



Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

State of play

STUDY

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Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

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 gender equality strategy 2026-2030, achieving gender equality in the EU 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 the European Parliament formally launched gender mainstreaming activities within the institution, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) has been regularly preparing monitoring reports on the state of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament. The subsequent resolutions, adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2019 and 2022, are part of a sustained series of activities implemented over the past two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming in Parliament. This effort was significantly reinforced by the adoption of a gender action plan and a roadmap for its implementation in July 2020 and April 2021 respectively, and their renewal in October 2025 and April 2026.

This study, which updates a previous edition of September 2021, 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 provides an updated overview of the concept of gender mainstreaming and the tools available to implement it; analyses Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy, with particular focus on the 2022 resolution on the issue, Parliament's 2020 and 2025 gender action plans and their accompanying roadmaps, as well as committee gender action plans; and examines gender mainstreaming both in European Parliament policymaking and in terms of representation, institutional culture and working environment within the institution. It further reviews gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions and national parliaments to place the European Parliament's efforts in a broader comparative context.

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Executive summary

Background

Gender mainstreaming is firmly embedded in the European Union (EU) Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. **Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)** commits the EU and its Member States to ensuring that a **gender equality perspective is integrated into policymaking**, so that both women's and men's experiences and concerns inform the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and funding programmes. This obligation encompasses both the protection of individual rights and the structural dimension of inequality, including balanced representation of women at all levels.

The **European Parliament (EP) gender mainstreaming policy** was formally **launched in 2003**. Since then, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) has regularly prepared **monitoring reports** on the state of gender mainstreaming in the EP, with **resolutions adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2019 and 2022**. These form part of a sustained series of activities implemented over two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming within the institution.

Since March 2019, **Rule 249 of the EP Rules of Procedure** requires the EP Bureau to adopt a **gender action plan (EP GAP)**. The **first EP GAP** was adopted in **July 2020**, accompanied by a **roadmap for implementation** adopted in **April 2021**. A **renewed EP GAP** was adopted in **October 2025**, with a **further roadmap** following in **April 2026**. For the first time, these instruments explicitly cover Parliament's political side, in addition to its administrative dimension. The roadmaps include concrete actions with timelines ('milestones') and, where relevant, binding measures.

In **September 2025**, the **FEMM committee** requested the **Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS)** to **update the 2021 EPRS study on gender mainstreaming in the EP**,¹ in support of a **forthcoming FEMM monitoring report** co-rapporteured by **MEPs Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová** (Renew, Slovakia) and **Alice Kuhnke** (Greens/EFA, Sweden).²

Scope and objectives of the study

This **updated study** examines the **current state of play of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament**, with a view to informing the FEMM committee's forthcoming own-initiative monitoring report. It pursues four complementary objectives:

- providing an **updated overview** of the **concept of gender mainstreaming**, including its tools and enabling conditions, as well as available **assessment frameworks** and the **role of inter-parliamentary benchmarking**;
- analysing the **state of implementation** of **Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy**, with particular focus on the **latest 2022 resolution** on the issue, **committee gender action plans**, and the **2020 and 2025 EP GAPs** and accompanying **roadmaps**;
- examining, as did the 2021 study, **gender mainstreaming both in EP policymaking and in terms of representation, institutional culture and working environment** within the EP; and

¹ N. Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke and R. Shreeves, [Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament – State of Play](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2021.

² The forthcoming FEMM report will be the latest in a series of regular monitoring reports drawn up by FEMM since 2007. See [EP Legislative Observatory \(OEIL\)](#).

- reviewing **gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions** and in **national parliaments**, based on a **new European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD) survey** conducted in **February 2026**.

The study relies primarily on **desk research**, supplemented by **primary data** collected through an **ECPRD survey to national parliaments** and a **written questionnaire** sent to **EP committee secretariats** in **February 2026**.

A number of **limitations** should be acknowledged in relation to the data from the ECPRD survey and the committee questionnaire. Data gaps and the uneven level of detail in the responses prevented full comparability across parliaments and committees.

In **Section 4.2.2.** on committee gender action plans (and the related **Annexes II-IV**), **artificial intelligence** was used to **assist in extracting data from the plans for comparative analysis**. **All results were double-checked** against the information included in the committee gender action plans.

Key findings

Overview of gender mainstreaming and assessment frameworks

Gender mainstreaming was established as the **principal global strategy for gender equality** at the **United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing** in **1995**. It is **both a strategy and a set of instruments** aimed at **integrating gender equality concerns into policy-making** – not a goal in itself but a means to ensure that law, policy and public funding contribute systematically to gender equality. To support its practical application, the **European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)** has developed a **toolkit** mapping concrete tools onto **four key stages** of the policy cycle: defining policy interventions; planning implementation; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation.

The literature identifies a cluster of **enabling conditions** essential to effective gender mainstreaming: **consistent, high-level political commitment** from an institution's leadership; a clearly articulated **framework policy** specifying objectives, procedures, timelines and accountability mechanisms; **formal gender mainstreaming structures** with well-defined roles, responsibilities and powers; and **sufficient capacity** in terms of gender expertise, staffing and financial resources. Common **obstacles** include the **absence of clear institutional leadership, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, inadequate resource allocation**, and the **risk** of mainstreaming being **reduced to a compliance formality**.

EIGE's assessment of gender equality in the European Parliament and national parliaments in the EU Member States in 2023 found **significant scope for improvement**. **Benchmarking** – for example through EIGE's biennial reports, the ECPRD network, the Inter Pares programme and the ParlAmericas dashboard – is **increasingly used** to **promote transparency, accountability** and the **dissemination of good practice**.

EU approach to gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming has constituted the **official EU policy approach** to gender equality since the Amsterdam Treaty (**1997**). The EU pursues a **twin-track approach** combining mainstreaming across all policy sectors with specific positive action for women. The **EU gender equality strategy 2026–2030**, accompanied by a roadmap for women's rights, **reaffirms this commitment**, with key provisions including further integration into the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the

years 2028 to 2034 and into areas such as climate and environment, research and innovation, and crisis preparedness.

Despite those commitments, **evaluations** of the **2020–2025 EU strategy for gender equality** point to **persistent gaps** in implementation: **gender mainstreaming** remained **limited across the full range of EU policy domains**; **gender-related impacts** were **partially or fully considered** in **only 7 % of impact assessments** produced during the **2019–2024** parliamentary term; and the **methodology for tracking EU spending on gender equality** requires **further development**. At **Member State level**, **overall commitment** to gender mainstreaming has **declined**, with EIGE's gender mainstreaming indicator falling from 39 % of the maximum score in 2021 to 34 % in 2024. The broader context is increasingly challenging, marked by contestation regarding women's rights and gender equality policies.

Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy rests on a series of **resolutions**, **Bureau reports**, **EP GAPs** with accompanying **roadmaps**, and **committee-level action plans**. **All standing committees and sub-committees** have **gender action plans** structured around **five recurrent dimensions**: policy work; organisation of work; cooperation and coordination; monitoring and reporting; and innovative initiatives. However, the **rigour of monitoring varies considerably** across committees; **several action plans pre-date the 2020 EP GAP** and **remain unrevised**.

FEMM is the **primary body** for integrating a gender perspective into Parliament's legislative and non-legislative work. A **2023 EP study** found that **only approximately 24 % of FEMM's amendments** were **incorporated into lead committee reports**, and **just over 16 % into texts adopted in plenary**, indicating that the uptake of FEMM proposals depends significantly on support from other committees and political groups. **Gender impact assessments** and **gender budgeting** remain **underused** in practice.

On **gender representation**, the **share of female MEPs** reached **40 %** in **2024** before declining to **39.2 %** in **2026**. In Parliament's **Secretariat**, **48 % of Heads of Unit** and **52 % of Directors** were **women** in **2026**, although the **target of 50 % female Directors-General** has **not yet been met** (approximately **35 %** in **2025–2026**).

Progress has been made on **work–life balance** and **institutional culture**. In **November 2025**, Parliament voted by a large majority to **allow female MEPs to delegate their voting rights to a colleague** for up to three months before and six months after childbirth; the **Council of the EU** agreed in **March 2026**, and **Parliament** gave its **formal consent** on **29 April 2026**. The measure must still be ratified by all 27 Member States before entering into force, with completion expected ahead of the 2029 European elections. **Anti-harassment policies** have been **strengthened** through mandatory training, a new mediation service and a network of confidential counsellors; nevertheless, procedural challenges remain, as illustrated by recent judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The **2026–2027 EP gender roadmap** introduces a **new benchmarking exercise** comparing Parliament's practices with those of national parliaments, drawing on ECPRD and EIGE expertise.

Gender mainstreaming in other EU institutions and national parliaments

The study's **comparative analysis** of gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions and national parliaments yields the following **principal observations**.

- **European Commission (EC):** despite institutional structures – Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), an Inter-Service Group on Gender Equality and a Task Force on Equality – **gender mainstreaming across policy areas** remains **weak**, as evidenced by the **limited consideration of gender impacts in Commission impact assessments** accompanying legislative proposals. **Gender budgeting** has been introduced as an ex-post expenditure tracking tool under the 2021-2027 MFF but is **not yet embedded across all phases of the budget cycle**. **Progress** has been made at **mid-level management**, although **men continue to predominate** at the **most senior levels**.
- **Council of the EU:** gender mainstreaming is addressed through the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) configuration and Council conclusions, but a **dedicated configuration on gender equality** – as called for by the European Parliament and recommended by EIGE – has **not been established**. **Negotiations within the Council** have at times **delayed agreement** on key legislative instruments, as illustrated, among other examples, by the **prolonged negotiations** over the **Women on Boards Directive**. In its **2030 diversity and inclusion strategy**, the Council strives to attain **gender balance** in management and other positions of higher responsibility **within a 45 % to 55 % margin by 2030**.
- **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and European Committee of the Regions (CoR):** **both bodies** have **recently formalised gender equality commitments**, through a new diversity and inclusion strategy (EESC) and a gender equality action plan (CoR). **Women** remain nevertheless **significantly under-represented at political level** in both bodies.
- **European Investment Bank (EIB):** the **EIB's gender action plan III (2026-2030)** aims to **intensify efforts to promote gender equality** by promoting women's access to capital and the workforce, and extends its scope beyond women to include LGBTIQ+ persons and vulnerable men and boys. However, while aiming to promote gender equality through the EIB's investments in the EU, the **new action plan** is **silent** about **gender representation within the institution itself**.
- **National parliaments:** the **ECPRD survey** launched by **EPRS** in **February 2026** (responses from chambers in **25 EU Member States** and **10 non-EU countries**) confirms that the **picture remains uneven**. Only a **minority** of national parliaments have developed **consistent and sustained gender mainstreaming practices**. **Promising practices** in **work-life balance**, **anti-harassment policies** and **gender-sensitive occupational health** exist in some chambers and warrant further attention.

No comprehensive approach or structured cooperation in gender mainstreaming currently exists across the EU institutions, despite their shared obligations under the Treaties.

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Acronyms

AD	Administrator
AFCO	Committee on Constitutional Affairs
AFET	Committee on Foreign Affairs
AGRI	Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
AHCP	Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace
AHGE	Ad-Hoc Group on Equality
AIPN	Appointing Authority
APA	Accredited Parliamentary Assistant
AST	Assistant
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
BUDG	Committee on Budgets
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COD	Ordinary legislative procedure, formerly known as co-decision procedure
CODI	Joint Committee of Diversity and Inclusion
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
COPEC	Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity
Council	Council of the EU
CULT	Committee on Culture and Education
CSW	UN Commission on the Status of Women
DEVE	Committee on Development
DG JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DG PERS	Directorate-General for Personnel
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EC	European Commission
ECPRD	European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation
ECON	Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EIB	European Investment Bank

EIDU	Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EMPL	Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
ENVI	Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety
EP	European Parliament
EP GAP	EP gender action plan
EPRS	European Parliament Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
EU	European Union
EUDES	Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield
FEMM	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GIA	Gender impact assessment
GMN	Gender Mainstreaming Network
GSC	General Secretariat of the Council
HGL	High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity
HOUS	Special Committee on the Housing Crisis in the EU
IMCO	Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection
IMS	Office of the Gender Advisor (NATO IMS)
INI	Own-initiative procedure or report
INTA	Committee on International Trade
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
ISG	Inter-Service Group
ITRE	Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
JURI	Committee on Legal Affairs
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
LRAs	Local and regional authorities
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MFF	Multiannual financial framework

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PECH	Committee on Fisheries
PETI	Committee on Petitions
REGI	Committee on Regional Development
RoP	Rules of Procedure
RSB	Regulatory Scrutiny Board
SEDE	Committee on Security and Defence
SQWP	Working Party on Social Questions
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TRAN	Committee on Transport and Tourism
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

1. Introduction

In **September 2025**, the Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Rights (FEMM) requested DG EPRS to **update its study on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament**, published in **2021**, as supporting evidence for a forthcoming **FEMM report** on the same issue under the co-rapporteurship of **Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová** (Renew, Slovakia) and **Alice Kuhnke** (Greens/EFA, Sweden).³

The **2021 EPRS study**, a first of its kind, had been produced further to calls for research on gender mainstreaming progress in Parliament included in EP resolutions.⁴ While the focus of the 2021 study was on Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy and its implementation, it also analysed gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions and bodies, national parliaments and international organisations.

After providing an overview of the concept and state of gender mainstreaming in the EU, the study outlined the EP resolutions, reports, action plans and roadmaps forming the basis of Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy. In this context, it also described Parliament's structures and mechanisms responsible for gender mainstreaming.

The study then looked at where Parliament stood in terms of gender mainstreaming, examining, on the one hand, the incorporation of a gender perspective into Parliament's policymaking and, on the other, the representation of women in the EP (both at political level and in Parliament's administration). Beyond the aspect of gender balance, the study also touched upon measures to create a gender-sensitive working environment (including work-life balance measures, anti-harassment policies and professional training), as both aspects are intrinsically linked. In relation to both dimensions – gender mainstreaming in EP policymaking and gender representation – the 2021 study looked both at the situation at the time the study was drafted and at future action under Parliament's new gender action plan and roadmap, adopted in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

Finally, the study also looked at efforts of the European Commission (EC), the Council of the EU, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), examined (based on a survey through the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation – ECPRD) gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments, and presented the United Nations (UN) action plans for gender mainstreaming across the UN system.

The **present study** follows a similar structure to that of its predecessor, albeit with some differences: following the **first section** (introduction), the **second section** provides an updated overview of the concept of gender mainstreaming; tools and methods to implement it; key stages of the policy cycle for including a gender perspective; main enabling conditions and obstacles for gender mainstreaming; as well as its monitoring. Unlike the previous edition, this section also explains how the exchange of best practice between parliaments can serve as a basis for benchmarking and promote gender mainstreaming, both within Europe and beyond. In this context, the study sheds light on the findings of a report on gender equality in the European Parliament and national parliaments in the EU Member States, published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2024, in which EIGE assessed performance against its gender-sensitive parliaments

³ N. Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke and R. Shreeves, [Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament – State of Play](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2021.

⁴ In its [2016](#) and [2019](#) resolutions on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, Parliament notably called on DG EPRS to conduct regular qualitative and quantitative research on gender mainstreaming progress in Parliament.

framework. Beyond Europe, the study provides examples of exchange of best practice and increased transparency and accountability, such as projects under the Inter Pares programme or the gender equality dashboard drawn up by ParlAmericas, a diplomacy network covering national parliaments in North, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

After touching upon the EU's approach to gender mainstreaming in the **third section**, the study provides, under the **fourth section**, an analysis of the state of play of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament. In the context of Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy, the study puts a special focus on Parliament's latest resolution on gender mainstreaming, adopted in 2022, as well as committee action plans and their implementation. It also touches upon the 2020 and 2025 EP gender action plans (and roadmaps for implementation). As in the 2021 study, gender mainstreaming is examined both in policymaking and gender representation. As to the former, the study analyses, in particular, the impact of FEMM, as Parliament's main body in charge of gender mainstreaming, on the work of other EP committees. As to the latter, it examines gender balance both at political level and in Parliament's Secretariat-General, showing its evolution since 2021. In a new sub-section on Parliament's institutional culture and environment, particular focus is put on EP anti-harassment policies as well as maternity, paternity and parental leave provisions for MEPs and members of staff.

Finally, the **fifth section** of the study examines, as did its predecessor, gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions and national parliaments. In addition to presenting the state of play in Commission, Council, CoR and EESC, the study also includes a sub-section on the European Investment Bank (EIB). Moreover, the study presents the findings of another ECPRD survey, launched in February 2026, enquiring about gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments within and outside of the EU.

In terms of **methodology**, this study is – except for the collection of primary data through the ECPRD survey to national parliaments and a written questionnaire sent to committee secretariats – primarily based on desk research. As its predecessor, it analyses relevant EP resolutions, Bureau reports, action plans and roadmaps, as far as available, as well as Council conclusions and opinions adopted by the EESC and the CoR. Moreover, it reviews research carried out by academia and EIGE.

Several **limitations** should be acknowledged. In relation to the data from the ECPRD survey and the committee questionnaire, the uneven level of detail in the responses and missing data (because of the fact that not all parliaments replied, and that not all parliaments and committees that replied answered all the questions) prevented full comparability across parliaments and committees.

Artificial intelligence (AI) was used in **Section 4.2.2.** on committee gender action plans (and the related **Annexes II-IV**), to **assist in extracting data from the plans for comparative analysis. All results were double-checked** against the information included in the committee gender action plans.

2. Overview of gender mainstreaming

Key findings

Gender mainstreaming, established internationally as the principal global strategy for achieving gender equality at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, is a strategy and set of instruments aimed at integrating equality concerns into the policy arena. It is not a goal in itself but a means of ensuring that law, policy and public funding contribute systematically to gender equality. No policy intervention can be presumed to be gender-neutral: gender mainstreaming is intended to ensure that policymaking accounts for women's and men's differing situations, concerns and aspirations, and assesses the potential differential impacts of proposed measures.

A range of tools and methods have been mapped by **EIGE** against four key stages of the policy cycle: defining policy interventions (through gender analysis, gender impact assessments and participatory methodologies); planning implementation (through gender-sensitive objectives, indicators and gender budgeting); implementation (through capacity-building and targeted communication); and monitoring and evaluation (through gender-sensitive ex-ante and ex-post evaluation). Comprehensive gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data are indispensable at each stage. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (**OECD**) has recently proposed a shift from the application of individual tools to the design of policy combinations capable of addressing the multiple and interconnected drivers of gender inequalities.

The **literature** identifies a cluster of enabling conditions that are critical to effective gender mainstreaming: consistent, high-level political commitment from an institution's leadership; a clearly articulated framework policy specifying objectives, procedures, timelines and accountability mechanisms; formal gender mainstreaming structures with well-defined roles, responsibilities and powers; and sufficient capacity in terms of gender expertise, staffing and financial resources. Conversely, common obstacles include the absence of clear institutional leadership, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, inadequate resource allocation, and the risk that mainstreaming procedures are reduced to a compliance formality, oriented towards the number of activities rather than their quality or impact. Achieving gender equality as a cross-cutting institutional value requires sustained cultural transformation and systems for meaningful accountability.

EIGE's assessment framework for public institutions identifies five dimensions of effective gender mainstreaming: formal adoption of a high-level commitment; supporting structures and procedures; investment in capacity and expertise; accountability and compliance mechanisms; and stability of implementation across policy areas and over time. For parliaments specifically, **EIGE**, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (**IPU**), the **OECD**, and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (**ODIHR**) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (**OSCE**) have developed tailored frameworks centred on the concept of a gender-sensitive parliament. EIGE's assessment of the state of play of gender equality in the European Parliament and national parliaments in EU Member States in 2023 identified significant scope for improvement across all five areas of its framework. Benchmarking – within the EU (notably through EIGE's biennial reports and exchanges facilitated by the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation – ECPRD) and beyond (through initiatives such as the Inter-Pares programme and the ParlAmericas parliamentary practices dashboard) – is increasingly used to promote transparency, accountability and the dissemination of good practice.

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

Gender mainstreaming is a tool for ensuring that law, policy and funding contribute towards achieving gender equality, that is, a situation where women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities both in law and in practice. It was established internationally as the **major global strategy for gender equality** at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women held 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 the effects on women and men are analysed before decisions are taken.⁵

While a **gender dimension** may be more immediately evident in some areas than others, no intervention can be assumed to be gender-neutral. Gender mainstreaming is intended to ensure that **polymaking** considers both women's and men's situations, concerns and aspirations, and assesses potential differential impacts that may inadvertently cause or perpetuate inequality. It also entails looking through a gender lens at **institutions and organisations** and their structures and ways of working, for example, considering gender balance in decision-making.

Gender mainstreaming **is not an end in itself** but a strategy and set of instruments and processes aimed at **bringing equality issues into the policy arena to achieve the goal of gender equality**. It can be used alongside other approaches such as targeted action to address discrimination and advance women's empowerment.

Since 2013, EIGE has been **monitoring progress towards gender equality in the EU** through its composite Gender Equality Index (GEI).⁶ The 2025 GEI results⁷ show **many remaining gender gaps**, which require gender-sensitive policy responses because of their significant costs to individuals, societies and economies.⁸ Gender analysis also illustrates that **new and emerging challenges**, such

Box 1 – The concept of 'gender'

In the context of gender mainstreaming, 'gender' is an analytical tool that makes a distinction between biological sex and the socially constructed roles ascribed to women and men. This makes it possible to explore how different societies shape and value the roles, behaviours and domains ascribed to them, and to assess and address unequal access to resources and power. Importantly, the concept of gender refers not only to women and men but also to the relations between them, creating an opportunity to focus on men and boys as well as women and girls. Since women and men are not homogeneous groups, the combination of gender with other characteristics that can compound inequality and discrimination, such as ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, class or disability, is a further dimension of analysis.

Sources: [UN](#); [Council of Europe](#).

⁵ See BPfA strategic objective H.2. and the references to mainstreaming a gender perspective across the strategic objectives. 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 webpages on the [conference](#) and [gender mainstreaming](#). In 1997, the Economic and Social Council adopted [agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming](#). The UN [stresses](#) that gender mainstreaming is not something it has imposed on governments, but rather a global strategy for promoting gender equality that member states have shaped through intergovernmental discussions since the mid-1990s and adopted by consensus. For an overview of EU action, see M. Prpic and R. Shreeves, [Beijing Platform for Action: 25-year review and future priorities](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2020; and EIGE, [Beijing Platform for Action +30: Impact driver – Marking milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU](#), June 2025.

⁶ EIGE, an EU agency, was set up in 2010 to promote gender equality. Since 2011, it has been operating under the remit of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST). EIGE's tasks include providing expertise on gender mainstreaming in all EU bodies and devising tools to support the incorporation of gender equality into all EU policies.

⁷ EIGE, [2025 EU Gender Equality Index](#), website.

⁸ On the costs of gender inequality see, for example: W. van Ballegooij with J. Moxom, [Equality and the Fight against Racism and Xenophobia – Cost of Non-Europe Report](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2018; EIGE, [Economic benefits of gender equality in the EU: Overall economic impacts of gender equality](#), 2018; EIGE, [Economic benefits of gender equality in the European Union](#), website; EIGE, [Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union](#), 2014; EIGE, [The costs of gender-based violence in the European Union](#), 2021.

as the development of AI, climate change and demographic change, have gender dimensions that will need careful consideration to design fair, effective policy.⁹

In this context, gender mainstreaming also matters because of its **potential for better policymaking**. 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, humanitarian aid that is gender- and age-insensitive has been shown to be less effective, and risks not reaching the most vulnerable people or failing to respond adequately to their specific needs.¹⁰ Industry standards based on gender-neutral, one-size-fits-all design and risk assessment can disadvantage women and put their health at risk.¹¹ Research and practice show the **pitfalls of 'gender-blind' or 'gender-neutral' approaches** across multiple other areas including pandemic response, trade, climate change, disaster resilience, health, AI, and security.¹² Conversely, research illustrates how, in areas such as trade policy, **better understanding of the gender dimension can help to protect both sexes from negative effects and improve policy quality**.¹³ More broadly, the OECD concludes that public policies 'cannot afford to ignore' the inter-relationship between specific policy areas and gender equality objectives, because a mainstreamed policy approach to gender equality is **key for sustainable progress and growth**.¹⁴ For **parliaments**, gender mainstreaming has specific resonance, since incorporating gender perspectives into their work as legislators and representative institutions can help to improve policy outcomes, ensure effective scrutiny, and increase democratic legitimacy.¹⁵

2.2. How does it work?

A range of methods and tools have been developed to put the principles of gender mainstreaming into practice. EIGE has mapped them against **four key stages of the policy cycle**:

⁹ EIGE, [Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the future of work](#), 2020; EIGE, [Gender mainstreaming: Environment and climate change](#), website; EIGE, [Gender mainstreaming: The outcome of improved gender equality on demographics and labour supply](#), website.

¹⁰ European Commission, [Age and gender-sensitive aid](#), website; European Commission, [Gender: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance](#), 2013, pp. 1-6.

¹¹ European Trade Union Institute, [Gender matters at work](#), HesaMag 31, 2026.

¹² See, for example, EIGE, [Covid-19 and gender equality](#), website; A.C. Callerstig and S. Strid, 'Gender mainstreaming in times of crisis: Missed opportunities in pandemic policymaking', *Papers. Revista De Sociologia*, Vol. 108(3), 2023; A. Saha et al., [From commitment to coherence: rethinking trade policy for gender equality](#), ODI Global, 2026; M. O. Ensor, [The risks of gender-blind climate action](#), Climate Diplomacy, 2022; M. Belsey Priebe, [Gender-blind DRR blunts response and recovery](#), Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 2024; UN Women Europe and Central Asia, [Explainer: Why gender matters in disaster risk reduction](#), 2025; A. Acanga et al., 'Gender perspectives in disaster response: An evidence-based review', *Progress in Disaster Science*, Volume 26, 2025; Our Secure Future, [A Gender Perspective on AI Risks to National Security](#), 2024; V. Henkemeier and S. Goodger, [The EU must mainstream gender in AI policy](#), EPC, 2026; N. Bentzen, [Women in the age of AI-enabled disinformation](#), EPRS, March 2026; NATO, [IMS Office of the Gender Advisor](#), website, updated March 2026.

¹³ E. Vilup, [The EU's Trade Policy: from gender-blind to gender-sensitive?](#), Policy Department for External Policies, European Parliament, 2015.

¹⁴ W. Adema et al., 'Mainstreaming Gender Equality', in [Joining Forces for Gender Equality](#), OECD, 2023, pp. 15-38, p. 31.

¹⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Gender-sensitive parliaments](#), website.

1 Defining policy interventions

Since no intervention can be presumed to be gender-neutral, the starting point is 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** 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.¹⁶

This analysis forms part of a **gender impact assessment**, which identifies and measures the projected positive, neutral or negative impacts of the planned intervention.¹⁷ 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 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 meant to benefit from the intervention, and inputs from gender experts and women's organisations.

2 Planning implementation

This part of the policy 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** should be included to allow for monitoring and evaluation of the actual outcomes.¹⁸

This phase includes **gender budgeting**.¹⁹ 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 advance gender equality and women's rights, making it a powerful tool for gender mainstreaming. It includes the gender perspective in all 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.

3 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 into 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.

4 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,

¹⁶ EIGE, [Gender analysis](#), website.

¹⁷ EIGE, [Gender impact assessment](#), website.

¹⁸ EIGE, [Gender statistics and indicators](#), website.

¹⁹ EIGE, [Gender budgeting](#), website.

on completion of the intervention, in which case the focus is on gender impacts and the contribution of the intervention to promoting gender equality.²⁰

The OECD has proposed a new framework for gender mainstreaming, which would allow for a shift from a focus on individual policies to considering which **policy combinations** can be used in parallel to address the multiple drivers and impacts of gender inequalities.²¹

For these tools to function effectively, **comprehensive gender statistics** are needed throughout the policy cycle as an evidence base to assess both the initial situation and change over time.²² 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 human resources policies. As defined by EIGE and the UN, gender statistics include, but are not limited to, the collection, analysis and presentation of sex-disaggregated data.²³ While breaking data down separately for women and men is a key element, gender statistics go further than this, by encompassing three additional dimensions. **First**, the data collected need 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 capture 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.

2.3. Enabling conditions and obstacles

The use of gender mainstreaming tools in policymaking is an important – albeit not the only – dimension of gender mainstreaming in institutions (Figure 1). The literature identifies a combination of **elements that are crucial to gender mainstreaming** or can help to reinforce it, as well as number of **common obstacles** that can prevent institutions from implementing it effectively.²⁴

Consistent, high-level political commitment from an organisation's leadership and senior management is key to driving change and establishing a supportive organisational culture for gender mainstreaming.

A **framework policy** for gender mainstreaming, such as an action plan with specific objectives, serves as a baseline for measuring progress, and can be used to hold the institution accountable for action – or inaction. As a first step, it is recommended to conduct a self-assessment or audit, consulting with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders to take account of existing efforts and challenges and bring people on board. A gender mainstreaming policy works best if it clearly defines objectives, procedures, timelines and actors, and includes mechanisms to track implementation and record and disseminate the results.

²⁰ EIGE, [Gender-responsive evaluation](#), website.

²¹ OECD, [Gender Equality in a Changing World: Taking Stock and Moving Forward](#), 2025.

²² OECD, [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#), 2018, pp. 42–44.

²³ EIGE, [Gender statistics and indicators](#), website; UN, [Manual – Integrating a gender perspective into statistics](#), 2016.

²⁴ This section draws on: EIGE, [Gender institutional transformation](#), website; EIGE, [Gender equality training online toolkit: Designing effective gender equality training](#), website; Expertise France, [Guide for assessing gender mainstreaming: Diagnosing the state of play and improvements](#), 2025; K. Kamioka and E. Cronin, [Review of the United Nations system-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#), UN, 2019; OECD, [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality 2023](#), 2023; OECD, [Joining Forces for Gender Equality: What Is Holding us Back?](#), 2023, pp. 52–54; OECD, [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#), 2018.

Formal gender mainstreaming mechanisms, with clear roles, responsibilities and powers help to implement, coordinate and advance the gender mainstreaming policy and action plan across an institution and integrate the concepts and practices into the organisational culture. The OECD recommends that parliaments should have mechanisms covering both political and administrative levels.²⁵

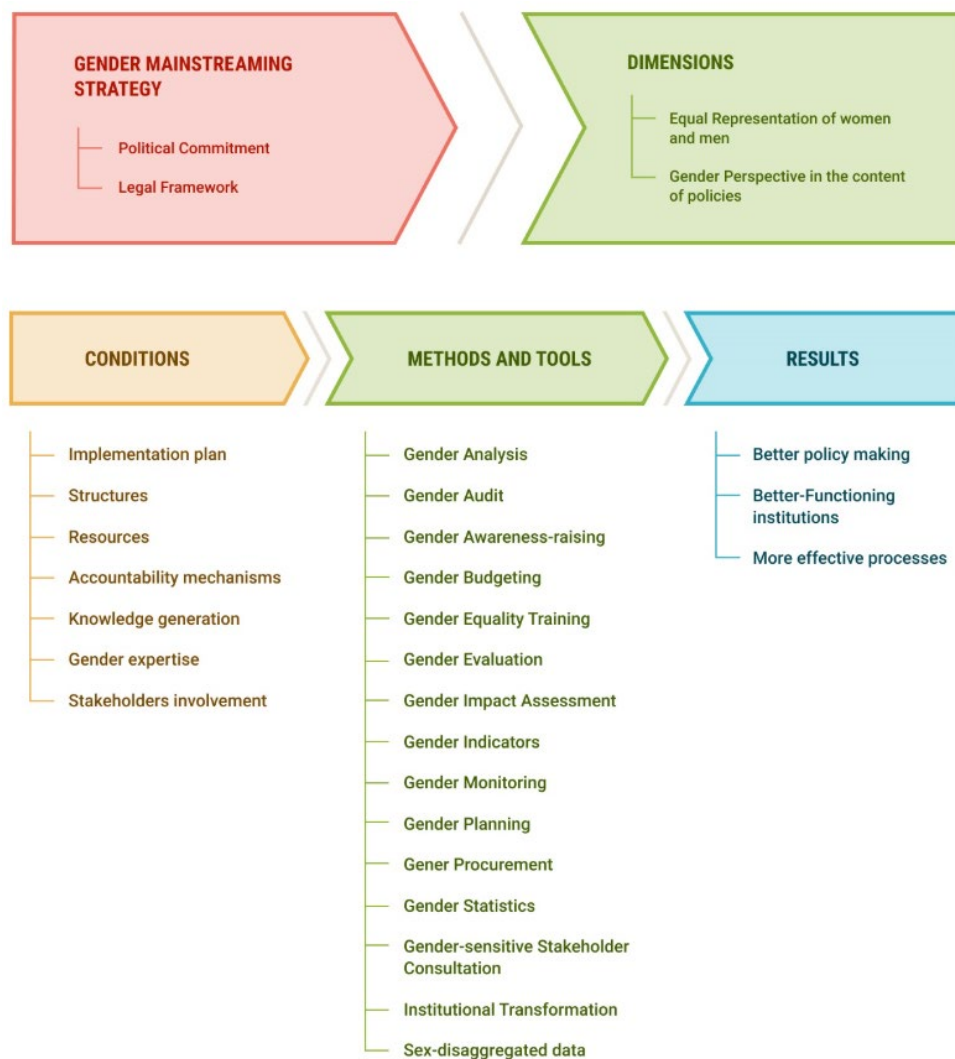
Sufficient capacity (expertise, staff, resources) increases the likelihood that gender mainstreaming initiatives will be successful and sustainable. As well as having gender specialists and senior staff qualified in gender equality, it is important to develop gender equality competence as a key skill for all staff, through awareness raising and training. The literature notes the importance of tailoring training to different groups of staff, based on needs. 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 in how to conduct gender mainstreaming, focusing on the use of practical technical tools in specific policy areas and programming phases. An effective alternative approach is to incorporate gender equality elements into core technical training. For instance, training in gender impact assessment can be integrated into training on impact assessment tools.

Common obstacles to effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in institutions include a lack of clear leadership; a top-down approach and poor communication; inadequately defined roles and responsibilities; and insufficient allocation of human and financial resources. One frequent impediment is staff responsible for gender mainstreaming being in junior roles with little authority, and undertaking mainstreaming on top of their existing tasks. A further pitfall to be avoided is creating gender-mainstreaming procedures that become a 'checkbox exercise' only, for example, focusing on the number of activities and measures rather than on their quality or impact.

Getting cross-cutting issues such as gender equality into the 'DNA' of an organisation requires **cultural change**. Systems for encouraging gender mainstreaming within organisations must have 'bite', otherwise they are regarded as 'nice but not necessary'.

²⁵ OECD, [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality](#), 2018, p. 50.

Figure 1 – Dimensions of gender mainstreaming in institutions



Source: EIGE, [Gender mainstreaming](#).

2.4. Assessment frameworks

EIGE has brought the findings on effective gender mainstreaming together in a toolkit for public institutions, setting out a process for embedding gender equality in their work and internal processes.²⁶ **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 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

²⁶ EIGE, [Institutional transformation: Gender mainstreaming toolkit](#), 2016. The toolkit provides guidance on preparing, implementing and evaluating gender mainstreaming in institutions, with examples from the EU and UN institutions. As described in the previous edition of this study, the UN has developed a framework for mainstreaming gender equality in a systematic and measurable way across the entire UN system (see , pp. 61-64).

mainstreaming in the guidance from EIGE and elsewhere, can also be used as a basis for assessment and evaluation of its implementation.

2.4.1. Assessment framework for the EU institutions

Academic research has combined the factors necessary for effective, sustainable gender mainstreaming in an assessment framework that could be applied to the EU institutions.²⁷ While it 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:

- **Formal adoption of gender mainstreaming.** Beyond the commitments to gender mainstreaming set out in the EU Treaties, has the institution formally adopted an explicit, high-level commitment to gender equality as an objective, and gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving this goal?
- **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. Good-practice indicators 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; ensuring that bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming have a clear mandate and terms of reference; and establishing regular reporting and evaluation.
- **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 investment in human and financial resources; provision of regular training and coaching; availability and accessibility of gender mainstreaming toolkits; and quality assurance.
- **Ensuring accountability and compliance.** Is gender mainstreaming sufficiently transparent to enable external oversight? Is it monitored regularly? 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 publicly available; having 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.
- **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 considered in isolation. Writing from a feminist perspective, they add a further dimension designed

²⁷ L. Mergaert and R. Minto, [Gender mainstreaming in the European Commission](#), Sieps – Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies, 2021.

to **assess the transformative potential** of an institution's gender mainstreaming strategy.²⁸ The 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, to make the process more participatory and ensure better understanding of gender equality's intersectional dimension.

2.4.2. Assessment frameworks for parliaments

Given their multiple roles as representatives of their electorate, legislators, oversight bodies and employers, as well as their distinct political and administrative structures, parliaments are a particular type of institution, with particular gender mainstreaming issues and requirements. In view of this, several bodies, including EIGE, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the OECD, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association have designed specific frameworks and checklists that parliaments can use to assess how they are mainstreaming gender across these various dimensions.²⁹

Box 2 – Defining a gender-sensitive parliament

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 EIGE, [Gender-sensitive parliaments toolkit](#), 2018.

EIGE adopted its gender-sensitive parliaments toolkit 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 they may choose to start the process by focusing on different aspects. Since 2024, the gender-sensitive parliaments toolkit has included a self-assessment tool and a tool to help parliaments to draw up a gender-equality action plan to address the findings and facilitate change.³⁰

The **IPU toolkit** covers similar ground but is **structured around seven key dimensions**. Parliaments are invited to assess: (i) the numbers and positions of women parliamentarians; (ii) the legal policy

²⁸ For a wider definition of gender transformative policy, see, for example, European Commission (with ILO, UN Women, Learn4Dev), [EU resource package on gender mainstreaming in EU development cooperation – Useful gender analysis frameworks](#), p. 5.

²⁹ See EIGE, [Gender-sensitive parliaments toolkit](#); IPU, [Plan of action for gender-sensitive parliaments](#), 2012; [Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments: A self-assessment toolkit](#), 2016; OECD, [Toolkit for Mainstreaming and Implementing Gender Equality 2023](#), 2023; Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, [Gender sensitising parliaments guidelines: standards and a checklist for parliamentary change](#), 2020. ODIHR, [Realizing Gender Equality in Parliament: A Guide for Parliaments in the OSCE Region](#), 2021; ODIHR, [Participatory gender audits of parliaments: A step-by-step guidance document](#), 2022. See also L. Wängnerud, *The Principles of Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, Routledge, 2015.

³⁰ See the [online resource](#) and the guide: EIGE, [Gender equality action plans for parliaments: Step-by-step tool](#), 2024.

and framework in which the parliament operates; (iii) 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 the use of mainstreaming tools; (iv) the parliament's culture, environment and equality and non-discrimination policies; (v) how far responsibility for gender equality is shared with men; (iv) political parties; and (vii) 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.

The **OECD's guidance** for gender mainstreaming in parliaments includes a checklist of priorities for mainstreaming gender in internal parliamentary processes and practices. Parliaments should have a framework policy for gender mainstreaming; gender mainstreaming mechanisms such as committees, caucuses, research bodies and secretariats; processes and tools; and monitoring of outputs and outcomes. The related self-assessment framework sets out a checklist of questions and key actions to consider, with examples of **best practice to follow and pitfalls to avoid**. The latter include: undeveloped internal and external consultation in designing the parliament's framework policy for gender mainstreaming; insufficient support and buy-in of parliamentary leadership; limited engagement of political party leaders and of men; placing responsibility for gender mainstreaming solely on gender equality mechanisms, such as gender equality committees that are devalued and given insufficient mandates to address a full range of policies; positioning gender mainstreaming work as an 'add-on' or voluntary activity; insufficient allocation of resources to build the capacity of bodies undertaking gender analysis and other gender mainstreaming tools, for example limited integration of gender-disaggregation into data collection, reserving training only for gender equality mechanisms, or not building sufficient capacity for parliamentarians and staff to review budgets from a gender perspective; ignoring the findings of gender mainstreaming tools, including gender budget statements; insufficient reporting channels or lack of consequences for gender-biased behaviour or sexual harassment; and not taking account of informal practices in parliament that are at odds with gender equality.

The ODIHR's **guidance for parliaments in the OSCE region** stresses that **making parliaments gender-sensitive is a continuous process** that moves through four stages: (i) assessment using an existing or tailored tool to conduct a gender-sensitivity audit; (ii) implementation by creating a policy or action plan; (iii) resourcing by allocating a sufficient budget for the activities identified in the action plan; and (iv) reviewing the action plan on a regular basis and reassessing, drawing on an external reviewer.³¹

2.5. Benchmarking for parliaments

Gender-sensitive parliament frameworks can serve as a **basis for benchmarking and exchanges of best practice** between parliaments.

2.5.1. Benchmarking in the EU

EIGE has published two reports on gender equality in the European Parliament and national parliaments in the EU Member States, assessing their performance in the five areas of its gender-sensitive parliaments framework.³² Its next report is due to be published ahead of the 2029 European

³¹ The ODIHR itself can support parliaments by running a gender audit to produce tailored recommendations for a multiannual parliamentary gender action plan. See ODIHR, [ODIHR support for parliaments in advancing gender equality](#), 2024, and [Participatory gender audits of parliaments: A step-by-step guidance document](#), 2022.

³² EIGE, [Gender equality in national parliaments across the EU and the European Parliament](#), 2019; EIGE, [Gender equality in the European Parliament and in national parliaments in the European Union: 2023 state of play](#), 2024. See also the

elections, based on data to be collected in 2027.³³ The second report of 2024, based on data collected between May and August 2023, found that there was significant scope for improvement across all five areas to deliver gender equality in the parliaments' internal structures and legislative outputs.

- **Area 1: Women and men have equal opportunities to enter parliament.** Slow progress had been made; to improve gender balance in national parliaments, states and political parties could take further action, such as adopting legislation explicitly giving women and men equal access to parliament, improving data on gender balance among candidates for elections, and introducing enforceable legislative gender quotas to increase the number of women standing for election.
- **Area 2: Women and men have equal opportunities to influence parliament's working procedures.** In a context where women are under-represented among committee chairs and as members of more powerful, prestigious and influential parliamentary committees,³⁴ some national parliaments had introduced incentives to improve vertical gender balance. Only a minority of parliaments had introduced policies to ensure that working conditions for Members of Parliament (MPs) and staff were free from discrimination, harassment or violence based on gender. Eight national parliaments had introduced specific measures to strengthen protection against sexual harassment, particularly for parliamentary staff or staff working with MPs or for political parties. However, the growing issue of sexist online abuse and threats against women parliamentarians was yet to be tackled.³⁵ Only half of national parliaments had provisions to regulate work–life balance or provide access to family leave options. Availability of other work–life balance measures, such as proxy or remote voting, was limited.
- **Area 3: Women's interests and concerns have adequate space on parliamentary agendas** and **Area 4: The parliament produces gender-sensitive legislation.** In 2023, 20 national parliaments in the EU had a standing parliamentary committee on gender equality or equality between women and men and women's rights.³⁶ However, less than half of these had the power to scrutinise government policy from a gender perspective.³⁷ Six national parliaments had adopted gender equality action plans. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming tools, including gender impact assessments and gender budgeting remained underused by most national parliaments. Less than a third had binding rules requiring gender impact assessment or gender analysis of draft legislation.³⁸ Only a quarter reported applying gender budgeting when setting the national budget.
- **Area 5: Parliament complies with its symbolic function.** The assessment found that few national parliaments had policies and initiatives in place to improve the gender sensitivity of their physical spaces. Twelve had some type of childcare facilities in

summary: [Gender equality in the European Parliament and in national parliaments in the European Union ahead of the 2024 election year](#).

³³ The assessment has been based on a general version of the gender-sensitive parliaments tool, relying mostly on publicly available data, as well as on interviews with contact points from some national parliaments: EIGE, [2023 data collection on gender-sensitive parliaments – Methodological report](#), 2024. Based on March 2026 information from EIGE, there are plans to review and update the conceptual and measurement framework for the 2027 update.

³⁴ For data, see EIGE, [Gender statistics database: committees of national parliaments – President and members](#), last updated in July 2025.

³⁵ See IPU and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, [Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe](#), 2018.

³⁶ [EIGE 2024](#), p. 42 and Table 1 in Annex 3.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 52

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

place, of which seven were professional 'daycare' facilities such as crèches or kindergartens, while the others were children's or family rooms with some supervision. Six parliaments had breastfeeding rooms.³⁹ Publicly available information on national parliaments' gender equality initiatives was scarce. Seven national parliaments published content on gender equality on their websites and five systematically disseminated information about gender equality to the public.

In EIGE's 2019 and 2024 reports, 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 sexual harassment; aspects of the gender sensitivity of the physical environment; and communication around gender equality issues. Nevertheless, as for national parliaments, there was room for improvement. In Area 2, the 2024 report noted that in Parliament, women continued to be under-represented among committee chairs and across different committees focusing on 'hard' and 'soft' policy areas. **More could still be done** to address sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women, particularly online violence, and to support MEPs in combining their mandate with family responsibilities. In Area 3, while Parliament was a forerunner in promoting the use of gender mainstreaming tools and applying them in its own activities, there was still scope to improve gender mainstreaming in committee work and budgetary procedures.

2.5.2. Benchmarking beyond the EU

Beyond Europe, the **Inter Pares programme** – an EU project that aims to strengthen parliaments' capacity – has issued a **handbook detailing the experiences of parliaments that have embraced gender-sensitive reforms**, drawing on self-reported survey data on parliamentary initiatives in 24 chambers worldwide. This project also promotes **exchanges of best practice** to support parliaments in developing gender mainstreaming. For example, in March 2026, it brought parliamentarians and gender experts together to share practical insights with the Malaysian Parliament's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gender Equality (APPGM-GE), whose remit includes conducting a gender-sensitive assessment of the parliament, developing an action plan, undertaking gender audits of legislation, and facilitating knowledge exchange and capacity building.⁴⁰ **Academic research** also plays a role in assessing the effectiveness of gendered scrutiny of legislation in parliaments and what supports parliamentary committees in doing this work.⁴¹

The **ECPRD inter-parliamentary network** is a platform that parliaments can use to share good practice across different areas of parliamentary work.⁴² In recent years, national parliaments and the

³⁹ [EIGE 2024](#), p. 56.

⁴⁰ See Inter Pares, [programme](#), website; Inter Pares, [Beyond Numbers: Stories of Gender Equality in and through Parliaments](#), 2024; Inter Pares, [Architects of Equality: Advancing Inclusive Democracy in Malaysia](#), 2026.

⁴¹ See, for example, the Gender Legislative Index research project, [Auditing the Auditors: Gender-responsive Lawmaking in Australia and globally](#), running between 2025 and 2027. The project is assessing parliament committees in Australia, Canada and Spain as to whether they are having a measurable, positive impact on the legislative process and in how far the scrutiny process reflects the experiences of diverse women and allows for their participation. The [Gender Legislative Index](#) itself is a benchmarking tool that ranks and scores legislation against international women's rights standards and shows how often laws that impact on women are defined as gender-neutral. To date, it has screened legislation in Australia, Canada, Indonesia, the Philippines, Spain and Sri Lanka, covering areas such as family law, financial services, housing, labour law, local government, public procurement, sexual and reproductive health, sexual orientation and gender identity, taxation and gender-based violence.

⁴² [ECPRD](#) members are parliaments whose Speaker is a member of the European Conference of Presidents of Parliament: the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Member States of the European Union and the Council of Europe. The latter consists of the 27 EU Member States as well as Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova,

European Parliament have submitted requests for information on **how their counterparts are developing gender mainstreaming and using specific tools** such as gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. For the previous version of this study in 2021, EPRS asked for information on parliaments' structures and policies for gender mainstreaming. For the current study, parliaments were asked for updated information, as well as for additional information on issues in focus for the further development of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, including work–life balance measures to support parliamentarians with young children in exercising their mandate, policies to address harassment and online hate speech, and gender-sensitive approaches to occupational health. A summary of the responses is set out in Section 6 of this study.

Contributing to transparency and accountability, some of the parliaments that have received support from the ODIHR have published their **gender audit reports**, enabling other parliaments to learn from their experience.⁴³ In June 2025, members of parliaments from across the OSCE region signed a pledge committing to the global gender-sensitive parliaments agenda with recommendations to national parliaments on how to move forward.⁴⁴

The **United Kingdom (UK) Parliament** has also shared the **results of its work towards becoming a gender-sensitive parliament**. Following an initial report in 2015, it conducted a gender-sensitive parliaments audit, facilitated by the IPU, in 2018.⁴⁵ The audit identified a need to streamline the information available to support gender-sensitive scrutiny of legislation and budgets. It also identified barriers to equal representation of women stemming from the parliament's working procedures and culture, and from the growing issue of online abuse. Recommendations for further action included a proxy voting scheme for parliamentarians on parental leave; a code of behaviour and independent complaints scheme to address harassment; and a review of the support available to MPs to address online threats. In 2021, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Select Committee followed up on the audit by holding an inquiry to assess the progress that had been made in some of these areas, with input from parliamentary bodies and independent experts. In her oral evidence to the inquiry, Professor Sarah Childs, the author of the initial (2015) *The Good Parliament* report, stressed the benefits of systematically drawing on evidence from other parliaments.⁴⁶

Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The ECPRD services are also available for countries with observer status in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Canada, Israel and Mexico).

⁴³ See ODIHR, [Document collection – Gender equality in politics: Parliamentary gender audit reports](#), website.

⁴⁴ [Helsinki Pledges on Gender-sensitive Parliaments in the OSCE Region](#), adopted at the OSCE [Realizing Gender Equality in and by Parliaments](#) workshop in June 2025.

⁴⁵ See S. Childs, *The Good Parliament*, University of Bristol, 2016; House of Commons Library, [The Good Parliament – Debate Pack](#), 2016; UK Parliament, [UK Gender-Sensitive Parliament Audit 2018](#), 2018; UK Parliament, [Women in Parliament: new report highlights progress and recommends new measures](#), 2018; IPU, [UK Parliament makes steady progress on gender equality](#), 2018.

⁴⁶ House of Commons, [Oral evidence: Gender-sensitive Parliament](#), 9 June 2021.

Another example is **ParlAmericas**, a parliamentary diplomacy network covering 35 national parliaments in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean, which has developed a dashboard benchmarking parliamentary practices for gender equality.⁴⁷

Figure 2 – Example of a regional benchmarking dashboard for parliaments

COUNTRY 	CHAMBER	WOMEN	MEN	Policy on Gender-based Violence  	Daycare Facilities  	Lactation Facilities  	Quota or Parity Legislation  	Woman Presiding Officer  	Women's or Gender Equality Caucus  	Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality  	Gender Technical Unit  
Antigua and Barbuda	House of Representatives	5.6%	94.4%								
	Senate	41.2%	58.8%								
Argentina	Chamber of Deputies	42.4%	57.6%								
	Senate	45.8%	54.2%								
Barbados	House of Assembly	26.7%	73.3%								
	Senate	38.1%	61.9%								

Source: ParlAmericas, [Parliamentary practices for gender equality dashboard](#), 2026.

⁴⁷ See ParlAmericas, [Parliamentary practices for gender equality dashboard](#), website.

3. EU approach to gender mainstreaming

Key findings

Gender mainstreaming has constituted the official EU policy approach since the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), grounded in **Article 8 TFEU**, and has been a cross-cutting priority in successive EU multiannual gender equality strategies. The EU pursues a twin-track approach combining gender mainstreaming across all policy sectors with specific positive action for women. Successive assessments of EU gender equality policy frameworks point, however, to fluctuating political commitment over time and persistent gaps between high-level commitments and practical implementation.

Evaluations of the **EU gender equality strategy 2020–2025** identified several advances under the first von der Leyen Commission, including the establishment of a Task Force on Equality, a dedicated data portal to monitor the strategy, and EIGE's gender mainstreaming platform. Progress was also noted in tracking the gender impacts of EU funding, described as a 'first valuable step towards gender budgeting'. Notwithstanding these developments, implementation of gender mainstreaming across the full range of EU policy domains remained limited, the methodology for tracking EU spending on gender equality requires further development, and only a limited share of EU funding has been directed towards specific gender equality objectives.

The **EU gender equality strategy 2026–2030**, accompanied by a roadmap for women's rights, reaffirms the EU's commitment to gender mainstreaming. Key provisions include further integration of gender mainstreaming into the next **MFF** (2028–2034) and into policy areas such as climate and the environment, research and innovation, and crisis preparedness. At Member State level, EIGE's monitoring demonstrates that overall commitment to and implementation of gender mainstreaming have declined: the average score on the gender mainstreaming indicator fell from 39 % of the maximum possible in 2021 to 34% in 2024.

In the field of **EU external policy**, gender mainstreaming has advanced further than in internal policy frameworks. Under the EU gender action plan III (GAP III), at least 85 % of all new external actions are required to treat gender equality as a significant or principal objective. The plan also prioritises a shift towards gender-responsive institutional culture across the European Commission, the European External Action Service, EU delegations, and common security and defence policy missions. A fourth EU gender action plan (GAP IV) is currently in preparation. The broader context for gender mainstreaming is increasingly challenging, marked by a growing backlash against gender equality and the risk that gender perspectives are marginalised in favour of competing priorities such as security and economic competitiveness.

3.1. Legal basis and policy framework

The **EU promoted gender mainstreaming** at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It became the official policy approach in the EU 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.

To advance gender equality, 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.⁴⁸ This communication presented gender mainstreaming as a means of building a new partnership between women and men to remedy historic inequalities, promote equal opportunities and ensure that both sexes benefit equally from new legislation and policy. As defined by the Commission, gender mainstreaming

⁴⁸ [COM\(96\) 67](#), 1996.

means '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'. It was recognised that this would entail embedding a systematic approach to designing and evaluating laws, policies and spending programmes to ensure that they contribute to gender equality and avoid perpetuating or creating gender inequalities.

Gender mainstreaming has been included as a cross-cutting priority in successive EU multiannual gender equality strategies.⁴⁹ It 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.⁵⁰

In March 2025, the Commission issued a **roadmap for women's rights** reaffirming the EU's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and actions.⁵¹ An annexed declaration contains a list of eight principles, each with objectives for the EU to pursue to achieve a gender-equal society. **Principle 8** – institutional mechanisms that deliver on women's rights – acknowledges that advancing women's rights requires effective gender mainstreaming, financing and institutional infrastructure, as well as gender-sensitive research, data collection, design and planning that address women's needs, with an intersectional approach.

The current **EU gender equality strategy 2026–2030** outlines measures to implement these objectives.⁵² Key elements include further development of gender mainstreaming in policy areas such as climate and environment, research and innovation and crisis-preparedness and in the next long-term EU budget (2028–2034 MFF). The strategy also proposes further support for gender mainstreaming at Member State level, through EIGE and existing platforms for mutual learning and exchange, as well as enhanced opportunities for the involvement of civil society and a commitment to the collection of robust sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based policymaking.

3.2. Assessments of the state of play

Assessments of the EU 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**.

Ahead of the successive multiannual EU gender equality strategies and external gender action plans, the European Parliament and respondents to public and expert consultations have supported **stronger gender mainstreaming and more systematic use of gender mainstreaming tools**.

Ahead of 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

⁴⁹ European Commission, communication on a strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015, [COM\(2010\) 491](#), 2010: Horizontal issues; European Commission, [Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019](#), 2015: Section 4. Integrating a gender equality perspective into all EU activities and policies; European Commission, communication on A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, [COM\(2020\) 152](#), 2020: Section 4. Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional perspective in EU policies; European Commission, communication on the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030, [COM\(2026\) 113](#), 2026, and accompanying Commission staff working document ([SWD\(2026\) 82](#)), 2026: Institutional mechanisms & EU policy areas.

⁵⁰ European Commission, [EU plan of action on gender equality and women's empowerment \(2010–2015\)](#) (GAP I) and [EU action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment in external relations \(2016–2020\)](#) (GAP II); European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint communication – EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, [JOIN\(2020\) 17](#), 2020. A fourth EU gender action plan is planned for the first quarter of 2027. A [public consultation](#) was held in March and April 2026.

⁵¹ Commission communication on A Roadmap for Women's Rights, [COM\(2025\) 97](#), 2025.

⁵² COM(2026) 113, Roadmap Principle 8: Institutional mechanisms that deliver on gender equality, pp. 17–19.

contribution to the concrete achievement of gender equality.⁵³ 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 evaluation and accountability was insufficient. Assessments for 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.⁵⁴ Academic experts argued that gender mainstreaming remained less embedded in the institutional fabric of European decisionmaking than comparable instruments such as evaluation.⁵⁵ Stakeholder consultations⁵⁶ identified the **measures that would have the most positive impact on gender mainstreaming** in large public administrations, such as the European Commission, as: setting targets for policy areas and monitoring results (44.2 %); gender budgeting (36.3 %);⁵⁷ and integrating a gender perspective into impact assessments (33.4 %).

Evaluations of the 2016–2019 policy framework flagged a continued 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.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

Assessments of the 2020–2025 EU strategy for gender equality point to advances in gender mainstreaming and areas for improvement. Under Ursula von der Leyen's first Commission, steps were taken 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, notably the first-ever Commissioner with a dedicated equality portfolio and establishment of a Task Force on Equality to ensure implementation of gender mainstreaming at operational and technical level.⁶⁰ In addition, the Commission developed a methodology for tracking expenditure on gender equality at programme level, which was applied to the entire EU budget in 2023, 2024 and 2025.⁶¹

⁵³ See F. Bettio and S. Sansonetti (eds), [Visions for gender equality](#), European Commission, 2015.

⁵⁴ F. Cengiz and F. Beveridge, [The EU Budget for Gender Equality](#), Policy Department D: Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, 2015; P. 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.

⁵⁵ R. Minto and L. Mergaert, 'Gender mainstreaming and evaluation in the EU: comparative perspectives from feminist institutionalism', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 20(2), 2018, pp. 204–220.

⁵⁶ European Commission, [Analysis of the public consultation: Equality between women and men in the EU](#), 2015, p. 17.

⁵⁷ For an overview of the long-running discussions on the feasibility of introducing gender budgeting at EU level, see M. Sapala and R. Shreeves, [Gender-responsive budgeting: State of play and opportunities for the European Parliament's 10th term](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2025.

⁵⁸ E. 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.

⁵⁹ For the Parliament and Council positions, see European Parliament, [Post-2015 strategy for equality between women and men](#), Legislative Train Schedule. For 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 P. Ahrens, 'The birth, life, and death of policy instruments: 35 years of EU gender equality policy programmes', *West European Politics*, 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.

⁶⁰ Detailed information on the internal action taken by the Commission to promote gender mainstreaming is set out in Section 5.1.1. of this study.

⁶¹ The 2020–2025 EU gender equality strategy included a commitment to improve gender mainstreaming in the budget process, notably by developing a methodology to track expenditure on gender equality. In 2021, a report from the Court of Auditors concluded that the high-level commitment to gender mainstreaming was not yet being reflected in

The **stocktake of the strengths and weaknesses** of the strategy⁶² concluded that the task force, a new data portal to monitor the gender equality strategy,⁶³ and EIGE's gender mainstreaming platform demonstrated significant efforts to develop and integrate gender mainstreaming at EU and national levels. The evaluation flagged positive steps towards monitoring the gender impacts of EU funding as a 'first valuable step towards gender budgeting'. The evaluation also identified a number of weaknesses, noting that practical implementation of gender mainstreaming across all policy domains was limited, and that the methodology for tracking EU funding for gender equality needs further improvement and better data if it is to become part of the budget and programming cycle from planning to evaluation.⁶⁴ It found that the tracking system illustrates that a limited share of EU funding is devoted to specific gender equality objectives.⁶⁵ For the next EU gender equality strategy, it recommended that the priority area on gender mainstreaming should be maintained but reinforced. It also recommended that gender budgeting should be integrated into the full budget cycle, and that the small share of funding allocated for projects and programmes with direct gender equality objectives should be increased.

In 2025, EIGE welcomed the **stronger focus on gender equality under Ursula von der Leyen's first Commission**, while also flagging the **need for more substantive gender mainstreaming in key policy areas** such as sustainable growth and in EU spending.⁶⁶ In EIGE's view, while the total EU expenditure on projects scoring 1 and 2 under the tracking methodology has increased significantly since 2021, there is still insufficient evidence to demonstrate many programmes' contribution to gender equality, since the scores are not fully aligned with international standards,⁶⁷ and the tracking methodology does not take account of potential negative impacts programmes might have on gender equality. EIGE also stresses that **expenditure tracking is only one component of gender budgeting** and would need to be complemented by other tools to fully assess how EU funds are spent to promote gender equality. Research for the European Parliament's Committee on Budgets also highlights that gender budgeting, as currently implemented by the Commission, is a 'mere tracking of gender spending across programmes' instead of being considered in all steps of the budget cycle (design, implementation and control).⁶⁸

the EU budget, and that more needed to be done to institutionalise it in the Commission (see ECA, [Gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: time to turn words into action](#), 2021). The Commission subsequently developed a methodology to track all EU spending programmes' contributions to gender equality under the 2021–2027 MFF, which was piloted in the 2023, 2024 and 2025 draft budgets. Actions are given a score of between 2 and 0, depending on their objectives: 2 if the principal objective is to improve gender equality; 1 if gender equality as an important and deliberate objective but not the main reason for the action; 0 for actions that do not have a significant impact on gender equality; and 0* if the expected impact on gender equality is unclear. The tracking methodology draws on but is not identical to the [OECD–DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker](#). For details, see European Commission, [Gender equality mainstreaming](#), website (under [EU budget](#) / [Performance and reporting](#) / [Horizontal priorities](#)).

⁶² European Commission, [staff working document](#) accompanying the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2032, 2026.

⁶³ European Commission, [Gender Equality Strategy Monitoring Portal](#): to date, some but not all of the gender mainstreaming indicators are populated with data from 2021.

⁶⁴ Here, the evaluation cites M. Enzell Tangen, M. Iehl and A. Pouwels, [European Union gender budgeting – state of play 2024](#), Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, December 2024.

⁶⁵ In its [reporting on gender equality mainstreaming in the budget](#), the European Commission states that over the 2021–2024 period, a total of 12 % of the EU budget expenditure contributed to the promotion of gender (gender scores 1 and 2), amounting to €158.4 billion over these four years. The Commission reports that in 2024, 19.5 % of the EU budget contributed to promoting gender equality (scores 2 and 1), an increase from previous years.

⁶⁶ EIGE, [Beijing Platform for Action +30: Impact driver – Marking milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU](#), 2025: Section 1.4. Developments and trends in gender mainstreaming, pp. 30–38.

⁶⁷ For example: the [OECD–DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker](#) and EIGE's own [tracking system for EU cohesion policy funds](#).

⁶⁸ A. Pouwels, [Gender budgeting in the 2021–2027 period and the proposal for the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework](#), Directorate-General for Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, October 2025, p. 4.

Academic research finds that, although gender equality was a priority issue under the first von der Leyen Commission, a **gender perspective was not systematically incorporated into other priority areas**, such as climate policy.⁶⁹ In some cases, such as the Next Generation EU funding to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and the development of the tracking methodology, a gender dimension was incorporated only following strong negotiating from the European Parliament and active lobbying from civil society.⁷⁰

Ahead of the **EU gender equality strategy 2026–2030**, the Commission ran a call for evidence, a public consultation and targeted consultations to gather input from civil society, citizens and public institutions.⁷¹ Respondents again **advocated gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting** as horizontal enablers to deliver coherence, impact and accountability throughout the policy cycle and EU spending.⁷² Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academic institutions called for gender impact assessments (GIA) to be compulsory for all new EU legislation, particularly in complex areas such as the EU pact on migration and asylum and new EU climate and environmental policies. For external policies too, NGOs called for mandatory gender impact assessments for all EU trade, investment and development cooperation agreements, and the use of gender mainstreaming tools to integrate a gender perspective into security policies.

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.⁷³ 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, all external assistance across all sectors, including infrastructure, digital, energy, agriculture and blended funds, must integrate a gender perspective and support gender equality.⁷⁴ This is backed by a concrete target for at least 85 % of all new external actions to have gender equality, and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant or principal objective.⁷⁵ Considering the assessments of gender mainstreaming in GAPs I and II and the results of a public consultation, GAP III also prioritises changing 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 common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ P. Debusscher, 'Chapter 5: The EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025: the beginning of a new season?', in B. Vanhercke, S. Sabato and S. Spasova (eds.), *Social policy in the European Union: state of play 2022. Policymaking in a permacrisis*, ETUI and OSE: 2.4 Gender mainstreaming and an intersectional perspective in EU policies, pp. 100–102 and 2.5 Funding actions to make progress in gender equality in the EU, pp. 102–104.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 103; B. Vanhercke et al., *From the European Semester to the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Some social actors are (not) resurfacing*, ETUI, 2021.

⁷¹ European Commission, staff working document accompanying the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2032, *SWD(2026) 82*, 2026.

⁷² *ibid.*, Figure 2, p. 38.

⁷³ P. Debusscher, 'Chapter 23: Development Policy', in G. Abels et al. (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Gender and EU Politics*, Routledge, 2021, pp. 290–301, p. 293.

⁷⁴ See *GAP III*, Section 1.2.: Promoting gender mainstreaming in all areas of EU external action.

⁷⁵ 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, 2015. Section 1.2. of GAP III states that, under GAP II (2015–2020), the share of actions with a gender equality objective increased from around 58 % in 2016 to 65 % in 2019.

⁷⁶ See *GAP III*, Section 4. The EU leads by example. For a summary of assessments of the previous action plans, see I. Ioannides, *EU Gender Action Plan 2016–2020 at year one: European Implementation Assessment*, EPRS, European

While GAP III has been extended to 2027, **preparations for GAP IV for the years 2028 to 2034** have begun, drawing on independent evaluations of GAP III in 2023 and 2025.⁷⁷ The 2025 evaluation concluded that the approach of combining gender mainstreaming, gender targeted actions and political dialogue have helped to make the EU's external gender quality policy more coherent, but that the quality and depth of gender mainstreaming remains uneven, and capacity gaps at national level are preventing the policy from reaching its ambitions. The Commission is also seeking input from stakeholders including civil society, international organisations, development finance institutions and national gender equality experts. Respondents to the public consultation in March to April 2026 are calling for the gains made under GAP III, including the 85 % gender mainstreaming target, to be preserved, and for more even gender mainstreaming across all areas of EU action, including security and defence and Global Gateway and Team Europe initiatives.⁷⁸ Both the Council and the European Parliament are urging the Commission to put forward an ambitious plan.⁷⁹ Parliament has also called for adequate funding for the implementation of GAP IV to be earmarked in the 2028–2034 MFF.⁸⁰

EIGE's monitoring of the commitments to gender mainstreaming set in the Beijing Platform for Action⁸¹ finds that at **national level**, effective use of gender mainstreaming remains low and uneven.⁸² While some EU countries have made significant advances, between 2021 and 2024, the implementation of gender mainstreaming has declined. Use of gender budgeting remains particularly limited and relatively unknown.⁸³ Few Member States are carrying out gender-responsive evaluations on most policies, programmes and projects, which could result in unintended negative impacts for women and a lack of progress towards gender equality objectives.⁸⁴ EIGE is calling for legally mandated gender mainstreaming at national level, and for an EU directive on substantive gender equality to foster gender equality and gender mainstreaming standards across the EU.

Looking ahead, the implementation of the EU gender equality strategy 2026–2030, the preparation of the next external gender action plan, and the shaping of the next EU long-term budget offer **opportunities to strengthen and mobilise gender mainstreaming** approaches and the structures

Parliament, 2017. For the results of the public consultation, see European Commission, [Gender Action Plan III 2020–2025: Report on the results of the online targeted consultation 2 April – 4 May 2020](#), pp. 36–37.

⁷⁷ European Commission, [Mid-term evaluation of the EU Gender Action Plan III](#), 2023, and [Intermediate Evaluation of the implementation of the EUs Gender Action Plan III \(2021–2027\)](#), December 2025.

⁷⁸ European Commission, [Consultation: EU action plan for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action \(GAP IV\)](#), website. See also Concord, [Position paper on GAP IV](#), 2025; A. Burni and A. Somjif, [From GAP III to GAP IV: Rethinking the EUs global support for gender equality](#), ODI Europe, 2025.

⁷⁹ Council of the EU, [conclusions](#) on advancing mutually beneficial partnerships through better financing, gender equality, global health, and trade, 15 December 2025; European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 13 November 2025 on the Gender Equality Strategy 2025.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸¹ EIGE's monitoring is based on indicators set by the Council of the EU. A first set of indicators for area H of the BPfA (H1 to H3) was adopted in [2006](#) and supplemented with indicator H4 in [2013](#). Gender mainstreaming is covered in area H3, with sub-indicators to measure the strength of governmental commitment to gender mainstreaming; governmental gender mainstreaming structures and consultation processes; commitment to and use of methods and tools for gender mainstreaming and consultation of independent gender equality bodies. EIGE undertook data collections to monitor progress in 2012, 2018, 2021 and 2024. From 2021, the method was changed to evaluate the effectiveness rather than simply the presence of gender mainstreaming. The data is available on the EIGE [gender statistics database](#).

⁸² EIGE, [Beijing Platform for Action +30: Impact driver – Marking milestones and opportunities for gender equality in the EU](#), June 2025, Section 2.8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (area H), pp. 104–112.

⁸³ *ibid.* Figure 36: Gender budgeting in ministerial budgets (2024), p. 111.

⁸⁴ EIGE, [Institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the EU: Present realities, future priorities](#), 2025, p. 120

and mechanisms that support it.⁸⁵ As part of the EU gender equality strategy, EU support for developing gender mainstreaming will also be available to national authorities. However, the EU gender equality strategy also recognises the **current difficult context** for advancing women's rights, in the face of an escalating transnational backlash against gender equality that is threatening hard-won progress.⁸⁶ Parliaments are not unaffected by this trend and can play a role in countering it to support core values of human rights and democracy and their own representativeness as institutions.⁸⁷ Moreover, as illustrated by the largely gender-blind responses to the 2008 economic and financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, gender perspectives are frequently sidelined during periods of crisis or instability. In this context, gender equality experts and civil society are flagging the risk that a gender perspective will not be visible in the current focus towards competitiveness and security.⁸⁸

These assessments of the state of play and further prospects for gender mainstreaming 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.⁸⁹ They also flagged that each EU institution has its own system and would have its own challenges.⁹⁰ In this perspective, the following section and main body of the study focuses specifically on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Concord, [Position paper on GAP IV](#), 2025; A. Burni and A. Somjif, [From GAP III to GAP IV: Rethinking the EU's global support for gender equality](#), ODI Europe, 2025; A. Pouwels, [Gender budgeting in the 2021-2027 period and the proposal for the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework](#), Directorate-General for Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, 2025; and M. Sapala and R. Shreeves, [Gender-responsive budgeting: State of play and opportunities for the European Parliament's 10th term](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2025.

⁸⁶ See, for example, B. Juhász and E. Pap, [Backlash in Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Rights](#), Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2018; United Nations, [Gender equality and gender backlash: Guidance document of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls](#), 2024; I. Zamfir, [Women's rights: What is at stake?](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2025; Civicus, [Gender Rights: Rollback and Resistance](#), in the [2026 state of civil society report](#), 2026; A. Eknor Ackzell et al., [Strategic Responses to Backlash Against Gender Justice](#), UNRISD and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2026.

⁸⁷ See, for example, IPU and UN Women, [Parliaments and Beijing +30: Resisting the backlash and shifting paradigms towards gender equality](#), 2025; P. Caravantes, A. Elizondo and E. Lombardo, 'Gendering democracy: feminist parliamentary responses to opposition against gender equality', *Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 34(5), 2025, pp. 749-763.

⁸⁸ See, for example, [Nicosia Declaration](#) – Invest in What Matters for People: Placing Gender Equality, Women's Rights, Care and Social Priorities at the Core of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034, 2026.

⁸⁹ M. A. Pollack and E. Hafner-Burton, [Mainstreaming Gender in the European Union](#), *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 7(3), 2000, pp. 432-456, p. 434.

⁹⁰ *ibid.* p. 437; EIGE, [Gender mainstreaming – Institutions and structures: European Union](#), website.

4. Gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament

Key findings

The **European Parliament (EP)** gender mainstreaming policy rests on a series of resolutions, Bureau reports and gender action plans with accompanying roadmaps, as well as committee-level action plans. Since 2019, Rule 249 of the Rules of Procedure requires the Bureau to adopt a gender action plan (**EP GAP**); the first was adopted in 2020, and a renewed plan, in October 2025.

All 21 standing committees and two sub-committees have gender action plans structured around five recurrent dimensions: policy work (gender analysis in reports and opinions, sex-disaggregated data, gender budgeting where relevant); organisation of work (gender-neutral language, gender balance in rapporteurships, speakers, delegations and staff); cooperation and coordination (with the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (**FEMM**), the Gender Mainstreaming Network (**GMN**), the European Institute for Gender Equality (**EIGE**) and the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (**HLG**)); monitoring and reporting; and innovative initiatives. **Several plans pre-date the 2020 EP GAP and remain unrevised.** While a European Parliamentary Research Service (**EPRS**) **questionnaire (February 2026)** found that monitoring of gender action plans is in place in 12 responding committees, the rigour of monitoring varies considerably. Gender balance in panels of committee hearings, workshops and other events, appears – in view of an average share of female speakers of approximately 43 % across the 21 committees providing data for 2024–2025 – to be overall respected.

FEMM is the primary body for integrating a gender perspective into Parliament's legislative and non-legislative work. A 2023 EP study found that only approximately 24 % of FEMM's amendments were incorporated into lead committee reports, and just over 16 % into texts adopted by plenary, underscoring the dependency of gender mainstreaming on the willingness of other committees and political groups. Gender impact assessments and gender budgeting remain underused in practice.

On **gender representation**, the share of female **MEPs** reached almost 40 % in 2024 before declining to 39.2 % in 2026. The committees with the highest proportions of female members in 2025 were FEMM (90 %), the Special Committee on the Housing Crisis in the EU (HOUS) (69.7 %), and the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) (63.3 %); those most closely reflecting the Parliament-wide average were the Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS) (39.4 %) and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (37.8 %). In Parliament's Secretariat, 48 % of Heads of Unit and 52 % of Directors were women in 2026, although the target of 50 % female Directors-General has not yet been met (approximately 35 % in 2025–2026).

On **work-life balance and institutional culture**, Parliament voted by a large majority in November 2025 to amend the European Electoral Act to allow female **MEPs** to delegate their voting rights to a colleague for up to three months before childbirth and six months thereafter; the Council agreed in March 2026, and Parliament gave its formal consent on 29 April 2026. The implementing arrangements will be set out in Parliament's Rules of Procedure. The revised act must nonetheless be ratified by all 27 Member States before entering into force, with completion expected ahead of the 2029 European elections. **EP staff** benefit from leave, part-time and teleworking schemes exceeding the minima of the 2019 Work-Life Balance Directive, although gendered patterns of uptake persist. Anti-harassment policies have been strengthened through mandatory training, a new mediation service and a network of confidential counsellors; nevertheless, procedural challenges remain, as illustrated by recent judgments of the CJEU.

Gender mainstreaming monitoring occurs through **FEMM's** reports to plenary, the Bureau's biennial reporting under Rule 249 and the annual 'Women in the EP' publications. The 2026–2027 gender roadmap introduces a benchmarking exercise comparing Parliament's practices with those of national parliaments, drawing on **ECPRD** and **EIGE** expertise.

The European Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy is based on several resolutions, reports, action plans and roadmaps and is supported by a number of political bodies and administrative structures. The following section provides an outline of these structures and policy instruments (and their evolution over time), including an in-depth analysis of committee actions plans, and takes a look at where Parliament stands today in terms of gender mainstreaming. In this respect, it examines, in particular, **two different dimensions: (i) incorporation of the gender perspective into Parliament's policymaking; and (ii) 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, and professional training), since both aspects are intrinsically linked, as discussed in relation to the gender-sensitive parliaments frameworks (mentioned in Section 2.4.2.).

4.1. Existing structures and mechanisms in the EP

Parliament's gender mainstreaming policy is supported by several political bodies and administrative structures (see also Annex I).

4.1.1. Political bodies

FEMM committee

The main body responsible for implementing and further developing gender mainstreaming across policy sectors is Parliament's **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)**, set up in 1984 and supported by a secretariat. With the adoption of opinions (including positions in the form of amendments), in particular, FEMM aims to introduce a gender perspective into other committee's reports on specific issues. It is also responsible for assessing gender mainstreaming in the work of committees and delegations, including of failures to include the gender dimension. To this end, FEMM regularly prepares a non-legislative own-initiative report, to be submitted to plenary (see further details under sections 4.3. and 4.6.). Under the current term, FEMM has 40 full Members and 38 substitutes (which represents a slight increase compared with the previous ninth term, where FEMM had 35 full and 29 substitute Members). It is chaired by Lina Galvez (S&D). In addition to its female Chair, FEMM's bureau is composed of two female and two male Vice-Chairs. FEMM has two standing co-rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming (Veronika Cifrová Ostrihoňová (Renew, Slovakia) and Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA, Sweden)).

Gender Mainstreaming Network

In line with Parliament's 2003 resolution on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, **each parliamentary committee appoints one of its members as the member responsible for gender mainstreaming.** Since 2009, these designated MEPs have also formed part of the Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN). Since the eighth legislative term, the delegations have also appointed their own members responsible for gender mainstreaming. To ensure smooth cooperation between delegations and the GMN, a representative of the delegations is also a member of the GMN.⁹¹ The GMN meets regularly (around two to three times per year). It is chaired by the FEMM Chair and supported by the FEMM secretariat (and a network of gender mainstreaming administrators in the committee secretariats). It is a forum for exchanging information on ongoing files of interest from a gender equality perspective and for sharing best practice.

⁹¹ See D. Jancic et al., [Promoting gender equality through parliamentary diplomacy](#), Policy Department for External Relations, European Parliament, 2021, p. 77.

High-level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity

The Bureau's High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (HLG) was established in 2004 to promote equal representation of women and men at all levels in the European Parliament. 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: Ewa Kopacz (EPP, Poland), Vice-Chair: Sophie Wilmès (Renew, Belgium) – and five invited MEPs (including the Chair of the FEMM committee, the Chair of the Conference of Committee Chairs, the Chair of the Conference of Delegation Chairs, and the two FEMM Standing Rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming). 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 in DG Personnel (DG PERS).

4.1.2. Administrative structures

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 eight staff members and is headed by a woman. It is, in particular, responsible for: (i) implementing equality, inclusion and diversity policy formulated by the EP Bureau (such as, in particular, the EP GAP and roadmap); (ii) devising projects to promote participation and inclusion of people with disabilities; (iii) drawing up reports, analysing data from a gender perspective, and preventing discrimination in accordance with Article 1d of the Staff Regulations; (iv) 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 (v) organising awareness-raising events (such as on the occasion of International Women's Day) and training, and providing assistance on equality and diversity issues.

Equality and diversity coordinators

The equality and diversity coordinators are representatives from each Directorate-General, with whom the EIDU liaises on all matters relating to equality, inclusion and diversity. The coordinators ensure close inter-service coordination on all thematic activities in Parliament's Secretariat. Each Directorate-General and each political group has also nominated a gender coordinator to ensure the smooth implementation of the measures in Parliament's gender roadmaps.⁹² The EIDU chairs both of these networks.

Committee on Equal Opportunities and Diversity (COPEC)

COPEC's eight members and Chair are proposed by the Director-General for Personnel and the Staff Committee, and are 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, at the EP and at interinstitutional level through INTERCOPEC. COPEC proposes actions to ensure non-discrimination, issues opinions on rules stemming from the Staff Regulations, and monitors the proper implementation of measures taken, in particular by sending observers to sit on various advisory committees.

⁹² As of January 2026, almost all of Parliament's 18 DGs had appointed a gender equality coordinator (with such coordinator yet to be appointed in the Directorate-General for Cohesion, Agriculture and Social Policies (DG CASP)).

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. Currently, the Staff Committee is composed of 29 elected members. It is committed to achieving equality between men and women in Parliament and to contributing to a fair, inclusive and equitable working environment for all staff. While only nine Staff Committee members are female, the top three positions in the committee are currently held by one woman and two men. It is chaired by a man. Staff Committee elections are taking place this year.

4.2. 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 1995,⁹³ 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 Parliament's administration.⁹⁴

Since 1998, the **EP Bureau** has set **targets for the percentage of women at management level**, and regularly reports on the state of play of gender equality in the Secretariat.⁹⁵ These reports, the statement of principles on the promotion of equality and diversity, adopted by the Bureau in 2006, as well as a series of consecutive gender equality action plans and roadmaps, provide the relevant policy framework within the overall legal context.⁹⁶

At the same time, the **EP** was an **early supporter of gender mainstreaming in policymaking**, backing, in a resolution adopted in 1997, the original Commission communication. This resolution and the following ones on gender mainstreaming in the EP covered – in addition to the aspect of gender balance within Parliament – also the integration of gender equality into Parliament's policymaking. **In a resolution adopted in 2003, Parliament formally launched gender**

⁹³ The EU took comprehensive steps towards implementing the recommendations of the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. To ensure gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, measures were implemented to increase the number of women in decisionmaking and in 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.

⁹⁴ See Article 1(d) of the [EU Staff Regulations](#), which prohibits any discrimination on the grounds of sex, and provides for positive action to be taken to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity.

⁹⁵ 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 (HoUs), 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 HoUs and Directors, but increased the target for female Director-Generals (from 20 % to 30 %), all of which were to be reached by 2019. To ensure balanced representation of women in management positions across Directorates-general, this report also set additional targets by Directorate-General (30 % female HoUs, 30 % female Directors), to be achieved by 2019. After a further increase of the targets under the EP gender action plan in 2020 (50 % female HoUs and Directors, and 40 % female Directors-General), to be achieved by 2024, the latest EP gender action plan, adopted in October 2025, aims at full parity (50/50/50) at all management levels.

⁹⁶ European Parliament, [Policy on promoting equality and diversity in the Secretariat of the European Parliament – Statement of principles on the promotion of equality and diversity](#), PE 380 038/BUR, 2006.

mainstreaming in the EP by, in particular, committing the FEMM committee to ensure integration of the gender dimension into 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)) ⁹⁷
2003	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament (2002/2025(INI)) ⁹⁸
2007	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees (2005/2149(INI)) ⁹⁹
2009	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of its committees and delegations (2008/2245(INI)) ¹⁰⁰
2009	Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity within the European Parliament Secretariat (2009–2013) ¹⁰¹
2011	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2011/2151(INI)) ¹⁰²
2015	Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity in the European Parliament's Secretariat for the period 2014–2019 ¹⁰³
2016	EP resolution on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2015/2230(INI)) ¹⁰⁴
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 Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat – State of play and the way forward 2017–2019 ¹⁰⁵ and related roadmap for implementation ¹⁰⁶

⁹⁷ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 6 October 1997 on the Commission Communication – Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities – 'mainstreaming'.

⁹⁸ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 13 March 2003 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament.

⁹⁹ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 18 January 2007 on gender mainstreaming in the work of the committees.

¹⁰⁰ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 22 April 2009 on gender mainstreaming in the work of its committees and delegations.

¹⁰¹ European Parliament, [Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity within the European Parliament Secretariat 2009–2013](#), PE 413.568/BUR.

¹⁰² European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 17 November 2011 on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament.

¹⁰³ European Parliament, Action plan for the promotion of gender equality and diversity in the European Parliament's Secretariat for the period 2014–2019, PE 533.210/BUR.

¹⁰⁴ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 8 March 2016 on Gender Mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament.

¹⁰⁵ PE 595.277/BUR.

¹⁰⁶ PE 602.221/BUR.

YEAR	EP resolutions, Bureau reports, Action plans and roadmaps
2019	EP resolution on Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament (2018/2162(INI)) ¹⁰⁷
2020	EP gender action plan ¹⁰⁸
2021	2021–2022 roadmap for implementation of the EP gender action plan ¹⁰⁹
2022	EP resolution on Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament ¹¹⁰
2025	EP gender action plan ¹¹¹
2026	2026–2027 roadmap for implementation of the renewed EP gender action plan

4.2.1. EP resolutions on gender mainstreaming

For more than two decades, Parliament has been adopting a significant number of resolutions on gender mainstreaming, examining the state of play within the institution but also scrutinising gender mainstreaming activities in the European Commission and the Council of the EU.

In **2003**, in its first resolution of the kind, **Parliament launched gender mainstreaming activities in the EP** by committing FEMM to gender mainstreaming, and outlining how a related policy plan could be implemented. The resolution set out key priorities: establishing a high-level group on gender equality under the Bureau; applying a dual approach to mainstreaming; improving gender balance in Parliament's governing bodies; incorporating gender analysis into the budgetary process; and adopting an information policy that avoids gender stereotypes. FEMM was tasked with drawing up annual progress reports on gender mainstreaming in EP committees and delegations. Building on this mandate, FEMM started drafting regular own-initiative (INI) reports on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, leading to further resolutions in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2019 and 2022.

The **2007** and **2009 resolutions** found that most parliamentary committees attach importance to gender mainstreaming, although a minority engage with it rarely or not at all. While welcoming the growing number of female MEPs, both resolutions regretted the low representation of women in key political decision-making roles and in Parliament's top management. Accordingly, Parliament called for stronger implementation of gender mainstreaming; better coordination between the Bureau HLG, the GMN and the FEMM committee, and dedicated training for MEPs and EP staff.

The **2011 resolution** again proposed a policy plan for gender mainstreaming, reflecting Parliament's recognition of the need for robust institutional mechanisms. Key measures included continued progress reports to plenary, further development of the GMN, gender analysis in the budgetary process, and adequate financial and human resources to provide parliamentary bodies with the necessary tools including gender analysis, gender expertise and gender-disaggregated data. The resolution also called on relevant committees to assess the gender impact of spending priorities in the post-2013 multiannual financial framework.

¹⁰⁷ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 15 January 2019 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament.

¹⁰⁸ European Parliament, [2020 EP gender action plan](#), PE 650.297/BUR.

¹⁰⁹ European Parliament, [2021–2022 roadmap for implementation of the EP gender action plan](#), PE 658.028/BUR, PE 692.028/BUR.

¹¹⁰ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraph 29.

¹¹¹ European Parliament, [2025 EP gender action plan](#), PE 771.725/BUR/GT/ANN. PE 771.739/BUR/ANN.

The **2016** and **2019 resolutions** again highlighted insufficient female representation in key political and administrative decision-making positions. The 2016 resolution called on the HLG to adopt a gender equality action plan and roadmap to increase representation of women in middle and senior management positions to 40 % by 2020. The 2019 resolution welcomed the Papadimoulis report and its roadmap for implementation, while calling for faster progress towards the 2019 gender equality targets. Both resolutions addressed political groups directly, urging them to promote women's participation through gender-balanced electoral lists, governing body nominations, and committee composition.

Both resolutions also regretted the insufficient allocation of financial and human resources to gender mainstreaming, and identified a lack of coordination between the bodies responsible, within Parliament and across EU institutions. Gender mainstreaming amendments by FEMM were recognised as an effective tool to mainstream gender in the work of other committees, alongside gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. Parliament, however, regretted that gender budgeting was still not systematically applied by any EU institution. Targeted training for MEPs, parliamentary assistants, political group staff, and the EP administration was considered essential for building in-house capacity, including on gender-responsive budgeting.

Moreover, both resolutions called for regular research on gender mainstreaming progress in Parliament, with the 2019 resolution additionally emphasising the need for systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data to track progress, identify gaps and support evidence-based decision-making. The 2019 resolution also highlighted anti-harassment policies, welcoming new measures taken by Parliament's services, while strongly regretting the slow implementation of earlier recommendations.

In its **latest resolution on gender mainstreaming, adopted in March 2022**, Parliament set out its objective to be a leader in promoting gender equality. While welcoming the adoption of the EP gender action plan (EP GAP) and roadmap for implementation in 2020 and 2021 respectively, **Parliament nevertheless regretted** that 'the **gender action plan and roadmap are not publicly available and that most of the measures included are formulated as principles without clear targets and obligations**, which indicates a lack of political engagement with their implementation' (paragraph 7).

