

recommendations to the European Commission 2024-2029

Institutions. Renew the mandate of a European Commissioner dedicated to (Gender) Equality

Policies. Renew the Union of Equality Agenda and all relevant Strategies, and mainstream SRHR in them. Renew the Gender Equality Strategy 2025-2029, which should include a pillar on the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), include comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) as a prevention measure, and actions to combat all forms of sexual and gender-based violence including violations of SRHR (gynaecological and obstetric violence, and denial of abortion care).

Funding. Ensure sufficient funding for gender equality and SRHR in the EU budget, through gender mainstreaming and targeted budget lines. In particular, improve access to SRH care (EU4Health), and support civil society organisations (CSOs) and (women) human rights defenders ((W)HRDs) working on gender equality and SRHR (CERV).

1. Prioritise gender equality in the next EU institutions

The structure of EU institutions in the upcoming legislature will be determining for the degree of prioritisation given to gender equality and SRHR.

➤ **European Commission:** Renew the mandate of a European Commissioner dedicated to (Gender) Equality. Ensure all appointed Commissioners support gender equality and SRHR. Ensure gender mainstreaming through a strong Equality Task Force.

➤ Meaningfully consult with, and take into account the expertise and recommendations of diverse civil society representatives. Involve the people concerned and consult with

community-based organisations. Ensure an intersectional approach in decision-making.

➤ **Council of the EU:** Support the creation of a Council Working Party dedicated to (Gender) Equality, or at least the strengthening of an Equality Council within EPSCO, while ensuring gender mainstreaming throughout all Council configurations.

➤ **European Parliament:** Support the renewal and strengthening of the FEMM Committee, the re-appointment of Gender Focal Points responsible for gender mainstreaming in every Committee, and engage with relevant intergroups and informal cross-party networks championing SRHR and LGBTIQ+ rights.

2. Prioritise gender equality in the future EU agenda

A. MAINSTREAM GENDER EQUALITY AND SRHR THROUGH THE UNION OF EQUALITY AGENDA

➤ Renew the Union of Equality Agenda.

➤ Apply gender mainstreaming and intersectionality as cross-cutting principles, to ensure the needs of women and men in all their diversity, particularly those affected by intersecting forms of discrimination¹, are addressed through an inclusive and non-stigmatising approach. When it comes to access to SRHR in Europe, particular attention should be paid, among others, to women, young people, LGBTIQ+ people, people living with HIV, people living with disabilities, sex workers, Roma people and other ethnic minorities, migrant people.

➤ **Renew the Gender Equality Strategy 2025-2029.** The Strategy should contain strong commitments, clear indicators, and hold all EU institutions and Member States accountable. The European Commission should urge the Council of the EU to adopt the Gender Equality Strategy through Council Conclusions. The Strategy should include a pillar on the full range of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

- The European Commission should organise regular **exchanges of best practices** on the full range of SRHR between EU Member States and civil society (see [Mutual Learning Seminar](#)), to contribute to upwards convergence towards the highest standards of SRHR among EU Member States.
- The European Commission should issue

Recommendations or Guidelines to Member States on the provision of SRHR and CSE, in line with international standards (WHO, UNESCO).

- The European Commission must ensure the **full implementation of the Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence** by Member States, including by providing them Guidance and training on the provision of SRH care to victims of sexual violence, and awareness-raising and education on consent. The European Commission should also plan to revise the Directive, to criminalise rape with a consent-based definition of rape and other forms of SGBV, and provide comprehensive sexuality education as a key prevention measure.
- The European Commission should broaden the scope of its actions to prevent and combat all forms of SGBV. Violations of women's SRHR constitute a form of gender-based violence against women² and should be addressed as such, including gynaecological and obstetric violence and the denial of abortion care. The European Commission should tackle gynaecological and obstetric violence, as part of the Recommendation on Harmful Practices, and in future initiatives.
- The European Commission should promote comprehensive sexuality education including consent education, as a key preventive measure against sexual, gender-based, and intimate partner violence.

➤ **Renew and/or ensure the full implementation of all other EU Strategies linked to the Union of Equality Agenda**, noting that all these Strategies should address the specific challenges that each group faces regarding the realization of their SRHR:

- ▶ the **LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2025-2029** should notably aim to reduce health inequalities for LGBTIQ+ people, and respond to their specific health needs, notably regarding sexual and reproductive healthcare: such as STI/HIV prevention, testing and treatment, trans-specific healthcare, and access to comprehensive sexuality education, which addresses sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics and contributes to reducing homophobia and transphobia. The Strategy should also encourage other measures that increase the well-being of LGBTIQ+ people, such as combating gender-based hate crimes and hate speech (which should be added to the Eurocrimes), intersex genital mutilation, and bringing an end to conversion practices in the EU.
- ▶ the Youth Action Plan and the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan, with, for the latter, a better inclusion of SRHR, LGBTIQ+ rights, women's rights and gender equality in those policies. Continue to protect and support CSOs and HRDs promoting human rights, gender equality, SRHR, and combating SGBV in third countries.
- ▶ the EU Roma Strategic Framework's target on access to SRH for Roma women should be realized.
- ▶ the new Anti-Racism Action Plan should include a gender and health perspective.
- ▶ and others.

