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PART 1/5

**JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT 2018**

**EU Gender Action Plan II**

**Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and  
Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report monitors progress achieved in the implementation of the European Union's Gender Action Plan II, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020' (GAP II) during 2018, the third year of its implementation.

It presents progress achieved to date, by means of a comprehensive set of actions taken by the European Commission, the European External Action Services (EEAS), by EU Delegations and by EU Member States, while underlining the remaining challenges still to be addressed to meet the GAP II's objectives. The implementation of the GAP II contributes to the implementation of the EU policy framework on gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment. It also contributes to accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In numerical terms, 2018 was another year of constant progression towards the GAP II's target of ensuring that **85 % of all new programmes will be marked 'G1' or 'G2'** by 2020, using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) gender equality policy marker.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the **neighbourhood and enlargement** area, as well as **international cooperation and development**, greater progress was observed in 2018 compared to the previous year.<sup>2</sup> The data on the same target for the **EU Member States** remained static.<sup>3</sup>

The **pace of progression, however, has been slower**. For instance, the increase in percentage terms towards the 85 % target for international cooperation and development was roughly 10 % between 2015 and 2016, 7 % between 2016 and 2017, and 3 % between 2017 and 2018. This suggests that the full potential of gender mainstreaming needs to be exploited throughout the EU external action programmes

**Despite the progress observed, at the current pace, the 85 % target will be difficult to achieve by 2020.** More focused and impactful efforts are needed by all implementing actors over the remaining two years of the GAP II.

In terms of the budget for new initiatives that include a gender perspective, the European Commission committed **EUR 15 billion** worth of development funding in a **gender-sensitive manner** in 2018. **Of this, funding targeted specifically to gender equality and women's empowerment amounted to EUR 600 million.**

Overall in 2018, the **EU integrated a gender dimension in all its policies and actions**, including in **political and policy dialogues and in international fora**.

During the course of the year, the EU continued to include sessions dedicated to boosting gender equality and empowering girls and women in all **human rights dialogues**. The implications of issues such as good governance and justice, decent work, trafficking and social protection for gender equality were also regularly addressed. Moreover, the implementation of the women, peace

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<sup>1</sup> The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) gender equality policy marker (known as the 'Gender marker') is a qualitative statistical tool to record aid activities that target gender equality as a policy objective. It is based on a three-point scoring system: An intervention is marked 'G2' or '**principal**' if gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme. Interventions are marked 'G1' or '**significant**' when gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme; Intervention are marked 'G0' or '**not targeted**' when the project/programme has been screened against the gender marker but has not been found to target gender equality. For more information see: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm>

<sup>2</sup> In terms of neighbourhood and enlargement negotiations policy, 55.05 % of new actions in 2018 were marked 'G1' or 'G2' compared to 43.13 % in 2017 and 46.01 % in 2016. The figures for international cooperation and development were 68.35 % in 2018, compared to 65.9 % in 2017, 58.8 % in 2016 and 51.6 % in 2015.

<sup>3</sup> The proportion of new programmes by EU Member States which were marked 'G1' or 'G2' totalled 50.51 % in 2018, compared to 50.1 % in 2017 and 43.75 % in 2016.

and security agenda featured as a standing item of the multilateral agenda, as well as political and/or human rights dialogues and sub-committees with partner countries.

The EU was increasingly active in **multilateral fora** in 2018. The annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women, quarterly sessions of United Nations Human Rights Council and the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee were among the key policy-making UN fora where the EU's policy commitments to gender equality were delivered on. There was evidence of greater visibility accorded to gender equality issues by EU actors<sup>4</sup> during **regional and international instances** such as the UN, NATO and the G7 Summit, as well as national events, such as those linked to International Women's Day.

A notable achievement was the **Council's adoption of conclusions on women, peace and security (WPS)** in December 2018. The conclusions welcomed the EU's strategic approach to women, peace and security<sup>5</sup>, emphasised the WPS agenda's complementarities and synergies with the GAP II, and established gender equality and women's empowerment as critical to peace and security.

Progress has continued on the implementation of the **EU-UN Spotlight Initiative** to eliminate violence against women and girls. As part of this EUR 500 million partnership, EUR 270 million was committed for programmes in Africa and Latin America in 2018. Planning of activities also advanced well.

As part of its broader efforts to end gender-based violence, the European Commission also supported the work of the two 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege.

Another way in which the EU supported efforts to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence was by leading the global initiative **Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies** from June 2017 until December 2018. During its leadership, the EU welcomed 18 new partners, piloted the initiative in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and contributed to the implementation of the Call to Action Road Map 2016-2020, among other initiatives. During 2017-2018, the EU allocated approximately **EUR 62 million** to prevent and respond to sexual- and gender-based violence from its humanitarian budget.

With regard to women's access to finance, specific attention was accorded to the **NASIRA Guarantee**. In addition to creating and supporting up to 800,000 jobs, NASIRA will benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on internally displaced persons, refugees, women returnees and young people. In Arabic, 'nasira' is the feminine form of 'the helper' – reflecting the initiative's intention to serve as a bridge between commercial investors, development finance institutions, private financial intermediaries and perceived high-risk end borrowers.

Globally, the data collected reveals an **increase in the number of external relations programmes** related to all of the GAP II's thematic priorities and objectives in 2018 compared to 2017.

There is a strong **correlation between actions implemented on the GAP II's thematic priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals**. For example:

- 1,017 reported actions on thematic priority B, 'Physical and Psychological Integrity', contributed to advancing SDG 1 ('No Poverty'), SDG 2 ('Zero Hunger'), SDG 3 ('Good Health and Well-being'), SDG 5 ('Gender Equality'), SDG 6 ('Clean Water and Sanitation') and SDG 16 ('Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions');

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<sup>4</sup> EU actors include EU institutions at the headquarters level and in partner countries. Unless they are mentioned separately, the term 'EU actors' may also be used to refer to both EU institutions and EU Member States.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf>

- 1,580 reported actions focusing on thematic priority C, ‘Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment’, contributed to advancing , SDG 1, SDG 3, SDG 4 (‘Quality Education’), SDG 5, SDG 6, SDG 7 (‘Affordable and Clean Energy’), SDG 8 (‘Decent Work and Economic Growth’) and SDG 9 (‘Industry, Infrastructure and Innovation’); and
- 964 reported actions on thematic priority D, ‘Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation’, contributed to advancing SDGs 5 and SDG 16.

In 2018, the greatest proportion of funding was allocated for actions under thematic priority C, ‘**Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**’. This reflects a continuation of trends observed in previous years, with a 14 % increase in funding for this priority compared to 2017.

In absolute terms, the **greatest number of reported actions** concerned the following GAP II objectives:

- making **financial services** more accessible to women (objective 15);
- encouraging and consolidating the **participation of women in policy and governance** processes at all levels (objective 17); and
- combatting **violence against women and girls** (objective 7).

Overall, the **smallest number of reported actions** were related to **protection in crisis** situations (objective 9) and **combatting the trafficking of women and girls** for all forms of exploitation (objective 8). A slight shift of reported actions to larger global and regional programmes in the domain of trafficking was observed.

Compared to 2017, the greatest relative increase in reported actions (+ 60 %) concerned gender-sensitive **decision-making on climate-related and environmental** issues (objective 20). The largest relative decrease (-29 %) concerned reported actions related to healthy nutrition levels (objective 12).

Finally, following a steep increase in funding during the previous reporting period on challenging **discriminatory social norms and stereotypes** (objective 19), **18 % fewer actions** were reported in 2018 on such vital efforts that contribute to transforming societies and curbing discrimination against women and girls.

The number of reported actions in **support of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)** (objective 8) decreased in 2018 compared to the previous year. This may be due to the fact that a large number of actions addressing SRHR were initiated in 2017. However, levels of funding were sustained in 2018 through several streams, including Commission services and EU Member States. Initiatives such as ‘SheDecides’ continued to grow throughout the year, receiving increasing support from EU Member States.

The elimination of violence against women and girls was a key priority **for the European Commission services**, corresponding to the highest number of reported actions.

**EU funding continued to reach women and girls around the world in 2018**, including in humanitarian crisis situations, affording much needed services for survivors of violence. In tandem, funding was used to strengthen knowledge and capacities, alongside institutional and legal frameworks for sustainable solutions and the prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.

