



EVALUATION OF THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE STRATEGY FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN 2010 – 2015

Research Report

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Executive Summary

Aims and structure of the study

The key purpose of this study is to assist DG Justice and Consumers in **reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015** as implemented up to June 2014 in order to draw lessons for a possible new policy framework.

The study covers all six priority areas of the Strategy and provides:

- i. assessment of the **achievements of the Strategy in relation to its objectives** in the six priority areas and their **relevance** in addressing current needs (Chapter 2);
- ii. discussion of the role of **the Strategy according to key stakeholders and whether it is perceived as a coherent framework** (Chapter 3);
- iii. assessment of the **role of funding for gender equality** by dedicated budget support in the previous multiannual financial framework (2007-2013) and the prospects for the 2014-2020 period (Chapter 4);
- iv. concluding remarks on the Strategy's **main strengths, weaknesses and value added**, as well as some indications emerging from the analysis and stakeholders indications in relation to any new policy framework (Chapter 5).

The assessment is based on a desk review of existing documents, as well as the results of an on-line survey conducted by the Commission's services between June and August 2015 among the members of the High Level Group for Gender Mainstreaming.

Given the nature of the assessment carried out and the necessity to take into account all the other intervening factors (in primis the financial and economic crisis and the austerity measures) that may account for the changes that have occurred in gender equality conditions, it is not possible to assess the contribution of the Strategy to reaching the ultimate expected outcomes. For these reasons, the assessment conducted focuses mainly on the Strategy outputs and immediate outcomes, and provides a qualitative indication of the extent to which the Strategy could contribute to achieving its objectives. The analysis of stakeholders' perceptions provides additional inputs for the final assessment.

Main findings: the Strategy's achievements, strength, weaknesses, and value added

Overall, the **Strategy has produced several outputs and important immediate outcomes**. The outputs mainly concern the actions implemented, comprising awareness-raising measures, new data-gathering tools, studies and indicators, as well as important soft and hard legislative measures addressing women's economic

situation and access to the labour market, women's presence in top management positions and political life and the fight against gender-based violence. Among the main immediate outcomes it is worth stressing the improved knowledge on the many different dimensions of gender inequalities; the increased awareness among both the overall population and the policy-makers of the importance of tackling gender inequalities in policy making¹; the support to gender mainstreaming in the European Commission services.

Progress has, however, been uneven across the priority areas, reflecting the different standing and salience of each priority in the European policy debate.

Achievements appear to have been greater in those priority areas, like **gender equality in decision-making and violence against women**, which were not systematically tackled in previous years. The first priority area (**Equal economic independence**) and the **horizontal issues** suffer, on the other hand, from a lack of focus and prioritization of the envisaged actions, which makes it difficult to assess progress out of the many important actions that have been implemented.

Overall, the Strategy appears to have produced **positive effects in terms of value added** especially in relation to the **agenda setting and learning dimensions**, by providing a valuable framework for gender mainstreaming in the European Commission and for the implementation of a coherent framework for gender equality policies in Member States.

The Strategy supported the implementation of a considerable number of new actions at the EU level (**volume effects**), further **strengthening the policy areas already partly addressed in the Road Map 2006-2010**. In particular, the Strategy enhanced attention to the gender pay gap, innovation and gender in ICT and research. The Strategy also shows an **extension of the types of actions and measures implemented**, with increasing attention to awareness-raising measures, data-gathering, monitoring and evaluation tools.

According to the key stakeholders, the main **strengths** of the Strategy include:

- The provision of a **reference framework** on priority policy areas and actions to be implemented for **national gender equality strategies and action plans** and of a **coherent guidance for multi-annual priorities**. This reference role is recognised as particularly important for those Member States where gender equality is still receiving relatively little attention.
- The adoption of the **dual approach** based on the combination of targeted measures and gender mainstreaming.
- The **identification of priority areas of intervention** considered important by most of the strategy stakeholders and experts, and a good capacity to adjust to changing socio-economic contexts.
- The capacity to **combine both legislative and practical measures** in a coherent and consistent way and the **attention to awareness-raising measures**, acknowledging the importance of a wide and extensive use of communication and awareness-raising tools in order to change "traditional" cultural views and fight gender stereotypes.
- The **provision of a reference framework for the mainstreaming of gender equality in EU funding programmes**.
- The **involvement of the European Commission DGs**, even if to different

1 European Commission (2015b), Special Eurobarometer 428 Gender equality, 2015.

degrees, in the programming and implementation of gender mainstreaming in almost all policy areas, the establishment of an **interdepartmental coordination mechanisms** and the **support for a greater gender balance in the Commission** services management positions and committees.

- **The support for the development of monitoring and evaluation systems and of indicators and data-gathering tools** (such as the 2013 FRA survey on violence against women and the development of new gender indicators, like the EIGE Gender Equality Index), important to improve knowledge of the many dimensions of gender inequality, as well as the **exchange of practices** for institutional learning to support more effective policies on the basis of an evidence-based approach.

There are, however, **areas for improvement** underlined by most of the Strategy stakeholders and experts, including:

- The **need to better target and focus the envisaged priorities and key actions** within each policy field in order to improve effectiveness. For example, some actions belonging to the same policy field are scattered across different priorities (such is the case of education and R&D), making it difficult to monitor implementation. In addition, **greater attention to the heterogeneity of women and men needs and conditions** could improve definition of the actions to be implemented.
- The **link with the EU 2020 strategy** is weak: the EU2020 strategy does not explicitly address gender equality. A stronger connection could reinforce both strategies.
- **Gender mainstreaming and institutional mechanisms promoted within the horizontal pillar** are far from being achieved in those policy domains that are not seen as directly related to women and gender equality². In addition, some important tool for decision-making, like **Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) and Gender Budgeting (GB)**, are still rarely adopted in EU or national institutions.

In particular, some bottlenecks hamper strategy implementation and effectiveness mainly involving:

- The **lack of adequate resources** (both human and financial). **The strategy has no budget earmarked to it** because for the majority of funding programmes it is not possible to earmark resources to gender equality measures. In addition, the European Commission unit in charge of Gender Equality appears to be under-resourced in its efforts to support gender mainstreaming in all the European Commission DGs. Finally, the **austerity measures imposed by the crisis** are likely to further reduce the scarce resources available for gender equality.
- The fact that **gender mainstreaming, even if greatly improved**, still remains **weakly institutionalised** in the EU decision-making process is another drawback. Gender equality units in the European Commission have limited power to interact on the same level with other decision-making bodies. In addition, the recent tendency to **merge all grounds of discrimination**, including dis-

² e.g. environmental policies, transportation and competition policies, regional development, macroeconomic policies, and the media and communication policies that may affect women and men differently, as shown by recent developments in socio-economic research.

crimination based on sex, **within the promotion of civil rights and equal treatment for all** risk to downgrade the profile of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the policy agenda.

Relevance of the Strategy and emerging Challenges

The actions and outputs of the Strategy appear to address adequately the needs identified when the Strategy was launched. These needs continue to be relevant and the crisis and the austerity measures adopted by most MSs in order to contain budget imbalances have aggravated most of them. In addition, emerging demographic and socio-economic challenges have important gender effects that have to be considered in the design of a new policy framework. The following are considered particularly important in the current debate:

- Emerging **demographic and socio-economic challenges** with important gender effects have however to be considered in the design of a new policy framework. Particularly important for their gender effects are the following:
 - The **ageing of the population**. The gender gap in life expectancy will increase the share of elderly women living alone in the total population with important policy implications. In the gender perspective, this issue needs to be tackled in terms of: employment continuity, income levels, work-life balance and elderly care services.
 - **Migration**, with the specific risks faced by **migrant women**, concerning for example the increasing role of migrant women in the provision of family care and their employment conditions; their vulnerability to trafficking and to traditional harmful practices; the recognition of their skills and education levels and of their specific work-life balance needs.
 - The **increasing fragmentation of household models and employment patterns**, which introduces new forms of fragility, especially among women and the elder population, calling for closer attention to single households in welfare policies and to the associated increase in the demand for social and care services. The growing diffusion of various forms of employment characterised by limited duration, short and/or flexible working hours and new forms of autonomy also needs to be addressed in the design of social protection systems, in order to avoid increasing poverty risks.
- **The gender effects of the crisis and austerity measures** are also to be considered. The crisis has in fact driven European countries to revise their welfare policies drastically with little attention to their effects in terms of increased poverty risks and gender inequalities. The austerity measures are also threatening the survival of Equal Opportunity bodies.
- **The persistence of gender stereotypes** is another aspect to keep under attention. Despite the several initiatives implemented at both policy and legal levels, there is still a deeply entrenched gender inequality persisting as a result of discriminatory norms and practices, as well as cultural frameworks and gender stereotypes often reinforced by the media and social networks.

Suggestions for a post 2015 strategy

The assessment of the current strategy and the stakeholders' positions underlines the need to continue the strategic approach adopted in 2010 and to strengthen it further with attention to:

- **The heterogeneity of women's and men's conditions**, adopting an intersectional perspective and recognising the different needs and the multiple discrimination faced by some groups of women.
- **Gender stereotypes**, which should be addressed more directly. This means targeting men as well as women and developing new, more effective measures to fight gender stereotypes in schools and the media, starting from an in-depth assessment of what has worked in past experience.
- **The mobilisation of women's organisations to support gender equality strategies at both the EU and national level**. The degree to which women's organisations are involved is important for the design and implementation of effective gender equality strategies and to pressure policymakers to keep gender equality issues high in the policy agenda.
- **Maintaining gender equality in public debate** is crucial to keep gender equality high in the policy agenda. This means that, besides legislative and non-legislative measures, it is important to adopt effective communication measures targeting public opinion and adopting the "right" language.
- **Continuing to support the development of gender-relevant and gender-sensitive data, indicators and research** in all policy fields as well as accurate evaluations of the effectiveness of gender equality policies and good practice exchange in gender equality issues. This would increase the level of gender awareness and a better understanding of the dimensions of gender equality and its trends in the member states, as well as institutional learning as to what policies are more effective in terms of the objectives. This also implies that it is necessary to **assess the (potential) gender impact of proposed changes and cuts in welfare provisions and public services, as well as of measures proposed to support recovery**. **Governance aspects** should also be considered in evaluation studies in order to understand how outputs and results are produced and which mechanisms (especially at the institutional and organizational level) **need to be reinforced** to increase the Strategy effectiveness.
- **Continuing to support attention to gender equality issues in EU funding programmes**, which will constitute the most important financial support available for the implementation of gender equality policy in the EU by providing support to Managing Authorities and closely monitor the use of these funds.

As for the **policy domains to be considered**, the main indications emerging from the literature and debate are:

- **In employment and social inclusion policies** the priority areas and key actions already identified are to be maintained. Within these priority areas, some policy fields usually given little attention in gender equality strategies are becoming increasingly relevant due to fiscal consolidation measures impacting disproportionately on women: **pension reforms; cuts and restrictions in care related benefits/allowances/facilities; the tightening of eligibility criteria and cuts on housing benefits and welfare provisions; increases in fees for publicly subsidized services**.

- **Outside the employment and social inclusion domain**, policy fields of importance for their effects on gender equality are: **communication policies and the role of media** to oppose gender stereotyping, **growth and competition policies, fiscal policies, transportation and environmental policies, territorial development, research and innovation policies.**

1. Background, aim and structure of the report

The Commission's Strategy for Equality between women and men for the period 2010-2015³ is a comprehensive policy framework committing the Commission to integrate gender equality into all its policies, reflecting the Commission's resolve to step up its activities in this field.

The Strategy is structured around **six priority areas**:

1. equal economic independence ;
2. equal pay for work of equal value;
3. equality in decision-making;
4. dignity, integrity and ending gender violence;
5. promoting gender equality beyond the EU;
6. horizontal issues.

For each priority area, the Strategy identified some key actions to be carried out by 2015 as well as more than 120 actions to be implemented by different Commission services and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Each Commission service is responsible for the promotion of gender equality in the policy falling under its competence. The **Inter Service Group (ISG) on equality between women and men** (managed by DG Justice and Consumers) contributes to the programming, monitoring and reporting of the Strategy's priorities and actions. It is composed of representatives from nearly all services and serves as a forum for exchange of information and best practice in the field of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming are implemented as part of the Commission's policy-making and defined according to the distribution of responsibilities. Each Directorate General is responsible for designing and implementing the promotion of gender equality in its activities, as well as for the monitoring and evaluation of the outcome of their gender equality activities. The DGs have to report every year to the secretariat of the inter-service group managed by the gender equality unit in DG Justice and Consumers. The secretariat of the inter-service group coordinates the annual monitoring and reporting of the actions carried out and provides a summary of the main developments in the **Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men** presented each year.

³ COM(2010) 491 final

([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri= COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF)).

The **mid-term review of the Strategy**, published by the Commission on 14 October 2013⁴, provided information about the contribution of each Commission service and the EEAS to the implementation of the Strategy. The mid-term review found that, half-way through the strategy's five-year time scale, the Commission is **delivering on its commitments**.

To follow up on the mid-term review, DG JUST concluded a **review of activities** carried out by Directorates-General between January 2013 and June 2014. This review was carried out by **Inter Service Group (ISG) on equality between women and men**.

Within this framework, the key purpose of this study is to assist DG Justice and Consumers in a **preliminary review of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015** as so far implemented in order to draw lessons for a possible new policy framework.

The assessment is based on review of the existing documents, as well as the results of an on-line survey conducted between June and July 2015 among the members of the High Level Group for Gender Mainstreaming.

The assessment covers all six priority areas of the Strategy and aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent have the Strategy actions achieved their objectives within the 6 priority areas defined in it? What factors influenced the achievements observed?
2. To what extent do the original objectives still correspond to the needs within the EU?
3. How relevant and effective was EU funding for gender equality related interventions in the previous multi-annual financial framework (2007-2013) and what are the prospects for the 2014-2020 period?
4. What is the Strategy's EU added value? To what extent is the Strategy perceived as a coherent EU framework by key stakeholders?
5. What are the Strategy's main strengths and weaknesses and which advice would the contractor provide in relation to any new policy framework?

In order to address these questions, this report is organized in 5 chapters, complemented by three annexes.

Following this introductory chapter, **Chapter 2** provides an assessment of the **Strategy achievements, relevance and value added**. This analysis was carried mainly through desk research literature and documentation review of work already carried out by the Commission. The analysis presented in this chapter is complemented by Annex 1 providing a more detailed assessment.

Chapter 3 discusses whether the Strategy's initiatives responded to the main expectations from key stakeholders, on the basis of available documents and the results of an on-line survey among the members of the High Level group on gender mainstreaming (HLG). This chapter is complemented by Annex 2, which provides a more detailed analysis of the results of the on-line survey among the members of the HLG and by Annex 3, which sets out the main positions of the relevant stakeholders.

4 SWD(2013)339.

Chapter 4 illustrates the **role of funding for gender equality** through dedicated budget support in the 2007-2013 EU programmes (ESF, ERDF, PROGRESS, EU Plan of Action on GEWE in Development, 7th Research Programme) and provides an outlook for the 2014-2020 period. The analysis was carried out mainly through a review of the available literature and documentation.

Finally, **chapter 5** draws the main conclusions on the Strategy's EU added-value and its main strengths and weaknesses and provides some indications emerging from the analysis and the stakeholders' indications regarding a possible new policy framework.

Three annexes complete the report:

Annex 1 includes tables presenting in greater detail the Strategy's main achievements (outputs and immediate outcomes) in each of the six priority areas and horizontal issues.

Annex 2 presents the main results of the Survey to the High-Level Group on gender mainstreaming.

Annex 3 presents the main positions shown by the relevant stakeholders, by priority areas.

2. Strategy achievements and the progress made towards the objectives

In this chapter we consider the preliminary effects generated and progress made towards the Strategy's objectives within the six priority areas, including assessment of the relevance of the Strategy to addressing existing and future needs.

The following research questions are to be answered:

1. To what extent have the Strategy actions achieved their objectives within the 6 priority areas it defines?
2. What factors influenced the achievements observed?
3. To what extent do the original objectives still correspond to the needs within the EU?

2.1 The Strategy intervention rationale

To answer the evaluation questions we must consider the strategy's **basic rationale**, linking the strategy priority areas to the needs they are meant to address, their key actions, expected outputs and outcomes.

The basic rationale is not made explicit in the Strategy and in the accompanying documents, but can be deduced from the Commission staff working document "Actions to implement the Strategy of equality between Women and Men 2010-2015", accompanying the Communication on the Strategy ⁵, which links the strategy priority areas and key actions to the activities foreseen to implement/complement the key actions and the European Commission services in charge of each action and the expected delivery dates.

Table 2.1 provides a reconstruction of the Strategy Intervention rationale based on these documents.

In the following sections we provide **an initial assessment of the Strategy relevance, effectiveness and value added**, on the basis of the documents available.

A full evaluation of the Strategy would have required more time and ad hoc field work to assess the actual outcomes. For this reason, in the following exercise we consider mainly the Strategy outputs and provide qualitative indication of the extent to which we expect the Strategy could contribute to achieving the ultimate outcomes; its relevance in relation to needs; and its value added. The analysis of

⁵ Commission Staff Working Document, SEC (2010) 1079/2 Brussels
http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm.

stakeholders perceptions conducted in chapter 4 provides additional inputs for the final assessment presented in the closing chapter.

Effectiveness has been assessed on the basis of the following questions:

1. Has the Strategy delivered the expected outputs?
2. To what extent has it contributed to the immediate/ intermediate outcomes identified in the logic model? And how far would it go towards achieving the ultimate expected outcomes (potential effectiveness)?

Relevance has been assessed considering the following questions:

1. To what extent do the needs identified in the Strategy continue to be relevant in Member States and/or at EU level?
2. To what extent do the (type of) actions and outputs of the strategy respond to the needs?

The **European added value** criterion was assessed on the basis of the following aspects:

1. Does the strategy 'add' to existing action or directly produce beneficial effects that can be expressed in terms of volume?
2. Does the strategy 'broaden' existing action by addressing groups or policy areas that would not otherwise be addressed (scope effects)?
3. Does the strategy support innovation and the transfer of ideas (Agenda setting, innovation and learning effects)?

Table 2.1 - The Strategy logic of intervention

Priorities	Needs	Key Actions	Outputs	Expected outcomes
1. Economic independence	<p>Persisting gender gaps in the labour market and poverty risks which reduce women access to economic resources and independence</p> <p>Some disadvantaged groups particularly at risk of poverty and exclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting equality as part of the Europe 2020 strategy and through EU funding; • promoting female entrepreneurship and self-employment; • assessing workers' rights with regard to leave for family reasons; • assessing Member States' performance with regard to childcare facilities; • supporting gender equality in matters of immigration and integration of migrants. 	<p>42 Actions promoted</p> <p>11 European Commission services involved</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes</p> <p>Improvement in knowledge of conditions for women in the labour market and poverty risks and on effectiveness of policies</p> <p>Improvement in work-life conciliation measures</p> <p>Progress in gender mainstreaming and Gender Equality awareness in all policies that could support women in the labour market and reduce poverty risks</p> <p>Greater support for gender equality with European funds</p> <p>Improved monitoring of implementation of the envisaged actions and directives</p> <p>Ultimate outcomes</p> <p>Increase in women's participation and employment rates</p> <p>Progress in the provision of care facilities and reduction of gender differences in parental leave take ups</p> <p>Reduction in women's poverty risks</p>
2. Equal pay for equal work	<p>Persisting gender pay gap for equal work and work of equal value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring possible ways to improve the transparency of pay with social partners; • supporting equal pay initiatives in the workplace such as equality labels, 'charters' and awards; • instituting a European Equal Pay Day; • seeking to encourage women to enter non-traditional professions, for example in the 'green' and innovative sectors. 	<p>18 actions promoted</p> <p>5 European Commission services involved</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes</p> <p>Improved knowledge and awareness on the GPG and its root causes</p> <p>Promotion of actions to address the root causes of gender segregation in education and employment in primis)</p> <p>Monitoring measures implemented and their effects</p> <p>Ultimate outcomes</p> <p>Reduction of gender segregation in education and employment and of the gender pay gap</p>
3. Equality in decision-making	<p>Women still largely under-represented in economic, political and research decision making processes and positions at both the EU and MS level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposing targeted initiatives to improve the situation; • monitoring progress made towards achieving the 25% target for women in top-level decision-making positions in research; • promoting increase in the number of women in the committees and expert groups established by the Commission, with the aim of achieving at least 40% female membership; • promoting greater participation of women in European Parliament elections. 	<p>8 actions promoted</p> <p>6 European Commission services directly involved</p> <p>+ all DGs (gender balance within the European Commission services)</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes</p> <p>progress in the gender balance in management positions in the European Commission services, in EU committees</p> <p>improved knowledge of the gender balance in economic and political and economic decision-making</p> <p>Ultimate outcomes</p> <p>Reduction of gender imbalances in economic, research and political decision making at the EU and MS levels</p>

<p>4. Dignity, Integrity and end to gender based violence</p>	<p>Large share of women victims of violence Presence of gender inequalities in health care access and research Gender differences in asylum-seekers' needs</p>	<p>proposing an EU-wide strategy on combating violence; ensuring that EU asylum legislation takes account of gender equality considerations monitoring gender issues in the field of health.</p>	<p>17 actions promoted 5 European Commission services involved</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes improved knowledge of the dimension and features of gender-based violence and of its cost and the effectiveness of the measures adopted implementation of specific recommendations and directives increased awareness of the dimension of gender based violence among the general population and practitioners in the judicial and health care systems improved gender mainstreaming in health policies and awareness of gender differences in health conditions in health research and policies Ultimate outcomes Improvement in the effectiveness of measures adopted to contrast gender based violence Change in attitudes towards gender based violence and reduction of gender based violence Improvement in the effectiveness of health care policies for women and for men</p>
<p>5 Gender equality in external actions</p>	<p>Women are still discriminated against and victims of violence in many countries</p>	<p>identifying progress in equal treatment between women and men in the candidate and potential candidate countries for accession to the EU; implementing the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development (2010-2015); conducting regular dialogue and exchange of experience with the European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries; integrating equal treatment considerations into humanitarian aid operations.</p>	<p>14 actions promoted 7 European Commission services involved</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes Increased attention to Gender Equality issues and capacity building in EU services and delegations involved in external actions, humanitarian aid and trade relations; improved knowledge on gender issues in countries addressed with EU external actions, humanitarian aid and trade relations on the effectiveness of Gender Equality policies in different context Ultimate /long term outcomes Contribute to reduce gender inequalities in countries addressed with EU external action, humanitarian aid, and trade relations.</p>
<p>6. Horizontal issues</p>	<p>Gender roles and stereotypes are among the strongest barriers to gender equality; Legislation against sex discrimination needs monitoring, enforcement, evaluation and updating to remain effective Implementation of gender equality policies is often hampered by the lack of adequate governance mechanisms and tools</p>	<p>the role of men in gender equality; disseminating good practices in redefining gender roles in youth, education, culture and sport; correct implementation of European legislation, particularly Directive 2004/113/EC on equal treatment in the access to and supply of goods and services and Directive 2006/54/EC on equal opportunities; governance and gender equality tools, particularly by drafting an annual report on gender equality to contribute to a yearly top-level Gender Equality Dialogue involving the European Parliament, the Commission, Member States and key stakeholders.</p>	<p>33 actions promoted 10 EU services + EIGE +</p>	<p>Immediate and intermediate outcomes Improved knowledge of: the role of men in Gender Equality and of gender differences among the youth population and sport; the implementation of the EU equal treatment legislation; the gender dimension in disability policies: Improved knowledge of the implementation of the BPfA; and of models and indicators to support gender mainstreaming ; Greater cooperation between the EP, Commission, MSs and key stakeholders on progress on Gender Equality; Adoption of Gender Equality institutional mechanisms and tools (GIA, GB, etc.) in the European Commission Improved awareness and capacity for the integration of gender aspects in all policy areas in the Commission services Ultimate /long term outcomes Greater effectiveness of GM and Gender Equality policies</p>

2.2 The strategy overall achievements and value added

Before assessing the Strategy's achievements and value added, it is to be noted that the **Strategy is composed of European Commission actions**, and is based on the division of competencies between the EU institutions and Member States. The assessment thus considers what the European Commission has and could have done.

In addition, it is worth stressing that it is **not possible to evaluate the Strategy ultimate outcomes and its effectiveness in achieving the gender equality objectives in the envisaged priority areas**, given the scope of this study (based on the review of existing materials and documents) and the many intervening factors that have shaped the situation of women and men in Europe in the five years of implementation of the Strategy, in primis the dramatic financial and economic crisis and the austerity measures that have negatively affected gender equality developments. For this reason, as anticipated in the previous section, we mainly assess the outputs produced and their potential contribution to obtaining the strategy intermediate and final objectives.

Overall the Strategy has produced several outputs and important immediate outcomes. The outputs mainly relate to the implemented actions, comprising awareness-raising measures, new data-gathering tools, studies and indicators, as well as important soft and hard legislative measures addressing women's economic conditions and access to the labour market, women's presence in top management positions and the fight against gender-based violence.

Notable among the main **immediate outcomes** is improved knowledge of the many dimension of gender inequalities; increased awareness both in the overall population and policymakers of the importance of addressing gender differences in policy-making⁶; implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission services. While **all the envisaged actions have the potential to contribute greatly to achieving the Strategy's priorities, it is difficult to assess their actual effectiveness, as some of them were only generically identified** (e.g. *promote gender equality in education and training, explore options to improve the transparency of pay*, etc) and in most of the cases **they did not indicate specific outputs or expected results**.

