

*S&D Position Paper on*



# **GENDER EQUALITY & WOMEN'S RIGHTS**



Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament



## FOREWORD

As female politicians we are very well aware of the incredible amount of sexism and discrimination that surrounds us and shapes the societies we live in. We, the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, want this to change as soon as possible. Our vision for Europe is a feminist one. We want a life in dignity for all and see gender equality as the basis of democracy, not as a cherry on top!

We will not allow backsliding on gender equality, be it by conservative right-wing governments or international anti-democratic movements. Gender equality and women's rights are an integral part of any democratic society and as such they need to be advanced, safeguarded and protected.

We put forward this position paper as a roadmap, a pledge and a commitment to every woman and girl in the European Union and beyond. In our feminist fight we will continue to champion women's rights and gender equality, make politics work for all and celebrate diversity. We put gender equality at the heart of our work, always keeping it as one of the main objectives and core values we strive to uphold. Because we know that gender-equal societies are not just for women. These societies are happier, healthier, safer, more just and prosperous for all.



**Helène Fritzon**

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**Iratxe García Pérez**

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**Maria Noichl**

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**Evelyn Regner**

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## GENDER EQUALITY – THE BASIS OF DEMOCRACY, NOT A CHERRY ON TOP

Gender equality is not just for women, it is for all citizens and society as a whole, and we need not only women and girls but also men and boys to achieve it.

As Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament our vision of the EU is a feminist one: we want a life in dignity for all and see gender equality as the basis of democracy, not the cherry on top. Gender equality and women's rights are indispensable and indivisible parts of human rights. As such, they present the very basis and purpose of the rule of law at national, European, and international levels, as well as the most adequate indicators of health and resilience of our democracies. Gender equal societies are happier, healthier, more prosperous, safe and just. Thus, gender equality is not just for women, it is for all citizens and society as a whole, and we need not only women and girls but also men and boys to achieve it. We make politics for all, celebrating diversity and fighting for equality, because none of us is free until all of us are. The empowerment of women, the protection of women's rights and activists inside and outside of the EU is a priority for us.

We witness an increasing influence of transnational and well-funded fundamentalist and right wing organisations, which is clearly linked to the backlash against women's and LGBTIQ+ rights globally and within the European Union. These highly organised anti-gender actors aim to undermine the rule of law and to promote social and political hierarchies that benefit them. It is essential to understand this movement - and the threat it poses to the rights of women and LGBTIQ+ persons - as manifestation and reinforcement of broader anti-democratic trends. We will not accept backsliding on women's rights by conservative and right wing governments or international anti-gender and anti-democratic movements and organisations. Neither through fake news online, nor hatred in the streets, nor through crises like the Covid-19 pandemic.

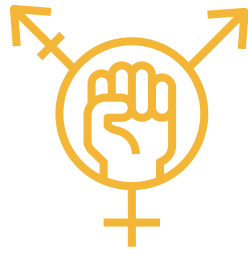
Focusing on 10 thematic priorities, **beating stereotypes**, fighting for **women's rights to decide for their own bodies**, ending all forms of **violence**, ensuring **women's equal representation in decision making**, enhancing their **economic independence**, tackling **gender bias in taxation**, prioritising **gender equality in digital and green transitions and in foreign policy**, and consequent use of **gender mainstreaming and budgeting** will break patriarchal structures and set people free.



We are calling on the Commission to present an EU Women's Rights Charter

The progress already achieved needs to be carefully safeguarded. Therefore we are calling on the Commission to present an EU Women's Rights Charter, a catalogue of basic rights to protect women everywhere, such as the universal access to comprehensive sexuality and relationship education, contraception, sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe and legal abortion, European perinatal standards and equal pay, as well as ambitious proposals aiming at the empowering of women and ensuring standardisation of their rights across the EU.

There is no way back to the last century. We are committed to safeguarding achievements that have been made and pushing for faster progress towards a gender equal European Union. How do we do this? By strengthening women's position in society, reaching economic independence, breaking the cycle of violence, low pay and dependency, sharing power and responsibilities in all areas of life. An overarching gender equality objective should be introduced across all policies and the gender perspective mainstreamed using an intersectional approach in line with the Principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights.



# BEAT THE STEREOTYPES! EUROPE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION

We call for the Commission to support training programmes for law enforcement and judicial authorities, and for the relevant EU agencies to prevent and tackle discriminatory practices and hate crimes.

Harmful gender stereotypes are among the main causes to fuel gender inequalities, resulting in women's economic dependence, plague of violence, unequal opportunities, underrepresentation in politics and economy and obstacles to bodily integrity. However, they also limit boys and men. Unequal power relations between men and women, entrenched in a patriarchal system, foster gender inequalities that are deeply rooted within our societies.

True gender equality takes an intersectional approach. Women, in all their diversity, be it LGBTIQ+ persons, women of colour, refugee and migrant women, women with disabilities, elderly women, ethnic minorities, or the most economically vulnerable women; face different obstacles and interlocking forms of discrimination on a daily basis, adding an additional layer to already existing gender bias.

We welcome the Commission taking steps to **criminalize hate speech and hate crime in the EU**, mainstreaming the dimension of gender equality in the proposal. We are calling on the Council to finally adopt the **horizontal directive against discrimination!**

**The EU is and must remain LGBTIQ+ freedom zone!** We call on the Commission to take concrete measures **to ensure freedom of movement for all families and on Member States to introduce legislation for equal recognition of same-sex marriages and partnerships as well as an EU wide recognition of parenthood** so as to ensure full respect for the right to private and family life without discrimination. We call for the Commission **to support training programmes for law enforcement and judicial authorities**, and for the relevant EU agencies to prevent and tackle discriminatory practices and hate crimes. We call for the **LGBTIQ+ free zones to be recognized as a violation of freedom of movement and residence in the EU.**





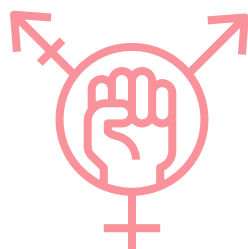
It is crucial to target harmful gender stereotyping and norms already at school as well as strengthening sexuality education and violence prevention through gender sensitive education programming for both boys and girls.

We are calling for an international convention, either on the level of the UN or the Council of Europe, for protecting the rights and freedoms of LGBTIQ+ persons, as such an instrument still does not exist.

Stereotypes are not innate, therefore we have to work preventively from an early age. It is crucial to target harmful gender stereotyping and norms already at school as well as strengthening sexuality education and violence prevention through **gender sensitive education programming** for both boys and girls.

In this sense, one of the projects to be taken into account will be the new **European Education Area**, which has one of its main axes dedicated to inclusion and gender equality. By achieving this European Education Area by 2025, education and training systems should work to develop a better gender sensitivity in education processes, fight against gender stereotypes and discrimination, and close the gender gap in leadership positions.

We insist that **education campaigns** need to be an integral part of gender equality related measures proposed by the Commission. In addition, we call on the Commission to put forward an **annual Campaign Against Gender Stereotypes**, focusing on different areas of discrimination each year. This campaign must aim to raise awareness on the harmful effects of these stereotypes, debunk myths and empower girls and women to achieve their potential and boys and men to stand on their side and to free themselves from harmful gender roles and toxic masculinity.



## MY BODY – MY RIGHTS!

Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are fundamental human rights, and their realisation is an essential element of human dignity - a precondition for the achievement of gender equality.

Gender equality and women's empowerment start with a person's free choice about their body and their life. A person's bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy must always be respected! Whether, with whom and when to be sexually active, to decide whether, when and whom to marry, whether and by what means to have children, and how many children – this must always be an adults free, autonomous and fully informed decision and not depend on economic or social status. Nobody shall be forced into unintended motherhood, no person shall die in childbirth or suffer forced and coercive medical interventions during childbirth, corrective rape and no body shall be mutilated or exploited. We strongly condemn harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Intersex Genital Mutilation (IGM) and Child Early and Forced Marriages (CEFM). We strongly condemn obstetric and gynaecological violence which has shown to be increasingly prominent for women across Europe.

**Sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are fundamental human rights**, and their realisation is an essential element of human dignity - **a precondition for the achievement of gender equality**. Boys and girls, women and men must have throughout their lifetime access to the information, resources, services and support necessary to enjoy these rights, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence. Consent-culture must become the norm.

Figures show that criminalizing abortion does not lead to fewer abortions, but only forces women to seek clandestine abortions in which they risk their health and life.

**This is a violation of human rights and a form of gender based violence!**

Only education, information and access to male and female contraception can reduce the number of unintended pregnancies.



We therefore urge all EU Member States to ensure universal access, to age-appropriate and evidence-based sexuality and relationship education, to a range of high-quality and accessible, affordable modern contraceptive methods and supplies, family planning counselling and information on contraception and to guarantee free, safe and legal abortion care.

We strongly condemn the backsliding in women's SRHR that we witness worldwide and in certain EU member states. Socialists and Democrats will not accept that opponents of SRHR abuse the COVID-19 health crisis as a pretext to adopt further restrictive measures in SRHR, or exploit national interest or demographic change, in order to undermine women's rights.

Abortion is a right and needs to remain a free decision based on a women's request, given on her own free will, and on value-free information without cost as a factor, but never tied to mandatory counselling or a waiting period. Access to legal, free and safe abortion is a matter of women's health, as is the availability of free, safe and modern contraception, especially in times of health crisis.

Age-appropriate, comprehensive, non-judgemental sexuality education critically addressing gender norms, gender equality, power dynamics in relationships, consent and respect for boundaries is highly beneficial for young people. It is the key to building their skills to form healthy, equal and safe relationships and the basis for a gender equal society.

We therefore urge all EU Member States **to ensure universal access** to age-appropriate and evidence-based **sexuality and relationship education**, to a range of high-quality and accessible, **affordable modern contraceptive methods and supplies, family planning counselling and information on contraception** and to guarantee **free, safe and legal abortion care**.

We call on the Commission to take concrete steps for protecting SRHR, starting with the establishment of an EU Special Envoy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, the addition of a designated chapter on the 'State of play of SRHR' in the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy and by including SRHR in the next EU Health Strategy.

