

Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

State of play

STUDY

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Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

Study

Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union commits the European Union (EU) and its Member States to eliminating inequalities and promoting the principle of equality between women and men in all their actions. As set out in the EU's gender equality strategy 2020-2025, achieving gender equality in the EU is a joint responsibility requiring action by all EU institutions, Member States and agencies, in partnership with civil society and women's organisations, social partners and the private sector.

Since 2003, when gender mainstreaming activities within the European Parliament were formally launched, its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) has regularly prepared monitoring reports on the state of gender mainstreaming in the institution. The subsequent resolutions, adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2019 respectively, are part of a whole series of activities implemented over the past two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming in the Parliament, the most recent being the adoption of a new gender action plan and a roadmap for its implementation, in July 2020 and April 2021 respectively.

This study examines the current state of play regarding gender mainstreaming in the Parliament, in support of a forthcoming own-initiative report by the FEMM committee on the same topic. It gives an insight into the concept of gender mainstreaming and possible tools to implement it, provides an overview of Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy (with particular focus on the new gender action plan and related roadmap) and analyses gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national parliaments and international institutions to date, in order to put Parliament's efforts into a wider context.

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Executive summary

Background

At present, the concept of gender mainstreaming is firmly embedded in the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU, including its institutions, and the Member States are bound to ensure that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into policy-making so that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed. This includes balanced representation of women at all levels.

The gender mainstreaming policy was formally launched by the European Parliament (EP) in 2003. Since then, Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) has regularly prepared monitoring reports on the state of gender mainstreaming in the EP. The subsequent resolutions, adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2019 respectively, are part of a whole series of activities implemented over the past two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming in the EP.

The new EP gender action plan (EP GAP), adopted in July 2020, as well as the roadmap for its implementation, adopted in April 2021, include a range of specific actions and, for the first time, also cover the political side of the Parliament. While the action plan sets out a number of objectives, the roadmap includes concrete actions with timelines ('milestones') to reach them. The milestones (including possible indicators that are set out in the annex of the roadmap) are intended to allow for monitoring of progress.

Scope and objectives of the study

With a view to the FEMM committee's forthcoming own-initiative report on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, this study examines the current state of play of gender mainstreaming in the EP. It gives an insight into the concept of gender mainstreaming and the possible tools to implement it, provides an overview of Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy (with particular focus on the new gender action plan and related roadmap) and analyses gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national Parliaments and international institutions to date.

Key findings

Since the **European Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy** was formally launched in 2003, it has **evolved considerably** over time. From a simple equal opportunities policy, primarily aimed at ensuring gender balance within Parliament's administration, it has developed into a comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy, encompassing gender mainstreaming both in terms of incorporating gender equality aspects in policy-making and of achieving balanced representation of women within the institution.

As shown in the study, **a number of demands** expressed in Parliament's latest resolutions to improve gender mainstreaming within the institution **have been or will be followed-up under the new EP GAP and roadmap**. This goes, in particular, for Parliament's repeated calls for gender impact assessments (GIAs) and gender budgeting, improved coordination between the different bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming within the EP, as well as building up in-house gender mainstreaming awareness and capacity. Accordingly, a timeline has been established for introducing GIAs for own-initiative legislative reports, accompanied by measures to develop in-house guidance and tools (including training on gender mainstreaming open to all staff). Similarly, several strands of action are envisaged to effectively implement gender budgeting, notably including an annual GIA to inform the EP's draft report on the EU budget and dedicated training. Moreover, regular trilateral meetings and joint reports will, inter alia, contribute to

enhancing the cooperation between the High-Level Group (HLG) on Gender Equality and Diversity, the FEMM committee and the Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN).

However, in order to put Parliament's efforts into a wider context, this study also examined different **assessment frameworks** (such as the toolkits for gender-sensitive parliaments developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) or the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)), as well as recent **research** and **best practices** for effectively implementing gender mainstreaming. As a result of this exercise, several **strengths** and **weaknesses** of Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy could be identified.

Accordingly, Parliament's **high-level commitment** to gender mainstreaming, not least expressed in numerous resolutions, as well as a **wide range of structures and procedures** responsible for implementing it are, without any doubt, remarkable. Yet, several **deficiencies** currently hinder its effective implementation. These include:

- the fact that **gender mainstreaming** is **still not fully embedded** in the **EP's culture and ways of operating**;
- a **lack of coordination** between the different bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming within the EP (while the EP GAP and roadmap set out several actions, there is a risk of overlapping responsibilities of different bodies, possibly resulting in a lack of ownership);
- a **lack of institutional ownership and oversight** (linked, in particular, to gender mainstreaming being often done 'on top of everything else', and oversight by political bodies only and not (also) by a senior civil servant);
- a **lack of actual capacities for implementing gender mainstreaming tools** such as GIAs and gender budgeting (while several actions are envisaged under the EP GAP and roadmap, these need to be accompanied by appropriate investment of human and financial resources, which might require additional staff and/or re-focussing of activities);
- a **lack of data** (both in terms of gender-disaggregated data and statistics) due to a lack of systematic data collection; and
- a **lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation** (especially regarding the extent to which FEMM's suggestions have been included in the work of other committees and the final resolutions; in this respect, the indicators to be developed under the roadmap will potentially tackle this shortcoming).

When taking a look at gender mainstreaming practices in **other EU institutions, national parliaments and international organisations**, some general observations can be made:

- Although all EU institutions are guided by the Treaties and the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025 in implementing gender mainstreaming in their policy-making and institutional affairs, there is currently **no coherent approach or structured cooperation**;
- In terms of **structures and procedures** for gender mainstreaming, the **EP and the European Commission (EC)** seem **more advanced** than the **European Economic and Social Committee** (**EESC)** and the **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)** (where, however, efforts are currently under way to formalise existing informal structures and mechanisms). As to Council, Parliament's calls for a **specific Council configuration** dedicated to gender equality have so far remained unheard and academic research points to a **lack of transparency** regarding Council's implementation of gender mainstreaming;

- While a **number of shortcomings in implementing gender mainstreaming** have been identified in the **European Commission**, both in recent academic research and in the European Court of Auditors' 2021 report on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget, some **recent (and upcoming) developments** under the leadership of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have the potential to **strengthen gender mainstreaming** in the Commission;
- As to implementation of gender mainstreaming in **national parliaments**, the situation is at present rather **patchy** (with only a minority having so far developed consistent, sustained gender mainstreaming practices, but some concretely using gender mainstreaming tools such as gender impact assessment of draft legislation and gender budgeting);
- At international level, the **United Nations gender action plan** demonstrates how a gender mainstreaming system with clear indicators for tracking progress, incentives for take up and reporting standards can be **built across bodies with different structures and mandates** (flagging the potential for a **more coordinated approach** to gender mainstreaming **across the EU institutions**, as called for by the EP in its gender mainstreaming resolutions.

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Acronyms

AA – association agreement

BfPA – Beijing Platform for Action

BUDG – European Parliament Committee on Budgets

CONT – European Parliament Committee on Budgetary Control

COPEC – European Parliament Committee for Equality of opportunity between men and women and diversity

CoR – European Committee of the Regions

DG PERS – European Parliament's Directorate General for Personnel

EC – European Commission

ECPRD – European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation

EESC – European Economic and Social Committee

EIDU – Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit in the European Parliament's Directorate General for Personnel

EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality

EP – European Parliament

EP GAP – European Parliament gender action plan

EPRS – European Parliamentary Research Service

EPSCO – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs configuration of the Council of the European Union

Eurofound – EU Agency for the improvement of living and working conditions

EWL – European Women's Lobby

FEMM – European Parliament Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

FRA – European Agency for Fundamental Rights

GIA – gender impact assessment

GMN – The European Parliament's Gender Mainstreaming Network

GSC – General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union

HLG – The European Parliament's High Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity

INTA – European Parliament Committee for International Trade

IPU – International Parliamentary Union

MFF – EU multiannual financial framework

OEIL – The European Parliament's legislative observatory

SOC – Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, European Economic and Social Committee

SEDE – European Parliament Subcommittee on Security and Defence

SEDEC –Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture, European Committee of the Regions

TEU – Treaty on European Union

TFEU – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UN-SWAP – UN system-wide action plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women

WEUCO – Women's European Council

1. Introduction

Background

In a 1996 communication, the European Commission (EC) defined gender mainstreaming as '... not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality'. Since then, further definitions have been developed at global, regional and EU levels and by academia, but the basic concept has essentially remained the same over time. In particular, it encompasses three dimensions: first, gender mainstreaming involves adopting a gender equality perspective in policy-making to ensure that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed. Second, it also entails looking through a gender lens at institutions and organisations and their structures and ways of working. Third, gender mainstreaming is not an end or policy goal in itself, but a strategy and set of instruments and processes aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of gender equality, by bringing equality issues out of a narrow ghetto into the broader policy arena.

Today, after becoming the EU's official approach to achieving gender equality in the Amsterdam Treaty adopted in 1997, gender mainstreaming is firmly embedded in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which commits the European Union and its Member States to eliminating inequalities and promoting the principle of equality between women and men in all their actions.

The EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025, adopted in March 2020 by the EC, reaffirmed this commitment. It acknowledged that 'The core challenges affecting the EU today – including the green and digital transitions and demographic change – all have a gender dimension. The inclusion of a gender perspective in all EU policies and processes is essential to reach the goal of gender equality'. In this context, the EC committed to integrating a gender perspective in all major EC initiatives during the current mandate. The EC's commitment to paying greater attention also to the gender equality dimension in its impact assessments was reiterated in its communication on Better Regulation of April 2021 (with further guidance for the preparation of new initiatives – in the form of revised Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox – expected to be adopted still this year).

Similarly, the European Parliament and the Council have repeatedly stressed the need for the EU to deliver on its high-level gender-mainstreaming commitments and expressed strong support for gender mainstreaming in the multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the EU budget. When negotiating the 2014-2020 MFF, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed to apply 'gender-responsive elements' wherever appropriate in the MFF's budgetary procedures. This approach was reaffirmed for the 2021-2027 MFF and the Next Generation EU instrument. In July 2020, the European Council concluded that the 2021-2027 MFF should promote equal opportunities through gender mainstreaming. For the first time, the MFF now explicitly contains gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle in order to ensure more gender-responsive spending policies also at programme level.[1]

[1] In line with its commitment under the Inter-institutional Agreement on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, the EC is currently developing a methodology for tracking gender equality-related expenditure and updating its guidelines for reinforced analysis of the impact of EU funding programmes on gender equality.

Despite these high-level commitments, concerns remain about ineffective and fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels. The coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected women and thus exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men, bringing a real risk that progress towards gender equality could go into reverse. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic which disproportionately affected women and emerging challenges such as climate change and digitalisation, integrating the gender dimension in all policy areas, including in the recovery from the pandemic at EU and Member State levels, appears more necessary today than ever.

Upcoming FEMM report on gender mainstreaming in the EP

The European Parliament was an early supporter of gender mainstreaming, backing, in a resolution adopted in 1997, the original Commission communication. In a resolution adopted in 2003, Parliament launched gender mainstreaming activities within the EP by publicly committing its Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (FEMM) to gender mainstreaming. FEMM is the main body responsible for implementing and further developing gender mainstreaming across policy sectors in the European Parliament. With the adoption of opinions and positions in the form of amendments, in particular, FEMM aims to incorporate a gender perspective into the work of other committees. It is also responsible for assessing gender mainstreaming in the work of committees and delegations, including assessment of failures to incorporate the gender dimension. To this end, FEMM prepares a non-legislative own-initiative report, which it submits bi-annually to the plenary.

Objective, methodology and scope of the study

With a view to the upcoming FEMM report on gender mainstreaming in the EP under the co-rapporteurship of Irène Tolleret (Renew, France) and Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Greens/EFA, France), DG EPRS was requested to draw up a supporting analysis.

This study examines the current state of play of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament and is aimed at supporting the monitoring work of the FEMM committee. It gives an insight into the concept and possible tools for implementing gender mainstreaming, provides an overview of Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy (with particular focus on the new gender action plan and related roadmap) and analyses gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national parliaments and international organisations to date.

From a methodological point of view, this study is – with the exception of the collection of primary data through the ECPRD survey to national parliaments and interviews held by the authors of this study with the EC, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR)[2] – primarily based on desk research. It analyses relevant EP resolutions, Bureau reports, action plans and roadmaps, as well as Council conclusions and opinions adopted by the EESC and the CoR. Moreover, it reviews research carried out by academia and, in particular, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The focus of the study is placed on Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy and its implementation. The **first section** (introduction) explains the background, context, objective, methodology and scope of the study.

The **second section** provides an overview of the state of gender mainstreaming in the EU. Besides explaining the theoretical concept (and why it still matters today), it focuses on the methods and tools that have been developed to put the principles of gender mainstreaming into practice throughout the policy cycle, the enabling conditions needed to apply them effectively (including the challenges organisations can face in mainstreaming gender internally) and possible means to

[2] As of the date of publication of this study, a written questionnaire sent to the Council remained unanswered.

assess their implementation. Based on recent research, it is shown that key factors identified as crucial for effective gender mainstreaming[3] can also be used as a basis for assessment and evaluation of its implementation, and how this can be done. In this context, the study also touches upon specific assessment frameworks for parliaments, with a particular focus on the toolkits for gender-sensitive parliaments developed by the EIGE and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). With a view to the EU approach to gender mainstreaming and the state of play in the EU, the study outlines current shortcomings (such as fragmented implementation in the EU institutions and the Member States, too little evaluation and accountability, and insufficient implementation of gender-responsive budgeting) identified in research.

In the **third section**, the study gives an outline of Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy and, in particular, the EP resolutions, reports, action plans and roadmaps it is based on. It then describes Parliament's structures and mechanisms responsible for gender mainstreaming and, in its first sub-section, takes a look at the state of play of incorporating gender equality into Parliament's policymaking. In this context, the study also touches upon current implementation of specific gender mainstreaming tools in the EP (gender impact assessments and gender budgeting). Moreover, it sheds some light on gender mainstreaming practices in Parliament's Committee for International Trade (INTA), as a Parliament committee that has, especially in the past legislature, actively tried to mainstream gender perspectives in its work. The second sub-section provides insights into the current representation of women in the European Parliament, covering both the political level (i.e. female MEPs and women in EP governing bodies) and Parliament's administration. In both sections, the study looks at the current situation and future action. In this context, it describes the actions foreseen under Parliament's new gender action plan, adopted in July 2020, as well as the 2020-2021 roadmap for its implementation, adopted in April 2021.

The **fourth section** examines gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national parliaments and international organisations in order to put the EP's gender mainstreaming policy and its implementation into context. In particular, it looks at current efforts to implement gender mainstreaming in the Commission, the Council, the EESC and the CoR. In relation to gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments and international organisations, the study presents the findings of a survey launched through the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) network in April 2021 and outlines the main features of the United Nations' action plans for gender mainstreaming across the UN System.

[3] As explained under Section 2.2., pp. 22-26, such key factors include, for instance, high-level commitment to gender equality as an objective and gender mainstreaming as a tool; specific structures and procedures such as an overarching gender equality action plan, dedicated bodies and regular reporting/evaluation; investment in high-quality gender mainstreaming through training and capacity-building; ensuring accountability and compliance including a system of incentives, sanctions, peer pressure or accountability mechanisms; and stability in terms of implementing gender mainstreaming evenly over time and across sectors.

2. Gender mainstreaming in the EU: State of play

When the European Union endorsed 'gender mainstreaming' as its official policy approach to gender equality,[4] it was seen as a potentially revolutionary means of accelerating progress and achieving real equality between the sexes.[5] Twenty-five years on, concerns remain about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels.[6] The coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected women and thus exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men, bringing a real risk that progress towards gender equality could stall. Against this background, and with emerging challenges such as climate change and digitalisation also requiring gender sensitive policy responses, there are calls for the EU and the Member States to mobilise their capacities for gender mainstreaming.[7]

2.1. What is gender mainstreaming and why does it matter?

In some areas, such as education and employment, the gender dimension is evident. In others, such as trade or climate change, it may be less immediately apparent. Yet, across the spectrum, including in these seemingly 'neutral' fields, policy may have different impacts on women and men, and may inadvertently perpetuate inequality or discrimination. One of the tools that has been developed to ensure that these impacts are considered is 'gender mainstreaming'.

Gender mainstreaming was established internationally as the major global strategy for gender equality at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. At the conference, the EU and its Member States committed to the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA) which asks governments and other actors to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively.[8]

As organisations and institutions have sought to put gender mainstreaming into practice, further definitions have been developed at global, regional and EU levels and by academia. Definitions (see Box 1) emphasise three dimensions:

- first, gender mainstreaming involves adopting a gender equality perspective in policy-making to ensure that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built in to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and

4 COM(96)67of 21 February 1996

5 Teresa Rees, *Mainstreaming Equality in the European Union: Education, Training, and Labor Market Policies*, New York: Routledge, 1998, cited in Mark A. Pollack and Emilie Hafner-Burton, Mainstreaming Gender in the European Union, *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 7, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 432-456, p. 434.

6 See, for example: Opinion on the future gender equality policy after 2019, old and new challenges and priorities, Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, 2018, pp. 2-4; Beijing +25 policy brief: Area H - Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women: reduced efforts from Member States, European Institute for Gender Equality, March 2020; Abels, Krizsán, MacRae and van der Vleuten (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics*, Routledge, 2021, pp. 257-258.

7 R. Shreeves, Enhancing EU gender equality policy, in Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: Options to enhance the EU's resilience to structural risk, Study, European Parliamentary Research Service with the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL) and External Policies (EXPO), European Parliament April 2021, pp. 66-67.

8 See the BPfA's strategic objective H.2. and the references to mainstreaming a gender perspective across the strategic objectives in the BPfA. Further information on the Fourth World Conference on Women and on the development of the concept of gender mainstreaming in the UN context is set out in the UN Women's webpages on the conference and gender mainstreaming. The UN's own standards and action plans for gender mainstreaming are discussed in detail in Section 4.

spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed;
- second, it also entails looking through a gender lens at institutions and organisations and their structures and ways of working;
- third, it is not an end or policy goal in itself, but a strategy and set of instruments and processes aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of gender equality, by bringing equality issues out of a narrow ghetto into the broader policy arena.

Box 1. Definitions of gender mainstreaming

United Nations

In 1997 the Economic and Social Council adopted agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming, defining the concept as: 'The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality'. (Source: Gender Mainstreaming, UN Women website).

Council of Europe

'The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.' (Source: What is Gender Mainstreaming?, Council of Europe website).

European Commission

'...not restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality.' (Source: COM(96)67of 21 February 1996, p. 2).

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE):

'Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination. Gender mainstreaming requires both integrating a gender perspective to the content of the different policies, and addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the given policy area. Both dimensions – gender representation and gender responsive content - need to be taken into consideration in all phases of the policy-making process. (...) Gender mainstreaming is as much about addressing gender inequalities in society through policies, as it is about the organisations' own ways of working.' (Source: What is Gender Mainstreaming?, EIGE website).

Feminist academic research

'Gender mainstreaming is the promotion of gender equality through its systematic integration into all systems and structures, into all policies, processes and procedures, into the organisation and its culture, into ways of seeing and doing.' (Rees, T. (2005) Reflections on the uneven development of gender mainstreaming in Europe, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 7(4), 555–574.)

As the Council of Europe highlights,[9] gender mainstreaming entails more than simply including an introductory paragraph in a document stating that a gender perspective will be integrated, or

[9] What is Gender Mainstreaming?, Council of Europe website.

increasing the presence of women in decision-making roles. Ensuring that a gender perspective is included requires more significant steps to factor in the different situations of women and men, throughout the policy cycle and within institutions. It also means going beyond considering women and men as 'homogeneous groups with single aims and needs' and considering their 'multiple identities, in terms of characteristics such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, social status and (dis)ability'.[10]

This close attention to the specific situations and needs of women and men demonstrates that one of the reasons why gender mainstreaming matters is its potential for better policy-making. Incorporating gender can make the difference between addressing and failing to address people's needs, and between good or ineffectual, or even counter-productive, policy and legislation. For instance, in the area of humanitarian aid, the European Commission stresses that aid that is gender- and age-insensitive is less effective, and risks not reaching the most vulnerable people or failing to respond adequately to their specific needs.[11] A study on EU trade policy concluded that better understanding of the gender dimension of trade agreements can help to protect both sexes from negative effects and improve policy quality.[12]

Since 2013, EIGE has been monitoring progress towards gender equality in the EU through its composite Gender Equality Index (GEI).[13] The 2020 GEI results[14] show there are many remaining gender gaps, which require gender-sensitive policy responses due to their significant costs to individuals, societies and economies.[15] Gender analysis also illustrates that new and emerging challenges, such as digitalisation and the future of work, climate change and demographic change, have gender dimensions that will need careful consideration to design fair, effective policy.[16] Not least, bodies such as EIGE and Eurofound have flagged that, as a triple health, social and economic crisis, the coronavirus pandemic is having different impacts on women and men, and that there is an urgent need to understand this gender dimension and factor it into policy responses.[17] Without a gender-sensitive approach, the pandemic could have far-reaching implications, including a real risk of exacerbating gender inequalities, sending progress into reverse and stalling upward convergence between EU Member States.[18]

Gender mainstreaming the policies directed towards recovery will therefore be vital to avoid cementing inequalities that have emerged during the pandemic and to ensure that policy

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10 The term 'intersectionality' is used to cover this dimension of analysis. See for example the entry in EIGE's gender equality thesaurus and the intersecting inequalities section of its Gender Equality Index.

11 Factsheet - Age and Gender-Sensitive Aid, European Commission, 2021; Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance', European Commission, 2013, pp. 1-6.

12 Elina Vilup, The EU's Trade Policy: from gender-blind to gender-sensitive?, In-Depth Analysis, Policy Department, Directorate-General for External Policies, European Parliament, 2015.

13 The European Institute for Gender Equality, an EU agency, was set up in 2010 to promote gender equality. Since 2011, it has been operating under the remit of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) of the European Commission. EIGE's tasks include, in particular, providing expertise on gender mainstreaming in all EU bodies and devising tools to support the incorporation of gender equality into all EU policies.

14 2020 EU gender equality index, EIGE website.

15 On the costs of gender inequality see, for example: Wouter van Ballegooij with Jeffrey Moxom, Equality and the Fight against Racism and Xenophobia- Cost of Non-Europe Report, EPRS, European Parliament, March 2018; Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU: Overall economic impacts of gender equality, EIGE, 2018; Gender-based violence costs the EU €366 billion a year, press release, EIGE 7 July 2021 (full study forthcoming in September 2021)

16 Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the future of work, EIGE, October 2020; Gender mainstreaming: Environment and climate change, EIGE website; Gender mainstreaming: The outcome of improved gender equality on demographics and labour supply, EIGE website.

17 Covid-19 and gender equality, EIGE website; Living, working and COVID-19, Eurofound, November 2020; Women and labour market equality: Has COVID-19 rolled back recent gains?, Eurofound, December 2020; Covid-19: The need for a gendered response, Briefing, EPRS, European Parliament, February 2021.

18 Upward convergence in gender equality: How close is the Union of equality?, EIGE, 15 July 2021.

contributes to gender equality. In this context, gender experts and stakeholders, including the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men and the European Women's Lobby (EWL) see better use of gender mainstreaming at EU, national and subnational levels, as a particularly vital priority to ensure that all EU instruments and policies contribute to gender equality goals.[19]

The European Parliament has advocated effective gender mainstreaming in the response to the pandemic, in EU recovery funding and in the long-term EU budget.[20] In a resolution adopted in January 2021, Parliament stressed the need for a gender-sensitive approach to the Covid-19 crisis, with gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting principles reflected in all aspects of the response, in order to preserve and protect women's rights throughout the pandemic and post-pandemic period and to enhance gender equality.[21] Parliament was instrumental in getting gender mainstreaming included in long-term budgetary planning and recovery funding.[22] It would like to see EU funding used much more proactively to achieve gender equality goals, and gender budgeting to be applied in all EU budget lines and in all future EU funding programmes, with clear targets, specified resources and systematic monitoring. Parliament has also called for systematic use of gender impact assessments and for the EIGE Gender Equality Index to be incorporated in Commission monitoring.[23]

2.2. How does it work?

As noted above, gender mainstreaming is an approach for achieving gender equality, which can be used alongside other approaches such as targeted action to advance women's empowerment and overcome discrimination. A range of methods and tools have been developed to put the principles of gender mainstreaming into practice. Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 focus on these, together with the enabling conditions needed to apply them effectively and the challenges organisations can face in mainstreaming gender perspectives internally. Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 investigate frameworks for assessing the implementation of gender mainstreaming in public institutions, including specific frameworks developed for parliaments.[24]

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19 For an overview of expert and stakeholder positions see: R. Shreeves, Responding to risks: Resilience through action - Enhancing EU gender equality policy, Study, EPRS European Parliament, 2021, pp. 66-67.

20 ibid, pp. 68-69 and p. 72.

