

Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men

Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020¹

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1. Introduction

Equality between women and men is first of all a fundamental right and a common value of the EU. With the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, equality between women and men is a "fundamental value" (art.2 TUE) and an objective (art.3 TUE) of the European Union. The Treaty also establishes that the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women in all its activities (Art. 8 TFEU).

Equality between women and men is also a productive factor and there is a powerful economic and business case for gender equality. It is thanks to the massive entrance on the labour market by women that the EU is being able to face the challenges of a globalised economy. It will be impossible to reach the EU objectives set in the Europe 2020 Strategy, in particular 75% of employment rate for women and men, without a consequent increase in women's employment.

EU funding for activities to increase women's employment rate and promote quality employment, to improve reconciliation policies for both women and men, to strengthen national care infrastructures, to tackle vertical and horizontal gender segregation in education and in the labour market, and to combat the gender pay gap and the increasing feminisation of poverty, is indispensable for reaching the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to counter the demographic challenges.

However, delivering on the EU's Treaty commitment to equality of women and men as a fundamental right goes beyond the Europe 2020 framework. This requires EU funding for combating violence against women, for promoting equality in decision-making, for improving women's health, for empowering women's rights organisations, and for strengthening capacity for gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in Europe but also in developing and neighbouring countries.

With its Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 adopted in September 2010, the Commission commits itself to promote gender equality and to implement gender mainstreaming as an integral part of Commission's policy making. The Strategy underlines that the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will be presented in the first half of 2011 and will provide the support to implement the actions foreseen in the Strategy after 2013.

On the 8th of March 2011, the Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality for 2011-2020 (Pact)², which renews the commitments on gender equality taken by Member States in the first European Pact of 2006. This Pact should in particular serve to enhance women's participation in the labour market and to promote equality between women and men. It builds on already existing objectives, targets and instruments, in particular within the Europe 2020 Strategy, the employment guidelines, the Commission Strategy, the follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). It also includes a section on violence against women.

The Commission is currently preparing a new Multiannual Financial Framework and new legislative proposals of the EU budget for 2014-2020. In this context, the Advisory Committee

² Council conclusions 7370/11 of 08/03/2011

intends to provide a contribution to respond to the public consultations launched by the Commission on the future programs.

2. General recommendations for all future funding programmes 2014-2020

- **Provide dedicated, adequate and predictable funding for women's rights and gender equality.** Take strong commitment for gender equality through dedicated budget earmarked for gender specific policies, activities and projects in all areas of EU competencies.
- **Ensure a dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific actions.** The horizontal integration of gender equality required by the Treaty needs to be complemented by specific measures to overcome persisting conditions of inequality between women and men.
- **Ensure visibility, accountability, and transparency.** The budget allocations for gender equality need to be visible, in order to ensure accountability and transparency towards the European citizens.
- **Specific gender equality provision in the EU legislative proposals and funding programme regulations.** This is relevant for all policies but in particular for cohesion, employment, social inclusion and education policies.
- **Include in the MFF a commitment to gender-responsive budgeting** to ensure that from 2014 onward gender mainstreaming is part of the EU budgetary process from planning to monitoring and evaluation,
- **Make EU funding more accessible to civil society organisations** at national and European levels and in neighbouring and developing countries, both as promoters of EU-funded projects and as recipients of operative grants.

The above recommendations are valid for all programs, including the new Programme for DG Justice. However, given the important role that this DG and the new funding programme for its activities will have for gender equality, the Advisory Committee strongly recommends the following additional proposals to DG Justice:

3. Specific recommendations for DG Justice

The Advisory Committee sees the Commission proposal for the new Multiannual Financial Framework as an opportunity to improve the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the EU budget. However, we want to highlight the potential risk for gender equality when gender equality is not protected and specifically earmarked.

Main risks

- Dilution of women's rights and gender equality by merging gender equality with policies to combat other ground of inequalities and also with other policy areas covered by DG JUST

- Apply only gender mainstreaming as a substitute of gender specific actions

The recommendations to the new financing programme in DG Justice:

- **Dedicate specific budget for women's rights and gender equality.** A specific, predictable and dedicated budget for gender equality work needs to be ear-marked. This would be additional to any complementary budget for gender mainstreaming in other policy areas covered by DG Justice and other DGs.
- **At least maintain the current level of budget funding devoted to gender equality.** We recognise that in this current financial climate there are pressures on budgets, however we recommend keeping the current level of funding for gender equality. Given the reorganisation within the Commission, this should include not only the budget allocations for gender equality within the current PROGRESS Programme but also the budget dedicated to gender equality within the DAPHNE programme.
- **Continue support to activities and stakeholders.** Continue to support the activities and the actors funded in the current financing period, including in particular dialogue and activities with Member States, social partners and civil society in a sustainable and predictable way.