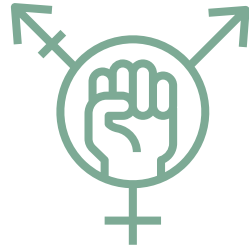
We call on the Commission to take concrete steps for protecting SRHR, starting with the establishment of an **EU Special Envoy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights**, the addition of a designated **chapter on the 'State of play of SRHR' in the EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy** and by including **SRHR in the next EU Health Strategy**. We call on governments, women's rights organisations, activists and other entities to lend their expertise in narrative, capacity and campaign building to grass roots organisations focusing on SRHR within Member States which have restrictive SRHR policies, such as criminalization.

It is important to ensure **a gender perspective in health and clinical research** for both quality and safety matters, act upon this knowledge and better target medicines treatment to respective patient population groups as we know that side effects as well as symptoms of diseases may vary between the women and men.

Ensuring bodily integrity is one of the priorities for our Group. Prostitution has cross-border implications on women, their rights and gender equality and thus needs to be tackled on a European level, to make sure women everywhere enjoy the same rights and protection. Figures show us: women in prostitution are at a much higher risk of violence and exploitation. There are a number of links between prostitution and organised crime such as human trafficking and prostitution fuels the trafficking of vulnerable women and minors with the aim of sexual exploitation - we cannot continue to look the other way. Building on positive experiences of EU Member States, we want the Commission to propose a regulation that **tackles demand but at the same time protects women and their rights**, guaranteeing the **end of their criminalisation and stigmatisation** and **introducing exit strategies** as well as their **unconditional access to social security schemes and reintegration**. It further should hamper human trafficking and organised crime and introduce **information campaigns for men**, as well as training for **law enforcement and social workers** in order to support survivors.


Last but not least, we want to raise the **issue of surrogacy** - a woman's body is not for sale or rent. Surrogacy increases woman's exposure to exploitation and human trafficking and constitutes commodification of women and children. It has a clear impact on women's rights and gender equality and cross-border implication. **We therefore call to tackle this issue on EU level, focussing on women's rights and needs.**





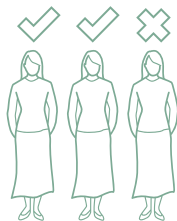
## ENHANCING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

65  
million



**Poverty is female and is the result of a lifetime discrimination.**

In Europe, more than 65 million women live in poverty compared to 57 million men, and **women's poverty creates child poverty.**



1/3

One third of women in the EU **do not have a paid job.**

One in three women in the EU does not have a paid job and women do the large majority of part-time work in the union. Women's work has traditionally been undervalued. Both horizontal and vertical labour market segregation in the EU are still significant, with women over-represented in less profitable sectors. We want to close the gender gaps in employment and social protection and reduce gender gaps in part-time jobs as well as involuntary part-time employment. These are crucial steps if we want to strengthen women's economic independence within an ageing European society. The best way to ensure safe and adequate pensions for women is to increase the overall employment rate and provide more quality jobs across all ages, improve working and employment conditions, and commit the necessary public spending.

Stereotypes widely conveyed by society are rooted in patriarchy and leave women in a subordinate role in society, contributing to discrimination, unequal pay, leading to economic dependence and the feminisation of poverty. In order to eliminate the gender pay and pension gap we need to tackle different structural and interlocking inequalities, operating at the household, organisational and labour market levels. Particularly women are being adversely affected by insecure, precarious employment, periods of involuntary unemployment and reduced working time and they should be a fundamental part of labour market employment policies.

At the household level, an uneven division of unpaid care work between women and men constrains women's equal labour force participation and career advancement. As a consequence, women tend to work less often in gainful and socially prestigious employment, have more career-breaks, do more (involuntary) part-time work and are more employed in low-paid sectors and with precarious working conditions.

Women constitute **the majority of minimum wage earners in Europe** and are too one of the main sub-minimum wage earners



12%

The overall employment rate of women is almost 12% **lower than that of men**



1/3

One third of women who are employed **work part time** compared to 8% of working men.

In addition, more women than men are single parents in charge of their children. Balancing work and family responsibilities has always been a challenge, but now more than ever, housework and 'real' work are intertwined and there is no clear line between the two. As a result of the pandemic, women face a double burden - longer shifts at work and additional care work at home. On a daily basis, women perform on average more than 4 hours of unpaid care work. Furthermore, globally, women make up over 70% of workers in the health sector - including those working in care institutions. Nurses, care workers, pharmacists, cleaners, teachers, grocery store clerks - all are essential roles doing essential work. This is systematically being ignored and undervalued, causing in-work poverty, and women's economic and social contribution through it is not recognized.

The Covid 19 crisis has significantly accentuated that care, falsely viewed as unproductive, although an indispensable part of the economy and ageing society, must be put in the centre of social policies. We need a **Care Deal for Europe** aiming at supporting a transition towards a true care economy, ensuring relevant investment and legislation at EU level with benefits from informal and formal carers and the people they care for.