Progress has been uneven across the priority areas, largely reflecting the different standing and salience of each priority in the European policy debate. Achievements also appear to have been greater in priority areas, like **gender equality in decision-making and violence against women**, with a clear focus which were not systematically tackled in previous years. The first priority area (**equal economic independence**) and the **horizontal issues** suffer from a lack of focus and prioritisation of the envisaged actions, which makes it difficult to assess progress of the many important actions that have been implemented.

Besides the usual context indicators, useful indications on gender equality outcomes across policy areas may be derived from the **EIGE Gender Equality Index**. Even if the latest GEI release⁷ is only for 2012 and not all the Strategy's priority areas are addressed (e.g. violence against women and external actions), the index shows that

6 European Commission (2015b), Special Eurobarometer 428 Gender equality, 2015.

7 EIGE (2015), Gender Equality Index 2015 – Measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2012, <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0415169enn.pdf>.

between 2010 and 2012 some progress was achieved in the majority of domains and sub-domains addressed by the Strategy. The greatest improvements occurred in the domain of “power” (measuring improvements in gender equality in decision making), even if the GEI remains at a very low level (39.7 in 2012 relative to 37.9 in 2010 and to 52.9 for the overall GEI Index). A slight increase has also been registered in the domain of “money”, measuring gender gaps in earnings and income and in poverty risks (going from 67 in 2010 to 67.8 in 2012). On the contrary, the index declined in the work domain (from 62.2 in 2010 to 61.9 in 2012), showing that the austerity measures are making employment conditions relatively worse for women than for men. The index remains stable for the other domains (knowledge, time and health), but showing very low levels of gender equality for the “time” dimension (with a GE index reaching only 37.6) given the still uneven division of care work and social activities between women and men, and a relatively low level (49.1) also in the domain of knowledge (measuring gender segregation in education and access to lifelong learning).

While there are still some areas for improvement, overall the Strategy appears to have produced **positive value added effects in relation to all the three dimensions** described in section 2.1. and especially in relation to the **learning dimension**.

In particular, the Strategy heightened attention to the gender pay gap, to innovation and gender in ICT and research.

Besides supporting the **implementation of a large number of new actions** at the EU level (**volume effects**), the Strategy has further **strengthened the priority policy areas addressed in the Road Map 2006-2010**⁸, both in the labour market domain (non-standard employment, pay gaps, working time, work-life balance) and in other domains: health, violence against women, segregation in education and training, economic and political decision making. In particular, the Strategy heightened attention to the gender pay gap, to innovation and gender in ICT and research.

The Strategy also shows an **extension of the types of actions and measures implemented**, with increasing attention to awareness-raising measures with **the involvement** of men and of operators of the judiciary, health care, educational and socio-economic systems, as well as data-gathering, monitoring and evaluation tools.

The **agenda setting, innovation and learning effects** represent probably the most important value added of the Strategy.

In particular, the Strategy has served as **a coherent reference framework** on priority policy areas and actions for **gender equality strategies and action plans** in a large majority of countries. In addition, important learning effects may derive from the implementation gender sensitive **monitoring and evaluation systems and tools and the development of indicators and data-gathering tools** of importance in enhancing knowledge and awareness of the many dimension of gender inequality. The support given to the **exchange of practices** for institutional learning in policy-making on the basis of an evidence based approach is another important value added of the Strategy. Knowledge building, information exchange and networking among stakeholders have been supported especially through the

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 [COM(2006) 92 final.

PROGRESS Programme⁹ and EIGE activities. These activities have supported the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies in the EU Member States¹⁰. The Strategy has also contributed to the implementation of a gender mainstreaming approach in nearly all Commission policy areas and supported a greater gender balance in the Commission services management positions and committees.

2.3 Achievements, relevance and value added by priority area

Table 2.2 presents for each priority area the Strategy's key actions and some context indicators that are not part of the Strategy, but provide an overview of the changes brought about in the policy areas covered by the Strategy during its implementation, and are useful to assess its relevance to current needs.

The final three columns provide a qualitative synthetic assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and value added of each priority area according to the criteria described in section 2.1.

More detailed table describing the main achievements for each key actions is providing in annex 1.

9 See chapter 4 for a description of the gender equality measures supported by the PROGRESS Programme.

10 Besides the organisation of conferences and workshops, among the major examples of exchange of good practices, we can include the EIGE good practice programme; the support provided to the website European Platform for Investing in Children – EPIC (formerly referred to as European Alliance for Families) containing good practices in the area of parenting and child support measures to help the MSs with implementation of the Recommendation Investing in Children; the setting of the good practices section on Antidiscrimination and Equality of the EWSI website - European Web Site on Integration.

Table 2.2 - Main achievements of the Strategy: context indicators and overall assessment

Priority areas	Context indicators	Relevance	Potential Effectiveness	Value added
1. EQUAL ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE				
1.1 - Support the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy	<p><i>Women's Empl. Rate (EU 28):</i> 63,5% (2014) Vs 62% (2010)</p> <p><i>Women's entrepreneurship:</i> In 2012 women were 34.4% of EU self-employed and 30% of start-up entrepreneurs.</p> <p><i>EU NEET Rate (15-29):</i> <i>women</i> 17,7% (2013) Vs 17% (2010)</p> <p><i>Men</i> 14,1% (2013) Vs 13% (2010)</p> <p><i>Percentage of Children cared for in formal structures:</i> <i>Aged 3 years and over:</i> 83% (2012) Vs 81% (2007)</p> <p><i>less than 3 years:</i> 28% (2012) Vs 26% (2007)</p> <p><i>Population at risk of poverty or social exclusion:</i> <i>Women: 25,4% (2013) Vs 24.8% (2010); Men: 23.6% (2013) Vs 22.6% (2010)</i></p>	High	Medium – high	Medium – High
1.2 - Promote female entrepreneurship and self-employment (EMPL/ENTR/REGIO)				
1.3 - Assess remaining gaps in reconciliation work and family; social partners consultation; report on MSs performance on child care facilities (JUST/EMPL)				
1.4 - Promote Gender Equality in research and innovation (RTD) ¹				
1.5 - Promote Gender Equality in all initiatives on Migration and integration of migrants (HOME/EMPL)				
2. EQUAL PAY				
2.1 - Explore possible ways to improve the transparency of pay as well as the impact on equal pay of arrangements such as part-time work and fixed-term contracts (JUST/EMPL)	<p><i>Average unadjusted Gender Pay Gap in the EU28</i> 16.4 (2013) Vs 16.1 (2010)</p> <p><i>Average gender gap in pensions:</i> 38.5% (2012) Vs 37.6 % (2008)</p>	High	Medium - high	High
2.2 - Support equal pay initiatives at the workplace such as equality labels, 'charters', and awards, as well as the development of tools for employers to correct unjustified gender pay gaps. Institute a European Equal Pay Day to be held each year to increase awareness on how much longer women need to work than men to earn the same. (JUST/EMPL)				
2.3 - Encourage women to enter non traditional professions, for example in "green" and innovative sectors (EAC/MOVE/RTD)				
2.3.1 - Participation of women in ICT (CNECT)				
2.3.2 - Gender equality and research				
3. EQUALITY IN DECISION – MAKING				
3.1. - Targeted initiatives to improve the gender balance in decision-making (JUST/MARKT)	<p><i>women members of national parliaments:</i> 28% (2014) Vs 24% (2010)</p> <p><i>Women members of the European Parliaments</i> 35% (2009) Vs 37% (2014)</p> <p><i>Women senior ministers:</i> 28% (2014) Vs 26% (2010)</p> <p><i>Board members of largest publicly listed companies:</i> 20% (2014) Vs 12% (2010)</p>	High	High	High
3.2 - Monitor the 25% target for women in top level decision-making positions in research (RTD)				
3.3 - Monitor progress towards the aim of 40% of members of one sex in committees and expert groups (ALL)				
3.4 - Promote greater participation of women in European Parliament elections (COMM/JUST)				

4. DIGNITY, INTEGRITY AND AN END TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE				
4.1 Adopt an EU-wide strategy on combating violence against women (JUST/HOME)	Percentage of women experiencing sexual and/physical violence since the age of 15 (2014): - 33% victims of sexual and/or physical violence;	High	Medium	High
4.2 Ensure that Asylum legislation takes into account Gender Equality; promote Gender specific training and BP within the EASO and via funding by the ERF (HOME)				
4.3 - Gender issues in health policies (SANCO/EMPL/JRC)				
4.3.1 - Cyber stalking/harassment/violence				
5. PRIORITY GENDER EQUALITY IN EXTERNAL ACTIONS				
5.1 - Monitor and support adherence to the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU (ELARG/EMPL)	na	High relevance	Medium	Medium
5.2 - External relations and development policies (DEVCO/EEAS)				
5.3 - Further integration of gender considerations into EU humanitarian aid ECHO)				
6. HORIZONTAL ISSUES				
6.1 - Address the role of men in Gender Equality; promote good practices on gender roles in youth, education, culture and sports (EAC/RTD)	na	high	medium	high
6.2 - Monitor the implementation of EU equal treatment laws with focus on Dir. 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC (JUST)	na			
6.3 - Promote full implementation of the BPfA with support of EIGE (ALL/ESTAT/JUST)	na			
6.4 - Present an Annual report on progress on Gender Equality (JUST/EMPL)	na			

¹ This action was not labeled as a key action, but being a stand alone action without reference to the other key actions we considered it as a key one.

Sources: Eurostat,

European Commission, *2014 Report on Progress on equality between women and men*,

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/annual_reports/150304_annual_report_2014_web_en.pdf;

FRA (2013), *Violence against women : an EU survey*,

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

The first priority area, “Equal Economic independence” is very wide in its contents and comprises a large number of actions to support women in the labour market.

Overall, this priority area comprised **42 actions** up to the end of 2012¹¹, with **38 actions**¹² still ongoing. Given the focus of this priority area, the actions were mainly under the responsibility of **DG EMPL** and **DG JUST**. The other DGs participated in the actions to a lesser extent

11 See the Mid –Term Review 2013.

12 See the European Commission monitoring document “The Strategy for equality between women and men (2010–2015): Actions to be implemented between 2013 and 2015 - State of play November 2014.

As described in greater detail in Annex 1, the key actions implemented in this priority area focused on the root causes of women's difficult access to the labour market and Economic independence, and combine regulatory measures (mainly related to supporting initiatives on equal economic independence within structural funds or directives on the equal treatment of women and men), with monitoring actions, studies and funding of projects/programmes.

The envisaged actions address:

- the low female participation and employment rates with particular attention to vulnerable persons and multiple discriminations (older women, single parents, migrant women and women from ethnic minorities, who face higher poverty risks);
- the higher barriers faced by women in entrepreneurship, employment and educational gender segregation;
- women's heavy family burdens.

However, **some emerging challenges** that might impact upon this priority will have to be considered in future strategies, such as the effects of demographic change on caring roles and the issues related to access to social security and social protection, as well as multiple forms of discrimination faced by vulnerable groups of women.

All the envisaged actions are **highly relevant** in addressing women's difficult access to economic independence, given that context indicators show a situation that has not improved much since 2010 largely due to the effects of the crisis and of the austerity measures, which are likely to further aggravate conditions for women in the labour market, shifting back on them the provision of unpaid welfare services in households.

Despite the numerous achievements of the 2010-2015 Strategy in supporting women's access to the labour market and the progress made in recent years, the *2014 Report on Progress on equality between women and men*¹³ underlines that while the **target of 75% of persons in employment** set by the EU 2020 Strategy is **close to being achieved for men**, it **will take almost 30 years** to reach it **for women**.

More specifically, the women's Employment Rate (EU 28) remains **lower** than men's reaching **63.5% in 2014** (up from 62% in 2010). In addition, **some of the barriers to women's participation** are likely to remain or even get worse given the cuts in social spending occurring in many MSs to comply with austerity measures. For example, the percentage of children cared for in formal structures remains significantly below the Barcelona objectives according to 2012 figures. Even if the **gender gap in the risk of poverty or social exclusion** showed some decline between 2010 and 2013, this occurred due to a worsening of men's conditions, and in 2013 women's rates were still at 25.4% compared to 23.6% for men.

The actions involved in these priority areas have a potential **medium - high effectiveness** in contributing to achieving the Strategy objectives of reducing gender gaps in economic conditions.

All the envisaged actions could potentially contribute to ensuring equal economic independence (**potential effectiveness**). However, the fact that **no specific tar-**

¹³ 2014 Report on Progress on equality between women and men

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/annual_reports/150304_annual_report_2014_web_en.pdf.

gets are identified and that in some cases actions are only generically defined, risks weakening their contribution to the effective achievement of the priority's objectives. Hard measures such as the revision of the leave directives and legislative guidelines to MSs on paternity leave together with stricter enforcement of the parental leave directive in all MSs could be considered, as well as guidelines on the combination of flexible working time conditions with a flexible use of parental leave by both parents¹⁴.

For some actions, the indication of specific targets could also help in better prioritising the actions to be implemented. For example, the Strategy could stress the importance of increasing female employment rates in achieving the Europe 2020 targets (which do not distinguish between men and women), as well as setting specific targets for long-term care (as in the case of the Barcelona targets for child care). Also greater attention could be paid to the labour market inclusion of disabled women and other women facing multiple discriminations.

As for **value added**, this priority area is likely to produce a **medium-high** value added, especially in relation to the broad spectrum of actions supporting conditions for women in the labour market (volume and learning value added effects).

The second priority of the Strategy, "Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value" builds on the first priority and aims to ensure on the one hand that employed women receive the same pay for equal work as men and, on the other, that they are employed in high pay sectors.

This priority area comprises a lower number of actions (18) than the previous priority and appears more focused on its specific objectives. **The actions implemented mainly involved DG JUST and DG RTD.** Some other DGs¹⁵ also participated in the actions, although to a much lesser extent.

Overall, **this priority has great relevance** to current and future needs. These actions tackle serious barriers at the basis of the gender pay gap: women's vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market; their higher employment in part-time and atypical jobs than men; their segregation in employment and in education and training; cultural stereotypes, etc.

Context data show that after the decline from 17.3% in 2008, the gender pay gap remained stable at **16.2% in 2010 and 16.4% in 2013**.¹⁶ The previously cited *2014 Report on Progress on equality between women and men* underlines that **it will take more than 70 years to achieve equal pay**, assuming a continuous decrease at the same rate.

The gender pay gap and women's interrupted employment careers are at the basis of the **pension gender gap, amounting on average to 38.5%** in 2012 (compared to **37.6%** in 2008). The recent pension reforms designed to increase the financial sustainability of pension systems risk aggravating the gender gap in pensions.

14 D. Szelewa, Maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and unpaid care work, in *A new strategy for gender equality post 2015*. Workshop for the FEMM Committee, 3 September 2014.

15 More detailed information on the Key actions' implementation by the DGs are reported in the annex 1.

16 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com_2014_224_en.pdf.

The **effectiveness** of the envisaged actions in contributing to reduce the gender pay and pension gaps is considered **medium - high**. Overall, the actions could potentially provide a significant contribution to achieving this Strategy priority. However, the **actual contribution of the actions to the Strategy objectives largely depends on the measures that are promoted** – measures that are not in the Strategy. In addition, **the role of the social partners and equality bodies in reducing the gender pay gap and supporting the enforcement of anti-discrimination provisions is not sufficiently addressed**.

The **value added** is considered high, given the scope of the priority and the attention to awareness-raising activities.

The third Strategy priority, “equality in decision making”, tackles a **relevant issue for gender equality**, re-confirmed by the 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights¹⁷. Overall this priority action currently comprises 9 actions, mainly implemented by DG JUST followed by DG Just also DG RTD¹⁸.

This **priority area is considered among the better performing ones** and its effectiveness may be considered **high**. The relatively low number of actions allows for stronger focus on implementation and the priority features a relatively new policy area, and consequently improvements are more visible.

According to the 2014 report *Progress on equality between women and men in 2014* (cit.), the intense debate and regulatory pressure has resulted in an **increase in women’s presence in political and economic decision-making**.

In November 2014, 28% of the elected members of National Parliaments in the Member States were women (as compared with 24% in 2010), even if with wide country differences. As for the current European Parliament, the proportion of women (37 %) has reached an all-time high.

With regard to gender equality in economic decision making, since the Commission placed the issue on Europe’s political agenda (in 2010) and put forward a proposal for a *Directive on improving the gender balance among directors of listed companies* (in November 2012), the proportion of women on boards has risen by 8.3 pp, over four times as fast as in 2003-10¹⁹, reaching 20.2% in October 2014 from 12% in 2010. Most of the top-ranked countries have adopted legal measures to promote a better gender balance on company boards.

This priority has great relevance to current and future needs given that, despite progress, men still outnumber women in senior positions in both politics and business.

All the **actions are important for achieving this Strategy priority, even if they could be further strengthened** for example through: a sharper focus on legislative initiatives and positive actions to support the extension and application of gender quotas in economic and political decision making institutions; more attention to addressing the leaky executive pipeline in companies; the diffusion and promotion of good practices for supporting women’s presence in top economic and political decision-making. In addition, the proposal for a directive with the aim of attaining a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies is still to be approved.

17 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com_2014_224_en.pdf.

18 More detailed information on the Key actions’ implementation by the DGs are reported in the annex 1.

19 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/annual_reports/150324_annual_report_2014_web_en.pdf

The **value added is high** because it considerably extends the scope of EU actions, as well as improving knowledge of these issues.

The fourth Strategy priority “**dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence**” aims to fight gender-based violence and female genital mutilation.

Overall, this priority action comprised 20 actions by June 2014²⁰, involving a larger number of DGs than the other actions and primarily **DG SANCO and DG JUST**²¹.

The **magnitude** of these phenomena is confirmed by the first EU Survey on Gender based violence conducted by FRA in 2013. One in three women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15; one in 20 women had been raped since the age of 15; 22% had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner²². The survey also showed that 55% of the women in the EU have been confronted with some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15. The survey also documents the extent, nature and consequences of stalking and sexual harassment, indicating in particular that cyber stalking and cyber (sexual) harassment disproportionately affect young women.

Trafficking in human beings is another serious problem, as shown by the data reported in the 2014 report on *Progress on equality between women and men in 2014*: women are 80% of the registered victims of trafficking during 2010-2012, and 69% were trafficked for sexual exploitation.

The Strategy's actions focus mainly on the prevention of all forms of violence and on supporting victims, also through awareness-raising measures and improvement of the available data on gender-based violence. Particularly relevant have been the measures establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and improving asylum procedures and reception provisions for vulnerable persons, including women victims of gender-based violence and FGM (legislative measures), as well as preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, fighting gender-based violence and female genital mutilation and introducing a gender perspective in health policies.

The **potential effectiveness** of the envisaged actions in achieving the priority objectives can be considered **Medium**. The three key actions foreseen and implemented within this priority could bring a major contribution to the fight against gender-based violence, as they appropriately combine legislative measures, with awareness-raising measures and knowledge production. However, actions in this area could have a stronger impact if they were envisaged to specific categories of women that are usually more difficult to reach (i.e. minority women; trafficked women, etc). Involvement of NGOs and women's associations could also be more vigorously addressed, as well as involvement of men. In addition, appropriate and earmarked financial resources are needed for the prevention of violence and to support victims, given the high social costs resulting from violence against women. Operational support to MSs could also be envisaged as well as support in improving data collection.

20 See the European Commission document “Actions to be implemented between 2013 and 2015 –State of Play 2014.

21 More detailed information on the Key actions' implementation by the DGs are reported in the annex 1.

22 EU survey on violence against women, European Agency on Fundamental Rights, 2014, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf.

The **Value added is considered High** due to the new actions envisaged and the extended scope of interventions, as well the innovation in legislative measures and the pilot projects supported by the Daphne programme.

The fifth priority of the Strategy, “gender equality in external relations”, aims to ensure that EU principles and objectives on gender equality in the labour market, in education and training, in fighting violence against women and in healthcare and long term care are ensured also beyond the EU.

In particular, the **actions promoted within this priority** (enlargement process; external relations and development policies; EU humanitarian aid) **consider and seek to respond to the EU engagements at international level**: i.e. the Millennium Development Goals, the Beijing Platform for Action, etc.

Overall, this priority comprises 17 on-going actions. **The actions implemented have mainly involved DG DEVCO followed by DG EEAS**, while some others DGs have only participated in 1 or at the most 2 actions.

This priority has **High relevance** both in relation to current and future needs. Particularly relevant appear the attention to gender discrimination in employment in the 2014-15 enlargement strategy as well as the funding of many projects aiming primarily at protecting the rights of women and eliminating sexual and gender-based violence in various countries.

Its effectiveness can be considered as **medium**, in relation to the implementation of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development (GAP)²³ which has led to progress since 2010.

Overall, the actions in this area seem to address the strategy objectives appropriately. According to the 2014 report *Progress on equality between women and men in 2014*, gender mainstreaming has been systematically integrated into the main humanitarian aid policy areas (e.g. protection, shelter, food assistance, health, water, sanitation and hygiene) and the gender-age marker introduced in 2014 will further ensure gender- and age-sensitive programming in these areas. Among the main achievements, there is also the promotion of gender equality through political dialogue, which has involved women in democratic and peace-building processes and supported the empowerment of women activists/organizations. However, in order to further strengthen their contribution to the Strategy priority in this field, specific targets should be designed for each EU institution and European Commission DGs dealing with external policy as well as a single monitoring system.

The value added is considered medium given the not particularly innovative type of actions implemented.

The last priority area relates to Horizontal issues, declined in very different cross cutting key actions.

Overall 29 actions are implemented, most of which by DG Justice. The actions envisaged are intended to **reinforce the overall strategy through the development and implementation of gender tools** (e.g. development and diffusion of gender relevant and gender-sensitive indicators, exchange of good practices, GIA, GB, etc.) **and European Commission institutional mechanisms** to support gender mainstreaming in EU policy making, including training initiatives to support the internalisation of Gender Mainstreaming in all European Commission services.

²³ 2014 Report on the implementation of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development (2010–15) (SWD(2015) 11 final).

The Strategy considers **education as one of the horizontal issues to be considered**, with specific reference to the dissemination of good practices on redefining gender roles in youth, education, culture. It intends to promote the mainstreaming of gender issues also through sport.²⁴

The **Strategy also supports and monitors the correct implementation of EU equal treatment laws with a particular focus on Directives 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC**. Important contributions to the implementation of the Strategy are also the **actions monitoring the implementation of the Strategy** achievements through the Annual Reports on Progress on Equality between women and men²⁵ and the development and **analysis of sex disaggregated statistics and studies on gender relevant issues**. Particularly important in this respect are the activities performed by EIGE in the context of the EU follow-up of the Beijing Platform for Action and the construction of a Gender Equality Index to monitor the evolution of gender equality across different policy dimensions and Member States .

Overall, these actions are **highly relevant** to current and future needs and **their potential effectiveness in supporting the Strategy's objectives is considered high**.

The actual adoption of the tools for gender mainstreaming still appears weak, however, and should be further reinforced, especially in relation to those policy fields that are not directly involving women, but that may have important effects on gender equality. **The lack of resources (human and financial) is one of the main barriers for effective implementation of these horizontal actions**.

For these reasons, these actions are likely to have **medium effectiveness, while the value added could be high**, especially in relation to the new indicators developed and the focus on institutional mechanisms.

24 This in compliance with the Council positions calling for the Erasmus+ Programme to include a focus on decision-making in sports' governing bodies, on coaching, and the fight against gender-based violence and negative stereotypes in sport. Council Conclusions of 21 May 2014 on Gender Equality in Sport, 2014/C 183/09.

25 Reports on Progress on Equality between women and men in 2010 (SEC (2011)193), in 2011 (SWD (2012) 85 final), in 2012 (SWD(2013)171final), in 2013 (SWD(2014)142final) and in 2014.

3. Analysis of the EU added-valued of the Strategy based on the reactions, inputs or follow-up shown by key stakeholders in relation to the Strategy's key actions

The Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015 has been monitored and assessed from several perspectives since its launch and implementation. The advancement in each of the strategy priorities is periodically assessed through annual reports issued by the European Commission²⁶ and has been evaluated in the *Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men*²⁷; at the same time it has also been assessed by different stakeholders both in terms of the role played in the EU policy-making as a whole, and in terms of the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of each strategy priority within the wider context of the Beijing Strategy and of the European policy-making.

The Strategy is generally referred to as an important reference document for national gender equality action plans and strategies, and in this chapter its added value as perceived by selected key stakeholders at EU level is analysed.

26 See the yearly European Commission *Report on equality between women and men* for years 2010-2011-2012-2013-2014.

27 See European Commission (2013a), *Commission Staff Working Document (SWD(2013)339 final) Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-15)*, 16.9.2013, Brussels.

The main stakeholders considered in the analysis are:

Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men ¹
The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
The Council of Europe (CoE)
The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE),
High level group members ² (documents and survey)
Member States' Ministers with competencies on gender equality
European Parliament – FEMM Committee
Women against violence Europe – Wave
European Women's Lobby (EWL)
European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET)
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) - Women's Committee
Employment and Social Affairs Ministers in the Employment and Social Affairs Council (EPSCO),
Forum on the future of gender equality
BUSINESSEUROPE
European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP)
European Association of Craft, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (UEAPME)
European Economic and Social Committee (EESC),

¹ The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men assists the Commission in formulating and implementing the European Union activities aimed at promoting equality between women and men. The Committee was created in 1981 and it is composed of Association (Employment and social affairs), Trade Union (Employment and social affairs), National administrations. See: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=1238>.

