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## TEXTS ADOPTED

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### **P8\_TA(2016)0204**

#### **Gender equality and empowering women in the digital age**

##### **European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2016 on gender equality and empowering women in the digital age (2015/2007(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3), second subparagraph, of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in 1995, and in particular the area of concern ‘Women and the Media’,
- having regard to the outcome document of the 23<sup>rd</sup> special session of the UN General Assembly in 2000, in which Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are recognised as achievements presenting new opportunities for women’s empowerment, but also potential risks,
- having regard to the Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action adopted during the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that took place in Geneva in 2003,
- having regard to the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which details financial and international mechanisms for implementing the WSIS agendas that were adopted during the second phase of the WSIS in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,
- having regard to the references to women’s rights and gender equality in the Statement on the Implementation of WSIS Outcomes and the related WSIS+10 Vision for WSIS Beyond 2015,
- having regard to the results of the WSIS Forum held from 25 to 29 May 2015 in Geneva on ‘Innovating Together: Enabling ICTs for Sustainable Development’, in which a delegation from the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality took part,

- having regard to the 2014 WSIS Action Lines, which were combined with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance synergies between these global strategies, including the action to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, disability, genetic features, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, social or ethnic origin, religion or belief, or economic or other status by 2030,
- having regard to the Commission Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015 (SEC(2010)1079), which includes a series of actions related to women and the internet, in particular as regards ICT, and the mid-term review of the Strategy,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post-2015<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on empowering girls through education in the EU<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2010 entitled ‘EU 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) conclusions of June 2014 on ‘Women and the economy: Economic independence from the perspective of part-time work and self-employment’ stating that ‘The Europe 2020 Strategy identifies a number of priority growth areas, including in the white economy and the science and technology sectors. In order to fully tap Europe’s growth potential in these areas, it is important to overcome gender stereotypes and combat educational and occupational segregation’,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the application of 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 occupation<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 May 2012 with recommendations to the Commission on application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2013 on the Digital Agenda for Growth, Mobility and Employment<sup>6</sup>, and in particular the Grand Coalition on Digital Skills and Jobs,
- having regard to Action 60 of the Digital Agenda, on encouraging women to take up ICT-related careers and increasing the proportion of women in the ICT sector,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0218.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0312.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2015)0351.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 264 E, 13.9.2013, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 93, 9.3.2016, p. 120.

- having regard to the Commission communication ‘A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe’ (COM(2015)0192),
- having regard to Pillar II of the Commission’s Digital Single Market Strategy, which is aimed at creating the right conditions and a level playing field and environment for digital networks and innovative services to develop, and Pillar III, which supports an inclusive digital society in which citizens have the right skills to seize the opportunities brought about by the internet and boost their chances of getting a job,
- having regard to the study by European Parliament Policy Department C entitled ‘Study on Empowering women on the Internet’, published in 2015,
- having regard to Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013<sup>1</sup> on the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination,
- 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, and more specifically to its objectives with regard to ‘Women and the Media’ calling for increasing the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication as well as promoting a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media,
- having regard to the Commission’s ‘European Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT’ of 2013,
- having regard to its in-depth analysis of 2012 entitled ‘Women in ICT’,
- having regard to the report of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) entitled ‘Violence against women – an EU-wide survey. Main results’, published in March 2014,
- having regard to Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission’s EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings 2012-2016 and the mid-term report on the implementation thereof,
- having regard to the EU Serious and Organised Crime Policy Cycle, which commenced in 2014, and to the priority area of trafficking in human beings,
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A8-0048/2016),

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 101, 15.4.2011, p. 1.

- A. whereas digitalisation has revolutionised and fundamentally changed the way people access and provide information, communicate, socialise, study and work, creating new opportunities to participate in public and political discussions, education and the labour market, opening up new prospects for a self-determined life and having enormous economic potential for the European Union and beyond; whereas digitalisation does not only impact markets but society as a whole;
- B. whereas the information society, driven by information and communication technologies (ICTs), brings with it huge opportunities for generating and distributing wealth and knowledge, as shown for example by the free and open-source software industry, which has changed the way software is produced, distributed, supported and used, allowing for richer digital inclusivity; whereas digitalisation further holds opportunities for a more flexible and diverse use of time and space moving towards more equitable models for society; whereas, at the same time, the digitalisation of the labour market can create new dimensions of exclusion, for example the risk of economic, social, cultural and gender segregation;
- C. whereas only 9 % of developers in Europe are women, only 19 % of bosses in the ICT and communications sectors are female (compared with 45 % in other service sectors) and women represent just 19 % of entrepreneurs (compared with 54 % in other service sectors)<sup>1</sup>;
- D. whereas these developments have strong potential for the empowerment of women, allowing access to information and knowledge beyond conventional means and providing a platform for expression, which can inspire others to action, opening up new opportunities to interact and campaign with a view to defending the rights and freedom of women, girls and LGBTI people but also for people with specific needs, such as those with disabilities; whereas active participation of women in the information society is not just a matter of justice and equality, it will also contribute to improving social and economic conditions in society and EU competitiveness;
- E. whereas there is a significant gender gap in access to professional and educational opportunities in relation to information and communication technologies and to computer skills; whereas digitalisation has a strong impact on the consumption and distribution of media, more noticeably for younger users, opening new channels and enabling a less hierarchal media landscape; whereas digitalisation may facilitate but also pose new challenges to the empowerment of women through the distribution of negative, degrading and stereotyped portrayals of women;
- F. whereas digital communication channels and social networks are particularly important for parents on parental leave and people working from home;
- G. whereas digitalisation has an enormous impact on the labour market by changing value chains and creating new job opportunities and more flexible working patterns; whereas opportunities for flexible and teleworking work arrangements brought about by digitalisation may serve as an important tool for ensuring a better work-life balance for both women and men; whereas these flexible working arrangements can play a positive role in contributing to the inclusion in the labour market of disadvantaged groups of women; whereas, however, there are possible negative consequences which can particularly affect women, such as the erosion of workers' rights and working time

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/women-active-ict-sector>

boundaries and of boundaries relating to professional and non-professional responsibilities, which increases low-paid and less secure types of employment;

- H. whereas improving digital skills and IT literacy presents a unique opportunity for increasing the inclusion in the labour market of women and girls, but also of people with special needs, such as people with disabilities; whereas increasing the number of women in the ICT sector, which is one of the highest paying sectors, could contribute to their financial empowerment and independence, resulting in the reduction of the total gender pay gap;
- I. whereas, in the digitalised labour market, responsibility is being increasingly shifted away from the company to the individual, changing the terms of social security membership of the self-employed and freelancers; whereas political decisions clearly shape the outcome of these changes;
- J. whereas, in cases of multiple individual contracts within various companies and institutions, the monitoring of the principle of equal pay for equal work at the same workplace, which is of utmost importance for a truly equal society, is more challenging;
- K. whereas the entry of more women into the ICT sector would boost a market in which labour shortages are foreseen and in which equal participation of women would lead to a gain of around EUR 9 billion EU GDP each year; whereas women remain heavily underrepresented in ICT degree programmes, where they constitute only around 20 % of graduates in the field, with only 3 % of all female graduates having a degree in ICT; whereas women face numerous difficulties in integrating into and staying in the ICT sector; whereas the male-dominated working environment, with only 30 % of the workforce being female, contributes to the trend of many women leaving the ICT sector within a few years of completing their university degrees;
- L. whereas the study entitled ‘Women active in the ICT sector’ estimates that there will be 900 000 unfilled positions in the ICT sector in Europe by 2020; whereas the ICT sector is growing rapidly, creating around 120 000 new jobs every year;
- M. whereas the ICT sector is characterised by particularly high vertical and horizontal segregation, as well as a gap between women's educational qualifications and their position in the ICT sector; whereas less than 20 % of ICT entrepreneurs are women; whereas the majority (54 %) of women in ICT jobs occupy lower paid and lower skill-level positions and only a small minority of them (8 %) occupy high-skill software engineering positions; whereas women are also underrepresented in decision-making within this sector, with only 19,2 % of employees in the ICT sector having female bosses, compared with 45,2 % of employees elsewhere;
- N. whereas women aged 55 and over are at a particular risk of unemployment and labour market inactivity, with the average EU employment rate for women aged 55-64 being only 42 %, compared with 58 % for men; whereas a low level of IT literacy and e-skills further amplifies this risk; whereas improving and investing in digital competences of women aged 55 and over would boost their employment opportunities and offer a level of protection against exclusion from the labour market;
- O. whereas the impact of sexism and gender stereotyping is an obstacle to equality between women and men, and a burden for economic development and the competitiveness of the EU, further widening the already significant digital gender gap in the fields of ICT, media

and related industries; whereas existing gender stereotypes make it difficult for women to fully develop their capacities as users, innovators and creators; whereas there is a need for clear political will, concrete actions and the participation of civil society to change that;

