**Samira Rafaela,** *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality***.** – Madam President, central to the EU budget for 2022 is the recovery from an unprecedented crisis and when one must recover, one focuses on where the harm is, so a doctor treats his or her patients and focuses on where the pain is.

In the European Union it is women that have been hurt the most. They were on the forefront in all of our healthcare services, and they have experienced excessively high rates of violence at home and enormous difficulties with accessing sexual and reproductive health services during the lockdowns. And despite these challenges, this budget does not contain a single reference to sexual and reproductive health and rights in its 1 348 page document, and the Commission often refers to its commitment of achieving a Union of equality.

True equality does not exist if we ignore the unequal strain that this pandemic has had on women in Europe. So the recovery must focus on where the harm is done. We must put our money where it is needed and make gender equality the priority in the budget for 2022.