Thursday 21 January 2021

P9_TA(2021)0024

The gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period

European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on the gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period (2020/2121(INI))

(2021/C 456/18)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, and Articles 6, 8 and 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

— having regard to Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

— having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, its principles 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 16 and 20,

— having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and, in particular, Goal 1 which seeks to end poverty, Goal 3 which seeks to ensure people can live healthy lives, Goal 5 which seeks to achieve gender equality and improve living conditions for women, and Goal 8 which seeks to achieve sustainable and economic growth,

— having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women of 18 December 1979,

— having regard to Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of 3 May 2008,

— having regard to the EU directives from 1975 onwards on various aspects of equal treatment for women and men (Council Directives 79/7/EEC [1], 86/613/EEC [2], 92/85/EEC [3] and 2004/113/EC [4], Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council [5], Council Directive 2010/18/EU [6] and Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council [7]),

— having regard to Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU [8],

— having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence ('Istanbul Convention'),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled 'A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025' (COM(2020)0152),

---

(1) Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security (OJ L 6, 10.1.1979, p. 24).

(2) Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood (OJ L 359, 19.12.1986, p. 56).

(3) Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1).

(4) Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37).

(5) Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23).

(6) Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC (OJ L 68, 18.3.2010, p. 13).

(7) Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC (OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1).

(8) OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79.

Thursday 21 January 2021

— having regard to the Joint Staff Working Document of 21 September 2015 entitled Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' (SWD(2015) 0182),

— having regard to the proposal for a Council decision of 4 March 2016 on the conclusion, by the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (COM(2016)0109),

— having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2020 on the EU priorities for the 64th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women ([9]),

— having regard to its resolution of 30 January 2020 on the gender pay gap ([10]),

— having regard to its resolution of 13 February 2019 on experiencing a backlash in women's rights and gender equality in the EU ([11]),

— having regard to its resolution of 28 November 2019 on the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention and other measures to combat gender-based violence ([12]),

— having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2018 on care services in the EU for improved gender equality ([13]),

— having regard to its resolution of 29 November 2018 on the situation of women with disabilities ([14]),

— having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on empowering women and girls through the digital sector ([15]),

— having regard to its resolution of 16 January 2018 on women, gender equality and climate justice ([16]),

— having regard to its resolution of 3 October 2017 on women's economic empowerment in the private and public sectors in the EU ([17]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 June 2017 on the need for an EU strategy to end and prevent the gender pension gap ([18]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2014-2015 ([19]),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on women and their roles in rural areas ([20]),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2017 on promoting gender equality in mental health and clinical research ([21]),

---

([9]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0039.
([10]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0025.
([11]) OJ C 449, 23.12.2020, p. 102.
([12]) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2019)0080.
([13]) OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 80.
([14]) OJ C 363, 28.10.2020, p. 164.
([15]) OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 28.
([16]) OJ C 458, 19.12.2018, p. 34.
([17]) OJ C 346, 27.9.2018, p. 6.
([18]) OJ C 331, 18.9.2018, p. 60.
([19]) OJ C 263, 25.7.2018, p. 49.
([20]) OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 14.
([21]) OJ C 252, 18.7.2018, p. 99.

— having regard to its resolution of 8 March 2016 on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU ([22]),

— having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on external factors that represent hurdles to European female entrepreneurship ([23]),

— having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on women's careers in science and universities, and glass ceilings encountered ([24]),

— having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015 ([25]),

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 10 December 2019 on Gender-Equal Economies in the EU: The Way Forward,

— having regard to the report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) entitled 'COVID-19 and the world of work. Fourth edition', published on 27 May 2020,

— having regard to the analysis by the ILO entitled 'Sectoral impact, responses and recommendations related to COVID-19',

— having regard to the report by the OECD entitled 'Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19', published in April 2020,

— having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document of 6 March 2019 entitled '2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU' (SWD(2019)0101),

— having regard to the report by UN Women entitled 'The Impact of COVID-19 on Women', published on 9 April 2020,

— having regard to the UN Women report entitled 'From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of COVID-19', published on 2 September 2020,

— having regard to the UN Women publication entitled 'Online and ICT* facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19',

— having regard to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) report entitled 'Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage', published on 27 April 2020,

— having regard to the statement by UNFPA entitled 'Millions more cases of violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation, unintended pregnancy expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic', published on 28 April 2020,

— having regard to the Statement of 24 March 2020 by the President of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), Marceline Naudi, on the need to uphold the standards of the Istanbul Convention in times of a pandemic,

— having regard to the Joint Research Centre report entitled 'How will the COVID-19 crisis affect existing gender divides in Europe?',

---

([22]) OJ C 50, 9.2.2018, p. 25.
([23]) OJ C 11, 12.1.2018, p. 35.
([24]) OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 173.
([25]) OJ C 407, 4.11.2016, p. 2.

Thursday 21 January 2021

— having regard to the Gender Equality Index 2019 from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), published on 15 October 2019,

— having regard to the report by EIGE entitled 'Tackling the gender pay gap: not without a better work-life balance', published on 29 May 2019,

— having regard to the report by EIGE entitled 'Beijing + 25: the fifth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States' published on 5 March 2020,

— having regard to the 2020 dataset for the survey by Eurofound entitled 'Living, Working and COVID-19',

— having regard to the survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) entitled 'A long way to go for LGBTI equality', published on 14 May 2020,

— having regard to the report by the FRA entitled 'A persisting concern: anti-Gypsyism as a barrier to Roma inclusion', published on 5 April 2018,

— having regard to the survey by the FRA entitled 'Violence against women: an EU-wide survey', published on 5 March 2014,

— having regard to the ILGA Europe policy brief entitled 'COVID-19: domestic violence against LGBTI people',