21 Resolution of 21 January 2021 on the gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period, European Parliament.

22 For an overview of Parliament's positions on the inclusion of gender equality commitments in the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the 2021-2027 MFF, see: Success for the #halfofit movement: More justice in EU budgets, November 2020, by MEP Alexandra Geese (Greens/EFA), the rapporteur for gender budgeting in Parliament's Committee on Budgets and Parliament's legislative train carriage on the MFF 2021-2027.

23 Resolution of 13 February 2020 on the EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, European Parliament.

24 Section 2.2.1 draws principally on EIGE's gender mainstreaming resources, including the practical gender mainstreaming toolkits drawn up specifically for the context in the EU and its Member States, with additional references to other sources. Section 2.2.2. draws on EIGE's gender mainstreaming resources, together with academic sources and guidance and assessments from the United Nations and the OECD, in particular: Enabling conditions for gender mainstreaming, EIGE website; Gender mainstreaming in development programming - guidance note - 5. Gender mainstreaming within institutional processes, pp. 35-42. UN Women, 2014; Keiko Kamioka and Eileen A. Cronin, Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations, 2019 (discussed further in section 4 of the study); OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming & Implementing Gender Equality, 2018; Fast forward to gender equality: Mainstreaming, implementation and leadership, OECD, 2019. Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.3 again draw on EIGE's gender mainstreaming resources for institutions and parliaments and on resources from the Interparliamentary Union (IPU).

2.2.1. Gender mainstreaming in the policy cycle

EIGE identifies **four key stages** in the policy cycle where a gender perspective can be included using gender mainstreaming tools:[25]

- ***Defining policy interventions***: No intervention can be presumed to be gender neutral. The starting point is therefore to investigate how, and to what extent, a gender perspective may be relevant for a planned intervention, such as a new policy framework, piece of legislation, programme or project. This involves conducting a ***gender analysis***[26] of the existing situation of women and men in the particular policy domain to identify their needs and any differences in rights, roles, access to and use of resources or participation/representation. This analysis forms part of a ***gender impact assessment,***[27] which identifies and measures the projected positive, neutral or negative impacts of the planned intervention. EIGE notes that the final aim of a gender impact assessment is to improve the design and planning of the intervention, to ensure that any discriminatory effects are either removed or mitigated. The assessment can also be used 'in a more transformative way' as a tool for defining gender equality objectives and (re)formulating the policy so as to promote gender equality proactively. In this context, and in relation to better policymaking, EIGE flags the importance of using ***participatory methodologies*** to include the voices and experiences of the different groups of men and women intended to benefit from the intervention and inputs from gender experts and women's organisations.
- ***Planning the implementation***: This part of the cycle entails using the findings of the gender impact assessment to define gender-sensitive policy goals and appropriate approaches and measures to achieve them. Preferably, ***gender indicators***[28] should be included to allow for monitoring and evaluation of the actual outcomes. This phase includes ***gender budgeting***.[29] As defined by EIGE, gender budgeting is a strategy to achieve gender equality by focusing on how public resources are collected and spent. Its purpose is to promote accountability and transparency, increase gender responsive participation in the budget and to advance gender equality and women's rights, making it a powerful tool for gender mainstreaming. It includes the gender perspective in all the phases of the budget cycle. Attention should also be paid to the gender dimension when drawing up evaluation criteria for calls for tenders in the framework of funding programmes or public procurement.
- ***Implementation***: Gender mainstreaming should continue during the implementation phase, for example by ensuring that all actors involved are fully aware of the gender dimension, including the relevant gender objectives and indicators, and have the capacity to integrate it in their work. This is likely to entail ***capacity-building***, such as gender equality training. Communication around the intervention also needs to be considered, to ensure that the gender dimension is given visibility.
- ***Monitoring and evaluation:*** In addition to the ongoing monitoring of the gender equality objectives defined during the planning phase, mainstreaming also entails ***gender-sensitive evaluation***. This can take place on an ongoing basis, with the aim of embedding continuous improvement. Alternatively, it can take place ex-post, on

[25] Gender mainstreaming - Policy Cycle, EIGE website.
[26] Gender analysis, EIGE website.
[27] Gender impact assessment, EIGE website.
[28] Gender statistics and indicators, EIGE website.
[29] Gender budgeting, EIGE website.

completion of the intervention, in which case the focus is on gender impacts and the contribution of the intervention to promoting gender equality.[30]

2.2.2. Enabling conditions for effective gender mainstreaming

Although gender mainstreaming has the potential to be a transformative approach that can embed a gender perspective in policymaking and contribute to gender equality, there is often a gap between the adoption of gender mainstreaming policy and its practical implementation.[31] The literature shows that this has contributed to patchy results at EU and national levels.[32] In this context, several obstacles to effective gender mainstreaming and prerequisites for more systemic and sustainable practice have been identified.

In order for gender mainstreaming tools to function effectively, there is a need for **comprehensive gender statistics** throughout the policy cycle as an evidence base to assess the initial situation and change over time.[33] Gender statistics are also vital within organisations and in workplaces, for example to measure the representation of women in decision-making positions or to inform the human resources policies and procedures. As defined by EIGE and the United Nations, gender statistics include, but are not limited to, the collection, analysis and presentation of sex-disaggregated data.[34] Breaking data down separately for women and men is a key element, but gender statistics go further than this, by encompassing three additional dimensions. First, the data collected needs to reflect salient gender issues that affect one sex more than the other. Second, the concepts and definitions used for data collection must capture the diversity of various groups of women and men and all aspects of their lives. For example, it is important to have data that captures how gender intersects with other characteristics such as age, education, family composition and parenthood, country of birth, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. Third, data collection methods must avoid inducing gender bias. In terms of methodology, qualitative methods can be as important as quantitative methods.

The literature also identifies a number of **common obstacles to effective implementation of gender mainstreaming within institutions**, together with a combination of elements that are crucial to gender mainstreaming or can help to reinforce it.[35] The latter include high-level commitment, clear ownership and responsibilities, staff training and commensurate funding.

While a lack of **political will** is a frequent impediment to successful gender mainstreaming, commitment on the part of an organisation's leadership and senior management has been found to be a major driver of change and a critical factor for establishing a supportive organisational culture.[36] When senior managers are committed to gender equality and have a clear remit to address

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30 Gender-sensitive evaluation, EIGE website.

31 Fast forward to gender equality: Mainstreaming, implementation and leadership, OECD, 2019, key findings pp. 9-10 and pp. 19-56.

32 For the EU level, see for example: Beijing +25 policy brief: Area H - Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women: reduced efforts from Member States, EIGE, 2020; Elaine Weiner and Heather MacRae (eds): The persistent invisibility of gender in EU policy, European Integration online Papers (EIoP), Special issue 1, Vol. 18, 2014. For the national level see: Hanna Ylösalo (2016), Organizational Perspectives to Gender Mainstreaming in the Finnish State Administration, " *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18 (4): 544–58; Lenita Freidenvall and Madeleine Ramberg (2021); Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Swedish Model Municipalities, *Politics & Gender*, Volume 17 / Issue 2, June 2021. The implementation of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament and other EU institutions is the focus of Sections 3 and 4 of this study.

33 OECD, 2018: pp. 42-44.

34 EIGE, Gender Statistics; United Nations, Manual - Integrating a gender perspective into statistics, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Statistics Division, Studies in Methods, Series F No. 111, 2016.

35 See footnote 24 for the principle sources. More specific references are set out in the following footnotes.

36 United Nations, 2014: p. 36; United Nations, 2019: p. iv, p. 12; OECD, 2018, p. 16, p. 72; OECD, 2019, p. 11.

it, this can make it more likely for gender mainstreaming to be incorporated in policies, procedures and spending decisions. It also creates conditions where staff members are required to deliver on gender mainstreaming. Gender balance in leadership and management posts is a strong signal of an organisation's internal commitment to gender equality.

Research suggests that even where there is a lack of political will or internal resistance to gender mainstreaming, this can be compensated for by clear formal rules, a solid system of governance and management and a clear chain of command.[37] For instance, a **framework policy** for gender mainstreaming, such as an action plan with specific objectives, can serve as a baseline for measuring progress and be used to hold the institution accountable for action – or inaction.[38] The OECD notes that best practice in this regard is for institutions, including parliaments, to conduct a self-assessment or audit to identify any existing efforts, opportunities for scale up and persisting gaps and challenges.[39] It also recommends consulting with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders in drawing up the policy. For parliaments specifically, it is important to ensure that the framework policy takes account of broader political dynamics.[40] With regard to the substance of the framework policy, best practice recommendations include incorporating institutional standards and reporting procedures to strengthen accountability. The importance of **formal gender mainstreaming mechanisms**, with clear roles, responsibilities and powers has also been highlighted.[41] For parliaments specifically, the OECD points to the need for such mechanisms at both political and administrative levels.[42] At the political level, it recommends, as good practice, establishing a parliamentary committee, with a clear mandate spelled out in the rules of procedure, and the power to draft or amend gender equality laws and scrutinise government policy and legislation, including budgets, from a gender perspective.[43] It also notes that informal networks can play a useful role in promoting gender mainstreaming and should be supported. When it comes to the administrative level, the UN stresses that it is important to send a clear message about what is expected of staff, for example by incorporating gender performance targets into job descriptions and staff personal development plans, including at senior management level.[44]

Within organisations, one of the common challenges identified in the literature is **insufficient expertise and capacities at staff level** for implementing gender mainstreaming.[45] Understaffing and underfunding are cited as common problems, along with the level at which gender mainstreaming is operationalised.[46] Having authoritative gender focal points and putting staff with adequate seniority in charge can help to embed a culture of gender mainstreaming. However, staff responsible for mainstreaming are often in junior roles with little authority and undertake mainstreaming alongside their existing tasks.[47] In addition, while gender mainstreaming

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37 See, for example, 'Implementing Gender Mainstreaming in Swedish Model Municipalities', Lenita Freidenvall and Madeleine Ramberg, *Politics & Gender*, Volume 17 / Issue 2, June 2021.

38 United Nations, 2014: pp. 38-39; OECD, 2018, pp. 7-9; p. 50.

39 OECD, 2018: p. 50. See also Institutional-transformation: Step-3. Conducting-organisational-analysis, EIGE website.

40 OECD, 2018: Chapter 3: Gender Sensitive Practices in Parliaments – 3.2. Mainstreaming gender in internal parliamentary processes and practices, pp. 50-51.

41 OECD, 2018, p.52; Isabelle Ioannides, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 at Year One: European Implementation Assessment, Study, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, October 2017, p. 28

42 OECD, 2018: p. 50.

43 ibid.: p. 52.

44 UN, 2014: p. 37.

45 UN, 2014: p. 38; OECD, 2018: p. 54; Isabelle Ioannides, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 at Year One: European Implementation Assessment, Study, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, October 2017: p. 25.

46 Isabelle Ioannides, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 at Year One: European Implementation Assessment, Study, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, Brussels, October 2017, p. 69.

47 UN, 2014; OECD, 2019: p. 45. In the EU context, Petra Debusscher's research into the gap between the formal commitment to gender mainstreaming in development cooperation and actual practice in an EU delegation found

encompasses a range of tasks, these are often amalgamated, with staff responsible for gender mainstreaming expected to fulfil three different roles: political advocacy, coordinating gender mainstreaming across the organisation and carrying out tasks such as impact assessment and evaluation requiring specific gender expertise.[48] In this context, the United Nations stresses the importance of **building gender expertise** across an organisation by establishing gender champions, gender focal points and gender experts, with distinct, complementary roles.[49]

Training has been identified as a vital part of capacity building. Here, the literature points to the importance of distinguishing between different types of training for different groups of staff, based on a prior assessment of needs.[50] On the one hand, training for staff as a whole can focus on the 'why' of gender mainstreaming to increase understanding and 'buy-in'. On the other hand, staff working on gender issues require training primarily in how to conduct gender mainstreaming, focusing on the use of practical technical tools in specific policy areas and programming phases. The UN flags that organising stand-alone gender mainstreaming training is not necessarily essential.[51] An effective alternative approach is to incorporate gender equality elements into core, mandatory technical training courses. For instance, training in gender impact assessment can be integrated into wider training in impact assessment tools. Good practices also include combining formal training courses with mentoring, self-assessments and creating internal teams of gender and non-gender staff, and encouraging dialogue between them and external gender experts.[52]

Above all, the literature highlights that gender mainstreaming systems within organisations must have 'bite', otherwise they are regarded as 'nice, but not necessary'.[53] A further pitfall to be avoided is creating gender-mainstreaming procedures that become a 'tickbox exercise' only.[54]

2.2.3. Assessing the implementation of gender mainstreaming

In the EU context, EIGE has brought the findings on effective gender mainstreaming together in a toolkit for public institutions, setting out a three-stage process for embedding gender equality in their work and internal processes.[55] For EIGE, the success of gender mainstreaming within public institutions can be measured by the extent to which a given institution has integrated gender equality into its regular rules, procedures and practices. From this perspective, the ultimate success of an institution's gender mainstreaming strategy is that, following a process of organisational

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that work on gender mainstreaming was initially assigned to a local contract agent, was more or less voluntary and performed on top of the staff member's main duties. Despite pressure from HQ in Brussels to formalise the role of gender focal points, as of 2014, no time or budget had been allocated for the function and the person responsible was still performing gender mainstreaming tasks on top of their existing job responsibilities. The research concluded that this was one of the factors contributing to gender mainstreaming being a 'formal' and 'symbolic' exercise. Subsequent assessments of EU development cooperation find that despite progress, these issues persist, including posts being held by contract agents. See: Petra Debusscher, 'Gender mainstreaming on the ground? The case of EU development aid towards Rwanda', *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP), Special Issue 1, Vol. 18, 2014, pp. 13-14; Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018), European Commission, November 2020, p. 145.

48 UN, 2014: p. 37.

49 ibid.

50 ibid.; Gender equality training, EIGE, 2016; Gender equality training online toolkit: Designing effective gender equality training, EIGE website.

51 United Nations, 2014: p. 37

52 ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Petra Debusscher, 'Gender mainstreaming on the ground? The case of EU development aid towards Rwanda', *European Integration online Papers* (EIoP), Special Issue 1, Vol. 18, 2014; Evaluation of the EU's external action support to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (2010-2018), European Commission, November 2020, p. 114.

55 EIGE: Gender mainstreaming toolkits – institutional transformation, 2016.

learning, gender equality has become a normal requirement, 'similar to other principles such as saving costs or working efficiently'. Accordingly, the key factors identified as crucial for effective gender mainstreaming in the guidance from EIGE and elsewhere, can also be used as a basis for assessment and evaluation of its implementation.

In the context of the EU institutions, one concrete example of how this can be done is set out in a recent academic article[56] that combines factors necessary for effective and sustainable gender mainstreaming into an assessment framework. While the research uses the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in the European Commission as a case study, the framework has wider relevance for other EU institutions, agencies and bodies.

The research identifies five key dimensions, with associated indicators:

1. **Formal adoption of gender mainstreaming**: Beyond the commitments to gender mainstreaming set out in the EU Treaties, has the individual institution formally adopted an explicit, high-level commitment to gender equality as an objective and gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving this goal?
2. **Structures and procedures for gender mainstreaming**: Has the institution established a regular practice of gender mainstreaming, together with the necessary supporting structures? The empirical indicators for assessing this dimension include the existence of a standard, institution-wide approach to gender mainstreaming with clear guidelines, dedicated tools to implement it and dedicated bodies to support implementation. Particular indicators of good practice here include having an overarching gender equality strategy encompassing gender mainstreaming both in policy and internally within the institution; having a formal document imposing gender mainstreaming across all services; and ensuring that bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming have a clear mandate and terms of reference; and establishing regular reporting and evaluation.
3. **Investing in achieving and maintaining high-quality gender mainstreaming**: Has the institution made consistent efforts to build in-house gender expertise and staff capacity to understand and conduct gender mainstreaming? Particular indicators of good practice here would include sufficient investments in human and financial resources, provision of regular training and coaching, availability and accessibility of gender mainstreaming toolkits and quality assurance.
4. **Ensuring accountability and compliance**: Is gender mainstreaming sufficiently transparent to enable external oversight? Is it monitored on a regular basis? Are mechanisms in place to ensure compliance? Particular indicators of good practice here include: ensuring that all actors involved in gender mainstreaming are clearly identifiable; making policy documents publically available; clear ownership of gender mainstreaming at a senior level within the administration to exercise oversight and ensure quality, accountability and compliance; and having a system of incentives, sanctions, peer pressure or accountability mechanisms.
5. **Stability**: Has the institution ensured that gender mainstreaming is implemented evenly, i.e. that it does not vary across policy areas or over time?

The authors of the research consider that these five dimensions are interlinked and should not be looked at in isolation. Writing from a feminist perspective, they also add a further dimension aimed at **assessing the transformative potential** of an institution's gender mainstreaming strategy. The

[56] Lut Mergaert and Rachel Minto, Gender mainstreaming in the European Commission, Sieps – Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, 2021. The findings are discussed in further detail in Section 4 in the part focused on the European Commission.

specific indicators for assessing practice as 'transformational' rather than 'technocratic' are: that it considers qualitative as well as quantitative data and that it involves stakeholders, in order to make the process more participatory and ensure better understanding of the intersectional dimension of gender equality.

2.2.4. Specific assessment frameworks for parliaments

Given their multiple roles as representatives of their electorate, legislators, oversight bodies and employers and their distinct political and administrative structures, parliaments are a particular type of institution, with particular gender mainstreaming issues and requirements. In view of this, EIGE and the IPU have designed specific frameworks that parliaments can use to assess how they are mainstreaming gender across these various dimensions.[57]

Box 2. Defining a gender-sensitive parliament

Both EIGE and the IPU base their assessment frameworks on the concept of a 'gender-sensitive parliament'. According to their definitions, a gender-sensitive parliament is one that promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures. Beyond this, it has no barriers – substantive, structural or cultural – to women's full participation and responds to the needs and interests of women and men in all its operations, methods and work. Through its promotion of gender, it fully reflects the populations it serves and sets a positive example for wider society. Being sensitive to gender is seen as making parliaments modern, efficient, effective and legitimate.

Source: IPU Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments, 2012 and the EIGE Gender-Sensitive Parliaments Toolkit.

EIGE adopted its '*gender-sensitive parliaments tookit*' in 2018, with the aim of enabling parliaments across the EU to conduct a self-assessment to evaluate how gender equal they are, identify areas where further efforts are needed, and monitor their progress towards achieving gender equality. The assessment framework covers five areas, encompassing the inner workings of parliaments, their legislative activity and their symbolic function. It addresses both elected members of parliament and administrative staff. Given that parliaments have different points of departure, EIGE stresses that that they may choose to start the process by focusing on different aspects. These areas are as follows:

1. **Women and men have equal opportunities to enter and work in parliament**: In relation to elected members of parliament, this measure looks at whether and how electoral rules and procedures ensure gender equality and active measures taken by political parties to support gender balance among candidates. In relation to employees, it covers recruitment procedures for parliamentary staff.
2. **Women and men have equal opportunities to influence the working procedures of parliament**: In relation to elected members of parliament, this measure assesses substantive representation and how this is affected by parliament's procedures – for instance, gender balance in positions of power and authority and across policy domains and how this is affected by appointment procedures. It also assesses the existence and implementation of codes of conduct and other formal policies prohibiting overt and covert discrimination, and work-life-balance measures, such as limitations to working hours and sitting schedules, family

[57] EIGE, Gender-sensitive Parliaments Toolkit; IPU, Self-assessment tool for gender sensitive parliaments. The OECD Toolkit for Mainstreaming & Implementing Gender Equality also has self-assessment questions for parliaments. See also Lena Wangnerud, *The Principles of Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, Routledge, 2015. In 2019 the IPU also published Guidelines for combating sexual harassment and violence against women in parliaments.

leave options and procedures for substitution/proxy voting. For parliamentary staff, this measure assesses the share and position of women and men among staff, steps taken to ensure equal career progression and pay and work-life balance measures.

3 **Women's interests and concerns are given sufficient space on the parliamentary agenda**: This measure assesses the formal institutional mechanisms a parliament has established to ensure that women's interests and concerns are addressed. For the political side, the benchmarks include the existence of gender mainstreaming structures with dedicated resources and the availability of gender mainstreaming training and tools for parliamentarians. For parliamentary staff, there is a similar benchmark for training in gender mainstreaming tools, including gender impact assessment and gender budgeting.

4 **Parliament produces gender sensitive legislation**: This measure assesses whether and how gender equality is mainstreamed into legislative work and legislation, through the systematic use of gender analysis and gender impact assessment. It also assesses whether the parliament exercises gender-sensitive oversight of the action of the executive, for example, by monitoring the gender impact of legislation, through hearings and stakeholder consultations, monitoring the implementation of international conventions and agreements, and examining the expenditure, administration and policies of the executive.

5 **Parliament respects and values its symbolic and exemplary function**: This measure assesses the gender-sensitivity of physical spaces in the parliament and gender equality in external communication. It includes, for instance, practical issues such as provision of toilets, baby changing and breastfeeding facilities, the symbolic naming of buildings and rooms, the visibility of gender issues in communication and the use of non-discriminatory language.

The IPU's toolkit covers similar ground, but is structured around seven key dimensions. Parliaments are invited to assess:

- the numbers and positions of women parliamentarians;
- the legal policy and framework in which the parliament operates;
- mainstreaming of gender equality – including specific questions on mainstreaming structures, the resources dedicated to them, their effectiveness, and how they relate to each other; and on the use of mainstreaming tools;
- the parliament's culture, environment and equality and non-discrimination policies;
- how far responsibility for gender equality is shared with men;
- political parties;
- parliamentary staff.

The IPU toolkit also sets out additional guidance on enabling conditions for conducting the self-assessment and making it part of a broader evaluation or auditing process.

In 2019, based on the results of its tookit, EIGE published an **assessment of national parliaments in all EU Member States and the European Parliament**, focusing primarily on the political dimension.[58] The European Parliament scored well, being one of the highest performers in terms of the share of women parliamentarians, gender balance in leadership positions, the existence of gender mainstreaming structures, the establishment of adequate mechanisms to prevent and punish discrimination, sexism and sexual harassment, aspects of the gender sensitivity of the

[58] Gender equality in national parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament: 2019 results from EIGE's gender-sensitive parliaments tool, EIGE, 2019. The assessment was drawn up using publically available data.

physical environment, and communication around gender equality issues.[59] Nevertheless, along with national parliaments, the European Parliament shared several areas for improvement, particularly around the representation of women across different committees focusing on 'hard' and 'soft' policy areas, the mainstreaming of gender into parliamentary work and the implementation of gender budgeting.

2.3. The EU approach to gender mainstreaming

The EU promoted gender mainstreaming at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It became the official policy approach in the European Union and its Member States in the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), and the legal basis was strengthened in Article 8 TFEU, which commits both to eliminating inequalities and promoting the principle of equality between women and men in all their actions. The EU has adopted a twin-track approach of incorporating a gender perspective across all sectors, and specific positive action for women to eliminate, prevent or remedy inequalities, first set out in the 1996 Commission communication on incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all community policies and activities.[60]

Gender mainstreaming has been included as a cross-cutting priority in successive EU multi-annual gender equality strategies, the most recent being the **strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015**, the **strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019** and the current **EU strategy for gender equality 2020-2025**.[61] Over the same period, gender mainstreaming has also been a key element in the additional **EU action plans** for gender equality and women's empowerment in development cooperation and external relations.[62]

Assessments of these policy frameworks for gender mainstreaming and the structures and policies put in place at national level in the EU Member States point to fluctuating commitment over time and areas where improvements could be made.

With regard to **EU internal policy**, prior to the strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, there was considerable discussion on the implementation of gender mainstreaming at EU and national levels and its contribution to the concrete achievement of gender equality.[63] The consensus was that, despite high-level commitment to the gender mainstreaming policy, implementation remained fragmented in the EU institutions and in Member States, and that there was too little evaluation and accountability. Assessments of take-up in different policy areas found that the commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming was not reflected in spending, and that gender-responsive budgeting needed to be extended.[64] Academic experts argued that gender

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59 Gender-sensitive Parliaments, EIGE website.

60 COM(96) 67 final, European Commission, 21.02.1996.

61 Commission communication: Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 (COM(2010) 491 final), European Commission, 21.9.2010: p. 4, pp. 11-12; Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019, European Commission, 2015: Section 4. Integrating a gender equality perspective into all EU activities and policies, p. 18; Commission communication: A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 (COM/2020/152 final): p. 2, Section 4. Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional perspective in EU policies. pp. 15-17.

62 EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2010–2015) (GAP I); EU Action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations (2016-2020) (GAPII); Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council – EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 25.11.2020.