² The High Level Group on gender mainstreaming is an informal group created in 2001 and comprises high-level representatives responsible for gender mainstreaming at national level. The HLG plays a key role for the EU gender equality agenda, including in the formulation, programming and implementation of the EU Gender Equality Pact and the Trio-Presidencies Programme. It is composed of National administrations. See: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=memberDetail.memberDetail&memberID=1788&orig=group>.

The most relevant documents on the reactions, inputs or follow-ups made by key stakeholders in relation with some of the Strategies' key actions were gathered. The analysis was carried out mainly through desk research literature, documentation review and the analysis of the answers of HLG members and replies of Ministers.

3.1 Reactions, inputs or follow-up shown by key stakeholders in relation to the Strategy's key priorities and actions

The role of the socio-economic context in the advancement of the Strategy

Most stakeholders²⁸ evidence that no assessment on the impact of the Strategy for Equality 2010-2015 can fail to consider the role played by the economic crisis in the four year period since the European Commission published the Strategy: “The impact of the downturn on economic growth, on employment and on State budgets has led many MS to reduce levels of public services to meet the cost of rising unemployment. Strong evidence has been presented showing the benefits of maintaining a focus on gender equality issues in these circumstances, including the importance of dual-earner households to avoid poverty at times of unemployment. However, **diminishing resources have raised challenges for some national equality bodies in meeting the mandate given to them under the EU Directive to promote gender equality and combat discrimination.**”²⁹

EPSCO (2015)³⁰ points out that progress in this area **has been less evident than in other domains**. “Apparently, the crisis seems to have reduced the political attention for a more gender-balanced labour market, as was also regrettably evident in this year’s Annual Growth Survey. The new Employment Guidelines, that this EPSCO Council recently agreed upon, call for renewed vigour to increase women’s participation rates, including by improving reconciliation between work and family life”.

The negative impact of the economic and financial crisis and of austerity policies on the work of progressing gender equality is also noted by most equality bodies, as emerged in the EQUINET (2015) survey: various barriers to gender equality due to the economic crisis and austerity policies have been described by equality bodies. Among others emerges the consideration that “the crisis and the economy are the dominant focus. New ideas on gender equality are seen as unimportant and irrelevant; Gender equality is being de-prioritised as a policy concern... There is a loss of interest among employers in gender equality initiatives, in particular in relation to work-life balance.” In addition, “diminishing resources are being provided to equality bodies and made available for gender equality initiatives”.

Thus the Strategy is being implemented in a context which seriously influences its potentialities and added value at the national and EU level.

In this context, despite progress and many actions taken, gender equality remains very much an “unfinished business”. Several stakeholders share the opinion that “The status and profile of gender equality currently shows **signs of decreased importance in the EU**” (Forum on Gender Equality and EIGE³¹ among others). The position emerged within the Forum on Gender Equality: “Over the last years, we have seen a growing focus on judicial aspects of equal treatment, while **developing**

28 Among others: Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2014); EPSCO; EQUINET (2015).

29 Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2014).

30 EPSCO (2015), Speaking note informal EPSCO Luxembourg on labour market challenges for women and men.

31 EIGE (2014), Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Gender Equality, Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States.

and promoting active gender equality policies receives less attention. The current trend of merging gender equality policies with other grounds of discrimination **tends to reduce gender equality to a pure human rights issue.** It is thereby risking that gender equality policy loses even more of its power, budgets and strength to address structural inequalities and discrimination at societal level. (...) We believe that gender equality policy deserves its own field of strategy and framework” Consequently, as reflected in the **Council Conclusions adopted in December 2014**, there is unanimity among Member States on the need for a new Strategy with a call on the Commission to develop a new Strategy for equality between women and men.

The state of play of gender equality in the European Union in the view of key stakeholders

According to the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (2015), while gender equality is a fundamental right enshrined in the Treaties, it is far from being achieved in the EU.

The Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2014) reports that according to the European Commission's annual report on *Progress on Equality between Women and Men*³² **gender gaps persist; they have been narrowing** in recent years but **positive developments tend to vary among the individual MSs as described by EIGE's Gender Equality Index.**

Several Ministers with competence on gender equality and the Advisory Committee consider that **persisting gender gaps** impact on the economic output and growth potential of the Union and/or on the poverty levels and well-being of its population:

- Women continue to participate less than men in the labour market while men still take a less active role than women in the division of care and domestic roles;
- Women experience a significant gender pay gap and a resultant pension gap; they remain under-represented in all key decision-making roles; while women disproportionately experience gender-based violence.

The European Commission Eurobarometer 2015 recently evidenced that **around two thirds of Europeans (68%) believe that gender inequalities in their country are less widespread now** than a decade ago: Europeans citizens' views remain similar to those reported in 2009. Moreover, “three quarters of Europeans (76%) think that tackling inequality between men and women should be an EU priority”.

According to EWL (2014) “Women and girls in Europe are now present in all spheres of society, from education to employment, reaching political and business decision-making, expressing their views as artists, journalists, researchers, or community leaders. They are more able than ever to bring their voice to the political debates and raise their concerns. Events, campaigns and conferences are taking place in different countries, giving life to a renewed women's social movement. However, despite this optimistic picture of a renewed feminism in Europe, **women's rights are facing a stronger backlash than ever.... Gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a central strategy for all EU policies, but the reality shows that it is not implemented in many areas, and not considered as a priority.** The

³² Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men: April 2014: Accompanying the 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (COM(2014) 224 final).

myth of “equality being already there” in Europe is still strong and prevents gender equality from becoming a standalone goal for the EU.”

The European Commission (2014a) *Report on equality between women and men* presents the overall picture in a critical perspective despite EU widespread efforts to advance gender equality over the past year: “Although gender gaps have narrowed in recent decades, **inequalities within and between Member States have grown overall and challenges remain in critical areas**. At this rate of change, it would take another 70 years to achieve gender equality. Women’s indispensable contribution to family incomes is growing but **the trend towards equal economic independence has come to a grinding halt or**, in some cases, been **reversed**”. Therefore it concludes that active policy initiatives are needed to accelerate progress and meet the expectations of citizens.

The Council of the European Union (2014) shares the same concern, even if not specifically referring to the Strategy: “Despite progress made in the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (...) and although Goal 3 identifies gender equality and women’s empowerment as a global priority, overall progress for women and girls (...) remains slow and uneven, both within and between countries. Indeed, **lack of progress on gender equality has hindered progress towards all of the Millennium Development Goals**”, in particular in poor regions and for marginalised, vulnerable and disadvantaged women and girls or subject to multiple forms of discrimination. The document acknowledges that across Member States, **governments have taken increasing responsibility for the promotion of gender equality**. “Over the last years, in a number of Member States, the governmental structures and equality bodies dealing exclusively with gender have been merged with entities that work to combat discrimination on several different grounds”.

3.2 The added value of the Strategy for Equality between women and men in Europe

According to the European Commission (2013a), the Strategy, together with the Women’s Charter, continues to **provide an ambitious policy framework for promoting gender equality in the EU**. “This midterm review of the Strategy clearly shows that the priorities of the Strategy are being addressed by the Commission and the European External Action Service and that **progress has been made already with almost all the key actions**.”

In its 2014 report *Opinion on gender equality in the EU in the 21st century* the Advisory Committee is very praiseworthy of the work of the European Commission in developing and implementing its 2010 – 2015 Strategy on Gender Equality. The Committee finds the work of the European Commission in developing and implementing its 2010 – 2015 Strategy on Gender Equality very praiseworthy. The Committee reports that MSs recognise the Strategy as a blueprint or reference framework for action on gender equality for both the MS and the EU Institutions: its main added value resides in its support **to setting and maintaining the national agenda for gender equality and to increase its visibility**, and in the dissemination of data and good practices to support local actions.

According to the Advisory Committee, all of the priorities included in the Strategy are still valid, while new ones have been identified for future activities to be incorporated or strengthened in future work. This same position is shared by most of the

Ministers with competence on gender equality.

The European Women's lobby (2015) has clearly conceptualised why an EU Strategy for Equality between women and men in Europe is key:

- **“Because equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU:** The EU and its Member States have the responsibility to promote equality between women and men, according to the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. The adoption of an EU Strategy on equality between women and men is **a matter of credibility and accountability for the European Union”**.
- **“Because there should be consistency between EU internal and external policies on equality between women and men”.** In the last few years EU Member States and EU as a whole adopted international tools supporting equality and reaffirmed their commitment to political declarations in support of gender equality: the Beijing Platform for Action first and foremost, and the EU Gender Action Plan for External Action 2016-2020.
- **“Because the Council has already committed to the realisation of the human rights of women and girls”:** December 2014 Council's conclusions on a transformative post-2015 agenda reiterate the commitment towards the empowerment of women and girls and the ending of discrimination in all its forms, as well as violence against women and girls.

According to the EDUC position paper (2015), the trade unions are positive about the added value of the Strategy and stress the need for a new framework on gender equality at the European level: “The positive influence of the Strategy was seen more in terms of awareness **raising and guidance on national governments** than really influencing policy developments at national level.”

The role of the strategy in supporting Member States' progress towards gender equality

The first significant impact the strategy has shown is its role in supporting Member States' progress towards gender equality.

As emerged in the Opinion on Gender Equality in the EU in the 21st century, drafted by EIGE and the Advisory Committee, “the work carried out by the European Commission to implement the objectives of the Strategy (...) had been praised and the Member States considered the document as the blue print for the actions on gender equality as it helped to set and maintain the national agenda on gender equality and increase its visibility”.

This role clearly emerged in the position expressed by the Ministers with competence in gender equality. In some cases (such as Estonia, Cyprus, Portugal, Greece and Spain), the Ministers stated that the strategy fed the national policy-making or was seriously taken into account during the preparation of national documents and action Plans. The Strategy and its key actions served as reference and blueprint for the national public policies on Gender Equality; the European strategy served as a roadmap when drafting the National Action Plans on gender equality and to combat and prevent violence against women. Other ministers, e.g. from Finland, affirm that the Strategy and its measures stimulated and strengthened gender equality policies in Member States. Croatia has recognised the European Commission Strategy for equality between women and men 2010 -2015 as an important framework for action at the national level. Ireland, while stating that that its national strategies

predated the Commission Strategy, at the same time considers that it has provided useful guidance for implementation of the national strategy in the overlapping areas.

According to the high-level group experts, the Strategy served as useful guidance for gender equality activities at the national level and facilitated developments in national gender equality policies:

D1. In general terms, do you think that the Strategy has served as a useful guidance for gender equality activities at national level? Were developments in national gender equality policies for example facilitated through the existence and implementation of the Strategy for equality between women and men?			
yes: 17	no: 0	partially: 6	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, CZ, DE, IE, SI, IT, BE, SE, LV, RO, ES, AT, BG, HR		DK, EE, PL, NL, FR, LU	

According to several HLG members, the Strategy and its measures have provided a coherent framework with clear priorities and measures: it has **proved a concrete tool in supporting national activities**. The Strategy served as one of the main inspirations during the preparation of National Strategies in several Member States. **The Strategy also provided guidance to the gender equality units (institutional mechanisms) at the national level** by defining key priority areas and actions.

In some countries, all the national gender equality policies have been planned, elaborated and approved in correspondence with the EU strategic documents in this field. In countries such as Greece the majority of actions in favour of gender equality are co-financed by the European Union and have been initiated in the framework of the Strategy. It is equally true that in some countries **national policies in the gender equality area would probably have been the same as now even without the strategies**: this is particularly true in the Netherlands and Denmark, but here this is considered as a positive factor adding synergy to Danish progress in the different areas. In countries like Ireland and France the national strategies or gender policies predated the Commission Strategy.

A shortcoming pointed out is that the 24 key actions indicated in the Strategy were mostly directed to the European Commission as they imply taking action at the EU level.

Promoting cooperation between key stakeholders

The Strategy states that to ensure progress in the intended directions it is crucial to strengthen cooperation with the various institutions and stakeholders active in the field of gender equality — Member State Governments, the European Parliament, social partner organisations, civil society, equality bodies, international organisations and EU agencies. The European Parliament motion (2015) calls on the Commission to involve civil society and the social partners structurally in the development and continuous evaluation of the strategy.

According to some positions, the cooperation between some of the actors has been fruitful. According to the Advisory Committee (2014) **the involvement of social partners**, and in particular in the area of *Reconciliation between work and private*

life, was crucial in fostering gender equality, as evidenced by the successful negotiations that led to the revision of parental leave and more recently through the joint launch by European employers and the trade union organisations of a toolkit of initiatives to promote gender equality.

As described by EIGE (2015), the European Union has established several inter-related structures within both the European Commission and the European Parliament to ensure the advancement of gender equality. Several other EU institutions and agencies, such as the Council of the European Union, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the European Court of Justice, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) play a significant role in promoting gender equality within their specific competencies.

The **European social partners** (BUSINESSEUROPE, CEEP, UEAPME and ETUC (and the liaison committee Eurocadres/CEC) report in their *2015-2017 Work Programme*³³ that they have already been engaged actively in the debate on **reconciliation and gender equality to reduce the gender pay gap**, inter alia in the context of their joint agreement on parental leave, their framework of actions on gender equality, including the launch in 2014 of a web-based gender toolkit and their joint letter on childcare.

EQUINET emphasises that Equality bodies are contributing to the implementation and impact of the Strategy for Equality 2010-2015, but with few equality bodies reporting direct engagement: in many cases the equality bodies' work contributed to the Strategy, while at the same time their work is informed by the Strategy.

3.3 Assessment of the strategy priorities

The Strategy for Gender Equality structured six Strategy priorities over the period 2010 – 2015: equal economic independence; equal pay for work of equal value; equality in decision-making; dignity, integrity and ending gender violence; and promoting gender equality beyond the EU, and a sixth transversal strategic priority area. The key stakeholders show different attitudes in assessing the different strategic priorities considered.

Together with documents expressing the position of the major organisations and institutions involved in the matter across Europe, the following analysis also takes into consideration the survey carried out in July and August 2015 on the High Level Group's members.

The first issue considered regards the **relevance** of the six priority areas of the Strategy 2010-2015. According to the vast majority of HLG members, they were the right ones:

D2. Do you think that the six priority areas of the Strategy 2010-2015 were the right ones?			
yes: 18	no: 0	partially: 5	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, SI, EE, IT, PL, SE, NL, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR		CZ, IE, BE, AT, LU	

33 AA.VV. (2015).

The main positions expressed can be summarised as follows:

- **The six priority areas of the Strategy have been and remain important fields for action and should be incorporated in the new Strategy.** In particular, the focus on gender equality in working life, equal pay and economic decision-making **has been well justified, based on the treaties and the mandate of the EU.**
- There is no need for a change in priorities **but a sharper focus on specific issues and new tools to address them. It should be borne in mind that gender equality also concerns men.**

Some proposals for improvement also emerge from the answers:

- As far as the **specific actions** are concerned, they are considered in some cases **generically identified, thus failing in some cases to establish specific outputs or results to be achieved, timing and responsibilities; some aspects regarding the fight against gender stereotypes or the concrete implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy are missing** while violence against women is addressed through specific actions instead of taking a global approach. It is suggested **to work more with the justice and human rights argumentation, not just the economic argumentation.**

Asked whether **the objectives of the Strategy's priority areas were sufficiently clear and well-defined**, the answer of most of the HLG experts interviewed was **only partially**.

D3. In general terms, do you think that the objectives of the Strategy's priority areas were sufficiently clear and well defined?			
yes: 9	no: 2	partially: 12	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, LV, RO, BG	IE, LU	SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, AT, HR, CZ	

The positions on this issue are split, with half of the respondents only partially agreeing. The answers appear contradictory according to the different national and cultural perspectives of each HLG member:

- The text of the Strategy and the communication approach is considered **quite clear and concise but concrete terminology and examples should be integrated.**
- **Priority areas are well defined and backed by relevant statistical data and** reference to relevant legislation, guidelines and other related documentation. The **annual Strategy reports provide further insight into the actions taken to achieve these priorities**, as well as the progress and remaining challenges;

while the more negative aspects are the following:

- The objectives identified in Strategy are often defined too broadly; the need is for more specific indicators for each of the objectives, with specific "gender-sensitive" indicators, including terms of their fulfilment in the next Strategy. More specific, measurable, achievable and realistic objectives are needed.
- Targets and indicators need to be in connection with both the EU 2020 Strategy

and its monitoring and control mechanism and with the post 2015 development agenda.

- Area 1 (Equal economic independence) and area 2 (Equal pay for equal work) are similar and could be merged in a future Strategy.
- **Gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently addressed:** it should be a specific priority, as it was in earlier European Commission gender equality Strategies.

Focusing on the **objectives of each priority area**, the experts have different views, also as to whether they are all sufficiently **clear and well defined**:

D4. More specifically, do you think that the objectives of each priority area were sufficiently clear and well defined?				
	Yes	No	Partly	Don't know
Equal economic independence	11 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, IT, LV, RO, BG, HR	1 IE	10 CZ, SI, EE, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, LU	0
Equal pay for work of equal value	10 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, IT, PL, SE, LV, RO	1 IE	11 CZ, DK, SI, EE, BE, NL, FR, ES, LU, BG, HR	0
Equality in decision-making	14 FI, LT, EL, CZ, DE, DK, SI, IT, PL, SE, LV, RO, LU, HR	1 IE	6 EE, BE, NL, FR, ES, BG	0
Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence	11 FI, EL, MT, CZ, DE, DK, SI, LV, RO, BG, HR	2 IE, PL	8 EE, IT, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, LU	1 LT
Promoting gender equality beyond the EU	11 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, SI, PL, SE, LV, RO, BG	2 IE, LU	7 CZ, DK, BE, NL, FR, ES, HR	2 EE, IT
Horizontal issues	11 LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, SI, IT, PL, LV, RO, BG	3 IE, SE, FR	8 FI, CZ, EE, BE, NL, ES, LU, HR	

In most of the priority areas, the objectives are considered clear and well defined through specific key actions. The objectives are wide-ranging since they incorporate

various issues related to every priority area, thus enabling policy-makers and other stakeholders to develop and implement various initiatives that are in line with such objectives. However:

- **The objectives of gender mainstreaming in different policy areas could have been clearer. More focus is needed on multiple discrimination and the situation of vulnerable groups of women.**
- **The objectives under the equality in decision-making and dignity, integrity and ending gender violence were clear.** However, the **objectives in the remaining areas were often defined too broadly and without specific indicators or date set for their fulfilment. Promoting GE beyond the EU is a new area and leaves room for improvement.**
- **The Strategy refers only to objectives under other measures**, e.g. the Europe2020 objective of reaching 75% employment rate for women and men; the 'She' goal set in 2005 of having 25% of leading positions in the public research sector filled by women; and the Commission goal set in 2000 to have at least 40% of each sex in the membership of its committees and expert groups.
- **The role of education, a vital area that can help fight gender stereotypes, has been left out of the strategy.**
- **The first three priority areas should be interrelated** as equal pay and equality in decision-making would be considered a prerequisite for Equal economic independence.

Among the experts interviewed, there is little consensus as to whether **implementation of the 24 key actions** of the Strategy brought about sufficient progress in gender equality across the EU:

D5. In general terms, do you think that implementation of the 24 key actions of the Strategy brought about sufficient progress in gender equality across the EU?			
Yes: 5	No: 4	Partly: 12	Don't know; 1
LT, EL, IT, RO, BG	IE, SE, AT, LU	FI, MT, CZ, DE, DK, SI, EE, PL, BE, FR, LV, ES	NL, HR

The period covered presented particular challenges due to the economic downturn: the female employment rate made no progress during the period while the gender pay gap narrowed slightly. Nevertheless, under the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Commission, in accordance with the Employment Guidelines, has closely monitored the national policies adopted to improve gender equality in the labour market. According to several HLG members, gender equality in the EU is still a work in progress, where a lot of energy and political will are still needed; however, **gender equality is far from being achieved in several policy fields**, and gender gaps are still significant in many Member States. Studies in the field at the national and international level, also carried out by EIGE, show that in recent years **significant progress has been made**, but the action should continue firmly and systematically. **Progress per Member States and per priority areas is uneven.** According to some HLG members, not all of the 24 key actions have been or could be (fully) implemented, but some of them have (nevertheless) generated a trend towards gender equality in the European Union, especially in the fields of **equal pay** for equal work and **equality in decision making**. Adoption of an EU-wide strategy on

combating violence against women was not achieved, but adoption of the victims' directive during the timeframe of the Strategy is considered an important result.

Summarising some of the positions, it emerges that significant inequalities still need to be addressed: occupational segregation is a persistent challenge; the employment rate of women is slightly declining and therefore increasing the gender gap; women continue to be employed mostly in some of the worst remunerated sectors, are more likely than men to work part-time; are underrepresented in positions of responsibility and are still paid on average around 16% less than men per hour of work across the EU; while, from another perspective, motherhood affects female employment rates and persisting stereotypes on traditional gender roles remain in relation to care-giving and domestic choices, which makes it more difficult for women to reconcile personal, work and family life. This places women at a disadvantage when it comes to choosing their professional career. Additionally, and of great concern is the fact that violence against women remains an issue throughout the EU.

According to the majority of the HLG members, only partial progress was achieved in the six priority areas:

D6. More specifically, do you think that sufficient progress in the six priority areas was achieved?				
	Yes	No	Partly	Don't know
Equal economic independence	2 LT, EL	2 CZ, LU	15 FI, MT, DE, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 IE, DK, NL
Equal pay for work of equal value	3 LT, EL, SE	2 CZ, LU	14 FI, MT, DE, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 IE, DK, NL
Equality in decision-making	4 LT, EL, IT, HR	1 LU	13 FI, MT, CZ, DE, SI, EE, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG	3 IE, DK, NL
Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence	1 EL	3 CZ, PL, LU	14 FI, MT, DE, IE, SI, EE, IT, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 LT, DK, NL
Promoting gender equality beyond the EU	4 LT, EL, SE, HR	1 LU	13 FI, MT, CZ, DE, IE, SI, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG	4 DK, EE, IT, NL
Horizontal issues	2 EL, IT	3 CZ, SE, FR	15 FI, LT, MT, DE, IE, SI, EE, PL, BE, LV, RO, ES, LU, BG, HR	2 DK, NL

For each priority area, the positions expressed by relevant stakeholders have been gathered and analysed. They are presented in Annex 3.

3.4 Internal coherence of strategy and coherence within the EU policy framework

Analysis of the stakeholders' positions was carried out to assess whether they consider the Strategy a coherent framework for gender equality (internal coherence) and if it can be considered as being coherent with the general EU policy framework.

EIGE (2015) claims the inherent coherence of the Strategy by recalling that “to reaffirm and support the close link between the European Commission’s Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–15 and the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Council of the European Union adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–20) in March 2011.” In this document, the Council highlighted the need to strengthen gender equality further in the context of the current economic crisis, as well as reaffirming its commitment to implementing the BPfA.

Admittedly, Europe 2020 does not specifically refer to gender equality, but under both the smart and inclusive growth agendas, the EU targets look at employment (making specific reference to gender inequality and other grounds of inequality) and education.

According to the Advisory Committee (2012), despite the concept of gender mainstreaming, “the equality between women and men has not been included in the Europe 2020 Strategy as a goal per se. It is not an explicit objective of the Strategy, nor is it of the European Semester.” It was the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020, adopted by the EPSCO council in 2011, which encouraged Member States to apply a gender equality perspective and to promote gender equality policies when developing and implementing their national reform programmes (NRPs). The European Pact invited the Commission and the Council to incorporate a gender equality perspective in the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs); at the same time, the EU2020 targets played their role as policy anchors (Advisory Committee 2012).

According to almost all the members of the High-level group, the strategy constitutes a coherent framework for gender equality:

D7. Do you perceive the Strategy as a coherent framework for gender equality?			
yes: 21	no: 0	partially; 2	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, CZ, DE, IE, DK, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, LV, RO, AT, BG, HR		ES, LU	

In particular, the HLG members stress the following elements:

- The Strategy ensures a **systematic and comprehensive approach** and **strategic vision; it represents a coherent policy framework to create, develop, implement and enforce gender equality policies in the EU.**
- The framework maintain gender equality as a value and a goal as enshrined in the Treaty (Article 2 and 3), as well as a commitment to gender mainstreaming (TFEU Article 8). It links other strategic European documents. Its priorities are complementary and reflect the principles set out in the 2010 Women’s Charter, a subset of the areas of concern addressed by the Beijing Platform for Action; the

key actions envisaged for each priority area are closely linked to the strategic objectives of the BPfA.

- **It is an important strategic tool for accountability on a fundamental value of the Union enshrined in the Treaty.**

On the other hand, some critical aspects have also been pointed out:

- **The EU 2020 has set ambitious targets for progress in some key areas, forgetting to include a gender equality focus on them and on their implementation and monitoring mechanisms.** A coherent framework will necessarily directly link the new Gender Equality Strategy with all the EU Strategies, funding programmes, policy areas and governance instruments, including the EU 2020 and its implementation and monitoring mechanism.

