

## **Engender Response to the European Commission: Public consultation on Gender equality in the EU – current situation and priorities for future**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union; the principle of equality between women and men is enshrined in the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and confirmed in EU law. The European Commission promotes gender equality through strategic frameworks. The current Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 sets the following priorities:

- Increasing female labour market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men;
- Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women;
- Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;
- Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims;
- Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world;

The Commission is launching this public consultation to gather opinions of different actors of the current situation of gender equality in the EU and priorities for the next five years.

#### **1. Do you think that the EU has made progress on gender equality during the last five years?**

<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Don't know

#### **2. Do you consider the current gender equality priorities still valid for the Commission's work on gender equality after 2019?**

<input type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Partially

**3. Do you believe that new priorities should be set?**

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Yes
<input type="radio"/>	No

If yes, which? (200 character(s) maximum)

<p>We support the European Women’s Lobby’s calls for an EU political Strategy on Equality between women &amp; men 2019-24 with combating VAWG a priority. Equality and employment protections should be made a strategic priority in future trade relationships.</p>
--

**4. Gender inequality is a structural and endemic problem with numerous manifestations. In your opinion, which of them should be dealt with most urgently? Please choose no more than five manifestations of inequality, which you would prioritise for EU action. (1 = most important)**

	1	2	3	4	5
Prejudice and unconscious bias based on ideas about the image, role and abilities of women and men					
The unequal sharing of caring and household tasks between men and women					
The under-representation of women in positions of power in politics, business and public life					5
Women’s unequal access to property (e.g.					

land, inheritance, bank account)					
Women and men working in different sectors and occupations					
The lower employment rate of women					
Women being paid less than men for the same work or work of equal value				<b>4</b>	
Women being discriminated against because of their gender at the workplace					
Women being more likely than men to live in poverty	<b>1</b>				
Women receiving lower pension benefits than men					
Specific challenges faced by single parents, more than 90% of whom are mothers					
Girls' and boys' performance and (gendered) choices in education					
Women being more exposed to gender-based and domestic violence than men		<b>2</b>			
Women's exposure to hate speech and violence online			<b>3</b>		

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

We restate that each of these is an important manifestation of gender inequality, and add that resources and research must be funded in order to respond to any and all of these issues.

**5. Is there any specific group of people that requires more focused attention in the Commission’s efforts to ensure gender equality? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Children and youth					
Elderly women and men					
Rural women and men					
Women and men with a low educational background					
Women and men with disabilities					
Women and men of a migrant background					
Refugees and asylum seekers					
Women and men who suffer from discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation <sup>1</sup> (e.g. LGBTI <sup>2</sup> people or the Roma) – please specify					
Victims of human trafficking					
Working parents					
Women and men working in occupations where one gender is under-represented					
Women and men in political and corporate					

<sup>1</sup> Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Article 19.

<sup>2</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

decision-making positions					
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--

<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

The EC must adopt an intersectional approach to gender equality that does not prioritise groups of women as a cohort above each other, but responds to each's specific and overlapping needs.

**6. From your perspective, which type of actions should the Commission prioritise in the next 5 years? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

	1	2	3	4	5
Improving collection of sex-disaggregated data, monitoring and evaluation				4	
Information and awareness-raising campaigns					
Training and capacity building of professionals					
Developing or disseminating informational and training tools and materials for promoting gender equality					
Enforcing and monitoring existing EU gender equality legislation	1				
Introducing new or revising existing gender equality legislation (please specify topic)		2			

Ensuring that a gender sensitive approach is adopted throughout all policies at EU and national level			3		
Introducing positive action measures aimed at remedying gender imbalances					
Providing funding to European civil society networks working on gender equality					5
Providing funding for projects on gender equality					
Strengthening cooperation and coordination on gender equality policy at EU level and between Member States					
Providing fora for mutual learning between countries in the EU and outside					

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

Gender mainstreaming should be reinforced across strategic actions and coupled with data gathering and monitoring; new legislation on VAWG, representation and maternity protections. All prioritised in relationships with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.

