



# FROM WORDS TO ACTION

1995 – 2015

20 years of the Beijing Platform for Action

**A European Women's Lobby review of  
the activities of the European Union**



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# WELCOME

**2015 is a very exciting time for gender equality and women's rights, and for the women's movement globally and in Europe.**

The international community will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, a fundamental human rights instrument for women and girls adopted in 1995. At the same time, the European Union (EU) will adopt its new Strategy on Equality between women and men, which should be the framework of the EU action on gender equality and women's empowerment for the coming 5 years. At the international level, a new global framework for development will be adopted, with new Sustainable Development Goals, amongst which women's rights and gender equality will be the subject of a standalone goal. Also, in 2015 the European Women's Lobby (EWL) will celebrate its own anniversary, 25 years of feminist action and activism all over Europe! An exciting and diverse new wave of feminist activism is bursting forth throughout the world and in Europe, connecting women and men in new campaigns and actions to combat discrimination and misogyny.

**The celebration of Beijing+20 therefore comes at a strategic time for the women's movement and the EU policies on gender equality.**

Assessing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Europe allows us to take stock of progress, look at remaining challenges, and highlight opportunities for the European Union to lead the way towards women's empowerment and equality. The report of the European Women's Lobby provides a picture of the situation of women and girls in Europe, based on the collective assessment of our 2000 member organisations.

Moreover, this publication will serve as a guideline for the next 5 years for the new leadership within the European institutions. Despite the fact that equality between women and men is a core value of the EU, it is still not a reality in Europe. Our Beijing+20 report aims to be a key instrument for the new European decision-makers to develop ambitious policies and actions, at all levels and in all sectors of society and life.

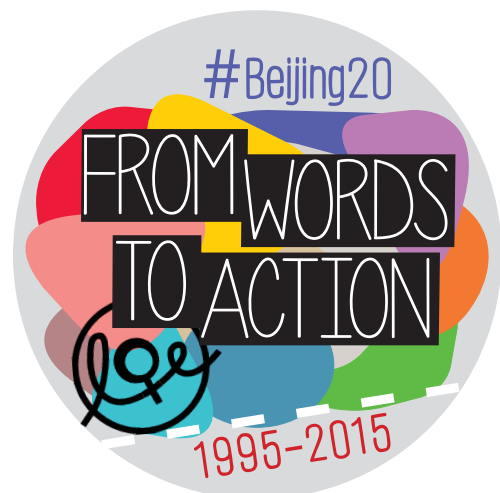
This Beijing+20 review gives us the opportunity to learn from 20 years of activism and policy work, but also, and above all, to realise that investing in women's rights and empowerment is the core commitment for a sustainable, democratic and inclusive world to blossom. **The analysis and demands of this report are the basis for a feminist Europe.**

Whether you are a decision-maker, an activist, a researcher, a member of a civil society organisation, a feminist or a humanist, we hope that the EWL Beijing+20 report will inspire you to take action, be part of our movement and bring words into reality for all women and girls in Europe.

Best regards,

Viviane Teitelbaum  
EWL President

Joanna Maycock  
EWL Secretary General



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"All human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social, including the right to development – are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated"*

Beijing Platform for Action, about the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993.

**Adopted two years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the Beijing Platform for Action aimed to bring to light the structural inequalities and human rights violations faced by all women and girls on the planet, and setting the ground for concrete action to realise de jure and de facto equality between women and men. 20 years later, much has been achieved, and much remains to be done.**

Women and girls in Europe are now present in all spheres of society, from education to employment, reaching political and business decision-making, expressing their views as artists, journalists, researchers, or community leaders. They are more able than ever to bring their voice to the political debates and raise their concerns. Events, campaigns and conferences are taking place in different countries, giving life to a renewed women's social movement. The Nordic women's organisations came together at the Nordiskt Forum in June 2014 and organised four days of activism, arts and reflection on today's challenges. The women of Hungary organised in 2013 the first Women's Congress since 1989!

A new generation of young feminists is mobilising widely, making the most of new communication technologies, and dynamically tackling new and old forms of violations of their rights. There is international outrage and massive waves of solidarity in response to violations of women's rights as witnessed by the reactions to the appalling cases of rape in India. Some men are taking a public stance or engaging in the feminist movement, to support women's organisations' demands. Feminist economists are challenging the current system we live in, by proposing new ways of measuring wellbeing and protecting our planet and the next generations.

However, despite this optimistic picture of a renewed feminism in Europe, women's rights are facing a stronger backlash than ever. On the one hand, ultra-conservative and religious groups are systematically calling gender equality into question, by attacking women's sexual and reproductive rights, sexuality education, women's access

to employment and decision-making. Some men's groups are getting media attention to their reactionary demands for patriarchal structures. Financial cuts are threatening the very existence of women's organisations. With the 2014 European elections, we are seeing more populist and misogynist parliamentarians sitting in the European Parliament, directly threatening EU policies to promote gender equality and women's rights.

On the other hand, the neoliberal system and the consumer society are impacting detrimentally on women's and girls' empowerment, by commodifying their body and sexuality and perpetuating gender stereotypes throughout all spheres of society. We are worried to see that the cult of individualism has become so widespread that structural violations of women's rights are not taken seriously.

**If the Beijing Platform for Action identifies 12 critical areas, it is clear, putting them altogether, that they are all interconnected and related, and that common conclusions can be drawn from our assessment of the EU actions.**

**The European Union can be a driving force for legislation on gender equality, and of inspiration for the Member States.**

Equality between women and men is a core value of the EU and its Member States. However, such commitment doesn't translate into practice in the majority of the spheres of society and life. While over the years, the European Parliament has taken a bigger role in raising the alarm over human rights violations, calling for gender equality and women's empowerment, the Member States have prevented the adoption of ambitious goals and legislation on women's human rights. It is according to this logic that, for example, no strategy on ending violence against women has been adopted until now.

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a central strategy for all EU policies, but the reality shows that it is not implemented in many areas, and not considered as a priority. The myth of "equality being already there" in Europe is still strong and prevents gender equality from becoming a standalone goal for the EU. The recent climate of austerity reinforces the idea, for many decision-makers and individuals, that women's rights are "the icing on the cake". Reading our report, you will see that some actions have been taken in one or the other area, but the lack of

a comprehensive strategy shows that gender equality is not taken seriously enough. In this context, in the majority of the EU policies (including some areas not covered by the Beijing Platform for Action, such as sport or culture), women's and girls' needs are not integrated at all.

**Another clear learning from our assessment lies in the persisting gender stereotypes in all spheres of society.**

Stereotypes that shape toys for boys and girls (blue and pink...), that influence girls' choices in education, that prevent women from accessing some jobs, that impact on women's and girls' health, that legitimise violence and everyday sexism, that convey messages about women's role in society... The Beijing Platform for Action did not only want to see legal frameworks to guarantee women's rights, it also aimed to raise awareness on the radical change needed in mentalities to achieve equality between women and men. Today, this shift of mentalities remains the highest challenge for the women's movement. While legislation is key, it is not enough and should be accompanied by powerful political will and grassroots action to make a real change at all levels of personal life, community and society.

**In parallel, new challenges are coming up and will require all our attention and vigilance.**

**Women are not a homogenous group and have multiple identities.** This diversity is what makes our societies so interesting and creative. But living in systems where racism, sexism and classism are still prevalent, women with multiple identities are rendered more vulnerable to discrimination, violence and violation of their rights. The situation of migrant or undocumented women, women from ethnic minorities, indigenous women, Roma women, women with disabilities, rural women, girls, older women, lesbians and bisexual women, transgender women, has long been made invisible. It is urgent to make sure that all policies are designed to not leave a single girl or woman behind.

**It is time to understand that peace, justice and sustainable development cannot be achieved if half of the planet's population is not fully enjoying their human rights.** We need a new paradigm for human rights: human rights are about a collective vision and solidarity, they are not tools to promote individualism. The current economic, political and social system has proven to be unsustainable, dangerous for the Earth, and unable to include and protect the most vulnerable, starting with women and girls. Feminist economists are an inspiration for a radical new vision of people and planet, including of

the care economy, and the women's movement is allying with other social movements to propose alternatives based on rights, solidarity and equality.

The EWL works towards a vision of a peaceful, social and democratic European Union built on a culture of respect for human rights, equality, peace and solidarity, in Europe and globally, where women and men have equal rights, full enjoyment of their personal integrity and choice, an equal share of social, cultural and economic resources, caring and family roles, and are equally represented in decision making.

**We strongly believe that the values we promote could form the basis of a new model:** Equality; Solidarity; Respect; Parity; Freedom; Peace; Justice; Empowerment; Cooperation and consensus building; Accountability; Openness and transparency; Independence.

While celebrating 20 years of the Beijing Platform for Action, in 2015 the international community will also adopt a new global framework for development, with new Sustainable Developments Goals. Amongst the 17 proposed goals, women's rights are included as a standalone: "Attain gender equality and empower women and girls everywhere". **The European Union, as part of the international community, is at a turning policy point: it can choose to lead the way towards a gender equal sustainable future, or to ignore the Beijing Platform for Action for 20 more years.** The nomination of an EU Commissioner for Gender Equality can be a milestone towards more ambitious EU action. The development of a global citizens' movement demanding a new paradigm for the future can be an opportunity for the women's movement to demonstrate that investing in women's rights is the most urgent and clever action to protect the planet and see future generations equal, empowered, living in peace and dignity.

The European Women's Lobby and all its members will continue to actively push for a better world for all women and girls in Europe and beyond.

*"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."*  
Arundhati Roy

# FROM BEIJING TO BRUSSELS... OUR MEMBERS REMEMBER

"I was in Beijing in 1995 and for me it was extremely important. It changed my life to see the power of women coming from all over the world. After that I was more engaged in gender equality and women rights. From that time on, I got more interested in topics such as violence against women, female mutilation, gender-selective abortion in India."

Tonny Filedt Kok, EWL Board member,  
The Netherlands

"What remains on your mind and in your heart, even 20 years later, is the excitement of 35 000 women from all over the world – government and NGO delegates – together. Beijing was the place where you realised that the problems and hurdles women encounter are the same all over the place. And, that we must strongly work together – North and South – to bar cultural, economic and religious arguments that would reign in women's potential for self-development and empowerment.

Since Beijing 1995 the world has changed. However, a lot still remains to be done. An area where I have difficulty in seeing progress is the plague of violence against women – babies, adolescents, adults and elderly – in all its forms. My feeling is that women and children have increasingly been used as a weapon of war (Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Islamist insurgents in different areas). Also, are young girls more at risk than "before" or is it just because we were unaware of those practices in a pre-smartphone world? Nonetheless, knowing that the Beijing crowd all together wanted to achieve the same goals at the same moment is most energising and keeps you on striving for a better life for women all over the world."

Chris Verhaegen, Chair of the Belgian Institute for equality between women and men

"As long as I live I will be proud that we have succeeded in saving the progressive formulations from the Cairo conference in the Beijing documents, and I am still happy to remember that we have succeeded in keeping the wording on the ban of discrimination on sexual orientation until LGBT rights were traded off by the "rich old democracies" the last night of the negotiations, against the demand of the "poor developing countries" for more financial support to their sustainable development.

There is no doubt that in the last 20 years, humanity has made some giant steps towards gender equality - looking for example at the decrease of women's illiteracy. When all women can read and write and can control their reproductive potential, they will be able also to claim effectively all their human rights. But from the distance of these 20 years, I am thinking also how terrible the price is that ordinary citizens from both groups of the UN nations, the rich and the poor, are paying for this shameful trade off in Beijing. Not only the rights of sexual minorities, but sexual and reproductive rights of all women are under incredible growing pressure of religious fundamentalists all over the world, and the unprecedented concentration of the wealth in the first ten percent of global elites and elites of each of the UN nations, is endangering global and national prospects of women and everybody else, to equality, development and peace."

Sonja Lokar, Executive Director of CEE Network for Gender Issues, Slovenia



"Gathering in Beijing, the air was filled with enthusiasm, hope for the future and constructive discussions. The far-reaching agreements of the Beijing Platform for Action, reflects this. As the time of decisions draw nearer, tension increased in the conference hall. I would say that the dividing line was between secular and religiously dominated nations, and not a North and South divide. Around thirty delegations fully approved the conclusions. This was greeted by applause and acclamation, particularly from the NGO gallery. Disagreements from some representatives were scarcely hidden, whether in declarations or body language. Of interest is to note that Egypt adopted the conclusions, pointing out that women's rights were at risk from the conservative movements threatening reversing progress. Issues concerning girls and young women were eagerly debated and found their way into the conclusions. The declaration includes strong wording on equal rights and against discrimination of women and girls, which today would be difficult to achieve. Therefore let's protect and continue working with the Beijing Platform for Action."

Katarina Lindahl, President of UN Women National Committee Sweden

"I was impressed by the speech of Hillary Rodham Clinton, the wife of the at that moment most powerful man in the world, Bill Clinton. These were her first words: "We come together in fields and in factories. In village markets and supermarkets. In living rooms and board rooms. [...] And time and again, our talks turn to our children and our families. [...] By gathering in Beijing, we are focusing world attention on issues that matter most in the lives of women and their families: access to education, health care, jobs and credit, the chance to enjoy basic legal and human rights and participate fully in the political life of their countries. [...] What we are learning around the world is that if women are healthy and educated, their families will flourish. If women are free from violence, their families will flourish. If women have a chance to work and earn as full and equal partners in society, their families will flourish. And, when families flourish, communities and nations will flourish."

With this speech she made clear that the aspirations of women are basically the same in all countries, rich or poor, democratic, autocratic, theocratic... Moreover she made the perfect connection between women's aspirations and rights, and family aspirations. And in twenty years, those aspirations are still basic and have not changed."

Mieke Van Haegendoren, former chair of the Vrouwenraad, Belgium



## THE EU'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION: STRUCTURE OF THE EWL REPORT

**The EWL Beijing+20 report looks at the 12 critical areas identified by the Beijing Platform for Action, according to the same framework:**

- A short paragraph states in a concrete way why there is a crucial need to realise equality between women and men in the critical area identified.
- Facts and figures give an accurate picture of the situation in Europe, in order for readers to take stock of the reality experienced by women and girls.
- A brief highlight of EWL actions over the last 5 years show how the EWL acted to raise awareness and make change at EU level.
- The EU section looks at the progress made or still to be made at European level.
- Some good practices have been highlighted by EWL members as inspirational examples for other Member States and the EU institutions.
- For each area, some challenges seem to remain over the years, and new challenges are appearing, requiring new answers.
- Finally, we present our main demands for action at EU (and sometimes national) level for each area.

The EWL report can also be transformed into thematic factsheets, on each critical area.

We hope that you will find this report informative, useful, and inspiring!



# WOMEN AND POVERTY

*"Gender inequalities represent a violation of the human right to live in dignity. Poverty is a denial of human dignity."  
Investing in a Social Europe, Report 2012*

Poverty and social exclusion are mutually linked to the achievement of women's economic independence, which is a key issue in enabling women to be active actors in all aspects of life. Not only are women part of every group at risk of poverty, but they are particularly vulnerable when facing other forms of discrimination (such as based on their migration status, ethnic origin, disability, etc.). Poverty and social exclusion, coupled with persisting patriarchal mentalities legitimising the commodification of women's sexuality and bodies, are also among the push factors that propel women and girls into prostitution and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, both within EU Member States and on an international scale.

The persistence, and increase in some countries, of high rates of poverty among women is a clear indication of the incapacity of the current EU social, economic and employment policies to respond properly to women's needs and to guarantee women's and girls' rights. Austerity measures, originally conceived to tackle the EU economic and democratic crisis, continue to have a dramatic impact on women, both as public sector workers, in areas such as education and health, and as beneficiaries

of social security, public services, including care services, all of which have been affected by public cuts.

It is crucial to address the gender dimension of poverty and social exclusion within the broader EU policy framework, and especially EU macro-economic policies, if we want to attain real gender equality in Europe.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Review, adopt and maintain macro-economic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.
- Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources. Access to markets and training
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Over a quarter (26,9%) of women in the EU's 28 countries experience poverty and social exclusion. Across a range of indicators in the labour market and in social protection, the structural causes of poverty have a disproportionate impact on women. The crisis has strongly impacted on women's lives. The number of homeless women is growing. Surveys estimate that between 11-17 % of street homeless and 25-30 % of all homeless people in Europe are women, either alone or with children. Among the major causes are domestic and sexual violence, indicating that shelters and informal support systems are breaking down and/or are insufficiently funded.

Around 9% of people employed experience in-work poverty. According to the OECD, roughly every fourth person with disabilities lives in poverty. Poverty needs to be addressed from a life-cycle perspective: the gender pension gap of 39% in the EU is the major cause of the feminisation of poverty among older women, affecting 22% of women over the age of 65 compared to 16% of men in the same age category. Single parents, 80-90% of whom are women, migrant women, many of whom work in the informal economy, and Roma women, many living in conditions of severe housing deprivation, are particularly at risk of poverty.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- EWL video clip "**A she-(re) session. What does austerity mean for women?**" (2013) captures the main messages of EWL's reports on the impact of the crisis on women 'An invisible crisis?', 2010, with Oxfam International, and 'The price of austerity', 2013.
- The **European Civil Society Semester Alliance**: since 2012, the EWL has been working with a coalition of social NGOs, service providers, Trade Unions and environmental NGOs, to monitor the EU poverty target and provide alternative country-specific recommendations (CSR), in the context of the European Semester (governance of the EU 2020 Strategy). In addition, the EWL membership provides alternative CSRs compiled in a publication entitled '**Ticking Clocks**', which is sent to European policy-makers responsible for the European Semester.
- Since the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy in 2011, which set a headline target to lift 20 million people out of poverty, the EWL has been part of the **European Platform against Poverty (EPAP)**, co-ordinated by the European Commission, with the aim of highlighting and addressing women's poverty and social exclusion. The EWL chaired the workshop on the gender dimension of poverty in the context of the annual European Convention on Poverty (2012); the recommendations fed into the subsequent European Commission's Social Investment Package (SIP).
- EWL action for the rights of older women: "**Improving the situation of older women in the European Union**", joint publication with AGE Platform Europe, March 2014.



# WOMEN AND POVERTY & THE EUROPEAN UNION



In 2010, as part of its EU 2020 Strategy, the European Union set a target to lift at least 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion in the next decade. This target is accompanied by a set of sub-targets on social deprivation and Member States are invited to break down the targets by gender. However, the predominance of macro-economic governance and ensuing austerity measures have resulted in an increase of over six million people experiencing poverty/social exclusion (2012). In February 2013, the European Commission adopted the Social Investment Package (SIP), social policy guidance for Member States to address unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. The SIP stresses the need for affordable quality early

childhood education and care and long-term care services for elderly dependents, but its narrow focus, namely measures to remove barriers' to women's lower labour market participation, does not go far enough to tackle the structural causes of the feminisation of poverty.

There is still no overarching strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion at the European level, and while the number of poverty related country-specific recommendations has increased over the past four years, women's poverty and social exclusion have yet to be addressed.

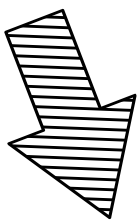


## GOOD PRACTICE

- A new law in France requires work contracts of a minimum of 24 work hours per week. This certainly will improve the situation of precarious workers, particularly women.
- The introduction of a minimum wage in Germany (2015) will benefit women, who make up the majority of the 7 million so - called mini-jobbers, earning 450 euros per month and who are not covered by social protection or pension schemes.

## CHALLENGES

- Women continue to be considered as dependents: second earner status and household units continue to determine access to and levels of individual rights in social security and taxation, hiding gender inequalities.
- Lack of adequate access to affordable child care disproportionately affects women-headed households, hinders women's participation in the labour-market and their lack of pension entitlements leading to poverty in old age.
- Unequal sharing of unpaid care and housework severely limits women's equal opportunities to earn an adequate independent income.
- Gender roles, gender stereotypes and discrimination compound to produce unequal life chances and choices.
- Inequalities in employment (part-time work, pay gaps, etc.) play a key role in trapping women in poverty preventing their economic independence throughout their lives. Inadequate pensions – the gender pension gap – directly impact on women as caring responsibilities mean that they build up fewer credits during their working life as pension schemes continue to reflect the male-bread-winner-model.
- Inadequate social protection systems can particularly affect the position of women outside the labour market. Given the strong link between women's poverty and child poverty, inadequate child income support is also a crucial factor for many women.
- Violence against women and girls increases their risk of poverty and social exclusion.
- Existing macro-economic data is not sufficiently sensitive to reveal both existing poverty, and the effects of recession, on women's lives. The 'household unit' continues to be used as a statistical measure, with the result that individual poverty, particularly affecting women, is hidden.



## OUR DEMANDS **The female factor: empower women, eradicate poverty.**

- **Guarantee the individualisation of rights in social security and taxation systems.**
- **Establish a minimum income ensuring basic set of social standards, such as access to health, education and care.**
- **Elaborate and implement a European Social Protection Strategy.**
- **Develop an overarching European strategy that will have a decisive impact on gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the right for all women and girls in Europe, regardless of their age, ability, disability, ethnic or migrant origin, social or geographical origin, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, to live a dignified life in a Europe free of poverty and social exclusion.**



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN

*"Let us pick up our books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons."  
Malala Yousafzai, nominee for 2014 Nobel Peace Prize*

Quality education contributes to the development of each individual and it is a condition for the development of a democratic society. Education is her human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. While all 28 EU Member States guarantee and offer free primary and secondary education to boys and girls, gender stereotypes are still prevalent in all formal and non-formal educational systems in Europe, through both values and attitudes of education professionals and education materials. Such stereotypes impact on girls' self-esteem, relationships with boys, but also their educational and career choices, as well as their vision of their potential in all spheres of society.

Non-discriminatory education benefits both girls and boys and thus ultimately contributes to more equal relationships between women and men, and supports girls' and women's wellbeing and empowerment in society.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Ensure equal access to education.
- Eradicate illiteracy among women.
- Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.
- Develop non-discriminatory education and training.
- Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms.
- Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

In the EU, girls are less likely (10,2%) than boys (13,6%) to drop out of school. However, girls from ethnic minorities, Roma women and girls with disabilities are more likely to drop out of school than girls from the majority groups. Women outnumber men as graduates at secondary and university levels. Among women aged 15-24, 63.9% are likely to participate in education, compared to 59.3% of men. Women are also more enrolled in tertiary education (41%) than men (32,6%). Since 2008, both women and men have more access to lifelong learning, with more women (11,3%) benefiting from such education than men (9,5%).

Educational choices continue to be highly gendered: women are 78,3% of graduates in education and training, 75,9% in health and welfare, 25,5% in engineering, manufacturing and construction, 40,2% in science, mathematics and computing. The sectors where women are over-represented are sectors which are less remunerated and less "valued". Moreover, women with

low levels of education are highly likely to be unemployed. With the same level of education, men are 55,8% more likely to be employed.

The education system itself conveys stereotypes: education is still seen as a female occupation and a women's role, especially for the youngest. Women are in majority among primary teachers; at primary level, the share of female teachers exceeds 90% in some Eastern and Baltic countries and Italy. On the contrary, in tertiary education, women are less than 40% of the teachers. They are under-represented in researchers, academic staff, and school management. Stereotypes are also prevalent in the way boys and girls are raised and educated: boys and girls are given different toys, teaching material continues to be particularly gendered, boys and girls are asked to do different tasks and teachers have different attitudes towards them.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- In 2011, the EWL actively contributed to the adoption of ambitious conclusions on **"Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work"** during the 55th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



Education is a Member State's competence. Nevertheless, the European Commission has a Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), which is the executive branch of the European Union responsible for policy on education, culture, youth, languages, and sport. DG EAC supports these issues through a variety of projects and programmes, which are now merged into the new EU programme for education, training, youth and Sport "Erasmus For All" (2014-2020, replacing Lifelong Learning Programme, Youth in Action, and international cooperation programmes). Its goals are to reduce early school leaving rates and increase the number of 30-34 year-old students having completed the third level of education. More than 4 million people have already benefited from these programmes, but there is no sex-segregated data about the participants, no gender impact assessment and no gender

budgeting foreseen in the implementation of the programmes. Gender mainstreaming is still not yet a reality in the EU actions on education, despite recommendations made at Council of Europe level (2007 recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on gender mainstreaming in education).

