

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2021/2020(INI)	Procedure completed
Equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020		
Subject 4.10.04 Gender equality		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Women's Rights and Gender Equality	 PEREIRA Sandra	17/02/2021
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 SEIBUTYTĖ Aušra	
		 FRITZON Helène	
		 MELCHIOR Karen	
		 DELBOS-CORFIELD Gwendoline	
		 TOVAGLIERI Isabella	
		 HOOGVEEN Michiel	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
European Commission	Commission DG Justice and Consumers	Commissioner DALLI Helena	

Key events			
11/03/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/10/2021	Vote in committee		
08/11/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0315/2021	Summary
13/12/2021	Debate in Parliament		

15/12/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0500/2021	Summary
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Technical information

Procedure reference	2021/2020(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Annual report
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	FEMM/9/01547

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report	PE693.864	16/06/2021	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE696.288	19/07/2021	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A9-0315/2021	08/11/2021	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T9-0500/2021	15/12/2021	EP	Summary

Equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020

The Committee on Womens Rights and Gender Equality adopted the own-initiative report by Sandra PEREIRA (GUE/NGL, PT) on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020.

Womens rights are human rights and thus universal and indivisible, as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The struggle for gender equality and the promotion and protection of womens rights is a truly collective responsibility that requires faster progress and efforts by EU institutions and Member States.

The EU and its Member States must aim to combat inequalities and discrimination based on gender and sex, promote gender equality, and guarantee equal rights and treatment for women and men in all their diversity, as well as ensure that they have equal power and opportunities to shape society and their own lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected womens lives and exacerbated existing gender inequalities in almost every respect.

A gender-equal economy

Members stressed that respect for the right to work, as well as equal pay and equal treatment, is an essential precondition for womens equal rights, economic independence and career fulfilment. They called on the Commission and the Member States to promote policies that aim to eliminate precarious work and involuntary part-time work in order to improve the situation for women in the labour market. Member States should tackle inequalities between men and women through policies that enhance the value of work, wages, labour conditions, and the living conditions of all workers and their families.

Moreover, the report stressed the importance for Member States to impose firm measures, including sanctions, when businesses fail to comply with labour legislation against gender discrimination and gender bias. The Commission and the Council are called on to ensure that all budget appropriations under the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework respect the principle of equality between men and women and promote gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all EU policies.

The eradication of gender-based violence

The report underlined the need to combat the exploitation, inequalities, discrimination and violence affecting women, noting that harassment in the workplace leads to women being excluded from their chosen careers and sectors and constitutes a serious assault on their psychological and physical health. Members urged the EU and its Member States to devise Me Too legislation to combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

Members also noted that inequalities and economic and social pressures caused by COVID-19 lockdown measures, which entailed restrictions on movement and social isolation, led to an increase in violence against women with domestic violence increasing by as much as 30 % in some Member States during the first lockdown.

Stressing that sexual exploitation constitutes a serious form of violence affecting mostly women and children, Members highlighted the need for Member States to ensure adequate funding for social and psychological support and access to public services for victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation and specialised services dedicated to the social inclusion of vulnerable women and girls. Member States are urged to implement the Anti-Trafficking Directive in full and to desist from imprisoning or deporting potential victims as a matter of urgency.

Health, education, inclusion and poverty

The report noted that access to sexual, reproductive and other forms of healthcare for women is a fundamental right. Sexual and reproductive health and rights services are essential healthcare services that should be available to all, including migrant and refugee women. Member States are called on to tackle sexism and harmful gender stereotypes in their education systems and to combat gendered labour market segmentation in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Female participation in sporting activities should also be promoted.

Lastly, Members called for gender equality to be mainstreamed into all policymaking and to carry out gender impact assessments when setting up any new policy to help ensure a more coherent and evidence-based EU policy response to gender equality challenges.

Equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020

The European Parliament adopted by 500 votes to 105, with 87 abstentions, a resolution on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2018-2020.

Women's rights are human rights and thus universal and indivisible, as enshrined in the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The struggle for gender equality and the promotion and protection of women's rights is a truly collective responsibility that requires faster progress and efforts by EU institutions and Member States.

An economy based on equality between women and men

Members are concerned about the gender pay gap (14.1%) and the pension gap (29.5%) that persist in the EU, as well as the often precarious employment situation of women.

Parliament stressed that respect for the right to work, as well as equal pay and equal treatment, is an essential precondition for equal rights, economic independence and professional fulfilment for women. It called on the Commission and the Member States to promote policies to eliminate precarious work and involuntary part-time work in order to improve the situation of women in the labour market.

Member States should address gender inequalities through policies that value work, pay, working conditions and living conditions of all workers and their families.

Members welcomed the Commission's proposal for binding pay transparency measures but stressed that this alone will not be enough to address the deep inequalities between women and men. They called on Member States to also develop an action plan with clear objectives to tackle the gender pay and pension gaps. In addition, Member States should impose firm measures, including sanctions, when companies fail to comply with labour legislation against discrimination and gender bias.

The Commission and the Council are called upon to ensure conditionality in the allocation of EU funds to companies, to ensure that all budgetary appropriations in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 respect the principle of gender equality and to promote gender budgeting in all EU policies.

Stressing the right to a good work-life balance, Parliament called for greater protection for maternity and paternity by increasing the duration of equal and fully paid leave. It called for the right to flexible working arrangements after maternity and paternity leave to be ensured in practice, to enable both parents to share family responsibilities.

The eradication of gender-based violence

The resolution underlined the need to combat the exploitation, inequalities, discrimination and violence affecting women, noting that harassment in the workplace leads to women being excluded from their chosen careers and sectors and constitutes a serious assault on their psychological and physical health. Members urged the EU and its Member States to devise Me Too legislation to combat sexual harassment in the workplace.

Domestic violence increased by 30% in some Member States during the first lockdown resulting from COVID-19. Parliament called on Member States to implement effective policies to combat violence against women and to ensure that perpetrators are identified and prosecuted, in order to help prevent violence and death, as well as to provide protection, assistance and compensation to women victims of such violence.

Stressing that sexual exploitation constitutes a serious form of violence affecting mostly women and children, Members highlighted the need for Member States to ensure adequate funding for social and psychological support and access to public services for victims of trafficking or sexual exploitation and specialised services dedicated to the social inclusion of vulnerable women and girls.

Parliament called on the EU and the Member States, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, to ratify and/or duly implement the Istanbul Convention.

Health, education, inclusion and poverty

Access to sexual, reproductive and other forms of healthcare for women is a fundamental right. Sexual and reproductive health and rights services are essential healthcare services that should be available to all, including migrant and refugee women.

Member States are called on to tackle sexism and harmful gender stereotypes in their education systems and to combat gendered labour market segmentation in careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Female participation in sporting activities should also be promoted.

Lastly, Members called for gender equality to be mainstreamed into all policymaking and to carry out gender impact assessments when setting up any new policy to help ensure a more coherent and evidence-based EU policy response to gender equality challenges.