



2018/2046(BUD)

28.9.2018

OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2019
(2018/2046(BUD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Malin Björk

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the European Union is founded on, inter alia, the value of gender equality and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union states that the promotion of such equality is a fundamental principle of the Union, requiring gender equality to be incorporated into all its policies and activities and addressed at all levels of the budgetary process via gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting;
- B. whereas inequality is a growing problem in the Union as shown in the current backlash against women's rights and gender equality, and whereas the Union budget must increasingly be designed to make a significant contribution to safeguarding and developing social rights, and improving gender equality and the situation of women;
- C. whereas Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process and means a gender based assessment of budgets, incorporating the gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality¹;
- D. whereas women spend more time than men on unpaid care work, which is one of the main reasons for women's underrepresentation in the labour market; whereas the demand for high-quality, accessible and affordable childcare and long-term care services is higher than current supply and some families from disadvantaged backgrounds have difficulties in affording to private care services;
- E. whereas the European Parliament has repeatedly called for sufficient funding and sought to keep as high a profile as possible for the Daphne specific objective of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme to protect women and girls against violence;
- F. whereas gender-responsive budgets and related policies aimed at contributing towards achieving gender equality lead to more sustainable and inclusive growth and employment and increase transparency and accountability of public expenditure;
- G. whereas one of the main objectives of the draft general budget for the European Union proposal for 2019 is strategic investment and sustainable growth in order to support economic cohesion and create jobs, in particular for young people; whereas, in this regard, it is important to also focus on enhancing women's potential in all sectors of the economy, including the digitalised economy, information and communication technologies (ICT) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM); whereas, with a specific focus on gender in those areas, it is necessary to address the significant gender gap and the Union-wide skills shortfall in the ICT and STEM sectors;
- H. whereas international organisations such as the IMF strongly promote gender

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responsive budgeting as a good governance standard tool in public finance and consider gender budgeting as good budgeting; whereas the OECD recognizes gender budgeting as a key tool to implement gender equality in the context of public finance; whereas the joint declaration of the EP, the Council and the Commission attached to the 2014-2020 MFF commits the three institutions to “integrating, as appropriate, gender responsive elements in the EU budget” but whereas the Commission's "Strategic Engagement for gender equality" 2016-2020 states that “Gender budgeting is not applied systematically to the EU general budget”;

- I. whereas the EU is committed to promoting gender equality and equal opportunities and whereas women and men should therefore equally benefit from public funds and services; but whereas despite the EU’s high level political commitments to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, spending decisions do not take gender equality into account in all policy areas;
- J. whereas the Union and its Member States collectively are the world’s leading donor of global development aid, providing over 50 % of all such aid; whereas the reduction of aid from other donors in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and women’s reproductive health requires an increase in current Union funding, especially in those fields with a particular gender dimension;
- K. whereas the EU has committed itself in the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment to make progress in making its trade and development policies more gender-responsive in order to report on this in 2019; whereas the Parliament has adopted a resolution on Gender Equality in EU Trade Agreements that call for several new measures in the field of gender and trade that requires strong budgetary and political commitments;
- L. whereas trafficking in human beings is a devastating crime that threatens society’s most disadvantaged members, mainly women and girls, exploited in the prostitution industry;
 - 1. Calls on the Commission and the Council to systematically use gender budgeting in all public expenditure, including when negotiating and concretising the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) with the aim of being gender-responsive and of achieving the SDGs by promoting and implementing SDG 5 on Gender Equality and gender mainstreaming throughout all SDGs;
 - 2. Is committed to safeguard the promotion and protection of gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights in the 2019 budgetary procedure; calls on the Member States and the Commission to integrate gender budgeting in the budgetary procedure in all budget lines, and not only in programmes in which the gender impact is most obvious, so that budgetary revenues and expenditures advance gender equality and women’s rights;
 - 3. Is concerned that despite strong inter-institutional and political statements, gender equality objectives are not explicitly stated in EU budget documents nor taken into account in all stages of the budget process and that over the past years, tracking of budgetary commitments for the promotion of gender equality has become impossible due to the deletion of specific budgetary lines for gender equality; Stresses the necessity

of linking gender equality goals with dedicated budgetary allocations; adds that these allocations should serve both mainstreaming and targeted actions as the dual approach is key to positively impact gender equality;