— having regard to the European Women's Lobby publication entitled 'Putting equality between women and men at the heart of the response to COVID-19 across Europe',

— having regard to the IPPF European Network publication entitled 'How to address the impact on women, girls and vulnerable groups and their sexual and reproductive safety',

— having regard to the European Women's Lobby policy brief entitled 'Walk-the-talk: EU funds must mirror women's equality',

— having regard to the European Women's Lobby policy brief entitled 'Women must not pay the price for COVID-19!',

— having regard to the study by Professor Sabine Oertelt-Prigione entitled 'The impact of sex and gender in the COVID-19 pandemic', published on 27 May 2020,

— having regard to the joint report by the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights and the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network entitled 'Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights during the COVID-19 pandemic', published on 22 April 2020,

— having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A9-0229/2020),

A. whereas the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences have clear gender perspectives as they affect women and men differently and have highlighted existing inequalities and shortcomings with regard to gender equality and women's rights; whereas therefore a gender-sensitive response is needed;

B. whereas COVID-19 affects different groups in society in different ways and to varying degrees, including women and men, young people, older people, persons with disabilities, victims of gender-based and domestic violence, people from different socio-economic backgrounds, children, single parents, and minority groups including Roma, LGBTQI+ people and refugee and migrant women, and it also has intersectional implications; whereas women and girls will be affected disproportionately in the short, medium and long term and the pandemic has exacerbated existing structural gender inequalities, in particular for girls and women from marginalised groups;

C. whereas initial official mortality figures show that older men have a higher death rate from the virus than women, while women are more at risk of contracting the virus due to their disproportionately high representation among frontline workers in essential sectors during the current crises;

D. whereas the EU and the Member States were not prepared for such a health crisis; whereas access to health without discrimination is a fundamental human right; whereas pre-existing barriers in access to critical care services were seriously aggravated by the health crisis; whereas as a result of the cancellation or postponement of 'non-essential' health services, a delay, and sometimes barriers, arose in accessing critical care for urgent complaints, including for women; whereas, in this regard, access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and services were hampered with serious consequences, and some legal attempts were made to limit the right to safe and legal abortion in certain Member States; whereas critical needs for women include access to maternity care and safe delivery, availability of contraception, safe abortion and IVF services, and provisions for clinical management in the case of rape; whereas, due to the extraordinary situation in the national health systems, and as essential services and goods become more limited during the crisis, women and girls risk losing their fundamental right to health services; whereas efforts to contain outbreaks can divert resources from routine health services and exacerbate already limited access to sexual and reproductive health services;

E. whereas reports and figures from several Member States during and following the confinement period revealed a worrying increase in domestic and gender-based violence, including physical violence, psychological violence, coercive control and cyber violence; whereas violence is not a private issue but a societal concern; whereas lockdown measures make it more difficult for victims of intimate partner violence to seek help as they are often confined with their abusers, and limited access to support services such as women's shelters and hotlines and insufficient support structures and resources can exacerbate an already existing 'shadow' pandemic; whereas the number of beds in shelters for women and girls who are victims of violence is only half of that required by the Istanbul Convention; whereas the lives and wellbeing of many vulnerable groups of women are increasingly at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis; whereas femicides are not counted in the official death statistics for COVID-19, but may well be related to the outbreak and the lockdown measures taken during this period; whereas confinement and isolation measures may have led to a higher risk of female genital mutilation (FGM) with cases going undetected due to the interruption of schooling; whereas economic and social stresses are exacerbating factors which could lead to an increase in domestic and gender-based violence in the long term and make it harder for women to leave abusive partners;

F. whereas the greater use of the internet during the pandemic increases online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence and the online sexual abuse of children and especially girls; whereas human rights defenders, women in politics, female journalists, women belonging to ethnic minorities, indigenous women, lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, and women with disabilities are particularly targeted by ICT-facilitated violence; whereas in Europe the risk of experiencing online violence is highest among young women aged between 18 and 29 ([26]);

G. whereas a majority of workers delivering essential services in the current crisis are women, including 76 % of healthcare workers (doctors, nurses, midwives, staff in residential care homes), 82 % of cashiers, 93 % of child care workers and teachers, 95 % of domestic cleaners and helpers, and 86 % of personal care workers ([27]) in the EU; whereas it is thanks to

([26]) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ STUD/2018/604979/IPOL_STU(2018)604979_EN.pdf
([27]) https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/frontline-workers

them for whom physical distancing is often not an option and who thus bear the increased burden of possibly spreading the virus to their relatives, that our economic, social and healthcare systems, our public life and our essential activities are maintained;

H. whereas wages in many essential and significantly female-dominated sectors can be low, with often only the minimum wage being paid; whereas horizontal and vertical labour market segregation in the EU is still significant, with women overrepresented in less profitable sectors; whereas 30 % of women work in education, health and social work, compared to 8 % of men, and 7 % of women work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics compared to 33 % of men ([28]); whereas the ILO warns that certain groups will be disproportionately affected by the economic crisis, including those entering the labour market, thereby increasing inequality, and that women have less access to social protection and will bear a disproportionate burden; whereas there is reason for concern about job losses in women-dominated professions due to the crisis; whereas male-dominated sectors are likely to recover earlier than typical female-dominated ones; whereas the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan should sufficiently address those sectors where women are overrepresented; whereas the Commission's proposal for a recovery plan highlights that investment in digital transitions holds the key to Europe's future prosperity and resilience; whereas the Gender Equality Index for 2019 revealed persistent inequalities between men and women in the digital sector, and whereas efforts are needed to mitigate gender gaps and labour market segregation during the digital transformation of the labour market;

I. whereas women are more likely to be in temporary, part-time and precarious employment than men (26,5 % compared to 15,1 % of men ([29])), and have therefore been, and will be in the long run, significantly impacted by job losses and furloughing due to the crisis;

J. whereas research from Eurofound shows that the COVID-19 crisis poses a serious risk of rolling back decades of gains achieved in gender equality in labour market participation, particularly if activity is further hampered in sectors overrepresented by women ([30]); whereas research shows that the reduction in the gender employment gap stagnated between 2015 and 2018, and the persisting disparities in employment participation cost Europe more than EUR 335 billion per year, corresponding to 2,41 % of EU GDP in 2019 ([31]);

K. whereas the gendered impact of the crisis is well evidenced by the work of EIGE and UN Women among others; whereas however the full impact of the crisis is difficult to measure given the lack of comparable gender-disaggregated data across the Member States; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the European labour market; whereas the situation must be carefully examined by sector with gender- and age-disaggregated data, through both the crisis and recovery periods; whereas the full economic, employment and social consequences of the pandemic are still unknown, but preliminary studies, including from Eurofound, suggest significant job losses in service and industrial sectors, as well as contact sectors including retail, leisure and personal services, which are female-dominated; whereas conversely other sectors have preserved employment security despite the crisis, including the public, medical and ICT sectors;

L. whereas start-up entrepreneurs have been significantly impacted by the crisis;

M. whereas COVID-19 has exposed a long-standing problem in care provision in many EU Member States; whereas care needs to be viewed holistically along a continuum, from childcare to after-school care, to care for those with disabilities to care for older persons;

([28]) EIGE, Gender Equality Index, 2019.
([29]) https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/economic-hardship-and-gender
([30]) Eurofound, COVID-19 Survey, 2020.
([31]) Eurofound, Closing gender gaps in employment: defending progress and responding to COVID-19 challenges (2020).

N. whereas the closure of schools, care centres and workplaces has increased the unequal distribution of non-paid domestic and care responsibilities within the home for women who, often in addition to balancing working from home, were left without sufficient support for child and elderly care; whereas remote working is not a substitute for childcare; whereas women usually spend 13 hours more each week than men on unpaid care and housework ([32]); whereas the COVID-19 crisis has been an opportunity for men to become more involved in care responsibilities, yet has also revealed how uneven the share of care and housework still is, which will most likely affect women and girls more severely; whereas balancing telework and family responsibilities adds additional strain, and women therefore face an increased emotional, mental and social burden; whereas this could result in fewer achievements at work and have an impact on their professional development compared to their male peers;

O. whereas a disproportionate and extreme burden has been placed on single parents, 85 % of whom are women amounting to 6,7 million single-mother households in the EU ([33]), almost half of which are at serious risk of social exclusion or poverty;

P. whereas survey results ([34]) show that COVID-19 had a heavier impact on women with young children than on men with the same household situation; whereas almost one third (29 %) of women with young children found it hard to concentrate on their work, compared to 16 % of men with young children; whereas twice as many women with children (29 %) were likely to feel too tired after work to do household work, compared to 16 % of men; whereas in April 2020 women with children aged 0-11 were more likely to feel tense than men with children in the same age range (23 % vs 19 %), or to feel lonely (14 % vs 6 %) and depressed (14 % vs 9 %);

Q. whereas the Commission's proposal for a recovery plan highlights investment in the green transition; whereas the impact of climate change is experienced differently by women, as they face higher risks and burdens for various reasons; whereas gender equality and the inclusion of women in decision-making is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the efficient management of climate challenges; whereas all climate action must include a gender and an intersectional perspective;

R. whereas certain groups within society such as single parents, victims of violence, women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, older and young women, women with disabilities, Roma women, LGBTQI+ persons, women in prostitution, refugees and migrants are particularly vulnerable to the virus or its health and socio-economic consequences, given the measures taken and existing infrastructure and service deficiencies;

S. whereas women experiencing homelessness continue to encounter specific challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with temporary and emergency accommodation being particularly vulnerable to disease transmission, gender-based violence and a lack of access to hygiene and healthcare facilities;

T. whereas COVID-19 is a global pandemic affecting every country in the world; whereas the pandemic will have devastating consequences for populations, especially women and girls, in countries with underfunded health systems and the populations of conflict-affected countries; whereas the pandemic will put more than 47 million women and girls worldwide below the poverty line by 2021 ([35]);

U. whereas, according to recent data from UNFPA, the delay or interruption of community outreach programmes and education on harmful practices globally is estimated to lead to 2 million more cases of FGM and 13 million more child marriages over the next decade compared to pre-pandemic estimates;

([32]) https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/unpaid-care-and-housework

([33]) https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/how-will-covid-19-crisis-affect-existing-gender-divides-europe

([34]) Eurofound, COVID-19 survey 2020.

([35]) UN Women, 'From Insights to Action: Gender Equality in the wake of COVID-19'.

V. whereas the provision of services should be based on data-driven identification of needs, with budgetary resources being allocated on the basis of this research; whereas budgets and the allocation of resources must take into account the different needs and circumstances of men and women;

W. whereas women are not as equally involved as men when it comes to decision-making in the recovery phase, due to the existing glass ceiling; whereas women, and their representative civil society organisations, must play an active and central role in decision-making processes to ensure that their perspectives and needs are taken into account in the decision-making, design, implementation and monitoring of the recovery phase and related measures at local, regional, national and EU levels;

X. whereas issues concerning women's rights and the promotion of gender equality must be mainstreamed and discussed at the highest level, in particular with a view to the implementation of the EU Gender Equality Strategy; whereas, while the European Parliament has a committee dedicated to women's rights and gender equality and the Commission has a Commissioner exclusively responsible for equality, there is no specific Council configuration on gender equality and Ministers and Secretaries of State in charge of gender equality have no dedicated forum for discussion and decision-making;

Y. whereas the essential actions identified herein will build resilience and preparedness for future crises;

General remarks

1. Stresses the need for a gender-sensitive approach, with gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting principles reflected in all aspects of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, to preserve and protect women's rights throughout the pandemic and post-pandemic period and to enhance gender equality;

2. Underlines the need to apply the lessons learned from past and current crises to future policy development and implementation so as not to repeat past mistakes, as well as the need to prepare gender-sensitive responses for all stages of future crises to prevent negative consequences for women's rights; calls on the Commission to facilitate the creation of a standing network for sharing best practices between Member States on how to tackle the gender-related aspects of COVID-19; calls on the Council to establish a dedicated configuration on gender equality and a formal working party in order to deliver common and concrete measures to address the challenges in the field of women's rights and gender equality and ensure that gender equality issues are discussed at the highest political level;

3. Stresses that the Commission and Member States should conduct gender impact assessments as a matter of course, including for measures that form part of the recovery plan; resolves to incorporate and strengthen gender equality in Next Generation EU through Parliament's position;

4. Urges the Commission to examine the prevalence of the virus among workers in essential sectors during the current crisis, particularly the female and minority ethnic populations in view of their disproportionately high representation in these sectors; urges the Commission and the Member States to respond with appropriate action to bolster their safety at work and calls on the Member States to improve their working conditions, including through the Framework Directive ([36]), Directive 92/85/EEC and the post-2020 EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work;

5. Calls on the Member States, the Commission, Eurostat and EIGE to regularly gather data on COVID-19 disaggregated by sex, age and intersecting discrimination, amongst other factors, as well as data on the socio-economic impact of the virus; stresses that recovery measures must be informed by and based on gender-disaggregated data to ensure responses are comprehensive, with special attention to areas where data is scarce and incomparable, such as violence against women and care services; emphasises that such data must be systematically produced and made publicly available; emphasises the need for the Commission and the Member States to support capacity building by national statistics bodies and other relevant actors in this regard;

([36]) Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (OJ L 183, 29.6.1989, p. 1).

6. Emphasises the necessity of equal representation of women and men, including from the most vulnerable groups, in leadership and the decision-making process when enacting and lifting measures in crises, as well as in all stages of the design, adoption and implementation of recovery plans, so that their specific needs and circumstances are fully and appropriately taken into account and effective and targeted measures planned to ensure that the necessary support package is responsive to their needs; invites the Member States to establish dedicated taskforces with the involvement of relevant stakeholders and representatives from women's civil society organisations during such crises to ensure gender mainstreaming; calls on the national parliaments of the Member States to create committees on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and girls to ensure a dedicated space for the discussion and monitoring of the crisis and its gender impacts; welcomes the Commission's intention to encourage the adoption of the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures ([37]) (the Women on Boards Directive) and urges the Council to unblock and adopt it; further stresses that more women must be involved in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and other crisis response mechanisms both at EU and national level; commits, furthermore, to ensuring panels in Parliament's hearings and workshops are gender-balanced and to enriching the discussions on recovery measures through diversity;

7. Calls on the Commission and Member States to closely monitor and strongly respond to disinformation, negative public discourses, insufficient prioritisation, restricted or denied access to relevant services and regressive initiatives related to women's rights, LGBTQI+ rights and gender equality; calls on the Commission to monitor the shrinking space for civil society organisations and demonstrations related to the aforementioned topics due to confinement measures as matters of democracy and fundamental rights during the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period; notes that appropriate measures shall be taken when it is established that breaches of the principles of the rule of law in a Member State affect or seriously risk affecting the sound financial management of the EU budget or the protection of the financial interests of the Union in a sufficiently direct way; calls on the Member States to ensure that restrictive emergency measures serve the purpose of combating the pandemic only, are time-limited and are compatible with fundamental rights;

COVID-19 health-related aspects and the gender impact

8. Expresses its concern at the high mortality rate from COVID-19; notes the initial higher mortality rate among men and urges the World Health Organization (WHO) and relevant EU agencies to examine the different health impacts on men and women; calls on the Commission to continue to monitor the situation with a view to understanding the long-term health impacts of the virus on women and men; emphasises that clinical research into the virus must involve gender-balanced representation to assess how the virus and any potential vaccine or treatment could affect women and men differently;

9. Urges the Member States to ensure access to essential aspects of women's and men's quality medical and psychological healthcare unrelated to COVID-19, such as cancer screening and treatment, maternal and neo-natal healthcare and urgent care for those suffering from heart attacks and strokes; urges the Member States to operate according to WHO guidelines in these areas;

10. Regrets that access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services was neglected, restricted or even attacked in some Member States during the crisis; underlines the need for the Member States to guarantee quality and affordable access without discrimination to SRHR services, information and commodities during the crisis and post-crisis period and in similar emergency situations, by recognising that these are essential, life-saving and often time-sensitive services and should be delivered in accordance with WHO guidelines and a patient-centred, human-rights-based approach; strongly rejects any attempts to back-track on SRHR and LGBTQI+ rights and highlights that opponents of SRHR should not be allowed to abuse this crisis as a channel for limiting women's rights, such as the right to safe abortion; calls on the Commission to facilitate the exchange of best practices among Member States while also involving civil society organisations, who are often expert in these areas, as regards new methods in delivering SRHR-related care and ways of

([37]) COM(2012)0614.

addressing gaps in the provision of services; stresses the importance of communicating with service providers to clarify that these services remain essential and should be consistently provided; emphasises that all maternity services must be available and adequately staffed and resourced;

11. Urges the Member States to invest in robust and resilient health systems and to commend and support essential workers such as health and social workers by ensuring safe working conditions, providing appropriate equipment, establishing conditions for fair pay, offering professional development, including through higher education, and ensuring access to services such as childcare and mental health services;

12. Urges the Commission to factor in emergency circumstances such as COVID-19, including their impact on gender-specific healthcare considerations such as SRHR, in its health-related policy responses, for example the EU4Health Programme, the EU Beating Cancer Plan and the EU Health Strategy; calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the health-related aspects of the 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy when implementing the EU4Health Programme, such as SRHR being an integral part of health and an essential aspect of well-being and the advancement of gender equality; requests that investments in services essential for gender equality be boosted and that gender health experts and gender balance be incorporated into the implementation of the EU4Health Programme;

13. Recalls that access to healthcare is a human right and requires adequate funding; reminds the Member States to take account of women's and men's unique needs when bolstering healthcare system capacities and critical infrastructure as a consequence of COVID-19, specifically when it comes to health expenditure, disease detection and response, emergency preparedness, research and development and the health workforce;

14. Calls on the Member States to boost mental health support initiatives during and after this crisis, in view of the stress, anxiety, depression and loneliness brought on by lockdown, as well as of economic concerns and gender-based violence or other factors connected to the crisis, taking into account the differential impact on women and men, and also to invest financial resources to ensure adequate services are available when required; calls on the Commission to organise an EU-wide mental health campaign;

Gender-based violence during COVID-19

15. Urges the Member States, in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to address the gender-based violence faced by women and girls, including trans women, as well as intersex, non-binary and gender non-conforming persons; urges the Member States to continue analysing data on and tendencies in the prevalence of and reporting on all forms of gender-based and domestic violence, as well as the consequences for children, while confinement measures are in place and during the period immediately afterwards; acknowledges that public responses have been insufficient in addressing violence against women and girls and taking adequate account of the need to prevent violence against women in emergency response plans, as well as for future emergencies, with there being a lack of focus on introducing exemptions to confinement rules, setting up helplines and information sharing tools and signals, and ensuring continued access to healthcare services, as well as preserving safe access to legal clinics and shelters or alternative accommodation with sufficient capacity, police and justice services, emergency courts for the issuing of appropriate restraining and/or protection orders and ensuring they are considered essential; asks the Member States to establish safe and flexible emergency warning systems, offer new assistance services by phone, email and text message for direct police outreach and online services such as helplines, concealed apps, digital platforms, pharmacy networks, and provide emergency funding to support services, non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs); calls on the Member States to ensure that support services take a coordinated approach to identifying women at risk, to ensure that all these measures are available and accessible to all women and girls within their jurisdiction, including those with disabilities, regardless of their migration status, and to provide gender-sensitive training for healthcare workers as well as front line police officers and members of the judiciary; invites the Member States to share national innovations and best practices in addressing gender-based violence to better identify and promote efficient practices, and calls on the Commission to promote those practices;

16. In the light of the pandemic, calls on the Member States to ensure a coordinated approach between governments and public services, support facilities and the private sector and to update protocols for victims of gender-based violence to help them to seek help, report crimes and access health services, as well as encouraging witnesses to report such crimes; calls on the Commission to develop a European Union protocol on violence against women in times of crisis and emergency to prevent violence against women and to support victims of gender-based violence during emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic; highlights that this protocol should include essential protection services for victims; welcomes the German Presidency's proposal to establish an EU-wide helpline in all EU languages for victims of domestic and gender-based violence and urges the Council to support it;

17. Calls on the Commission to promote awareness-raising, information and advocacy campaigns tackling domestic and gender-based violence in all its forms such as physical violence, sexual harassment, cyber-violence and sexual exploitation, particularly in relation to newly created prevention measures and flexible emergency warning systems, in order to encourage reporting in coordination and cooperation with recognised and specialised women's organisations; calls on the Commission to work with technology platforms in the scope of the Digital Services Act to address illegal online activities, including online violence against women and girls in all its forms, as the internet has been widely used since the beginning of the pandemic for work, education and entertainment, and will continue to be;

18. Recalls that the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women has noted that the COVID-19 crisis has illustrated the lack of proper implementation of central conventions to protect and prevent gender-based violence; calls on the Council to urgently conclude the EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention on the basis of a broad accession without any limitations, and to advocate its ratification, swift and proper implementation, and enforcement by all Member States; calls on the remaining Member States to ratify the convention swiftly and to allocate adequate financial and human resources to preventing and combating violence against women and gender-based violence, as well as to the protection of victims, in particular during crisis periods; urges the Member States to take GREVIO's recommendations of into account and to improve their legislation to bring it more in line with the Istanbul Convention's provisions, in particular as regards common definitions for acts of gender-based violence;

19. Calls on the Council to add violence against women to the list of criminal offences in the EU, and calls on the Commission to propose a directive to tackle all forms of gender-based violence so as to put in place a strong legal framework, to coordinate the sharing of best practices between the Member States, to promote accurate and comparative data collection, to accurately measure the extent of such violence, to consider the possibility of producing forecasts, and to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of key services to victims; welcomes the Commission's commitment to carry out a new EU survey on gender-based violence with the results to be presented in 2023; stresses the need to collect harmonised data on gender-based violence and calls on the Member States to collect and provide the relevant data when requested, including to Eurostat;

