

Women's rights: MEPs call for action to fight backlash against gender equality

- MEPs set their priorities for the upcoming UN Commission on the Status of Women
- Call for the EU to take strong action against all measures undermining women's rights

Ahead of the 64th UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW64) in New York in March, Parliament spelled out its priorities on Thursday.

In a resolution adopted by 463 votes in favour, 108 against and 50 abstentions, MEPs deplore that many of the challenges identified by the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) 25 years ago are still relevant today.

They call on the Council to ensure a unified EU position and act to counter the backlash against gender equality and all measures undermining women's rights.

Setting out their priorities for the upcoming [UNCSW session](#) in March, MEPs call for measures boosting women's economic and political empowerment:

- greater inclusion of women in the labour market;
- more support for female entrepreneurship;
- close the gender pay gap (16%) and pension gap (37%);
- favour domestic and care responsibilities being shared equally;
- promote education for girls and encourage greater participation in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) careers;
- promote gender-balanced representation at all levels of decision-making, and
- unblock the "Women on Boards Directive" in the Council.

To step up protection of women, the EU should:

- urgently conclude the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women;
- allocate adequate resources to combat gender-based violence and protect victims, and
- protect and promote the rights of groups experiencing multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination, e.g. women with disabilities, women of colour, migrant women and LGBTIQ people.

The EU must act globally by:

- promoting and supporting the inclusion of a specific gender chapter in all future EU trade and investment agreements;
- condemning the US 'global gag' rule, which cuts US funding for international organisations if they provide or lobby for abortion services;
- significantly supporting funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and
- promoting greater participation of women in climate action, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and mediation processes.

Background

The [Beijing Declaration](#) was adopted by the UN at the end of the 4th World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 to promulgate a set of principles on the equality of men and women. The Platform for Action called for strategic actions in areas such as economy, education, health, violence and decision-making.

Upcoming EP events: “The long walk towards gender equality: what remains to be done?”

Journalists are invited to a seminar on 4 March in Brussels dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. The next day, the EP Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee will organise a meeting with national MPs on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration. A delegation of Women's Rights MEPs will attend the UNCSW64 in New York, 16-18 March.

Further information

[Adopted text \(13.02.2020\)](#)

[Video recording of the debate on the priorities for UNCSW64 \(12.02.2020\)](#)

[Video recording of the debate on the Gender Equality Strategy \(12.02.2020\)](#)

[EP Research Service - Towards a new Gender Equality Strategy \(05.02.2020\)](#)

[EP Research Service - Violence against women in the EU: state of play \(22.11.2019\)](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

[Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality](#)

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