63 See, Francesca Bettio and Silvia Sansonetti (eds), Visions for gender equality, European Commission, 2015.

64 Firat Cengiz and Fiona Beveridge, The EU Budget for Gender Equality, Policy Department D: Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, 2014; Petra Debusscher, Evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action +20 and the opportunities for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda, Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2015, p. 20.

mainstreaming remained less embedded in the institutional fabric of European decision-making than comparable instruments such as evaluation.[65] Stakeholder consultations identified the measures that would have the most positive impact on gender mainstreaming as: setting targets for policy areas and monitoring results (44.2 %), gender budgeting (36.3 %) and integrating a gender perspective into impact assessments (33.4 %).[66] However, the evaluation conducted at the end of the 2016-2019 policy framework flagged a continued a lack of quantitative targets, limited indicators to monitor gender mainstreaming and progress towards gender equality objectives, and a lack of focus on transforming institutional culture and organisation.[67] Both the European Parliament and the Council were disappointed at the political downgrading of the 2016-2019 policy framework for gender equality and its weak links with key Commission priorities, and both called for the following framework to be stronger and more ambitious.[68] Section 4 of this study explores the steps being taken under Ursula von der Leyen's Commission to strengthen the policy focus on gender equality – and equalities more broadly – through interconnected multiannual equality strategies and changes to the Commission's institutional structures.

EIGE recommends that the use of gender mainstreaming tools and methods should also be promoted in the **EU Member States**. Its review of the current state of play for the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action found that at national level, effective use of gender mainstreaming was low in 2012 and had weakened in 18 Member States by 2018.[69] The reasons EIGE identifies for this include gender equality bodies being restructured due to budget cuts or downgraded to lower positions within government, less use of gender mainstreaming methods and tools and, in some countries, a backlash against gender equality, which is manifesting in the replacement of gender mainstreaming by a 'family mainstreaming' approach.

With regard to **EU external policy**, academic research flags that development policy was among the first policies to be gender mainstreamed and that paradoxically, gender mainstreaming has proved more successful in this area of external policy than across EU internal policies.[70] The gender action plans have so far gone further than the internal gender equality policy frameworks in their rules and methodology for applying and monitoring gender mainstreaming across sectors. Under the current GAP III action plan, all external assistance across all sectors, including infrastructure, digital, energy, agriculture and blended funds, must integrate a gender perspective and support gender equality.[71] This has been backed by a concrete target.[72] By 2025, at least 85 % of all new

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65 Rachel Minto & Lut Mergaert, 'Gender mainstreaming and evaluation in the EU: comparative perspectives from feminist institutionalism', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Volume 20, Issue 2, 2018, pp. 204-220.

66 Analysis of the public consultation: 'Equality between women and men in the EU', European Commission, 2015, p. 17

67 Elvira González Gago, Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019, European Commission, 2019, p. 2, p. 3, p. 5; pp. 19-20, pp. 38-40, p. 64, p. 68.

68 For the Parliament and Council positions, see: European Parliament, Post-2015 strategy for equality between women and men, Legislative Train, 2021. An explanation of the authority of Commission communications (used for the 2010-2015 gender equality strategy) and Commission staff working documents (used for the 2016-2019 policy framework) see, Petra Ahrens,'The birth, life, and death of policy instruments: 35 years of EU gender equality policy programmes', *West European Politics*, 24 Oct 2018. Ahrens interprets the change to a staff working document as part of a more longstanding weakening in the status of gender equality policy over time.

69 EIGE, Beijing +25 –The 5th Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States, 22 November2019, in particular 3.4.Fostering parity democracy, gender-responsive institutions and a strong civil society: Ensure that gender is comprehensively mainstreamed into key EU and national initiatives, pp. 97-98 and p. 147.

70 Petra Desbusscher, Chapter 23: Development Policy, in Abels, Krizsán, MacRae and van der Vleuten (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics*, Routledge, 2021, pp. 290-301: p. 293.

71 ibid. GAP III, Section 1.2. Promoting gender mainstreaming in all areas of EU external action.

72 The target was set in 2015 in the Council conclusions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020, 26.10.2015. Section 1.2 of the GAP III action

external actions will have gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant objective or as a principal objective.[73] In addition, three minimum standards will be applied for all external EU-funded programmes: 1) updated gender analyses are to be conducted and used to inform decision-making on future action and integrated into all relevant dialogues, policies, strategies, programmes and operations; 2) Gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics will be applied to monitoring and evaluation; 3) Robust reasons, based on the findings of the gender analysis, must be given to substantiate any action deemed not to contribute to gender equality.[74] Following assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming in the two previous gender action plans and a public consultation, GAP III also prioritises a shift in institutional culture, by building 'gender-responsive leadership' and 'improving institutional capacity and ownership' across the Commission's external directorates-general, the European External Action Service, the EU delegations and CSDP missions and operations).[75] This includes commitments to building gender expertise by strengthening the role of gender focal points and appointing senior gender advisers. Promotion of gender equality will be included as core competences and responsibilities for all leadership and management positions. Managers will receive mandatory training on gender equality. A comprehensive training programme is also foreseen for staff, based on a needs analysis.

These assessments highlight the complexity and challenges of implementing gender mainstreaming across EU policies and institutions. Indeed, when gender mainstreaming was adopted in the EU, experts noted that it was not only a potentially revolutionary concept but also an extraordinarily demanding one, which required the adoption of a gender perspective by all the central actors in the policy process, who might have little experience or interest in gender issues.[76] They also flagged that each EU institution has its own system, and would have its own challenges.[77] In this perspective, the following section and main body of the study focuses specifically on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament.

plan states that, under the previous GAP II action plan (2015-2020), the share of actions with a gender equality objective increased from around 58 % in 2016 to 65 % in 2019.

73 GAP III: See footnote 20 of the action plan, stating that GAP III will apply the DAC gender equality scoring system as a qualitative statistical tool to record and report development activities that target gender equality as a policy objective. Significant (marked 1) means that gender equality is an important objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the action, while principal (marked 2) means that gender equality is the main objective. For humanitarian aid, the Commission applies its own humanitarian Gender-Age Marker.

74 GAP III: See footnote 22 and footnote 23.

75 See GAP III, Section 4: The EU leads by example. For a summary of assessments of the previous action plans, see: Isabelle Ioannides, EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 at Year One: European Implementation Assessment, Study, European Parliamentary Research Service, European Parliament, Brussels, October 2017. For the results of the public consultation see, Gender Action Plan III 2020-2025: Report on the results of the online targeted consultation 2 April - 4 May 2020, European Commission, November pp. 36-37.

76 Mark A. Pollack and Emilie Hafner-Burton, 'Mainstreaming Gender in the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy*, Volume 7, Issue 3, 2000, pp. 432-456, p. 434.

77 ibid. p. 437; Gender mainstreaming institutions and structures: European Union, EIGE website.

3. Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

The European Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy is based on several resolutions, reports, action plans and roadmaps. The following section provides an outline of these (and their evolution over time) and takes a look at where Parliament stands today in terms of gender mainstreaming. In this respect, it examines, in particular, two different dimensions: 1) incorporation of the gender perspective in Parliament's policy-making; and 2) representation of women in the EP. As to female representation, the study covers both the political and administrative side of the European Parliament, touching, beyond the aspect of gender balance, also upon measures to create a gender-sensitive working environment (including work-life balance measures, anti-harassment policies, professional training etc.), as both aspects are intrinsically linked. In relation to both dimensions, the study looks at the current situation and future action under Parliament's new gender action plan, adopted in July 2020, as well as the 2020-2021 roadmap for its implementation, adopted in April 2021. It should be noted that ideas for future development of gender mainstreaming have also been discussed in the context of Parliament's ongoing internal reflection on its working methods in the light of the coronavirus pandemic. Provisional recommendations for possible action, yet to be endorsed, include a call for better gender mainstreaming in Parliament's diplomacy, including gender balance in EP missions and the selection of experts, action plans for gender mainstreaming in the EP delegations and annual reporting, as well as a call to consider the gender equality dimension in the EP's teleworking policy.

3.1. Main elements of the EP gender mainstreaming policy

Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy started off as an equal opportunities policy, with Parliament, as an employer, aiming to promote gender equality and encourage balanced representation of women and men at all levels of employment in its Secretariat.

Following the adoption of the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995[78] and encouraged by subsequent EP resolutions in 2003 and 2009, this internal policy has been firmly embedded in the EP Secretariat's objectives, with gender equality today forming an integral part of the human resources policy of the EP Secretariat.[79]

Since 1998, the EP Bureau has set targets for the percentage of women at management level[80] and regularly reports on the state of play of gender equality in the Secretariat. These reports, the Statement of principles on the promotion of equality and diversity, adopted by the Bureau in 2006,

[78] In order to implement the recommendations of the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the EU took comprehensive steps. In order to ensure gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, measures were implemented to increase the number of women in decision-making and high-ranking positions. Human resource policies had to be adapted to reach this aim and to comply with the ambition that the European public service would respond to the highest quality standards and could serve as an example for other public and private employers.

[79] See Article 1(d) of the Staff Regulations, which prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of sex, and provides for positive action to be taken in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity.

[80] Since 1998, Parliament's Bureau has set targets for the percentage of women at management level. The targets set for the 2002-2007 period were 40 % for female heads of unit, 30 % for female directors and 20 % for female directors-general. While the targets for female heads of units and directors-general were subsequently reconfirmed in the Kaufmann report, adopted in 2006, the target for female directors was raised to 35 %, all of which were to be achieved by 2009. The Papadimoulis report, adopted in 2017, maintained the targets for female heads of unit and directors, but increased the target for female director-generals (from 20 % to 30 %), all of which were to be reached by 2019. In order to ensure balanced representation of women in management positions across directorates general, this report also set additional targets by DG (30 % female HoUs, 30 % female airectors), to be achieved by 2019. In January 2020, the Bureau further increased these targets (50% female HoUs and directors and 40 % female director-generals), to be achieved by 2024.

as well as, since 2009, a series of consecutive gender equality action plans and roadmaps, provide the relevant policy framework within the overall legal context.

At the same time, the EP was an early supporter of gender mainstreaming in policy-making, backing, in a resolution adopted in 1997, the original Commission communication. This resolution as well as the following ones on gender mainstreaming in the EP covered, besides the aspect of gender balance within Parliament, also the integration of gender equality in Parliament's policy-making. In its resolution adopted in 2003, Parliament formally launched gender mainstreaming in the EP by, in particular, committing the FEMM committee to ensure integration of the gender dimension in Parliament's work.

The following table provides an overview of the main institutional steps in the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the EP:

Table 1 – Key steps in the development of gender mainstreaming in the EP

YEAR	EP resolutions, Bureau reports, Action plans and roadmaps
1997	EP resolution on the Commission communication - Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities – 'mainstreaming' (1996/2036(COS))[81]
2003	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament (2002/2025(INI))[82]
2007	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees (2005/2149(INI))[83]
2009	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of its committees and delegations (2008/2245(INI))[84]
2009	Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity within the European Parliament Secretariat (2009-2013)[85]
2011	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2011/2151(INI))[86]
2015	Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity in the European Parliament's Secretariat for the period 2014-2019'[87]
2016	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2015/2230(INI))[88]
2017	Report of Dimitrios Papadimoulis, vice-president of the European Parliament and chair of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, to the Bureau of the EP on

81 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:51997IP0251

82 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2003-0098+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

83 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-6-2007-0010_GA.html?redirect

84 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-6-2009-0198_EN.html

85 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/femm/dv/bureau_action_plan_/bureau_action_plan_en.pdf

86 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2011-0515_EN.pdf

87 https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/files/live/sites/epintranet/files/human-resources/equality-diversity/ep-ref-documents/action-plan/plan_actions_2014_19_en.pdf (EP intranet only), PE 533.210/BUR

88 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0072_EN.html

	Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat – state of play and the way forward 2017-2019[89] and related roadmap for implementation[90]
2019	EP resolution on Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament (2018/2162(INI))[91]
2020	EP gender action plan[92]
2021	2021-2022 roadmap for implementation of the EP gender action plan[93]

3.1.1. EP resolutions on gender mainstreaming

In its resolution of 2003, Parliament launched gender mainstreaming activities in the EP by publicly committing FEMM to gender mainstreaming, but also by showing how a policy plan for gender mainstreaming could be implemented. In particular, it committed the EP 'to adopting and implementing a policy plan for gender mainstreaming; the overall objective of this policy is to promote equality of women and men through genuine and effective incorporation of the gender perspective in policies and activities, including decision-making structures and the administration, so that the different impact of measures on women and men is assessed before decisions are taken'. As a matter of priority, the resolution requested: 1) the creation of a high level group on gender equality under the auspices of the Bureau, signalling political will and commitment at the highest level; 2) the use of the dual approach for mainstreaming gender in Parliament's work; 3) improved gender-balance in Parliament's decision-making processes by increasing the representation of women on Parliament's governing bodies and other posts of responsibility; 4) incorporation of gender analysis into all stages of the budgetary process; and 5) an effective press and information policy which systematically takes into account gender equality and avoids gender stereotypes. In order to ensure monitoring and evaluation, FEMM was charged to draw up annual reports on gender mainstreaming in the work of EP committees and delegations, complementing the Bureau reports on equal opportunities in the EP Secretariat. Based on this mandate, FEMM introduced the drafting of regular INI reports on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the work of EP committees and delegations. As a consequence, resolutions on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament were adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2019 respectively.

In its 2007 and 2009 resolutions, Parliament found that the majority of parliamentary committees generally attach importance to gender mainstreaming, while a minority of them rarely or never take an interest in the matter. While welcoming the continuous increase of female Members, both resolutions, however, deplored the low proportion of female Members in Parliament's political key decision-making positions (e.g. chairs or members of the committee bureaux or delegations, bureaux of political groups etc.) and the fact that, within Parliament's administration, women were under-represented in top management positions. Accordingly, Parliament called for a reinforced implementation of the gender mainstreaming approach within the EP, effective and coordinated cooperation between the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (HLG, created in 2004), the Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN) and the FEMM committee, and the provision of training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming for MEPs and EP staff.

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89 https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/home/browse-as/human-resources/equality-diversity/gender-equality.html (EP intranet only), PE 595.277/BUR

90 https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/files/live/sites/epintranet/files/human-resources/equality-diversity/roadmap-gender-equality-2017-19/roadmap-gender-equality-2017-19_en.pdf (EP intranet only), PE 602.221/BUR

91 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0010_EN.html

92 https://epintranet.in.ep.europa.eu/files/live/sites/epintranet/files/human-resources/equality-diversity/guides-brochures/final-gender-action-plan/final-gender-action-plan-bureau-06072020_en.pdf (EP intranet only), PE 650.297/BUR

93 PE 658.028/BUR, PE 692.028/BUR

The 2011 resolution included, again, a proposal for a policy plan for gender mainstreaming, reflecting Parliament's awareness of the relevance of institutional mechanisms for implementation of the gender mainstreaming principle. Among the measures proposed were, besides application of the dual gender mainstreaming approach and awareness-raising of the need for gender-balance in decision-making processes, the continued submission of regular progress reports to plenary, further development of the GMN and incorporation of gender analysis into all stages of the budgetary process. Moreover, it was suggested that the Parliament should focus on the need for adequate financial and human resources, so that parliamentary bodies are provided with the necessary tools, including gender analysis and assessment tools, appropriate gender expertise and gender-specific data and statistics. In the context of the MFF, the resolution included a call on the committees responsible to assess, inter alia, the gender impact of the proposed spending priorities in order to ensure that the post-2013 MFF was gender-sensitive.

In its 2016 and 2019 resolutions, Parliament pointed, again, to the insufficient female representation in key decision-making positions at political and administrative levels. In this regard, the 2016 resolution called upon the HLG to adopt an action plan for the promotion of equality and diversity in Parliament's administration and a gender equality roadmap indicating how to increase the representation of women in management positions in order to reach the targets set for 2020[94]. The 2019 resolution, in turn, welcomed the Papadimoulis report[95] and the related roadmap[96] for implementation, but called for progress to be sped up in order to reach the gender equality targets set for 2019. As for women in political decision-making bodies, both resolutions included specific recommendations addressed to political groups, considering their important role in implementing gender mainstreaming, changing gender stereotypes through their programmes and activities and promoting women's participation in politics.[97]

Parliament, in both resolutions, also deplored the insufficient allocation of financial and human resources to gender mainstreaming and identified a lack of coordination and cooperation between the different bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming, within Parliament and with other EU institutions. It acknowledged gender mainstreaming amendments as an effective tool to mainstream gender in the work of the other committees and stressed the importance of gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. In relation to the latter, however, Parliament deplored that gender budgeting was still not systematically applied by any of the EU institutions. Building up in-house gender mainstreaming awareness and capacity, including on gender-responsive budgeting, by providing specific training for Members, parliamentary assistants, staff of political groups and the EP administration, was therefore considered as crucial.

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[94] Since 1998, Parliament's Bureau has set targets for the percentage of women at management level (see footnote 80). In January 2020, the targets for 2019 (40 % for female heads of unit, 35 % for female directors and 30 % for female directors-general) were further increased to 50 % female heads of unit and directors and 40 % female director-generals, to be achieved by 2024.

[95] Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat – state of play and the way forward, report to the Bureau by Dimitrios Papadimoulis, vice-president with responsibility for gender equality (PE 595.277/BUR), January 2017.

[96] Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat, roadmap 2017 to 2019 '*Implementing the Papadimoulis report on Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat*' (PE 602.221/BUR)

[97] In particular, they called upon political groups to recognise their responsibility in the promotion of women, by: 1) increasing the presence of the under-represented gender on electoral lists and ensuring a gender-balanced representation of candidates for elections to the European Parliament in 2019; 2) ensuring gender-balanced composition of the EP governing bodies (by putting forward both male and female Members as candidates for the positions of EP president, vice-presidents and Bureau, committee and delegation chairs); and 3) taking into account the goal of achieving equal gender representation in each committee when nominating Members to all committees and delegations, and especially nominating a gender-equal number of parliamentarians as members and substitutes of the FEMM committee).

It should be noted that Parliament, in both resolutions, called upon DG EPRS to carry out regular detailed qualitative and quantitative research on the progress of gender mainstreaming in Parliament and the functioning of the organisational structure dedicated to it. In addition, the 2019 resolution asked EPRS to develop gender impact assessments and gender-based analysis. In this context, the resolution called for increased systematic and periodic collection of gender-disaggregated data and statistics in policy and programme impact assessments as well as in the policy-making process in order to analyse the advancement of gender equality, to give an accurate map of gender gaps, to assess achievements or regression and to inform evidence-based decision-making.

In its 2019 resolution, Parliament also put a specific focus on anti-harassment policies, welcoming the new measures taken by its services, while strongly regretting slow progress in implementing other recommendations included in previous resolutions.

3.1.2. Committee action plans and the new EP gender action plan (EP GAP) and roadmap

Most of Parliament's standing committees and sub-committees have at present drawn up their own gender mainstreaming action plans[98]. While Parliament, in its 2019 resolution, welcomed this and called on the few remaining committees to follow suit, it also noted the heterogeneity of these plans and the lack of implementation thereof. It therefore called for the adoption of a common gender action plan for the European Parliament (containing, at least, provisions regarding equal gender representation in all parliamentary work and all of Parliament's bodies, the introduction of a gender perspective in all its policy activities and in its working organisation and the use of gender-neutral language in all documents). It also requested that the Rules of Procedure be amended accordingly.

Since March 2019, the EP Rules of Procedure indeed include a new provision (Rule 228a on Gender Mainstreaming) which requires the Bureau to adopt a gender action plan aimed at incorporating a gender perspective in all Parliament's activities, at all levels and all stages. Moreover, it stipulates that the gender action plan shall be monitored bi-annually and reviewed at least every five years.

In line with Rule 228a, the Bureau, in July 2020, adopted a new gender action plan'[99] (hereafter referred to as EP GAP), launching the development of a roadmap for its implementation. In April 2021, the 2021-2022 roadmap[100] for implementation of the EP GAP was adopted.

While the focus of previous reports and roadmaps was on gender balance[101] within Parliament's administration, including on targets for female representation in management posts, the new EP GAP and related roadmap, for the first time, also cover the 'political side' of Parliament, including cooperation between Parliament's political bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming, the use of gender mainstreaming tools (such as gender impact assessments and gender budgeting) and promotion of gender balance in EP governing bodies and at all levels of committee and delegations' work ('vertical' and 'horizontal' balance). While the action plan sets out a number of objectives for the political and administrative side of Parliament, the roadmap includes concrete actions with

98 At present, all 20 standing committees (AFET, DEVE, INTA, BUDG, CONT, ECON, EMPL, ENVI, ITRE, IMCO, TRAN, REGI, AGRI, PECH, CULT, JURI, LIBE, AFCO and PETI), except for FEMM, have adopted gender mainstreaming action plans. Two out of the current three sub-committees (DROI, SEDE) also have such action plans in place.

99 PE 650.297/BUR

100 PE 658.028/BUR, PE 692.028/BUR

101 Note that gender balance is often understood as having a ratio of 40-60 % of women or men, whereas gender parity often refers to a 50-50 ratio of women and men.

timelines ('milestones') to reach them.[102] The milestones will also allow for monitoring of progress. In this context, the roadmap lays down possible progress monitoring indicators.

As explained in the EP GAP, the purpose of the actions and objectives laid down in the part covering, on the one hand, the political side, is to ensure that Parliament, as a gender-sensitive parliament, provides equal access and participation for all genders and continues to progress towards this goal through political processes and procedures. On the other hand, the purpose of the actions and objectives laid down in the action plan's part covering the administrative side is to guarantee equality in recruitment, salary structures and other human resource procedures. The EP GAP also stresses the importance of ensuring an adequate consultation process by involving all relevant bodies and actors in charge of gender mainstreaming within Parliament in the action plan's development and implementation. In terms of follow-up, it foresees a bi-annual report from the HLG to the Bureau on the implementation of the actions, to be shared with all relevant actors.

The specific objectives and actions foreseen in the EP GAP and roadmap will be explained in more detail under the different sections below.

3.2. Existing structures and mechanisms in the EP

Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy is supported by a number of) political bodies and administrative structures.

1) Political bodies:

3.2.1. FEMM committee

The main body responsible for implementing and further developing gender mainstreaming across policy sectors is the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), set up in 1984 and supported by a secretariat. Since the introduction of the concept in 1995, the activities of FEMM have also included gender mainstreaming. With the adoption of opinions (including positions in the form of amendments), in particular, FEMM aims to introduce a gender perspective into the reports of other committees on specific issues. It is also responsible for assessing gender mainstreaming in the work of committees and delegations, including assessment of failures to incorporate the gender dimension. To this end, FEMM prepares a non-legislative own-initiative report, to be submitted bi-annually to the plenary. Under the current term, FEMM has 35 full Members and 29 substitutes. It is chaired by Evelyn Regner (S&D).[103]

3.2.2. Gender Mainstreaming Network

The Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN), established in 2009, composed of a representative of each EP committee and delegation, and chaired and coordinated by FEMM, links Members of the European Parliament and staff appointed to bring a gender dimension into the work of committees and delegations. It serves as a platform to share information and best practice. The GMN's administrative support is provided by the FEMM Secretariat as well as a network of gender mainstreaming administrators in the other committee secretariats.

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[102] While the EP GAP states that 'This action plan will be implemented by a roadmap for a period of two years containing concrete actions with timelines (milestones) ...', the roadmap indicates that the actions laid down therein should be implemented until the end of the years 2021 and 2022 respectively.

[103] See List of FEMM Committee Members and substitutes and FEMM website.

3.2.3. High-level group for gender equality and diversity

The High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (HLG) was established in 2004 to promote, in particular, equal representation of women and men at all levels in the European Parliament.[104] In addition, the HLG is mandated to ensure that Parliament is a safe and supportive workplace. Since 2007, its mandate also includes diversity. In the current term, the HLG is composed of five MEPs (Chair: Dimitrios Papadimoulis/The Left Group, vice-president responsible for gender equality and diversity, Vice-Chairs: Ewa Kopacz/EPP, Lívia Járóka/EPP, Heidi Hautala/Greens/EFA and Monika Beňová/S&D) and four invited MEPs (including the Chair of the FEMM committee, Evelyn Regner/S&D, the Chair of the Conference of Delegation Chairs, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero/S&D, and the two FEMM Standing Rapporteurs on Gender Mainstreaming, Irène Tolleret/RE and Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield/Greens/EFA). It cooperates closely with other parliamentary bodies (in particular the FEMM committee and the Conference of Delegation Chairs). The administrative support for the HLG is provided by the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit of DG Personnel.

2) Administrative structures:

3.2.4. Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit (EIDU), DG PERS

The EIDU provides support to the chair of the HLG and also advises and assists the Appointing Authority (AIPN), the Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity (COPEC) and other internal bodies within the EP Secretariat. The EIDU currently has 10 staff members and is headed by a woman (Chiara Tamburini). It is, in particular, responsible for: 1) implementing equality, inclusion and diversity policy formulated by the EP Bureau; 2) devising projects to promote participation and inclusion of people with disabilities; 3) drawing up reports, analysing data from a gender perspective, and preventing discrimination in accordance with Article 1d of the Staff Regulations; 4) encouraging a safe and inclusive working environment, devising projects that promote a good work-life balance, and implementing policies designed to ensure dignity at work, aiming to eliminate workplace harassment; and 5) organising awareness-raising events and training, and giving assistance on equality and diversity issues.

