



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 20.10.2021  
C(2021)7588 final*

*Dear President,*

*The Commission would like to thank the Camera dei Deputati for its opinion on the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council 'EU Gender Action Plan III — An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in the EU's external action' (JOIN (2020) 17 final).*

*The Commission appreciates the observations made and is pleased to react on the main issues raised.*

*The COVID-19 crisis is increasing multiple kinds of inequalities worldwide, including the unequal access to rights, resources, services and power by women and girls, thus adding to the urgency to raise the level and effectiveness of EU engagement for gender equality internally and externally.*

*In line with the EU Gender equality strategy 2020-2025, the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) provides a policy framework to promote gender equality and women's empowerment across all external policies, sectors and instruments. It calls for placing women and girls at the heart of a fair and sustainable post COVID recovery and, hence, to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls worldwide.*

*Building on the achievements and lessons learned from the previous gender action plans, the Gender Action Plan III commits to step up actions in six priority areas of engagement, including the elimination of gender-based violence, the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, economic empowerment and decent jobs, improved gender awareness in trade policy, a fair and inclusive green transition, full and equal participation in public and political life, gender-responsive migration policies and a human-centric digital transformation that benefits women and girls.*

*As pointed out by the Camera dei Deputati, gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened to effectively translate the Gender Action Plan III into concrete action on the ground.*

*Mr Roberto FICO  
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*In this context it is important to recall the target set by the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Gender Action Plan III: by 2025, 85% of all new actions will significantly contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment and, out of this, a minimum of 5% will have gender equality as a principal objective<sup>1</sup>.*

*This target can only be achieved by consistent gender mainstreaming, starting from the integration of Gender Action Plan III objectives into the NDICI-Global Europe funded multi-annual indicative programmes at country and regional levels and by formulating gender-responsive objectives and indicators at annual action programme and action levels.*

*At action level, it is foreseen that gender analysis informs the design of any new action, and that gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated indicators and statistics are applied for monitoring and evaluation purposes.*

*The Joint Staff Working Document accompanying the Gender Action Plan III defines concrete objectives and relevant indicators to frame the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-25) and to ensure comprehensive reporting on results.<sup>2</sup> The Presidency Conclusions<sup>3</sup> on the Gender Action Plan III encourage Member States to use the revised monitoring and reporting framework, which is anchored in the sustainable development goals' indicator framework.*

*As regards the evaluation feeding into the formulation of the Gender Action Plan III, an independent assessment was carried out and evidence gathered on the contribution of EU external action support in the policy area of gender equality and women's empowerment in the period 2010 – 2018, which included ex-ante and ex-post elements and made it possible to verify the effects and propose possible corrections in relation to the predecessors Gender Action Plan I and Gender Action Plan II<sup>4</sup>.*

*A strategic thematic evaluation of Gender Action Plan III's implementation is foreseen end-of-term to provide an independent assessment of achieved results in line with the plan's objectives.*

*Specific ad-hoc evaluations will be carried out with results made available by 2023. At this stage it is considered to focus on the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as on aspects linked to GAP III country level engagement.*

*The Gender Action Plan III mid-term report will include quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of EU action across the thematic areas of engagement.*

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<sup>1</sup> Following OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker methodology, actions with gender equality as an important/significant objective score as G1, while actions aimed at gender equality as the main/principal objective score as G2.

<sup>2</sup> [Joint Staff Working Document, Objectives and Indicators to frame the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III \(2021-25\) Accompanying the document \(SWD\(2020\) 284 final\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Presidency Conclusion on the Gender Action Plan \(GAP\) III 2021-2025](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Evaluation of the EU's external action support in the area of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment \(2010-2018\) | International Partnerships](#)

*The Camera dei Deputati also addresses the need to promote cultural change in favour of gender equality through education.*

*There can be no doubt about the crucial role of inclusive and quality education in driving societal change. By increasing education spending from 7% to 10% of the EU's external action budget, we also aim at building stronger gender-responsive education systems and safe and healthy learning environments to promote gender equality, as well as equitable education results for girls and boys.*

*The comprehensive and transformative approach guiding Gender Action Plan III's implementation aims at tackling harmful social norms and stereotypes in a context-sensitive way and in partnerships and dialogue with all relevant actors: national authorities, civil society, local communities, the media, education and cultural institutions, and by actively engaging men and boys.*

*Recognising that the goal of mainstreaming all aspects of gender equality and women and girls' empowerment requires ownership, input, understanding and action from all development partners, the Commission is also setting up a structured dialogue with local authorities and non-governmental organisations including and beyond women's organisations, such as trade unions, cooperatives, and private sector associations.*

*The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera dei Deputati and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Maroš Šefčovič  
Vice-President*

*Jutta Urpilainen  
Member of the Commission*