B. MAINSTREAM GENDER EQUALITY AND SRHR IN OTHER POLICIES

Promote SRHR as EU Values

- Continue to affirm that SRHR are essential to the realization of several fundamental rights enshrined in the Charter, including the rights to (gender) equality and non-discrimination, life, human dignity, freedom from torture, physical and mental integrity, health, and private life.
- Closely monitor and counter the rising anti-gender and anti-choice backlash and disinformation in the EU (offline and online), ensure the EU does not fund any anti-choice actors or initiatives, and firmly condemn any attacks on EU values in EU Member States, including on SRHR, women's rights and bodily autonomy.
- Establish an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism on access to SRHR across the EU. Collect disaggregated data on this (i.e. by EIGE, or the European Commission itself). Monitor and condemn retrogressive initiatives in Member States, that seek to limit access to SRHR and attacks against women's rights organisations and defenders (possibly through the Annual Reports on the Rule of Law, on the implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and/or of the Gender Equality Strategy).
- Support, protect and fund women's rights and SRHR organisations and (women) human rights defenders ((W)HRDs). Propose a fully-fledged EU Civil Society Strategy and establish an **EU Protection Mechanism for HRDs in the EU**.
- Support the process of amending the EU Treaties and Charter to add SRHR including [abortion](#) and GBV, as [proposed](#) by the European Parliament.

Reduce gender-based inequalities in healthcare and social policies

- Propose a EU Health Strategy, which prioritizes improving access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and information and comprehensive sexuality education, preventing STIs/HIV and reproductive cancers, addressing women's specific health needs, and reducing health inequalities related to gender and other social determinants of health, including migration status.
- Support initiatives aiming at harmonising and improving access to SRHR across the EU; including a possible solidarity mechanism between Member States to cover access to abortion care for women who live in EU Member States where access is limited or impossible, as proposed by the [My Voice, My Choice](#) European Citizens' Initiative.
- Progress towards [reproductive justice](#) through EU social and care policies, to ensure that all people can have the number of children they want and have the means to raise them in good conditions. Ensure the full implementation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), [European Care Strategy](#), the EU Directive on Equal Access to Goods and Services, and other relevant commitments, promoting gender equality, work-life balance, childcare and support to children, and long-term care.

Connect environmental and social justice in EU climate action

- Consider and tackle both the fact that the climate crisis is caused by unequitable power systems, and disproportionately impacts women and communities marginalised by intersecting systems of oppression. Ensure EU responses to the climate crisis are grounded in, and prioritise, human rights and gender equality, [including access to SRHR](#), and seek to

alleviate rather than reinforce existing inequalities. Mainstream gender equality across all efforts to address the climate crisis.

Advance the universal realization of SRHR through global and external policies

- Propose a fully-fledged **EU intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy**, applying a gender-transformative, intersectional and decolonial approach to all areas of EU external action: human rights, international cooperation, humanitarian aid, but also accession, migration, security, climate, trade, economic policies, etc. The current Gender Action Plan should be renewed and expanded upon, and adequate resources should be allocated to its implementation.
- Guarantee the SRHR of undocumented migrants, refugees and displaced persons within EU migration and humanitarian policies, notably under the EU Temporary Protection Directive; assess gender-based violence in asylum claims; and ensure the safe reporting of crimes and access to support services for undocumented migrants.
- Renew the Youth Action Plan and the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan, with a better inclusion of SRHR, LGBTIQ+ rights, women's rights and gender equality in those policies. Continue to protect and support CSOs and HRDs promoting human rights, gender equality, SRHR, and combating SGBV in third countries.
- Monitor the implementation of the Global Health Strategy in relation to SRHR.
- Work towards the universal realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDGs 3.7 and 5.6 focused on SRHR; and leverage the momentum of the 30th anniversaries of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action to push for universal recognition of and respect for SRHR.

3. Prioritise gender equality in the future EU budget

During the next mandate, the European Commission will be responsible for reviewing and proposing a new EU long-term Budget (Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034), and for annual programming exercises. It will be crucial to mainstream a gender perspective across all EU funding instruments, and to guarantee sufficient targeted funding to advance gender equality, women's rights, and SRHR, within and outside of the EU.

➤ Ensure smaller, grassroots, community-based, and more informal CSOs and movements have equal access to funding opportunities. The EU should provide core, long-term, flexible funding to women's rights organisations, feminist and youth-led movements in and outside of the EU.

➤ Through the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)** new regulation: ensure sufficient financial support for women's rights and SRHR organisations and HRDs. CERV must remain under direct management of the European Commission, to fund independent CSOs working in hostile environments; and

continue to support CSOs advancing women's rights and SRHR through the strand on gender equality.

➤ Through the **EU4Health Programme** and **European Social Fund** + new regulations: ensure funding to reduce health inequalities and improve access to SRH care.

➤ Through the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** new regulation: ensure an increased focus on human development, health, SRHR and gender equality, and support for women's rights organisations and WHRDs, with increased and targeted funding for those issues.

1 On grounds of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sexual characteristics, ethnic, religious or socio-economic background, age, disability, health status, or any other grounds.

2 See UN CEDAW [General recommendation N°35](#) on gender-based violence against women, paragraph 18



**International Planned Parenthood Federation
European Network**

55, Rue Royale 1000 Brussels Belgium

www.europe.ippf.org

Tel : +32 (0)2 250 0950

Email : eninfo@ippf.org

Follow Us On Social Media



IPPF European Network cares.

We are working through our 30 autonomous national Member Associations across Europe and Central Asia so that all women, men, children and young people can lead safe and dignified sexual and reproductive lives, free from harm and discrimination