The network Eurydice provides information on European education systems and policies; its 2010 study on "Gender differences in educational outcomes" asserts that most of the EU countries have gender equality policies in education, and concludes that traditional stereotypes are the biggest challenge for gender equality in education. The European Parliament also highlighted the gender perspective of education in a 2013 resolution on Educational and occupational mobility of women in the EU.

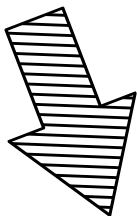


## GOOD PRACTICE

- France has set up a set of pedagogical tools called the "ABCD of Equality" to fight against sexism and gender stereotypes at school. They have been experimentally used in about 600 primary schools and pre-schools since 2013.
- In Portugal, there is a system of youth mediators to alert peers on issues related to dating violence, harassment and to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
- Estonia is developing a project of integration of gender into teachers' education and training, a partnership between universities, teachers' associations and women's organisations.
- Sweden is often mentioned as an example of best practice in integrating gender equality into the curriculum and training of teachers.

## CHALLENGES

- The crisis is having a detrimental impact on education and its quality: teachers' salaries have been frozen, and public spending has been cut in many EU Member States.
- Gendered representations of social roles impact on women's access to lifelong learning: women cite family responsibilities as the main impediment to their participation in lifelong education and training programmes. The easier the access to lifelong learning, the more women tend to participate.
- The UN CEDAW Committee has repeatedly criticised the fact that women's higher education has not led to a level playing field for advancement, whether in academia or in the labour market in general.
- Equal access to education is still not a reality in Europe for all girls: some girls – girls with disabilities, from ethnic minorities, from the Roma and traveller minorities - are facing several barriers to accessing and achieving in school.
- Girls and young women continue to experience sexism, sexual harassment and violence in schools and universities.
- In Europe we are seeing a worrying movement of extreme conservative and religious groups which try to prevent the implementation of programmes on equality between women and men, women's rights and comprehensive sexuality education.



## OUR DEMANDS **I am a girl: equal and non-stereotypical education throughout the life cycle.**

- **Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender in the areas of education and media.**
- **Ensure the application of gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment and gender budgeting in all European programmes, policies and actions related to or having an impact on education and training.**
- **Fight against gender stereotypes in education and training, including at every school age.**
- **Raise awareness of formal and non-formal education professionals about gender stereotypes, women's rights and gender equality and relations, so as to ensure that they behave gender-neutrally.**
- **Counteract to fundamentalism, by integrating democracy and gender equality in the curriculum.**
- **Provide funding for the creation, development and support of gender and feminist studies and research.**



# WOMEN AND HEALTH

*"It is my aspiration that health finally will be seen not as a blessing to be wished for, but as a human right to be fought for."*  
United Nations former Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Health and wellbeing, both physical and mental, are crucial conditions for the full development of every human being. Health is more than a biological issue: according to the World Health Organisation, it represents "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". However, women and girls have specific health needs which are not yet understood and integrated into European and national policies.

On the one hand, biological differences imply that women have particular health concerns and needs, especially related to their sexual and reproductive health. On the other hand, the social construct of gender and women's roles and stereotypes impacts on women's representation of their own health, on their access to health and health care, and women's health itself (for example, the prevalence of violence against women).

In addition to this, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or identity, resources, education, social and marital status, position in the labour market, place of residence, the level of gender equality in society and other attributes influence women's health needs and

access to health. Moreover, women's and girls' health is also endangered by the lack of awareness of gender aspects among health care professionals, which can lead to gender bias in medicine.

Promoting and guaranteeing women's and girls' highest standards of health is a precondition for the enjoyment of their full human rights.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Increase women's access through the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care.
- Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.
- Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.
- Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Each year more than 5 million women give birth in the EU, and another 2 million women have to put an end to their pregnancy, for various reasons. However, one in ten women in Europe doesn't have access to care in the first months of pregnancy. And abortion is still not legal in Cyprus, Ireland, Malta and Poland, forcing women to face the health risks of unsafe illegal abortion.

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of mortality and disability among women in Europe. Cancer represents one of the biggest health threats in Europe today, fatal for nearly 140 women out of every hundred thousand. While men's rates of lung cancer are decreasing, women's rates continue increasing in the vast majority of EU Member States.

Elderly women are more affected by dementia, Alzheimer's disease and depression than elderly men. Women with disabilities face barriers in their access to health services. Lesbian, bisexual and transgender women are more likely to encounter specific barriers to access health care such as discrimination by or lack of awareness of health professionals. Roma women are particularly vulnerable when it comes to health. According to Doctors of the World, 9 out of 10 Roma women in France have no access to maternal health care. A study in Bulgaria,

Czech Republic, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain, shows that only 15% of Roma women were using birth-control pills. Roma women and women with disabilities face forced sterilisation, a serious violation of their human rights.

Women, especially those under 30, have a more negative self-perception of body image as compared to young men. Women make up the great majority of cosmetic surgery patients: non-surgical procedures to look younger and thinner, as well as breast surgery, are among the most popular practices. Female genital cosmetic surgery is a rising trend, including in under-age girls.

Between the ages of 25 and 40, women are three times more likely than men to suffer from depression, the higher rate being at times when they have their babies. Women are twice as likely as men to commit a suicide attempt; amongst them, immigrant young women are at particular risk, facing discrimination and isolation in individualistic European societies.

Today, women are only 10% of the doctors in leading positions in most of the EU countries; this means that men's perspectives are prevalent in medical science and in decision-making in the health sector.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- In 2010, the EWL published its position paper "**Women's Health in the European Union**", calling for a systematic inclusion of a gender equality and women's rights dimension into all EU and national health policies, and for policies which specifically address women's health needs and guarantee their access to quality health care, including sexual and reproductive health care and services.

# WOMEN AND HEALTH & THE EUROPEAN UNION



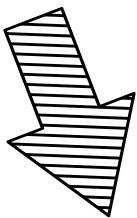
Women's health has been addressed as a policy issue at the EU level in the context of the social and economic determinants of health and specific age groups. In theory, the EU recognises that gender – alongside age, education, economic and civil status – is a significant determinant for health and health care. Despite several reports including data on the situation of women's health and access to health care, no concrete policy actions and programmes have been implemented to address women's health needs and European public health policies broadly remain gender blind. The lack of a consistent and integrated approach to women's rights and gender issues within health policy needs to be urgently addressed, including in a context

of a financial and social crisis marked by cuts in public spending in services that are crucial for the attainment of a 'high level of human health protection' for all, as guaranteed by the European Union Treaties. Between 2008 and 2011, 17 out of the EU 28 member states have slashed their public spending on healthcare due to austerity policies. Moreover, health care spending is lower for women than for men, and even lower for young women.

In 2013, after an intense debate, the EP rejected the FEMM report on 'Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights', due to opposition by religious extremists to the inclusion of abortion and LGBT rights.

## CHALLENGES

- Biomedical research continues to be based on the unstated assumption that women and men are physiologically similar and ignores social and gender differences which have a considerable impact on health. At the same time, gender bias can result in applying prejudices on women and men, such as taking less seriously women's reports of symptoms by attributing them to emotional causes.
- Sexual and bodily integrity is still not a fully achieved right for women in Europe. Women's right to decide over their sexuality, pregnancies, and free access to contraception, abortion, and assisted reproductive technologies, are the cornerstones of a gender equal society. However, the right to abortion is under attack in many EU countries. The objectification of women, societal sexualisation and unreasonable expectations of youth and bodily perfection impact on women's mental health and self-esteem, and cause eating disorders, and other forms of self-inflicted injury.
- The trivialisation of surrogacy is a direct threat to women's equality and enjoyment of their reproductive and human rights. The growing commercialisation of pain-killers or caesareans when giving birth, and the medicalisation of menopause, pregnancy or gynaecology, illustrates the dangers of the commodification of health.
- The links between violence against women, including sexual violence and buying sex, and women's sexual, reproductive and mental health, need to be urgently acknowledged. Violence against women leads to severe sexual and psychological problems, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, at-risk behaviour, or sexual transmitted diseases.
- Women continue to face additional barriers to health and health care due to their multiple identities: migrant, refugee women and undocumented women face discrimination and risk of deportation in accessing health services. Rural women's access to health-care services – and even health information – is greatly affected by a lack of infrastructure and transport facilities.
- Comprehensive sexuality education and contraception aren't provided or available in all of the European countries, and contraception is partially or totally uncovered by social schemes in most countries.



## OUR DEMANDS **A holistic approach for the highest standards of wellbeing and health for all.**

- **Ensure that all EU health related policies and programmes have an integral gender dimension, and take into account the specific needs of women and girls, through prevention, gender mainstreaming, gender impact assessment, gender budgeting, and the collection of sex disaggregated data.**
- **Take measures to ensure equal access to health care services – including women's shelters – to all women independent of their legal or migration status, disability, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, age or religion, or geographical situation.**
- **Support health research focused on women's health and health needs, especially in the framework of EU Research Framework Programmes; include gender/sex as a criterion for funding in all EU research.**
- **Facilitate women's access to senior posts in the health sector, including to the boards of medical and research centers.**
- **Promote women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, adequate gender-sensitive information and comprehensive sexuality education, as well as reliable, safe and affordable contraception, and quality maternal health care.**
- **Provide for safe and legal abortion within and beyond the European Union; abolish the restrictive Protocols and Unilateral Declarations annexed to Accession Treaties to the European Union for Ireland, Malta and Poland.**
- **Ensure that health (including reproductive and sexual health) services addressed to women are covered under public health services and are accessible through public health insurance schemes.**



# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*"The mechanism of violence is what destroys women, controls women, diminishes women and keeps women in their so called place."  
Eve Ensler, founder of V-Day*

Violence against women is the most widespread violation of women's human rights in Europe. Its persistence and high prevalence demonstrate that our societies are still built on, vehicle and perpetuate patriarchal values and male domination.

Violence against women shapes women's place in society: their health, access to employment and education, integration into social and cultural activities, economic independence, participation in public and political life and decision-making, and relations with men. Besides being a cause of suffering and trauma which has devastating consequences for the mental, physical and sexual health of individual women, violence is a major barrier to the achievement of the goal to create a society based on the principles of participation and citizenship, and in direct contradiction with the EU Treaty goal of promoting equality between women and men.

We want a world free from violence and the fear of violence for all women and girls.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Back in 1999, the European Women's Lobby found out that 1 out of 5 women in Europe experience domestic violence. Today we see that the figures haven't changed. In March 2014, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency unveiled the outcomes of its survey on violence against women in Europe: one in three women aged 15 or over has experienced physical and/or sexual violence; one in five women has experienced stalking and every second woman has been confronted with one or more forms of sexual harassment; 5% of women aged 15 or over have been raped.

Violence against women and girls is also about: sexual harassment in the work place, prostitution and sexual exploitation, marital rape, incest, pornography, psychological abuse, female genital mutilation, cyber-violence and bullying, sexist advertising, etc.: all kinds of tools used by men to control women's lives, bodies and sexuality.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- **2013 EWL Barometer on rape:** produced with the expertise of the experts to the EWL Observatory on violence against women, it gives a concrete and documented European overview on the needs for change in legislation data collection systems and support services for women victims of sexual violence.
- **2013 EWL-Council of Europe joint project "Act against rape! Use the Istanbul Convention!"** during the 16 days of activism against violence against women: public events took place in 28 countries all over Europe, calling for the adoption of the Istanbul Convention by all EU member states.
- **One Billion Rising (2013 and 2014):** EWL flash mob in Brussels and all over Europe, calling on decision-makers to act to end violence and provide access to justice for all women.
- **EWL campaign "Together for a Europe free from prostitution":** raising awareness on prostitution as a form of violence against women at UN, EU and national levels, through events, advocacy actions and communication tools (like "18 myths on prostitution").



# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU has no legally binding instrument providing a comprehensive framework to end and prevent violence against women and girls in all member states. EU member states tackle violence in widely differing ways, ranging from an absence of its recognition as a fundamental violation of women's human rights, to a broad policy framework based on a feminist analysis of gender power relations in our societies. Women and girls are therefore not equally protected in the EU, and the absence of harmonised European legislative and policy framework has important consequences on the ability of women to resist and survive male violence.

Over the last two years, the EU has adopted new tools which can be used by women to gain protection and support: the European Protection Order (guaranteeing women's protection when they travel in the EU) and the victims' rights directive (including a gender perspective). EU funding to support projects on ending violence against women has been integrated into the new Rights and Citizenship Programme.

The meetings of the EU civil society platform on trafficking in human beings also provide an opportunity for the EWL and

its members to bring their perspective on the intrinsic links between sex trafficking and prostitution. The two EU agencies dedicated to fundamental rights and gender equality worked on establishing and delivering data, a key milestone to get a better understanding of the scope of violence against women and girls in Europe (FRA survey, EIGE studies).

Over its last term (2009-2014), the European Parliament has actively pushed for an EU strategy to end all forms of violence against women. February 2014 saw the adoption of strong resolutions calling for: a European law to tackle violence against women and the ratification by the EU of the Istanbul Convention; the recognition of prostitution as an obstacle to equality between women and men and the adoption of the Nordic (abolitionist) model in the EU.

However, despite promises from the European Commission to come up with a Strategy to end violence against women in 2010, and despite statements of the Council to adopt such a strategy, ratify the Istanbul Convention and develop more policies and tools, the EU is not yet taking the necessary steps to protect all women and girls in Europe from violence.

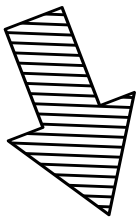


## GOOD PRACTICE

- The Swedish law criminalising the purchase of sex has proven to be successful in protecting women, reducing prostitution, changing mentalities and deterring traffickers. Norway (2008) and Iceland (2009) have adopted similar legal provisions.
- Spain provides a range set of measures and laws against violence against women. Their victim support system includes housing, healthcare and employment dimensions, in order to make it easier for women affected by violence to reintegrate themselves into society. The Spanish law also takes into account the situation of vulnerability faced by migrant women.

## CHALLENGES

- Violence against women remains invisible and underestimated.
- Violence against women is de-politicised (considered as a private issue, or a personal choice) and therefore disappearing from political agendas.
- Violence against women is trivialised in our societies and fostered by the sexualisation and the pornification of the public sphere and the media, including social media.
- Perpetrators remain unpunished; women don't get access to justice.
- Protection of women should take into account the diversity of women's needs and identities, to make sure that not one single woman is left without protection, information and support, and gets access to justice and reparation. In particular, migrant women coming under family reunification laws should get access to justice and independent status.
- Women and girls are at greater risk of male violence in times of recession.
- Services to protect and support women and girls, such as hotlines, shelters, legal aid, rape crisis centres, women's organisations, are under threat because of a lack of political support or financial cuts.
- Preventing violence cannot be successful if governmental bodies don't act and exercise their obligation of due diligence: we need legislation that condemns all forms of violence against women.
- We need an urgent and radical change of mentalities to oppose violence against women and girls.



## OUR DEMANDS **A Europe free from violence against women.**

- **Establish 2016 as the EU Year to End violence against women, with substantial resources to raise awareness and support actions at all levels.**
- **Adopt and implement a comprehensive EU Strategy to end all forms of violence against women in Europe, including prostitution, to end impunity, protect all women, prevent violence and raise awareness, provide quality services, and give women access to justice, based on data and partnership with women's organisations.**
- **Adopt EU legislation to end prostitution and sex trafficking through the criminalisation of the purchase of sex and of procuring, the development of exit programmes and education actions.**
- **The EU and its member states: ratify the Istanbul Convention.**



# WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

*"It is perhaps more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in armed conflict."*

*Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Patrick Cammaert  
Wilton Park Conference, May 2008*

Conflict, war and militarism are gendered processes. They use, maintain and often promote the traditional ideological construction of "masculinity" and "femininity": men go to war to defend or promote national/state values, territories and borders, and protect their 'own' women and children. Women are considered passive, and are the targets of intolerable acts of violence, as a strategy of war. Their multiple and diverse roles in conflict are hidden, poorly understood and, at times, consciously or unconsciously dismissed. In this context, women are not regarded as equal actors in peace building and democratic development; they are not allowed equal participation in the enforcement of rights and justice, and the creation of human security for all.

The absence of women and their perspectives in peace negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction, disarmament, humanitarian relief and peace building, means the absence of sustainable peace and any chance of obtaining human security. But more importantly, the persistence of wars and conflicts prevent from the achievement of gender equality and women's rights. It is time to redefine sustainable peace as the presence of human security, justice and equality, rather than the absence of war.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts, or under foreign occupation.
- Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.
- Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.
- Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.
- Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.
- Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

In contemporary conflicts, as much as 90 percent of casualties are among civilians, most of whom are women and children. Rape has been a rampant tactic in modern wars. Conservative estimates suggest that 20,000 to 50,000 women were raped during the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN data from 39 countries however show that the presence of women police officers correlates positively with reporting sexual assault.

Of the 14 peace negotiations held under UN auspices in 2011, only four women participated in negotiation teams, in Cyprus, Georgia, Guyana and Yemen. As of September 2012, 3 out of 15 International Court of Justice judges

were women. According to UN Women, in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Timor-Leste, less than 8 per cent of post-conflict spending was specifically budgeted to empower women or promote gender equality.

After conflict, female voters are four times as likely as men to be targeted for intimidation in elections in fragile and transitional states. Moreover, there is a significant increase in female-headed households during and after conflict (up to 40 per cent of households), and these are often the most impoverished, all the more so as post-conflict actions don't include financial compensation.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- In 2010, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1325, the EWL joined a coalition of over 60 organisations and networks calling for "**10 points on 10 years UNSCR 1325 in Europe**", and took the floor at high-level European conferences to raise the alert on the lack of political commitment to act on Women, Peace and Security.
- On the occasion of the 100th International Women's Day in 2011, the EWL joined a wide range of international partner organisations in issuing a **Statement calling for progress on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security** (an initiative of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict).
- Since 2011, **the EWL has supported the 12th August campaign** promoted by the Global Justice Center to ensure the right to safe abortion for women and girls raped in armed conflict. The EWL wrote to US President Obama to alert him to the "no abortion" restriction attached to US humanitarian aid; the EWL also succeeded in getting statements from the European Parliament on the need to respect women's sexual and reproductive rights in conflict and post conflict situations. In October 2013, the EWL welcomed the United Nations Security Council unanimous resolution (n°212) supporting abortion services for girls and women raped in armed conflict.





# WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT & THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union's commitment to the issue of Women, Peace and Security, can be found in its "Comprehensive EU Approach to the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 1820" and the "Implementation of SCR 1325 as reinforced by 1820 in the context of European Security and Defence Policy".

The EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development also comprises objectives to support partner countries to fully implement UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889, through the development of national action plans and policies on women, peace and security. However, only 17 out of the 28 EU Member States have adopted a National Action Plan on the UN SCR 1325. Moreover, out of the 10 EU special representatives appointed in troubled areas of the world, only one has been a woman (Ms Rosalind Marsden, Special Representative for Sudan, from 2010 to 2013).

From 2014 on, the EU will partner with UN agencies in a joint programme piloting a model for EU/UN collaboration on Women, Peace and Security, to strengthen the capacity and coordination of women's civil society organisations and relevant EU and UN actors, and support women's participation in peace-building, especially with regard to post-conflict planning and financing, the rule of law, and post-conflict economic recovery.

The European Parliament is one of the most active and engaged European institutions on the issue of women and armed conflict. Several MEPs consistently drive the issue forward and seek to pressure the European Union and the European Commission to do more on the issue. Mainstreaming gender equality within EU policy frameworks such as development and humanitarian aid, security and defence policy and missions, and human rights more generally, should be comprehensive.

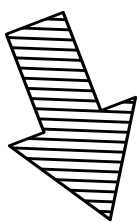


## GOOD PRACTICE

- The EU Delegation to Rwanda currently supports civil society both through the EDF geographical program "Voice and Accountability" and thematic programmes such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the non-state actors and local authorities. The EIDHR is focused on strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting the peaceful reconciliation of group interests and in consolidating political participation as well as representation.
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court requires states, in electing judges, to take into account the need for "fair representation" of female and male judges, and requires that the prosecutor and registrar do the same when hiring staff.

## CHALLENGES

- According to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), in recent years there has been an increasing number of states spending profusely on military activities; they continue to foster a culture of militarisation by maintaining their military budgets with secrecy, minimum transparency and limited accountability. In 2013 alone, the total of global military expenditure surpassed 1700 billion USD. The same year, containing and dealing with the consequences of violence cost the world 9.8 trillion USD, which accounts for 11.3% of global GDP.
- The increasing use of new technologies in conflict, such as armed drones or other dangerous chemicals, pose a clear threat to women's human rights and human security and dignity in general.
- Domestic responsibilities of women and their burden of caring for children, the elderly and the injured, generally increase during conflict. Women also frequently lack control over productive resources or economic assets, even when they themselves are generating them. Post-conflict discussion rarely takes into account the role of women during conflicts and doesn't include appropriate compensation for them.
- When demobilising child soldiers, equal attention and benefits should be awarded to the girls as well as the boys.
- When conflict ends and displaced populations return to their home communities, there can be competition over scarce resources, land and property; if women's rights are not protected by law, they can be left without access to the resources needed for livelihood generation, and become more vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation.



## OUR DEMANDS **A culture of peace and respect for women's human rights.**

- **Improve gender balance at decision-making levels of the European External Action Service.**
- **Appoint a gender focal point in all EU delegations and all Common Security and Defense Policy missions.**
- **Adopt a binding "Code of Conduct" on the standards of conduct of military and civilian peacekeeping and humanitarian national and EU staff while on mission in areas of armed conflict. Such codes should include an unequivocal condemnation of all forms violence against women, including prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.**
- **Place women's human rights at the core of donor policies for reconstruction and development; and invest in women's organisations as a means of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction.**
- **Guarantee access to justice (including transitional) for all women, as well as access to reproductive and sexual health services and support programmes, including for women victims of sexual violence.**
- **The EU and its member states: cease to promote this culture of increasing militarisation and redirect their military-first budgets towards gender-aware budgets that consider the multiple needs of women and address gender equality as a priority.**
- **The EU and its member states: grant asylum to women who flee their country by recognising sexual violence and gender-based violence as legitimate grounds for asylum.**



# WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

*"Not everything that counts can be counted; not everything that can be counted counts."*  
Albert Einstein

Women's economic independence is of crucial importance to enable women to make real choices in their lives on an equal footing with men and in order to achieve effective gender equality. Women's real and full economic independence is not yet a reality in any of the EU member states. Persistent gender gaps in employment pay, poverty, pensions and unpaid work, show that women's economic independence is far from being achieved and that the vast majority of women remain in a dependency status.

Limited access to decent work, gender-segregated labour markets, women's over-representation in unpaid care work, and social protection systems shaped around the male breadwinner model, are all major hurdles for the advancement of women and hinder women's ability to enjoy their full and equal rights .

Women's economic independence is more than a "business case". We need a shift in the values conveyed by our economic and financial systems: from profitability to wellbeing, from competition to solidarity, from inequality to transparency. The economy must serve the wellbeing of all, and not the other way round.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.
- Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
- Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

The gender pay gap remains a major issue within the EU as women on average earn 16 % less than men. A worrying development is the widening gender pension gap which stands at 39% within the EU: twice the gender pay gap. The gender pension gap shows that gender inequalities accumulate throughout women's lives and that a life-cycle approach to women's economic independence is urgently needed. Forecasts predict that in the absence of decisive action, it will take over 100 years to close gender gaps in employment, pay and unpaid work (30 years for equal employment, 70 years for equal pay, 40 years for equal share of housework).

In figures, women's employment rate - 63% (2012) - is nowhere close to the EU target of 75%, and work patterns continue to reflect traditional gender roles as women are four times more likely than men to work part-time. The crisis is hitting particularly young women, facing

high unemployment rates. Migrant women face multiple discrimination when trying to access the labour market.

Family responsibilities and household tasks are not equally shared. In 2010, women spend 26 hours a week in unpaid work compared with 9 hours for men. As a result, women have more frequent career breaks and often either leave the labour market, and/or do not go back to a full time job following childbirth.

Austerity measures have a huge effect on women, both as workers in the public sector and users of public services. Therefore, reductions of care-related facilities and/or allowances, cuts in housing benefits or family benefits can disproportionately affect women. Moreover, women bear a disproportionate share of tax burdens, as they use larger portions of their income on food and basic goods for the household.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- EWL action for an EU Maternity Leave Directive "**2/3/4 years overdue!**": campaign calling for the adoption of a legally-binding instrument protecting all pregnant women workers.
- EWL report "**The price of austerity - The impact on women's rights and gender equality in Europe**" (2012).
- EWL video clip "**A she-(re) cession. What does austerity mean for women?**" (2013): captures the main messages of EWL's reports on the impact of the crisis on women.
- **Monitoring of and advocacy on EU processes having an impact on women's economic independence:** contributions on Employment Package (2012), Personal and Household Services (2011), a possible EU Directive on Filial Leave (2011), White Paper on Pensions (2012), equal pay (2012-2013).

# WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY & THE EUROPEAN UNION



Women's economic independence is one of the five priorities of the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015. The European Commission carried out a review of the 2006 Recast Directive (on equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation), paying particular attention to equal pay, and following a number of consultations, issued a Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through increased wage transparency (2014). In 2014, EU social partners released a gender equality toolkit.

The Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee of the European Parliament adopted a series of legislative and 'own opinion' reports in the period 2009-2014 relating to women's economic independence, including: equal treatment of self-employed workers (2010); the so-called Maternity Directive, adopted initially in plenary in 2010 but never reached the

second reading phase due to the reluctance of the Member States to accept the proposal of the Parliament; equal pay and work of equal value (2012); impact of the economic crisis on women's rights (2010 and 2013); precarious women workers (2010), and the role of women in the green economy (2012).

The Council of Ministers for Employment, Social Affairs (EPSCO) adopted conclusions in 2014 that call for indicators to measure: Full-time equivalent employment rates; Part-time employment as percentage of total employment; Self-employment as percentage of total employment; and also called for a pillar on gender equality within the Europe 2020 governance framework. However, the lack of EU dialogue with civil society organisations on the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy shows that there is urgent need to address the current paradigm for the economy, putting equality and the environment before growth.

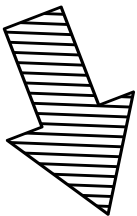


## GOOD PRACTICE

- In Croatia, new approaches to time surveys offer a broader understanding of gender gaps that move beyond standard calculation of the gender pay gap (eg. time linked not only to work or care, but also to sleep or cultural activities).
- 15:54 campaign: raising awareness on the gender pay gap in Sweden. In 2014, from 15h54, women are not paid any more for their work. The Sweden Women's Lobby annual campaign, called 15h53 in 2013, showed that women gained only one extra paid minute in 2014.

## CHALLENGES

- International institutions and economic networks emphasise gender equality as a determining factor for good economic and social development. However, obsolete economic models are applied, which in many cases lead to policies that risk increasing gender inequality in society. We need new models, based on feminist economics.
- In 2012, the European institute for statistics Eurostat asked all EU Member States to integrate into their national statistics most of the illegal activities producing wealth, including drug dealing and prostitution. While some countries already count prostitution in their GDP, others will hasten to do so, in order to reduce their debt and deficit. Such economic strategies trivialise the commodification of women's bodies and highlight the limits of the model based on GDP only.
- Austerity policies could transfer the responsibility for care from society to households, i.e. women, with detrimental consequences on stereotypes about women's and men's roles, and obstacles to women's economic independence.
- Persisting gender stereotypes in the education and the media have a direct impact on society's representations of the possible roles for women and men and the prevalence of traditional unequal/patriarchal patterns.
- The increasing demand for migrant domestic workers should be closely monitored to make sure that migrant women have access to social protection and equal labour rights and to ensure that all women in Europe have the same rights



## OUR DEMANDS **Women's economic independence is the foundation of all rights.**

- **Promote women's quality employment by effectively enforcing and strengthening EU equality legislation.**
- **Guarantee the individualisation of social security and taxation rights in order to break women's dependency on their partners and/or the State.**
- **Protect all women workers, irrespective of their employment status, including pregnant workers, by adopting a European Directive on maternity leave that guarantees women's full pay and protection from discrimination.**
- **Develop standards on quality and affordable care services for children, dependent and elderly persons across the life-cycle, and achieve the Barcelona targets on childcare.**
- **Develop a multi-layered approach that focuses on equality in paid and unpaid work to enable both women and men to become equal earners and equal carers throughout their lives. Take measures to increase men's take-up rate in care responsibilities and ensure that educational options for boys include sectors that are traditionally associated with women and girls.**
- **Close the gender pay gap by 2020 and set targets to close the pension gap.**
- **Create quality jobs especially in the public sector, so called white jobs, and the social economy. Invest in public services especially in the areas of education, health, child and dependent persons care.**
- **Use Gender Budgeting as a standard methodology of all public budget processes.**
- **Work together with Trade Unions to support/enforce gender equality.**
- **Go beyond GDP: develop indicators on wellbeing and alternative accounting measures, including to ensure that women's unpaid care work is recognised in national accounts systems and a visible contribution to the economy.**
- **Promote parity in decision making in the economic and financial sector as well as private companies in order to ensure democracy and better governance, particularly financial and economic governance.**



# WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

*"Women's political participation is fundamental to democracy and essential to the achievement of sustainable development and peace."  
United Nations and UN Women, 2011*

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. Empowering women to take leadership position is crucial for sustainable economies and democratic and just societies. Studies from different countries demonstrate that companies with a higher share of women at top levels financially perform better. Diversity among employees and board members produces creativity and innovation through complementary knowledge and skills.

Today's picture however shows that women are still under-represented in political and corporate decision-making at local, national and EU level, due to persisting stereotypes, patriarchal attitudes and perceptions of women's competences and roles. Achieving parity is crucial for democracy, rights and justice.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.
- Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Across the EU, women are underrepresented in positions of responsibility in all domains. Particularly at the highest levels, women are still largely outnumbered by men in leadership positions in politics and business, as well as in other fields.

In June 2014, only 27% of national parliamentarians in the EU were female with very little progress over the last five years. The European Parliament performs slightly better with almost 37% of MEPs being women: an increase of just 1,75% in comparison to the European elections in 2009.

The situation is worse in business with, on average, one in six women members of boards in Europe's largest publicly quoted companies and only 4% of board chairpersons. In other fields such as Research and Innovation, women are still greatly under-represented, in particular at the top level of academic careers; only 20% of top level academics are women and only one out of ten universities in the European Union has a female Rector. In many European countries men outnumber women by at least two to one in the top two tiers of the civil service.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- The EWL reactivated its **50/50 campaign** in advance of the 2014 European elections in order to promote the active participation of women as voters and candidates in European Parliament and the equal representation of women and men in all European institutions. Several tools (publications, videos, lobbying kit) were instrumental to raise awareness at European and national level. A unique cross-party alliance of all democratic parties in the European Parliament supported the campaign.
- **EWL European Political Mentoring Network (2013-2014)**: a unique programme promoting and supporting women from ethnic minority or migrant backgrounds to run for the European Parliamentary elections.
- The **EWL Manifesto "Act now for her future, commit to gender equality!"** comprises the main demands of the EWL towards the candidates to the European Parliament 2014 elections and was supported by 4 of the Top Candidates to the EP Presidency.
- EWL Project **"Young women leaders are voices for girls & women"**: from September 2014, the EWL will develop training modules on leadership and women's rights for the young women newly elected to the European Parliament in Brussels
- EWL publication **"Women on Boards - From a Snail's Pace to a Giant Leap?" (2013)**: a comprehensive overview of the measures adopted in the recent years at national level to increase the representation of women in the boardrooms.

# WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



Gender equality in decision-making is mentioned as one of the priorities in the European Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) as well as in the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020). However, parity in decision-making positions still remains a significant challenge for all EU Member States, and the EU has not yet adopted legally-binding instruments providing a comprehensive framework to address the under-representation of women in politics.

A first important step was made by the European Commission in 2012 by proposing a directive with the aim of attaining a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-

member positions in listed companies in the EU. However, the Council of Ministers has not been able yet to find a consensus on this draft directive, which is therefore still a draft proposal. If the Council endorses the directive it will represent a clear commitment and leadership by the EU and its Member States to gender equality, justice and democracy.

As a result of the Member States negotiations on the composition of the new Commission in the summer 2014, only 9 women were proposed, out of 28 Commissioners: a step back compared to the 2009 Commission (9 women out of 27 Commissioners).

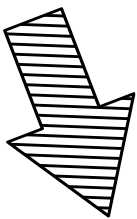


## GOOD PRACTICE

- In Northern Ireland, the “women in local council programme” aims at increasing the number of women in local councils through a gender action plan and gender champions.
- The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) publishes every year, for International Women’s Day, an internal assessment of gender equality with regards to ETUC membership and decision-making positions. ETUC’s resolution “from membership to leadership” fosters action through gender audits, mentoring programmes and quotas.

## CHALLENGES

- The progress in women’s participation in decision-making and leadership positions is still very slow. Under the current rate of progress, it will take almost 40 years to achieve parity in national parliaments.
- More gender-inclusive measures and laws, as well as education and action against stereotypes, are needed to include more women in decision-making and leadership positions and allow them to hold down their positions. Indeed, preconceptions of women’s roles and abilities is the most important obstacle women face, closely followed by a lack of suitable female role models, barriers to access opportunities to further deepen their management experience, family commitments, and a lack of mentoring opportunities.
- The highest level of European monetary decision-making is still 100% male. Parity democracy is also about breaking stereotypes about sectors considered ‘female’ or ‘male’: we want women in power in all spheres of society and on all issues, from finance to health.
- The media contribute to the misrepresentation of women in leadership positions, through the use of gender stereotypes and other degrading coverage. Women in politics face sexism, cyber hate and harassment.
- The talents of women remain still unemployed in science, research and development.
- European and national authorities, local governments, media and business-related bodies continue to invite more men than women as experts. We need them to change attitudes and invite women as experts, including without being swayed by gender-stereotypical perceptions regarding the assignment’s subject matter; women in minority groups must also be heard as experts.



## OUR DEMANDS **Parity at all levels of political and economic decision-making.**

- **Endorse the proposed directive on Women on Boards as a first step to continue to adopt efficient binding EU-level legislation to reach parity on company boards.**
- **Introduce a system whereby each Member State nominates a woman and a man as candidate Commissioners, and adopt a binding rule ensuring that women and men are equally represented in the European Commission.**
- **Adopt binding texts to ensure parity at all levels within the European institutions and agencies.**
- **Develop and support mentoring programmes as well as confidence building, leadership and media relations training for women within the European institutions and agencies, and support similar projects at national level.**
- **All political parties: be inclusive of women and aim at achieving parity in elections at all levels.**
- **All political groups: ensure gender parity and non-gender biased portfolios when nominating and appointing MEPs for decision-making positions in national and European institutions.**



# INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

*“Institutional mechanisms play a vital role in accelerating the achievement of de facto equality between women and men within the European Union and that strong and sustainable mechanisms are needed for developing, implementing and monitoring the relevant policies, in order to ensure that gender equality remains prominent on the political agenda.”*  
EU Council Conclusions, December 2013

Institutional mechanisms are support systems that are put in place at government level to ensure that a gender-equality perspective is mainstreamed in all policies and programmes. They play a central role in ensuring that gender equality laws are upheld, that women are made aware of their rights and can seek justice before the Courts when their rights have been violated. They also are crucial to ensure that women’s concerns and experiences form an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and societal spheres.

Well-functioning and adequately resourced institutional mechanisms are recognised at EU and national level as essential tools to promote women’s rights: they are crucial preconditions for ensuring progress in all the other critical areas for women’s rights, and therefore are central for promoting and realising de facto equality between women and men.

We want to see a strong sustainable architecture for women’s rights and gender equality at EU level, as a comprehensive and effective tool for the realisation of gender equality in Europe, and a model for similar mechanisms in all Member States.

## BEIJING ‘95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.
- Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.
- Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

EIGE has established that, while by 2012 all 28 Member States had established governmental equality bodies, there has been a tendency for gender equality, as a policy area, to decrease in importance. Fewer governments have cabinet ministers responsible for gender equality in 2012 compared to 2005; more governments placed the highest responsibility for gender equality with deputy ministers and assistant ministers. One third of Member States do not have their governmental gender equality body located at the highest level of governmental structures despite the recommendation of the Council in 2009 to do so.

Since 2005, the personnel resources of governmental

gender equality bodies have decreased in 14 Member States. Only five Member States have a separate designated body for the promotion of equal treatment of women and men.

In 2012, only two Member States used gender mainstreaming widely for drafting laws, policy programmes, actions plans and projects; only eight Member States had established a legal commitment for gender budgeting and only three used gender budgeting widely.

Two thirds of Member States have a national legal obligation to regularly collect and disseminate statistics disaggregated by sex.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- **EWL issues regular alerts on the weakening of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women’s rights in Europe.** Its in-depth work on the impact of the crisis on women’s rights and gender equality in Europe publication “The price of austerity” (2012) has shown the gradual and potential further erosion of gender specific institutional mechanisms particularly at national level; austerity policies have had a drastic impact on national gender equality bodies and the equality ministries/departments, at a time when women’s rights advocates in Europe most need them.
- The EWL actively participates in European Commission advisory bodies, and collaborates with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).
- The key demand of the EWL in its 2014 Manifesto for the European elections was a Commissioner for women’s rights and gender equality, as an instrumental political sign of the EU priority to realise gender equality, both through gender mainstreaming and specific actions for women’s rights.



# INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

At the European level, each of the three main institutions has developed some form of mechanism for the promotion of equality between women and men, to varying degrees of success. In the Council of Ministers, equality between women and men falls within the competence of a body in charge of social affairs in general. In 2010, a specific Gender Equality Unit was established in the European Commission within DG Justice, which addresses different grounds of discrimination (sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic/migration background), sending the message that women's rights are mainly about discrimination. The 2014 Commission might slightly change this structure. In 2010, the European Commission adopted a five-year Strategy for equality between women and men, which should be renewed; all EU Commissioners, when starting their mandate in 2009, signed a Charter on Women's Rights and committed to integrate gender equality in their respective policy portfolios. Other mechanisms are active within the European Commission, such as the Commission Inter-service Group on Gender Mainstreaming, the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Committee on

Women's Rights and Gender Equality is the key political body of the European Parliament on women's rights, and delivers annual reports on gender equality and political resolutions on the diversity of issues related to women's rights.

The adoption of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, in 2013, provides funding mechanisms for women's rights and gender equality, and the Structural Funds regulations contain an obligation for all partners to integrate a gender equality dimension in all funded projects and partnership agreements. However, there is no gender impact assessment of the EU budget. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) started working in 2009 and developed several projects to support EU policies, including data collection. However, it has no power of coordination and policy mandate.

In this context, there is a clear lack of coordinated and sustainable EU architecture for women's rights and gender equality, which would ensure the accomplishment of de facto equality between women and men in Europe.

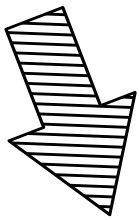


## GOOD PRACTICE

- In Germany, gender equality bodies at the regional level are working with universities and public institutions.
- In France, a high level Council for equality between women and men was established in 2013 and comprises experts, researchers and civil society representatives.

## CHALLENGES

- Throughout the EU, both at the national and European level, gender equality institutional mechanisms are diluted into bodies dealing with diversity and all grounds of discrimination, and in some cases into human rights bodies. This leads to an invisibility of the goal of women's rights and a decrease of human and financial resources for gender equality and women's rights.
- There is a lack of training within governmental structures on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting.
- More cooperation with and support for women's rights organisations is needed.
- There is an urgent need for gender disaggregated data and specific reports that reflect gender issues. When it comes to gender equality measures, the data and information have many shortcomings and the data collected (gender pay gap, gender pension gap) is not systematically used in other policy frameworks.
- The role of gender mainstreaming and institutional mechanisms can become neutral in terms of feminist analysis of power relations. Any gender equality strategy should challenge structural discrimination against women and girls and the persisting violations of their rights.



## OUR DEMANDS **A sustainable and strong EU architecture for women's rights and gender equality.**

- **A strong European Commissioner for Women's Rights and Gender Equality, supported by a Directorate on equality between women and men.**
- **An EU Strategy for women's rights and equality between women and men, based on the dual approach of gender mainstreaming and specific actions.**
- **A stronger role for the European Institute for Gender Equality: monitoring gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in all EU policies and organs, including macroeconomic policies and EU external policies; collecting and disseminating gender statistics; training and raising awareness on gender inequality within the EU institutions and towards the general public.**
- **A budget heading for activities on gender equality in the budget of each Commission unit.**
- **A structured dialogue of the different EU institutions with the women's rights movement, including the EWL.**
- **The strengthening of the European Commission's Inter-Service Group on Gender Mainstreaming and making its work more visible inside and outside the Commission.**
- **To the Member States: Gender equality mechanisms should be at the highest political level, be part of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy for women's rights, and need to have the necessary authority, visibility, political recognition, funding and human resources. They should develop gender expertise within and as capacity builders for gender equality at different levels of government and administration.**



# HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

*"The human rights of women throughout the life cycle are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights."  
World Conference on Human Rights, 1993*

Women make up more than half of the world and Europe's population, and should therefore fully enjoy all human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on an equal footing with men, and on an equal footing among themselves.

Several international human rights instruments focusing on women's rights and empowerment have been adopted over the last 40 years, including the Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW, but equality between women and men is still not a reality in Europe; violations of women's and girls' human rights are still prevalent at all levels, in different spheres of society and life; women and girls lack knowledge about their rights; and some women are made more vulnerable to the violation of their rights due to their multiple identities. More and more violations of women's human rights are emerging in the case of migrant, refugee, asylum-seeking and undocumented women, in a context of globalisation and increased migration flows.

Promoting, respecting and guaranteeing women's human rights is an integral commitment of all Member States, which should be accompanied by an obligation for all Member States to act with due diligence, in order to provide a framework to prevent and combat all human rights violations, including women's human rights and their right to equality.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.
- Achieve legal literacy.

## MIGRANT WOMEN IN EUROPE

The European Union is a region of destination for many individuals, leaving their country for various reasons: refugees, displaced persons, unaccompanied minors, families, students, migrant workers; some of them might also be undocumented. Women are an integral part of these migration flows, and face specific situations which make them vulnerable to the violation of their human rights.

Some have fled their country because of gender persecution, but not all asylum policies implement the UN High Commission for Refugees' gender-sensitive guidelines which would grant them asylum. Some women arrive in the EU on the basis of family ties, with a temporary residence permit connected to a partner; this lack of individual rights means that access to basic services can

be compromised; for women in an abusive relationship, status dependency prevents them from claiming their right to life and dignity and leaving the relationship without fearing of deportation. Women's vulnerability as domestic workers needs to be taken into account more seriously, and the overrepresentation of migrant women in prostitution should alert policy and decision-makers to the links between trafficking and the sex trade and push them to adopt abolitionist policies.

The European Parliament is regularly raising the alarm on the situation of migrants, asylum seekers and undocumented persons in the EU, including women and girls (see in 2013 the EP resolution on undocumented women).



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- **"Equal Rights. Equal Voices. Migrant women's integration in the labour market in six European cities: A comparative approach" (2012):** the study by the EWL and the European Network of Migrant Women (ENoMW) reveals that targeted national and local policies make a difference in integrating migrant women to the labour market.
- In the context of the European Commission public consultation on the right to family reunification, ENoMW and the European Women's Lobby produced a lobbying campaign that calls for gender-sensitive EU policies on family reunification: **"Lobbying Kit - EU Directive on the right to family reunification in Europe: What is at stake for migrant women?" (2012)**, as a follow-up of ENoMW's publication "Family Reunion Legislation in Europe: Is it Discriminatory for Migrant Women?" (2011).
- In 2010, the EWL co-organised an event in the EP on **"Preventing Undocumented Women and Children from Accessing Health Care: Fostering Health Inequalities in Europe"**, together with the European Anti-Poverty Network, Médecins du Monde, and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM); a report was published with the outcomes of the meeting.
- **"En-gendering the European Asylum Support Office":** In 2011, the EWL, together with Amnesty International END FGM campaign and ILGA Europe, issued a series of recommendations for the integration of a gender perspective into the work of the European Asylum Support Office.





# HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The EU correctly takes pride in its commitment to the respect and promotion of human rights, but this commitment has so far mainly been associated with external EU policies. The EU has developed Human Rights Guidelines, which have been adopted at ministerial level and therefore represent a strong political signal that they are priorities for the Union. The Guidelines address a wide range of rights, such as freedom of expression, humanitarian law, human rights defenders, rights of the child, human rights of LGBTI persons, freedom of religion or belief, violence against women, death penalty, and torture. Since 2009, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights has been a guiding text for EU action and a tool for the Advocates General of the European Court of Justice. However, there is still obvious discrepancy between the EU external and internal action, and a lack of monitoring and action within its borders.

By creating the Fundamental Rights Agency and the European Institute for Gender Equality, the EU has equipped itself with structures monitoring the implementation of some human rights within its borders. Several EU directives prohibit discrimination,

but the prevalent phenomenon of multiple discrimination, particularly faced by women, is not adequately addressed by the EU: legislation providing for non-discrimination against women does not go beyond employment and goods and services, and there is still no EU legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, disability, and religion or belief (while such legislation exists in some EU Member States and can assist women in being protected against discrimination). In this context, women facing multiple discrimination are not adequately protected by the EU. Moreover, a comprehensive internal strategy on human rights is nevertheless still missing, to guarantee that all individuals, including all women and girls, can fully enjoy their human rights in Europe.

In 2007, the EU signed the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force with respect to the EU in 2011. Until now, the EU has not ratified any other human rights instruments, despite its new legal capability to do so.

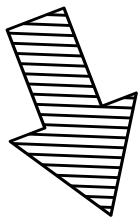


## GOOD PRACTICE

- Ireland has the most rights-based approach to supporting domestic workers.
- In Finland, multiple discrimination is mentioned in the anti-discrimination law.
- EWL members have developed projects to support migrant women in different ways: the Belgian Vrouwenraad has led the project "Empowerment of female asylum seekers" in 2012-14; the German NGO Maisha provides business plan templates for migrant women considering setting up their own business.

## CHALLENGES

- Many international instruments directly impact on the human rights of individuals; for example the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, or the Convention against Torture. The EU has not ratified them, and the EU Member States repeatedly add reservations to international human rights instruments.
- Women's rights organisations face attacks and threats in several countries in the EU; it can be physical attacks against women defending the right to abortion, such as in France and Spain; in other countries, women's organisations are put on a black list by their government (as in Hungary) and cannot enjoy their right to association and freedom of expression.
- Women's human rights defenders face distinct forms of violation of their human rights (including sexual violence), because they are women. The EU should be strong on protecting them inside and outside its borders.
- Women in very vulnerable situations should be given information and access to justice: women in detention and prison, in hospitals or care institutions, in youth establishments.
- There is an urgent need to add explicit clauses and binding regulations on multiple discrimination to national legal systems.
- At the international level, women's human rights are under threat: some countries regularly object to the implementation of their obligations by referring to their sovereignty over the values they commit to.



## OUR DEMANDS **Women's rights are human rights.**

- **Sign and ratify the CEDAW Convention and its Optional Protocol.**
- **To the EU Member States: withdraw all reservations made to the international human rights instruments, including CEDAW and the EU Accession Treaties, and implement the CEDAW Committee's recommendations.**
- **Develop an EU internal Human Rights Strategy with a strong women's rights and gender dimension.**
- **Mainstream women's rights, including the goal of gender equality, into all EU policies on human rights and on migration and asylum.**
- **Implement systematic gendered human rights impact assessment for all EU legislation.**
- **Eliminate all gaps in the EU legislation on discrimination by: adopting legislation that prohibits sex discrimination in all sectors, including education and media; adopting legislation prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of age, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief.**
- **Develop compulsory training programmes on human rights, women's rights, multiple discrimination and gender equality, for all the persons working in the European institutions, delegations and agencies, including the European Court of Justice, as well as internal awareness raising campaigns against gender stereotypes.**
- **Sanction any violation of the right of association and expression and any attacks against women's rights organisations, and support these organisations as part of the EU civil and democratic dialogue.**
- **Take measures to give access to justice to women, including to the European Court of Justice, by disseminating relevant information about their human rights and possibilities of action, using adequate and non-sexist language, providing free legal aid, and supporting women's organisations undergoing strategic litigation.**



# WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

*"If media are a mirror of society as they should be, they certainly need to reflect better the fact that gender equality is a fundamental human right."  
International Federation of Journalists, Gender Equality in Journalism.*

During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviours, especially of children and young adults. Books, newspapers, magazines, photography, sound recordings, films, radio, television, the Internet, and other social media, convey messages, values, beliefs. All forms of media have shaped and will continue to strongly influence our view of the world. All over the world, the media could provide an important contribution to advance the status of women and has already proven to play a great role in creating awareness and connecting women. However women still suffer from a serious lack of visibility in the media. Moreover, the persistence of gender stereotyping and discrimination in the media impedes the realisation of equality between women and men. It is still men who make the news, tell the news and are the news. The growing eroticisation of violence and objectification of women in the media must be a societal concern. The rapidly

increasing spread and impact of the media, especially in digital form, make ensuring the protection of human dignity in media content all the more essential.

The media is a cornerstone of democratic societies, just as gender equality is. We must at the same time secure freedom of press and expression, and counteract stereotypical and sexist representations of women and women's issues.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and the new technologies of communication.
- Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

As underlined by EIGE, while women have considerably outnumbered men in university-level and practice-based journalism programmes (68% of graduates in journalism), the ownership, control and organisational culture of the media remains largely masculine. Women are still significantly under-represented in the decision-making structures of media organisations (32 % of all senior positions) and the pay gap between female and male media professionals is still very high (estimated at 17 % across the EU).

In the EU, women account for only 24% of people that we hear or read about in the news. Moreover, while men are asked to speak as experts, women continue to be considered as victims or readers or watchers belonging to the general public. Women's image in the media is very much stereotyped and reductive. Only 4% of the

news coverage is against stereotypical portrayal. Only 16% of photos in European newspaper show women over 45 years of age (according to the project "You can't be what you can't see"). Women are only 32% of principal TV characters. When at least one writer on a film is a woman, the number of female characters rises from 30 to 40 per cent (Media Smarts). Less than 9% of sports coverage is devoted to women's sports. And women are more than twice as likely to be portrayed in (semi-)nudity in adverts.

The objectification of women and girls in video games, music video clips and lyrics, movies, adverts, children's TV programmes, and magazines, should be considered a very serious issue. Two-thirds of young people turn to the media when they want to learn about sex. 80% of boys between 14 and 18 years old and 45% of girls watched a pornographic movie in the past year.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- In 2010, the EWL exchanged with cosmetics industries across Europe to raise awareness on the impacts of gender stereotypes in advertising and call for self-regulation mechanisms.
- EWL website and social media promote women's views, opinions and actions in Europe!
- In 2014, as part of its 50/50 Campaign on parity democracy, the EWL explored the relationship between sexist stereotypes and ownership in the media and the participation of women in politics.



# WOMEN AND THE MEDIA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union has made slow progress in ensuring that the principle of gender equality, which was enshrined in its founding Treaties, applies and is implemented with regard to the media industry. While the EU prohibits discrimination on the basis of race in all spheres of society, equal treatment between women and men is not guaranteed in the areas of media and education, and the EU Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015) doesn't address stereotypes and gender inequality in the media.

In 2013, the EPSCO Council of Ministers adopted Conclusions on Women and the Media and took note of the first indicators

prepared by EIGE. However, those indicators mainly concentrate on women's participation and decision-making in the media. We lack data about the link between women's rights and participation and gender stereotypes and the media.

In 2013, the European Parliament approved a report on 'eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU', which stresses the need to run special courses on gender stereotypes in the media for national advertising standards committees and self-regulatory bodies to raise awareness of the negative influence of gender-discriminatory images.

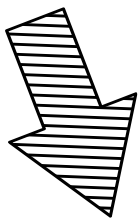


## GOOD PRACTICE

- In Luxembourg: every Tuesday, newspapers dedicate their sports section to women. Ahead of national elections, some organisations proposed workshops for female candidates to make better use of social media.
- In Bulgaria, there is a code of conduct in the newspapers.
- Estonia sees TV channels and magazines specialised in gender issues.
- Different EU countries participate in the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) which maps the representation of women and men in news media worldwide.

## CHALLENGES

- Women who write on the Internet and participate in social media, on blogs and other online forums, meet increasing hostility and harassment. This organised, sexist harassment threatens the empowerment of women and is a way to silence women's voices in the public sphere. Moreover, cyber hate has both short and long-term harmful effects on women's quality of life and mental health, and weakens the potential for active participation in society, while trivialising negative views on all women and girls.
- Advertisements reinforce gender stereotyping, objectification, and hypersexualisation of women's body. Excessive use of Photoshop creates fake examples of female beauty, which can negatively influence girls and women's self-image.
- Advertisers, TV and movie studios legitimise the abundance of female stereotypes with economic arguments. Today, the most desirable part of the audience consists of males aged 18 to 34. TV writers and producers are more inclined to create shows aimed at men, and to give key roles to men. Media executives therefore argue that the economics of the industry make it impossible to avoid stereotypes of women. It is urgent to question the economics of gender stereotyping in all forms of media (Media Smarts).
- What appears in the news and what is left out of the news matters. There is a need for more awareness and education to help people, especially youth, to critically look at the role and content of the media, from a women's rights and gender equality perspective.



## OUR DEMANDS **Mirror, mirror on the wall... a fair and equal representation of women in the media.**

- **Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex/gender in the area of media and education.**
- **Fully mainstream gender equality and women's rights into all European policies and programmes related to the media and information society, including the communication tools of the European institutions and agencies.**
- **Develop, fund and encourage training programmes on women's rights, anti-discrimination and gender stereotypes for media professionals.**
- **Create a European Media Monitoring Group with a specific gender equality branch to fight gender stereotyping and misrepresentation of women.**
- **Promote more diversity in female role models and the way women are portrayed in the media, and a diversified and realistic picture of the skills and the potential of women in society, as well as of the diversity of women's identities.**
- **Introduce a code of conduct for journalist which stresses gender equality.**
- **Develop research and comparable data on women and the media, and databases with expert women, from diverse backgrounds and identities.**
- **Create awareness campaigns for children and young people, to prevent stereotypes in cartoons, cyber harassment, and promote positive images.**
- **Follow-up concretely on the 1997 European Parliament Resolution calling for the prohibition of all forms of pornography in the media, as well as the advertising of sex tourism.**



# WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

*'We need to recognize women as change agents engaged in struggles over fossil fuel exploitation, pollution and environmental health, for food sovereignty, against privatisation of water, access to renewable energy, etc.'*

*Anita Nayar, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)*

The state of the environment and climate change are the greatest challenges that the world faces. Men and women affect and are affected by environmental and climate change in different ways. Environmental policies impact directly on the health and living standards of individuals. In certain regions of the EU, access to safe water and sanitation is still not guaranteed.

Women's rights and climate change are interlinked: when women's rights are not protected, more women than men die from disasters, most of which, these days, are climate-related. On the other hand, the more unequal a country is, the higher its carbon emission.

While many women are present in ecological and environmental movements, they are largely absent from decision-making in this sector, including at the governmental level. For women in Europe, it is also a question of solidarity with all women on the planet, who already have to live with the consequences of climate change. Women are half of the world's population: it is obvious that we won't save the planet without women's leadership and participation.



## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Gender-differentiated roles and responsibilities in families and households, as well as gender-segregated labour market and income gap, cause differentiated vulnerabilities of women to the effects of climate change. They include more casualties among women during extreme weather events and stressful experiences of recovering from disasters. Economic disparities lead to differences in adaptive capacity. Care work may increase due to health impacts of climate change or due to natural disasters, putting additional burdens on women who are mainly responsible for caring.

According to EIGE, women, on average, generate less gas emissions than men, in particular in the transport sector. Women tend to travel in a more sustainable way than men. In Europe the overall number of women driving (40%) is smaller than the overall number of men (62,2%). In the area of nutrition, women's daily meat consumption tends to be lower, and we know that raising livestock contributes to agricultural gas emissions.

Women's capabilities to adapt to climate change are shaped by education, gender roles, division of labour in the household and income. For example, women tend to

### BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.
- Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.
- Strengthen or establish mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

spend more time indoors as they more often have care responsibilities in the family, and thus depend to a greater extent on space heating. In terms of mobility, women depend on access to public transport to a larger degree. Owing to their lower incomes, they have greater risk of energy poverty than men. Women from discriminated groups or living in isolated areas (like homeless women or rural women) have lower access to safe water and sanitation.

In terms of attitudes towards climate change, women are more likely than men to reject nuclear power, and to be in favour of policy measures to reduce energy consumption. The proportion of women in climate change decision-making bodies at the national, European and international level is still low. The percentage of women in high-level positions dealing with climate change in national ministries competent for environment is 33.9%, for transport 20.2% and for energy 17.3%. The average percentage of women in relevant high-level positions in the European Commission is 26.9%. While in DG Climate action it is 40% and in DG Environment 37.5%, in DG Energy it is 20% and in DG Mobility and Transport 12.5%.

## CLIMATE CHANGE IN EUROPE

Anthropogenic or human-induced climate change, caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is widely acknowledged as one of the greatest challenges of our time. The expected impacts of climate change in the EU include more frequent extreme weather events, high temperatures and drought (in particular in Southern Europe), retreat of glaciers and reduced snow cover. Consequences will include increased risk of flash floods and coastal flooding, increased erosion, more frequent wildfires, extensive species loss, rise of the sea level, air pollution, reduced water availability and crop productivity. These geo-physical impacts will result in socio-economic impacts such as effects on human health and pressure on economic activities such as tourism (Source: EIGE).



## WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT & THE EUROPEAN UNION

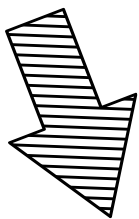
Despite the leading role of the EU in advancing the international negotiations on climate change, the gender dimension has been largely absent from policy initiatives and debates at the European and international levels. Since 2012, the issue is high on the political agenda in the EU. Firstly, in 2012, the EU Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of Ministers (EPSCO) adopted conclusions on gender equality and climate change, highlighting that more women are needed in climate change decision-making to respond to climate change effectively. The same year, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) introduced the first indicators to measure the progress of gender equality in the area of women and the environment, showing that to develop and maintain a sustainable and effective response to climate change, a gender approach and gender-sensitive indicators must be an integral

part of all policies and actions at all levels.

The 2012 European Parliament resolution on women and climate change explains that women would be more affected by climate change, because consumption and lifestyle patterns have a significant impact on climate change, and women still have relatively more responsibility for everyday consumption choices, childcare and household activities. The Parliament highlights that women consume more sustainably than men and show greater willingness to act to preserve the environment by making sustainable consumption choices. The 2012 EP resolution on women and the green economy makes proposals to support more women in this new form of sustainable economy.

### CHALLENGES

- The proportion of women at high-level positions in the sectors of Transport and Energy is still very low, both at European and national level. This situation can be explained by gender stereotypes and education that define technology and science as masculine. EIGE studies indeed show that women are less likely to choose scientific and technological fields relevant to climate change.
- EU indicators on women and the environment focus mainly on decision-making, and should include other quantitative and qualitative indicators on the direct and indirect impact of climate change on women. There is insufficient research and data collection on exposure to chemicals (for example cleaning products, pesticides, industrial and farming products, consumer products) and their impact on women's and men's health (including cancers, pregnancies, and sexual and reproductive health), access to safe water and quality sanitation (such as public or school toilets).
- Privatisation of water (despite the EU Water Framework Directive) and public services, including public transports, can threaten the access of women and men to these fundamental resources and services.
- Waste management and packaging are issues that have a great impact on women, and strict legislation should be implemented.
- In other parts of the world, women climate activists are threatened of criminalisation and pervasive forms of violence, including rape. Despite this, the action of grassroots women is making concrete change at local level. The 2014 Summit on Women and Climate Change in Bali brought together women's and environmental rights leaders.
- The current GDP system does not integrate the impact of our life styles on the environment; we need new values that prioritise the protection of the Earth and the wellbeing of people.



