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## **DRAFT REPORT**

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

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Lina Gálvez

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## DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION

### to the Council concerning the EU priorities for the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (2024/2057(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the UN declaration of 15 September 1995 entitled ‘Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action’ and the outcomes of its review conferences,
  - having regard to the UN Secretary-General’s report of 13 December 2019 to the UN Commission on the Status of Women entitled ‘Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly’,
  - having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 November 2020 entitled ‘EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III: an ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action’ (JOIN(2020)0017) and the accompanying joint staff working document of 25 November 2020 entitled ‘Objectives and Indicators to frame the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-25)’ (SWD(2020)0284),
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU Gender Action Plan III<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2021 on challenges ahead for women’s rights in Europe: more than 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the briefing entitled ‘Accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5): Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls’, published by its Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services on 18 September 2024,
  - having regard to the UN Women and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs report of September 2024 entitled ‘Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024’,
  - having regard to Rule 121 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A10-0000/2024),
- A. whereas equality between women and men is a fundamental principle of the EU, and whereas the EU’s external action must be guided by this principle;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 160.

- B. whereas women’s human rights and gender equality are not only fundamental human rights, but preconditions for advancing development and reducing poverty, and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world;
  - C. whereas 189 governments across the world, including the EU and its Member States, committed to working towards gender equality and empowering all women and girls at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing;
  - D. whereas the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the most comprehensive global agenda for promoting gender equality and is considered the international ‘Bill of Rights’ for women, defining women’s rights as human rights and articulating a vision of equal rights, freedom and opportunities for all women in the world, and was reaffirmed in 2015 with Goal 5, ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’, of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set out in the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by specifying targets and concrete measures across a range of issues affecting women and girls;
  - E. whereas just six years in advance of the 2030 deadline for the UN’s SDGs, not a single indicator under Goal 5 has been fully achieved; whereas the UN estimates that radical actions are needed in order to accelerate progress and to avoid taking 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory legislation for women;
  - F. whereas a 2024 UN study<sup>3</sup> on the evaluation of SDG 5 highlights that social norms still exist that legitimise violence against women and girls, reduce access to healthcare services, assign unpaid care and domestic work solely to women and restrict leadership opportunities;
  - G. whereas the UN General Assembly has raised the alarm about the active resistance to advances in gender equality and the growing transnational backlash against women’s rights; whereas there is a clear and urgent need to reaffirm substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls<sup>4</sup>;
1. Recommends that the Council:
    - (a) confirm its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to the range of actions for women’s human rights and gender equality outlined therein; confirm its commitment to women’s human rights, through gender mainstreaming in all policy areas and cycles, to the implementation of specific and targeted actions for women’s human rights and gender equality, and to ensuring proper gender budgeting;
    - (b) ensure that gender equality and women’s rights are fully and proudly implemented in all aspects of EU external action through an adequately funded,

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<sup>3</sup> UN, *Are we getting there? A synthesis of UN system evaluations of SDG 5*, March 2024, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/03/are-we-getting-there-a-synthesis-of-un-system-evaluations-of-sdg-5>.

<sup>4</sup> UN General Assembly, *Escalating backlash against gender equality and urgency of reaffirming substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls: Report of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls*, 15 May 2024, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/073/47/pdf/g2407347.pdf>.

gender-transformative, inclusive and intersectional approach;

- (c) ensure the full involvement of Parliament and its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the decision-making process on the EU's position at the 69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (10-25 March 2025); ensure that Parliament has adequate and timely information and access to the EU's position document ahead of the negotiations; and further improve interinstitutional cooperation and informal consultation, including prior to and during negotiations, so that Parliament's priorities are properly incorporated;
- (d) take due stock of the progress, and setbacks, encountered in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action;
- (e) reinvigorate the EU's efforts to overcome remaining challenges to the full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; ensure that the EU leads by example by putting in place robust policy measures to address, combat and anticipate gender inequality in all its manifestations, and to empower women in all their diversity;
- (f) reiterate that the EU has an important role to play in achieving a gender-equal world through supporting partner countries in addressing gender discrimination; ensure that the EU leads by example by urging the remaining five Member States that have still not ratified and implemented the Istanbul Convention to do so in the shortest possible timeframe;
- (g) press for equal opportunities for all in all areas of life, to allow women in all their diversity to fulfil their potential, notably in decision-making, whether political, economic, academic or cultural, this also being essential for good governance and policymaking; within this context, express opposition to semiotic violence against women in politics, which sustains and reinforces negative stereotypes about women and discourages young women from entering politics and the public sphere;
- (h) emphasise that weak political leadership, lack of commitment, data gaps, insufficient investment, and the rise of anti-rights movements have been identified as obstacles; thus making it necessary to promote more women in leadership, increase investment, and implement comprehensive policy reforms to overcome these systemic barriers and achieve a truly equal society;
- (i) apply gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all EU policy areas, including external action, and lead by example in this regard;
- (j) commit to constant appraisal and pro-active corrective action in the EU's internal and external policies in regard to gender equality, mainstreaming and budgeting;
- (k) call on the Commission to further develop and roll out concrete and well-financed plans and actions to address the UN SDGs, specifically those related to gender equality;
- (l) take the lead in the global fight against the backlash against gender equality and women's rights;
- (m) urge the Commission to further develop and improve the collection of gender-desegregated data and to ensure that this data contributes to better policymaking;

as well as to reinforce the European Institute for Gender Equality both in terms of funding and capacity;

- (n) implement without delay and to the fullest extent the EU GAP III and ensure that 85 % of all new actions throughout external relations by 2025 contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment;
  - (o) take note of and implement the recommendations of Parliament's resolution of 10 March 2022 on the EU GAP III, and thus prioritise GAP III in every aspect of EU external action through a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, both in terms of GAP III's geographical coverage and areas of action, as well as gender mainstreaming in all areas of external action, whether trade, development policy, humanitarian aid, security or sectors such as energy and agriculture;
  - (p) devise, fund and implement policies that reduce the role of gender as a factor in poverty both within and, through external action, outside of the EU, taking due note of intersectional factors, including age, care responsibilities, disability, race and sexuality;
  - (q) address the systemic and root causes of women's poverty and empower women and girls in all their diversity through education, training, lifelong-learning, non-discriminatory labour opportunities, access to social services, balancing unpaid care and social responsibilities through legislative initiatives, combating gender stereotyping and promoting women as role models;
  - (r) call for further efforts, legislation and enforcement of existing measures to ensure the rights of women domestic workers;
  - (s) enhance the EU's response, resources and toolkit, both internally and externally, regarding gender-based violence, including domestic, sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence, including in war zones, taking account of migration, prostitution and sexual exploitation;
  - (t) ensure that women in all their diversity have access to health services, including for sexual rights and reproductive health, including age-appropriate sexuality and relationship education, contraception, safe and legal abortion, maternal healthcare and care-based health services;
  - (u) call for increased efforts to address gender issues in the context of the green transition, given the intersectional and disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls, particularly in developing countries, noting that the effects of climate change are not gender-neutral;
  - (v) advocate for and strengthen civil society organisations supporting women's rights;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council, and for information, to the Commission.

## **ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The rapporteur declares under her exclusive responsibility that she did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.