In its 2022 resolution, Parliament also reiterated several calls already made in the past. More specifically, Parliament called for **improving the representation of women at all levels of Parliament** (paragraph 3). To increase the number of **female MEPs**, Parliament encouraged national political parties to introduce quotas when deciding on electoral candidates, even if not required under national law, calling for support mechanisms and best practices to be shared with political parties to that end (paragraph 10). As regards **Parliament's administration**, Parliament noted that despite efforts made, gender equality had not been achieved at all management levels. In this context, Parliament supported the 2020 GAP's targets to be achieved by 2024, stressed the need to strengthen gender expertise at management level, and called for mentorship programmes to be implemented (paragraph 17).

In addition, Parliament welcomed the commitment in the 2020 EP GAP to ensure that all committees and other bodies organising hearings, workshops and conferences include **gender-balanced panels**, asking for the establishment of clear targets to implement this provision (paragraph 32). In addition, **all committee and delegation missions** should be **gender-balanced** and examine gender equality and women's right dimensions, with meetings with women's rights organisations to be included in mission programmes (paragraph 31). Moreover, Parliament called on 'the relevant Directorates-General to ensure that the **selection of study authors is gender-balanced**' (paragraph 16).

As regards **gender mainstreaming in Parliament's policymaking**, Parliament stressed that members of the **GMN** are responsible for gender mainstreaming in their respective committees, **regretting** 'that this work is **very ad hoc thus far**', and calling for more structured implementation (paragraph 30). In view of the variable degree to which FEMM's suggestions (expressed in opinions or positions in the form of amendments) were being integrated into the work of other committees and EP resolutions, this should be systematically monitored (paragraph 29). In addition to **closer and more structured cooperation between Parliament's main bodies in charge of gender mainstreaming (FEMM, HLG and GMN)** – a call already made in the 2007 and 2009 resolutions – Parliament also called for the GMN's inclusion in Parliament's Rules of Procedure (EP RoP), thereby reflecting its role in promoting gender mainstreaming in committees and delegations (paragraphs 25 and 27).

In line with earlier resolutions, Parliament, in 2022, also called for a **systematic implementation of gender mainstreaming in the EU budget**, welcoming the actions on gender budgeting envisaged the 2020 EP GAP and roadmap, and requesting their implementation as soon as possible (paragraph 39).

The 2022 resolution also put forward several requests to ensure a **gender-sensitive working environment in the EP**. In terms of **work–life balance**, for example, Parliament asked for the **systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data on the share of parliamentary staff working part-time**, and to address significant imbalances in this context (paragraph 19). In light of persisting cases of sexual harassment in the institution, Parliament also reiterated its calls to **improve existing anti-harassment policies**. This included the request for an external assessment of Parliament's dedicated anti-harassment committees and their improved composition (involving independent experts including doctors, therapists and lawyers), as well as mandatory anti-harassment training for all MEPs and EP staff (paragraph 20). The resolution also included **several demands relating to maternity, paternity and parental leave**, both for EP staff and MEPs (paragraphs 22 to 24).¹¹²

As in previous resolutions, Parliament stressed the importance of **data collection and monitoring**. Noting the lack of quantitative and qualitative data on gender mainstreaming within the EU institutions, Parliament called for comprehensive gender statistics to be compiled, and committed to creating qualitative indicators on gender equality (paragraph 4). Moreover, Parliament reiterated – with the aim of updating the EP GAP and roadmap – its call for an **audit**.

Finally, the 2022 resolution put forward several **requests addressed specifically to political groups** (thereby recognising their crucial role in ensuring both vertical and horizontal gender balance in EP committees, delegations and governing bodies, as also highlighted in a 2022 academic article¹¹³): in addition to **improved gender balance** in the leadership of committees, delegations and political groups, gender balance should be ensured at all levels of plenary, committee and delegation work, including when appointing coordinators, rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs and when distributing speaking time (paragraph 12). To tackle horizontal segregation, the composition of committees should be gender-balanced (paragraph 14). Similarly, to avoid discrimination and increase the presence of women in policy areas where they are under-represented, Parliament asked political groups (and EP services) to promote gender-responsive recruitment procedures (paragraph 11). In addition, political groups and their secretariats should establish **internal rules** and other relevant

¹¹² Parliament's call for recognition of maternity, paternity and parental leave for MEPs and the possibility of remote and/or proxy voting (paragraph 23) has recently been implemented through an amendment to the Statute for MEPs (see further information under Section 4.5.1.).

¹¹³ A. Elomäki and P. Ahrens, [Contested gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament: political groups and committees as gatekeepers](#), *European Journal of Politics and Gender*, 2022.

measures (such as codes of conduct and gender-mainstreaming tools, trainings and monitoring) to ensure gender equality in their internal functioning (particularly as regards appointments and the distribution of roles and responsibilities). Best practice guides and advice, including training for staff and Members on gender mainstreaming, should be made available to political groups to improve the understanding and implementation of gender mainstreaming in their internal functioning (paragraph 15). Moreover, data on vertical and horizontal representation among group staff should be collected (paragraph 18). Recognising that some areas covered by the EP GAP and roadmap are inherently political, **Parliament also called for the establishment, by mid-2022, of a temporary working group under the Conference of Presidents** (paragraph 58; see further details under the following section).

4.2.2. Committee and EP gender action plans

Overview of committee action plans

All of the European Parliament's 21 standing committees,¹¹⁴ as well as its two sub-committees, have now adopted gender mainstreaming action plans.¹¹⁵ These plans constitute the principal operational instruments through which committees fulfil their Treaty-based- and procedural obligations to integrate a gender perspective across parliamentary activity. Anchored in Article 8 TFEU, they translate a longstanding political commitment into structured, committee- specific- practices. Collectively, they demonstrate how gender considerations can be embedded in legislative scrutiny, policy development, internal organisation, interinstitutional cooperation, and mechanisms for monitoring and accountability. Importantly, committee action plans are **currently drawn up on a voluntary basis** (as opposed to the EP gender action plan which is, since 2019, mandatory under Rule 249 of the EP RoP).¹¹⁶

The **development** of these plans has been **incremental**. The first were introduced in 2015 during the eighth legislature (2014–2019), marking the initial formalisation of committee-level approaches. Additional plans were adopted or updated during the ninth legislature (2019–2024), following the introduction of Rule 249, which provided a clearer procedural foundation for gender mainstreaming. The 10th legislature (2024–2029) has seen the publication of further plans. Taken together, the plans illustrate a continuous process of institutionalisation shaped by evolving procedural requirements and committee-specific timelines.

However, **some action plans date from previous legislatures** and have **not been revised since their initial adoption**, neither at the beginning of a new legislature nor following the adoption of Parliament's gender action plans in 2020 and 2025. While gender mainstreaming has been progressively institutionalised across committees, **variation persists in the timing and frequency of updates of committee action plans**. Further details on the status of the different plans are set out in **Annex III**.

While the plans share a common baseline – such as integrating gender analysis into reports, ensuring gender-balanced- participation, and coordinating with the FEMM committee – many committee action plans also develop approaches tailored to their policy domains. The result is a diverse yet coherent set of instruments designed to strengthen Parliament's capacity to address gender inequalities both within its internal structures and across the EU policy landscape. **Five core**

¹¹⁴ While there are at present 22 standing committees, FEMM does not have a gender action plan, since gender equality and gender mainstreaming are at the core of its remit.

¹¹⁵ See all action plans on the [FEMM website](#) on gender mainstreaming.

¹¹⁶ European Parliament, [Rules of Procedure](#), 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

dimensions recur systematically in committee action plans: **policy work; organisation of work; cooperation and coordination; monitoring and reporting; and unique or innovative initiatives.**¹¹⁷

Policy work

Committee action plans aim to operationalise gender mainstreaming by integrating gender analysis into reports, opinions and legislative scrutiny, supported by gender-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive indicators, and structured engagement with FEMM. Some committee action plans also aim to apply gender budgeting, commission sector-specific research, and monitor international gender commitments, thereby ensuring that gender considerations inform both policy content and the evidence base underpinning it.

All committee action plans commit to **integrating a gender perspective into draft reports and opinions**, either as a general principle or through specific operational requirements. Several aim to examine whether the Commission has conducted gender analysis in its ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments, and call for corrective action where necessary (e.g. EMPL, ECON, INTA, REGI). Many commit to requesting and using gender-disaggregated data, recognising its importance for evidence-based decision-making (e.g. AFET, AGRI, BUDG, CONT). Plans also call for gender-sensitive indicators to guide monitoring and evaluation (e.g. CULT, ENVI, FISC).

Committee action plans consistently reference the **need to consider FEMM's positions and amendments**, reflecting FEMM's role as the Parliament's gender-expertise committee (e.g. ITRE, SANT, REGI). Budget-related committees commit to **gender budgeting** (e.g. BUDG, CONT, LIBE). Several schedule annual or periodic events on gender within their policy area (e.g. BUDG, DEVE, INTA, LIBE). Others commit to commissioning research on gender dimensions specific to their remit (e.g. AGRI, ENVI, SEDE, TRAN). Committees with external competences commit to monitoring international or EU gender instruments (e.g. DEVE, INTA, SEDE). A **growing number of plans** – particularly those adopted for the 10th legislature – **explicitly address LGBTIQ+ equality and intersectional discrimination** (e.g. DROI, FISC, PECH).

Organisation of work

Committee action plans commit to **adapting their internal working methods to reflect gender-equality standards**, including the use of gender-neutral language, balanced representation among speakers and rapporteurs, and the systematic inclusion of women's organisations in mission programmes. Many introduce gender-mainstreaming training, gender-sensitive recruitment practices, safeguards for non-sexist work environments, and measures supporting staff work–life balance.

All plans commit to using **gender-neutral language** in committee documents. Ensuring **gender balance among invited experts and speakers** is a shared commitment (e.g. ECON, FISC, SEDE). Most Committee action plans also aim for **gender balance in the allocation of reports and opinions**, while acknowledging the prerogatives of political groups (AGRI, BUDG, CONT, CULT, DROI, EMPL, ENVI, FISC, IMCO, ITRE, JURI, LIBE, PECH, PETI, REGI, SANT, SEDE, TRAN). Most plans call for **gender-balanced delegations and missions** (AFCO, AFET, AGRI, BUDG, CONT, DEVE, DROI, EMPL, FISC, IMCO, INTA, ITRE, JURI, LIBE, PECH, PETI, SANT, SEDE, TRAN), with some adding specific

¹¹⁷ This analysis of the committees' action plans is accompanied by three complementary resources in Annexes II, III and IV: a summary of each committee action plan; a summary table capturing the principal gender mainstreaming commitments across all committees action plans; and a table mapping gender mainstreaming actions by committee.

requirements for mission content (e.g. AGRI, DEVE, DROI). Several require meetings with women's organisations during missions (e.g. AFET, INTA, LIBE).¹¹⁸

Most plans encourage or require **gender-mainstreaming training** for Members, assistants, political group staff, and secretariat staff (AGRI, BUDG, DROI, EMPL, ENVI, FISC, IMCO, INTA, JURI, LIBE, PECH, PETI, REGI, SEDE, TRAN). Several address gender balance in secretariat recruitment (AGRI, CONT, DROI, ENVI, FISC, IMCO, JURI, LIBE, PECH, REGI, TRAN). A smaller number of committees' action plans address leadership roles and speaking time in committee debates (CONT, DROI, FISC, LIBE, PECH, REGI). A few designate the committee as a space free from sexist or degrading speech, with Chairs responsible for upholding this standard (INTA, LIBE). A couple include measures on staff work–life balance (AFET, REGI).

Cooperation and coordination

Gender mainstreaming is intended to be reinforced through **structured collaboration with the GMN, the FEMM committee, EIGE, and relevant European Commission Directorates**. These mechanisms should facilitate the exchange of expertise, alignment of standards, and coordinated approaches across institutional actors.

All plans commit to appointing a **full member and substitute to the GMN**, with reporting obligations to the committee. Plans also commit to **coordinating with the FEMM committee**, whether through taking FEMM opinions into account, inviting the FEMM GMN Standing Rapporteur, or contributing to FEMM-led reports (e.g. BUDG, CONT). Several reference **cooperation with EIGE** as a source of expertise and data (e.g. AFCO, AFET, AGRI, PECH, SEDE). A small number propose formal interinstitutional cooperation with European Commission Directorates or agencies (e.g. PECH, REGI).

Monitoring and reporting

According to their gender action plans, **committees should establish mechanisms to track progress and ensure accountability**, including annual reporting by GMN representatives, quantitative scoreboards monitoring gender balance and – where relevant – requests for data from the European Ombudsman. These tools aim to create a transparent evidence base for assessing implementation.

Many plans commit to **annual or periodic reporting** by the GMN member to the committee (AFCO, BUDG, CONT, FISC, INTA, LIBE, PETI, SANT, TRAN). Some introduce **numerical tracking of gender balance** across committee activities (e.g. AGRI, CONT, FISC). Two committee action plans commit to requesting data from the European Ombudsman on gender equality complaints relating to their policy area (PECH, REGI). As will be explained in the following sub-section, **committees' monitoring and reporting commitments do not always correspond to what is done in practice**.

Unique or innovative initiatives

Several committee action plans introduce **tailored or forward-looking initiatives that extend beyond the common baseline**, such as targeted communication campaigns, new governance models, digital tools for identifying gender-related petitions, and sector-specific oversight mechanisms.

¹¹⁸ This analysis is based on the JURI gender action plan from 2017 (as mentioned, while JURI updated its gender action plan in December 2025, it is currently not available; it was presented at a [JURI meeting](#) on 15 April 2026).

A small number commit to proactive external communication on gender mainstreaming (e.g. FISC, INTA, ITRE). Some include governance innovations (e.g. AFCE, IMCO, JURI, PECH, REGI). PETI proposes thematic filters and keywords in the ePetition tool to identify petitions with a gender or LGBTI dimension. ECON proposes using its oversight powers to monitor gender balance in key EU financial institutions, while SEDE focuses on tracking women's participation in CSDP missions and drawing on NATO best practices.

While the fact that **all EP standing committees and sub-committees** currently have **dedicated gender action plans** can be considered a **positive development**, it is **important to also look at the action plans' implementation**.

Implementation of committee action plans

EPRS questionnaire

In terms of implementation of the committee gender action plans, Parliament welcomed, in its **2022 resolution** on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, that all standing committees have their own gender action plans. However, it also noted the **'lack of monitoring and implementation of these plans'**, calling on committees to **monitor their gender action plans to measure progress and ensure their implementation**.¹¹⁹

In **February 2026**, for the purposes of this study, a **short questionnaire** prepared by **EPRS** was sent to committees and delegations through the GMN, asking for input regarding committee/delegation practices in monitoring the implementation of their gender action plans,¹²⁰ any plans for updating them, as well as on the gender distribution in panels of public hearings, conferences and workshops organised by committees/delegations (in 2024 and 2025 or at least in 2025), as far as available.¹²¹

All consulted committees replied, with **replies** received from a total of **25 standing committees, sub-committees and special committees**.¹²² Despite the heterogeneity of replies in terms of depth and content (see details in Annex V), several **observations** can be made.

- **First**, it appears that **some kind of monitoring is in place in 12 of the committees that replied to this question**, ranging from committees 'following implementation as far as possible' to committees having established dedicated, regular monitoring mechanisms.¹²³ As to the latter, seven committees reported drawing up regular implementation reports or similar (presented either to coordinators or to committee

¹¹⁹ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraph 6.

¹²⁰ It appears from the [FEMM website](#) (which displays all current gender action plans) that there are currently no gender action plans of Parliament's delegations. For more information on gender balance in EP delegations, see Section 4.4.1.

¹²¹ The questionnaire, as sent by the FEMM secretariat on request from EPRS, included the following two questions.

- 1) As regards your committee/delegation gender action plan, is your committee/delegation regularly monitoring its implementation, and how (for example, through monitoring reports, studies, such as a 2024 [study](#) by the Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs commissioned by LIBE, or through other means)? Does your committee/delegation intend to update its gender action plan, especially in light of the recently adopted EP GAP?
- 2) The 2025 EP GAP recognises the importance of gender balance in external expertise, encouraging EP political and administrative structures, particularly committees and delegations, to track data on the gender balance among invited experts. If available, could you provide information on the gender distribution in panels of hearings, conferences and workshops, for the current term (2024/2025) or at least for the year 2025?

¹²² FEMM did not take part in the survey (considering that it does not have a gender action plan, since gender equality and gender mainstreaming are at the core of its remit).

¹²³ Some committees that replied did not provide any information on monitoring and/or updating of their respective gender action plans (see details in Annex V).

members). Moreover, one committee currently not having any specific monitoring tools in place expressed its **willingness to consider setting up such tools in the future**. Another committee replied that, while there was no continuous monitoring, the secretariat compiled data on the action plan's implementation on request.

- **Second, seven committees** expressed their **intention or showed at least a willingness to update their gender action plans** in the future. This is of relevance considering that several committee gender action plans date back from as far as the eighth term (2014–2019), as mentioned previously, so even from before the 2020 EP GAP.
- **Third**, the EPRS questionnaire found that, **in 2024/2025**, the **gender distribution in panels of public hearings, workshops or other events organised by 21 committees ranged from 27.5 % of female speakers to around 59 %**. At an **average of around 43 % of female speakers**, the **gender distribution** among invited experts in the period and committees analysed seems **overall balanced**.¹²⁴

Moreover, in the context of gender distribution in panels, several committees referred to the **crucial role of political groups** in determining the experts to be invited (thus limiting the choice of committee secretariats). In addition, several committees stressed that, while they were seeking to ensure a gender-balanced representation among invited speakers, they currently did not collect such data; whereas one committee, which reported not currently having a comprehensive overview of gender balance in panels of hearings, workshops and conferences, expressed openness to develop a more systematic way of collecting and analysing such data to ensure compliance with the 2025 EP GAP in the future.

Furthermore, a couple of committees pointed out that the **gender classification** used was **based solely on available information**, and that **invited speakers had not been asked about their gender identity**. This – and, among other things, the fact that the analysis reflects a binary framework (female/male), thus not fully capturing the diversity of gender identities – should therefore be kept in mind when looking at these statistics. Additionally, one committee argued that the collection of such information in the future might raise **data protection issues**.

Best practice examples in monitoring gender action plans: LIBE and FISC

As regards committees' **monitoring** of the implementation of their gender action plans, two committees – the **LIBE** committee and **FISC**, a sub-committee of the ECON committee – stand out as having a more systematic, transparent monitoring framework.

Further to adopting its first formal gender action plan in 2021,¹²⁵ **LIBE**, in **2023**, prepared an annual **report on the action plan's state of implementation in 2022**.¹²⁶ According to the report – which

¹²⁴ These statistics need to be considered with caution, since information on gender distribution in panels was not provided by all committees that replied to the questionnaire (with such information only provided by 21 out of 25 committees). Moreover, committees' replies varied in terms of periods covered (with some committees providing the statistics for 2025, either for the entire year or part thereof, and others from the start of the 10th term in 2024 to the end of 2025 or even up to beginning of 2026), and events taken into account for this exercise (with some committees e.g. excluding meetings with institutional speakers – such as from the Commission or the European Court of Auditors – considering that in those cases, it was not possible to ensure gender balance, as the choice of speakers was predetermined by their formal roles); moreover, some committees also included – in addition to public hearings, workshops and conferences – simple exchanges of views in committee). Finally, the replies also varied in terms of degree of aggregation, with some committees indicating only the total number of events in a certain period (and the gender distribution in total), and others specifying the gender distribution for each event or each type of event (see details in Annex V).

¹²⁵ See [FEMM website](#).

¹²⁶ LIBE committee, [Working document](#) on LIBE Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming: Annual Report on the State of Implementation 2022, March 2023.

was also presented to LIBE members – implementation of the action plan had been successful on some levels, but there were still areas requiring further efforts in achieving a LIBE committee with full gender equality across all of its work.¹²⁷ Notably, when examining gender distribution among the LIBE committee bureau, LIBE coordinators, group advisors and secretariat staff in 2022, the report finds that **'men are over-represented in power positions, and women are over-represented in supporting positions'**.

The 2023 report also provides insights in the **gender distribution among LIBE members** (53.6 % women), rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs (44 % and 51 % women respectively), invited speakers to public hearings (59 % women), and LIBE members participating in missions (52 % women) **in 2022**. Acknowledging that some areas of the action plan were not covered by the report, the report puts forward several **recommendations**. In particular, it suggests that LIBE should aim to apply an **intersectional approach** to gender mainstreaming in its legislative and non-legislative work, using existing tools for an intersectional gender analysis.¹²⁸ Importantly also, the report recommends, whenever possible, to **integrate a gender perspective into LIBE reports and opinions**, paying due attention to available research from within and outside the EP, and to **develop gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative indicators** (and request gender-disaggregated data) to monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and projects. Moreover, LIBE should aim to help **improve the knowledge about gender issues** (including gender representation and participation in decision-making processes) within the committee, possibly by producing studies.

As the 2023 annual report did not cover the gender mainstreaming action plan's qualitative aspect, it was to be followed by an in-depth analysis of the legislative and non-legislative work in LIBE in 2022, to be carried out by Parliament's services and to be presented later in 2023. In **March 2024**, on request by LIBE, Parliament's services thus published a **study assessing gender mainstreaming in LIBE's parliamentary work in 2021 and 2022**.¹²⁹

Based on the 2023 report, interviews and a qualitative analysis of the incorporation of gender equality (and intersectionality) into LIBE's legislative and non-legislative work between January 2021 and December 2022, the study found that, while the **LIBE committee had made progress in mainstreaming an intersectional perspective of gender in its work, room for improvement remained**.

In particular, **only one third (34) of the 103 (legislative and non-legislative) acts adopted in the period analysed incorporated a gender aspect** to some extent. Out of these, only three were specifically focused on gender-related issues with a full intersectional approach, 11 combined both a gender and intersectional perspective, and 20 included a gender perspective without

¹²⁷ The 2023 implementation report was presented at the LIBE committee meeting of [22 March 2023](#).

¹²⁸ According to [EIGE](#), intersectionality can be defined as an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination. Intersectionality starts from the premise that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of intersectional and multiple discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities and the intersection of sex and gender with other grounds. The intersectional approach also features prominently in the Commission communication on the [Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030](#), adopted in March 2026, with the European Commission acknowledging that sex and gender intersect with other grounds of discrimination, leading to specific inequalities and unique experiences of discrimination. According to the Commission, the strategy thus pays particular attention to women from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, migrant women, women with disabilities, women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, young and older women, and LGBTIQ+ women.

¹²⁹ S. Samek Lodovici et al., [Gender Mainstreaming in the parliamentary work of the LIBE Committee](#), Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2024.

intersectionality. In this context, the study identified a positive relationship between the adoption of a gender perspective and intersectionality (with the degree of incorporation of gender directly correlating with that of attention to other rights-sensitive issues in intersection with gender). Accordingly, all three acts with a high level of attention to gender also pay medium to high attention to intersectionality. Importantly, however, a majority of acts incorporating gender aspects were non-legislative (30 out of 34), carrying less political weight.

The study also examined the **participation of women in the committee's work**. While 57 % of LIBE members were women in the concerned period (37 out of 69), the LIBE Committee's bureau was composed mainly of men (80 %). In light of this, the slightly higher male representation among LIBE political advisors (53.1 %) and women representing 68.4 % of the LIBE secretariat's staff, the study concluded – as did the 2023 report – that, although LIBE's members were, in their majority, women, **men were over-represented in power and decision-making roles, while women were over-represented in supporting positions**.¹³⁰ The study also found that, in the period examined, women were more likely to be appointed as rapporteurs on rights-related topics (fundamental rights, migration, gender-based violence), while men dominated in areas like judicial cooperation, cybersecurity, and financial supervision.

Finally, the study found that **panels in public hearings organised by LIBE in 2022** and the **composition of LIBE missions** in that year were – with 59 % of female speakers and 52.3 % of female participating MEPs – **gender-balanced**.

Based on these findings, the study put forward several **policy recommendations**:

- increase attention to gender mainstreaming across all policy areas, not only those explicitly relating to gender;
- strengthen the intersectional approach and systematically collect sex-disaggregated data; adopt tools such as gender impact assessments;
- define concrete, quantitative indicators in the action plan and put in place gender-responsive evaluation mechanisms;
- ensure greater participation of women as rapporteurs in legislative procedures and reduce thematic gender segregation in role assignment;
- invest in capacity building for MEPs and staff on intersectional gender mainstreaming;
- strengthen collaboration with other EP gender equality bodies, such as the GMN.

Another committee that meticulously monitors the implementation of its gender action plan is **FISC**, a sub-committee of the ECON committee. Every year, the FISC member in charge of gender mainstreaming produces an **implementation report together with a scoreboard**, providing an overview of how gender equality is integrated into different areas of FISC's work, as well as gender distribution in public hearings, exchanges of views, shadow- and rapporteurships and missions, and the evolution of the situation over time, among other things. While both report and scoreboard are presented to coordinators, the report is also published on a dedicated page of the FISC website.

According to the **FISC implementation report of March 2026**, covering the period between July 2024 and February 2026, **implementation** of the FISC gender action plan (adopted in March 2025) was **acceptable**.¹³¹ More specifically, 46 % of speakers in public hearings were female, compared with 33 % of institutional speakers in exchanges of views and other events organised by FISC in the

¹³⁰ In this context, it is, however, worth noting that, in the period analysed, 71.4 % of coordinators, 44 % of rapporteurs and 51 % of shadow-rapporteurs were women, making the gender distribution in LIBE's power and decision-making positions overall appear rather balanced.

¹³¹ FISC committee, [FISC Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Report 2024-2026](#), website.

mentioned period. While the **distribution of gender in panels** was, therefore, **overall balanced**, the report notes that two public hearings organised by FISC in the concerned period had an all-male and all-female panel respectively, a situation that should be avoided.

As regards the five **missions** carried out by FISC in the concerned period, **24 % of participants were female**. This, in addition to **25 % of FISC rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs being women** in that period, should be seen against the backdrop that **only a quarter of FISC members and substitutes were women**. However, as, according to the report, the under-representation of women in FISC missions could negatively affect Parliament's work and image and should be avoided, a possible measure to remedy the situation would be to set rules and encourage political groups to fill their vacant substitute seats with female Members and, as an intermediate solution, to encourage political groups with at least two seats in a mission to allocate at least one seat to a woman.

The report also describes the **FISC secretariat's composition**. While, as of February 2024, the proportion of women in secretariat staff overall amounted to 66 %, the **share of women in administrator (AD) posts remained at 25 %, while 100 % of assistant (AST) posts were occupied by women**. Although FISC participated in Parliament's Gender Equality Week for two consecutive years, the gender perspective was not taken into account in any own-initiative reports. To improve FISC's engagement with gender equality, the report suggests, for example, requesting an update of a 2017 study on Gender equality and taxation in the European Union.¹³²

In summary – and in light of the detailed, systematic monitoring of their respective gender action plans – the **LIBE and FISC committees** could therefore serve as **best practice examples** for other committees with less developed monitoring mechanisms. The fact that the **monitoring results** are **publicly accessible and presented to committee members** (either in committee meetings – which are public – or to committee coordinators meeting in a closed format) **contributes to enhanced transparency and accountability**.¹³³

EP gender action plans

As already indicated, in addition to the committee actions plans, **since 2020**, Parliament also has a **dedicated gender action plan**. In its 2019 resolution on gender mainstreaming, Parliament noted the heterogeneity of committee action plans at the time, calling 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 RoP be amended accordingly.

As mentioned, **since March 2019, Parliament's RoP include a provision (Rule 249 on Gender Mainstreaming)** that requires the Bureau to adopt a gender action plan aimed at incorporating a gender perspective into all of Parliament's activities, at all levels and all stages. Moreover, it

¹³² Å. Gunnarsson and U. Spangenberg (Forum For Studies On Law And Society, Umeå University – Sweden/Germany), M. Schratzenstaller (Austrian Institute for Fiscal Studies), [Gender equality and taxation in the European Union](#), Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2017.

¹³³ Even if implementation reports (or similar, such as monitoring tables or gender balance statistics) presented to coordinators *in camera* (i.e. in a closed format) are usually included in committee meeting minutes (accessible in principle on the [committee websites](#) or [archives](#) but possibly difficult to find), the visibility of such monitoring tools is much bigger where they are presented at (public) committee meetings (and thus also included in the [meeting documents](#) of the respective committee meeting) or published on a dedicated page of the committee website.

stipulates that the **gender action plan** be **monitored bi-annually** and **reviewed at least every five years**.¹³⁴

In **July 2020**, in line with Rule 249, the Bureau adopted the **first such gender action plan**.¹³⁵ This was followed, in **April 2021**, by a **2021-2022 roadmap for its implementation**.¹³⁶

While the focus of previous reports and roadmaps was on gender balance within Parliament's administration, including targets for female representation in management posts, the **2020 EP GAP and related roadmap, for the first time, also covered Parliament's 'political side'**, 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).¹³⁷ While the **action plan** set out a number of **objectives** for the political and administrative side of Parliament, the **roadmap** included **concrete actions with timelines ('milestones')** to reach them until the end of 2021 and 2022 respectively. The milestones were also intended to allow for monitoring of progress, laying down possible progress monitoring indicators.¹³⁸

As explained in the **2020 EP GAP**, the purpose of the actions and objectives laid down in the part covering 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**. 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 stressed 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 envisages a **bi-annual report from the HLG to the Bureau on the implementation of the actions**, to be shared with all relevant actors.¹³⁹

More specifically, the 2020 EP GAP called for **exploring both gender impact analysis of legislation and gender budgeting**; considering the **horizontal representation of women** throughout Parliament; **strengthening Parliament's zero-tolerance harassment policies**; encouraging **gender-sensitivity** and the widespread usage of **gender-neutral language** in EP communications; and ensuring that **physical spaces reflect the diversity** of Europe, be it through building names, artwork or staffing. The action plan also recommended **examining the work-life balance** offered to elected **members**, a topic that appeared particularly relevant after Parliament's sudden move to teleworking in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the **administrative side**, and building on previous work to ensure gender equality throughout the Secretariat, the 2020 EP GAP aimed at **enhanced 'vertical gender equality'**, setting out **more ambitious targets for managerial posts** (with 50 % of HoUs, 50 % of Directors, and 40 % of Directors-General to be female by 2024). Moreover, the 2020 EP GAP

¹³⁴ [Rule 249](#) of the [Rules of Procedure](#), European Parliament, 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

¹³⁵ European Parliament, [EP Gender equality action plan](#), PE 650.297/BUR.

¹³⁶ European Parliament, [2021-2022 roadmap for implementation of the EP gender action plan](#), PE 658.028/BUR, PE 692.028/BUR.

¹³⁷ 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.

¹³⁸ N. Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke and R. Shreeves, [Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament – State of Play](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2021.

¹³⁹ An implementation report has been prepared but was not accessible to the authors at the time of drafting.

called for examining the underlying reasons of some **DGs being more imbalanced than others ('horizontal balance')**.¹⁴⁰

In its **2022 resolution**, **Parliament commented on several parts of the 2020 EP GAP and 2021 roadmap**. While welcoming, notably, the actions on gender budgeting envisaged in the action plan and roadmap, as well as the commitment to ensure gender-balanced panels in all hearings, workshops and conferences organised by committees and other bodies, Parliament also expressed some criticism.¹⁴¹ More specifically, Parliament **regretted**, as mentioned, that **'the gender action plan and roadmap are not publicly available** and that **most of the measures included therein are formulated as principles without clear targets and obligations**, which indicates a **lack of political engagement with their implementation'**. In this context, Parliament requested the preparation of reports regularly monitoring the progress made in implementing the EP GAP.¹⁴² Moreover, **Parliament reiterated its call for an audit** to be carried out to map the situation in terms of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and make recommendations for both the political and administrative side of Parliament. With the aim of updating the EP GAP and roadmap, the audit should be based on EIGE's gender-sensitive parliaments toolkit and identify the rules facilitating or blocking gender equality in each area examined. In addition, the audit should assess the impact of a fixed gender balance requirement across all parliamentary structures, including committees, delegations and missions.¹⁴³

Importantly also, Parliament pointed out that **some areas** covered by the EP GAP and roadmap are **inherently linked to the groups' political organisation**, and therefore need a political deliberation involving all groups; a **temporary working group under the Conference of Presidents**, composed of representatives of each political group and chaired by Parliament's gender-mainstreaming Standing Rapporteurs, **should therefore be established** to steer work in that area, implement the resolution, and coordinate with the HLG, Parliament's Bureau, FEMM and the GMN, where relevant.¹⁴⁴ Although the resolution encourages political groups to establish such working group by mid-2022, as of the drafting of this study, no working group has been set up.

In **October 2025**, the Bureau adopted a **new EP GAP**, designed to guide Parliament's action in this area for the next five years. As its predecessor, the 2025 EP GAP is accompanied by a **roadmap for implementation**, adopted in **April 2026**.¹⁴⁵ Building on its predecessor, the 2025 EP GAP will continue guiding Parliament's approach to equality, staffing, leadership balance, anti-harassment measures and mainstreaming across committees until the end of the current 10th term. The **roadmap for 2026–2027** sets out measures to reinforce systematic gender-mainstreaming across all EP activities – both policymaking and institutional practices. As well as consolidating progress in existing areas of action, it expands into new ones, such as combating hate speech and gender-based

¹⁴⁰ See Women in the EP brochure 2021 ([EP intranet](#)).

¹⁴¹ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraphs 32 and 39.

¹⁴² *ibid*, paragraph 7.

¹⁴³ *ibid*, paragraph 58.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid*, paragraph 59.

¹⁴⁵ The 2025 EP GAP (PE 771.725/BUR/GT/ANN.; PE 771.739/BUR/ANN.) and roadmap for 2026–2027 (PE 783.177/BUR/GT/ANN/REV; PE 786.465/BUR/ANN.) are internal documents, available to MEPs and parliamentary staff on the [gender equality page](#) of Parliament's intranet site.

violence against parliamentarians, systematic benchmarking against gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments, and a gender-sensitive approach to occupational health.¹⁴⁶

4.3. Integrating gender equality into the EP's policymaking

4.3.1. Role of the FEMM committee

In the EP, the **FEMM committee** plays a **central role in incorporating a gender perspective into 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. Additionally, FEMM's (legislative and 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. Moreover, FEMM opinions support the introduction of a gender perspective in the work of other committees (Rule 57 EP RoP).¹⁴⁷ While less frequent, FEMM may also be involved in joint committee procedures (Rule 59 EP RoP), where it is in a co-lead position and enjoys a stronger role than when drafting opinions, as it can directly contribute to the drafting of the report through its own rapporteur.¹⁴⁸ As a monitoring tool, the FEMM committee draws up a regular report on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament. In this context, the appointment, at the start of the ninth term, of **two FEMM standing co-rapporteurs on gender mainstreaming**, responsible for preparing FEMM's regular reports on gender mainstreaming in the EP, has put further emphasis on and increased the visibility of this matter.¹⁴⁹

FEMM as a lead committee

However, as noted in a **2018 EP study**¹⁵⁰ examining the state of play of gender mainstreaming in Parliament's committees and delegations, **FEMM is rarely in charge of legislative procedures, as legislation directly focused on women's rights and gender equality is rather limited**. In particular, the study found that, in the period analysed (July 2017–July 2018), FEMM was not in the lead of any legislative procedures, possibly affecting its impact and internal reputation/accreditation.

By contrast, the situation somewhat **improved** in the **ninth parliamentary term**. Accordingly, **between 2019 and 2024**, FEMM was – together with the LIBE, EMPL and JURI committees respectively – in the **co-lead of six legislative files**.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, **only one legislative file** was

¹⁴⁶ Information based on the meeting of the EP Gender Mainstreaming Network of 14 April 2026, which was public but neither webstreamed nor recorded.

¹⁴⁷ European Parliament, [Rules of Procedure](#), 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

¹⁴⁸ Under Rule 59 of the EP RoP, when a matter falls within the competence of two or three committees, without the competence of any of them prevailing, each committee appoints one rapporteur who draw up a single draft report together (to be examined and voted on by the committees involved, under the joint chairmanship of the committee Chairs).

¹⁴⁹ In the ninth term, the FEMM Standing Rapporteurs were Irène Tolleret (Renew, France) and Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Greens/EFA, France). In the current 10th term, Veronika Cířrová Ostrihořová (Renew, Slovakia) and Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA, Sweden) occupy this function in FEMM.

¹⁵⁰ M. Samek Lodovici et al., [Updating the Study on Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament](#), Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2018. See also the 2014 study: M. Samek Lodovici et al., [Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament](#), Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2014.

¹⁵¹ According to the [FEMM activity report \(2019–2024\)](#), FEMM was, in the ninth legislative term (2019–2024), in the co-lead (Rule 59 EP RoP) of six co-decision procedures: Amending Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA ([2023/0250\(COD\)](#)); Amending Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims ([2022/0426\(COD\)](#)); Standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal

attributed **exclusively to FEMM** during the ninth term.¹⁵² Regarding **legislative own-initiative reports**, serving as a means to call on the Commission to put forward a proposal for a legal act in a certain policy area, **FEMM** was – jointly with LIBE – in charge of **two such files** in the last term.¹⁵³

FEMM's impact on the work of other EP committees

As to FEMM's impact on the work of other EP committees, the 2018 study argued that FEMM enjoys a particular status as a '**horizontal**' committee with competence for women's rights and gender equality in all policy fields, which potentially enhances its capacity to integrate a gender perspective into a broad range of Parliament's work. By contrast, it also flagged that because of this situation, the uptake of FEMM proposals (provided through an opinion or position in the form of amendments) depends significantly on support from other committees.

To gain a clearer understanding of the actual impact of FEMM's work on the work of other committees, the 2018 study analysed in detail **13 opinions and 213 positions in the form of amendments adopted by FEMM between July 2017 and July 2018**, drawing the following conclusions:

- Out of a total of 259 suggestions and amendments, **almost half (47 %)** were fully or partially **integrated into the report of the lead committee**.
- For **opinions**, the rate of inclusion 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 inclusion 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 its **2022 resolution** on gender mainstreaming in the EP, the European Parliament touched on the very issue of FEMM influencing the work of other committees. Pointing out that 'FEMM, as a fully fledged committee in charge of women's rights and gender equality, works on many horizontal issues that often touch the work of other committees', Parliament noted 'that the **inclusion of FEMM's suggestions in the form of opinions or amendments varies across other committees**'.¹⁵⁴ In this context, and to ensure the '**systematic, transparent and accountable monitoring of the**

opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation ([2022/0400\(COD\)](#)); Combating violence against women and domestic violence ([2022/0066\(COD\)](#)); Strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms ([2021/0050\(COD\)](#)); Gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges ([2012/0299\(COD\)](#)). In half of these joint procedures (three out of six), FEMM was co-lead with the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE); in two others, co-lead with the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL); and in one procedure, co-lead with the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI).

¹⁵² In the ninth term, FEMM was in the lead of the consent procedure on Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC ([2022/0401\(APP\)](#)).

¹⁵³ In the ninth term, FEMM was, together with LIBE under Rule 59 EP RoP, in charge of two legislative INIs: on Identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU ([2021/2035\(INL\)](#)); and on Combating Gender-based Violence: Cyberviolence ([2020/2035\(INL\)](#)).

¹⁵⁴ As INI reports, Parliament requested improved cooperation between committees in establishing their respective timetables to ensure sufficient time between when the draft report of the lead committee is available and the committee vote, in order to allow FEMM to produce its position in the form of amendments to the draft report (see paragraph 30 of the 2022 resolution).

integration of FEMM's suggestions, which is essential to ensure that the principles of gender equality and gender mainstreaming are properly implemented', Parliament **welcomed the 2020 EP gender roadmap's commitment to collecting clear indicators to measure whether the input from FEMM is being incorporated into the work of other committees and Parliament's final position.**¹⁵⁵

The 2020 roadmap's commitment to develop indicators to determine FEMM's impact on the work of other committees, as reconfirmed in the 2022 resolution, was later followed up by FEMM, requesting EP services to prepare a study on developing gender mainstreaming indicators measuring the input from the FEMM committee in the EP's final position. The **study**, published in **March 2023**, provides a **set of indicators** measuring to **what extent the input from FEMM was included in the work of other EP committees and incorporated into the EP's final position** (i.e. the EP resolution adopted by plenary) **between July 2019 and June 2022.**¹⁵⁶

Based on the analysis of **42 opinions** adopted by FEMM in the concerned period (and applying the indicators developed), the 2023 study found that:

- **out of a total of 452 FEMM amendments and suggestions, almost a quarter (24 %)** were fully (9 %) or partially (15 %) **incorporated** into the committees' final reports;
- the **committees receiving the largest share of FEMM opinions** (19 %) were **BUDG and ECON**, followed by **LIBE** (17 %), **CONT** and **EMPL** (both 14 %), with budget and economic-monetary issues addressed in almost one third (29 %) of FEMM opinions, followed by fundamental rights and democracy, the labour market and working conditions, climate, environment and sustainability, as well as digital issues;
- regarding the incorporation of FEMM amendments and suggestions, **EMPL incorporated the highest share of FEMM amendments** (with 40 % of FEMM amendments to some extent included in EMPL's single final report), followed by **LIBE** (31 % of all FEMM amendments and suggestions tabled to three different reports), **IMCO** (26 % of FEMM amendments in one final report) and **ENVI** (22 % in one final report). Only 24 % of FEMM amendments were incorporated by BUDG and ECON under the joint committee procedure;
- **out of the FEMM amendments and suggestions included in committees' final reports** (24 % of the total number of FEMM amendments and suggestions, as mentioned), the **large majority (70 %)** were **incorporated** into Parliament's **final resolutions**.

That said, a **direct comparison** between the findings of the 2018 and the 2023 studies is **difficult**. This because the former does not distinguish between the (legislative or non-legislative) nature of the procedure, thus examining FEMM opinions on both legislative and non-legislative reports of other committees, while the latter only considers FEMM opinions on legislative reports (adopted under the ordinary legislative (COD) or the consent (APP) procedure), as well as on legislative own-initiative reports (INL).

Notably, the **uptake of FEMM amendments by other committees between July 2019 and June 2022 in legislative procedures** was, **overall, rather low** (constituting only about a quarter – 24 % – of all amendments tabled by FEMM). This should also be taken into account when looking at the relatively high incorporation rate of (initial) FEMM amendments that were taken up by other committees and subsequently incorporated into final resolutions adopted by plenary (almost three

¹⁵⁵ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraph 29.

¹⁵⁶ M. Samek Lodovici et al., [Developing Gender Mainstreaming Indicators Measuring the Input from the FEMM Committee in EPs Final Position](#), Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, 2023.

quarters – 70 %): only **slightly over 16 % of FEMM amendments and suggestions were ultimately incorporated into legal texts adopted in the EP** (46 out of 287 amendments and suggestions for which the EP adopted a final report), as also pointed out in a 2024 EIGE study.¹⁵⁷ According to a **2022 academic article**, it is **ultimately the committees responsible for each policy area and the political groups – rather than FEMM – that determine whether and how a gender perspective is integrated into EP policies**.¹⁵⁸ Against this backdrop, the 2023 study's recommendation to disseminate the results of the gender mainstreaming monitoring to all EP committees could be useful to raise awareness of the importance of internalising gender mainstreaming in practice.

In terms of **evidence-based policymaking in FEMM**, the previous edition of this study, published in 2021, highlighted several **tools** that FEMM draws upon when preparing its reports and opinions such as internal and external expertise (in particular studies, in-depth analyses, briefings and delegation papers produced by the EP's policy departments and the EPRS), the organisation of hearings, workshops, inter-parliamentary committee meetings, conferences and ad-hoc delegations to a country or organisation of the committee's interest.¹⁵⁹

In the **eighth legislature, more than 44 events were held by FEMM** 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. **In the ninth term, FEMM organised over 80 events** including 63 public hearings, 11 workshops and seven inter-parliamentary committee meetings. Besides a particular focus on gender-based violence (both online and offline), many of these events also revolved around sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) including abortion rights; women's economic empowerment and labour issues; the care economy and work–life balance; digital issues (such as women's participation in the digital economy); the gender dimension of COVID-19 and Russia's invasion in Ukraine; as well as the situation of women in countries such as Afghanistan, Belarus, Ethiopia and Iran. Moreover, **between November 2019 and March 2024, FEMM also carried out 13 missions and ad-hoc delegations** (including ad-hoc delegations to the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in New York).¹⁶⁰

Every year, FEMM also organises several events to celebrate **International Women's Day**. In addition, a **Gender Equality Week** involving other EP committees was organised for the first time in October 2020 and has in the meantime become a firmly established yearly practice.¹⁶¹ In July 2024, EP President Roberta Metsola proposed to turn this initiative into a standing annual event, and to set up an administrative task force to support its organisation. Over the years, involvement of other committees and delegations constantly increased.¹⁶²

4.3.2. Gender mainstreaming in other committees than FEMM

The **2023 study** pointed out that, **each committee can**, of course, in addition to or in the absence of a FEMM contribution, **take measures to integrate a gender perspective into its own policies**.

¹⁵⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality, [Gender equality in the European Parliament and in national parliaments in the European Union: 2023 state of play](#), June 2024.

¹⁵⁸ A. Elomäki and P. Ahrens, [Contested gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament: Political groups and committees as gatekeepers](#), 2022.

¹⁵⁹ N. Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke and R. Shreeves, [Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament – State of Play](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2021, p. 27.

¹⁶⁰ [FEMM activity report \(2019–2024\)](#), pp. 48–55.

¹⁶¹ European Parliament, Parliament launches its first European Gender Equality Week, , 23 October 2020. See also [2025 EP Gender Equality Week](#).

¹⁶² [FEMM activity report \(2019–2024\)](#), pp. 56–57.

However, as found in a **2019 academic article**, this has **only been implemented slowly**.¹⁶³ In this context, the **2018 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**. The study also highlighted that, in addition to committees, individual parliamentarians supportive of gender equality, whether they are members of FEMM or of other committees, can push for the integration of a gender perspective directly in plenary.

As a consequence, the 2018 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.

4.3.3. Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN) and High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity (HLG)

As mentioned earlier, in addition to FEMM, there are **two other political bodies** with responsibilities in relation to gender mainstreaming: the **GMN**, which has, since its creation in 2009, served as a platform to share information and practices among committees, and the HLG of the EP Bureau.¹⁶⁴

In the **ninth term**, the **GMN met 11 times**. To improve the functioning of the GMN, the **2018 study** suggested increasing 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. The **2022 EP resolution** was also **rather critical about the GMN**, judging its work as 'very ad hoc thus far', and calling for it to be 'implemented on a more structured basis'. To formally reflect the GMN's role in promoting gender mainstreaming across parliamentary committees and delegations, the resolution called for the **inclusion of the GMN in the EP RoP** (which has thus far not been implemented); for putting in place necessary resources for the GMN to fulfil its tasks; for the inclusion of gender mainstreaming as a standing item for discussion in the agendas of committee meetings; and for a more structured cooperation between the GMN and other EP bodies in charge of gender mainstreaming in the EP. More specifically, the 2022 resolution also asked the GMN to **develop and adopt** – together with the HLG and the FEMM, BUDG and CONT committees – **dedicated guidelines to implement gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting**.¹⁶⁵

As for the **HLG**, it is notably in charge of **preparing and adopting the EP's gender action plans and roadmaps**, as mentioned previously, as well as **overseeing their implementation**.

4.3.4. Use of gender mainstreaming tools

Parliament's gender mainstreaming resolutions have consistently highlighted the importance of integrating tools such as **gender impact assessments, gender indicators, gender**

¹⁶³ Ahrens, P., [Working against the tide? Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament](#), 2019, p. 19.

¹⁶⁴ The focus of this study is on FEMM as the main actor responsible for ensuring integration of a gender dimension into Parliament's work. The initial focus of the HLG's work – to promote gender balance within Parliament's Secretariat – slightly shifted following adoption of the 2020 EP GAP and roadmap, which, for the first time, also covered the EP's political side.

¹⁶⁵ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraphs 27, 30 and 34.

budgeting and **gender-responsive evaluations** into the institution's operations and the work of its committees. The first and second EP GAPs and associated roadmaps have included measures to strengthen the institution's capacity in this area.

Parliament **scrutinises** the **extent to which the Commission is considering the gender dimension in its ex-ante impact assessments** accompanying legislative initiatives (see further details under Section 5.1.1.).

Parliament also aims to **incorporate a gender angle** when **assessing the potential European added value of its own legislative initiatives**. According to Article 225 TFEU, Parliament may, acting by a majority of its component Members, request the Commission to submit a proposal on matters on which it considers that a Union act is required for the purpose of implementing the Treaties (with the Commission having to provide a justification if it does not submit such a proposal).¹⁶⁶ Ahead of the adoption of such proposals (also called '**legislative-initiative reports**'),¹⁶⁷ EPRS usually prepares '**European added value assessments**'.¹⁶⁸ **Between 2023 and 2025, six such assessments** were carried out by EPRS.¹⁶⁹ Out of those, **four** considered a **gender dimension**.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, a gender aspect was incorporated into three studies and three briefings drawn up by EPRS in this period.¹⁷¹

Regarding **gender budgeting**, during the **2019–2024 legislature, cooperation** between the FEMM committee and the committees responsible for budgets and budgetary control (**BUDG** and **CONT**) was **stepped up** to raise awareness of the importance of this tool and explore ways of integrating a gender perspective into Parliament's scrutiny of the budgetary process, policies and spending programmes.¹⁷² **Options for gender budgeting** were **explored** during committee meetings, sessions of the GMN and the annual EP Gender Equality Week, and in publications for EP committees. **Training on gender-responsive budgeting** was made available for Members, parliamentary assistants, political group and secretariat staff, with support from EIGE and the

¹⁶⁶ [Article 225](#) TFEU.

¹⁶⁷ Pursuant to Rule 47(1) EP RoP, a resolution to request the Commission to submit a legislative proposal is always adopted on the basis of a legislative-initiative report. See also S. Kotanidis, [Parliament's right of legislative initiative](#), EPRS, European Parliament, January 2025. In its 2022 gender mainstreaming [resolution \(2021/2039\(INI\)\)](#), Parliament committed to carrying out a gender impact assessment for each legislative own-initiative report with the aim of including a gender perspective, and to researching new methods and tools for improving gender mainstreaming in the legislative process.

¹⁶⁸ European added value assessments, as prepared by the European Added Value unit (EAVA) within EPRS, set out and explain the rationale for and quantify the potential benefits from legislative initiative reports put forward by parliamentary committees.

¹⁶⁹ See the activity reports on European Parliament work in the fields of impact assessment and evaluation from [2023](#) and [2025](#). In 2024, no European added value assessment was produced.

¹⁷⁰ L. Jancova, C. Kammerhofer-Schlegel and J. Saulnier, [Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context – European Added Value Assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023; M. Centrone, C. Kammerhofer-Schlegel and C. Navarra, [EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors – European added value assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023; A. Heflich and L. Jancova, [Promotion of freedom of scientific research in the EU – European added value assessment](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023; L. Jancova and F. Sinicato, [Just transition in the world of work \(legislative initiative\)](#), EPRS, European Parliament, September 2025.

¹⁷¹ EPRS cost of non-Europe studies: [Increasing European added value in an age of global challenges: Mapping the cost of non-Europe \(2022–2032\)](#), 2023; [Improving EU action to end poverty in developing countries – Cost of non-Europe, 2024](#); [Cost of non-Europe in health policy](#), 2024. Other EPRS briefings: [Towards renewed and beneficial EU enlargement](#), March 2025; [Council directive on equal treatment: Potential European added value](#), 2025; [Addressing the gender care gap: Potential European added value](#), September 2025.

¹⁷² See M. Sapala and R. Shreeves, [Gender-responsive budgeting: State of play and opportunities for the European Parliament's 10th term](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2025; A. Pouwels, [Gender budgeting in the 2021–2027 period and the proposal for the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework](#), Directorate-General for Budgetary Affairs, European Parliament, October 2025.

Commission.¹⁷³ In addition, Parliament seized opportunities to **press for systematic use of gender-responsive budgeting in the 2014–2020 MFF**, the **annual budget**, the **EU Financial Regulation** and the **Recovery and Resilience Facility** – the EU financial instrument supporting recovery in the Member States following the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷⁴

The **focus on gender budgeting** has **continued** during the current legislature. As part of their scrutiny remit, the **BUDG** and **CONT** committees are paying particular attention to the **tracking methodology** developed by the European Commission to mainstream gender equality in the EU budget.¹⁷⁵ In **November 2025**, Parliament adopted a **resolution assessing the implementation of the methodology**, based on a report from the **CONT** committee.¹⁷⁶ While welcoming the methodology and its contribution to improving gender mainstreaming in the Commission's budget process, **Parliament flags limitations**, notably that it is not applied ex ante to shape the design of policies; does not take sufficient account of indirect or possible negative impacts on gender equality; and is not applied to the same extent across all EU programmes. Parliament has **asked the Commission** to develop and introduce a **comprehensive approach and method for gender budgeting for the next programming period**, establish binding spending targets for interventions where gender equality is a principal objective, and create a safeguard mechanism to adjust proposals found to have negative effects on gender equality.

In its **response**, the **Commission** states that its **proposal for the next MFF (2028–2034)** represents a **major step forward** for consistent **embedding of gender equality in the implementation of the EU budget**, notably through the proposal for a regulation establishing a budget expenditure tracking and performance framework and other horizontal rules for the Union programmes and activities ('performance regulation').¹⁷⁷

The **FEMM** committee, the **budget-related committees** and the **GMN** have **analysed the Commission's proposal** and **recommended steps to strengthen the gender equality dimension** across the next MFF and its specific programmes, and ensure that it remains measurable.¹⁷⁸ For example, the **FEMM committee's opinion attached to Parliament's interim resolution on the MFF** points to a **risk that gender mainstreaming will be diminished**, and urges the Commission to introduce specific and quantifiable financial targets for gender equality across programmes, and for tracking of the overall funding dedicated to gender equality.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ For example, EIGE carried out training sessions for the GMN and FEMM members on gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. It also developed a [checklist](#) for gender-sensitive screening of proposals of EU directives that can be used by parliamentarians.

¹⁷⁴ For details, see Sapala and Shreeves, 2025, pp. 5–8.

¹⁷⁵ BUDG committee, [Action Plan on Gender mainstreaming of the Committee on Budgets \(BUDG\) – 10th legislature](#), December 2024 and [Gender Action Plan – 10th term Committee on Budgetary Control](#).

¹⁷⁶ European Parliament [resolution](#) of 25 November 2025 on the 2024 budget – assessing the implementation of the gender mainstreaming methodology in the EU budget. See also the proceedings of the CONT committee workshop, [Implementation of the gender mainstreaming methodology in the EU budget](#), which fed into the report.

¹⁷⁷ Commission response to the text adopted in plenary, [SP\(2026\)02-27](#), 27 February 2026. For further analysis of the performance regulation, see European Parliament, [Budget expenditure tracking and performance framework](#), EPRS, May 2026.

¹⁷⁸ See BUDG committee, [Exchange of views: Gender Budgeting in the New MFF: Moving Forward?](#), 6 November 2025; EP Gender Mainstreaming Network, Exchange of views on gender equality in the MFF proposals with the European Commission, 14 April 2026 (public but not recorded); A. Elomäki, [Gender equality objective in the proposal for a Regulation establishing AgoraEU](#), Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture, European Parliament, May 2026; A. Elomäki, [Gender equality objective in the proposal for a Regulation establishing the European Social Fund \(2028–2034\)](#), Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture, European Parliament, May 2026.

¹⁷⁹ See [FEMM opinion](#): Interim report on the proposal for the multiannual financial framework for 2028–2034 (2025/0571(APP)).

In addition, under the **current EP GAP and roadmap**, a gender budgeting methodology is to be piloted for some budget lines in Parliament's own administrative budget.¹⁸⁰

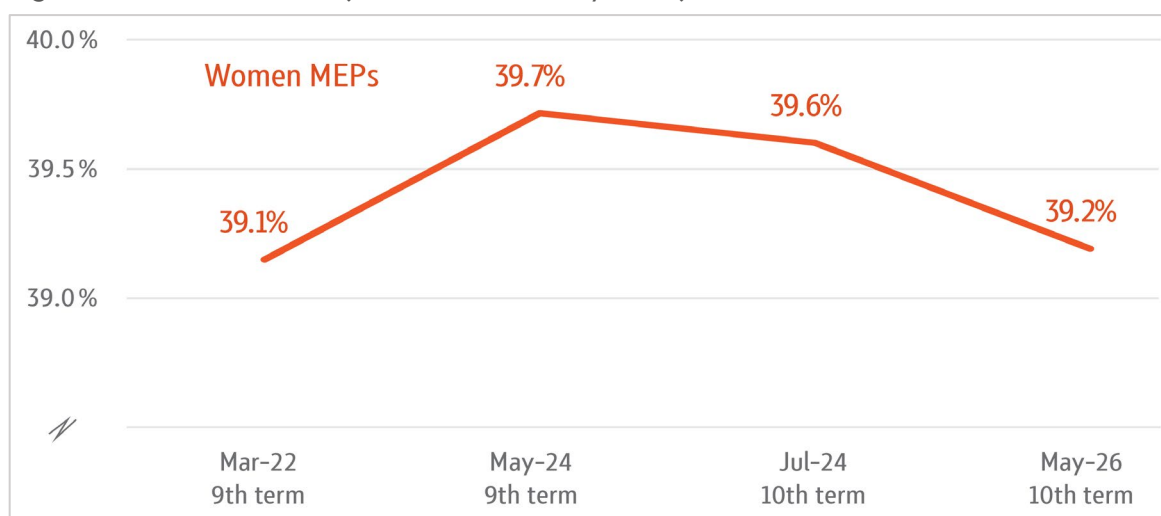
4.4. Balanced representation of women and men at all levels

4.4.1. Political level (women MEPs and female representation in EP governing bodies)

Gender balance at political level

Despite the positive trend noted in the first edition of this study, with **women MEPs** accounting for approximately 39 % of the total in 2021, the percentage has remained largely constant since then. As of May 2026, it stood at 39.2 %, as shown in **Figure 3**.¹⁸¹

Figure 3 – Women MEPs (March 2022 to May 2026)



Source: [EP Facts and Figures](#), May 2026.

However, there are large differences between national delegations in the EP. Notably, as of May 2026, Cyprus was solely represented by men, followed by Romania (83 % of male MEPs), Malta (80 % of male MEPs) and Lithuania (almost 78 % of male MEPs). On the other end of the spectrum, almost 62 % of Swedish MEPs were women, followed closely by 60 % Finnish female MEPs. 13 Member States (Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, Hungary, Spain, Luxembourg, France, Slovakia, Ireland, Croatia, Belgium, Denmark and Austria) were in a 'balanced representation' – understood as gender distribution of between 40 % and 60 %, with Spain and Luxembourg having achieved gender parity.¹⁸²

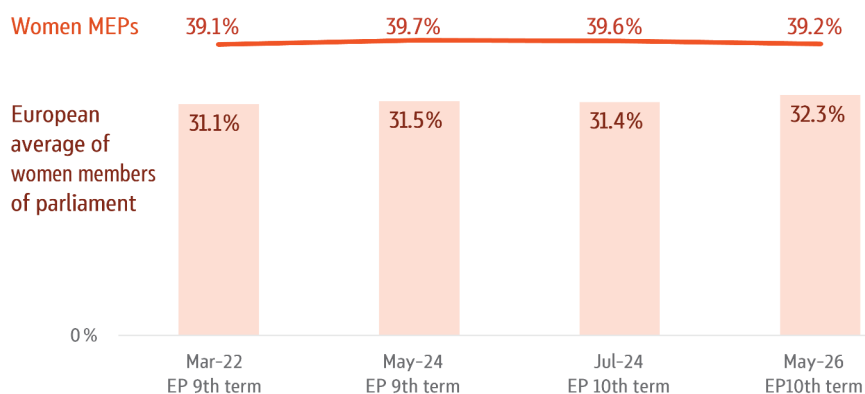
¹⁸⁰ The options for gender budgeting in Parliament's own budget were flagged during the previous legislature. See, for example: G. Badalassi, [The gender budgeting report of the European Parliament: A preliminary study](#), Greens/EFA in the European Parliament, 2021; M. Sapala and R. Shreeves, [Gender-responsive budgeting: Implications for the budget of the European Parliament](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2023.

¹⁸¹ See [EP Facts and Figures](#), May 2026.

¹⁸² See [EP Facts and Figures](#), May 2026.

At any rate, as shown in **Figure 4**, the **representation of women in the European Parliament** – over time and in 2026 – remains **significantly higher than the EU average for national parliaments** (32.3 %), as well as the global average of 27.5 % (as of April 2026).¹⁸³

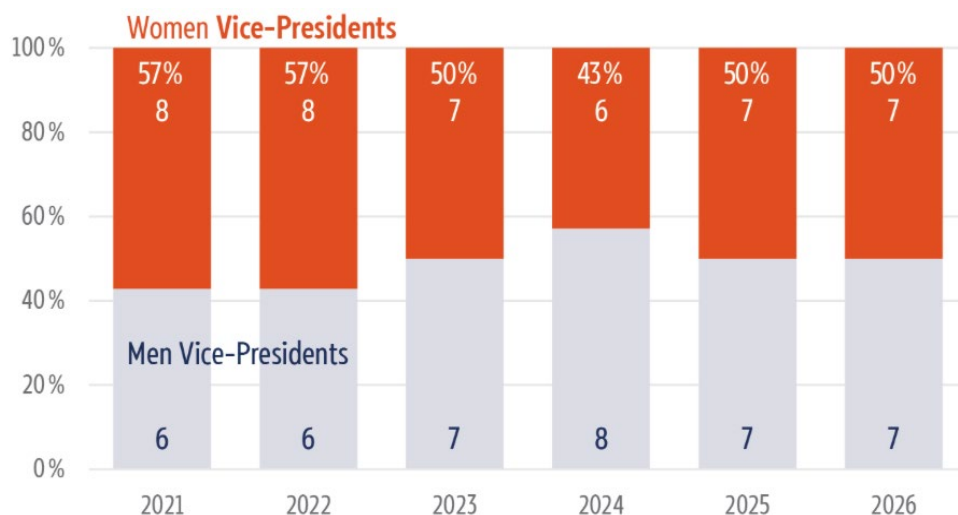
Figure 4 – Women MEPs and EU average of women members of national parliaments (March 2022 to May 2026)



Source: [EP Facts and Figures](#), May 2026.

Importantly, **2022** was a **landmark year** for the European Parliament, as its presidency was assumed, for the first time since 2002, by a woman, **Roberta Metsola** (EPP, Malta). However, this significant appointment was followed by a substantial decline in the number of appointed women **Vice-Presidents**, from around 57 % in 2022 down to almost 43 % in 2024 – a decrease of 24.5 %. In 2025 and 2026, the number of women Vice-Presidents rose again, accounting for 50 % of the total, achieving gender parity, as shown in **Figure 5**.

Figure 5 – Women Vice-Presidents (2021 to 2026)

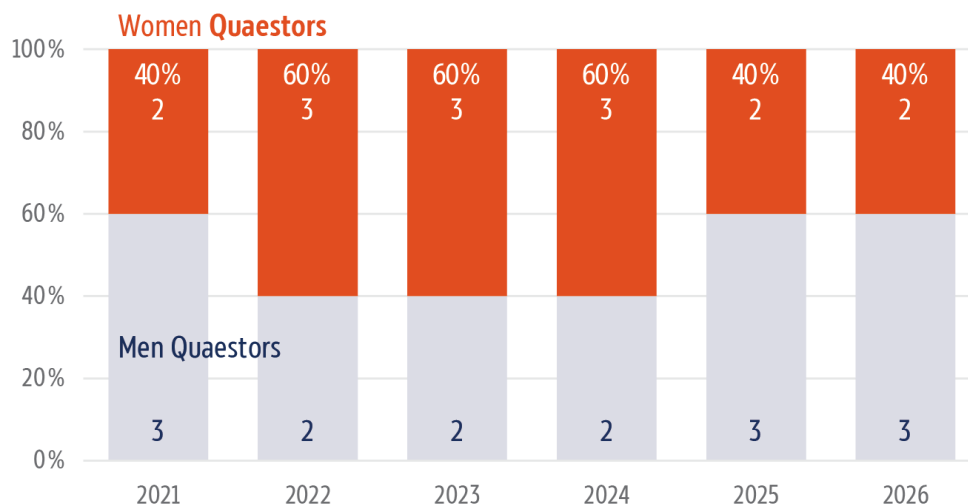


Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

¹⁸³ See I. Zamfir, [Women in politics in the EU: State of play in 2026](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2026, and Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Global and regional averages of women in national parliaments](#), website.

The proportion of **women Quaestors** has fluctuated over the years, in line with their parliamentary term of two-and-a-half years, given that attaining gender balance among the five Quaestors is mathematically impossible. Indeed, as illustrated in **Figure 6**, the share of women Quaestors climbed from 40 % in 2021 to 60 % from 2022 to 2024, dropping again to 40 % in 2025 and 2026.

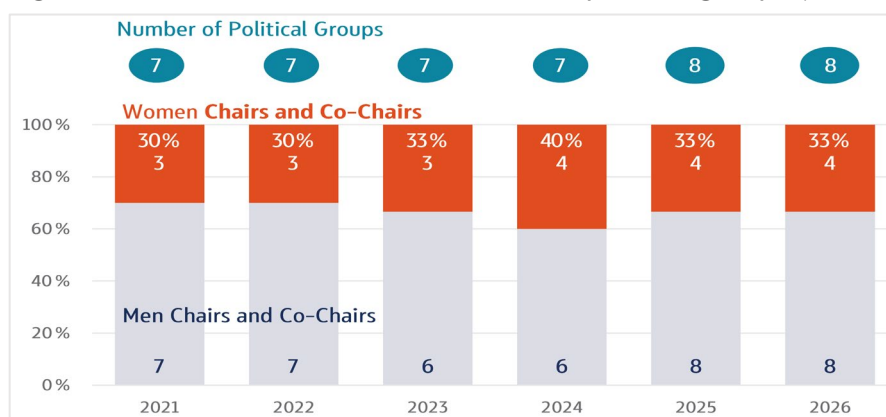
Figure 6 – Women Quaestors (2021 to 2026)



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

As shown in **Figure 7**, the percentage of women **Chairs and Co-Chairs of political groups** in the European Parliament has also ranged considerably, with a slight, albeit inconsistent, upward trend. In 2021 and 2022, 30 % of political groups were (co-)chaired by a woman, rising to 33 % in 2023 and 40 % in 2024, an increase of 33 % compared with 2021 and 2022. However, the percentage of political groups (co-)chaired by a woman dropped again to 33 % in 2025 and 2026.

Figure 7 – Women Chairs and Co-Chairs of political groups (2021 to 2026)



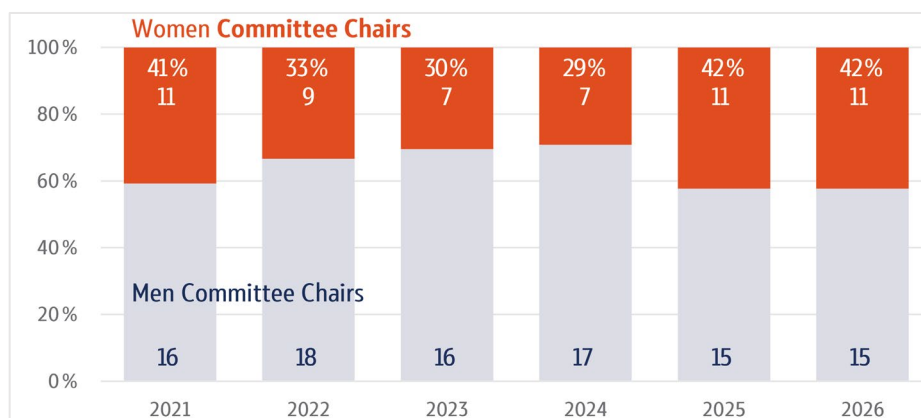
Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

A similar fluctuating pattern can be observed with the number of **parliamentary committees chaired by women (Figure 8)**.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, although 41 % of committees were chaired by a woman in

¹⁸⁴ The 26 committees mentioned in Figures 8 and 9 include 22 standing committees, two sub-committees (DROI, FISC) and two special committees (HOUS, EUDS).

2021, a downward trend followed in the subsequent three years, reaching its lowest level in 2024, with only 29 % of committees being female-chaired. Nonetheless, this percentage increased in 2025 and 2026, by almost 50 %, to 42 % of parliamentary committees being chaired by a woman. Importantly, since the EP elections in 2024, committee bureaus must be gender-balanced (and the Chair and first Vice-Chair must not be of the same gender).¹⁸⁵

Figure 8 – Women Committee Chairs (2021 to 2026)

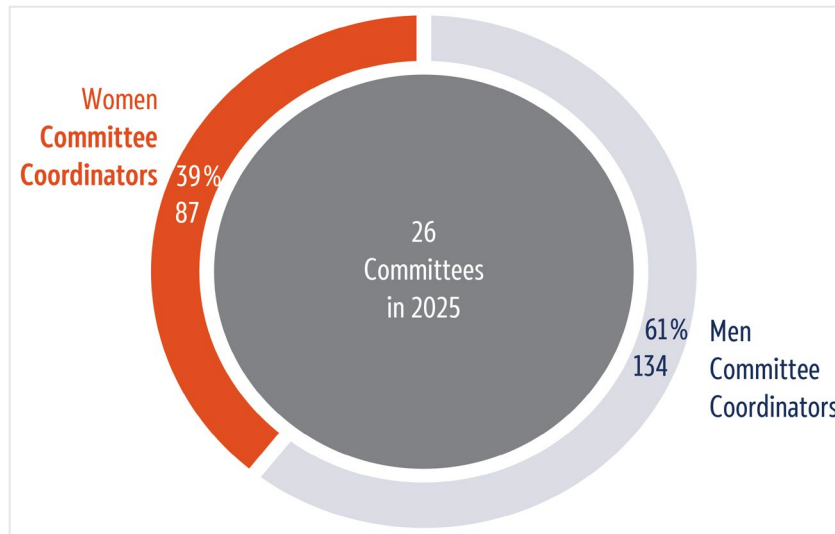


Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

While aggregated data on the number of **women political group coordinators of parliamentary committees** throughout the years are not readily available, the data collected on the 2025 composition of committees reveal that 39 % of all coordinators (87 out of 221) were women in that year, with significant discrepancies between committees (see **Figure 9**). While FEMM was taking the lead, with eight female coordinators, most coordinator posts were also held by women in EMPL (where women held nine of the 11 coordinator posts, corresponding to 81.8 %) and LIBE (where eight of the 11 coordinators (72.7 %) were women in 2025). By contrast, of the 11 coordinator positions in TRAN, only one was occupied by a woman (9 %).

¹⁸⁵ Rule 219 [EP RoP](#), May 2026.

Figure 9 – Women Committee Coordinators (2025)



Source: Internal data (Members' Administration Unit, European Parliament).

Similarly, despite the Parliament's 2022 resolution calling for gender balance to be ensured at all levels of committee work, including when appointing rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs, **aggregated data** about the **gender distribution of rapporteurships** across all parliamentary committees are **currently lacking**.¹⁸⁶ Some committees are nevertheless collecting (and publishing) such information (as mentioned under Section 4.2.2.).

Importantly, despite **Rule 216(2) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure** stipulating that the **composition of the committees** must **reflect**, as far as possible, the **composition of Parliament** itself (39 %), the **composition of most committees falls short of this requirement**.¹⁸⁷ Indeed, at the beginning of 2026, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) consisted of only 13.3 % women, followed by the Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) and the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) with 20 % women each, the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) with almost 23 % women, as well as the Subcommittee on Tax Matters (FISC, 23.3 %). At the other end of the spectrum, women accounted for 87.5 % of FEMM, 66.7 % of the Special Committee on the Housing Crisis in the EU (HOUS), 57.6 % of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL), and 53.3 % of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). The committees that most successfully adhered to Rule 216 at the start of 2026 were the Special Committee on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS) (39.4 % women) and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) (37.8 % women). Data from the preceding ninth legislative term also demonstrate a similar pattern, with AFCO, AFET, FISC, CONT and BUDG consistently ranking among the committees with the lowest female representation.¹⁸⁸ FEMM also systematically ranked as the committee with the highest proportion of female MEPs.¹⁸⁹

The percentage of **delegations chaired by women** has also varied greatly over the past few years, as shown in **Figure 10**. Although 30 % of delegations were chaired by women in 2021, only 23 % of

¹⁸⁶ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament – annual report 2020, paragraph 13.

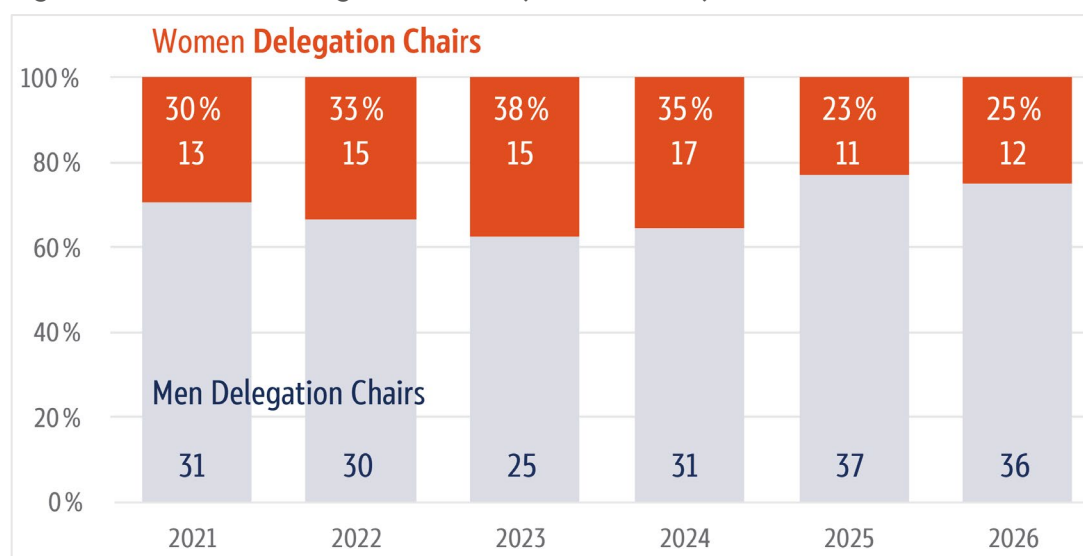
¹⁸⁷ Rule 216(2) [EP RoP](#), May 2026.

¹⁸⁸ The only exception is CONT in 2024, with women accounting for 40 % of total committee members.

¹⁸⁹ See Women in the EP brochures ([EP intranet](#)).

delegations were so in 2025, a decrease of about 23 %. Interestingly, this downward trend was not linear; rather, the share of women-chaired delegations reached 38 % in 2023 and 35 % in 2024, declining to 23 % in 2025 before rising to 25 % of women-chaired delegations in 2026. An article from The Loop also reports that EP delegation chairs, while 'key performers of EP diplomacy' that may facilitate gender equality promotion, were under-explored in the current 10th term.¹⁹⁰ Both in the ninth and 10th term, male MEPs chaired most of the biggest delegations (with more than 20 members each), with male MEPs chairing 10 and 11 out of 14 such delegations in the ninth and 10th term respectively. Moreover, in the current 10th term, male MEPs reportedly hold most Chair positions across all political groups; nonetheless, certain groups such as S&D and Greens/EFA have only nominated female MEPs as Vice-Chairs to meet the requirement of Rule 219 of the EP RoP (which also applies to bureaus of delegations).¹⁹¹

Figure 10 – Women Delegation Chairs (2021 to 2026)



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

4.4.2. Parliament's Secretariat

Gender balance in Parliament's Secretariat

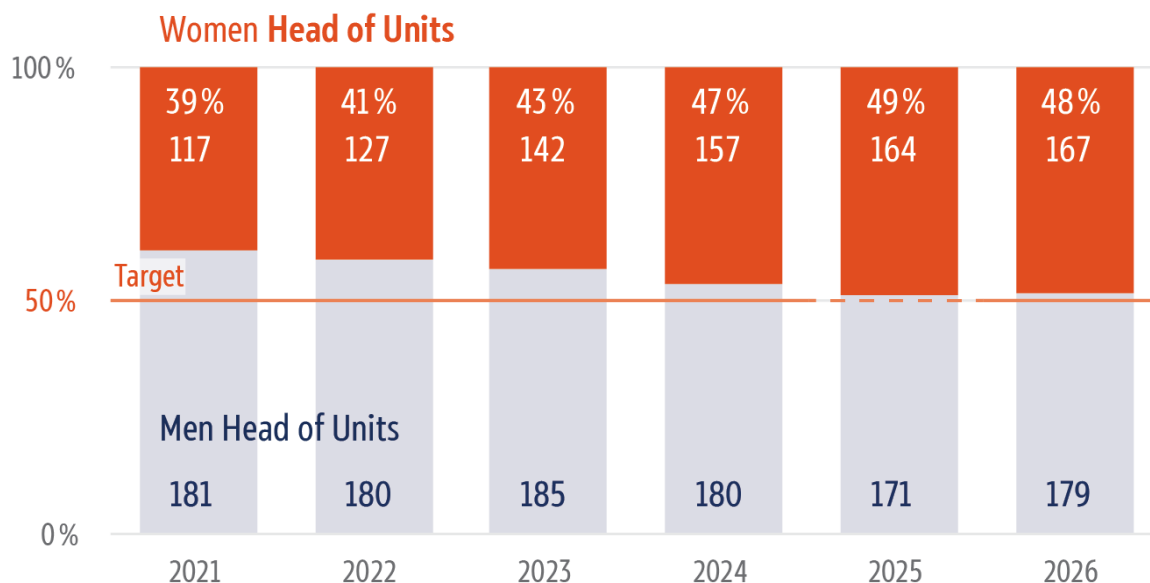
In **2025**, the EP Bureau adopted **new targets** to increase the percentage of women in management positions in the Secretariat ('vertical gender balance'): **50 % women HoUs; 50 % women Directors and 50 % women Directors-General** (an increase from the previous target of 40 % women Directors-General), aiming at full parity at all management levels.

¹⁹⁰ C. Miller and L. Santini, [Women's leadership in the European Parliament's external delegations](#), The Loop (ECPR's Political Science Blog).

¹⁹¹ Rule 219 [EP RoP](#), May 2026.

As illustrated in **Figure 11**, the target for **women Heads of Unit** was **almost met** at the time of writing of this study, with 48 % of women Heads of Unit (representing a relative increase of 23 % from 2021 where 39 % of Heads of Unit were women).¹⁹²

Figure 11 – Women Head of Units (2021 to 2026)

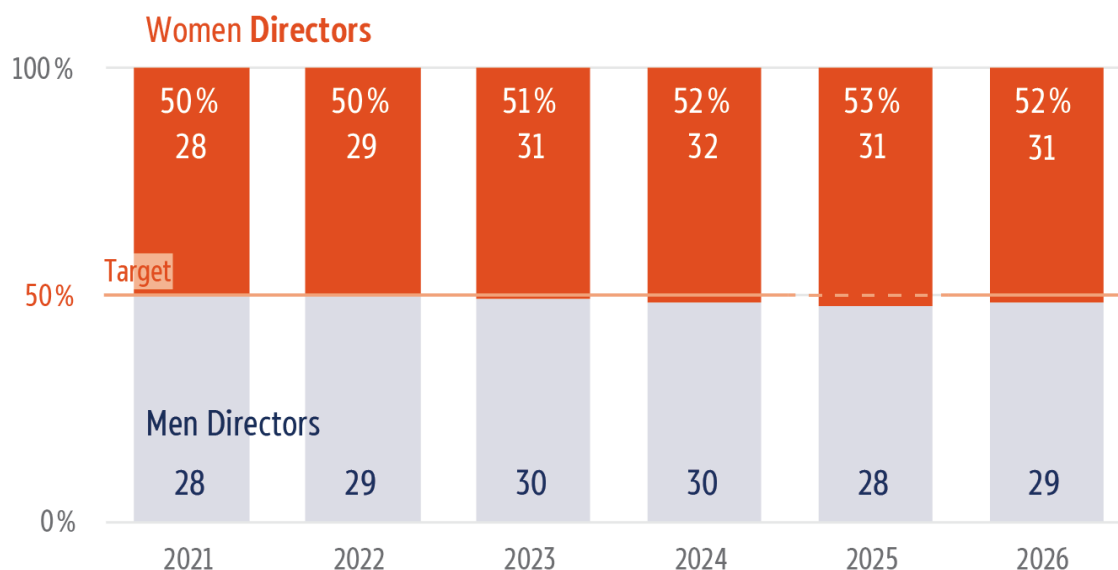


Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

¹⁹² The dotted line in Figures 10, 11 and 12 aims to illustrate that, while the management targets were set in the 2020 and 2025 EP gender action plans and apply for 2020–2024 and 2026–2029 respectively (as specified in the Women in the EP brochures on the [intranet](#)), no specific target was set for 2025, considering that the 2025 action Plan was only adopted in December 2025 and that, as expressed by the Secretary-General in its introduction of the 2026 Women in the EP brochure, published in March 2026, the 2025 gender action plan applied for the remainder of the term.

Moreover, the target for **women Directors** in the Secretariat was **surpassed**, with 52 % being women in 2026 (**Figure 12**).

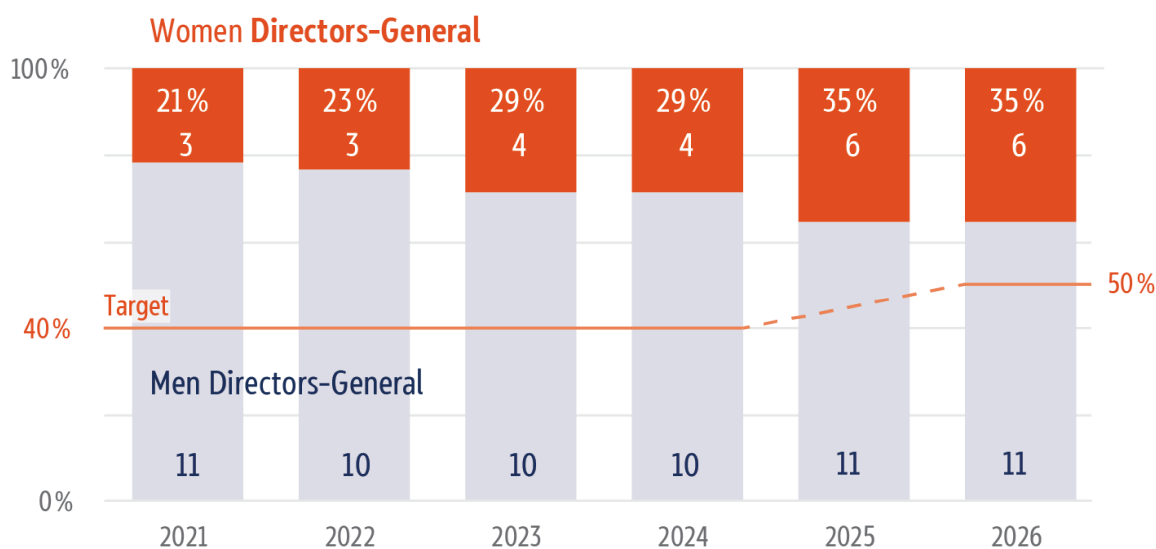
Figure 12 – Women Directors (2021 to 2026)



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

Despite these positive developments, further efforts will be needed to meet the target set for **women Directors-General**, considering that only around 35 % Directors-General were women in 2025 and 2026 (**Figure 13**). Nevertheless, this represents a significant increase of 25 % compared to 2024 when women accounted for around 28 % of women Directors-General, and a 66 % increase from 2021 when only 21 % of Director-General positions were occupied by women.

Figure 13 – Women Directors-General (2021 to 2026)



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

4.5. Culture and environment in Parliament

Advancing gender-sensitive representation also requires understanding how Parliament's institutional culture and environment shape the conditions under which Members and staff carry out their roles, providing the context for examining the institution's approach to work–life balance and the fight against harassment.

4.5.1. Work–life balance

Work–life balance has become a key axis of gender-equality policy in the EU, driven both by legislative developments and by institutional reforms within the European Parliament at political and administrative levels.

The 1992 **Directive on the safety and health at work of pregnant workers**,¹⁹³ governing workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding ('Pregnant Workers Directive' or 'Maternity Leave Directive') lays down EU-wide minimum standards on maternity protection, including a minimum of 14 weeks of maternity leave, of which at least two weeks are compulsory; protection against dismissal linked to pregnancy or maternity; the right to return to the same or an equivalent job; and specific measures on working conditions and health and safety (such as exemption from night work and protection against hazardous working environments).

Alongside this, the 2019 **Work–life Balance Directive**¹⁹⁴ establishes minimum standards on paternity leave, parental leave, carers' leave and the right to request flexible working arrangements for workers, including telework and reduced or flexible hours. It guarantees at least 10 working days of paternity leave paid at a level set by national law, at least four months of parental leave per parent of which two months are non-transferable and paid, and five working days per year of carers' leave, while also granting parents of children up to at least eight years of age and carers a right to request reduced hours, flexible schedules or flexibility in the place of work.

Taken together, the Work–life Balance Directive and the Maternity Leave Directive form the core EU baseline on maternity protection, family-related leave, and flexible working arrangements that Member States have transposed into their labour and social security systems (see Map 1).

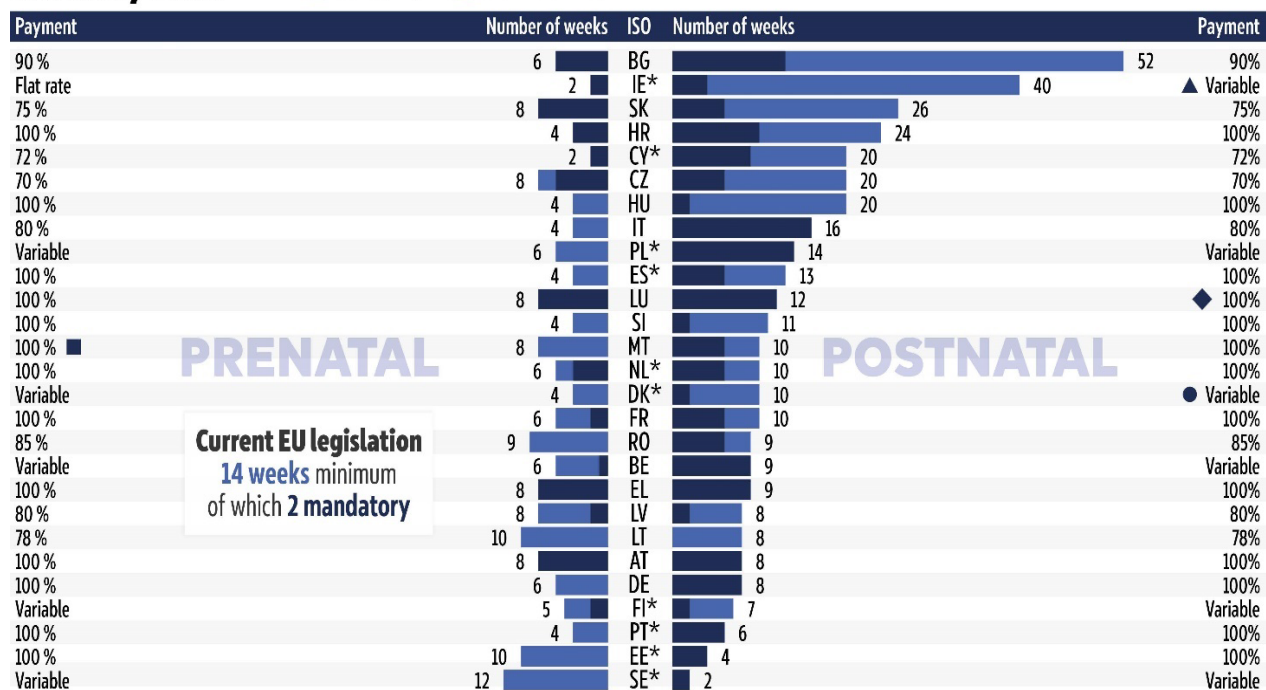
¹⁹³ [Council Directive 92/85/EEC](#) of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC).

¹⁹⁴ [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.