During 2018, there was a clear focus on actions seeking to tackle issues related to **migration**, including, for example, the rights of migrant workers and support for economic opportunities in

partner countries. In addition, **environment and sustainable energy** initiatives featured prominently, as did actions seeking to foster intercultural dialogue. The EU's contributions to large-scale global programmes represented a significant component of international cooperation and development support.

Disaggregating data at the regional level, as well as by actor, reveals more details and variations in terms of which objective and thematic priorities were the focus of actions in 2018. This information is set out in the body of this report.

In terms of actions by **EU Member States**, by far the greatest number of reported actions concerned thematic priority C on 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', followed by priorities B, 'Physical and Psychological Integrity, and D, 'Political and Civil Rights'. However, many reported actions covered more than one priority and several objectives of the GAP II.

**EU Member States** reported that their **centrally-managed reported actions** most frequently addressed:

- ensuring access to decent work for women of all ages (objective 14);
- combatting violence against women and girls (objective 7); and
- making financial services more accessible to women (objective 15).

The smallest number of reported actions by EU Member States concerned **combating trafficking for exploitation** (objective 8). This was also the only objective on which the number of reported actions decreased compared to 2017 (44 % fewer reported actions).

Compared to 2017, the sharpest relative **increase** in EU Member States' support centred on championing women's equal rights to participate in and influence **decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues** (objective 20), ensuring **access to and control over clean water** (objective 16) and promoting **healthy nutrition levels** (objective 12).

In 2018, the **EU institutional culture shift gradually continued to improve**. EU Delegations and many EU Member States **across geographical regions** reported improvements in reaching the minimum standards set by the GAP II for initiating the institutional culture shift needed to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in their daily work. However, **some challenges remain in particularly difficult areas for gender mainstreaming**, such as trade, infrastructure-related investments, private sector investments, security-related initiatives and climate change-related actions.

While formal EU **burden-sharing** arrangements on the GAP II were available in a number of countries, with EU Delegations and EU Member States leading on their priority sectors, informal arrangements were in place in most countries. Overall, **donor coordination was productive**. Burden-sharing agreements covered the GAP II's implementation, as well as underscoring progress on **joint initiatives, joint programming** and project development. Sharing information, analysis and **good practice examples** were emphasised, alongside eliminating duplication, optimising resources and coordinating joint policy positions.

**Senior gender champions** were present in most countries, often at the Ambassadorial level and usually rotating between EU Member States' and EU Delegations' Heads of Mission.

In conclusion, evidence in 2018 affirms that the implementation of the **GAP II is playing a key role in streamlining and leveraging resources, as well as strengthening the voice of the EU** in support of gender equality and women's empowerment. While much has been achieved thus far, much still remains to be done.

In the next year, it will be vital to step up progress to achieve the target of ensuring that 85 % of all new programmes focus on gender equality and women's empowerment as a significant or principal objective, hand in hand with contributing to the attainment of relevant SDGs.

Work should focus on continued efforts to:

- reach the GAP II's 85 % target;
- improve the quality of gender mainstreaming;
- develop capabilities and capacities, while advancing the use of gender mainstreamed procedures through learning and training;
- improve the availability of data, results and indicators; and
- improve collaborative work with civil society and other key partners.



# ACRONYMS

CRS	Creditor reporting system of the OECD
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSO	Civil society organisation
CSO-LA	Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities Thematic Programme (CSO-LA) of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) 2014-2020
EAMR	External Assistance Management Report
EDF	European Development Fund
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights
EOM	Electoral Observation Missions
ESDC	European Security and Defence College
EUPOL COPPS	EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support
EU	European Union
EU Member States	European Union Member States
EU RF	European Union Results Framework
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FP	Family planning
GAP	EU Gender Action Plan 2010-2015
GAP II	Second Gender Action Plan for EU external relations 2016-2020
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GFP	Gender focal person
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
G-marker	Gender equality policy marker of the OECD DAC
HoC	Head of EU Delegation cooperation section
HoD	Head of EU Delegation
HoM	Head of Mission (EU Member States' and EU Ambassadors in partner countries)
HRD	Human Rights' Defender
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace

MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MNCH	Maternal, newborn and child health
NGEM	National gender equality mechanism
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
ODA	Official development assistance
PAR	Public administration reform
PAG	Principal Advisor on Gender in the European External Action Service
PFM	Public finance management
PPCM	Programme and project cycle management
ROM	Results-oriented monitoring
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SRHR/FP	Sexual and reproductive health and rights/Family planning
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WO	Women's organisation
WPS	Women, peace and security

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The **European Union Strategic Engagement on Gender Equality** (2015-2019) and the **EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy** (2016) reaffirm the central importance which the EU attaches to gender equality, as a fundamental value enshrined in the EU treaties, a key political objective and a recognised driver of sustainable development and economic growth.

The EU remains strongly committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights. This includes the full and effective implementation of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, CEDAW's Optional Protocol on women's rights, and the **Beijing Platform for Action**, the **International Conference on Population and Development** and the outcomes of their review conferences, as well as United Nations Security Council (UNSC) **Resolution 1325** and its follow-up resolutions.

The **New European Consensus on Development**, agreed in May 2017, provides a renewed common approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment throughout EU development policy. Its commitments apply to the work of EU institutions and EU Member States alike. Anchored to the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the consensus reaffirms gender equality and women's empowerment as vital for achieving sustainable development, cutting across the entire 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while underlining the need to mainstream gender perspectives in all actions.

The European Union Gender Action Plan II, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020', (**GAP II**) translates the EU's policy and political commitments to gender equality<sup>6</sup> into a set of concrete objectives. Advancing these objectives is necessary for achieving results for girls and women. The GAP II also promotes more efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of EU activities in this area. The GAP II's implementation is mandatory for all EU institutions and EU Member States, and contributes to the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.<sup>7</sup>

The GAP II also contributes to the achievement of all **17 SDGs**, specifically delivering on SDG 5 ('Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls') and SDG 16 ('Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'), as well as several others. More broadly, an end to poverty (SDG 1) can only be achieved if inequalities, in all their different forms, are ended. Across the world, sex- and gender-based inequalities make and keep women poor, depriving them of the full enjoyment of their human rights and curtailing their full potential in the both public and private spheres.

This report monitors progress on the implementation of the GAP II in 2018, the third year of its implementation. It examines actions taken by EU Delegations, the European Commission, the External Action Service (EEAS) and by EU Member States. **The analysis is based on actions reported by EU actors. These represent a selection of actions, rather than a comprehensive account of all of the actions carried out by all EU actors in 2018. The selected and reported actions are those which are considered representative of EU actors' work in implementing the**

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<sup>6</sup> These include the Council conclusions on 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Cooperation', doc. 9561/07, 15 May 2007, the 'EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015' (SWD, SEC(2010) 265 final), the Council conclusions on the 'Millennium Development Goals for the United Nations High Level Plenary Meeting in New York and Beyond', 14 June 2010, the Council conclusions on the '2013 Report on the Implementation of the EU GAP', doc. 9360/14, 19 May 2014, and the Council conclusions on 'Gender in Development', doc. 9241/15, 26 May 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019), "Keeping human rights at the heart of the EU agenda" (JOIN(2015) 16 final), 28 April 2015.

**GAP II.** While highlighting progress, the report also underlines what remains to be done to achieve the GAP II's objectives and, consequently, contribute to the SDGs.

The report is structured in four parts:

This first introductory section situates the report in the broader context of the GAP II and the EU's commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. **Part 2** analyses the progress made in 2018 on the GAP II's cross-cutting, horizontal '**Institutional Culture Shift**' priority, which comprises seven objectives and 47 indicators. It begins with a global introduction of key issues, followed by a section-by-section analysis of the progress achieved by different EU actors. Section 2.1 looks at the EU's work in partner countries, combining inputs from reports submitted by EU Delegations and EU Member States' agencies or embassies. Section 2.2 reflects on the work done by the European External Action Service. Section 2.3 section focuses on efforts by Commission services in charge of external relations at the headquarter level, divided into sub-sections for each policy area and the services responsible for them. Section 2.4 examines actions reported by EU Member States at the capital level.