### OUR DEMANDS **Women as agents of change for a sustainable people-centred world.**

- **Ensure the right of all women and girls to be heard on environmental issues in their regions.**
- **Systematically include a women's rights and gender equality perspective in the definition, implementation and monitoring of environmental/climate/transport/energy policies at all levels, including research activities and data collection, and in both EU external (including development) and internal policies.**
- **Secure women's political participation and decision-making roles in environmental and climate change work, at all levels (regional/national/European/international).**
- **Assess, disseminate and raise awareness on the impacts of environmental policies on women, by both public policies and the private industry.**
- **Take action towards women's higher enrolment in science and technology-related fields of education, and women's entrepreneurship in agriculture, renewable energies, environment, protection and tourism, and enhance their contribution to innovation, quality of life and preservation of land, environment and culture.**
- **Speed up the elaboration of an environment strategy based on biodiversity, sustainable development, quality of life and wellbeing, from an intergenerational and gender equality perspective.**



# THE GIRL CHILD

*“Empowerment of and investment in girls are the key in breaking the cycle of discrimination and in promoting the full and effective enjoyment of their human rights”.*  
United Nations Resolution 66/170

Achieving equality between women and men begins with the girl child: it is crucial to recognise that the gender relations between girls and boys in the early stages of life are a precursor to their full enjoyment of human rights and to the realisation of gender equality in other phases of life. Children are gendered human beings: girls have specific experiences and needs, and are more likely to suffer from sexual violence, sexist stereotypes, or sex-based discrimination.

A proactive and systematic approach to gender equality in early childhood, including the integration of a gender perspective in all policies related to children, is a prerequisite to eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Children’s rights are considered within different European policies and programmes – combating violence, trafficking and sexual exploitation, anti-discrimination, prevention of child abduction – but with a neutral perspective. Childhood is a particular period, where children shape their personality and which has an impact on the rest of their life. Hence, the distinct needs of girls must be addressed in EU and national policy. Girls are full of ideas and energy and should be considered a driving force for a brighter, greener and more equal Europe.

## BEIJING '95 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child.
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- Promote and protect the rights of the girl child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skill development and training.
- Eliminate discriminations against girls in health and nutrition.
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
- Eradicate violence against the girl child.
- Promote the girl child’s awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
- Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child.

## FACTS & FIGURES IN EUROPE

Since 2008 in Europe, the risk of poverty and social exclusion has risen more rapidly for girls than for boys; moreover, girls experience specific human rights violations arising from poverty and social exclusion: dangers of child trafficking and prostitution, and child labour and exploitation. ‘Au pair’ work or summer jobs abroad can attract under-18 girls into trafficking or exploiting networks. Certain groups of girls are particularly at risk of exclusion from educational opportunities, in particular those from migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds and from families with low socio-economic status.

Violence against girls is still prevalent in Europe: one in ten women have experienced some form of sexual abuse before the age of 15 and more than 27% of women have

experienced some form of abuse in their childhood. Child, early and forced marriage, as well as sexual harassment at school, affects millions of girls every year and brings risks for their reproductive and overall health; Roma girls suffer disproportionately from this practice. Female genital mutilation (FGM), an extreme and violent way in which girls are controlled and disempowered, is still present in EU countries. Girls with disabilities or in care institutions are at particular risk of abuse.

Girls are a very vulnerable category in terms of health: they are more at risk of addiction to alcohol and cigarettes, more at risk of getting eating disorders and sensitive to reproductive health.



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY ACTIONS

- In 2011, in **partnership with the World Association of Girls Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)**, the EWL organised an event on the European Parliament to raise awareness on violence against women and girls, and the discrepancy between EU external and internal policies in terms of gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- During the 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2014, the EWL co-organised a side-event entitled **“Reaching out to the last girl: Prostitution, MDGs and the most vulnerable women and girls”**: EWL partners shared their experience and views on prostitution from the perspective of the most vulnerable women and girls: girls from Indian low castes, African women and girls in Europe and women and girls from Canadian Indigenous communities.

# THE GIRL CHILD IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



The right to protection and respect and the promotion of the principle of the child's best interests are recognised by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which has had the same legal status as the EU Treaties since the Lisbon Treaty.

However, experience shows that when girls are not specifically mentioned as a unique cohort, interventions don't reach them. Today, there is no overall EU legislation affecting the rights of girl children and the European Commission Youth Strategy doesn't have a gender perspective or a particular pillar for girl children.

In December 2011, the European Parliament and the Council

approved a directive on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography. In 2012, the European Parliament approved also the Daphne Programme, a programme to fight against violence and to protect women and girl children.

Since the International Day of the Girl Child (11th October each year) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2011, a European Week of Action for Girls is organised every year by NGOs, giving a regular opportunity to highlight the rights of girls, the challenges they face, and the initiatives they promote for a better life in Europe.

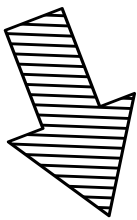


## GOOD PRACTICE

- Holistic, compulsory and continuous sexuality education is part of the primary school curriculum in several EU Member States (Sweden, Belgium, France, Germany, Denmark and Finland).
- In 2012, the French government commissioned a report on equality between girls and boys in childcare and unveiled the persisting stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes against girls from the earliest age. The report is a key tool for the government to implement systematic education schemes on gender equality at school.

## CHALLENGES

- Gender stereotypes are resilient in all spheres of society, including in formal and non-formal education. Stereotypes have an impact on girls' educational patterns of choice and path, which have consequences for their whole life in terms of professional and personal development. Girls are confronted every day with sexist stereotyping in the media, the culture and fashion industry, and advertising, which sends them damaging messages about their self-esteem and their potential.
- There is a lack of opportunities for girls to participate in programmes to promote gender awareness and empowerment for girls.
- New technologies can offer opportunities for girls to speak out, but are also used as a tool by boys and men for bullying, sexual harassment and control over girls' sexuality and freedom.
- A more conservative political climate over the past decade in Europe has led to a growth in the influence of religious and customary practices on the girl child. At the same time, the entertainment industry sends restrictive messages to girls and young women about their potential, which makes them vulnerable to sexual objectification, and impacts on their health and sexual health.
- Girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights are threatened: there is a lack of information, counselling, health care, and methods of contraception and abortion services.
- Violence against the girl child in the family persists: child marriage, pressure or control over girls' social life, prostitution...
- Non-accompanied migrant or asylum-seeking girl children are highly vulnerable and at risk of sexual exploitation.



## OUR DEMANDS

**Her future: empowering the girl child for the future of women's rights.**

- **Recognise the distinctive needs of girl children in all EU internal and external policies on children, youth and young people, and establish goals for girls in EU various actions and instruments.**
- **Systematically assess the impact of poverty and social exclusion on the girl child and develop specific measures to address these issues.**
- **Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in the areas of education and the media.**
- **Adopt and implement a strategy to end all forms of violence against women and girls, with concrete actions towards girl children, taking into account their multiple identities, and providing quality child protection systems.**
- **Ensure universal access to education for girls, and the disappearance of sexist stereotypes in formal and non-formal education. Ensure that teaching overall Europe is in conformity with gender equality principles and support girls' empowerment.**
- **Support, including financially, gender-sensitive comprehensive sex education for all girls and boys in Europe, including information on women's rights, gender equality, sexual orientation and sexual rights.**
- **Pursue active policies to protect girls from minority groups and girls from migrant communities and allow the non-accompanied girl child to benefit from asylum.**
- **Support programmes that actively promote the full and effective participation of young women and girls in the design, implementation, and monitoring of European and national policies and services.**

# THE EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Women and girls are half of Europe's population, and are entitled to the same rights as men and boys. Achieving substantive equality between women and men, promoting women's rights and empowering women should be a priority of the European Union and its Member States. Gender equality is an essential part of democracy, social justice, human rights and dignity.

This is what drives the European Women's Lobby and its member organisations. The European Women's Lobby is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union, working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men, and representing a total of more than 2000 organisations.

Acting as a forum for increased exchange, cooperation and integration, allowing the women's organisations of Europe to play an active role in shaping the European framework for gender equality, the EWL aims to ensure that the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by both the European Union and its Member States remains high on the political agenda. The EWL has therefore contributed to the regular review of the Beijing Platform for Action by providing its own assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action at the European level, through two comprehensive policy reports in 2005 for Beijing+10, and in 2010 for Beijing+15.

**If you also believe that women's rights are human rights, and that feminist values are instrumental to make a change, then take action: join us, support us, like us, retweet us, contact us, tell your friends about us.**

[www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org)

 **European Women's Lobby**

 **@EuropeanWomen**  
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ANY DONATIONS WELCOME TO SUPPORT  
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# ACRONYMS

**CEDAW** – UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women  
**DG** – Directorate-General (within the European Commission)  
**EC** – European Commission  
**EIGE** – European Institute for Gender Equality  
**ENoMW** – European Network of Migrant Women  
**EP** – European Parliament  
**EPSCO Council** – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council of the EU  
**EU** – European Union  
**EU 2020 Strategy** – EU ten-year growth strategy  
**EWL** – European Women’s Lobby  
**FEMM Committee** – Committee for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality within the European Parliament  
**FRA** – Fundamental Rights Agency  
**GDP** – Gross Domestic Product  
**LGBTI** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Persons  
**MEP** – Member of the European Parliament  
**NGO** – Non-Governmental Organisation  
**OECD** – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development  
**SRHR** – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights  
**UN** – United Nations  
**WHO** – World Health Organisation

# MAIN RESOURCES

- “Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States”, European Institute for Gender Equality (reports and factsheets).
- “Feminist agreements and demands”, The Nordic women’s movements final document of Nordiskt Forum Malmö 2014 – New Action for Women’s Rights.
- European data, facts and figures: Eurostat, European Commission reports, Council Conclusions, European Parliament resolutions, reports, studies and briefings, reports of the Fundamental Rights Agency, OECD data.
- International data, facts and figures: UN Women.
- European Women’s Lobby publications, position papers, lobbying kits, statements and press releases.

# CREDITS

President: Viviane Teitelbaum

Secretary General: Joanna Maycock

Editorial and publication coordination: Pierrette Pape

Graphic design: Elvira Buijink

Contributors: Serap Altinisik, Elena Brolis, Elvira Buijink, Mary Collins, Capucine Coustere, Sophie Dehareng, Colette De Troy, Anna-Leena Hayha, Gina Horst, Jessica Machacova, Joanna Maycock, Giulia Mirizzi, Pierrette Pape, Irene Rosales, Marion Sharples, Karima Zahi

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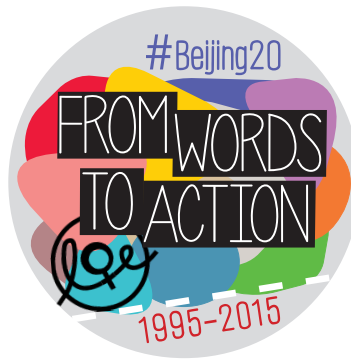
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2015



## EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY CALENDAR

12 months to celebrate 20 years of the Beijing Platform for Action and 25 years of the European Women's Lobby!

- JANUARY Read our European Women's Voice publication on women's economic independence.
- FEBRUARY We will put the Women on Boards Directive back on the EU agenda.
- MARCH International Women's Day: working with the new EU Commissioner for Gender Equality.
- APRIL Raising awareness on women's health.
- MAY Gathering journalists for a special training on women's rights.
- JUNE Thinking green, acting green: join EWL action on the environment.
- JULY Join the first European Women's Lobby feminist summer school!
- AUGUST Empowering girls and young women through creativity.
- SEPTEMBER What if we start scrutinising military spending vs. women's rights and peace?
- OCTOBER Joining forces with European networks to end poverty in Europe.
- NOVEMBER 16 days of activism against violence against women.
- DECEMBER Building on a year of action for women's human rights.

