

## **Committee on Regional Development**

### **Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan**

adopted on 13 July 2017

Gender mainstreaming<sup>1</sup>, or the act of incorporating a gender perspective into all policies and at all levels and stages, is firmly established in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>2</sup>: ‘In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women’.

Understanding and taking into account the gender dimension of regional development policies will contribute to better, more inclusive policy-making for all citizens. Gender equality is formally mentioned in regional cohesion policy in relation to pursuing women’s empowerment and promoting economic development. Promoting gender equality is important in reducing regional economic and social disparities and ensuring the long-term development of regions, which are the two main objectives of cohesion policy.

In its resolution of 13 March 2003<sup>3</sup>, Parliament decided that a gender perspective should be integrated into the work of its committees and delegations and laid the foundations for the establishment of the Gender Mainstreaming Network, with a view to implementing the principle of gender mainstreaming in all its activities. The Committee on Regional Development (hereafter ‘the Committee’) has appointed one Member to take part in the network. On the basis of the work of the Gender Mainstreaming Network and the recommendations set out in Parliament’s resolutions of 17 November 2011<sup>4</sup> and 8 March 2016<sup>5</sup> on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament, the Committee endorses the following principles and actions to be implemented in its work. The purpose of this action plan is to implement recommendations issued by the Gender Mainstreaming Network and to ensure that coherent and continuous attention is paid to the issue of gender mainstreaming in the Committee’s work.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 61E, 10.3.2004, p. 384.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 153E, 31.5.2013, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0072.

## **In the area of work organisation:**

### **Ensuring gender-balanced representation**

The Committee and political groups should apportion opinions and reports, and speaking time in Committee and Plenary debates, in such a way that both genders are represented in a manner that reflects the composition of the Committee, and, where possible, ensure better representation if a gender is underrepresented. In addition, the Committee should encourage gender-balanced representation of Members taking part in missions and delegations.

### **Gender-balanced representation of the Bureau**

The Committee aims to elect a gender-balanced Bureau. To do so, it invites the political groups to propose both male and female candidates for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

### **Selection of staff**

Secretariat staff should be selected with the goal of equal representation of women and men at all levels. The selection procedure should take into account the recommendations of the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity. Moreover, knowledge of gender mainstreaming work should be considered a valuable qualification in the appointment of staff to the Secretariat.

### **Staff work-life balance**

The Committee invites the Secretariat and political groups to ensure a good work-life balance for its staff by implementing as soon as possible the recommendations set out in the report by Mr Papadimoulis entitled ‘Gender Equality in the European Parliament Secretariat – state of play and the way forward 2017-2019’, as regards:

- flexible working arrangements,
- considering the possibility of ‘purchasing time credits’ for both genders,
- placing a time limit on administrative meetings held in the evening, and
- assessing adequate performance on the basis of achievements and not presence in the office.

### **Training**

The Committee invites the Directorate-General for Personnel to provide gender mainstreaming training for Members, assistants, and staff of the groups and committee secretariats.

### **Gender-neutral language**

The Committee should promote the use of gender-neutral language (in accordance with Parliament's decisions on the use of gender-neutral language) in all its documents, with a particular focus on reports, opinions and commissioned studies.

### **Cooperation with other bodies promoting gender mainstreaming in parliamentary activities**

The Secretariat should coordinate with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the High-Level Group on Gender Equality and Diversity, the FEMM Committee and the Gender Mainstreaming Network, by establishing procedures dedicated to promoting gender mainstreaming in parliamentary activities. Written material produced by these bodies providing information about the most interesting and important best practices in the field of gender mainstreaming should be offered to Members, assistants, and staff of the groups and the Secretariat.

### **Other parliamentary committees**

The Committee should organise interparliamentary meetings with Member States and third countries to promote the exchange of best practices on gender issues and provide technical assistance.

### **Hearings and workshops**

The composition of invited speakers and paid experts attending hearings and workshops should be gender balanced. The gap between the number of female and male speakers and experts should be as small as possible.

### **Commission expert groups**

The Committee invites the Commission to ensure gender balance in its expert groups by ensuring parity between women and men in their composition.

### **European Ombudsperson**

On a regular basis, the Chair of the Committee should request data from the European Ombudsman on complaints about poor administration by EU institutions or EU bodies in the field of gender equality in regional development.

### **Interinstitutional cooperation mechanism**

A mechanism for interinstitutional cooperation between the different EU directorates and units working on regional development should be created in order to promote the integration

of a gender perspective in this area, including within the work and organisation of the institutions.

### **In the area of policies:**

#### **Studies**

Where appropriate, commissioned studies should take into account a gender perspective in the policy area concerned, collecting gender-disaggregated data whenever possible, including ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments of proposals on gender equality, and proposing alternative ideas to reduce gender inequalities and discrimination.

#### **Hearings and exchanges of views**

The Committee should promote a gender perspective in hearings and exchanges of views with representatives of Member States, regions, NGOs, businesses and women's organisations on issues related to regional development.

#### **Policies**

The Committee should aim to include a gender dimension in its regional development policy proposals.

#### **Reports and opinions**

Where appropriate, reports and opinions should take into account the potential impact of the proposed policies on the rights of women. Due account should be taken of the position of the FEMM Committee, if known.

Studies and analyses pertaining to gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the field of policy and any relevant and available data should be mentioned in the text. In the absence of such studies or analyses, the Committee could request one from the Policy Department or DG EPRS, if appropriate.

In the case of legislative proposals, the Committee should check whether an impact assessment taking into account gender inequalities has been carried out by the Commission and, where this is deemed lacking or insufficient, should notify the Commission of this fact so as to rectify the situation, in accordance with the EU's 2009 Impact Assessment Guidelines.

#### **Committee missions**

Where possible, Committee mission programmes should also include an assessment of the gender equality and women's rights situation in the related context, for example in the course of meetings with women's organisations.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming:**

This plan should be closely monitored by the Member responsible for gender mainstreaming in the Committee. The Member will be supported by the Secretariat.

The Committee should hold an exchange of views on gender mainstreaming in its policy area once every two years, to coincide with and feed into the drafting of Parliament's gender mainstreaming report.

At the start of each new mandate, the Committee should designate one of its Members to be part of Parliament's Gender Mainstreaming Network, endorse the Gender Action Plan and update it if necessary.