under Article 8 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2021 on challenges ahead for women’s rights in Europe: more than 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action²,
 - having regard to the briefing entitled ‘Accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5): Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls’, published by its Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 18 September 2024,
 - having regard to the UN Women and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs report of September 2024 entitled ‘Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024’,
 - having regard to its resolution of 22 November 2023 on proposals of the European Parliament for the amendment of the Treaties³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 April 2024 on including the right to abortion in the EU Fundamental Rights Charter⁴,
 - having regard to Rule 121 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A10-0030/2024),
- A. whereas equality between women and men is a fundamental and universal principle of the EU, and whereas the EU’s external action must be guided by this principle, so that the EU continues to lead by example and further steps up and meets its commitments on gender equality;
- B. whereas women’s and girls’ human rights and gender equality are not only fundamental human rights, but preconditions for advancing development and education and reducing poverty, and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world;
- C. whereas 189 governments across the world, including the EU and its Member States, committed to working towards gender equality and empowering all women and girls at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing;
- D. whereas the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the most comprehensive global agenda for promoting gender equality and is considered the international ‘Bill of Rights’ for women, defining women’s rights as human rights and articulating a vision of equal rights, freedom and opportunities for all women in the world, and was reaffirmed

¹ OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 150.

² OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 160.

³ OJ C, C/2024/4216, 24.7.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/4216/oj>.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2024)0286

in 2015 with Goal 5, ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’, of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set out in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by specifying targets and concrete measures across a range of issues affecting women and girls;

- E. whereas the UN Assembly agreed in 2017 on a global indicator framework to standardise data collection, a key element for the comparability of data;
- F. whereas just six years in advance of the 2030 deadline for the UN’s SDGs, not a single indicator under Goal 5 has been fully achieved; whereas the UN estimates that strong actions are needed in order to accelerate progress and to avoid taking 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory legislation for women;
- G. whereas gender equality is a cross cutting principle, to be mainstreamed across the SDGs;
- H. whereas a 2024 UN study¹ on the evaluation of SDG 5 highlights that social norms still exist that legitimise gender-based violence against women and girls, without sufficient appropriate punishments against perpetrators, reduce access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, assign unpaid care and domestic work solely to women and restrict leadership opportunities; whereas women and girls can be still discriminated against through reproductive sex selection²;
- I. whereas the UN General Assembly has raised the alarm about the active resistance to achievements and advances in gender equality and the growing transnational backlash against women’s rights; whereas sexual and gender-based violence as well as anti-rights movements threaten the fundamental rights of women and girls on a daily basis; whereas there is a clear and urgent need to reaffirm, safeguard and develop gender equality and the human rights of women and girls³;
- J. whereas women’s sports competitions must be a celebration of sporting values; whereas all conditions must be met to ensure fairness within these competitions, to preserve the health of female athletes and to prevent physical and psychological violence against them;
- K. whereas the Summit of the Future adopted document includes a specific action for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a crucial

¹ UN, ‘Are we getting there? A synthesis of UN system evaluations of SDG 5’, March 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/03/are-we-getting-there-a-synthesis-of-un-system-evaluations-of-sdg-5>.

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Population Fund, UN Women, UNICEF, World Health Organization, ‘Preventing gender-biased sex selection: an interagency statement’, 2011, https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Preventing_gender-biased_sex_selection.pdf

³ UN General Assembly, ‘Escalating backlash against gender equality and urgency of reaffirming substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls: Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls’, 15 May 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/073/47/pdf/g2407347.pdf>.

contribution to progress¹;

