
MEPs call on the EU to champion women's rights against global backlash

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- Need to resist efforts to roll back existing rights amid pressure from anti-rights movements
 - Combat the feminisation of poverty
 - Health care including safe and legal abortions should be available to everyone
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On Thursday, MEPs finalised their recommendations for the EU's position on the upcoming UN global gathering on women's rights in New York in March 2025.

Ahead of [the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women](#), the European Parliament calls for EU leadership in achieving equal opportunities for women in every area of life, including by implementing [the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) on gender equality. The recommendation was adopted by plenary with 322 votes in favour, 163 against, and 46 abstentions.

Amid a growing transnational backlash against women's rights, MEPs want the EU to confirm its commitment to the Declaration and Platform, which they describe as an "international 'Bill of Rights' for women". They condemn "all attempts to roll back, restrict or remove existing protections for gender equality" in light of increasingly influential anti-rights movements.

MEPs also say the EU must support partner countries in addressing gender discrimination, and to lead by example in promoting equality, ensuring that the rights of women and girls are a core part of the EU's external action.

Equal opportunities through funding, work opportunities and health care

To ensure equal opportunities in all areas of life, MEPs call for gender mainstreaming and

gender budgeting in all relevant EU policy areas and the improved collection of gender-disaggregated equality data, which should also contribute to better policymaking. They also demand the EU addresses the systemic and root causes of women's poverty, with an emphasis on women and girls living in rural areas. MEPs urge the EU to implement equal pay and pensions, call for more female political leadership, and want member states to ensure women and girls can fulfil their potential through education, training and work opportunities. MEPs also want to see more efforts to boost female entrepreneurship and women's economic autonomy.

On health care, MEPs argue that all women should have access to health services, including reproductive health services, contraception, and safe and legal abortion.

Stronger response to gender-based violence

MEPs say greater efforts to combat gender-based violence are needed, be it online, offline, domestic, sexual, physical, psychological or economic. All EU member states should swiftly ratify [the Istanbul Convention](#) on preventing and combating violence against women, including domestic violence, they argue. They also note the major impact of online gender-based violence on women's mental health, and continue to push for a consent-based definition of rape to be promoted as a universal standard across the EU.

Quote

After the vote, rapporteur and Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality [Lina Gálvez](#) (S&D, Spain) said: "At the current rate of progress, it will take 286 years to close the gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory legislation for women globally. The European Parliament wants women's rights to be taken more seriously in all policy areas. This is now more important than ever due to the global backlash against the protection of women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights."

Further information

[Adopted text will be published here \(19.12.2024\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)


[Profile of the rapporteur Lina GÁLVEZ \(S&D, ES\)](#)

[Free multimedia material](#)

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