



**European Committee
of the Regions**

ENVE-VII/018

148th plenary session, 26-27 January 2022

OPINION

Gender equality and climate change: towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the European Green Deal

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- reaffirms that gender equality is a core European value, and a fundamental principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and in Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- highlights that there are important links between gender, climate change and other environmental challenges; points out that women and men are likely to be affected differently by the impacts of climate change, have different perceptions of and attitudes towards options for climate change mitigation, and are affected differently by the socioeconomic impacts of climate policy; believes that women and girls can act as catalysts of behavioural change;
- considers that a gender-sensitive approach can better respond to the needs and capacities of all citizens. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are best placed to integrate social issues with climate action, since they are the level of government closest to the people and play a key role in implementing legislation;
- stresses that women's contribution in green economic activities is essential to achieve equitable sustainable development and should be seen and valued; women and girls can also benefit from the opportunities in the field of green entrepreneurship and become green employers rather than employees;
- is concerned that gender mainstreaming does not feature among the 11 assessment criteria set out in the Resilience Facility Regulation;
- welcomes the preamble of the Paris Agreement, which calls for gender equality to be achieved and for women's empowerment to help limit global warming to be fostered; embraces the recognition made in the Paris Agreement of the need to adopt gender-responsive approaches in adaptation and capacity-building efforts, but regrets the lack of action in this regard and the lack of a further implementation plan.

Rapporteur

Kata Tüttő (HU/PES), Member of the General Local Assembly of Budapest, Hungary

Reference document

Own-initiative opinion

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – Gender equality and climate change: towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the European Green Deal

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. reaffirms that gender equality is a core European value, and a fundamental principle of the European Union enshrined in the Treaties and recognised in **Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights** of the European Union. **Article 8 of the TFEU** requires the Union, in all its activities, to aim to eliminate inequalities between women and men, and to promote equality;
2. remembers that gender equality, secure and adaptable employment and work-life balance are affirmed in **Principles 2, 5 and 9 of the European Pillar of Social Rights** proclaimed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on 17 November 2017;
3. recognises that climate change policies have gender-differentiated impacts and that gender equality and women's empowerment need to be promoted for effective climate action¹; in this regard, stresses the fundamental importance of ensuring that women are involved in the design of crises-responses strategies and actions for a more democratic and inclusive Europe;

A gendered approach to climate change

4. notes that hazards due to climate change, global warming, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation have a greater impact on the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population in the countries of the Global South and of the EU; points out that climate change entails compound risks that exacerbate long-standing socioeconomic disparities and existing imbalances, such as those relating to the lack of gender equality; stresses, therefore, that climate policies and measures that neglect a gender analysis and perspective are likely to increase social inequalities;
5. acknowledges that, at the global level, women and girls are more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change and deterioration of the natural environment, while at the same time being powerful actors that can play a key role in the path towards climate neutrality and in adapting to the impacts of climate change; stresses that, in light of their specific experiences and perspectives, men and women can often have complementary innovative thinking and creative ideas, and that integrating gender analyses into climate policy and recognising diverse gender identities widens its application across the whole of society. In this sense, endorses the Joint statement published by the Scottish Government and UN Women at COP26 calling for the role of women and girls to be advanced in addressing climate change²;

¹ Council conclusions - Preparations for the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings (Glasgow, 31 October – 12 November 2021)

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/glasgow-womens-leadership-statement-gender-equality-climate-change/>.

6. considers that women should be more empowered with regards to climate change; this should happen by improving their education and awareness on climate-related technologies, measures and actions and by fostering their role into the decision making processes related to these fields;
7. highlights that there are important links between gender, climate change and other environmental challenges; points out that women and men are likely to be affected differently by the impacts of climate change, depending on their specific life circumstances and different capabilities for mitigating and adapting to climate change at the individual level, have different perceptions of and attitudes towards options for climate change mitigation, and are affected differently by the socioeconomic impacts of climate policy; believes that women and girls can act as catalysts of behavioural change;

Mainstreaming the gender perspective

8. stresses that gender mainstreaming, understood as the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes, is a valuable tool for realising gender equality, and deplors its disuse;
9. notes that while the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025³ acknowledges that policies and programmes under the European Green Deal (EGD) can impact women differently to men, the announced integration of the gender perspective in all major Commission initiatives is not explicit⁴; refers to the European Parliament's Resolution on the EGD, which "emphasises the need for a gender perspective on actions and goals in the EGD, including gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive actions"⁵;
10. emphasises that gender impact assessments are a key element of the EU's gender mainstreaming toolkit, which are not fully developed, since the collection and use of sex-disaggregated and intersectional data, statistics and information are all too often missing; calls on the Commission to apply the EIGE's Guide to Gender Impact Assessment⁶; stresses that data collected across the EU Member States should include more comprehensive gender indicators without increasing the administrative burden for local and regional authorities;
11. welcomes the creation of a Task Force for Equality⁷ to ensure the mainstreaming of equality, including gender equality and gender diversity, in all EU policies, from their design to their

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0152&from=EN>.

⁴ The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final), the 2030 Climate Target Plan (COM(2020) 562 final) and the climate and energy framework (COM(2014) 15 final); A Clean Planet for All (COM(2018) 773 final) make no mention of gender; the Environmental Action Programme (1386/2014/EU) makes one mention of pregnant women as a vulnerable group. This is despite the fact that gender mainstreaming is a Treaty obligation; that a framework for EU gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming is set out in the Gender Equality Strategy (COM(2020) 152) and that the EU is committed to the SDGs (2015) and to the UNFCCC's Gender Action Plan (2019). <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jcms.13082>.

⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0005_EN.html.

⁶ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/guide-gender-impact-assessment>.

⁷ [Union of equality: the first year of actions and achievements | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://commission.europa.eu/equality-union-of-equality).

implementation and calls on the EU to facilitate the exchange of best practices among national, regional and local authorities avoiding a top-down approach;

12. asserts that women's participation in climate change decision-making is another important factor for more gender responsive and efficient climate change policies and programmes; calls for women's participation to be boosted in actions across the EU institutions, government bodies and public authorities at all governance levels; calls on the Council to unblock the “Women on Boards” Directive⁸;
13. stresses that the pandemic recovery is an opportunity to build a new normal and to redirect resources towards a climate-neutral and gender-balanced society; encourages the use of gender mainstreaming tools to implement the Recovery and Resilience Plans, given that they should be the basis not only for recovery, but for a sustainable, fair and equal society;
14. calls for enhanced research in order to identify barriers to participation in decision-making, as well as to explore how gender stereotypes affect people's consumption and lifestyles; encourages the use of models like GAMMA (Gender Assessment Method for Mitigation and Adaptation) in order to obtain better data;
15. considers that a gender-sensitive approach can better respond to the needs and capacities of all citizens. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are best placed to integrate social issues with climate action, since they are the level of government closest to the people and play a key role in implementing legislation; stresses that women's participation needs to be promoted at all institutional levels, starting from the EU;
16. calls for the European Climate Pact to reflect this gendered approach to influence climate actions and policies, through the inclusion of specific outreach activities focused on awareness raising, education and knowledge-sharing about gender perspectives;
17. underlines the importance of cross-party cooperation among gender and environment-related NGOs, civil organisations, and of creating common awareness campaign and training programmes;

Green jobs

18. welcomes the fact that a green, digital and inclusive recovery will provide opportunities for new jobs or for reintegrating long-term unemployed women into the digital economy; upholds that the path towards a sustainable and low-carbon economy will allow for the inclusion of a gender perspective to avoid the perpetuation of existing inequalities;
19. stresses that women's contribution in green economic activities is essential to achieve equitable sustainable development and should be seen and valued; women and girls can also benefit from the opportunities in the field of green entrepreneurship and become green employers rather than

⁸ It would ensure that at least 40% of the members on non-executive company boards are women.

employees, provided that this does not create job insecurity for employees who are driven to self-employment;