We Socialists call for the **equal share of unpaid work and responsibilities** in order to achieve an "equal earner-equal carer" model in society. We are strongly committed to proceeding quickly with an ambitious implementation of the **2019 Work-Life Balance Directive**, and to further developing care policies that foster equal parental and care leave schemes. We want to speed up efforts to reach the **Barcelona targets everywhere in the EU**, as quality, accessible, and affordable care services for children are crucial for women's participation in the Labour market.

The ever greater use of digital tools for work purposes, even before the pandemic and much more during through increased teleworking, has resulted in an 'ever-connected', 'always on', or 'constantly on-call' culture, which can have detrimental effect on workers' fundamental rights and fair working conditions, including fair remuneration, the limitation of working time and work-life balance, physical and mental health and safety at work and well-being. It also has a negative impact on gender equality, because of its disproportionate impact on workers with caring responsibilities, who tend to be women.



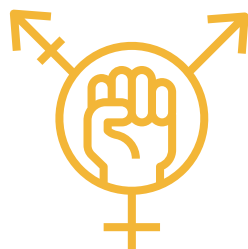


Today, the **gender pay gap** still stands at 14,1 % in the EU. It has decreased **only minimally over recent years** and results in a gender pension gap that is even more than double the gender pay gap, nearly 40%.

Socialists and Democrats are therefore calling for a Directive on the Right to Disconnect and a Legislative Framework with a view to establishing minimum requirements for remote work across the Union ensuring that teleworking does not affect the employment conditions of teleworkers, both with strong gender aspects.

At the organisational level, managerial practices and diverging pay levels are rarely challenged, the lack of pay transparency and unconscious bias is often a source of discrimination and the motherhood penalty strikes every day. We therefore welcome the Commission's proposal for the long requested **Pay transparency Directive** which aims at **introducing binding measures to guarantee workers' right to information** on pay level of workers doing the same work or work of equal value. We Socialists want this directive to be applied to all workers whatever the size of the enterprise they work in, we insist on the strong involvement of social partners and clear criteria for determining work of equal value, and we want effective monitoring and sanction mechanisms to be introduced. We also welcome the **Minimum Wage Directive** as women are mostly affected by low pay.

S&D wants to address the issue of **equal pay for work of equal value across different occupational sectors** and to reach **fairer remuneration in all sectors**. The Covid -19 crisis has shown clearly that it is work in low-paid sectors that keeps our societies functioning! **Women should get what they deserve. Sectoral segregation** and the pay and pension gap have to be closed by **structural binding measures** that are sustainable and not just temporary and not crisis-related. For that, we want the Commission, Member states and social partners to develop **guidelines for a clear definition of the value of work, for gender-neutral job evaluation and classification systems and the definition of clear criteria** (such as educational, professional and training requirements, skills, efforts and responsibility) **in order to better value and remunerate work in all sectors, and particularly in highly-feminised sectors**. Collective bargaining agreements should also address pay discrimination and the undervaluation of work predominantly carried out by women and secure the enforcement of equal pay. **Furthermore, we want to promote gender-blind CVs** to discourage companies and public administrations from operating gender bias during their recruitment processes. **We call on the Commission to propose an anonymised 'Europass CV'**.



## TACKLING GENDER BIAS IN TAXATION

In addition, women's consumption patterns differ from those of men as they purchase more goods and services with the aim of promoting health, education and nutrition.

**Taxation policies have gender biases**, as tax regulations interact with socioeconomic realities. While most Member States have abolished tax regulations that explicitly differentiate between men and women, **implicit tax biases are still prevalent**: this means that a provision nominally applies equally to all, but in reality there is discrimination as the policy interacts with behaviour/income patterns that impact genders differently.

The current EU and national taxation policies reinforce current gender gaps (employment, income, unpaid work, pension, poverty, wealth, etc.) as it creates disincentives for women to enter and remain in the labour market, in particular under the joint taxation scheme, and reproduces traditional gender roles.

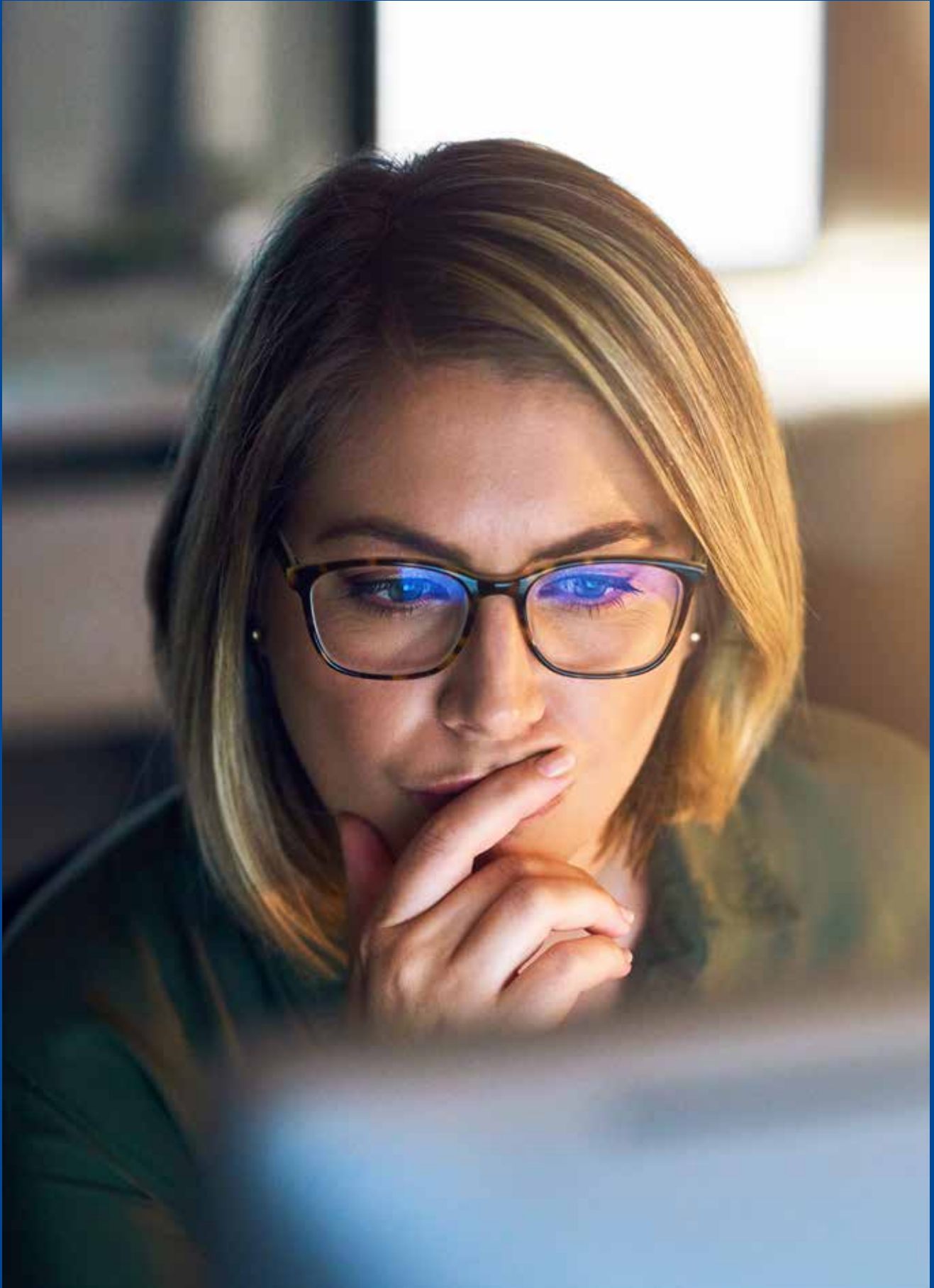
In addition, women's consumption patterns differ from those of men as they purchase more goods and services with the aim of promoting health, education and nutrition. Combined with women's lower income, women bear a larger VAT burden. While many Member States exclude some medical products from the sales tax base, tampons and other menstrual hygiene products are subject to sales taxes. Moreover, they are seen as 'luxury' items and are taxed as such. This shows how deeply embedded gender inequality is as well in the tax system.

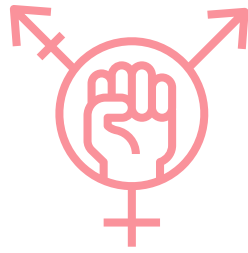


We want the Commission to promote best practices on taxation policies

We as Socialists stress **that individual taxation is instrumental to achieving tax fairness for women.** We call on Member States to phase in individual taxation while ensuring full preservation of all financial and other benefits linked to parenthood in current joint taxation systems. We call on the Member States **to provide for VAT exemptions, reduced rates and zero-rates for products and services with positive social, health and/or environmental effects, in line with the ongoing revision of the EU VAT Directive.**

We urge the Commission to carry out **regular gender impact assessments of fiscal policies from a gender equality perspective,** focusing on the multiplier effect and implicit bias to ensure that neither direct nor indirect discrimination feature in any fiscal policies in the EU. We want the Commission to **promote best practices on taxation policies** that take gender impact into account and promote gender equality and to include a **gender analysis in its annual Taxation Trends in the European Union report.**





## EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

# 30%

The average **share of women in parliament in the 28 EU member states** has increased from 21% to 30%, with wide national discrepancies.

Diverse groups taking decisions do take the better, more inclusive and more sustainable ones. Only the decisions that consider everyone's view are fit to lay the ground for a future, which is better for all. Women in decision-making positions are furthermore important role models for the next generation. Girls and boys can thus learn: a woman's place is at the decision-taking table. Major inequalities remain to be tackled when it comes to **economic and political decision-making**. We are calling on the Council to establish a **Council Configuration on Gender Equality and Equality**: the EU needs a platform for intergovernmental exchange on gender equality and a formal forum for the ministers responsible for the matters of gender equality and equality in general.

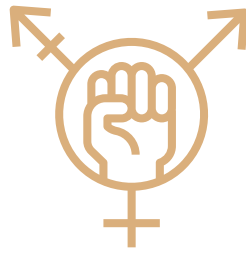
# 89%

Yet 89% of **country leaders remain men** and less than one in five of the EU's major political parties is led by a woman. In the private sector, almost **three quarters of those sitting on corporate boards are men**.

