



Plenary sitting

A9-0315/2021

8.11.2021

REPORT

on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020
(2021/2020(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Sandra Pereira

CONTENTS

	Page
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	22
INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE.....	23
FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE	24

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020 (2021/2020(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union, Articles 6, 8, 10, 83, 153 and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
- having regard to the EU directives from 1975 onwards on various aspects of equal treatment for women and men, namely Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security¹, Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood², Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding³, Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services⁴, Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation⁵, Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC⁶, and Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employment capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC⁷,
- having regard to the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others of 1949,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 5 and its targets and indicators,

¹ OJ L 6, 10.1.1979, p. 24.

² OJ L 359, 19.12.1986, p. 56.

³ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37.

⁵ OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23.

⁶ OJ L 68, 18.3.2010, p. 13.

⁷ OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1.

- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995 and to the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the UN Beijing+5, +10, +15 and +20 special sessions,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to Convention No 100 of the International Labour Organization concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value,
- having regard to Convention No 156 of the International Labour Organization concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0152),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 12 November 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0698),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 5 March 2021 entitled ‘2021 report on gender equality in the EU’ (SWD(2021)0055),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 March 2021 entitled ‘EU Strategy on the rights of the child (2020-2025)’ (COM(2021)0142),
- having regard to the study entitled ‘The gendered impact of the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period’, published by the Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs of its Directorate-General for Internal Policies on 30 September 2020,
- having regard to the 2019 and 2020 Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 June 2017 on the need for an EU strategy to end and prevent the gender pension gap⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 December 2020 on the need for a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality¹⁰,

⁸ OJ C 407, 4.11.2016, p. 2.

⁹ OJ C 331, 18.9.2018, p. 60.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0379.

- having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality¹¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 21 January 2021 on the gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period¹²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2021 on challenges ahead for women’s rights in Europe: more than 25 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 24 June 2021 on the situation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EU, in the frame of women’s health¹⁴,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A9-0315/2021),
- A. whereas women’s rights are human rights and thus universal and indivisible, as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; whereas the struggle for gender equality and the promotion and protection of women’s rights is a truly collective responsibility that requires faster progress and efforts by EU institution and Member States; whereas the EU and its Member States must aim to combat inequalities and discrimination based on gender and sex, promote gender equality, and guarantee equal rights and treatment for women and men in all their diversity, as well as ensure that they have equal power and opportunities to shape society and their own lives; whereas according to the European Institute for Gender Equality, the EU is at least 60 years away from achieving complete gender equality; whereas gender equality in the EU has not yet been achieved and progress in this direction remains slow, stagnating or even regressing in certain regions and countries; whereas the EU’s score in the Gender Equality Index has increased by only 4.1 points since 2010 and 0.5 points since 2017¹⁵; whereas Member States achieved an average score of 67.9 out of 100 in 2020;
- B. whereas women must have the same opportunities as men for reaching economic independence; whereas although female employment rates have risen, gender inequality on the labour market remains a worrying reality and a significant challenge, while labour market trends in the light of the pandemic show a more significant impact on women than men¹⁶; whereas the employment rate for men of working age in the EU-27

¹¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0025.

¹² Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0024.

¹³ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0058.

¹⁴ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2021)0314.

¹⁵ Gender Equality Index 2020 report.

¹⁶ Eurostat, *May 2021 Euroindicator: Euro area unemployment at 7.9 %, EU at 7.3 %, 1 July 2021.*

was 79 % in 2019, exceeding that of women by 11.7 percentage points; whereas with regard to labour market participation, 8 % of men in the EU are working part-time compared to 31 % of women, revealing persistent inequalities; whereas the gender gap in the full-time equivalent employment rate has increased in eight Member States since 2010; whereas too little progress has been made in challenging the sectoral and occupational gender segregation in the labour market; whereas the employment gap is particularly high for women of poor socioeconomic status, such as single mothers, female caregivers, women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women, women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds and from religious minorities, women with low educational achievements, LGBTIQ+ women, as well as young and elderly women;

- C. whereas women in the EU are paid 14 % less per hour than men on average and whereas the gender pay gap varies from between 3.3 % to 21.7 % across the Member States; whereas despite the fact that the principle of equal pay for men and women has been part of the EU *acquis* since 1957 and a significant amount of national legislation, and in spite of the action taken and resources spent trying to reduce these disparities, progress has been extremely slow and wage inequality has even got worse in several Member States; whereas far more women than men work part-time (8.9 million vs 560 000) owing to their care responsibilities; whereas the increasing long-term care needs and lack of care services exacerbate gender inequalities within families and in employment; whereas Eurostat figures show that unemployment among women grew from 6.9 % in April to 7.9 % in August 2020, while unemployment among men grew from 6.5 % to 7.1 % over the same period;
- D. whereas women face intersectional inequalities and discrimination, including on account of their race, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, religion or belief, residence status and disability, and whereas efforts must be made to address all forms of discrimination to achieve gender equality for all women; whereas until now EU policies have not deployed an intersectional approach and have focused only on the individual dimension of discrimination, which downplays its institutional, structural and historical dimensions; whereas applying an intersectional analysis not only allows us to understand structural barriers, but also offers evidence to create benchmarks and set a path towards strategic and effective policies against systemic discrimination, exclusion and social inequalities;
- E. whereas the Commission's 2021 report on gender equality in the EU concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected women's lives and exacerbated existing gender inequalities in almost every respect; whereas at the forefront of efforts to combat the pandemic, around 70 % of workers in the social and health sectors are women, such as nurses, doctors or cleaning assistants; whereas the manifold impacts of the pandemic on women range from an increase in gender-based and domestic violence and harassment to a greater burden of unpaid care and domestic responsibilities, with women continuing to carry out the majority of household and family tasks, even more so when teleworking, unemployed or in part-time work; whereas in addition, women face economic disadvantages on the labour market, particularly healthcare workers, caregivers and workers in other female-dominated and precarious sectors, and restricted access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); whereas the economic