20. acknowledges that technology will play a more important role in all our lives and that it is critical that the technology sector should look like the society it serves; calls for specialised digital and technological training programmes targeted towards women and girls to be created and financially supported, as a key opportunity to speed up innovation in the field of the climate and energy transition, by enhancing gender quotas in these sectors and ensuring equal access to professional opportunities⁹;
21. calls on the Commission and the Member States to incorporate gender equality as an important element of the digital transition, including the gender perspective in the development of digital education policies, promoting mentoring schemes with female role models in ICT, eliminating conscious and unconscious gender discriminatory bias from algorithms, preventing cyber-violence, using the efforts and programmes of ERASMUS+, boosting the concept of a life-long learning approach in adult education, particularly in remote areas, and preventing digital exclusion;
22. considers that teleworking has the potential to lead to a better work-life balance, especially for women, provided that families have access to high-quality, affordable childcare throughout working hours, including leisure activities for older children, and provided that particular attention is paid to women's greater exposure to domestic violence¹⁰; stresses the importance of getting the latest technology hardware and high-speed internet for teleworking at an affordable cost, and of enlarging the WIFI4EU programme for remote areas; urges to proceed quickly with an ambitious implementation of the 2019 Work-Life Balance Directive;

Sustainable public transport and mobility

23. emphasises that the design and planning of transport systems in cities should take greater account of the gender imbalance, since women tend to use public transport more frequently; stresses that safety and sense of security are major points that should be improved; mobility patterns (including timetables) and decisions about the convenience of routes need to consider the different uses by gender (more commuting for men and shorter, multi-stop journeys for women), as well as the division of roles in the labour market and the care economy; stresses that off-peak capacity, reliability and flexibility of public transport services need to better accommodate the mobility patterns of people of all genders and ages while keeping in mind that each municipality, region and country should organise its public transport services based on the different needs and realities, both in urban and rural environments;

⁹ Successful examples: Women and Girls in STEM Forum, Girls Go Circular (eit.girlsgocircular.eu); the creation of the Women in Digital scoreboard as an integral part of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI).

¹⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

24. believes that simple, cost-effective and replicable initiatives like allowing night buses to stop on request or providing cycling lanes and pedestrian paths that are well-lit and fully separated from traffic could contribute to more sustainable, safe and inclusive mobility;
25. believes that initiatives such as the Women in Transport - EU Platform for change can help strengthen women's employment in the transport sector and provide a good forum to exchange best practices, and calls for a follow-up through the diversity ambassadors in transport;
26. urges the Commission to plan how to link cities with remote areas, as well as how to ensure accessibility and connectivity, and greater use of clean vehicles, trains and electric-hybrid buses for longer distances; believes in digital solutions for ticketing routes on different apps; acknowledges the efforts of the new EU Urban Agenda;

Energy poverty

27. is deeply worried about the soaring of prices for electricity and gas to their highest levels in decades in all Member States, which pushes many women and men into energy and mobility poverty; calls on the EU to take long-term countermeasures including investigating the reasons for the increase in energy prices;
28. acknowledges that energy poverty disproportionately affects women due to structural inequalities in income distribution, their socioeconomic status and the gender care gap;
29. points to the European Parliament's Resolution¹¹ calling for the EU to include a gender dimension in all its energy policies and programmes focusing especially on women and girls who are facing poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation;
30. encourages the EU Energy Poverty Advisory Hub (EPAH) to apply a gender perspective in its indicators and when using and collecting data;
31. reiterates that energy poverty is a major societal challenge, with social, economic and environmental consequences that must be addressed urgently at all levels of governance; underlines therefore that tackling energy poverty requires the use of various public policy instruments which take into account both energy efficiency and social protection issues;
32. welcomes initiatives like the Platform for Change and the Price of Women in Energy as a means of promoting gender equality and the Social Climate Fund proposal to compensate for the socio-economically imbalanced impacts of ETS extension to transport and buildings, which mentions the need to take into account women's perspectives; stresses the need for the implementation of the Social Climate Fund and the Just Transition Fund to be guided by gender-sensitive approaches; welcomes the upcoming launch of the Equality Platform for the Energy Sector by the Commission's Directorate-General for Energy;

¹¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2016-0235_EN.pdf.

Gender budgeting

33. recalls that *gender budgeting* means gender mainstreaming of the entire budgetary process with a view to incorporating a gender equality perspective into all decisions on revenue and expenditure;
34. acknowledges with concern the conclusions of two recent studies conducted by the European Parliament in 2015 and 2017, highlighting the insufficient application of gender budgeting in practice and the absence of progress in terms of gender-budgeting between 2015 and 2017¹²;
35. is concerned that gender mainstreaming does not feature among the 11 assessment criteria set out in the Resilience Facility Regulation; more broadly, the European Court of Auditors¹³ considers that the EU budget does not integrate the gender perspective, since key elements, such as gender analysis, gender-related objectives, indicators and accountability through reporting, are largely missing;
36. regrets that the recent communication "Strategy for Financing the Transition to a Sustainable Economy"¹⁴ does not include a gender perspective, especially given that inclusiveness is one of the four main areas identified where additional actions are needed for the financial system to fully support the transition of the economy towards sustainability;
37. calls on the Commission and the Council to commit to gender budgeting, to ensure it is applied to the whole EU budget and that the recommendations from the European Court of Auditors are fully implemented, including into the mid-term review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility;
38. points to the CoR opinion "A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020 – 2025"¹⁵, which called for a clearer link between the strategy and the EU's main political priorities and strategies, in particular the transitions towards a climate-neutral economy; welcomes the CoR opinion "The gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021-2027, with a focus on the preparation of the operational programmes"¹⁶, which stresses the need to consider gender equality as a cross-cutting criterion for drawing up cohesion policy programmes, a goal to be pursued by the programmes and a powerful factor helping to achieve cohesion policy's sustainable and balanced development goals;

12 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/660058/IPOL_BRI\(2020\)660058_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/660058/IPOL_BRI(2020)660058_EN.pdf).

13 https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR21_10/SR_Gender_mainstreaming_EN.pdf.

14 https://ec.europa.eu/finance/docs/law/210704-communication-sustainable-finance-strategy_en.pdf.

15 CDR 2016/2020.

16 CDR 2503/2021.

International level

39. welcomes the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) decision to adopt its Gender Policy¹⁷ and Implementation Plan to mainstream gender in its work;
40. welcomes the establishment of a dedicated agenda within the UNFCCC process – the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) and the Gender Action Plan (GAP) – for addressing the lack of gender-responsive and gender-sensitive implementation of climate policies and ensuring that women's voices are included in the global discussion and international negotiations on climate change, and specifically welcomes the appointment of national gender & climate change focal points (NGCCFP) for every party;
41. notes the recognition in the Rio Conventions¹⁸ of the important linkages between gender-related issues; points to the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action as the most comprehensive source of guidance and inspiration to achieve gender equality, in which Area K¹⁹ in particular highlights the greater risks for women and girls of fragile ecosystems and the degradation of the state of the natural world, exacerbated by the effects of anthropogenic climate change;
42. asks for assurance that the national determined contributions (NDCs) and regionally and locally determined contributions (RLDCs) will take social factors and the gender perspective, into account;
43. welcomes the preamble of the Paris Agreement, which calls for gender equality to be achieved and for women's empowerment to help limit global warming to be fostered; embraces the recognition made in the Paris Agreement of the need to adopt gender-responsive approaches in adaptation (Article 7.5) and capacity-building efforts (Article 11.2), but regrets the lack of action in this regard and the lack of a further implementation plan.

Brussels, 27 January 2022

The President
of the European Committee of the Regions

Apostolos Tzitzikostas

The Secretary-General
of the European Committee of the Regions

¹⁷ https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2020/05/IPCC_Gender_Policy_and_Implementation_Plan.pdf.

¹⁸ Namely the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD).

¹⁹ https://beijing20.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf#page=161.

Petr Blížkovský

II. PROCEDURE

Title	Gender equality and climate change: towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the European Green Deal
Reference(s)	Own-initiative opinion
Legal basis	Article 307(4) TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(b)(ii)
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	
Date of Bureau's decision	4 May 2021
Commission responsible	Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
Rapporteur	Kata Tűttő (HU/PES) Member of the General Local Assembly of Budapest, Hungary
Analysis	
Discussed in commission	23 November 2021
Date adopted by commission	23 November 2021
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	majority
Date adopted in plenary	27 January 2022
Previous Committee opinions	
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	