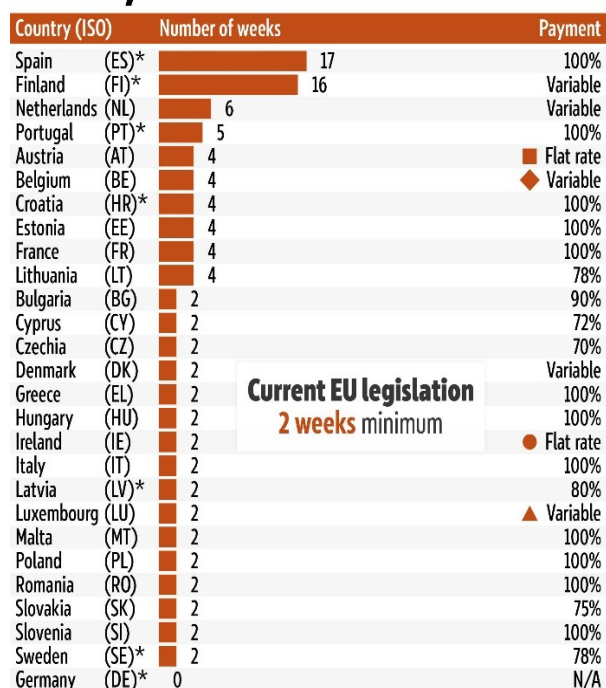
Map 1 – Maternity and paternity leave in the EU in 2026

Maternity leave

■ Mandatory ■ Non-mandatory

**Paternity leave**

■ Non-mandatory

**Notes on allowances**

- **MT** Postnatal period: 6 weeks, 100 % plus 4 weeks, flat rate equivalent to the statutory minimum wage
- ◆ **LU** 100 %, up to 5 times the social minimum wage (€13 518.7 per month)
- **DK** Up to DKK 5 085 (€680) per week before tax based on former earnings
- ▲ **IE** weekly rate of €299
- **AT** 'Family time bonus' amounting to €54.87 per day
- ◆ **BE** 100 % for 3 days (paid by the employer), 82 % of wage for the remaining period
- **IE** weekly rate of €299
- ▲ **LU** 100 % for 2 days (paid by the employer), up to 5 times the social minimum wage (€13 518.7 per month)

Definitions

Maternity leave: leave from work for mothers in the period immediately preceding and following birth.

Paternity leave: leave from work for fathers or recognised second parents, similar to maternity leave.

Parental leave: leave after maternity/paternity leave which can be taken by either parent.

Source: V. Kern and M. Lecerf, [Maternity and paternity leave in the EU](#), EPRS, European Parliament, April 2026.

Box 3 – Post-2022 national reforms expanding leave rights for parents

Several EU Member States have used the Work-life Balance Directive deadline as a lever to improve maternity, paternity and closely related parental-leave schemes. Recent reforms in Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia have lengthened post-natal or paternity-type leave and/or raised benefit levels, thereby strengthening income protection around childbirth. Other countries, including Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland and Romania, have expanded paid parental-leave entitlements, introduced non-transferable, better-paid portions for each parent and added carers, or reduced-hours options, which particularly encourage fathers' take-up and facilitate work-family reconciliation.

Source: V. Kern and M. Lecerf, [Maternity and paternity leave in the EU](#), EPRS, European Parliament, April 2026.

Beyond this directive, recent national reforms – often in response to the August 2022 transposition deadline – have expanded parental-leave payments, created reduced-hours schemes for parents in the public sector, and extended telework rights for workers with care responsibilities.

These developments intersect with broader EU gender-equality instruments (for example the gender equality strategy 2020-2025,¹⁹⁵ the Pay Transparency Directive¹⁹⁶ and the recent gender equality strategy 2026-2030¹⁹⁷) that treat work life balance as a structural precondition for women's participation in paid work and in decision-making.

For the European Parliament, this dual framework performs a double function: externally, it guides Parliament's legislative agenda on gender equality and work-life balance, while internally, it operates as a reference point for the design of its own rules for Members and for staff, who benefit from Staff Regulation schemes that generally exceed the EU minima in duration, payment and flexibility.

Political level – Members of the European Parliament

Leave for family reasons, maternity/paternity and parental leave

At EU level, the September 1976 European Electoral Act¹⁹⁸ (concerning the Election of the Representatives of the Assembly by Direct Universal Suffrage), together with the EP RoP, sets out the rights and obligations of Members of the European Parliament. While neither document mentions maternity leave explicitly, the issue is addressed in implementing measures adopted by the Bureau.

- **Maternity provisions.** Under Article 31 ('Periods of absence') of the Decision of the Bureau of 19 May and 9 July 2008 (implementing measures for the Statute for Members¹⁹⁹), pregnant Members have the right to be excused from meetings three months before and six months after giving birth; these absences are considered justified, preventing any negative financial implications (Article 31(4)).
- **Paternity and parental leave.** There is no equivalent mandate-specific framework for paternity or parental leave. Absences for these reasons are managed under general

¹⁹⁵ European Commission, communication on A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, , 2020.

¹⁹⁶ [Directive \(EU\) 2023/970](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms.

¹⁹⁷ European Commission, communication on a Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030, , 2026.

¹⁹⁸ [Act concerning the election of the representatives of the Assembly by direct universal suffrage](#), OJ L 278, 8.10.1976.

¹⁹⁹ [Decision of the Bureau of 19 May and 9 July 2008 \(implementing measures for the Statute for Members\)](#), OJ C 159, 13.7.2009.

rules on justified absence and through internal arrangements within political groups or parliamentary committees. As residents of their Member States, MEPs may benefit from national measures transposing the Work-life Balance Directive, including minimum entitlements to paternity leave (10 working days) and parental leave (four months, of which two are non-transferable). However, these arise from national labour and social security law and are not tailored to the parliamentary mandate.

Voting rights, proxy voting and remote participation

The European Electoral Act²⁰⁰ (Article 6) and Rule 193 of the EP RoP²⁰¹ require that **MEPs vote on an individual and personal basis**; proxy voting and temporary substitution are therefore currently prohibited, and any breach is treated as a serious violation potentially leading to sanctions. Temporary replacement is also excluded: Article 13 of the Electoral Act permits replacement only in cases of resignation, death or withdrawal of mandate, and the replacement serves for the full remainder of the term, not for a limited period corresponding to maternity or parental leave.

Current rules²⁰² do not allow MEPs who are pregnant or on maternity leave to participate in plenary sessions remotely, vote by proxy, or temporarily suspend their mandate yet. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament introduced a regime of remote participation in 'extraordinary circumstances' under Rules 244 to 246, but this is triggered by institutional rather than individual circumstances.²⁰³

On 29 April 2026, Parliament gave its consent to the **targeted revision of the European Electoral Act**, introducing a limited and clearly circumscribed derogation from the principle of strictly personal voting.²⁰⁴ The **amendment allows female Members to delegate their voting rights to a colleague for a defined period** – up to three months before the expected date of childbirth and up to six months thereafter – enabling them to continue exercising their mandate during maternity-related absences from plenary. In line with the position adopted by the Council²⁰⁵ in March 2026, the reform incorporates safeguards on transparency, accountability, traceability and the integrity of the vote, and requires that the detailed implementing arrangements be set out in Parliament's RoP. On 26 May 2026 the Council gave its **final green light to amend the European Electoral Act**;²⁰⁶ the Act must now be ratified by all Member States in accordance with their constitutional requirements before entering into force, a process expected to be completed ahead of the 2029 European elections.

Comparative perspective: National parliaments

Most EU national parliaments now recognise maternity leave for their members in some form, although legal frameworks and practical arrangements vary markedly. In several Member States (e.g. Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia) maternity leave is integrated into the general social-security and labour law framework for public employees, with formal mechanisms for

²⁰⁰ [Act concerning the election of the representatives of the Assembly by direct universal suffrage](#), O J L 278, 8.10.1976.

²⁰¹ European Parliament, [Rules of Procedure](#), 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

²⁰² European Parliament, [Decision of the Bureau](#) of 19 May and 9 July 2008 (implementing measures for the Statute for Members), O J C 159, 13.7.2009.

²⁰³ M. Díaz Crego and R. Mañko, [Parliaments in emergency mode – Lessons learnt after two years of pandemic](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2022.

²⁰⁴ European Parliament, Proxy voting rights approved for MEPs during pregnancy and after giving birth, , 29 April 2026.

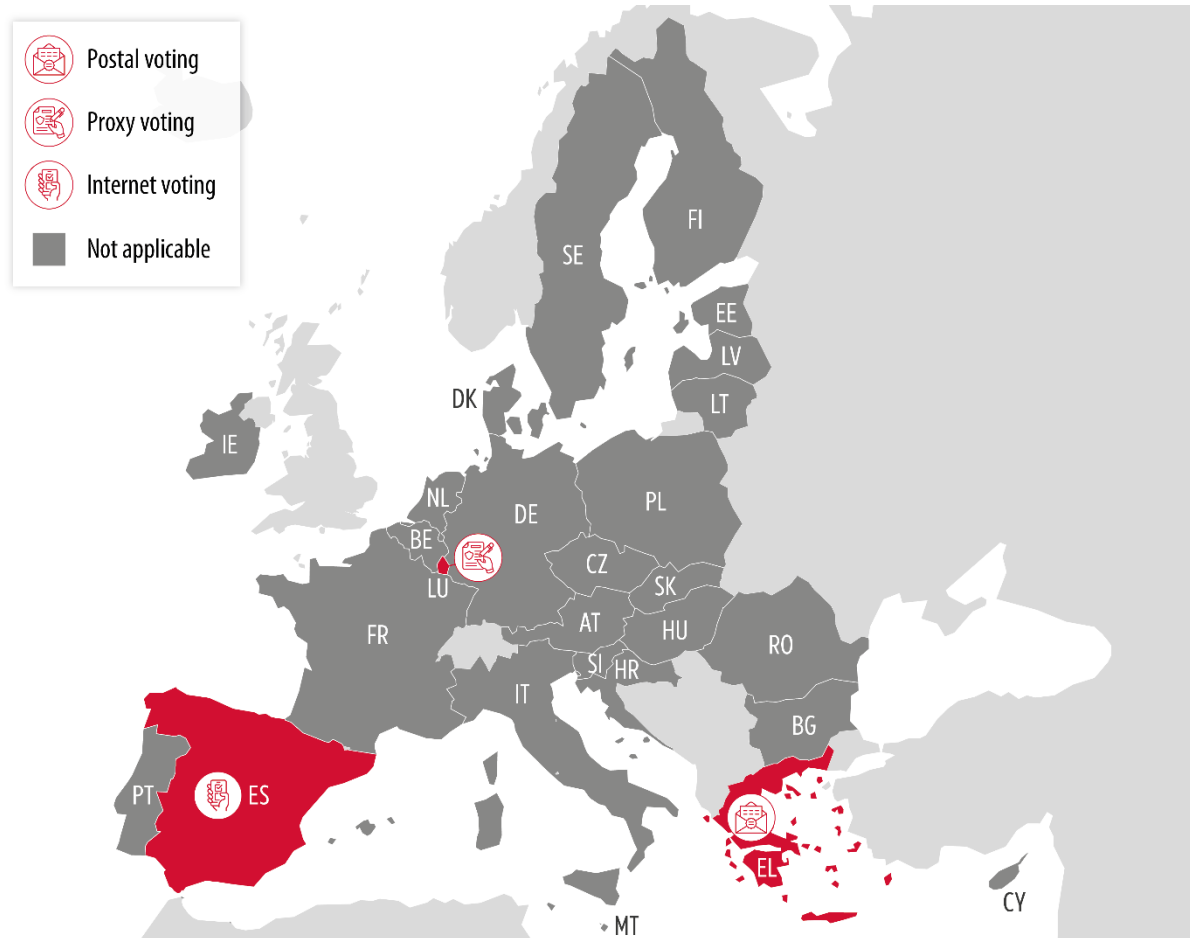
²⁰⁵ Council of the EU, Council Decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976 – [Approval of the draft Council decision](#), 11 March 2026.

²⁰⁶ Council of the EU, Council gives final green light to proxy voting for MEPs during pregnancy and after giving birth, [press release](#), 26 May 2026. See also Council of the EU, [Decision amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage](#), 26 May 2026.

temporary substitution; in others (e.g. Belgium, German, France, Italy, Romania, Finland) maternity-related absences are justified or covered by other categories (sick leave, mission status or informal agreements) but without an organic, specific regime for parliamentarians.

Formal voting *in absentia* while on maternity leave remains limited to three Member States (see Map 2). Spain allows remote electronic voting for pregnant Members and those on maternity leave. Greece permits postal voting in the last month of pregnancy and the first month after childbirth. Luxembourg recognises proxy voting, including for maternity-related absences. A larger group of Member States constitutionally exclude any form of remote or proxy voting, while some rely on informal 'pairing' practices to preserve political balance during absences, highlighting the tension between the personal character of the mandate and evolving expectations on work–life balance in representative democracy.

Map 2 – Voting in *absentia* during maternity leave for members of EU Member State parliaments



Source: M. Lecerf, [Maternity leave and voting procedures in the European Parliament and EU national parliaments](#), EPRS, European Parliament, September 2024.

Administrative level – Staff of the European Parliament and EU administration

The European Parliament has implemented various measures to ensure that its staff strikes a work–life balance, from part-time work to teleworking and leave for a variety of reasons, such as parental and family leave, or leave on personal grounds.

Leave for family reasons and work–life balance tools

The EU Staff Regulations²⁰⁷ (Regulation No 31/62, as amended) provide a comprehensive framework for work–life balance, grounded primarily in Title III Chapter 2 (career breaks), Title IV (working conditions) and Title V (social security), with detailed implementing provisions in Annexes IVa (part-time), V (leave) and institution-specific internal rules. These schemes exceed the 2019 Work–life Balance Directive²⁰⁸ minima in duration, payment and flexibility, applying to officials, temporary and contract staff in the European Parliament Secretariat (and by analogy to trainees/seconded experts), with the explicit aim of reconciling professional and family life (Article 1(e) Staff Regulations).

Key leave entitlements include:

- **Maternity leave** (Article 58 Staff Regulations): 20 weeks full pay (24 weeks for multiple/premature/disabled child births), starting six weeks pre-confinement and ending 14 weeks post-birth; non-fractionable post-partum;
- **Paternity/birth leave** (Annex V Article 6 Staff Regulations; Articles 29–30 EP internal rules): 10–24 working days special leave for the other parent (extended for multiples/disabled children), taken within 14 weeks of birth/adoption;
- **Adoption leave** (Annex V Article 6): 20–24 weeks if spouse employed; fall back 10–24 days otherwise;
- **Parental leave** (Article 42a): up to six months per child (to age 12, longer if child is disabled), with flat-rate allowance and pension/sickness coverage (EP general implementing provisions);
- **Family leave** (Article 42b): for serious illness/disability of child/spouse/dependent;
- **Special family leaves** (Annex V Article 6 Staff Regulations; Title II EP internal rules): 2–5 days for serious/very serious child illness, 3–9 days/year for spouse illness, 2–4 days for deaths.

Annual leave entitlements are set for between 24 and 30 working days per year, in accordance with Title I of the internal rules. Leave is adjusted on a pro-rata basis for staff working part-time and for periods of unpaid leave or other interruptions of service. Provisions supporting the return from maternity leave include breastfeeding time off, allowing up to two hours per working day for a period ranging from six to 12 months, depending on the staff member's situation and applicable rules.

Empirical patterns of usage, as documented in the Parliament's Women in the EP 2026 report, indicate distinct gender profiles across leave categories in 2025. Parental leave (full- and part-time) and family leave show a clear predominance of women: 68.8 % of parental leave beneficiaries and 76.3 % of family leave beneficiaries were women.

Part-time work and telework

Part-time work is regulated by Articles 55a–55b and Annex IVa of the Staff Regulations. Staff members have the right to request part-time work, with an automatic entitlement in specific situations, including childcare, disability, recognised training, and preretirement arrangements. Part-time work may be authorised from 50 % of full-time hours upwards, with remuneration and allowances adjusted on a pro-rata basis. Certain allowances, namely children, household and

²⁰⁷ Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the [Staff Regulations of Officials](#) and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

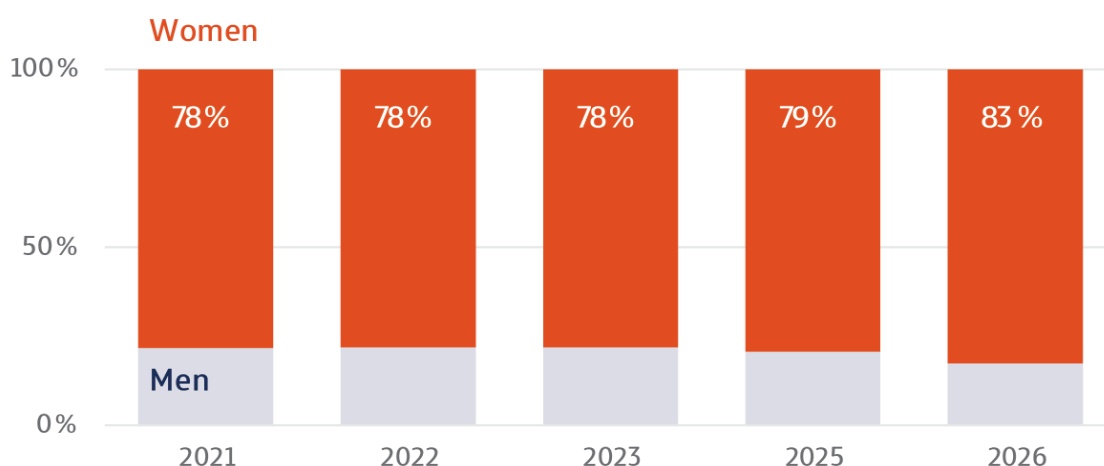
²⁰⁸ Article 1(e): 'Officials in active employment shall have access to measures of a social nature, including specific measures to reconcile working life with family life.'

education allowances, are not reduced. Staff may also opt to maintain full pension contributions during the period of part-time work.

Additional flexibility is provided through job-sharing arrangements, whereby two staff members jointly occupy a post on a half-time basis, and through pre-retirement schemes, which allow staff aged 58 or above to work half-time while receiving at least 60 % of their full-time remuneration. Requests for part-time work or related schemes may only be refused on the grounds of service needs, which must be duly justified.

Part-time trends: since the latest edition of this study, Parliament's annual reports show that more female than male staff work part-time. However, the rate of the beneficiaries of part-time work measures has not been linear; while the number of women working part-time decreased significantly, from around 45 % in 2021 to almost 38 % in 2024, it increased significantly in 2026, with slightly over 82 % of eligible part-time staff being women, as shown in **Figure 14**.²⁰⁹

Figure 14 – Gender distribution in part-time work (2021 to 2026)



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet).

Telework arrangements in the European Parliament are governed by the Secretary-General's Decision of 18 December 2023.²¹⁰ The framework distinguishes between standard telework, which provides an entitlement of one day per week, and extended telework, allowing up to two days per week for a period of six to 12 months for eligible functions.²¹¹ The decision also provides for individual adaptations linked to medical needs or disability, as well as the possibility to telework for up to 15 days per year from outside the place of employment, including in situations of urgent family necessity.

²⁰⁹ This figure should be treated with caution, as the methodology for counting part-time employment changed in 2026 compared with previous years, which may explain the considerable increase (see [Women in the EP](#), 2026).

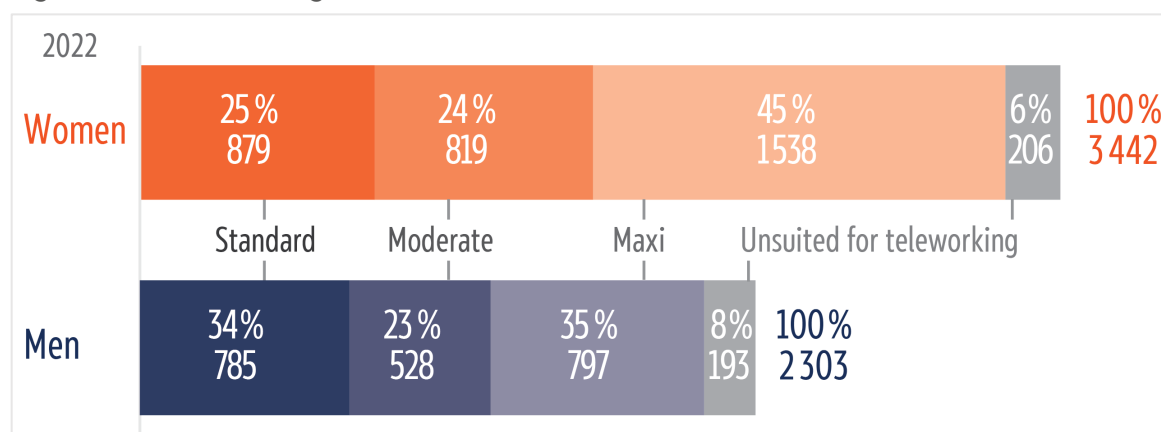
²¹⁰ European Parliament, [Decision of the Secretary-General on Telework in the European Parliament](#) (C/2023/1581), December 2023.

²¹¹ Prior to the 2023 decision, three modes of telework were available for staff: standard (1 day/week), moderate (2 days/week) and maxi (3 days/week). Since 1 March 2024, only two modes of telework are available (standard corresponding to 1 day/week and extended corresponding to 2 days/week). As the graphs relate to 2022 and 2023 (when the previous telework scheme was applied), they refer to the before-mentioned three modes.

Line managers retain responsibility for ensuring an adequate level of physical presence in the office. However, any refusal of teleworking or request for an employee to return onsite must be explicitly justified. Teleworkers remain responsible for complying with health and safety requirements in their remote workspace, except for obligations relating to equipment supplied by the European Parliament.

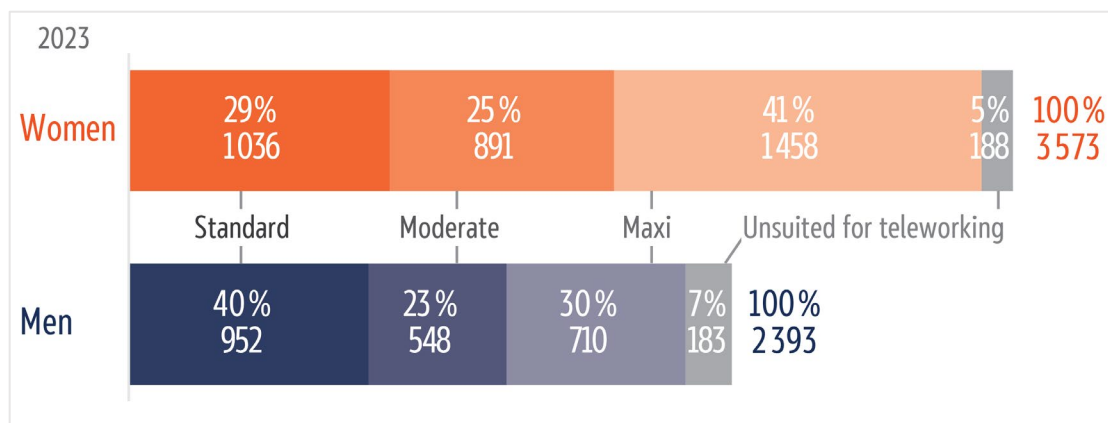
Telework trends: aside from 2021, when all staff was teleworking due to the COVID-19 arrangements, Parliament has only provided relevant data for 2022 and 2023. Overall, the data reveal that more staff made use of standard teleworking in 2023 compared with 2022 (see **Figure 15**). In addition, there is a clear trend of more men favouring standard teleworking than women, with an increase of 16.7 % from 2022 to 2023 (compared with an increase of 13.7 % for women from 2022 to 2023). The numbers of male and female staff engaging in moderate teleworking are roughly equal across 2022 and 2023, with slightly more women preferring this teleworking mode. While the proportion of men remained stable across both years (22.9 %), there was a slight increase of 4.6 % in women moderately teleworking from 2022 to 2023. Interestingly, while significantly more women took maxi teleworking across 2022 and 2023, participation in maxi teleworking decreased overall, with a steeper decline in men's engagement with maxi teleworking from 2022 to 2023 (14.1 %, compared with an 8.7 % decline for women).

Figure 15 – Teleworking in 2022



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet), 2023 brochure.

Figure 16 – Teleworking in 2023



Source: [Women in the EP](#) (EP intranet), 2024 brochure.

Between 2021 and 2025, the European Parliament's internal data point to a gradual decline in the use of part-time work among both women and men, suggesting a slow reconvergence towards full-time patterns while the option of reduced hours remains available. Over the same period, telework has become structurally embedded but with distinct gendered profiles across schemes, and the various categories of family-related leave continue to display stable disparities in uptake, calling for regular monitoring and qualitative analysis.

Governance and monitoring of work–life balance

Parliament's Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit coordinates gender action plans with DG-level coordinators, publishing annual data; COPEC and Staff Committee monitor uptake, issuing opinions on rules. This ensures formal tools (leave/telework/part-time) are complemented by anti-bias training and harassment prevention, with granular tracking revealing structured usage patterns (e.g. declining part-time rates; differentiated telework profiles) that inform targeted policy adjustments.

4.5.2. Gender-sensitive working environment: fighting against harassment

Under Article 24(a) of the EU Staff Regulation,²¹² **staff members have a right to receive assistance from the institution if, by reason of their position or duty in the Parliament, they are subjected to unlawful threats or harm, possibly including allegations of harassment.**²¹³ Harassment is not only a gender issue, while sexual harassment is often triggered by discrimination based on gender, and psychological harassment may have a gender based-discrimination component, as well. To enhance assistance, several measures have been set up.

²¹² Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the [Staff Regulations of Officials](#) and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community.

²¹³ The Staff Regulations define two types of harassment: **psychological harassment** (Article 12a(3)), meaning any improper conduct that takes place over a period, is repetitive or systematic and involves physical behaviour, spoken or written language, gestures or other acts that are intentional and that may undermine the personality, dignity or physical or psychological integrity of any person; and **sexual harassment** (Article 12a(4)), meaning conduct relating to sex which is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed, and which has the purpose or effect of offending that person or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive or disturbing environment. Sexual harassment shall be treated as discrimination based on gender.

In its resolution of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament,²¹⁴ Parliament requested the implementation of measures to improve anti-harassment policies.²¹⁵ In its **2023 resolution on sexual harassment**, Parliament noted that very few concrete internal measures were fully implemented against harassment, and that more needed to be done. So, the Parliament reiterated its calls for 'further transparency on all procedures and implementation of concrete measures by different departments at the political and administrative level'.²¹⁶ Such measures concern the **Advisory Committee dealing with harassment complaints concerning Members ('Advisory Committee')** and the **Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace (AHCP)** dealing with complaints about harassment among staff.

Regarding the **Advisory Committee dealing with complaints concerning Members**, Parliament requested that the rules of its functioning be amended. In 2023, the Bureau revised the 2018 rules,²¹⁷ reportedly to incorporate good practice applied by the Advisory Committee, and to align with developments of the relevant case law.²¹⁸ The eight-member Advisory Committee²¹⁹ remains competent to deal **exclusively with cases of harassment implying Members**.

Two decisions were adopted. The **first decision**, adopted in July 2023, focuses on procedural changes designed to strengthen the **rights of the parties**. It set up:

- revised deadlines to speed up the procedure;
- procedural safeguards such as the right to be heard for any party and sharing non-confidential evidence;
- rules to protect the individual Advisory Committee members' duty of impartiality;²²⁰
- disciplinary sanctions or penalties against anyone involved in the procedure that does not respect the Advisory Committee's autonomy, independence and confidentiality;
- in cases of alleged sexual harassment, the possibility to propose to a complainant a more restricted format for the hearing so the complainant feels at ease in a safer environment.

The **second decision**, adopted in November 2023, introduces procedural safeguards to strengthen a fair and equal treatment of the parties while paying attention to the victim. Additional deadlines are introduced to speed up the procedure, together with measures to ensure the rapporteur's impartiality. More protective measures are laid down, including a restricted format for hearing a

²¹⁴ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 10 March 2022 on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament –annual report 2020.

²¹⁵ When the draft GAP was approved in 2025, the [EP Bureau minutes](#) from 10 October 2025 did not indicate a reference to sexual harassment. The draft is not publicly available; however, considering that there were relevant changes regarding the anti-harassment policy within the EP, it is reasonable to expect that the GAP will reiterate the EP's commitment to prevent harassment.

²¹⁶ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 1 June 2023 on sexual harassment in the EU and MeToo evaluation.

²¹⁷ The procedure for cases concerning Members, introduced in [2014](#), was revised in [2018](#). It lays down the rules on the functioning and procedure applied by the Committee. 'The Committee shall work with complete autonomy, independence and confidentiality. Its proceedings shall be secret' (Article 8).

²¹⁸ On the changes brought up in 2023, see two decisions adopted by the Bureau in [July](#) and [November](#), together with the [report on the activities of the Advisory Committee \(2019–2024\)](#); for the relevant case law, see below.

²¹⁹ Three of them including the chair must be Quaestors, one member must be a Director in Parliament's Secretariat, and two members must be from the APA Committee (Article 6). The Secretariat-General will appoint two expert advisers – one medical officer from the Medical Service and one member of the Legal Service. The decision modifies only the composition when dealing with complaints submitted by a member of staff other than an APA or a Member's trainee to include two members (instead of one) of the AHCP.

²²⁰ Prior to introducing a complaint, the complainant may no longer informally contact the members of the Advisory Committee; contacts with the Secretariat prior to introducing a complaint should be limited to requests for advice on the procedure.

complainant in cases of alleged sexual harassment. Confidential counsellors and the medical service are available to provide support for Members and staff. The decision also strengthens the protection of witnesses,²²¹ and provides for either party the right to obtain, on request, non-confidential information about the state of progress of the procedure.

The Chair of the Advisory Committee must regularly inform the Bureau about the functioning of the Committee by submitting two confidential reports per legislative term to the Bureau.

Recent changes did not substantially affect the procedure, which starts with a complaint in the form of a request for assistance to the Appointing Authority. Then a preliminary study will determine if there is *prima facie* evidence of harassment. If such evidence is identified, the Advisory Committee will open a detailed investigation.²²² The Advisory Committee remains a **consultative body** that gives recommendations to the President of the Parliament who is competent to acknowledge the existence of harassment. The President may impose a penalty or financial measures.²²³

During the ninth legislative term, the Advisory Committee dealt with **31 cases against 22 different MEPs, which is almost the double compared with the previous term.**²²⁴ This may indicate growing awareness on the Advisory Committee and increasing trust in its capacity to handle cases with professionalism and independence.²²⁵ Among those cases, **sexual harassment constitutes by far the lowest number.**²²⁶ In approximately half of the 31 cases, the Advisory Committee recommended that the President recognise the alleged harassment. In several cases, the MEPs have challenged the decision before a Court, and the final decisions are currently pending.²²⁷

Regarding the **AHCP**, its tasks cover the promotion of a peaceful and productive working environment; the prevention of harassment of staff (officials and other servants); and a role of conciliation and mediation, training and information. There has been no major change since rules for its functioning were set in 2006.²²⁸ The procedure is similar in many respects with that of the Advisory Committee, including an informal meeting with the potential complainant, a formal investigation if there is a formal complaint, and a report and recommendations addressed to the Secretary-General who will ultimately decide which measures will be followed up. Procedural safeguards are not detailed in the same way as for the Advisory Committee; however, the member

²²¹ A person invited to be heard may ask to be accompanied by a psychologist of Parliament's Medical Service.

²²² For details of the procedure, see the November 2023 [Decision on the functioning of the Advisory Committee](#) with harassment complaints concerning Members of the EP and its procedure for dealing with complaints.

²²³ The President issues a reasoned decision to acknowledge harassment after hearing the Member (see Article 11).

²²⁴ The number is determined by the number of complainants; in some cases, there are few complaints against one MEP, hence the discrepancy between figures here. The figures are provided by the [Report on the activities of the Advisory Committee \(2019-2024\)](#).

²²⁵ Despite progress, the [report](#) notes remaining challenges – length of the procedure and workload, difficulty to gather evidence, need for strict confidentiality throughout the procedure, and increasing involvement of lawyers in the proceedings.

²²⁶ This is the conclusion of the [Report on the activities of the Advisory Committee \(2019-2024\)](#); however, there is no detailed breakdown.

²²⁷ See details in [Report on the activities of the Advisory Committee \(2019-2024\)](#).

²²⁸ The AHCP is made up of six members, including the Chair. Two members are appointed by the Staff Committee; one is appointed by the Medical Service, at least one member must have expertise on equal opportunities. There is no detail regarding the other members. See Article 2 of the [Internal rules for the Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace](#). The Committee is assisted by a secretary; see European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), [2009 EDPS opinion](#).

of staff against whom a complaint has been lodged must be given the opportunity to present their views.²²⁹

Available figures between 2018 and 2023 show that the number of cases decreased over the years; the AHCP opened 21 cases, including eight for alleged sexual harassment. Sexual harassment was found in two cases. The lack of contextual analysis accompanying those figures makes their interpretation impossible.²³⁰

In terms of prevention, progress has been made because of the implementation of a **mandatory anti-harassment training** for all MEPs,²³¹ and a mandatory training on the zero-tolerance policy for all staff.²³²

Further measures supported by the EP Bureau were adopted.

- The EP RoP were amended in light of the **mandatory training**. Members may not be elected as office-holders of Parliament or one of its bodies, be appointed as rapporteur or participate in an official delegation or interinstitutional negotiations: (a) if they have not completed the specialised training on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management; or (b) if they have not completed the specialised training on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace and on good office management.²³³ An amendment imposing stricter sanctions on those who fail to attend the training within the first six months was rejected.²³⁴
- The training complements available tools to outreach MEPs and staff.²³⁵
- To enhance anti-harassment policies, a **new mediation service** to support Members and staff was decided on 10 July 2023²³⁶ and set up since then.²³⁷ At the beginning of 2026, a new **network of confidential counsellors** has been added to the prevention

²²⁹ For details, see [Internal rules for the Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the workplace](#).

²³⁰ In [Procedures involving the Advisory Committee on harassment and its prevention at the work place](#) (1 January 2018 to 31 December 2023), figures are presented without any context, which does not allow pertinent conclusions to be drawn.

²³¹ Put to vote in 2019 for the first time, the training 'How to create a good and well-functioning team' was finally adopted in 2024. It consists of five different modules, including one on harassment.

²³² The 2023 resolution notes: 'Parliament's Legal Service stated that the introduction of mandatory harassment prevention training for Members would not affect the exercise of their free and independent mandate; whereas research shows harassment training must be complemented by bystander training, which delivers better results when also directed at management level and staff and further calls for the introduction of mandatory harassment prevention training for all Members at the very beginning of each mandate and for all staff, notably all the levels of management; calls for sanctions to be attached to the non-completion of this training and the revision of the Rules of Procedure in this regard'.

²³³ Rule 10(6) [EP RoP](#), May 2026.

²³⁴ Sanctions such as penalties and the possibility to remove an elected officeholder, such as President, Vice-President, Quaestor, Committee Chair or Vice-Chair were envisaged in the [report](#) endorsed by AFCE on 3 April 2024; however, they were not retained in the final text, as indicated in the S&D rapporteur's [press release](#); see also S. Schug, '[Has the European parliament done enough after #MeTooEP?](#)', *The Parliament*, 2024.

²³⁵ For instance, a 2023 [guide for MEPs on preventing conflict and harassment in the workplace](#).

²³⁶ European Parliament, Parliament strengthens its anti-harassment policy, [press release](#), 10 July 2023; and [Internal rules of the mediation service in the EP](#), 1 August 2025. In case of allegations of physical or sexual violence, the person must be directed to contact the person in charge with requests for assistance in DG PERS, and/or, if appropriate, the Police and the Medical Service – Article 5 (paragraph 4).

²³⁷ Mediation is a flexible and confidential process used to settle a dispute. It may help prevent a situation from worsening, including the risks of harassment. However, this is an informal way of resolving a conflict. It cannot take place when a formal procedure was already launched or in the event of serious misconduct.

tools, aiming to prevent and resolve workplace grievances, conflicts and potential harassment.

The current RoP²³⁸ (2024–2029) and the annexed code of appropriate behaviour for MEPs²³⁹ have incorporated those new measures, and reflect this strengthening of the anti-harassment policy.

Under the revised rules, few cases of harassment were examined and resulted in sanctions. However, **procedural loopholes** remain, as indicated by some CJEU decisions. In one case, the Court concluded that parliamentary assistants of an MEP have the right to access reports containing the conclusions of an investigation into this MEP's behaviour.²⁴⁰ The Court has ruled that 'in the absence of a legitimate interest in confidentiality, the Parliament should have forwarded the Committee's report to the applicants'. In another decision,²⁴¹ the Court highlighted procedural breaches; on the grounds that rights of defence were not respected, the Court annulled the European Parliament decision to sanction an MEP found guilty of harassment. According to the Court, a person accused of harassment is entitled to 'a summary reproducing the substance of the statements of witnesses' or 'to the documents in the file serving as the basis for the allegations against her' such as emails.²⁴² Parliament failed to ensure respect of rights of the defendant, which negatively affected the legality of the process.

4.6. 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 previously (Section 4.1.1.), **resolutions on the state of play of gender mainstreaming in the EP were adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2019 and 2022 respectively**. Moreover, based on a request by FEMM, parliamentary services carried out studies evaluating gender mainstreaming in Parliament's committees and delegations in 2014 and 2018, as mentioned in Section 4.3.

Regarding gender balance in the Secretariat, the Bureau has adopted, since 2006, a series of reports assessing progress relative to the targets set.²⁴³ On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Equality and Diversity Unit in Parliament's DG PERS publishes, each year, detailed statistics on gender balance at all levels of the EP, as well as on work–life balance (Women in the EP brochure and Observatory on Gender Equality Statistics).²⁴⁴ 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 aforementioned publications seem to comply with this request. In relation to work–life balance, however, it is worth noting that

²³⁸ European Parliament, [Rules of Procedure](#), 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, Annex II ([Code of appropriate behaviour](#)).

²⁴⁰ In [TU and BY v PE](#) of 12 February 2025, Parliament had concluded to the existence of psychological harassment, and both complainants had sought to use the Advisory Committee's report as evidence in a separate trial before a Belgian court. Parliament had refused to release the report.

²⁴¹ CJEU, [Judgment T-349/23](#), 12 March 2025.

²⁴² For more details, see P. Soler, '[EUs top court annuls Roberta Metsola's fine against former liberal MEP over harassment](#)', *Euronews*, 2025.

²⁴³ Kaufmann report (2006) and Papadimoulis report (2017).

²⁴⁴ All editions of the Women in the EP brochure, as well as the Observatory on Gender Equality Statistics since 2017, are available on the [EP intranet](#).

the statistics on staff working part time or teleworking, as well as on staff on parental or family leave, only provide information on officials and temporary staff (and thus no information regarding this aspect for the political groups and Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs)).

As mentioned, the 2020 and 2025 EP GAPs are both accompanied by roadmaps for implementation, containing concrete actions with timelines (milestones) and, where relevant, binding measures for a period of two years. While the roadmap for implementing the 2020 EP GAP only covers the years 2021 and 2022, with no (further) milestones or measures having been set for the following three years, when the 2025 EP GAP was adopted, the roadmap accompanying the latter, covering the years 2026 and 2027, points to a future roadmap to be developed for the years thereafter (2028 and 2029). In line with Rule 249 of the EP RoP, the HLG has to report bi-annually to the Bureau on the implementation of the actions, and share its reporting with all relevant actors. Moreover, the EP GAPs must be reviewed at least every five years.²⁴⁵

The latest roadmap, accompanying the 2025 EP GAP and adopted in April 2026, includes several specific actions in relation to implementation and monitoring of the EP GAP, notably to carry out a gender benchmarking exercise – with the support of the ECPRD and EIGE as an expert – to evaluate Parliament's practices and policies on gender equality based on a comparison between the EP and national parliaments in the Member States in various areas.

²⁴⁵ European Parliament, [Rules of Procedure](#), 10th parliamentary term, May 2026.

5. Gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions

Key findings

In the **European Commission**, gender mainstreaming is co-ordinated by DG JUST, supported by an Inter-Service Group for Gender Equality and a Task Force on Equality established in 2019. Despite these institutional structures, gender mainstreaming across policy areas remains weak, as evidenced by the limited consideration of gender impacts in Commission impact assessments: gender-related impacts were considered in only 7 % of impact assessments produced during the 2019–2024 parliamentary term. Gender budgeting has been introduced as an ex-post expenditure tracking tool under the 2021–2027 MFF but is not yet embedded in all phases of the budget cycle. Progress has been made in gender balance within the Commission's administration, with near-parity achieved at mid-level management grades, although men continue to predominate at the most senior levels.

In the **Council of the EU**, gender mainstreaming is addressed within the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) configuration and through successive Council conclusions calling for stronger mainstreaming and gender budgeting across EU policies and Member State legislation. However, negotiations within the Council, as co-legislator, have at times delayed agreement on key legislative instruments, as illustrated by the prolonged negotiations over the Women on Boards Directive and the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence. A dedicated Council configuration on gender equality, as called for by the European Parliament and recommended by EIGE, has not been established. As regards gender balance in its administration, the Council strives – in its 2030 diversity and inclusion strategy – to attain gender balance in management and other positions of higher responsibility within a 45 % to 55 % margin by 2030.

The **EESC** has endorsed the European Commission's Declaration for a gender-equal society, adopted a new diversity and inclusion strategy, and issued opinions calling for the systematic integration of gender mainstreaming across EU policies and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Gender imbalance among appointed members at political level persists, with some Member States having no female representatives. The **CoR** adopted a gender equality action plan in October 2023, embedded gender equality commitments in its revised 2024 Rules of Procedure, and has addressed gender mainstreaming across diverse policy areas including climate change, cohesion funds and the care economy. Despite these efforts, women remain substantially under-represented at political level, accounting for approximately 30 % of full members in 2026, and gender balance in management positions within the General Secretariat remains an acknowledged priority. In its gender action plan III (2026–2030), the **EIB** aims to intensify efforts to promote gender equality, promoting women's access to capital and participation in the workforce, enhancing equal access to infrastructure and services, such as mobility, housing and health, and upholding safety, dignity and equal rights in all its operations, extending the gender action plan's scope beyond women to include LGBTIQ+ and vulnerable men and boys. However, while aiming to promote gender equality through the Bank's investments in the EU, the new action plan is silent about gender representation within the institution itself.

5.1. Gender mainstreaming in the European Commission and the Council of the EU

5.1.1. European Commission (EC)

The main actors responsible for gender mainstreaming in the EC are **DG Justice and Consumers (JUST)**, **DG Budget (BUDG)** and the **EC's Secretariat-General**.²⁴⁶ The coordination of gender mainstreaming across the DGs is currently under the responsibility of DG JUST, led by the Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management, Hadja Lahbib, who was in charge of developing the 2025 roadmap for women's rights that shaped the 2026–2030 gender equality strategy, as mentioned in Section 3.²⁴⁷

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 accompanying impact assessments.²⁴⁸ The unit deals with legal aspects (monitoring of gender equality *aquis* and new legislation) and policy issues (such as the exchange of good practice between EU Member States, awareness raising and funding). It is consulted, both formally and informally, when new legislation is proposed. 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. It also supports civil society organisations as experts during consultations and public dialogue. The Gender Equality Unit is responsible for preparing annual gender equality reports.²⁴⁹ 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.²⁵⁰

Moreover, an **Inter-Service Group (ISG) for Gender Equality**, with members from all DGs and services at technical level, coordinates the implementation of actions to promote equality between women and men in the policies and annual work programmes for the DGs' and services' policy areas. It is chaired by the structure with primary responsibility for gender equality – currently the Gender Equality Unit – and coordinates the activities of Commission departments with respect to planning and implementing actions to promote equality between women and men in their policies and work programmes. The ISG is also the platform for monitoring and reporting the Commission's activities in the area of gender equality, and contributes to policy follow-up. The group meets four times a year to monitor the implementation of specific actions, with the ISG members liaising with the Gender Equality Unit during the preparation of the annual report on equality between women and men, published every year ahead of International Women's Day on 8 March.²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ 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).

²⁴⁷ In 2010, responsibility for gender equality was moved from the DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and came under the remit of the Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality. Since the first 2019–2024 von der Leyen Commission, there has been a dedicated Commissioner for Equality, covering gender equality alongside [other dimensions of equality](#) (although the [current Commissioner](#) has a broader portfolio, also including preparedness and crisis management).

