



## Gender Action Plan – putting women and girls' rights at the heart of the global recovery for a gender-equal world

Brussels, 25 November 2020

Today, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy put forward ambitious plans to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through all external action of the European Union.

While there has been some significant but uneven progress achieved in advancing women's and girls' rights, no country in the world is on track to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Moreover, the health and socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis are disproportionately affecting women and girls. For example, because a higher proportion of women work informally and in vulnerable sectors, their job loss rate is 1.8 times greater than that of men. The poverty rate among women could go up by 9.1%.

To address this, the EU's new Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III) aims to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls, and safeguard gains made on gender equality during the 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action.

High Representative/Vice-President, Josep **Borrell**, said: *"Ensuring the same rights to all empowers our societies. It makes them richer and more secure. It is a fact that goes beyond principles or moral duties. The participation and leadership of women and girls is essential for democracy, justice, peace, security, prosperity and a greener planet. With this new Gender Action Plan, we are pushing for more and faster progress towards gender equality."*

Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta **Urpilainen**, said: *"Stronger engagement on gender equality is key to a sustainable global recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and building fairer, more inclusive, more prosperous societies. Women and girls are in the frontline of the pandemic and must be put in the driving seat of the recovery. As a gender-sensitive and responsive geopolitical Commission, we want to work more closely with our Member States, as well as all partners, in building a truly gender-equal world."*

### Promoting gender equality in EU external action 2021-2025

The Gender Action Plan III provides the EU with a policy framework with five pillars of action for accelerating progress towards meeting international commitments and a world in which everyone has space to thrive. It makes the promotion of gender equality a priority of all external policies and actions; offers a roadmap for working together with stakeholders at national, regional and multilateral levels; steps up action in strategic thematic areas; calls for the institutions to lead by example, and; ensures the transparency of the results.

#### The five pillars of action in detail:

**1) 85% of all new actions throughout external relations will contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment by 2025.** GAP III introduces stringent rules for applying and monitoring gender mainstreaming across sectors. All external assistance across all sectors, including infrastructure, digital, energy, agriculture and blended funds, etc., should integrate a gender perspective and support gender equality.

**2) Shared strategic vision and close cooperation with Member States and partners at multilateral, regional and country level.** GAP III makes the case for developing a common approach for all EU actors at country-level and for focusing on selected strategic issues. Careful gender analysis and close consultation with Member States, civil society organisations, women's rights activists, and the youth, will provide a firm foundation for actions on the ground.

**3) GAP III calls for accelerating progress, focusing on the key thematic areas of engagement,** including fighting against gender-based violence and promoting the economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls. It puts a renewed emphasis on universal access to healthcare, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender equality in education, as well as

on promoting equal participation and leadership. It also fully integrates the EU policy framework on Women, Peace and Security, and brings the gender perspective to new policy areas, such as the green transition and the digital transformation.

**4) Leading by example.** The action plan calls for the European Union to lead by example, including by establishing gender-responsive and gender-balanced leadership at top political and management levels.

**5) Measuring results.** GAP III adopts a new approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning, with a stronger focus on measuring results. The EU will set up a quantitative, qualitative and inclusive monitoring system to increase public accountability, ensure transparency and access to information on its assistance to gender equality worldwide. The Commission, in cooperation with the EEAS, will monitor progress each year on the implementation of GAP III.

### **A transformative approach**

Contributing to empowering women, girls and young people to fully use their rights and increase their participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life is a key objective of the new action plan. GAP III strongly supports the participation and leadership of girls and women, promoting it, for example, through governance programmes and public administration reforms.

GAP III will promote a transformative and intersectional approach, and will mainstream gender in all policies and actions. It aims to address structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination, including by actively engaging men and boys in challenging gender norms and stereotypes. Finally, to leave no one behind, the action plan seeks to tackle all intersecting dimensions of discrimination, paying specific attention for example to women with disabilities, migrant women, and discrimination based on age or sexual orientation.

### **Background**

This external Gender Action Plan reflects the objectives of the EU [Gender Equality Strategy](#), the first Commission strategy in the area of equality, which delivers on the commitments made by the President von der Leyen in her [political guidelines](#).

### **For More Information**

[Joint Communication – EU Gender Action Plan \(GAP\) III](#)

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