4. Recalls that gender budgeting is one dimension of a broader gender mainstreaming strategy and points out the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming in all the stages of the policy cycle; stresses that there is a clear window of opportunity to properly implement gender mainstreaming when designing new policies and bodies;
5. Stresses that ‘a modern, focused EU budget’, cannot be achieved without a clear and comprehensive gender perspective that is key to enable better and more evidence-based decision-making, which in turn contributes to ensuring an effective use of public funds and EU added value in all its actions;
6. Requests a holistic approach in the design of the new European Labour Authority (ELA) by introducing a requirement to implement gender budgeting in the ELA Regulation and an individual budget line in the budget 2019 to implement gender mainstreaming within the framework of competences of ELA;
7. Reaffirms its request for increased resources, e.g. under the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the EU cohesion fund, to uphold women’s economic and social rights, especially through women’s employment and investment in high-quality, affordable public care services, and to reduce gender inequality, including through the use of existing instruments at Union and Member State level and by allocating an individual budget line for that purpose;
8. Calls for appropriations to support women’s entrepreneurship and to ensure and encourage access for women to loans and equity finance through Union programmes and funds, such as COSME, Horizon 2020 and the European Social Fund;
9. Calls for equal participation of girls and young women in the measures covered by the Youth Employment initiative to be ensured and special attention to be paid to quality offers of training and employment for them, including in the digitalised economy, ICT and STEM sectors;
10. Calls on the Member States to ensure well-structured gender budgeting initiatives that promote gender equality through education and health services, notably comprehensive sexuality education and SRHR services;
11. Reminds that one of the requirements to implement gender budgeting is to foresee independent budget lines for gender equality goals defined in a programme; stresses the need to increase resources for combating all forms of violence against women and girls, as well as gender-based violence against LGBTIQI people, including by dedicating an independent budget line for Daphne and for promoting gender equality and to advance gender mainstreaming within the framework of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, with at least the same level of spending of 2011, for the period 2014 to 2020 and, with a view to the preparation of the next Multiannual Financial Framework, the need to provide for a separate budget line for this specific objective; calls for sustainable and adequate funding to be made available for actions aimed at the effective

implementation of the Istanbul Convention, paying special attention, and offering financial support, to the ongoing training of judicial and non-judicial staff who deal with complaints of sexual abuse and gender-based violence;

12. Calls on the EU and the Member States to include concrete measures and allocate adequate financial resources to combat violence against women and girls and ensure protection of migrant and refugee women, as well as women in irregular situation, from violence; insists on targeted investments to ensure women's rights and safety in the whole asylum procedure;
13. Recalls that a very significant number of refugees and asylum seekers entering the EU are women and children; highlights that gender mainstreaming is also among the founding principles of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and reiterates its call for the gender dimension to also be taken into account in migration and asylum policies by allocating specific funds dedicated to prevent gender-based violence and ensuring access to health and reproductive health and rights;
14. Calls on the Union and its Member States to intensify their efforts to eradicate trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation through adequate budgetary commitments across the union and increasingly invest in victim's rights and protection, as well as actions decreasing the demand for trafficked women and girls;
15. Calls on the Union and the Member States to promote women's rights organisations, the empowerment of girls and women's representation in decision-making through EU development aid; recalls the urgent need to increase Union funding for SRHR in order to counter the impact of the financing gap left by the US after the reinstatement and expansion of its 'global gag rule';
16. Underlines the need to counteract the shrinking space for civil society and calls on the Union and the Member States to prioritise investment to support and protect Human Rights Defenders, and specifically women human rights defenders, who face unique gender-based obstacles and threats in their work, by giving them visible political support and recognition, in particular by means of urgent grants under the EIDHR emergency fund for human rights defenders at risk;
17. Considers that with a view to reaching its commitments to achieve SDG 5 and in particular its target to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), the Commission should include earmarked funding for SRHR, including family planning, through an explicit SRHR budget line or by designating SRHR as an objective under its various budget lines such as health, education, youth empowerment, human rights, gender;
18. Urges the Union and the Member States to increase support to girls' and women's social, economic and cultural rights in partner countries; calls in this context on all parties to ensure GAP II implementation is improved based on results from annual reports;
19. Recalls the important role of the European Institute for Gender Equality and calls for the Institute's budget, staff establishment plan and independence to be maintained;

20. Calls on the Union to support the development of new measures that will promote and support gender equality, women's human rights and their economic empowerment in its trade policies, and allocating adequate financial resources for these commitments.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	27.9.2018
Result of final vote	+: 18 -: 3 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, André Elissen, Iratxe García Pérez, Mary Honeyball, Angelika Mlinar, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Pina Picierno, Ernest Urtasun, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Michaela Šojdrová
Substitutes present for the final vote	Stefan Eck, José Inácio Faria, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Jordi Solé
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Marek Plura, Damiano Zoffoli

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

18	+
ALDE	Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Angelika Mlinar
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto
GUE/NGL	Malin Björk, Stefan Eck, Kostadinka Kuneva
PPE	Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, José Inácio Faria, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Marek Plura
S&D	Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Iratxe García Pérez, Mary Honeyball, Maria Noichl, Pina Picierno, Damiano Zoffoli
VERTS/ALE	Jordi Solé, Ernest Urtasun

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ECR	Jadwiga Wiśniewska
ENF	André Elissen
PPE	Marijana Petir

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PPE	Michaela Šojdrová

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention