



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

An EU budget that works for women's rights and equality between women and men

January 2020

As European decision-makers are negotiating the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2021-27) of the EU, it is critical that they do not forget about women, who make up half of Europe's population, and their human rights. **This long-term budget must ensure the EU meets its objective towards Gender Equality** as set out in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights¹ whereby, "In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality between men and women".

This negotiation process comes at a time where women's rights are facing a backlash across Europe and beyond, pushing women's equality further down the political agenda. In this context, women's organisations are facing severe funding cuts and are operating within an increasingly shrinking civil society space. It is therefore imperative that the EU will combat this pushback and ensure that equality between women and men is a lived reality through its future budget.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL), the European umbrella network of more than 2,000 women's organisations, welcomes the focus on women's gender equality in the proposed MFF, notably under Heading II "Cohesion & Values" where funds are specifically allocated to promote women's equality and combat violence against women. However, the EU continues to perpetuate the stereotype that women's equality is merely a social issue. The EWL is extremely disappointed that **the proposed MFF fails to incorporate gender mainstreaming** and so fails to implement the objective of Gender Equality across all seven headings of its EUR 127.9 billion budget. These concerns have similarly been reiterated by the European Parliament in its November 2018 interim report, whereby it 'deeply regrets' that gender mainstreaming had been side-lined completely within the MFF and 'deplored the lack of clear gender equality goals, requirements and indicators in the proposals on the relevant EU policies'².

As the Finnish Presidency is expected to submit a new negotiating box of the MFF total amounts to the European Council by the end of the year, **the EWL is calling on EU Member States and the European Parliament to ensure that the new long-term budget is gender-responsive**. This means that the MFF should not only provide **increased funds to support women's equality and the work of women's organisations** but that it should also implement **gender mainstreaming across all policy areas, including through the incorporation of gender budgeting** as a tool to ensure the budget equally benefits women and men. This will not only guarantee that a gender perspective is incorporated across all areas of policy and budgetary making, it will also address and eliminate gender gaps and stereotypes³, to allow for critical structural changes to be made across how the EU funds women's equality. Through these changes, the EU will reaffirm its commitment to women's equality, as

¹ Article 8 (ex Article 3(2) TEC) [2] of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (2007), and Article 23: Equality between women and men, *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union* (2000).

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0449_EN.html?redirect

³ As per the United Nations *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979).



enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, international law, and the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, notably Goal 5.

EWL DEMANDS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, EU MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Overarching demands on the MFF

1. Ensure **gender mainstreaming across all headings of the EU budget** that can be translated into concrete programmes that are **activity-based and results-oriented** and are in line with the purpose and scope of each policy area. This includes ensuring the incorporation of **measurable gender indicators** and **gender impact assessments**, and the creation of **accountability and transparency mechanisms**, together with regular reporting of the outcomes and recommendations aimed at improving the process of gender mainstreaming and the efficiency of the programmes implemented.
2. Make sure that as a minimum, the **current inter-institutional agreement** annexed to the current MFF (2014-2020) **is maintained**, whereby “...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)**.”⁴
3. Align with the European Parliament’s demands to **increase EU Member States’ contributions of EU gross national income (GNI) to 1.3%** to guarantee that the overall amount of the proposed MFF is EUR 1 324.1 billion⁵. An increase in long-term funds is critical to ensuring women’s equality, particularly given how scarcely women’s issues are addressed in only a few programme areas.
4. Ensure **earmarked funding for the support and capacity-building of women’s civil society organisations under all headings** and depart from Article 8(2) of the European Social Fund Plus proposal currently calling on Member States to allocate an ‘appropriate amount of ESF+ resources’. This discretion places a risk on women’s civil society organisations from receiving sustainable funds. Funding must instead be streamlined and guaranteed across all headings.
5. Allocate funds and resources to implement a **pilot project on gender budgeting** within the EU institutions to build capacity amongst decision- and policy-makers.
6. We call for a **mid-term review** in the proposed MFF (2021-2027) to ensure that spending priorities remain relevant.

Demands on the Rights and Values Programmes

7. Adopt the European Parliament’s request that the **total amount allocated to the Rights and Values Programme is increased to EUR 1.6 billion for 2021-27**.
8. Make sure that the shared amount between the Equality, rights and gender equality strand and the Daphne strand increases from EUR 408,705,000 to **EUR 429 million**⁶. It is imperative that the funds allocated to both of these strands are not watered down as a result of

⁴ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0455+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0449_EN.html?redirect

⁶ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0468_EN.html



redistributing funds to accommodate for an additional fourth strand on promoting Union values. Increased funding for the Daphne strand is particularly crucial, given that the costs of violence against women is EUR 226 billion across the EU per year⁷. We also recall the EU and Member States' commitment to Declaration 19 as annexed to the Final Act of the Intergovernmental Conference which adopted the Treaty of Lisbon, 'to combat all kinds of domestic violence [...], to prevent and punish these criminal acts and to support and protect the victims'⁸.

9. Align with the European Parliament's demand to include **earmarked funding to support civil society organisations** to the amount of **50% of funds** allocated to the Equality, Rights and Gender Equality Strand and the Daphne strand⁹. This will meet the EU's commitment to combat the shrinking civil society space whilst reinforcing its position under §9 of the Rights and Values Programmes' provisional agreement whereby it is 'essential' to support women's rights organisations.

