



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2018)0239

Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020

European Parliament resolution of 31 May 2018 on the implementation of the Joint Staff Working Document (SWD(2015)0182) – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020 (2017/2012(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the United Nations Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),
- having regard to the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No 197) and the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No 201),
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention of 11 May 2011 on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),
- having regard to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) report of 2012 entitled 'Marrying Too Young – End Child Marriage',
- having regard to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action from the 4th World Conference, and the outcomes of the review conferences,
- having regard to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of the review conferences,
- having regard to United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security Nos 1325 (2000), 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2010), 1960 (2011), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015),
- having regard to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development of July 2015,
- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015 and which entered into force on 1 January 2016, and in particular to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5, 8 and 10,

- having regard to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative,
- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on the European Union,
- having regard to Articles 8 and 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan 2010-2015 (GAP I),
- having regard to the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020), adopted by the Council on 7 March 2011,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 September 2010 entitled ‘Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015’ (COM(2010)0491),
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 28 April 2015 by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament and the Council, entitled ‘Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019), Keeping Human Rights at the Heart of the EU Agenda of 28 April 2015’ (JOIN(2015)0016),
- having regard of the Council conclusions on Gender in Development of 26 May 2015,
- having regard to the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP II), adopted by the Council on 26 October 2015, and to the Annual Implementation report 2016 thereof, published on 29 August 2017 by the Commission and the High Representative,
- having regard to the Commission’s Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 of 3 December 2015,
- having regard to the EU Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy of June 2016,
- having regard to Article 208 TFEU establishing the principle of Policy Coherence for Development, requiring that the objectives of development cooperation be taken into account in policies that are likely to affect developing countries,
- having regard to the new European Consensus on Development,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the renewal of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2017 on the Revision of the European Consensus on Development²,
- having regard to the European Implementation Assessment of the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, published in October 2017 by the European Parliamentary Research Service,

¹ OJ C 349, 17.10.2017, p. 50.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0026.

- having regard to the report by COC Nederland on the implementation of the EU LGBTI Guidelines¹,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality under Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A8-0167/2018),
- A. whereas the principle of equality between women and men is a core value of the EU and is enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and gender mainstreaming is thus to be implemented and integrated in all EU activities and policies so as to deliver equality in practice and achieve sustainable development; whereas equality and women’s empowerment form a precondition for achieving post-2015 sustainable development goals, as well as being a self-standing human rights issue that should be pursued independently of its benefits for development and growth;
 - B. whereas the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5) is to achieve gender equality and to empower all women and girls worldwide, and whereas SDG5 must be mainstreamed into the entire 2030 agenda so as to achieve progress across all SDGs and targets;
 - C. whereas no development strategy can be effective unless women and girls play a central role;
 - D. whereas the original Gender Action Plan I (2010-2015) (GAP I) brought some progress, but was also marked by a number of shortcomings: narrow scope, absence of gender-responsive budgeting, weak understanding of the gender equality framework by the EU delegations, lack of commitment on the part of the EU leadership, and lack of institutional architecture and incentives to motivate and adequately support staff;
 - E. whereas Parliament called in its resolution of 8 October 2015 for these shortcomings to be corrected and for a number of other changes to be adopted, including widening the scope of the GAP and increasing management-level responsibility for gender equality;
 - F. whereas 2018 marks the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and whereas the principle of equality forms the core of the human rights vision of the 1945 UN Charter, which states that human rights and fundamental freedoms should apply to all human beings ‘without discrimination on the basis of race, sex, language or religion’;
 - G. whereas the new Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020) (GAP II) emerged from Parliament’s recommendations with a focus on shifting EU institutional culture at headquarters and delegation levels in order to create a systemic change in how the EU

¹ https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/report_on_the_implementation_of_the_eu_lgbti_guidelines_2016.pdf

approaches gender, as well as on transforming women's and girls' lives through four pivotal areas;

- H. whereas the four pivotal areas created within GAP II are: ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity; promoting the economic and social rights and the empowerment of girls and women; strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation; and a horizontal pillar consisting of shifting the institutional culture of the Commission services and the EEAS in order to more effectively deliver on the EU's commitments;
- I. whereas in its resolution of 3 October 2017 on addressing shrinking civil society space in developing countries¹, Parliament stresses the high importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through the EU's external relations;
- J. whereas it is difficult to determine the budget allocated to actions pursuing gender equality, as gender mainstreaming is not yet internalised in all budget allocations and spending decisions as part of a gender budgeting methodology; whereas according to the Commission, EU financial commitments to gender equality have increased, but the Commission's and the EEAS's human resource capacity to manage this increasing volume of work has not;
- K. whereas women's participation in economic activities is crucial for sustainable development and economic growth;
- L. whereas gender equality tends to be absent from programme and project monitoring systems and evaluation processes, and whereas gender analysis is scarcely used to inform country strategy objectives, programmes, projects and dialogue;
- M. whereas one year on from the adoption of GAP II it is too early to undertake a full assessment of its impact; whereas an interval of at least three years of policy intervention or implementation is recommended before an evaluation of an EU action is undertaken; whereas the objective of this resolution is therefore not to debate the objectives of GAP II, but to consider how the stated objectives have been implemented in its first year and to recommend actions to improve implementation in future years;
- N. whereas the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been signed by 195 countries, is legally binding, and is an essential instrument to deal with the vulnerability of girls and their need for special protection and care;
- O. whereas the reinstatement and extension of the Mexico City Policy or so-called 'Global Gag' rule, cutting off US global health assistance from organisations that provide girls and women with family planning and sexual and reproductive health services, is a matter of serious concern; whereas programmes which address HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, Zika response efforts and other health and disease areas will be affected, as will organisations that provide, counsel for, refer to or advocate for abortion services – even if they are doing so with their own, non-US funds and even if abortion is legal in their country;
- P. whereas the EU delegations and missions are on the frontline of implementing GAP II

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0365.

in partner countries, and the leadership and knowledge of delegation and mission heads and staff play a significant role in ensuring the successful implementation of GAP II; whereas there is still a gender barrier impeding women's access to leadership and management posts in EU delegations;

- Q. whereas only a third of all EU delegations work on LGBTI human rights; whereas the EU's LGBTI Guidelines are not being applied uniformly; whereas their implementation depends strongly on the knowledge and interest of individual ambassadors instead of a structural approach;
- R. whereas men and women are affected differently in conflict, post-conflict and fragile situations; whereas women are not only victims but also agents of positive change, who could contribute to conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction; whereas women and girls might experience different forms of discrimination and be more exposed to poverty; whereas one in three women in the world is likely to experience physical and sexual violence at some point in her lifetime; whereas 14 million girls are forced into marriage every year;
1. Notes the release in August 2017 of the first annual implementation report for the year 2016, which demonstrates a clear momentum towards the implementation of GAP II;
 2. Stresses that one year on since the adoption of GAP II, it is still early days, but the general direction of travel is welcome and a number of positive trends have been noted; also notes, however, a number of challenges as regards the reporting and implementation of key priorities and gender-related SDGs and the monitoring of progress on all objectives, as well as in terms of mainstreaming gender into sector policy dialogue;
 3. Notes that GAP II has been produced in the form of a Joint Staff Working Document; calls on the Commission to demonstrate its firm commitment by upgrading it into a future communication on gender equality;
 4. Notes that the use of cutting-edge policy research and robust evidence are critical ways of building knowledge on gender equality and women's empowerment, in order to develop policies and strategies that strengthen the capacity of the Union to make gender equality a lived reality; asks the EEAS and the Commission, therefore, to pay special attention to their goal of ensuring that an independent evaluation is carried out of the implementation of the measures set out in Annex 1 of GAP II;
 5. Notes that GAP II provides a comprehensive agenda that spans the entire EU foreign policy agenda, and welcomes in this regard the choice of three thematic pillars, namely ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity, promoting the economic and social rights and the empowerment of girls and women, and strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation; stresses that these pillars are intended to tackle the main factors and causes involved in discrimination and marginalisation; also takes note of the horizontal pillar consisting of shifting the institutional culture of the Commission's services and the EEAS in order to more effectively deliver on the EU's commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment through the Union's external relations;
 6. Points out that the chief contributory factors and causes leading to discrimination and

marginalisation include: sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, including harmful traditions such as child marriage and FGM; inadequate access to basic sectors and social services, for example health, education, water, sanitation, and nutrition; difficulties in gaining access to sexual and reproductive health; and unequal participation in public and private institutions, as well as in political decision-making and in peace processes;

7. Notes that gender inequality intersects with, and exacerbates, other forms of inequality and that an understanding of that point has to guide the selection of priorities and commitments for action;
8. Calls for a greater focus in the implementation of GAP II on girls and women who suffer additional discrimination on account of ethnicity, sexuality, disability, caste, or age, and for data to be broken down accordingly;
9. Maintains that greater inclusion of women in the labour market, better support for female entrepreneurship, safeguarding equal opportunities and equal pay for men and women, and promoting work-life balance are key factors for achieving long-term inclusive economic growth, combating inequalities, and encouraging women's financial independence;
10. Welcomes the strong monitoring and accountability framework established to measure and track progress in GAP II, and acknowledges that its increased ambition provides a real opportunity for the EU to advance equality between women and men, as well as the empowerment of girls and women in the field of external relations; recognises, however, the need for deeper understanding and harmonisation of this framework in order to properly assess the impacts of EU actions;
11. Recognises the importance of strengthening policies and measures promoting education for girls, and its implications in terms of their health and economic empowerment; points out that girls and young women are particularly vulnerable and that specific focus is needed to ensure their access to all levels of education; calls in this regard for the consideration of a range of opportunities in the field of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM subjects);
12. Points out that greater involvement of both public and private sectors is crucial for advancing women's rights and their economic empowerment across different economic sectors; emphasises the need for women's inclusion and representation in emerging economic fields that are important for sustainable development, including ICT; stresses that business has an important role to play in enhancing women's rights; calls, in this context, for increased support to be given to local SMEs, especially to female entrepreneurs, so as to enable them to gain from private sector-led growth;
13. Stresses the need to empower rural women by improving their access to land, water, education and training, markets and financial services;
14. Calls on the EU to promote the increased participation of women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes and EU military and civil crisis management missions;

Achievements of GAP II

15. Welcomes the expansion of the gender action plan to all EU external services and to the

Member States, and notes the progress in shifting EU institutional culture at headquarters and delegation levels, which is key to strengthening the effectiveness of EU initiatives and their impact on gender equality; also welcomes the compulsory requirement introduced by GAP II for all EU actors to report annually on the progress delivered in at least one thematic area; reiterates, however, the need for strengthened leadership and for continued improvements in coherence and coordination among EU institutions and Member States while using the existing structures and budget;

16. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's services and the EEAS, as well as 81 % of EU delegations and 22 Member States, submitted gender reports for 2016; while aware that there might be exceptional circumstances explaining delegations not reporting, expects the delegations and the Member States to step up their efforts, and wishes to see continued progress year on year towards all reports being submitted; notes that there are still significant disparities between Member States; recalls that full compliance in GAP reporting and implementation will be key to attaining the GAP II target of mainstreaming gender actions across 85 % of all new initiatives by 2020;
17. Welcomes the practical steps towards a culture shift and the introduction of a mandatory gender analysis for all new external actions undertaken, thus placing the overall responsibility for reporting on the GAP with the heads of the EU delegations (EUDs), as well as the increased number of high-level staff involved in the implementation of the GAP II and the appointment of an increasing number of gender champions and gender focal points in the EUDs, although as things stand there is a gender focal point in only half of the EUDs; calls for more management-level time to be dedicated to gender issues and for those delegations which have still not done so to create their gender focal points; stresses that all gender focal points should be given sufficient time and capacity to carry out their tasks;
18. Regrets that, according to an EEAS report of November 2016, only a few EU CSDP missions provide training on sexual or gender-based harassment, and notes that in 2015 no cases of sexual or gender-based harassment, abuse or violence were reported by CSDP missions; stresses the importance of applying a zero-tolerance policy regarding cases of sexual or gender-based harassment and of supporting institutional structures focused on preventing sexual or gender-based violence; calls on the EEAS and the Member States to support all efforts to combat sexual or gender-based violence in international peacekeeping operations and to ensure that whistle-blowers and victims are effectively protected;
19. Welcomes the increased number of actions with a gender equality focus (G1 and G2 markers), and the requirement for delegations to justify projects having no such focus; underscores that overall increases in such projects should not come at the expense of specific gender-targeted projects (G2 marker), recommends, therefore, a specific target for G2 projects; notes that it is unclear how targeted (G2) and mainstreamed actions (G1) should complement each other; calls for further efforts to clarify gender mainstreaming and to increase targeted actions;
20. Notes that only a few recurrent components of gender equality are applied in programming and project selection; calls on implementing actors to use the whole range of gender equality areas;
21. Condemns all forms of violence against women and girls, and all forms of gender-based