20. Reiterates its strong support for both the Justice programme and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme; welcomes the creation of the new Union Values strand within the CERV and stresses that it should focus on protecting, promoting and raising awareness of rights by providing financial support to civil society organisations that are active at local, regional and transnational level; recalls Parliament's position on ensuring adequate funding for those programmes; welcomes the additional allocation for the flagship programmes as agreed in the final negotiations on the MFF for 2021-2027 between Parliament and the Council, from which the CERV programme will benefit; welcomes the provisional agreement for the EU budget for 2021, which allocates an additional EUR 6,6 million to the CERV programme; stresses the need for adequate funding from these allocations for actions aimed at preventing and combating gender-based violence under the DAPHNE specific objective and welcomes the earmarking agreed for that purpose; stresses the need for the EU to be more ambitious in defending our values and to provide adequate funding for these activities; calls, in addition, for the urgent implementation of clear gender-targeted measures, through earmarking, to address the specific needs of women following the crisis, in particular in the fields of employment, gender-based violence and SRHR, including in other programmes and instruments within Next Generation EU and the MFF for the 2021-2027 period, in line with the dual approach of the Gender Equality Strategy; calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider this when submitting national COVID-19 response plans, with due regard to existing measures and funding, and with gender equality at the heart of the economic recovery; calls on the Member States and the Commission to apply gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in the recovery measures;

21. Notes with serious concern the impact of the crisis on LGBTQI+ persons, in particular young persons, many of whom have had to social distance or quarantine in hostile family environments, increasing their risk of being subjected to domestic and LGBTQI+-phobic violence; notes that a greater-than-average rate of LGBTQI+ people are unemployed or working in precarious jobs with limited and unstable financial resources, resulting in them remaining in a hostile or abusive environment; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that all COVID-19-specific initiatives regarding domestic, gender-based and sexual violence take the increased risk to and specific challenges of LGBTQI+ people into account, and that victim support services and special COVID-19 initiatives responding to domestic violence explicitly reach out to LGBTQI+ victims of domestic violence;

22. Calls on the Member States to ensure the provision of effective, accessible, affordable and quality medical and psychological support for victims of gender-based violence, including sexual and reproductive health services, especially in times of crisis where such support must be deemed essential; asks the Commission to work closely with the Member States to ensure the full implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive ([38]), with a focus on the gender perspective following its recent implementation report ([39]), and with a view to strengthening the rights of victims of gender-based violence in the new Victims' Rights Strategy;

COVID-19, the economy, the recovery and the gender impact

23. Calls for the Commission, Parliament and the Council to take into account the fact that the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affects women in the socio-economic sphere, including their income and employment rate, and will result in even more profound inequalities between men and women and discrimination in the labour market, and calls on them to work with the Member States to closely examine and make specific provision for women's and men's socio-economic needs following the crisis, and to examine horizontal and vertical labour market segregation when implementing programmes within the 2021 EU budget, the next MFF and Next Generation EU, ensuring all programmes incorporate the gender perspective and gender budgeting as well as ex-post gender impact assessments as indicated in the Commission's 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy; calls for the strategy's effective implementation and monitoring; calls on the Member States to incorporate a chapter with targeted actions to advance gender equality as part of the national recovery and resilience plans, developed in cooperation with national equality bodies;

24. Emphasises that there will be a need to re-examine the nature and location of work after the crisis; emphasises that working from home is not a substitute for childcare or the need for provision of and access to affordable quality childcare services, nor is it a substitute for disability-related workplace adjustments; points out that flexible work as agreed with employers can provide opportunities for women and men to work from home or from local co-working spaces, and has the potential to lead to a greater work-life balance, potentially resulting in long-term gender-inclusive growth; notes that this approach has the potential to boost rural areas and infrastructure; calls on the Commission to guarantee that the Barcelona targets are met; urges the Member States to ratify the 2019 ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) without delay, and implement it along with its accompanying recommendation (No. 206), which covers all venues where work-related violence and harassment may occur, such as public and private places of work, as well as work-related communications;

25. Calls on the Commission to collect disaggregated and comparable data on the provision of different types of care, including childcare, care for older persons and care for persons with disabilities, as well as the carer's gender, age and employment status, to feed into a study examining the care gap, with a view to devising an EU Care Strategy that would take a holistic and life-long approach to care, taking into account the needs of both carers and those who receive care; notes that the strategy must respect the competences of Member States and regions, but should aim to improve cooperation and coordination at EU level through relevant initiatives and investment, including under the InvestEU programme and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, with benefits for informal and formal carers and the people they care for; stresses that

([38]) Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57).

([39]) Commission report of 11 May 2020 on the implementation of Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (COM(2020)0188).

cooperation and action at EU level, together with the efficient use of EU funds, can contribute to the development of quality, accessible and affordable care services;

26. Emphasises that investment in care is important for ensuring gender equality and women's economic empowerment, building resilient societies and improving the regularisation of employment, social security and pensions in female-dominated sectors, and also has a positive effect on GDP as it allows more women to take part in paid work; highlights the need for changing models in the provision of care as seen as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures; against this background, calls on the Commission to facilitate the exchange of best practices on the quality, accessibility and affordability of care services, as well as the different models of care services; urges the Commission to examine the situation of informal carers and to share best practices on how Member States can regularise their work; calls on the Member States to address the needs of carers upon retirement; calls in this regard for a proposal for a Council recommendation on social protection and services for carers;

27. Urges the Member States to encourage men, through for example incentivising measures, to take up flexible working arrangements, as a disproportionate number of women usually avail themselves of such arrangements; urges the Member States to fully transpose and implement without delay the Work-Life Balance Directive and calls on the Commission to closely and systematically monitor the implementation of the directive by the Member States on an annual basis; encourages the Member States to address work-life balance deficiencies by going beyond the standards laid down in the directive, particularly given the necessity to address circumstances exposed by COVID-19 measures and their consequences as regards medical protocols in facilities, including quality childcare facilities;

28. Calls on the Member States to establish, while measures to face the COVID-19 crisis are still in place, special leave for caregivers and working parents that is non-transferrable and fully remunerated;

