Basic information

2017/2015(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Gender equality in EU trade agreements **Subject** 4.10.04 Gender equality 6.20.03 Bilateral economic and trade agreements and relations 6.20.05 Multilateral and plurilateral economic and trade agreements and relations	

Key players

European Parliament

Joint committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
INTA International Trade	FORENZA Eleonora (GUE/NGL)	01/02/2017
FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality	BJÖRK Malin (GUE/NGL)	01/02/2017
	Shadow rapporteur SAÏFI Tokia (PPE) MATERA Barbara (PPE) RODRÍGUEZ-PIÑERO Inma (S&D) NOICHL Maria (S&D) KARIM Sajjad (ECR) BECERRA BASTERRECHEA Beatriz (ALDE) MARCELLESI Florent (Verts/ALE) HAUTALA Heidi (Verts/ALE) URTASUN Ernest (Verts/ALE) AIUTO Daniela (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
DEVE Development	SÁNCHEZ CALDENTEY Lola (GUE/NGL)	12/06/2017

European

Commission DG	Commissioner

Commission	Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs	MALMSTRÖM Cecilia

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/02/2017	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/02/2017	Referral to joint committee announced in Parliament		
24/01/2018	Vote in committee		
06/02/2018	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0023/2018	Summary
12/03/2018	Debate in Parliament		
13/03/2018	Decision by Parliament	T8-0066/2018	Summary
13/03/2018	Results of vote in Parliament		
13/03/2018	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2017/2015(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 59 Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CJ30/8/09124

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE610.717	19/09/2017	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE612.284	26/10/2017	
Committee opinion	DEVE	PE610.543	22/11/2017	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0023/2018	06/02/2018	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0066/2018	13/03/2018	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2018)366	30/08/2018	

Gender equality in EU trade agreements

2017/2015(INI) - 06/02/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on International Trade Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality adopted an own-initiative report on gender equality in EU trade agreements drafted jointly by Eleonora FORENZA (GUE/NGL, IT) and Malin BJÖRK (GUE/NGL, SE).

Members argued that EU **trade and investment agreements and policy are not gender-neutral**, meaning that they have different impact on women and men due to structural inequalities.

Gender equality is a universal goal enshrined in many international instruments, such as the UN Charter. The Union is firmly committed to promoting and ensuring gender equality in the framework of its fundamental treaties, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Members insisted that **the new generation of trade agreements should promote relevant international standards and legal instruments**, including on gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the core ILO Conventions and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The report argued that **binding and enforceable provisions in EU trade agreements** are necessary to ensure respect for human rights standards, including gender equality.

The Commission, the European Union and its Member States were invited, *inter alia*, to:

- ensure that the objectives of the SDGs, in particular **Goal 5 on gender equality**, and the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 are fully reflected in EU trade policies;
- take into account the gender dimension in its mid-term review of the **Trade for All** strategy, and ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into trade and investment policy;
- ensure that **public procurement** provisions have a positive impact, especially from a gender perspective, when included in EU trade agreements; the Commission should support the access of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to public procurement and develop specific measures for such enterprises run by women;
- support the inclusion of a **chapter** on the gender dimension in EU trade and investment agreements, building on existing examples such as the Chile-Uruguay and Chile-Canada FTAs;
- promote multilateral agreements to extend the protection afforded by EU legislative acts that take into account gender equality issues such as the Conflict Minerals Regulation;
- include a reference to **CEDAW** in trade agreements and take steps towards the EU's accession and ratification of the Convention;
- continue the work of the **ILO** in implementing the Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention and Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and reinforce international labour standards for decent work on global value chains, with particular focus on women;
- find ways to improve the **GSP and GSP + systems** by means such as reinforcing their conditionality to the removal of legal discrimination against women;
- ensure, in **negotiations at WTO level**, that due consideration is given to gender equality when preparing new rules and agreements, and implementing and reviewing existing agreements, included in the WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism;
- strengthen **corporate social responsibility** and due diligence, and encourage the WTO to take gender equality into account in its trade policy;
- promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to ensure an **improved participation of women** in decision-making bodies, both in the public and in the private sector;
- ensure that the gender equality objective is given special attention in **development cooperation,** and that it is part of all aid programs, including programs related to the Aid for Trade strategy;
- explore how EU trade policies and agreements can promote **women's economic empowerment** and participation in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The report also made concrete recommendations as to what the Union can and should do to strengthen its commitment to the issue of gender inequalities in various sectors with a gender-specific cause and effect such as services, manufacture, agriculture, clothing, and intellectual property rights.

Gender equality in EU trade agreements

2017/2015(INI) - 13/03/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 512 votes to 107 with 68 abstentions a resolution on gender equality in EU trade agreements. Members argued that EU **trade and investment agreements and policy are not gender-neutral**, meaning that they have different impact on women and men due to structural inequalities.

Gender equality is a universal goal enshrined in many international instruments, such as the UN Charter. The Union is firmly committed to promoting and ensuring gender equality in the framework of its fundamental treaties, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Parliament insisted that **the new generation of trade agreements should promote relevant international standards and legal instruments**, including on gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the core ILO Conventions and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Members argued that **binding and enforceable provisions in EU trade agreements** are necessary to ensure respect for human rights standards, including gender equality.

The Commission, the European Union and its Member States were invited, *inter alia*, to:

- ensure that the objectives of the SDGs, in particular **Goal 5 on gender equality**, and the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 are fully reflected in EU trade policies;
- take into account the gender dimension in its mid-term review of the **Trade for All** strategy, and ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into trade and investment policy;
- promote multilateral agreements to extend the protection afforded by EU legislative acts that take into account gender equality issues such as the Conflict Minerals Regulation;
- include a reference to **CEDAW** in trade agreements and take steps towards the EU's accession and ratification of the Convention;
- continue the work of the **ILO** in implementing the Decent Work for Domestic Workers Convention and Convention No. 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities and reinforce international labour standards for decent work on global value chains, with particular focus on women;
- find ways to improve the **GSP and GSP + systems** by means such as reinforcing their conditionality to the removal of legal discrimination against women;
- ensure, in **negotiations at WTO level**, that due consideration is given to gender equality when preparing new rules and agreements, and implementing and reviewing existing agreements, included in the WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism;
- promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to ensure an **improved participation of women** in decision-making bodies, both in the public and in the private sector;
- ensure that the gender equality objective is given special attention in **development cooperation,** and that it is part of all aid programmes, including programmes related to the Aid for Trade strategy;
- explore how EU trade policies and agreements can promote **women's economic empowerment** and participation in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Recommendations by sector: Parliament also made concrete recommendations as to what the Union can and should do to strengthen its commitment to the issue of gender inequalities in various sectors with a gender-specific cause and effect such as services, manufacture, agriculture, clothing, and intellectual property rights.

It called for binding measures to combat the exploitation of women in more export-oriented industries, particularly in the **textile and agricultural sectors**. Parliament recommended giving greater priority to women working in the **informal sector of the economy**, recognising the need to strengthen decent work standards for women in this sector.

Lastly, Members called on the Commission to extend its **support measures for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises**, with a focus on measures for women-owned enterprises of this type. The Commission should help to establish partnerships between women entrepreneurs in the Union and their counterparts in developing countries.