**Part 3** analyses the progress made in 2018 on the GAP II's three **thematic priorities**:

- thematic Priority B, 'Physical and Psychological Integrity', encompassing four objectives and 23 indicators;
- thematic Priority C, 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment', including six objectives and 45 indicators; and
- thematic Priority D, 'Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation', comprising four objectives and 15 indicators.

Following a global introduction of key issues, Part 3's sections focus on each thematic priority in turn, each divided by EU actors: Commission services, EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries, and EU Member States at the capital level.

**Part 4** presents **conclusions and** proposes **ways forward**, as suggested by the analysis of how to consolidate and further the progress recorded in 2018, two years away from the end of the GAP II's implementation period.

Finally, six **annexes** outline the methodology used, and provide details to support the information presented in Parts 2 and 3 of the report. The annexes also present figures on the EU's official development assistance, a review of the EU support for the sexual and reproductive health and rights, and a summary table of promising examples of the GAP II's implementation during 2018.

## Box 1: Full list of GAP II objectives

### Horizontal priority and objectives

#### A. Institutional Culture Shift in European Union External Relations

1. Increased **coherence and coordination** amongst EU institutions and with Member States.
2. Dedicated **leadership** on gender equality and girls and women's empowerment established in EU institutions and Member States.
3. Sufficient **resources** allocated by EU institutions and Member States to deliver on EU gender policy commitments.
4. Robust **gender evidence** used to inform all EU external spending, programming and policymaking.
5. **Results** for women and girls measured and resources allocated to systematically track progress.
6. **Partnerships** fostered between EU and stakeholders to build national capacity for gender equality.

### Thematic priorities and objectives

#### B. Thematic priority: Physical and Psychological Integrity

7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and private sphere.
8. Trafficking of girls and women for all forms of exploitation eliminated.
9. Protection for all women and men of all ages from sexual and gender based violence in crisis situations through EU supported operations.
10. Equal access to quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for girls and women.
11. Promoted, protected and fulfilled right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.
12. Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle.

#### C. Thematic priority: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment.

13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.
14. Access to decent work for women of all ages.
15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship.
16. Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women.

#### D. Thematic priority: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation

17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.
18. Women's organisations and other CSOs and Human Rights Defenders working for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and rights freely able to work and protected by law.
19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.
20. Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues.

## 2. PROGRESS ON THE GAP II'S INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SHIFT PRIORITY

The GAP II introduced the **cross-cutting priority** of evoking **an institutional culture shift by EU Institutions and EU Member States** in addressing gender equality. Progress on this priority is measured against five **minimum standards of performance**.<sup>8</sup>

In 2018, EU Delegations and many EU Member States across all geographical regions reported **some improvement in reaching the GAP II's five minimum standards** for initiating the institutional cultural shift needed to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in their daily work. While significant progress has been made, **far more progress is still needed** to implement the EU's gender equality policy in external relations and attain these five minimum performance standards.

The **standard complied with least often** is the need for a justification when an action scores '0' using the gender equality marker ('G0') of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Only some EU Delegations applied this standard correctly across all new actions, according a score of 'G0' only to those actions which were assessed as 'not relevant' for advancing gender equality.

Although regional variations exist, the overall **use of gender analysis** to inform project design and formulation has increased year-on-year since 2016. Many EU Delegations in 2018 reported the value of the mandatory GAP II gender analysis, alongside sector-specific analysis. The 2017-2018 reports indicate an **average increase of 25 %** in the use of gender analysis to inform new initiatives, except in Asia and the Pacific region, where the ratio decreased by an average of 15 % in 2018 compared to 2017. For **EU Member States**, sector- or country-based gender analysis was part of the initial context analysis that must inform the design of any new development programme.

Overall, the use of **sex-disaggregated data** has improved. However, it remained unchanged in the Caribbean and decreased among EU Delegations to the Gulf States, those in the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement region, and those in East and Southern Africa.

Moreover, a decline in compliance with the standard of **selecting and reporting on GAP II objectives** was apparent in Central America, Central and Western Africa, and Asia and the Pacific. This may be due to a lack of communication between gender focal persons and the staff members responsible for compiling External Assistance Management Reports (EAMR), which were used to collect data for this annual report. As a result, this may have led to the underreporting of actions that meet the GAP II's objectives.

The availability of **gender expertise improved** in 2018, or remained at the same level as in 2017, in all regions with the exception of the Gulf States, where it decreased considerably. **The increased use of gender expertise** strengthened EU actions and ensured more comprehensive contributions to the GAP II's objectives. The **network of gender focal persons** grew in 2018. Engagement also increased with **national gender equality mechanisms, women's civil society organisations and academic institutions**, informing policy, political dialogue and action formulation in many instances.

**EU Member States' contribution to the GAP II** is evident through the **consistent implementation** of the EU's gender equality policy across their international relations and

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<sup>8</sup> The five minimum standards are: a justification whenever an action scores '0' using the OECD DAC gender equality marker ('G0'), thereby indicating that an action has no discernible gender dimension; a gender analysis is done for all priority sectors; sex-disaggregated data is used throughout the project and programme cycle and programming; gender expertise is available and used in a timely manner in the programme cycle and programming; and GAP II objectives are selected to be reported on.

cooperation activities. At the partner country level, Member States' progress was reported together with that of EU Delegations. At the capital level, EU Member States reported on a wide range of good practices and measures that aim to correct weaknesses in the GAP II's implementation. For example, external gender expertise was contracted for strategic and ad hoc issues, and specialised task forces and working groups were created on gender equality and women's empowerment. Other examples include the application of the OECD DAC gender marker at the budgetary approval stage, the **use of gender-sensitive corporate results frameworks** and the increased collection of **sex-disaggregated data**.

For EU Member States' in partner countries, the performance standards **met least frequently**, on average, were undertaking **a gender analysis for priority sectors** (37 % of those who submitted a report responded confirmed that such analyses were undertaken) **and the selection of GAP II objectives** (44 % of those who submitted a report affirmed that they had selected relevant objectives). Member States met the other three performance criteria, on average, in 50 % of cases.

A detailed discussion of the work done by EU actors in 2018 is included in Annex 2.

## 2.1 EU Delegations and Member States in partner countries

For this reporting exercise, reports were submitted by 133 EU Delegations and by 20 EU Member States<sup>9</sup> present across 106 countries.

The table below summarises the **EU Delegations compliance** with the GAP II's five minimum performance standards across all regions, indicating the variations revealed by the analysis of data from 2017 and 2018. The data used for this assessment derives from the External Action Management Reports mentioned above. Specifically, the table refers to the number of EU Delegations which complied with the minimum performance standards, out of the total number of EU Delegations in each respective region.

In terms of results for the first performance standard, on justifications for 'G0' scores for actions using the gender equality marker, it should be noted that there were instances in which no action was marked 'G0' and, therefore, no justification was required.

**Table 1: EU Delegations' compliance with the GAP II's five minimum performance standards across regions, Institutional Culture Shift, 2018**

2018	East and Southern Africa	Central and Western Africa	Latin America	Central America	Caribbean	Asia and the Pacific	Central Asia	Gulf States	Southern Neighbourhood	Eastern Neighbourhood	Enlargement Negotiations
Gender marker 0 ('G0') is always justified	0 %	30 %	57 %	40 %	50 %	6 %	0 %	100 %	50 %	16 %	42 %

<sup>9</sup> The embassies or bilateral agencies of the following Member States present in partner countries submitted reports: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

A gender analysis is done for all priority sectors	86 %	91 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	94 %	75 %	100 %	90 %	100 %	71 %
Sex-disaggregated data used throughout the project and programme cycle	55 %	83 %	86 %	80 %	83 %	65 %	100 %	100 %	70 %	67 %	71 %
Gender expertise is available and used in a timely manner in the programme cycle	82 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	80 %	100 %	85 %
GAP II (SWD) objectives are selected and reported on	86 %	78 %	86 %	60 %	67 %	88 %	100 %	100 %	90 %	83 %	71 %

The availability of gender analysis in priority sectors improved in 2018, although it experienced a slight decrease in Asia and the Pacific, and a greater decrease in Central Asia, compared to the assessment in 2017. The decrease in Asia and the Pacific is due to one delegation not having provided clear indication on the existence of gender analysis for the priority sectors or a gender action plan. The previous year, information on an upcoming gender analysis as well as use of existing information from reliable sources was provided as a justification for gender analysis. The decrease in Central Asia (-25%) is because out of the four Delegations in the sub-region one has not provided clear indications of the existence of gender analysis; a regional one does exist providing an overall assessment for the sub-region.

While this trend appears surprising, it is possible that the national selection of objectives was reviewed or modified in 2018, or that information on gender equality was not reported in External Assistance Management Reports, which were used to collect data for this annual report.

In terms of the objectives of the GAP II's cross-cutting 'Institutional Culture Shift' horizontal priority, there was clear evidence of enhanced coherence and coordination among EU institutions, as well as with EU Member States in 2018. Political and policy dialogues that considered gender equality and human rights were held in most countries, particularly focusing on violence against women and girls. Furthermore, dialogues also addressed the gender dimensions of other issues, such as governance and justice, decent work, trafficking and social protection. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) was the topic most discussed by EU Member States in the Americas. In Asia and the Pacific, EU actors addressed gender equality in the transportation, infrastructure and communications sectors more often in 2018 than in 2017. In the Southern Neighbourhood and Eastern Neighbourhood regions, the most commonly discussed topic was gender the framework of human rights. In Enlargement Negotiation countries, violence against women and girls was most often discussed. Overall in the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region and in Russia, there was an increase in dialogue on gender-responsive budgeting, on women, peace and security, and on the environment, climate change, resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Both formal and informal dialogues enabled EU actors to raise issues which are particularly sensitive in certain countries, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM) and teenage pregnancy. Pregnant schoolgirls' right to attend school was raised by the EU Delegation and EU Member States in Mozambique. They successfully pleaded for the repeal of decree 39/2003, which states that pregnant girls should be transferred to evening courses to avoid setting a 'bad example'.

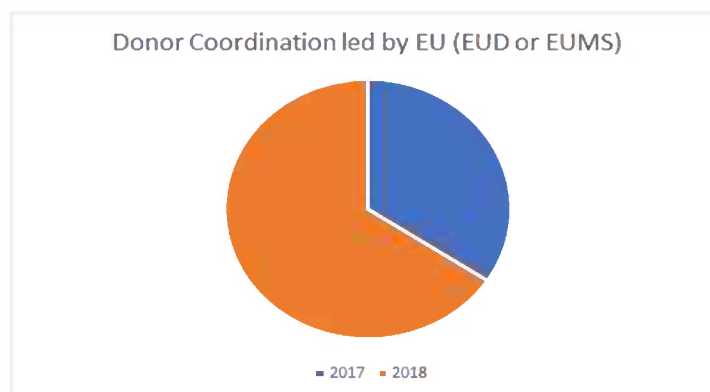


In December 2018, the Government publicly announced the repeal of the decree. In Tunisia, political dialogue resulted in a new action to support gender mainstreaming in the context of budget management reform.

EU Delegations and EU Member States' embassies also reported several informal and formal public and political events, such as launch events for programmes or campaigns, at which EU Ambassadors spoke and gender equality issues featured exclusively or prominently. High-profile occasions marked by EU actors' active engagement included International Women's Day, the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, the 16 Days of Activism on Gender-based Violence, and International Human Rights Day.

While formal **burden-sharing** on the GAP II was agreed in a number of countries, with EU Delegation and EU Member States leading on their priority sectors, informal arrangements exist in most countries. Overall in 2018, donor coordination proved productive. Burden-sharing agreements covered the GAP II's implementation, joint initiatives, joint programming and project development. An emphasis was placed on sharing information, analysis and good practice examples, alongside minimising duplication, optimising resource and coordinating joint policy positions. Donor coordination mechanisms were in place in most partner countries, many of which were led by EU actors.

**Figure 1: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Donor coordination led by the EU, 2017 vs 2018**



**Senior gender champions** were present in most countries in 2018, often at the Ambassadorial level and usually agreed and rotating between EU Member States' and EU Delegation's Heads of Mission. For instance, in Thailand, one gender champion was selected to improve the EU's ability to speak with one voice and uphold a common position on gender equality issues. In many instances where formal gender champion were not appointed, reports highlight that Member States' Ambassadors display an interest in speaking out on gender equality.

**Figure 2: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Senior gender champions, 2018**

### EU Delegations and EU Member States Senior Gender Champions, 2018 compared to 2017

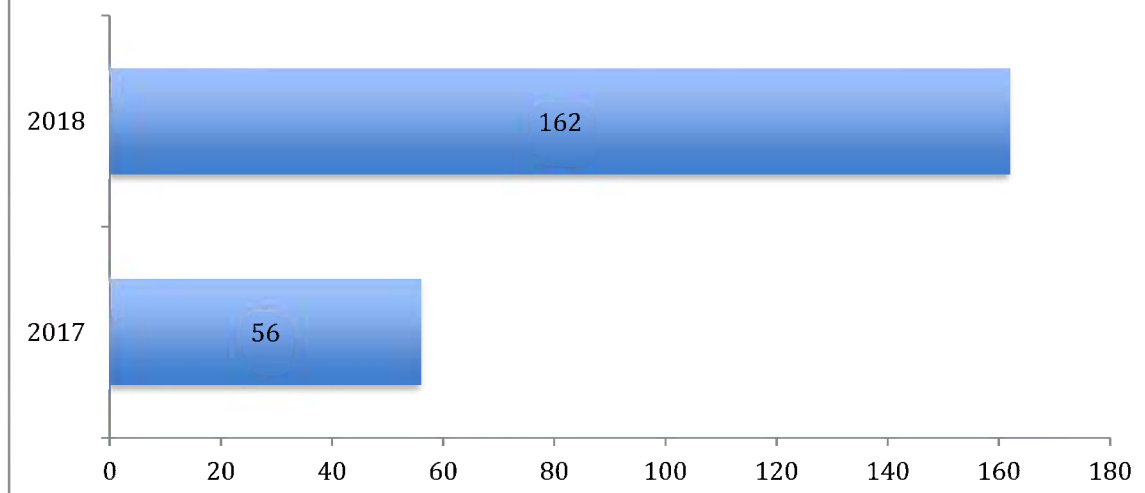


Despite regional variations, the overall **use of gender analysis** to inform project design and formulation has increased year-on-year since 2016. Many EU Delegations reported the value of the mandatory GAP II gender analysis in country studies, alongside sector-specific analysis. Gender analysis informed the design and formulation of actions in some cases, most often by EU Member States, but was often used to shape logical frameworks and guide the selection of indicators. 2017-2018 comparative data show that the use of gender analysis to inform new initiatives increased by 25 % overall in 2018 compared to 2017. However, it decreased by 15 % in Asia and the Pacific.

There was also an increase in EU Delegations and EU Member States **access to gender expertise**, provided in the context of donor coordination, from headquarters, through ad hoc technical assistance and, perhaps most importantly, through consultations with partner countries' gender mechanisms and civil society organisations. Gender equality issues were regularly discussed by donor coordination mechanisms and with civil society. In Peru, for example, the gender coordination mechanism invited gender senior specialists to its sessions on a regular basis. Some EU Delegations used technical assistance facilities to acquire ad hoc inputs, while others earmarked funds for ad hoc advisory support.

**Figure 3: EU Delegations' and EU Member States in partner countries – Mechanisms to access senior gender expertise, 2018**

### EU Delegations and EU Member States Mechanism to consult external senior gender expertise 2018 compared to 2017



In 2018, EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries described several **good practices to improve transparency and accountability**, as well as to ensure the delivery of results on gender equality. These most frequently involved the appointment of one or more gender focal persons. For example, the EU Delegation to Afghanistan appointed a gender focal person in each of its sections. However, good practices also included mainstreaming the GAP II into the Joint European Strategy in order to monitor its implementation, as in Cambodia.

In Africa, the corrective actions included relying on the gender focal person for quality control, guidance to the result-oriented monitoring missions to draw out gender related issues systematically, quality control of new action documents, inclusion of gender expertise in evaluation team, making gender expertise available as needed through preparation of dedicated contract, collection of the results from the annual reports of different actions and channelling them internally to the gender focal person, relying on the headquarter technical support for quality control and training as needed, etc. Some actions have been made within specific projects to increase for example number of female participants in EU funded actions. Another type of corrective actions reported dealt with promoting gender equality within staff, supporting career advancement of women and measures for improving professional and personal life balance.

In Asia and the Pacific, gender equality was also included as a priority in the guidelines for applicants of the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities Thematic Programme (CSO-LA) and the European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR). In tandem, EU actors in the region prioritised engaging in closer work and consultations with civil society organisations.

Good practices were similarly apparent in the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiation region. For instance, the EU Delegation to Armenia made electoral funding conditional on an increased gender quota.

In the Americas, there was an emphasis on providing guidance to civil society organisations and project partners in terms of incorporating gender issues in the actions which they implement. Rising commitment to the systematic use of gender analysis and the use of disaggregated data was also reported.

Progress on the use of sex-disaggregated data remained steady in 2018. The importance of such data was firmly on the agenda in a number of regions. In East and Southern Africa, nearly two-thirds of reported actions contributed to improving data quality and availability. Similarly, almost 40 % of EU Delegation-supported actions in Colombia contained a focus on improving the quality and availability of sex-disaggregated data. In Palestine\*, the new ‘Gender Country Profile’ contained recommendations on the use of the GAP II’s objectives and informed the EU’s joint programming results-oriented framework for 2017-2020, which was extensively sex-disaggregated.

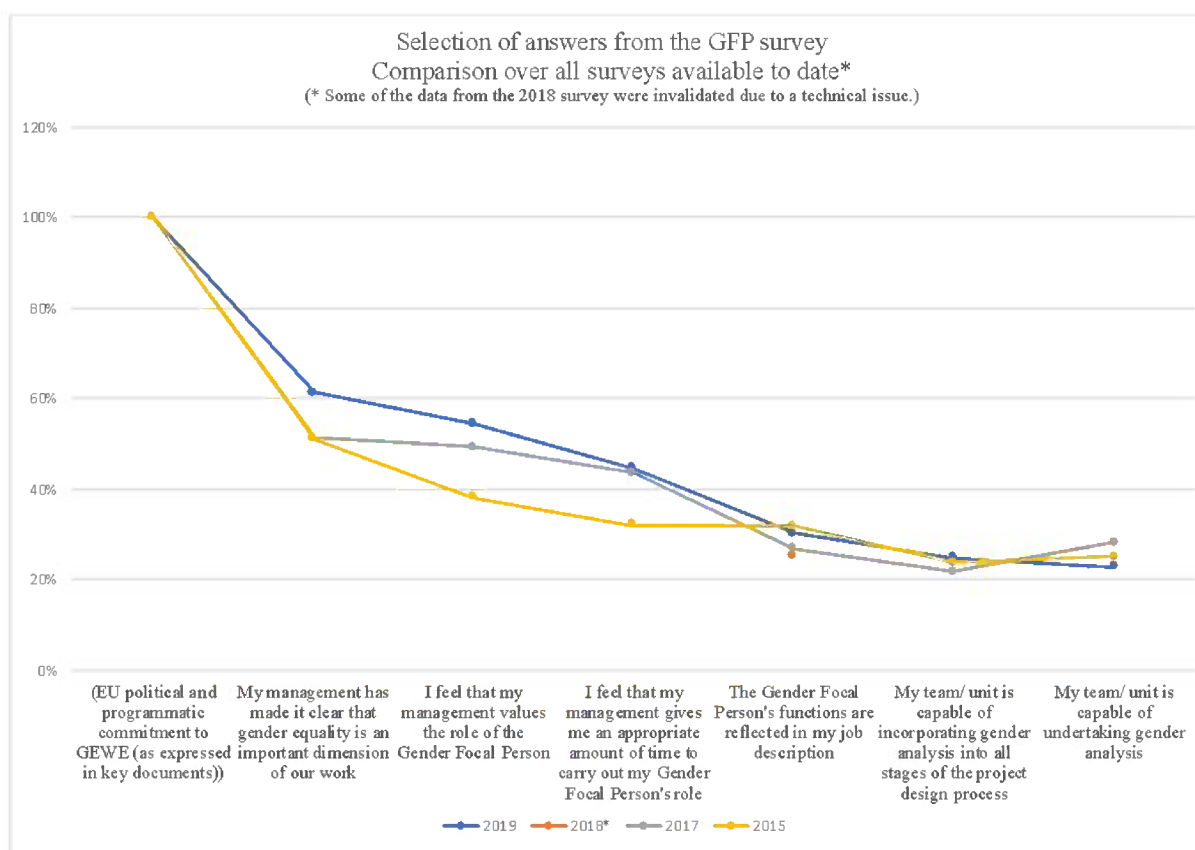
While direct support for national gender equality mechanisms (NGEMs) continued to be a small part of the overall EU portfolio, there is clear evidence that EU engagement with such mechanisms and civil society organisations working on gender equality and women’s rights increased in 2018. Support for research actions remained low. However, a growing number of reported actions contained a research component.

According to the **Gender Focal Persons (GFP) Network**, which includes EU staff working at headquarters and in partner countries, progress in 2018 continued trends identified since 2015, before the GAP II’s implementation began. Annual surveys are circulated to EU gender focal persons to obtain a full picture of their experiences and needs, exploring their views on their own – and on their institutions’ – contributions to gender equality. The latest survey was circulated in May 2019, while this report was being drafted. It revealed that gender focal persons perceive greater levels of clarity within management messages on the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment for external relations. This is in line with the data on political and policy dialogues. Respondents also considered that appreciation of the role of gender focal persons has increased. However, in both cases, these perceptions are not globally shared among the network. As such, further work remains to be done to equip management with much-needed guidance. The operational capacity for generating and using gender analysis meaningfully has changed very little. This affirms the need to maintain support through clear procedures, guidance on ways to approach gender mainstreaming, revised and improved templates, and the dedication of resources (both financial and in terms of expertise). Moreover, there is a need for continuous training to build internal institutional capacity to use, if not to generate, gender analysis as a qualitative aspect of the planning process.

**Figure 4: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Comparison of all available gender focal person surveys, 2015-2019\***

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\* This designation shall not be construed as a recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of EU Member States on this issue.



Note: \*Some data from the 2018 survey was invalidated due to technical issues.

## 2.2 European External Action Service

In 2018, the EU continued to demonstrate its commitment and leadership to advance gender equality, the full enjoyment of all human rights by women and girls and their empowerment in all areas of its external action, in stable, conflict and post-conflict situations.

The EU's role was key to protecting and safeguarding internationally agreed commitments on gender equality at a critical time, characterised by a backlash against the human rights of women and girls. The EU strategically used all the tools at its disposal at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels to make a difference in the daily lives of girls and women worldwide.

In terms of bilateral progress, all **human rights dialogues** during 2018 included ad hoc sessions dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment on the agenda. This proved a stepping stone towards confidence-building over time, while multiplying the possibilities for cooperation and joint actions.

The European External Action Service was also been increasingly active and constructive in **multilateral fora** in 2018. Key policy-making UN fora where the EU's policy commitments were delivered on included the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the annual discussion on women's human rights and ad hoc discussions during the sessions of the Human Right Council, and the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly's Third Committee. Furthermore, women, peace and security was chosen as the first priority in the UN-EU Strategic Partnership on crisis management for the 2019-2021 period.

In the context of the **G7 Summit**, the EU and Canada co-chaired the first-ever meeting of women foreign ministers in September 2018. This gathering, convened at the very highest level, aimed to identify innovative ways of jointly addressing crucial foreign policy challenges. Participants

pledged to build a network of governments and civil society organisations to advance gender equality and girls' and women's rights. At the ministerial meeting, the G7 launched the 'WPS Initiative', wherein members identified specific partner countries for enhanced implementation. The EU selected Bosnia and Herzegovina. In August 2018, the initiative's efforts led to the establishment of a roadmap for its implementation.

The new **EU Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security** emphasised a commitment to systematically mainstream a gender perspective into all EU policies as a key strategy. It also entailed commitments to gender balance and specific actions to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. These commitments will be pursued across all relevant policy frameworks, including in the areas of foreign and security policy, development, trade, finance, humanitarian aid, migration, justice, and education, as well as preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism.

