

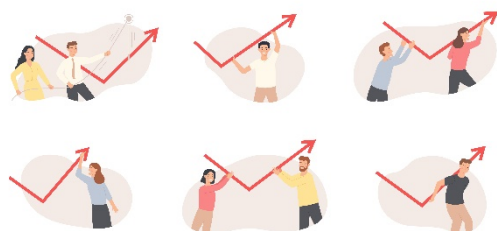
# Gender equality in the Recovery and Resilience Facility

## SUMMARY

The extent of the negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the social and economic situation of women has triggered a debate on the urgent need to take a gender-sensitive approach to the policy response to the pandemic. In this context, the establishment of the EU's biggest financial instrument supporting recovery in the Member States – the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) – is an opportunity to channel the extraordinary resources to the measures that take into account the principles of gender equality. It is also a chance to put in practice the EU's long-standing commitments regarding the need to mainstream gender across different policies and apply gender budgeting principles to EU spending.

Offering an overview of how gender equality has been built into the RRF Regulation, this briefing explains what was expected from the Member States when they were preparing their national recovery and resilience plans (NRRPs) as regards gender equality. It also provides practical examples of reforms and investments where gender equality has been taken into account, from the approved NRRPs of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal and Slovakia.

In keeping with the RRF Regulation, all the NRRPs analysed declare gender equality to be a horizontal objective, to be given consideration in all measures. However, not all Member States have included dedicated reforms or investments addressing gender-related challenges explicitly, or indicating women as the main beneficiaries.



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## Gender equality and the EU recovery instrument

There is [evidence](#) that the coronavirus pandemic has affected women disproportionately and exacerbated existing inequalities between women and men. In almost all areas of life, the situation has worsened so much that there are serious [concerns](#) that progress towards gender equality made in recent decades could be rolled back. In this context, integrating the gender perspective in any activities and measures aimed at economic and social recovery appears more necessary than ever. Therefore, many governments [around the world](#) have designed policy responses to tackle the negative consequences of the pandemic that are also gender sensitive, with the principles of gender equality in mind.

In 2021, on top of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2021 to 2027, the European Union agreed the most prominent element of its response to the pandemic crisis – a temporary recovery instrument referred to as Next Generation EU (NGEU). This extraordinary stimulus package for the EU is to be financed from money borrowed by the EU on the markets. It totals €806.9 billion (in current prices) and represents 5.4 % of EU 2019 gross domestic product (GDP). Intended to shore up national efforts, it has been designed to help repair the economic and social damage caused by the pandemic, generate high-quality jobs, combat social exclusion and support the Union's green and digital transitions.

The bulk of the total allocation for NGEU – €723.8 billion – is to be implemented through the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). The RRF must be spent by the end of 2026<sup>1</sup> on selected reforms and investments in the Member States. These have to be outlined in national recovery and resilience plans (NRRPs). As key preconditions for implementation, each plan must have a positive assessment from the Commission and Council approval (an implementing decision adopted by qualified majority).

The introduction of the RRF is an opportunity for the EU to put into practice its commitments in the area of [gender mainstreaming](#) and [gender budgeting](#). Although these concepts have a strong [legal basis](#) and have been reaffirmed in many EU documents,<sup>2</sup> including in the agreements on both the [2014-2020](#) and [2021-2027](#) MFFs, so far not much progress has been made in their practical application. As concluded by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in a [special report](#) on the matter, the EU's budget cycle does not take gender equality adequately into account and little attention is paid to gender analysis in the policies and programmes examined. With a view to improving the situation and making the EU recovery measures gender-sensitive, the ECA called for gender equality to be properly taken into account in the [regulation](#) establishing the RRF and in the NRRPs. This view and concerns about the real impact of the funds spent under the RRF on the situation of women were also shared and voiced by various [stakeholders](#), [experts](#), and Members of the European Parliament (see below).

In practical terms, mainstreaming gender in the RRF means that measures supported should incorporate a gender equality perspective at the planning, implementation and reporting stages. However, the first version of the provisions on the implementation of the RRF were equality blind. The Commission's [proposal on the RRF regulation](#), put forward on 28 May 2020, did not include any references to gender equality and did not mention women as a specific social group to be supported. During the legislative process, owing largely to pressure from civil society organisations and the European Parliament,<sup>3</sup> a gender dimension was added to the provisions and is part of the [RRF Regulation](#) approved on 12 February 2021.

### Gender equality in the regulation on the RRF

The [Regulation](#) establishing the RRF recognises women as one of the social groups worst affected by the Covid-19 crisis. According to the text of the regulation, mitigation of the social and economic impact of that crisis, in particular on women, is one of central objectives of the RRF. The regulation states that the Member States should mainstream and promote objectives relating to gender

equality throughout the process of preparing and implementing their recovery and resilience plans. Furthermore, the regulation emphasises the importance of investment in robust care infrastructure, which is essential to secure gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. It allows more women to take part in paid work and therefore has a positive effect on GDP (see recital 28).

Despite the efforts of the European Parliament's negotiators involved in the legislative process leading to the adoption of the RRF rules, the regulation does not set a minimum for spending relating to gender equality. This contrasts with the cases of climate and digital (37 % for spending on climate and 20 % on digital transition). Furthermore, the issue of gender equality is not included in the 11 main criteria for assessing the plans (see Annex 5 'Assessment guidelines for the Facility' and Article 19 of the RRF Regulation). Unlike children and young people, women are not mentioned specifically in any of the assessment criteria. Nevertheless, the Commission deems gender equality to be a horizontal requirement, along with security, self-assessment for investments in digital capacities and connectivity, the presence in the plan of cross-border and multi-country projects, and the process of consulting local and regional authorities and other stakeholders on the plan.

## Information to be provided in the NRRPs

Article 18(4)(o) of the RRF Regulation lays down the requirement to take into account gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the NRRPs (see Box 1). Details of the provision are further explained in the European Commission's [guidance](#) on preparing the plans, according to which Member States should explain how the measures in the recovery and resilience plan are expected to contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all and how those objectives will be mainstreamed. The plans must also take into account United Nations sustainable development goal number 5 on gender equality, the European Pillar of Social Rights (see Box 2), and any existing national gender equality strategy. In particular, the Member States should outline:

- challenges in terms of gender equality, including those relating to the Covid-19 crisis, for example in terms of equality of treatment and opportunities in the labour market, conditions for employment, career progression, and equal pay for work of equal value;
- how the reforms and investments described in the plan will be instrumental in overcoming the above-mentioned challenges;
- how the plan ensures and fosters equality between women and men, how the plan mitigates the economic impact of the crisis on women, including on gender-based and domestic violence;
- how the plan contributes to the achievement of UN sustainable development goal number 5 and its targets; and
- how the measures in the plan will improve the situation in terms of gender equality and its different dimensions, such as education, training, skills, the employment gap, working conditions, social protection, etc.

Mainstreaming and promotion of the above-mentioned aspects should be demonstrated across the six pillars of the RRF, including the green and digital transitions.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Member States are encouraged to present data disaggregated by gender (among other indicators, such as age, disability, ethnic origin, etc.).

Box 1 – Article 18(4)(o) of [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/241](#) of 12 February 2021 establishing the RRF

*'The recovery and resilience plan shall be duly reasoned and substantiated. It shall in particular set out the following elements: (...)*

*(o) an explanation of how the measures in the recovery and resilience plan are expected to contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all and the mainstreaming of those objectives, in line with principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 and, where relevant, with the national gender equality strategy.'*

The Member States have to give an explanation as to whether the measures described in the NRRP contribute to effectively addressing the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) issued in the context of the European Semester. Therefore, it could be expected that the gender-related challenges identified in the CSRs will be taken into account in the design of the reforms and investments envisaged in the relevant NRRPs.

## Box 2

### Gender equality in the European Pillar of Social Rights

Proclaimed in 2017 at the Gothenburg Summit, the European Pillar of Social Rights defines 20 principles guiding the EU towards a more social, fair and inclusive economy and society. Point two on the list of the principles is dedicated to gender equality:

*'Equality of treatment and opportunities between women and men must be ensured and fostered in all areas, including regarding participation in labour market, terms and conditions of employment and career progression. Women and men have the right to equal pay for work of equal value.'*

Source: [European Commission](#).

United Nations sustainable development goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

In 2015 the United Nations member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 goals for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. The agenda was adopted by all EU Member States.

Goal 5 concerns gender equality and women's empowerment and sets six main targets:

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health rights.

Source: [United Nations](#).

## Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the RRF is based on a specially designed performance framework, the details of which are specified in two delegated acts: [on a methodology for reporting social expenditure](#) in the RRF, and on [the common indicators](#) and elements of the recovery and resilience scoreboard (both documents were proposed by the Commission on 28 September 2021 and are not yet in force). Some elements of the performance system deal specifically with information relevant to gender equality.

### Flagging measures with a gender equality focus

In article 1 of the [delegated regulation](#) on a methodology for reporting social expenditure, the European Commission proposed that in order to allow for specific reporting on gender equality in the RRF, it would apply a flagging method. For each national measure of a social nature that includes a focus on gender equality, the Commission will attribute a flag (similarly to measures focused on

children or youth). This, according to the Commission, should allow for specific reporting on expenditure on gender equality under the RRF.

## Common indicators disaggregated by gender and the scoreboard

Twice a year in connection with the European Semester procedure, Member States will have to report on progress made on implementing the NRRPs (Article 27 of the RRF Regulation). Based on the information collected from the Member States, the European Commission will prepare annual and other reports and evaluations of the RRF (see below). To this end, the Commission proposed a list of 14 common indicators. Among them four should be disaggregated by gender in the reports prepared by the Member States:

- researchers working in supported research facilities;
- participants in education or training;
- people in employment or engaged in job searching activities;
- young people aged 15-29 years receiving support.

The common indicators will be used to monitor the NRRPs' implementation and to reflect progress towards the achieving the RRF's objectives. They will be presented online on a public scoreboard. The Commission will update this monitoring tool twice a year, following the biannual report by the Member States. The scoreboard should be operational by December 2021.

## Commission reports

The Commission's reporting obligations include the presentation of annual reports, as well as independent interim and ex post evaluation reports (by February 2024 and 31 December 2028 respectively). Furthermore, by 31 July 2022 the Commission is expected to submit a review report to the European Parliament and the Council, including an assessment of how the NRRPs tackle inequalities between women and men (Article 16 of the RRF Regulation). The assessment will be based on data provided by Member States.

## Examples of NRRP measures addressing gender equality

So far all but one Member State have [submitted](#) their NRRPs to the Commission (the Netherlands postponed its submission because of the recent elections and ongoing process of forming the government). On 13 July 2021, based on positive assessments by the Commission, Council approved the first batch of national plans. It included the NRRPs of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal and Slovakia. At the time writing, Council has approved all NRRPs submitted, except for the plans of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Sweden, which are still awaiting a positive assessment from the European Commission.

The table in the annex to this briefing presents the results of an analysis of the 12 plans approved by Council on 13 July 2021 as regards measures addressing gender equality. The analysis is based on the Commission's assessments and the Council's implementing decisions approving them. The table includes practical examples of reforms and investments relevant to gender equality or where women are indicated in the milestones and targets<sup>5</sup> to be achieved.<sup>6</sup>

With the exception of Luxembourg, all the NRRPs analysed include a chapter or a separate section dedicated to gender equality and the issue is among the challenges to be addressed. It should be noted, however, that the Member States analysed differ as regards their performance and challenges in the area of equal opportunities for women and men. For example, while Luxembourg is a country where gender equality and social protection are at a relatively high level, and Latvia is among the best performers in minimising the gender employment gap, in Greece and Italy the issue is among the most important challenges.<sup>7</sup> In their NRRPs, the Member States point out various gender-related problems and challenges, such as gender gaps in employment, career opportunities, wage and education systems, and fewer women with STEM degrees (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Women are often mentioned among the social groups that suffer

most from energy poverty and have been worst hit by the consequences of the pandemic (for example in Italy and Portugal).

As presented in the annex, the European Commission assessed that each of the 12 national plans contained measures expected to improve the situation in the area of gender equality. In line with the RRF regulation, all the plans analysed declare gender equality to be a horizontal objective, to be upheld and taken into account across all measures. The number of targeted measures however, dealing exclusively with the situation of women, is limited. Only a few Member States include one or more dedicated reforms or investments explicitly addressing gender-related challenges or indicating women as specific beneficiaries. The most numerous and varied measures of this type can be found in the NRRPs of Belgium, Spain, Italy and Austria.

## Stakeholders' views

While the inclusion of provisions on gender equality in the RRF Regulation is [seen](#) as a political success and an important step towards gender mainstreaming, there are concerns among stakeholders and experts about implementation and monitoring. Experts and organisations dealing with gender equality have been following the process of the Commission assessing the NRRPs closely and are vitally interested in monitoring the implementation of the plans. Some of them have launched their own analysis of the NRRPs in order to find out if and how the situation of women has been tackled by the Member States. The debate concentrates around such questions as:

- To what extent have the Member States actually fulfilled the requirements outlined in the RRF Regulation and addressed gender equality objectives in their NRRPs?
- Can the proposed spending priorities and sectors to be supported under the RRF produce a positive impact on gender equality and the situation of women?
- Will the RRF performance framework provide relevant indicators and data disaggregated by sex, useful to measure the gender impact of the financed actions?

Already at the beginning of the process some organisations were [concerned](#) that the women's perspective was not sufficiently represented in the plans, and that they included only very limited targeted measures to address equality problems.<sup>8</sup> According to Anna Elomäki,<sup>9</sup> gender mainstreaming obligations were introduced in the RRF regulation too late in the decision-making process and they are not specific enough. The urgent nature of the situation meant that Member States were preparing their NRRPs in parallel to the legislative process taking place at EU level. As a result, by the time the amendments on gender equality had been agreed, the spending priorities and measures had already been fixed and agreed at national level in some Member States.

A [study](#) presented by researchers at University College Dublin and Dublin City University argues that the gender equality commitments made in the RRF Regulation are in line with similar statements made in many other EU policy documents. However, the experts are not optimistic as far as the implementation of the commitments is concerned. They do not find evidence in the NRRPs of priority ascribed to gender or gender equality, and describe this a failure to deliver on the promise made in the declarations. The study's authors recommend making the care economy and sector a third main spending priority for the RRF spending alongside the green and digital economies.

Experts from German political foundation [Heinrich Böll Stiftung](#) highlight the risk that without specific measures encouraging female employment the spending priority on the green and digital transitions will create jobs mainly for men (in such sectors as digital, transport, energy and construction) and could aggravate existing gender segregation and inequalities on the labour market. They add that the care, health and education sectors, traditionally dominated by female employment, have been worst hit by the negative consequences of the pandemic, and yet these sectors are not sufficiently supported by the RRF.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, one of the key issues and challenges that has arisen in the debate is the need to ensure that data collected from Member States actually allows progress implementing the NRRPs to be

monitored, and achievements evaluated from a gender perspective. Experts [emphasise](#) that without relevant, sex disaggregated indicators, it will be difficult to scrutinise RRF spending and assess its impact on the situation of women. Furthermore, indicators collected in the RRF implementation process must be of high quality and also cover various areas and sectors beyond the labour market and education, e.g. violence, health, poverty, media and the environment.

## The special report of the European Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) dealt with the issue of gender equality mainstreaming in the RRF as part of its [special report](#) on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget. Overall, the Court found that despite a strong commitment to implementing gender mainstreaming in the EU budget, the Commission had not developed a solid framework to support this task. Regarding the RRF, the ECA noted that although the national plans were required to explain how proposed measures were expected to contribute to gender equality, the lack of relevant common indicators made it difficult to monitor and follow up on results. Therefore, the ECA recommended that the Commission develop a robust system of tracking funds and improve reporting on the gender aspect both under the 2021-2027 MFF and the RRF (see Box 3).

On 28 June 2021, the report was debated in a [joint meeting](#) of three parliamentary committees – on Budgets (BUDG), Budgetary Control (CONT) and Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM). As a follow up to the debate, the CONT Committee produced a [working document](#), in which it stressed the importance of gender mainstreaming in the national recovery and resilience plans. It fully supported the recommendations presented by the Court and called for improved communication and coordination between the Commission and the Member States regarding measures with strong impact on gender equality under the RRF.

The ECA report also triggered a discussion on the issue in Council. On 15 October 2021, EU ministers at the Employment and Social Policy Council adopted [conclusions](#) on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget. Among practical suggestions as to how the Commission could improve the way it is introducing gender budgeting to the EU system, Council called on the Commission to further examine and report on the NRRPs from a gender equality perspective.

Box 3 – European Court of Auditors Special Report on gender mainstreaming in the EU budget: Time to turn words into action

### **Recommendation 5: Improve reporting on gender equality**

To improve accountability and budgetary transparency and ensure that reliable information on funds allocated and used on gender equality at programme level in the MFF 2021-2027 is available, the Commission should: (a) develop a robust system for tracking funds allocated and used to support gender equality that can be applied to all EU funding programmes, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility (...).

### **Recommendation 6: Assess and report on whether the RRF addresses gender equality**

The Commission should assess the proposed measures included in Member States' recovery and resilience plans and, subsequently, report on whether they have contributed to gender equality.

Source: European Court of Auditors, [May 2021](#).

## The role of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is a strong [supporter](#) of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in EU spending. Thanks to its efforts during the negotiations on the 2021-2027 MFF, gender mainstreaming must be promoted in EU spending programmes and progress should be made in developing a methodology for monitoring spending on gender equality in the EU budget (see point 16(f) of the [Interinstitutional Agreement](#) of 16 December 2020). Furthermore, on many occasions, in the context of the pandemic, Parliament has [insisted](#) on applying the principles of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in the EU financial response to the crisis.