²⁴⁸ Such as, for example, on the impact assessment regarding the legislative initiative on preventing and combating gender-based violence and domestic violence.

²⁴⁹ For the most recent one, see European Commission, [2025 report on gender equality in the EU](#).

²⁵⁰ See [EIGE](#) website.

²⁵¹ *ibid.* It also mentions a few other structures responsible for gender mainstreaming, such as the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming.

As regards **gender balance at political level**, the College of Commissioners is currently gender-balanced, with 11 out of 27 Commissioners being female (just over 40 %). This is, nevertheless, a step backwards compared with the previous term, where 13 out of 27 Commissioners were women.

Considerable progress has been made to ensure **gender balance in management positions in the Commission's administration**. As of January 2026, female representation at senior management level stood at almost 47 % (up from 37 % in 2019); at middle management level, female representation reached just over 50 % (up from 42 %). Overall, female representation in management positions in the Commission reached 49.5 % (up from 43 %). Moreover, female middle managers in the executive agencies amounted to 47 %, while four out of six Directors of executive agencies were, as of January 2026, also women.²⁵²

Furthermore, as a recent analysis by *Euractiv*,²⁵³ published in April 2026, reveals, a **near gender balance in the positions held by administrators (AD)** was achieved in **2024**, with 48 % of women in AD roles. However, **women dominate in assistant positions (AST)**, with 68 % female-filled AST roles in 2024. Also, while women represented 52 % of mid-level grades (AD05–AD10) in 2024, men still accounted for close to 60 % of staff in senior grades (AD11–AD16), with the gap widest at the very top.

As regards **horizontal gender representation across Commission services**, according to *Euractiv*, the **majority have increased their share of female staff**, with, in 2024, women even outnumbering men in some services, such as in DG SCIC (69 %), DGT (65 %), EPSO (63 %) and DG JUST (63 %). However, despite the increase in the proportion of women, **several services were imbalanced** in 2024, most prominently DG IDEA (17 %), DIGIT (25 %), and DG JRC (30 %). Moreover, **five Commission services recorded downward trends** in female representation from 2019 to 2024, particularly DG IDEA with a decrease of 58 % from 40 % women in 2019 to only 17 % women in 2024.

Since 2015, the framework for policymaking in the Commission has been provided by the **Better Regulation Agenda**, including Better Regulation Guidelines²⁵⁴ and a toolbox²⁵⁵ that encompass all stages of the EU policymaking process, providing, among other things, rules for conducting impact assessment work from ex-ante impact assessment to ex-post policy evaluation. The Better Regulation Guidelines were updated in November 2021 to include a reinforced consideration of 'any significant impacts on gender equality', where relevant, while the toolbox was most recently updated in December 2025 to consistently include gender-related impacts in the questions aimed at guiding relevant stakeholders when analysing significant impacts of proposed policies.²⁵⁶ However, the Commission's recent **communication updating the better regulation rules**,²⁵⁷ adopted in **April 2026**, makes no specific reference to the gender equality dimension in law-making and policymaking. While the Communication proposes more focused impact assessments based on 'an initial matrix of key impacts', no indicative or exhaustive list of such impacts is provided. Rather, such impacts will be determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on each individual proposal. At

²⁵² See [Commission website](#). Further details, including on the Commissions Female Talent Development Programme and other coaching programmes, as well as on how to promote gender-responsive leadership in the EUs external action, can be found in the Commissions [2025 Gender Equality report](#).

²⁵³ E. Braun, M. Saenz de Tejada and M. Monti, '[European Commission makes progress on gender parity – but men still dominate top jobs](#)', *Euractiv*, 2026.

²⁵⁴ European Commission, [Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox](#), website.

²⁵⁵ European Commission, [Better regulation toolbox](#), website.

²⁵⁶ The revision of the actual guidelines and toolbox is expected at the end of the year.

²⁵⁷ European Commission, communication on A Simpler, Clearer and Better Enforced EU Rulebook, [COM\(2026\) 380](#), 2026.

any rate, as the Communication notes, impact assessments 'will focus on what really matters, meaning on assessing key economic, social and environmental impacts', which could extend to gender equality considerations, as well.

In this context, it is worth noting that the EC does not perform **gender impact assessments** as a separate, stand-alone 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.²⁵⁸

On a positive note, as the updated **EPRS study of February 2025**²⁵⁹ assessing the quality of 143 ex-ante impact assessments accompanying legislative proposals between December 2019 and November 2024 reveals, there has been an **increase in the assessment of gender-related impacts**. Indeed, seven impact assessments evaluated gender-related impacts during the 2019–2024 period (including three impact assessments partially assessing gender-related impacts), an increase of slightly over 4 % from the previous 2015–2018 study²⁶⁰ (which showed that only one out of 132 impact assessments addressed gender-related impacts in that period). However, the numbers do not lie – as the study concludes, **gender-related impacts were (partially) considered in only 7 % of the impact assessments between December 2019 and November 2024**. This appears also in contrast to the Commission's commitment to a reinforced consideration of significant gender equality impacts in the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines, as mentioned.

This slight increase in assessing gender-related impacts in ex-ante impact assessments is also noted in the **2023 annual report of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)**,²⁶¹ which states that 16 % of impact assessments seen by the Board addressed equality-related impacts – a relative increase of 23 % compared with 13 % of impact assessments addressing equality-related impacts in 2022. Similarly, 34 % of impact assessments evaluated impacts relating to fundamental rights – a relative increase of slightly over 30 %, compared with 26 % of impact assessments addressing such impacts in 2022. As the RSB annual report further elucidates, a link to UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality was made in three impact assessments, staying consistent with the corresponding numbers in 2022.

Regarding gender budgeting, as noted in Sections 3.2 and 4.3.4. of this study, the Commission has developed and piloted a methodology for tracking expenditure on gender equality across programmes, which has been conducive to the collection of relevant data. For the 2028–2034 MFF, it has proposed to integrate gender considerations in a more systematic way through the Performance Regulation, and to report on the EU budget's contribution to gender equality more accurately, including on a publicly available data portal.²⁶²

²⁵⁸ 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).

²⁵⁹ Ex-ante Impact Assessment Unit, [Quality analysis of European Commission impact assessments: Developments during the 2019–2024 term](#), EPRS, European Parliament, February 2025.

²⁶⁰ Ex-ante Impact Assessment Unit, [Appraising the quality of the European Commissions impact assessments: Trends and developments from 2015 to 2018](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2019.

²⁶¹ Regulatory Scrutiny Board, [Annual Report 2023](#), 2024.

²⁶² European Commission, [proposal](#) for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a budget expenditure tracking and performance framework and other horizontal rules for the Union programmes and activities, 16 July 2025.

In conclusion, while **further efforts** will be needed to **effectively implement gender mainstreaming in the EC**, under the leadership of President von der Leyen there have been **some developments that have the potential to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the EC**. These include the creation of the post of the Commissioner for Equality during von der Leyen's first mandate and maintaining it in her second mandate (albeit combined with other competences) and the adoption of a 2026–2030 gender equality strategy (including a call for further development of gender mainstreaming in the next 2028–2034 MFF).

5.1.2. Council of the EU (Council)

In 1994, 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. Since 2018, **informal meetings of gender equality ministers** have been held under each Council presidency trio. More recently, gender equality ministers met²⁶³ informally on 16 April 2025, under the Polish Presidency, with Poland, Denmark and Cyprus signing a Trio (Joint) Declaration on Gender Equality.²⁶⁴ These joint declarations on gender equality represent an 18-month action plan that outlines the priorities of each presidency for advancing gender equality. These informal meetings have also been 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.²⁶⁵

At present, however – despite calls from the European Parliament and EIGE²⁶⁶ – there is **no dedicated Council configuration on gender equality**, and working groups are embedded in the Working Party on Social Questions (SQWP), which deals with all issues concerning gender equality and anti-discrimination, alongside employment and social policy files.²⁶⁷ 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)**.²⁶⁸

Among the main outcomes of EPSCO meetings are **Council conclusions** on different subjects relating to gender equality and women's rights (as outlined below). 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 bi-annual reports to follow up the BPfA in the EU.

²⁶³ Council of the EU, [Informal meeting of gender equality ministers](#), 16 April 2025.

²⁶⁴ Presidency of the Council of the EU, [Trio Presidency Declaration on Gender Equality for Poland, Denmark and Cyprus](#) (January 2025 – June 2026).

²⁶⁵ European Commission, [High-level group on gender mainstreaming and Advisory committee on equal opportunities for women and men](#), website.

²⁶⁶ See European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 17 December 2020 on the need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality, and parliamentary question [E-002421/2025](#) by Elena Kountoura (The Left, Greece) from 16 June 2025, who asked the Council not only whether it recognises the need to establish a dedicated configuration on gender equality but also whether it is committed to inviting the European Council to proceed with said establishment. The Council, in its response, revealed that there are currently no plans to create such a separate Council configuration, as the subject of gender equality is addressed in the EPSCO Council and in other Council formations, depending on the agenda topics. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) also recommended the formation of a Council configuration on gender equality in its 2025 report (see EIGE, [Institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the EU: present realities, future priorities](#), 2025).

²⁶⁷ Council of the EU, [Working Party on Social Questions](#), website.

²⁶⁸ See Council of the EU, [Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council](#), website. It is worth noting that in 2018, an informal Women's European Council (WEUCO), with European Parliament delegates, Commissioners and representatives of the rotating Council presidency, was established to frame the European agenda from a gender perspective. It has convened before several European Council meetings, and submitted conclusions to the European Council, the Council presidency, the Parliament and the Commission.

As a result of the economic, budgetary and institutional crises in the EU, Member State support for gender equality actions within the Council has varied over the past decade. Nevertheless, the Council has **stressed the significance of gender mainstreaming across all EU policies, programmes and budgets in various conclusions** adopted throughout the years. In the Council conclusions of 15 October 2021 (under the Slovenian Presidency), the Council notably called on the Commission to 'systematically mainstream a gender perspective into future EU strategies and policies' and reflect on undertaking ex-ante and ex-post gender impact analyses.²⁶⁹ Similarly, in the Council conclusions of 11 May 2023 (under the Swedish Presidency), the Council called on the Commission to not only systematically mainstream a gender equality perspective in policy initiatives but also draft a common EU-wide definition of the concept of 'gender budgeting' and ensure that gender equality is integrated into the implementation of the EU budget.²⁷⁰ In the conclusions, the Council also called on the Member States to incorporate a gender perspective into all stages of policymaking and legislation, and to set up institutional mechanisms at all levels. Other Council conclusions have focused on the economic empowerment and financial independence of women (19 April 2024, under the Belgian Presidency),²⁷¹ as well as work-life balance (3 December 2024, under the Hungarian Presidency).²⁷² Most recently, the Council adopted conclusions on advancing gender equality in the AI-driven digital age,²⁷³ specifically calling on the Commission to support the mainstreaming of gender equality in the implementation of the AI Act (19 June 2025, under the Polish Presidency).²⁷⁴

Nevertheless, negotiations within the Council, as co-legislator, have at times delayed agreement on key legislative instruments. In November 2012, for example, the Commission put forward a legislative proposal on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies (which was to become the '**Women on Boards Directive**'²⁷⁵), which remained **stuck in the Council for 10 years**, because a qualified majority could not be reached.²⁷⁶ It was not until the 2022 French Presidency that the subject was prioritised in the Council's agenda, leading to the co-legislators reaching provisional agreement in June 2022.²⁷⁷

Similarly, the Commission's 2022 proposal for a **directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence** underwent several rounds of interinstitutional negotiations before the co-legislators reached agreement in May 2024.²⁷⁸ Indeed, in the Council, the proposal was debated over the course of a year owing to the **unwillingness of certain Member States to include an EU-wide**

²⁶⁹ Council of the EU, on the European Court of Auditors Special Report 10/2021 on Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Budget, 15 October 2021.

²⁷⁰ Council of the EU, [conclusions](#) on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in policies, programmes, and budgets, 11 May 2023.

²⁷¹ Council of the EU, on the economic empowerment and financial independence of women as a pathway to substantive gender equality, 19 April 2024.

²⁷² Council of the EU, on ensuring work-life balance and gender equality for all generations in the context of demographic challenges, 3 December 2024.

²⁷³ Council of the EU, on advancing gender equality in the AI-driven digital age: 6th horizontal review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the Member States and the EU institutions, 19 June 2025.

²⁷⁴ For relevant Council conclusions adopted between 2013 and 2020, as well as policy debates held in that period, see previous edition of this study (p. 51): N. Hahnkamper-Vandenbulcke and R. Shreeves, [Gender Mainstreaming in the European Parliament – State of Play](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 2021.

²⁷⁵ [Directive \(EU\) 2022/2381](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 November 2022 on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies and related measures.

²⁷⁶ See the EP [Legislative Train Schedule](#) for more information.

²⁷⁷ See the EP [Legislative Train Schedule](#) for more information.

²⁷⁸ [Directive \(EU\) 2024/1385](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

definition of rape based on the lack of consent, as requested by Parliament. While Parliament ultimately dropped its request to facilitate the directive's adoption,²⁷⁹ it recently, in a resolution adopted in April 2026, called on the Commission to propose legislation promoting a common definition of rape based on freely given, informed and revocable consent.²⁸⁰

In a related context, the **Council had been blocking the EU's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women** (the 'Istanbul Convention') for approximately six years, from 2017 to 2023.²⁸¹ While the Council signed, on behalf of the EU, the Istanbul Convention in June 2017, ratification was delayed by seven Member States who opposed it (Bulgaria, Czechia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, then still a Member State). Given the Member States' resistance, Parliament requested the CJEU to deliver an opinion on whether the Council should wait for the Member States' 'common accord' before concluding the Istanbul Convention. In October 2021, the CJEU ruled that the Council could ratify the Convention with qualified majority instead,²⁸² paving the way for its entry into force for the EU.²⁸³

With respect to **gender balance within the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC)**, the **2021-2024 diversity and inclusion strategy**²⁸⁴ outlined key measures to horizontally advance diversity and inclusion across the GSC, including as regards disability, ethnic and racial diversity, LGBTI+ and age. The strategy also touches upon gender equality, striving to attain gender balance in management positions within a 45 % to 55 % margin by the end of 2026 – the only exception to the target deadline in 2024. The 2021-2024 strategy also committed to a balanced representation of women and men in other positions of higher responsibility, such as Heads of Unit, Heads of Sector, Heads of Office, Senior Administrators and Senior Assistants, as well as selection and promotion panels. In **2025**, the Council released the successive **2030 diversity and inclusion strategy**,²⁸⁵ which lays down a mid-term review in 2027 and the long-term vision of fulfilling all diversity and inclusion goals by 2030 across the GSC. The 2030 strategy retains its focus on gender balance, repeating the aim of achieving gender equality in management and other roles of higher responsibility, without however alluding to selection and promotion panels, as did its predecessor. The 2030 strategy also covers the new parameter of intersectionality, which considers the interplay of multiple identities, such as age and gender, leading to multiple discrimination, as mentioned previously. The implementation of the strategy is monitored and coordinated by the Council's **Diversity and Inclusion Office** (formerly known as the Equal Opportunities Office), supported by the **Diversity and Inclusion Network** (formerly known as the Equal Opportunities Network) and the **Joint Committee of Diversity and Inclusion (CODI)**.

²⁷⁹ See the EP [Legislative Train Schedule](#) for more information.

²⁸⁰ European Parliament, [Resolution](#) of 28 April 2026 on the importance of consent-based rape legislation in the EU.

²⁸¹ Council of Europe, [Convention](#) on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

²⁸² CJEU, [Opinion 1/19](#), 2021.

²⁸³ See the EP [Legislative Train Schedule](#) for more information.

²⁸⁴ Council of the EU, [The diversity and inclusion strategy of the General Secretariat of the Council 2021-2024](#), 2022.

²⁸⁵ Council of the EU, [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030](#), 2025.

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

5.2.1. European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

The EESC is a consultative body composed of representatives of civil society organisations, employers and workers divided in three distinct groups. Its 329 members are appointed for renewable five-year terms by the Council on a proposal by each Member States.²⁸⁶

The EESC has stressed its commitments and achievements towards gender equality in the achievement report April 2023 to September 2025,²⁸⁷ published at the end of the mandate by its President, Oliver Röpke.²⁸⁸ The report highlights gender equality and gender mainstreaming as one of the core priorities of the EESC's mandate as reflected both in EESC external action and within the EESC itself. 'As the house of organised civil society', the EESC emphasised its responsibility to lead by example, 'making equality not a side issue but a pillar of Europe's democratic resilience'.

In line with its stated desire to strengthen gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the EESC was the first EU body to endorse the European Commission Declaration for a Gender-Equal Society (see below), and to participate for the first time in the UN Commission on the Status of Women.²⁸⁹ The EESC also integrated **gender into policymaking and governance**, tackling issues disproportionately affecting women and girls, such as the unpaid care burden, structural barriers in labour markets, financial exclusion, and the digital divide. Attention was given to those experiencing intersectional discrimination: women with disabilities, migrant women, rural women, and young women in precarious jobs.

The 2021 EPRS study on gender mainstreaming in the Parliament had stressed the lack of specific structures and procedures to implement the EESC guidelines on gender mainstreaming 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 into the EESC's work). In 2020, the **Ad-Hoc Group on Equality** (AHGE) was established, and its role has reportedly been strengthened.²⁹⁰ In its 2022 annual activity report,²⁹¹ the EESC highlighted the AHGE core mandate, which is to increase women's participation and to get a gender-balanced workforce in a near future. In its 2023 annual activity report,²⁹² the EESC reported that the AHGE met twice, reportedly collected data (the data collection that took place in 2022 aimed at identifying the areas

²⁸⁶ EESC, [European Economic and Social Committee](#), website.

²⁸⁷ EESC, [Stand up for Democracy – Speak up for Europe](#), 2025.

²⁸⁸ In his [inaugural speech](#), in April 2023, the President had stated: 'Together we will propose concrete measures to improve the gender balance at the EESC; I will seek strategic collaboration with the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council to mainstream gender equality in all relevant EU policies.'

²⁸⁹ In July 2025, the EESC co-signed a [Joint Declaration](#) with the UN Women's Executive Director, committing both institutions to stronger cooperation on gender equality.

²⁹⁰ The [AHGE](#) was established in 2020 to promote a cross-cutting culture of equality within the EESC, including all aspects of this principle, particularly gender equality. It consists of 12 members, with each of the three groups appointing four members to represent it. The AHGE submits a report to the Committee bureau at the end of each term of office that informs on the group's activities and proposals and takes stock of the progress made within the EESC regarding compliance with the principle of equality. There is no specific structure: the secretariat supporting the AHGE's work is Directorate A, Registry and Legislative Planning unit, bureau and ad-hoc groups sector. It would appear that the AGHE addresses gender equality among the members rather than among the staff.

²⁹¹ EESC, [2022 annual activity report](#), 2023.

²⁹² EESC, [2023 annual activity report](#), 2024.

in which members might potentially receive unequal treatment),²⁹³ and contributed to organising events to promote gender equality (for instance, in the context of the European Gender Equality Week). Reportedly, the AHGE drafted the annual report on the distribution of members' work between men and women. This report is not on the EESC website. Only EESC annual reports are available and provide figures on **gender distribution of staff positions**.²⁹⁴

In November **2023**, the EESC adopted a new **diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan** moving towards the 'diversity and inclusion (D&I)' principle. The strategy aims to tackle under-representation of women at senior management level. There is also the EESC Women Forum, a participatory 'safe space' where staff and members – women and men interested in inequality – gather from time to time to discuss existing concerns and possible solutions. In 2024, the EESC formalised its shift towards a broader D&I approach by transforming the former Joint Committee for Equal Opportunities (COPEC) into the Joint Committee for Diversity and Inclusion (CODI) and appointing a diversity and inclusion officer.

Qualified in 2021 as a persistent and systemic phenomenon, the lack of gender balance notably at political level is still a concern. Although the EESC, at the beginning of 2025, called on the Council for greater gender balance in the **appointment of future members**, and urged for intergenerational renewal, with the inclusion of younger members, recent statistics (first quarter of 2026) from EIGE²⁹⁵ show major differences between Member States and a gender imbalance: one country has no appointed female member (Cyprus), and only eight Member States have 50 % or more appointed female members (with four Member States – France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden – having a 50/50 distribution).

Regarding the **administrative and managerial staff**, EP resolutions on discharge regarding the EU budget implementation by the EESC show trends throughout the years confirmed by the EESC annual activity reports, despite slight discrepancies with figures reported by the EESC. For the financial year **2020**, there has been a decreasing percentage of women occupying middle management post compared with 2019,²⁹⁶ and the EP noted with concern a steeper decrease in **senior management** posts from 57 % in 2019 to 40 % in 2020; it stressed that this was going against the increasing number of women at AD level and in non-management posts (63.3 % in 2020). The EP noted that the EESC should set more ambitious targets on gender balance to make the working environment fairer. In **2021**,²⁹⁷ the EP welcomed the well-balanced gender representation in middle and senior management functions, with 52 % women and 48 % men in such positions.²⁹⁸ The action of the EESC's equal opportunities officer in shaping the forthcoming diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan was welcomed. EP stressed that, at the end of 2021, women accounted for 64 % of

²⁹³ Because of their origin, gender, sexual orientation or beliefs. AHGE also conducted a survey on inclusion perception. Details and outcomes are not available.

²⁹⁴ For instance, in 2023, the group of AD/FGIV/END/CS excluding management consisted of 53.6 % females versus 46.4 % males. In 2022, the figures were 60.8 % females versus 30.2 % males. Regarding middle and senior management functions, 56.5 % were female in 2023, compared with 53 % in 2022. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of females holding senior positions since 2019, alongside a concomitant decrease by the AD/FGIV staff category. See details in appendices p. 190 Annual report 2023.

²⁹⁵ EIGE, [Gender Statistics Database](#), website.

²⁹⁶ The [EP discharge report 2020 – EESC](#) takes note of the ongoing consideration of new measures to promote women's access to management posts, such as intermediate management responsibilities below Head of Unit level, and the practical implementation of gender budgeting.

²⁹⁷ European Parliament, [resolution](#) of 10 May 2023 on discharge 2021– EESC, [resolution](#) of 10 May 2023 on discharge 2021.

²⁹⁸ Those figures correspond to the table from the 2023 EESC annual activity report; the EP and the EESC use the same category of senior and middle management.

the overall staff, 55 % of the middle managers, and 40 % of the senior managers at the EESC, placing the Committee 'in one of the leading positions among the EU institutions'. It reiterated its appreciation of the role to be played by the EESC's equal opportunities officer. In **2022**,²⁹⁹ as noted by the EP, the EESC continued to employ a high proportion of female staff (64.6 % of all staff), including at middle management level (59 % of all managers); female representation in senior management positions still needed to be improved, given that only three senior managers out of seven were women at the end of 2022; the EESC was encouraged to pursue its efforts regarding a gender balance, notably through awareness raising with respect to the appointing authority, and ensuring that the composition of different bodies, including human resources recruitment and selection panels, remains gender-balanced. For the year **2023**,³⁰⁰ the EP underlined remaining challenges regarding female representation in senior management, indicating that this was due to the EESC's small size and the subsequent limited number of such positions. The EP stressed that the appointment of a new Secretary-General at the beginning of **2024** marked a positive shift in senior management representation, regretting however the persistent low level of females in senior management (two out of seven positions).³⁰¹ The 2024 annual activity report includes comparative figures showing progress in reaching gender balance in staff including managerial staff.³⁰²

In terms of **opinions** relating to gender equality issues and gender mainstreaming specifically, the EESC expresses commitment, calling for gender mainstreaming in several opinions and resolutions. In its 2022 opinion on gender equality,³⁰³ 'the EESC reiterates its call to policymakers at appropriate levels to follow the principle of mainstreaming and include the gender equality aspect in all decisions, including decisions on budgeting, investment and funding, as well as in public procurement'. On 26 February 2025, the EESC adopted an opinion for contribution to the EU's priorities³⁰⁴ at the 69th session of the Commission on the status of women,³⁰⁵ and called for an overarching EU sustainable development strategy even beyond 2030, 'to allow gender mainstreaming across all policies'.

A few months later, on 18 June 2025 – in its opinion³⁰⁶ on a **New Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR)**,³⁰⁷ the EESC stresses the need to achieve equal opportunities and access to the labour market along with the need for mainstreaming and prioritising gender equality throughout the EPSR. The EESC insists that 'gender equality should be systematically mainstreamed across all 20 EPSR principles to achieve policy outcomes that benefit

²⁹⁹ European Parliament, [resolution](#) of 11 April 2024 on discharge 2022 – EESC, paragraph 27; [resolution](#) of 11 April 2024 on discharge 2022 – EESC, paragraph 27; [resolution](#) of 11 April 2024 on discharge 2022 – EESC, paragraph 27; [resolution](#) of 11 April 2024 on discharge 2022 – EESC, paragraph 27.

³⁰⁰ European Parliament, [resolution](#) of 7 May 2025 on discharge 2023 – EESC.

³⁰¹ European Economic and Social Committee, [2024 annual activity report](#), June 2025.

³⁰² See p. 183–184 of the report. A detailed breakdown can also be found in the EESC's [replies](#) to the EP questionnaire in the context of the discharge discussions. See also point 51.

³⁰³ EESC, [opinion](#) on gender equality, 13 July 2022, SOC/731-EESC-2022.

³⁰⁴ EESC, [opinion](#) for contribution to the EU's priorities, 26 February 2025, SOC/821-EESC-2024.

³⁰⁵ UN Women, [69th session of the Commission on the status of women](#) (UNCSW69). The focus of this session was the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The review planned an assessment of current challenges and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and its contribution towards the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

³⁰⁶ EESC, [opinion](#) on a New Action Plan on the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), 18 June 2025, SOC/822-EESC-2025.

³⁰⁷ The EPSR is a set of 20 principles underlying the development and strengthening of a fair, inclusive labour market and social model within the EU. It was launched in 2017 in Gothenburg. An action plan was adopted in its aftermath that set the principles into concrete actions. See [EPSR](#).

everyone and counter persistent gender gaps'. It proposes to include gender-specific indicators in the new EPSR Action Plan and accompanying budgets.³⁰⁸ On 19 June 2025, the EESC adopts a resolution entitled 'A Roadmap for Women's Rights',³⁰⁹ whereby it endorses the European Commission's Declaration of Principles for a Gender-Equal Society. To support a coordinated and sustained implementation of these principles, the EESC affirms its commitment to five principles including promoting gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and the systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data. Recalling that the EESC is 'the voice of organised civil society in the European Union', the EESC stresses that it 'stands ready to contribute actively to the realisation of this roadmap and to work with the European institutions and Member States to transform these principles into practice by contributing to the next gender equality strategy'.

5.2.2. European Committee of the Regions (CoR)

The CoR³¹⁰ is the voice of regions and cities in the EU that represents local and regional authorities across the EU and advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and cities (70 % of all EU legislation).

It 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).³¹¹ The CoR's legislative work is divided between six commissions set up per policy area. The commissions analyse the European Commissions' legislative proposals; those are then discussed in plenary by the members, up to six times a year. Debates are closed with the adoption of resolutions and opinions for further action by the EU.³¹² Gender equality comes under the competence of the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).³¹³ CoR members are supported by an administration headed by the Secretary-General.

In 2019, with less than 21 % of CoR members being female, the CoR had stressed that membership remains significantly less gender-balanced than in the European Parliament (37 % women at the time) and regional parliaments (29 %). On 9 April 2019, the first **strategy for gender balance in members' participation in the CoR** was adopted.³¹⁴ Since then, the CoR is aiming at reversing persisting gender inequality among its members. Following its own calls for action in response to the EU gender equality strategy 2020-2025, and based on the assessment of its 2019 strategy, the CoR has stressed the necessity to adopt additional concrete actions towards gender equality. Noting that, gender balance may be achieved only with the concurrence of the appointing authority, the CoR

³⁰⁸ EESC, [A Roadmap for Women's Rights: Supporting the Declaration of Principles for a Gender-Equal Society](#), 18. June 2025, SOC/839-EESC-2025-01814.

³⁰⁹ EESC, [Resolution](#) on a Roadmap for Women's Rights, 18 June 2025.

³¹⁰ CoR, [European Committee of the Regions](#), website.

³¹¹ Each national government proposes its regional or local representative (members and alternates) – national delegations who must be approved by the Council of the EU; see European Parliament, Fact Sheets on the European Union – [The European Committee of the Regions](#), 2026.

³¹² CoR [opinions](#) are not legally-binding, but they ensure local and regional authorities have a formal voice in EU policymaking.

³¹³ CoR, [SEDEC](#), website.

³¹⁴ See CoR, [Towards gender equality in the Committee of the Regions](#), COR-2019-00269-06-01-NB-TRA, May 2023. The strategy comprises a set of recommendations: (i) for those involved in nominations of new CoR members; and (ii) within the CoR, pertaining to the revision of the rules of procedures, code of conduct, and the appointment of members in constituent and statutory bodies.

has highlighted the necessity to address the issue with the Council well ahead of the renewal of the CoR mandate.

Three levels of inequality were distinguished: first, the **composition – membership** which has long been characterised by a marginal increase in the percentage of full members who are women;³¹⁵ second, the **representation in leading positions** that reached parity only at the level of the chairs of the commissions;³¹⁶ and third, the unequal **participation**, resulting from the appointment of rapporteurs but also the unequal representation in panels, conferences, external events, official missions, and delegations. Against this backdrop, a **new action plan – Towards gender equality in the CoR**³¹⁷ – was developed, to improve gender representation and ensure gender equality in the CoR in the 2025–2030 mandate. The plan's objective is to reach equality in the composition of the Committee and its constituent bodies through concrete actions. An information and outreach campaign targeted at the Council, Members States and national associations of local and regional authorities is planned, with the aim of drawing their attention on the crucial importance of achieving gender-equal delegations. Other actions include a revision of the CoR's rules of procedures, the drafting of a code of conduct, and cooperation with national delegations. Actions are foreseen regarding also the process for nominating CoR members. In that sense, political groups are invited to engage in a broad dialogue with their political counterparts in the appointing authorities at the national and subnational level to stress the need for gender equality when CoR members and alternates are to be appointed. Likewise, gender equality is requested in the panels of statutory meetings and plenary sessions, in panels at conferences, and all events held by the CoR or on its premises.³¹⁸

The **action plan has been complemented by follow-up actions** adopted by the CoR bureau on 9 October 2023.³¹⁹ Since then, progress has been noted; gender equality has been reflected in the 2024 revised rules of procedure,³²⁰ the Committee being mandated from now on to strive for gender equality in all its activities and at all levels.³²¹ Efforts to promote gender equality regarding the nomination process for CoR members have been pursued as planned through an information and outreach campaign targeted at the Council, Member States and national associations of local and

³¹⁵ For instance, regarding full members, from 21 % females in 2019 to 24 % as of 29 March 2023. Regarding the alternates, in 2023, 72 % were men and 27 % were women; see proposal to adopt concrete measures towards gender equality presented at the 219th meeting of the CoR bureau of 23 May 2023 (see link to the action plan on the [For more women in politics](#) webpage).

³¹⁶ For a detailed breakdown per commission and a comparison between 2021 and 2023, see the updated assessment of the 2019 strategy as presented to the Bureau in October 2023, Annex 1 to the gender equality action plan (see the [For more women in politics](#) webpage).

³¹⁷ CoR, [Towards gender equality in the Committee of the Regions](#), May 2023.

³¹⁸ *ibid.*

³¹⁹ Decision on [taking forward](#) the May 2023 gender equality action plan in the CoR; an assessment of the 2019 CoR strategy on gender equality was presented at the meeting of the CoR Bureau of 4 July 2023 with its update; it is annexed in Appendix I of the decision to take forward the GAP.

³²⁰ CoR, [Revised rules of procedure](#), 2024/2142, 2024.

³²¹ This general principle from Rule 2 is further elaborated to foster gender balance in the composition and activities of the CoR; see Rule 21(1) (speakers in assembly); Rule 31(e) (composition of the Bureau); Rule 49(2) (commission composition); Rule 62 (rapporteur nomination), Rule 63(1) (commission of working groups). In the 2010 [rules of procedure](#), the only reference to gender was as follows: the terms used in these rules of procedure for the various offices are not gender-specific. In 2021, the initial [revision](#) focused on acknowledging the need for gender diversity to be reflected as much as possible in the composition of the CoR constituent bodies, and the need for an action plan. The revised RoP entered into force on 15 August 2024.

regional authorities.³²² Gender equality as regards speakers in the panels at conferences and events held by the CoR or at its premises were also considered. Promotion of gender equality also continued in its programmes and networks, such as the Young Elected Politicians (YEP) initiative, and through outreach activities throughout the year.

In its 2024 annual activity report,³²³ the CoR observed **some progress** thanks to the CoR's 2023 gender equality action plan and the revision of its rules of procedure. Nevertheless, women remain significantly **under-represented in local decisionmaking**.³²⁴ As of November 2024, women accounted for 36.3% of members of regional assemblies across the EU, and for 34.8 % of members of local/municipal councils.³²⁵ A gap persists, and the CoR aims to further strengthen gender equality at this level.³²⁶

Regarding the **gender balance in the CoR at political level**, as of 5 May 2026, 31.7 % of CoR members and 27.5 % of alternates are women, bringing the total share of female members at political level to 29.6 %.³²⁷ While this is progress compared with the 21 % of female CoR members in 2021, parity is still not achieved. Currently, the CoR is led by a female President, and there is parity at the level of the Conference of Presidents, as well as among the presidents of the political groups.

As to **gender balance at staff level** (particularly in management positions), the 2024 annual activity report³²⁸ notes that gender balance in **management** is still a challenge and a top priority. Efforts have been made over the past years to ensure gender-balanced recruitment of women in middle management level, as well. In 2024, a slight decrease – from 32.5 % in 2023 to 29.7 % in 2024 – was reportedly due to different staff movements, internal restructuring, and the merging of several posts mainly occupied by female managers. Regarding senior management, the decrease from 44.4 % in 2023 to 33.3 % in 2024 was reportedly due to the departure of one female Director, but this was restored in 2025, including through the appointment of a female Head of the President's Cabinet. Despite that progress, imbalances persist. Reaching the target of 40 % representation in middle management remains challenging because of ongoing restructuring, resource constraints, and forthcoming retirements among female managers. The CoR however remains committed to enhancing diversity and inclusion while ensuring a fair and balanced recruitment process.

CoR efforts towards gender equality concern not only gender balance in its composition but also a **gender equality policy**. It is part of EU policy and of the successive EU gender equality strategies.³²⁹ In an opinion adopted on 14 October 2025, the CoR highlighted the **role of the local and regional authorities in implementing gender equality policies** and measures, calling for the recognition of local and regional authorities as strategic partners in the design, implementation and monitoring of

³²² Such outreach is rendered necessary because the appointment process takes place at national level. The Council adopts the list of members and alternate members drawn up in accordance with the proposals made by each Member State. As a result, a wide range of criteria apply, which differ from one Member State to another.

³²³ CoR, [2024 annual activity report](#), 2025.

³²⁴ See CoR, [The state of regions and cities EU annual report 2025](#), noting that out of 285 regional assemblies EU-wide, 74 regional assemblies are made up of between 40 % and 50 % women, while only 26 have assemblies made up of 50 % or more women (p. 66).

³²⁵ EIGE, [Gender balance in politics: November 2024](#). EIGE notes that the EU situation is heavily influenced by France, which contributes more than two fifths of the councillors recorded (44 %). If France is excluded, the share of women in local/municipal councillors across the remaining 26 EU Member States drops to 29.2%.

³²⁶ EIGE, [Gender balance in politics: November 2024](#), 2025.

³²⁷ CoR, [For more women in politics](#), website.

³²⁸ CoR, [2024 annual activity report](#), 2025.

³²⁹ European Commission, [Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025](#) and [Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030](#), websites.

the Commission's roadmap for women's rights³³⁰ and the new 2026–2030 gender equality strategy,³³¹ backed by adequate financial resources and strengthened equality bodies. In its opinion, the CoR addressed gender equality as a **fundamental principle** at the crossroads of EU policies and EU programmes touching upon digitalisation, rural areas, sustainable development, climate change, social innovation, and economic changes.³³² Against this backdrop, the CoR made policy recommendations while emphasising the pivotal role of local and regional authorities in implementing gender equality policies and measures on the ground. The decision-making process must be as close as possible to citizens, where challenges and opportunities are most tangible. The CoR called also for the next MFF to systematically mainstream the principle of gender equality and a gender-sensitive perspective across all EU programmes, including through the review of the gender budgeting methodology.

After issuing policy recommendations, the CoR elaborated on **concrete measures** that local and regional authorities can design and implement, given that these specifically concern areas where they hold competence. These include freedom from gender based-violence; health standards; equal pay and economic empowerment; work-life balance and joint caring responsibilities; equal opportunities for employment and good working conditions; quality and inclusive education; political participation and equal representation; as well as institutional mechanisms ensuring women's rights.

The CoR has addressed gender equality and gender mainstreaming in various **opinions** and across **policies**. In December 2021, in an opinion on the gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021–2027, with a focus on the preparation of the operational programmes,³³³ the CoR recalled the need to step up efforts to ensure real gender equality by using a double-pronged approach of, on the one hand, specific initiatives to tackle specific inequalities and, on the other, mainstreaming, as a cross-cutting approach covering all European policies. It pressed the Commission to propose a methodology for assessing the EU programmes' gender impact, and insisted that the contribution to gender equality come from all the funds, and not from the European Social Fund Plus alone. In **January 2022**, in an opinion on gender equality and climate change,³³⁴ the CoR highlighted important links between gender and climate change. Women and men are likely to be affected differently by climate policy, and women can therefore act as catalysts of behavioural change. In its opinion, the CoR advocated a gender-sensitive approach across EU policies. Women should be more empowered with regard to climate change, including by improving their education and awareness on climate-related technologies, measures and actions. The CoR pleaded for fostering women's role in the decision-making processes relating to these fields, and insisted on the need for mainstreaming

³³⁰ The Commission's [roadmap for women's rights](#) of 7 March 2025 is a policy framework that aims to guide efforts from EU institutions, bodies and civil society for women's rights and gender equality, so they remain at the core of EU policies and actions. It relies on a dual approach: (i) mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies; and (ii) preventing and eliminating gender inequalities.

³³¹ European Commission, communication on the Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030, [COM\(2026\) 113](#), 2026.

³³² The CoR has recently tackled gender equality and a gender-sensitive approach in various opinions on specific policies. For instance, in 2025, in its [opinion](#) on Building the European Research Area: A Local and Regional Perspective, it called for gender equality to be fully integrated as a horizontal priority within the European Research Area, with clear targets, gender-sensitive processes, and support for local and regional authorities to implement inclusive strategies, ensuring that women, particularly in STEM fields and innovation, are empowered and adequately represented; in 2024, in the [opinion](#) on Fair working conditions in agriculture: the local and regional perspective, it deemed it crucial to better protect women's rights in the agricultural sector, regardless of their status, and promote a gender-sensitive approach in this sector; in 2023, in the [opinion](#) on Stopping gender-based violence – cities and regions leading the way, the CoR stressed the urgency to tackle gender-based violence, highlighting the role of the local and regional authorities in combating such violence by putting in place concrete measures and actions, and by enhancing awareness raising and education to improve gender equality.

³³³ CoR, [opinion](#) on the gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021–2027, 2021.

³³⁴ CoR, [opinion](#) on gender equality and climate change, 2022.

gender in all climate-related policies and instruments, including in transport and mobility, green jobs, energy, and budgeting.

In its **priorities for 2025–2030**,³³⁵ the CoR reaffirmed its commitment towards gender equality along the lines of the 2025 opinion, stating that 'contributing to the next EU gender equality strategy and translating the EU Roadmap for Women's Rights into tangible outcomes on the ground will be a cross-cutting priority for the CoR in 2025–2030'. The CoR committed to actively supporting local and regional authorities as strategic partners to achieve equal pay for equal work and economic empowerment, equal access to quality health services, accessible childcare, work–life balance and equal employment opportunities. It reiterated its support for the mainstreaming of gender equality across all EU policies and for increasing women's participation in political life. It called for equal representation regarding the composition and nine leadership positions in the EU institutions, and on political institutions to adopt gender-sensitive codes of conduct and enforce anti-harassment safeguards. For the CoR, those are necessary for safeguarding local democracy and ensuring that equality becomes a lived reality across Europe.

5.2.3. European Investment Bank (EIB)

The EIB is the EU's financing institution. It is owned by the 27 EU Member States and supports – through loans, guarantees and advice – projects that advance EU policy objectives in areas such as climate change, environment, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), cohesion and infrastructure. Together with the European Investment Fund, it forms the EIB Group.

While the EIB is only directly accountable to the Member States and does not have any formal reporting obligations towards Parliament, the CONT committee annually reviews EIB's activities and presents a report in plenary, to which the EIB President is invited. In addition, Parliament adopts an annual own-initiative report on the EIB's financial activities.³³⁶

Since 2018, the EIB Group has embedded gender equality into its business model, with its financing for gender equality having more than doubled to more than €30 billion over the past five years. In March 2026, the EIB launched its **third gender action plan**,³³⁷ covering the period from **2026 to 2030**.³³⁸ Together with the **EIB's gender strategy** from 2016,³³⁹ the new action plan aims at enhancing the EIB Group's contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda,³⁴⁰ aligning its activities with Sustainable Development Goal 5 and helping 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030'.³⁴¹

Based on the view that promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment is essential to boosting competitiveness, driving global development and accelerating the green transition,³⁴² the action plan focuses on **three areas of action**:

³³⁵ CoR, [Priorities 2025–2030 – Resolution](#), 2025.

³³⁶ European Parliament, Fact Sheets on the European Union – [The European Investment Bank](#), 2025.

³³⁷ See EIB, EIB Group launches its new Gender Action Plan reinforcing its commitment to gender equality, [press release](#), 3 March 2026.

³³⁸ EIB, [The European Investment Bank Groups Gender Action Plan III \(2026–2030\)](#), 2026.

³³⁹ EIB, [The EIB Group Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment](#), 2016.

³⁴⁰ United Nations, [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), 2015.

³⁴¹ United Nations, [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 5](#), website.

³⁴² To underline these arguments, the [EIB gender action plan III](#) (p. 1) puts forward some numbers: it explains, for example, that better equality in the EU could lead to a 9.6 % increase in gross domestic product (GDP) and create 10.5 million additional jobs by 2050. Moreover, it could lift 45 million people out of food insecurity and make EU value chains more sustainable. Closing gaps in women's access to infrastructure could raise global GDP by 2.5 % by 2050 in OECD

- 1 **New economic opportunities** for women;
- 2 **Inclusive infrastructure and services**, including health solutions;
- 3 **Safety, security, dignity and equal rights** in all operations.

Under the **first area of action**, the action plan aims to expand access to capital for women entrepreneurs and inclusive businesses worldwide by supporting financial intermediaries (such as banks, funds and microfinance institutions) to reach new markets, thereby better serving women and addressing gender gaps. In addition, by promoting participation in the labour market, focusing on green and digital skills and more inclusive workplaces, women should be enabled to participate in the workforce, especially in regions where opportunities are limited and in green and digital sectors in need of diversification of their workforce.³⁴³

The action plan's **second area of action** strives to advance health services for women, tackling underfunding of women's health and closing the gap in the additional time women spend in poor health compared with men, potentially growing the global economy by \$1 trillion annually. Moreover, equal access to services and infrastructure advancing gender equality – such as mobility, housing, water and energy – should be improved. The EIB will also explore innovative approaches to finance services and infrastructure in the care economy.³⁴⁴

Under its **third area of action**, the action plan intends to uphold safety, security, dignity and equal rights of women, girls and other people who are discriminated against because of gender norms (such as LGBTIQ+ people and vulnerable men and boys), across all investments, in line with EU values and international standards. To that end, the EIB Group will work with clients to better mitigate gender risks and ensure equal access to resources and opportunities, proactively addressing potential issues such as discrimination, gender-based violence and exclusion, through the EIB Group Environment and Social Policy, notably.³⁴⁵

Importantly, the action plan commits to a **fivefold increase in advisory services** (reaching €25 million across the three action areas); the **simplification and digitalisation of processes** (using AI and dashboards for analysis, monitoring and reporting); **investing** in the EIB Group's **internal capacities** (through its networks of gender champions); and **deepening partnerships** with, in particular, the Commission (including through the Global Gateway and InvestEU), other multilateral development banks and international financial institutions, and the United Nations.³⁴⁶ Moreover, the

countries alone. Moreover, according to the action plan, in view of almost 70 % of women entrepreneurs globally not getting the credit they need for running their business, closing the gender finance gap represents a \$30 billion annual revenue opportunity for financial institutions. As to accelerating the green transition, companies with gender-diverse boards are 60 % more likely to reduce energy consumption, and 40 % more likely to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, companies with above-average diversity in management report 19 % higher innovation revenues and are 25 % more likely to have above-average profitability.