An especially notable achievement in 2018 was the inclusive process pursued to prepare and draft the EU Strategic Approach on WPS. The process involved dialogue and participation between Commission services, EU Member States, gender advisors from the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, civil society partners, representatives of academia and other multilateral and regional partners within the Informal Taskforce on WPS. The Council underlined that such an inclusive approach should be the standard working practice for future drafting processes.

The European External Action Service's support for Yemeni and Syrian women as actors for peace was one of many concrete examples of how the EU supported **women's leadership on the ground** in 2018. The initiative was funded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) and included a high-level dialogue between women from Yemen and Syria, with the participation of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (HRVP).

In 2018, the Gaziantep Women Platform was launched, bringing together women representatives of the political opposition in Syria, alongside civil society representatives, members of the UN Women Advisory Board and the opposition negotiating team. The initiative aims to foster dialogue and build consensus around a common agenda for the political process in Syria.

The implementation of the women, peace and security agenda, as well as gender equality and women's empowerment more broadly, continued to be standing items of political and/or human rights dialogues and sub-committees with partner countries. The inclusion of these issues in such dialogues has become standard practice.

The EU also continued to support the women, peace and security agenda of the **African Union (AU)**, particularly in terms of women's role in countering violent extremism. An AU-EU 'Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance' was signed in May 2018. Its key priorities for implementation include fostering gender equality and strengthening women's role in peace and security from early warning to mediation, resolution and peace building.

During 2018, the EU continued to play a lead role in gender equality issues at high-level international events, particularly the issues of women's human rights. For example, EU representatives took part in the UN Security Council's open debates on sexual violence in conflict, as well as debates on the political and economic empowerment of women.

Internally, the European External Action Service worked to implement a roadmap on gender and equal opportunities, based on its **strategy for 2018-2023**. Its overall aim is to achieve sustainable gender balance at all levels, in all functions and across all jobs categories, both at headquarters and in EU Delegations. Trends in 2018 were positive. As of December, 25.19 % of Heads of

Delegations were women, compared with 20.3 % in 2016. In 2018, three out of ten civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions were headed by a woman. These were the EU capacity building mission (EUCAP) in Somalia, the EU rule of law mission (EULEX) in Kosovo\*\*, and EUCAP Sahel Niger, up to March 2018. Two of the eight EU Special Representatives are women, namely the Special Representatives for Kosovo and for the Middle East Peace Process.

Some of the many actions to improve performance on gender equality in 2018 included a leadership development programme for women managers, a mentoring programme for women in pre-management positions, and efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in EU Delegation seminars. An EEAS anti-harassment awareness campaign was also launched in 2018 in all headquarter services, EU Delegations, and civil and military missions.

In addition to the adoption of the upgraded ‘Generic Standards of Behaviour for **CSDP Missions and Operations**’ in 2018, the Civilian Operations Commander issued operational guidelines for staff and mission management on gender mainstreaming. A full time in-house advisor was appointed on gender and women, peace and security for civilian CSDP missions, a position that reports directly to the Commander.

## 2.3 European Commission services

### 2.3.1 Foreign policy instruments

All headquarters-based units of the Commission services responsible for foreign policy instruments submitted reports on the GAP II’s implementation in 2018. Contributions were also received from all five of the service’s regional teams, located in Bangkok, Thailand; Beirut, Lebanon; Brasilia, Brazil; Dakar, Senegal; and Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>10</sup> **Gender mainstreaming was increasingly a stronger feature and mind-set within the working methods of the Commission service responsible for foreign policy instruments in 2018**, across all of its interventions. Gender equality is integrated structurally into the service’s management plan, with clear targets and references to the GAP II. In July 2018, the service updated its **results framework and manual**. The former incorporated a clear gender perspective on sections covering project management methodology, while clear gender-sensitive criteria were incorporated into the results framework, both of which apply across the service.<sup>11</sup> The revisions were informed by the GAP II’s commitments and inspired by SDG 5’s pledge to ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’. This provided a clear basis for the assessment of the service’s performance in terms of implementing the GAP II’s objectives.

In 2018, gender equality was included both as an action-specific and cross-cutting issue under interventions of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and the Partnership Instrument (PI). For both instruments, a **Gender Facility (external technical services)** was created to advance work on gender mainstreaming as part of programming and action design in EU Delegations, regional teams and at headquarters. Gender also featured as an important consideration in the of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) operations and continued to be an **integral part of the planning and implementation of EU election observation missions (EOM)**.

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\*\* This designation is without prejudice to the positions on the status of Kosovo and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>10</sup> These regional teams cover Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas, West Africa and Lake Chad, and Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, respectively.

<sup>11</sup> For CFSP operations, the results framework is under construction.



Three **good practices** may be highlighted in 2018 were highlighted within the framework of the Annual Activity Report 2018 and Programme Statements for Draft Budget 2020<sup>12</sup>, including the Gender Facilities discussed above. The second involves the service's reporting on the gender equality marker<sup>13</sup>, and the third its active use of 'Guidance on the evaluation of gender as a cross-cutting dimension'.

In addition, work on gender equality formed part of the core responsibilities of the service's operational project managers. In terms of quality, a gender-sensitive approach to **evaluations** was applied fully as of 2018. This was facilitated by the aforementioned guidance note, drafted in cooperation with other Commission services in 2017.

In terms of staff allocation, five gender focal persons at headquarters, and five in the service's regional teams ensured delivery on EU gender policy commitments at the technical level.

The service's **management** was also actively involved in promoting the gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment. Regular statements by the **Director/Head of Service** explicitly referenced these issues – particularly women's participation in mediation, peace negotiations and dialogue processes – in addition to giving speeches with a prominent women, peace and security thread. For example, in the framework of the 'Ring the Bell for Gender Equality' ceremony organised by UN Women and Nasdaq on 7 March 2018, ahead of International Women's Day, the Director/Head of Service participated in a dedicated panel discussion. This emphasised the EU's work for women's economic empowerment, and illustrated how the EU values private sector engagement in Partnership Instrument actions to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. Moreover, the Director/Head of Service has been recognised as a **senior gender champion**.

## 2.3.2 International cooperation and development

**High-level international events** in 2018 provided excellent opportunities to showcase the EU's position on gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment in its international cooperation and development policy.

The EU participated in **several G7 meetings** and took part in prominent discussions in the framework of the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Significantly, gender issues were raised in the Council conclusions on water diplomacy, as well as the preparation of EU Human Rights Guidelines on Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The **2018 European Development Days** were entirely dedicated to gender equality in different spheres of life. Several plenary sessions were held with high-level participants, while other presentations and lab sessions were organised around a range of related topics. For the first time, the event included a debate on gender and religion as instruments for development, as discussed in the box below.

Senior management's commitment to the **Spotlight Initiative** and its side event 'Leaving no one behind' in March 2018, held under the auspices of 62<sup>th</sup> Commission of Status of Women (CSW 62)

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<sup>12</sup> See 'Programme Statements for Chapter 19 – Foreign Policy Instruments'.

<sup>13</sup> The service's management plan for 2018 undertook to apply the gender equality marker to all of the service's operations as the indicator for measuring the GAP II's implementation. CFSP operations were the only exception, as these are not registered in CRIS and consequently not marked against the gender marker. This situation is due to change in 2019, when the use of the future platform for project management (OPSYS) becomes obligatory. Reporting on the use of gender expertise and gender analysis as an integral and systematic part of project design will also be introduced. Furthermore, work will commence on capturing sex-disaggregated project results data to comply with GAP II indicator 5.1.2 on using OPSYS data as the source of verification.



accorded significant visibility to the initiative and the EU's work to prevent sexual- and gender-based violence across all regions.

To promote change, **new partnerships** for gender equality were explored. These included, for instance, partnerships with the private sector, private foundations and the banking system, in addition to partners with whom collaboration has been less usual to date, such as **faith-based and belief-based organisations** (FBOs).