In considering whether “more progress could have been achieved through the Strategy?” the HLG members interviewed answered that much has been done but much still remains for future action. In particular, the following aspects were stressed:

- Progress in the Member States is the result of strategic work and political commitment, but much work remains to be done. Political will and keeping gender equality prominent on the political agenda are crucial for more rapid progress to *de facto* gender equality. Systematic involvement of top-level national and EU political actors in the discussions and monitoring of the Strategy could bring about more even progress across the EU.
- A future Strategy should have more ambitious goals if it is to achieve genuine progress, as well as more concrete and binding measures.
- More efficient gender mainstreaming is needed in implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy.
- More progress could have been achieved if a set of key actions had been targeted at national stakeholders besides those set for the Commission. Including national stakeholders in the Strategy can encourage the development and implementation of additional initiatives at the national level. Such coordinated effort can address the needs of the Member States and strengthen action towards specific objectives related to gender equality, thus achieving further progress.
- The Strategy could have achieved more progress by improving cooperation with EIGE and other EU agencies, with a view to enhancing the quantity and quality of sex-disaggregated data. EIGE's achievements should be better promoted and the Strategy should invite, encourage and facilitate MSs to make active use of its researches and instruments.
- The Commission's Annual Reports on progress in gender equality constitute a valuable contribution to monitoring but it is regrettable that the Annual Reports have not been published as stand-alone Commission Communications since 2011. This has reduced their visibility and perception of them considerably. In addition, the long-term impact of the Strategy and its measures is difficult to evaluate. More attention should be paid to evaluating and tackling the gendered effects of the economic crisis and integration of gender perspective in the design and the implementation of the responses to the crisis.

3.5 Main strengths and weaknesses of the strategy according to HLG members and Ministers

The main strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy evidenced by the HLG members and Ministers have been summed up together with suggestions for the improvement of the most critical issues emerged.

The Ministers delegated to gender equality share with HLG members the opinion that the strategy was useful: it is considered an important reference framework for action even though progress remains slow and uneven in different EU countries. “The Commission has been and still is a major driving force for gender equality in Europe” the German Minister states, while the French Minister points out that “The Strategy 2010–2015 enabled us to focus our national activities and it is important that the Commission continues to provide direction and impetus.” The Finnish Minister considers that “Without such a framework it would be very difficult to fulfil and live up to gender equality as a value and goal as enshrined in the Treaty as well as a commitment to gender mainstreaming.”

High-level group members in particular consider that **one of the strategy's main strengths is that it was a stand-alone strategy**: this has increased the coherence and visibility of gender equality policies at the EU level. Priority areas are coherent and relevant, serving as a common reference framework and relating directly to the EU treaties and policy documents. More specifically:

- The Strategy and its measures have provided important **support for gender equality policies in Member States**. Member States considered the text of the Strategy as a useful tool for the promotion of gender equality at the national level, as emerges also from the Ministers positions.
- Some HLG members appreciated the **dual strategy**, consisting of specific measures to promote both gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policy areas as both approaches are needed in the effective promotion of gender equality.
- **The strategy is considered by some of the HLG members as a concrete commitment delineating effective actions** addressing the main areas that have an impact on the participation of women and men in the economic, political and social spheres, as well as on their dignity and integrity.
- The **document is clear and accessible and not too lengthy** thanks to a **down-to-earth approach, with pragmatic**, ambitious and highly visible objectives, built on the long run.
- The strategy **includes a systematisation of information** related to gender equality (directives, UN Conventions, information on institutions, statistical data...) and important opportunities for an exchange of good practices; it also includes **clarification of possibilities and scope of work of the various DGs**, including the range of possibilities within the Structural and Investment Funds.
- Only a few agree that the Strategy defined **concrete and measurable key actions** and sub-actions for each priority area, has strengthened **the cross-sectoral coordination, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies** and is complemented with **regular evaluation and reporting**.

Some suggestions for response to the most critical issues have been provided:

- **Gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently prioritised in the Strategy:** concrete tools to integrate gender perspective in policy processes and the implementation of gender mainstreaming in different policy areas are needed.
- **To enhance formal follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy, its effectiveness and efficiency more measurable objectives concrete goals and targets are necessary. Provision has been made to enhance formal follow-up.** The Strategy should also include an effective timetable for implementation of the actions planned.
- **The report should have a stronger formal status than that of a staff working document, so that it can serve as a basis for dedicated debate on gender equality at the EPSCO-Council and as input for Council conclusions.**
- The Strategy for equality between women and men should introduce coherent synergies with the EU 2020 and its governance framework **addressing gender mainstreaming also in other areas of the Europa2020** (i.e. innovation and research).
- Further **publicity and promotional material** could support the visibility of the Strategy across the EU and beyond. The outcomes such as reports on gender equality, studies, conclusions coming from databases and researches should be presented and promoted as widely as possible in EU and MS forums not necessarily strictly connected to gender equality.
- The question of multiple discrimination could become an integral part of the Strategy while the needs of different groups of women and men could be taken into account in relation to every objective.
- The Strategy seems to address gender equality more specifically with regard to women, while it is important to promote gender equality as an issue concerning both women and men.

The Strategy should include links to funding programmes and lines allocated by the European Commission for the implementation of activities in the field of equality between women and men, in connection with the objectives of the European Strategy.

4. The Role of funding for gender equality

The role of European funding programmes supporting gender equality is paramount.

The aim of this chapter is to assess the role of funding for gender equality through dedicated budget support in the 2007-2013 EU programmes and provide an outlook for the 2014-2020 period mainly on the basis of desk research and documentation review. Given their financial importance, the aim is in particular to verify the way EU Structural Funds have contributed or may contribute to the European Commission Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015).

In fact, the Structural and Investment Funds (cohesion policy) 2014-2020 will be the main investment instruments for supporting the key priorities of the Union as enshrined in the Europe 2020 Strategy. They will also constitute the most important financial support available for the implementation of gender equality policy in the EU.

4.1 Gender equality in the 2007-2013 EU programmes

4.1.1 European Structural Funds and the evolution of the communitarian approach to gender issues

As pointed out above, European Structural Funds represent an important resource in promoting gender equality and supporting Member States in achieving steady progress towards genuine equality.

Community legislation has worked on the assumption that the European Structural Funds should contribute to gender equality since 1988, when a specific measure on the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market was proposed in the Council Regulation of 1988 under Objective 3 of the European Social Fund. Since 1977 the European Social Fund has financed vocational training and employment schemes for women as part of its general policy. In the programming period 1994-1999, gender equality was a priority objective of the four European Structural Funds³⁴ and was reinforced in the programming period 2000-2006, through a dual approach strategy which encompasses both pro-active interventions (gender mainstreaming or indirect policies) and reactive interventions (dedicated measures or direct policies such as policies tackling gender gap, reconciling policies, etc). This integrated approach marked an important change from the previous Community actions, mainly based on compartmental activities and programmes funded under different specific budget headings. This scenario is representative of the evolution of the Community approach to gender issues in the last programming periods:

³⁴ European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance.

- The **1994-1999 programming period** saw the importance of focussing attention on the implementation of measures and programmes (for example, the programme NOW) specifically targeting women.
- The **2000-2006 programming period** saw the introduction of the *dual approach* as a fundamental element: this approach consists in differentiating and between equal opportunities (direct policies) and gender mainstreaming policies (indirect policies). In particular, taking the mainstreaming approach has implied the adoption of vertical priorities (positive actions to permit women to overcome access barriers to services, training, labour market) and horizontal priorities. These latter priorities aim to integrate gender equality objectives in all policies and planning measures.
- The **2007-2013 programming period** further developed the principle of mainstreaming at all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation of activities, also through Progress, the financial programme created with the aim of supporting on the one hand, effective application of the principle of equality between men and women and, on the other, bringing about better integration of the gender dimension in EU policies (employment, inclusion, working conditions, anti-discrimination, etc.). The 2007-2013 regulations formally included a number of references to the promotion of gender equality both in the General Regulation³⁵ and specifically in ESF³⁶.

Structural Fund regulations were particularly considered within the implementation of the 2007-2013 programming period with specific regard to the incre-

35 Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

The General Regulation (Article 16) states that the Member States and the Commission 'should ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementation of the Funds' and that 'the Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementation of the Funds and, in particular, in the access to them'. In addition, Article 11 stresses the importance of the presence of bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women with reference to the framework of close cooperation, (partnership) between the Commission and each Member State.

36 The ESF Regulation deals with these issues extensively; in particular: Article 2 refers to the promotion of gender equality; Article 3 (Scope of assistance), in defining priorities and actions that can be undertaken, underlines the importance of 'mainstreaming and specific action to improve access to employment, increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, including by addressing the root causes, direct and indirect, of gender pay gaps'; Article 4 (Consistency and concentration of support) defines the obligation for all the evaluations undertaken in relation to ESF actions to 'assess the contribution of the actions supported by the ESF to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and to the Community objectives in the fields of social inclusion, non-discrimination and equality between women and men, and education and training in the Member State concerned; Article 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities) calls on Member States to promote in their Operational Programmes gender equality and equal opportunities, declaring that 'the Member States shall ensure that operational programmes include a description of how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall promote a balanced participation of women and men in the management and implementation of operational programmes at local, regional and national level, as appropriate'. In addition, Article 10 contains an obligation for Member States to report on the implementation of gender mainstreaming and of any gender specific action.

use of childcare facilities as a key tool to support female employment. Indeed, the Structural Fund's budget support offers an important contribution to enhancing Member States' development of childcare facilities and the promotion of female employment. Significant steps towards increasing childcare availability and affordability and towards diversifying the care offered have been taken in several Member States. It was estimated that around 3.2 billion euro from the structural funds were dedicated to investing in childcare facilities and to promoting women's participation in the labour market, with positive results, including an increase (+4% for children under 3 years and +5% for children between 3 years and compulsory school age) in the number of children cared for in formal childcare facilities.³⁷

However, the level of targeted EU financial support for promoting equality between women and men was considered to have been subject to a decrease³⁸, with an uneven distribution between the different funds (mainly ESF) and Member States.

Moreover, the availability of evaluations and studies assessing the achievement of equality between women and men through the use of Structural Funds in the 2007-2013 programming period at European level is not yet widespread: in fact, it is still difficult to have detailed and structured evidence highlighting the results obtained or problems occurring with regard to the Funds' contribution to the Strategy for equality between women and men and few of the available evaluations are carried out at the European level.

Nevertheless, the sections below present the main issues arising from the available evaluations.

4.1.2 Overall assessment of ESF (2007-2013) support for gender-equality policy

The only available evaluation of the European Social Fund's support for Gender Equality carried out at EU level³⁹ shows that most Member States have incorporated gender mainstreaming into their operational programmes.

Because of the mainstreaming of the issue in programmes, however, it is difficult to estimate the funding that has gone into supporting equality between women and men. Nevertheless, the 2011 evaluation presents an overview of the findings from a country-level analysis carried out in each of the 27 EU Member States and on six specific aspects of gender-equality policy⁴⁰, advancing recommendations.

The evaluation shows that an appreciable number of Member States pushed gender equality onto the policy agenda thanks to the contribution of ESF. The gender

³⁷ EC, Commission Staff Working Document 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

³⁸ Advisory committee on equal opportunities for women and men opinion on gender equality in the cohesion policy 2014-2020. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/opinions_advisory_committee/opinion_on_gender_equality_in_the_cohesion_policy_2014-2020_en.pdf

³⁹ European Commission, Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Evaluation of the European Social Fund's support to Gender Equality, GHK and Fondazione G. Brodolini, 2011.

⁴⁰ Enhancing women's access to employment', 'Vertical segregation (under- or over-representation of women in certain levels of the professional hierarchy)', 'Horizontal segregation (concentration of women in certain sectors of the economy)', 'Work and private life reconciliation', 'Participation of women in enterprise creation and growth', 'Education and training'.

equality measures supported by the ESF were, in fact, targeted to a number of objectives, namely:

- enhancing the capacity of women to compete in the labour market by improving their skills;
- training women and men in occupations traditionally dominated by the opposite sex, thereby enhancing their career prospects;
- assisting women in the endeavour to become entrepreneurs as well as providing them with care facilities to enable them to reconcile work with family life;
- improving the quality of care services to encourage their take-up and extending their opening hours, as well as training the unemployed for care jobs;
- combating gender stereotyping and, to a lesser extent, educational gender segregation through support for public awareness campaigns, seminars with trade unions, training teachers and parents and changes to school curricula;
- aiding poverty-stricken, vulnerable women, often suffering from multiple discrimination as well as victims of violence, to help them acquire skills and confidence, and thus economic independence.

However, the evaluation also shows that the implementation of gender equality measures in the everyday ESF procedure still needs to be enhanced. For example, the available information suggests that the adoption of the 'dual approach' for gender equality has led to less support for gender-specific actions, and greater weight assigned to gender mainstreaming. However, the contribution of the ESF to gender equality is directly related to the extent to which the gender mainstreaming principle is widely understood and successfully applied. The country reports, on which the above-mentioned evaluation is based, pointed out that genuine efforts have been undertaken in almost all Member States, but that in many cases these efforts tend to be directed in rather general ways. Consequently, the gender sensitiveness of project promoters and applicants, along with the logic of project-selection criteria and the screening ability of project-selection assessors, was not always effective.

As for specific actions, the main objective pursued by most Member States in the 2007 -2013 programming period with the contribution of the ESF was to increase women's active and productive participation in the labour market, which represents the core interest of the ESF. However, it is also important to consider the way in which jobs (which types and where) are created and work organization is shaped. In the last programming period, the ESF funded actions to foster female entrepreneurship and reconciliation between work and family life, even if in many cases this is, in fact, considered an additional instrument to foster labour market participation. On the other hand, there seems to be considerably less pursuit of objectives addressing educational segregation, cultural and social stereotypes, easing of caring duties, domestic and criminal violence, women's empowerment and female poverty.

In implementing actions with ESF contributions due importance should be attached to the underlying causes of gender inequality, which can be mainly related to social and cultural rules governing not only individual opportunities, but also group interactions and collective actions that still affect gender roles unequally within the EU. Nevertheless, there are signs of change: although a supply-side approach, addressing women's capacities to compete in the labour market, still prevails, some Member States have devised strategies that combine actions working on women's capacities with some actions (i.e. counselling and training or networking activities) aiming at reinforcing sensitivity towards gender equality in the social, economic and institutional environment with a proactive approach.

4.1.3 The integration of the gender perspective in Cohesion policy programmes co-financed by ERDF and the Cohesion Fund

As in the case of the ESF, also for ERDF ex post evaluation has addressed the promotion of gender equality⁴¹.

This evaluation found good overall awareness of the Article 16 requirements in programmes supported by the ERDF, with explicit reference to them found in 64% of the programmes analysed. The other main findings of the study concern the collocation of equal opportunities between horizontal priorities, without devoting specific attention to this issue in separate strategies or statements of priorities. Most attention is devoted to gender equality (70%), followed by non-discrimination. The ERDF and the Cohesion Fund promote equal opportunities in: SME support, public transport infrastructure, social infrastructure (child-care facilities). However, other policies that could potentially promote equal opportunities through these funds were also identified.

The main critical aspect lies in the risk of a formal approach, stating the problems without including a clear vision of how to resolve them adequately.

With regard to the evaluation of the 2007-2013 Cohesion Programmes implementation, it is also worth considering the Staff Working Document “Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Cohesion policy: Strategic report 2013 on programme implementation 2007-2013”⁴². The report provides a strategic overview of the implementation of the 2007-2013 cohesion policy programmes which are due to end in 2015⁴³.

The reports provide an overview of the socio-economic challenges Member States are facing and the implementation of the EU-funded programmes. The accompanying Staff Working Document explains how the Commission set about assessing progress, presenting 13 thematic fact sheets drawing together material on implementation.

In particular, in “Factsheet 11: Social Inclusion and Social Infrastructure”, it is pointed out that two main groups of investments took place under this heading: social inclusion activities, supported mainly by the ESF, and social infrastructure, including childcare supported mainly by the ERDF. However, the areas of social inclusion and education are mainly national competences, and member states build different models of social services. In general, focused social infrastructure investment is not common, which leads to some difficulties in understanding the added value of the investments, and also to the sharing of good practices amongst the countries.

Almost all the Member States allocated resources to childcare services. However, the total expenditure has varied greatly from one Member State to another depending on the budget available under the Structural Funds and the current state of provision of services. The Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality

41 Ex post evaluation of the ERDF and CF - Study on the translation of Article 16 of Regulation EC 1083/2006 on the promotion of gender equality, non-discrimination and accessibility for disabled into Cohesion policy programmes 2007-2013 co-financed by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, Public Policy Institute, Net Effect, Racine, for the European Commission – Info Regio, 2009.

42 SWD(2013) 129 final and the related Factsheets.

43 The first report was presented in March 2010. This report summarises the 27 strategic reports presented by the Member States at the end of 2012.

between women and men (2010-2015) contains a commitment for 2013-2015 to gathering and exchanging good practices on childcare in the framework of the HLG on gender mainstreaming in the Structural Funds and through the ERDF the commitment to support the Member States to implement Operational Programmes containing measures for childcare infrastructures.

4.1.4 Integration of the gender perspective in the PROGRESS Programme (2007-2013)

Gender equality was also one of the aspects monitored with respect to participation in PROGRESS⁴⁴ funded activities. Many project teams reported paying attention to gender equality in their projects and in the delivery of activities. The other transversal topics were less frequently mentioned as objects of specific attention.

An ex-post evaluation of Progress was finalised in June 2014⁴⁵. In particular, the evaluation also looked at how has the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues on gender equality and non-discrimination was operationalised.

In terms of thematic coverage of transversal issues, the evaluation found that:

- The gender equality dimension was relatively present in PROGRESS-funded actions, even outside the activities directly focused on this theme.
- 49 analytical activities representing 36% of the budget allocated to analytical activities made explicit reference in the title to at least one of the transversal issues.
- Gender equality is tackled more vigorously than the other transversal themes, with 20 analytical activities explicitly tackling this topic. Gender equality was paid relatively great attention – 11% of all studies representing 13% of the total budget explicitly made explicit reference to gender equality in their titles.
- Funding was extended to a number of expert networks focusing on gender equality and antidiscrimination as well as exchange of good practices.

Some analytical activities funded under PROGRESS have a wide scope and significant potential for mainstreaming transversal issues like gender equality in policies throughout Europe. In particular, the following analytical resources supported by PROGRESS play a key role in mainstreaming transversal issues in EU policies beyond the scope of specific policy areas:

- Database on Men and Women in Decision-making,⁴⁶ which contains data on men and women in key decision-making positions in politics, public administration, the judiciary and various other key areas of the economy in 34 European countries. The on-going support for the database and its wide scope ensure that policy-makers have access to up-to date and extensive data. Organisations and individuals engaging in public policy debate regarding gender equality measures (e.g. quotas) can also use the data for reference.

44 PROGRESS, the EU employment and social solidarity programme was directly managed by the Commission to provide financial support for the attainment of the European Union's objectives in employment, social affairs and equal opportunities for the period 2007-2013.

45 ICF-GHK, Ex-post evaluation of the Programme for employment and social solidarity – PROGRESS 2007-2013 and recommendations for the successor programmes to PROGRESS 2014-2020.

46 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm

- In 2012, due to special emphasis in the field of gender equality, PROGRESS additionally funded several new series of publications reporting evidence on this topic, including ‘Women in economic decision-making in the EU: progress report’, and Special Eurobarometer 376 ‘Women in decision-making positions’.⁴⁷ This publication has been used in policy discussions at Commission level, e.g. when presenting the proposal to introduce a 40% quota for women in non-executive board member positions in public listed companies.⁴⁸ PROGRESS also funds the work of two expert networks on gender equality, one specifically focusing on legal aspects and the other more policy oriented.

PROGRESS funds the activities of both national and EU-level networks and NGOs, with the goals of promoting gender equality, fighting discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, and promoting active inclusion. Among the funded networks, with regard to gender equality, worthy of mention are the:

- Network of legal experts in the field of gender equality;
- network of gender equality experts on EU policies; and
- network on women in decision-making.

Another important funded activity concerns the “Exchange of good practices seminars on Gender Equality”⁴⁹. The programme of Exchange of good practice seminars on gender equality aims to reinforce mutual learning among EU countries and other participating countries (EEA countries, candidate and pre-candidate countries).

From the outset, the seminars were intended to focus on the key priority areas of the Women’s Charter and of the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015.

Six gender equality seminars were organised in 2011 and 2012 (three each year; in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway and Portugal), and two more in 2013 (in Spain and Estonia).

Overall, participants in the Gender Equality seminars found them to be worth the time and effort spent on them: between 86% and 99% of respondents to the evaluation questionnaire in 2011 and 2012 found the programme of the seminars to be good or very good, approximately the same percentage believed the discussions were also good, and between 84% and 100% judge the ratio between time invested in the seminars and their outcomes as at least ‘good’.⁵⁰

47 PROGRESS Performance Monitoring Report 2012,

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/keyDocuments.jsp?type=0&policyArea=86&subCategory=987&country=0&year=0&advSearchKey=PerformanceMonitoringReports&mode=advancedSubmit&langId=en>

48 <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/>

49 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/other-institutions/good-practices/index_en.htm

50 ÖSB Consulting IRS (2012) Organisation of exchange of good practices on gender equality. Evaluation report, pp. 26, 42.

4.2 The 2014-2020 period and gender issues

The renewed political framework reflects the EU's commitment to promoting equality between women and men, an issue that is clearly inferred by the EU's new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) covering 2014-20, which was adopted in 2013.

The EU also promotes gender equality through its numerous funding schemes. In particular:

a) 2014-2020 European structural and investment funds.

The new 2014-2020 structural and investment funds finance numerous initiatives to promote gender equality within social and economic sustainable development policies, even though with less emphasis than in the past. The ESIF will provide funding for enhancing gender equality in all areas, including access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and promotion of equal pay for equal work, and indeed through projects that are not under the specific gender investment priority but contribute to gender equality in a more transversal way.

- ✓ the **2014-2020 ESF** finances initiatives to fight all forms of discrimination and promote equal opportunities, as well as promoting equality between men and women in all areas, including access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and equal pay for equal work. Moreover, the ESF also provides funding for education and training initiatives. Gender equality objectives and a dual gender equality approach, both in terms of mainstreaming and with specific actions, are then mandatory requirements in the ESF for the funding period 2014-2020. The promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all without discrimination is an integral part of all the action and will also be supported with specific initiatives. It is clearly pointed out that the social dimension is significantly enhanced, with a specific budget allocation (as indicated before, 20% of the contribution of the ESF is devoted to social inclusion actions), intensification of the fight against youth unemployment and integration of and specific support for gender equality and non-discrimination. The new ESF Regulations identify specific strategic fields to tackle gender equality and non-discrimination issues effectively, in particular: Priority of investment 8.iv) Equality between men and women in all areas, including access to employment and career development, reconciliation of work and family life and promotion of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value; Priority of investment 9.iii) fighting all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. Priority of investment 9.iv) improving access to affordable, sustainable and quality services, including health care and social services of general interest.
- ✓ The **2014-2020 ERDF** supports gender equality through financing interventions in the area of childcare facilities.
- ✓ The **2014-2020 EARDF** states that women in rural areas should represent a priority in the national programmes financed by EARDF. EARDF funding should also support entrepreneurship for women in rural areas through the diversification of farms into non-agricultural activities and setting up and developing non-agricultural SMEs in rural areas. In detail, EARDF finances the following actions targeting women in rural areas: knowledge transfer and

information actions, advisory services, farm management and farm relief services, investments in physical assets, farm and business development, basic services and village renewal in rural areas and cooperation.

- ✓ The **2014-2020 EMFF** finances initiatives to promote the role of women in fishing communities and networking and exchanging experiences and best practices among aquaculture enterprises or professional organisations and other stakeholders, including scientific and technical bodies or those promoting equal opportunities between men and women.
- b) EASI** finances gender equality through its Progress axis, which supports initiatives promoting gender equality in employment and on the labour market, as well as the axis regarding the Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion, which supports entrepreneurship for women by ensuring their access to credit and other financial mechanisms.
- c) European Integration Fund** which mainly promotes initiatives favouring the integration of women migrants in the labour market and their access to education and training.
- d) Horizon 2020** which supports gender equality in scientific and ICT careers as well as research. In **Horizon 2020** - the new European Framework Programmes (FP) for **Research and Innovation** gender will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in correcting deficiencies and promoting gender equality along three lines:
 - Improving female scientists' career;
 - Ensuring gender balance in decision-making, and
 - integrating gender analysis in research content and programme⁹⁸.

Gender equality should also be taken into account in the management of all EU financial instruments. In a Joint Declaration, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed that the annual budgetary procedures applied for the 2014-20 MFF will, where appropriate, integrate gender-responsive elements, and take into account the ways in which the EU's overall financial framework contributes to greater gender equality (and ensures gender mainstreaming).⁹⁷

Moreover, a part of the new **Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme** will be dedicated to equality between women and men. This Programme can be considered the successor of three 2007-2013 programmes: the PROGRESS Programme (Gender Equality and Anti-discrimination strands), the Daphne Programme and the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme.

The objectives of the REC Programme include the promotion of equality between women and men and advance in gender mainstreaming; preventing and fighting all forms of violence against children, young people and women, as well as violence against other groups at risk, in particular groups at risk of violence in close relationships, as well as protecting the victims of such violence⁵¹.

⁵¹ Commission Staff Working Document - Report on Progress on equality between women and men in 2013 - Accompanying the document - Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2013 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

4.3 Conclusions

The policy change, from “equal opportunities for men and women” as an aspect merely to be promoted by European funding to the double-pronged strategy of specific actions and “mainstreaming of gender equality”, was relatively rapid.