**7. How could the Commission tackle persistent gender stereotypes, denoting “typical” or “normal” behaviours and choices for girls and women, and for men and boys? Please choose no more than three options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important)**

	1	2	3
Encouraging schools and educational institutions to include gender equality topics in the curricula from a young age			3
Raising awareness about stereotypes through public communication campaigns			
Funding projects and initiatives by civil society and national authorities addressing gender stereotypes		2	
Engaging media and online platforms to question gender stereotypes	1		
Supporting the involvement of men in gender equality/women's rights movements and as role models for change			
Collecting data on the prevalence of different gender stereotypes amongst Europeans			

<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

**8. One of the EU's objectives is to increase women's participation in the labour market and to tackle gender employment, pay and pension gaps. Which of the following specific goals would you prioritise for action? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

	1	2	3	4	5
Introducing measures to further support the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value', such as gender neutral job classifications and pay transparency		2			
Making sure it is beneficial financially for women to work (by changing rules on taxes and social protection rights, where possible and necessary)					

Improving women's access to jobs traditionally held by men, such as technical and innovative sectors including STEM <sup>3</sup>					
Making jobs in traditional female dominated sectors, such as health care and education, more attractive for men					
Providing targeted active labour market measures for specific groups of women (e.g. women of a migrant background, women returning from family leaves, etc.)			3		
Empower women to get the same opportunities as men to develop their careers and reach leading positions in companies and in politics					
Introducing incentives or quota for women in decision-making positions such as on company boards					5
Ensuring awareness of legal rights					
Introducing further EU legislation on equality and non-discrimination in the workplace (please specify)				4	
Better enforcing EU legislation, for instance by improving access to justice and by empowering equality bodies	1				

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

Address the unequal distribution of unpaid care work and the persistent gaps in pay and pensions; Ensure that women and men can equally become equal-earners-equal-carers throughout their lives.

**9. One of the EU's objectives is to encourage an equal sharing of caring activities between the parents (housework, caring for children and/or dependents). Which of the following specific goals would you prioritise for action? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

<sup>3</sup> Science, technology, engineering, mathematics.

	1	2	3	4	5
Improving the conditions of part-time work, flexible working arrangements and family leaves to make them valid career options for both women and men		2			
Making childcare and other dependents' care more available, accessible, affordable and of high quality and give support to informal carers	1				
Revising and/or introducing targets such as on childcare and elderly care					
Changing attitudes towards caring activities (housework, caring for children and/or dependants) by men and women and towards educational and professional choices					
Increasing fathers' uptake of family leaves (e.g. paternity, parental, carer's leaves, adoption leaves)					
Preventing discrimination of workers with care responsibilities such as dismissal and unfavourable treatment of pregnant workers and workers who take family leaves				4	
Encouraging companies and public employers to adopt more family friendly workplace practices					
Ensuring awareness of legal rights			3		
Introducing further EU legislation on work-life balance related matters (please specify)					5
Better enforcing EU legislation on work-life balance matters					

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

The EU must expand provision for maternity and family leave, and articulate care as a key growth sector, expanding on 'Barcelona targets', improving pay, conditions and affordability by including as infrastructure investment.

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

10. Which of the following actions should the Commission prioritise in combating gender-based violence? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).

	1	2	3	4	5
Prevention work, including by tackling gender stereotypes and promote non-violent conflict resolution			3		
Data collection and research on root causes, prevalence, consequences or costs					
Training and capacity building of professionals, such as support service providers, healthcare and criminal justice professionals (please specify target group)					
Strengthening the rights of victims of gender-based violence, including on specific support, protection measures and compensation		2			
Developing measures to tackle online hate speech, abuse and violence against women and girls					
Promoting workplace measures tackling violence and harassment against women					
Ensuring that gender-based violence is addressed within relevant EU policies and strategies (education, humanitarian aid, digital agenda, etc.)				4	
Funding projects tackling violence by civil society organisations and national authorities					5
Supporting EU-wide civil society networks					
Information and awareness-raising campaigns					
Exchanges of good practice among Member States					

Implementing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) <sup>4</sup>	1				
Introducing new EU legislation to combat gender-based violence (please specify topic)					

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

## EU POLICY-MAKING

11. Do you think a gender perspective should be better integrated in some specific EU policy areas? If so, please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).

	1	2	3	4	5
Agricultural and rural policy					
Asylum and migration policy		2			
Business and enterprise policy				4	
Climate change					
Cohesion and regional policy					
Culture and sports policy					
Development cooperation and humanitarian aid policy					
Digital policy					
Economic and financial policy					
Education and training policy					
Employment and social policy			3		
Energy policy					
Environmental policy					
Health policy					
Justice and fundamental rights policy	1				
Neighbourhood and external relations policy					
Maritime and fisheries policy					
Research policy					
Security policy					
Trade policy					5

<sup>4</sup> If the EU accedes to the Istanbul Convention following its signature in June 2017.