violence, including trafficking in human beings, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, honour crimes, FGM and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war; calls on the EU and all Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention, as the first legally binding international instrument seeking to prevent and combat violence against women;

22. Regrets that women who have experienced or are experiencing violence are unequally supported against male violence, in terms of information on, access to and provision of shelters, support services and rights, helplines, rape crisis centres, etc.; emphasises that the Istanbul Convention should place its core focus on male violence against women, while also addressing all gender-based violence by tackling violence motivated by the intersection of various grounds, including sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; underlines the importance of strategic measures to proactively combat gender stereotypes and counter patterns of patriarchy, racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia, as well as gender normativity and heteronormativity;
23. Strongly regrets that current programming appears to sideline the gender dimension in situations of crisis or difficult conflicts, which, among other outcomes, has meant that girls and women who are victims of war rape do not have access to non-discriminatory care, and specifically to comprehensive medical care; calls on the Commission to systematically implement GAP II in humanitarian settings where it must provide non-discriminatory access to medical services, and to actively inform its humanitarian partners that the Commission's policy foresees that, in cases where pregnancy threatens a woman's or a girl's life or causes suffering, international humanitarian law may justify offering a safe abortion; urges that the provision of humanitarian aid by the EU and the Member States should not be subject to restrictions imposed by other partner donors regarding necessary medical treatment, including access to safe abortion for women and girls who are victims of rape in armed conflicts; welcomes the fact that many EUDs have focused on combating violence against women; insists in this context on the need to ensure the protection of the right to life and dignity of all women and girls by actively combating harmful practices such as gendercide; highlights that the use of rape as a weapon of war and oppression must be eliminated, and that the EU must bring pressure to bear on third-country governments and all stakeholders implicated in regions where such gender-based violence takes place, in order to bring the practice to an end, bring perpetrators to justice and work with survivors, affected women and communities to help them heal and recover;
24. Emphasises that universal respect for and access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) contributes to the achievement of all the health-related SDGs, such as prenatal care and measures to avoid high-risk births and reduce infant and child mortality; points out that access to family planning, maternal health services and safe and legal abortion services are important elements for saving women's lives; regrets, however, that priorities related to family planning or reproductive health are neglected in terms of both funding and programmes; is concerned that that no EUDs in the Middle East and North Africa or the Europe and Central Asia regions chose any SRHR-related indicator despite the important needs regarding SRHR in those regions; calls on EUDs in those regions to re-evaluate these worrying figures to determine whether they may be linked to misreporting or if there is a need to complement current programmes with targeted actions on SRHR, taking advantage of the mid-term review of the programming; underlines that the dedicated chapter on SRHR must be retained in the annual report so as to ensure that the transformative impact of GAP II is properly assessed and that progress on SRHR is appropriately captured by the methodological approach of the report;

25. Notes that the report shows the need for stronger action on SRHR as a precondition for gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the need for appropriate tools to measure progress with regard to ensuring universal access to SRHR, as agreed in accordance with the EU's commitment to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences, as per SDG 5.6; also recalls, in this regard, SDGs 3.7 and 5.3;
26. Regrets that in a context of shrinking civil society space, Objective 18 focusing on women's rights organisations and defenders of women's human rights is receiving little attention; is concerned that the thematic priority relating to political and civil rights, and specifically the participation of women and girls in political and civil rights, has not been emphasised in GAP II implementation;

Key recommendations for the Commission/EEAS

27. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to take further steps to facilitate exchange of best practice in improving gender equality and gender mainstreaming between delegations and units, such as establishing and promoting a network of gender focal points and sharing more positive examples of successful practice, including but not limited to programme formulation, implementation and systemic gender analysis, and to ensure that the gender analyses effectively impact the programmes implemented by the EUDs;
28. Points out that significant progress has been made in different priority areas, but with some recording slower advancement than might have been expected; calls on the Commission to examine through a study the reasons why certain thematic objectives and priority areas are more often taken into consideration by the EU delegations, with greater progress being achieved;
29. Calls for the strengthening of the human resource capacity dedicated to gender mainstreaming within the Commission's services, through tailored training and reorganisation of existing structures and by taking on additional staff; suggests that enhanced staff training, aimed especially at senior officials in management roles and including specific training on gender issues within more vulnerable groups as well as a gender focal point per unit and a gender coordination group across units in DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG ECHO and the EEAS would better help to mainstream gender across the external policy units; considers that improvements and further specialisation in training on gender equality issues should also be made available to local partners at government level and among non-state actors, including NGOs;
30. Stresses the need to ensure coherence and complementarity among all existing EU external instruments and policies in their relation to gender mainstreaming, including the new Consensus on Development, the EU resource package on gender mainstreaming in development cooperation, and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy;
31. Welcomes the guidance note of 8 March 2016 that outlines the resources and tools for the implementation of GAP II applying to DG DEVCO and the EEAS, and calls for the provision of a guidance note for all the European services involved in the implementation of GAP II;

32. Welcomes the launching of the joint EU-UN global gender initiative ('Spotlight Initiative'), in line with the objective of GAP II of addressing sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices such as FGM, early forced marriage, or human trafficking; notes, however, that the Spotlight Initiative addresses mainly elements of the agenda which are already shared concerns globally, as proven by the implementation report, and therefore underlines the need to advance gender equality in a more comprehensive way, through an adequate mix of programmes and modalities; calls for the Spotlight Initiative to be resourced with additional funds not already earmarked to gender equality; calls the Commission to use the mid-term review of its international cooperation programmes for increasing funding of the Gender Resource Package in order to realise the ambitious goals of GAP II, including streamlining gender into bilateral cooperation and through thematic programmes;
33. Stresses that the principle of equality between women and men must be promoted and mainstreamed by the EU in its external relations; notes, however, that the link between trade and gender is not sufficiently addressed in GAP II, and more generally that gender mainstreaming remains a multidimensional challenge; recalls, in this respect, that the negotiation of trade agreements, and especially of Trade and Sustainable Development chapters which cover labour rights, represents an important tool for advancing equality between women and men, and empowering women in third countries; calls, therefore, on DG TRADE to take steps to implement GAP II in its work and for all EU trade agreements to include girls' and women's rights and gender equality, as drivers of economic growth, and to respect the ILO core conventions on gender and labour rights, including on forced and child labour; recalls the need to monitor the impact of EU trade policies on women's empowerment and gender equality during their implementation;
34. Notes that the empowerment of girls and women is one of the stated goals of EU external action through the Global Strategy for Common Foreign and Security Policy; notes that the role of women in peace negotiations and mediation as taken into consideration in GAP II is not sufficient; highlights the important role of women in promoting dialogue and building trust, building coalitions for peace and bringing different perspectives on what peace and security mean, in particular in conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction; notes that the promotion of women's rights in crisis or conflict-ridden countries fosters stronger and more resilient communities; welcomes the designation within the EEAS of a Principal Advisor on Gender and on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; encourages the strengthening of EU Member State and international action through the UN in order to more effectively address the impact of conflict and post-conflict situations on women and girls; calls on the Commission to support the new global Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network; notes the importance of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, and the importance of finding the best possible ways for the EU to implement this resolution;
35. Recalls its request, in respect of trade negotiations with Chile, for the inclusion of a specific chapter on trade, gender equality and the empowerment of women; emphasises that the proposal to include such a dedicated chapter in a trade agreement is now becoming reality for the first time; stresses the need to be informed of the content of this chapter and to evaluate it with a view to subsequently taking decisions at a more general level; urges the EU to introduce cross-cutting measures in trade agreements in order to promote gender equality, exchange best practices and enable women to derive greater

benefit from trade agreements;

