



**Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A  
Commitment to Action**

**27 September 2015, New York**

**EU and its Member States' Commitments to the full, effective and accelerated  
implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**

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Gender equality is one of the founding values of the European Union (EU) as stated in the Treaty of Rome 1957. Promoting gender equality and combating gender-based discrimination in the EU Member States and in third countries is a long-standing policy commitment of the European Union and continues to be an integral part of the EU policy-making. We welcomed the Political Declaration adopted at the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the calls for the full realisation of women's and girls' full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout their life cycle.

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This is an opportunity to assess the progress made by the EU in the area of gender equality, but also an opportunity to intensify action and to double up our efforts to ensure the full and swift implementation of the commitments we made in Beijing.

We believe that development will not take place if half of the world's population is left behind. Gender equality is a condition for social justice and women's participation in the economy is essential for sustainable development and economic growth.

Despite significant increases in recent years, the overall funding resources for gender equality and women's empowerment actions are still not adequate. The post-2015 agenda represents a real and maybe unique opportunity to push gender equality forward.

Therefore the European Union and its Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) hereby commit:

## **General**

- The EU Member States which have not yet done so will consider accepting the right of individual complaint under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- The EU Member States, which are all States Parties to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, will aim to submit in a timely manner their periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- The EU Member States which have not yet accepted the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, will initiate or accelerate their domestic ratification procedures with regard to the amendment and notify the Secretary-General in writing of their agreement to the amendment.

## **Investing in gender equality at the national and international levels**

- The EU will allocate more than 100 million euro over the next 7 years to gender equality, women and girls empowerment under the EU Global Public Goods and Challenges thematic programme of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), an instrument that supports the EU external cooperation.
- The 2014-2020 DCI Multi-annual indicative regional programme for Latin America will include specific actions for gender equality and girls and women's empowerment in its three priorities areas of cooperation, with an estimated budget of EUR 16-18 million.

- The 2017 mid-term review of the DCI thematic instruments will identify gaps and needs for gender equality and women and girls empowerment and provide the opportunity for additional funding.
- The EU will continue its close and strategic partnership with UN Women under the Memorandum of Understanding and will continue to support the organisation in areas like gender and justice, women's leadership and political participation; women's economic empowerment; combating sexual and gender based violence; humanitarian aid; women, peace and security, women's empowerment in global issues. There are currently 12 ongoing joint EU - UN Women programmes supporting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in around 35 countries and regions. In addition, the EU is committed to engage on additional programmes in 2015, to address the thematic areas outlined in the MoU, including in EU Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood countries, Latin America, Africa, Pacific and Caribbean and in Asia.
- Further to the above mentioned programmes whose main objective is to promote gender equality, the Foreign Affairs Council conclusions<sup>1</sup> adopted in May 2015 '...recall the importance of adopting an integrated three pronged approach that effectively combines gender mainstreaming in all stages of EU development policies and programmes, as well as in joint programming processes, gender specific actions, and political and policy dialogue with all partner countries'.
- The EU recognises that women and girls are disproportionately affected by the scale of global food and nutrition insecurity and the impact of natural and man-made disasters. Therefore, the EU will pay due attention to these impacts in the EU's response to humanitarian emergencies and in broader development policy and programming, including disaster risk reduction.
- Under the "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" Programme (2014 – 2020) the EU will support national and transnational projects in its Member States aimed at promoting equality between women and men and advancing gender mainstreaming and preventing violence against children, young people, women and other groups at risk.

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<sup>1</sup> Council conclusions on Gender in Development, Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 26 May 2015

- Based on its treaty obligation to promote in all its activities equality between women and men and to eliminate inequalities, the EU will promote gender mainstreaming also in budgetary matters, as well as in the production of statistics.

### **Updating or establishing new action plans, strategies and policies on gender equality**

- The EU and its Member States will implement the new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015 – 2019) with its dedicated actions on women's rights (including a commitment to step up the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, CEDAW, ICPD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) and to pursue further gender mainstreaming in areas like women's political participation and leadership and in the field of conflict prevention/early warning mechanism and peace building, in accordance with Resolution 1325 and its follow up resolutions.
- The EU will update the indicators used to monitor the commitments under the *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security*.
- The EU and its Member States will adopt a robust and ambitious successor to the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP), “Gender equality and women's empowerment: Transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations (2016 – 2020),” where the EU will commit to implement actions in four priority areas throughout EU external relations: ensuring girls and women's physical and psychological integrity; promoting the economic and social rights / empowerment of girls and women; strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation and shifting the institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.
- The EU and its Member States remain committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context.
- The EU and its Member States will contribute to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, which reaffirm the essential role of gender equality and of the empowerment of women and girls as key to and drivers for sustainable development. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as being ends in themselves, are a key means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda and will be promoted by the EU at all levels, as reflected in the present pledges. The EU and its Member States are committed to implementing the Agenda's gender goal, both in their internal and external policies; and to mainstreaming gender effectively in pursuing the other goals.

- The EU and its Member States will continue promoting equality in all European Union activities, internal and external, as required by the Treaty. The future priorities for gender equality policy at EU level will be based on a new comprehensive strategy for the equality between women and men, building on a consultative process with major stakeholders and the broader public and on the evaluation of the current Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) which is coming to an end this year.
- The EU will adopt by the end of the year an EU policy framework on support to transitional justice which integrates a strong gender dimension. The EU will promote a gender sensitive approach in all transitional justice mechanisms and processes, from their design through to the implementation of recommendations. This approach will take into account to the different vulnerabilities and needs of women and men. The EU will support women's leadership and active role in conflict resolution, peace talks and recovery, making sure that women and their concerns are adequately represented in transitional justice processes, including through supporting the role of civil society and grassroots women's organisations.
- The EU will ensure that the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings and trafficking of women and girls will be fully addressed, in particular in the context of an EU Strategy to be developed after 2016 and through our funding priorities.

<b>Enhancing women's leadership and participation at all levels of decision-making</b>
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- The EU will adopt a Directive that aims at ensuring that businesses make full use of the available talent pool and aims to improve the gender balance on boards of listed companies.

- The EU will take measures to tackle the under-representation of women in political decision-making with a view to attaining a more balanced participation of women and men in the European institutions.
- The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will ensure by the end of her mandate that a substantial number of Heads of EU Delegations are female.
- The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy will appoint a Senior Gender Adviser in the European External Action Service (EEAS) who will contribute to the internal coordination and to the visibility of gender and Women, Peace and Security related matters. The Senior Gender Adviser will report directly to the EEAS Secretary General.
- The EU will promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the context of CFSP/CSDP at all levels. The EU will put in practice the decisions taken to promote gender equality in the context of CSDP and the related checklist, from the early planning to the conduct and evaluation of CSDP missions and operations. Furthermore, gender perspective will be fully integrated in peace building and the EU will develop targeted EU activities to promote gender equality and the role of women in post-conflict situations.
- The European Commission, by the end of its mandate, will ensure that a significant percentage of middle and senior management positions in its administration are filled with female candidates.
- The EU will continue to support data collection through the Commission's database on women and men in decision-making, in order to monitor the situation and to disseminate information and good practice.

<p><b>Introducing new laws or reviewing and implementing existing ones to promote gender equality</b></p>
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- The EU Member States which have not yet done so will ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

- The European Commission will continue to monitor the correct and effective implementation of existing EU laws on equal treatment, and to work with both branches of the legislative power to swiftly adopt pending legislation.
- The EU will work to modernise work-life balance through a package of measures to support working parents and to enhance equal sharing of work and family responsibilities between women and men.

<p><b>Preventing and addressing social norms and stereotypes that condone gender inequality, discrimination and violence</b></p>
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- The EU will pursue the engagement and actions to increase the female rate of employment (Europe 2020 Strategy), to address the gender pay gap, to better reconcile work and family life, to fight against labour segregation, to make affordable and quality childcare available. Especially in the field of employment and social inclusion, a stronger gender equality focus is needed. For this reason, the EU and its Member States will strengthen their efforts to reach the Europe 2020 targets.
- The EU and its Member States will continue to promote women's equal access to the labour market and fight all forms of discrimination based on sex as a key factor in achieving equal opportunity and economic independence for women.
- The EU will contribute to preventing and responding to all forms of violence against girls and women, including sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. It will support political, legislative and judicial action to protect girls and women, and to prosecute perpetrators; will ensure the regular collection of reliable and comparable prevalence data as well as administrative data on violence against women and girls; will invest in governmental and non-governmental services and institutional capacity building, and will promote behavioural change through public and media campaigns.
- The EU and Member States will take measures to ensure that any person in the EU who is exposed to gender-based violence will have access to general and specialist support services, including shelters or any other appropriate interim accommodation for victims in need of a safe place, and targeted and integrated support, including trauma support and counselling.



- The EU will contribute to the elimination of multiple discrimination of women and girls and structural inequalities.
- The EU and its Member States find that all women should be able to exercise their rights to participate in society and decision making. For this reason the EU and its Member States will combat stalking, harassment and everyday sexism in order to make it safe for women to attend the public spaces and public debates.
- The EU will develop a web-based knowledge platform on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting for professionals who come into contact with victims and girls at risk within the EU, as part of their work.
- The EU will join the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Initiative to end Child Early and Forced Marriage.
- The EU will join the second phase of the joint program UNICEF-UNFPA to tackle Female Genital Mutilation.
- The EU will work towards the eradication of trafficking of women and girls. We addressed more systematically and comprehensively the trafficking of women and girls by adopting an ambitious and comprehensive legal and policy framework against trafficking in human beings which is human rights-based, victim-centred, gender-specific and child-sensitive. We have also been working towards constantly improving our knowledge on this phenomenon with data collection and studies, including on the gender dimension thereof.

<p><b>Launching public mobilisation and national campaigns to promote gender equality</b></p>
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- The EU will launch a diplomatic campaign with a global focus on all forms of violence against women and children and a focus on ending child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).