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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P9\_TA(2021)0276**

#### **The gender dimension in Cohesion Policy**

##### **European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2021 on the gender dimension in cohesion policy (2020/2040(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, and Articles 6 and 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the “Charter”),
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, to principles 2, 3 and 9 thereof,
- having regard to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, Goal 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and improve living conditions for women by 2030<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the EU directives from 1975 onwards on various aspects of equal treatment for women and men (Directive 79/7/EEC<sup>4</sup>, Directive 86/613/EEC<sup>5</sup>, Directive

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_egalite\\_en.pdf](https://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (OJ L 6, 10.1.1979, p. 24).

<sup>5</sup> Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood (OJ L 359, 19.12.1986, p. 56).

92/85/EEC<sup>1</sup>, Directive 2004/113/EC<sup>2</sup>, Directive 2006/54/EC<sup>3</sup>, Directive 2010/18/EU<sup>4</sup> and Directive 2010/41/EU<sup>5</sup> ),

- having regard to its resolution of 24 May 2012 with recommendations to the Commission on application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value<sup>6</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU<sup>7</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on women’s careers in science and universities, and glass ceilings encountered<sup>8</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on external factors that represent hurdles to European female entrepreneurship<sup>9</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘Gender in regional cohesion policy’ from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), published on 25 January 2017<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2017 on promoting gender equality in mental health and clinical research<sup>12</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37).

<sup>3</sup> Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23).

<sup>4</sup> Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC (OJ L 68, 18.3.2010, p. 13).

<sup>5</sup> Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC (OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 264 E, 13.9.2013, p. 75.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> OJ C 11, 12.1.2018, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> OJ C 66, 21.2.2018, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-regional-cohesion-policy>

<sup>12</sup> OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 99.

- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2014-2015<sup>1</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on women and their roles in rural areas<sup>2</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 June 2017 on the need for an EU strategy to end and prevent the gender pension gap<sup>3</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 October 2017 on women’s economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the EU<sup>4</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2018 on women, gender equality and climate justice<sup>5</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements<sup>6</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on empowering women and girls through the digital sector<sup>7</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2018 on care services in the EU for improved gender equality<sup>8</sup> ,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘Gender budgeting – Mainstreaming gender into the EU budget and macroeconomic policy framework’ from the EIGE, published on 10 April 2019<sup>9</sup> ,
- having regard to the opinion of the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of 19 December 2018 entitled ‘The future of gender equality strategy after 2019: the battles that we win never stay won’<sup>10</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2019 on gender equality and taxation policies in the EU<sup>11</sup> ,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 263, 25.7.2018, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 331, 18.9.2018, p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 162, 10.5.2019, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 80.

<sup>9</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-budgeting-mainstreaming-gender-eu-budget-and-macroeconomic-policy-framework>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid\\_development\\_cooperation\\_fundamental\\_rights/opinion\\_on\\_gender\\_equality\\_policy\\_post\\_2019\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/aid_development_cooperation_fundamental_rights/opinion_on_gender_equality_policy_post_2019_2018_en.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> OJ C 411, 27.11.2020, p. 38.

- having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on experiencing a backlash in women’s rights and gender equality in the EU<sup>1</sup> ,
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document of 6 March 2019 entitled ‘2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU’ (SWD(2019)0101)<sup>2</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the EU’s accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence<sup>3</sup> ,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 10 December 2019 on ‘Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward’<sup>4</sup> ,
- having regard to the report entitled ‘The Missing Entrepreneurs 2019: Policies for Inclusive Entrepreneurship’, published by the OECD on 10 December 2019<sup>5</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2019 on public discrimination and hate speech against LGBTI people, including LGBTI free zones<sup>6</sup> ,
- having regard to the study entitled ‘Gender Dimension of the EU Cohesion Policy’ published by its Directorate-General for Internal Policies on 19 February 2019<sup>7</sup> ,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 January 2020 on the gender pay gap<sup>8</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2020 on the EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women<sup>9</sup>,
- 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 the Commission factsheet of 17 June 2020 entitled ‘Coronavirus Pandemic – Impact on Gender Equality’<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to the Council of Europe communication of 29 May 2020 entitled ‘National minorities and COVID-19: inequality deepened, vulnerability exacerbated’,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 449, 23.12.2020, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7263-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0080.

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14254-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/industry/the-missing-entrepreneurs-43c2f41c-en.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2019)0101.

<sup>7</sup> Study/In-depth analysis – ‘Gender Dimension of the EU Cohesion Policy’, European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B – Structural and Cohesion Policies, 19 February 2019, available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/629185/IPOL\\_STU\(2019\)629185\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2019/629185/IPOL_STU(2019)629185_EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0025.

<sup>9</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0039.

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research\\_and\\_innovation/research\\_by\\_area/documents/ec\\_rtd\\_covid19-gender-equality\\_factsheet.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/research_by_area/documents/ec_rtd_covid19-gender-equality_factsheet.pdf)

- having regard to the Commission Discussion Paper 129 of 24 July 2020 entitled ‘Gender Smart Financing – Investing In & With Women: Opportunities for Europe’<sup>1</sup> ,
  - having regard to the Commission communication of 18 September 2020 entitled ‘A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0565),
  - having regard to the Gender Equality Index 2020 from the EIGE, published on 16 October 2020<sup>2</sup> ,
  - having regard to the Commission communication of 12 November 2020 entitled ‘Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0698),
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A9-0154/2021),
- A. whereas the principle of equality between women and men is a core value of the EU, enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter; whereas gender mainstreaming should therefore be implemented and integrated as a horizontal principle in all EU activities, measures, actions, programmes and EU-funded projects and policies, including Cohesion Policy; whereas greater efforts are needed to address the multiple forms of discrimination and inequality that women face; whereas Article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation<sup>3</sup> for 2014-2020 establishes that equality between men and women and the integration of a gender perspective must be taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including in relation to monitoring, reporting and evaluation; whereas women and men at the forefront of the fight for equality have shown commitment, courage and leadership in promoting equal opportunities across the world, especially where such inequalities persist, where women are persecuted and their rights are violated simply because they are women; whereas as European citizens, we should be proud of having achieved rights and obligations, freedoms and opportunities for men and women, and whereas today women lead some of the most important institutions and hold some of the most prominent political posts in Europe; whereas these positive examples help in starting to address existing stereotypes and to promote role models;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/gender-smart-financing-investing-and-women-opportunities-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/gender-smart-financing-investing-and-women-opportunities-europe_en)

<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2020-digitalisation-and-future-work>

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

- B. whereas cohesion policy addresses disparities between various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions in order to promote its overall harmonious development with a view to achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion, of which the achievement of gender equality is an essential part; whereas cohesion policy has proven its relevance by achieving significant progress towards equality between citizens and territorial balance;
- C. whereas cohesion policy is as an important tool not only to actively and effectively support the achievement of equality between citizens, sustainable development and economic and social cohesion, but also to reduce disparities affecting groups still suffering from discrimination, including that linked to their sexual orientation; whereas the promotion of gender equality is a horizontal objective for all cohesion policy funds; whereas the Structural Funds are a very important resource to support the Member States to achieve progress in the field of gender equality;
- D. whereas achieving gender equality, equality between men and women, regions or generations, among other things, is key to reducing local and regional, and economic and social disparities, as well as for ensuring the long-term competitiveness and fair, inclusive and sustainable development of the EU, its Member States and its regions; whereas there has been progress in recent decades in the area of equality between men and women, and gender equality in the EU has improved horizontally in many dimensions; whereas the under-representation of women in the labour market and the available indicators still show vertical and horizontal segmentation in the labour market, and in the socio-economic and political spheres; whereas the Treaty of Rome already included the principle of equal pay for equal work, and whereas cohesion policy can contribute to creating the conditions underpinning economic and social development, which are also beneficial in terms of the further reduction of this gap and the inclusion of women in the labour market; whereas according to the EIGE, the effective promotion of gender equality would have a strong, positive social and economic impact, including an increase in EU GDP per capita, millions of additional jobs and an increase in Member States' GDP;
- E. whereas the European Court of Auditors is currently assessing gender mainstreaming in the European budget; whereas this audit report, due to be published in the first quarter of 2021, will give useful insights into how to implement the gender dimension in the cohesion policy actions under the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021–2027;
- F. whereas, during the programming period 2014–2020, the main critical elements to promote gender equality through cohesion policy have been, among other things, the gap between formal statements in Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes (declaring the promotion of principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination) and their actual implementation, as well as the rather weak political commitment in this domain; whereas the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes declare that they observe and promote the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination; whereas greater efforts are still needed as regards the participation of women in all stages of the cohesion policy cycle, especially in the development of programmes and decision-making processes, as well as in the implementation of the selected projects; whereas, during the programming period 2014–2020, gender-related issues have been mainly tackled through the European Social Fund (ESF) Operational Programmes; whereas, during the same period, the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) has contributed to the promotion of gender equality in a very limited manner;

- G. whereas gender-disaggregated data based on reliable and verified sources and gender-relevant indicators are essential in order to allow particular sectors or regions to effectively use EU support, based on the local reality of inequalities, in order to improve the decision-making process and to assess the outcome of cohesion policy's direct and indirect actions aimed at promoting the identification of possible inequalities or injustices on which to act and developing effective policies to uphold equal rights and freedoms among citizens;
- H. whereas policy coherence is lacking in the area of gender equality, and whereas a unified system facilitating an identical understanding and implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EU institutions does not yet exist;
- I. whereas the full economic, employment and social consequences of the pandemic are still unknown; whereas preliminary studies suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities between men and women, especially in terms of an increase in unpaid care work and work-life imbalance, as well as domestic violence, and has a disproportionate impact on girls and women, especially those from marginalised groups; whereas this is also because women often make up the majority in the sectors exposed to the pandemic, such as education and health; whereas cohesion policy and, more specifically, the upcoming ESF Plus, should take this into account;
- J. whereas the EU Recovery Fund supports sectors deeply affected by the crisis; whereas the impact on European society as a whole will therefore have long-term effects on the education, employability and future of all citizens, and the rapid response of the European institutions and their willingness to support European society should be commended; whereas the overarching priorities of the EU Recovery Fund focus on sectors with a high share of male employment and therefore could potentially risk increasing inequalities between men and women in employment;
- K. whereas women and men do not have the same resources, needs and preferences; whereas many policies often take mainly the male perspective into account; whereas women and men therefore experience services and infrastructures differently and their priorities are often not the same in terms of basic services;
- L. whereas small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of regional economies; whereas the promotion of equality, work-life balance, inclusive hiring and equal pay will enable gender equality in SMEs;
- M. whereas many investments affect women and men differently, making it necessary to apply a gender equality perspective to investments;

***Role of cohesion policy in promoting gender equality to the benefit of socio-economic growth and sustainable development***

1. Stresses the importance of cohesion policy in promoting equality between people and between regions, including gender equality, and in implementing the EU Gender Equality Strategy, including its gender-related health priorities such as sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); recalls that all policy goals need appropriate, sufficient and sustainable resources dedicated to their implementation; recommends that the Member States take gender equality measures into account when developing and approving programmes;

2. Strongly believes that gender equality is still mainly addressed in a general manner and limited to the policy domains of the ESF, as well as in the context analysis and programming phase, while more attention is needed in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases on a regular basis; recalls that it is necessary for each programming phase to identify the priority areas that contribute to gender equality and sustainable development;
3. Strongly believes that EU rules should be written in a clear and explicit way that facilitates their application for the benefit of citizens, including with regard to gender equality and equality between men and women; underlines that the lack of suitable resources is a major cause of discrimination;
4. Stresses the need for a strong political commitment to defend gender equality in law for the entire population and for fair, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and territorial development; points out that in order to achieve gender equality, it is essential to ensure a good work-life balance which reduces the pressure on women during family-related leave; stresses, therefore, the necessity of a stronger work-life balance strategy for the EU as a way to promote gender equality;
5. Emphasises the importance of a coordinated governance framework on gender equality, national guidelines and technical support for gender impact monitoring, available in the official EU languages, as well as stronger scrutiny at EU level after the adoption of programmes; calls, furthermore, for account to be taken of the connection with the national plans resulting from the recovery plan for the development of the economic and social development objectives of these programmes;
6. Stresses the need for a gender equality strategy with clear objectives and targets at national and regional level, and for awareness-raising programmes on the benefits of pursuing gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men for socio-economic growth and sustainable development at national and regional level;
7. Considers it necessary to boost skills and further develop the training and capacity-building of Managing Authorities and implementing partners as regards the gender dimension of the Structural Funds, as well as to meet the need for coordinated monitoring strategies, unified methodology and evaluation systems as regards managing and disaggregating useful data aimed at identifying possible inequalities between citizens; stresses the importance of evaluating the training output to assess its effectiveness in improving the implementation of gender mainstreaming;
8. Emphasises the importance of respecting the partnership principle in national programming under cohesion policy; calls on the Member States to coordinate closely with local and regional authorities, social and economic partners, civil society and academia in the framework of the partnership principle in a cross-cutting manner and when drafting the partnership agreement in order to take into account challenges related to effective equality policies at local and regional level, and encourages the Member States to carry out campaigns to promote equality policies, in particular in the fields of the reconciliation of work and private life, the elimination of gender stereotypes in career choices and in improving women's economic independence;
9. Considers that programme stakeholders and monitoring committees should be equipped with clearer indicators of programme efficiency and effectiveness when it comes to the



implementation of a gender perspective in concrete projects, especially in ERDF interventions; considers that the guidelines, training programmes and concrete examples of good practice to address this issue remain limited in number; underlines, in this regard, the potential of the ERDF/Cohesion Fund to bridge the gap women are still facing, with particular reference to female entrepreneurship and the digital sector, as women represent only 34,4 % of the self-employed and 30 % of start-up entrepreneurs in the European Union; urges the Council to reach an agreement on the proposal for a directive on improving gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures (the Women on Boards Directive), as it is a very important tool for achieving a greater gender balance in economic decision-making at the highest level; calls for part of the cohesion policy funds to be devoted to supporting women in poverty, women at risk of poverty, single mothers, women with disabilities and women who are victims of violence; calls on the Member States and their respective authorities to deliver such programmes;

10. Stresses that all programmes implemented under cohesion policy should ensure gender equality throughout their preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as equal opportunities for all, including through positive action where necessary and applicable, without discrimination based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; underlines that the actions aimed at bridging the gender gap under cohesion policy should also adopt an intersectional approach; is of the opinion that the composition of expert groups in the different phases of the policy cycle should be gender balanced;
11. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and their respective authorities to follow the principles of the rule of law, including the principle of non-discrimination, and respect for fundamental rights when it comes to decisions on funding programmes or regions, followed by monitoring, investigation and appropriate actions in cases of breaches of these principles, while always ensuring the protection of final beneficiaries; believes that the beneficiaries of cohesion policy should not adopt any discriminatory policy, in particular against those groups that still suffer from discrimination, such as the LGBTI community; encourages the rejection of applications from potential beneficiaries, including from regional or local authorities, which have adopted discriminatory policies against members of the LGBTI community such as the declaration of 'LGBTI-free' zones;
12. Points out the need to improve synergies between cohesion, recovery funds and other existing programmes, such as programmes with the aim of improving working conditions for women, including by combating the gender pay gap and precarious employment, investing in care facilities, combating and preventing gender-based violence, and ensuring access to SRHR services among others;
13. Recognises the burden placed on women as principal caregivers in formal and informal settings, as well as its social value, especially during the COVID-19 crisis; acknowledges that 80 % of all care across the EU is provided by often unpaid informal carers, 75 % of whom are women; therefore points out the crucial role of cohesion policy in securing adequate investments in care services; calls on the Member States to prioritise the available funds within cohesion policy for the provision of care to meet not only the growing demand for care infrastructure, but also to effectively address gender gaps in employment, the resulting pay and pension gaps, labour market segregation and, as a result, to improve working conditions and ensure the same pay for

the same work, to fight informal employment and precariousness and to create new high-quality jobs in this sector, as well as to support a transition towards a better care economy that is accessible for all; requests that the Commission therefore propose a Care Deal for Europe aimed at supporting such a transition; stresses in addition the necessity of investment in the socio-economic protection of women, owing to the fact they assume the responsibility for unpaid care work most of the time and often have very little social protection;

14. Underlines that a serious digital gap still needs to be tackled and that greater investment is needed in digitalisation, digital innovation and digital connectivity; stresses that cohesion policy needs to support equal access to training and employment for women and men, to implement positive action in order to bridge the digital gender gap and to support the just, green and digital transitions, while protecting the workers who will be affected by these transitions, for example through increasing the proportion of female graduates in STEM subjects, as well as their involvement in sectors that are crucial for the environmental transition, such as the energy sector; recognises that innovation is a key element of sustainable development and green jobs in the EU and that tailor-made strategies can enable each region to identify and develop its own competitive advantages;
15. Underlines the crucial role of cohesion policy in investing in high-quality public services, including healthcare, and social infrastructure, both for combating various inequalities, especially gender inequality, and for building social resilience and coping with economic, social and health crises; recalls that cohesion policy is aimed at the harmonious development of the regions through the objective of social and economic convergence, thereby contributing to the well-being of citizens; therefore believes that cohesion policy should pay particular attention to women living in areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, such as outermost regions or very low and sparsely populated areas and island, cross-border and mountain regions; stresses that the effective implementation of gender equality policies helps to reverse depopulation trends in converging regions susceptible to that phenomenon;
16. Points out the opportunity of the sustainable integrated urban and territorial development strategies undertaken by local and regional governments in line with the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that all dimensions of sustainable development, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, are addressed when designing policies at local and regional level; stresses the role played by the cities and regions that have long been at the forefront of working towards gender equality, as well as European urban development initiatives, such as the Leipzig Charter; believes that cohesion policy should contribute to reducing widespread urban inequalities by better integrating women in policy planning for regional and urban development in order to design gender-inclusive cities and communities that work for all; underlines that gender-sensitive urban planning can ensure fairer and more equal access to urban goods; stresses further that regions and local governments have a key role to play in the promotion of social inclusion, and that gender-sensitive territorial planning can contribute to making advancements in this process;

### ***Gender equality in post-2020 cohesion policy***

17. Calls for a strong political commitment to gender equality at EU, national and regional level in order to enhance the attention given by national, regional and local stakeholders to gender equality and equality aspects, both from a human rights perspective and as a crucial factor for socio-economic development, and to promote further commitment in this area;
18. Calls for clear and concrete targets and requirements on gender equality objectives and for greater opportunities and equality between men and women to be introduced in all post-2020 programmes, with specific and interdisciplinary measures to be translated into all operations;
19. Strongly supports the *ex ante* requirement of developing a national gender equality strategy with clear objectives and targets to underpin cohesion policy interventions in order to improve its effectiveness and value added in relation to gender equality; calls on Member States to enforce such a strategy, including, where appropriate, through targeted measures, obligations and binding guidelines;
20. Calls on the Member States to utilise cohesion policy funding to further reduce regional economic and social disparities with a particular focus on combating the feminisation of poverty, on unemployment among women and their exclusion from many economic opportunities, on preventing and combating all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination, on promoting and pursuing women's empowerment through improving access to and reintegration into the labour market and on addressing health-related priorities as defined in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, in particular sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as a fundamental human right and an essential aspect of people's well-being, and on the advancement of gender equality; calls, furthermore, for the improvement of synergies between Cohesion and Recovery Funds and other existing programmes with the aim of improving working conditions for women, including by combating the gender pay gap, precarious employment and informal work, investing in care facilities, combating and preventing gender-based violence and ensuring access to SRHR services, among others;
21. Stresses the importance of partnerships with gender equality bodies and strongly supports the involvement of these organisations in all programme phases in order to guarantee a better alignment between the implemented actions and the needs of women and men by consolidating institutional frameworks and strengthening the gender equality coordination and support bodies in all the policy domains;
22. Calls for the introduction of *ex ante* and *ex post* gender impact assessment as part of the Member States' evaluations, in connection with the promotion of gender equality in how the funds are spent and whether compliance with gender equality targets is effectively respected; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that during the mid-term review of the post-2020 cohesion policy, an evaluation on the use of their sources is carried out in order to assess their effectiveness, efficiency, impact and, where applicable, inclusiveness and non-discrimination, including from a gender perspective;
23. Recalls the need to evaluate the Funds on the basis of information collected through specific monitoring requirements; stresses that measurable indicators, where appropriate, should also enable support of gender equality to be monitored;

24. Welcomes the addition of gender equality and mainstreaming as one of the horizontal priorities of the new MFF and as a horizontal principle in the new Common Provisions Regulation; recalls that gender budgeting is the application of gender mainstreaming at all levels of the budgetary process; stresses that the monitoring of the programmes should not only aim to measure the relevant expenditure in all budget lines, but, even more importantly, to assess the outcome of the EU budget in improving gender equality; highlights that any gender impact assessment should be available in the official EU languages; recommends the use of criteria that not only assess the national median wage and the median annual gross income in purchasing power parity, but also non-economic indicators, such as those measuring subjective well-being, the elimination of gender-based violence, civil engagement, work-life balance and social connections; underlines that the assessment of the outcome is only possible if gender-disaggregated data is available;
25. Highlights the gender data gap in the field of cohesion policy and urban planning, which exists in a number of Member States, and calls on the Member States to introduce data collection methods corresponding to sex-disaggregated data so that differences between genders can be properly analysed; stresses that in order to ensure gender mainstreaming, the Commission should implement a gender impact assessment for each policy and legislative proposal in the area of cohesion policy, define gender-responsive indicators, collect gender-disaggregated data and carry out gender-responsive evaluations;
26. Calls on all institutions to provide guidance documents and, on a regular basis, hands-on training at all levels of the administration, so as to disseminate and embed concrete examples of good practices on gender mainstreaming, integration and sound management; stresses, moreover, that at the project selection stage the criteria for gender mainstreaming should be strengthened through higher scoring and requirements for more practical actions; welcomes the role of the EIGE in the promotion of gender equality and in the fight against discrimination based on gender; underlines its positive contribution to gender mainstreaming, including in the domain of cohesion policy; calls for the adequate funding of the EIGE and recommends making use of the existing tools developed by the EIGE such as its toolkit for gender budgeting in all stages of evaluation, implementation and monitoring in the European Structural and Investment Funds;
27. Emphasises the fact that countless women are facing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to spikes in reports of domestic violence; calls on the Council to urgently conclude the EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; calls on the Commission and the Member States to allocate cohesion policy funding and to deliver programmes that are aimed at preventing and combating violence against women and at helping the victims of violence; highlights the disparities in the quantity and quality of services provided for women and children suffering from gender-based violence and the role of cohesion policy in dismantling such inequalities; highlights the necessity for local authorities to involve regional employers and NGOs in their work;
28. Calls on the Commission to include the necessary recommendations on promoting the gender dimension and gender-related issues in its communication on the launch of the new cohesion policy 2021–2027;

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