



## Commission unveils its Roadmap to strengthen women's rights

Brussels, 7 March 2025

Today, ahead of International Women's Day, on 8 March, the European Commission sets out its [Roadmap for Women's Rights](#), and presents the 2025 [Report on Gender Equality](#). The Roadmap drives the gender equality agenda forward and brings a political long-term vision to advance on women's rights.

The European Union is home to some of the most gender-equal societies in the world, setting the global benchmark. The Roadmap builds on the significant progress achieved under the [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#). In the past five years, the EU has made historic progress with rules on [pay transparency](#), [work-life balance](#) for equal care responsibilities, [gender balance on company boards](#), and on [combating violence against women](#).

With the Roadmap, the Commission is reaffirming and reinforcing its commitment to **empower women and girls and fully realise a gender-equal society** across Europe and the world. The Roadmap provides guidance for the future measures in the next Gender Equality Strategy.

President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"There is no reason why a woman should be paid less than a man. Or why she should have lower health standards or face violence, because of her gender. We know that societies where women and men are treated equally are better, fairer and more successful. So let us tap into the vast reservoir of talents and skills of everyone, men and women alike. Today's Roadmap shows our strong commitment to continue building a European Union of gender equality and women's rights."*

### A guiding compass towards women's rights

While the EU has adopted a number of decisive initiatives under the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, progress towards gender equality remains slow and unequal across areas and Member States, as highlighted in the 2025 Report on Gender Equality. One in three women in the EU have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Employment and pay gaps are narrowing only slowly in the EU, and violence against women, discriminatory norms and stereotypes persist. Women are overrepresented in lower paid positions and under-represented in decision-making roles.

The Roadmap aims to address structural discriminatory norms in our societies, in view of achieving:

- **Freedom from gender-based violence**, including through preventing and combatting all forms of violence against women and girls, such as sexual violence, including rape, based on lack of consent, and ensuring support and protection for victims of violence.
- **The highest standards of health**, through supporting and complementing health action by Member States on women's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in full respect of the Treaties, and promotion of gender-sensitive medical research, clinical trials, diagnostics and treatments.
- **Equal pay and economic empowerment**, such as by closing the gender pay gap and pension gap promoting financial literacy among women and girls and tackling the undervaluation of jobs done by women.
- **Work-life balance and care**, notably by promoting the equal sharing of care responsibilities between women and men, and promoting investments in long-term care sector to ensure quality care jobs.
- **Equal employment opportunities and adequate working conditions**, such as by eradicating the gender employment gap, eliminating sexual harassment in the world of work, and ensuring quality jobs and equal career prospects.

- **Quality and inclusive education**, for example through promoting a gender-balanced perspective at all levels of education, encouraging girls and women to engage in the STEM sectors, and encouraging boys and men to engage in the education, health and welfare sectors.
- **Political participation and equal representation**, including by promoting gender-balanced representation in all spheres and all levels of public and political life, ensuring women's safety in public life and combatting sexism.
- **Institutional mechanisms that deliver on women's rights**, notably by ensuring specialised institutional infrastructures for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and sustainable funding for gender equality policies and women's rights organisations.

The Commission calls on the European Parliament, the Council, Member States, and other institutions and stakeholders to unite around the Roadmap and put forward actions within the remit of their competences to turn this EU-wide commitment to women's rights into a reality.

## Background

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and a founding value enshrined in EU law since the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Today's adoption of the Roadmap comes on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the [Beijing declaration](#) and platform for action, where 189 countries, including all EU Member States, committed to advance women's empowerment and achieve gender equality globally.

This value is enshrined in President von der Leyen's [Political Guidelines](#), which committed to a new Gender Equality Strategy that will "*strengthen women's rights across the board, from the fight against gender-based violence to empowering women in politics and the labour market, across the EU, as well as across the EU institutions*".

Today, the Commission also published its 2025 Report on Gender Equality in the EU, providing an overview of the progress made in implementing the [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#). While the reports notes key progress in legislation in 2024 with the adoption of the first-ever Directive on [combating Violence against Women](#) the commitments made under the [Beijing declaration](#) are yet to be fully reached. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) 2024 [Gender Equality Index](#), which reveals the state of play of gender equality in the EU, out of 100, the EU achieved 71 points in 2024. Additionally, in November 2024, Eurostat, the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), and EIGE released an [EU gender-based violence survey](#) which revealed pervasive violence against women.

The Commission funds projects and organisations promoting gender equality and tackling gender-based violence through the [Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values](#) Programme. From 20 February 2025, the Commission opened for submissions a new [call for proposals](#) to finance projects that will prevent gender-based violence, protect and help victims and survivors, and support grassroots organisations active in the field. The deadline for submission of proposals is 7 May 2025.

## For More Information

[Roadmap for Women's Rights](#)

[Roadmap for Women's Rights – Principles for a gender-equal society](#)

[Annual Report on Gender Equality](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[Gender Equality Strategy Monitoring Portal](#)

IP/25/681

Quote(s):

*"There is no reason why a woman should be paid less than a man. Or why she should have lower health standards or face violence, because of her gender. We know that societies where women and men are treated equally are better, fairer and more successful. So let us tap into the vast reservoir of talents and skills of everyone, men and women alike. Today's Roadmap shows our strong commitment to continue building a European Union of gender equality and women's rights."*

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission - 07/03/2025

*"Women's rights are fundamental rights and central to our European values. The road to gender equality has never been a straight one, but we must keep pushing forward. This is not just a women's fight – it's everyone's responsibility. Advancing gender equality makes our societies, our economies and our democracies stronger. It's not just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do."*

Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness - 07/03/2025

*"Questioning gender equality is questioning progress. Gender equality is not up for debate — it should be as natural as the air we breathe. It is at the heart of our European way of life. This Roadmap for Women's Rights is our guiding light, our vision for a world where women and girls can lead, thrive and live up to their full potential, free from violence and discrimination."*

Hadja Lahbib, Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management - 07/03/2025

Press contacts:

[Eva HRNCIROVA](#) (+32 2 29 88433)

[Anna GRAY](#) (+32 2 29 80873)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)