



**2019/2028(BUD)**

2.10.2019

# 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 2020  
(2019/2028(BUD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Frances Fitzgerald

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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 Union is founded on, inter alia, the value of equality between men and women, and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides that, in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women, and therefore requires that gender equality be incorporated into all policies and addressed at all levels of the budgetary process via gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting; whereas ensuring coherence between their internal budgetary and discharge procedures and their external actions in the field of promotion of gender equality is essential to the credibility of Parliament and the other Union institutions;
- B. whereas budgets are not gender-neutral and thus need to be established with the clear objective of anti-discrimination and the goal of benefitting both genders equally;
- C. whereas the Union has committed to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 5 on Gender Equality;
- D. whereas Parliament has repeatedly called for sufficient funding of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC Programme) and for the Daphne-specific objective of that programme to keep as high a profile as possible; whereas Parliament has called for the continuation of all actions relating to combating violence against women by means of an independent budget allocation dedicated to that goal also in the Rights and Values programme for the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027;
- E. whereas women remain under-represented in the labour market, as well as in public and political life, and devote a disproportionately greater amount of time than men to unpaid housework and care;
- F. whereas the proposal for the draft general budget for the European Union for 2020 seeks to continue supporting strategic investment and sustainable growth in order to improve economic cohesion and create jobs, in particular for young people, older persons and persons with disabilities; whereas, in this regard, it is important also to focus on increasing the participation of women, including LGBTI women, in the labour market by, among other measures, investing in infrastructures and public services to support work life balance and increasing their potential in all sectors of economy, including the digitalised economy, information and communication technologies (ICT) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) , as well as in leadership positions, and on reducing the gender employment and pay gap;
- G. whereas digitalisation has a substantial impact on the labour market, including by creating new job opportunities and more flexible working conditions such as teleworking, which could serve as a tool for better reconciliation of professional and domestic duties for both women and men;
- H. whereas gender equality is a core objective of the Union, yet remains severely

underfunded. In 2019 the European Institute for Gender Equality found that just 1 % of the Union's Structural and Investment Funds have been set aside for the promotion of gender equality within the 2020 Union budget. Yet gender inequality and discrimination carry an enormous economic cost to both women and society. The World Bank estimates that around EUR 145 trillion is lost in human capital wealth as a result of gender pay inequality. In England and Wales alone, domestic violence costs approximately 33 billion dollars per year, according to UN Women in 2016;

1. Reaffirms its strong request to promote equality between women and men, by supporting gender equality mainstreaming and gender budgeting at all levels within the budgetary procedure, including when finalising the negotiations of the next MFF, and to use budgetary expenditure as an effective tool for combatting existing inequalities and promoting gender equality, including LGBTI women and men; recalls that gender budgeting is a methodology that must be applied to all Union budget lines; recalls the importance of an increase in resources for gender equality in order to achieve substantial progress and the need for better channelling and monitoring of Union funding in this regard, in particular in the case of Member States that violate the rule of law and experience a backlash in women's rights;
2. Stresses that gender budgeting must become an integral part of the budgetary procedure in all budget lines, and not only in programmes in which the gender impact is most obvious, so that budgetary expenditure becomes an effective tool for promoting gender equality;
3. 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;
4. Recalls that one of the requirements to implement gender budgeting is to foresee independent budget lines for targeted actions linked to gender equality goals; reiterates its requests, therefore, to also assign an independent budget line to the objective in the REC Programme dedicated to promote gender equality and to advance gender mainstreaming;
5. Regrets the tendency of the last years to cut Union funds which combat all forms of violence against women and girls and reaffirms its request to increase resources for the Daphne-specific objective of the current REC Programme and that such an increase is maintained in the Rights and Values programme; calls to ensure that adequate funding is made available for actions aimed at combating both violence against women and girls, including female genital mutilation (FGM), and trafficking in human beings, particularly for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in the framework of the effective implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence; calls on the Commission to support programmes and measures specifically tackling harassment, including sexual harassment;
6. Calls on Member States to ratify without delay the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, with particular regard to the Convention's role in the protection of women and girls from violence and the resultant economic impact on victims and societies; calls on relevant Union funds to be

utilised in assistance to preparations for, or continued efforts towards, implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Member States;

7. Stresses the need to continue all actions focused on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women in the framework of the programme that will replace the REC Programme in the next MFF period, with an independent budget allocation for combating gender-based violence against women and specific attention to combat trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation as well as honour culture and honour-related violence;
8. Stresses the need for specific funding to support the most vulnerable women and girls in our society, in particular women with disabilities, women refugees and victims of trafficking and abuses; supports in this regard increasing both commitment and payment appropriations of the two strands of the REC Programme;
9. Stresses the need to reinforce budgetary allocations that support women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, both within and outside the Union, as this access is increasingly at risk;
10. Calls for the Union to support women's rights organisations and activists and their work as well as to increase their representation in European decision-making processes;
11. Reaffirms its request for increased resources under the Union Structural Funds to uphold women's economic and social rights, especially through measures to increase women's participation in the labour market and investment in high-quality public care services;
12. Stresses the importance to use the European Structural and Investment Funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), to promote women's employment, including by financing high-quality, affordable care facilities;
13. Calls for budgetary allocations to support women's entrepreneurship and women's economic independence and to ensure and encourage access for women to specialised professional training, affordable loans and equity finance through Union programmes and funds, such as COSME, Horizon 2020 and the ESF Fund in order to maximise women's participation in the labour market particularly single mothers, care-takers and women returning to the job market after a long break in order to increase their employability; with regard to those funds, which should be sufficiently resourced, calls for, supporting the promotion of gender equality through education and health care and the increased integration of a gender perspective and the objective of achieving gender equality through each programme;
14. Notes with concern the low number of female students studying ICT-related subjects and reiterates the need to restore the budget proposed by the Commission in that area; adds that, with a view to closing the digital gender divide, there needs to be adequate funding to improve education, to support female entrepreneurs in the digital sector and to increase awareness-raising campaigns;
15. Stresses the need to close the digital divide between women and men, which leads to