36. Calls for sex-disaggregated data to be gathered in the key sectors most affected by trade agreements, in order to provide a useful tool for predicting as accurately as possible how women's lives might be affected and counteracting any adverse impacts; also calls for a mechanism to be set up expressly for the purpose of monitoring and strengthening gender policy under trade agreements;
37. Welcomes the thematic priority of economic and social empowerment and the analysis of barriers in accessing productive resources, including land, and the corresponding activities; reiterates that while the EU has committed to investing in gender equality in agriculture, women farmers are not primary targets of agricultural official development assistance (ODA), and calls on the EU and the Member States to allocate more resources to women farmers, in line with Objective 5 of GAP II;
38. Strongly encourages the institutions to substantially improve the proportion of women in terms of assignment to, and particularly headship of, EUDs, there currently being 28 women delegation heads out of 138, as well as that of women heads of mission (there are now 5 out of 17); calls, therefore, on the Commission and the EEAS to efficiently implement targeted policies to facilitate women's access to leadership and managerial posts; points out the low presence of women in decision-making, which indicates the existence of invisible barriers preventing them from occupying positions of greater responsibility;
39. Stresses that the success of GAP II will ultimately depend on the long-term and consistent engagement of high-level political and senior across all EU actors, as well as on the availability of sufficient human and financial resources for its implementation and on adapting EU efforts to local realities in the recipient countries; welcomes, in this regard, the positive engagement from the Commissioner responsible for international cooperation and development and encourages more commitment from other Commissioners; notes that more political leadership from the High Representative and managers is needed to increase resources and accountability and to coordinate and strengthen this engagement in the coming years; calls for all EU actors to make use of the Gender Resource Package in order to ensure that gender mainstreaming is consistently applied so as to realise the ambitious goals of GAP II;
40. Strongly condemns the reinstatement and expansion of the Mexico City Policy (the so-called 'Global Gag Rule') by the US in January 2017 and its impact on women's and girls' global healthcare and rights; reiterates its call on the EU and its Member States to proactively support women's rights worldwide and to significantly increase both national and EU development funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights, in particular for access to family planning and safe and legal abortion without discrimination, with a view to reducing the financing gap left by the US in this area;
41. Calls on the EEAS to improve the implementation of the EU LGBTI Guidelines and to ensure that EUDs consult regularly with LGBTI organisations and inform them on what is being done on LGBTI rights, so as to ensure that the level of engagement and the actions taken depend on the needs of the LGBTI community in a country and not on the personal commitment of delegation staff, and to coordinate strategy and action not only with national embassies of EU Member States, but also with embassies of third countries and with international organisations such as the UN;

42. Notes that adequate funding for gender equality in external relations will be necessary to sustain political commitment to this goal; stresses that current funding for gender equality and women's empowerment actions remains inadequate and urges that this situation be reversed in the next MFF;