- P. whereas education and training are key to empowering women in the digital age, and thus to a society with future viability; whereas 60 % of school students in the EU never use digital equipment in their classrooms; whereas the already low share of female ICT graduates has dropped; whereas women are very underrepresented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects, and around half of female graduates do not go on to work in STEM roles; whereas in initiatives such as the EU Code Week, ICT for Better Education, the Startup Europe Leaders Club and the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, which are aimed at further fostering e-education and e-skills, women remain largely underrepresented;
- Q. whereas the promotion of digital technologies and ICT has an important role to play in the EU's development cooperation policy, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in empowering women and girls socially and economically, and lifting them out of poverty;
- R. whereas digitalisation favours the promotion of direct democracy via the web, thereby permitting women to be more involved in politics and improving their access to information;
- S. whereas the partnership of digitalisation and direct democracy provides women with more opportunities to get involved directly, outside of traditional political schemes, and participate fully and in a comprehensive manner;
- T. whereas ICT, like any technology, can be used and abused to threaten women, their rights and freedoms, and ultimately their empowerment, such as in the case of cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, trafficking in human beings, hate speech, incitement to hatred, discrimination and violation of fundamental rights; whereas anonymity on the internet contributes to the proliferation of these forms of violence against women; whereas such new challenges and risks need to be identified and addressed appropriately by policymakers, as well as by enterprises, companies and civil society organisations, while providing room for information exchange on the internet;
- U. whereas new information and communication technologies are used to create channels and platforms which facilitate certain forms of sexual exploitation of women, including minors; whereas digital platforms are also used for the commercialisation of women's bodies; whereas there is a need for relevant law enforcement professionals to recognise the transformative effect that digitalisation has on these crimes; whereas there is also a need to raise awareness among relevant education professionals about these new forms of digital threats and to make EU and Member State funding available to promote education on safe and respectful use of the internet and the risks of online gender-based violence for both boys and girls and to involve men and boys in the fight against violence against women and girls;
- V. whereas digital modes of communication have contributed to the prevalence of hate speech and threats against women, with 18 % of women in Europe having suffered since adolescence some form of harassment from acquaintances on the internet, and nine million victims of online violence in Europe; whereas the number of threats, including death threats, towards women has increased; whereas social awareness about digital forms

of violence, both among the general public and the relevant professionals, such as law enforcement agents and teachers, remains insufficient to ensure adequate prevention, monitoring and assistance for victims; whereas various forms of online violence are not yet fully reflected in criminal law, nor in some modes and procedures of prosecution in all Member States; whereas there is a lack of responsiveness by the justice system; whereas abusers and haters are very rarely reported, investigated, prosecuted and sentenced; whereas there is a need for recognition at EU level of the potentially transborder nature of the abuse and violence on the internet;

- W. whereas gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming can be used as tools to further gender equality; whereas gender-based perspectives should be taken into account at all stages of the Commission's work on digitalisation in Europe to ensure that women are not just included but are at the forefront of digital developments;
- X. whereas low participation of women and girls in ICT-related education, and later in employment, is a result of a complex interplay of gender stereotyping that starts in the early stages of life and education and continues into professional careers; whereas factors limiting women and girls from participating in ICT education and employment include: lifelong stereotyping, segregation into 'typically female and male' activities, hobbies and toys, starting from the earliest stages of education, a relative lack of female role models in the ICT sector and the limited visibility of women in this sector, especially in leadership positions;

### ***General recommendations***

1. Urges the Commission and the Council to fully exploit the potential that the information society, ICT and the internet have to promote women's empowerment, women's rights and freedoms and gender equality, irrespective of age, disability, genetic features, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, social or ethnic origin, religion or belief or economic status;
2. Stresses that internet access constitutes a new essential service, necessary for the whole world, men, women, boys and girls, with the internet now a key tool for the daily lives of individuals in family, work, study and learning contexts, for management within companies, public authorities, institutions and organisations, and for the workings of social networks and the promotion of equal opportunities;
3. Calls on the Commission to exploit and better target the Digital Agenda and the Digital Single Market Strategy with a view to addressing the severe gender gap within the ICT sector and fostering the full integration of women into the sector, particularly in relation to technical and telecommunication professions, to foster education and training of women and girls in ICT and other STEM subjects, to increase the visibility of women in the digital arena, to enhance gender equality and participation of women through better access to funding, to systematically implement gender impact assessments and gender budgeting in its work on the Digital Agenda and the Digital Single Market Strategy so that the fundamental European principle of equality between women and men can be duly incorporated and to support civil society and women's organisations in making an inclusive internet a reality;
4. Calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to incorporate the gender perspective into all digital initiatives and to recognise that digital power is driving a new, stronger wave of awareness about gender issues and gender equality; highlights to the Commission

the effectiveness of the internet for means such as campaigns, forums and giving visibility to female role models, which all help to accelerate gender equality; asks the Commission therefore to consider placing women at the forefront of its Digital Agenda so that the new digital age can be a driving force towards furthering gender equality;

5. Urges the Commission to include in the upcoming Strategy for equality between women and men 2016-2020 specific actions to support the integration and participation of women in the information society and to strongly promote women's networks online as they are the manifestation of a self-organised, bottom-up approach to female empowerment and should receive all the support necessary for them to become long-term;
6. Notes the Commission communication on 'A Digital Single Market Strategy for Europe', but regrets its narrow focus, as it underestimates the considerable potential that digitalisation can have with regard to an inclusive, equal and participatory society and fails to give sufficient recognition to the opportunities that targeted support and funding infrastructure can provide for women's empowerment;
7. Calls for a stronger emphasis on free and open-source software in the ICT sector and the digital market; views free and open-source software to be a vital tool for promoting gender equality and democratisation in the digital market and ICT sector; highlights the need for gender awareness in the open-source sector as well;
8. Calls on the EU and the Member States to develop, support and implement the actions promoted by the UN and its bodies, in particular in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the World Summits on the Information Society (WSIS), in order to strive for women's empowerment in the digital age at European and global level; calls on the Member States to communicate and share best practices with one another with a view to promoting the equal involvement of women in digital developments across Europe;
9. Calls on the Member States, with a view to achieving gender equality in the information society and ICTs, to establish multiannual action plans aimed at: increasing women's access to the information society, improving and increasing women's use of ICT, giving women a more significant role in ICT sectors, fostering women's ICT knowledge through education and training, promoting employment and entrepreneurial spirit among women through regular use of the internet and digital services, developing online content that promotes gender equality, fostering the continuous exchange, dissemination and communication of equality values, promoting access to and use of ICTs as tools against gender discrimination in areas such as gender violence, promoting international cooperation, establishing a work-life balance, and the design, implementation, dissemination and evaluation of equality policies and plans;

### ***Participation***

10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make better use of the considerable potential that digitalisation has at all levels of political participation and the inclusion of women in the decision-making processes, for example by means of electronic voting; highlights the major opportunities that digitalisation and e-government initiatives hold with respect to access to information, decision-making processes, transparency, and greater accountability; stresses furthermore that ICTs can greatly increase women's ability to take part in surveys and discussion forums, as well as to submit complaints and report others anonymously;

11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote digitalisation in politics in order to promote direct democracy, allowing for a more active involvement of all citizens, thereby overcoming out-dated schemes and obstacles that cause difficulties for women and underrepresented groups in attempting to establish themselves in electoral and institutional environments; further calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider and further develop online voting methods for electoral consultations, thus eliminating barriers, which often affect women in particular;
12. Calls on the Commission to make full use of the 'Europe for Citizens' programme to specifically target civil society and women's organisations working in areas relating to digitalisation and ICT, in order to improve conditions for civic and democratic participation of women and to pay special attention to the gender-specific objectives in the upcoming implementation evaluations;
13. Highlights the importance that new media can play in strengthening women's participation in democratic processes; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote women's full participation in the media, including in management, and in regulatory and monitoring bodies, in order to strive for a more gender-equal media realm fighting gender stereotyping and misrepresentation of women; urges the Commission furthermore to foster the creation of networks among civil society organisations and professional media organisations in order to empower women to take an active part and recognise the specific needs of women in media;
14. Stresses the key role of international civil society in internet governance, through such forums as the Global Internet Forum; calls on the Commission and the Member States to engage with and support digital civil society organisations at grassroots and international level, and to advance the participation and representation of women and girls in all of these forums and networks;
15. Considers that access to free broadband for all, at least in public spaces, would improve possibilities for women to use digital opportunities and increase their chances to access the labour market, which would also contribute to increased social inclusion and positive developments with regard to environmental and economic matters; calls on the Commission to recognise the importance of extending its Digital Agenda to rural areas so that no citizens are excluded and isolated, in particular women, and digital opportunities are available to all;

### ***Labour market***

16. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and social partners to promote gender equality in ICT companies and other relevant industries, representative bodies and training institutions, including in positions of responsibility, to closely monitor and follow up the progress made, and to share best practices in this area;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the severe underrepresentation of women in the ICT sector, in particular among people in higher positions and on boards; urges the Commission and the Member States to recognise that the draft directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures provides a real opportunity to change the culture inside companies, which would have an impact on all levels of the hierarchy, and therefore urges the unblocking of the Directive in the Council; urgently reminds the Commission of its responsibility to take any action that could help break the deadlock in the Council as

regards EU legislation addressing transparency and greater balance in recruitment for decision-making positions;

18. Calls on the Member States to address the gender gap in the ICT sector by stressing the business case for diversity and by creating more and stronger incentives for both companies and women, such as role models and career paths, in order to increase the visibility of women;
19. Urges the Commission and the Member States to safeguard fundamental workers' rights and the social protection of employees and to combat precarious working conditions; urges the Commission to propose, and the Member States to further develop, new protection mechanisms adapted to the working and career patterns shaped by digitalisation, paying particular attention to the situation of women; highlights the importance of collective bargaining at all levels, especially in areas which are strongly affected by digitalisation, in order to ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work and to safeguard working space quality and working space security in times of digitalisation; points out that necessary general framework conditions must be found in order to safeguard the protection of employees' personal data;
20. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to recognise the full potential of the flexibility offered by digitalisation in the area of work-life balance, highlighting at the same time that the digitalisation of the labour market requires adaptation of both labour market policies and the underlying social security systems; calls on the Commission and the Member States, with regard to the Commission's roadmap 'New start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families', to identify the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation, with regard to working conditions and the need for adaptation of the workplace, skill development, and lifelong learning opportunities, especially for workers with care responsibilities; calls on the Member States and the Commission also to invest in a targeted manner in digital working practices in order to improve the work-life balance for all;
21. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support lifelong learning as well as training and schemes which help prepare for a better adaptation or potential change of career path in accordance with the growing demand for e-skills in many different sectors, paying particular attention to women aged 55 and over, in order to safeguard them from exclusion from the labour market;
22. Calls, in the context of all measures taken in this area, for the bureaucratic burden on firms to be kept to a minimum; points out that excessive red tape can jeopardise acceptance and lead to job losses and job relocations; welcomes the workable, consensus-based compromises reached by the two sides of industry in the Member States with a strong tradition of codetermination; regards codetermination as a best-practice model for European economies;
23. Notes that the gender pay gap remains one of the major issues in relation to the gender gap in the ICT sector, and calls, therefore, on the Member States to finally start actively implementing the Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency and continued positive action, preferably by means of legislation, and to introduce wage transparency measures and gender-neutral job evaluations; calls on the Commission to address equal pay in its 2016 work programme initiative 'New Start for working parents', as the pay gap increases even further when people become parents;

24. Points out that the gender pay gap results in an even higher pension gap; stresses that the principle of equal pay for equal work in the same workplace to ensure just and fair wages must be guaranteed, as pointed out by Commission President Juncker;
25. Encourages the Member States to have tax and benefit systems that are free of disincentives for second earners to work or work more, because women tend to be second earners, with ICT jobs featuring heavily in this field;
26. Points out that the gender pay and career development gap remains for women working in the ICT sector; stresses that the principle of equal pay for equal work in the same workplace to ensure just and fair wages is being challenged, even though it constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of social justice in the labour market and should therefore be protected above all else; reiterates that inequalities should not be allowed to take root in the digital economy as regards equal pay and career development; stresses that increased participation of women in the labour market and related investments in social inclusion policies will help to reduce the gender pay gap; highlights the importance of collective bargaining also in the digital market economy in order to safeguard quality and security of jobs in times of digitalisation;
27. Welcomes the many opportunities and the greater flexibility that the digital age offers employees and self-employed people, including opportunities for a better work-life balance, in particular with regard to the situation on the labour market of parents of young children and people with disabilities; calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the situation of flexible work and job security that is prominent in the ICT sector, but stresses at the same time the new challenges connected to this development, and calls on the Member States to ensure that adequate social security provisions are in place; advocates a 'right to log off' for workers outside the agreed working hours;
28. Draws attention to the fact that the digitalisation-driven trend towards more flexible working practices may also give rise to unstable forms of employment; emphasises that work-related mental health problems, such as burnout, caused by constant accessibility present a serious risk; advocates, therefore, full compliance with the prescribed rest times for workers, and stresses the need to respect working time arrangements under flexible-hour employment contracts, in order to maintain the boundaries of working time, as defined by the labour laws of the individual Member States;

### ***Education and training***

29. Underlines the importance of ensuring gender mainstreaming in the education sector by promoting digital literacy and the participation of women and girls in ICT education and training through the inclusion of coding, new media and technologies in education curricula at all levels, as well as extra-curricular, informal and non-formal education, and in all types of education and training, including for teaching staff, in order to reduce and remove digital skills gaps, and to encourage girls and young women to embark on careers in the sciences and ICTs; highlights, in this connection, the importance of open educational resources (OERs), which ensure better access to education for all, and of the exchanging of best practices for incorporating gender mainstreaming into the ICT field;
30. Encourages the Member States to introduce age-appropriate ICT education in the early stages of school, with a particular focus on inspiring girls to develop interest and talent in the digital field, and urges the Commission and the Members States to promote STEM education to girls from a young age, given that girls move away from science, technology

subjects, engineering and maths earlier during their educational path due to gender stereotypes surrounding these subjects, a lack of role models, and a segregation of activities and toys, resulting in an underrepresentation of women in these subjects at university, which extends into the work place; underlines therefore that both gender stereotypes and digital training should be addressed, starting within the primary education system and continuing to move through all stages of education until adult learning and training for people who have been excluded from the labour market;

31. Urges the Commission and the Member States to facilitate education and lifelong learning aimed specifically at older women for the duration of their working life and beyond, in particular for those with caring responsibilities and women who have taken a break from their career or are re-entering the workplace, so as to ensure that they are not left behind in the increasingly rapid shift towards digitalisation;
32. Notes that education in digital technologies, ICT and coding at an early age is especially important in empowering girls, encouraging them into the field and overcoming gender stereotypes; emphasises that increasing the representation of women in STEM subjects in higher education is key to increasing their representation in the digital sector;
33. Calls on the Member States to address the gender gap in the ICT sector by creating more incentives and support structures for women, such as role models, mentoring programmes and career paths, in order to increase the visibility of women; calls therefore on the Member States to adapt educational systems, where necessary, with a view to promoting teaching and interest in the STEM subjects in general and for female students in particular;
34. Emphasises the value of ICTs, and more specifically online training courses, for girls and women, but also people with special needs, such as those with disabilities, and the inhabitants of rural areas and remote areas, as well as the possibilities for teleworking, in order to improve education among these groups and increase their chances of financial independence;
35. Notes the important role and enormous potential that arts and design education, formal, informal and non-formal, the creative industries, and the cultural sector have in empowering women and girls and propelling them into the digital sector; emphasises therefore the importance of connecting STEM and the economic sectors constituted by education and the arts, transforming STEM into STEAM;
36. Calls on the Commission to promote digital technologies as tools for reducing barriers to entry in the labour market in the framework of lifelong learning and to set EU benchmarks for public and private investment in skills as a percentage of GDP;
37. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to promote, in particular by means of information and awareness-raising campaigns, the participation of women in business sectors that are stereotypically considered ‘male’, as in the case of digitalisation; stresses the need to organise awareness-raising, training and gender-mainstreaming campaigns for all the actors involved in digitalisation policy;
38. Welcomes the European ‘Code of Best Practices for Women and ICT’ and calls for its wide and active implementation; welcomes the establishment of the Europe-wide ‘Grand coalition for digital jobs’, and encourages the companies involved to put a special focus on recruitment and equal career opportunities for women;

39. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement programmes targeted at parents in order to familiarise them with the ICTs used by their children, thereby improving adults' awareness of the potential encounters and relationships that can occur online, and reducing the generational gap that exists with regard to the ICT sector;
40. Stresses the importance of improving digital skills and literacy in order to facilitate the entry into ICT companies of women who, for various reasons, do not possess these specific skills; points out that failure in this respect would result in further disadvantage regarding access for women to this sector; recalls that the European Social Fund may participate in funding such training courses;
41. Highlights the importance of integrating coding, new media and technologies into educational curricula at all levels, and points out the potential of digital skills to reduce access barriers to entry in the labour market; points to the importance of constant dialogue with social partners in order to overcome the gender gap in this field;
42. Urges the Commission, within the scope of the Digital Single Market Strategy, and more specifically with regard to the reference to building an inclusive e-society, to increase the visibility of women by setting up a pilot project on a European online university specifically focused on ICT and technical engineering and introducing a tailored scholarship programme for women in the area of ICT and new media;
43. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, as well as businesses, to promote gender equality in ICT by collecting gender-disaggregated data on the use of ICT, developing targets, indicators and benchmarks to track the progress of women's access to ICT and promote best practice examples among ICT companies;
44. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase their support for the empowerment of women in digital sectors and ICT in development cooperation and EU external relations, through promoting digital education and enabling women's entrepreneurship through various tools, including micro-finance schemes and support networks;

#### ***Investment and funding entrepreneurship***

45. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to make funds available, to improve access to existing funds and, if necessary, to make funds available for female entrepreneurs to create ICT-related businesses and digital start-ups, as well as women mentorship and peer-to-peer exchange networks, fostering innovation and investment within the EU; encourages the Member States to offer appropriate financial support and training to women intending to build a career in the field of digitalisation, in order to encourage female entrepreneurship in this sector;
46. Holds that, especially with regard to the objective of the Digital Single Market Strategy of creating the right conditions for an innovative and competitive ICT environment and improvements for financing opportunities for SMEs and start-ups, women's access to funding and financial services need special consideration; notes the importance of women's access to micro-finance in women's entrepreneurship;
47. Calls on the Commission in relation to the Digital Agenda to thoroughly monitor and evaluate the application of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting within the framework of EU funds in accordance with Article 7 of the Common Provisions

Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013) on European funds, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the involvement of women's organisations in the monitoring committees of funding programmes in order to guarantee that targeted actions strengthening the role of women in ICT are implemented; recalls the Commission's commitment to gender budgeting;

48. Calls on the Commission to take into account the gender dimension when analysing and reporting on the partnership involvement in relation to the Digital Agenda;
49. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to set up support programmes in relation to investing in ICT through the European Structural and Investment Funds, including favourable credit conditions and loans for firms, civil society organisations and start-ups in the ICT sector, in which at least 40 % of the workforce are female;
50. Calls on the Commission to support and promote a digital entrepreneurial culture for women, to promote and financially support a European networking and mentoring platform for women and to further strengthen the role of women in existing programmes; encourages the Member States, and also companies, to create diversity policies that go beyond focusing on the recruitment of women in order to promote sustainable economic development and leadership;
51. Highlights the role of social enterprise and of alternative business models such as mutuals and cooperatives in empowering women in digital entrepreneurship and in increasing the representation of women in digital sectors; calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote social enterprise initiatives aimed at empowering women and girls in ICT;
52. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and all stakeholders to make more use of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs in order to support measures aimed at improving digital skills among women and girls, promoting female employment in the ICT sector, and increasing dissemination of the various education and vocational training options available;

### ***Fight against violence against women in a digitalised world***

53. Calls for identification of the challenges posed by the use of ICT and the internet to commit crimes, issue threats or perpetrate acts of harassment or violence against women based on misogyny, homophobia or transphobia or any other form of discrimination; urges policymakers to address these issues properly, taking into account special groups of women with multiple vulnerabilities, and to ensure that a framework is in place guaranteeing that law enforcement agencies are able to deal with digital crimes effectively, taking into account the challenges related to online anonymity and the potential transborder nature of such crimes and abuse; calls on the Member States to allocate the resources necessary for law enforcement, i.e. implementation of existing laws against cyber-violence, cyber-bullying, cyber-harassment, cyber-stalking and hate speech;
54. Calls on the Commission to demand greater efforts from the Member States to prosecute any homophobic or transphobic crimes that take place online, as well as to apply properly the EU legislation in force in this regard and relating to the rights of victims;

55. Calls on the Commission to address sexism and gender stereotypes in education and the media, as part of the recast Equal Treatment Directive;
56. Calls on the Commission to develop a code of conduct for its own communications and the communication of the EU agencies in order to foster the empowerment of women, and to combat stereotypes and sexism and the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women;
57. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider the changed realities of women and girls, on account of digitalisation, in the implementation of future EU data protection legislation; emphasises that data controllers may only use sensitive data for limited purposes and may under no circumstances further share such data;
58. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to make the necessary resources available in order to ensure that rules concerning the safeguarding of sensitive data contained in online communications are observed;
59. Calls on the Commission to increase financial support for Safer Internet Digital Services Infrastructure, financed by the Connecting Europe Facility, and for the Member States to increase funding for support lines for victims of cyber-bullying; underlines that girls are twice as likely as boys to be victims;
60. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to adopt measures protecting girls from advertising in the digital environment that could incite them to behaviour harmful to their physical and mental health; calls on the Commission to renew and expand the Safer Internet programme, paying particular attention to the gender issue as one of the measures necessary to improve the safety of girls online;
61. Calls on the Commission to launch and support e-literacy and training programmes, as well as awareness campaigns, thereby raising awareness of the potential risks of the digital world and how to counter them among the relevant parties concerned, such as students at all levels of education, teachers, and education and law enforcement professionals; calls on the Commission to promote campaigns against sexism and gender stereotypes in social and digital media and to use the potential of digital media to eliminate stereotypes;
62. Welcomes the proposal made by the Commission to include in its post-2016 Strategy on Trafficking in Human Beings provisions on prevention, victim support, safe-return and reintegration, as well as the role of the internet; underlines that the phenomena of cyber-harassment and cyber-stalking should also be addressed;
63. Calls for the EU and the Member States to make available sufficient resources and funding for the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to be able to conduct research and data-gathering on how digital services can be better employed and harnessed for the benefit of women and gender equality;
64. Calls for the EU institutions, agencies and bodies, as well as the Member States and their law enforcement agencies, to cooperate and concretely coordinate their actions to counter the use of ICT to commit crimes related to trafficking in human beings, cyber-harassment and cyber-stalking, given that they are often transborder in nature and that EU-level coordination is vital for prosecuting these crimes; calls on the Member States to review and potentially revise their criminal law to ensure that new forms of digital violence are

clearly defined and recognised, and to ensure that appropriate modes of prosecution are in place; calls on the Member States to adopt reporting portals so that citizens will have their own secure and confidential place online where they can report harassment from internet users; calls for the EU Cybersecurity Strategy and the Europol Cybercrime Centre to cover these issues; calls on the Commission to promote training and capacity-building for victim support in digital matters among police and judicial authorities, as well as psychological support during court cases related to the issue;

65. Calls on the Commission to prepare as soon as possible the necessary steps for ratification by the EU of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, without prejudice to the EU responsibility to consider all necessary actions to end and prevent violence against women in all Member States, and calls on the Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which is instrumental to the eradication of violence against women, including digital forms of violence, since it introduces harmonised legal definitions and modes of prosecution of crimes that are facilitated by new communication technologies, such as trafficking in human beings and stalking;
66. Calls on the Commission to present, as soon as possible, a European Gender Violence Strategy that includes a legislative instrument and tackles new forms of violence against women and girls, such as cyber-bullying, the use of degrading images online, the distribution on social media of private photos and videos without the consent of the people involved, etc.;
67. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to tighten the monitoring of internet grooming by terrorist groups which recruit young women and force them into marriage or prostitution in third countries;

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