Recommendation to the Council on EU priorities for the 70th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

2025/2240(INI) - 12/02/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 340 votes to 141, with 68 abstentions, a recommendation to the Council concerning the EU priorities for the 70th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

EU's commitment to gender equality

Members recommended that the Council reaffirm the EU's firm commitment to gender equality and **ensure the full implementation of the rights of women and girls in all aspects of the Union's external action**, with adequate funding. They called for Parliament and its Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality to participate fully in the decision-making process regarding the Union's position at the 70th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The EU's commitment to gender equality must be reaffirmed as a **horizontal priority**.

Guaranteeing access to justice

Parliament recommended making EU and international legal instruments complementary and ambitious, with robust provisions to **empower** women and girls and guarantee effective access to justice. It stressed the importance of legal aid and representation to ensure universal and fair justice. It also called on the EU to demonstrate strong leadership in promoting **inclusive and impartial justice systems**, developing comprehensive legal frameworks that protect women's rights, and guaranteeing victims' right to timely compensation, while preventing secondary victimisation.

The recommendation stressed the importance of (i) ensuring women and girls have effective access to justice at all levels, including clear reporting channels and the swift processing of protection and support measures, ii) removing barriers, particularly for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of women, and iii) ensuring adequate, victim-centred support and protection services in cases of gender-based violence.

Parliament also called for international recognition **of gender apartheid** as a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute.

The recommendation emphasised the need to:

- ensure that women and girls have access to comprehensive information about their rights, as well as the support and protection available, at every stage of the legal process, particularly in cases of violence against women or domestic violence;

- commit to guaranteeing victims' access to legal aid from the start of civil or criminal proceedings and to promote this approach globally;

- demand the integration of a gender perspective into all policies, legislation, procedures, initiatives and practices in order to address obstacles such as lack of awareness of rights, discriminatory attitudes and sexist stereotypes within judicial systems;

- advance female leadership, equal participation and increased representation of women within the judiciary and its governing bodies.

Women's participation and leadership

Parliament recommended advocating for concrete actions and measures to ensure women's participation and leadership in **public decision-making, including in foreign policy, defence and security, and conflict and crisis prevention, management, and resolution. To advance women's full and effective participation in public life**, thereby facilitating their involvement in decision-making processes, measures should be taken to fully and urgently implement existing commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Funding

Parliament called for (i) guaranteed sustainable funding and legal protection for feminist and LGBTIQ+ organisations, in particular grassroots groups under attack from the shrinking of civic space and restrictive laws targeting non-governmental organisations; (ii) increased funding for development aid to make up for the gap that remains after the dismantling of the United States Agency for International Development; (iii) reaffirmed its full support for the work of UN Women, a central actor in the United Nations system; (iv) a commitment to sufficient funding for gender equality and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; and (v) the application of gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting in all areas of EU policy, including external action.

Gender-based violence

Parliament reaffirmed the European Union's commitment to **combating impunity** for all forms of gender-based violence – including domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, and harmful practices – and to accelerating the implementation of international commitments in this area. It recommended advocating, at both EU and international level, for stronger action against **online violence**, which disproportionately affects women.

Members also stressed that the lack of or denial of access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including safe and legal abortion, constitutes a form of gender-based violence and a violation of human rights and fundamental rights. They advocated demanding safe access to abortion, contraception, and maternal care for all.

Lastly, the recommendation emphasised the importance of adopting **consent-based rape legislation**. It called for the strongest possible condemnation of the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war and stressed that **femicide** is one of the most extreme forms of gender-based violence and constitutes a grave violation of universal fundamental rights.