3.2.5. Equality and diversity coordinators

The Equality and Diversity Coordination Group (made up of the equality and diversity coordinators of each DG[105] and the EIDU) may draw up documents, notes and proposals for the secretary-general and directors-general on issues and matters of interest falling within its remit. The EIDU coordinates the group and acts as its secretariat. The heads of the resources unit/service of each DG are members ex officio of the group. Furthermore, the group liaises with the Human Resources Inter-DG Steering Group in order to pool resources.

3.2.6. Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity (COPEC)

The COPEC is composed of eight members and a chair (that are proposed by the director-general for personnel and the Staff Committee, and subsequently appointed by the Appointing Authority). COPEC aims to promote a tolerant and inclusive working environment, through participation in awareness raising events and other activities. COPEC proposes actions to ensure non-discrimination, issues opinions on rules stemming from the Staff Regulation, and monitors the proper

[104] High-Level Group Mandate 2014-2019 (PE 538.374/BUR/GT/REV) – EP Intranet only.

[105] It should be noted that as of June 2020, eight out of 13 DGs had not nominated an equality and diversity coordinator.

implementation of measures taken, in particular by sending observers to sit on various advisory committees.

3.2.7. Staff Committee

The Staff Committee represents the interests of the staff vis-à-vis their institution and maintains continuous contact between the institution and the staff. It is elected for a period of three years and all officials of the institution (and other servants holding a contract extending more than one year) are entitled to vote and to stand for election. At present, the Staff Committee is composed of 29 elected members. It is committed to achieving equality between men and women in Parliament. The current staff committee has a gender-balanced bureau, the top three positions in the committee are currently held by women and 45 % of its elected members are women. It is chaired by a woman (Sandra Volante).

3.3. Integrating gender equality in the EP's policy-making

3.3.1. State of play and future action

State of play

In the EP, the FEMM committee plays a central role in incorporating a gender perspective in Parliament's legislative and non-legislative procedures across all policy fields. In particular, FEMM is the committee responsible for drafting Parliament's position on new Commission proposals for legislation in the field of gender equality and women's rights. In addition, FEMM's non-legislative own-initiative reports are a useful tool to raise awareness and stimulate debate on gender equality issues that are either new or less considered. Also, FEMM opinions and positions in the form of amendments[106] support the introduction of a gender perspective in the work of other committees. The appointment of two FEMM standing co-rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming, responsible for preparing FEMM's bi-annual reports on gender mainstreaming in the EP, at the start of the current term has put further emphasis on and increased the visibility of this matter. In addition, the GMN has, since its creation in 2009, served as an important platform to share information and practices amongst committees.[107]

However, as pointed out in a 2018 EP study[108] examining the state of play of gender mainstreaming in Parliament's committees and delegations, FEMM is rarely in the lead in relation to legislative procedures,[109] possibly affecting its impact and internal reputation/accreditation. A major part of FEMM's activities thus concentrate on influencing the work of other committees so that gender aspects are integrated in all policy fields. In this context, the study argues that FEMM enjoys a particular status as a 'horizontal' committee with competence for women's rights and gender equality in all policy fields (with particular emphasis on women on the labour market) which potentially enhances its capacity to integrate a gender perspective into a broad range of Parliament's work. By contrast, it also flags that this situation makes FEMM dependent on the

[106] Since 2017, the FEMM committee no longer adopts gender mainstreaming amendments, which are now replaced by 'positions in the form of amendments' (see Rule 56(4) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure).

[107] Note that the focus of this study is on FEMM as the main actor responsible for ensuring integration of a gender dimension in Parliament's work. As to the HLG, the focus of its work has been on promoting gender balance within Parliament's Secretariat, but might be subject to change in the future under the EP GAP and roadmap, as will be explained under Section 3.4. below).

[108] Updating the Study on Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament, Study, Policy Department C, DG IPOL, European Parliament, 2018.

[109] In the period under examination (July 2017-July 2018), FEMM has not been involved in any legislative procedure.

willingness of other committees to accept its intervention (provided through an opinion or position in the form of amendments).

In order to get a better idea of the actual impact of FEMM's work, the study looked in detail into the reports, opinions and amendments adopted between July 2017 and July 2018. Besides outlining the issues dealt with in nine own-initiative reports and one non-legislative report adopted during this period, the study assessed the impact of suggestions included in FEMM opinions and amendments by analysing if, and to what extent, FEMM contributions have been integrated in the reports adopted by the respective committees. In this context, it examined thirteen opinions and 213 positions in the form of amendments to six reports of other committees, drawing the following conclusions:

- Out of a total of 259 suggestions, almost half (47 %) were fully or partially integrated into the report of the lead committee;
- For opinions, the rate of inclusions of FEMM's suggestions in the work of the other committees amounted to 47.5 %. Most of FEMM's opinions – 8 out of 13 – had a high impact (i.e. over half of the suggestions tabled by it were included in the reports adopted by the lead committees), with the highest level of gender impact in AFET, CONT, CULT, EMPL and JURI, and the lowest in BUDG;
- For positions in the form of amendments, the rate of inclusions in the reports adopted by other committees amounted to 63 %, with 72 % thereof being fully approved. EMPL, LIBE and PETI had the highest rates of inclusion, while ECON had the lowest.

In general terms, the study found that, while the EP legal and institutional framework supporting gender mainstreaming in the EP was formally well developed, gender mainstreaming in the work of parliamentary committees was still highly variable and essentially voluntary, resulting in a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality in some areas and little or no apparent activity in others. As a consequence, the study stressed the need to provide actors in the EP with appropriate tools to gain a sound understanding of gender mainstreaming and for committees to avail themselves of in-house and external expertise to raise their awareness of the extent to which gender equality and women's rights needed to be improved in their area of competence, possibly contributing to a greater ownership of the gender mainstreaming process of each committee.

In relation to Parliament's administration (i.e. the EP's Secretariat), the study recommended, in particular, to support training for permanent staff on the philosophy and technicalities of impact assessment and gender equality, and to promote specific studies on the issues of gender impact assessment and gender budgeting. In order to improve the functioning of the GMN, the study suggested to increase the possibility of setting minimum common objectives and topics, of receiving more specialised training and of exploring different policy issues other than those that were normally considered in a gender perspective.

Without putting into question the usefulness of the 2018 study (and a similar exercise carried out in 2014) in order to get a better idea of FEMM's actual impact in the work of other committees, it, however, only provides a snapshot of the situation at a specific moment in time. While the 2018 study only looked at the period of July 2017 to July 2018, the 2014 study[110] examined FEMM's work between July 2011 and February 2013. Another limitation stems from the fact that both studies only looked at the committee stage, but did not analyse to what extent FEMM's positions were taken into account in the final EP resolutions. In order to improve the pertinence of similar exercises to be carried out in the future, continuous monitoring, including an analysis of whether FEMM

[110] Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament, Study, Policy Department C, DG IPOL, European Parliament, 2014.

suggestions made their way through to the final EP resolutions, could be appropriate. This, however, might require additional resources or re-focusing of current research activities within the EP. In terms of information management and in order to facilitate future monitoring activities in this context, it could be useful to include information on successful FEMM suggestions on a publicly accessible website (e.g. in Parliament's legislative observatory – OEIL).

It should be mentioned that when preparing its reports and opinions, FEMM draws upon several tools to support evidence-based policy-making, such as internal and external expertise (in particular studies, in-depth analyses, briefings and delegation papers commissioned by the European Parliamentary Research Service and the EP's policy departments), the organisation of hearings, workshops, inter-parliamentary committee meetings, conferences and ad-hoc delegations to a country or organisation of the committee's interest. In the past legislature, more than 44 events were held on key issues such as the implementation of EU funds aimed at fighting violence against women and girls, gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions, gender equal workplaces, tackling the gender pay gap, gender budgeting and work-life balance. Every year, FEMM also organises several events to celebrate International Women's Day. In addition, a gender equality week involving other parliament committees was organised for the first time in October 2020, and will be repeated in October 2021.[111]

However, as external expertise is at present not always gender balanced, the EP GAP encourages EP political structures, particularly committees and delegations, to address currently existing gender imbalances by favouring, in case of equivalent experience and qualifications, the under-represented sex. The EP GAP notes that, despite FEMM inviting all EP committees to include a call for gender balance in their action plans as regards paid experts and invited speakers when organising hearings or commissioning studies, action plans of only seven committees contain a higher degree of detail, ranging from setting a minimum of one female participant in each panel (SEDE) to a checklist to guide the implementation of the principle of gender equality (BUDG). As for the FEMM committee, during the last term, around 87 % of the invited external experts were female.

Future action under the new EP GAP and roadmap

The new EP GAP considers the capacity of FEMM opinions to have an impact on the texts adopted in the lead committees as limited and also sees the need to strengthen the GMN. As a consequence, the action plan and roadmap suggest a series of specific actions to be taken by end of 2021 and 2022 respectively, the details of which are outlined in the tables below.

In order to **strengthen gender impact analysis** of legislation and **develop gender mainstreaming** of the Parliament's legislative and non-legislative output, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 2 – EP roadmap: gender impact analysis and mainstreaming in policy-making

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Continue to develop gender mainstreaming of EP's legislative and non-legislative output, ensuring adequate gender input through FEMM's reports, opinions, amendments and any other relevant tools at its disposal (hearings, exchanges of views, structured	FEMM	End of 2021	

[111] Parliament launches its first European Gender Equality Week, FEMM Committee Press Release, October 2020.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
dialogue with the EC, fact-finding missions, studies etc.)			
Develop clear indicators to measure to which extent the input from FEMM has been incorporated in EP's final position [112]	FEMM (together with relevant services and bodies)	End of 2021	
Carry out a gender impact assessment for the relevant legislative initiative reports [113]	EP through its relevant services	End of 2021	Proportion of legislative initiative reports for which a gender impact assessment was done
Produce a guide, including a checklist, on how to incorporate the gender perspective in parliamentary work. Distribute guide to rapporteurs, shadow-rapporteurs and group staff when dealing with a file.	Relevant political structures (and Committee Secretariats/ distribution)	End of 2021	Guide on gender mainstreaming and checklist on gender mainstreaming produced.
Regularly invite EIGE and other relevant bodies and actors to GMN meetings to explore further methods and tools for improving gender mainstreaming in the legislative process.	FEMM and GMN	End of 2022	GMN Meetings in the presence of EIGE
Meet regularly to assess the situation in the committees and present findings to HLG and FEMM	GMN	End of 2022	

In order to better take account of **gender balance in external expertise**, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 3 – EP roadmap: gender balance in external expertise

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Make sure that, to the extent possible, panels are gender balanced and provide yearly monitoring report on the composition of panels (including gender-balance of authors of the documents produced, disaggregated by policy area)	Committees and other bodies organising conferences (and relevant services for monitoring report)	End of 2021	Gender distribution in panels of EP hearings, conferences and workshops and gender distribution among authors of EPRS and Policy Department publications

[112] This action might have the potential to tackle at least some of the shortcomings identified in relation to previous research (2014 and 2018 PolDep studies).
[113] See further details under Section 3.4.2.1.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Ensure that a fair proportion of the authors of external expertise requested by committees and delegations are of the under-represented gender	Directorates -General	End of 2022	Gender distribution among authors of external expertise requested by EP's committees and delegations
Report to the HLG on the basis of feedback received from the relevant DGs	Relevant services	End of 2022	

In order to **strengthen the GMN and its impact**, under the GAP, special attention should be paid to its decision-making procedures, as well as its role and status. In addition, the GMN should be politically and gender balanced. In order to enhance the level of gender expertise, all relevant parliamentary structures must engage with both external and internal experts in a systematic manner. In this context, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 4 – EP roadmap: developing gender expertise

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Continued close cooperation between GMN and Chair of FEMM and its two standing rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming (mutual invitation to each other's meetings, regular information exchange on the implementation of the roadmap and regular reporting by the standing rapporteurs to FEMM coordinators)	GMN, FEMM (Chair and standing rapporteurs)	End of 2021	
Continued efforts by GMN to further deepen its relations with committee and delegation secretariats (in particular by proposing initiatives to promote policies fostering gender equality in the areas of competence of each committee and delegation, setting and exchanging benchmarks for best practices)[114] and monitoring and periodic reporting on progress made to HLG and FEMM coordinators	GMN	End of 2021	
Structured cooperation between HLG, FEMM and GMN (including regular trilateral meetings and extraordinary meetings whenever appropriate in order to share information and issue joint thematic reports) and invitation to each other's relevant meetings	HLG, FEMM and GMN	End of 2021	Number of trilateral meetings of HLG, FEMM and GMN
Ensure that all EP publications include expertise (provided both in-house and	Relevant services	End of 2022	Proportion of publications focusing on gender equality

[114] It is not entirely clear to whom this is addressed. Although the text speaks of further deepening the GMN's relations with 'committee and delegation secretariats', it seems to be more addressed to other committees and delegations (as 'initiatives to promote policies fostering gender equality in the areas of competence of each committee and delegation' would probably be proposed to the latter rather than to their secretariats).

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
through external experts) on gender equality and systematically include information and an analysis of the gender dimension of the topic analysed			as a main topic or including a gender equality perspective of a topic not directly targeting gender equality[115]
Draw up annual report for HLG on implementation of this provision	Relevant services	End of 2022	Annual report on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in EPRS and Policy Departments' publications produced
Provide training on gender mainstreaming in legislative, non-legislative and budgetary procedures, to Members, group staff, parliamentary assistants and administrators supporting this work	Responsible DGs	End of 2022	Proportion of MEPs, APAs, group staff and staff in committee and delegation secretariats who followed a training on gender mainstreaming
Monitor take-up and effectiveness of such trainings, and report to the HLG	Relevant services	End of 2022	

Finally, in order to **strengthen Parliament's scrutiny of Commission action** (including Commission expenditure, administration and policies) in the area of gender equality, the GAP requires an assessment of the extent to which current practices in this area can be improved. The roadmap specifies the following actions (in addition to the regular oversight of the Commission's thematic actions done by the relevant committees):

Table 5 – EP roadmap: scrutiny of Commission action

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Monitor and examine annually the expenditure and measures implemented by EC to improve gender equality in each policy area (by internally preparing analyses, publishing externally commissioned analyses and enhancing the dialogue with the EC's relevant services).	In-house structures in charge	End of 2021	
Systematic presentation at, and discussion by, the relevant committees in charge.	In-house structures in charge and relevant EP committees	End of 2021	

[115] Note that, in this context, the roadmap also mentions the following possible indicators (albeit under 'oversight of gender equality' which appears to be the wrong place as this seems more linked to EP publications including a gender dimension rather than oversight of EC action on gender equality): 1) the number of studies other than the ones requested by FEMM that incorporate a gender equality dimension; 2) the number of studies linked to budgetary issues that incorporate a gender equality dimension and 3) the proportion of hearings other than those organised by FEMM, that included experts on gender equality as speakers.

3.3.2. Gender mainstreaming tools

While gender impact assessments are currently not mandatory during the legislative process and, similarly, gender budgeting is not yet done in the EP at the moment, the new EP GAP explores the introduction of a gender impact analysis of legislation and gender budgeting and how they could be integrated into the operations of Parliament and its committees.

3.3.3. Gender impact assessments

Although there is currently no requirement for gender impact assessments to be made during the legislative process, the 2021-2022 roadmap states that the EP will, by end of 2021 and through its relevant services, carry out a gender impact assessment for the relevant legislative initiative reports with the aim of including the gender perspective when drafting legislative proposals (as mentioned, the roadmap proposes the proportion of legislative initiative reports for which a gender impact assessment was done as a possible indicator in this context). By end of 2022, the GMN and the FEMM committee should regularly invite EIGE (and other relevant bodies and actors) to its meetings in order to explore further methods and tools for improving gender mainstreaming in the legislative process. The GMN will meet regularly to assess the situation in the committees and present its findings to the HLG and the FEMM committee. As mentioned, the indicator proposed in this context is (are) the meeting(s) of the GMN in the presence of EIGE.

Since the EC is primarily responsible for proposing new legislation and for assessing its impacts during the ex-ante impact assessment process, including with regard to gender, one issue likely to require further exploration is Parliament's role and capacities for scrutinising the quality of the EC's impact assessments (IAs) from a gender perspective. On the administrative side, Parliament's Research Service (EPRS) currently provides support to committees in their work on ex-ante impact assessment. Its Ex-ante Impact Assessment Unit routinely scrutinises the IAs drawn up by the EC to accompany legislative proposals, and can conduct additional impact assessments at the request of committees, where specific elements are lacking. It can also conduct IAs on Parliament's amendments to EC proposals.[116] Consideration could therefore be given to how EPRS – or another structure within Parliament – could further develop the capacity and expertise to carry out gender impact assessment, especially for legislative own-initiative reports, as requested under the EP GAP and roadmap.

3.3.4. Gender budgeting

The EP GAP notes that gender budgeting[117] is not yet being done either in the EP or in any other EU institution at the moment. Accordingly, a discussion process needs to be invigorated, starting from discussion with the most relevant committees (Committee on Budgets (BUDG) and Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT)).[118] In this respect, the EP GAP states that both BUDG and CONT included

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[116] Information from a reply by the European Parliamentary Research Service to an ECPRD Network Request on the gender impact of draft legislation from November 2020, accessible to parliaments participating in the network.

[117] See related EPRS studies:
- European Parliament, Directorate for Internal Policies, briefing on EU Gender budgeting - where do we stand? (2020);
- European Parliament, Directorate for Internal Policies, study on Gender responsive EU Budgeting, Update of the study 'The EU Budget for Gender Equality' and review of its conclusions and recommendations (2019).

[118] In the BUDG committee, MEP Alexandra Geese (Germany, Greens/EFA) is responsible for gender budgeting. The Greens/EFA have conducted a pilot project on gender budgeting for the European Parliament budget, Giovanna Badalassi, The gender budgeting report of the European Parliament: A preliminary study, Greens EFA in the European Parliament, April 2021. It should also be noted that on 3 September 2021, a webinar on 'A metholodology for Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget' was organised by the S&D group. See A methodology for Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget - Concept note.

the need for implementation of gender budgeting among the principal goals of their respective action plans. BUDG wants to incorporate the gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and take into consideration the input provided by FEMM during the budget procedure, while CONT aims to use the annual discharge procedure to assess whether the other institutions and bodies integrate gender mainstreaming requirements in the design and implementation of policies in their remits. CONT also wants to ensure that gender focus is a recurrent theme of CONT scrutiny of EU policies or spending programmes, as well as to increase awareness of gender budgeting as an important milestone in promoting gender mainstreaming.

The roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 6 – EP roadmap: gender budgeting

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Develop a guide on how to implement gender budgeting (with BUDG, CONT and FEMM committees taking the lead)	Relevant political structures	End of 2021	
Distribute the guide to rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs and group staff dealing with files linked to the budget	Committee secretariats (with GMN representatives playing a proactive role in their committees, in close cooperation with the committee secretariat and FEMM coordinators)	End of 2021	
Produce annual gender impact assessments to inform the draft report on the budget	Relevant services	End of 2021	Gender impact assessment on the Parliament budget produced
Organise annual meetings of GMN, HLG and FEMM, BUDG and CONT committees	Relevant services	End of 2021	Number of meetings between GMN, HLG and BUDG committee organised
Invite EIGE and EC to take stock of EC commitment under the MFF and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and further contribute with ideas on which measures and tools ought to be developed by the committees to further strengthen gender budgeting methodologies in the EP	FEMM, EIGE and EC	End of 2022	FEMM meeting with EIGE to discuss gender budgeting measures organised
Report on the outcome of stock-taking exercise to HLG	FEMM	End of 2022	

3.3.5. Considering gender aspects in international trade – a case study

Article 8 TFEU provides that 'in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality between men and women'.

This principle applies to all policy areas and thus to all EP committees. While the will to consider the gender angle (and/or to integrate a gender perspective by taking over the amendments submitted by FEMM) varied across Parliament's committees in the past,[119] as explained, the Committee for International Trade (INTA) is a Parliament committee that has, in the past legislature, actively tried to mainstream gender perspectives in its thinking, own-initiative reports and recommendations.

This is not only reflected in the reports adopted by INTA in this context, but also in the fact that – as trade policy issues discussed by this committee can have differing gender impacts across the various sectors of the economy and current EU trade policy lacks a gender perspective[120] – INTA commissioned several internal studies to get a better understanding of the gender dimension of trade agreements.

In this context, a 2015 in-depth analysis on the gender perspectives of EU trade policy, for example, clearly demonstrates INTA's (and Parliament's) interest in the issue.[121] It also shows Parliament's engagement with the narrative on the need to better look at gender issues in trade and, by doing so, to ensure that, ultimately, both sexes can take advantage of the benefits of trade liberalisation and be protected from its negative effects. The 2017 European Implementation Assessment[122] on the effects of human rights related clauses in the EU-Mexico Global Agreement and the EU-Chile Association Agreement as well as the 2018 European Implementation Assessment[123] on the trade pillar in the EU-Central America Association Agreement, carried out in the framework of implementation reports prepared by INTA, show that this political will has been put into practice and how it has been done. It is also worth noting that INTA specifically requested gender aspects of trade policy to be taken into account as a standard feature of EP studies.[124]

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119 Updating of the Study on Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament (pp. 7-8), Study, Policy Department C, European Parliament, 2018.

120 2017 Wide+ Gender and Trade position paper.

121 Although not specifically prepared upon request by INTA, a 2016 study on gender equality in trade agreements (prepared by the Parliament's Policy Department C upon request by FEMM) and a 2019 briefing on gender equality and trade (prepared by DG EPRS ahead of plenary) are also indicators of Parliament's increased interest in the issue.

122 See pp. 86-87 (Women's rights in EU-Mexico Global Agreement) and pp. 153-155 (Women's rights in EU-Chile Association Agreement).

123 As explained on pp. 17-18, the ex-ante impact assessment of the EU-Central America AA commissioned by the European Commission highlighted, inter alia, that if the EU insisted upon standards being met in the production of goods to be exported there and the implementation of ILO conventions, then this could benefit Central American workers, in particular the most vulnerable groups (women, children and indigenous populations). On p. 35, the study explains that despite some positive results from the monitoring mechanisms of the EU-Central America AA in facilitating implementation of the TSD chapter, progress in this field has been mixed and some key challenges persist. For instance, vulnerable groups such as women, children and indigenous populations suffer from disadvantaged positions. Females have higher rates of unemployment and lower salaries.

124 It is important to note that this move towards considering the impact of trade agreements on gender equality is part of a growing interest in the impact of EU trade agreements on social and human rights, going beyond the purely economic benefits of such agreements. This can be seen also in the increasing interest in the implementation of TSD chapters in EU trade agreements, as shown, inter alia, in the 2018 Implementation Assessment on the trade pillar in the EU-Central America Association Agreement and the 2018 Impact Assessment on the generalised scheme of preferences regulation, both carried out in the framework of implementation reports by INTA.

While Parliament's 2015 resolution on the EU strategy for equality between women and men post-2015[125] – which stressed the need to integrate the gender perspective and the fight against gender violence into EU international trade policy, and called on the EC to work for the recognition of women's rights as human rights and for making their respect mandatory in all EU partnerships and bilateral negotiations – was prepared by FEMM as the lead committee, other subsequent EP resolutions were based on reports adopted by INTA in the lead or by INTA together with another committee, under the joint committee procedure.

The EP resolution on gender equality in trade agreements,[126] for instance, which was adopted in 2018, was based on a report drafted jointly by INTA and FEMM. The resolution stressed that all EU trade agreements must include an enforceable trade and sustainable development (TSD) chapter, and called for the inclusion in such agreements of core labour standards and of other international instruments on women's rights. It called for effective measures to combat the exploitation of women in export-oriented industries and stressed the need to collect gender-disaggregated data on the impact of trade. It further called for the reinforcement of corporate social responsibility and due diligence in free trade agreements.

In the past legislature, INTA as the lead committee also ensured incorporation of gender aspects in a number of EP resolutions. The EP 2019 resolution on the implementation of the trade pillar of the Association Agreement (AA) with Central America[127] highlighted that the trade pillar of the AA retrospectively lacked updated provisions on, inter alia, gender and trade, and strongly encouraged the parties to carry out evaluations on the basis of gender-disaggregated data in order to adequately assess the implementation of the agreement. Most importantly, the report recalled the EU's obligation under Article 8 TFEU and its commitment under the Buenos Aires Declaration on Gender and Trade, to mainstream gender equality into trade policy. In this context, it called on the parties to reinforce the gender focus of the agreement and to promote and support the inclusion, in a future review, of a specific gender chapter. In its 2017 recommendation on the negotiations of the modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association Agreement (AA),[128] Parliament recommended to ensure that the parties include a specific chapter on trade and gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, it recommended to ensure, inter alia, that the parties commit to collecting disaggregated data allowing for thorough ex ante and ex post analysis on the impact of the modernised AA on gender equality, to pursue an enhanced participation of women enterprises in public procurement and to ensure the inclusion of gender equality expertise in the negotiating teams and periodic discussions on the implementation of this specific chapter.