However, whether these “requirements” are fully respected in programme proposals by the regions and Member States remains to be seen. Moreover, one of the general risks of a mainstreaming approach is that, in the absence of precise objectives in reducing gender inequalities, the treatment of gender can be too easily located within, and thus subject to, other policy goals, such as employment creation, economic growth or poverty reduction. The “transversal” treatment of gender is too easily translated as merely “horizontal” — a principle at operational levels or results levels — and thus becomes a means to achieving other objectives, rather than a goal in its own right. The risk is further increased by the tendency, evident in some Member States (such as the UK) and among some policy-makers in the Commission, to treat gender inequality as just one form of disadvantage, along with others like disability, ethnicity, etc.

On the whole, the gender mainstreaming approach is leading to wider attention to equality between women and men in programme proposals, i.e. it is mentioned in a wider range of priorities and measures, and is encouraging improved efforts to ensure sex-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation indicators as well as involving equal opportunities organisations in programme management (at least in a consultative capacity). However, many important areas of possible interventions in terms of gender equality are left out. Gender issues are more easily accepted in “soft” areas of development, such as human resources development, than in “hard” areas — which receive the most financial support. The relevance of gender to measures in the fields of infrastructure (transport, etc.) or agricultural support, for example, still needs due recognition. A similar difference in acceptance of the issue can be observed between “small-scale” and “large-scale”, for example concerning enterprise development or tourism.

With specific regard to Structural Funds, the policy framework and regulations on gender mainstreaming are relatively robust. However, it is worth noting that the main objective in terms of the Structural Funds and gender equality is still limited to increase female participation in the labour market. While gender mainstreaming may have a relatively high policy profile at the European level, there is a much stronger policy imperative concerning employment. Moreover, “equity” *per se* is given rather less consideration. This can be seen, for example, in the case of the treatment of “reconciliation of home and professional life”, which is rightly identified as an important issue. This is, more implicitly than explicitly, treated as a means to facilitating women’s “more active” participation in the labour market, than as an equality objective in its own right, i.e. to achieve more equal sharing of domestic and family work between men and women.

Efforts on gender mainstreaming in the Structural Funds have focused very much on “policy statements” and on “procedures and instruments” — reflected in the form of technical guidelines. There have been major efforts to influence and inform Member States and the EU regions, but considerably less effort has been put into changing mentalities and understanding. In many institutions, there is strong male bias in the culture; in gender balance in staffing; social and human goals and policy areas do not have high status in the institutions, and the resources — technical, human and financial — allocated to supporting gender mainstreaming are usually very limited.

Nevertheless, the few undertaken evaluations showed that many activities and interventions have been funded, albeit still unevenly.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The Strategy's achievements, value added, strengths and weaknesses

The Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015 has been monitored and assessed from several perspectives since its launch and implementation. Progress in each of the strategy priorities is periodically assessed with annual reports issued by the European Commission⁵² and a mid-term review was carried out in 2013⁵³; at the same time it has also been assessed by different stakeholders in terms of its relevance, effectiveness and value added and its role within the wider context of the Beijing Strategy and European policy-making.

In assessing the Strategy's achievements and value added it is important to bear in mind two main aspects. The first is that the **Strategy addresses European Commission actions in the first place**, and thus it must be assessed firstly in this respect. The second is that it **is not possible to assess the contribution of the Strategy to reaching the ultimate expected outcomes**, given the nature of the assessment carried out in this study (largely based on review of existing documents) and the need to take into account all the other intervening factors that have shaped the situation of women and men in Europe in the five years of implementation of the Strategy, in primis the dramatic financial and economic crisis and the austerity measures that have negatively affected gender equality developments.

Notwithstanding these caveats, the assessment conducted in this report shows that the **Strategy has produced several outputs and important immediate outcomes**. The outputs mainly consist of the actions implemented, comprising awareness-raising measures, new data-gathering tools, studies and indicators, as well as important soft and hard legislative measures addressing women's economic conditions and access to the labour market, women's presence in top management positions and political life and the fight against gender-based violence. Notable among the main immediate outcomes are a better knowledge of the many dimensions of gender inequalities; greater awareness on the part of both the overall population and the policy-makers of the importance of addressing gender inequalities in policymaking⁵⁴; the development of models and indicators to support gender mainstreaming.

As illustrated in chapter 2, **progress has, however, been uneven across the priority areas**, reflecting the different standing and salience of each priority in the European policy debate and some drawbacks to the Strategy.

⁵² See the yearly European Commission *Report on equality between women and men* for years 2010-2011-2012-2013-2014.

⁵³ See European Commission (2013a), *Commission Staff Working Document (SWD(2013)339 final) Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-15)*, 16.9.2013, Brussels.

⁵⁴ European Commission (2015b), *Special Eurobarometer 428 Gender equality*, 2015.

The achievements appear to have been greater in the better focused priority areas, like **gender equality in decision-making and violence against women**, which were not systematically tackled in previous years. The first priority area (**equal economic independence**), while the **horizontal issues** suffer from a lack of focus and prioritization of the envisaged actions, which makes it difficult to assess progress among the many important actions that have been implemented.

In greater detail, the following main **strengths** of the Strategy emerge from the analysis carried out in the report and the perceptions of key stakeholders:

- The provision of a **reference framework** on priority policy areas and actions to be implemented for **national gender equality strategies and action plans** and of **coherent guidance for multi-annual priorities**. This reference role is recognised as particularly important for those Member States where gender equality still receives relatively little attention.
- The adoption of the **dual approach** based on the combination of targeted measures and gender mainstreaming.
- **Stakeholders see the strategy as a concrete commitment delineating effective actions in a clear and accessible way.** The **identification of priority areas of intervention is** considered important by most of the strategy stakeholders and experts. The strategy has also shown a good capacity to adjust to changing socio-economic contexts.
- The capacity to **combine both legislative and practical measures** in a coherent and consistent way and the **attention to awareness-raising measures**. In this respect, important developments comprise increasing attention to the role of men in gender equality policies (addressed now among the “horizontal issues” priority area), as well as awareness-raising and training measures targeting workers in the judiciary, health care, educational and socio-economic systems to heighten attention to gender differences in access to and use of services.
- **The support given to the development of monitoring and evaluation systems and of indicators and data-gathering tools** (like the 2013 FRA survey on violence against women,) as well as the **exchange of practices** for institutional learning in policy making to support more effective policies on the basis of an evidence based approach.
- The **capacity to involve the European Commission DGs increasingly** in the programming and implementation of gender mainstreaming many EU policy areas and the establishment of an **interdepartmental coordination mechanisms**. As illustrated in chapter 2, most of the Commission DGs have been progressively involved in the implementation of the Strategy’s actions.
- The **provision of a reference framework for the mainstreaming of gender equality in EU funding programmes**, as illustrated in chapter 4. In particular, the 2007-2013 programming period further developed the principle of gender mainstreaming in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities, especially through PROGRESS⁵⁵. However, according to the Advisory Committee on

55 In the Progress Programme Gender equality is tackled more vigorously than the other transversal themes and the gender equality dimension was relatively present in PROGRESS funded actions, even outside the activities directly focused on this theme. Some analytical activities funded under PROGRESS have a wide scope and significant potential for mainstreaming transversal issues like gender equality in policies across Europe (e.g. Database on Men and Women in Decision-making; Special Eurobarometer 376 ‘Women in decision-making positions and several expert networks focusing on gender equality and antidiscrimination as well as exchange of good practices were funded.

equal opportunities,⁵⁶ EU financial support for gender equality was lower than in the previous programming period.

Among the main **areas for improvement**, the following are pointed out by most of the Strategy stakeholders and experts:

- The **need to better target and focus the envisaged priorities and key actions**. According to many members of the HLG, in order to **improve the monitoring of the Strategy's effectiveness and efficiency provision should be made for more measurable objectives concrete goals and targets, along with** an effective timetable for the implementation of the actions planned. The Strategy is not built on the basis of a clear logic of intervention linking needs, objectives, actions and indicators. For example, some actions belonging to the same policy field are scattered across different priorities (such as the case of education and R&D), making it difficult to monitor implementation. **Greater focus is needed especially in the first priority issue and in the horizontal issues** which include very different actions, difficult to monitor in their achievements. In addition, **greater attention to the heterogeneity of women and men needs and conditions** is necessary in the definition of the actions to be implemented to improve their effectiveness.
- The **link with the EU 2020 strategy** is too weak: the EU2020 strategy does not explicitly address gender equality. Stronger connection could reinforce both strategies.
- **Gender mainstreaming and institutional mechanism promoted to support it within the horizontal pillar** are far from being achieved in those policy domains that are not seen as directly related to women and gender equality: e.g. environmental policies, transportation and competition policies, regional development, macroeconomic policies, and the media and communication policies that may affect women and men differently, as shown by recent developments in socio-economic research. Looking at the ownership of the actions envisaged in the Strategy, the majority are still promoted and implemented by DG JUST and EMPL. In addition, some important tools for decision making, like **Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) and Gender Budgeting (GB)**, are still rarely adopted in policy design and implementation in both the EU and national institutions. This implies that the EU and national institutions are still lacking gender expertise, knowledge and experience, as well as resources in adopting these tools.
- **The visibility of the Strategy should be supported** by vigorously promoting the outputs and outcomes as widely as possible in EU and MS forums not necessarily strictly connected to gender equality. To this end, according to some of the members of the HLG the **report should have a formal status to** serve as a stronger basis for dedicated debate on gender equality.

There are in addition some **bottlenecks** that restrain strategy implementation and effectiveness, and in particular:

⁵⁶ Advisory committee on equal opportunities for women and men opinion on gender equality in the cohesion policy 2014-2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/opinions_advisory_committee/opinion_on_gender_equality_in_the_cohesion_policy_2014-2020_en.pdf

1. The **lack of adequate resources** (both human and financial) for effective implementation of the strategy. The strategy has no budget earmarked to it; in fact, for the majority of funding programmes it is not possible to earmark resources to gender equality measures. In addition, the European Commission unit in charge of Gender Equality appears to be insufficiently resourced to support gender mainstreaming in all the EC DGs. Finally, the austerity measures imposed by the crisis are likely to further reduce the scant resources available for gender equality strategies.
2. The fact that **gender mainstreaming, even if greatly improved**, still remains **weakly institutionalised** in the EU decision-making process is another drawback. Gender equality units in the EC have limited power to interact on the same level with other decision-making bodies. In addition, the recent tendency to **merge all grounds of discrimination**, including discrimination based on sex, **within the promotion of civil rights and equal treatment for all** risk to downgrade the profile of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the policy agenda.

Notwithstanding these bottleneck and areas for improvement, overall the Strategy appears to have produced **positive value added effects**, especially in relation to the **agenda setting, innovation and learning dimensions**.

Besides supporting the implementation of a large number of new actions at both the EU and national level (**volume effects**), the Strategy is **further strengthening the priority policy areas already partly addressed in the Road Map 2006-2010**, and providing an **extension of the types of actions and measures implemented**, with increasing attention to awareness-raising measures, data-gathering, monitoring and evaluation tools.

It has also provided **a coherent reference framework** on priority policy areas and actions to be implemented for **national gender equality strategies and action plans**. This reference role is recognised as particularly important for those Member States where gender equality continues to receive little attention.

In addition important learning effects may derive from the implementation of gender sensitive **monitoring and evaluation systems, indicators, data-gathering tools** and the **exchange of practices** for institutional learning in policy making.

5.2 Relevance of the Strategy and emerging Challenges

The actions and outputs of the Strategy appear to address the needs identified when the strategy was launched. These needs continue to be significant and the crisis and the austerity measures adopted by most MSs to contain budget imbalances have aggravated most of them, as shown by the context indicators presented in table 2.2.

In addition, emerging demographic and socio-economic challenges have important gender effects that should be considered in the design of a new policy framework. The following are considered particularly important in the current debate.

The **ageing of the population** is having and will continue to have significant gender effects. The gender gap in life expectancy will increase the share of elderly women living alone in the total population. Population projections show that in the EU-27 this ratio will rise from the 19.7% of 2010 to over 30% of the total popula-

tion by 2060. There is also a secondary ageing process underway: the ageing of the aged. This will result in a significant increase in the numbers of people aged 75 and over, with the share of elderly women aged 75 and over expected to reach 20% by 2060 (as compared with the 10% of 2010).

This demographic trend has important policy implications that need to be considered in the future strategy: while on the one hand it may be a strong push factor in favour of greater participation in the labour market on the part of women, on the other hand it calls for increased attention to the adequacy of pension benefits and the provision of elderly care and long-term care (with women acting both as providers and users of care). In a gender perspective, this issue needs to be tackled in terms of: employment continuity, income levels, work-life balance and elderly care services.

A related issue is **migration**, with the specific risks faced by migrant women. For example, one issue in this respect is the increasing role of migrant women in the provision of family care and their employment conditions. Others risks to be tackled when addressing women migrants concern their vulnerability to trafficking and violence and traditional harmful practices (like FGM, forced marriages, etc.). The recognition of migrant women's skills and education levels and their specific work-life balance needs (both when their children are with them in the destination country, and when they are in the country of origin) are other aspects to be considered.

Socio economic trends related to the **increasing fragmentation of household models and employment patterns** introduce new forms of fragility for women and men that need addressing. Changes in demographic trends, societal structures, household composition and life styles have led to an increase in one-person households in all the EU Member states, especially among women and the elder population, calling for closer attention to single households in welfare policies and to the associated increase in the demand for social and care services.

In contemporary labour markets the decline of lifelong open-ended employment contracts and the growing diffusion of various forms of employment characterised by limited duration, short and/or flexible working hours and new forms of autonomy call for attention in the design of social protection systems, in order to avoid increasing poverty risks, especially for workers (largely women) with caring responsibilities and those more vulnerable in the labour market.

Modern welfare systems only partially respond to these new needs, while the **fiscal consolidation measures and reforms in social protection systems** adopted in recent years by EU countries are likely to further aggravate gender inequalities, penalising women's economic and social conditions given their interrupted employment careers and lower labour income, their greater dependence on welfare transfers and services, and their overrepresentation in public sector employment.

The gender effects of the crisis and austerity measures are in fact another aspect to be considered. As underlined by many experts⁵⁷ and stakeholders⁵⁸ the economic crisis risks "obscuring" gender equality issues and could cause a move backwards from achieved gender equality targets. In the period since the European Commission published the Strategy, demographic trends and the crisis have driven European countries to revise their welfare policies drastically. Budget cuts, closer

⁵⁷ Bettio (2013); Hirschmann (2015).

⁵⁸ Among others: Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2014); EPSCO; EQUINET (2015).

targeting in welfare policies and acceleration in pension reforms to improve their financial sustainability have characterised recent years in all countries with little attention to their effects in terms of increased poverty risks and gender inequalities. Women are particularly affected by the austerity measures, being over represented among both the workers and users of public sector services. The austerity measures are also threatening the survival of Equal Opportunity bodies.

To contain these risks, it is necessary to **assess the (potential) gender impact of proposed changes and cuts in welfare provisions and public services, and indeed of the measures proposed to support recovery**. This requires greater attention to *evaluation* of the potential differentiated effects of both dedicated and general policies (such as pensions, employment and assistance policies, fiscal policies) on women and men and on women living alone, as well as the development of more *disaggregated statistics and research*. Improvement in EU and national statistics on pensions and welfare policies, streamlining sex-disaggregated data and indicators, could also help monitoring and evaluation of the gender effects of pension and welfare reforms, as well as affording more realistic simulations of the potential effects of proposed reforms.

The **persistence of gender stereotypes** is another aspect to keep under attention with regard to effectiveness. Despite the several initiatives implemented both at the policy and legislative levels, there is still a deeply entrenched gender inequality that persists as a result of discriminatory norms and practices, as well as cultural frameworks and gender stereotypes often reinforced by the media and social networks, resulting in violence against women and gender differences in employment and education, poverty risks, and in economic and political decision-making. It is thus necessary to **address gender stereotypes more directly**. This means targeting men as well as women and developing new, more effective measures to fight gender stereotypes in schools and the media, starting from an in-depth assessment of what has worked in past experiences.

5.3 Suggestions for a post-2015 strategy

The Strategy provided a valuable framework for gender mainstreaming in the European Commission and for the implementation of coherent gender equality measures. Emerging from the assessment of the current strategy and the stakeholders' positions described in chapter 3 is the need to continue the strategic approach adopted in 2010 and to further strengthen it with attention to:

- 1. The heterogeneity of women's and men's conditions**, adopting an intersectional perspective and recognising the different needs and the multiple discrimination faced by some groups of women. Demographic and socio-economic structural changes and the crisis have created new forms of fragility and aggravated gender inequalities among population groups facing multiple forms of economic and social exclusion, such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, individuals with low educational attainment, the elderly and the disabled, single parents and women living alone. These groups call for differentiated policy responses depending on the stage of the life cycle and the manifold dimensions of discrimination and exclusion they face.
- 2. Men as well as women.** Men can play a significant role for gender equality. For example, work-balance policies should start targeting men as well as women and challenge the division of labour within the household between the sexes.

In the last decade, men and stereotypes on masculinity have increasingly come under study, and gender policies in the EU and gender mainstreaming strategies have promoted an initial awareness of the role of men in promoting gender equality.

3. **The mobilisation of women’s organisations to support gender equality strategies at both the EU and national level.** This is important for the design and implementation of effective gender equality strategies. Women’s organizations are necessary to bring pressure to bear on policymakers to keep gender equality issues high in the policy agenda and to maintain an effective women’s policy machinery, to support gender policy innovation and to identify the existing gender bias in institutional arrangements, policies and politics.
4. **Maintaining gender equality in the public debate** in order to increase attention to and awareness of the importance of a gender perspective in all policy fields and to keep gender equality high in the policy agenda. This means that, besides legislative and non-legislative measures, it is important to **adopt effective communication measures** targeting public opinion and adopting the “right” language. The importance attached to an issue by public opinion and/or by political actors influences the feasibility of a certain policy transformation/innovation. This is particularly true in the case of gender policies, which crucially depend on cultural changes and public concern to be implemented.
5. **Supporting gender mainstreaming in the use of the 2014-2020 European structural and investment funds**, which will constitute the most important financial support available for the implementation of gender equality policy in the EU, by providing support to Managing Authorities and closely monitoring the use of these funds.
6. **Continuing to support the development of gender relevant and gender sensitive data, indicators and research** in all policy fields as well as accurate evaluations of the effectiveness gender equality policies and good practice exchange on gender equality issues. This would increase the level of gender awareness and a better understanding of the dimensions of gender (in)equality and its evolution in the member states, as well as institutional learning on what policies are more effective according to the objective. In order to support gender research it is necessary to continue to:
 - i. improve the quantity and quality of sex-disaggregated data and support further research on gender-relevant issues and indicators;
 - ii. support research exploring the cultural dimensions that influence women’s and men’s perceptions of their role in the economy and in society, as well as their perceptions of working conditions and factors that limit their opportunities;
 - iii. support gender impact assessment of policy reforms, in order to avoid the introduction of disincentives to gender equality, and gender budgeting;
 - iv. consider governance aspects in evaluation studies in order to understand how outputs and results are produced and which mechanisms (especially at the institutional and organizational level) need to be reinforced to enhance the effectiveness of the Strategy.

As for the **policy domains to be considered**, the main indications emerging from the literature and debate are:

- **Within employment and social inclusion policies** the priority areas and key actions already identified in the current priority themes are to be maintained. Within these areas, some policy fields usually given scant consideration in gender equality strategies are becoming increasingly relevant due to fiscal consolidation measures impacting disproportionately on women: **pension reforms; cuts and restrictions in care-related benefits/allowances/facilities; the tightening of eligibility criteria and cuts in housing benefits and welfare provisions; increases in fees for publicly subsidised services.**
- **Outside the employment and social inclusion domain**, policy fields of importance for their effects on gender equality, even if not directly related to women, are: **communication policies and the role of media** to fight gender stereotyping, **development and competition policies, fiscal policies, transportation and environmental policies, territorial development, research and innovation policies.**

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**EVALUATION OF THE
STRENGTHS AND
WEAKNESSES OF THE
STRATEGY FOR EQUALITY
BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN
2010 – 2015**

ANNEXES



Annex I

Assessment of EU strategy on equality between women and men 2010-2015: main achievements in the six priority areas⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The tables are largely based on information derived from the European Commission Staff Working document (2010), *Actions to implement the Strategy for equality between Women and Men 2010-2015* (European Commission SEC(2010) 1079/2); the Strategy Mid-term Review (SWD (2013) 339), and the European Commission review of actions implemented up to June 2014. See the European Commission monitoring document "The Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015): Actions to be implemented between 2013 and 2015 - State of play November 2014".

Table 1: Priority 1- Equal economic independence: actions and main achievements

Strategy key actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/ 06-2014 New actions	Main Achievements (outputs/outcomes)
<p>1.1- Support the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy</p>	<p>Tot. actions: 40</p> <p>DG EMPL:27 DG REGIO: 4 DG HOME: 3 DG EAC: 3 DG MARE: 3 DG ESTAT: 1 DG AGRI: 1 DG RTD: 1 DG ENTR: 1 DG COMP:1</p>	<p>Total actions: 19</p> <p>DG EMPL: 10 DG JUST: 8 DG EAC: 2 DG MARE:2 DG ESTAT: 1 DG MPL: 1 DG RTD: 0 DG HOME: 2</p> <p>Repealed actions: 2</p>	<p>Total actions: 17</p> <p>DG EMPL: 12 DG JUST: 7 DG EAC: 2 DG MARE: 2 DG AGRI: 1 DG REGIO: 1</p> <p>Repealed actions: 0</p>	
<p>1.1.1-Employment and labour market (EMPL/JUST)</p>	<p>Total actions: 6</p> <p>DG EMPL:5 DG EAC: 1 DG MARE: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 6</p> <p>DG EMPL: 4 DG JUST: 4 DG EAC: 1 DG MARE:1</p> <p>Repealed actions: 2 (MARE, JUST)</p>	<p>Total actions: 4</p> <p>DG EMPL: 4 DG JUST: 3 DG EAC: 1,</p>	<p>This action foresaw the implementation of EU 2020 policies (Gender Equality is part of the EU 2020 main policies on this issue) combined with soft legislations regarding women labour participation and employment, family responsibilities and childcare (for instance CSRs on the take up of the gender equality perspective within the EU 2020 initiatives at MS level.). It also combined on funding programmes to increase the participation of female researchers and for initiatives in this area with knowledge production (thematic reports on female labour market conditions) and reporting/monitoring activity on the application of the Directive 2006/54/ European Commission on equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the EU 2020 main policies on this issue (the EU agenda for new skills and jobs; Employment Package 2020 and Employment guidelines; Staff Working paper on Flexicurity; Digital Agenda; Youth on the move); - policies promoting Gender Equality in the labour market and in family responsibilities: European Quality Framework in ECEC (2014); Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Programme in the MS – DG EMPL and DG EAC (2013); - other policies particularly significant in GM perspective: the Social Investment Package (2013); Commission Communication “An open and secure Europe: making it happen” (2014); Annual Growth Survey Package (AGS) -2011; - Founding programmes: Marie Curie Action including specific measures to increase the participation of female researchers (2010 -2015); - Council Decision 2014/51/EU authorising MS to ratify the OIL 2011 Convention concerning decent work for domestic workers (No. 189)¹; - since 2011 CSRs during European semesters on the take up of the gender equality perspective within the EU 2020 initiatives at MS level. For instance, the CSRs (2013) to promote the participation of women in the labour market and gender equality; recommendations (2014) tackling issues related to Gender Equality in employment (i.e. improvement of childcare facilities; increase in women’s employment levels; promotion of flexible work arrangements; eradicate labour gender segregation) and pension adequacy. <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thematic review reports on female labour market conditions (2011-2013); chapter on gender impact of the crisis in ESDE 2013; - Report on ‘Using EU Indicators of Immigrant Integration’ on the situation in the labour market of migrant women (2013); - Report on the application of the Directive 2006/54/ European Commission on equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation (2013);

<p>1.1.2 - Poverty, social exclusion and pension (EMPL/JUST/ESTAT)</p>	<p>Total actions: 5 DG EMPL: 5 DG JUST: 1 DG ESTAT: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 7 DG EMPL: 5 DG JUST: 4, DG ESTAT: 1, New actions: 2</p>	<p>Total actions: 5 DG EMPL: 4 DG JUST: 4, New actions: 3</p>	<p>Gender Equality is part of specific policies on this issue, with reference to specific vulnerable targets (ROMA, the elderly), and Gender Equality is considered in the legislation/soft law as well. In this field awareness raising measures, studies and tools (e.g. methodology to calculate Gender gap, guidelines for unisex pricing in the insurance) have also been realized to focus the attention on the gender dimension of the poverty, social exclusion situations as well as pension topic.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GM in the <i>Platform against Poverty</i> (2010) and its initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COM (2012) 226 <i>National Roma Integration Strategies</i>: a first step in the implementation of in the EU Framework; ▪ COM (2012) 55 final <i>-White Paper an Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions</i>; ▪ Commission Recommendation 2013 "Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage" - GM within the Social Investment Package (2013) - European Commission Communication "<i>Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion- including implementing the ESF 2014-2020</i>" (2014); - Council Declaration on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations (2012); - <i>Opinion of the Advisory Committee</i> on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men on the gender dimension of active ageing (2011); <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workshops during the Annual Convention of the EU Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion on the gender dimension of poverty (2012) and on gender gaps in employment, activity rates, and in pension entitlements (2014); seminars for local and regional officials in MS about the CSRs on investing in children (2013-2015); - campaign in the framework of <i>European Year 2012 for Active Ageing and Solidarity</i> between generations; - European Commission's legal proceedings against Italy and Greece for discriminatory pensionable ages (2010); - Gender Equality institutional mechanism and tools: <i>Guidelines to help the insurance industry implement unisex pricing</i> (2011); European Commission methodology to calculate Gender gap (2013); <p>Studies and reporting activity: European Commission's <i>Report on the Gender Gap in Pensions in the EU (ENEGE)</i>, 2013; <i>EU SILC ad hoc module</i> (2013); <i>Report on the impact of the economic crisis on Gender Equality</i> (2011); <i>Report on "Active ageing and gender equality policies: the employment and social inclusion of women and men of late working and early retirement age"</i> (2010); <i>Report on "The socio-economic impact of pension systems</i> on the respective situations of women and men and the effects of recent trends in pension reforms" (2011); Social Protection Committee's <i>Annual Social Report and the Joint Assessment Framework</i> emphasizing on monitoring the risk of poverty and social exclusion faced by women (2012); European Commission Annual Growth survey (AGS 2013) emphasized the need to address poverty and social exclusion risks among women;</p>
<p>1.1.3 - Promote gender equality in youth and education and training (EAC)</p>	<p>Total actions: 1 DG EAC: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 1 DG EAC: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 1 DG EAC: 1</p>	<p>Gender equality is being mainstreamed in all policies and funding programmes on education and training also addressed to specific people (e.g. ROMED II European Commission/COE joint Programme for mediation in school, culture and health emphasizing the value of education for ROMA young girls). In this framework several projects, from 2010 till present, have been addressing the gender issue in education and training. Many studies on gender equality in education and training have been carried out to improve the knowledge on this issue and various actions have been implemented to make gender balance within high institutions one of the assessment criteria of these institutions .</p> <p>Among-main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GM in LLP - Grundtvig Leonardo Da Vinci, Erasmus+, Lifelong Learning programmes to "Transfer the Innovation" (2010-2015), ROMED II; - GM in <i>EU Agenda for modernising higher education systems</i> (COM(2011) 567 final) ; - GM in European Commission Communication "<i>Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes</i>" (2010); - GM in E-Skills For The 21st Century: Fostering Competitiveness, Growth And Jobs; - GM in EU Digital Agenda; - Bruges Communiqué that mainstreams the gender dimensions in the EU long-term targets for VET in Europe; <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices: <i>European Researchers Night (ERN)</i> on importance of the research to young people, especially girls (2011-2015)</p> <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools: The European Tertiary Education Register (ETER) http://eter.joanneum.at/imdas-eter/ funded by DG EAC that gathers the European Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and collects a comparable set of data for HEIs in Europe.</p> <p>Studies and reporting activity: DG EAC's <i>study on the risks of drop out based on gender</i> (2013); <i>2 reports on Early School Leaving</i> and on <i>Tackling Low Achievement in Basic Skills</i> with analysis of gender patterns (2013); Report on Gender equality in the workforce: <i>Reconciling work, private and family life in Europe</i>, (2014); European Commission Commission's <i>analysis (2013) of OECD's PISA survey</i> (2012) with gender statistics; the 2012 Education and Training Monitor includes a cross-country analysis of the main trends in education and training, including gender-related performances and benefits; <i>The Education and Training Monitor 2013</i> with some cross-country comparison and the latest trends in gender patterns in European education systems.</p>

<p>1.1.4 - Promote gender equality in European Funds (EMPL/REGIO/AGRI/MARE)</p>	<p>Total actions: 5</p> <p>DG EMPL: 2 DG MARE: 2 DG AGRI:1</p>	<p>Total actions: 5</p> <p>DG MARE: 2 DG EMPL: 2 DG AGRI:1</p>	<p>Total actions: 7</p> <p>DG EMPL: 4 DG MARE: 2 DG REGIO: 1 DG AGRI: 1</p> <p>New actions: 2</p>	<p>Gender Equality is promoted during the implementation of the EU programmes in the framework of EU Funds and the funding of specifically identified issues is envisaged. In order to facilitate the implementation of GM in the programmes/projects, specific tools and institutional mechanisms have been set (e.g. a joint COCOF - ESF Technical Working Group with DG REGIO on gender mainstreaming in the structural funds).</p> <p>Many studies in order to promote gender issues and assess the impact of the funding programmes on promotion of equality have been realized combined with awareness raising measures and exchange of good practices activities to improve the knowledge on these issues (e.g. discussion forum on the issue of women and the sustainable development of the fisheries area; networking on rural development and gender; European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP)).</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mainstreaming of the Gender Equality dimension in the 2014-2020 EU Structural and investments and other funds: ESF, EARDF, EFF, ERDF, EGF; - GM in the new European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI); <p>Gender Equality institutional mechanism/tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a specific tool “the European standard on Gender Mainstreaming in the ESF” in order to integrate Gender Equality into the ESF programmes (2014-2020) in relation to the EU-2020 targets; - EAFRD guidelines for 2007-2013 incorporating the principle of non-discrimination and equality (2010); - a joint COCOF (comité de coordination des fonds) ESF Technical Working Group with DG REGIO on gender mainstreaming in the structural funds; <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workshop on women in fishing communities organized by DG MARE in Brussels (2011); - meetings and interactions (a discussion forum) between women active in fisheries and aquaculture in Europe under the FEMMES Programme funded by the European Commission (2013) - “European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming (Gender-CoP)” - European Network on Rural Development promoting Gender Equality in rural areas; - EU Rural Review Magazine and RPD project database, including projects focusing on women ; <p>Studies and reporting activity: Study on employment, growth and innovation in rural areas (SEGIRA) of DG AGRI in order to promote gender issues (2010); mid-term and ex-post evaluations in accordance with the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the impact of the rural development programmes on promotion of equality (2010-2015); DG AGRI’s publication on Women in EU Agriculture and rural areas: hard work, low profile (2012); SWD (2012) 44 final Commission Staff Working Document “A view on employment, growth and innovation in rural areas”, analyzing partly the situation of women and youth in rural areas;</p> <p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2012: the mid-term evaluation of the EFF showed that it has played a limited role in promoting Gender Equality. This has resulted in reinforcing the Gender Equality in the proposal for EMFF post 2013; 2014: 2% of all projects implemented by and for women. More than 344 female workers in the fishing sector have received support to improve safety training, to upgrade professional skills, to help diversify their professional activities; - 2013: ex post evaluation of PROGRESS (2007-2013) concluded that the issue of gender mainstreaming was well implemented;
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1.2 - Promote female entrepreneurship and self-employment (EMPL/ENTR/REGIO)	Total actions: 7 DG EMPL: 4 DG REGIO:2 DG ENTR: 1 DG COMP: 1	Total actions: 7 DG EMPL:2 DG REGIO: 2 DG ENTR: 1 DG JUST: 1 DG COPM:1, repealed	Total actions: 6 DG EMPL: 2 DG REGIO: 2 DG ENTR: 1 DG JUST:1	<p>The action appropriately combines funding schemes for initiatives in this area with legislative measures, monitoring of already set targets, exchanges of good practices between EU MS and knowledge production. Specific tools and awareness raising actions in order to promote the women entrepreneurship have been set (e.g. WES Network and European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs, conferences etc.)</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COM (2013) 83 European Commission Communication “Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion - including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020” with a focus on women throughout the document and statistics broken down by gender; - COM (2011) 78 final Review of the “Small Business Act “ for Europe reviewing the importance of the Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors (WES) as role models for young women; - COM (2012) 795 Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan established a Europe- wide on-line mentoring, advisory, educational and business networking platform for women entrepreneurs; - Directive 2010/41/EU 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 and follow up of its transposition (2012 workshop on its transposition); -ESF Regulation (art. 7) introducing the obligation for Member States to support specific action addressed to women (2013); - Decision No 283/2010/EU “establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion” that promotes equal opportunities and access to funds for vulnerable persons, including women; - Council Conclusions on Women and the Economy: economic independence from the perspective of part time work and self-employment (2014); <p>Gender Equality institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exchanging (2010-2015) on GM in the Structural funds within the COCOF - Coordination Committee of the Funds (replaced by COESIF in 2014) that brings together Managing Authorities both from ERDF and ESF; - joint meeting COCOF – ESF Technical Working Group to support measures aiming at promoting women entrepreneurship (2012); - the WES Network functioning (2009-2013) and became part of the Annual SME Assembly to facilitate policy level exchange (2013); - Creation of the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs in 17 CIP countries; - institution of a representative of European Commission (as of 2011) who participates in the work of the monitoring committee for each Operational Programme containing measures for women entrepreneurship; <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conference on Women Entrepreneurs under EU Polish and Cypriot Presidency (2011); - the European SME Week Summit 2012 on “Women’s Entrepreneurship Makes Business Sense” in Brussels; <p>Studies and reporting activity: DG Enterprise study on statistical data on women entrepreneurs in Europe and on the creation of an e-platform for women entrepreneurs (2013);</p>
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<p>1.3 - Assess remaining gaps in reconciliation work and family; social partners consultation; report on MSs performance on child care facilities (JUST/EMPL)</p>	<p>Total actions: 12 DG EMPL: 4 DG REGIO: 2 DG RTD: 2 DG EAC: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 12 DG JUST: 4 DG REGIO: 2 DG RTD: 2, DG EMPL: 1 DG EAC: 1</p> <p>Repealed actions: 1 (RTD)</p>	<p>Total actions:10 DG JUST: 6 DG EMPL:3 DG REGIO: 2</p> <p>New actions: 1</p>	<p>The action appropriately combines funding schemes (integrated approach among ESF and ERDF) for initiatives in this area with legislative measures, monitoring of Directive 2010/18/EU and already set targets and reporting on the performance obtained, also regard to childcare facilities.</p> <p>Studies on reconciliation issue and exchanges of good practices between EU MS along with awareness raising actions have been realized as well .</p> <p>GM institutional mechanism to integrate gender perspective in the policies (COCOF/ COESIF and EGESIF, joint meeting COCOF – ESF Technical Working Group) and ESF and ERF support to MS in implementing the operational programmes containing measures for childcare policy have been envisaged.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative proposal on maternity protection and leave - Com(2013) 778 final CSRs "Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage"; - 2011 Communication "Early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow"; - the work of DG EAC on developing a European Quality Framework in ECEC - promotion of the reconciliation between work and private life within EU structural and investment funds (ESF and ERDF, Social Investment Package and the EU 7th Programme for Research); - ESF and ERF support to MS in implementing the operational programmes containing measures for childcare policy - the EU 7th Programme for Research financed numerous projects supporting the setting up and the implementation of Gender Equality plans in research institutions. - Directive 2010/18/EU implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/ European Commission and follow-up of its transposition; <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring of directive 2010/18 on parental leave - the issue of reconciliation between work and private life and monitoring of targets in this field within the EU 2020 framework: - Gender Equality in the workforce: Reconciling work, private and family life in Europe, and related annexes (2014); - DG Justice statistical reports on reconciliation between women and men² - European Commission study on the <i>Role of men in gender equality and the involvement of men/fathers in domestic and family responsibilities</i> (2014) - Childcare services for school age children - a comparative review of 33 countries (2013); - Barcelona Objectives: the development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe (2013) - Men and Gender Equality - tackling gender segregated family roles and social care jobs (analysis note) (2010); - Opinion on flexible and part-time working arrangements and the gender dimension of the labour market (2010); - Individual assessments by Commission Services of the situation in each of the Member States on the implementation of the Directive. - country reports of European Network of Legal Experts in the Field of Gender Equality (2014) <p>Gender Equality institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GM in the context of COCOF replaced by COESIF and EGESIF - Group of experts in ESIF (2014); joint meeting COCOF – ESF Technical Working Group to support measures aiming at promoting women entrepreneurship (2012); Develop of the methodology to better measure obstacles in access to childcare (2014); <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - REGIO on European Regional Policy WebPages - an Open Days workshop organized by DG EMPL and REGIO on removing barriers to women's labour market participation through accessible, high quality childcare infrastructure (2014) - support to the website European Platform for Investing in Children (EPIC) - formerly referred to as European Alliance for Families - to help the MSs with the implementation of the Recommendation (containing good practices in the area of parenting and child support measures). - meeting of High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming in Structural Funds (2011) - 38 practices supporting family friendly workshops are casted on the European Alliances for families website
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1.4 - Promote GE in research and innovation (RTD)³	Not considered among the key actions	Not considered among the key actions	Total actions: 2 DG RTD:2	<p>Attention to gender dimension in research under this specific priority (see new actions as of 2013) before included in priority 2. The key action envisages funding for integrating Gender Equality in EU-funded research (Gender Equality is integrated in Horizon 2020 and 7th Framework Programme) and for incentivising research institutions to modernize working culture and institutions, also assuring gender balanced participation at all levels of management and in research team. Funding is combined with awareness raising and knowledge production activities (monitoring and reporting on the situation of women in science and research (annual monitoring reports of FP7, She Figures 2015 publication of statistics).</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GM mainstreamed in: Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for the period 2014-2020 under the part "Science with and for Society" and the Marie Curie actions; 7th Framework Programme for Research & technological development (2007-2013); <p>Studies and reporting activities on the situation of women in science and research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a first Progress Report which provided a baseline on issues of women in science and research.(2013) - annual monitoring reports of FP7 (7th Framework Programme for Research & technological development) with a chapter on Gender Equality (2013-2015) - She Figures 2015 publication of statistics and indicators on gender in research and innovation (2015) <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices: communication campaign "Science it's a girl thing"</p>
1.5 - Promote GE in all initiatives on Migration and integration of migrants (HOME/EMPL)	Total actions: 4 DG HOME: 3 DG EMPL: 2	Total actions: 4 DG HOME: 3, DG EMPL: 1	Total actions: 3 DG HOME: 2 DG EMPL: 1	<p>Gender Equality is systematically promoted in initiatives on immigration and integration. This action appropriately identifies key issues to be promoted within the policies and EU funds dedicated to migration policies (European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Immigrants) or including provision related to the integration of migrants (ESF). Attention to gender dimension was integrated in migrant entrepreneurship policies and recently in integration measures with reference to family reunification issue. The exchange of good practices and awareness raising actions are considered very important to support all initiatives on migration and integration of migrants.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainstreaming of equality between women and men and anti-discrimination principles in the main legislations and the main EU policies and programmes on immigration or including provision related to the integration of migrants: - MS commitment to Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU with a view to promoting the main dimensions of integration, including Gender Equality (2014) - European Commission Communication on guidance for application of Directive 2003/86/ European Commission on the right to family reunification, in which it is stated that integration measures should be gender sensitive (2014). - European Agenda for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (European Agenda COM(2011) 455 final) - European Integration Fund; - ESF (with reference to increasing the participation migrant women in the labour market) - Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan (with reference to the promotion of migrant women's entrepreneurship) <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DG Home report on the EU indicators of immigrant integration with gender indicators (2013) <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting of the new section of good practices on Antidiscrimination and Equality of the EWSI website - European Web Site on Integration (2011).

minimum = ▲; maximum=▲ ▲ ▲

Note

¹Domestic Workers Convention no. 189, 2011 (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460) and Domestic Workers Recommendation No. 201, 2011 (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R201)

² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/document/index_en.htm#h2-4

³ This action was not labeled as a key action, but being a stand alone action without reference to the other key actions we considered it as a key one

Table 2 - Priority 2 - Equal pay for equal work and work of equal value: actions and main achievements

Strategy actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/06-2014 New actions	Main Achievements (outputs/outcomes)
2.1 - Explore possible ways to improve the transparency of pay as well as the impact on equal pay of arrangements such as part-time work and fixed-term contracts (JUST/EMPL)	Tot actions: 3 DG EMPL: 3	Total actions: 3 DG JUST: 3 DG EMPL: 1	Total actions: 4 DG JUST: 3, DG EMPL: 1, New actions: 1	<p>This key action contributed to increase the knowledge and the transparency about this topic through the adoption of the Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (2014) aiming at facilitating the application of the Equal Pay principle and supporting the MS in reducing it. In addition, various studies have been carried out to evaluate the impact of part-time and fixed - term contracts and the effectiveness of the Directives 97/81/EEC, 99/70/ European Commission and 2006/54/ European Commission on equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation, with focus on the application of the provisions on equal pay in practice. The specific insights have been accompanied by consultation of the social partners. Practical documents are also provided with the aim of helping stakeholders to more effectively apply the national law on equal pay.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency (2014). - COM (2013) 512 final Report on the application of the Directive 2006/54/European Commission of the European Parliament and the Council of 5 July 2006 (recast) 2013 <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines on the application of Council Directive 2004/113/European Commission to insurance, in the light of the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Case C-236/09 (Test-Achats) (Text with EEA relevance) (2012/C 11/01) - Practical Guidance on job evaluation and classification system <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2013) study used to prepare an impact assessment which accompanied Commission Recommendation on strengthening of the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency adopted in 2014 - An external expert study (2014) to evaluate the impact of part-time and fixed-term contracts, and to assess the effectiveness of directives 97/81/EEC and 99/70/European Commission.

<p>2.2 - Support equal pay initiatives at the workplace such as equality labels, 'charters', and awards, as well as the development of tools for employers to correct unjustified gender pay gaps. Institute a European Equal Pay Day to be held each year to increase awareness on how much longer women need to work than men to earn the same. (JUST/EMPL)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 5 DG EMPL: 4 DG ESTAT: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 5 DG JUST: 4 DG ESTAT: 1 DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 4 DG JUST: 4 DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>The action appropriately identifies and combines operation support to MS in this field with awareness raising activities (as for instance, European Equal Pay Day" to be organized every year) and initiatives (also training) or tools aimed to analyse the reasons for the existence of unjustified gender pay gaps and support companies in ensuring equal pay for women and men for equal work;</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014 European Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between women and men through transparency (above mentioned) - Financed projects on the gender pay gap in the framework of ESF and the Social Investment Package <p>Awareness raising, dissemination actions and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender pay gap website (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/index_en.htm) - annual Business Forum in Brussels to exchange experience between companies in gender equality actions (2011-2014) - "Equality Pays Off" initiatives (training and tools for companies to raise awareness in companies about gender pay gap) - EU Equal Pay day 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 <p>Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Commission assessments of the impact of the gender pay gap and European Commission CSR to close gender pay; - introduction of the gender pay gap indicator in the Structural Earning Survey - (2014) report Tackling the gender pay gap in the European Union
<p>2.3 - Encourage women to enter non traditional professions, for example in "green" and innovative sectors (EAC/MOVE/RTD)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 2 DG EAC: 2</p>	<p>Total actions: 2 DG EAC: 2,</p>	<p>Total actions: 4 DG EAC: 2 DG MOVE: 1 DG RTD: 1</p>	<p>The actions combine initiatives oriented at strengthening gender equality in training and education with studies on this topic (with particular reference to gender stereotypes and male role in Gender Equality and analyses on the situation of women in education and training), monitoring of set targets in the scientific and technological careers and awareness raising activities/campaigns.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) - the 2012 Commission Communication "Rethinking education: investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes" underlines the need to make science, technology, engineering and mathematics more attractive to women; - Horizon 2020 Programme, including measures for the promotion of women's participation in science education (call for proposals GERI "Innovative approach to communication encouraging girls to study science") - 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), including analyses on the situation of women in education and training; - Draft 2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET2020) <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -2012/2116(INI) European Parliament Resolution on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU (2013) - study on "The role of men in gender equality" published by the European Commission (2013) <p>Awareness raising, dissemination actions and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the campaign "Science: it's a girl thing!" in collaboration with Scientix, the science teachers' online community (2013-2015) and dynamic website in the 24 EU languages (http://science-girl-thing.eu/en/splash).

2.3.1 - Participation of women in ICT (CNECT)	Tot actions: 1 DG INFSo: 1	Total actions: 1 DG CNECT: 1	Total actions: 1 DG CNECT: 1	<p>Many EU policies encourages the participation of women in the ICT workforce in order to achieve equal pay. This strategy action is focused more on awareness raising activities (also awards), networking and exchange of good practices to facilitate stakeholder dialogue on women's careers in digital.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COM (2007) 496 - E-Skills for the 21st Century – improvement of women's ICT skills and their participation in ICT jobs; - Horizon 2020 – promotion of women in ICT and scientific careers - Digital Agenda Action 60 – promotion of women in ICT (2011) - Davos Declaration on the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs (2014); <p>Awareness raising, dissemination activities and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code of best practices for Women in ICT; - multi-stakeholder platform on Corporate Social Responsibility in the ICT sector providing an opportunity to exchange good practices on gender equality and facilitate sector-wide cooperation (2013) - International Girls in ICT Day awareness raising campaign (2013 -2015) organized by DG Connect; - Commission's patronage of Digital Woman/Digital Girl/ Digital Organization of the Year Award in Vilnius (2013) - (2013) Study on Women in the ICT sector
2.3.2 - Gender equality and research	Tot actions: 7 DG RTD: 7	Total actions: 7 DG RTD: 7,	Key action not present in the document	<p>The Strategy sustains women's presence in research under this action only over 2010-2013. It combined activities for modernizing working culture and working conditions in research institutions (many projects were founded), studies in depth, training activities to scientific community and European Commission staff for integrating the gender dimension in EU-funded research and awareness activities through conferences and national events. Methods, terminology and case studies have also been developed to better integrate gender in the future European research activities (for instance by the Gendered Innovations expert group)</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financed projects on modernizing the working culture and working conditions in research institutes and Universities: FESTA, STAGES, GENOVATE and Gender Time; - Gender toolkit and training sessions held in 15 MS; - creation of the Gender Innovation expert group (2011) to identify specific modalities to better integrate gender in future European research (it has developed methods, terminology and case studies). <p>Awareness raising, dissemination actions and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -conferences and seminars such as the 2010 conference for the presentation of the results of the study "Meta – analysis of gender and science research"; - National events in Amsterdam, Munich, Vienna, Milan and Warsaw (2011) - website in all EU languages on women scientists - the campaign "Science it's a girl thing" (2011) <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structural change in research institutions: enhancing excellence, gender equality and efficiency in research and innovation¹ (2012); -report on Genderace² (2011); -FEMCIT reports³ launched under FP6 (2011) - FEMAGE reports launched under FP6

minimum = ♠; medium=♠ ♠; maximum=♠ ♠ ♠

Note:

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/science-society/document_library/pdf_06/structural-changes-final-report_en.pdf.

² <http://genderace.ulb.ac.be/>.

³ <http://www.femcit.org/>.