29. Recognises the uniquely challenging circumstances that single parents, of whom a large majority (85 %) are women, have been faced with during the pandemic and post-crisis period as a result of multiple burdens, including the continuous provision of care, concerns as to custody arrangements, potential economic concerns and loneliness; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account and further examine their specific situation, including the additional burdens in terms of working, schooling and caring, access to lawyers and the implementation of custody agreements;

30. Highlights the importance of increasing women's participation in the economy and ensuring more inclusive growth as a part of the solution to the post-pandemic recovery, as equal opportunities and greater labour market participation among women can increase jobs, economic prosperity and competitiveness in the EU; encourages the Member States to follow the Commission's Guidelines for Employment Policies in the EU, having due regard to their national labour market models; in this regard, calls on the Member States to take due account of labour market segregation, precarious employment, pay and pension gaps with a view to improving working conditions and social protection through tailored policies;

31. Stresses that equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between women and men must be a guiding principle for the Commission, Parliament and all Member States when designing response measures to the COVID-19 crisis; urges the Commission to meet its commitment to present binding measures on pay transparency promptly in order to effectively address gender pay and pension gaps, as economic indicators suggest that these gaps are further widening as a consequence of the pandemic; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to consider the Member States' best practices, while taking due account of the unique conditions of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the different labour market models in the EU; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to revise Directive 2006/54/EC;

32. Stresses the challenges for the domestic and home care sector and its workers; calls on the Member States to ratify ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers and to ensure that the sector is eligible for measures aimed at mitigating the financial impact of the crisis so that they may resume their activity in adequate conditions; calls on the Member States to ensure the regularisation of the domestic work sector;

33. Welcomes the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) and CRII Plus package, which mobilise cohesion policy to support the most exposed sectors and also calls for targeted measures to address sectors predominantly employing women; stresses the importance of the Commission's instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE), which ensures income support for unemployed or furloughed workers; stresses the need to assess the impact of these instruments on the situation of women and men in the EU labour market and accordingly readjust

future policies; emphasises the need for retraining and upskilling programmes for women to take account of shifts in the labour market as a consequence of COVID-19;

34. Calls on the Commission to support entrepreneurs, in particular women entrepreneurs, as they seek to develop and build on skills or interests gained during the COVID-19 period, including through entrepreneurship opportunities for mothers, lone parents and others who less frequently engage in entrepreneurial activity, to advance their economic independence and to improve access to and awareness of loans, equity finance and microfinancing through EU programmes and funds so that the crisis becomes an opportunity to progress through adaptation and transformation as part of the green and digital economies; calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to place special emphasis on supporting SMEs, particularly SMEs led by women that often face unique challenges when it comes to accessing requisite financing and will also require support during the recovery phase; calls on the Commission, EIGE and Eurostat to increase data collection on female-led SMEs, self-employed women and women-led start-ups, and on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;

35. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to increase the presence in and contribution of women to the artificial intelligence the science, technology, engineering and mathematics and the digital sectors, as well as the green economy; calls for a multi-level approach to address the gender gap in all levels of digital education and employment in order to bridge the digital divide that has been revealed as work and schooling, as well as many services and facilities, have suddenly moved online; stresses that closing the digital gap will increase gender equality not only in terms of the labour market but also through access to technologies in the personal sphere; calls on the Commission to gender mainstream the Single Market Strategy and the Digital Agenda with a view to effectively addressing the under-representation of women in growing sectors for the future EU economy; welcomes the Commission's Women in Digital Scoreboard, which monitors women's participation in the digital economy, internet use, internet user skills, specialist skills and employment; stresses its importance in helping the Member States and the Commission to make informed decisions and set relevant targets, particularly given the implications of COVID-19;

36. Notes the importance of considering the special situation of women who are returning from maternity leave to ensure that they can access government support without discrimination;

37. Stresses the challenges for the agricultural sector and food supply in the EU, as well as the specific situation of women in rural areas; emphasises the need to maintain the existing thematic sub-programme for women in rural areas through the common agricultural policy strategic plans financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development; stresses that this sub-programme seeks to encourage women's employment and female entrepreneurship; calls, in this regard, for EU funds to be earmarked to improve living and working conditions in rural areas; calls in addition for a reflection upon rural women's roles in safeguarding the environment and biodiversity under the European Green Deal; calls on the Member States to exchange best practices on the professional status of assisting spouses in the agricultural sector and requests that the Commission prepare guidance in this regard;

COVID-19 and intersectionality

38. Stresses that intersecting and structural discrimination create additional barriers and challenges and negative socio-economic impacts for specific groups of women, and that the safety, protection and socio-economic well-being of all persons must therefore be secured and their specific needs addressed by taking due account of an intersectional approach to the crisis and post-crisis measures;

39. Highlights the importance of including women and girls in the design of accessible and targeted information, and for this information to be disseminated in all settings, particularly in times of crisis;

40. Underlines that due to a higher life expectancy and higher likelihood of experiencing health problems, older women often account for the majority of residents in long-term care facilities ([40]), which have become virus hotspots in many countries due to, inter alia, a lack of sufficient resources and knowledge to guarantee the safety and protection of residents; calls on the Commission to analyse the different settings of formal, long-term care provision and their level of resilience

([40]) https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/gender-impacts-health

during the COVID-19 pandemic; calls on the Member States to examine the provision of care for older persons in both residential care facilities and community-based care settings, including through the provision of 24-hour home care or live-in care, and to ensure the wellbeing of older women, including access to care and healthcare services and economic independence; calls on the Council to establish targets for the provision of accessible, affordable and quality long-term care that are equivalent to the Barcelona objectives;