In the current term, INTA notably prepared the resolution on the Implementation of the common commercial policy – annual report 2018,[129] adopted in October 2020, which includes a specific section dedicated to gender and trade. Parliament therein called on EC and Council to propose negotiating a specific gender chapter in EU trade and investment agreements. Moreover, it noted that the 26 sustainability impact assessments completed as of June 2017 by the EC did not include any specific statistics on trade and gender and that the 2018 implementation report did not provide

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125 European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015 (2014/2152(INI)).

126 European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements (2017/2015(INI)).

127 European Parliament implementation report of 16 January 2019 on the implementation of the Trade Pillar of the Association Agreement with Central America (2018/2106(INI)).

128 European Parliament recommendation of 14 September 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association Agreement.

129 European Parliament resolution of 7 October 2020 on the implementation of the common commercial policy – annual report 2018 (2019/2197(INI)).

any data either. It therefore insisted on the need to start collecting gender-disaggregated data. Parliament also called on the EC to make sure that the composition of the Domestic Advisory Groups was gender-balanced and that a trade and gender committee was established under each free trade agreement.

Similarly, in a resolution on gender equality in the EU's foreign and security policy,[130] also adopted in October 2020, Parliament called for a values-based EU trade policy, ensuring a high level of protection for labour and environmental rights and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality. It recalled that all EU trade and investment agreements had to be gender mainstreamed and include an ambitious and enforceable TSD chapter. Importantly, it also stressed the need to include country- and sector-specific gender impact of EU trade policy and agreements in ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments. Moreover, it welcomed the EC's commitment to ensuring, 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 called for the promotion of and support for the inclusion of such chapters in all further EU trade and investment agreements, building on existing international examples and on the basis of their added value following the assessments carried out. This resolution was prepared by FEMM as the lead committee (and can thus be seen as a concrete example of FEMM's horizontal competence).

3.4. Balanced representation of women and men at all levels and a gender-sensitive working environment

Ensuring a high representation of women in the EP increases the level of democratic representation of all EU citizens and helps Parliament to achieve gender mainstreaming more effectively, whether in the context of EU-wide legislation and policies or within its internal structures and bodies, including its Secretariat.

In order to achieve gender balance at all levels of Parliament and make sure that the EP is not only a place where women can work, but also one where women want to work and contribute, it is crucial to create a gender-sensitive working environment. This includes, inter alia, availability of a wide range of work-life balance measures (the use of which by men and women alike is widely accepted), anti-harassment policies, professional training and measures for women's equal career progression, the use of gender-neutral language in all communications, and measures to ensure that the physical spaces reflect diversity.

While in the past the HLG was the main actor responsible for promoting and implementing balanced representation of women in Parliament's Secretariat, without having a direct role in ensuring the integration of gender perspectives in Parliament's policy-making, its role might change under the EP GAP and roadmap in the future. This is due to the fact that, as explained, the EP GAP and roadmap for the first time also cover the political side of the EP and that the HLG will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the roadmap (which includes action to strengthen Parliament's gender mainstreaming in the wider sense i.e. action to promote gender balance and inclusion of gender perspectives in Parliament's policy-making).

The following sections outline the state of play as well as future action under the EP GAP and roadmap in relation to 1) gender balance and 2) a gender-sensitive working environment. In line

[130] European Parliament resolution of 23 October 2020 on Gender Equality in EU's foreign and security policy (2019/2167(INI)).

with the EP GAP and roadmap, they make a distinction between the political level (Section 3.4.1.) and Parliament's Secretariat (Section 3.4.2).

3.4.1. The political level (Women MEPs and female representation in EP governing bodies)

Gender balance at political level

State of play

As to women MEPs, the trend over the past years has been generally positive. After rising to 36.4 % in 2019 and 39.6 % in 2020, the percentage of women MEPs today stands at 39.1 %. The representation of women in the EP is therefore higher than the world average (25.5 % in April 2021[131]) and the EU average (30.4 % in early 2021[132]) for national parliaments. Yet, men today still comprise a larger proportion of MEPs than women (60.9 %). While half of the Member States have at least 40 % of each gender among their MEPs, the majority of members in the remaining portion are men. Most notably, men account for 85 % of MEPs for Romania and Cyprus has no women MEPs at all.

With the exception of the position of the EP president (which has not been held by a woman since January 2002), a similar trend could be observed in some of the EP governing bodies and other decision-making positions ('vertical balance'). Accordingly, the EP Bureau (composed of the EP president, 14 vice-presidents and five quaestors) is, since 2020, fully gender balanced (with eight female vice-presidents out of 14 and two female quaestors out of five), while the number of female committee chairs, in early 2021, stood at 11 out of 27 committees[133] and at 13 out of 44 delegations for female delegation chairs.[134]

Future action under the new EP GAP and roadmap

However, as parity has so far not been achieved in all EP governing bodies (such as the Conference of Presidents,[135] Conference of Committee Chairs, Conference of Delegations' Chairs or in committee bureaux) and in order to also improve horizontal balance at all levels of committees' and delegations' work, the new EP GAP aims, for the first time, to extend its own scope beyond the EP Secretariat. In this context, the EP GAP considers that horizontal balance at the level of committees, delegations etc. is less visible for some of them, including the distribution of rapporteurships. With a view to the political nature of the issue, the active engagement of the political leadership is needed. Horizontal balance must be promoted and respected at all levels of committees and delegations' work (election of chairs and vice-chairs, appointment of coordinators,[136] rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs, invitation of speakers for committee hearings, etc.). It is worth noting that Parliament, in a decision on the revision of Parliament's Rules of Procedure adopted in July 2021,

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131 Inter-Parliamentary Union, Global and regional averages of women in national parliaments.

132 Women in the European Parliament, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit, DG Personnel, European Parliament, March 2021.

133 This number includes Parliament's 21 standing committees, three sub-committees and three special committees.

134 Women in the European Parliament, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit, DG Personnel, March 2021.

135 In January 2021, the Conference of Presidents (CoP) was composed of three female members out of 11 (including the EP president).

136 An analysis of gender balance amongst coordinators is set out in J. Kantola and L. Rolandsen Agustin, 'Gendering the representative work of the European Parliament: A political analysis of women MEP's perceptions of gender equality in party groups', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 4, May 2019, pp. 768-786. The research found that the strongest representation of female coordinators (five out of seven or more) was to be found in culture and education, petitions, employment and social affairs, civil liberties, justice and home affairs and women's rights and gender equality. The weakest (one female coordinator or none) was in budgetary control, agriculture, industry research and energy, money laundering, and tax avoidance and tax evasion.

endorsed an amendment to Rule 213 aimed at imposing gender parity for Committee bureaux as of 2024.[137]

In relation to horizontal balance in committees and delegations, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 7 – EP roadmap: gender balance in committees and delegations

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Provide annual statistics on the gender balance within committees and delegations (early on during each constitutive process, and to ensure an improved gender balance in the leadership of committees, delegations and other bodies, nominations of candidates from both genders should be considered)	Committees and delegations	End of 2021	Gender distribution among: 1) full and substitute members per committee/delegation; 2) rapporteurs of legislative and non-legislative reports per committee; 3) rapporteurs of legislative and non-legislative opinions per committee; 4) coordinators per committee; 5) members of the Bureau per committee/delegation; 6) chairs of committees and delegations; 7) the Conference of Presidents; 8) the Conference of Committee/Delegation Chairs; 9) the Bureau; and 10) among quaestors
Provide annual statistics on gender balance (both within the committee and its Secretariat) and include them in committee gender action plans	Committees and delegations	End of 2022	
Discuss issue further in order to identify best practices and potential solutions to gender imbalances (which will have to be reported to the HLG and FEMM coordinators)	GMN	End of 2022	

Gender-sensitive working environment at political level

State of play and future action under the new EP GAP and roadmap

The EP GAP intends to build upon previous achievements by continuing to strengthen and develop Parliament's zero-tolerance harassment policies, encouraging gender-sensitivity and the widespread usage of gender-neutral language in all communications, and ensuring that the EP's physical spaces reflect the diversity of Europe, through building names, artwork or staffing. It also recommends to examine the work-life balance offered to elected members and staff, a topic of particular relevance after the EP's sudden move to teleworking due to the coronavirus pandemic.

[137] European Parliament decision of 7 July 2021 on amendments to Parliament's Rules of Procedure concerning Rules 99, 197, 213, 214, 222, 223, 230, 235 and Annex V, and on insertion of a new Rule 106a (2021/2048(REG)).

As to measures against sexual and psychological harassment, Parliament, in 2017, adopted a dedicated resolution.[138] Parliament's 2019 resolution on gender mainstreaming in the EP also includes a specific section on harassment, as mentioned.[139] At present, there are two advisory committees[140] that are responsible for dealing with harassment complaints respectively involving Members and among staff members.[141] Sexual harassment is considered as discrimination based on gender.[142] According to the EP GAP, it is thus an important aspect of ensuring gender equality, both in the political and administrative parts of Parliament, that there is no harassment between Members, in relations between Members and staff and between staff members. The EP GAP foresees regular review of Parliament's policies and procedures in order to ensure that the zero tolerance policy is effectively implemented, both regarding preventive and protective measures and complaint resolution, and that it is well known by all Members and staff.

More specifically, the roadmap requires the following actions:

Table 8 – EP roadmap: strengthening gender sensitivity at the political level

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Enlarge the network of confidential counsellors with highly qualified and trusted staff (receiving full training support and specialisation)	Not specified	End of 2021	Number of confidential counsellors
Continue to raise awareness about existing harassment prevention and protection measures to Members and staff, using various platforms (intranet, Newshound, presentations, etc.), with special emphasis at the beginning of the parliamentary term	DG Personnel	End of 2021	Recommendations on EP's harassment prevention policies produced
Further develop training courses for MEPs, all the staff of EP services, political	DG Personnel	End of 2021	Proportion of MEPs, managers of political groups, managers

138 European Parliament resolution of 26 October 2017 on combating sexual harassment and abuse in the EU (2017/2897(RSP)).

139 See, in particular, paragraphs 22-25. In paragraph 24, plenary requested mandatory training for MEPs and staff, establishment of a task force of independent, external experts to examine the situation of sexual harassment in the EP and the functioning of its two harassment committees, and to merge these into one sole committee with a variable composition depending on the case under examination and including experts such as lawyers and doctors as standing members of the committee.

140 The Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace, established in 2000 by a decision of the secretary-general, deals with cases of harassment between all staff members (including trainees and accredited parliamentary assistants). It listens to anyone who considers that he/she is a victim of harassment and works autonomously, independently and on a strictly confidential basis. The committee's main tasks are to foster a calm and productive working environment, prevent and/or stop harassment of staff (officials and other servants), act as a conciliator and mediator, provide training and information, and play an active role within Parliament's existing health promotion network. The Committee has no authority to take administrative or disciplinary measures against anyone within Parliament. By contrast, the Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members of the European Parliament deals exclusively with cases of harassment concerning Members. Its principal tasks are to prevent and/or stop any harassment, and to act as a consultative body for the president of the Parliament in enquiring and issuing a recommendation on formal harassment complaints against Members of Parliament. It also works with complete autonomy, independence and confidentiality. Its deliberations are secret.

141 The procedure for cases concerning Members was introduced in 2014 and revised in 2015 and in 2018 (when it was extended to cover complaints against MEPs from all categories of staff, not only parliamentary assistants. The procedure for cases between staff members was introduced in 2004 and last revised in 2006.

142 Article 12a of the Staff Regulations.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
groups and APAs, on harassment prevention issues, including a bystander intervention aspect (and widely advertise them and strongly encourage the largest possible attendance)			of the EP administration, APAs, group staff and staff of EP administration who followed a training on prevention against harassment
Undertake targeted training on harassment prevention (within the framework of the induction modules offered in the Jean Monnet House)	All new EP managers	End of 2022	Proportion of (new) managers who followed a targeted training on harassment prevention

In order to identify which types of work-life balance measures are most useful for MEPs, APAs, and staff of political groups, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 9 – EP roadmap: strengthening work-life balance at the political level

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Prepare a survey on work-life balance measures, and seek EIGE's input on the matter	Relevant services (survey), HLG (EIGE input)	End of 2021	
Study which work-life balance measures could be most effective and make recommendations for work-life balance policies, taking into account the survey and existing practices in other parliaments, for consideration by the EP Bureau	HLG, EP Bureau	End of 2021	1) Number of measures proposed to improve work-life balance for MEPs, APAs and staff of political groups endorsed by the Bureau; 2) analysis of spaces dedicated to childcare produced

Ensuring that gender-neutral language is used in the legislative procedure and in legislation is an important contribution to gender equality. In 2008, the EP was one of the first international institutions to introduce gender-neutral language guidelines (updated in 2018).[143] Under the EP GAP, an assessment needs to be made on the procedure to put them into practice. The roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 10 – EP roadmap: gender-neutral language

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Raise awareness of the guidelines and establish a monitoring system to analyse the use of gender-neutral language in legislative texts	DGs involved	End of 2021	Establishment of monitoring system
Provide training on gender-sensitive language to all administrators in the committees, secretariats, lawyer-linguists and translators, starting from those in charge of preparing legislative texts	Relevant services	End of 2021	Proportion of administrators in committee secretariats, lawyer-linguists and translators who followed a training on gender-neutral language in legislation

[143] Revised 2018 EP guidelines on gender-neutral language.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Report to HLG on take-up and effectiveness of trainings	Relevant services	End of 2022	
Send summary report to GMN and FEMM committee coordinators	Not specified	End of 2022	

As to gender equality in Parliament's external communication, under the EP GAP special attention needs to be put to events dedicated to gender equality and women's rights, gender balance in parliamentary delegations, the existence of a section on gender equality on the website, the existence of specific policies on gender equality in official communications, the regular dissemination of gender equality initiatives in the Parliament, the extent to which official communication is free of gendered stereotypes, at both linguistic and content level, etc.

The roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 11 – EP roadmap: gender equality in external communication

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Development of a communication policy for the launch of the EP gender action plan and its roadmap	DG COMM	End of 2021	
Report on existing guidelines, tools etc. to incorporate gender equality in Parliament's external communication	DG COMM	End of 2021	Report produced
Develop strategy for implementing and monitoring gender-responsive and sensitive communication	DGs involved	End of 2021	Report produced on existing mechanisms to incorporate gender-responsive perspective in EP's internal communications and its monitoring
Develop media or social media actions for key international awareness raising days to promote gender equality rights such as the International Women's Day	Relevant services	End of 2021	
Continue efforts to make visits to the EP inclusive and to give visibility to gender equality and diversity aspects	Relevant services	End of 2021	
Report on the prizes awarded by the EP, such as the Sakharov prize, analysing the gender balance of the awards and exploring how to mainstream gender into the regular reports drawn up on the awards	Relevant services	End of 2021	Gender-responsive report produced on EP prizes
Make proposals to improve the inclusion of gender equality in Parliament's external communication (based on monitoring report by DG COMM by end of 2021)	HLG	End of 2022	Revision of the existing tools for external communications done
Make recommendations for possible changes to procedures to award prizes,	HLG	End of 2022	

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
with the aim of improving gender-sensitivity and the visibility of the under-represented gender			

Finally, with few buildings/sectors etc. named after women in the EP, and relatively few pieces of art by female artists on public display in the EP, the EP GAP identified the need to look at the issue of symbolic representation more systematically, developing concrete plans/steps when planning on future names of buildings, art purchases and displays etc. In addition, a gender-sensitive parliament will also attempt to ensure that its physical spaces and staffing arrangements are equally welcoming and accommodating for everybody. The roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 12 – EP roadmap: symbolic representation of women

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Discuss the lack of gender balance at the level of building/other locations' names and proposal to the Bureau for female names to be used as a priority in the future (the members of the HLG, the FEMM standing rapporteurs for gender mainstreaming and the FEMM chair will receive data on the current names of the buildings and other locations to inform this work)	HLG	End of 2021	Proportion of buildings and other types of locations named after a woman
Issue gender-disaggregated mapping of the existing EP artworks, and set up a temporary exhibition of pieces by female artists in their possession	DGs responsible	End of 2021	1) number of artworks by female artists purchased in proportion to full numbers of art works purchased (per year); 2) proportion of EP artwork produced by female artists
Produce an analysis of spaces dedicated to childcare for MEPs, staff and visitors in the EP premises	Relevant DGs	End of 2021	
Continue to make art purchases and acquisitions with a gender lens to ensure more female artwork is acquired/purchased, with an emphasis on young artists	DGs involved	End of 2022	Plan developed for future art purchases
Organise temporary exhibitions of female artists or artists of all genders dealing with gender themes, in the Parliament premises	DGs involved	End of 2022	

3.4.2. Parliament's Secretariat

Gender Balance in Parliament's Secretariat

State of play

In order to increase the percentage of women in management positions in the EP Secretariat ('vertical gender balance'), concrete targets have been set and increased over the years in reports and action plans adopted by the Bureau.

According to the Papadimoulis report, women were, by 2019, to occupy 40 % of head of unit (HoU), 35 % of director and 30 % of director-general positions, with a minimum requirement of 30 % of female HoUs and directors by DG. In January 2020, the Bureau further increased these targets (50 % female HoUs and directors and 40 % female director-generals), to be achieved by the end of the legislature in 2024. While at present gender parity has been reached at directors level (with 28 directors out of 56 being female), further efforts will be needed for HoUs (currently 39 %, with 117 female HoUs out of 298) and, in particular, director-generals (currently 23 %, with three female director-generals out of 14).[144]

Future action under the new EP GAP and roadmap

As 'horizontal gender balance' varies considerably amongst DGs and units, the EP GAP suggests to explore the reasons for some DGs being currently more imbalanced than others in order to identify actions to address this. To this end, measures such as individual action plans at DG level shall be developed.

In relation to 'vertical' and 'horizontal' gender balance', the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 13 – EP roadmap: gender balance in the Secretariat

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Consistently apply positive discrimination when recruiting for senior posts (a consequence, if their merits e.g. qualifications, experience etc. are equal, candidates from the under-represented gender shall be preferred in their report to the EP Bureau as Appointing Authority)	Selection board	End of 2021	Gender distribution in senior posts per type of post.
Develop a self-assessment tool to see the state of play of gender balance for each DG and policy stream, and jointly identify reasons for any lack of gender balance	Relevant services	End of 2021	Self-assessment tool developed
Propose concrete actions to remedy any existing or foreseeable imbalances	Relevant services	End of 2021	
Collect periodic reports from the directorates-general and regularly report on the progress made to the secretary-general	Relevant services	End of 2021	
Report for discussion to the HLG, with special attention given to possible remedial actions if results are unbalanced	Secretary-General	End of 2021	Report produced on horizontal balance in the EP administration
Use available staff communication platforms (Newshound, EP intranet, etc.)	Relevant services	End of 2022	Number of success stories posted

144 2021, Women in the EP, p. 6.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
to share positive examples/success stories of staff members working in DGs/job categories where their gender is under-represented			
Provide support to (formalised and non-formalised) gender-related networks, with the aim of promoting horizontal and vertical gender balance	Relevant services	End of 2022	Number of formalised/non-formalised gender-related networks

Gender-sensitive working environment in Parliament's Secretariat

State of play

While a wide range of work-life balance measures is already in place in the EP, the new EP GAP and its roadmap outline a number of concrete actions, focusing, in particular, on more gender-balanced use, as these measures (such as working part-time, parental or family leave, leave on personal grounds or teleworking) are at the moment mostly used by women.[145] This, however, could have a negative impact on their careers.

Future action under the new EP GAP and roadmap

In order to ensure alignment with the Work-Life Balance Directive,[146] adopted in 2019, and to attain equal distribution of unpaid care work, the roadmap lays down the following actions:

Table 14 – EP roadmap: strengthening work life balance for the secretariat-general

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Monitor the patterns of meeting organisation in the EP (both by administration and political groups) and discourage regular organisation of meetings and events outside of the official working hours/crèche opening hours	Not specified	End of 2021	Proportion of meetings and events organised outside official working hours
Examine flexible working arrangements that EP offers to staff	Not specified	End of 2021	
Promote male role models using work-life balance measures at all levels (including senior management) to reduce risks of inequalities arising from use of these measures and their stereotyping as measures for women	Not specified	End of 2021	
Raise awareness of diverse family models and their specific needs in terms of work-life balance and family care, and ensure	Not specified	End of 2021	

[145] According to the 2021 'Women in the EP' brochure, pp. 10-11, in 2020, of all staff (including officials and temporary staff, but excluding political group staff) working part-time, 45.1 % were women compared to 18.4 % of men. As to staff on full-time parental leave, around 74 % of ADs, 73 % of ASTs and nearly 90 % of AST/SCs were female in 2020.

[146] Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
full application of the work-life balance measures and provisions in such cases			
Organise regular surveys and moderated conversations with staff on perceived issues related to the use of work-life balance measures	DG PERS	End of 2021	Number of moderated conversations organised
Develop guidance in order to foster an exchange among managers on good practices in managing staff making use of teleworking, flexible working arrangements/part-time while ensuring that these measures do not have adverse effects on career progression, job security, remuneration levels and efficiency	Not specified	End of 2021	System to foster an exchange among managers on good practices established
Perform a gender-sensitivity analysis of teleworking in the EP (taking into account lessons learned so far, to be used for future positive advancement of teleworking to the benefit of all genders, in particular in the context of the increased use of teleworking due to the pandemic	Not specified	End of 2021	Analysis produced
Monitor teleworking conditions and seek input from staff about their satisfaction and needs	Relevant	End of 2021	
Develop further teleworking possibilities in order to offer staff that are parents or carers an opportunity to work full-time while better enabling them, in accordance with the EU directive on work-life balance, to also fulfil their care tasks	Not specified	End of 2022	Proportion of women/men using teleworking arrangements in each job category
Monitor the need for places in Parliament crèches and proactively adjust the numbers of places to meet the needs expressed and forecast		End of 2022	

In terms of training and career progression, the roadmap foresees the following actions:

Table 15 – EP roadmap: training and career progression in the Secretariat

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Include equality, inclusion and diversity dimensions in all relevant training courses, particularly in management and leadership courses	Relevant services	End of 2021	Proportion of newcomers, HoUs, senior managers and staff of EP administration who followed a course on gender mainstreaming

ACTION	Main actor	Deadline	Indicator
Design and organise specific thematic induction courses for newcomers and HoUs	Relevant services	End of 2021	Proportion of newcomers and HoUs who followed a course on gender mainstreaming
Organise specific training on gender budgeting for staff working in the area	Relevant services	End of 2021	
Raise awareness of female HoUs on existing training programmes and coaching activities, and support these programmes in order to build a pipeline for future senior management appointments	Not specified	End of 2021	Proportion of HoUs who followed training programmes and coaching to prepare for future senior management appointments
Encourage directorate-generals and their learning and development advisors to share training initiatives developed by them around equality, inclusion and diversity in order to create synergies and partnerships, and to maximise impact	Not specified	End of 2021	
Ensure that the group of participants of each 'Growing Talent' programme is gender balanced	Not specified	End of 2021	Gender distribution among participants in each Growing Talent programme
Stress gender balance in calls for tender for training and coaching services, assess contractors on the way they integrate these dimensions in their programmes, encourage the proposal of both female and male external trainers and coaches, and generate statistics on an annual basis to examine progress	Relevant services	End of 2022	Gender distribution among trainers and the proportion of calls for tenders for trainings with a clause on gender mainstreaming
Collect the feedback and report on the outcomes to the HLG and send a summary report the GMN and FEMM committee coordinators	DG PERS	End of 2022	
Do utmost to respect gender balance when selecting senior managers participating in external training courses, temporary placements to other organisations and fellowships (existing university fellowships for senior staffers, temporary placements in the fellow EU institutions, EU delegations, DG envoys to the European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLOs), etc.)	DGs involved	End of 2022	Proportion per gender of senior managers participating in external training courses, temporary placements to other organisations and fellowships
Ensure equal share of female role models in mentoring and coaching activities of talent management programmes	Relevant services	End of 2022	

3.5. Evaluation and monitoring of implementation

In terms of ex-post evaluation, FEMM is required to draw up regular, non-legislative reports to be submitted to plenary, assessing gender mainstreaming in the work of parliamentary committees and delegations, including an assessment of failures to incorporate the gender dimension. These resolutions thus serve as a monitoring tool. As explained under Section 3.1., resolutions on the state of play of gender mainstreaming in the EP have been adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2019 respectively.[147] Moreover, on the basis of a request by FEMM, parliamentary services have carried out studies evaluating gender mainstreaming in Parliament's committees and delegations in 2014 and 2018, as mentioned.

Regarding gender balance in the Secretariat, in 2017 the Bureau adopted a report assessing progress over the past decade, followed by a roadmap for action to be taken from 2017 to 2019, as mentioned. On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Parliament's Equality and Diversity Unit of DG Personnel publishes, each year, detailed statistics on gender balance at all levels of the EP and work-life balance ('Women in the EP' brochure). It should be noted that Parliament, in its 2016 resolution, specifically called for a yearly analysis of the state of play of gender equality within Parliament, based on gender-disaggregated data, at all levels of staff and political bodies, including parliamentary assistants, and for this reporting to be made public. The before-mentioned publication seems to comply with this request. In relation to work-life balance, however, it is worth noting that the statistics on staff working part time only provide information regarding officials and temporary staff (and thus no information regarding this aspect for the political groups and APAs).

As mentioned, the new EP GAP will be implemented by a roadmap for a period of two years containing concrete actions with timelines (milestones) and, where relevant, binding measures. In order to facilitate the monitoring of progress towards the specific targets, the roadmap proposes, in its Annex, a number of possible indicators.

In line with Rule 228a of the EP Rules of Procedure, the HLG will have to report bi-annually to the Bureau on the implementation of the actions and share its reporting with all relevant actors. The EP GAP will have to be reviewed at least every five years.

The roadmap includes several specific actions in relation to implementation and monitoring of the EP GAP, namely: 1) to enhance and continue cooperation with EIGE to review further the gender mainstreaming policies of the EP; 2) to appoint a person responsible (gender expert point) for the implementation of the roadmap in each DG and ask each political group to appoint a person responsible among its staff; 3) DG PERS shall report bi-annually on the implementation of the EP GAP, using as a basis the list of indicators in the Annex; and 4) the HLG will review the roadmap bi-annually in light of the monitoring reports.

[147] See Section 3.1. for further details on the main findings of the resolutions.

4. Gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national Parliaments and international organisations

4.1. Gender mainstreaming in the European Commission and the Council of Ministers

4.1.1. European Commission (EC)

In 1996, prior to the constitutionalisation of gender mainstreaming through the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam (former Article 13 TEC, now Article 8 TFEU), the EC, in its communication on Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all community policies and activities, formalised its commitment to gender mainstreaming. An important step, considering that, as the EC enjoys the sole right of initiative of EU legislative proposals, the EC's commitment to and institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming (i.e. ensuring that gender mainstreaming becomes a normalised and stable part of the institution's functioning) is significant for the design, elaboration and implementation of Union policies and legislation. Currently, three gender equality approaches – equal treatment legislation, positive action initiatives and gender mainstreaming – co-exist within the EC.

On 5 March 2020, the Commission presented its EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025.[148] The strategy establishes policy objectives and actions to address gender equality challenges in Europe and 'seeks to include the gender perspective across all policy areas, at all levels and in all stages of policy-making'. It should be noted that, while the EC produced several strategies over time, it had been downgraded to a staff working document entitled Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019, under EC President Juncker. The von der Leyen Commission re-introduced the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025 in the form of a communication as part of its Union of Equality. Besides the commitment to improve the integration of a gender dimension in all major EC initiatives during the EC's mandate and setting up a task force for equality to ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming at operational and technical level, the strategy sets out targeted actions to address the following gender equality challenges: combating gender-based violence and challenging gender stereotypes; boosting women's economic empowerment and ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market, including equal pay; and giving both women and men the opportunity to lead and participate in all sectors of the economy and in political life.

The main actors responsible for gender mainstreaming in the EC are DG Justice and Consumers (JUST), DG Budget (BUDG)[149] and the EC's Secretariat-General. The coordination of gender mainstreaming across the EC's DGs is currently under the responsibility of DG JUST, led by Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli whose responsibilities encompass the implementation of

[148] Communication on A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, COM(2020) 152 final, 5.3.2020, European Commission.

[149] While the overall responsibility for gender mainstreaming lies with DG JUST, gender budgeting and reporting come under the competence of DG BUDG (and the DGs responsible for EU funding programmes).

the gender equality strategy.[150] Gender balance[151] within the EC (including work-life balance, anti-harassment policy etc.) comes under the responsibility of DG Human Resources and Security (HR).[152]

Within DG JUST, a dedicated Gender Equality Unit coordinates the EC's work on gender equality. It is consulted when new legislation is proposed and may take a leading role in relation to impact assessments.[153] In the context of the inter-service consultation, the Gender Equality Unit can make suggestions to reflect gender equality issues in proposals. It has a contact person for each DG, supporting them to include a gender perspective in their activities and processes, and also supports civil society organisations, as experts during consultations and public dialogue. The Gender Equality Unit is responsible for preparing annual gender equality reports.[154] In the context of the preparation of policies, DG JUST and the Gender Equality Unit organise public consultations and seminars with social partners on specific topics to gather input from a broad range of stakeholders.

Moreover, an Inter-Service Group (ISG) for Gender Equality, with members from all DGs and services at technical level, coordinates the implementation of actions for gender equality in their respective policies as well as the annual work programme for their respective policy area.[155] A Task Force on Equality was also established at the beginning of the mandate of the 2019-2024 von der Leyen Commission. It is composed of representatives from all EC services (at management level) and the European External Action Service. Its Secretariat is based in the EC Secretariat-General. According to the EC, the Task Force on Equality plays a key role in mainstreaming equality (not just gender equality) in all policies, from their design to their implementation. This includes providing strategic guidance, designing a toolbox for policy-makers, organising training and facilitating the work on equality by different services.[156] The task force meets around three times a year and is invited to the ISG meetings.[157]

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150 During previous terms, gender equality was under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, while, under the 2019-2024 von der Leyen Commission, there is now a dedicated commissioner for equality (even if this Commissioner is not only responsible for gender, but for all types of equality).

151 While the College of Commissioners is, at present, gender balanced, with 13 female (48.1 %) and 14 male (51.9 %) Commissioners, the EC aims to reach gender balance of 50 % at all levels of its management by the end of 2024. As of 1 December 2020, women in the EC constituted up to 43 % in management overall, specifically 41 % of senior management and 43 % of middle management. A majority of women (56 %) were also designated as deputies to Directors (2021 Gender equality report, European Commission, p. 43). On work-life balance measures etc., see 2017 EC communication on A better workplace for all: from equal opportunities towards diversity and inclusion, 2017 EC Diversity and Inclusion Charter.

152 It is worth noting that, in January 2021, the EC established a new Diversity and Inclusion Office responsible for development, implementation and monitoring of various initiatives addressing all aspects of diversity and inclusion amongst Commission staff, notably gender equality, in collaboration with the Task Force for Equality.

153 Such as, for example, on the impact assessment regarding the legislative initiative on preventing and combatting gender-based violence and domestic violence.

154 2021 Annual Report on Gender Equality in the EU, European Commission.

155 According to an interview held with the EC in April 2021 by the authors of this study, the ISG meets around twice a year (usually in spring and fall). However, the evaluation report of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 points out that there is no information about the functioning of the ISG, since there is no dedicated report about gender mainstreaming. A 2021 European Policy Analysis by the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (Sieps) therefore considers the situation of the ISG as 'opaque'.

156 According to the 2021 Sieps European Policy Analysis, at this stage, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this Task Force for promoting mainstreaming. As to the toolbox for policy-makers, the before-mentioned analysis considers that, as there is no trace of any formal document imposing their implementation and there is no report on gender mainstreaming by the EC, any such guidelines or toolboxes do not have the same standing as the Better Regulation Agenda. The interview with the EC in April 2021 confirmed that the toolbox was available, but only as an internal document.

157 In addition, some DGs (e.g. DG MOVE) have set up gender equality focal points and each DG is supposed to develop Gender Equality work plans covering their initiatives (interview with EC in April 2021).

Since 2015, the framework for policymaking in the Commission has been provided by the Better Regulation Agenda,[158] including Better Regulation Guidelines and a toolbox that encompass all stages of the policy-making process, providing, inter alia, rules for conducting impact assessment work from ex-ante impact assessment to ex-post policy evaluation. In this context, it is worth noting that the EC does not perform gender impact assessments as a separate, standalone exercise. Instead, it has integrated the consideration of gender aspects within its general impact assessment system (which follows an integrated approach, considering the potential economic, social and environmental consequences of initiatives in an integrated manner). The gender-related impacts are therefore currently addressed either as a social concern or a fundamental rights issue.[159]

As a matter of fact, however, and, as shown in an EPRS study appraising the quality of the EC's impact assessments from 2015 to 2018, social impacts are given less consideration than economic impacts, which remain predominant, and gender equality-related impacts feature rarely in the EC's impact assessments.[160] The findings of this study relating to the limited consideration of the gender dimension concur with the findings of the Commission's Regulatory Scrutiny Board, an independent quality controller of draft impact assessments within the Commission. In its 2018 report, the board indicated that gender impacts were rarely addressed in the IAs for the period of 2017-2018. In its annual report 2020, the board noted that some impacts, like social impacts, were not always well analysed. Out of 41 IAs last year, social impacts were analysed in 30 cases and fundamental rights in 10 cases.

The gap between the high-level commitments to promoting gender equality[161] and their actual implementation has also been highlighted in the Court of Auditors' recent report on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget.[162] The court found that the EC had not yet lived up to its commitment to gender mainstreaming in the EU budget. In particular, the EC's strategy for gender equality did not sufficiently promote the use of gender mainstreaming, and its institutional framework, although it had been reinforced, did not yet fully support gender mainstreaming. The court also considered that gender equality was not adequately taken into account in the EU's budget cycle, that the EC paid little attention to gender analysis of the policies and programmes assessed and that only few gender-related objectives were set. In this context, it highlighted the absence of a methodology for tracking funds allocated by DGs to support gender equality and the

158 In April 2021, the EC adopted a communication drawing lessons from the Better Regulation stocktaking review carried out in 2019. In the context of improved impact assessments, the communication, on p. 14, states: 'We will pay greater attention to the gender equality dimension as well as equality for all, to give it consistent consideration in all stages of policymaking.' The EC is expected to present revised Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox still in 2021.

159 As raised in the 2021 Sieps European Policy Analysis, the guidelines and toolbox do not provide clear guidance for gender mainstreaming with an incoherence between the two with respect to how gender inequality is understood (as a social or fundamental rights issue).

160 According to the 2019 EPRS study on Appraising the quality of the European Commission's impact assessments (2015-2018),this was the case only in one out of 132 impact assessments appraised under this review.

161 Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, stated in her political guidelines that the Commission will systematically address the way laws impact the decisions women take throughout their lives in the European gender strategy. Furthermore, as part of the recent gender equality activity in the Commission, there have been efforts to integrate equality into key Commission priorities, e.g. relating to the Covid-19 recovery and the European Green Deal. When negotiating the 2014-2020 MFF, the EP, the Council and the Commission also agreed to apply 'gender-responsive elements' wherever appropriate in the budgetary procedures for the 2014-2020 MFF. This approach was reaffirmed for the 2021-2027 MFF and the Next Generation EU instrument. In July 2020, the European Council concluded that the 2021-2027 MFF should promote equal opportunities through gender mainstreaming.

162 In its report, the ECA assessed whether gender mainstreaming had been applied in the EU budget to promote equality between women and men from 2014 onwards. In particular, the Court assessed whether the EC's framework for supporting gender mainstreaming was appropriate, whether the EU's budget cycle took gender equality into account; and whether gender equality had been incorporated into five selected EU funding programmes which, taken together, represent 66 % of the 2014-2020 MFF.

lack of common indicators to monitor progress. The absence of an overall and consistent commitment to gender equality in EU policies and spending programmes was also flagged in previous EP study of 2019.

With a view to 'institutionalising' gender mainstreaming within the EC to ensure that gender mainstreaming becomes a normalised and stable part of the decision-making process, recent research comes to the conclusion that while there are examples of good practice within the EC[163], significant work remains to be done, encompassing not only the EC's policy process, but also the EC as an organisation. Although there is a commitment to gender mainstreaming, which is in principle mandatory, there is currently no system of incentives or sanctions, peer pressure, or accountability mechanisms in place to ensure compliance. Among others, lack of institutional ownership (i.e. that the gender mainstreaming agenda is owned by a senior official and their team in the EC's administration, with authority to ensure that gender mainstreaming is effectively implemented), a prevalent 'masculine' culture, limited gender expertise within the EC and lack of capacity, as well as weak consultation mechanisms, are identified as main barriers to the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

In conclusion, while further efforts will be needed to effectively implement gender mainstreaming in the EC, under the leadership of EC President von der Leyen there have been some recent developments that have the potential to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the EC. In this context, in April 2021, the EC adopted a new communication on Better Regulation, committing, inter alia, to improve the analysis and reporting of impacts, and pay greater attention also to the gender equality dimension in its impact assessments. The EC is also expected to adopt the revised Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox still this year, which will provide further concrete guidance to the EC services when preparing new initiatives. It is to be seen in which way the commitment announced in the new Communication will be addressed in the revised Guidelines and the Toolbox in terms of gender impact assessment. Similarly, the ongoing development of a methodology to track expenditure related to gender equality at programme level of the 2021-2027 MFF,[164] a framework[165] to monitor progress towards the objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy, and guidelines on socially responsible public procurement[166] can be seen as positive developments towards more effective gender mainstreaming.

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163 Examples of good practice within the EC include 1) investment in developing internal expertise through the employment of gender experts in DG International Partnerships (see 2021 Sieps European Policy Analysis, p. 7); and 2) inclusion of objectives regarding the incorporation of gender equality across its policy area in DG Development Cooperation's strategic plan (gender action plan for external relations for 2016-2020). One of the three key performance indicators monitored by DG DEVCO was the proportion of EU-funded cooperation and development initiatives promoting gender equality. Together with DG JUST, DG DEVCO is the only Commission DG with a dedicated unit dealing with gender equality. DG DEVCO also runs the EU International Partnerships Academy, a platform offering e-courses on gender equality which are open to the public (see Court of Auditors' report, p. 23).

164 As stated in the IIA accompanying the 2021-2027 MFF, 'The Commission will examine how to develop a methodology to measure the relevant expenditure at programme level in the MFF 2021-2027. The Commission will use that methodology as soon as it is available. No later than 1 January 2023, the Commission will implement the methodology for certain centrally managed programmes to test its feasibility'.

165 The monitoring framework (consisting of a monitoring tool and an online monitoring portal) has been developed specifically for the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, in close collaboration between the Joint Research Centre and EIGE, and combines data from Eurostat, EIGE and other sources. Based on this monitoring framework, the EC publishes annual progress reports on gender equality. At the time of drafting of this study, the specific gender mainstreaming section of the portal was not yet available.

166 Socially responsible public procurement (SRPP) asks procurers to consider the social impact of how a product/service is produced, sourced and delivered. Public procurement can therefore be used as a strategic tool to achieve social policy objectives, including gender equality. The EC's non-binding guidelines on Buying Social – a guide to taking account of social considerations in public procurement (2nd edition) were published in May 2021.

4.1.2. Council of the EU (Council)

At present, there is no dedicated Council configuration on gender equality and working groups are embedded in the Working Party on Social Questions. In 1994, the ministers responsible for gender equality convened for the first time to promote gender equality as an issue to consider at European Community level, while supporting the preparation of the Beijing Conference. In 2018, during the Austrian presidency, an informal configuration of ministers responsible for gender equality met for the first time since 2011. In 2019, the Romanian and the Finnish Presidencies organised a formal meeting on gender equality issues, attended by Ministers for Employment and Social Policy. Earlier, informal meetings were held to support Council presidencies of the Union to set an agenda on gender equality, informed by the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (an informal group comprising representatives responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level and chaired by the EC). Member State ministers responsible for gender equality have the opportunity to meet within the framework of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO). Among the main outcomes of EPSCO meetings are Council conclusions on different subjects related to gender equality and women's rights. They primarily focus on the areas of Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) concern selected by the Presidency country. Since 2011, EIGE has provided expertise in the preparation of such biannual reports to follow-up the BPfA in the EU.

As a result of the economic, budgetary and institutional crises in the EU, Member State support for gender equality actions within the European Council has varied since 2013. The Council conclusions of 2015 on advancing gender equality in the European Research Area highlighted the importance of acknowledging the crucial contribution of gender equality to the quality of research and innovation, and the need for gender balance in decision-making bodies including leading scientific and administrative boards, recruitment and promotion committees as well as evaluation panels. In 2016, the Council adopted conclusions on gender equality, stating its commitment to upgrading the status of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality to that of a Commission communication. In 2017 and 2018, the Council adopted conclusions to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action. In 2019, it reached an agreement on the work-life balance Directive and adopted conclusions on the gender pay gap. In its 2019 conclusions 'Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward', Council stressed that the objectives set for gender equality have not been fully achieved, that gender mainstreaming is fragmented and lacks a systematic approach, that gender mainstreaming tools, such as gender impact assessments or gender budgeting, are only seldom used in the EU and its Member States, and that there are shortcomings in the collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data. In 2020, it adopted presidency conclusions on the Gender Action Plan III 2021-2025 in external action[167] and conclusions on the gender pay gap. Moreover, in November 2020, the German Presidency of the Council of the EU organised an informal virtual meeting of EU gender equality ministers focused on violence against women. A policy debate on the implementation of the gender equality strategy 2020-2025 was also held at an informal video conference of the ministers of employment and social policy in December 2020. Equal participation of women and men in the labour market was subject to a policy debate of employment and social ministers in 2020.

In December 2020, the EP adopted a resolution on the need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality in which it regretted that ministers and secretaries of state in charge of gender equality have no dedicated institutional forum to ensure common and concrete measures and legislation to address the challenges in the field of women's rights and gender equality and ensure

[167] Note that the Council could not reach the necessary consensus on draft conclusions that would have endorsed the plan. In response to this lack of unanimity, the German Presidency of the Council adopted presidency conclusions, which were supported by 24 EU Members. Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland did not support them. These conclusions endorse the EU GAP III and its accompanying staff working document (see Legislative Train).

that gender equality issues are discussed at the highest political level. Considering that gender equality issues are currently addressed at the EPSCO Council level, which does not properly reflect all aspects to be tackled, Parliament called on the Council and the European Council to establish a Council configuration on gender equality in order to facilitate gender mainstreaming across all EU policies and legislation. In 2018, an informal Women's European Council (WEUCO), with delegates from the European Parliament, Commissioners and representatives of the rotating Council presidency, was established to frame the European agenda from a gender perspective.[168] It has convened before several European Council meetings and submitted conclusions to the European Council, the Council presidency, the Parliament and the Commission.

With respect to gender balance within the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC),[169] the equal opportunities strategy 2017-2020 is aimed at ensuring gender equality and non-discrimination.[170] Under this strategy, the GSC as an employer is committed to providing equal opportunities to all its employees and applicants for employment, actively welcoming applications from all qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds, across all abilities and from the broadest possible geographical basis amongst the EU Member States. An equal opportunities officer oversees the implementation of the strategy in the GSC.

The main aims of the GSC's equal opportunities policy in relation to gender equality are to:

1. achieve a balanced representation of men and women (by encouraging applications from women especially for management posts where they are currently under-represented);
2. ensure that human resources and personnel management policies respect the principles of equality and non-discrimination;
3. protect staff from harassment at work; and
4. reconcile professional and private life (by offering telework, individual working time and the possibility to take parental leave in accordance with the Staff Regulations. The GSC has a crèche for children aged 0-4 years. After-school care and holiday-time facilities are organised by the European Commission and open to children of GSC staff).

Despite the GSC's commitment to gender balance at all levels and while women outnumber men in total (with 57 % female and 43 % male staff members), a significant gender imbalance currently exists amongst Council's senior managers (28 % women and 72 % men). In middle management, the numbers are more balanced (38 % women and 62 % men).[171]

In May 2020, a written question on gender equality within the EU institution was tabled by MEP Robert Biedron (S&D) to the Council. In the context of the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025

168 https://europeanwomenalliance.eu/weuco/

169 As to gender balance in EU governments, as of January 2021, two thirds of senior ministers were men as an EU average. While eleven governments (Estonia, Finland, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, France, Lithuania, Spain, Germany, Netherlands and Portugal) were gender balanced (i.e. composed of at least 40 % of each gender), governments were predominantly male in others (Poland, Malta, Greece, Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary), with 20 % or less women senior ministers. Evidence suggests that women are often in charge of portfolios considered to be of lower political priority, such as socio-cultural policies. Despite these also being important areas, women should also be in charge of the more prestigious and male-dominated portfolios such as finance, defence and security, while men also have important value to add in social affairs and education (2021 Equality report, European Commission, p. 42).

170 According to information provided by the GSC, the equal opportunities strategy 2017-2020 was still being implemented as long as the new equal opportunities strategy for 2021 to 2024 was being finalised (which was still the case at the time of drafting of the present study). The GSC recently appointed a new equal opportunities officer (Ms. Evgenia Chatziioakeimidou).

171 Numbers as of July 2020. See also infographic.

and considering that the EU institutions should lead by example, the Member inquired about internal measures to foster gender equality, the ratio of women to men in leadership positions in the General Secretariat of the Council, and whether Council ensured gender-balanced representation in its conferences.

In its reply, the Council referred to the 2017-2020 equal opportunities strategy, which clearly showed the General Secretariat's commitment to achieving balanced representation of men and women in management positions. Various actions had been taken to ensure an unbiased selection process (including the adoption of guidelines on non-biased selection procedures, with specific recommendations for management selections; training for selection board members; and attention to inclusive communication in vacancy notices for management posts), to build a strong female leadership pipeline (by organising pre-management trainings, workshops and group coaching sessions for women) and to encourage eligible women to apply for management posts. A network of female administrators also played an important role in professional and personal development of its members. In addition, the General Secretariat regularly organised communication and awareness-raising events to dispel gender stereotypes. A session on equal opportunities was part of the induction programme for newcomers. As of 1 June 2020, 35 % of managers in the General Secretariat were women (including 28.6 % of senior managers and 38.3 % of middle managers). In relation to conferences, the General Secretariat was always striving to ensure gender balance among speakers and panellists, endeavouring to put a diversity of topics, speakers and panellists on the agenda of all events, visits and other outreach actions it organises.

It should be noted that recent academic research flags the need for further research into gender mainstreaming in the Council.[172]

4.2. Gender mainstreaming in the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions

4.2.1. European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The EESC delivers opinions to the EP, the Council and the EC and ensures that civil society organisations have a say in the EU's development. The EESC's 350 members from all EU Member States are representatives of the EU's socio-occupational interest groups, representing employers, workers, and other various interests representative of civil society, notably in socioeconomic, civic, professional and cultural areas. The EESC members are nominated by national governments and appointed by the Council of the EU for a renewable five-year term of office. They are divided into three different groups: Group I – Employers, Group II – Workers, and Group III – Diversity Europe.[173] The EESC has six sections specialising in different policy areas. The section on Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC) is, inter alia, responsible for gender equality matters. The main task of EESC members is to prepare opinions, which are adopted in the EESC plenary.

The EESC, in 2020, adopted guidelines on gender mainstreaming[174] aimed at 'ensuring gender equality at all levels of the EESC and in all of its activities' (thus covering both the aspect of gender balance within the institution and of integration of gender aspects in the EESC's work). However, it currently does not dispose of any specific structures or procedures for effectively implementing

[172] Gabriele Abels, 'Gendering the Council system' in Abels, A.; Krizsán, A., MacRae H. and van der Vleuten, A. (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics*, Routledge, 2021, Chapter 10, pp. 120-132.

[173] Group III is made up of 'other representatives and stakeholders of civil society, particularly in the economic, civic, professional and cultural field'.

[174] EESC-2019-05075-00-01-TCD-TRA (EN) 53/90

them.[175] Moreover, recent research on gender balance within the EESC points to a persistent and systemic gender imbalance in the EESC, notably at the political level (i.e. its members[176]). In this context, the lack of formally established requirements/quotas regarding gender parity or, at least, gender-balance in the appointment processes at the national level is considered a major contributory factor. Moreover, more clarity on the criteria for the selection of members at national level would be desirable, particularly in some Member States. Even in cases where the Member State or national organisation may have a commitment to the principle of gender equality, this is not reflected in the selection/nomination of the EESC members. Given that the EESC's mission is linked to strengthening the democratic legitimacy and effectiveness of the EU, democracy and gender balance, however, are matters of its concern. It should be noted, though, that among EESC staff there is overall a greater gender balance than among EESC members.[177]

Despite the described shortcomings, there are several examples of action taken in the recent past (or to be implemented in the near future), which demonstrate the EESC's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. These examples include, in particular:

- adoption of relevant opinions (2019, 2020 and 2021, see details below);
- establishment of an ad hoc Equality Group (March 2021);
- revision of the 2019 Code of Conduct aimed at addressing inadequate behaviours of EESC Members, such as harassment or sexist attitudes (January 2021[178]);
- adoption of guidelines on gender mainstreaming, as mentioned (2020);
- dedication of the EESC's 2019 Civil Society Prize to innovative initiatives and projects which aim to fight for equal opportunities for women and men and their equal treatment in all spheres of economic and social life;
- adoption of an action plan for equal opportunities and diversity (2017).

