

## Interparliamentary Committee Meeting

# We are strong: women leading the fight against Covid-19

Expert and research publications



This [Thematic Digest](#) contains a list of publications from the European Parliament's expertise and research capacities within the Directorates-General for Internal Policies (IPOL), External Policies (EXPO) and Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), relevant to the topics of debate of the Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on [women leading the fight against Covid-19](#), organised by the [Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality](#), on the occasion of International Women's Day 2021.



## [COVID-19: the need for a gendered response](#)

*Briefing by Rosamund Shreeves, with G. Sabbati, February 2021*

In the midst of the current Covid-19 pandemic, adopting a gender perspective may seem a secondary concern. However, evidence shows that pandemics affect women and men differently and that it is essential to recognise these differences in order to understand the impacts on individuals and communities and to respond effectively and equitably.

## [Women in politics in the EU: state of play](#)

*Briefing by R. Shreeves and M. Prpic, with E. Claros, February 2021*

The EU has committed to achieving gender balance in political representation. Since EU policies can influence the lives of women and men in different ways, it is important that both sexes have equal representation in posts that can make a difference. The coronavirus pandemic has shone a spotlight on the need for gender balance in decision-making.

## [Achieving gender equality in the face of the pandemic and existing challenges](#)

*'At a glance' note by R. Shreeves, January 2021*

Since the release of the EU gender equality strategy for 2020-2025 in March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has exposed and exacerbated gender inequalities, creating further challenges. This note was prepared in view of Parliament's plenary session in January 2021, where the Parliamentary committee reports on the EU gender equality strategy, women's participation in the digital economy and the gender impacts of the pandemic were tabled.

## [Gender and geographical balance in the governance structures of Horizon 2020](#)

*Briefing by M. Franke and L. Casaca Franco, December 2020*

This briefing analyses gender and geographical balance in the governance structures of Horizon 2020. It first briefly examines the Treaty base for gender and geographical balance in the EU's actions. Then, it gives an overview of how gender and geographical balance are considered in the legal framework of Horizon 2020, and specifically in its governance structures such as the European Research Council (ERC). The briefing finds that while research excellence is the main criterion for funding, the programme takes into account gender and geographical balance in its governance structures. It addresses inequalities between the sexes and between the Member States in terms of application and success rates, and other aspects.

## [After parental leave: Incentives for parents with young children to return to the labour market](#)

*Study coordinated by S. Schulz, November 2020*

This study examines the employment situation of parents with young children in the EU and specifically, the factors that affect parents' return to the labour market. The paper identifies interventions that could help parents return to work after family-related leave and improve labour-market integration of unemployed or inactive parents. It outlines possible additional actions at the EU level and includes a section on the impact of COVID-19 on parents with young children. It finds that COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate gender differences and employment gaps among parents of young children.

## [European gender equality strategy and binding pay transparency measures: pre-legislative synthesis of national, regional and local positions on the European Commission's initiatives](#)

*Briefing by C. Collovà and L. Zandersone with E. Habib, November 2020*

This briefing forms part of a series offering syntheses of the pre-legislative state of play and consultation on key European Commission priorities during the current five-year term. It summarises the state of affairs in the relevant policy field, examines how existing policy works on the ground, and, where possible, identifies best practice and ideas for the future on the part of governmental organisations at all levels of European system of multi-level governance.

## [Violence against women in the EU: State of play](#)

*Briefing by R. Shreeves and M. Prpic, November 2020*

The EU is tackling the problem of violence against women in various ways, but has no binding instrument designed specifically to protect women from violence. This briefing explains the scale of the problem, also in view of the current Covid-19 crisis. It provides an overview of the international context, of the political commitments at the EU level, the activities of the European Parliament, the different approaches of the Member States, and the stakeholders' views.

## [EU gender budgeting: where do we stand?](#)

*Briefing by C. Simoes and R. Calatozzolo, October 2020*

Gender budgeting has a fundamental impact on inclusive and economic growth, fostering employment, reducing poverty, addressing ageing population and increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to the study of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the estimated impact of improved gender equality varies considerably across member states from 4% to 12% of GDP, depending on the present level of achievement of gender equality.

## [Gender equality in the college of the European Court of Auditors](#)

*Briefing by M. Franke and L. Casaca Franco, October 2020*

This briefing on gender balance in the college of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) aims to shed light on the balance between male and female members, from a historical perspective as the ECA has a reputation of being a rather male-dominated institution. It first sets out the nomination procedure and the challenges it presents for the achievement of gender balance in the college of ECA members. Then, the actual number of female and male ECA members is analysed over time.