As mentioned above, the European Parliament also played a key role in securing the inclusion of gender equality in the RRF Regulation.<sup>11</sup> Parliament is monitoring the process of submitting and evaluating the NRRPs closely. In a resolution of [10 June 2021](#), Members expressed their concern that most recovery plans do not contribute enough to the mainstreaming of gender equality objectives, fail to include explicit and concrete measures, and are not able to respond adequately to the country-specific recommendations in this regard. Parliament called on the Commission and Council to ensure that this aspect is taken into account and promoted in the preparation and implementation of the NRRPs. Moreover, the Members stressed the importance of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring implementation of the RRF.

The implementation of the provisions on mainstreaming gender equality in the RRF and more generally in the NGEU is regularly discussed as part of the two-monthly meetings of the Recovery and Resilience Dialogue between the Commission and the European Parliament (the last meeting took place on [1 September 2021](#)). Another opportunity for such discussion is in the framework of the interinstitutional meetings on the implementation of Next Generation EU, which also involves Council representatives (the most recent meeting took place on 14 October 2021).

The contribution of Next Generation EU and, in particular, the RRF to gender equality is an important topic for Parliament's FEMM Committee. On [15 June 2021](#) Members of the Committee conducted an exchange of views with Céline Gauver, Director General of the Recovery and Resilience Task Force at the European Commission. They discussed the gender perspective in the national plans and implementation of the RRF.<sup>12</sup> Whereas the Members taking part in the debate were pleased that requirements relating to gender equality had been introduced in the RRF regulation, they considered the provisions weak and not sufficient to ensure that Member States do enough to tackle the issue in their NRRPs. The Members emphasised that it is very important to make sure that the measures in the plans address the gender-related challenges pointed out in the country-specific recommendations,<sup>13</sup> and that availability of gender disaggregated data is a key condition for proper evaluation of the implementation of the plans.

### MAIN REFERENCES

Sapala M. and Thomassen N., Recovery plan for Europe: State of play, September 2021, EPRS, European Parliament, September 2021.

Simoes C. and Calatozzolo R., EU gender budgeting: Where do we stand?, Policy Department for Budgetary Affairs, October 2020.

Shreeves R., Gender mainstreaming in the EU: State of play, EPRS, European Parliament, January 2019.

Regulation (EU) [2021/241](#) establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, 12 February 2021.

Commission staff working document, Guidance to Member States, recovery and resilience plans, [SWD\(2021\) 12 final](#), Brussels, 22 January 2021.



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The implementation period is understood here as the time for paying out RRF resources. Under Article 3 of Council Regulation (EU) 2020/2094 on NGEU, legal commitments giving rise to expenditure should be made by 31 December 2023.
- <sup>2</sup> One of the most important recent initiatives in this regard is the EU's 2020-2025 [gender equality strategy](#).
- <sup>3</sup> For example, #halfofit – the action initiated by Alexandra Geese of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament. On Parliament's role in the process, please see: A. Elomäki and J. Kantola, How the European Parliament worked gender equality into the EU pandemic response, The Loop, ECPR's Political Science Blog.
- <sup>4</sup> The six pillars of the RRF are policy areas to be given particular support: green transition; digital transformation; smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including economic cohesion, jobs, productivity, competitiveness, research, development and innovation, and a well-functioning internal market with strong small and medium enterprises (SMEs); social and territorial cohesion; health, and economic, social and institutional resilience with the aim of, inter alia, increasing crisis preparedness and crisis response capacity; and policies for the next generation, children and the youth, such as education and skills (recital 9 of the RRF regulation).
- <sup>5</sup> Milestones and targets are defined as measures of progress towards the achievement of a reform or an investment, with milestones being qualitative achievements and targets being quantitative achievements (Article 2(4) RRF Regulation).
- <sup>6</sup> This does not rule out women being supported under other measures, even if they are not explicitly mentioned as a target group.
- <sup>7</sup> See the social [scoreboard](#) of the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- <sup>8</sup> Similar concerns were expressed in a letter of the group of Greens/European Free Alliance (The Greens/EFA) in the European Parliament to the European Commission. The group expressed serious doubts about compliance of the measures presented in the NRRPs with the requirements. Among other areas of concern, the Members pointed at a failure to address the gender-related CSRs in the plans. See: Ongoing assessment of national recovery and resilience plans by the Commission, [1 June 2021](#).
- <sup>9</sup> See for example Anna Elomäki's presentation at the workshop on applying gender mainstreaming in the EU recovery package, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, [16 March 2021](#).
- <sup>10</sup> Similarly, Alexandra Geese, German Member of the European Parliament, [sees](#) a danger of worsening the gender divide through the RRF, as most of support is going to finance the green and digital sectors; the sectors, where women are typically underrepresented.
- <sup>11</sup> A. Elomäki and J. Kantola, How the European Parliament worked gender equality into the EU pandemic response, [The Loop](#), ECPR's Political Science Blog.
- <sup>12</sup> Other events organised by the FEMM Committee include: a workshop on applying gender mainstreaming in the EU recovery package ([16 March 2021](#)), and a side-event 'Enhancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Covid-19 recovery' ([23 March 2021](#)).
- <sup>13</sup> For a detailed analysis of how the 2019 and 2020 country-specific recommendations covering gender-related issues are being addressed in national plans see C. Dias and K. Grigaitė, Country-specific recommendations and recovery and resilience plans – Thematic overview on gender-related issues, Economic Governance Support Unit (EGOV), European Parliament, [October 2021](#).