We as Socialists want women, especially those facing multiple forms of discrimination, to be represented on an **equal footing with men in the world of economic and political decision making**. We call for enabling a fairer representation of women in decision making processes in politics as well as on company boards, **by quota, reserved seats, and zip-lists**, but also by improving political and company culture implementing **codes of conduct** and **party statutes** in order to raise awareness for gender equality. **Underrepresentation of women in politics is a serious issue that poses an obstacle for fair democratic representation.**

Women politicians, activists and journalists are **targeted by violence**. Political violence is gendered and has a silencing effect.

Socialists in the EP call on the Council to finally **unblock the "Women on Boards" Directive**, which would ensure that at least 40% of the members on non-executive company boards are women.

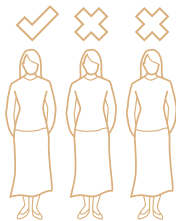


# STOP THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE



55%

One in two women (55 %) has experienced **sexual harassment**.



1/3

One in three women in the European Union, which represents 62 million women, **has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15**.

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of fundamental rights. It's time to take action! **We urge the European Commission to fulfill the goals set up in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020 - 2025 and submit a proposal for a Council decision to identify gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in the Article 83(1) TFEU.** There is no denying that gender based violence is a serious crime - it's time to treat it like one. Combating gender based violence on common basis is crucial because there is a need to establish minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions, including a common definition of gender-based violence, as well as minimum rules concerning key issues of prevention, underreporting, victim protection, support and reparation, and the prosecution of perpetrators.

Yes, **we are calling for the EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention**, but we have no time to wait around for all the Member States to ratify it, especially witnessing a massive far-right propaganda surrounding the Convention. Identifying gender based violence as an EU crime is one step that should be followed by **a horizontal directive to eliminate all gender-based violence against women and girls both online and offline that implements the standards of the Istanbul Convention and has a victim-centered intersectional approach.**

**The Directive should include prevention measures**, including through gender-sensitive education, **support services and protection measures for victims**, measures to **combat all forms of gender-based violence**, **minimum standards for law enforcement**, measures to **ensure cooperation and exchange of best practises among Member States**. In addition, **obligations for Member States to ensure that intimate partner violence is a decisive factor when examining custody cases**, keeping children's and women's interests as a priority to protect them from secondary victimisation during legal proceedings and through use of non-scientific theories such as "parental alienation syndrome".

Harassment,  
cyberbullying, femicide,  
sexist hate speech,  
intimate partner violence,  
assault, revenge porn,  
stalking/cyberstalking,  
reproductive coercion and  
denial of safe and legal  
abortion, sexual violence,  
rape, psychological  
violence.

**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**



38%

of all femicides are committed by intimate partners.

1/3

Worldwide almost one third of women aged between 15 and 49 who have been in a relationship have reported that they **have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.**



Even the online world is still not a safe space for women. 1 in 10 women in the EU **have been victims of sexual harassment via digital tools** since the age of 15.

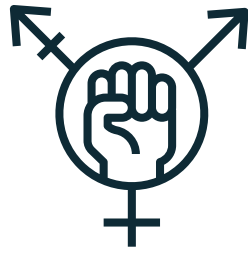


Combating newer forms of violence, like **online hate and cyber violence**, has to form an integral part of any strategy against violence in general, but is especially crucial to stabilise and safeguard democracy. For example, first analysis of the Capitol riots in Washington DC have shown that the radicalisation of most men involved started with online hate against women from where right-wing organisations slowly but surely gathered their supporters.

In prevention programmes and education, we need to constantly talk about **consent and boundaries**. We therefore urge all EU Member States to **ensure universal access to comprehensive sexuality and relationship education**, which should as well focus on **educating on consent, boundaries and responsibility of men in the efforts to end gender-based violence** through specific actions such as awareness raising campaigns that would challenge stereotypical views that help perpetuate violence against women, as well as preventing re-occurrence of violence through developing methods to work with the perpetrators.

The more we know about gender based violence, the better. **We are calling on the Commission and the Member to collect and make available quality, disaggregated data on all forms of gender-based violence** through cooperation with Eurostat, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Institute for Gender Equality. We are calling on the Commission to develop **a European Union protocol on violence against women in times of crisis and emergency** to prevent violence against women and to support victims during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a need to establish safe and flexible emergency warning systems and essential protection services for victims, such as EU wide helplines, safe public accommodation and health services.





## GENDER PERSPECTIVE MAKES FOR A GREENER FUTURE

More can be done to ensure women can take advantage of the opportunities created by the green transition.

Climate emergency and gender inequalities go hand in hand, as systemic inequalities cause and perpetuate the climate crisis as well as discrimination of women. **Women and girls are powerful actors of change**, with their unique skills, knowledge and perspective being an important part of a green transition that works for everyone. **Women need to be equally represented in political decision-making and industries vital to green transition.** Secondly, looking beyond traditional “green jobs”, women’s wellbeing in the sectors that contribute to broader societal well-being, such as care, education, healthcare, needs to be prioritised. **The Fit for 55 package policies must be designed and implemented with a clear gender and social dimension.** The renovation and innovation initiatives, which the green transition requires, will need strong investment in workers, in creation of quality jobs and retraining, and women should be included in all aspects.

**In the field of the green energy transition** creating a more gender equitable energy policy must be a priority, as women and men experience energy poverty in different ways and are unequally affected by energy poverty due to income differences, housing conditions, care responsibilities and age. Access to affordable heating and electricity should be guaranteed to low-income households, and especially single women and lone mothers. Recognising the gendered nature of energy poverty is one step. In addition, more can be done to ensure women can take advantage of the opportunities created by the green transition. For instance, by reducing the gender gap in the renewable energy sector employment and education. Access to education, re- and up-skilling and supporting women’s participation in STEM education and careers are crucial in addition to increasing gender equality in decision-making at the European, national and local levels related to the energy transition.

Initiatives that aim to improve the quality of the spaces and cities where we live, such as the New European Bauhaus, need to encourage the equal participation of women and girls.

**Women are also vital in designing smart mobility policies.**

Currently, the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of transport and mobility solutions are gender blind, reproducing society's existing gender biases, norms and inequalities.

Underrepresentation among transport workers, decision makers as well as researchers, planners, engineers and designers in the sector together with the gender data gap and unconscious gender biases result in mobility that does not work for everyone. **We are calling on the Commission to gender mainstream all transport-related legislation, policy, programmes and actions and to include gender criteria and work-life balance in the design of mobility planning.** We emphasize the right to safe and attractive workplaces in the transport sector, where all workers are free from violence or sexual harassment and their health and safety at work is ensured, including access to decent sanitary facilities, appropriate tools and equipment including work gear, as well as a good work-life balance. In this regard we urge stakeholders to promote standards as laid down in ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment and to implement without delay a zero-tolerance policy towards violence and harassment in the workplace.

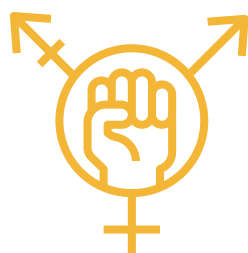
Despite the fact that women make up 51% of the world's population, their experience of the environment has not generated much interest in the past, and the spaces and structures for participation have not been created so that women are represented equally and contribute the knowledge they have about the territories and cities where we live. We need **gender-sensitive urban planning** that includes a more active participation of women in decision-making, diagnosis, transformation and urban design processes. Participation helps to give greater visibility to the issues that most concern women and to promote understanding of the relationships between issues such as **safety, accessibility and mobility** that shape the daily routine of women's lives. The implementation of **The New Leipzig Charter** must address this issue.

Likewise, initiatives that aim to improve the quality of the spaces and cities where we live, such as the New European Bauhaus, need to encourage the equal participation of women and girls. This could be done by integrating gender perspective reflecting the everyday experience of all women, including mothers, both in urban planning and public transport, and in the design of our public spaces, buildings, interiors, housing and furniture.



Gender equality as well as non-discrimination principles should be an integral part of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of CAP interventions.

There should be a particular focus on promoting participation of women in socio-economic development in **rural areas**. The size of female-operated farms tends to be smaller and the work performed by women, as male farmers' family members, is not recognised on an equal footing, which impacts women's economic independence. **The CAP Regulation should help to ensure that the work that women do is more visible, better appreciated and taken into account within the specific objectives to be proposed by the Member States in their strategic plans.** Gender equality as well as non-discrimination principles should be an integral part of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of CAP interventions. We call on actions focused on promoting a greater inclusion of women in the rural economy, through granting support to promote the involvement of women in knowledge transfer and information actions, advisory services, investments in physical assets, farm and rural business start-up and development, installation of digital technologies and co-operation.



## GENDER SENSITIVE DIGITAL TRANSITION

The importance of these subjects and related jobs is growing and we must assure that women are not left behind or excluded from the society of today and the future.

It is estimated that there are 8 million ICT specialists in the EU but only 17% of them are women. In the world, only 22% of AI professionals are women. The digital transition is not going anywhere as the societies are becoming increasingly digitised. The importance of these subjects and related jobs is growing and we must assure that women are not left behind or excluded from the society of today and the future. Gender stereotypes and harmful socio-cultural norms, lack of access, affordability and participation in STEM and ICT education all contribute to lack of inclusion of women in the digital world. **Gender mainstreaming of digital education policies** and programmes, through creating safe spaces for girls to learn, educating parents and teachers about gender stereotypes, setting up positive women role models, is the first step towards closing the digital gender gap and tackling leaky pipe phenomenon in the area of digital education. There is a need for **EU wide life-long learning campaigns directed at women** to improve digital literacy.

Anti-harassment, work-life balance and gender-pay gap measures are key to ensure women's representation in ICT, STEM and AI related fields. **We are calling on the Commission to promote gender equality in companies in the ICT and related sectors**, including through financing female-led projects in the digital sector, and the promotion of a minimum number of women researchers participating in ICT projects. Also by the designing of prizes and incentive schemes for companies and organisations actively implementing gender-neutral policies linked to measurable targets and annual reports on diversity.

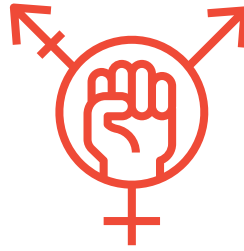


It must be ensured that social media platforms do not employ practices that are discriminatory, promote exploitation and exclusion, which negatively affect women in particular.

Promoting gender equality in ICT can be done by applying public procurement policies and/or guidelines on the purchase of ICT services from providers that apply a gender balance in the composition of their companies and boards, facilitating the distribution of European funds to companies that take into account gender balance criteria.

Furthermore, digitalisation requires that we put in place a **strong regulatory framework for online platforms** which shape the way our societies communicate and receive information. It must be ensured that social media platforms do not employ practices that are discriminatory, promote exploitation and exclusion, which negatively affect women in particular. It is of equal importance to put strong safeguards for algorithms driven by AI systems to avoid any gender bias in the field of their application.





## FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

We highly encourage increased engagement of women from affected communities into these structures to ensure direct representation and to further the ability of these institutions to take the most effective possible actions.

EU foreign and security policy must be a feminist one with gender equality as one of the overarching goals. Equal representation of women and girls in foreign policy actions is key, as they are unproportionally affected by violence, poverty, armed conflicts, and the impact of climate, health and other emergencies. Consequently, women's empowerment is essential to tackling these issues. Meaningful participation of women and girls in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction increases the sustainability and success of peace and the resilience of local communities. Protection and support for women activists, educators and leaders in conflict zones must be a priority in all EU conflict response strategies.

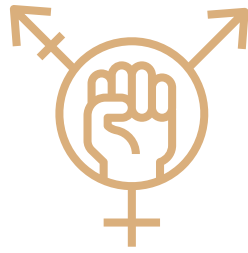
**The EU shall lead by example** by ensuring **gender equal representation of women in the key positions** in EEAS, relevant Commission services, European agencies working outside of EU and delegations. We highly encourage increased engagement of women from affected communities into these structures to ensure direct representation and to further the ability of these institutions to take the most effective possible actions.

We welcome the GAP III, but maintain yet again that **85% of all new external actions shall incorporate gender as a significant or principal objective and that 20 % of official development aid in each country should be allocated to programmes having gender equality as one of its principal objectives**. We insist on the **systematic implementation of rigorous gender analysis, gender-disaggregated data collection, gender budgeting and gender impact assessments** to inform the design of all EU and EU Member States external financing, as well as their engagement in policy dialogues. There is a need to invest in knowledge, resources and in-house expertise on gender equality in EU Delegations to be able to implement GAP III adequately.

We need a **feminist migration policy, taking into account the needs of migrant and asylum seeking women and girls** and their human rights by finally adopting a comprehensive migration and asylum framework that specifically addresses their experiences. The fortress Europe should be a fortress protecting rights and people, not shutting them out.







## POLICIES THAT WORK FOR WOMEN

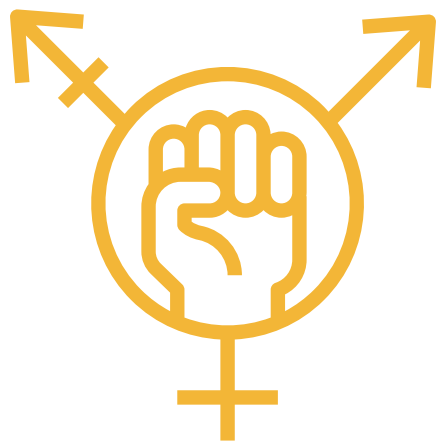
EU foreign and security policy must be a feminist one with gender equality as one of the overarching goals

The previous discussion demonstrates clearly that gender is everywhere, thus achieving gender equality needs to be tackled by a cross-cutting approach integrating all areas of society. The globally accepted tools for this are **gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting**.

We, Socialists in the EP, want a **gender equality perspective integrated at all stages and levels of policies, programmes and projects**. Women and men have different needs, living conditions and circumstances, including unequal access to and control over power, resources, human rights and institutions, as well as the justice system. The situations of women and men also differ widely according to country, region, economic status, age, ethnic or social origin, race, disability, or other factors. **Gender mainstreaming means taking into account these differences when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, programmes and projects, so that they benefit both women and men and do not increase inequality but enhance gender equality**. It should also be included also in areas that do not seem to be gender-relevant at the first sight, such as taxation, trade, mobility design and as previously demonstrated, green transition. Gender mainstreaming shows us the hidden gender inequalities and biases.

Gender Mainstreaming has to be complemented by **gender budgeting: the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process**.

We want the gender-based assessment of budgets to become the norm. The gender perspective has to be integrated at all levels of the budgetary process, and revenues and expenditures must be restructured to be beneficial for **achieving gender equality goals**. The European Commission must ensure that gender budgeting is applied to the EU budget as a whole and that the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors are fully implemented, including into the mid-term review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework and the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility.







Group of the Progressive Alliance of  
**Socialists & Democrats**  
in the European Parliament

