

## Inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting

### 5 March 2020

2020 marks 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action, the most comprehensive global agenda for girls and women in all areas of life. Although progress has been made, real change has been slow and to date not a single country has achieved gender equality. In the current political and economic environment, growing nationalism and populism in certain countries, such as the US, and pushback against ensuring full rights for women have been powered by the highest levels of governments.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 - endorsed by 189 governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China and powered by the 21st century women's movement - is the most visionary agenda for the human rights of women and girls. Governments committed to take strategic, bold action in 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child.

This thematic briefing, requested by the Committee of Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the context of International Women's Day 2020, concentrates on women and the economy, violence against women, women and climate change, and the backlash against women's rights and gender equality.

### Women and the economy

*"Despite important progress in promoting gender equality, there remains an urgent need to address structural barriers to women's economic empowerment and full inclusion in economic activity... If the world is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we need a quantum leap in women's economic empowerment."* - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, January 2016

Women's economic empowerment requires the creation of decent, quality work opportunities with fair pay, and an increase in women's decision making power. This is vital for fulfilling women's rights, reducing poverty and achieving broader development goals. However, progress in making women equal to men in the economy is slow, and women are still more likely than men to live in poverty.

Investing in women can provide a great stimulus to economic growth, known as the "gender dividend". Women perform 66% of the world's work, produce 50% of the food, but earn only 10% of the income and own 1-2% of the property. Women and girls suffer disproportionately from the burden of extreme poverty. They make up 70% of the people living on less than a dollar a day. Outside of the agricultural sector, in both



developed and developing countries, women still average less than 78% of the wages given to men for the same work. Globally, women represent 49.6% of the total population, but only 40.8% of the total workforce in the formal sector.

At the current rate of progress, it will take 170 years for women and men to be employed at the same rates, paid the same for equal work, and have the same levels of seniority. A study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) shows that improving gender equality could lead to substantial long-term gains for the EU economy, increasing the EU GDP per capita by as much as 9.6 % by 2050.

Evidence shows that although gender equality supports economic growth, not all economic growth supports gender equality. The current economic model is concentrating wealth at the top of the economy, causing economic inequality and leaving the poorest women and girls behind. Inequalities also persist in laws and regulations. There are 155 countries which have at least one law which results in women having fewer economic rights than men. There is also a failure to recognise that economic policy impacts women and girls differently from men and boys.

In the EU labour market gender employment and pay gaps persist despite the recent recovery. The employment rate of women rose by about four percentage points since 2013 to 66.5% in 2017. It remained 11.5 percentage points below that of men, despite women outperforming men in education (EIGE).

This continues to contribute to substantial income inequalities, with the gender pay gap standing at 16.2% in 2017 and the gender pension gap reaching almost 40% (European Commission). Some of the causes underlying women's disadvantaged situation in the economy are:

- Women are less likely than men to be in paid work, education or training. This inequality is reflected in their professional and payment status.
- Women still do not earn the same wages as men and do not have the same access to, or control over, productive resources such as land.
- Women not only possess a smaller sum of financial assets, but they also hold less property, less business assets, less insurance entitlements, less pension savings, and less stock options.
- Women's time spent on unpaid labour, caring and household activities severely limits their capacity to participate in income generating activities. In all regions of the world, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work.
- Tax and benefits systems often disincentivise women to enter the labour market.
- Austerity measures following the 2008 economic crisis negatively affected public spending and public services used by women, as well as public employment where women are overrepresented.
- Women are more likely to work in the informal sector or in part-time, temporary or precarious jobs where earnings are lower and opportunities to access better jobs and social security coverage are lacking. The disproportionately high share of part-time work results in lower earnings and increases the risk of poverty, especially in marginal part-time work.
- Women re-entering the labour market after maternity leave face a particular risk of being trapped in low paid part-time work with detrimental effects regarding professional qualification, long-term income opportunities, sufficient social security insurance, and pension levels.

- Women are at a higher risk of losing their jobs due to automation than men. Women who are less educated, older and employed in low-skilled clerical, services and sales positions are most at risk in this respect.
- Generally, women have little power and control over decisions that affect them and/or their resources, be it in their households, communities or societies as a whole.
- Women participate less in formal politics than men and are underrepresented at most levels of decision-making.
- Gender gaps in education lead to higher inequality in opportunity.
- The socioeconomic inequalities experienced by women over the course of their life results in lower pension levels. The gender pension gap, comparing the average pensions between women and men, amounts to 39% on average across all EU Member States.