impact of the pandemic threatens to reverse the hard-won progress with regard to women's economic independence over the past decade; whereas women's employment has fallen more sharply during the pandemic than it did during the 2008 recession¹⁷, with significant consequences for women and their families and the wider economy, including reduced opportunities, freedoms, rights and well-being; whereas the Global Gender Gap report 2021 states that the time it will take to close the gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years as a result of the pandemic¹⁸;

- F. whereas there has been an unprecedented focus on gender equality in sport over the last decade, but not always for the best reasons and purposes, especially as regards women's rights in practice;
- G. whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality defines gender-based violence against women as any form of violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately; whereas violence against women in all its forms (physical, sexual, psychological, economic or cyber-violence) is a violation of human rights, an extreme form of discrimination against women and one of the biggest obstacles to achieving gender equality; whereas gender-based violence is rooted in the unequal distribution of power between genders, patriarchal structures and gender stereotypes, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and can differ in appearance, intensity and form; whereas a society free from gender-based violence must be acknowledged as an absolute prerequisite for gender equality;
- H. whereas 31 % of women in Europe have experienced physical and/or sexual violence and whereas countless women experience sexual assault and harassment in intimate partnerships and public life¹⁹; whereas reports and figures from several Member States show a worrying increase in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic; whereas according to the World Health Organization, some Member States have reported a 60 % increase in emergency calls from women subjected to violence by their intimate partner during the pandemic²⁰; whereas according to a report by Europol, child sexual abuse online has increased dramatically in the EU²¹; whereas the impact of confinement on social, economic, psychological and democratic life has been disproportionately severe on people and women in vulnerable situations, with particular regard to exposure to violence, increased economic dependence and inequalities in the workplace and between caring roles; whereas in addition, lockdown measures made it more difficult for the victims of intimate partner violence to seek help as they were often confined with their abusers and had limited access to support services; whereas insufficient or inadequate support structures and resources have exacerbated an existing

¹⁷ Gender Equality Index 2020.

¹⁸ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap report 2021*, 31 March 2021.

¹⁹ World Health Organization, *Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women*, 2021.

²⁰ Statement to the press by Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, World Health Organization Regional Director for Europe, 7 May 2020.

²¹ Europol, *Exploiting isolation: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic*, 19 June 2020.

‘shadow’ pandemic;

- I. whereas there are worrying anti-gender and anti-feminist movements attacking women’s rights across Europe, challenging achievements and progress and thus undermining democratic values; where the backlash against gender equality policies and women’s rights is becoming a matter of grave concern;
- J. whereas trafficking in human beings is a highly gendered phenomenon with nearly three quarters of the reported victims in the EU being women and girls, who were predominantly trafficked for sexual exploitation; whereas trafficking in human beings is a growing part of organised crime and a human rights violation; whereas 78 % of all children trafficked are girls and 68 % of adults trafficked are women;
- K. whereas access to SRHR, including sexuality and relationships education, family planning, contraceptive methods and safe and legal abortion, is essential to achieving gender equality and eliminating gender-based violence; whereas the autonomy and ability of girls and women to make free and independent decisions about their bodies and lives is a precondition for their economic independence and thus for gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence; whereas it is unacceptable that several Member States are currently attempting to limit access to SRHR through highly restrictive laws, which lead to gender discrimination and have negative consequences for women’s health;
- L. whereas women in the EU are more disproportionately affected by poverty or the risk of social exclusion than men, notably women who experience intersectional forms of discrimination owing to structural factors, gender norms and stereotypes; whereas since 2010 the gender gap in earnings has increased in 17 Member States, while the gender gap in income has gone up in 19 Member States, leading to an overall increase in gender inequality in earnings and income in the EU²²; whereas 40.3 % of single-parent households in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2019²³; whereas women are at greater risk of poverty and job insecurity, with those at risk often working in low-paid jobs with wages insufficient to overcome the poverty line and precarious working conditions;
- M. whereas it is important to guarantee the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, as enshrined in the Treaties;
- N. whereas the EU gender pay gap is 14.1 %, with variations between the Member States; whereas this gender pay gap has a number of implications, not least a 29.5 %²⁴ difference in corresponding pension entitlements, leading to a gender pension gap that places older women at greater risk of poverty and social exclusion; whereas this is the result of career and employment gaps that have built up through care responsibilities

²² Eurostat, Gender pay gap statistics, February 2021.

²³ Eurostat, ‘Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion’, October 2020.

²⁴ 2021 Commission report on gender equality in the EU.

and/or part-time work undertaken by women over time, and the ensuing repercussions for access to financial resources such as benefits and pension payments; whereas the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is not always guaranteed and remains one of the biggest challenges to be met in efforts to combat pay discrimination²⁵; whereas gender-equal sharing of parental leave is important for tackling the gender pay gap; whereas although essential and of high socioeconomic value, work in highly female-dominated sectors such as care, cleaning, retail and education is often less valued and lower paid than work in male-dominated sectors; whereas this fact highlights the urgent need to reassess the adequacy of wages in female-dominated sectors;

- O. whereas 20.6 % of women with disabilities are in full-time employment in the EU, compared with 28.5 % of men with disabilities; whereas figures show that on average, 29.5 % of women with disabilities in the EU are at risk of falling victim to poverty and social exclusion, compared with 27.5 % of their male counterparts;
- P. whereas gender stereotypes still influence the division of labour at home, in education, in the workplace and in society; whereas unpaid care and domestic work, which is mostly carried out by women, imposes a disproportionate burden on women, who play a vital role in this respect; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the shocking state of European care homes and the sector as a whole, which mostly employs women; whereas 80 % of care in the EU is provided by informal caregivers, 75 % of whom are women²⁶; whereas prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, women in the EU spent an average of 13 hours more than men on unpaid care and housework every week; whereas the unequal sharing of care responsibilities in the Member States is exacerbated by a limited or total lack of access to adequate and accessible care facilities, including public care facilities for children and older people, which leads to periods of absence from the labour market and widens the gender pay and pension gaps; whereas 7.7 million women aged between 20 and 64 were away from the EU labour market in 2019 because they were looking after children or other people with care needs, compared with 450 000 men; whereas investment in universal services, including public services, has an impact on fundamental rights and the ability to participate freely in the labour market; whereas everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and to balance their professional and private lives;
- Q. whereas measures to achieve a work-life balance are important in ensuring an equal division of caregiving responsibilities between women and men and addressing income and employment disparities; whereas the achievement of a work-life balance depends on the availability and accessibility of high-quality public care services, which should be provided free of charge; whereas all maternity benefits should be ensured and upheld, with an increase in fully paid leave entitlements; whereas public policies are required for the protection and promotion of nursing and breastfeeding;

²⁵ 2021 Commission report on gender equality in the EU.

²⁶ Eurocarers, *The gender dimension of informal care*, 2017.

- R. whereas the Commission adopted its Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025 on 5 March 2020, outlining an ambitious framework on how to advance gender equality in the EU; whereas policies must contribute more to advance gender equality; whereas women are disproportionately affected by rising unemployment, increased precariousness, low pay and budget cuts including in public services, notably health and education; whereas Parliament has called on the Commission to establish a concrete roadmap with timeframes, objectives, a yearly review and monitoring mechanism, clear and measurable indicators of success, and additional targeted actions; whereas through its policies, programmes and relations with the Member States, including close cooperation on the national recovery funds, the EU should assess the Member States carefully to ensure they are taking proper account of the gender dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- S. whereas the presence of women in both chambers of national parliaments in the EU has increased from 24 % in 2010 to 32 % in 2020; whereas the gender balance has improved among cabinet ministers in national governments, from 26 % in 2010 to 32 % in 2020; whereas there are significant differences between the Member States however, with only seven having achieved gender parity or a gender balance in their cabinets: whereas the pace of change continues to be extremely slow at regional and local levels, with only 29 % of positions represented by women in 2019 and Hungary, Slovakia and Romania having more than 80 % male representation in regional assemblies;
- T. whereas the right to equal pay for equal work of equal value is not guaranteed in many circumstances, even where enshrined in law; whereas the root causes of such discrimination need to be tackled, whether by protecting and enhancing labour rights or by stepping up business monitoring, especially by national labour inspectorates; whereas collective bargaining is key to reversing and overcoming gender inequalities;
- U. whereas gender equality is closely linked to the green and digital transitions and whereas the inclusion of women in decision-making is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the efficient management of both the green and digital transitions in order to achieve fair and just transitions that leave no one behind; whereas all climate action and digital policies must include a gender and intersectional perspective;
- V. whereas the effects on families of involving men and of fatherhood show that caring men are important to the optimal development of children and can improve the work-life balance and help redress gender inequality in relationships; whereas male engagement can help to prevent violence in families and contribute to more equitable societies;
- W. whereas the persistence of gender stereotypes and expectations about the roles of men and boys can make them reluctant to show positive emotions and make them internalise negative emotions such as sadness and anxiety, which can result in men and boys displaying greater levels of aggression and anger than women; whereas this can make men and boys more likely to perpetrate violence such as gender-based violence;
- X. whereas gender imbalance is a persistent phenomenon in central banks, which are cornerstones of economic decision-making that shape social, political and economic

realities; whereas all central banks of the Member States are currently governed by a man and whereas last year women occupied only a quarter (24.6 %) of the positions on key decision-making bodies of the EU's national central banks;

- Y. whereas the European Institute for Gender Equality has concluded that the performance of the Member States in gender mainstreaming has been getting worse since 2012; whereas despite slightly more ambitious commitments by governments to mainstream gender into public administrations, the availability of gender mainstreaming structures and the use of gender mainstreaming tools has waned;

A gender-equal economy

1. Stresses that respect for the right to work, as well as equal pay and equal treatment, is an essential precondition for women's equal rights, economic independence and career fulfilment; underlines that equal opportunities and higher labour market participation of women increase economic prosperity in Europe; believes that combating gender inequalities must be a core consideration at the workplace; recalls that women are overrepresented among low and minimum wage earners, in part-time work and in precarious working conditions; recognises the equal right of women and men to fair remuneration for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families; insists, therefore, that the fight against precarious employment should be improved so that all workers receive fair remuneration sufficient for a decent standard of living for themselves and their families, through statutory minimum-wage-setting mechanisms or collective agreements in accordance with the principle that every permanent job must entail an effective employment relationship with recognition and enhancement of rights at the workplace; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote policies that aim to eliminate precarious work and involuntary part-time work in order to improve the situation for women in the labour market; encourages the Member States, in collaboration with social partners, to tackle inequalities between men and women through policies that enhance the value of work, wages, labour conditions, and the living conditions of all workers and their families;
2. Points to the need to pay close attention to the situation and rights of professional and non-professional top-level athletes representing their countries in international and European competitions both during and after their sporting careers; urges the Member States to ensure that children and young people are fully entitled to participate in sport and to combat the widening social divide regarding access to sport;
3. Is concerned about the results of the 2020 Gender Equality Index; stresses that more than a third of the Member States²⁷ registered fewer than 60 points in 2018²⁷; regrets the

²⁷All Gender Equality Index rankings as follows (EU-28 and average): Sweden (83.9), Denmark (77.4), France (75.1), Finland (74.7), Netherlands (74.1), United Kingdom (72.7), Ireland (72.2), Spain (72.0), Belgium (71.4), Luxembourg (70.3), EU average (67.9), Slovenia (67.7), Germany (67.5), Austria (66.5), Italy (63.5), Malta (63.4), Portugal (61.3), Latvia (60.8), Estonia (60.7), Bulgaria (59.6), Croatia (57.9), Cyprus (56.9), Lithuania (56.3), Czechia (56.2), Poland (55.8), Slovakia (55.5), Romania (54.4), Hungary (53), Greece (52.2).

slow progress towards achieving equality and the fact that not all Member States make it a priority of their policymaking; calls on the Member States to take practical measures to ensure that women have equal access to the labour market, employment and working conditions, including work with equal rights and equal pay as well as fair remuneration, notably in female-dominated sectors; acknowledges the role of social partners and collective bargaining in reversing and overcoming inequality in promoting gender equality and addressing pay discrimination against women in all their diversity and calls for *de jure* and *de facto* compliance with the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value;

4. Welcomes the Commission's proposal on binding pay transparency measures as an important initiative to combat and apply the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, but stresses that pay transparency alone will not address the deep-rooted gender inequalities behind it; calls on the Member States to define clear goals to address the gender pay and pension gaps; highlights the need to incorporate within this action plan an intersectional perspective and the diverse realities and experiences of discrimination faced by women from particular groups;
5. Stresses the importance for Member States to impose firm measures, including sanctions, when businesses fail to comply with labour legislation against gender discrimination and gender bias; highlights the need to ensure conditionality in the allocation of EU funds to companies that do not ensure workers' rights, in particular by discriminating against women, in contravention of the legislation; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that all budget appropriations under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework respect the principle of equality between men and women and promote gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all EU policies; calls for the Gender Equality Index to be incorporated within the Social Scoreboard and for the provision of gender-disaggregated data on the existing indicators in order to better address country-specific challenges; calls for support for actions for women's economic independence through all EU programmes and structural funds, such as the strategic implementation of the European Social Fund, which should be used to promote gender equality, improve women's access to and reintegration in the labour market and combat the unemployment, poverty and social exclusion of women and all forms of discrimination; calls on the Commission to propose proactive measures through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to support women's employment in rural areas;
6. Emphasises the importance of ensuring that everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and balance their professional and private lives; calls for the EU and its Member States to further underpin maternity and paternity entitlements by improving periods of equal and fully paid leave with a view to involving men equally in unpaid work including care responsibilities, while taking account of the World Health Organization recommendation; calls for the right to a flexible working arrangement following maternity, paternity and parental leave to be guaranteed in practice, enabling both parents to equally share and balance work with care responsibilities; calls for these

measures to be backed up by investments in modern, high-quality and local infrastructure and funding for services and caregivers to ensure universal early childhood education and childcare, including from public services;

7. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a drastic impact on the lives of women, in particular working women; notes that a disproportionate share of the burden was borne by teleworking women whose lives were made harder by the need to combine work, childcare and domestic chores; points out that many women were faced with increased expenses on lower pay;
8. Stresses that the employment rate of women in the EU must increase; calls for measures to achieve work and pay enhancement, to combat unemployment effectively, and to promote full-time employment for all women; calls for the promotion of the existing national systems, placing particular emphasis on social dialogue, collective bargaining and its binding effect, the revitalisation of employment, and the fight against job insecurity; notes that men and women face different risks at work and stresses the importance, therefore, of a gender-sensitive approach to occupational health and safety by ensuring that working time is organised in such a way as to guarantee that both men and women can equally enjoy daily and weekly rest periods, breaks, and holidays, as well as ensuring adequate working conditions; calls for the EU and its Member States to encourage employers to adopt family-friendly measures such as the possibility of reducing working hours for men and women in order to guarantee care and education for children;
9. Urges the Commission and the Member States to better apply the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women across the different economic sectors; calls, to this end, for the creation of gender-neutral job evaluation tools and classification criteria, in close cooperation with social partners and with respect for their autonomy and for collective agreements and national labour market traditions and models, which can contribute to a better valuation and thus fairer remuneration of work in female-dominated sectors;
10. Call on the EU to put forward a set of policies, programmes, funding and recommendations to foster a transition towards a care economy with a view to progressing towards societies in which life and the well-being of all is prioritised over growth and where the value of care work – both paid and unpaid – is put at the centre of our economies, while responding to the social impacts on those with caring responsibilities;
11. Calls for measures to be adopted to foster men and women’s entrepreneurship in the EU by promoting fiscal, economic and financial measures, thereby enabling this important initiative to create new jobs and alleviate the financial burden on entrepreneurs;
12. Stresses the paramount importance of eliminating tax-related gender biases and other inequalities, towards which tax schemes must make a contribution, including personal income tax schemes; calls on the Member States to ensure that fiscal policy, including taxation, serves to tackle and eliminate socioeconomic and gender inequalities in all their dimensions;

13. Points out that COVID-19 has brought to light the precarious situation of female intellectuals (researchers, architects and others) who, in the absence of a stable employment relationship, have been particularly affected; stresses the need for extraordinary measures to mitigate the consequences of the Member States' containment measures and underlines the importance of structural measures that take into account equality at work and in everyday life and enforce women's rights;
14. Stresses the role of women working in the social sector; recognises that their workload has been exacerbated by the pandemic and that low wages, increased exploitation (especially of migrant women) and the hiring of people without training or qualifications for the tasks to be performed are aggravating their working and living conditions; stresses the importance of enhancing working conditions and pay, respecting working hours and using collective bargaining as a guarantee of respect for working conditions;

The eradication of gender-based violence

15. Highlights the cases of unequal treatment and harassment of women at work and underlines the need to combat the exploitation, inequalities, discrimination and violence affecting women, noting that harassment in the workplace leads to women being excluded from their chosen careers and sectors and constitutes a serious assault on their psychological and physical health; notes that women are far more likely to be subjected to sexual harassment than men; calls on the Member States and the EU to ratify International Labour Organization Convention No 190 in order to comply with the global standards to end violence and harassment in the world of work and Convention No 189 on domestic workers, which has only been ratified by eight countries and aims to provide legal recognition for domestic work, to extend rights to all women domestic workers, notably those in the informal economy, and to prevent violations and abuses; urges the EU and its Member States to devise 'Me Too' legislation to combat sexual harassment in the workplace; calls on the Member States, employers and associations to ensure that they have proper procedures in place for preventing gender discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, which create a toxic environment, and insists that they protect the victims of and ensure accountability for gender-based violence committed at the workplace or their organisations;
16. Condemns all forms of violence against women and girls in all their diversity; strongly reaffirms its commitment to tackling gender-based violence; calls on the EU and the Member States, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, to ratify and/or duly implement the Istanbul Convention, which among other issues highlights misconceptions about gender roles in our society such as 'traditional family values' and seeks to combat repressive views about women; recalls that the convention should be regarded as a minimum standard and strongly reaffirms its previous call for comprehensive legislation covering all forms of gender-based violence as the best way to put an end to it;
17. Notes that violence between men and women increases during any kind of emergency, be it economic crisis, conflict or outbreak of disease; notes that inequalities and

economic and social pressures caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures, which entailed restrictions on movement and social isolation, led to an increase in violence against women; highlights that many women were confined to their homes with their aggressors; notes that in general, domestic violence increased by as much as 30 % in some Member States during the first lockdown²⁸; calls on the Member States to devise and implement effective policies and measures to tackle violence against women and to take all the necessary measures to ensure that the perpetrators of abuse are identified and tracked by the police and other authorities to help prevent violence and deaths, as well as providing protection, support and reparations for the women subjected to it, ensuring the deployment of increased and adequate resources and more effective responses by the Member States; stresses the need for specific programmes to protect and monitor the victims of violence and for measures to strengthen social support and improve access to justice, shelter and mental healthcare in the fields of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation;

