



To:

Ms. Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European Commission

Ms. Helena Dalli,
Commissioner for Equality

Ms. Jutta Urpilainen
Commissioner for International Partnerships

Brussels, 01 June 2021,

Concerns: European Commission's commitments in the coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum

Your Excellencies,

As Members of the European Parliament committed to protect and promote women's rights, gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights, we welcome the European Commission's commitment to Gender Equality and its active contribution to the Generation Equality Forum.

The European Commission is one of the co-leaders of the Action coalition on Gender-based violence. As a result, it must show a strong leadership in proposing transformative commitments that will make a difference in women's and girls' lives and that will help reach the objectives laid down in the GEF Global Acceleration Plan. This is even more important since the international community has repeatedly deplored the continuous set-back on gender equality in many countries around the world, as well as the disastrous effect of the pandemic on existing gender inequities and on rising sexual and gender-based violence.

With its six action coalitions and its ambitious blueprints for 2026, the Generation Equality Forum aims at fuelling a powerful and lasting coalition for gender equality and against gender-based violence. We shall not waive this opportunity.

We therefore invite the European Commission to take the following policy, funding, advocacy and programmatic commitments, in the framework of the Gender-based violence Action coalition.

(1) On strengthening the European legislative framework on GBV, we urge the Commission to:

- Propose a **comprehensive Directive to combat all forms of GBV**, that would explicitly include: Violations of SRHR and more specifically sexual violence, reproductive coercion, gynecological and obstetrical violence and harmful practices; Prevention measures to catalyse a change in behaviours and combat sexism through comprehensive sexuality education; Recognition of SRH services as essential services for all, and specifically for survivors of GBV and guarantee their accessibility; Definition of sexual violence and rape as absence of consent and recommendations to EU Member States to change their national legislation accordingly.
- **Recommit to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention** without delay and encourage all EU Member States to ratify and comply with it;
- Submit, on the basis of Article 83(1) TFEU, a proposal for a Council decision including **gender-based violence as a new area of crime**.

(2) On scaling up implementation and financing of prevention strategies and affordable services for survivors of GBV, including in humanitarian settings, we urge the Commission to:

- Ensure **consistent and ambitious funding to gender equality, SRHR and the fight against GBV within the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**;

(3) On enhancing support to autonomous girl-led & women's rights organizations working to end gender-based violence, we urge the European Commission to:

- **Increase and secure long-term funding dedicated to prevent and combat GBV but also to promote Gender Equality in the EU through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme for 2021-2027**, including support for civil society organisations working in this area;
- **Fully include civil society organisations working on gender equality and/or against GBV in the relevant monitoring processes** such as the Gender Equality Strategy implementation reporting and the Gender Action Plan implementation reporting.

In the framework of the Action coalition on Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), we invite the European Commission to take the following commitments:

(1) On increasing delivery of comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in and out of school reaching 50 million more children, adolescents, and youth by 2026, we urge the Commission to:

- **Support politically the expansion of CSE in Europe and beyond** through recommendations to Member States and through political dialogues with partner countries to ensure access to scientifically accurate and comprehensive sexuality education for all primary and secondary school children in line with WHO standards;
- **Secure long-term funding to educative and prevention measures that combat sexism and challenge gender stereotypes in the EU**, including comprehensive sexuality education, through the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme for 2021-2027;
- **Allocate ambitious funding to comprehensive sexuality education in EU partner countries**, as part of the 20% target on Human development in the NDICI and the 10% political target put forward by the European Commission for education.

(2) On increasing the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of comprehensive abortion and contraception services for 50 million more adolescent girls and women by 2026, we urge the Commission to:

- **Support politically the removal of legal and practical barriers for access to SRH services, including safe and legal abortion, in all EU Member States** through recommendations to and exchange of best practices between Member States and through political dialogues with partner countries;
- Allocate **consistent and long-term funding to support Member States' actions to promote access to SRH services within the EU4Health Programme (2021-2027)**.
- **Consider SRHR as a priority in the programming of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI); Ensure consistent and ambitious funding to SRH services in the NDICI**, including to CSOs providing such services in EU partner countries and to the specific regional programme in Sub-Saharan Africa;
- Commit to **continue and increase financial support to the UNFPA Supplies Partnership** in the thematic component of NDICI;

(4) On increasing SRHR Decision-Making & Bodily Autonomy, we invite the European Commission to:

- **Support legal and policy changes to protect and promote bodily autonomy and SRHR** through political dialogues and the implementation of the Gender Action Plan in EU partner countries by 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories:

1. Hon. Sophie in't Veld, MEP (RE)
2. Hon. Olivier Chastel, MEP (RE)
3. Hon. Fred Matić, MEP (S&D)
4. Hon. Karen Melchior, MEP (RE)
5. Hon. Irène Tolleret, MEP (RE)
6. Hon. Hilde Vautmans, MEP (RE)
7. Hon. Samira Rafaela, MEP (RE)
8. Hon. Malin Björk, MEP (GUE/NGL)
9. Hon. Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D)
10. Hon. Łukasz Kohut, MEP (S&D)
11. MEP Sylwia Spurek, MEP (Greens/EFA)
12. Hon. Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, MEP (Greens/EFA)
13. Hon. Sylvie Guillaume, MEP (S&D)
14. Hon. Terry Reintke, MEP (Greens/EFA)
15. Hon. Robert Biedroń, MEP (S&D)
16. Hon. Heidi Hautala, MEP (Greens/EFA)
17. Hon. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, MEP (RE)
18. Hon. María Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (GUE/NL)
19. Hon. Milan Brglez, MEP (S&D)
20. Hon. Sirpa Pietikäinen, MEP (EPP)
21. Hon. Heléne Fritzon, MEP (S&D)
22. Hon. Marie Toussaint, MEP (Greens/EFA)