## Violence against women

Violence against women affects at least one in three women and can take multiple forms. Cyber violence and online hate speech are emerging concerns stemming from the increased use of social media platforms. No legislative measures are currently in place at EU level to protect women from gender-based violence. The lack of a comprehensive instrument means there is no uniform definition of violence against women, children and girls. The potential efficiency gains of an EU policy framework is estimated at EUR 7 billion per year.

In 2011, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). It prescribes the criminalisation of various forms of violence against women and highlights a range of measures Member States should adopt to meet their obligations. At present, the levels of protection and prevention differ considerably between Member States.

Violence against women (VaW) is a violation of the human rights of women, as well as a form of discrimination. It may entail physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, in either their private or public lives. VaW is destructive not only for survivors and their families, but also for the broader community. EIGE estimates a loss of EUR 225 billion every year, with an estimated one-third of these costs deriving from the use of services relating to health, social and justice sectors. High rates of underreporting mean that the costs of violence against women are likely to be significantly higher than estimated, as many women never seek help or report the violence to authorities.

In 2014, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) undertook a survey to shed light on the prevalence of this problem in the EU. The findings were stark, showing that at least one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. The survey also showed that only between 10% and 30% of women report the most serious incident of violence they experience to the police.

The under-reporting of VaW constitutes a serious issue, both in terms of estimating the scale of the problem - crucial for developing policies and allocating funds - and because it evidences the severe lack of support and even safety of women, which prevents them from disclosing instances of violence and puts them at risk of further victimisation. Even where such instances are reported, difficulties in calculating the precise numbers of women affected by violence stem from differences in definitions and criminalisation of forms of violence against women. In addition, data are collected in different ways in the Member States, complicating

comparisons. There is a clear need for further measures to promote the reporting of VaW, particularly at national level, in order to identify and address the problem.

Violence against women can take many forms. Sexual harassment - whether in the workplace or in other social settings - is the most common form of VaW experienced by women in Europe, with one in two women having experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15. Almost as common is psychological abuse at the hands of an intimate partner, with 43% of women in Europe suffering from this form of abuse. Intimate partner violence (IPV), which occurs between current or former partners, can also include physical, sexual and economic abuse and is considered a widespread problem in Europe, with one in five women in (or previously in) a relationship having experienced this type of violence.

Physical violence, such as pushing and shoving, slapping and punching, grabbing or pulling a woman's hair, burning, suffocating, stabbing and shooting a woman, affects 31% of women in Europe, both within and outside relationships (current or former). Many women also report having suffered from some form of sexual violence in their adult lives, with an estimated 11% affected, and as many as one in 20 women in Europe reporting having been raped since the age of 15. The stigma that continues to be attached to sexual violence causes feelings of shame in the victim and subsequent failure to report, thus the statistics on the prevalence of sexual violence in Europe are likely to be conservative.

Another form of VaW showing high prevalence rates in Europe is stalking, with an average of 18% of women reporting having experienced stalking in one form or another. This chiefly consists of threatening or offensive telephone calls, emails and text messages, being followed, damage to property and, especially with respect to young women, stalking by means of the Internet. The wide reach of the Internet and the increased use of social media platforms has given rise to new forms of VaW – cyber violence and hate speech online. Acts falling under this category may include the sharing of private photos or information and hacking, as well as rape and death threats. Research shows that women are specifically targeted by cyber violence and that age and gender are significant factors in the prevalence of cyber violence. Young women are particularly at risk of sexual harassment and stalking, with an estimated one in 10 girls having already experienced some form of cyber violence by age 15.

Other forms of VaW, while not new, are particularly under-reported and suffer from a general lack of data. The transnational nature of human trafficking, for example, frustrates estimates of the numbers of women affected every year, as does the challenges for victims to speak out or be identified. Nevertheless, in 2013, an estimated minimum of 5189 women and girls were victims of trafficking in the EU, although this number must be understood to be conservative.