³⁴³ In this context, the EIB gender action plan III (p. 3) provides several examples of how these goals will be achieved, including the [Gender Finance Lab](#), set up in 2025, or the [EIB Group's Women EU Climate Leaders Network](#).

³⁴⁴ According to the EIB gender action plan III (p. 4), these goals will be delivered by, for example, developing new integrated climate-gender investment packages to help clients scale up climate solutions that benefit women, girls and underserved communities' lives under the Group's second Climate Bank Roadmap. The EIB also intends, among other things, to scale up efforts towards a gender-responsive recovery in Ukraine; explore how the EIB can support new tools (such as AI-driven gender analysis, action planning and reporting); and support strategic and gender-responsive procurement by embedding gender equality criteria into EIB practices.

³⁴⁵ As outlined on p. 5 of the EIB gender action plan III, the EIB Group intends to deliver on these objectives by, for example, establishing innovative support to manage gender risk in operations; boosting promoter capacity (e.g. by developing a standard module to embed zero tolerance for gender-based violence and harassment in technical assistance to private sector clients and by further promoting quality employment and leadership opportunities for all); strengthening internal guidance and training; and establishing a baseline and tracking system for complaints relating to gender-based harassment and violence.

³⁴⁶ See p. 2 of the EIB gender action plan III.

action plan calls for an **inclusive approach** to gender equality (considering how gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and other characteristics interact) and **addressing gender norms and gaps affecting men and boys** (such as closing the gap in educational attainment that boys experience in certain EU regions).³⁴⁷

However, while the EIB's new gender action plan aims to promote [gender equality](#) through the Bank's investments in the EU, it is silent about gender representation within the institution itself.

³⁴⁷ See p. 1 of EIB gender action plan III.

6. Gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments – findings of requests to the ECPRD network

Key findings

The **ECPRD survey** launched by **EPRS** in **February 2026**, to which chambers in 25 EU Member States and 10 non-EU countries responded, provides an updated comparative picture of gender mainstreaming practices in national parliaments, covering structures and policies, monitoring arrangements, work-life balance provisions, and gender-sensitive approaches to occupational health. Despite significant variation in the remit and status of the structures, including their legislative powers, an overwhelming majority (32 countries) have one or more bodies responsible for promoting gender equality. While six EU Member States (Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Sweden) have internal action plans (covering either the political or the administrative level), only one (non-EU) country (North Macedonia) avails of an overarching gender mainstreaming strategy covering both. Monitoring mechanisms appear to be the most developed in three parliaments (Finland, Spain and Sweden).

In **February 2026**, **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 (GM).³⁴⁸ Chambers in **25 EU Member States** and **10 non-EU countries** sent replies.³⁴⁹ Parliaments were asked, specifically, whether they:

- have a gender mainstreaming structure;
- have a specific gender mainstreaming policy that encompasses policymaking and internal gender balance in political and administrative posts; and
- conduct regular monitoring and assessments of the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

Picking up on issues highlighted in the EP gender action plan, chambers were also asked about measures in place to support work-life balance for parliamentarians and staff, measures to address hate speech and harassment, and gender-sensitive measures to support occupational health.³⁵⁰

The **key findings**, illustrated in the three tables below, and examples of specific initiatives on work-life balance and occupational health, show **considerable diversity in approaches**.³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ ECPRD network request No 6263. Parliaments were asked to provide a follow-up to their responses to ECPRD network request No 4722, launched by EPRS in 2021. The earlier results from 22 EU Member States and 11 non-EU countries are set out in [Section 4.3.1](#) of the first study on gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament, pp. 57–61.

³⁴⁹ EU Member States (in English alphabetical order): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden; non-EU countries: Armenia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Israel, Moldova, North Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland and Türkiye. For the EU, three countries (Cyprus, Denmark and Luxembourg) were responding for the first time. Three new non-EU countries responded: Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Moldova, while four non-EU countries (Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro and the United Kingdom) did not respond to this round.

³⁵⁰ Some chambers provided links to further documentation in their replies. Where this was the case, or where our further desk research identified further publicly available documentation, details are included.

³⁵¹ While the Belgian House of Representatives and Senate replied, they indicated that the information provided was confidential. They therefore do not form part of this analysis.

6.1. Gender mainstreaming structures and policies

With regard to structures, **five parliaments (Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Slovenia)** say they currently have **no gender mainstreaming structure**. Only **three** report having a **dedicated gender mainstreaming body (Finland, Luxembourg and Sweden)**. The **majority** have **one or more structures** in place, most frequently a gender equality committee or a committee with a remit to consider gender equality or women's rights alongside other issues, such as discrimination on multiple grounds, social affairs or human rights. In Israel and North Macedonia, the parliament has both a standing committee on gender equality and one or more women's caucuses.³⁵² As **EIGE** also highlights in its **latest monitoring report**, there is **significant variation** in the remits and status of the structures, including their legislative powers.³⁵³

As regards a **comprehensive framework strategy for gender mainstreaming**, covering both the political side (gender balance and consideration of gender in policymaking) and administration, **only one (non-EU) country (North Macedonia)** reportedly has such strategy in place. A further **six countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Sweden)** have an **internal action plan** that covers gender balance at political or administrative level. With a view to **developing a gender mainstreaming strategy** covering both the political and administrative sides, **Luxembourg** is currently carrying out a gender audit.

Based on the information provided, **four parliaments (Finland, North Macedonia, Spain and Sweden) come closest** to covering **all the dimensions (structure, framework strategy or action plan, and monitoring)**.³⁵⁴ However, while Finland, Spain and Sweden have a clear gender mainstreaming structure, an action plan and regular reporting, the Swedish action plan only covers gender balance (and related aspects) at political level, with policymaking and the administration unaddressed. The Finnish and Spanish action plans, by contrast, only cover administration.

Most parliaments in the EU Member States and non-EU countries that responded to the request have, however, **at least one element in place**. For example, the **overwhelming majority (31 countries)** have **one or more bodies responsible for promoting gender equality**. 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.

While **12 parliaments (Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Spain, Sweden and Türkiye)** reported that they conduct **some kind of monitoring** and assessment of the implementation of gender mainstreaming, **monitoring mechanisms** appear to be the **most developed** in **three parliaments (Finland, Spain and Sweden)**.

³⁵² In Israel, the current 25th Knesset has six women's caucuses: [Caucus for Pink Collar Female Workers](#); [Caucus for the Promotion of Women's Health](#); [Caucus for Stopping Domestic Violence](#); [Caucus for Women in Israeli Society](#); [Caucus for the Proper Representation of Women in the Municipal Sphere](#); and [Caucus for Arab Women and Employment as a Social and Economic Impetus](#).

³⁵³ EIGE, [Gender equality in the European Parliament and in national parliaments in the European Union: 2023 state of play](#), June 2024.

³⁵⁴ Several countries replying to the survey did not provide any information on monitoring.

Table 2 – Parliaments or chambers with a gender mainstreaming structure

Dedicated gender mainstreaming body	Finland, Luxembourg, Sweden
Gender equality committee	Croatia, Denmark, France, Romania (Chamber of Deputies), Spain, Sweden Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Georgia, Israel, North Macedonia, Türkiye* ³⁵⁵
Gender-equality sub-committee	Portugal Albania
Multi-functional or multi-portfolio committee	Austria, Cyprus, Czechia, Ireland, Germany (Bundestag and Bundesrat), Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland (Sejm), Romania (Senate), Slovakia* Armenia
Women's caucus	Estonia, Finland (with the power to draft amendments), Ireland, Lithuania, Poland (Sejm) Israel, Moldova, North Macedonia, Switzerland*
Other structure	Latvia*
No structure	Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia Norway

***Türkiye:** The Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (KEFEK), the main gender mainstreaming body within the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT), aims at protecting and promoting women's rights, monitoring developments aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, and contributing to legislative and oversight activities in this area. In addition to providing opinions on legislative procedures, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of legislation, in-depth studies are conducted (through sub-committees within the KEFEK committee) and reports prepared on thematic areas (such as employment, political participation, reconciliation of work and family life). The committee is also responsible for examining individual applications on allegations of gender-based discrimination referred to it by the Presidency of the GNAT, and forwarding them to the relevant authorities when deemed necessary.

***Slovakia:** While this question remained unaddressed in the EPRS survey, other sources indicate that the Slovak Parliament (National Council of the Slovak Republic) – while not having a dedicated, permanent gender committee – generally addresses women's affairs and gender equality through the Committee on Human Rights and National Minorities.³⁵⁶

***Switzerland:** As in its 2021 reply, Switzerland reported that it had neither a gender mainstreaming structure nor a policy in place (with no current plans to develop either element). A women's cross-

³⁵⁵ Where asterisks were used, it was considered useful or necessary to add some further explanation (e.g. to provide more specific information, to indicate that a country referred to its previous reply, or to specify that other information than that gathered through the survey was used).

³⁵⁶ See [EIGE](#) webpage on Slovakia and National Council of the Slovak Republic [website](#).

party group, established in 2020, promotes networking among women MPs and with female decisionmakers (the number of its – exclusively female – members has increased from 50 to 80 since 2021). Moreover, two dedicated women's sessions were held in 1991 and October 2021 respectively, with a catalogue of demands presented to the Federal Assembly.

***Latvia:** MPs may form thematic groups on their own initiative and work in cooperation with NGOs and the public if an issue arises. A group for parliamentary advocacy of women's interests was established in 2023.³⁵⁷

Table 3 – Parliaments or chambers with a gender mainstreaming policy

Framework strategy or action plan for gender mainstreaming	North Macedonia (political and administrative sides)
Plan for gender balance at administrative level	Austria*, Finland*, Germany*, Hungary, Spain*
Plan for gender balance at political level	Sweden*
No policy	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France*, Greece*, Ireland*, Latvia*, Lithuania, Luxembourg*, Poland, Portugal*, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands* Albania*, Armenia, Canada*, Moldova, Norway*, Switzerland, Türkiye

EU Member States

***Austria:** Women's Advancement Plan for the years 2021 to 2026 (with the next plan from 2027 being drafted) for the parliament's administration. Legal requirements for gender budgeting and gender impact assessment (but no overarching gender mainstreaming strategy).

***Finland:** The Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan covers the parliamentary administration fully. While it does not directly regulate policymaking, equality principles are included in induction and guidance provided to MPs, and awareness of gender equality obligations is promoted through information and training. Moreover, the Employment and Equality Committee plays an important role in integrating gender considerations into the legislative process. The Equality Council, composed of the Finnish parliament's Vice-Chair and MPs of all political groups, is tasked to advance gender equality and to promote a constructive dialogue, and an informal network of women MPs contributes to awareness-raising.

***Germany:** While there is no comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy in the Bundestag, an elected Equal Opportunities Officer has been appointed for the administration. Moreover, the In-Service Agreement on Gender Equality in the Workplace includes various provisions on gender-equitable advertising of vacancies and recruitment.

***Spain:** The First Equality Plan (2020-2024, still in force; second plan in preparation for 2026) covers both chambers' administration. At the political level, the Gender Equality Committees in both the Congress and Senate carry out scrutiny work.

³⁵⁷ See the 14th Saeima website on [thematic groups](#).

***Sweden:** Action programme for gender equality at political level.³⁵⁸ Its objectives are, in particular, to ensure gender balance in different political bodies, to integrate gender equality into business and various processes, to ensure an internal culture where both women and men are respected, resources are equal, and there is work–life balance for MPs. The action programme does not cover administration or consideration of the gender dimension in policymaking.

***France:** While there is no single, formal document setting out a gender mainstreaming policy at the political level, the Delegation for Women's Rights monitors the consequences of government policy on women's rights, scrutinises legislation from a gender perspective, and produces public reports. Gender balance at political level is addressed through national legislation and rules of procedure (as regards the Bureau and committee bureaus). At the administrative level, several texts on discrimination and maternity exist, and an anti-harassment unit has been in place since 2020. The human resources department regularly publishes gender statistics on staff.

***Greece:** referred to its previous reply from 2021, when it answered N/A to the questions on GM policy.

***Ireland:** no formal GM policy, but a 2021 Forum on a Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament produced recommendations and gender pay gap reporting exists.³⁵⁹

***Latvia:** referred to previous answers with no changes reported. In the previous answer, the Saeima referred to a thematic group that covered gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, but this no longer exists. The current 14th Saeima has a Group for parliamentary advocacy of women's interests (set up in 2023).³⁶⁰

***Luxembourg:** The gender audit (led by the Gender Committee established in 2024) explicitly covers both the administrative dimension (first phase) and the political/institutional dimension (second phase, to be completed by end 2026), with a view to developing a targeted gender mainstreaming strategy covering both sides.

***Portugal:** no dedicated gender mainstreaming policy, but legal requirements for gender impact assessment of legislation and gender budgeting.

***The Netherlands:** some policies and structures for improving gender balance in management, diversity and inclusion, and gender pay gap reporting exist, but only on the administrative side; no policy at political level.

Non-EU countries

***North Macedonia:** The Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia has drawn on guidance from the OECD, IPU and EIGE to draw up multiannual parliamentary action plans for the advancement of equality between women and men. The action plan for 2025–2027³⁶¹ is the assembly's third such action plan. The measures are grouped into four strategic objectives: (i) promoting equal representation of women and men in the parliament; (ii) promoting equality of women and men in the legislative process; (iii) promoting equality of women and men in the parliament's oversight function, and following up on the recommendations from ratified international agreements and

³⁵⁸ The Riksdag, [Action programme for gender equality in the Riksdag for the electoral period 2022–2026](#).

³⁵⁹ Houses of the Oireachtas, [Publication of Gender Pay Gap Report 2025 for Houses of the Oireachtas Service](#), 2025. The reports for 2022, 2023 and 2024 are also available at this link.

³⁶⁰ See 14th Saeima website on [thematic groups](#).

³⁶¹ Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, [2025–2027 Action Plan on the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia](#) (see also the [original version](#)).

conventions; and (iv) promoting equality between women and men in internal organisation. The assembly reports that there is an ongoing focus on a transition from formal representation to substantive gender impact in all legislative outputs. The plan is overseen by the Assembly's Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

***Albania:** does not currently have a gender mainstreaming policy, but did have a gender-sensitive parliament action programme that ran between 2020 and 2021.

***Canada:** The Canadian parliament reports that the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) tool introduced in 1995 can be used by parliamentarians as well as by the government and the civil service. GBA+ is a gender mainstreaming analysis that can be applied to legislation, policies, programmes, and budgetary and financial processes during development and design, consultation and the evaluation of outcomes.³⁶²

***Norway:** While Norway reported that it has neither a formal gender mainstreaming structure nor policy (with no plans at present to develop either), it underlined that most of the preparatory work on government proposals or reports is at present conducted within the responsible Ministry prior to reaching the parliament (Storting). The preparatory work has to be carried out in line with the Instructions for Official Studies (including instructions for the preparation of central government measures).³⁶³ According to these guidelines, when considering the effects of different measures, the government is bound to consider equality/equal opportunities as fundamental questions (and involve the Ministry of Children and Equality in cases of major equal effects). The Storting is, as public authority and employer, subject to, among other laws, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (notably requiring parliament to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote equality and prevent discrimination in all its activities)³⁶⁴ as well as the Working Environment Act.³⁶⁵ In its reply, Norway also reported on new legislation adopted in 2025 governing remuneration of MPs during pregnancy, maternity and parental leave.³⁶⁶

***Türkiye:** While no dedicated gender mainstreaming policy is in place, Türkiye referred to relevant provisions on gender equality applicable to the GNAT (such as in its constitution, International Conventions to which Türkiye is a party, GNAT's rules of procedure and national legislation). Under Law No 5840 on the KEFEK's establishment, priority must be given to women when appointing MPs. Gender mainstreaming is reportedly applied through several tools (such as gender analysis of legislative proposals, awareness- and capacity building activities, as well as training for parliamentary staff). For the 2024-2026 period, gender budgeting was, for the first time, included in the investment programme and budget preparation guidelines, with sub-committees within KEFEK preparing reports analysing the impact of the budget on women and men, and KEFEK responsible for monitoring this process.

³⁶² House of Commons, [Implementing Gender-Based Analysis Plus in the Government of Canada](#), Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2016.

³⁶³ Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management, [Guidance Notes on the Instructions for Official Studies](#), 2018.

³⁶⁴ [Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination \(Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act\)](#).

³⁶⁵ [Act relating to the working environment, working hours and employment protection, etc. \(Working Environment Act\)](#).

³⁶⁶ [Act on Remuneration and Other Benefits for Members of the Storting \(The Storting Remuneration Act\)](#).

Table 4 – Parliaments or chambers with regular monitoring of their gender mainstreaming policy³⁶⁷

Monitoring of the administrative side	Austria, Finland, France*, Germany, Hungary*, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Luxembourg North Macedonia
Monitoring of the political side	Croatia, (France), Sweden North Macedonia, Türkiye*

***France:** While there is no formal gender mainstreaming policy at the political level, the Delegation for Women's Rights monitors the consequences of government policy on women's rights, scrutinises legislation from a gender perspective and produces public reports, as mentioned.

***Hungary:** some data collection (on indicators such as the gender, age and level of education of the Office staff, working time (full-time or part-time), proportion of women and men among managers).

***Türkiye:** To ensure monitoring, the KEFEK committee prepares activity and evaluation reports for each legislative term.

As regards **monitoring** of gender mainstreaming policies in **EU national parliaments**, it appears that most of the parliaments reported about monitoring of the **administrative side**, with monitoring often limited to tracking gender balance statistics rather than the extent to which parliaments consider the gender dimension in their policymaking.

Sweden appears to have **one of the most effective monitoring systems** in place. The **Gender Equality group** (with a representative from each party) reports to the Riksdag Board at least once per semester and at the end of each electoral period, using both quantitative and qualitative measures, providing for continuous monitoring and regular evaluation of initiatives, as also pointed out in a 2024 academic article.³⁶⁸ In the **Spanish Congress of Deputies**, a **dedicated monitoring committee** publishes annual monitoring reports, contributing to transparency and accountability. A final evaluation report of the First Equality Plan (2020–2024) was produced in 2025.³⁶⁹ In the **Finnish parliament**, the **Equality Commission** oversees implementation of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan, tracks developments, and proposes new initiatives. Monitoring relies on **predefined indicators, sex-disaggregated data, staff surveys and periodic pay audits**. The results are reviewed regularly, and previous equality plans are evaluated ex post to inform future actions.

Among the **non-EU parliaments**, the Assembly of the Republic of **North Macedonia** has issued implementation reports for its two previous action plans for the advancement of equality between women and men, which encompass the administrative and political sides. The implementation reports for the previous plans found that they had helped to raise the issue of gender equality to a higher level in the legislature, resulting for example in changes to the rules of procedure and an

³⁶⁷ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia did not provide any information on monitoring.

³⁶⁸ J. Erikson and L. Freidenvall, 'Exploring Sustainability in Parliamentary Gender Equality Work. Insights from the Swedish Riksdag', *NORA – Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, Vol. 32(1), 2024, pp. 17–34.

³⁶⁹ See [Spanish Congress of Deputies: Final Assessment of the implementation of the First Equality Plan of the Spanish Parliament, March 2020–June 2024](#) (in Spanish), and [Final Assessment First Equality Plan of the Spanish Parliament](#) (infographic, in Spanish).

annual plenary session on gender equality. A working group will again monitor the implementation of the activities envisaged in the 2025–2027 action plan.³⁷⁰

6.2. Examples of interesting / promising practices

6.2.1. Gender audits

Since the previous request to ECPRD in 2021, further parliaments report that they have conducted, or are considering, a **self-assessment or audit**. In **Luxembourg**, the Bureau of the Chamber established a gender committee in 2024 with a mandate to design, coordinate and carry out a gender audit, issue recommendations, and develop a more targeted and evidence-based gender mainstreaming strategy and concrete measures, covering both the political and administrative dimensions of the institution. The first phase, which ran to the end of 2025, focused on parliamentary administration. The second, in 2026, is focusing on the political dimension.³⁷¹ Outside the EU, the Parliamentary Assembly of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** reported that its Committee on Gender Equality plans to conduct a gender audit covering members of both houses and administrative staff.³⁷²

6.2.2. Use of gender mainstreaming tools

Several parliaments reported on the **use of gender-mainstreaming tools**, including gender analysis and gender budgeting.

As in the previous survey, within the EU, the parliaments in **Austria** and **Portugal** reported on their use of gender impact assessments and gender budgeting.

In **Canada**, the House of Commons reports that the Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) tool can be applied in policymaking, but take-up has been uneven across parliamentary committees, and it is not systematically applied for legislation. In 2016, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women recommended that all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff should take an online introductory training course on GBA+ within six months of taking up their duties, and that the training should also be mandatory for employees with research policy, programme or customer service responsibilities in the two chambers and the library of parliament.³⁷³ Respondents who gave evidence to the committee noted that a two-day course or three-hour module would not be enough for civil servants to understand and apply the concept, and that departments would need to invest continued time and effort and ensure collaboration with GBA+ experts. The committee also heard that the quality and effectiveness of training courses and tools needed to be monitored and evaluated.³⁷⁴ While primary responsibility for monitoring GBA+ lies with federal departments and agencies, Canada's parliament has also played a scrutiny role. During the preparation of its report, the standing committee on the status of women heard evidence on the positive difference that GBA+ can make to the quality, responsiveness, and effectiveness of government policies, programs and legislation. The committee recommended the establishment of a commissioner for gender equality as an agent of parliament, with a mandate to promote the implementation of GBA+ in federal departments and

³⁷⁰ op cit. Annex 1 to the 2025–2027 action plan includes a table with an assessment of the 2022–2024 action plan.

³⁷¹ Chambre des Députés du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, [Compte rendu officiel n° 26](#), March 2025, and Vers un Parlement plus sensible au genre, [press release](#), 7 March 2025.

³⁷² The Assembly has also explored the gender audit approach with the ODIHR: ODIHR, [What are gender-sensitive parliaments and why do they matter? Consultations with parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), December 2025.

³⁷³ House of Commons, [Implementing Gender-Based Analysis Plus in the Government of Canada](#), Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, 2016, Recommendations 7 and 8.

³⁷⁴ The parliament reported that it had found no evidence of a follow-up on the recommendations.

agencies. In 2026, the parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts called on the government to implement recommendations on improving GBA+ from the Auditor General of Canada and to report back to the House.³⁷⁵

In **Israel**, according to a government decision, all government ministries are required to carry out a gender impact evaluation of their annual budget, as part of the budget proposal submitted to the Knesset. The Budgetary Control Department in the Knesset Research and Information Center reviews these evaluations and they are discussed in dedicated debates of the Gender Committee.³⁷⁶

6.2.3. Initiatives on work–life balance

Several parliaments reported that the issue of **ensuring that MPs are able to combine their political mandate with family life** is on their agenda.

In **Germany**, the Bundestag has made childcare facilities available for both MPs and staff, including, for MPs, a room providing supervised care for children and a breastfeeding space next to plenary. Although it is not a codified right, MPs may bring their children and babies to plenary sessions and committee meetings. Similarly, there is fully fledged nursery, day-care centre and kindergarten for the children of both MPs and staff within the parliamentary campus of the **Turkish GNAT** (and a baby care room serving both). There is also a baby care room serving both parliamentarians and staff within the parliamentary campus.

In **Ireland**, the government has announced its intention to establish maternity, paternity and adoptive leave policies for all elected representatives.³⁷⁷ Under the current legislation, MPs who give birth are entitled to take 26 weeks of maternity leave.³⁷⁸

In **Luxembourg**, the Chamber of Deputies is examining the needs of MPs who are pregnant, have just given birth or are breastfeeding to tackle barriers to women's entry to parliament.³⁷⁹ The recommendations set out in a report prepared for the Chamber include establishing a right to maternity, adoption, parental or special leave for members of parliament; organising specific procedures to address the physical absence of MPs from plenary sessions and parliamentary committee meetings; and considering the creation of breastfeeding facilities and a nursery or daycare centre for babies and young children.

In **Spain**, as noted in Section 4.5.1. of this study, the Congress of Deputies provides for remote voting in various cases, ensuring that deputies do not lose their right to vote due to maternity, paternity, or family care responsibilities.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁵ House of Commons, More Improvements needed by Government of Canada to Identify GBA+ Barriers & Improve Equality Outcomes, [press release](#), 27 February 2026.

³⁷⁶ See, for instance: Knesset Research and Information Center, [Gender Budgeting and Gender Analysis of the 2025 State Budget](#), 2025. The report was prepared ahead of the debates on the 2025 state budget. The first section briefly reviews the development of the concepts relating to gender budgeting and their implementation in Israel and the EU; the second section reviews the gender analysis of the 2025 budget bill that was carried out by the various government ministries.

³⁷⁷ See the [Programme for Government 2025 – Securing Ireland's Future](#), p. 98.

³⁷⁸ [Maternity Protection, Employment Equality and Preservation of Certain Records Act 2024](#).

³⁷⁹ Chambre des Députés du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, [Femmes enceintes, accouchées et/ou allaitantes exerçant un mandat politique. État des lieux au Luxembourg et à l'étranger](#), 2025.

³⁸⁰ Congress of Deputies, [Standing Order of the Congress of Deputies](#), Article 82.

In **Sweden**, work–life balance for MPs is one of the objectives of the Riksdag's 2022–2026 action programme.³⁸¹ Earlier studies for the parliament found that MPs who are single parents, MPs with younger children or elderly parents, and MPs from constituencies outside of Stockholm were particularly affected. Under the action programme, research is being conducted to serve as an evidence-base for further measures. This includes focus groups to look into MPs' day-to-day duties and how they view the opportunities to combine their mandate with family life, followed by an analysis of the parliament's working procedures and a needs analysis of childcare.

In **Canada**, the House of Commons convened a committee to develop a policy for making the parliament more family-friendly. The resulting changes have included counting pregnancy and parental leave as attendance during a parliamentary session, allowing MPs to bring their infants to the floor of the House (although this is not a codified right), creating a family room and a dedicated breastfeeding space, and extending daycare services to include infants and more flexible hours.³⁸² In addition, in 2025, the rules of procedure were changed to allow for the possibility of hybrid participation in sittings.³⁸³ Outside of the ECPRD request, research into the Canadian experience highlights that it can be more straightforward for parliaments to make changes that do not affect their operations, but these alone are insufficient to make the institution inclusive.³⁸⁴

Regarding **work–life balance measures for administrative staff**:

In **Spain**, the parliament's Equality Plan³⁸⁵ includes guidelines on work–life balance and flexible working arrangements.³⁸⁶ For staff, measures already in force include paid maternity and paternity leave, extended maternity leave for single parents, and an entitlement to reduced working hours for childcare purposes (to date mostly taken up by women). New paid leave is envisaged to accompany dependants to medical appointments, for assisted reproduction treatments, and for ante-natal preparation.

Regarding the **environment in parliament**:

In **Canada**, the GBA+ tool was applied ahead of major renovations of the parliamentary precinct to ensure that they were informed by an understanding of needs and requirements, and to open up accessibility.³⁸⁷ The renovations included the creation of a family room for MPs.³⁸⁸

³⁸¹ See [Gender equality work in the Riksdag](#) and [Action programme for gender equality in the Riksdag for the electoral period 2022–2026](#).

³⁸² House of Commons, [Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: Interim Report on Moving Toward a Modern, Efficient, Inclusive and Family-Friendly Parliament](#), 2016, and [Report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: Support for Members of Parliament with Young Children](#), 2017.

³⁸³ House of Commons, 'Chapter 9: Sittings of the House, [Participation of Members in a Sitting](#)' in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, 2025.

³⁸⁴ R. Johnstone, '[When the House is Not a Home: Assessing the Family-Friendliness of Canadian Legislatures](#)', *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique*, Vol. 57(2), 2024; S. Franceschet and E. Rayment, '[Parliamentarians perspectives on parenthood and politics in Canadas House of Commons](#)', *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 79(2), 2026, pp. 440–460; D. Graham, [Parliament and Parenthood](#), 2025.

³⁸⁵ General Courts, [Equality Plan](#), website (in Spanish).

³⁸⁶ Congress of Deputies, [Guide to balancing personal, family and work life](#), 2024 (in Spanish).

³⁸⁷ Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, [Implementing Gender-Based Analysis Plus in the Government of Canada](#), 2016, p. 40.

³⁸⁸ House of Commons, 'Family-friendly environment', in [Report to Canadians 2019](#), 2019, p. 33.

6.2.4. Initiatives to tackle harassment, hate speech and gender-based violence

Some parliaments reported that they have introduced or are planning measures to address harassment, gender-based violence and violence against women in politics, including the rise in online misogyny and hate-speech.³⁸⁹

The parliaments in **Austria**, **Lithuania** and **Luxembourg** have explicitly prohibited sexual harassment against staff, while the parliament in **Finland** has a zero-tolerance policy.

In **France**, the Assemblée nationale has had an anti-harassment unit since 2020, comprising independent experts.³⁹⁰ Its remit covers MPs, parliamentary and group staff, in Paris and in their constituencies, as well as service staff and trainees. The unit also provides advice for managers.

In **Romania**, the Secretary-General of the Chamber of Deputies approved guidelines on the prevention and combating of gender-based harassment and harassment in the workplace in the Chamber of Deputies Services in July 2025.

In **Spain**, Area 7 of the parliament's Equality Plan focuses on improving support for parliamentary staff (civil servants, employees and temporary staff) who are victims of gender-based violence. The implementation has included the approval, in December 2023, of a protocol establishing specific procedures for preventing gender-based violence and supporting victims with a view to guaranteeing their rights to access assistance and maintain their employment, pay and professional development.³⁹¹ The measures include awareness raising, early detection, and victim-centred support, such as counselling and options for mobility, reduced working hours and leave. The Equality Plan also provides for mandatory and voluntary training on equality, co-responsibility, gender-based violence, and harassment.

In **Sweden**, the Riksdag's 2022–2026 action programme recognises that while all members can occasionally be subjected to threats and expressions of hate, women are more often affected than men. The programme sets out measures to address the internal and external dimensions. Internal measures include raising awareness of good practice in communication, researching how women and men are treated in debates, and stepping up the prevention of sexual harassment. It also comprises measures to support MPs subjected to hate and misogyny from outside, including online and in social media. These includes researching how other parliaments work with this issue as a basis for measures to improve support for MPs.

Outside the EU, the **Assembly of Albania**³⁹² has internal protection mechanisms that apply to MPs and administrative staff. Under the code of conduct for MPs (2018) and the rules of procedure (as amended in 2019), gender-based discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment are prohibited and may be sanctioned with disciplinary measures, including exclusion from participation in sessions and committees. The Parliamentary Assembly of **Bosnia and Herzegovina** has adopted a policy of

³⁸⁹ See also the [analysis](#) of replies given by the parliaments to the request 'Policies and procedures for dealing with sexual harassment in the EU's National Parliaments' (request No 4170) asked by the European Parliament in 2019 via the European Center for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD). S. Wickberg and L. Mügge analyse more recent data in '[Gender insensitive parliaments: blind spots in anti-harassment parliamentary policies in Europe](#)', *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 24(41), 2026.

³⁹⁰ Assemblée nationale, [Création de la cellule de lutte contre le harcèlement](#), website.

³⁹¹ Congress of Deputies, [Protocol for the protection of Spanish Parliament staff who are victims of gender-based violence, approved by the Bureaus of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate, at their respective meetings on 19 December 2023](#) (in Spanish).

³⁹² For further details, see OSCE/ODIHR, [Albania: Report on the Participatory Gender Audit of the Assembly](#), 2025, pp. 14–16, and recommendations H) and I), pp. 18–19.

zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and gender-based harassment in the workplace, and has appointed a counsellor for prevention.

6.2.5. Initiatives on gender-sensitive occupational health

In **Ireland**, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service has a **menopause policy**, which is intended to raise awareness of menopause among all employees, to outline relevant roles and responsibilities, and to provide guidance on workplace adjustments and supports that may be considered for employees.

Türkiye's parliamentary campus hosts a **hospital** providing **gender-sensitive healthcare services for MPs, advisors and administrative staff**. The hospital has an obstetrics and gynaecology clinic (to enable female employees to access this service during working hours); mammography and breast cancer screening (to support preventive medicine); and psychiatric support services (to combat clinical conditions caused by workplace harassment, stress and imbalances of professional and family life).

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ANNEX I – EP gender mainstreaming structures and bodies

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Equality, inclusion and diversity

Bodies, mandates and relationships

A structured overview of all EP bodies responsible for gender equality, inclusion and diversity — their different mandates, institutional levels, and relationships.

1. Overview: All bodies at a glance

The table below maps every EP body dealing with gender equality, inclusion and diversity, organised by tier, with their core mandate.

LEVEL / TYPE	BODY	CORE MANDATE
POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING	Bureau <i>Permanent</i>	Sets binding internal targets, approves gender action plans and diversity roadmaps, makes all financial/human resources (HR) decisions for the Secretariat.
POLITICAL STEERING	VP for Gender Equality & Diversity <i>Est. 1998</i>	Steers Parliament's internal equality agenda. Chairs the High-Level Group. Current holder: Ewa Kopacz (EPP, Poland).
POLITICAL ADVISORY	High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity <i>Est. 2004</i>	Internal advisory body. Adopts multiannual strategies. Expanded to diversity in 2007. Cooperates with FEMM and Conference of Delegation Chairs.
POLITICAL LEGISLATIVE	FEMM committee <i>Est. 1984</i>	Defines and promotes women's rights and gender equality in EU law. Drafts own-initiative reports, gives opinions on other committees' legislation, chairs the Gender Mainstreaming Network.
POLITICAL CROSS-CUTTING	Gender Mainstreaming Network (GMN) <i>Est. 2009</i>	Chaired by FEMM. One MEP + one administrator per committee + two representatives from Conference of Delegation Chairs – 23 out of 24 committees have adopted gender action plans.
ADMIN CORE UNIT	EIDU – Equality, Inclusion and Diversity Unit (DG PERS) <i>Est. 1992</i>	The dedicated operational unit. Implements Bureau decisions, produces statistics, mainstreams gender across all HR policies. Coordinates all four coordinator networks. Head: Chiara Tamburini.
ADMIN COMMITTEE SUPPORT	DG IUST – FEMM Secretariat <i>Permanent</i>	Provides secretariat, research and administrative support for the FEMM committee. Does not set policy. Also covers LIBE, enabling joint work on gender-based violence and digital rights.
ADMINISTRATIVE NETWORKS	Four Coordinator Networks (DGs + political groups) <i>Est. 2001</i>	Diversity coordinators in the DGs – Diversity coordinators in political groups – Gender coordinators in the DGs – Gender coordinators in political groups. All coordinated by EIDU.
STAFF ADVISORY BODY	COPEC <i>Est. 1986</i>	Oldest EP equality body. Proposes measures, issues opinions on Staff Regulations, monitors implementation. Observer in A1/A2 senior

LEVEL / TYPE	BODY	CORE MANDATE
STAFF SUPPORT GROUPS	Disability Support Group – Égalité – People of Colour SG <i>Various</i>	appointment procedures. Four members from Appointing Authority + four from Staff Committee. Three staff support groups providing safe spaces for colleagues with disabilities, LGBTQ+ staff, and staff from racial/ethnic minorities. All consulted in 2026–2029 diversity and inclusion (D&I) roadmap.
EXTERNAL AGENCY	EIGE – European Institute for Gender Equality <i>Est. 2007</i>	Specialist EU agency providing research, data and tools. Produces the Gender Equality Index. Trains MEPs. Key partner of FEMM, the GMN and the gender equality strategy.
EXTERNAL CIVIL SOCIETY	European Disability Forum (EDF) <i>Est. 1996</i>	European umbrella organisation representing 100+ million people with disabilities. Strong advocacy voice towards EP, Commission and Council.
RECOGNITION AWARD	Simone Veil Award for Equality and Diversity <i>Est. 2017</i>	Recognises best practice in equality and diversity within the EP Secretariat. Presented twice per parliamentary term. Staff vote; independent committee chaired by Jurisconsult makes final decision.

2. Key distinctions

Who sets policy?	Internal vs external mandate	Gender vs broader diversity
The Bureau sets binding internal targets and approves action plans. The VP and HLG advise and steer. FEMM shapes external EU law. Administrative and staff bodies implement — they do not set policy.	FEMM and the GMN work on EU legislation affecting all of Europe. The Bureau, HLG, EIDU, COPEC and coordinator networks work exclusively on the EP's internal HR and working environment. EIGE and EDF are external partners.	FEMM and the GMN focus exclusively on gender equality. COPEC, EIDU, coordinator networks, staff support groups and the D&I roadmap cover the full spectrum: gender, disability, LGBTQ+, race/ethnicity, age and socioeconomic background.

3. Political level – Detailed profiles

3.1 BUREAU

The Bureau is the EP's supreme administrative authority, composed of the President, 14 Vice-Presidents and five Quaestors in an advisory capacity, serving terms of 2½ years. On gender equality and diversity, it sets binding internal targets (currently 50/50/50 % for Directors-General, Directors and Heads of Unit), approves gender action plans and diversity roadmaps, and makes all financial, organisational and administrative decisions for the Secretariat.

3.2 VICE-PRESIDENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

One of the 14 Vice-Presidents is assigned specific responsibility for gender equality and diversity inside Parliament. This role chairs the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity and steers the institution's internal equality agenda, including gender impact analysis of legislation, gender balance in leadership roles, and zero tolerance on harassment. Current holder: Ewa Kopacz (EPP, Poland).

3.3 HIGH-LEVEL GROUP ON GENDER EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Established in 2004 (diversity added 2007). An internal advisory body composed of MEPs from each political group. Adopts multiannual strategies for equal treatment in the EP administration. Cooperates closely with FEMM and the Conference of Delegation Chairs. Administrative support provided by the EIDU.

Members (2024–2029): Chair Ewa Kopacz (EPP, PL), Vice-Chair Sophie Wilmes (Renew, BE), Pina Picerno (S&D, IT), Nicolae Stefanuta (Greens, RO), Antonella Sberna (ECR, IT), Younous Omarjee (The Left, FR), Miriam Lexmann (EPP, SK).

3.4 FEMM — COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Established in 1984 as a permanent standing committee. Composed of 40 MEPs. FEMM is the EP's primary body on gender equality policy and EU legislation — its mandate is external (shaping EU law), not internal HR. It drafts own-initiative reports, gives opinions on other committees' legislation, holds public hearings, monitors the EU gender equality strategy, and chairs the Gender Mainstreaming Network.

Chair: Lina Galvez (S&D, Spain) —Key topics: gender-based violence (GBV), equal pay, work–life balance, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), digital rights/AI deepfakes, women in conflict zones.

Coordinators: EPP — Eleonora Meleti (S&D, EL) — Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus (Pfe, PL) — Margarita de la Pisa Carrion (ECR, ES) — Laurence Trochu (Renew, FR) — Abir Al-Sahlani (Greens/EFA, SE) — Mélissa Camara (The Left, FR) — Irene Montero (ESN, ES) — Irmhild Boßdorf (ESN, DE).

3.5 GENDER MAINSTREAMING NETWORK (GMN)

Established in 2009. Chaired and coordinated by the FEMM committee. One MEP and one administrator per parliamentary committee, plus two representatives from the Conference of Delegation Chairs. Links MEPs with committee staff to integrate a gender dimension into all legislative work across all policy areas — 23 out of 24 committees have adopted action plans on gender mainstreaming. Last meeting: 14 April 2026.

4. Administrative level – Detailed profiles

4.1 EIDU — EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY UNIT (DG PERS)

The dedicated operational unit for all equality, inclusion and diversity matters in the Secretariat. Created in 1992 (upgraded to full unit in 2005). Sits within DG PERS. Implements Bureau decisions, produces studies and statistics, mainstreams gender across all HR policies, supports the VP and HLG, advises COPEC and the Appointing Authority. Acts horizontally across all DGs. Coordinates all four coordinator networks. Head of Unit: Chiara Tamburini.

4.2 DG IUST — SECRETARIAT SUPPORT FOR FEMM

Provides secretariat, research, legal and administrative support for the FEMM committee. Organises meetings, drafts agendas, liaises with the Commission and Council on gender equality files. Does not set policy. Also covers the LIBE committee, facilitating joint work on GBV and digital rights. Director-General: Leticia Zuleta de Reales Ansaldo; Director (Citizens, Equality and Culture): Sonia Wollny.

4.3 FOUR COORDINATOR NETWORKS

Four parallel networks, all coordinated by EIDU: (1) Network of diversity coordinators in the DGs. (2) Network of diversity coordinators in political groups. (3) Network of gender coordinators in the DGs. (4) Network of gender coordinators in political groups. Each coordinator ensures smooth implementation of the gender and diversity roadmaps within their DG or political group.

5. Staff-representative level – Detailed profiles

5.1 COPEC — COMMITTEE FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The oldest EP equality body, created by Secretary-General Enrico Vinci on 20 November 1986 following the EP's 1984 resolution. An advisory committee composed of a chair, four members nominated by the Appointing Authority, and four members appointed by the Staff Committee. Tasks: propose all appropriate measures to ensure non-discrimination; promote a tolerant and inclusive working environment; issue opinions on rules based on the Staff Regulations; monitor implementation. Since 2004, COPEC designates an observer for every A1 and A2 senior post appointment procedure.

5.2 STAFF SUPPORT GROUPS

Three staff support groups provide safe spaces for colleagues from specific diversity backgrounds. (i) Disability Support Group — over 80 members; advocates for accessibility and reasonable accommodation. (2) Égalité — association of LGBTIQ+ staff across EU institutions; provides mutual support and visibility. (3) People of Colour Support Group — advocates for better ethnic and racial representation. All three were consulted in the development of the 2026–2029 D&I roadmap.

6. External partners

6.1 EIGE — EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The EU's specialist agency on gender equality, established in 2007. Provides data, research and tools to the EP, Commission and Member States. Produces the Gender Equality Index. Delivers tailored training to MEPs on gender impact assessments and gender budgeting. Key partner of FEMM and the Gender Mainstreaming Network. Consulted on the gender equality strategy 2026–2030 and GAP III.

6.2 EUROPEAN DISABILITY FORUM (EDF)

European umbrella organisation representing over 100 million people with disabilities, created in 1996. Advocates for full inclusion, accessibility and rights at EU level based on the principle of 'nothing about us without us'. Strong advocacy voice toward EP, Commission and Council. Works directly with EP committees including FEMM, EMPL and LIBE.

7. Recognition and key documents

7.1 SIMONE VEIL AWARD FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Named after Simone Veil — Holocaust survivor, first female President of the European Parliament (1979–1982), and architect of France's abortion legalisation law of 1975 — the award was renamed in her honour by the Bureau following her death in 2017. It recognises good practice in equality and diversity within the EP Secretariat. Presented twice per parliamentary term. Each edition focuses on a specific strand. Nominations from Directors-General and political group Secretaries-General; all staff vote; independent committee chaired by the Jurisconsult makes the final decision.

7.2 KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS

The bodies above operate within a framework of successive policy instruments:

2020 Charter for Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion — the foundational values statement.

2025 gender action plan — adopted unanimously by the Bureau; new 50/50/50 management targets; covers both political and administrative sides.

2026–2027 gender action plan roadmap — 66 concrete measures across political and administrative dimensions.

2026–2029 diversity and inclusion roadmap — covers disability, LGBTIQ+, anti-racism and religion, age, and socioeconomic background.

8. Historical timeline

The EP's internal equality structures were built over four decades through successive resolutions, Secretary-General (SG) decisions, budget amendments and political leadership. The line from the 1984 resolution to the 2026–2027 roadmap is unbroken.