18. Welcomes the Commission's intention to propose measures to tackle cyber-violence against women; considers that the cross-border nature of cyber-violence against women and girls requires a common EU response; stresses the need for the Member States to establish programmes to better flag up the risk of and prevent recurring incidences of domestic violence, recidivism and femicide and measures to eradicate all forms of online violence; stresses the urgent need to protect women and girls from violence offline and online and recalls that violence against women can take many different forms; recognises the structural nature of violence against women as gender-based violence and points out that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms whereby women are forced into a subordinate position to men; notes that this kind of violence is still going underreported and underreacted to;
19. Underlines that violence by men against women starts with violence by boys against girls; stresses that comprehensive, age-appropriate education on sexuality and relationships is key to preventing gender-based violence and giving children and young people the skills they need to build safe relationships free from sexual, gender-based and intimate partner violence; calls on the Member States to implement preventive programmes, including educational measures geared towards young people and implemented with their input on issues such as the skills needed to create safe and healthy relationships, awareness about the ingrained preconceptions about care responsibilities, equality between women and men, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, gender-based violence against women and the right to personal integrity;
20. Stresses that since 2010 gender segregation in education, notably the preponderance of one gender in certain skills, has increased slightly, with the situation worsening in 13 Member States and in other cases remaining almost unchanged²⁹; highlights that this remains a major barrier to gender equality in the EU; calls on the Member States to ensure that all people have full access to equal opportunities in order to achieve

²⁸ Gama, A., Pedro, A. R., de Carvalho, M. J. L., Guerreiro, A. E., Duarte, V., Quintas, J., Matias, A., Keygnaert, I. and Dias, S., 'Domestic Violence during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Portugal', *Portuguese Journal of Public Health*, 2020, 38 (Suppl. 1), pp. 32-40.

²⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender segregation in education, training and the labour market: Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States*, 2017.

personal development without being hindered by structures, prejudices and stereotypical perceptions based on gender; calls on the Member States to tackle sexism and harmful gender stereotypes in their education systems and to combat gendered labour market segmentation in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by investing in formal, informal and non-formal education, lifelong learning and vocational training for women to ensure that they have access to high-quality employment and opportunities to reskill and upskill for future labour market demand and prevent a vicious circle of gendered labour market segregation;

21. Stresses that sexual exploitation constitutes a serious form of violence affecting mostly women and children; recalls, in particular, that nearly three quarters of all victims of human trafficking in the EU are women and girls, who are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation; stresses that trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation, especially women and children, is a form of slavery and an affront to human dignity; highlights that trafficking in human beings is on the rise worldwide, fuelled by the rise of increasingly profitable organised crime; stresses the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to human trafficking and highlights the need for Member States to ensure adequate funding for social and psychological support and access to public services for victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation and specialised services dedicated to the social inclusion of vulnerable women and girls; calls on the Member States to implement the Anti-Trafficking Directive³⁰ in full and to desist from imprisoning or deporting potential victims as a matter of urgency; underlines, however, that sexual exploitation and human trafficking for sexual purposes are driven by demand and that efforts to combat them must be focused on preventive work and stopping demand; insists that all legislation on sexual offences must be based on consent; insists that only voluntary sexual acts should be considered legal; calls on the Commission to prioritise the prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation, including through information, awareness-raising and education campaigns, by adopting measures and programmes to discourage and reduce demand, and by adopting dedicated legislation in future;
22. Stresses that gender-based violence intersects with multiple axes of oppression; underlines that women and girls with disabilities are two to five times more likely to experience various forms of violence; highlights that the EU is obliged, as a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by women and girls with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; notes that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended in 2015 that the EU should advance its efforts in this direction, inter alia through ratification of the Istanbul Convention;
23. Applauds the unambiguous defence of all freedoms anywhere in the world, while condemning measures that undermine rights, freedoms and guarantees and deprecating all forms of prejudice and discrimination on all grounds; calls for the effective prevention of gender-based violence, including educational measures that are geared

³⁰ OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

towards young people and implemented with their input, as well as ensuring that all young people benefit from comprehensive SRHR and relationship education; calls for further measures to combat gender stereotypes, including by focusing on men and boys and challenging toxic relationships and gender norms; calls on the Member States to implement clearer measures to target these norms, as gender stereotypes are a root cause of gender inequality and affect all areas of society; stresses the importance of addressing poverty and rising inequalities among women, especially those in vulnerable situations;

24. Stresses that any strategy designed to achieve gender equality must address all forms of violence against women, including the erosion of healthcare entitlements and SRHR acquired by women and infringements thereof; reiterates that access to healthcare and services, including public services, access to safe, legal and free abortion and psychological support for women who have been the victims of violence should be considered a priority; underlines that violations of SRHR, including the denial of safe and legal abortion care, constitute a form of violence against women and girls; stresses that the autonomy and ability of women and girls to make free and independent decisions about their bodies and lives are preconditions for their economic independence and thus for gender equality and the elimination of gender-based violence; calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their political support for human rights defenders, healthcare providers working to advance SRHR and women's rights and SRHR civil society organisations, which are key actors for gender-equal societies and crucial providers of services and information regarding sexual health and the market of reproductive health;