significant disparities in the labour market, by earmarking resources for education and training, as well as support for self-employed women;

16. Stresses the need to earmark resources to encourage women's interest in the digital economy and sectors such as ICT and STEM, and to support them in this context;
17. Stresses the importance of adequate earmarking of funding for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) in order to combat particularly high rates of youth unemployment; calls for equal participation of girls and young women in the measures covered by that initiative to be ensured and that special attention is paid to quality offers of training and employment for them, particularly in the digitalised economy, ICT and STEM sectors where women are significantly underrepresented both in terms of education and training as well as employment, leading to a digital gap between women and men; takes the view that measures as the YEI should contribute not only to helping young people join the labour force, but also to promote quality employment; affirms that special attention should also be paid to funding of quality training on issues such as sexism, sexual harassment, mobbing and hate speech, with encouraged equal participation of girls, young women, as well as boys and young men.
18. Recalls that a very significant number of refugees and asylum seekers entering the Union 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;
19. Stresses that it is essential to ensure an adequate budget for human development to achieve the Agenda 2030 and SDGs, including SDG5; recalls the Union's commitment to invest 20 % of the official development assistance in human development and calls for appropriate allocations on human development to support measures and projects aimed at eradicating female and child poverty; better integration into the labour market; eliminating wage inequalities between men and women; combating violence against women, children and young people; and to improve access to and provision of health care, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, gender equality and social protection under the Global Public Goods and Challenges programme;
20. Calls for the budget to tackle FGM to continue to be allocated throughout external action programmes, including the Development Cooperation Instrument;
21. Stresses that in the past decade, with the outbreak of the economic and financial crisis, economic, social, labour market and gender inequalities within and between Member States have been aggravated; recalls the important role of the European Institute for Gender Equality in raising awareness of the extent and the causes of gender inequality in the Union and calls for the Institute's budget, staff establishment plan and independence to be adequately resourced which will ensure the smooth running of the Institute and to implement ambitious projects; also calls for greater resources for the budget line 'promoting non-discrimination and equality';
22. Notes that the European Institute for Gender Equality found in 2019 that gender mainstreaming is "treated as a theme that has little impact on the actual content of

funding programmes”; calls therefore for robust and comprehensive measures to improve gender mainstreaming efforts, including a renewed focus on the promotion of accountability and transparency in fiscal planning and an increase in gender response participation in the budget process;

23. Recommends in particular increasing funding to promote the protection of maternity, parenthood and early childhood through the appropriate programmes; calls, to that end, for maternal and child health to be given special importance in the EU's 2020 budget; further recommends that funds be guaranteed for the defence, promotion and support of breastfeeding, thereby contributing to efforts to achieve the World Health Organisation's target of having 50% of babies worldwide exclusively breastfed for the first six months of their lives by 2025, which would require, among other measures, ensuring maternity and paternity leave is long enough and sufficiently well remunerated;
24. Calls for budgetary allocations to target the specific needs of different groups of women facing a diverse range of economic challenges, including but not limited to: period poverty among young girls, economic deprivation of single female pensioners and the gender pensions gap, unpaid caring duties and time poverty among mothers and female carers, and socio-economic exclusion and employment discrimination against BAME women;

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	30.9.2019
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 19 -: 5 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Christine Anderson, Annika Bruna, Belinda De Lucy, Frances Fitzgerald, Jackie Jones, Sandra Pereira, Pina Picierno, Samira Rafaela, Elżbieta Rafalska, Evelyn Regner, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Christine Schneider, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Isabella Adinolfi, Lena Düpont, Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Marina Kaljurand, Elena Kountoura, Alessandra Moretti, Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillips, Pernille Weiss
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Mazaly Aguilar, Enikő Győri, Pär Holmgren, Kathleen Van Brempt



## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

19	+
PPE	Lena Düpont, Frances Fitzgerald, Christine Schneider, Pernille Weiss, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi
S&D	Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Jackie Jones, Marina Kaljurand, Alessandra Moretti, Pina Picierno, Evelyn Regner, Kathleen Van Brempt
RE	Samira Rafaela, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos
GREENS/EFA	Pär Holmgren, Alexandra Louise Rosenfield Phillip
GUE/NGL	Elena Kountoura, Sandra Pereira
NI	Isabella Adinolfi

5	-
ID	Christine Anderson, Annika Bruna
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Elzbieta Rafalska
NI	Belinda De Lucy

1	0
PPE	Enikő Győri

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention