

European Parliament resolution on Gender Budgeting in the EU Budget - The way forward

The European Parliament,

- Having regard to the Trio Presidency Declaration on Equality between women and men from Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria from July 2017;¹
- Having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 5.²
- Having regard to the 2017 EIGE study ‘Gender Budgeting’³
- Having regard to the Final report of the Group of Specialists on Gender Budgeting, Council of Europe (2005)⁴
- Having regard to the IMF Policy Paper “Gender Budgeting in G7 Countries” from April 2017;⁵
- Having regard to the OECD Paper Gender Budgeting in OECD-countries from 2017;⁶
- Having regard to Article 2 and Article 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 study entitled ‘The EU Budget for Gender Equality’, published in 2015 by Parliament’s Policy Department D and the follow-up study on the use of funds for gender equality in selected Member States, published in 2016 by Policy Department C,
- Having regard to the Commission staff working document entitled ‘Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’ (SWD(2015)0278),
- Having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 1311/2013 of 2 December 2013 laying down the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2014-2020,
- Having regard to the Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027⁷

¹ <https://www.eu2017.ee/sites/default/files/2017-06/Trio%20programme.pdf>

² <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-5-gender-equality>

³ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/gender-budgeting>

⁴ http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/12462/GenderBudgeting-report2005_En.pdf

⁵ <http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2017/05/12/pp041917gender-budgeting-in-g7-countries>

⁶ <https://www.oecd.org/gender/Gender-Budgeting-in-OECD-countries.pdf>

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1527241903201&uri=CELEX%3A52018PC0322>

- Having regard to the joint declaration of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission attached to the MFF on gender mainstreaming from 19 November 2013,⁸
 - Having regard to the European handbook on equality data from 2016;
 - Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 3 July 2003 on gender budgeting - building public budgets from a gender perspective⁹
 - Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI))¹⁰
 - Having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 8 March 2016 on Gender Mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2015/2230(INI));
 - Having regard to the Joint Staff Working Document EU Gender Action Plan II “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020”
 - Having regard to the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – Mid-term review report of the External Financing Instruments (COM(2017 720 final) of December 2017
- A. whereas the principle of gender equality is a core value of the EU and is enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, whereas gender equality is a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment and social cohesion and whereas article 8 TFEU gives the Union the task of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between men and women through all its activities;
- B. whereas gender mainstreaming is an effective strategy towards realising gender equality which involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes;
- C. whereas women are still underrepresented in the labour market, public and political life, face gender pay and employment gaps that may contribute to poverty and spend disproportionately more time on unpaid domestic work and care work; whereas therefore gender impact assessments are necessary to identify the likelihood of any given decision having negative consequences for the state of gender equality; whereas it is consequently essential to analyse budgets from a gender perspective to provide

⁸<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013AP0455&from=EN>

Joint Declaration :

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agree that the annual budgetary procedures applied for the MFF 2014-2020 will integrate, as appropriate, gender-responsive elements, taking into account the ways in which the overall financial framework of the Union contributes to increased gender equality (and ensures gender mainstreaming).

⁹<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P5-TA-2003-0323+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

¹⁰<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0075+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

information on the different effects any budget allocation and distribution may have on gender equality;

- D. 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 equality¹¹;
- E. whereas gender budgeting is an important tool to achieve gender equality since it can allow a fair distribution of the public budget taking into account the different needs of men and women;
- F. whereas tax policies can play an important role in addressing disincentives for secondary earners to enter or re-enter the labour market; whereas the majority of time these impact the careers of women;
- G. whereas gender-responsive budgets and related policies aimed at contributing towards achieving gender equality can lead to more sustainable and inclusive growth and employment and increase transparency and accountability of public expenditure;
- H. whereas closing gender gaps requires proactive action and measures in addition to the adoption, implementation and enforcement of non-discrimination policies;
- P. whereas women spend more time carrying out unpaid work compared to men; whereas in the last ten years the proportion of time women spent on care, domestic work and social activities grew in comparison to men; whereas 80% of all care provided across the EU is provided by informal carers, 75% of whom are women; whereas the amount of time allocated to care activities is largely determined by the presence of children in the household¹²; whereas the gender impact of investments made in care services through the EU need to be assessed with this situation in mind;
- Q. 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;
- R. whereas despite the EU's high level political commitments to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, spending decisions in all policy areas should pay greater attention to gender equality;
- S. whereas several budget titles in the EU Budget do not specify the amount allocated to individual policy objectives and actions and are therefore not fully transparent, which reduces financial and budgetary accountability and increases the risk of gender equality objectives being neglected;

¹¹ <https://rm.coe.int/1680596143>

¹² https://www.oecd.org/els/family/LMF2_5_Time_use_of_work_and_care.pdf

- T. whereas successful budgeting for gender equality is based on the one hand on specific earmarked funding and on the other hand on a horizontal approach to streamline gender equality in all policy areas;
- U. whereas for effective implementation of gender budgeting sufficient data on the distribution and impacts of funds for advancing gender equality, a financial tracking system for gender equality and gender impact analysis aimed at assessing the implications of the funds for achieving gender equality outcomes are generally considered to be prerequisite;
- V. whereas providing gender equality training for staff involved in Fund management facilitates gender budgeting;
- W. whereas if gender equality is not recognised as a primary policy objective at the higher level it may be more difficult for programmes and projects to achieve their gender equality objectives;
- X. whereas in line with the EU Treaties and international commitments such as the CEDAW convention and the SDGs, the EU has the obligation to adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels¹³;
- Y. whereas in particular the indicators of SDG5 set out a system of specific instruments to ensure that allocations are made for and progress tracked on gender equality and women's empowerment allocations;
- Z. whereas an increasing number of Member States are applying gender responsive budgeting in a systematic way throughout the whole budget cycle and throughout all policy areas, as called for by the European Parliament since 2003;
- AA. whereas international organisations such as the IMF strongly promote gender responsive budgeting as a good governance standard tool in public finance and consider gender budgeting as good budgeting;
- BB. whereas the OECD recognizes gender budgeting as a key tool to implement gender equality in the context of public finance;
- CC. whereas the joint declaration of the Parliament, 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”;
- DD. whereas the European Commission declared that in line with its Treaty obligations, the gender-equality perspective will be taken into account in preparing the post-2020 generation of EU funding programmes¹⁴;

¹³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/SDG5>

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/151203_strategic_engagement_en.pdf

1. Regrets that gender equality was not addressed in the mid-term review of the MFF despite having been announced as a priority within that process, as this could have been the occasion to highlight achievements and challenges in improving gender equality by means of the EU budget;
2. Is deeply concerned that gender equality is not addressed as a horizontal key priority in the Proposal for the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027; strongly regrets that the only two cursory references to gender mainstreaming are mentioned in the annex, without details on implementation; also notes the absence of a gender mainstreaming clause in the Common Provisions for the seven shared management funds ; concludes therefore that the European Commission is not delivering on its legal obligations to promote gender equality;
3. Regrets that gender equality is not an independent objective in the proposal for a regulation on the European Social Fund + and has a narrow focus on women's market participation and work/life balance;
4. Is concerned about the decrease in proposed funding for Equality, Rights and Combating violence in the Rights and Values Programme (from € 439 million to € 409 million) and the decrease in funding for gender equality and human development in the proposed Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), both being merged under the existing 20 % target for human development; moreover regrets the merging into one single objective of the Gender equality, anti-discrimination and anti-xenophobia objectives and the suppression of the specific budgets for gender equality such as the EQUAL and DAPHNE programmes;
5. Stresses that a strong and independent women's rights movement is a critical factor for improving women's rights; considers that funding aiming to achieve gender equality objectives under this Programme should also be provided to women's rights organisations who often work, particularly at local and national level, in challenging contexts in Europe in order to overcome their difficulties in accessing EU funds. The Programme should also fund activities such as advocacy, monitoring of governments' commitments, litigation, or public mobilization and education;
6. Urges the Commission to recognise gender equality as an objective in the MFF , mention gender equality in one of the MFF headings with an individual budget line per gender equality-related objective with a view to increasing transparency;
7. Believes that gender equality spending should be tracked in the same way as for example climate change spending is tracked;
8. Is of the opinion 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;
9. Recalls that gender budgeting is a methodology that needs to be applied in all EU budget lines, and not only for the programmes where the implications for a gender impact seem most relevant

10. Notes that gender mainstreaming is not a once-off exercise and that gender budgeting requires an ongoing commitment to understanding gender, which includes analysis and consultation, and ongoing budget readjustments to take account of the changing needs of women and men, boys and girls;
11. Calls on the European Commission and the Council to ensure that the Regulations for the Funding programmes provide a firm basis for the promotion of gender equality by:
 - setting adequate gender equality targets and indicators, tools and redress mechanisms
 - ensuring the possibility to fund a specific action
 - integrating gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming obligations
 - targeted actions including the obligation to collect gender- and age-disaggregated data, to identify data gaps and to produce comprehensive statistics;
12. Is concerned that the EU's commitments to gender equality are side-lined by gender blind key priorities in MFF and annual budgetary procedures; stresses that the general emphasis on streamlining and administrative simplification should not endanger gender equality objectives;
13. Welcomes the commitments to gender mainstreaming in particular in the ESIF, but at the same time regrets the insufficient implementation of gender equality objectives in all its programmes; request the use of pragmatic tools to monitor and assess to what extent gender equality criteria are integrated in European Union funding and co-funding requirements and implementation;
14. Regrets that neither the European Fund for Strategic Investments nor the InvestEU Programme include a gender perspective and stresses that a successful process of recovery is not possible without addressing the impact of the crises on women;
15. Takes note of the gender equality objectives and gender mainstreaming obligations in the regulations of the different funding programmes but regrets the inconsistency in measures and references;
16. Notes that the legal basis for gender equality is well fenced by article 7 of the Common Provision Regulation of ESI Funds; asks that a similar provision be included in the legal framework of European Funds for the next programming period;
17. 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;
18. Recalls the Commission's commitment under the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 to have 85% of their external programmes having gender equality as a significant or principal objective; calls on the Commission and the Member States to reflect this

commitment through specific objectives under each thematic and geographic window of the NDICI;

19. Urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that EU funds safeguard the rights and protection of persons subject to multiple discrimination including refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, single parents, LGBTIQ people, people with disabilities, victims of gender-based and domestic violence;
20. Calls on the European Commission, Member States and regional and local authorities to create a dedicated working group on Gender Budgeting involving all actors including civil society, the EU Network of Gender Budgeting experts, parliamentarians, academia, local actors and gender advocates to analyse the budget from a gender perspective and to propose amendments to the MFF proposal 2021-2028 with a view to bringing it in line with the EU's legal obligations on gender equality;
21. 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;
22. Stresses the need to increase the budget allocations to civil society organisations that promote the rights of women and girls in all areas;
23. Notes that awareness raising and training on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting is necessary to develop gender sensitive structures and procedures;
24. Urges the European Commission, the European External Action Service and the Member States to allocate sufficient funds to ensure the implementation of a gender budgeting approach in the next MFF; urges the European Commission to improve the technical capacity of civil servants to implement gender budgeting, by hiring gender budgeting experts, building internal capacity within DG budget, creating a gender budgeting focal point within each DG and EU Delegation and by organising regular and recurrent trainings and technical support programmes on gender mainstreaming for all staff involved in policy making and implementation, and budgetary procedures;
25. Regrets the structural lack of comprehensive gender disaggregated data on the distribution and impact on gender equality of the EU budget and funding programmes i.e. for the European Regional Development Fund and urges the Commission to improve the situation by identifying and remediating existing data gaps;
26. Calls on the Commission to ensure EIGE has adequate resources to collect, analyse and disseminate gender disaggregated data;
27. Recalls that engendering data is more than collecting gender-disaggregated data and calls for the improvement of data collection in order to be able to make a qualitative analysis of women's situation, for example, regarding working conditions;
28. Calls on the Commission and Member States to monitor the data trends, and in case intended objectives are not being met or unintended impact emerges, to take remedial action;

29. Stresses that data collected across the EU Member States through the EU-wide surveys, such as the Eurobarometer surveys, should include more comprehensive gender indicators, including time-use surveys, and non-discrimination gender-disaggregated data;
30. Recalls that successful fiscal policy instruments to improve and promote gender equality include the use of tax and tax benefits to increase women's participation in the labour market, improved family benefits, subsidized child-care, and measures to improve the work life balance for parents and carers;
31. Calls on EU Member States and the Commission to enhance comparability and compatibility of data from various sources, to identify and address differences in definitions, classifications and categorisation both at EU and national level;
32. Strongly encourages the exchange of best practices and knowledge among Member States, local and regional authorities and calls on the European Commission to facilitate this exchange;
33. Is committed to safeguard the promotion and protection of gender equality and women's and girls' rights in the next MFF and EU annual budgetary procedures; calls on the Member States and the Commission to show leadership in the further elaboration of the future EU budget and to integrate the gender-equality perspective in the entire process for both the next MFF and the 2019 Budget so that public budget revenues and expenditures advance gender equality and women's rights;
34. Calls on the European Commission and the Council to re-affirm their commitment to gender equality by a clear commitment on gender budgeting and transparent monitoring in the Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027;
35. Stresses the importance of a periodic review of the MFF to assess the progress made on pre-defined gender equality targets and to use the evidence produced to feedback into EU programming, providing necessary adjustments throughout the budget cycle;
36. Calls for a gender impact assessment of the MFF to be conducted before its adoption to analyse its probable impact on gender inequalities in a systematic and transparent way;
37. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.