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## Annex – European Commission assessments and examples of measures addressing gender equality (GE) in the NRRPs

Member State	European Commission's assessment of equality aspect in the NRRP	Examples of measures (reforms and investments) explicitly addressing gender-related challenges or indicating women as specific beneficiaries
Belgium	<p>The plan contains a series of measures expected to help to address challenges in the area of GE. In addition, the Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men considers that 18 % of investments under the plan will have a positive and 52 % a potentially positive gender equality impact.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender and work (Investment I-4.10 of the Federal State) – the investment aims at analysing gender inequality on the labour market and promoting the integration of women into the labour market.</li> <li>• Development of public utility housing and housing for vulnerable persons (Investment I-4.12) – women victims of violence are among the beneficiaries of the investment.</li> <li>• Creation and renovation of early childcare infrastructure of the Walloon Region (Investment I-4.13) – the investment can support female labour participation.</li> <li>• End of career and pensions (reform R-4.07 of the Federal State) – the reform of the pension regime includes measures to increase gender balance ('gender test').</li> <li>• Various measures dedicated to attracting more women to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) studies.</li> </ul>
Denmark	<p>The plan contains measures that are expected to help Denmark to address the challenges posed by GE. These include measures to promote the use of digital solutions in the healthcare sector, such as video consultations, which should support vulnerable groups' access to healthcare. Provisions are made to ensure that the gender balance and the diversity of research teams are included in the overall assessment of applications to the green research and development scheme. Equality considerations are also expected to be integrated in the design of the new digital strategy.</p>	<p>According to the European Commission <a href="#">analysis</a>, the plan includes mechanisms to ensure that equal opportunities will be considered when developing or implementing some projects. However, neither GE nor women are specifically mentioned in the description of the reforms, investments, milestones or targets in the <a href="#">annex</a> to the Council implementing decision.</p>
Germany	<p>Gender equality issues and equal opportunities for all are addressed in the plan across multiple components. Particularly relevant measures include improving availability of quality early childhood education and care that promotes both gender equality and reduction of socio-economic disadvantages (in particular component 4.1. on strengthening social inclusion).</p>	<p>One of the objectives of the Component 4.1. 'Strengthening of social inclusion' is the improvement of labour market inclusion of women and parents in general. Apart from this, neither GE nor women are specifically mentioned in the description of the reforms, investments, milestones or targets in the <a href="#">annex</a> to the Council implementing decision.</p>