In terms of opinions related to gender equality issues, the EESC adopted, in March 2021, an opinion on teleworking and gender equality, laying down conditions to ensure that teleworking does not exacerbate the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men and for it to be an engine for promoting gender equality. Moreover, in its opinion on the gender equality strategy 2020-2025, adopted in 2020, the EESC called on the EU and Member States to ensure full integration of the gender perspective in the Covid-19 recovery measures and the 2021-2027 MFF. In its 2019 own-initiative opinion on gender equality Issues, the EESC called on public institutions and civil society organisations across the EU to promote gender equality with their policies and external actions and to introduce exemplary internal measures in all of their policies and processes. It also recommended that the Member States nominate their EESC members on a gender parity basis.

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175 Information based on an interview held by the authors of this study with the EESC in March 2021.

176 As of August 2019, 72 % of EESC members were men, and 28 % women. In this context, there is a knowledge gap regarding the EESC and its gender balance, both at the political and staff level, as, unlike the EP, the EESC does not provide information about the percentage of members that are women and men (2019 EESC study on On the road to gender equality: gender balance in the European Economic and Social Committee, pp. 13-14). When looking at the gender balance by Member State, there are some Member States with no women members at all, some with a minority of women and some that have gender parity among their members. 10 Member States (36 %) had less than 20 % of women members among their national delegations. While none of the groups is gender balanced, Group II (Workers) showed, as of August 2019, with 35 % female members, a better gender balance than the others (21 % female members in group I, and 29 % in Group III).

177 It should, however, be considered that, while, as of January 2019, there was almost gender parity among the EESC's HoUs, in Directorates B and C which are in charge of the legislative work, 6 out of 7 HoUs were men. At the senior management level, four out of the seven directors were women.

178 On 28 January 2021, the EESC plenary adopted revised Rules of Procedure and a Code of Conduct of the EESC Members (as an Annex to the RoP). The new rules came into effect on 10 February 2021.

However, the fact that, from 215 opinions and resolutions adopted in 2018 in the EESC, only 33 mention 'gender' gives an indication as to the level of implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EESC[179] and shows that there is clearly still room for improvement.

In terms of formal structures dealing specifically with gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming, it is worth noting that the EESC, in March 2021, started implementing an earlier Bureau decision of January 2020 on the establishment of an Equality Group at the EESC.[180] The new ad hoc Equality Group, to be supported by a newly established Secretariat, will be responsible for establishing a cross-cutting culture of equality within the EESC by implementing all aspects of the principle of equality, particularly gender equality. Moreover, it shall take note of proposals on equality issues from any member and draw up proposals for action in support of equality and make recommendations to the EESC Bureau. The ad hoc group will be composed of twelve members, with each of the three groups appointing four members to represent it (ensuring gender balance). It will meet once a quarter (and minimum three times a year). It shall draw up a work programme, with particular focus on gender equality and non-discrimination, and report to the Bureau at the end of each term of office.[181] The establishment of this ad hoc group can be considered as an important step forward in terms of institutionalising gender mainstreaming within the EESC.

4.2.2. European Committee of the Regions (CoR)

The CoR is the voice of regions and cities in the EU. It represents local and regional authorities across the European Union and advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and cities (70 % of all EU legislation).[182] The CoR is a political assembly composed of 329 members and 329 alternates from all EU countries (grouped by political party and headed by the president) who have been elected at local or regional level (for example as mayors or presidents of a region). They come to Brussels up to six times a year to debate their opinions on proposed legislation and agree on resolutions for further action by the EU. Six commissions (sub-committees), made up of members and grouped by policy areas, analyse the legislative texts drafted by the EC and draw up opinions, which are then discussed and adopted at CoR plenary sessions. Gender equality matters come under the competence of the CoR's Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC). CoR members are supported by an administration headed by the secretary general.

In the recent past, the CoR elaborated several opinions related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In 2019, it adopted an opinion on the gender equality strategy 2020-2025. Two opinions are currently still under preparation: an opinion on gender equality and climate change and an opinion on the gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021-2027, with a focus on the preparation of the operational programmes.[183]

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179 2019 EESC study on On the road to gender equality: gender balance in the European Economic and Social Committee, p. 43.

180 The establishment of this ad hoc group can probably also be seen as a follow-up to the EESC guidelines on gender mainstreaming, which, in this context, state the following:

'2.2. It also requires establishing clear responsibilities for the implementation, communication, monitoring and evaluation of all elements of gender mainstreaming and related policies on harassment, ill-treatment and/or bullying.

2.3. The Committee shall need to appoint a highly trusted body to oversee and monitor the implementation of these guidelines and accompanying policies, as well as to cooperate with any related established EESC bodies.'

181 Information based on Bureau decision EESC-2019-05748-11-01-DECBUR-TRA of 21 January 2020 and an interview held with the EESC by the authors of this study in March 2021.

182 https://cor.europa.eu/en/about

183 See working documents: gender equality and climate change and gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021-2027, with a focus on the operational programmes.

As a direct follow-up of the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025, the SEDEC Commission adopted, in June 2021, a document entitled 'Gender Equality Actions in consultative works.[184] This document is to be considered as a politically endorsed set of actions/activities (though not an action plan at this stage) to be implemented by the CoR's administration. Its four objectives are: 1) to make gender equality a key element of the strategic agenda of the EU and for a more democratic and inclusive Europe; 2) to take gender equality better into account in designing and implementing EU policies and programmes; 3) to support a stronger role of women in politics at all levels of government; and 4) to foster awareness about gender equality in the consultative works of the CoR. In order to achieve these objectives, the document sets out a number of activities.[185] It should be noted, however, that, besides the fact that the gender equality actions do not enjoy the status of an overarching gender action plan adopted at highest political level, there are currently no formalised structures or mechanisms[186] in place to implement gender mainstreaming in the CoR.

As to gender balance at political level (i.e. amongst its members[187]), with less than 21 % of CoR members being female, the situation in general was judged as far from satisfactory by the CoR itself in 2019. In its Strategy for a gender balance in Members' Participation in the CoR, adopted in 2019, the CoR Bureau indicated that, while gender parity had been achieved for the first time among the chairs of the six commissions, CoR membership remained significantly less gender balanced than that of the EP and regional parliaments. According to the strategy, the number of women rapporteurs of CoR opinions adopted between 2015 and 2018 was even below that level. The strategy therefore makes several recommendations including an amendment to the CoR's Rules of Procedure regarding gender-related behaviour,[188] the political commitment for gender parity at the level of vice-presidents, in the CoR constituent and statutory bodies (i.e. chairs of the CoR commissions, members of the Bureau etc.) and for rapporteurs, gender balanced panels at conferences and full use of the European political parties that represent and support female politicians. The before-mentioned gender equality actions can be seen as a contribution to this strategy (and the current discussion on revising the CoR's Rules of Procedure).

In addition, the CoR launched an initiative, including a dedicated website, entitled 'For more women in politics' in order to promote gender balance in local and regional policy-making. In this context, the CoR intends to act as a platform for the exchange of best practices among CoR members, young local leaders and other politicians from all over Europe to promote gender equality in local and regional politics and decision-making. This issue of enhanced representation of women in local and

184 COR-2021-02949-00-01-TCD-TRA

185 The envisaged activities include, in particular, to actively engage the CoR in implementing the EU gender equality strategy by carrying out an annual political debate on gender equality; to foster strategic collaboration with EC, EP and Council in promoting gender equality; to seek closer collaboration with territorial associations and like-minded partners such as EIGE and existing networks and associations (e.g. CEMR); to foresee a close collaboration with other CoR commissions in raising awareness on gender equality in the CoR commissions' consultative works, in order to mainstream gender into their respective policy areas; to foster the collection, analysis and application of gender-disaggregated data; and to showcase and promote the concrete actions taken, activities organised and best practices at local and regional level by the CoR members in the CoR webpage 'for more women in politics'.

186 According to an interview held by the authors of this study with the CoR in March 2021 and as stated in the Gender Equality Actions in consultative works document, at present there is only an informal taskforce on gender mainstreaming, composed of administrators of Directorates C (Legislative Work 2) and D (Communication).

187 As indicated on the CoR website, the EU has roughly a million local and regional elected office-holders, but only about 30 % of them are women. According to EIGE, at present only 17.2 % of elected mayors, 34.2 % of members of regional parliaments and assemblies, and about 35 % of presidents and members of regional governments are female. This is obviously reflected in the current composition of the CoR.

188 In this context, the strategy foresees a code of conduct to be annexed to the RoP, setting out provisions, including sanction mechanisms, on gender-related behaviour concerning, amongst others, aspects of the use of language, harassment, etc.

regional politics was also subject of one of the sessions of the recent CoR event on the International Women's Day (8 March 2021).

As to gender balance at staff level (in particular in management positions) and accompanying work-life balance measures, the CoR, in 2016, adopted its equal opportunities strategy 2017-2021, to be implemented under the responsibility of the CoR's equal opportunities officer.[189] Under the 2020 action plan, the CoR introduced a target of 40 % women in management positions,[190] to be achieved by 2025 (end of the new term of office) and to be closely followed up in an annual report.[191] In this context, an informal network for gender balance in management positions was launched by staff members in 2019. Other measures were proposed in the 2020 action plan to try to significantly improve the important gender imbalance in the institution. Accordingly, the CoR intends to act on four fronts to foster gender parity at all levels: 1) promote the CoR opinion on the gender equality strategy 2020-2025; 2) mainstream communication activities on gender across CoR key events and programmes; 3) work with external and internal stakeholders; and raise awareness among CoR members and staff.

4.3. Some examples of gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments and international organisations

National parliaments and international organisations, including the United Nations and the Council of Europe, have experience of implementing gender mainstreaming, which provides a useful point of comparison for the EU institutions.

4.3.1. Gender mainstreaming in national parliaments: findings of requests to the ECPRD network

In April 2021, EPRS launched a request to national parliaments belonging to the ECPRD inter-parliamentary network asking for information on their structures and policies for implementing gender mainstreaming.[192] Chambers in 22 EU Member States and 11 non-EU countries sent replies.[193] Parliaments were asked, specifically, whether they:

- have a gender mainstreaming structure;
- have a specific gender mainstreaming policy that encompasses policy-making and internal gender balance in political and administrative posts;

[189] Following endorsement by the Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs on 14 November 2016, the equal opportunities strategy 2017-2021 was endorsed by the CoR Bureau on 6 December 2016. The implementation of the strategy was to be fostered by the subsequent adoption of annual or bi-annual action plans, identifying a series of implementing measures, and will be coordinated, monitored and regularly reported upon by the CoRs equal opportunities officer (see decision by secretary general – 362/2016).

[190] According to its website for more women in politics, this target has been set in line with the 'Commission's 40 % initiative' (which presumably refers to the 2012 EC proposal to increase the number of women on corporate boards by 40 % in publicly listed companies).

[191] Interestingly, the equal opportunities strategy advises against establishing concrete targets for gender representation at all levels (given the small size of the institution, and the limited number of management positions available). The 2020 action plan, however, includes concrete objectives for management positions, to be reached by 2025.

[192] ECPRD network request No. 4722.

[193] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden; Albania, Canada, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

- conduct regular monitoring and assessments of the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

The findings, illustrated in the three tables below, show considerable diversity in approaches. Only three parliaments (Bulgaria, Ireland and the Netherlands) say they currently have neither a gender mainstreaming structure nor a gender mainstreaming policy.[194] At the other end of the spectrum, three parliaments (Austria, Finland and Sweden) come closest to covering all the dimensions. Most parliaments in the EU Member States and non-EU countries that responded to the request have at least one element in place. For example, the overwhelming majority (29 countries) have one or more bodies responsible for promoting gender equality. Four countries (Sweden; Georgia, Montenegro, and the Republic of North Macedonia) have a framework strategy or action plan for gender mainstreaming. A further nine countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain; Israel, Montenegro and the Republic of North Macedonia) have an internal action plan that covers the political or the administrative dimension of gender mainstreaming. However, interestingly, not all countries with gender mainstreaming structures have introduced a specific gender mainstreaming policy or action plan. In addition, several countries with developed structures or policies consider that these are not sufficient to merit being termed a 'gender mainstreaming structure or policy' as described by EIGE and the IPU. Only three parliaments (Austria, Finland and Sweden) report that they conduct regular monitoring and assessment of the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Table 16 – Parliaments or chambers with a gender mainstreaming structure

Dedicated GM body	Finland, Sweden
Gender equality committee	Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Romania, Spain, Sweden; Canada, Georgia, Israel, Mexico, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Turkey
Gender-equality sub-committee	Portugal, Hungary
Multi-functional or multi-portfolio committee	Austria, Ireland, Germany (Bundestag), Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia; Norway
Women's caucus	Estonia, Finland (with the power to draft amendments), Lithuania, Poland; Israel; Republic of North Macedonia, Switzerland
Other structure	Latvia
No structure	Bulgaria, Ireland, Netherlands

[194] However, in Ireland, a Forum on a Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament is due to report in October 2021 on recommendations for developing gender mainstreaming. One option is to consider undertaking an audit using the IPU gender sensitive parliaments toolkit.

Table 17 – Parliaments or chambers with a gender mainstreaming policy

Framework strategy or action plan for gender mainstreaming	Sweden; Georgia, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia
Plan for gender balance at administrative level	Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain; Israel, Montenegro
Plan for gender balance at political level	Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia
No policy	Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal*, Romania, Slovakia; Canada, Montenegro, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey*

* In **Portugal** the Assembly has introduced systematic gender impact assessment.
* The **Turkish** parliament has no overarching policy but its Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has set up a sub-committee for gender budgeting. A pilot scheme for gender sensitive budgeting of the parliament's budget was initiated in 2019.

Table 18 – Parliaments or chambers with regular monitoring of their gender mainstreaming policy

Monitoring of the administrative side	Austria, Finland, Sweden
Monitoring of the political side	Sweden

Several parliaments report that they have conducted, or are considering, a self-assessment using either the IPU or the EIGE gender-sensitive parliaments tool. Those that have already carried out the self-assessment report that this was a spur to further action towards becoming fully gender-sensitive, such as conducting a full screening of the current state of play, with wide-ranging consultation across the parliamentary estate, or drawing up a 'gender-sensitive parliament plan'.

Several parliaments also reported on their use of specific gender mainstreaming tools, notably gender impact assessment and gender budgeting. Two earlier requests to the ECPRD network in 2020 cover parliaments' use of these tools in more depth.[195] The request on gender impact assessments finds that roughly half of the countries that responded carry out gender impact assessment of legislation. Of these, only four conduct a separate gender impact assessment.[196] Several countries are trialling gender impact assessment or gender budgeting. The Austrian parliament is the only one that reports that its own budget is subject to gender-sensitive budgeting.

[195] ECPRD network request on gender impact assessment, No. 4571; request on gender budgeting: No. 4432.
[196] For the more detailed findings on GIAs, see: Gender impact assessment of legislation, Esther Luigi and Pekka Nurminen, European Parliament Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments, Spotlight on Parliaments in Europe No. 34; ECPRD, March 2021.

Examples of good and promising practices

The **Swedish** Riksdag has a longstanding, dedicated gender mainstreaming structure, the Riksdag Board. Its main objectives are to ensure balanced gender distribution in different bodies and contexts, integrate a gender perspective in the parliament's business and processes, create an internal culture where both women and men are respected and resources are equal and ensure work-life balance and the involvement of both men and women in the promotion of gender equality. For each legislative term, the board establishes a working group comprising representatives from all political parties, which is responsible for developing, implementing and reporting back on an action programme. The programme itself sets out how the follow-up and evaluation is to be carried out, and has qualitative as well as quantitative indicators. The working party must report back to the Riksdag Board at least twice a year.

Parliaments in **Belgium**, **Ireland**, and the **Republic of North Macedonia**, have adopted comprehensive approaches to developing gender mainstreaming structures and policies. For example, the **Belgian** Parliament aims to become fully gender sensitive by 2030. Following a self-assessment using EIGE's gender-sensitive parliaments tool, it is taking the process further by carrying out a cross-cutting screening of all aspects of parliamentary life and the internal functioning of the House and the Senate, to identify how progress can be made in each of the five areas in EIGE's assessment framework. One of the areas where it would like to advance is the collection of **disaggregated data** relating to parliamentary work, which is not currently possible, since the databases do not allow information on legislation or parliamentary control to be cross-referenced with members' personal data. This is likely to be a more general issue for other parliaments. The hope is that linking the data will permit monitoring of relevant indicators of women's and men's participation in parliamentary work (e.g. number of proposals, number and length of speeches, thematic distribution of issues by gender, and women's and men's participation outside parliament, when parliament organises hearings).

Other interesting approaches in specific areas include procedures for tackling sexual harassment, standardised procedures for gender impact assessment and changes to parliaments' rules of procedure to introduce gender budgeting:

- **Tackling harassment**: In February 2021, **France's National Assembly** introduced a new system to prevent and combat all forms of harassment. The new anti-harassment unit is accessible 24 hours a day and staffed by independent experts to guarantee confidentiality. It is open to victims and witnesses, elected officials, civil servants, employees and contract workers, who can obtain information, report harassment or seek support. The **Finnish Parliament** has also taken steps to monitor the procedure for combating sexual harassment through anonymous surveys, with the aim of encouraging victims to report.
- **Gender impact assessment**: In the **Portuguese Parliament**, gender impact assessments have been required for all draft legislation since 2018, under Law 14/2018 and Rule 131 of the parliament's Rules of Procedure. The gender impact assessment is an integral part of the technical note that accompanies draft legislation throughout the legislative procedure. There is also a requirement to submit a detailed gender equality form. Although this has a tick-box element, it also provides space for more substantial detail and has clear instructions on the factors to be taken into account. This is an interesting example of how a gender mainstreaming tool can be made straightforward enough for staff to use, while allowing space for more nuanced input from gender experts. The system also provides for accountability, since, if the MP or Parliamentary Group does not deliver the gender equality form, they are asked to do so by the parliamentary department concerned; if the form is still not delivered, the president of

the parliament is informed and the bill may not be admitted for the parliament's consideration.

- **Gender budgeting**: In **Montenegro**, a key target of the Parliament's Gender Responsible Parliament Activity Plan (2016-2018) was to introduce gender budgeting by amending the Rules of Procedure to oblige the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget to cooperate with the Committee on Gender Equality, give the latter committee competence to conduct gender-responsive budgeting, review the budget and recruit and train the committee's staff to carry out budget analysis. It is not stated in the response if the target has been reached.

4.3.2. United Nations: action plan for gender mainstreaming across the UN system

As noted in Section 2, the Beijing Platform for Action, which recognised gender mainstreaming as an international approach for achieving gender equality, was adopted in the framework of the United Nations. The UN has itself taken steps to embed gender mainstreaming within its own work and bodies.

In 2012, the United Nations adopted its first **system-wide action plan** on gender equality and women's empowerment, as part of its accountability framework for gender equality.[197] The first plan (UN SWAP 1.0) ran from 2012 to 2017. It was followed by a second plan (UN SWAP 2.0), which covers the period from 2018-2022.[198]

The key aim of the action plans is to enable **gender issues to be mainstreamed systematically and measurably** across the entire UN system, which consists of many separate bodies with different mandates and ways of working. The UN-SWAP also aims to facilitate the **accountability** of the United Nations system to Member States for its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The action plans have provided all UN entities with a **common set of performance measures on gender mainstreaming** against which to report, and against which senior managers can be held accountable. In terms of scope, the first plan focused on institutional arrangements such as policy and planning, strategic planning, oversight, human and financial resources and organisational culture. The second plan was extended in order to align it with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030, with more indicators focusing on results, in particular the contribution of UN bodies to implementing the sustainable development goals.[199] New indicators were also added, for example on leadership and gender balance in staffing. Requirements were strengthened for some indicators, including evaluation.

The current action plan is divided into **six key areas**: 1) results based management; 2) oversight; 3) accountability; 4) human and financial resources; 5) capacity; 6) knowledge, communication and coherence. Each of these areas is supported by two or three indicators. To ensure commitment to their implementation, all the indicators included in the action plans relate to existing mandates approved in resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly or Economic and Social Council.

With a view to making gender mainstreaming proactive rather than reactive, the UN chose to move from a **checklist approach to a scorecard approach**. In other words, the framework uses a five-

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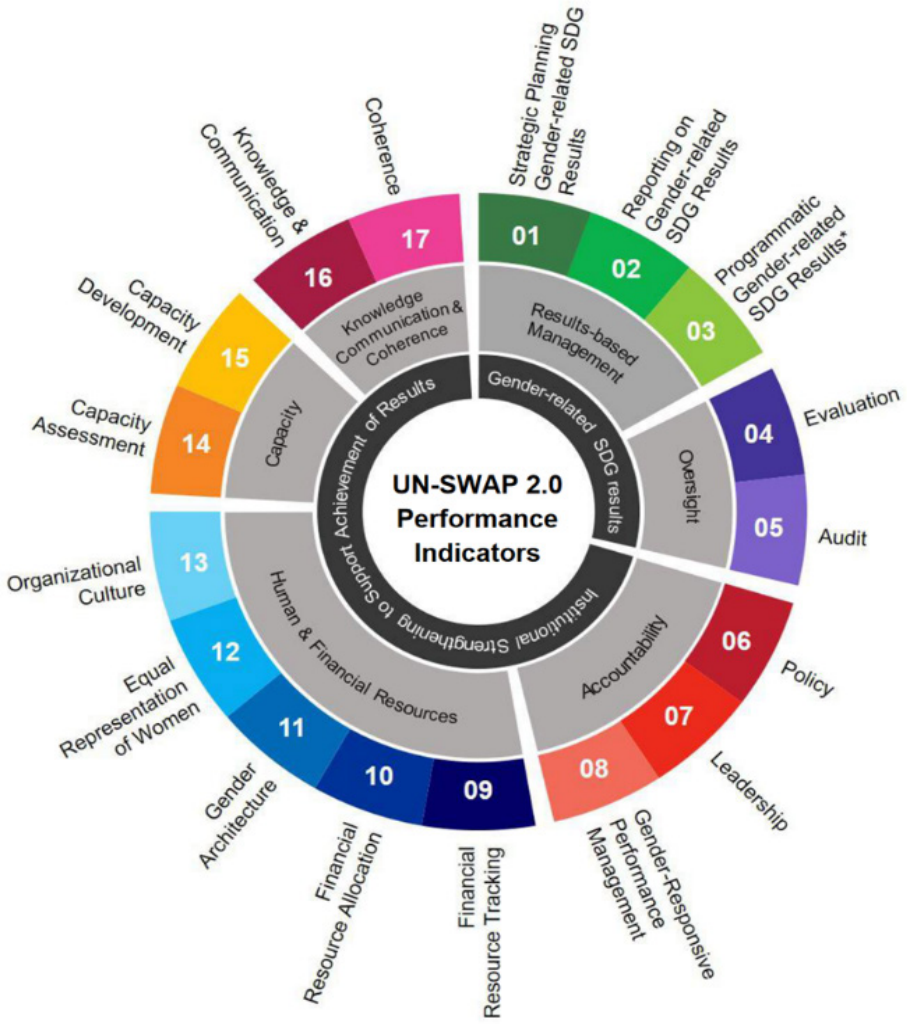
[197] The two other elements were performance indicators for United Nations country teams and the results of development work.

[198] An overview and links to the plans and further resources is available here: Promoting UN accountability (UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP), UN Women website (last checked 19 July 2021)

[199] For further details, see What's New in UN-SWAP 2.0?, p. 2.

point rating scale ranging from 'not applicable' to 'exceeds requirements' for every performance indicator, so as to build aspiration into the system and allow progress to be defined uniformly and measured over time.[200] The full set of performance indicators is included in Figure A below, followed by an example of the rating scale in Figure B.