Health, education, inclusion and poverty

25. Stresses that access to sexual, reproductive and other forms of healthcare for women is a fundamental right that must be underpinned and may not be in any way watered down or withdrawn; recalls that SRHR services are essential healthcare services that should be available to all, including migrant and refugee women; condemns the actions of anti-gender and anti-feminist movements in Europe and worldwide that systematically attack women's and LGBTIQ+ rights, including SRHR; calls on the Commission to strongly condemn the backsliding over women's rights, SRHR and LGBTIQ+ people in some Member States and to use all the powers at its disposal to strengthen action to counter it, including strengthening support for women's rights defenders and women's rights organisations in the EU, as well as organisations working on SRHR and LGBTIQ+;
26. Stresses the need for Member States to adopt a policy placing special emphasis on better systems and services of healthcare and the prevention of diseases, including gender-specific aspects, by guaranteeing accessible and high-quality healthcare and ensuring the availability of the necessary resources to combat the main health problems such as those arising from the current pandemic crisis; stresses that health inequalities are accumulating for women with low levels of education and women with disabilities, with both categories experiencing poor health and limited access to health services;

emphasises that access to healthcare in some Member States has been constrained by the COVID-19 lockdown measures and that consultations, treatment and diagnoses have not taken place; urges the Member States to strengthen healthcare systems including public services in order to expedite cancelled consultations, treatment and diagnoses;

27. Welcomes the upcoming review of the Barcelona targets and stresses the need to achieve these and to provide early childhood education and childcare, including public pre-school education; highlights the need to provide care services for early childhood education and care that is genuinely accessible to all children and has an overarching role in increasing women's participation in the labour market, particularly in the light of the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic; recognises the need to create and expand support facilities for older people and people with disabilities, in addition to developing long-term care facilities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to meet these objectives, which are key to boosting gender equality and the equal earner-equal carer model;
28. Stresses that poverty and social exclusion are exacerbated among some groups of women such as single mothers, women above the age of 65, women with disabilities, women with low levels of education, and women from migrant backgrounds; insists on the importance of fighting poverty and social exclusion and its multifaceted causes; urges the Member States to take specific measures to prevent and combat the risk of poverty for older and retired women in view of population ageing and the proportion of older women in disadvantaged or vulnerable positions; deems it imperative to address the work-life balance and overcome the gender pension gap by guaranteeing a fair pension for all women and access to universal and solidarity-based social security systems, and by better enforcing the principle of equal pay for equal work in order to close the gender pay gap and prevent its accumulation in women's careers; is extremely concerned by the fact that the poverty gender gap has increased in 21 Member States since 2017³¹;
29. Highlights that there is still a misconception that homelessness among women is a relatively minor social problem in Europe; points to the lack of basic data on the nature and extent of women's homelessness, which makes the problem less visible; stresses the importance of recognising gender-based violence and the gendered experiences of trauma as a root cause of women's homelessness, and of looking at wider societal problems intersecting with broader socioeconomic and structural barriers, such as poverty, the lack of affordable housing and other structural factors; urges the EU and its Member States to integrate a gender perspective into policies and practices addressing homelessness and to develop a specific strategy to combat women's homeless and ensure that services work appropriately and effectively to meet the needs of homeless women;
30. Recalls the need to combat intersectional forms of discrimination, especially against

³¹ Gender Equality Index 2020 report.

marginalised groups, including women with disabilities, Black women, migrant, ethnic minority and Roma women, older women, single mothers, LGBTIQ+ people and homeless women; stresses the importance of addressing their needs and concerns in EU policies and initiatives; calls on the Commission to devise specific guidelines on the implementation of the intersectional framework and to present an EU action plan with specific measures to improve the socioeconomic situation of women who face intersectional forms of discrimination and combat the feminisation of poverty and precarious work;

Equality in everyday life

31. Recognises that it is essential to ensure a broad set of effective, appropriate and targeted measures to combat discriminatory attitudes and practices, achieve equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work, and advance progress on gender equality, devoting particular focus to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting the exchange of best practices in fighting discrimination, and enabling women to exercise their civic and political rights on an equal basis and to fully participate in all aspects of our society; stresses the need to ensure adequate investment in services of general interest and public services, in particular health, education and transport, in order to promote the independence, equality and emancipation of women; calls on the Member States to implement specific social and gender-responsive measures to combat the risk of social exclusion and poverty with regard to access to housing, transport and energy, particularly for women in vulnerable situations;
32. Is deeply concerned that the European Green Deal and related environmental and climate initiatives do not include a gender perspective; urges the Commission to meet its obligation to incorporate gender mainstreaming into all EU policies, including EU environmental and climate policies: urges that these policies be informed by rigorous gender analyses to ensure that they address gender inequalities and other forms of social exclusion; calls on the Commission to design a roadmap to deliver on the commitments of the Gender Action Plan agreed at COP25 to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and to appoint a permanent EU gender and climate change focal point, with sufficient budgetary resources, to implement and monitor gender-responsible climate action in the EU and worldwide;
33. Highlights the major contribution of women in the fields of employment, culture, education, science and research; recognises the profound deterioration in the living conditions of women employed in culture and the arts, women running micro and small businesses and women working on farms and living in rural communities, as a result of the suspension of economic and cultural activities during the COVID-19 pandemic;
34. Urges the Member States to reach a common position as soon as possible on the proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation³², which has been blocked since its adoption by Parliament in April 2009;

³² Commission proposal of 2 July 2008 (COM(2008)0426).

35. Reiterates the importance of gender mainstreaming as a systematic approach to achieving gender equality; welcomes, therefore, the Commission's established taskforce on equality; underlines the importance of transparency and the involvement of women's rights and civil society organisations from diverse backgrounds;
36. Considers it essential to promote the participation of women in sporting activities, structures and development; recognises the need to address the inequalities regarding women's access to sport and the presentation of awards;
37. Calls on the Member States and the Council to create a formal Council configuration on gender equality in order to provide the ministers and secretaries of state for gender equality with a dedicated forum for discussion so as to ensure that gender equality issues are discussed at the highest political level and better facilitate gender mainstreaming across all EU policies;
38. Stresses the importance of gender budgeting in order to apply the principle of gender mainstreaming in all budgetary processes;
39. Highlights the findings of the European Court of Auditors that the Commission has not yet lived up to its commitment to gender mainstreaming in the EU budget; calls on the Commission, therefore, to implement the Court of Auditors' recommendations to strengthen the institutional framework for supporting gender budgeting, to carry out gender analyses of the needs and impacts and update its better regulation guidelines, to systematically collect, analyse and report on existing sex-disaggregated data for EU funding programmes, to make use of gender-related objectives and indicators to monitor progress, to develop a system for tracking the funds allocated and used to support gender equality, and to report annually on the results achieved in terms of gender equality;
40. Welcomes the commitment to take gender equality into account under the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the largest part of the NextGenerationEU instrument; deeply regrets the fact, however, that it will be difficult to monitor the gender impact of these funds and follow up on the results given the lack of gender-specific indicators and objectives; calls on the Commission, therefore, to use gender-disaggregated data and indicators, notably in the recovery and resilience scoreboard, to assess the gender impact of the implemented measures and results during the evaluation of the Member States' national plans setting out their reforms and investment agendas, and to impose gender-balanced governance of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and European Semester;
41. Regrets the weak link between the new EU Strategy for Gender Equality and the European Green Deal; calls on the Commission to strengthen the connection between climate change policies and gender equality in its upcoming proposals;
42. Calls on the Commission to mainstream gender equality into all policymaking and to carry out gender impact assessments when setting up any new policy to help ensure a more coherent and evidence-based EU policy response to gender equality challenges; calls on the Member States to undertake corresponding measures at national level;

o

o o

43. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Women continue to bear the brunt of existing inequalities regarding the gender pay gap, poverty and job insecurity. At the same time, their rights, including the right to live with dignity, are fundamental rights that must be upheld by public policy makers.

While the exercise of their rights and participation on an equal basis is a legitimate aspiration for women, this has yet to be achieved. A vast majority of women continue to be refused recognition of their career status, pay entitlements and the right to maternity without incurring penalties or discriminatory treatment. This is an unfair and inadmissible state of affairs. Legislation on equality is of great importance in closing loopholes, combating discrimination and further promoting women's rights and the exercise thereof in everyday life.

The continued misuse of equality policies to facilitate increased exploitation is inadmissible. One example of this has occurred where promised solutions designed to achieve a work-life balance were in fact aimed at introducing changes to labour law.

Gender inequality inside and outside the workplace cannot be dissociated from the neoliberal public policies imposed by the EU, which are causing rising unemployment, deregulation of the labour market and of working hours, increased job insecurity and low pay, all of which affect women in particular. This is in addition to the multiple forms of inequality and discrimination suffered by them as a result of cuts in public services, particularly in health, education and welfare benefits.

Policies intended to achieve equality need to be formulated by Member State governments and must propose solutions that uphold women's rights. Employment policies must include specific measures to eliminate discrimination regarding access to employment and promote employment with rights, collective bargaining, a general increase in wages and pensions and improved living standards. Renewed efforts must be made to raise awareness and improve supervision at the workplace in a bid to ensure better working conditions for women in terms of their working hours. In this respect, due account must be taken of maternity and paternity entitlements and the need for work-life balance. Maternity and parental leave on full pay must be made more widely available and action must be taken in response to any attempts to challenge these rights.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	28.10.2021
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 2 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Isabella Adinolfi, Simona Baldassarre, Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Annika Bruna, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Frances Fitzgerald, Helène Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Alice Kuhnke, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Karen Melchior, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Maria Noichl, Sandra Pereira, Pina Picierno, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Samira Rafaela, Evelyn Regner, Diana Riba i Giner, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Sylwia Spurek, Jessica Stegrud, Ernest Urtasun, Hilde Vautmans, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Marco Zullo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Lena Düpont, Aušra Maldeikienė, Predrag Fred Matić

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

26	+
PPE	Isabella Adinolfi, Lena Düpont, Frances Fitzgerald, Aušra Maldeikienė, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Renew	Karen Melchior, Samira Rafaela, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Hilde Vautmans, Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Marco Zullo
S&D	Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Helène Fritzon, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Predrag Fred Matić, Pina Picierno, Evelyn Regner
The Left	Sandra Pereira, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
Verts/ALE	Alice Kuhnke, Diana Riba i Giner, Sylwia Spurek, Ernest Urtasun

2	-
ECR	Margarita de la Pisa Carrión
ID	Annika Bruna

4	0
ECR	Andželika Anna Mozdzanowska, Jessica Stegrud
ID	Simona Baldassarre
PPE	Rosa Estaràs Ferragut

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention