



**Council Conclusions on the 2013 Report on the Implementation of the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015**

1. Recalling its Conclusions on “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development Cooperation<sup>1</sup>,” the Council reaffirms its strong commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women as a fundamental human right and as a core value of the EU and a basic principle of its development policy. It underlines that the promotion of gender equality, women’s empowerment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls are instrumental to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and key to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In addition, the Council emphasises the need to adopt an ambitious approach to gender equality, women’s empowerment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls in the post-2015 framework. The Council also reiterates the importance of full implementation of the EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them.<sup>2</sup>
2. The Council welcomes the third report<sup>3</sup> on the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (GAP), covering the period from July 2012 to June 2013. The Council welcomes the progress being made in implementing the GAP, particularly the improvement of coordination between the EU and its Member States, the use of sex-disaggregated indicators in an increasing number of sectors, the wider use of Gender Country Profiles which assist in the identification and design of programmes and projects, as well as regular dialogue with civil society. It also welcomes the strong commitment of the EU and its Member States to including and promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in global negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 9561/07

<sup>2</sup> Doc. 16173/08

<sup>3</sup> Doc. 17432/13

3. The Council nonetheless expresses concern with the main finding of the report that the pace of progress in implementing the GAP is, as stated, extremely slow. In particular, most projects lag behind in achieving a satisfactory OECD/DAC gender marker score and the gender-sensitivity aspects of projects are often neglected. Moreover, there is room for improvement with respect to the allocation of gender-focused aid, gender-related training and regular and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects. In light of the above, and taking into account the report's recommendations, the Council reiterates that the implementation of the GAP is a shared responsibility of the EU and its Member States and calls on all concerned to demonstrate leadership and deliver on their commitments to implement and report on the GAP.
4. The Council notes that close cooperation between the Commission, the European External Action Service and Member States is necessary to better integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in EU development cooperation. Gender equality, women's empowerment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls should be at the heart of the EU's rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. Gender issues should be systematically mainstreamed in the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all EU development policies and programmes, in the context of the current external financing instruments and the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund, as well as in the joint programming process. EU Delegations and Member States' Representations have a key role in ensuring that issues related to gender equality, women's empowerment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls are regularly included in political dialogue with all partner countries. With respect to reporting on gender in the context of political dialogue, the Council notes the key relevance of Human Rights Country Strategies.

5. The Council notes that gender mainstreaming throughout EU development cooperation and assistance, should be complemented by specific actions targeted at protecting the rights of women and girls, preventing violence against them and promoting their political, economic and social empowerment, including through addressing discriminatory social norms and combating gender stereotypes. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of their review conferences and in this context sexual and reproductive health and rights.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the Council stresses the need for continued support for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and all related Resolutions on women, peace and security.
6. The Council notes that the EU and its Member States can play a key role in supporting international initiatives which promote gender equality, women's empowerment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and calls for continued cooperation and coordination with UN bodies, notably UN Women, as well as with other relevant international fora and actors. Furthermore, the Council stresses the importance of further promoting and implementing the Busan Joint Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development.

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<sup>4</sup> Docs. 11559/13, 11656/13

7. The Council looks forward to both the mid-term evaluation on gender mainstreaming in EU development cooperation and the fourth annual report on the implementation of the GAP in 2014. The Council also looks forward to receiving regular updates from the Commission on progress made in the implementation of the GAP with respect to both geographic and thematic programming.
  8. The Council calls upon the EU and its Member States to develop an ambitious and robust successor to the current GAP, focused on results and taking into account the post-2015 agenda. The new GAP, covering the period from 2016 to 2020, should build on the progress of the current GAP, apply lessons learned and address remaining shortfalls and challenges. The Council calls upon the Commission and the EEAS in collaboration with Member States to set up a Taskforce to prepare Terms of Reference and define objectives, indicators and reporting format for the new GAP.
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