



Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
The Chair

24.1.2024

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets
BRUSSELS

Subject: Opinion on Guidelines for the 2025 Budget – Section III (2023/2220(BUI))

Dear Mr Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee. At its meeting of 29 November 2023, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter.

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality considered the matter at its meeting of 24 January 2024¹. At that meeting, it decided to call on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Biedroń

¹ The following were present for the final vote: Maria da Graça Carvalho, Frances Fitzgerald, Arba Kokalari, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Eleni Stavrou, Rainer Wieland, Sylvie Brunet, Samira Rafaela, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Marco Zullo, Laura Ballarín Cereza, Robert Biedroń, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Brglez, Marina Kaljurand, Carina Ohlsson, Evelyn Regner, Sandra Pereira, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Alice Kuhnke, Diana Riba i Giner, Sylwia Spurek, Johan Nissinen, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Christine Anderson, Livia Járóka, Andželika Anna Możdżanowska, Maria Veronica Rossi

SUGGESTIONS

- A. whereas gender equality and the elimination of inequalities is one of the core values on which the European Union is founded and whereas the Union is committed to promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all of its actions as enshrined in Article 8 TFEU;
 - B. whereas the European Parliament has repeatedly asked the Commission to promote and implement the use of gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and gender impact assessments in all Union policy areas;
 - C. whereas gender equality in the Union has been particularly impacted by the multiple crises facing the Union, which women are disproportionately affected by, such as war and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, an increase in gender-based and domestic violence, restrictions of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), backlashes against women's rights, as well as the persistent gender pay gap;
 - D. whereas budgets are never gender neutral and therefore need to be established with the clear objective of achieving gender equality, anti-discrimination and the goal of reaching everyone and their specific needs, including women and girls in all their diversity, as well as promoting women's economic empowerment, via a tangible commitment to gender mainstreaming;
 - E. whereas discrimination needs to be eradicated and effectively addressed by the Member States and the EU and whereas an increasing percentage of the EU budget, including the EU Structural Funds and investment in high-quality and accessible public care services, must be designed to create new, equal opportunities in the EU labour market including for female-led SMEs, while aiming to achieve a "equal carer- and equal-earner" model of society;
- 1. Underlines that a gender perspective must be integrated and evaluated in the budgetary cycle and in all programmes, at all stages, and regrets that despite repeated calls of the European Parliament, this objective still has not been achieved; calls for systematic and mandatory collection, reporting and evaluation of comparable gender-disaggregated data to enable mandatory gender impact assessments in all Union policy areas, in particular for a full breakdown of the scores within the gender equality methodology;
 - 2. Stresses that a gender equality perspective and gender-related objectives should be integrated into all policy areas and EU programmes; reiterates therefore its call for the implementation of gender budgeting at all stages of the budgetary process as well as the identification of relevant budget lines to enable the effective monitoring of the EU budget's contribution to gender equality and a gender-sensitive review of all programmes and spending;
 - 3. Stresses the need to further develop the EU Commission gender tracking methodology, which should not just identify the actions with a gender impact in some EU programmes, but also track the overall funding volume dedicated to gender equality in the EU budget;

4. Reiterates the need to reinforce the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) with the necessary staff and budget to enable it to perform its mandated duties and to cope with a sharp rise of requests for technical assistance on gender mainstreaming; recalls that EIGE has a crucial role in sharing valuable knowledge on the situation of gender equality and women's rights in the EU and expertise on policy, gender mainstreaming and gender sensitive analysis; recognises the value of EIGE's annual report which allows Member States to delve into the underlying aspects which hinder gender equality; notes that EIGE faces ever increasing requests for its services and underlines that under-funding and under-staffing EIGE is inconsistent with the objectives and values of the Union; in addition, highlights that rectifying worrying trends raised by EIGE would help the wider European economy become more competitive, efficient and resilient; stresses the importance of making use of the existing tools developed by the EIGE such as its toolkit for gender budgeting in all stages of evaluation, implementation and monitoring in the European Structural and Investment Funds;
5. Regrets the lack of specific budget lines for measures dedicated to gender equality and stresses the importance of increasing the funding for preventing and combating gender-based violence within the DAPHNE strand, as well as gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the CERV programme; calls in particular for increased funding for women fleeing the war in Ukraine, who are at significant risk of violence; recalls the importance of having specific gender-related budget lines along with clear data on the allocated funding; reiterates that this should be the practice for all programmes which include gender equality related goals, such as ESF+ and calls for special attention to be paid to cyber violence against women in this and other related horizontal programmes;
6. Stresses the worrying and increasing backlash against gender equality, rule of law and women's rights and the importance of EU instruments to raise awareness of and combat this situation; regrets that the Commission did not include a specific programme on gender equality in their budgetary proposal; repeats its concern at the interrelation between the attacks on the rule of law, democracy and human rights and the backlash on gender equality and women's rights;
7. Calls on the Commission to increase the budget allocation to civil society organisations (CSO) within the existing programmes, especially those dealing with sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including providing and facilitating access to safe and legal abortion and those working on combatting gender-based violence and providing support services for the victims, repeats its calls for the Commission to strengthen the rule of law and ensure that EU funds are not made available to any entity that is implicated in breaches of human rights, especially of minorities, and any breaches of the rule of law, which impact including women's freedoms and fundamental rights, including and SRHR;
8. Stresses that gender equality concerns are largely missing from the green transition and digital transformation pillars of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which represents a missed opportunity to effectively integrate gender equality into climate and environmental objectives.

**ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT**

The Chair declares under his exclusive responsibility that he did not receive input from any entity or person to be mentioned in this Annex pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure.