



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2020)0039

The EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

European Parliament resolution of 13 February 2020 on the EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2019/2967(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) and its priority theme of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,
- having regard to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, the Declaration and Platform for Action for the empowerment of women adopted in Beijing and the subsequent outcome documents of the UN Beijing +5, +10, +15 and +20 special sessions on new actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted on 9 June 2000, 11 March 2005, 2 March 2010 and 9 March 2015, respectively,
- having regard to the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDGs 3 and 5,
- having regard to the Paris Agreement of 12 December 2015,
- having regard to the 2019 report from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) entitled ‘Beijing +25 – The 5th Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States’,
- having regard to the Economic Commission for Europe resolution ECE/AC.28/2019/3 (Beijing+25 Regional Review Meeting),
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP II), adopted by the Council on 26 October 2015, and to the Annual Implementation report 2018 thereof, published on 11 September 2019 by the Commission and the High Representative,
- having regard to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative aiming at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls,

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 10 December 2018 on ‘Women, Peace and Security’,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions of 9-10 December 2019 on ‘Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward’,
 - having regard to the Presidency conclusions of 6 December 2018 on ‘Gender Equality, Youth and Digitalisation’,
 - having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 3 October 2017 on women’s economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the EU²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2019 on gender equality and taxation policies in the EU³,
 - having regard its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the EU’s accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence⁴,
 - having regard to Article 157(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the question to the Council on the EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (O-000006/2020 – B9-0005/2020),
 - having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU, enshrined in the Treaty of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and, gender mainstreaming is therefore an important tool in the integration of this principle in all EU policies, measures and actions, including in its external dimension;
- B. whereas women’s rights and gender equality are not only fundamental human rights, which should be defended by women and men equally, but are also preconditions for advancing social and economic development and reducing poverty and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world;
- C. whereas although the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) was established 25 years ago, many of the challenges identified in 1995 remain relevant today (such as the gender pay and pension gaps, low employment rates among women, underrepresentation in decision making, unequal distribution of unpaid work and gender-based violence among many others): whereas CSW64 will focus on reviewing and appraising the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the BPfA, the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and the full realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- D. whereas SDG5 aims at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls

¹ OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 9.

² OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 6.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0014.

⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0080.

worldwide; whereas SDG5 is a stand-alone goal, meaning that it has to be mainstreamed into the whole 2030 Agenda for the realisation of all SDGs; whereas empowering women means providing them with the necessary tools to become economically independent, be represented equally across society, play an equal role in all spheres of life, and gain more power in public life and control over all decisions that have an impact on their lives;

- E. whereas ‘Action Coalitions’ are global, innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that will mobilise governments, civil society, international organisations and the private sector; whereas the Action Coalition themes for Generation Equality are gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), feminist action for climate justice, technology and innovation for gender equality, feminist movements and leadership, which are selected based on human rights principles, and through a data-driven process of consultation with international feminist groups, grassroots activists’ organisations, governments and other partners; whereas the Action Coalitions reflect one of the objectives of the Generation Equality Forum, which is to achieve tangible results on gender equality during the UN Decade of Action (2020-2030) in order to deliver the SDGs; whereas each Action Coalition will launch a targeted set of concrete, ambitious and immediate actions over the 2020-2025 period in order to achieve tangible impact on gender equality and girls’ and women’s human rights;
- F. whereas the EU is a global international leader as it is the world’s largest development aid donor and, together with its Member States, provides more than half of the official development assistance (ODA) globally, and has been a major supporter of Agenda 2030 and is committed to the implementation thereof; whereas the European Consensus on Development includes gender equality and women’s and girls’ human rights, in addition to their empowerment and protection, as a core principle and priority in all areas of EU external action;
- G. whereas an organised, worrying backlash against women’s and LGBTIQ+ rights is being observed worldwide; whereas this backlash is also visible in the Member States where anti-gender movements try to limit sexual and reproductive health and rights, ban sexuality education and gender studies and promote smear campaigns against the Istanbul Convention; whereas this regression in women’s rights and gender equality must be equated with attacks against democracy itself;
- H. whereas the gender pay and pension gaps have been reduced in the EU since 2013, but still remain high (around 16 % and 37 %, respectively); whereas the gender employment gap remains stagnant at 11,5 percentage points; whereas women are still almost four times more likely to be in part-time employment than men, a figure that has remained practically unchanged since 2013;
- I. whereas women in Europe and throughout the world still bear more of the responsibility for caring for children and older relatives than men; whereas, by way of example, women in the EU are estimated to undertake an average of about 13 hours more unpaid work per week than men; whereas, despite some progress, the Barcelona objectives for providing formal childcare have not yet been fully met in some Member States and nearly a third of households in the EU still find it difficult to afford childcare; whereas there are significant gaps in the availability of formal long-term care services for older people and people with disabilities, as well as significant differences in Member States’ spending on these services;

- J. while the proportion of women in decision-making roles has, for the most part, increased since 2013, progress has typically been slow and inconsistent; whereas the extent of women's under-representation varies across and within sectors and Member States; whereas particularly poor levels of representation of women (around 20 % or less) are seen in many economic and business decision-making positions, in sport, in the diplomatic sector and in the Court of Justice of the European Union;
- K. whereas almost one in three single women and men are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with women making up the vast majority (87 %) of single parents; whereas around one in two people from a non-EU migrant background and almost a third of women with disabilities are at a risk of poverty and social exclusion; whereas four out of five members of the Roma community have incomes below the poverty threshold in their country of residence and fewer than one in five Roma women (aged 16 and over) are in employment;
- L. whereas, pursuant to the Istanbul Convention, violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women; whereas gender-based violence continues to be a daily reality for millions of women and girls; whereas as many as one in two women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment and one in three have been affected by physical and/or sexual violence; whereas women and girls account for more than two thirds of victims of trafficking in human beings; whereas the exposure of certain groups of women to intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination further increases their exposure to different forms of gender-based violence; whereas combatting discrimination in laws and practices, and tackling discriminatory attitudes and norms in areas such as child marriage and other customary practices strengthens women's rights and empowerment; whereas the denial of sexual and reproductive health and rights services is a form of violence against women;
- M. whereas the emergence of cyber violence (including online hate speech, cyber stalking, bullying or harassment, and non-consensual sharing of explicit images) is of increasing concern, as such violence can silence women and discourage them from taking a prominent role in public life; whereas women in public functions, such as politicians, journalists and those fighting for women's and minority rights, are increasingly becoming victims of sexist cyber harassment; whereas women are also subject to gender-based harassment and bullying in the workplace, which has been visibly demonstrated and acknowledged by the recent global #MeToo movement;
- N. whereas access to sexual and reproductive health and rights varies greatly around the world, also within and between the Member States; whereas denial of access or restricted access is particularly harmful to those in the most vulnerable situations; whereas every country analysed by the 2019 Contraception Atlas needs to do more to improve access to information and contraceptive supplies so that people have a choice over their reproductive lives;
- O. whereas women are agents of positive change and contribute to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction;
- P. whereas gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the efficient management of climate challenges in order to achieve a fair and just transition that leaves no one behind; whereas all climate action must include a gender and an intersectional perspective; whereas women need to play stronger roles in the climate change space as leaders, professionals and technical agents for change;

- Q. whereas women's economic empowerment is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth; stresses the importance of supporting female entrepreneurship, women's role in trade policies and agreements, and women's inclusion in emerging economic fields such as ICT, STEM, the digital sector, artificial intelligence and the green economy, as levers for sustainable growth and women's financial independence;
1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:

General remarks

- a. To reconfirm its unwavering commitment to the BPfA and subsequent review conferences and to the range of actions for gender equality outlined therein; reiterates that working to achieve women's rights and gender equality demands a coordinated and multisector approach that involves all stakeholders addressing the persistent multiple forms of discrimination, prevailing gender stereotypes and lack of equality between genders;
- b. To underline the importance of a positive outcome at the CSW64, to be held from 9 to 20 March 2020, including through the adoption of a set of forward-looking ambitious commitments outlined in the political declaration;
- c. To ensure that the EU has a unified position and takes strong action to univocally denounce the backlash against gender equality and measures undermining women's rights, autonomy and emancipation in every field; to acknowledge that a significant way to combat this backlash is to proactively advance rights-based gender equality and to mainstream gender in all areas;
- d. To pledge its strong support for the work of UN Women, which is a central actor in the UN system for advancing women's rights and bringing together all relevant stakeholders in order to generate policy change and coordinate actions; to call on all UN member states, as well as for the EU, to ensure adequate funding for UN Women;
- e. to strongly engage in the Action Coalitions, together with the Commission, and highlight the importance of Beijing+25 and the Generation Equality Forum; to acknowledge its commitment to support annual tracking and reporting as part of the Action Coalition Progress Report;
- f. To ensure the full involvement of Parliament and its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the decision-making process regarding the EU's position at CSW64;

The EU as a global actor

- g. To ensure coherence and complementarity among all existing EU external instruments and policies as regards gender mainstreaming, including EU trade policy, the new Consensus on Development, the EU resource package on gender mainstreaming in development cooperation, and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy;
- h. To conduct a values-based EU trade policy, which includes ensuring a high level of protection of labour and environmental rights as well as the respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality; to recall that

all EU trade and investment agreements must be gender mainstreamed and include an ambitious and enforceable chapter on trade and sustainable development (TSD); to welcome the Commission's commitment to ensure, for the first time for the EU, the inclusion of a specific gender chapter in the modernised Association Agreement between Chile and the EU and to promote and support the inclusion of such chapters in all further EU trade and investment agreements, building on existing international examples; to acknowledge that trading commitments in EU agreements should never overrule human rights, women's rights or environmental protection, and should take into account the local, social and economic environment;