Member State	European Commission's assessment of equality aspect in the NRRP	Examples of measures (reforms and investments) explicitly addressing gender-related challenges or indicating women as specific beneficiaries
Greece	<p>The plan contains a series of measures that are expected to contribute to addressing challenges in the area of gender equality and equal opportunities for all. These include targeted reforms and investments in the areas of employment, skills, health and social cohesion. The plan contains a number of measures to promote the participation of women in the labour market including through targeted employment subsidies and upskilling programmes and by expanding early childhood education and care facilities. Moreover, several other measures, though not explicitly aimed at promoting equal opportunities, contain an equality aspect. During the implementation phase of the plan, the collection of disaggregated data by gender and ethnic background should be ensured in order to better assess and follow up equality issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation and simplification of labour law (Reform, measure ID 16744) – the reform's overarching objectives are to increase job creation and competitiveness, fight undeclared and under-declared work, improve work-life balance and bridge the gender employment gap.</li> <li>• Upgrading vocational education and training (reform, measure ID 16934) – all projects under the measure aim to encourage women's participation and promote their leadership skills.</li> </ul> <p>Although gender equality issues and women as a beneficiary of the measures are included in the description of the reforms and investments, they are not mentioned in any of milestones or targets in the <a href="#">annex</a> to the Council implementing decision.</p>
Spain	<p>The plan has a strong focus on gender balance, which is one of the four cross-cutting lines of action in the plan, the other being green transition, digital transition, and social and territorial cohesion. There are various measures across the plan with a direct impact on reducing the gender gap, coherently highlighted in many of the 30 components of the plan.</p>	<p>GE and women are present in a number of components, reforms, targets and milestones, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National artificial intelligence strategy (Reform C16.R1) – elements of the reform will contribute to the reduction of the gender gap through actions targeted at women, for example the creation of the Spain Talent Hub, an information node to attract and retain talent in the field of AI.</li> <li>• Spanish strategy for science, technology and innovation 2021-2027 (Reform C17.R2) – the strategy is built to ensure the gender perspective in research, development and innovation plans.</li> <li>• National digital competences plan (Reform C19.R1) – the measure will promote the digital empowerment of women and foster scientific and technological vocations at school. One of the main goals and milestones of the reform is to bridge the gender digital divide.</li> <li>• Streamlining of maternity add-ons (reform C30.R4) – the objective of the reform is to compensate parents, primarily mothers, for the cost of a birth and childcare, in order to reduce the gender pension gap.</li> <li>• Reskilling and upskilling of the labour force linked to professional qualifications (Investment C20.I1) – the investment covers actions with a specific focus on women with a view to open new opportunities for learning, job creation and improving the local economy.</li> <li>• Spain protects you from gender violence (investment C22.I4) – the investment includes the development of telephone and online services to support victims of</li> </ul>

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		<p>violence against women, including victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measures to close the gender gap (Reform C23.R2) – one of the milestones to be achieved as a result of the reform is the entry into force of two by-laws on equal pay between women and men and on equality plans.</li> <li>• Female employment and gender mainstreaming in active labour market policies (Investment C23.I2) – the objective of this investment is to improve labour market integration of women. As a result of the investment (target) at least 23 200 people should complete the 'plan empleo mujer, rural and urban areas' and 'victims of gender violence and human traffic programme'. This programme involves a personal and integrated itinerary of orientation, counselling and training actions adjusted to the employability profile of the participating women.</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship (Investment C13.I1) – among other actions, the investment supports dissemination and communication campaigns for the creation, development or attraction to Spain of international events focusing on innovative companies and a programme to attract female talent; part of funding is dedicated to women's entrepreneurship. One of the targets expected to be achieved is at least 800 entrepreneurs supported by the 'women talent programme'.</li> <li>• Social plan for sports (Investment C26.I3) – one of the objectives of the investment is promotion of the participation of women in professional sports through actions to increase their presence and visibility, training and to allow for the professionalisation of female sports, notably football. Actions under the investment include renovation of at least 40 sport facilities and promotion of the presence of women in professional sports (training programmes, marketing campaigns, and studies).</li> </ul>
France	<p>The plan contains some measures that are expected to address the country's challenges in the area of GE effectively. Key measures include the transformation of the public service with quantitative objectives for women in management positions as well as pay transparency obligations for companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of enterprises to economic, social and environmental transformations in the context of recovery (Reform C5.R2) – the reform is aimed at promoting GE. It introduces an obligation for companies that are beneficiaries of the RRF to publish an index measuring progress in the area of gender equality.</li> <li>• Civil service transformation (Reform C7.R3) – the reform involves implementation of the plan for equal opportunities and gender equality in senior state management.</li> </ul>

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Italy	<p>The plan contains measures expected to contribute to addressing the country's challenges in the area of GE. A significant contribution to improvement of GE is expected under the plan's reforms and investments related to employment policies, social and territorial cohesion, social institutions and the health system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public employment reform and simplification reform (Reform 1.9) includes a set of measures strengthening the commitment to gender balance.</li> <li>• Reform of the spending review framework (Reform 1.13) includes measures to improve gender budgeting.</li> <li>• New skills and new languages (Investment 3.1) focuses on female students and aims at guaranteeing equal opportunities and gender equality in terms of methodological approach and STEM orientation activities.</li> <li>• Gender Equality Certification System (Investment M5C1012) – the investment aims at implementation and enforcement of the national gender equality certification system to improve women's working conditions in terms of quality, remuneration and empowerment. It is expected that as part of the investment at least 1 000 companies will obtain gender equality certification and be supported by technical assistance.</li> <li>• Plan for nurseries and preschools and early childhood education and care services (Investment M4C1-18) – the measure is expected to encourage women's participation in the labour market and support them in reconciling family and professional life.</li> <li>• Creation of women's enterprises (Investment M5C1-17) – the measure aims at increasing the level of participation of women into the labour market and, in particular, at supporting women's participation in business activities. Among the milestones set for the investment is the creation of the 'Impresa donna' fund to support women's entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>
Latvia	<p>The plan envisages the implementation of various measures to promote GE, including a number aimed specifically at female engagement in information and communication technology career opportunities, with a view to increasing the gender balance of information and communication technology specialists. The labour market situation for female jobseekers is expected to be improved by targeted measures aiming at the promotion of reconciliation of work and family life through the creation of remote and part-time work opportunities for households with children. The management and implementation of projects should ensure equal pay for work of equal value as well as diversity in management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a self-managed training approach for ICT specialists (Investment 2.3.1.3.i) – the investment aims at increasing women's engagement in ICT career opportunities, with a view to increase the gender balance among ICT specialists.</li> </ul>

Member State	European Commission's assessment of equality aspect in the NRRP	Examples of measures (reforms and investments) explicitly addressing gender-related challenges or indicating women as specific beneficiaries
Luxembourg	<p>The plan does not contain the requested stand-alone section describing national challenges in the field of equality and explaining how reforms and investments included in the plan will be instrumental to address them.</p> <p>This needs to be seen in the context of the overall high level of gender equality and social protection coverage in Luxembourg's labour market, with the gender employment gap below the EU average, and the gender pay gap among the lowest in the EU.</p> <p>Nevertheless, considerations to address certain equality challenges are present in four out of the eight components, for example in relation to equal access to education and life-long learning, parental leave, targeted support for vulnerable job-seeker groups and promotion of women in politics and businesses (Component 1A Skilling, reskilling and upskilling).</p>	<p>Neither GE nor women are specifically mentioned in the description of the reforms, investments, milestones or targets in the <a href="#">annex</a> to the Council implementing decision.</p>
Austria	<p>The plan contains a series of measures that are expected to address the country's challenges in the area of GE and equal opportunities for all. GE is reflected throughout the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the electronic mother child pass platform (Investment 4.A.3)</li> <li>• Early aid for socially disadvantaged pregnant women (Investment 4.A.4)</li> <li>• Pension splitting (Investment 4.D.3) – splitting pension benefits obtained during parental leave equally between the two partners to reduce the pension gap between men and women</li> <li>• Promoting re-skilling and up-skilling (Investment 3.B.2) – funding concentrated on offering flexible training methods focuses on supporting women</li> <li>• National financial education strategy (Reform 4.D.7) – women are identified as a specific target group in the reform</li> <li>• Expansion of elementary education, including improved offer of early childcare facilities (Investment 3.C.3) – the investment is aimed at improving the full-time labour market participation of women.</li> </ul>

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Portugal	<p>The plan contains measures to address the challenges of GE. These include reforms to combat the gender pay gap and occupational segregation as well as measures to promote work-life balance and attract young women into STEM studies. GE considerations are also integrated in measures relating to housing and digital transformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combating inequality between women and men (Reform RE-r18) is aimed at promotion of equality in gender pay, equal career opportunities, counter gender stereotypes and segregation in the choice of professional careers. As part of the reform, from 2021 onwards, the Ministry of Employment and Social Security is going to prepare a report on gender pay differences for each company with more than 50 workers, covering gender pay differences. From 2025 onwards, companies with more than 50 workers that have significant differences in gender pay levels for the same jobs shall have the obligation to submit an action plan to the Labour Inspectorate Directorate to address those disparities.</li> </ul>
Slovakia	<p>The plan contains a series of measures that are expected to address the country's challenges in the area of GE. It includes a horizontal mechanism to take gender equality and equal opportunities for all into account in the implementation phase.</p> <p>Gender equality considerations are integrated in some sections of the plan, such as those relating to curriculum reform, and early warning system for the prevention of early school leaving, which disproportionately affects women from disadvantaged backgrounds. To address the low availability of kindergarten facilities and its impact on women's participation in the labour market and on children's later school performance, a legal entitlement to a place in pre-school education facility for children from the age of three will be introduced.</p>	<p>According to the Council <a href="#">implementing decision</a>, the plan includes measures addressing GE, as well as a horizontal mechanism to take GE and equal opportunities for all into account in the implementation phase. However, neither GE nor women are specifically mentioned in the description of the reforms, investments, milestones or targets in the <a href="#">annex</a> to the Council implementing decision.</p>

\* See Tables 5 and 6 of the [NRRP of Belgium](#): Nationaal plan voor herstel en veerkracht, Kabinet van de staatssecretaris voor Relance en Strategische Investerings, belast met Wetenschapsbeleid, [June 2021](#).