Demands on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

10. Incorporate a gender perspective when implementing national programmes by drawing from **the Social Scoreboard indicators, notably the Gender employment gap indicator**, the **European Semester country reports** and sex-disaggregated data. This is to make sure funds are allocated to women's equality beyond upskilling and training, and to increase their participation in entering and re-entering the workforce. Including a gender perspective will address obstacles preventing women's full participation in the labour market, including women undertaking unpaid or part-time work due to care provisions, workplace segregation, women's exclusion from decision-making roles, gender pay and pension gaps, women with low levels of education and unskilled women who are particularly exposed to poverty and social exclusion.
11. Increase **earmarked funds allocated to social inclusion and poverty reduction from 25% to 30%** (Article 7(3)) to ensure services are tailored to the needs of women, particularly women and girls at risk of violence, asylum seekers, third country nationals, stateless, undocumented migrants and victims of trafficking¹⁰.
12. Increase **earmarked funds allocated to the most deprived (i.e. children living in poverty) from 2% to 4%** (Article 7(4)) to ensure a gender dimension is incorporated and gender-appropriate services are provided, noting the correlation between women's poverty and children's poverty.

Demands on Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF)

13. Include '**women and girls experiencing the most extreme forms of vulnerability**' under §27 which references the EU Anti-trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU and the provision of assistance, support, and protection to victims of human trafficking, to make sure that the allocation of

⁷ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/estimating-costs-in-european-union>

⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_5&format=PDF

⁹ Amendment 71 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0468_EN.html

¹⁰ This is to complement §27 of the Asylum and Migration Fund which references the need for Member States to implement Directive 2011/36/EU to ensure that assistance, support and protection is provided to victims of trafficking.



funds support women's intersectional experiences, and to further align with the AMF's impact assessment which recognises the gender dimension of human trafficking¹¹.

14. Allocate **earmarked funds for early-stage integration programmes and services for women and girls experiencing the most extreme forms of vulnerability**, including crucial services and technical assistance that are gender-sensitive. This is particularly important when considering migrant women and girls who are at risk of poverty and violence, and who have limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, employment opportunities, education and training.

Demands on the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)¹²

15. Strengthen the provisions within the new **Common Provisions Regulation** whereby funds should now generate 'enabling conditions'¹³ via the five policy objectives listed:

1. A smarter Europe - innovative and smart industrial transformation;
2. A greener, low-carbon Europe;
3. A more connected Europe - mobility and regional ICT connectivity;
4. A more social Europe - implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
5. Europe closer to citizens – sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas through local initiatives

The new CPR should:

- Guarantee that **gender mainstreaming is present across all five policy objectives of the CPR** to ensure the impact on women is taken into account when defining policies, in particular when defining enabling condition relating to the green deal and climate policies, given that women are disproportionately impacted by climate change (i.e. more vulnerable to energy poverty) and face higher levels of mortality and poverty during climate-related disasters¹⁴.
- Amend the fourth policy objective to: '4. A more social Europe – implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights [ADD: and ensure equality between women and men]'¹⁵.
- In **Annex IV** of the **CPR proposal**, under the fourth policy objective focusing on implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, amend the enabling condition setting up a **National strategic framework for gender equality**¹⁶ to include the following amendments:
 1. Evidence-based identification of challenges to gender equality

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1540391086875&uri=CELEX%3A52018SC0347>

¹² Applicable to all programmes under Heading II 'Cohesion and Values' and Heading IV 'Migration and Border Management', among others.

¹³ While the current *ex-ante conditionalities* including Article 7 on *promoting equality between women and men and non-discrimination* have been removed. *Ex-ante conditionalities* are based on pre-defined criteria established in the CPR, which are regarded as necessary prerequisites for the effective and efficient use of the EU funding for all ESI funds. Under the 2014-2020 programme period, Member States have to assess whether these conditions are fulfilled.

¹⁴ CEDAW, General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, 7 February 2018, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf

¹⁵ There are currently five enabling conditions: 1. A smarter Europe - innovative and smart industrial transformation; 2. A greener, low-carbon Europe; 3. A more connected Europe - mobility and regional ICT connectivity; 4. A more social Europe - implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights; 5. Europe closer to citizens – sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas through local initiatives. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-common-provisions_en.pdf

¹⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A375%3AFIN>



2. Measures to address gender gaps in employment, pay and pensions, and promote work-life balance, including through improving access to early childhood education and care, with targets [ADD: and support to the elderly and those with disabilities]
3. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review of the strategic policy framework and data collection methods [ADD: including sex-disaggregated data]
4. Arrangements for ensuring that its design, implementation, monitoring, [ADD: application of gender budgeting] and review is conducted in close cooperation with equality bodies, social partners and relevant civil society organisations

The European Parliament, EU Member States and the European Commission all have pivotal roles in ensuring equality between women and men will be met in the future long-term EU budget. They all need to push for the **inclusion of gender mainstreaming across all levels of the MFF negotiations**, notably during trilogues and the Council's horizontal Working Group on the MFF.

By taking on the EWL's calls and implementing a dual approach to the budget through affirmative actions and gender mainstreaming, including by utilising gender budgeting as a transformative tool, the EU budget for 2021-2027 has the potential to address women's experiences, needs or specificities across all policy areas, with the budgetary outcomes having equal benefits to women and men. **It is time for EU decision-makers to step up and push for women's equality across all policy areas of the EU, to ensure a gender-responsive EU budget is in place.**

