# Role of women in the green economy

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the role of women in the green economy.

Parliament recalls that due to gender roles, women do not affect the environment in the same way as men, and in many countries women's access to resources, and their opportunities to manage conditions and adapt, are curtailed by structural norms and discrimination. It also notes that it is the poorest people, an estimated 70% of whom are women, who will be hardest hit by climate change and the destruction of the ecosystem. Women also tend to consume less and show a greater willingness to act to preserve the environment via their consumption choices than men.

This is why it puts forward a series of recommendations stressing that the transition to **a green and sustainable economy** is essential to reducing environmental impact, improving social justice and **creating a society in which women and men enjoy equal rights and opportunities.**

Recalling that the "green economy" covers aspects such as the ecosystem, consumption, food, growth, transport, energy and the welfare sector, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to compile age- and gender disaggregated data when strategies, programmes and budgeting projects are being planned, implemented and evaluated for the environment and climate sectors.

It notes that the absence of statistics makes it difficult to implement appropriate measures to improve gender equality. In this context, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data on the distribution of financial resources in correlation to gender-divided sectors and green innovations, and to develop indicators in order to measure the potential, disaggregated effects of a green economy on territorial and social cohesion.

It regrets that gender concerns and perspectives are not well integrated in policies and programmes for sustainable development and points out that the **absence of gender perspectives from environmental policies increases gender inequality**.

It calls for:

- the establishment of gender mainstreaming mechanisms at international, national and regional levels in policies;

- the support and promotion of specific research and studies on how the conversion into a green economy will affect women and men in different sectors, and on women's essential role in facilitating the transition;

- the systematic inclusion of a gender-equality perspective in the definition, implementation and monitoring of environmental policies at all levels;

- the promotion of gender equality as a key issue when designing, and conducting negotiations on, future regulations and programmes for the EU structural funds (the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), as well as the Common Agricultural Policy; and

- the improvement of awareness about the importance of converting to a green economy and about the positive effects of gender-sensitive environmental policies.

**Sustainable consumption:** Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States **to introduce gender equality into all environmental policy areas, and at all levels of economic decision-making**. This could start with the application of a new, social and climate-friendly indicator on growth, which includes non-economic aspects of wellbeing and sets its primary focus on issues related to sustainable development such as gender equality, poverty reduction and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

It underlines that work to meet people's legitimate demands for housing, food, provisions, energy and jobs must always be carried out so that ecosystems are conserved and climate change is limited. It also emphasises that **GDP is a measurement of production and does not measure environmental sustainability**, resource efficiency, social inclusion or social development in general. It calls for the development of clear and measurable indicators that take account of climate change, biodiversity, resource efficiency and social equality.

**Sustainable transport:** the Commission and Member States are called upon to:

- create sustainable transport systems which take equal account of women's and men's transportation needs and which, at the same time, have a low impact on the environment;
- reduce the environmental and energy impacts of the transport sector and to improve equality by working to increase access to IT systems and traffic-efficient planning;
- introduce a transport hierarchy that clearly indicates which mode of transport should be prioritised for overall environmental and traffic targets to be achieved;
- integrate the impact of the use of transport by public authorities in the state audits carried out by respective auditing authorities;
- promote remote working by means of social and tax incentives;
- significantly strengthen local public transport by increasing the quantity and quality of transport services, by improving the safety, comfort and physical accessibility of transportation modes and facilities.

Overall, Parliament believes that **EU public funds should be used, to a much higher degree, for sustainable collective uses**.

**The welfare sector and green jobs:** Parliament encourages **women's entrepreneurship in the green economy** whether in the development of environmental protection, the use of environmentally-friendly technologies or the introduction of green innovations. In this context, it calls on the Member States to ensure that women are equally represented in political decision-making bodies as well as in government-appointed bodies and institutions dealing with defining, planning and implementing environmental, energy and green jobs policies. It calls for greater participation of women in social dialogue. For Parliament, a sustainable economy means is one that is '**green for all'**, creating decent work and sustainable communities and allowing for a fairer distribution of wealth.

Parliament refers to the fact that **female workers are strongly under-represented** in the renewable sector and especially in science- and technology-intensive jobs and that it is, therefore, especially important that the Member States develop action plans to encourage more women to choose courses and careers within fields such as engineering, natural sciences, IT and other areas of advanced technology. If it is not possible to achieve this through voluntary means, targeted initiatives, such as the **establishment of quotas** or other methods, must be used to strengthen equality and democracy.

In this regard, Parliament proposes a series of measures including support for women's access to microcredit for small business, training to facilitate women's access to new "green" jobs and emerging technologies with a low environmental impact, and support for social security, family planning and child care. Once again, Parliament stresses that in order for women to participate in the green economy on the same terms as men, more centres for the care of children and the elderly are needed.

**Sustainable policies in international relations:** Parliament calls on the Commission to fully recognise and address the multiple effects of environmental degradation on inequalities, in particular between women and men, and to ensure the promotion of women's equal rights in the elaboration of new policy proposals in the field of climate change and environmental sustainability. With this in mind, it calls for indicators to assess the gender-specific impact of projects and programmes.

Lastly, it calls for: i) access to clean water is of major importance to girls and women in many parts of the world; ii) particular attention to be paid to the fact that billions of people are totally dependent on biomass for energy, the use of which can give rise to health problems; iii) greater investment in renewable and more efficient energy sources; and iv) the development of programmes for the transfer of modern technology and expertise to help developing countries and regions adapt to environmental and climatic changes.