

Committee on International Trade (INTA)

Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming¹, the act of incorporating a gender perspective in all policies, at all levels and all stages, is firmly established in Article 8 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union²: “In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women”.

Economy is a gendered structure and economic policies, including trade liberalisation, affect different groups of women and men differently. From a gender equality perspective, trade policies are likely to have different effects on women and men, depending on the sectors which are impacted and notably on whether they are mostly employing women or men. Studies³ also show that gender equality increases the general economic benefits of trade reforms, raises productivity and boosts inclusive economic development. Understanding and taking into account the gender dimension in trade will contribute to better policy-making and ensure that both sexes can benefit from different trade policies. Further, the European Commission has recently recognised the need for better data to allow improving the methodology to assess the costs and benefits of EU trade policies on gender equality⁴. This should include an assessment of the impact of EU trade policies in the respect of all women civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, both within and outside the European Union.

In order to implement the principle of gender mainstreaming in all its activities, the European Parliament decided, in its resolution of 13 March 2003, that the gender perspective should be integrated in the work of its committees and delegations and set the premises for the Gender Mainstreaming Network to be established. INTA has appointed three Members to take part in the network. Based on the work of the Gender Mainstreaming Network and recommendations incorporated in the European Parliament resolution of 8 March 2016 on gender mainstreaming, the Committee on International Trade draws up the following principles and actions to be implemented in its work.

With regards to policy work:

- in preparing reports and opinions, a gender focus should be included in the formulation of the policy, whenever possible; given that due attention is given to studies and analysis on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in relevant policy field and to the extent possible, the available relevant data should be mentioned in the text; in the

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

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>

³ Report: Trade Policy & EU Agreements in Eastern European Partner Countries-Why Gender Matters

⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2015-004119&language=EN>

absence of such a study or analyses, the committee could request it from the Policy Department or EPRS, if necessary;

- the committee checks whether gender aspect has been analysed in ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments of legislative proposals and in sustainability impact assessments of trade agreements; in case this is deemed lacking or insufficient, the committee calls on the Commission to redress the situation; the committee requests the Commission to respect the gender balance in trade negotiating teams and in the Commission expert groups; and, if deemed lacking, invites the Commission to redress the situation;
- the committee advocates for the better collection of gender-disaggregated data as its lack hampers informed policy making;
- the committee ensures that its monitoring groups discuss the impact of specific trade agreements on gender equality and invites women's organisations to present their views, if appropriate;
- the committee aims to interact more effectively with the bodies in charge of the implementation and promotion of gender mainstreaming in parliamentary activities (FEMM Committee, Gender Mainstreaming Network, The High Level Group for Gender Equality); INTA Members responsible for gender mainstreaming report regularly back to the committee on the work of Gender Mainstreaming Network;

With regards to the practices of the work of members and staff:

- gender neutral language (EP Guidelines "Gender neutral language in the European Parliament) is used in all documents related to the work of the committee; attention is paid especially in the committee's reports and opinions as well as studies commissioned by the committee;
- gender balance of paid experts and invited speakers is taken into account to the maximum extent possible when organising hearings and workshops;
- meetings with women organisations (women business organisations, women in trade organisations, organisations representing female workers and organisations defending human and women rights) are included in the INTA missions programmes, if relevant;
- INTA Secretariat should coordinate with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the High-Level Group of Gender Equality and Diversity, FEMM committee and the gender mainstreaming network in order to ensure that information / written material on gender issues and best practices in gender mainstreaming are circulated in the committee; the committee promotes and communicates gender mainstreaming in

trade policy in its interaction with external stakeholders, including by the INTA newsletter;

- gender aspect will be included in the terms of reference of studies commissioned by the committee;
- the committee holds an exchange of views on gender mainstreaming in its policy at a minimum once in two years, to coincide with and feed into the drafting of the EP gender mainstreaming report;

Monitoring and evaluation of the Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming

- This plan will be closely monitored by the members responsible for gender mainstreaming in the committee. They will be supported by the Secretariat.