- i. To take a strong leadership role in achieving girls' and women's rights and gender equality in its external action, especially in its security, foreign, development and cooperation policy and to renew the Gender Action Plan for external relations after 2020 and make it even more ambitious; to heed Parliament's call for the EU to continue supporting the Spotlight Initiative, a partnership between the EU and the UN to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030;
- j. To double its efforts in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and all SDGs, in particular SDG3 and SDG5, to ensure that no woman or girl is subject to discrimination, violence or exclusion, and has access to health, food, education and job opportunities;
- k. To do its utmost to eliminate the use of rape as a weapon of war and oppression and for both the EU and its Member States to bring pressure to bear on third-country governments and all relevant stakeholders in regions where such gender-based violence takes place, in order to bring the practice to an end, bring perpetrators to justice and work with survivors, affected women and communities to help them heal and recover;
- l. To encourage greater participation of women in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and mediation processes and on EU military and civil crisis management missions, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security, with a particular focus on conflict-related sexual violence; to recall that gender-sensitive conflict analysis, in consultation with community-based actors and women's organisations, may facilitate a better understanding of the role of women in conflict;
- m. To include a gender-equality perspective in the EU and Member States' humanitarian aid response, and a perspective on sexual and reproductive health and rights, as access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is a basic need for people in humanitarian settings;
- n. To strongly condemn the 'global gag' rule, which prohibits international organisations from receiving US family planning funding if they provide, counsel for, refer to or lobby for abortion services; to consider this rule as a direct attack on, and a setback for, gains made for women's and girls' rights; to call, as a matter of urgency, for the EU and its Member States to counter the impact of the gag rule by significantly supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights funding and to fill the financing gap;
- o. To take into account that in developing countries women and girls are

disproportionately affected by the negative impacts of climate change, which increases existing inequalities and threatens women's and girls' health, safety, and economic well-being; to recall that climate action is most effective when women and girls play an active role, as they are powerful agents of change;

Women's economic and political empowerment

- p. To step up efforts for greater inclusion of women in the labour market and improve support for female entrepreneurship given that they are key factors behind achieving long-term inclusive economic growth, combatting inequalities and encouraging women's financial independence; to take measures to address women's unemployment, particularly their long-term unemployment;
- q. To strengthen both legislative and non-legislative efforts to definitively close the gender pay and pension gaps and to strongly enforce the equal pay principle, by ensuring that wages for part-time workers are in line with the full-time equivalent and by adopting legislation to increase pay transparency and improve legal clarity to detect gender bias and discrimination in pay structures, fight occupational vertical and horizontal segregation and combat employers' prejudices in hiring and in taking decisions on promotion; to promote new investment in care infrastructure, education and health care and in the public provision of accessible, affordable and quality care services throughout the life cycle, including care for children, dependents and older persons, and to ensure strong protection and labour rights for pregnant women during and after their pregnancies;
- r. To support policies that favour the equal sharing of domestic and care responsibilities between women and men and combat gender norms and unequal gender expectations regarding care by implementing appropriate policies that involve men in the necessary change;
- s. To recognise the differential impacts of taxation on women and on different types of households (dual-earner households, female and male single-earner households, etc.) and ensure that taxation systems promote and protect gender equality and tax fairness for women by eliminating tax-related gender biases and incentives that perpetuate unequal gender roles;
- t. To step up the work to combat horizontal and vertical labour market segmentation and the feminisation of precarious work, and to ensure adequate provision for women facing multiple forms of discrimination; to ensure that adequate provision is made for older women, including measures such as credits for care periods, adequate minimum pensions, survivors' benefits and family leave entitlements for men in order to prevent the feminisation of poverty;
- u. To emphasise the right of women domestic workers, including migrant and refugee workers, to decent working conditions and equal social protection; to ensure the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers;
- v. To recognise the importance of strengthening policies and measures promoting education for girls, and the implications thereof in terms of their economic empowerment; to recall that specific focus is needed to ensure girls' and women's access to all levels of education globally; to support, in this regard, gender-

sensitive career counselling and awareness-raising initiatives to promote greater participation of women in STEM careers and men in the health, welfare and education sectors; to emphasise the need for women's inclusion and representation in emerging economic fields that are important for sustainable development, including the ICT, digital and artificial intelligence sectors;

