

1. General framework - European Strategy for Gender Equality

1.1 GENDER EQUALITY IN EU POLICIES

The European Commission's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020/2025 proceeds on a double track: on the one hand, it puts in place concrete measures to achieve gender equality, on the other hand, it actually implements more gender mainstreaming. The Commission improves this integration by systematically incorporating a gender perspective at every stage of its own policy-making, in all areas of EU action, both internal and external.

The strategy encompasses the cross-cutting principle of intersectionality, i.e. the combination of gender identity with other personal characteristics or identities and how these intersections contribute to specific discrimination experiences.

1.2 FUNDAMENTAL THEMES

Combating gender stereotypes and ending violence

Gender stereotypes are one of the root causes of gender inequality and affect all sectors of society. Stereotypical expectations based on a standardised binary woman/man model limit people's aspirations, choices and freedom and must therefore be dismantled. Gender stereotypes strongly contribute to the gender pay gap. They are often associated with other stereotypes, such as those based on race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and this association can reinforce their negative effects.

Realising an economy based on gender equality

Closing the gender gap in the labour market is of paramount importance. Increasing the participation of women in the labour market has a strong positive impact on the economy, especially in the face of a shrinking workforce and skills shortages. It is also a means for women to shape their lives, play a role in public life and be economically independent.

Equal opportunities for leadership in decision-making and politics.

Businesses, communities and states should be led by both women and men, in all their diversity. Inclusive and diverse leadership is needed to meet the complex challenges facing policy-makers today. The Commission will facilitate the exchange of good practices regarding gender balance in boards and management positions, for instance, by setting the presence of women on boards at 40%. The European Platform of Diversity Charters will be a tool for exchange between countries. Equal opportunities in participation are essential for representative democracy at all levels: European, national, regional and local.

Gender mainstreaming and promoting an intersectional perspective in EU policies

The main challenges facing the EU today - including green and digital transitions and demographic change - all have a gender dimension. The inclusion of a gender perspective in all EU policies and processes is essential to achieve the goal of gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that policies and programmes maximise the potential of all - women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity. The goal is to redistribute power, influence and resources fairly and based on gender equality, fighting inequalities, promoting equity and creating opportunities.

Funding actions to advance gender equality in the EU

The Commission's proposals for the multiannual financial framework ensure gender mainstreaming across the whole framework, more specifically in the various EU funding and budgetary guarantee instruments, in particular the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund, the Creative Europe programme, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the InvestEU programme.

1.3 A NEW TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR STAFF OF PUBLIC BODIES

The E-QUALITY project, financed through an Erasmus Plus call, was designed to enhance the gender equality skills of and for public administration employees.

Through E-Quality, a new training curriculum for public bodies has been created, specifically aimed at providing staff with new knowledge and skills on gender equality. The guidelines, outlined here, are a useful tool to approach the proposed training. The overall objective of the project is to promote the EU's Agenda 2020-2025 for gender equality and the relevant EU regulations, recommendations and policies.

The training curriculum is accessible through the [E-Quality Project](#) digital platform, which provides, in addition to the training materials, useful and complementary tools for further training. These include a database of good practices, laws and strategies for each European administrative level (municipal, regional and national).

The project was developed in partnership between five European countries (IT, SP, EL, FR, MT). This transnational dimension guarantees a broad perspective to the curriculum, providing some specific competences, such as, for instance, the aptitude to recognise situations of exclusion and discrimination; a critical approach to the analysis of the local, national and international context in relation to gender equality; communication skills to promote the importance of equal opportunities for all people in the country.

The aim of the project in brief is:

- (a) provide municipalities and their staff with new tools and skills to address gender and equality issues, not only within their working environment, but also by promoting civil society actions and initiatives;
- b) increase the transversal competences of employees, useful for improving the implementation of gender policies, especially for those working on planning policies affecting women's participation in society, access to services and equal opportunities.
- c) improve knowledge on key issues related to gender equality and how they can be translated and incorporated into local policies and legislation. In particular:

- Access to medical care and reproductive and sexual health;
- Violence and exploitation of women;

- Access to work, career and equal pay;
- Recognition and valorisation of care work;
- Representation in decision-making processes and women's empowerment.

We believe that the training provides participants with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the effective implementation of gender *mainstreaming* strategies in their sector, organisation and institution.

Training on gender equality can create effective action and positive change and is a key choice for public and private institutions.