

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2019

NOTE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Readers,

I am pleased to address you in my new role as chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equality. To fight for a Europe in which women finally have equal opportunities has been the central goal of my political life and I am glad that I will be able to continue this fight with you. It is one of my deepest convictions that women's politics and Europe belong together. What must be clear in our joint way ahead, in the 21st century it must not make a difference, which gender or sex one has or whom one loves.

Unfortunately, taking a glance at the EU Member States it shows that women's rights are at risk once again. In recent years, the European Parliament has proven itself as a guarantor of women's rights in the fight against the backlash across the continent. I want

to further strengthen this role, because the status quo in matters of equality is far from satisfactory. Women have the right to fair representation, a self-determined life without violence and discrimination.

Five months after the European elections these days feel like 'back to school'. Committees and delegations have been constituted and are preparing the hearings for the candidates of the new commission under commission president elect Ursula von der Leyen. In this context important decisions about the main content of our parliamentary work over the next five years will be taken. And there are already concrete successes. Von der Leyen has accomplished what few would have expected, and presented a gender-balanced commission college. In addition, for the first time in history, all candidates must outline how they wish to advance gender equality in their policies. That is an important signal and a great success. After all, equality for women must finally become reality in all areas of politics.

For the FEMM-committee the way ahead is quite clear. We need clear progress on files like "Women on Boards", the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on violence against women and work-life balance. And new proposals to close the pay gap, to end female poverty and finally realize a binding EU gender equality strategy. So there is a lot of work ahead of us. And I look forward to working with you for the rights of women in Europe.

Thank you for coming to our meeting or following us via [webstream](#).

LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

4 SEPTEMBER

European Union Budget 2020 - Budgetary amendments



The budgetary amendments are part of the annual budgetary procedure for the 2020 EU budget. The budgetary amendments proposed by FEMM members focused, among others, on topics such as the digital gender gap, the protection of women's health, the prevention of gender-based violence, the promotion of equality and non-discrimination and the advancement on human development from a gender perspective. Proposals for pilot projects and preparatory actions were also submitted as budgetary amendments. In total 17 budgetary amendments were adopted.

[Link to the budgetary procedure 2020](#)

Accompanying resolution to the EU budget 2020 - Consideration of the draft opinion

The draft opinion, whose rapporteur is Ms Frances Fitzgerald (EPP, Ireland), states the priorities to be considered for the next EU budget. As a general demand, the draft opinion calls for the use of gender budgeting in the EU. It calls for an increase of funding for existing instruments aimed at upholding women's economic rights and reduce gender inequality. Among those funds which should be boosted the draft opinion pays special attention to those devoted to combat violence against women and trafficking in human beings, such as the Daphne-specific objective included in the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme.

The draft opinion also calls for the EU to enhance women's potential in all sectors of the economy, particularly in the digital sector. It stresses the need to support women's entrepreneurship and women's economic independence through Union programmes and funds, such as COSME, Horizon 2020 and the European Social Fund.



61 amendments, which were considered by the Committee on 23 September, were tabled to the draft opinion. The rapporteur proposed 8 compromise amendments.

On 30 September the opinion was finally adopted by 19 votes in favour to 5 votes against, with 1 abstention.

[Link to the budgetary procedure 2020](#)

Commission's Director General in charge of Gender Equality - Exchange of views



Members held an exchange of views with Ms Tiina Astola, European Commission Director General for Justice and Consumers, concerning the state of play of the main pending file in the area of gender equality. It was an excellent occasion to explore the situation as well as future perspectives of proposals like "Women on Boards", the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on violence against women, work-life balance and others.

Hearing with Carlien Scheele, nominated as new EIGE Director

The FEMM Committee held an exchange of views with Ms Carlien Scheele, candidate for the post of Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The candidate, before being appointed, was invited to make a declaration before the FEMM Committee, as a competent committee of the Parliament, and answer questions from its members. Ms Scheele, currently working as the Senior Gender Equality Adviser in the Council of Europe, has long years of experience in the gender equality field.



12 SEPTEMBER

Second EU report on the fight against trafficking in human beings - Presentation



Ms Myria Vassiliadou, the EU Anti Trafficking Coordinator, presented the second report on the progress made in the fight against trafficking in human beings as required under Article 20 of Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, in a joint session of FEMM and LIBE committees.

