

Gender mainstreaming: A strategy to achieve equality between women and men

Guidelines and resources proposed by the European Women's Lobby

Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realising gender equality. It refers to the integration of a gender perspective into every stage of each intervention: preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programmes. The aim is to promote equality between women and men in all spheres of life.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that policy-making and legislative work is of higher quality and has a greater relevance for society, because it makes policies respond better to the needs of all citizens – women and men, girls and boys.



Some resources

Gender mainstreaming

EWL Beijing+20 Report 'From words to action':

<http://www.womenlobby.org/From-words-to-action-women-can-t-wait-20-more-years-to-enjoy-their-full-human?lang=en>

Gender Mainstreaming Platform of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): definition, tools and methods, good practices, data, country specific information...: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

UN Women (2015), 'Gender Mainstreaming': <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/gender-mainstreaming>

GenderCoP's European Standard on Gender Mainstreaming in the ESF (2014):

<http://www.gendercop.com/material/european-standard-on-gm-in-the-esf/>

SKL Jämställdhet (2014), 'Sustainable Gender Equality – a film about gender mainstreaming in practice':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udSjBbGwJEg>

European Parliament (2014), 'Gender Mainstreaming in Committees and Delegations of the European Parliament':

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes>

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Women in the European Parliament (political and administrative posts), March 2015:

http://www.rosadoc.be/digidocs/dd-000559_2015_Women_in_European_Parliament_EP.pdf

Gender budgeting

EIGE: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-and-methods/gender-budgeting>

Gender budgeting – An Overview by the EWL:

<http://www.womenlobby.org/Gender-Budgeting-An-Overview-by-the-EWL-2004>

Council of Europe (2009), 'Gender budgeting – Practical Implementation: Handbook':

https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/equality/03themes/gender-mainstreaming/CDEG%282008%2915_en.pdf

Gender disaggregated data

EIGE: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics>

Eurostat: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

World Bank: <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/gender/>

UN GenderStats: <http://genderstats.org/>

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation for women's rights and gender equality in Europe.

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Step-by-step guide to Gender Mainstreaming

“Putting on your gender glasses”

Gender mainstreaming is about incorporating a gender perspective into all policy areas, on all levels. There are underlying, legal obligations to do so in the European Union. Additionally, **gender mainstreaming means increasing democracy, justice and accountability for the EU** since more than 50% of the global population are women and they are therefore concerned with and affected by all policy areas. Not incorporating gender mainstreaming would mean developing policies that are unrepresentative and ultimately flawed. **The European Union can, through effective and comprehensive gender mainstreaming implementation, truly become a place by all citizens, for all citizens.**

1. Is the policy area gender-relevant?

If it is related to persons, affecting everyday lives of populations directly and/or indirectly, or if there are differences between men and women in the sector/area (concerning direct and/or indirect impact on rights, conditions, representation, resources, etc.) then it is gender-relevant.

2. Gather data and information to deeper understand the gender sensitivity

This can be done by locating gender disaggregated data, comparisons with other similar cases or areas and through inviting experts and/or other stakeholders.

3. Mapping the stakeholders

Based on findings from gender disaggregated data and experts, or through previous knowledge, analyse who are the ones that will be **affected by**, and **concerned with** the outcomes of the policy. Have in mind both direct and indirect effects. Then make sure that you take their expertise and perspectives into account. Attempt to also go to the grassroots, and hear from especially vulnerable groups, if relevant.

Examples of stakeholders:

gender advisors in your party groups, your committee secretariat, the corresponding DG; the European Women's Lobby with its member organisations; other NGOs with gender or other human rights expertise; grassroots organisations; private sector representatives; social partners representatives; think tank/policy analysts with gender expertise; academics, etc.

4. Gender impact assessment

Based on the previous steps, analyse if the planned policy will have a positive, zero or negative impact on gender equality or the goal of gender equality. Consider aspects such as participation, access to resources, vulnerability, stereotypes and assumptions and rights. Ask yourself the questions: “Who is benefitting from this policy? What kinds of assumptions are being made about people's behaviours and preferences?” If the impact is zero or negative, then there is a need to change the usual way of thinking and to change priorities and focus. The good alternative is often somewhere outside the box. At this stage it is also important to consider an intersectional approach – remembering that women are not a homogenous group.

5. Designing the policy

Make sure that the policy design is consistent with the gendered aspects of the phenomena. Based on your previous consultations and analyses of gendered impacts – define gender sensitive goals that correspond to this. The goals should be **transformative, transparent and inclusive**. Ensure that there are proper measures taken to reach these goals, and develop indicators for it to be monitored. The goals should also be **progressive but realistic, time-bound and measurable**.

6. Implementation

For a policy to have an effect, there need to be funds earmarked and set aside to reach the goals. Here, **gender budgeting** is an important part!

7. Monitoring and evaluation

Have a system in place for monitoring and measuring your target indicators. See if the wanted effects are realised. Through these results you have resources for establishing good practices and/or lessons for improvement. If the wanted effects are not realised, then either redesign policy and prioritisations or analyse what the reasons were for not reaching the goals and incorporate this learning into future policy development.

Getting people on board!

An Awareness Raising Kit

All MEPs have the responsibility towards gender equality through gender mainstreaming. As you may need to convince some of your colleagues of the importance of a gender mainstreaming initiative, here are some tips meant to help you in this area.

1. Prepare your statement

Consider what you have found in your preparations from the step-by-step guide and identify your most important messages. Try and make it short, concise and to the point so that it is easy to relate to, even for persons who are not knowledgeable in the area as you are.

2. Use both data and personal examples

Use sex disaggregated data to support your message, but combine this with “soft” facts. Remind your colleagues of the commitment of the EU in the area and speak of the impact the problem has on people’s everyday lives.

3. Give examples of good practices in gender mainstreaming

If applicable, find similar areas where a gender mainstreaming approach has been used. Bring forwards these examples to install a sense of it being reasonable and feasible to do, and that the results are important and relevant. This can strongly support your case.

4. Tell the scenario of what could happen if measures are not taken

Return to the personal examples and, perhaps using expert statements to support you in this, speak of what could or would happen if a gender sensitive approach is not included.

5. Elevate the double wins

Most often gender mainstreaming initiatives are not only positive in that they increase democracy and accountability in the EP. They are also economically beneficial, since they increase access to societal services and resources for all citizens, which also increases their ability to contribute to the European society.

Article 8 TFEU:

“Gender Mainstreaming is not a goal in itself but a strategy to achieve equality between women and men. It is used to integrate gender concerns into all policies, and programmes of the European Union institutions and Member States”.

6. Increase general knowledge of the topic

Invite committee members to trainings and events on gender equality and/or gender mainstreaming. Contact the European Women’s Lobby secretariat, member organisations and/or other NGOs and experts for help with such trainings. With more knowledge comes a stronger commitment and increased political will.

7. Get the media involved

A topic about gender equality that is reported on by the media is more likely to get response in the EP. Use this to your advantage and speak out in media about the importance of taking on a gender sensitive approach in the issue, which makes it more likely that your colleagues will follow your opinion.

8. Use your contacts

If you need advice, consultancy or other support for fulfilling your mandate, then turn to the European Women’s Lobby, its member organisations, your secretariat’s gender focal points and other gender experts to advice you on general and/or specific questions you may have. Where there is cooperation, there is strength!

Role of the members of the EP Network for Gender Mainstreaming in supporting Gender Mainstreaming in committee work (according to the FEMM Committee guidelines)

1) Promote gender-balanced groups and gender-neutral language

- promote equal representation of women and men in the composition of hearings, workshops and mission of committees;
- promote a gender-neutral language in meetings and documents;

2) Promote a gender equality perspective in daily work of the Committees

- follow and raise the attention on gender mainstreaming issues;
- establishing contacts with gender experts;
- support training on gender equality, gender mainstreaming and practices;
- raise the issue of gender equality with invited speakers as well as during mission visits;
- check that gender aspects are included in the scope of hearings;

3) Develop a gender mainstreaming strategy

- check whether there is a gender mainstreaming strategy or action plan in your committee or propose that one be adopted;
- if a gender mainstreaming strategy exists, support its implementation;

4) Gender mainstreaming in policy making and legislation

Data

- when using statistics and tables, always try to obtain gender disaggregated data, or at least be aware whether gender disaggregated data are not available;
- point out the lack of disaggregated data or indicators;

Relevance of gender

- when gender differences are identified, they should be highlighted and the policy recommendations could include measures to address the imbalances;
- check whether the gender implications of different actions or proposals have been considered;
- consider whether the policy proposal reinforces or maintains existing differences as regards participation of men and women, distribution of resources, benefits, tasks and responsibilities, discriminatory norms and values and structural direct or indirect discrimination;
- research the views of civil society organisations working for women's empowerment in the concerned policy fields;

Drafting

- define gender sensitive policy goals related to the specific sector and the steps to be taken to reach those goals;
- use the information about gender equality during the preparation of reports and opinions;
- invite rapporteurs and draftspersons to pay due attention to relevant gender issues in the preparation of reports and opinions;
- use data (statistics, studies, etc.) on women's issues and gender mainstreaming while preparing reports and opinions;
- draft and table amendments on gender equality or support gender mainstreaming amendments;
- check on relevant studies on gender issues in the concerned policy fields (possibility to request advice from FEMM Secretariat or Policy Department);
- consult external experts to identify knowledge gaps on gender issues so that future studies can be ordered;
- identify areas where an opinion or support from other committees or bodies is needed in order to carry out a more gender-balanced analysis or decision;

Gender budgeting

- consider that there is no budget allocation without gender dimension, therefore incorporate gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process;
- consider what financial conditions are necessary for an adequate gender-balanced implementation of the positions/decisions taken;
- analyse the distribution of budget resources in each of the policy areas from the point of view of equality between men and women;

5) Monitoring and evaluation

- participate actively in the network of Members responsible for gender mainstreaming coordinated by FEMM Committee;
- contribute actively to the questionnaires sent by FEMM Secretariat in view of the preparation of the report on gender mainstreaming drafted every two years;
- participate in training, seminars and conferences on gender and women's issue whenever possible;
- check whether the adopted strategy brought about the desired result.

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