Key recommendations for EU delegations

43. Welcomes the flexibility GAP II gives delegations to choose priorities according to their country context, since this allows a case-by-case analysis and assessment of the specific needs of each country or region, thus addressing the particular challenge of enhancing women's rights and their economic empowerment; recommends, nonetheless, that delegations should be encouraged to have shown progress on at least one priority per thematic pillar by the end of GAP II, so as to ensure a more even coverage of the different thematic areas, such as strengthening policies and measures promoting education for girls and their implications in terms of health and economic empowerment; urges focusing on the situation of women and girls in conflict-affected areas as well as on gender-based violence and most particularly on the use of rape as a weapon of war; further recalls that EU-funded actions and projects should systematically aim to tackle gender inequalities and discrimination;
44. Recalls the obligation under the Treaties to apply gender mainstreaming in all EU activities, including political dialogues and across all sectorial policy dialogues and in areas such as energy, agriculture, transport, education, and public administration which have so far received less attention; insists that gender mainstreaming should be integrated in national plans and policy frameworks in order to ensure the ownership and responsibility of partner countries, thus recalling the importance of supporting development projects promoted by women from the countries in question; points to the importance of working with partner countries on gender-sensitive national budgeting;
45. Calls for a dedicated budget line on gender equality to be established in order to address in a more prominent way the level of political participation and representation of women, in the EU's neighbouring countries and within the EU; stresses that these programmes should be fully integrated with the targets and programmes of UN Women and should set measurable targets to regularly track progress on gender equality in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, strengthen cooperation and engage more with the governments of partner countries, with a view to achieving better results more rapidly, in the context of bilateral partnership and association agreements;
46. Notes that gender mainstreaming training is taking place only in some delegations and that a large proportion of the staff trained had contractual status with temporary assignments; calls on the EUDs to fix this situation;
47. Stresses the importance, during political dialogue, of improving women's participation in education, economic activities, employment and business as a priority means of improving women's position in society;
48. Underlines the importance of conducting systematic and evidence-based gender analysis, using, where possible, data disaggregated for sex and age, in consultation and with the participation of local civil society organisations (CSOs) and women's groups, human rights organisations and local and regional authorities for the selection and assessment of the choice of objectives, the means of implementation and monitoring

sources, and the efficacy and sustainability of the outcomes; welcomes the fact that 42 country gender analyses have been completed, encourages rapid completion for all other countries and a far greater use of gender equality criteria in programme and project monitoring systems and evaluation processes, and calls for gender analysis to play a role in defining country strategy objectives, programmes, projects and dialogue; encourages the EU to explore possibilities for sharing, managing and updating gender analysis in a more systematic manner in order to help improve coordination and not limit gender analysis to obvious policy fields like education and maternal health, but to consider as well policy fields which are currently wrongly considered to be gender-neutral, notably agriculture, climate and energy;

49. Notes that the Commission, in its Joint Staff Working Document on the 2016-2020 framework, has recognised that the EU's financial investment in gender equality has not been systematically measured; calls on the Commission to adopt a clear results-driven approach that sets high standards for reporting, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, and to promote evidence-based decision-making in order to use the available financial resources more efficiently and effectively; requests a report to determine exactly how much funding has been specifically committed to gender mainstreaming and identify the most noteworthy goals achieved;
50. Stresses the need to further improve data collection at national level and develop specific indicators with targets based on those indicators, as well as the importance of their monitoring being aligned with the SDG framework;
51. Recalls that women's rights are human rights, and encourages further work with regard to addressing social and cultural norms and gender stereotypes in societies through greater cooperation with civil society and grassroots organisations advocating women's rights and empowerment, in particular in contexts of state fragility and conflict and emergency situations; believes that creating new networks or developing existing ones and involving all key actors, including the private sector, is essential, as well as the development of public-private partnerships, if possible; stresses the need for a growing role of women in local communities and NGOs in monitoring and holding local authorities accountable; maintains that rather than representing women and girls as 'vulnerable', emphasis should be laid on their role as agents of change and development and as agents for peace in conflict resolution; stresses that the inclusion and active involvement of boys and men are necessary to ensure real equality between women and men; encourages, therefore, a broad-based education for behavioural change regarding gender-based violence, engaging all men and boys and communities; stresses that social norms with regard to women's and men's roles place women in a situation of greater vulnerability, particularly in relation to their sexual and reproductive health, and lead to harmful practices such as FGM or child, early and forced marriages;
52. Calls on the EU to promote legal frameworks and strategies that encourage a greater and more effective participation of women in peacekeeping, peace-building and mediation processes and EU military and civil crisis management missions, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security, with a particular focus on conflict-related sexual violence; to this end, considers that gender-sensitive conflict analysis, in consultation with community-based actors and women's organisations, may allow a better understanding of the role of women in conflict;

