The gender dimension in Cohesion Policy

2020/2040(INI) - 08/06/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 390 votes to 82, with 212 abstentions, a resolution on the gender dimension in cohesion policy.

Members considered that gender mainstreaming should be implemented as a horizontal principle in all EU programmes, activities, measures and actions, as well as in all EU-funded projects and policies, including cohesion policy.

The role of cohesion policy in promoting gender equality

Parliament stressed the importance of cohesion policy in promoting equality between people and between regions, including gender equality, and in implementing the European strategy for gender equality. It recommended that Member States **take gender equality measures into account in the process of designing and validating programmes** and identify, for each programming phase, priority areas that contribute to gender equality and sustainable development.

Members stressed the need to adopt a **gender equality strategy** with clear ambitions and objectives at national and regional level and to develop awareness raising programmes on the benefits of gender equality and equal opportunities for socio-economic growth and sustainable development. It called for a strengthened work-life balance strategy to promote gender equality.

Members also called for increased skills, training and capacity building for managing authorities and implementing partners on the gender dimension of the Structural Funds.

Programme stakeholders and monitoring committees should be provided with **clearer indicators** on the effectiveness of programmes when it comes to the implementation of the gender perspective in concrete projects, especially in ERDF interventions, given the potential of the ERDF/Cohesion Fund to bridge the gap that women still face, especially with regard to female entrepreneurship and the digital sector.

Part of the Cohesion Policy funds should be dedicated to support women in poverty, women at risk of poverty, single mothers, women with disabilities and women victims of violence

Impact of the COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 crisis has underlined the crucial role played by public services, social infrastructure and the **healthcare sector** in ensuring social and economic resilience. It has further highlighted the role played by women as primary carers in formal and informal settings and the value this creates for society: 80% of all care in the EU is provided by informal, often unpaid, carers, 75% of whom are women.

Members called on Member States to prioritise the funds available under cohesion policy for care provision to meet the growing demand for care facilities, but also to effectively tackle the gender gap in employment, the resulting pay and pension gaps and labour market segregation.

Cohesion policy should also be used to support equal access to training and employment for women and men, to implement positive action to bridge the digital gender gap and to support the just, green and digital transitions.

Gender equality in post-2020 cohesion policy

Welcoming the addition of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting priority of the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and as a cross-cutting principle of the new Common Provisions Regulation, Parliament recommended:

- the introduction of clear and concrete targets and requirements on gender equality objectives and for greater opportunities and equality between men and women to be introduced in all post-2020 programmes, with specific and interdisciplinary measures to be translated into all operations;

- the development of a national gender equality strategy with clear objectives and targets to underpin cohesion policy interventions;

- the introduction of ex-ante and ex-post gender impact assessments as part of Member States' evaluations of how funds are spent and whether gender equality objectives are actually met;

- the introduction of sex-disaggregated data collection methods in the Member States in order to be able to properly analyse the differences between men and women;

- strengthening the criteria for gender mainstreaming at the project selection stage by giving a higher scoring and requiring more concrete actions.

Given that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in reported cases of domestic violence, Members called on the Council to ratify the Istanbul Convention and on the Commission and Member States to allocate funding under cohesion policy and implement programmes to prevent and combat violence against women.