41. Regrets that many women with disabilities, including those who depend on others for everyday care, and particularly those living in institutions and other closed settings and with high support needs, were significantly impacted by the pandemic, but were unable to access their usual support networks or maintain physical distancing, and had difficulties accessing services and goods; calls on the Member States to ensure that these support networks are deemed essential services and are adequately adapted to the circumstances, and that provision for the specific needs of people with disabilities, in particular women and girls, is made in future crisis and emergency planning measures; calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure the rights of all women and girls with disabilities as enshrined in the CRPD, including their right to independent living and access to education, work and employment;

42. Invites the Member States to ensure support for migrant women and men is provided through access to critical healthcare during the crisis; highlights the need for refugee and reception centres to take due account of women's and girls' needs and risks in view of the known challenges of social distancing and maintaining hygiene, as well as their vulnerability to gender-based violence, and to provide adequate funds to alleviate these risks;

43. Highlights the unique circumstances of women experiencing homelessness and women in prostitution and their increased vulnerability to gender-based violence, as well as a lack of access to hygiene and healthcare facilities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent emergency measures; calls on the Member States to ensure services and adequate support is extended to those in precarious situations, including women at risk of or in poverty, and women who are homeless or vulnerable to social exclusion; welcomes the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, which provides additional resources to tackle material deprivation and social assistance; highlights the need for homeless and undocumented women to have access to healthcare; notes that the circumstances of these societal groups have been taken into consideration in the Commission's Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion; calls on the Member States to appropriately consider women experiencing homelessness in their pandemic response plans;

44. Highlights the additional needs of minority groups, such as women with a Romani background, who face entrenched discrimination and ongoing violations of their rights due to a lack of access to basic infrastructure, services and information, especially during confinement;

45. Emphasises the essential nature of support services for LGBTQI+ persons, including mental health support, peer support groups and support services for victims of gender-based violence;

46. Deplores instances of xenophobic and racial discrimination, which increased in the light of the crisis, and urges the Commission and the Member States to take a zero-tolerance approach to racist attacks and to adopt an intersectional approach in their responses that addresses the needs of marginalised population groups, including racial and ethnic minorities;

47. Urges the Member States to approve and implement the Anti-Discrimination Directive and guarantee that multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination are eradicated in all EU Member States;

48. Stresses the need for Member States to secure children's continued access to education, with due attention paid to groups from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds, vulnerable children and girls at risk of or in poverty, who are at greater risk of early or forced marriage; underlines the need to ensure that distance learning is fully accessible to all; highlights the needs of all young people to have the necessary resources and support during school closures and to facilitate their re-entry into the education system once the crisis is over;

External Action

49. Emphasises that the global nature of the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response; highlights the vulnerable position of women and girls in many parts of the world — especially in fragile and conflict-affected states — in relation to COVID-19, for example due to lack of access to healthcare, including SRHR, vulnerability to gender-based violence, including FGM and early or forced marriage, employment status, lack of access to education and extreme poverty and

hunger; notes that in many partner countries women are employed in feminised sectors such as the garment industry and food production which have been hardest hit, with knock-on impacts for their families' and communities' poverty levels and the economic independence and health and safety of women and girls; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that financial support given to partner countries to cope with the crisis is also allocated to support women and girls; calls for strengthened support for women's human rights defenders and women's rights organisations and their participation in all levels of decision-making; emphasises that all possible efforts must be made to ensure that a future vaccine will be available to all;

50. Welcomes the Team Europe package put forward by the Commission to support partner countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences and stresses the need for a gender-sensitive approach and earmarked gender equality spending in the allocation of these funds; emphasises the need for a gender-sensitive response to COVID-19 in the implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession III to take account of the unique circumstances of women and girls and to stimulate post-crisis opportunities; encourages the continuation and prioritisation of education in emergencies during this time; calls on the EU and its Member States to prioritise global solidarity by maintaining a sufficient level of official development assistance funding and by supporting partner countries' responses to the crisis in a comprehensive manner; calls on the EU to focus on strengthening access to healthcare, including SRHR, in its humanitarian and development response to the COVID-19 pandemic, international development, and the new Gender Action Plan III; emphasises that gender mainstreaming and budgeting principles should be followed across all of the NDICI geographic and thematic programmes;

51. Calls on the Commission to put in place a values-based EU trade policy that ensures a high level of protection for labour and environmental rights and respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality; recalls that all EU trade and investment agreements must be gender-mainstreamed and include an ambitious and enforceable chapter on trade and sustainable development; recalls that the negotiation of trade agreements could represent an important tool for advancing gender equality and empowering women in third countries; calls for the promotion of and support for the inclusion of specific gender chapters in EU trade and investment agreements on the basis of their added value, building on existing international examples;

52. Calls on the Commission to put women and girls at the heart of its global response and to fully involve them, listen to their voices and empower them to be an active part of the response to the pandemic;

Gender and the recovery

53. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully assess the gender-specific impacts of and needs arising from the crisis and its socio-economic consequences; calls on the Commission and the Member States to allocate extra and targeted budgetary resources to help women recover from the crisis, including in the implementation of the recovery package, particularly in the fields of employment, violence and SRHR, as well as to monitor this spending and gender mainstream all budgetary, policy and legislative proposals, in line with its commitments in the Gender Equality Strategy; calls on the Commission to strengthen the connection between climate change policies, digital policies and gender equality in its upcoming proposals; emphasises that preparatory action is the best way to build resilience in all areas for future crises;

54. Calls for the inclusion of gender equality as one of the policy priorities to be tackled in the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe and for the EU to ensure gender balance in its bodies and involve women's rights organisations and women organisations in its work to ensure women's needs are taken into account after the COVID-19 pandemic;

55. Calls on the EU and the Member States to maintain a supportive environment for civil society organisations, notably through political support and a sufficient level of funding;

o

o o

56. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.