#### **Box 2: Gender and religion at the 2018 European Development Days**

Religion matters to most people in the world, influencing how gender roles and relations are understood and practiced. In 2018, an event was organised during the European Development Days, structured as a debate between two 'teams'. One explored the positive role of religion in promoting gender equality, the other highlighted the challenges it poses. Participants noted that cooperation with religious leaders, organisations and communities can encourage gender-sensitive interpretations of religious scripture and empower marginalised voices. Others pointed to the danger of legitimising patriarchal structures and practices through enhanced cooperation with religious actors. Religious language is powerful and religious leadership is often male-dominated. Even where the inclusion of women's voices is pronounced, there is no guarantee against patriarchal interpretations.

The debate affirmed that there is no easy answer to the question 'is religion good or bad for gender equality?' Religion can be both a force for good and for ill, and there are both potential benefits and risks involved in cooperating with religious actors. There can be little doubt that religion must be taken into consideration in development agencies' efforts to promote gender equality. As the chair of the debate, Dr Azza Karam of the UN Interagency Taskforce on Religion and Development, put it, "To try to speak to people in a language that does not take religion into account is to not speak to them at all."

As Dr Karam noted, for international organisations such as the EU, engagement with religious actors is no longer an option when working towards gender equality: "Those of us responsible for making policies on and around this last bastion of patriarchy have an obligation to engage". Development agencies and policy-makers need greater 'faith literacy' in order to navigate this complex field, to be able to engage with religious actors, and to ensure religious diversity in cooperation. Such literacy would give them a better understanding of how, when and why religion matters to people's lives, while facilitating meaningful cooperation with religious actors.

At the same time, religious actors require greater literacy in their knowledge of human rights, alongside a willingness by development agencies to uphold these principles when challenged by patriarchal discourses. Cooperation with religious actors cannot be narrowed down to merely working with conventional religious leaders. As important as they may be, they are not the only – or even most legitimate or representative – spokespersons for religious individuals, communities, traditions and values. Taking into account issues of power and access, development agencies must seek to bring diverse voices to the table, including – but not limited to – faith-based organisations, women theologians and representatives of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community.

Work on the **Commission** proposal for the **Regulation establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) 2021-2027**<sup>14</sup> involved significant work to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment among the regulation's principles, mainstreaming priorities and areas of cooperation contributing to human development.

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<sup>14</sup> COM(2018)460 of 14/06/2018.

To enhance mainstreaming, one notable development in 2018 was the revision of the **Quality Review Group's (QRG) methodology for international cooperation and development initiatives**, the design of new templates for action documents, and a new instruction note. The review process and templates are now much stronger. Over time, these should significantly improve efforts to mainstream gender and a rights-based approach (RBA) in new external actions. The new methodology will also enhance the correct use of the OECD gender marker.

Inputs and contributions were made to improve the future information technology (IT) platform for project management (OPSYS). This ongoing work aims to facilitate gender equality and RBA mainstreaming and ensure that these remain compulsory. Several webinars and other **training and awareness building** activities were also organised for gender focal persons and project managers.

Other important changes included the establishment of a new technical assistance desk on the 'gender-responsive, rights-based approach' (GR-RBA). The desk provided quality support for action design, technical support and related services, as well as delivering 10 GR-RBA trainings – eight of which were delivered for EU Delegations in 2018. Moreover, four units have mid- to long-term **gender advisory services** in place, while others have the funds to acquire gender expertise as needed.

To further strengthen **capacities for gender mainstreaming**, roughly one-third of staff members of the Commission services responsible for international cooperation and development participated in some form of gender equality training. Both men and women participated in equal numbers in such trainings, which addressed issues such as budgetary support, agriculture and rural development, energy, conflict sensitivity and analysis, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB), and religion.

In terms of staff allocation, 25 gender focal persons at headquarters were vital to ensuring the delivery of the EU's gender policy commitments at the technical level within the Commission services responsible for international cooperation and development.

At the headquarters level, **gender analysis** informed the design of 63 % of all actions managed by the Commission services responsible for international cooperation and development – a trend which was reported to contribute to the GAP II's implementation. **Sex-disaggregated data** was used, either fully or partially, in three-quarters of actions monitored in 2018.

The contribution of **trust funds and blended finance** actions to gender equality were the focus of several discussions with EU Member States and the European Investment Bank. GAP II and RBA requirements were presented at a coordination meeting of the European Platform for Blending in External Cooperation (EUBEC). Moreover, a session was held with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, with a particular focus on the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia.

### 2.3.3 Neighbourhood policy and enlargement negotiations

Analysis of the GAP II reporting process reveals a positive upward trend in terms of several indicators in the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiation region. All 24 EU Delegations and 16 EU Member States which submitted reports considerably increased their commitments, particularly regarding to the GAP II's horizontal 'Institutional Culture Shift' priority. For example, there was greater **cooperation and dialogue** between EU actors and various stakeholders in partner countries – both essential elements of the GAP II's implementation. In 2018, gender equality was raised in 535 dialogues, compared to 459 dialogues in 2017. The most common overarching themes of these dialogues were human rights and democracy, followed by education, governance, the rule of law and decent work.

At the management level, a strong commitment to promoting gender equality was also apparent. EU Delegations and EU Member States increased the number of voluntary **gender champions** at the senior management level. In 2018, there were 60 senior gender champions in the region. Several countries nominated gender champions at the level of Ambassadors, Heads of Delegation or Heads of Cooperation. Most gender champions have not been formally appointed, but are considered champions in light of their active role in promoting gender equality. In Algeria, Ambassador of Sweden volunteered to be a gender champion on behalf of the EU. In Armenia, the Ambassadors of the United Kingdom, France and Germany are gender champions. They regularly raise issues of gender equality and women's rights at public events, meetings and on social media. This reflects the steps EU actors are taking to fulfil commitments to the GAP II's objectives and other regional-specific policy documents related to gender equality, such as the 20 deliverables for 2020 for the Eastern Partnership region.

Achieving lasting, targeted results on gender equality and women's empowerment requires joint and coordinated efforts among donors and partners. The reporting process in 2018 demonstrated that EU Delegations and EU Member States are increasingly coordinating efforts among themselves, as well as with international donors and often with ministries and local non-governmental organisations. **Donor coordination mechanisms** on gender equality have been established in 19 partner countries. In 2018, these coordination mechanisms proved useful for gathering advice for policy and political dialogues with partner countries on wide range of topics related to gender equality. For instance, in Moldova a functional coordination platform was in place to counter trafficking and promote gender equality. EU Delegations chaired gender coordination mechanisms in seven countries, as did EU Member States in four countries. In almost all cases, either EU Delegation or a Member State acted as co-chairs.

EU Delegations and EU Member States also took more active steps towards burden-sharing through **joint programming** on a range of gender equality issues. This was the case in several partner countries, such as Albania, Egypt, Moldova, Tunisia and the Ukraine. Issues addressed ran the gamut from women's and youth empowerment to violence against women and girls, property rights, gender responsive budgeting and the women, peace and security agenda.

**Gender mainstreaming** in programming has the potential to improve the quality of life of all community members and decrease gender inequalities under certain conditions. As such, it is a key component of the GAP II's implementation. Access to a gender equality brief throughout the project cycle is a necessary foundation for gender mainstreaming. Since 2015, all EU Delegations in the region completed a **gender country analysis**, except the Delegations to Jordan and Ukraine, whose analyses will be ready in 2019. These analyses proved useful for informing programming. As such, some EU Delegations are considering expanding their analysis to include a wider set of sectors, such as transport, water and waste management, energy, and tourism.

EU actors also implemented several **corrective actions** to strengthen gender mainstreaming, coupled with standalone actions on gender equality. In 2018, 51 corrective actions were reported, compared to 33 in 2017. Actions included trainings, expert support, and the use of gender analysis in programme formulation. **Reported good practices** also increased to 110 in 2018, up from 59 in 2017. For instance, the EU Delegation to Belarus committed to enhancing the number of women participants in EU conferences, as well as including gender equality as a key theme in the embassy's communication plan.

### **Box 3: Corrective actions and good practices in Armenia and Kosovo**

Corrective actions by the EU Delegation to Armenia included making electoral funding conditional
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on an increased gender quota. The Delegation also decided to examine EU support for gender equality in terms of the planned country evaluation. The Delegation further stressed that women's rights organisations should be included in the evaluation committees for the selection of financial support to third parties (sub-granting).