## [Towards a more resilient Europe post-coronavirus: capabilities and gaps in the EU's capacity to address structural risks - promoting gender equality](#)

*Study coordinated by E. Bassot, F. Debié, S. de Finance, M. Nogaj, A. Worum and A. Barberá Del Rosal, October 2020*

The coronavirus pandemic hit at a pivotal moment, when the EU had committed to refocus on combating gender inequalities. Emerging evidence shows that lockdowns have led to an increase in violence against women, a widening of the gender divide in unpaid care work and potentially long-term impacts on women's paid work and incomes. These are all areas where the EU and the Member States have, or could further develop, their capacities and where consistent application of gender mainstreaming tools could make a real difference to outcomes.

## [The gendered impact of the Covid-19 crisis and post-crisis period](#)

*Study coordinated by M. Schonard, September 2020*

COVID-19, like previous epidemics, infects and affects men, women and other genders differently. Whilst indications suggest that more men than women are dying of COVID-19, the impacts of the (short- and longer-term) socio-economic effects of COVID-19 fall disproportionately on women. Importantly, these effects are not because of the pathogen itself, but a consequence of the public health interventions and policies introduced by governments to minimise its spread. Based on currently available data on COVID and longer-term effects of previous outbreaks, this study outlines some of the key gendered effects of the pandemic thus far, and gives suggestions for how these may extend into the post-crisis period.

## [European Heritage Days – women's contribution](#)

*'At a glance' note by M. Pasikowska-Schnass, September 2020*

European Heritage Days have helped raise awareness of Europe's rich and diverse heritage. However, have they sufficiently promoted women's contribution to our common heritage? Or really highlighted the female dimension of the aim to promote diversity? This note points to some European efforts to promote cultural heritage by female artists.

## [Education and employment of women in science, technology and the digital economy, including AI and its influence on gender equality](#)

*Study coordinated by M. Schonard, April 2020*

This study provides evidence that there is still gender bias and inequality in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields and the digital. It gives an up-to-date literature review of the current status of women's education and employment in STEM fields and the digital sector. In so doing, the corresponding trajectories are examined, from primary education level up to the employment level, in an attempt to identify obstacles and bottlenecks that prevent gender parity. Finally, suggestions for future research, initiatives and policies that would improve women's participation in these areas are made.

## [The impact of COVID-19 measures on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU](#)

*Briefing written by O. Marzocchi, April 2020*

This briefing focuses on the impact of EU Member States' COVID-19 measures on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU. Their impact are examined from an institutional/constitutional and a fundamental rights and freedoms point of view in the following relevant areas: state of emergency and exceptional powers, functioning of national parliaments and the judiciary, freedom of movement, freedom of expression and the media, freedom of assembly, privacy and data protection, asylum, prisons, discrimination and vulnerable groups, and other issues of relevance for Art. 2 TEU.

## [Women in regional and local government: still a long way to achieve parity](#)

*Briefing by V. Margaras, March 2020*

Local and regional government ought to constitute an advantageous sphere for women: a space where they can easily participate in decision-making without having to sacrifice their multiple family, social and career roles. Nevertheless, data show that it is not always easy for women to participate in these structures.

## [Teaching: a woman's world](#)

*Infographic by I. Katsarova and S. Chahri, March 2020*

Data show that, in the EU, men dominate certain professional fields, such as engineering and technology. In contrast, a number of jobs are still commonly considered to be for 'women only'. These include pre-school education, nursing, midwifery, secretarial work, and domestic and personal care related services. In 2017, 72 % of the nearly six million people working as school teachers in the EU were women.

## [Gender equality in sports: \(slowly\) changing the game](#)

*Infographic by I. Katsarova and S. Chahri, March 2020*

Even though women's presence and involvement in the Olympic Movement have progressively evolved, girls and women across the world still get fewer opportunities and less investment, training and corporate attention when they play sport. Today, there is still ample room for improvement when it comes to women's participation in sports governance structures.

## [The Beijing Platform for Action – 25 year review and future priorities; Infographic](#)

*Briefing by R. Shreeves, February 2020*

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is considered the most comprehensive global policy framework for the rights of women. Its concrete measures and measurable outcomes across a range of issues affecting women and girls are regularly monitored and give an indication of progress towards gender equality, both globally and in the EU.

## [Women in parliaments](#)

*Infographic by M. Prpic, G. Sabbati and S. Chahri, February 2020*

This infographic shows the proportion of women in parliaments around the world, compares representation of women in national parliaments and the European Parliament and shows the proportion of women in the European Parliament by political group. It also gives an overview of female Members in the European Parliament by Member State and the gender quotas applicable to the 2019 elections.

## [Women in film: Still fighting the celluloid ceiling](#)

*Infographic by I. Katsarova and S. Chahri, February 2020*

Even though the past 50 years have seen a significant advance in women's status in society, their depiction on screen has continued to reflect patriarchal stereotypes. Accordingly, female characters are in general younger than their male counterparts and more likely to be reduced to the role of wife, mother or girlfriend. One way to help guarantee that stories portrayed on the screen are more true to life would be to encourage and support the presence of women in key positions in the film industry.

