

Gender in the 2021-2027 MFF

The EU must take a human rights based, transparent, accountable, participatory and inclusive approach to the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in line with the EU's commitments to Agenda 2030 to achieve gender equality, including by better serving women and girls. Gender equality principles should be reflected under each heading and instrument. These recommendations focus on the EU's external action.

I. Increasing and mainstreaming funding for gender equality

Eliminating all forms of discrimination based on gender identity is a necessity to achieve sustainable development for all and leave no one behind. In particular, ending the many of the inequalities and discriminations faced by women and girls is critical to lift women and girls out of poverty and helps lift whole families, communities and countries out of poverty to ensure sustainable, inclusive economic prosperity. Increasing funding for gender equality is imperative. In its external relations, EU investment in gender equality has been increasing but it is still far from its own target agreed in the EU Gender Action Plan II. According to the EU's own evaluation, in 2016 only 58.8 %¹ of EU aid had gender equality as a significant or principal objective, while the latest OECD DAC report from March 2018², indicates that this is the case for 45% of the EU Aid. To live up to its commitments, the EU must ensure that:

- **At least 85% of the EU's ODA has gender equality as a significant or principal objective³ and 20% of these funds must have gender equality as a principal objective.** However, the EU Institutions only invested 4% of their gender equality focused aid in gender specific interventions in 2014-2015⁴. Moreover, the gender marker should not be a tick-box at the start of the project but be part of the design, implementation and evaluation, and consistency in the use of the DAC gender marker and specific codes in all EU reporting to OECD DAC should be ensured.
- **Sufficient funds are allocated to a gender budgeting analysis**, recognising that gender analysis should not be treated as an optional exercise. On the contrary, it helps to ensure that aid investments maximize impact and reach the most marginalised. The budgeting analysis should aim to identify data gaps⁵ and areas where investments may exacerbate gender disparities, develop gender-specific indicators, collect gender and age-specific data; and monitor and evaluate annual programming to feed into the next budget cycle. The EU must also invest in filling data gaps identified through this analysis.
- **Each thematic and geographic window in the external financing heading should have a gender equality target, applied to all age-groups. Investment in gender should be integrated in all development sectors and take multiple discriminations into account.** Support for gender equality cannot be limited to the traditional sectors of education, health and protection against violence (for example, exclusively tackling gender equality through the Spotlight Initiative would be limiting). Consistent support for gender equality in all relevant sectors will have a multiplier effect and ensure a sustainable

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/2017-swd-annual-report_en.pdf

² <http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2018.pdf>

³ Gender Equality is tracked by the OECD Development Assistance Committee through the Gender Equality Policy Marker.

⁴ Various European countries are already allocating more than 20% of their gender equality programmes to programmes with a principal gender objective, for example Norway (38%), the UK (38%) and the Netherlands (26%), Spain (34%) in 2014-2015. Calculated on the basis of data provided by: Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Donor Charts, Statistics based on DAC Members' reporting on the Gender Equality Policy Marker, 2014-2015, March 2017, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-to-Gender-Equality-Donor-Charts-2017.pdf>

⁵ Council of the European Union, Second report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 & 1820 on women, peace and security, 6219/14, p.33, 6 February 2014, <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6219-2014-INIT/en/pdf>

impact of the actions - for example, ensuring access to energy, land and other resources, and to economic opportunities.. Similarly, adding the gender lens to all child-focused actions will increase the efficiency of those actions. This will also generate sector-specific data to enable tracking of change in gender equality.

- **Increase the budget allocated to civil society organisations** that promote women and girls rights, to strengthen the capacity of these associations in Europe and in the Global South. Research has shown that women and girls associations are very effective in pressing for legislation aimed at protecting women and girls rights and yet many of these organisations are struggling for survival⁶. OECD-DAC data shows that the percentage of ODA to CSOs working on gender in 2016 as a principal objective was under 5%⁷.
- **Allow partners to budget for gender mainstreaming** and reaching the most marginalised in projects. It is essential to recognise that ensuring impactful gender mainstreaming implies a cost. If we are to move beyond lip service and have real impact, gender mainstreaming requires adequate - even substantial - human and financial resources.

2. Adopting and implementing gender responsive budgeting

Gender budgeting is one of the strategies for realising gender equality by incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process. Gender budgeting does not consist only of analysing how a budget is allocated but also of evaluating the budget's impact on the socio-economic position of women and men and girls and boys. Gender budgeting involves steps throughout the budget cycle: an analysis of the budget from a gender lens, the development of gender objectives, restructuring the budget accordingly and monitoring and evaluating its implementations in order to improve the next budget.

- **The EU must commit to adopt a gender responsive approach in the next MFF.** Regulations of the next MFF should clearly state that the European Commission will implement a gender budgeting analysis and adjust structures, mechanisms and tools to fully incorporate this approach. This means building capacity at all levels, adopting a clear set of tools and indicators to monitor progress and ensure collection of gender disaggregated data, conducting regular impact assessments and establishing clear mechanisms to adjust the budget. Publicly available assessments of the budget should be made on a yearly basis and allow adjustments within the next annual budget. Opportunities for participation in the budget cycle should be created in order to influence transparency and accountability. The future mid-term review should also be a key moment to conduct such an analysis. Civil society organisations should be consulted in this endeavour.
- **Funds should be allocated to the implementation of the gender budgeting approach in the next MFF.** A team of experts and analysts needs to be pulled together and gender officers should be appointed within each Directorate General and Delegation. This could be achieved by reviving and enhancing the inter-institutional group responsible for gender equality within the European Commission and the EEAS. In addition, all personnel should be trained on gender budgeting techniques and held accountable for helping with data collection and analysis of resources allocation.



⁶ Weldon, S. and Htun, M. (2013) "Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women", in: *Gender and Development*, vol 21, pp. 231-247

⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-for-Civil-Society-Organisations-2015-2016.pdf>