Although it is recognised that data collection for certain types of violence linked to traditional and/or cultural practices is notoriously difficult – such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced (early) marriages, honour crimes and forced abortion or sterilisation – these are also understood to be occurring at the European level, without sufficient national-level knowledge and expertise for prevention, support and data collection. There is thus an urgent need to close these gaps and adopt measures to gain a better overview of the prevalence of these types of violence in Europe and to ensure more effective prevention and protection.

Young persons and children (including boys) are also at risk of physical violence, emotional abuse or neglect, and sexual abuse. Girls are three times more at risk of being subjected to sexual abuse, and they are also in greater danger of other types of violence, including forced early marriage, trafficking, FGM and honour

crimes. Over one-third of women in Europe report having experienced violence in childhood, whether physical, sexual or psychological, with 12% indicating that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before they were 15 years old. Again, these results should be understood to be conservative, owing to the under-reporting of experiences of violence in childhood, as well as the fact that this issue is both sensitive and susceptible to lack of recall.

Certain members of society often face significantly higher risk of certain types of violence, due to special vulnerabilities relating to their age, ability, location, occupation, sexual orientation, health profile or minority status. For example, a 2012 study found that almost 70% of female migrants and refugees entering the EU had experienced sexual violence.

Older women are particularly vulnerable to psychological and economic violence, women with disabilities are at least three times more likely to experience violence than non-disabled women, rural and economically disadvantaged women are also at higher risk of violence, and verbal and physical violence against Muslim women in Europe is on the rise. While it is recognised that preventative and support measures must take the specific needs of particularly vulnerable women (due to their likelihood of facing multiple discrimination) into account, few specialised measures or support services exist at national level, with fewer than one-third of all Member States providing at least one such service.

Other figures highlighting the scale and severity of VaW, as well as the need for measures on prevention, protection, and the support of victims, include the following:

- Across all forms of violence, including stalking, the overall percentage of women who have experienced violence is as high as 45%.
- The 2014 FRA survey shows that in the EU, around 13 million women experienced physical violence and 3.7 million women experienced sexual violence over the course of one year.
- 70% of women who have experienced violence suffer short and/or long-term physical and/or psychological health consequences.
- VaW is one of the main killers of women worldwide, with as many as 47% of all female victims of homicide being killed by an intimate partner or family member. In Europe, this number is even higher, at 55% (2012).
- 37% of women victims of sexual and/or physical violence have been victims of several types of perpetrators at some point in their lives.

## Women and climate change

Men and women are differently affected by climate change. This is mainly the case in poor and developing countries. Women are the worst affected by climate change because they are overrepresented amongst the world's poorest, which reduces their possibilities to protect themselves and their families against the negative consequences of climate change. They are more vulnerable, especially in developing countries, because they do not have the same access to resources, education, job opportunities and land as men.

Women are still responsible for the majority of caring and household tasks and the production of food for the family. Social and cultural norms also influence women's vulnerability to climate change due to the gendered division of labour, mobility, roles in the household and participation in political and economic decision-making. Consequently, existing gender inequality makes women more vulnerable than men in relation to the consequences of global warming. If these differences between men and women are not taken

into account in climate policies, there is a risk that there will even be an increase in gender inequality because climate change will make the position of women even more difficult.

There are a number of problems women encounter due to climate change:

- **Water:** In many countries, women are responsible for collecting water for the family. If there is less water due to drought, women have to travel longer distances in order to find water. This will influence the workload of women and the time they have for other tasks or work. There is also a risk that young girls have to quit school in order to help their mothers to collect water. Due to climate change, there can be a lack of (clean) water which can have an influence on hygiene for women. When there is a lack of water, water will be first used as drinking water and for cooking. There will be less water or only old water available for cleaning and sanitation, which influences the hygienic living conditions of people. This can increase the risk of disease.

- **Agriculture:** Climate change can influence agriculture, for example via a temperature rise, more extreme weather, drought etc. Crops and livestock can be very sensitive to changes in the climate. This can have the effect that it is no longer possible to produce a certain crop in a certain geographical area. In developing countries, many women work in agriculture or are responsible for producing food for the family. With this local agriculture women usually depend on natural resources. Due to a lack of economic resources, these women cannot invest in an irrigation system which makes them dependent on the rain. The accessibility of natural resources is influenced by climate change. If the harvest fails or diminishes due to climate change, these women will earn less money and will also have less food for their families. This will also influence the health of women and their families.

