Gender equality is one of the European Union’s core values and it has committed to ‘gender mainstreaming’, meaning that, in principle, all EU policies must take both women’s and men’s perspectives into consideration. However, much more work needs to be done to achieve gender equality. This year’s International Women’s Day is a key moment to take stock of the progress achieved so far, since 2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995. In this pivotal text, governments of all 189 signatory countries, including the EU Member States and the EU itself, committed to work towards gender equality across twelve crucial fields. This year also marks a new departure for gender equality since a new EU strategy, which will guide EU action in this area up to 2024, is expected in March.

The Beijing Platform for Action – 25 year review and future priorities
Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves, February 2020
The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is considered the most comprehensive global policy framework for the rights of women. Its concrete measures and measurable outcomes across a range of issues affecting women and girls are regularly monitored and give an indication of progress towards gender equality, both globally and in the EU.

Beijing Platform for Action – 25 years on
Infographic by Giulio Sabbati, Martina Prpic and Rosamund Shreeves, February 2020

Towards a new EU gender equality strategy
‘At a glance’ note by Rosamund Shreeves February 2020
Full gender equality is far from being achieved, and this has implications for the lives and life chances of individual women, girls, boys and men, the communities they live in and the EU as a whole. The European Commission has included a proposal for a new EU Strategy on Gender Equality in its work programme for 2020.

Gender mainstreaming in the EU: State of play
‘At a glance’ note by Rosamund Shreeves, January 2019
When the European Union endorsed ‘gender mainstreaming’ as its official policy approach to gender equality, it was seen as a potentially revolutionary means of accelerating progress towards equality. Two decades on, concerns remain about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels.

Women in politics in the EU: State of play
Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves and Martina Prpic, with Eulalia Claros, March 2019
The EU has committed to achieving gender balance in political representation. Since EU policies can influence the lives of women and men in different ways, it is important that both sexes have equal representation in posts that can make a difference.

Women in parliaments
Infographic by Martina Prpic, Giulio Sabbati and Samy Chahri, February 2020
This infographic shows the proportion of women in parliaments around the world, compares representation of women in national parliaments and the European Parliament (EP) and shows the proportion of women in the EP.
by political group. It also gives an overview of female Members in the EP by Member State and the gender quotas applicable to the 2019 elections.

Women in regional and local government: still a long way to achieve parity
Briefing by Vasileios Margaras, March 2020
Local and regional government ought to constitute an advantageous sphere for women: a space where they can easily participate in decision-making without having to sacrifice their multiple family, social and career roles. Nevertheless, data show that it is not always easy for women to participate in these structures.

Teaching: A woman’s world
Infographic by Ivana Katsarova and Samy Chahri, March 2020
In all EU countries, men dominate certain professions, such as engineering and technology. In contrast, a number of jobs are still considered to be for ‘women only’. Teaching is marked by a particularly sharp and growing gender gap. In 2017, 72 % of the nearly 6 million people working as school teachers in the EU were women.

Gender equality in the EU’s digital and media sectors
Infographic by Giulio Sabbati, Martina Prpic and Rosamund Shreeves, March 2018
The digital revolution is also a social process, and one which is not gender neutral. It can be a way for women to access new opportunities or it can reinforce existing gender inequalities. Media monitoring shows that there has been progress, but women continue to be under-represented as producers of media content and under- and misrepresented in media coverage.

Women in film: Still fighting the celluloid ceiling
Infographic by Ivana Katsarova and Samy Chahri, February 2020
Like the media, cinema has an important influence on societal norms, values and attitudes. Yet gender stereotypes still shape the way that women are represented, as illustrated in their depiction on screen. Increasing the presence of women in key positions in the film industry could help to ensure that on-screen stories are more reflective of women’s lives and perspectives.

Gender equality in sports: (Slowly) changing the game
Infographic by Ivana Katsarova and Samy Chahri, March 2020
Sport has traditionally been dominated by men, both in terms of participation and governance, and research shows that it remains one of the least gender-balanced areas of social power. Even though women’s presence and involvement in sport have progressively evolved, girls and women across the world still get fewer opportunities and less investment, training and corporate attention when they play sport.

Violence against women in the EU: State of play
Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves and Martina Prpic, November 2019
Violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of gender-based discrimination. It takes many forms and has a major impact on victims and the society. Estimates of the scale of the problem are alarming. The EU is tackling the issue in various ways, but has no specific legislation. Parliament's efforts have focused on strengthening EU policy in the area.