The report recognizes the emerging patterns and trends in the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings and discusses the EU response to them. The document also assesses potential ways of countering the culture of impunity and the best means to improve victims' access to justice. This debate will serve to the Members as an initial input to any future reports on the implementation of the Directive.

[Link to the report](#)

23 SEPTEMBER

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Experts' Forum

FEMM Members held an exchange of views with the two members of the EIGE experts' forum nominated by the European Parliament, Ms Edit Bauer and Mr Mikael Gustafsson. This was the first participation of these experts at a FEMM meeting since taking up their role in their new term of office on 1 December 2018. They presented themselves to the new Members of the FEMM Committee in an exchange of views on their work in the Experts' Forum.



Experts' Forum is an advisory body of EIGE established to provide expertise knowledge in the field of gender equality and it is comprised of 33 members (28 nominated by the Member States, three by the Commission and two by the EP) for an office term of 3 years.

Finish Presidency - Exchange of views



Mr Thomas Blomqvist, Finnish Minister for Nordic Cooperation and Equality, presented the main objectives of the Finnish Presidency in the field of gender equality. Finland has announced that, during its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, it wants to facilitate the debate on the EU's gender equality policy for the future and strengthen the links between economic policy and gender equality. The Finnish Presidency aims to put on the table the links between the economy, the social dimension and gender equality due to the important role that they will play in many of the equality-related questions the EU will be dealing with in the future.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Hearing of Commissioner-Designate Helena Dalli - Equality

FEMM Committee will lead, together with the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the hearing of the commissioner-designate for Equality, Helena Dalli. The hearing will take place on Wednesday 2 October from 14.30 to 17.30 in room JAN 2Q2 (József Antall building).



In order to prepare for the hearing, the Parliament sent several written questions to Commissioner-designate Dalli. You can find them and her replies in the following link:

[Link to the replies to the questions](#)

BULLETIN

EIGE

Gender equality: How far have we come since 2017?



Is gender equality in the EU still moving at a snail's pace? What can we do better? Where does your country stand? Find out on 15 October at EIGE's Gender Equality Index conference in Brussels.

A new feature of this year's Gender Equality Index is a special focus on work-life balance. The conference will explore the diverse ways women and men balance work and personal commitments. Aspects such as parental leave, flexible working arrangements and public infrastructure will be scrutinised and discussed by our panel speakers. Find out more and register in the link.

[Link](#)

LATEST STUDIES

Women, Gender Equality and the Energy Transition in the EU

The study examines the evidence on the role of women in the energy transition in the European Union and the extent of gender equality in the process particularly in respect of the renewable energy sector. It identifies gender inequalities preventing women from the involvement in the energy transition and career advancement in this area and assesses how the transfer to the sustainable energy model will affect gender equality and the role of women as actors of change. The study provides best practices in overcoming the barriers to gender equality in the energy transition and concludes with recommendations to the EU and national decision makers.



[Link to the study](#)

Women's role in peace processes



This study aims to provide insight on the meaningful inclusion of women - where women have decision-making authority - in peace and transition processes. Inclusive peace frameworks not only better reflect the diversity of society, they increase the durability and the quality of peace. Yet, awarding decision-making authority to those waging the war and not to those waging the peace remains a reoccurring theme in most armed conflict situations.

The study presents available data on fragility and armed conflict. It examines progress on the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions. It assesses global commitments, EU application of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, National Action Plans and global peace and security indicators. Lastly, the study provides recommendations to achieve sustainable peace and transform global power dynamics that currently favour traditional security perspectives.

[Link to the study](#)

The professional status of rural women in the EU

The study gives overview of the professional status of rural women in the EU, their employment situation and position in the labour market in rural areas in most relevant Member States. The document provides identification of the best practices implemented in the Member States and concludes with policy recommendations on the improvement of the employment situation and legal status of women living in rural areas of the EU.



[Link to the study](#)

Access to maternal healthcare and midwifery for vulnerable groups in the EU



The study examines issues related to access of vulnerable social groups to maternal health care services and midwifery in the EU. As the study points out, this access is affected by the interplay of health systems, law, policies, socio-economic factors and attitudes of health professionals and users which leads to barriers to access and consequently to worse health outcomes for those women, as evidence demonstrates. The document critically discusses the issues, analyses the causes, surveys the literature for best practices and makes policy recommendations, aiming at improving the situation for vulnerable women and contributing to reduction of health inequalities.

[Link to the Study](#)



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