Table 3 - Priority 3 - Equality in decision making: actions and main achievements

Strategy actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/06-2014 New actions	Main Achievements (outputs/outcomes)
3.1. - Targeted initiatives to Improve the gender balance in decision making (JUST/MARKT)	Tot actions: 3 DG EMPL: 2 DG MARKT: 1	Total actions: 5 DG MARKT: 1 DG JUST: 4, New actions:1	Total actions: 4 DG MARKT: 1, DG JUST: 3 New actions: 1	<p>The action appropriately combines soft legislation, knowledge production and exchange of good practices collection, analysis and dissemination of comparable data on gender balance in decision making at EU level with regular reporting on women's participation in decision making in the EU. The Commission has also supported the adoption of the <i>proposal for a Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges</i></p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - COM/2013/0207, a proposal to enhance business transparency on social and environmental matters -COM (2012) 615 A proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and the European Council on improving the gender balance among non executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges -COM (2012) 740 2012 Action Plan on European company law and corporate governance -COM (2011) 164 Green paper on EU corporate governance framework -European Pact for gender equality 2011-2020, including provisions on this issue - calls for projects under Progress to implement actions to increase gender balance in decision-making positions - Women on the Board Pledge for Europe initiative (call for MS actions) - 2012 European Commission Consultation on gender imbalance in company boards <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -SEC (2011) 246 Commission Staff Working Document The gender balance in business leadership - (2012) progress report on Women in economic decision-making - (2013) report on "Women and men in leadership positions in the EU, 2013" - (2014) two factsheets on the topic of gender balance on corporate boards
3.2 - Monitor the 25% target for women in top level decision-making positions in research (RTD)	Tot actions: 2 DG RTD: 2	Total actions: 2 DG RTD: 2,	Total actions: 1 DG RTD: 1	<p>Monitoring of set targets is relevant for assessing the state of art in this field. Under this action improvement of data collection, development of new indicators and data updating</p> <p><u>Main actions/outputs:</u></p> <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous updating of the She figures
3.3 - Monitor progress towards the aim of 40% of members of one sex in committees and expert groups (ALL)	Tot actions: 1 SG: 1	SG: 1 repealed	Total actions: 2 DG ALL: 1 DG RTD: 1	<p>The action focuses on the importance of monitoring the women's participation in committees and expert groups established by the Commission and under the ORIZON 2020. Significant improvements in gender balance have been achieved</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <p>2010: C (2010) 7649 framework for expert groups establishing as an objective the need to provide a balance representation between men and women in the appointment of the individual experts</p> <p>2013: EU regulation no. 1291/2013 of the EU Parliament and the Council establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/European Commission setting a 40% target of the under-represented sex in panels, groups and committees</p> <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanisms and tools: 2014: setting of a monitoring mechanism (ORIZON)</p>

3.4 - Promote greater participation by women in European Parliament elections (COMM/ JUST)	Tot actions: 1 DG COMM: 1 DG JUST: 1	Total actions: 1 DG COMM: 1 DG JUST: 1	Total actions: 1 DG COMM: 1, DG JUST: 1,	<p>The action identifies EU funding programmes that can be used for enhancing women's participation in EU elections. Many projects have been implemented to reach this aim (mainly awareness activities and networking) with particular reference to the EU Parliament elections in 2014.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to women's participation in politics under the following EU programmes: Europe for Citizens Programme; the 2007-2013: Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme; 2014-2020 Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme; <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2014: PROGRESS support to the campaign 50/50 (EWL) <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of women's presence in top management positions at national and EU level (European Commission database on women and men in decision-making)
3.4.1. Monitor progress of representation targets for women in management posts and AD category in the Commission (HR/ ALL)	Tot action: 1 DG HR: 1	Total actions: 1 DG HR: 1 DG ALL: 1	Total actions: 1 DG HR: 1 DG ALL: 1	<p>Under the action (2011), each Commission department drew up its own plan of action for how to achieve the targets. A regular monitoring and reporting activity on achievement of set targets have being carried out by the Directorate-General for Human Resources.</p> <p>Significant improvements in gender balance in management positions at the Commission and DGs level have been achieved</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action Plans for all the European Commission DGs including actions for reaching the EU targets on women's presence in management positions in the European Commission. <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices :- 2012 bilateral meetings with all the European Commission DGs.</p> <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2012-2014) DG HR monitoring reports on implementation of the Plans - a quarterly reporting system of the gender representation targets

Table 4 - Priority 4 Dignity, integrity and an end to gender-based violence: actions and main achievements

Strategy actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/ 06-2014 New actions	Main Achievements (outputs/outcomes)
<p>4.1 Adopt an EU-wide strategy on combating violence against women (JUST/HOME)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 6 DG JUST: 5 DG COMM: 1 DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 8 DG JUST: 6, 1 DG HOME: 2, Repealed action: 1 (JUST) New actions: 2</p>	<p>Total actions: 6 DG JUST: 5, DG HOME: 1 New actions: 3</p>	<p>The action appropriately combines legislative measures, monitoring of their transposition and support with awareness raising campaigns, knowledge production (thematic insights on specific forms of violence against women, study on collection data methods and tools etc.), exchange of best practices and funding for initiatives in this area</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA - Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings - Resolution on combating violence against women (2013/2004 (INL)) - COM(2012) 286 final EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016 - COM(2013) 833 final Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation - Daphne III programme (violence against women as priority) and financed projects <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - many studies and reports (2012-2013) in the field of Violence against Women, data collection, tools and good practices on gender-based and domestic violence across the EU, situation and trends of FGM in EU - database on domestic violence <p>Awareness raising/dissemination activities and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seminars on violence against the women across the EU MS - 2013 Consultation on combating female genital mutilation in EU - EU policy package on the elimination of female genital mutilation: EU campaign on zero tolerance to female genital mutilation, website on female genital mutilation and EIGE actions - 2013 roundtable on FGM chaired by Vice-President Reding
<p>4.2 Ensure that Asylum legislation takes into account GE; promote Gender specific training and BP within the EASO and via funding by the ERF (HOME)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 2 DG HOME: 1 DG JUST: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 2 DG HOME: 2, 1 repealed</p>	<p>Total actions: 1 DG HOME: 1</p>	<p>The action appropriately combines gender mainstreaming in EU legislation with funding schemes and training to operators involved in this field;</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender mainstreaming throughout the European Asylum Curriculum (EAC); - the recast Asylum Procedures Directive (2013/32) including women victims of gender-based violence and victims of female genital mutilation between applicants in need of special procedural guarantees) - the recast Reception conditions directive (2013/33) (improvement of reception provisions for vulnerable persons) <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EASO trainings curriculum for case officers and asylum practitioners

4.3 - Gender issues in health policies (SANCO/EMPL/JRC)	Tot actions: 9 DG SANCO: 5 DG EMPL: 5 DG EMPL: 1	Total actions: 10 DG SANCO: 6 DG EMPL: 4,	Total actions: 7 DGSANCO: 5 DG EMPL: 3, Deleted actions: 1 (EMPL)	<p>The action appropriately combines gender mainstreaming in EU legislation and policies on healthcare, through the drafting of health and gender impact assessments, with awareness raising activities, knowledge production and exchange of good practices between MS/stakeholders up to the definition of specific action plans in this area.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender mainstreaming within the EU Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategic Framework 2014-2020 (women are a specific target of the actions foreseen by the Strategy) - Gender mainstreaming within the EU Strategy Together for Health and the European Innovation Partnership - Gender as an horizontal issue in policies such as tobacco control, HIV/AIDS, European partnership for action against cancer - Gender mainstreaming within the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (Active Ageing Index; CSR to improve older women's labour market participation in the MS); <p>Awareness raising/dissemination activities and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - seminars/conferences on Gender Mainstreaming in health policies
4.3.1 - Cyber stalking/harassment/violence	Key action not present	Key action not present in the document	Total actions: 1 DG JRC: 1 New actions: 1	This new action introduced in 2013 aims to develop knowledge about gender-dimensions of cyber-stalking, cyber-harassments and all forms of cyber-violence. It foresaw proposals for actions and awareness-raising activities

Table 5 Priority area 5 Gender equality in external actions: main actions and achievements

Strategy actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/06-2014 New actions	Main Achievements (outputs/outcomes)
<p>5.1 - Monitor and support adherence to the Copenhagen criteria for accession to the EU (ELARG/EMPL)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 2 DG ELARG: 1 DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>Tot actions: 2 DG EMPL: 2 DG ELARG: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 3 DG EMPL: 2 DG ELARG: 1 New actions: 1</p>	<p>The action appropriately combines monitoring of the adherence to the Copenhagen criteria in the field of equal treatment between women and men by acceding countries with support for their take up. It also monitor the GE in the European Commission financial assistance under the IPA. Policy dialogues for the development of Employment and Social Reform Programmes has been launched with all four EU candidate countries.</p> <p>Among the main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equality as a horizontal issue within the Human Resources Development Operational Programme implemented within IPA <p>Awareness raising/dissemination activities and exchange of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2013-2014) Screening meetings and discussion with Montenegro and Serbia on GE issues - Taix regional workshops and technical meetings on implementation of EU criteria on GE/transposition of legislation in enlargement countries <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2010-14) Yearly Progress Reports on candidate/potential countries that cover GE issues;
<p>5.2 - External relations and development policies (DEVCO/EEAS)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 9 DG AIDCO: 8 DG DEV: 7 DG RELEX: 4</p>	<p>Total actions: 11 DG DEVCO: 11 DG EEAS: 5 New actions: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 11 DG DEVCO: 8 DG EEAS: 7 New actions: 1</p>	<p>The action appropriately combines policy dialogue with third countries and specific actions on gender equality, initiatives/projects addressed to support civil society organizations working on women's rights with capacity building of EU development staff working on gender (training, guidelines etc.), monitoring and reporting on gender equality performance, the advancement of the EU agenda on gender equality in third countries and contribution to international objectives (i.e Millenium development Goals). Particular attention is devoted to improvement of indicators (the use of gender sensitive indicators is increasing in all EU delegations: they are now included in at least 20 different sectors). Many initiatives have been devoted to promoting democracy and women's participation to the election process and their role in external conflicts and crises (guidelines, training, seminars, thematic factsheet, literature review on Gender issue, women's networks to interact in peace-building debates)</p> <p>Among the main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2010-15 EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment in Development (GAP) and setting of task force the GAP's successor (2016 -2020) - The EU Comprehensive Approach to external conflicts and crises (UNSCR 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security) and the first (2013) and second report (2014) on EU indicators for the Comprehensive approach - (2012-2014) EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy - The 2013 European Neighborhood Policy Package - Gender mainstreaming within the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and other financial Instruments supporting the Neighbourhood: Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI); Partnership Instrument (PI); Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP); European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR) and financed projects - (2013) human rights country strategies (116 out of 146 have women rights as a priority); <p>Study and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender country profiles of EAP countries <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanisms and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2014) EU EOM and revision of the Core Team Guidelines for election observation dedicated to Women participation.

5.3 - Further integration of gender considerations into EU humanitarian aid (ECHO)	Tot actions: 1 DG ECHO: 1	Total actions: 1 DG ECHO: 1	Total actions: 1 DG ECHO: 1	<p>The action foresees the integration of the gender perspective in the main sectors of humanitarian aid through the implementation of specific gender target initiatives and strategies, the develop of capacity building initiatives addressed to humanitarian partners and staff, the use of gender analysis, the creation of a gender-age marker and the collection of gender disaggregated data, awareness raising activities.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DG ECHO Staff Working Document on Gender in Humanitarian Assistance: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance (SWD (2013)290 final) - Humanitarian Wash Policy integrating the gender equality perspective <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanisms and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creation of a gender-age marker and trainings on its use - 2010/2014 European Commission support to the project that increased the capacity of humanitarian staff to effectively manage and coordinate inter-agency, multi - sectorial GBV programmes
5.3.1 - Other external actions and cooperation with international organizations (RTD/ JUST/EEAS)	Tot actions: 2 DG RTD: 2	Total actions: 3 DG RTD: 2 DG JUST: 1 DG EEAS: 1 New actions: 1	Total actions: 2 DG RTD: 1 DG JUST: 1 DG EEAS: 1 New actions: 1	<p>The action developed analysis of the situation of women in Science in the MED, international dialogue and cooperation with international organizations on the promotion of gender equality in research and innovation combined with the implementation of significant projects under the FP7 and Horizon 2020 programmes.</p> <p>Among the main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.4 million euro project SHERA <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanisms and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - involvement of USA experts in the expert group on Structural change in research institutions and USA/ Canadian experts in the expert group on Gendered Innovations <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU participation and support to the preparation of CSW

Table 6 Horizontal issues: main Actions and achievements

Strategy actions	Strategy' actions 2010	Number of actions Referent of the actions up to mid-term review New actions	Number of actions Referent of the actions - Monitoring 01-2013/ 06-2014 New actions	Achievements: main outputs/outcomes
<p>6.1 - Address the role of men in GE; promote good practices on gender roles in youth, education, culture and sports (EAC/RTD)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 4 DG EMPL: 1 DG EAC: 3</p>	<p>Total actions: 4 DG EAC: 3, DG JUST: 1,</p>	<p>Total actions: 2 DG EAC: 1 DG RTD: 1</p>	<p>The action refers to policies in part already envisaged under the priority 1 as for youth and education (action - Promote gender equality in youth and education and training), but emphasizing the importance of studying and awareness raising on the existing gender roles in this fields as well in the sport.</p> <p><u>Among main actions/outputs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Recommendation on Early School Leaving (2011) - The Communication "Youth on the Move" (COM (2010) 477 final) - Erasmus + 2014-2020 Programme for education, training, youth and sport (2013) <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (2014) Training toolkit and courses for the scientific community and on responsible research & innovation, including the promotion of gender equality <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study the Role of men in gender equality (2012)
<p>6.2 - Monitor the implementation of EU equal treatment laws with focus on Dir. 2004/113/EC and 2006/54/EC (JUST)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 7 DG EMPL: 7</p>	<p>Total actions: 6 DG JUST: 6,</p>	<p>Total actions: 6 DG JUST: 6,</p>	<p>The action increases the knowledge on effective implementation of anti-discrimination and gender equality directives and through monitoring reports and dissemination actions of implementation results. Specific attention is given to disability issue. Monitoring the directives' implementation is important in order to plan new and effective policies in gender equality field.</p> <p><u>Among main actions/outputs:</u></p> <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - report on implementation of Directive 2004/113/European Commission. - report on the application of the Directive 2006/54/European Commission - (2014) joint implementation report on the implementation of Directive 2000/43/European Commission on equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and the application of Directive 2000/78/European Commission on equal treatment in employment and occupation - annual reports of the Disability High Level Group <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A conference on the implementation of the directive 2004/113/European Commission - Forum on the implementation of the Directive 2004/113/European Commission and the <i>Test-Achats</i> judgement (2011) - annual meetings and the annual conference on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities to exchange good practices;

<p>6.3 - Promote full implementation of the BPfA with support of EIGE (ALL/ESTAT/JUST)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 5 DG EMPL: 5 DG ESTAT: 2 DG INFSO: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 5 DG JUST: 4 DG ESTAT: 2 DG CNECT:1 DG ENV:1 DG ALL: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 5 DG JUST: 4 DG ESTAT: 2 DG ALL: 2</p>	<p>The action combines activities to support in the MS the implementation of GM with particular reference to the gender impact assessment and gender budgeting (awareness raising activities, exchange of good practices, training initiatives within the public administration, GM tools) and an intense work to develop gender indicators mainly as the follow-up of the BPfA.</p> <p><u>Among main actions/outputs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PROGRESS programme - call for proposals on improving gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes (2010) <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a dedicated section on gender indicators on the Eurostat website - a memorandum of understanding between Eurostat and the EIGE on gender statistics (2011) - EU indicators (DG Home) on immigrant integration - indicators on women and the environment, on women and the media and recently on women and the economy (2014) in the framework of the EU follow-up of the BPfA - a new indicator on the provision of sex disaggregated statistics - European Commission Pilot project for the development of indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter of women and men in local life" (2013) <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EUROSTAT Statistics Explained article on gender statistics - EUROSTAT - Labour Force Survey (LFS) - the in-depth analysis of the ad-hoc module on reconciliation and ad hoc module on disability - Eurostat and DG JUST survey to collect data disaggregated by sex on disability in relation to employment and social participation - European Commission report presenting analysis of the indicators (2013) - EIGE study on women and the media (2013). - EIGE study on institutional mechanisms, women and the economy (2014). <p>EIGE comprehensive review of progress in all areas of concern of the Platform (2014).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (as from 2015), yearly specific focus on the EU follow-up of the Platform (in 2015 on decision making).
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<p>6.4 - Present an Annual report on progress on GE, Gender Equality dialogue. (JUST/EMPL)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 4 DG EMPL: 4</p>	<p>Tot actions: 6 DG JUST: 6 DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>Tot actions: 6 DG JUST: 6 + 1 not carried out so far DG EMPL: 1</p>	<p>This action focused on reporting activity about progress on gender equality and on the UE cooperation with both the Equality Ministries to plan the gender equality activity and Social partners and civil society. At this end, the action mainly combined funding activity with awareness raising actions and exchange of good practices on gender equality</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs: European Pact for gender equality, 2011-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - joint declaration, definition and implementation of gender equality policies by the Trio of presidencies; - European Commission. DG EMPL funding for measures addressing equality between women and men under the industrial relations and social dialogue budget heading (15 grants for EUR 2,4 million) under the budget heading for information and training measures for workers' organisations (5 grants for EUR 700 000), grants under the social dialogue budget heading (heading 04030108) as from 2014, involving as beneficiaries European and national social partner organizations. <p>Awareness raising, dissemination measures and exchanging of good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bi-annual meetings of the HLG on gender mainstreaming - EU Italian presidency conference (2014) "Gender equality in Europe: an unfinished business? Taking stock 20 years after the Beijing Platform for Action"; - EU Irish presidency conference (2013) "Women's economic engagement and the Europe 2020 agenda" - (2011- 2012) 6 seminars of exchange of good practice on 'Implementing gender mainstreaming', 'New forms of work' and 'Tackling the gender pay gap', awareness-raising on violence against women', 'Economic decision-making' and 'Gender Training in education'. - (2013-2014) 4 seminars of exchange of good practice on 'Measures to fight violence against women'; 'Equal pay days'; 'Reconciliation of work and family life', 'Gender impact assessment' <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eurobarometer on gender equality (2015) <p>Studies and reporting activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual reports on Progress on Equality between women and men in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014
<p>6.4.1 - Improve European Commission Institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming (SG/ ALL)</p>	<p>Tot actions: 8 DG ALL: 3 DG HR: 2 DG BUDG: 1 DG EMPL: 1 DG ENV: 1 DG AIDCO: 1 DG RTD: 1 SG: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 8 DG ALL: 3 DG HR:2, SG: 1 DG BUDG:1 DG RTD:1, DG AIDCO:1 DG ENV:1 DG JUST: 1</p>	<p>Total actions: 9 DG JUST: 2, SG: 1 DG BUDG:1 DG ALL: 1 DG HR:1 DG RTD:1 DG DEVCO:1 DG ENV:1 DG Taxud: 1</p>	<p>The action focused on activities to improve European Commission's institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming (Gender in the impact assessment, trainings to European Commission staff, website)</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <p>Gender Equality Institutional mechanism and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eight training sessions to project officers involved in research management (2010 -2011) – DG HR - (2013) a specific training on gender equality in Horizon 2020 - 5 training course 'Gender Mainstreaming for Policy Officers' (2010 and 2014) – DG HR - a dedicated internal website
<p>6.4.2. - Adapting governance tools for Gender Equality in research and innovation</p>	<p>Key action Not present in the document</p>	<p>Key action Not present in the document</p>	<p>Tot actions: 1 DG RTD: 1</p>	<p>Through this action the EU promotes as horizontal issue the mainstreaming of gender issues in research content and the equal participation of male and female researchers.</p> <p>Among main actions/outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Communication on the European Research Area of 2012 - Science with and for Society" Programme of Horizon 2020. - Financial support to research organizations through the Science in Society Programme of FP7

Annex 2

Main results from the Survey to the High-Level Group on gender mainstreaming on the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy for Equality between women and men 2010-2015

Out of the 28 contacted HLG members, 23 have answered to the questionnaire by 04 September 2015 (missing: Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, UK).

1. Added-value of the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015

1. 1. Do you perceive the Strategy as a coherent framework for gender equality?

According to the majority of members of the High level group **the strategy is perceived as a coherent framework for gender equality:**

yes: 21	no: 0	Partially:2	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, CZ, DE, IE, DK, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, LV, RO, AT, BG, HR		ES, LU	

1.2 In general terms, do you think that the Strategy has served as a useful guidance for gender equality activities at national level? Were developments in national gender equality policies for example facilitated through the existence and implementation of the Strategy for equality between women and men?

yes: 17	no: 0	partially: 6	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, CZ, DE, IE, SI, IT, BE, SE, LV, RO, ES, AT, BG, HR		DK, EE, PL, NL, FR, LU	

According to the majority of the respondents, the Strategy has served as a useful guidance for gender equality activities at national level:

- The Strategy and its measures have provided important support for gender equality policies and the development of national legislation. The priorities established in the Strategy served as a useful guidance for the preparation of National Strategies in several Member States.
- The Strategy has helped to set and maintain gender equality on the national agenda and increased its visibility.
- National policy-making has benefited also from both the practical and topical exchanges of good practices and discussions held in the framework of the High-Level Group of gender mainstreaming and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.
- In some countries all national gender equality policies have been planned, elaborated and approved in correspondence with the EU strategic documents in this field.
- The Strategy represents a clear message to member states on the Commission's intentions and it paved the way for national documents. The Strategy gives a general direction of the most needed and desirable actions which should be taken by both the Commission and Member States on their way towards achieving gender equality. In this respect it has served as a useful instrument for the government facilitating the process of initiating actions and drafting the budget in the area of gender equality.

However, some of the respondents underline that the Strategy is perceived as too much limiting the role of men to a supporting role of advancing women's rights whilst leaving out the specific needs of men (specific needs and problems, victims of discrimination). Also, some respondents observe that the 24 key actions indicated in the Strategy were mostly directed to the European Commission only.

2. Objectives and results

2.1. Do you think that the six priority areas of the Strategy 2010-2015 were the right ones?

yes: 18	no: 0	partially: 5	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, SI, EE, IT, PL, SE, NL, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR		CZ, IE, BE, AT, LU	

According to the large majority of respondents the six priority areas were the right ones:

- The priority areas are broad and incorporate matters that are most relevant to gender equality. They are still relevant and should be incorporated in the new Strategy. The focus on gender equality in working life, equal pay and economic decision-making has been well justified, based on the treaties and the mandate of the EU. Gender balance in political decision-making is an inherent part of the realisation of democracy in the EU. It is also important that the EU has put more emphasis on its work against gender based violence and promoting gender equality and human rights beyond EU.
- The following priority areas are considered by some of particular relevance to the achievement of gender equality:
 - The priority area on '*Horizontal issues*', particularly gender mainstreaming, can have an impact on other social, economic and political spheres, by ensuring that gender equality is safeguarded in the respective policies and programmes.
 - Other '*Horizontal issues*', such as gender stereotypes, may impact the achievement of gender equality within the other priority areas. Traditional stereotypes can influence the behaviour and attitudes of women and men in education, labour market, decision-making positions, media, the uptake of family friendly measures, the family and society, thus affecting the use of time, access to resources and participation in all these spheres. Therefore, combating gender stereotypes can have a spill over effect on the achievement of gender equality within other priority areas of the strategy.
 - Achieving '*Equal economic independence*' is also important, and impinges on other priority areas within the strategy, namely equal pay, having equal opportunities to participate in decision-making positions, as well as women's empowerment to challenge and combat violence. Thus, combating structural discrimination in employment; raising awareness on the benefits of work-life balance and family friendly measures; enhancing the availability and affordability of care structures, and combating segregation are important objectives towards equal economic independence and the achievement of gender equality.
- Due to the dramatic impact of the crisis, especially in some EU countries, and despite all the efforts and achievements the situation has not substantially improved in some Member States. Therefore, these priority areas should be main-

tained in the future Strategy. Additionally, there are a number of related issues which might be incorporated and/or strengthened, such as: Promoting economic independence of women, gender equality in decision-making in particular at the highest levels and removing gender pay gap; Promoting more equal sharing of family and household responsibilities and encouraging Member States to strengthen reconciliation policies for both men and women; Eradication of the violence against women as a priority; Integration of the gender dimension in all EU Strategies, funding programmes and policy areas (including gender impact assessment pre and post, gender budgeting, monitoring and evaluation)

Some proposals for improvement also emerge from the answers:

- In the future it could be considered whether the strategy should concentrate on a smaller number of actions; there is a need for a sharper focus on specific issues and new tools to address them.
- Many of the respondents underline the need to develop new mechanisms/tools for a greater engagement of men and boys in gender equality, for combating gender stereotypes including gender segregation in employment and education, for better work-life balance policies focusing more on men as caregivers, for challenging the gender division of work inside the households and care of the elderly. Men should be considered also when talking about the use of leave entitlements and the elimination of all forms of violence against women.
- In addition some suggest some new issues that deserve attention. These include the reconciliation of work and family life, a plan for thorough implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission. Future work must also make visible differences not only between women and men, but also within the groups of women and men, for example the situation of women from minorities including Roma women, and their access to employment.
- Other challenges mentioned by respondents are: equality between women and men in connection to the media and virtual space, environment, transport, sports, science, education and health. New challenges like precarious working conditions and the increasing digitalisation of society should also be addressed in a new strategy. Some suggest considering the equal division of work and family tasks between women and men as an additional priority area. Furthermore the impact of the financial and economic crisis should be taken into consideration.
- The role of education has been left out of the strategy, a vital area that can help fight gender stereotypes as decisions on future careers is taken in schools, which later has effects on pay, decision making and live/work balance.
- Some observe that gender mainstreaming, as a strategy within the strategy, should have been dealt with more prominently. More attention should be paid to the integration of gender perspectives in the EU economic policies and the Europe 2020 strategy as well as in other policy areas in general. Currently, gender mainstreaming is closely associated in the Strategy with employment and social issues and less so with other areas.
- According to others, while the priority areas of the Strategy address issues that are relevant in the European context, the specific actions included in the document are sometimes too generically identified.
- The language in the strategy should be more gender neutral in order to achieve gender equality for both sexes. Currently the tone of the strategy doesn't include the male perspective. In addition, the gender equality language should work more with the justice and human rights argumentation, not just the economic argumentation.

2.2. In general terms, do you think that the objectives of the Strategy's priority areas were sufficiently clear and well defined?

yes: 9	no: 2	partially: 11	don't know: 0
FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, LV, RO, BG	IE, LU	SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, AT, HR	

The positions on this issue are split, with half of the respondents only partially agreeing:

Positive answers:

- In general, the objectives of the Strategy were clearly defined. The text of the Strategy and the communication approach of the European Commission have been quite clear and concise.
- Priority areas are well defined and backed by relevant statistical data. Reference is made to relevant legislation, commitments, guidelines and other related documentation. Every objective of the Strategy is also complemented with a set of key actions that the Commission set out to achieve for every priority area, thus shedding more light on the scope of these priorities. Moreover, the annual reports of this Strategy provide further insight on the actions taken to achieve these priorities, as well as the progress and remaining challenges to the achievement of gender equality within the priority areas mentioned.
- The Strategy defined concrete and measurable key actions and sub-actions for each priority area. This is crucial for the successful implementation and evaluation of any strategy and should also be done in the next one.
- Each priority is to a great extent adequately designed to provide an effective answer to the main gender equality issues identified on European level.

While the more negative aspects are the following:

- The objectives identified in Strategy are often too broadly defined. It would be helpful to set more specific indicators to each of the objective. We are however aware of the difficulty with setting of the objectives and their exact indicators.
- In order to make gender equality a reality, we need more specific, measurable, achievable and realistic objectives. The specific actions are sometimes too generally identified, thus failing in some cases to establish specific outputs or results to be achieved, timing and responsibilities.
- The actions were sometimes too broadly defined. Verbs like: "promote", "support efforts", "seek to encourage", "consider initiatives" are not concrete enough to give a clear indication of the results expected. It was particularly the case regarding the actions concerning decision-Making. Most of the time, no concrete indicators were mentioned.
- Area 1 (Equal economic independence) and area 2 (Equal pay for equal work) are similar and could be merged in a future Strategy. Also, gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently prioritised in the Strategy, and not clear enough in the "Horizontal issues" area 6. Gender Mainstreaming needs to be a specific priority.
- Monitoring and control mechanism with specific "gender sensitive" indicators are also needed, and the data supporting them should be gender disaggregated to demonstrate relevant gender gaps and gender-specific impacts. Additionally, those targets and indicators need to be in connection with both the EU 2020 Strategy and its monitoring and control mechanism and with the post 2015 development agenda.

- There needs to be more emphasis on information dissemination and awareness raising. There has to be an emphasis on fighting gender stereotypes through the areas mentioned earlier and through a clear structure, where outdated models of perceptions are discouraged.
-

2.3. More specifically, do you think that the objectives of each priority area were sufficiently clear and well defined?

Focusing on the **objectives of each priority area**, the respondents show different views on whether they are all sufficiently **clear and well defined**:

	Yes	No	Partly	Don't know
Equal economic independence	11 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, IT, LV, RO, BG, HR	1 IE,	10 CZ, SI, EE, PL, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, LU	0
Equal pay for work of equal value	10 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, IT, PL, SE, LV, RO	1 IE,	11 CZ, DK, SI, EE, BE, NL, FR, ES, LU, BG, HR	0
Equality in decision-making	14 FI, LT, EL, CZ, DE, DK, SI, IT, PL, SE, LV, RO, LU, HR	1 IE,	6 EE, BE, NL, FR, ES, BG	0
Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence	11 FI, EL, MT, CZ, DE, DK, SI, LV, RO, BG, HR	2 IE, PL	8 EE, IT, BE, SE, NL, FR, ES, LU	1 LT
Promoting gender equality beyond the EU	11 FI, LT, EL, MT, DE, SI, PL, SE, LV, RO, BG	2 IE, LU	7 CZ, DK, BE, NL, FR, ES, HR	2 EE, IT
Horizontal issues	11 LT, EL, MT, DE, DK, SI, IT, PL, LV, RO, BG	3 IE, SE, FR	8 FI, CZ, EE, BE, NL, ES, LU, HR	

2.4 In general terms, do you think that implementation of the 24 key actions of the Strategy brought about sufficient progress in gender equality across the EU?

Yes: 5	No: 4	Partly: 12	Don't know; 1
LT, EL, IT, RO, BG	IE, SE, AT, LU	FI, MT, CZ, DE, DK, SI, EE, PL, BE, FR, LV, ES	NL, HR

Respondents underline that:

- Gender equality in the EU is still work in progress, where a lot of energy and political will are still needed. The Commission has acted on the large majority of actions in the strategy and progress has been made in many areas. Some of the key actions have caused movement towards gender equality in the European Union, especially in the fields of equal pay for equal work and equality in decision making. Measurable progress has been achieved with regard to the presence of women in boards of the larger publicly listed companies.
- However, progress across Member States and priority areas is uneven, with gender equality far to be achieved in several policy fields and gender gaps still significant in many Member States.
- The period covered has been challenging due to the economic downturn.
- Many respondents focus on slow progress of effective and full implementation of gender mainstreaming across all DGs (apart from DG EMPL and Education). One of the priorities in the forthcoming EU strategy should therefore be a plan/platform for through implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission, building on the experience of almost 20 years and providing an inspiration and role model for Member States.

2.5 More specifically, do you think that sufficient progress in the six priority areas was achieved?

	Yes	No	Partly	Don't know
Equal economic independence	2 LT, EL	2 CZ, LU	15 FI, MT, DE, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, SE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 IE, DK, NL
Equal pay for work of equal value	3 LT, EL, SE	2 CZ, LU	14 FI, MT, DE, SI, EE, IT, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 IE, DK, NL
Equality in decision-making	4 LT, EL, IT, HR	1 LU	13 FI, MT, CZ, DE, SI, EE, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG	3 IE, DK, NL
Dignity, integrity and ending gender violence	1 EL	3 CZ, PL, LU	14 FI, MT, DE, IE, SI, EE, IT, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG, HR	3 LT, DK, NL

Promoting gender equality beyond the EU	4 LT, EL, SE, HR	1 LU	13 FI, MT, CZ, DE, IE, SI, PL, BE, FR, LV, RO, ES, BG	4 DK, EE, IT, NL
Horizontal issues	2 EL, IT	3 CZ, SE, FR	15 FI, LT, MT, DE, IE, SI, EE, PL, BE, LV, RO, ES, LU, BG, HR	2 DK, NL

2.6. Could more progress have been achieved through the Strategy?

Answers to this question provide some valuable indications:

- Progress in the Member States is a result of strategic work and political commitment, however much work remains to be done. Political will and keeping gender equality prominent on the political area is crucial for accelerating the progress in achieving *de facto* gender equality. Systematic involvement of top-level national and EU political actors in the discussions and monitoring of the Strategy could bring about more even progress across the EU.
- A future Strategy should have more ambitious goals in order to achieve genuine progress, as well as more concrete and binding measures.
- More efficient gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy is needed.
- More progress could have been achieved if a set of key actions were targeted at stakeholders at a national level besides those set for the Commission: including national stakeholders in the strategy can enhance cooperation with the Commission, thus encouraging the development and implementation of further initiatives at a national level. Such coordinated effort can target the circumstances and needs of the Member States and strengthen more action towards specific objectives related to gender equality, thus achieving further progress.
- The Strategy could have achieved more progress by improving cooperation with EIGE and other EU agencies, with a view to enhancing the quantity and quality of sex-disaggregated data. EIGE's achievements should be better promoted and the Strategy should invite, encourage and facilitate MS to actively use its researches and instruments.
- The Commission's Annual Reports on progress in gender equality are a valuable contribution to monitoring but it is regrettable that the Annual Reports have not been published as a stand-alone Commission's Communication since 2011. This has reduced their visibility and perception considerably. In addition, the long term impact of the Strategy and its measures is difficult to evaluate. More attention is needed on evaluating and tackling the gendered effects of the economic crisis and the integration of gender perspective in the design and the implementation of the responses to the crisis.

3. Strengths and Weaknesses

3.1 What were the Strategy's main strengths? Please name a maximum of three and explain briefly:

1. The Strategy has provided a **strategic approach, with well-developed priorities and targeted actions** (LT and most of the other countries). Concrete priorities allowed all partners to know where to focus their policies and actions (EL). The document was clear and accessible and not too lengthy. The Strategy correctly identifies the most important areas and actions to be taken (PL). A down-to-earth approach, with pragmatic, ambitious and highly visible objectives, built for the long-term. It is a politically important document showing the importance of gender equality policy in the EU and at national level and providing a framework, where goals and measures are defined to achieve gender equality as a value enshrined in the Treaty (LV).
2. A strong **political driver** (FR). The Strategy helps to maintain gender equality as a priority for action in the political agenda and policy arena (ES).
3. The separate strategy for equality between women and men has increased the **coherence and visibility of gender equality policies at the EU level**. The strategy has focused on clear priority areas that have a direct link to the EU treaties and goals (FI). One of the strategy's main strengths is that it was a stand-alone strategy (LU). The strategy defines actions that could only and better be done at EU level (BE). Priority areas are coherent and relevant (CZ), serving as a common reference framework; strengthens arguments for Gender Equality and cannot be put aside easily (AT).
4. The Strategy has strengthened the cross-sectoral **coordination, monitoring and evaluation of gender equality policies** (FI). The strategy is complemented with regular evaluation and reporting. The yearly reporting provides information on progress and ongoing actions. Such reporting also highlights remaining challenges and areas that require further action, thus setting out the agenda for further actions towards the achievement of gender equality (MT). The Strategy defined concrete and measurable key actions and sub-actions for each priority area (DE). Regular reports highlighted both activities carried out in the framework of implementation of the Strategy at EU level and in Member States and also changes in relevant situation (i.e. statistics) (EE). The strategy gives an opportunity to monitor progress annually on gender equality issues and to compare to other Member States, providing sometimes a stimulus to national policies. The mid-term review of the Strategy is an essential and strategic tool for follow-up of development (SE).
5. The Strategy and its measures have provided important **support for gender equality policies in Member States** (FI). The European Commission has shown strong determination to support and promote the Strategy; in that way, the Member States considered the text of the Strategy as a useful tool for the promotion of gender equality at national level (EL). It is a reference framework for action on gender equality for both the EU and Member-States, contributing to the visibility of gender equality issues on both, national and EU level. Defines key priority areas of intervention also being relevant for all the Member States (SI). Coordination and sharing of national gender equality policies within the EU (NL). The added value of having a focused strategy at EU level, encouraging and reinforcing national policies and practices (ES). The priorities and actions

implemented by the Strategy address issues that are relevant in the European context; it is a coherent framework for gender equality and a useful guidance for gender equality activities at national level (BG). Rather small number of focus areas. This enabled focusing both efforts and resources on achieving results in chosen areas (EE).

6. The **dual strategy** consisting of both specific measures to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in all policy areas: both approaches are needed in the effective promotion of gender equality (FI, IE, SI, IT).
7. The linkage to the other important **international** documents and conventions on the gender equality is included (CZ). External work: a united EU has enabled progress and promoted gender equality (DK)
8. **Supportive measures**, such as expert-level co-operation (HLG and Advisory Committee), programme for exchanging good practices, gender mainstreaming in the EC (EE); Coordination and knowledge exchange; it is important to learn from other MS in order to build on best practises. Having specific focus areas helps create synergies with the EC as well as MS (DK). Organising the events of exchange of good practices at European Union level (RO).
9. Promoting areas of interest which focus on **vulnerable groups**, their situation, especially in the context of economic, financial and social crisis in Europe (RO).

The main weaknesses identified are:

1. **Gender mainstreaming** is the most mentioned issue: More focus would have been needed on the implementation of gender mainstreaming in different policy areas with concrete tools to integrate gender perspective in policy processes (including systematic gender impact assessments and training of civil servants and decision-makers) (FI). Gender mainstreaming as an integral part of the Strategy could be mentioned in a broader way and as the horizontal issue of the Strategy (CZ). We need more effective mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and top-level commitment to achieve this (SI). Reference to gender mainstreaming is limited (IT). Gender mainstreaming is not sufficiently prioritised in the Strategy. There should be a plan/platform for implementation of gender mainstreaming in the Commission. A systematic work on enforcing the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all policy fields is crucial in the preparation of the new strategy (SE). Gender mainstreaming does not appear to be established yet as a routine assessment tool outside of the employment and social policy area e.g. in EU environmental policy (IE). The Strategy insufficiently addresses gender mainstreaming in other areas of the Europa 2020 (e.g. innovation and research) (LT) The Strategy is not effectively linked to the EU 2020 strategy and does not address certain policy fields that are important for gender equality (IT).
2. Another weakness often cited is the **need of a more formal follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy** (e.g. in the form of a communication and political discussion on the Annual Report on equality between women and men) (FI). The annual report must get its formal status back so that it can serve as a basis for a dedicated debate on gender equality at the EPSCO-Council and as input for council conclusions to be adopted by the council. A political message is also essential if the Commission wants to present the report to the EP and to have a dialogue with them (SE). The Commission's Annual Reports on progress in gender equality have not been published as a stand-alo-

ne Commission's Communication since 2011 (DE). No systematic discussions of gender equality in the Council formations) (SI). Lack of a tool to bring systematic top-level political attention to the implementation of the Strategy and progress of the situation of women and men in the EU (EE).

3. **The need for objectives and indicators** is another issue mentioned by respondents. The effectiveness and efficiency of the Strategy are difficult to assess, in the absence of measurable objectives (IE). No specific monitoring system of the results achieved through the Strategy is in place (IT). How to measure progress when indicators are often absent (AT). There are no concrete goals and targets, which makes it difficult to assess progress and see whether results have been achieved (SE). There is not a clear connection in the annual reports of the Commission between the Strategy and the national results of MS policies on gender equality (NL). The lack of quantitative and qualitative targets in the main priorities areas and of a proper monitoring and control mechanism with specific "gender sensitive" indicators. The Strategy for equality between women and men should made coherent synergies with the EU 2020 and its governance framework (ES). Lack of measurable goals and steady indicators that should be built on the model of the "Barcelona objectives" (FR). There are no indicators to measure the key action points in the 2010-2015 strategy. Objectives too ambitious and vague (HR).
4. A few respondents say that the bureaucratic **terminology** in certain parts of the text of the Strategy is difficult to understand and probably "hostile" to certain citizens who are sceptical towards the EU (EL). Wording often too weak e.g. consider initiatives instead of launch initiatives (AT).
5. **Intersectionality** is not covered in much detail in the strategy. The needs of particular groups should be considered in every objective within the strategy, in the context of gender mainstreaming (MT). The question of multiple discrimination should be covered (CZ). More binding and concrete measures and better integration of an intersectional approach and taking into account the differences between groups of women and men, for example women with disabilities, older and younger women and women from ethnic minority background, without losing focus on gender (SI).
6. The Strategy should include **actions that can be carried out at a national level** to enhance the effectiveness of its implementation across the Member States and achieve stronger results (CZ).
7. It is important to promote gender equality as an issue concerning **both women and men** but looking at the strategy it still seems as if gender equality is only concerning promoting and empowering women (DK).
8. Insufficient programs and **funding lines** allocated by the European Commission for the implementation of activities in the field of equality between women and men, linked to the objectives of the European Strategy (RO).

Annex 3

Positions expressed by relevant stakeholders by priority areas

Priority area 1: equal economic independence

The general conceptualisation by different stakeholders is that across Europe there's still the **permanence of under-utilisation of female human capital**. According to the stakeholders Key area 1's objective seems still not assured. The Advisory Committee states "a significant under-utilisation of the EU's well educated female human capital resource", besides the European Council's and the Employment Committee's specific endorsement of the need to increase female labour market participation.

Referring to **strategy action 1.1** (Support the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy) according to EIGEs' opinion (2015) "Gender equality needs constant and substantive support in order to be a priority policy within the complex European agenda." According to Advisory Committee (2012) the EU2020 targets have played their role as policy anchors, while in Advisory Committee (2014) it is said that "Europe 2020"⁶⁰ offers an opportunity to review and re-launch the Union's commitment to the achievement of comprehensive gender equality policies. The achievement of the economic independence of women is closely linked to the key employment target of the Europe 2020 agenda. The European Parliament motion (2015) regrets "the fact that the Europe 2020 Strategy did not satisfactorily include the gender perspective, and therefore calls on the Commission and Council to ensure that gender equality is incorporated in all the programmes, actions and initiatives launched under that strategy and to introduce a specific pillar for equality between women and men within the strategy, to consider the objectives of the future strategy as an aspect of the European Semester, and to insert a gender perspective in the country-specific recommendations and the Annual Growth Survey".

Relating to strategy action 1.2 (Poverty, social exclusion and pension) the European Parliament states that the face of poverty in Europe continue to be disproportionately female, "and this includes particularly single mothers, women with disabilities, young women, old women, migrant women and ethnic minority women, all of whom are affected by poverty and social exclusion"; according to Forum on the future of gender equality in the European Union (2015) the Strategy addresses the poverty of women through actions promoting equal economic independence and tackling women's lower pension entitlements.

As for strategy action 1.3 (Promote gender equality in education and training) European Commission (2014a) report on equality between women and men mentions the **persistence of this segregation in education and occupations**, while

⁶⁰ European Commission COM (2010) 2020 final: Europe 2020 A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: March 2010.

according to the European Parliament motion (2015) “there are still educational institutions that practise gender segregation, and education materials often contain stereotypes that help to perpetuate the traditional separate roles assigned to girls and boys, which has a negative influence on their choices”.

Referring to **strategy action 1.4** (Promote gender equality in European Funds) much has been done: the European Commission has ensured its position as a horizontal principle in successive EU structural funding programmes. The Commission has funded initiatives at Member State and Institutional levels through Progress and Daphne. The European Commission has made EU PROGRESS funding available over a two year period to end 2015 to enable both MS and civil society to undertake a wide range of projects to advance women into decision-making roles, and this continues under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme (Advisory Committee (2014)).

Strategy action 1.5 (Promote female entrepreneurship and self-employment) is mentioned in the European Parliament motion (2015) which stresses the importance of support programmes for women entrepreneurs and for women in science and academia, and urges the EU to support such programmes in a more tangible manner.

In the area of **strategy action 1.6** (Reconciliation between work and private life) the Advisory Committee, reporting the results from a study promoted by DG Justice *Single Parents and Employment in Europe*⁶¹ underlines that much still has to be achieved: mothers continue to be much more likely than fathers to work part-time; working mothers continue to have much frequent interrupted careers for caring purposes; parental leave still remains a female tool; lone (single) mothers continue to have reduced work opportunities; women continue to spend significantly longer periods on domestic work than men. The European Parliament motion (2015) underlines “the failure to promote policies making for work-life balance, the insufficient promotion of flexible working hours, especially among men, and the low take-up rate of parental and paternity leave”. In addition specific concern is expressed by the Advisory Committee referring to the availability of services: “**The availability of affordable quality childcare to support working parents continues to remain a major issue** in many MS although a revision of the Barcelona targets to incorporate factors such as ages of compulsory schooling and the use of informal childcare arrangements merits consideration. (...) **Recent research shows no significant improvement**, which is disappointing particularly as the social partners actively fostered action in relation to the availability of parental leave”⁶². The Advisory Committee evidences, in particular in the Nordic countries, a behavioural change, particularly on the part of senior male politicians and other key role model concerning the taking of parental leave, with some impact on the responses of the wider workforce. According to ETUC in relation to equal economic independence, most unions point to the need for stronger action on reconciliation issues, quality employment and equal pay.

Within **strategy action 1.7** (Migration policies and integration of migrants) the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (2015) highlights the unequal and vulnerable position of women of minority and immigrant origin as regards their access to education and the labour market and calls on the Commission to propose

61 Short Statistical Report No. 3: European Commission: April 2014.

62 Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2014) Opinion on gender equality in the EU in the 21st century: remaining challenges and priorities, 27.11.2014.

in its new gender equality strategy clear measures against discrimination in the labour market based on gender and gender identity. At the same time the European Parliament motion (2015) stresses the importance of a gender-sensitive asylum and migration policy, the recognition of the threat of genital mutilation as a reason for asylum.

Priority area 2: equal pay for work of equal value

The main feeling emerging from stakeholders regards the enduring of gender pay gap: equal pay for work of equal value is still not adequately tackled. As Eurostat statistics⁶³ show in all Member States, there is still a significant gender pay gap (GPG). As reported by the Advisory Committee the equal pay principle is hindered by a lack of transparency in pay systems, a lack of legal certainty on the concept of work of legal value and by procedural obstacles, besides Recommendations issued by the European Commission on the GPG, addressed to all Member States and requiring them to facilitate greater wage transparency through specific measures in collaboration with economic entities, civil society, the social partners and the equality bodies.

European Commission's report on equality (2014a) recalls that "progress in closing the gender pay and pension gaps has been frustratingly slow" and that occupational segregation is still widespread and women tend to be concentrated in less well-paid sectors, but "Even in the same occupation and with the same education level, women tend to be paid less than their male counterparts". The European Parliament motion (2015) draws attention "once again to the fact there is still a gender pay gap that has hardly been reduced in recent years; stresses that the gender pay gap arises from insufficient participation of women in the labour market, vertical and horizontal segregation, and the fact that sectors where women are over-represented often have lower wages".

No comments on each strategy action has been found in the documents analysed, even though, for example, as part of the Strategy, the European Commission in 2011 established the European Equal Pay Day together with collateral initiatives such as 'Equality Pays Off' (strategy action 2.3 Institute a European Equal Pay Day)

Priority area 3: Equality in decision-making

Priority area 3 is the one where more progress, according to the stakeholders considered, has been reached. At the same time according to European Commission (2014a) while a few national parliaments and governments are about to reach gender parity, women still account for less than a third of ministers and members of parliaments in the vast majority of Member States. "Addressing this deficit plays an important role in improving democratic accountability and prosperity in Europe."

Referring to **strategy action 3.1** (Improve the gender balance in decision making)

⁶³ Source: Employment Statistics: Eurostat LFS; Gender Pay Gap: Progress on Equality between Women and Men 2013 : European Commission.

according to the Advisory Committee this area represents the most significant increase in women's representation in recent years, most noticeably in MS which have adopted legislative measures, even though in very few MS and very few sectors of activity have women yet achieved the critical mass of 30% recommended by the United Nations or the more ambitious EU goal of 40% , but 15 MS are still at or below 15%. A progress in this direction is clearly detectable thanks to the fact that this issue has been a clear priority of the European Commission and the EU for many years and the Commission has implemented a very useful on-line data collection system to identify progress in the achievement of the overall goal. The increase has probably been achieved in response to the Commission's initiative in this regard and due to political and regulatory pressure and which led to the draft resolution currently being examined at technical level at the Council of Ministers and in the European Parliament. The European Parliament motion (2015) points out that the biggest increase by far in the proportion of women on corporate boards has occurred in countries that have already adopted legislation on compulsory quotas, and that in Member States where no compulsory measures have been implemented companies are still a long way from achieving an acceptable gender balance.

Priority area 4: dignity, integrity and ending gender violence

The Council of the European Union (2014) considers that in recent years "the problem of violence against women and girls has gained more visibility. It is recognised that violence against women remains prevalent in the European Union and constitutes one of the main sources of gender inequalities of our time and a violation of human rights".

A consideration shared among stakeholders is that concerning the area of gender violence it is difficult to assess the progress as statistics remain highly difficult to be collected and interpreted. The Advisory Committee evidences that "these are frequently hidden and unreported crimes, which may not always lead to prosecutions or the accurate measurement of true numbers of victims. Qualitative surveys are the most usual methodology used." European Commission (2014a) describes in its Report on equality between women and men, 2014 that "The prevalence of gender-based violence is still alarmingly high. The EU worked to gather accurate and comparable European data on gender-based violence, as a basis for gauging the right policy responses. In cooperation with national statistical offices, Eurostat started to collect more detailed crime data recorded by the police and justice systems. A first EU-wide survey on women's experiences of various forms of violence has been carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)".

Even if an EU-wide strategy on combating violence against women still hasn't been adopted the Forum on the future of gender equality in the European Union (2015) mentions that "several EU Institutions have collaborated to work on several areas of violence against women: in the support to the elimination of female genital mutilation, to support the drafting of the Istanbul Convention, the first instrument in Europe to set legally binding standards to prevent violence against women and domestic violence, and its ratification in MS. The Commission is collaborating with partners to improve knowledge including the collection of comparable data across the EU. EIGE has produced research on VAW and in cooperation with Eurostat, it will also contribute to the future collection of data on violence. The European Commission funded awareness-raising campaigns in EU countries and NGOs and networks working to prevent violence against women and support its victims. In addition, the European Commission organises regular exchanges of best practices".

The European Parliament motion (2015) regrets that the strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 “does not specifically address disability, despite the fact that women with disabilities are often in a less favourable situation than men with disabilities and are more exposed to the risks of poverty and social exclusion; therefore calls on the Commission to address the needs of women with disabilities in order to ensure their increased participation in the labour market; in that sense also regrets that the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 does not also include an integrated perspective on gender or a separate chapter dedicated to disability policies with a special focus on gender”.

Priority area 5: promoting gender equality beyond the EU

The European Commission in its Report on equality between women and men (2014a) states that they have played a relevant role in promoting gender equality beyond the EU: “in its strategic framework and action plan on human rights and democracy in non-EU third countries, **the EU prioritised issues such as women’s political participation and economic empowerment**, initiatives against gender based violence and harmful traditional practices, and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security”. The Implementation of the EU plan of action on gender equality and women’s empowerment in development has led to significant progress since 2010: “The Commission had supported developing countries’ efforts to promote equal rights and improve the situation of women: ... gender mainstreaming was enhanced in 20 different policy sectors... Gender has been systematically integrated into the main humanitarian aid policy areas (e.g. protection, shelter, food assistance, health, water, sanitation and hygiene) and the gender-age marker (57) introduced in 2014 will further ensure gender- and age-sensitive programming in these areas. The Commission is currently supporting several projects aimed primarily at eliminating sexual and gender-based violence in various countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Syria”.

The relevance of the EU action is clearly noticeable also in specific political actions: according to the European Commission (2013a) “in 2012, DG Justice in cooperation with the EEAS and DG Development and Cooperation prepared an EU position paper for the 57th session of the CSW in 2013 on the Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. The CSW was able to arrive at a very good outcome reflecting the main EU priorities outlined in the position on this important topic.”

According to the Advisory Committee (2014) “The EU, including the Commission, continues to actively engage on gender equality issues at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and through funding of aid programmes. The European Union also works in close partnership with UN Women. (...) The EU has been an active player in the support of development for women in the 20 years since the Beijing Platform for Action was agreed (...)”

European Commission (2015c) report draws attention to the importance of promoting gender equality through political dialogue. A majority of EU delegations (66 out of 78, as compared with 57 in 2013) reported that they had raised gender equality at least once in the framework of political dialogue with partner countries.

Priority area 6: horizontal issues

The priority area on '**Horizontal issues**', particularly **gender mainstreaming**, is considered particularly relevant by the members of the HLG, as it can have an impact on other social, economic and political spheres, by ensuring that gender equality is safeguarded in the respective policies and programmes. Other '*Horizontal issues*', such as **gender stereotypes**, may impact the achievement of gender equality within the other priority areas. Traditional stereotypes can influence the behaviour and attitudes of women and men in education, labour market, decision-making positions, media, the uptake of family friendly measures, the family and society, thus affecting the use of time, access to resources and participation in all these spheres. Therefore, combating gender stereotypes can have a spillover effect on the achievement of gender equality within other priority areas of the strategy.

However the way the actions are specified is considered by some HLG experts sometimes unclear with many diverging themes included in this priority area. In particular **the objectives of gender mainstreaming could have been clearer**, especially in some of the core areas of the EU policies, such as economic policies and innovation policies.