- **Health:** The rise in temperature, but also floods, can have the effect that more diseases will occur. This will affect women because they still have the main caring responsibilities and will therefore devote more of their time to these caring tasks. For instance, there can be an increase in malaria mosquitos due to the rise in temperature and/or more rain. Pregnant women are more vulnerable to diseases such as malaria and bad hygienic conditions can badly influence menstrual periods and maternal health. Climate change can also cause an increase in heat related deaths, more respiratory allergies, mental health problems and additional stress. Furthermore, polluting practices like forest fires and the dumping of toxic chemicals in the sea or rivers contributes to climate change but also influences the health of the (local) population. Moreover, in the aftermath of natural disasters, there is also a higher risk of an increase in disease because the hygiene has decreased due to bad living conditions.

- **Disasters:** Climate change can result in more extreme weather and natural disasters. In general, disasters have more female than male victims. There are a number of reasons for this. One is the lower socio-economic status of women. Poor women cannot afford protective measures against natural disasters. Moreover, the traditional role of women as caretakers makes it more difficult for women to flee because they also have to protect children or the elderly. Their chances of survival are also influenced by their traditional roles in society which means that not all women learn how to swim, that women wait for their husbands or families before they leave the house, or that traditional clothing restricts the mobility and speed of women. Due to the lack of financial resources of (poor) women, they also have more difficulty to recover and rebuild their lives after a disaster. In addition, in the aftermath of disasters, there is a higher risk of sexual violence against girls and women.

These problems can have the effect that women often have no choice but to migrate. If climate change makes it impossible to live and work in a certain area and there are no solutions available, people are forced to migrate. The migration can also be a result of natural disasters. Migration can take place in two forms: either only the man of the family migrates, or the women themselves migrate (with their family). Male migration leads to additional pressures for the women. When the men leave, women have to take over men's responsibilities. At the same time, they do not have the same access to ownership rights and resources as men would have, which creates an additional burden for women. When women (and their families) migrate, they are exposed to serious threats and dangers such as violence.

Besides the difference in how men and women are affected by climate change, there may also be a difference in the extent to which women and men contribute to global warming, especially the emission of greenhouse gases. It has been suggested that women may have a smaller ecological footprint due to differences in consumption. For example, women may consume less meat, drive shorter distances, use public transport and consume less energy than men. It has also been suggested that men and women may think differently about solutions for global warming.

Based on the results of population surveys, women are more willing to accept that they have to make changes in their personal lives to reduce the effects of climate change. Women are also more likely to buy products from environmentally friendly companies and pay a higher price for these products. They also try to choose low carbon practices. Men, on the other hand, prefer technical solutions such as electric cars and tend to be more open to the use of nuclear energy as an alternative source of energy while women do not support nuclear energy due to the higher risks. In addition, women do not favour fiscal measures such as a higher tax on energy. This can be explained by the fact that women usually have a lower income than men and therefore have less money for energy.

One of the problems with climate change and emissions reduction policy is that climate change is regarded as a technical and scientific problem. It is not people-oriented, which makes it more difficult to include gender equality and human rights in the policy making addressing climate change. In order to change this orientation, the concept of climate justice has come into existence.

There are many differences with regard to the perspectives and groups involved with climate justice. Climate justice can be understood as *"linking climate change with human rights and development to achieve a human-centred approach, safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable and sharing the burdens and benefits of climate change and its resolution equitably and fairly"*. The aim of the climate justice concept is to achieve recognition in (international) climate change policies that climate change is not only a technical and environmental problem, but also a problem which has socio-economic effects.

The concept of climate justice can also be applied by focusing on the gender dimension. Many climate change policies have either not included a gender perspective, or gender equality is considered to be irrelevant, especially where policies, such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, are technically oriented.

Thanks to the activism and lobbying activities of women's rights organisations, the gender aspects of climate change are now increasingly recognised in international climate negotiations and policy documents. However, there is still much that needs to be done in order to have policies adopted that can protect women against the consequences of climate change.

One of the reasons why the gender dimension of climate justice has found only little attention is the fact that women are underrepresented in climate change policy making and negotiations, both as representatives of governments and of civil society organisations. Women should be part of the decision-making in order to make this process a proper representation of the world's population. More female representatives are needed to address the issues and needs of women with regard to climate change.

Women from both developed and developing countries should be recognised as stakeholders, not only because of their activities in agriculture and as entrepreneurs but also as consumers of products such as energy. As stakeholders, women should be able to have a say in or have influence on climate change policies. Moreover, the knowledge and experience of women can be useful for policy makers. In particular, the experiences of local women in developing countries with climate change can show the importance of including gender equality in climate change policies. If there were more attention for the needs of women with regard to climate change in policy making, more sustainable solutions could be found for men and women alike.

The vulnerable position of women in relation to climate change stems from their weaker social-economic position, especially in developing countries. This position is the result of the lack of equality in other fields, including: cultural traditions and access to resources, ownership, education and poverty. Therefore, the inclusion of gender equality in climate change policies will be a decisive factor in meeting the challenges related to women's vulnerable position when the climate changes.

There is still a lot to be done to ensure the inclusion of climate justice and gender equality in international, regional and national climate change policy. Moreover, these policies must be implemented in practice so as to make a real change for men and women affected by the negative consequences of global warming.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide for possibilities to address the issues which are at the root of the weaker social-economic position of women. According to UN Women, sustainable development is: *"an economic, social and environmental development that ensures human well-being and dignity, ecological integrity, gender equality and social justice for now and in the future"*.

Agenda 2030, which includes the 17 SDGs, was adopted in September 2015 by the international community and aims at eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. While other SDGs are focused on creating a sustainable environment, for example via agriculture, sustainable energy, the proper use of oceans, seas and marine resources, there are a few sustainable development goals with particular potential to improve the social-economic position of women:

- SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

The EU committed itself in the Treaties to contribute to sustainable development and the protection of the environment. Article 2 TEU states that the EU shall work for sustainable development and for a high protection of and improvement of the quality of the environment. Moreover, environment protection requirements must be integrated and implemented in other EU policies and activities, especially with regard to sustainable development. These requirements should be combined with the objective of equality between men and women for a successful EU climate change policy.



## The backlash against women's rights and gender equality

The past decade has seen a visible drive against gender equality and the women's human rights agenda across the world. In the European Union, the Gender Equality Index shows persistent inequalities. The main areas and fields of this backlash are common across countries. They include the key areas of institutional and policy framework for gender equality, certain policy areas (such as education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and preventing and combating violence against women) as well as the working environment/operating space for women's rights and human rights NGOs. Consequently, both the agenda for gender equality and women's human rights, and the main actors promoting this agenda are facing challenges.

Despite commonalities, the penetration, intensity and effects of this backlash varies among countries and areas. In some cases, the backlash has (so far) mostly remained at the level of rhetoric and discourse, while in others it has been translated into concrete measures and initiatives, in some cases even as part of a wider, strategic approach. Generally speaking, the backlash has taken place in a context where state action with regard to promoting gender equality and women's rights featured persistent and fundamental problems.

The backlash is connected to a significant degree with intensifying campaigning against so-called "gender ideology". The first news about the misinterpretation of the word "gender" and the creation of the concept of "gender ideology" which undermines families and cultures shocked and surprised feminists, gender equality experts and civil servants who worked with gender mainstreaming. Considerable energy went into trying to explain that the concept of gender ideology is wrong, that there is no such ideology, and that families are safe. When similar attacks started against the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) - seen by some as the Trojan horse of the so-called gender ideology because of its definition of gender as a social concept - the security and rights of women seemed to be directly at stake.

The backlash is quite heterogeneous in terms of its content across the EU, but tends to be based on traditional gender stereotypes. It ranges from reactive opposition to gender equality policies to the proactive promotion of a social transformation towards traditional values. Several emerging populist and far-right parties in various EU countries challenge or openly reject women's fundamental rights and their economic and social empowerment, in particular of the most vulnerable of women - trans women, lesbian and bisexual women, migrant women and Roma women.

The backlash against gender equality policies often operates within broad political movements shaped by nationalism, scepticism towards climate change, negative attitudes toward migration, and an anti-EU stance. It has become perhaps the most serious challenge to be addressed for progress to be made in gender equality. It has the potential to erode existing achievements, diminish protection against discrimination and block further progress.

Countries with a longer and uninterrupted history of democratic governance, a strong women's movement and living traditions of civil organising have been able to balance the forces behind the "gender ideology" debate. Other countries with weaker democratic roots and legacies, a younger women's movement (often not supported by the usual liberal, progressive allies), a living memory of "state feminism", Soviet-style crèches, and forced "social engineering" of the socialist past, have managed differently. Civil movements in these countries offered less resistance when anti-gender sentiments were raised to state policy level in the guise of demography policy, the weakening of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the

dismantling of gender equality mechanisms, including gender mainstreaming. The national machineries for gender equality - not yet equipped with adequate specialisation, authority and/or resources - have been sensitive to political changes and experienced either restructuring, issue-enlargement, or budget cuts in recent years.

Pre-existing and ongoing challenges to gender equality - e.g. difficulties in accessing funding due to restrictive criteria and administrative burdens - have been further heightened in recent years by measures and initiatives aiming at or resulting in the creation of an unfavourable, or even hostile environment. This has taken various forms, such as smear campaigns, legislative measures, or centralisation of funding. In some countries, the backlash affects a wider group of NGOs with a progressive democracy development and human rights agenda. In parallel, other, non rights-oriented women's groups and/or initiatives have been supported or favoured by governments.

Public education systems have been affected by the backlash in two substantive fields. In terms of gender equality education, the campaign against "gender ideology" has successfully blocked or prevented reforms, or has led to the rolling back of achievements. Comprehensive sex education has been affected in the same way. In the field of preventing and combating violence against women new phenomena have emerged, such as sexist hate speech, misogyny and online violence. Also, men's/fathers groups have become increasingly visible, along with the promotion of the shared custody of children, while histories of domestic violence are often ignored in custody/visitation cases. Since the Istanbul Convention became a target of opponents of the so-called gender ideology, its ratification or implementation has been hindered.

When addressing the increased migration and refugee flows into Europe, the specific situation of migrant and refugee women, including the different forms of discrimination and violence they have suffered/are suffering from has not received due attention in policy and practice. Countries which changed their economic model to a market economy often lack a protective net of social-democratic welfare policies since the rapid transition after 1989, and they are often prone to embracing concepts of community that offer more traditional forms of security: family, nation and religion.

In the face of perceived poverty the weakening or dismantling of family/social policies and workers' rights has undermined the focus on individual human rights and European values such as equality between women and men, LGBTQ rights, anti-racism and the integration of migrants. In order to counteract the backlash the EU and its institutions should therefore:

- maintain strong commitment to gender equality and women's rights as basic values of the European Union;
- closely monitor the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in the EU Member States, with special regard to the institutional, policy and legislative framework;
- assess whether existing EU legislative and other measures are applied and implemented in accordance with the principles of gender equality and promoting of the rights of women and girls;
- monitor and evaluate the distribution and utilisation of European Union funding schemes from a gender equality and women's rights perspective;
- guarantee that gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a horizontal principle is fostered;
- assess the EU funding for women's rights NGOs and the gaps and difficulties in accessing such funding;

- remove existing barriers such as co-funding requirements or obligatory partnerships with state actors as eligibility criteria;
- help guarantee a safe and enabling space for civil society organisations and the recognition of the work of NGOs that promote democracy and human rights, including women's and girl's rights;
- continue to support the accession/ratification and proper implementation of the Istanbul Convention;
- raise public and professional awareness about the value and benefits of gender equality and the need to eliminate gender stereotypes;
- promote the acceptance of the European Pillar of Social Rights by all Member States in the knowledge that women and children are especially vulnerable to changes in social and family policy;
- adopt and evaluate legislative, policy and other measures aiming at the protection of different groups of women who are victims of or vulnerable to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g. Roma women, migrant, asylum seeking or refugee women);
- monitor the situation of migrant women working in the care industry, whether public or private;
- promote the introduction of national anti-poverty strategies that use gender as a key indicator and make women a significant target group for suitable measures. Women's employment rates should also be targeted in order to create sustainable measures for combatting poverty among women.

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