- w. To ensure the full integration of women on an equal footing with men at all levels and in all areas and to actively promote gender-balanced representation and equal representation of all women's concerns and interests at all levels of decision-making; to lead by example and unblock the Women on Boards Directive in the European Council and recommends the introduction of gender-balanced requirements in electoral laws;

Eradicating gender-based violence and ensuring women's fundamental rights

- x. To condemn all forms of gender-based violence and the fact that women and girls continue to be exposed to psychological, physical, sexual and economic violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, cyber violence, stalking, rape, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), crimes committed in the name of so-called 'honour', forced abortion, forced sterilisation, sexual exploitation and human trafficking and other forms of violence that constitute a serious violation of their human rights and dignity; to take note of Parliament's serious concern about the phenomenon of femicide, which is the most extreme form of violence against women;
- y. To urgently conclude the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention on the basis of a broad accession without any limitations, and to advocate its ratification by all the Member States; to ensure proper implementation and enforcement of the Convention, and to allocate adequate financial and human resources to prevent and combat violence against women and gender-based violence, as well as to the protection of victims; to take the recommendations by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) into account and to improve legislation to bring it more into line with the Istanbul Convention's provisions; to request the Commission to submit a legal act on the prevention and suppression of all forms of violence against women and girls and of gender-based violence;
- z. To ratify ILO Convention 190 on eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work, and take affirmative action to implement the Council of Europe's first-ever recommendation on preventing and combating sexism, which proposes concrete ways for different actors to identify and address it;
- aa. To ensure that all Member States are efficiently transposing and implementing Directive 2011/36/EU of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims¹;
- ab. To guarantee universal respect for, and access to, sexual and reproductive health and rights as agreed in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the BPfA and the outcome documents of the review conferences thereof acknowledging that they contribute to the achievement

¹ OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

of all health-related SDGs such as prenatal care and measures to avoid high-risk births and reduce infant and child mortality; to acknowledge that access to family planning, maternal health services and safe and legal abortion services are important elements for saving women's lives;

- ac. To provide evidenced-based age-sensitive, comprehensive sexuality and relationship education to girls and boys in school settings in order to enable children and young people to develop the accurate knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to form safe, healthy, and respectful relationships; to recall that such education should be grounded in respect for human rights and gender equality and diversity; to acknowledge that such education should include topics such as sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression, gender norms, relationships and affirmative consent, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices such as grooming and female genital mutilation, prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV, and unintended pregnancy, and provide information about access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including family planning, contraceptive methods and safe and legal abortion;

Gender-responsive and inclusive policies and institutions

- ad. To ensure the implementation of systematic gender mainstreaming as a key strategy to support the realisation of gender equality in practice; to acknowledge that gender mainstreaming must be undertaken in all policy areas and acknowledge the special importance of performing gender impact assessments;
- ae. To improve the monitoring and the collection of comparable, anonymised age- and gender-disaggregated data in order to improve the qualitative analysis of women's situations and to adopt as a consequence better informed gender policies; to call for the EU and the Member States to invest more in collecting disaggregated data and to help strengthen the national statistical capacities and mechanisms in partner countries;
- af. To introduce gender mainstreaming in EU environmental and climate change policies and to guarantee financial and institutional support, gender expertise and strong policy measures, and to establish focal points on gender and climate change across government institutions; to acknowledge that meaningful and equal participation of women in decision-making bodies and national- and local-level climate policy and action is vital for achieving long-term climate goals, and to recognise and support women's and girls' roles as agents for change;
- ag. To adopt and implement gender-responsive budgeting, practices and roadmaps to ensure adequate funding earmarked for the promotion of gender equality; to establish reliable, systematic and adequate funding from national budgets to implement international and national commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment;
- ah. To implement a gender perspective within EU migration policy that guarantees the rights of women and girl refugees, to immediately introduce gender sensitive asylum and migration procedures and to step up work in order to ensure proper identification and protection of potential trafficking victims at reception centres across the EU;

- ai. To emphasise the need to protect and promote the rights of groups experiencing multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, including women with disabilities, black women and women of colour, migrant and ethnic-minority women, older women, women in rural and depopulated areas, single mothers and LGBTIQ+ people and to work to promote the concept of combatting multiple discrimination and institutionalise intersectional analysis throughout all UN bodies, the EU and in the respective Member States;
 - aj. To ensure that grassroots organisations for women's rights and women's and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders are supported through the provision of adequate funding and the removal of restrictions that impede their ability to operate and to hold power to account; to promote the broad and meaningful participation of civil society, women's organisations and marginalised groups in decision- and policy-making at all levels; to encourage the participation of young women and youth in particular;
 - ak. To adopt the proposal for the Anti-Discrimination Directive aimed at implementing, in a gender-sensitive way, the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
2. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.