53. Stresses the need for budgetary allocations for child marriage prevention programmes that aim to create an environment where girls can achieve their full potential, including by means of education, social and economic programmes for out-of-school girls, child protection schemes, girls' and women's shelters, legal counselling and psychological support;
54. Stresses the importance of increasing the involvement, by regular dialogue and coordination, of CSOs and other stakeholders such as human rights, health, or environmental actors, with EUDs, as such cooperation will contribute to improving the visibility and implementation of GAP II, thereby increasing public accountability as regards progress on gender equality;
55. Is concerned that insufficient attention is being paid to the protection of women's rights defenders and women's rights organisations, considering that they are currently under huge pressure due to the shrinking civic space in many regions; is equally concerned that the thematic priority of political and civil rights, and specifically the participation of women and girls in political and civil rights, has not been emphasised in GAP II implementation;
56. Calls on the EUDs to ensure effective and regular data collection on violence against women and girls, to draw up country-specific recommendations, and to promote the establishment of protective mechanisms and adequate support structures for victims;

Key recommendations for the European Parliament

57. Encourages Parliament's delegations, in their work with their partner countries, to systematically enquire about gender programming, the results of gender analysis, and work on promoting gender equality as well as women's empowerment, and to include meetings with women's organisations in their mission programmes; calls on Parliament to ensure a better gender balance in the membership of its delegations;
58. Calls for country gender analysis reports to be made available by the Commission and included in the background briefings for all delegations of Parliament to third countries;
59. Recommends that Parliament should periodically examine future GAP II implementation reports, possibly every two years;

Key recommendations for future reporting

60. Underlines the need for a simplified method of reporting which keeps bureaucracy to a minimum; calls for future implementation reports to be finalised and released within a shorter timeframe; calls for the development of on-line reporting, clear templates and the issuing of a guidebook to facilitate the work of the delegations;
61. Emphasises the need for women's inclusion and representation in economic fields that are important for sustainable development; stresses that business has an important role to play in enhancing women's rights; calls, in this context, for increased support to be given to local SMEs, especially to female entrepreneurs, via micro-loans, so as to enable them to gain from private sector-led growth;
62. Stresses the need to support the strengthening of national statistical capacities and mechanisms in partner countries, effectively coordinating financial and technical

assistance in order to allow better measurement, monitoring and management of the results obtained in the field of gender mainstreaming;

63. Calls on the Commission to collect gender-disaggregated data in the implementation of EU-financed programmes on women's empowerment;
64. Points to the need not just for sound gender mainstreaming policies, but also for reports on specific practical actions – particularly in sensitive areas such as sexual and reproductive health – with which to gauge the real impact on the lives of women and girls, and of men and boys as well;
65. Recalls, however, that gendering data is more than collecting gender-disaggregated data, and calls for the improvement of data collection in order to enable a qualitative analysis of women's situation, for example regarding working conditions;
66. Stresses the need to improve the reliability of gender analysis by harmonising the data collected by EU delegations in such a way as to make it comparable;
67. Points out that it is necessary not only to consult international and national partners, academia, think-tanks and women's organisations, but also to ensure that their input and expertise can feed into the monitoring of EU-financed activities and programmes on gender equality;
68. Recalls that it is the obligation of the EU and its Member States to respect the rights of girls and women as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers when implementing and developing EU migration policy; calls, in this context, for the reassessment of the engagement of the EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia with the Libyan coastguards, in view of the reports of systematic sexual violence against women in the detention centres on Libyan soil;
69. Notes that the concept of gender mainstreaming is still often poorly understood, and that there is a need for better qualitative reporting which would allow evaluation of the implementation of GAP within existing policies and projects; points to the need for tangible goals and activities linked to clear, specific reference points and a strict schedule, and for qualitative assessment of data showing the real impact that measures implemented have had on recipient countries, the object being to ensure that GAP II serves as a genuine prioritising and policy implementation mechanism, as opposed to a mere in-house reporting tool;

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