Transport policy					
Youth policy					

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

*You may also specify which specific elements of the policies chosen you think should be more gender sensitive.*

All policy areas should include gender mainstreaming, at design, implementation and evaluation. For us, it is vital that gender is a priority within the EU's future relationship with the UK.

**12. Which of the following measures have had the most impact on improving the integration of a gender perspective within businesses, organisations and public administrations? Please choose no more than three options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

*between 1 and 3 answered rows*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Mandatory training on gender equality for staff			
Mandatory training on gender equality for high-level decision-makers			
Integrating the gender perspective better into studies, impact assessments, evaluations and legislative proposals		<b>2</b>	
Setting targets for each policy area and monitoring results			<b>3</b>
Integrating a gender perspective in the budgetary process, including in the structure and monitoring of revenues and expenditures (so-called "gender budgeting" <sup>5</sup> )	<b>1</b>		
Promoting role models amongst male and female managers (showing, for example, that a better work/life balance is possible)			

<sup>5</sup> The Council of Europe defines gender budgeting as a "gender based assessment of budgets incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality" Council of Europe (2005), [Final report of the Group of Specialists on Gender Budgeting](#).

<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None
<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)

For sustained integration of gender perspective, the EU must introduce gender budgeting & allocate budgets for women's rights at all levels, including in the MFF, specifically increasing resources to women's organisations.

**13. Which actors do you believe are the most important partners? Please choose no more than five options indicating the order of importance (1 = most important).**

*between 1 and 5 answered rows*

	1	2	3	4	5
Trade unions and employers' organisations					5
National governments			3		
National equality bodies					
Local and regional authorities					
EU institutions and agencies		2			
Human rights organisations					
Women's rights organisations	1				
Organisations working with men					
Education and training institutions					
Social services					
Youth organisations					
Private sector (businesses and corporations)					
Think-tanks and lobbyists					
Private foundations and individuals (please specify)					
Other stakeholder organisations, including pan-European ones				4	
International organisations (UN, OECD, ILO, Council of Europe, European Investment Bank, World Bank, etc.)					

<input type="radio"/>	Other (please specify)
<input type="radio"/>	None

<input type="radio"/>	None (please explain)
-----------------------	-----------------------

## ANY OTHER COMMENTS

**14. Open question (1500 characters): If you have any additional comments and/or suggestions to improve gender equality in the EU, feel free to use the answer box below or upload a document.**

*1500 character(s) maximum*

Brexit will profoundly change Scotland's relationship with the EU, whatever solution is ultimately pursued. The EU has been an instrumental actor in the development of legal rights which directly improve women's lives, including non-discrimination, employment and equality protections; has driven the expansion of gender mainstreaming into UK and Scottish policy, and has promoted cooperation across justice and security which has facilitated efforts to combat violence against women.

We do not know what these rights will look like across the UK post-Brexit, but we know that the UK's membership of the European Union has led to stronger rights and conditions for women in the workplace, maternity rights, equal pay and anti-discrimination legislation, secures equal access to certain social protections and vastly strengthened access to justice for women whose rights have been breached. The EU has also been a major source of funding for projects and services with gender equality as core outcomes.

However women, their legal rights and access to justice have been largely unrepresented during discussions about the UK's exit from the EU. Engender is clear that women will be best served by continued cooperation, such as the European Arrest Warrant and minimum alignment with EU employment rights standards. The Scottish Government has, where empowered to do so, committed to keep pace with EU law, but we would call on the EU Commission and UK Government to centre women within discussions about our future relationships to ensure that pan-European strategies, goals and funding continues to improve the lives of women and girls living and working across Europe.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Eilidh Dickson, Policy and Parliamentary Manager, Engender

Email: [eilidh.dickson@engender.org.uk](mailto:eilidh.dickson@engender.org.uk)

### ABOUT US

Engender is a membership organisation working on feminist agendas in Scotland and Europe, to increase women's power and influence and to make visible the impact of sexism on women, men and society. We provide support to individuals, organisations and institutions who seek to achieve gender equality and justice.