Year	Milestone
1984	EP plenary resolution on women in Community institutions — founding political trigger
1986	COPEC created by SG Enrico Vinci — oldest EP equality body
1992	Equal Opportunities Unit created within DG Personnel, Budget and Finance
1995	First annual gender statistics report published
1997–98	Political momentum under SG Julian Priestley; institutional crisis when both unit posts fall vacant simultaneously
1999	Amsterdam Treaty + amended Staff Regulations provide new legal basis for positive action
2001	Group of Equal Opportunities Correspondents created in each DG
2004	High-Level Group on Gender Equality established; unit moves to DG PERS HR Strategy Directorate

Year	Milestone
2007	HLG mandate expanded to include diversity; EIGE created
2009	Gender Mainstreaming Network launched, chaired by FEMM
2017	Simone Veil Award renamed in her honour following her death
2020	Charter for Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion adopted
2025	2025 gender action plan adopted unanimously by the Bureau; new 50/50/50 management targets
2026	66-measure 2026–2027 gender action plan roadmap adopted; 2026–2029 D&I roadmap adopted

Author: Ludovica Lasconi (Parliamentary Support and Capacity Building Unit, Directorate for Democracy Support, DG for External Policies of the Union).

ANNEX II – Summaries – Committee action plans

The following subsections summarise the distinctive elements of each committee's gender mainstreaming action plan (available on [FEMM website](#) on gender mainstreaming).

AGRI – Agriculture and Rural Development

AGRI's action plan places strong emphasis on women in agriculture and rural areas, ensuring that gender equality is integrated into all aspects of the committee's work. The plan requires systematic attention to gender balance in committee events, including an annual overview of gender representation among speakers and participants. Briefing materials for delegations must include information on the role and situation of women in agriculture in the destination country, ensuring that missions incorporate a gender-sensitive perspective.

In policy work, AGRI mandates that all research commissioned by the committee explicitly examine the role of women in agriculture and rural areas, including structural barriers, access to land and credit, and participation in decisionmaking. The plan reinforces the need for gender-disaggregated data in studies and evaluations relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP), and encourages consultation with women farmers' organisations and rural women's networks.

Monitoring is supported by the secretariat, which provides data on gender balance in events and missions. AGRI's plan stands out for its sector-specific focus on rural women, and its operational requirement that all committee outputs reflect agricultural policy's gendered dimensions.

AFCO – Constitutional Affairs

AFCO's action plan covers the full range of gender mainstreaming commitments, with a specific focus on the institutional and constitutional dimensions of gender equality. It commits to appointing a GMN representative, strengthening cooperation with FEMM, the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, national parliaments, and EIGE. The secretariat is tasked with proposing gender-balanced expert lists for hearings and workshops and supporting the election of a gender-balanced bureau.

The plan requires gender-neutral language across all documents, and encourages training for members, assistants and staff. In policy work, AFCO integrates gender perspectives where relevant, follows up on FEMM amendments, and invites gender equality experts to contribute to discussions on institutional matters. Mission programmes should include exchanges with experts on gender and constitutional affairs.

AFET – Foreign Affairs

AFET's action plan places gender equality at the centre of EU external action, requiring systematic integration of gender perspectives into all reports, opinions, resolutions and studies. It emphasises the use of gender-disaggregated data and consultation with women's rights organisations and gender equality experts. A distinctive feature is its strong operational focus on GAP III implementation and visibility, ensuring that GAP III priorities are reflected in hearings, events and external missions.

AFET commits to gender-balanced representation among speakers, experts and mission participants. Missions must include meetings with women's organisations, including grassroots actors, and mission briefings must assess the local gender context. Monitoring is structured around an annual reporting cycle, with cooperation across Parliament's gender mainstreaming structures and the EEAS.

BUDG – Budgets

BUDG's action plan is centred on gender budgeting, requiring that the annual EU budget and the multiannual financial framework incorporate gender-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive

analysis. The committee promotes the exchange of good practice on gender budgeting from Member States, and ensures that gender equality considerations are integrated into budgetary scrutiny.

The plan envisages close cooperation with FEMM's Standing Rapporteur on the budget, and encourages the use of gender-sensitive indicators in budgetary evaluation. BUDG also commits to organising an annual stocktaking event on a gender-related theme, reinforcing awareness and institutional learning. Its distinctive feature is its exclusive focus on gender budgeting as a structural tool for equality.

CONT – Budgetary Control

CONT's action plan includes a comprehensive 15-indicator gender balance scoreboard covering rapporteurs, legislative and INI procedures, opinions, speakers at hearings, ECA Special Report rapporteurs, mission participants, and committee membership at all levels. A designated secretariat official is responsible for monitoring implementation and ensuring regular reporting.

In policy work, CONT scrutinises whether the European Court of Auditors and EU institutions integrate gender mainstreaming into their management systems, including internal controls, audits, and performance frameworks. The committee encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops, and promotes gender-neutral language in all documents. Its distinctive feature is its highly structured, data-driven monitoring system.

CULT – Culture and Education

CULT's action plan emphasises the integration of gender perspectives into cultural and educational policy. It requires the use of gender-disaggregated data in statistics, and encourages the development of gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring and evaluating cultural and educational programmes. The plan highlights cooperation with FEMM, and encourages gender-balanced expert participation in hearings and workshops.

In policy work, CULT promotes gender equality in cultural and creative sectors, including attention to representation, access to funding, and participation in decisionmaking. The plan also encourages training for parliamentary assistants and political group staff. CULT's distinctive feature is its focus on gender equality within cultural production, education systems, and creative industries.

DEVE – Development

DEVE's action plan has a strong external dimension, requiring a yearly exchange of views with the European Commission and the EEAS on the implementation of GAP III. The committee systematically scrutinises implementing and delegated acts under the Development Cooperation Instrument, Humanitarian Aid Regulation, and EU Aid Volunteers Regulation from a gender perspective.

DEVE proactively organises joint meetings with other committees on gender-related development issues, and ensures that women's civil society organisations are systematically included in mission programmes. The plan emphasises gender-disaggregated data, intersectionality, and the integration of gender equality into all development cooperation policies. Its distinctive feature is its deep alignment with GAP III and its operational focus on gender in external development instruments.

DROI – Human Rights Subcommittee

DROI's action plan designates women's rights as one of its general priorities, and explicitly integrates intersectionality, including LGBTIQ+ considerations. Country and regional assessments must include a gender equality dimension, and mission briefings must cover the state of women's rights in the destination country.

The plan requires gender-balanced mission composition, and encourages the inclusion of women's rights organisations in hearings and external engagements. DROI also promotes gender-sensitive

language and the systematic integration of gender perspectives into human rights reporting. Its distinctive feature is the explicit recognition of intersectionality and the centrality of women's rights within the committee's human rights mandate.

ECON – Economic and Monetary Affairs

ECON's strategy focuses on gender balance in EU financial governance. It systematically monitors the gender composition of senior decisionmaking bodies of the ECB, European Systemic Risk Board (ESRB) and European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs). Gender balance questions are included in questionnaires to the ECB President, and the committee provides feedback to the Commission and Council on selection processes.

In corporate governance, ECON integrates gender equality into its structured dialogue with the Commission, and monitors commitments in the Commission's work programme. The plan also encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops, and promotes gender-neutral language. Its distinctive feature is its targeted focus on gender balance in high-level financial institutions.

EMPL – Employment and Social Affairs

EMPL's action plan makes training a central priority, with a tiered system for staff, members and assistants. It requires gender-neutral language in all documents, and mandates gender balance in hearings, delegations and distribution of reports. Policy work focuses on studies, impact assessments, and reducing structural discrimination. Monitoring includes surveys, statistical overviews, and analysis of gender perspectives in reports.

ENVI – Environment, Climate and Food Safety

ENVI's action plan identifies specific environmental and public health gender issues that must be addressed in reports and opinions. These include the influence of endocrine disruptors on fertility, gender bias in clinical trials, gender aspects of climate justice, and gender differences in carbon footprints. The plan explicitly references EIGE studies and encourages their use in committee work. ENVI promotes gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops, and encourages training for parliamentary assistants and political group staff. It emphasises gender-neutral language and the integration of gender perspectives into legislative scrutiny. Its distinctive feature is its thematic specificity, linking gender equality to environmental health, climate policy and scientific research.

FISC – Tax Matters Subcommittee

FISC's action plan builds on its previous term with concrete monitoring and outreach mechanisms. It maintains an annual gender balance scoreboard covering all committee activities, and conducts social media campaigns during Gender Equality Week to highlight gender biases in tax systems.

The plan commits to following up on the EP's resolution on gender equality and taxation, and may initiate reports, opinions, hearings or studies to monitor implementation. It explicitly includes LGBTIQ+ considerations in taxation, and encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops. Its distinctive feature is its combination of monitoring, public outreach and thematic focus on gender biases in taxation.

IMCO – Internal Market and Consumer Protection

IMCO's action plan includes commitments on training, gender-neutral language, gender balance in staff selection, rapporteurship, delegations and missions. It integrates gender perspectives into consumer protection and internal market policies, with attention to digital market inequalities. A distinctive feature is its operational gender mainstreaming checklist for hearings and workshops.

INTA – International Trade

INTA's action plan integrates gender mainstreaming into all aspects of EU trade policy. It mandates an annual debate on gender in trade and investment policy, and requests that the Commission

include gender impact reporting in its trade implementation report, with an annex per agreement. The committee scrutinises whether EU free trade agreements (FTAs) include gender chapters, and follows up with the Commission and Council when they do not.

INTA also calls for gender-balanced domestic advisory groups and the establishment of a Trade and Gender Committee under each FTA. It follows up on the 2017 Buenos Aires WTO Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, and pays attention to gender stereotypes in visual communications. Its distinctive feature is its comprehensive integration of gender into trade agreements, implementation and global trade governance.

ITRE – Industry, Research and Energy

ITRE's action plan includes a strong communication and outreach dimension. The committee commits to launching video campaigns on social media before key digital legislative files to promote a gender perspective, and to running awareness campaigns on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. It organises an annual International Women's Day event and establishes high-level expert panels on women in digital, STEM and energy.

The Standing Rapporteur maintains direct contact with the Commission's CNECT Equality Coordinator and the Women in Digital initiative. The plan also promotes gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops, and encourages gender-neutral language. Its distinctive feature is its proactive communication strategy and its focus on women in STEM and digital sectors.

JURI – Legal Affairs

JURI's action plan includes structured training, gender-balanced speaker appointments, gender-neutral language, and gender balance in distribution of reports. It integrates gender perspectives into legal affairs, encourages surveys on gender balance in reports, and requires missions to include actors working on gender equality in legal fields.³⁹³

LIBE – Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

LIBE's action plan includes strong institutional commitments. All members and staff must attend gender mainstreaming training at least once per term. The Chair is responsible for ensuring gender-balanced speaking time and maintaining a sexism and racism free environment. The committee commits to gender budgeting analysis for major financial dossiers, supported by EPRS.

LIBE envisages one public hearing per year on a gender topic within the area of freedom, security and justice (AFSJ). The plan encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and delegations, and promotes gender-neutral language. Its distinctive feature is its institutional focus on training, speaking time, and anti-discrimination safeguards.

PECH – Fisheries

PECH's action plan proposes structural institutional changes. It suggests a regulation penalising political groups that do not meet gender equality criteria with a 5 % deduction of contributions, drawing inspiration from Italian law. It proposes a co-chair model for parliamentary committees, with one Chair and one Co-Chair of different genders.

The plan calls for interinstitutional cooperation with the Commission's DG MARE, and requests annual data from the European Ombudsman on gender equality complaints in fisheries. Missions must examine LGBTI rights, and the committee encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and delegations. Its distinctive feature is its ambitious institutional reform proposals and its explicit inclusion of LGBTI rights in mission work.

³⁹³ This analysis is based on the JURI gender action plan from 2017 (as mentioned, while JURI updated its gender action plan in December 2025, it is currently not available).

PETI – Petitions

PETI's action plan includes a unique operational innovation: the development of thematic filters and keywords in the ePetition software to identify and track petitions with a gender or LGBTI dimension. This enables systematic statistics on such petitions to be included in the annual report.

The plan also lists gender experience as a valuable qualification for applicants to committee positions, and encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and workshops. PETI promotes gender-neutral language and the integration of gender perspectives into petition analysis. Its distinctive feature is its digital tracking mechanism for gender-related petitions.

REGI – Regional Development

REGI's action plan includes governance and staff wellbeing measures. It invites political groups to propose both male and female candidates for Chair and Vice-Chair to enable a gender-balanced bureau. The plan incorporates recommendations from the Papadimoulis report, including flexible working arrangements, the possibility of purchasing time credits, limits on evening meetings, and performance assessment based on achievement rather than presence.

REGI also commits to regular data requests from the European Ombudsman, and encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and delegations. Gender-neutral language is required in all documents. Its distinctive feature is its focus on internal governance and staff wellbeing as part of gender equality.

SANT – Public Health

SANT's action plan emphasises gender-disaggregated health data in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of health programmes. It seeks gender balance at all levels, including the bureau, rapporteur distribution, speakers at hearings, and delegations. The plan gives due attention to gender equality amendments from FEMM, and integrates gender perspectives into public health legislation.

SANT highlights gender-differentiated health outcomes, and encourages consultation with experts on gender and health. It promotes gender-neutral language and gender-balanced participation in hearings and missions. Its distinctive feature is its thematic focus on gender in public health and health data.

SEDE – Security and Defence

SEDE's action plan is centred on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, implemented through UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its successors. It explicitly addresses gender-based violence as an instrument of war, and calls on EU executives to integrate gender perspectives into CSDP actions and missions.

The plan monitors the low proportion of women in CSDP missions, and advocates for increases. It requires that at least one woman be included on every expert panel, and encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and delegations. SEDE also promotes gender-sensitive mission programming and consultation with women's organisations in conflict affected areas. Its distinctive feature is its exclusive focus on WPS and gender in security and defence policy.

TRAN – Transport and Tourism

TRAN's action plan focuses on gender differences in travel patterns and transport decisionmaking. It commits to studying differentiated traffic safety solutions, addressing gender pay gaps in the transport sector, and considering an initiative report on equal representation in transport.

The plan calls for gathering gender-differentiated statistics across the transport sector, and encourages gender-balanced participation in hearings and delegations. It also promotes gender-neutral language and the integration of gender perspectives into transport policy. TRAN's distinctive feature is its sector-specific focus on gender in mobility, safety and employment.

ANNEX III – Comparative overview of gender action plans by committee

This annex provides a comparative overview of the gender mainstreaming action plans adopted by the European Parliament's committees and subcommittees. It summarises the key policy actions, organisational measures, unique initiatives, and monitoring mechanisms established by each committee according to their respective action plan.

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
AFCO	Constitutional Affairs	November 2018	Gender perspective in reports; check gender impact in legislation; invite gender experts to hearings; follow up on FEMM amendments to AFCO	Gender-neutral language; balanced speakers and experts; coordinate with FEMM, HLG, GMN, EIGE, national parliaments; gender-balanced bureau	Formal follow-up loop with FEMM: reports what FEMM amendments were approved in AFCO; invites gender equality experts to constitutional affairs discussions; missions include visits to gender equality experts	GMN representative reports to committee; secretariat coordinates with FEMM and GMN
AFET	Foreign Affairs	May 2025	Gender focus in reports/opinions; check Commission impact assessments; request gender balance in international negotiating teams; advocate for sex-disaggregated data; Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda integration	Gender-neutral language; balanced speakers at hearings; women's rights organisations in missions; coordinate with EIGE, FEMM, GMN	Specific focus on Commission's international negotiating team gender balance	GMN member reports back to committee; biennial exchange of views
AGRI	Agriculture and Rural Development	September 2024	Include women farmers in CAP work; gender-disaggregated data in agriculture; research on women in rural areas and decision-making	Gender balance in staff recruitment and training; gender balance in report distribution and missions; annual overview of gender balance in events	Annual gender balance scoreboard for committee activities; focus on CAP and rural development	Annual assessment by GMN member; secretariat support
BUDG	Budgets	December 2024	Integrate gender perspective in EU annual budgets and MFF; gender-disaggregated data in budget programmes; promote gender budgeting methodology; consult FEMM Standing Rapporteur on budget;	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers; share good practice on gender budgeting from Member States; annual stocktaking event on gender topic	Annual gender equality stocktaking event; explicit focus on EU budget gender budgeting methodology (Art. 33 Financial Regulation)	Annual report by gender mainstreaming rapporteurs; cooperation with FEMM

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
			Art. 33 Financial Regulation methodology			
CONT	Budgetary Control	March 2025	Assess gender mainstreaming in discharge procedure; screen ECA reports from gender perspective; call for gender-disaggregated data; scrutinise Commission's gender budgeting methodology	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in rapporteurs, missions, hearings; detailed 15-indicator gender balance scoreboard	15-indicator gender balance scoreboard covering all aspects of committee work	Dedicated CONT secretariat staff member for monitoring; annual report; 15 tracking indicators
CULT	Culture and Education	March 2017	Gender perspective in reports/opinions; gender-sensitive indicators in monitoring; take FEMM position into account; focus on gender-inclusive digital education	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers/experts; circulate gender best practice to members	Emphasis on gender-disaggregated data in cultural and educational statistics	Regular monitoring by GMN member and secretariat
DEVE	Development	April 2016	Monitor EU GAP II implementation (yearly exchange with Commission/EEAS); monitor GAP III implementation; scrutinise implementing/delegated acts under DCI/humanitarian aid from gender perspective; call for gender-sensitive indicators in development programmes	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers; include women's civil society organisations in mission programmes	Explicit annual oversight of EU GAP II with Commission and EEAS; scrutiny of humanitarian aid regulations from gender perspective	Regular monitoring; yearly Commission/EEAS exchange of views
DROI	Human Rights (Subcommittee)	10th legislature	Women's rights as distinct DROI priority for 10th term; reflect women's rights backsliding in reports; assess gender equality situation per country/region; include LGBTIQ+ considerations	Inclusive speaking time allocation; gender balance in staff; gender-neutral language; gender balance in missions	Women's rights formally designated as a DROI general priority for the 10th legislature; explicit attention to LGBTIQ+ and intersectional discrimination	Annual assessment by GMN members with recommendations to coordinators
ECON	Economic and Monetary Affairs	2020	Monitor gender balance in ECB, ESRB, ESA senior positions; include gender equality in corporate governance work; flag potential gender issues to rapporteurs	Strive to improve gender balance of expert representation in hearings; six-monthly update to coordinators on expert gender balance	Specific focus on gender balance in senior appointments to ECB, ESRB and ESAs; structured	Coordinators monitor semi-annually

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
					dialogue with Commission on corporate governance	
EMPL	Employment and Social Affairs	May 2018	Gender perspective in all reports and opinions to eliminate structural discrimination and stereotypes; commission gender impact studies; hearings with gender mainstreaming experts; statistical overview of report distribution by gender	Mandatory basic training for all secretariat staff; additional training for members, assistants, and political group staff; gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers, rapporteurships, delegations; political groups nominate two candidates per hearing	Tiered mandatory training system (basic mandatory for all staff, advanced for GMN responsible); political group coordination mechanism requiring two candidates per hearing; secretariat surveys to verify implementation	Secretariat conducts surveys on implementation; statistical overview of report distribution; Policy Department consulted to verify gender equality perspective in reports
ENVI	Environment, Climate and Food Safety	January 2017	Include gender aspects in reports (reproductive health, endocrine disruptors, climate justice, gender footprints); promote gender exchanges in hearings; include gender in study terms of reference	Gender balance in appointments/reports/missions; gender balance in hearing speakers; gender-neutral language; training for assistants and staff	Specific identification of environmental gender issues: endocrine disruptors, clinical trial gender bias, climate justice, gender differences in carbon footprints	Coordinated by GMN member
FISC	Tax Matters (Subcommittee)	9th and 10th legislature	Gender perspective in tax policy reports; gender-sensitive indicators in tax monitoring; share best practice from Member States on gender-equal tax policies; include LGBTQ+ considerations	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers; annual gender balance scoreboard; coordinate with FEMM and GMN	Explicit follow-up on EP 2019 resolution on gender equality and taxation; annual gender balance scoreboard; social media campaigns during Gender Equality Week	Annual report by the members responsible for GM; annual gender balance scoreboard; dedicated secretariat monitor
IMCO	Internal Market and Consumer Protection	February 2017	Gender perspective in internal market and consumer protection legislation; address gender inequalities in digital single market, e-commerce, and e-retail; gender-sensitive indicators and	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in staff selection, rapporteurships, speakers, delegations; distribute gender best practice; training for members and staff	Operational gender mainstreaming checklist for hearings (gender balance of speakers, gender-neutral	Member responsible for GM monitors with secretariat support; gender mainstreaming checklist applied at each hearing

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
			disaggregated data; LGBTI considerations		language, gender issues considered); specific focus on digital single market gender gaps; early LGBTI inclusion (2017); explicit consumer protection gender equality commitment	
INTA	International Trade	10th legislature	Gender focus in trade reports/opinions; call for gender-disaggregated trade data; check gender chapters in existing EU FTAs; request gender balance in trade negotiating teams; WTO gender-responsive rules; annual debate on gender mainstreaming in trade	Sexism-free committee space; gender-neutral language; no gender stereotypes in visual communications; gender balance in speakers and missions; trainings on gender mainstreaming	Annual debate on gender mainstreaming in trade; specific call for gender chapters in all EU FTAs; Buenos Aires 2017 Declaration follow-up	INTA GMN member reports to GMN and committee; supported by secretariat
ITRE	Industry, Research and Energy	June 2025	Gender perspective in STEM, energy and digital reports; contact European Commission CNECT Equality Coordinator; high-level expert panels on women in digital/STEM/energy; annual International Women's Day event; communication campaigns on digital legislative files	Gender-neutral language; gender balance in speakers and delegations; cooperate with EIGE, FEMM, HLG	Social media and communication strategy: videos and campaigns before key digital legislative files; International Women's Day event and International Day of Women and Girls in Science campaigns	ITRE standing rapporteur reviews implementation; secretariat support
JURI	Legal Affairs	March 2017 (but updated in December 2025; latest version not available)	Gender perspective in legal affairs reports and opinions to avoid gender disadvantages; gender-disaggregated data in statistics; studies on gender equality in legal areas; hearings with gender mainstreaming actors; missions to gender equality actors in legal affairs field	Structured training with knowledge-sharing routines within secretariat; gender balance in rapporteurships, staff, delegations; gender-balanced staff recruitment with legal affairs gender expertise as qualification; gender-neutral language	Knowledge-sharing routines to spread GMN training within the secretariat; missions specifically include visits to actors working on gender equality in legal affairs (already implemented at adoption); harm-	Secretariat surveys on report distribution by gender; analysis of whether reports include explicit gender equality perspective

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
					avoidance framing: reports must avoid disadvantages based on gender	
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	9th and 10th legislature	Gender perspective in all LIBE reports and opinions; gender budgeting analysis for budgetary/financial dossiers (with EPRS support); annual public hearing on gender topic in AFSJ; request disaggregated data	Chair ensures gender-balanced speaking time; gender balance in bureau, rapporteurs, delegations, hearings; gender-neutral language; mandatory gender mainstreaming training for all members and staff at least once per term	Mandatory gender training for all members and staff (at least once per term); explicit anti-sexism rule with Chair and Vice-Chairs responsible; gender budgeting analysis for all major financial dossiers	GMP attends coordinator meetings on gender topics; adviser tasked with monitoring; annual report to committee
PECH	Fisheries	9th and 10th legislature	Gender analysis in all fisheries reports and opinions; promote women's work and wellbeing in fisheries; initiative report on gender representation in fisheries sector; annual request to European Ombudsman for gender equality data	Gender balance in speaker selection; gender-balanced administrative and interpretation staff; invite political groups to propose co-chair model; gender-balanced composition in missions	Proposes a regulation penalising political groups (5 % deduction) not meeting gender criteria; proposes co-chair model for committees; specific attention to LGBTI rights in delegation missions	Cooperation with European Ombudsman; EIGE cooperation; interinstitutional mechanism with DG MARE
PETI	Petitions	June 2017	Develop statistics on petitions with gender/LGBTI dimension using ePetition tool; include gender section in annual PETI report; always strive for gender-balanced expert panels	Gender-neutral language; gender-balanced delegations and working groups; distribute gender-related materials to members, assistants and staff	Specific tool development for ePetition system to identify petitions with gender/LGBTI dimension; gender evaluation integrated into annual PETI activity report	Include gender action plan evaluation in annual PETI report
REGI	Regional Development	June 2020	Include gender dimension in regional development policy proposals; check Commission impact assessments for gender;	Gender-balanced bureau (invite political groups to propose male and female candidates for Chair/Vice-Chair); gender balance in rapporteurs, speaking time, missions; work-life balance	Detailed work-life balance measures for staff; proposes gender-balanced	Biennial exchange of views on gender mainstreaming; new mandate designation of GMN member;

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
			request European Ombudsman data on gender equality complaints; request Commission gender balance in expert groups	measures for staff; coordinate with EIGE, FEMM, GMN	Bureau with male and female candidates for all leadership positions; regular Ombudsman data requests	Ombudsman regular data requests
SANT	Public Health	2025	Gender perspective in health reports and opinions; request gender-disaggregated health data; promote gender exchange in hearings; attend FEMM gender mainstreaming amendments	Gender balance in bureau and rapporteur appointments; gender balance in speakers at hearings/workshops; gender-neutral language; circulate gender materials; gender-disaggregated data in statistics; systematic cooperation with FEMM on health-related gender issues; gender-balanced expert selection for public health hearings	Focus on sex-disaggregated data in health monitoring and evaluation; specific reference to gender dimensions in health policy design; dedicated public consultations on women's health; joint parliamentary hearings to bridge health and gender policy	Annual report to committee by GMN members; secretariat support; GMN member reporting; integration of findings from externally commissioned gender-health research
SEDE	Security and Defence	9th legislature	Promote WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325; call on EU executives to apply gender perspective in CSDP actions; address gender violence as instrument of war; increase women in CSDP missions; analyse NATO best practice on WPS	Gender balance in appointments/reports/missions; gender balance in speakers/experts (at least one woman on every panel); gender-neutral language; gender mainstreaming training; coordinate with FEMM, GMN, HLG, UN Women, EEAS gender advisor, EIGE	Explicitly addresses gender violence as an instrument of war; specific mandate to increase women in CSDP missions; analysis of NATO WPS best practice; requirement for at least one woman on every expert panel	Periodic reporting to GMN by member responsible
TRAN	Transport and Tourism	May 2015	Study gender differences in travel patterns and transport decisionmaking; research differentiated traffic safety solutions; initiative report on equal representation in transport	Gender balance in appointments, reports, missions, hearings; gender-neutral language; training; distribute gender best practice; gather gender-differentiated transport statistics; tackle pay gaps in transport	Specific research mandate on women's and men's different travel patterns; differentiated traffic safety solutions; tackling gender	Standard reporting GMN

Code	Committee	Year	Key policy actions	Organisational actions	Unique initiatives	Monitoring
					pay gaps in transport sector; adopted in 2015	

ANNEX IV – Gender mainstreaming actions in the committee action plans

European Parliament – 23 committees or subcommittees · Rows = actions · Columns = committees

Legend: ✓ Explicitly committed ⚪ Partially / implicitly mentioned — Not included in the action plan

ACTION / COMMITTEE →	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FISC	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PETI	REGI	SANT	SEDE	TRAN
1. POLICY WORK																							
Gender perspective integrated into reports and opinions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Check Commission impact assessments for gender dimension	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	⚪	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—
Request/use gender-disaggregated data	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	⚪	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓
Gender-sensitive quantitative/qualitative indicators	—	⚪	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	⚪	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—
Take FEMM committee position/amendments into account	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
Commission requested to ensure gender balance in negotiating/expert teams	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—
Gender budgeting: integrate into budget/financial work	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sector-specific gender research (women in fisheries, STEM, rural areas, transport, defence)	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓
Annual/periodic debate or hearing on gender topic in committee's area	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	⚪	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	⚪	—	—	—
Monitor implementation of external gender agenda (GAP II, WPS/UNSCR 1325, Buenos Aires Declaration)	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Include LGBTIQ+ / intersectional considerations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	⚪	—
2. ORGANISATION OF WORK																							
Gender-neutral language in all committee documents	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender balance in distribution of rapporteurships and opinions	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender balance in expert speakers at hearings and workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

ACTION / COMMITTEE →	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FISC	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PETI	REGI	SANT	SEDE	TRAN
Gender balance in composition of delegations and missions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓
Include women's organisations in mission programmes	ⓘ	✓	—	ⓘ	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	ⓘ	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—
Gender mainstreaming training for members, assistants and staff	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓
Mandatory training for all members and staff (at least once per term)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	ⓘ	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gender-balanced secretariat staff recruitment	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	✓
Gender-balanced bureau (Chair/Vice-Chair)	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—
Gender-balanced speaking time in committee debates	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Sexism/racism-free committee space (explicit rule)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Staff work-life balance measures (flexible working, time limits on evening meetings, etc.)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—
3. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION																							
Active GMN member participates in Gender Mainstreaming Network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinate with FEMM committee	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	✓	—
Cooperate with EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality)	✓	✓	✓	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	✓	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	✓	—
Engage High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—
Interinstitutional / inter-committee cooperation mechanism	—	ⓘ	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	ⓘ	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—
Circulate gender best practice and written material to members and staff	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	✓	—	—	ⓘ	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	ⓘ	—	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	✓
4. MONITORING AND REPORTING																							
Annual report by GMN member to committee	ⓘ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ⓘ	ⓘ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	ⓘ	✓	—	✓	ⓘ	✓	ⓘ	—
Dedicated secretariat official responsible for monitoring	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	ⓘ	—	✓	✓	—	—	ⓘ	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Quantitative gender balance scoreboard / tracking indicators	—	ⓘ	—	—	✓	—	—	—	✓	✓	—	✓	—	—	—	ⓘ	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—
Regular request to European Ombudsman for gender equality data	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	✓	—	—	—

ACTION / COMMITTEE →	AFCO	AFET	AGRI	BUDG	CONT	CULT	DEVE	DROI	ECON	EMPL	ENVI	FISC	IMCO	INTA	ITRE	JURI	LIBE	PECH	PETI	REGI	SANT	SEDE	TRAN
Gender action plan evaluation included in annual committee report	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	ⓘ	—	—	✓	—	—	ⓘ	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—
5. UNIQUE / INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES																							
Social media / communication campaigns on gender topics	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Annual International Women's Day event	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Initiative report on gender equality in the committee's sector	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	ⓘ	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	✓
ePetition tool adapted to flag gender/LGBTI petitions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—
Proposed regulation penalising political groups for gender non-compliance	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—
Co-chair model proposed (one male, one female Chair per committee)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—
Monitor gender balance in ECB/ESRB/ESA senior appointments	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Promote increase of women in CSDP missions and operations	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Address gender-based violence as instrument of war	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Gender parity: require gender chapters in all EU FTAs	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
At least one woman expert required on every panel	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	✓	—

Committee Key: AFCO=Constitutional Affairs · AFET=Foreign Affairs · AGRI=Agriculture & Rural Dev. · BUDG=Budgets · CONT=Budgetary Control · CULT=Culture & Education · DEVE=Development · DROI=Human Rights (Sub.) · ECON=Economic & Monetary Affairs · EMPL=Employment & Social Affairs · ENVI=Environment, Climate & Food Safety · FISC=Tax Matters (Sub.) · IMCO=Internal Market & Consumer Protection · INTA=International Trade · ITRE=Industry, Research & Energy · JURI=Legal Affairs · LIBE=Civil Liberties, Justice & Home Affairs · PECH=Fisheries · PETI=Petitions · REGI=Regional Development · SANT=Public Health · SEDE=Security & Defence · TRAN=Transport & Tourism

ANNEX V – Main results of EPRS committee questionnaire

Committee	Monitoring of gender action plan	Update of gender action plan	Gender balance in panels in 2024/2025 or 2025
AFET	Annual report to coordinators	No (as AFET action plan is from May 2025)	2025: 9 public hearings: 39.39 % female speakers (13 out of 33) 1 interparliamentary committee meeting (ICM): 50 % female speakers (1 out of 2) <u>Total (2025)</u>: 40 % female speakers (14 out of 35)
AFCO	AFCO Secretariat keeps record of gender-balance related statistics for committee activities	N/A* (decision to update AFCO gender action plan from 2018 belongs to committee Chair and coordinators)	10th term (2024–2026): 4 public hearings: 27.27 % female speakers (9 out of 33) 2 workshops: 20 % female speakers (1 out of 5) 1 ICM: 50 % female speakers (1 out of 2) Total (2024–2026): 27.5 % female speakers (11 out of 40)
AGRI	AGRI is issuing bi-annual gender mainstreaming reports (while latest version covers 2022–2023, AGRI secretariat is currently working on the report for 2024–2025)	No update envisaged for the time being (as AGRI gender action plan was last updated in 2024)	10th term (2024/2025): 6 public hearings: 38.71 % female speakers (12 out of 31) <u>Total (10th term)</u>: 38.71 % female speakers (12 out of 31)
BUDG	Annual stocktaking report to BUDG members (presented by Standing Rapporteur on GM)	N/A	2025: 4 public hearings: 58.8 % female speakers (10 out of 17) 2 workshops: 33.3 % female speakers (3 out of 9) <u>Total (2025)</u>: 50 % female speakers (13 out of 26)
CONT	After conclusion of 2024 discharge, CONT will take stock of implementation of its gender action plan	CONT gender action plan is from March 2025	10th term (2024/2025): 5 public hearings: 46.15 % female speakers (12 out of 26) 2 workshops: 58.33 % of female speakers (7 out of 12) 1 conference: 27.27 % of female speakers (3 out of 11) <u>Total (10th term)</u>: 44.9 % female speakers (22 out of 49)

Committee	Monitoring of gender action plan	Update of gender action plan	Gender balance in panels in 2024/2025 or 2025
CULT	Implementation of CULT gender action plan is followed as far as possible	No (CULT gender action plan is from 2017)	10th term (2024/2025): 6 public hearings: 46.15 % female speakers (12 out of 26, including 2 male EC speakers) 1 conference: 46.15 % of female speakers (6 out of 13, including 1 female EC speaker) <u>Total (10th term):</u> 46.2 % female speakers (18 out of 39)
DEVE	N/A	Willingness to update DEVE gender action plan further to adoption of EP GAP (DEVE gender action plan is from 2016)	10th term (2024/2025): 6 public hearings: 47.82 % female speakers (11 out of 23) <u>Total (10th term):</u> 47.82 % female speakers (11 out of 23)
ECON	ECON pays attention to implementation of its gender action plan but no official tracking nor formal reports/studies	Yes, intended in principle (ECON gender action plan is from 2018)	10th term (2024/2025)*** 9 public hearings (excluding the annual hearing with European Supervisory Authorities): 42 % female speakers (12 out of 30) <u>Total (10th term):</u> 42 % of female speakers (12 out of 30)
EMPL	No specific monitoring tools yet but might be considered for the future	Yes, review and possible update of EMPL gender action plan planned (action plan is from 2018)	10th term (2024/2025): 16 public hearings, ICMs and other exchanges of views: 43 % female speakers (31 out of 72) <u>Total (10th term):</u> 43 % female speakers (31 out of 72)
ENVI	N/A	Possible update of ENVI gender action plan in coming months (knowing that ENVI gender action plan reflected in its working methods that are updated regularly, most recently in Sept. 2024)	2025 (NB: no public hearings were held in 2024): 4 public hearings: 33 % female speakers (8 out of 24) <u>Total (2025):</u> 33 % female speakers (8 out of 24)
IMCO	N/A	Update of IMCO gender action plan in coming months (IMCO gender action plan is from 2017)	2025 (NB: no public hearings were held in 2024): 11 public hearings: 49 % female speakers (40 out of 82)

Committee	Monitoring of gender action plan	Update of gender action plan	Gender balance in panels in 2024/2025 or 2025
			<u>Total (2025)</u> : 49 % female speakers (40 out of 82)
INTA	INTA monitors implementation of its gender action plan through monitoring tables (updated regularly and sent to coordinators for information)	No (INTA gender action plan was updated in June 2025 and will apply for the full 10th term)	10th term (2024-2026): 7 public hearings: 51.52 % female speakers (17 out of 33) 2 workshops: 0 % (0 out of 4) <u>Total (10th term)</u> : 49.95 % female speakers (17 out of 37)
ITRE	Implementation of ITRE gender action plan followed by standing rapporteur on gender mainstreaming, supported by ITRE secretariat	No (as ITRE gender action plan was updated in June 2025)	N/A (while ITRE consistently seeks to ensure a gender-balanced representation among invited speakers in hearings, workshops and other events, in line with its action plan, it does not collect quantitative data on the gender distribution of external speakers across its activities)
JURI	Implementation of JURI gender action plan followed by standing rapporteur on gender mainstreaming, supported by JURI secretariat JURI draws up monitoring reports on the implementation of its gender action plan, and includes gender in policy studies such as the 2021 EP study , Women on Boards Policies and the Effects on Corporate Governance	JURI gender action plan from 2017 was updated in December 2025	2025: 7 public hearings: 59.45 % female speakers (22 out of 37) 4 workshops: 58.33 % female speakers (21 out of 36) <u>Total (2025)</u> : 58.9 % female speakers (43 out of 73)
LIBE	LIBE regularly draws up monitoring reports on the implementation of its gender action plan (see 2024 LIBE study and 2023 working document on LIBE action plan on Gender Mainstreaming: Annual Report on the state of implementation 2022)	N/A (LIBE gender action plan is from 9th term)	2025: 34 public hearings: 42.57 % female speakers (43 out of 101) 2 ICMs: 37.5 % female speakers (9 out of 24) 16 meetings of Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group (DRFMG): 33.76 % female speakers (26 out of 77) <u>Total (2025)</u> : 38.6 % female speakers (78 out of 202)

Committee	Monitoring of gender action plan	Update of gender action plan	Gender balance in panels in 2024/2025 or 2025
PECH	PECH gender action plan envisages continuous efforts to assess gender equality in its activities (such as gender balance in reports, opinions, hearings and missions), but no official monitoring mechanism has been established	PECH is open to update its gender action plan (PECH gender action plan was adopted in the 9th term).	PECH does not currently have a comprehensive statistical overview of gender balance among invited speakers in hearings, workshops and conferences, but always seeks to ensure a gender-balanced representation, and is open to develop a more systematic way to collect and analyse such data to ensure compliance with the EP GAP.
PETI	N/A	N/A (PETI gender action plan is from 2017)	10th term (2024-2/2026): 6 public hearings: 51 % of female speakers (19 out of 37, including 2 male EC speakers) 5 workshops: 68 % of female speakers (13 out of 19) ** <u>Total (10th term):</u> 57.14 % female speakers (32 out of 56)
REGI	N/A	No update of REGI gender action plan envisaged this year (as action plan from 2020 was re-approved by REGI coordinators in September 2024)	2025: 5 public hearings: 42.85 % female speakers (9 out of 21) <u>Total (2025):</u> 42.85 % female speakers (9 out of 21)
SANT	No specific tools for monitoring implementation of SANT gender action plan	No (SANT gender action plan is from 2025)	N/A (while gender balance in panels of hearings, etc. is always discussed, SANT does not collect such data)
SEDE	No specific monitoring tool (but continuous monitoring of implementation of WPS agenda in SEDE activities, also by SEDE representative in GMN)	As SEDE's gender action plan is from the 9th term, SEDE is open to update it (without any precise date envisaged yet)	N/A (while SEDE is well aware of the importance of gender balance and is trying to ensure it in the gender expertise provided, it is currently not tracking such data)
TRAN	No continuous monitoring (secretariat compiles data when prompted)	No (in 2024, there were some preliminary but inconclusive discussions to update the TRAN gender action plan)	2025: 4 public hearings: 37 % female speakers (10 out of 27) 1 workshop: 25 % female speakers (1 out of 4)

Committee	Monitoring of gender action plan	Update of gender action plan	Gender balance in panels in 2024/2025 or 2025
			32 exchanges of views: 35.48 % female speakers (22 out of 62) <u>Total (2025):</u> 36.66 % female speakers (33 out of 90)
DROI	Annual assessment report to coordinators (including qualitative and quantitative analysis of the action plan's implementation)	No (as DROI gender action plan covering the 10th term is from 2024)	<u>Total (9/2024 – 8/2025):</u> 55 % female speakers (55 out of 131 speakers in public hearings, workshops and other events held in the above-mentioned period)
FISC	Annual implementation report and scoreboard (giving an overview of how gender mainstreaming is integrated into different areas of FISC work and of gender distribution in hearings, as well as exchanges of views, regarding (shadow) rapporteurships and missions)	N/A (FISC gender action plan is from 2024 and covers the 10th term)	7/2024 – 2/2025: *** 17 public hearings: 47.46 % female speakers (28 out of 59) 1 tax symposium: 43.48 % female speakers (10 out of 23) <u>Total (7/2024 – 2/2025):</u> 46 % female speakers (38 out of 82)
EUDS	N/A	N/A	<u>Total (EUDS Mandate/Feb 2025 – current):</u> 47.46 % female speakers (28 out of 5911 in 11 public hearings)
HOUS	N/A	N/A	<u>Total (2 – 12/2025): ****</u> 41 % female speakers (50 out of 122 in 21 public hearings and workshops held in the above-mentioned period)

* 'N/A' means that no specific information was provided in reply to the questionnaire or, in the case of the special committees (EUDS, HOUS), that the question raised in the questionnaire was not applicable (due to the fact that special committees are temporary in nature and therefore do not have specific gender action plans to be monitored or updated).

** The gender breakdown is incomplete for some PETI workshops; this should be kept in mind when examining these statistics.

*** These numbers do not include institutional speakers from the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, EPPO, etc.

**** The committee specifically indicated that the gender classification used was based solely on publicly available online and internal resources. Speakers were not asked about their gender identity. Accordingly, the following limitations should be kept in mind when looking at these statistics.

- Some individuals may have changed their gender identity since the sources consulted were published.

- Non-binary, gender-fluid, or otherwise gender-diverse individuals may have been inadvertently misclassified or excluded from this binary categorisation.
- This analysis reflects a binary framework (female/male) and does not fully capture the diversity of gender identities.

ANNEX VI – Political vs administrative levels – Work–life balance tools

Dimension	Political level (MEPs)	Administrative level (EP staff)
Status	Personal/non-transferable mandate; strict personal vote	Staff Regulations employment; flexible delegation
Maternity/parental leave	Justified absence (3+6 months pre/post-birth, Article 31 Bureau Decision 2008); no paternity/parental (national fallback)	20–24 weeks maternity; 10–24 days paternity/birth; 6 months parental; full pay/allowances (female-predominant uptake)
Core functions during leave	No proxy/remote for family reasons; proxy voting amendment agreed by Council (17 March 2026), EP consent and national ratification by all 27 Member States pending	Telework/part-time ensure continuity (differentiated gender patterns)
Part-time/flexible hours	Informal only	Right to request (entitlement for care); 50 %+ hours (82.6 % of part-time beneficiaries women vs 17.4 % men, 2025).
Telework	Exceptional/institutional only	1–2 days/week standard/extended; medical/family add-ons (women > maxi; men > standard)
Governance	FEMM/HLG; Council unanimity needed	EIDU/COPEC; annual data tracking (structured usage patterns)

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Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (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 2026-2030, 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 the European Parliament formally launched gender mainstreaming activities within the institution, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee) has been regularly preparing monitoring reports on the state of gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament. The subsequent resolutions, adopted in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2016, 2019 and 2022, are part of a sustained series of activities implemented over the past two decades to support and intensify gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament. This effort was significantly reinforced by the adoption of a gender action plan and a roadmap for its implementation in July 2020 and April 2021 respectively, and their renewal in October 2025 and April 2026.

This study, which updates a previous edition of September 2021, 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 provides an updated overview of the concept of gender mainstreaming and the tools available to implement it; analyses Parliament's current gender mainstreaming policy, with particular focus on the 2022 resolution on the issue, Parliament's 2020 and 2025 gender action plans and their accompanying roadmaps, as well as committee gender action plans; and examines gender mainstreaming both in European Parliament policymaking and in terms of representation, institutional culture and working environment within the institution. It further reviews gender mainstreaming practices in other EU institutions and national parliaments to place the European Parliament's efforts in a broader comparative context.