## [Women's role in peace processes](#)

*Study coordinated by I. Sokolska, May 2019*

This study aims to provide insight in the meaningful inclusion of women - where women have decision-making authority - in peace and transition processes. It examines progress in the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, assessing global commitments, the EU's application of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, National Action Plans and global peace and security indicators. It explores women's participation across the peace-making landscape and evaluates the factors that enhance and constrain women's meaningful participation in peace-making. The study provides recommendations to achieve sustainable peace and transform the global power dynamics.

## [Gender equality in sport: getting closer every day](#)

*Briefing by I. Katsarova, March 2019*

Traditionally, sport has been dominated by men, both in terms of participation and governance. Even though women's presence and involvement have progressively evolved, girls and women across the world still get fewer opportunities and less investment, training and corporate attention when they play sport.

## [Gender responsive EU budgeting: update and review of the 2015 study on the EU budget for gender equality](#)

*Study coordinated by s R. Calatozzolo, February 2019*

This study updates the 2015 Study entitled 'The EU Budget for Gender Equality'. It investigates whether, and to what extent, progress has been made in gender budgeting in the EU since the publication of the 2015 Study, particularly in the light of the European Parliament's 2017 Resolution entitled 'EU Funds for Gender Equality'. The study finds that the absence of overall and consistent commitment to gender equality in the EU budget and the budgetary process continues. As a result, the study calls for legislative action to anchor gender equality to all policies that receive funding from the EU budget.

## [Gender mainstreaming in the EU: state of play](#)

*'At a glance' note by R. Shreeves, January 2019*

When the European Union endorsed 'gender mainstreaming' as its official policy approach to gender equality, it was seen as a potentially revolutionary means of accelerating progress towards equality. Two decades on, concerns remain about fragmented implementation across policy areas and institutions at EU and national levels.

## [The place of women in European film productions](#)

*Briefing by I. Katsarova, January 2019*

The sexual assault allegations brought against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein laid bare the painful reality for scores of women working in the film industry around the world. However, sexual harassment is seemingly just the tip of the iceberg in an industry where gender inequalities relating to biased representation and pay are arguably systematic and pervasive.

## [Gender equality in the EU's digital and media sectors](#)

*Infographic by G. Sabbati, M. Ppic and R. Shreeves, March 2018*

The digital revolution is also a social process, and one which is not gender neutral. It can be a way for women to access new opportunities or it can reinforce existing gender inequalities. Media monitoring shows that there has been progress, but women continue to be under-represented as producers of media content and under- and misrepresented in media coverage.

## [The EU budget for gender equality](#)

*Study coordinated by B. Grzebieluch, May 2015*

This study subjects the EU budget to a gender budgeting analysis revealing the impact of revenue and spending decisions on gender equality. It covers the operational expenditure of six selected policy areas, in an attempt to pave the way for further, more comprehensive analysis. It concludes that: (i) many titles of the EU budget do not follow the EU's commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming; (ii) the EU budget is not entirely transparent, since the amounts allocated to different policy objectives and actions are not always specified; and (iii) specific gender indicators and gender-disaggregated data are not systematically used in the monitoring and evaluation of different actions funded by the budget.

## Policy departments

The Policy Departments of DG Internal Policies (IPOL) and DG External Policies (EXPO) are responsible for providing expertise and policy advice to support the activities of the parliamentary committees and other parliamentary bodies. Based on analyses carried out either in-house or externally, policy departments provide independent, specialised, objective, high-quality and up-to-date information in all areas of Parliament's activities.

A wide variety of formats is used by the Policy Departments in order to deliver their policy analysis, most frequently in response to a request from a parliamentary committee or delegation. Their written output serves a variety of purposes by feeding directly into the legislative work of a specific committee or serving as a briefing for delegations of Members, or as background notes and speaking points for Parliament's political authorities.

The Policy departments also organise events, including workshops and expert panels, to enhance Parliament's analytical capacity and develop common approaches to current issues.

## European Parliamentary Research Service

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) provides Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of, and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work.

As the European Parliament's in-house research service and think tank, EPRS provides a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution.

EPRS also supports and promotes parliamentary outreach to the wider public.

## Access the publications in this document and more...

European Parliament Think Tank	<a href="https://europarl.europa.eu/thinktank">europarl.europa.eu/thinktank</a>
Supporting Analyses for Committees	<a href="https://europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses">europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses</a>
Fact Sheets on the European Union	<a href="https://europarl.europa.eu/factsheets">europarl.europa.eu/factsheets</a>

**Disclaimer and copyright.** The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy.

Manuscript completed 26 February 2021.

Image used under the license from Adobe Stock.

© European Union, 2021.