- L. whereas the rebels who brought down the regime in Syria are dominated by the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) force; whereas the HTS group is an Islamist organisation classified as a terrorist organisation by the EU and the UN; whereas this situation raises serious concerns about the security of women and girls in the area;
- M. whereas the UN's Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in an inquiry into Polish abortion law, has concluded that criminalising and restricting abortion discriminates against women;
- 1. Recommends that the Council:
 - (a) re-confirm its full and unwavering commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the range of actions for human rights of women in all their diversity and gender equality outlined therein; confirm its commitment to human rights of women, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, through gender mainstreaming in all relevant policy areas and cycles, to the implementation of specific and targeted actions for human rights of women and gender equality, and to ensuring proper gender budgeting;
 - (b) express its most profound opposition to the fact that Saudi Arabia is this year chair of CSW annual meeting and condemn any form of political instrumentation given that the country's own record on women's rights is abysmal and many of its policies contrary to the CSW's own mandate and objectives; raise the systemic discrimination against women and persecution of women's rights activists taking place in Saudi Arabia;
 - (c) ensure that gender equality and women's and girls' rights are fully and proudly implemented as a core part of EU external action through an adequately funded, gender-responsive, inclusive and intersectional approach, taking into account marginalised women and women in vulnerable situations, especially as the funding of anti-gender movements globally is on the rise²;
 - (d) ensure the full involvement of Parliament and its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the decision-making process on the EU's position at the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (10-25 March 2025); ensure that Parliament has adequate, regular and timely information and access to the EU's position document ahead of the negotiations; ensure the timely communication of Parliament's position to the EU negotiating team; and further improve interinstitutional cooperation and informal consultation, including prior to and during negotiations, so that Parliament's priorities are properly

¹ UN, 'Summit of the Future outcome documents: Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations', September 2024, https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/soft-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf.

² Datta, N., European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, 'Tip of the Iceberg– Religious Extremist Funders against Human Rights for Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Europe 2009 – 2018' June 2021, <https://www.epfweb.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/Tip%20of%20the%20Iceberg%20August%202021%20Final.pdf>.

incorporated;

- (e) conduct an annual review of the progress, and setbacks, encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- (f) pledge its strong support for the work of UN Women, which is a central actor in the UN system for advancing women's rights, while committing to ensure its funding as well as increased finance for gender equality;
- (g) reinvigorate the EU's efforts to overcome remaining challenges and accelerate the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as it is a universal document, and EU Member States are far from having achieved all targets; ensure that the EU leads by example by putting in place robust policy measures, coupled with adequate financing to prevent, address and combat gender inequality in all its manifestations, empower women in all their diversity in all EU countries and ensure the realisation of their rights;
- (h) reiterate that the EU has an important role to play in achieving a gender-equal world through leading by example and supporting partner countries in addressing all types of direct and indirect discrimination and gender-based violence; recall the importance of the Istanbul Convention, urge the remaining five Member States that have still not ratified and implemented the Istanbul Convention to do so in the shortest possible timeframe, and also call on other countries to make progress towards signing and ratifying it;
- (i) press for equal access to and opportunities in all areas of life, to allow women in all their diversity to fulfil their potential, notably also in decision-making, including political, economic, financial, academic, health, cultural and sports-related, this also being essential for good governance and policymaking; encourage initiatives that promote female political leadership and participation, strengthening democratic practices and inspiring future generations of women;
- (j) within this context, express opposition to all forms of gender-based violence, including online or offline, as well as against women engaged in or wishing to engage in politics, which sustains and reinforces the invisibilisation of women and negative stereotypes about women and discourages women of all ages from entering politics and public spaces;
- (k) encourage measures that promote women's participation and gender balance in all high impact sectors, including STEM; stress the importance of combating gender stereotypes, attitudes and prejudices in all their dimensions, through all kinds of media, including social media, and promote programmes, including through public-private partnerships, to reduce discrimination against women in politics and public positions;
- (l) emphasise that weak political guidance, lack of commitment, data gaps, insufficiently targeted investment, hate speech and hate campaigns, lack of access to relevant skills and knowledge, lack of economic opportunity and education, gender-related discrimination in the work place, including maternal mobbing, lack of economic autonomy and unequal conditions in the labour market, and the rise of anti-rights movements have been identified as obstacles and threats for

women's rights; thus making it necessary to encourage more women in politics and leadership, increase dedicated gender-equality-related investment in services such as education and health, and implement comprehensive rights-based and gender-responsive education, training and policy reforms to overcome these systemic structural barriers and achieve a truly equal society, for which the commitment and engagement of men and boys is essential;

- (m) apply gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting more consistently in all relevant EU policy areas, including external action, and lead by example in this regard, committing that the next MFF 2027 will include gender-equality-specific objectives and gender budgeting methods to be able to increase and monitor all investments regarding gender impact;
- (n) commit to constant appraisal and proactive corrective action in the EU's internal and external policies in regard to gender equality, mainstreaming and budgeting;
- (o) defend and recall the importance of the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda and the 25th anniversary of its landmark resolution, to renew the WPS EU action plan and to vocally combat any pushbacks towards this agenda internationally;
- (p) call on the Commission to further develop and roll out concrete and well-financed plans and actions to address the UN SDGs, specifically those related to gender equality, promoting equality in education;
- (q) take the lead in the global fight against the backlash against gender equality and women's rights, generated in particular by increasingly influential anti-rights movements, by condemning all attempts to roll back, restrict or remove existing protections for gender equality, including on sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as all forms of threats, intimidation and harassment, online and offline, of human rights defenders and civil society organisations working to advance these rights; emphasise that anti-gender movements are not only attacking women's rights and gender equality but go hand-in-hand with anti-democratic movements; promote partnerships and alliances to counteract regressive movements and reaffirm the EU's commitment to protecting gender equality as a core value, including by ensuring that women's rights movements are adequately funded;
- (r) emphasise the need to protect and promote the rights of groups experiencing intersectional forms of discrimination, including people with disabilities and people who are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, racialised, from ethnic, minority or migrant backgrounds, older or LGBTIQ+, among others;
- (s) work to promote the concept of combating intersectional discrimination throughout all UN bodies and to conduct, apply and integrate intersectional gender analysis at different levels in the EU and its Member States;
- (t) urge the Commission to further develop and improve the collection of gender-disaggregated equality data on sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or other belief, political opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, sex characteristics and gender identity as well as geographically disaggregated data,

including on a regional level, to ensure that this data contributes to better and more informed policymaking, and to reinforce the European Institute for Gender Equality both in terms of funding and capacity;

- (u) commit to advancing towards a foreign, security and development policy that gives priority to gender equality, protects and promotes the human rights of traditionally marginalised groups, such as transgender people, and takes into account the voices of women and LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders and civil society;
- (v) implement, without delay and to the fullest extent, the EU GAP III and ensure that 85 % of all new actions throughout external relations contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment by 2027 at the latest;
- (w) take note of and implement the recommendations of Parliament's resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU GAP III, and thus prioritise GAP III in every aspect of EU external action through a gender-responsive and intersectional approach, both in terms of GAP III's geographical coverage and areas of action, as well as gender mainstreaming in all areas of external action, whether trade, development policy, migration, humanitarian aid, security or sectors such as energy, fisheries and agriculture, while enhancing the consistency between the EU's internal and external policies;
- (x) devise, fund and implement policies that combat the feminisation of poverty and reduce the role of gender as a factor in poverty both within and, through external action, outside of the EU, taking due note of intersectional factors, including sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or other belief, political opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, sex characteristics or gender identity;
- (y) advocate for equal access to resources and equal opportunities for women in all regions, to achieve economic empowerment and enable access to social justice and to a better quality of life as a result of a global vision of gender equality; recognise the unique challenges faced by women living in rural, remote and least developed areas, where access to resources, healthcare, education, and economic opportunities may be limited; call for targeted measures and investments that address the needs of these communities, through the promotion of gender equality, female entrepreneurship and employment opportunities or infrastructure; stress the importance of integrating these perspectives into all relevant external action and development strategies to ensure no woman is left behind;
- (z) address and monitor the systemic and root causes of female poverty with an emphasis on those in rural areas or isolated and disadvantaged areas, empower women and girls in all their diversity through education, training and lifelong learning, non-discriminatory labour opportunities, access to equal pay and pensions, and encourage employment programmes for women with disabilities;
- (aa) promote female entrepreneurship and women-led businesses through an enabling environment for their economic activities, such as support programmes in partner countries, ensuring equitable access to business opportunities and training in entrepreneurial skills;

- (ab) encourage initiatives that strengthen women's economic autonomy and job creation in high-growth sectors, support initiatives that empower women economically, particularly women entrepreneurs and those leading micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as fight stereotypes and combat persisting inequalities in education, as well as addressing women's employment rate and under-representation in certain sectors like STEM and AI;
- (ac) ensure access to social services, including family support services, equal shares of unpaid care and social responsibilities through legislative initiatives, efforts to combat harmful gender stereotyping, patriarchal attitudes and systems and promote women as role models, and work-life-balance policies that ensure access to digital education and skills training to bridge the digital gender divide; enable women's access to ownership, property, adequate and affordable housing and land, eliminating barriers, with focus on addressing the specific needs of women, in particular those in poverty and female-led households;
- (ad) call for further efforts, legislation and enforcement of existing measures to ensure the rights of women care workers and domestic workers as well as the recognition of informal carers, including single mothers, recognising their work as essential for making our society function; push for more ambitious care policies and investments in care with a view to advancing towards care economies, setting minimum standards and guidelines for care throughout the life cycle, with an intersectional perspective;
- (ae) develop labour migration policies and programmes that are gender-responsive, including in highly 'feminised' and informal sectors such as domestic and care work, and which address the gendered barriers to women's labour force participation and skills recognition;
- (af) encourage, in the EU, the right to asylum, and the recognition, protection, support and integration of women who are victims of violence, whatever the form;
- (ag) enhance the EU's response, resources and toolkit, both internally and externally, regarding online and offline gender-based violence, including domestic, sexual, physical, psychological, verbal and economic violence, harassment at work, as well as violence in situations of conflict and war, trafficking, early and forced marriages and sexual and reproductive exploitation, noting that this should include support for the establishment of help centres for women victims of violence in non-EU countries, particularly in disadvantaged areas, similar to anti-violence centres, with a dual objective, namely: assisting in the recognition of situations of violence and providing both legal and practical protection and support for women who decide to report and exit violence;
- (ah) advocate for a consent-based definition of rape as a universal standard across all regions, aiming to enhance legal protections and ensure that sexual violence is defined by the absence of consent, rather than solely by the use of force;
- (ai) highlight the major impact of online gender-based violence on women's and girls' personal and professional lives, and on their mental and physical health;
- (aj) underline the importance of enforcing international humanitarian law to safeguard

the rights of women and girls in conflict; ensure that external agreements, including those related to border control and cooperation with non-EU countries, prioritise the safety of women and girls, stressing that the EU must ensure that partner countries uphold high human rights standards, particularly in preventing gender-based violence including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation;

- (ak) pay particular attention to the condition of Syrian women and children, including those from Christian minorities, who are more likely to be the particular target of an Islamist regime, as already seen in several Middle Eastern countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq;
- (al) promote the prevention of gender-based violence in sports by establishing a system to monitor and prevent such violence within sports institutions, requiring organisations to adopt preventive policies and measures, along with a secure and protected reporting mechanism;
- (am) remove the legal, financial, social and practical barriers and restrictions on access to safe and legal abortion worldwide; advocate firmly for the defence of sexual and reproductive health and rights as fundamental rights and fight against anti-choice networks; ensure that women and girls in all their diversity have information and access to affordable health services, including for sexual and reproductive health and rights, in line with international human rights and public health standards, including comprehensive age-appropriate and scientifically accurate sexuality and relationship education, access to contraception and emergency contraception, safe and legal abortion, respectful maternal healthcare and care-based health services; ensure that women are protected from forced pregnancies and sex-selective or forced abortions, particularly in the context of ethnic cleansing practices, and that in no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning, as mentioned in the Beijing Declaration; emphasise the importance of access to mental health services tailored to the specific needs of women and girls;
- (an) promote dignified and human rights-respectful conditions for incarcerated women who are also mothers, with special attention to the needs of mothers with young children; support access to healthcare, psychological care and rehabilitation programmes, ensuring adequate spaces to maintain the bond with their children;
- (ao) take note of and implement the recommendations of the European Parliament's resolution of 11 April 2024 on including the right to abortion in the EU Fundamental Rights Charter;
- (ap) commit to increase efforts to address gender issues in the context of the green and energy transition, recognising that the climate crisis is not gender-neutral; acknowledge the intersectional and disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, particularly in developing countries, as well as in the regions and rural areas most affected by these changes; advocate for the inclusion of women in environmental decision-making processes to build resilience and gender-responsive strategies;
- (aq) advocate for and strengthen civil society organisations working to advance women's and girls' rights and gender equality in all circumstances including

disability, violence, discrimination in the workplace or motherhood; advocate for the provision of safe spaces and shelters for women and girls suffering violence or threats; ensure the protection of human rights defenders, and their participation in the relevant forums;

- (ar) work to ensure that grassroots organisations and women's and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders, especially small organisations, are supported through the provision of adequate funding and the removal of restrictions that impede their ability to operate; provide targeted measures and capacity-building support to grassroots women's organisations to amplify their impact at the local and international levels; actively work against initiatives aimed at diminishing the civic space globally;
- (as) establish a Council Configuration on Gender Equality and Equality, to create a formal forum for the ministers responsible for the matters of equality to foster cooperation, coordinate policies and exchange best practices among Member States;

2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, and for information, to the Commission.