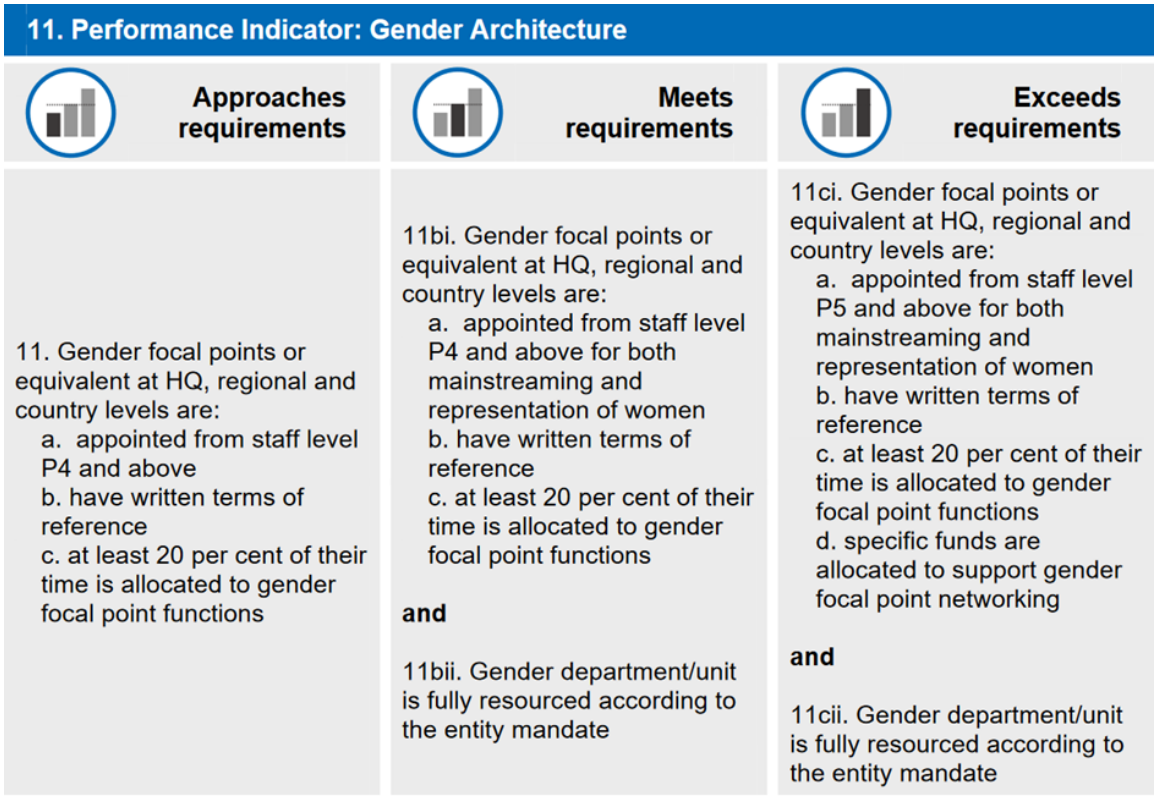
Figure A –Performance indicators in the UN action plan



Source: Promoting UN accountability (UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP) UN Women website.

[200] The UN system has drawn on the gender mainstreaming action plans to adopt similar approaches in other areas such as disability mainstreaming. In 2019, the UN Secretary General launched a system-wide disability inclusion strategy, intended to enact the principles and requirements set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and enable the organisation to lead by example. This plan, which has clear indicators for reporting, monitoring and evaluation, has been welcomed by organisations representing people with disabilities. It covers four core areas: 1) leadership, strategic planning and management; 2) inclusiveness; 3) programming; and 4) organisational culture. The accompanying accountability framework breaks these down further into 15 performance indicators, with detailed guidance on why each indicator is important, what needs to be done to 'approach', 'meet' and 'exceed' the requirements, and examples of best practice. A first assessment of the strategy was issued in 2020. The strategy will be reviewed each year and will be subject to external evaluation after 5 years.

Figure B – United Nations action plan – Example of the rating scale



Source: UN Women website.

Annual reporting by individual UN bodies is based on **self-assessment and self-reporting**. Each body is required to submit an **action plan for each indicator**, together with the ratings for indicators. This must include action points for keeping or improving the current ratings, with timelines, financial resources and clear lines of responsibility for follow-up actions. There is scope in the annual reporting process to add additional questions. For example, the 2020 exercise included questions on the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis with a view to assessing the impact of the pandemic on efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.

To assist and support UN bodies in implementing them, the SWAP Action Plans are accompanied by detailed **guidance explaining each performance indicator** and what needs to be done to report on it, together with examples of existing good practices from across the UN system.[201] A concrete illustration of how this works is set out in the Appendix, using indicator 6 on policy making as an example.

Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses

At the request of the UN General Assembly, the UN's Joint Inspection Unit conducted an internal evaluation of the effectiveness, added value and impact of UN-SWAP 1.0.[202]

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[201] For the current action plan, see UN-SWAP 2.0: Accountability framework for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women in United Nations Entities - Framework and Technical Guidance, UN Women, December 2020.

[202] Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012–2017), Keiko Kamioka and Eileen A. Cronin, Joint Inspection Unit, United Nations, 2019. See also Mainstreaming a

It found that the action plan had been an effective framework for tracking progress and a useful benchmark and catalyst for advancing towards gender mainstreaming in most of the UN entities participating. The plan had raised awareness of gender issues and increased dialogue across the system. Some UN bodies had increased their capacity for gender mainstreaming. Bodies that had already had a strong focus on gender before the adoption of the action plan[203] reported that it had complemented their existing initiatives, helped to identify areas for improvement and created internal support for doing so. Bodies that had weak performance ratings at the outset[204] reported that the action plan had provided them with a benchmark that had helped them to set and achieve minimum standards. The actions plan was endorsed at the highest level (United Nations Chief Executives Board (CEB)). The review found that the commitment of the leadership and executive management had been crucial to achieving progress. The fact that executive managers were given responsibility for taking action to create an enabling environment was found to be a key factor in ensuring that the plan was implemented effectively.

Regarding progress in the different areas covered by the action plan, compared with the baseline figures, the number of UN bodies that were meeting or exceeding requirements across all performance indicators had more than doubled between 2012 and 2017 (up from 31 % to 65 %). However, progress was not uniform. Performance had increased most in the area of oversight and least in the area of human and financial resources, especially the indicators on gender architecture and parity and resource allocation and tracking. Quality assurance was another area where further progress was required. The review found that quality assurance mechanisms differed widely across reporting entities and that this posed a challenge to the Action Plan's credibility. It recommended that further steps should be taken to ensure that reporting was not simply a bureaucratic exercise but reflected the real situation in each entity. The recommendations here included a call for an independent assessment using the SWAP as a benchmark.

gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2020/50)

203 Such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).

204 Such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Key findings

At present, the concept of gender mainstreaming is firmly embedded in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The EU, including its institutions, and the Member States are bound to ensure that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in policy-making so that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built in to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed.

Since the European Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy was formally launched in 2003, it has evolved considerably over time. What started as a simple equal opportunities policy, aimed at ensuring gender balance within Parliament's administration by setting targets for female representation in management positions, developed into a full-fledged gender mainstreaming policy, encompassing gender mainstreaming both in policy-making and internally within the institution. It is therefore not surprising that, in an assessment of gender-sensitivity of parliaments published by the European Institute for Gender Equality in 2019, the European Parliament scored well in comparison to most of the national parliaments in the Member States. The **new EP gender action plan (EP GAP), adopted in July 2020, as well as its roadmap for implementation, adopted in April 2021**, include a range of specific actions and, for the first time, also cover the political side of the institution.

When looking at the various **calls expressed in Parliament's latest resolutions** to improve gender mainstreaming within the institution, **a number of these demands have been or will be followed-up under the new EP GAP and roadmap**. This goes, in particular, for Parliament's repeated calls for gender impact assessments (GIAs) and gender budgeting, improved coordination between the different bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming within Parliament, as well as building up in-house gender mainstreaming awareness and capacity by providing specific training for Members, parliamentary assistants, staff of political groups and EP administration.

In this context, the EP GAP and roadmap foresee the following actions:

- **GIAs** will, by end of 2021, be carried out by the relevant services **for the 'relevant legislative initiative reports'** with the aim of including the gender perspective when drafting legislative proposals. Moreover, the relevant political structures will produce a **guide**, **including** a **checklist**, on how to incorporate the gender perspective in Parliament's work. By 2022, the Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN) and FEMM committee are expected to **regularly invite** the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** and other relevant bodies and actors to its meetings to explore further methods and tools to improve gender mainstreaming in the legislative process. The **GMN** will meet regularly to **assess** the situation in the committees and present its findings to the HLG and the FEMM committee.
- The relevant political structures will, by end of 2021, develop a **guide on how to do gender budgeting** (with the BUDG, CONT and FEMM committees in the lead), to be distributed to rapporteurs, shadow-rapporteurs and group staff dealing with files linked to the budget. Moreover, the relevant services will produce an **annual GIA** to inform Parliament's draft report on the EU budget. **Annual meetings** of the GMN, the High-Level Group (HLG) and the FEMM, BUDG and CONT committees will be organised, in the presence of EIGE, to **take stock of progress and discuss ways forward** on the matter. A first meeting of this kind took place on 28 June 2021.
- In order to ensure a **more structured cooperation** between Parliament's main bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming (HLG, FEMM and GMN), by end of 2021, **regular**

trilateral meetings (and extraordinary meetings whenever appropriate) will have to be held and **joint thematic reports** issued. While these bodies will invite one another to their relevant meetings, cooperation between the **HLG and FEMM** in particular shall be continued in order to **monitor implementation of the roadmap**. In addition, the **collaboration** between the **GMN** and the **committee and delegation secretariats** shall be **strengthened** in order to promote gender equality in the areas of competence of each committee and delegation.

- With a view to capacity-building and improving Parliament's in-house expertise, the responsible directorates-general will, by end of 2022, provide **training on gender mainstreaming** in legislative, non-legislative and budgetary procedures for Members, parliamentary assistants, group staff and administrators supporting this work. The relevant services will **monitor** its **take-up and effectiveness** and **report** to the HLG. On 27 June 2021, EIGE provided a training on gender impact assessments for MEPs and their assistants (with further trainings foreseen in the future).

When looking at Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy (including the measures to be taken in the future under the EP GAP and roadmap) from the perspective of different **assessment frameworks** for gender-sensitive parliaments, recent **academic research** and **best practices** for effectively implementing gender mainstreaming, several **strengths** and **weaknesses** appear.

In terms of **strengths**, Parliament has gone a long way in both **committing to gender mainstreaming at the highest level** ('formal adoption') and putting in place a **wide range of structures and procedures responsible for implementing it**. Over time, Parliament's commitment materialised in a panoply of resolutions, Bureau reports, action plans and roadmaps which, today, form the basis of Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy. With the introduction of Rule 228a in Parliament's Rules of Procedure in 2019, the adoption of gender action plans (including regular monitoring and review thereof) has become a formal requirement.

However, the following **weaknesses** have been identified:

- **Gender mainstreaming** is **still not fully embedded in the EP's culture and ways of operating**, as highlighted in recent academic research which finds that there has been significant progress in 'nesting' GM in the EP, but institutionalising resolutions has proved easier than establishing new practices and rules[205].
- **Lack of coordination between the various gender mainstreaming bodies**: While the HLG has, in the past, primarily been responsible for ensuring gender balance at all levels within Parliament's administration, FEMM (and the GMN) were in charge of incorporating the gender perspective into Parliament's policy-making. As pointed out in several resolutions adopted in the past, the activities of these bodies were, however, insufficiently coordinated. It remains to be seen whether the actions foreseen under the EP GAP and roadmap will remedy the current situation. Interestingly, the HLG will – besides FEMM and the GMN – also have a formal role in gender mainstreaming in policy-making (as it will, in particular, oversee the implementation of gender mainstreaming tools such as GIAs and gender budgeting, and be responsible for bi-annually reporting to the Bureau on the implementation of the actions under the EP GAP and reviewing the roadmap in light of the monitoring reports). This development could lead to a situation where, by making all actors responsible for gender mainstreaming in policy-

[205] Petra Ahrens, 'Working against the Tide?: Institutionalising Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament', in P. Ahrens and Agustin Rolandsen (eds.), Gendering the European Parliament: Structures, Policies and Practices, ECPR Press, 2019, pp. 85-101.

making, gender equality becomes everybody's – and nobody's – responsibility (lack of ownership).

- **Lack of institutional ownership and oversight**: Under the roadmap, each directorate-general will appoint a person responsible for the implementation of the roadmap and ask each political group to appoint a person responsible among its staff ('gender expert point'). These gender expert points will report to DG PERS which, in turn, will bi-annually report to the HLG. While it is not entirely clear whether the gender expert points will be identical to the (already appointed) 'equality coordinators' within each DG, it should be noted that, as of June 2020, several DGs had not appointed equality coordinators and this task is often carried out on top of other, unrelated tasks. As recommended in academic research, it might also be useful to (also) have a senior civil servant (and not only political bodies) overseeing the process, as this is currently not the case. Finally, many actions foreseen under the roadmap shall be carried out by the 'relevant services' or the 'responsible political structures' which leaves considerable uncertainty about who will actually carry out the tasks in question.
- **Lack of actual capacities for using gender mainstreaming tools (GIAs, gender budgeting)**: Gender impact assessments are currently not mandatory during the legislative process and gender budgeting is not yet done in the EP. While the new EP GAP and roadmap foresee several actions in these areas, the adoption of gender mainstreaming needs to be accompanied by an appropriate investment of human and financial resources to ensure its full and effective implementation, as pointed out in the latest EP resolutions and academic research. While external expertise is important, building in-house expertise is considered essential in order for staff to understand and promote gender mainstreaming. While the roadmap foresees specific training for staff involved in implementing gender mainstreaming tools, as explained, more dedicated staff (or re-focusing the activities of certain units/staff members) will probably be needed in the future, as gender mainstreaming activities are at present often carried out on top of other, unrelated tasks.
- **Lack of data**: Several EP resolutions highlighted the lack of data in order to monitor progress. In its resolutions adopted in 2016 and 2019, Parliament specifically called on DG EPRS to carry out regular detailed qualitative and quantitative research on the progress of gender mainstreaming in the EP and the functioning of the organisational structure dedicated to it. Moreover, the 2019 resolution asked EPRS to develop gender impact assessments and gender-based analysis. In this context, the resolution called for increased systematic and periodic collection of gender-disaggregated data and statistics. In terms of systematic data collection, this request has so far not been followed-up. While the EP GAP will probably require a more systematic collection of quantitative data, this does not seem to be the case for qualitative data (which are important, however, in order to complement the quantitative data and to capture informal processes).
- **Lack of systematic monitoring/evaluation**: This is also linked to the previous point, as effective monitoring can only be done if the corresponding data are available. In relation to the gender mainstreaming activities of FEMM, there is currently no systematic monitoring of the integration of FEMM's suggestions in the work of other committees nor in the final EP resolutions. The requirement to develop, by end of 2021, clear indicators to measure to which extent the input from FEMM has been incorporated in Parliament's final position, has the potential to tackle this shortcoming. Similarly, the requirement for the HLG to bi-annually report to the Bureau and review the roadmap on the basis of the monitoring reports, as mentioned, will likely contribute to a more systematic and comprehensive monitoring.

Looking at gender mainstreaming practices in **other EU institutions, national parliaments and international organisations** can be useful in the context of assessing (and possibly improving) the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EP. While the details of this analysis can be found in the dedicated sections, some **general observations** can be made:

- Although all EU institutions are guided by the Treaties and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 in implementing gender mainstreaming in their policy-making and within the institution, there is currently **no coherent approach or structured cooperation**.
- In terms of **structures and procedures** for gender mainstreaming, the **EP** (and the EC) seems **more advanced** than the **EESC and CoR** (where, however, efforts are currently underway to formalise existing informal structures and mechanisms). As to Council, Parliament's calls for a specific Council configuration dedicated to gender equality have so far remained unheard (while gender equality issues have been on the agenda of several informal and formal Council meetings in the past). Recent academic research points to a **lack of transparency** regarding Council's implementation of gender mainstreaming.
- While recent research as well as the European Court of Auditors' special report on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget point to a **number of shortcomings in implementing gender mainstreaming in the EC** (such as lack of consideration of social – including gender-equality related – impacts in the EC's impact assessments, insufficient consideration of gender equality in the EU's budget cycle and a lack of institutionalisation), some **recent (and upcoming) developments** under the leadership of EC President von der Leyen have the potential to **strengthen gender mainstreaming** in the EC. These include, inter alia, the adoption of the new communication on Better Regulation, the upcoming revision of the Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox (still expected in 2021), the ongoing development of a methodology to track gender equality related expenditure within the 2021-2027 MFF and guidelines on socially responsible public procurement.
- In relation to implementation of gender mainstreaming in **national parliaments**, the situation is rather **patchy**. While only a minority have so far developed consistent, sustained gender mainstreaming practices, some have experience in the concrete use of gender mainstreaming tools (such as gender impact assessment of draft legislation and systematic use of gender budgeting) which could be drawn upon by the EP.
- The **United Nations gender action plan** demonstrates how a gender mainstreaming system with clear indicators for tracking progress, incentives for take up and reporting standards can be **built across bodies with different structures and mandates**. As such it flags the potential for a **more coordinated approach** to gender mainstreaming **across the EU institutions**, as called for by the EP in its gender mainstreaming resolutions.

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Appendix 1

Figure C – Illustration of guidance for performance indicators in the UN Action Plan

Source: Performance indicator 6: Policy, UN Women website

06. Performance Indicator: Policy

Approaches requirements	Meets requirements	Exceeds requirements
6a. Policies and plans being developed on gender equality and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women	6b. Up-to-date policies and plans implemented on gender equality and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women	6ci. Up to date policies and plans implemented on gender equality and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women **and** 6cii. Specific senior level mechanism in place for ensuring accountability for promotion of gender equality

What is the Policy indicator?

Gender equality and the empowerment of women policies constitute a key driver of institutional change. Accordingly, the UN-SWAP has focused significant attention on policy development. The importance of gender policies cannot be overstated. Entities with policies are, on average, "meeting" or "exceeding" double the number of UN-SWAP Performance Indicators than those without. It is expected, therefore, that a UN-SWAP aligned policy will greatly enhance an entity's contribution to gender equality and the advancement of women by strengthening accountability and providing direction for the achievement of all the UN-SWAP Performance Indicators.

How to use this performance indicator

Entities must have both up-to-date gender equality and women's empowerment policies/plans (developed, reauthorised or revised, in the last five years) that include equal representation of women and gender mainstreaming. These can be separate documents or can be included together in one document. Entities with a mainly support or administrative function (e.g. UNOG, UNOV, UNON, DGACM, OLA, OAJ, UNOMS) may focus their efforts on policies and strategies on the equal representation of women and organizational culture. As Performance Indicator 12 focuses on gender parity strategies, entities are encouraged to report on the implementation of gender mainstreaming policies/plans under Performance Indicator 6.

¶



Evidence base

Examples of documents to attach to substantiate the entity self-assessment for this indicator:

- Gender mainstreaming policy/strategy
- Gender Action Plan/Implementation plan

- Gender parity strategy
- Documents to demonstrate that the policy is being monitored, for instance Gender Steering Board or Senior Management Team meeting minutes

Note: Please identify a self-explanatory title for the documents uploaded onto the platform, particularly for those shared to the UN-SWAP Knowledge Hub.



How to approach requirements

To approach the requirements of this indicator, entities should be in the process of developing a gender equality and women's empowerment policy/strategy and plan.



How to meet requirements

Gender equality and the empowerment of women policies/plans
Policy titles differ from entity to entity; in order to meet the requirement a policy, plan or equivalent should be in place. To meet requirements entities must have in place that include:

a) Implementation strategy
   - implementation plan;
   - time frame for implementation;
   - resources needed for implementation; and
   - accountability of different levels of staff, including senior managers, for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is inclusive gender mainstreaming, gender-targeted interventions and equal representation of women in staffing clearly set out. Accountability measures should include assessment in performance appraisal and/or senior manager compacts that specify their accountabilities.

b) Monitoring and evaluation of the policy and action plan, with timeline.

c) Monitoring takes place as planned.

d) Evaluation takes place as planned.

e) Results of monitoring and evaluation are fed back into programming.

"Up-to-date" refers to a policy developed, reauthorized or revised, in the last five years. UN entities are required to monitor progress towards, and achievement of, the Performance Indicator.

In addition, entity policies should include a section which outlines in detail the main GEEW results, tied to the SDGs, that the entity intends to achieve, and how these results will be tracked and reported. This can be an elaboration of the main strategic planning document.

Policies for the Equal Representation of Women
To meet the requirements on the equal representation of women, UN entities need to demonstrate, with supporting documentation as evidence, that they have implemented policies that support women's representation at the different levels of the organization. Ideally, these policies will be underpinned by a comprehensive strategy for achieving gender balance, which is linked to performance targets in the human resources and corporate strategies.

How to exceed requirements

To exceed requirements for this indicator, entities need to have an up to date gender equality and women's empowerment policy/strategy and implementation plan (including gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women) - and have specific senior level mechanism in place for ensuring accountability for promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Example: Meeting Requirements

The **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** adopted its Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019 with an accompanying strategic implementation plan in 2015. The Gender Coordination Unit (GCU) leads the implementation of the policy, in close collaboration with the business owners of the relevant sections. IOM's Diversity and Inclusion Workplan includes targets for gender parity and other activities to foster a gender-inclusive work environment. Implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Workplan is coordinated by the Diversity and Inclusion Officer who is part of the Human Resources Management Division (HRM).

GCU, HRM and other relevant offices continue to inform staff about the Gender Equality Policy through various trainings and presentations at Headquarters and in the field. In particular, staff are informed about their specific responsibilities under the policy as they relate to, inter alia, project development and endorsement, monitoring and evaluation, human resources management, and so forth.

Regarding gender parity in staffing, in 2018, a Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee was formed and met twice in 2018. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Director General and has ten members in total. It is gender balanced, includes the Gender Officer (Head of GCU) and has representation from various levels and locations.

A Mid-Term Evaluation of the IOM Gender Equality Policy was finalized in late 2017 and distributed to IOM staff in May 2018. A report of the evaluation findings and recommendations, along with IOM's progress on implementing the UN- SWAP framework from 2012-2017, was distributed to IOM Member States in April 2018 and later presented to IOM Member States at the Standing Committee on Programmes and Finance meeting in June 2018. A final evaluation of the implementation of Gender Equality Policy is planned for 2020.

The **Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)** launched the ESCAP Gender Equality Policy (2019-2023) and Gender Equality Policy Implementation Plan (2019-2023) in November 2019. The Policy sets out the overarching architecture to promote targeted and mainstreaming efforts to integrate gender equality in the work programme and administrative operations of the organisation. The Implementation Plan identifies three key goals and strategic areas in terms of a) strengthened delivery of gender-related SDG results b) tracking financial resources for gender equality and c) strengthened institutional framework. ESCAP continues to implement its ESCAP Strategy on Gender Parity Implementation Plan (2018-2021), which includes a detailed action plan and dashboard to monitor its implementation. As annual review will take place to monitor progress on the implementation of the Policy and Plan.



Example: Exceeding Requirements

The **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**'s Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women includes performance requirements that align with the six pillars of the UN-SWAP (Accountability, Results-based Management, Oversight, Human and Financial Resources, Capacity Development, and Coherence and Knowledge, and Information Management) and respond to the respective performance indicators within each pillar. The gender policy highlights gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women as key priorities for the Organization. In addition, the gender policy outlines the Organization's gender architecture, which introduced more senior accountability mechanisms to ensure the full and meaningful mainstreaming of gender at all levels and within all areas of work.

In addition, UNIDO has a Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Strategy 2020-2023 that provides a clear results-oriented framework and plan of action. The gender strategy is fully aligned with the Organization's strategic planning documents. Similar to its gender policy, UNIDO's gender strategy aligns its focus areas with the six pillars of the UN-SWAP, including a road map to comply with UN-SWAP standards.

UNIDO's Gender Mainstreaming Steering Board oversees the implementation of UNIDO's gender strategy. It is chaired by the Director General and comprises the three Managing Directors (i.e. UNIDO's Executive Board). The authority and responsibility for achieving gender mainstreaming in UNIDO lies with the Director General.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has instituted a Gender Steering and Implementation Committee (GSIC), which is the highest decision-making body on gender equality and the empowerment of women within UNDP with responsibility for policy setting and oversight of all offices. Chaired by the Administrator, the GSIC is the main institutional mechanism by which the UNDP Administrator builds senior leadership and commitment for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2018-2021) for the **United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV)** and the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** guides efforts to integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women into all aspects of the work of UNODC and UNOV. To ensure senior level accountability for the promotion of GEEW, Annual Senior Manager's Compact between the ED/DG of UNOV/UNODC and the Secretary General includes commitments to implementing the Gender Strategy and to rapidly respond to allegations of prohibited conduct, as well as a gender parity indicator.



Additional Points

Policy-related documents can be found on the UN-SWAP Knowledge Hub housed on the online UN-SWAP reporting site.

A Guidance to develop policies on gender mainstreaming in alignment with the UN-SWAP 2.0 indicators will be uploaded at https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability/key-tools-and-resources

Article 8 TFEU commits the European Union and its Member States to eliminating inequalities and promoting the principle of equality between women and men in all their actions. As set out in the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, achieving gender equality in the European Union is a joint responsibility, requiring action by all EU institutions, Member States and EU agencies, in partnership with civil society and women's organisations, social partners and the private sector.

Since 2003, when Parliament formally launched gender mainstreaming activities within the institution, Parliament's FEMM Committee has regularly prepared monitoring reports on the state of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament. The subsequent resolutions, adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2019 respectively, are part of a whole series of activities implemented over the past two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming in the EP, notably the adoption of a new Gender Action Plan and a roadmap for its implementation in July 2020 and April 2021 respectively.

This study examines the current state of play of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament in support of the forthcoming own-initiative report on 'Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament' to be drawn up by the FEMM committee. It gives an insight into the concept of gender mainstreaming and possible tools to implement it, provides an overview of Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy (with particular focus on the new gender action plan and related roadmap) and analyses gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions, national parliaments and international institutions to date in order to put the European Parliament's efforts into context

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