In Kosovo, a dedicated gender advisor was engaged to advise the EU Special Representative, while a gender focal person was appointed in the EU office. A joint action group on gender mainstreaming was established to improve gender mainstreaming in terms of programming and the implementation of EU financial assistance. This group will also guide and advise on specific matters related to the GAP II, in addition to strengthening the gender analysis used for all priority sectors.

As lessons learned from **programme evaluations** are indispensable for achieving gender equality results, EU Delegations undertook 198 monitoring missions in the region in 2018, compared to 166 in 2017. Recommendations from the missions included the need to increase gender mainstreaming in terms of the actions under review, the need to access and use sex-disaggregated data, and the importance of including an intersectional perspective. Reports indicate that these recommendations were well-received.

To ensure the effective implementation of gender equality policies in programming, in-house staff or ad hoc experts must be available with comprehensive knowledge on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. In 2018, EU Member States used a combination of different forms of gender expertise. In-house gender expertise was available for all EU Delegations, as well as in the embassies of several EU Member States. Among the measures in place to mobilise high quality **gender expertise**, the most frequently cited was engaging an ad hoc gender expert or advisor (23 % of EU Delegations) and reserving funds to mobilise gender expertise when needed (19 %).

The reporting process also shed light on remaining challenges. For instance, there is still a need to increase the number of staff who work on gender equality full-time, bearing in mind the large number of countries and programmes covered by the Commission services responsible for neighbourhood policy and enlargement negotiations. Action is also needed to ensure that the job description of gender focal persons and key management staff members includes gender mainstreaming and promoting gender equality among their tasks.

### 2.3.4 European civil protection and humanitarian aid operations

The EU is fully committed to implementing the GAP II's Institutional Culture Shift priority in all external relations, including humanitarian actions. For instance, the implementation of the 2013 policy, 'Gender in Humanitarian Assistance: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance', has continuously made reference to gender equality.

In the framework of the EU's leadership of the '**Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies**' (June 2017-December 2018), the EU's first priority was to raise awareness of gender-based violence in emergencies. As such, the EU organised a series of high-level raising awareness events on gender-based violence in emergencies and the Call to Action in Brussels, Geneva and New York. Key events included a high-level meeting during the European Development Days in June 2018, the EU-organised Call to Action annual partners meeting in June, an EU-UNICEF side event during the United Nations General Assembly in September, and a closing event to the handover of the Call to Action's leadership from the EU to Canada in December. Under the EU's leadership, 18 new partners were welcomed to the Call to Action, including five EU Member States. In addition, throughout 2018, the EU organised a series of field



workshops to raise awareness of the Call to Action and discuss context-specific challenges. Workshops in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Colombia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Senegal, Sudan, Thailand, and Turkey engaged over 500 participants overall. Details on all priorities are available in the **EU booklet on its leadership of the Call to Action**.<sup>15</sup>

During the year, the EU continued to use the **humanitarian gender-age marker** to track the integration of gender and age in EU-funded humanitarian relief operations. A first assessment report on its use was published in October 2018, covering the 2014-2015 period.<sup>16</sup> The assessment highlighted the marker's utility and called upon partners to continue investing in capacity building on integrating gender and age in their operations. Preliminary data for 2017 suggests that 89.1 % of projects integrated gender and age to a certain extent. Data is not yet available for 2018 as sufficient final reports for the year's projects have yet to be published.

Information on the EU's support for preventing and responding to sexual- and gender-based violence in emergencies – including support for the pilot of the Call to Action Road Map in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – is included in section 3.1.1, below.

## 2.4 EU Member States

For the 2018 reporting exercise, inputs were received from 26 EU Member States. While 23 Member States provided information using the agreed templates, three provided brief inputs (Romania, the Czech Republic and Greece). Bulgaria and Cyprus did not submit reports.

Several EU Member States' **positions on key international agendas** included a focus on gender equality and the rights of women and girls. Gender equality remained a policy priority for many Member States. As such, gender equality issues were consistently raised on all occasions. International gatherings provided key spaces for raising gender equality and rights issues, such as the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women, the UN General Assembly, European Development Days, the Davos World Economic Forum, the Human Rights Council, and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 2018. Austria's presidency of the EU Council generated many high-profile occasions, such as the conference, 'Defending Women – Defending Rights Women Human Rights Defenders' Perspectives and Challenges', organised by Amnesty International back-to-back with the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Vienna in August. Another key occasion was the launch event of the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) for 2019, which took place in December 2018.

Many EU Member States contributed to debates and negotiations during the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women. This proved a key occasion to emphasise the importance of a holistic, coordinated and transformative approach to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in rural areas. The women, peace and security agenda was a constant theme for several Member States, alongside the full range of issues related to violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), trafficking, safeguarding, economic and political empowerment, gender and trade, and the gender pay gap. A joint resolution was sponsored at the UN General Assembly on sexual harassment to elicit greater recognition of such harassment as a form of violence.

**Senior gender champions** were reported by almost half of the EU Member States which submitted reports in 2018, many officially appointed at the senior government level. This marks a modest increase compared to 2017. Some gender champions occupied an inter-ministerial role to strengthen

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<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet\\_eu\\_leadership\\_c2a.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet_eu_leadership_c2a.pdf) (booklet, published April 2019)

<sup>16</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/gender\\_and\\_age\\_marker\\_2014-2015\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/gender_and_age_marker_2014-2015_full_report.pdf)

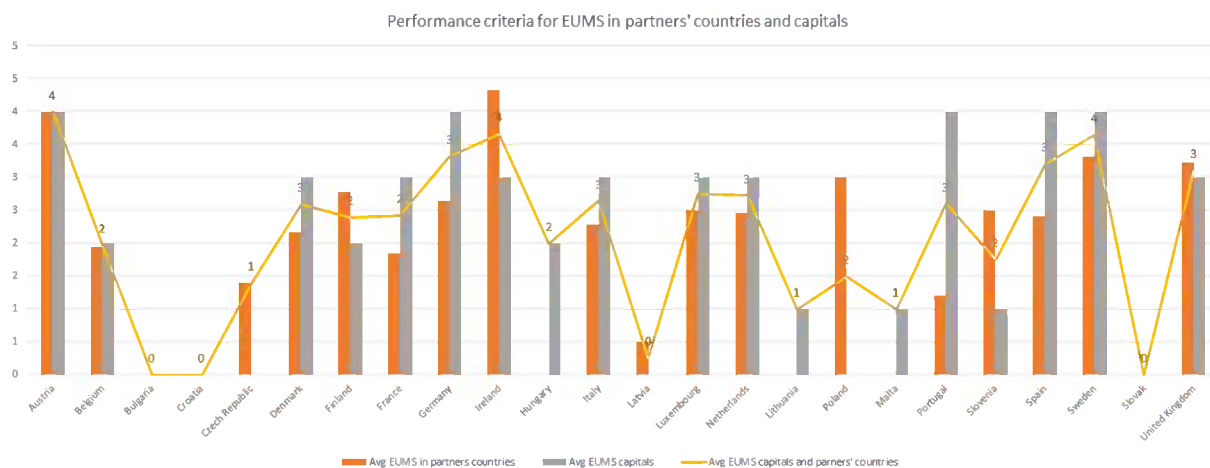
coherence on gender equality across ministries with an external mandate. A few EU Member States reported that gender equality was a responsibility of several top management officials, while some others indicated that one or two senior officials are explicitly responsible for gender equality.

In 2018, most EU Member States had an established **mechanism in place to consult external senior expertise** on strategic and ad hoc issues related to gender equality, ranging from government commissions to formal expert advisory structures and help desks. Furthermore, consultations with civil society organisations and academia was normal practice for most EU Member States.

The **quality and availability of sex-disaggregated data** in reporting continued to be a challenge. However, several projects were reported as having contributed to improvements in disaggregated data and the collection of gender-specific statistics. One in ten actions reported worked with national gender equality machineries in partner countries, while almost one in five actions sought to build awareness of gender equality in local and national media.

A number of examples of **corrective actions** were also reported. Some related to monitoring the use of the OECD gender equality marker, while others concerned updating guidelines for gender mainstreaming and arranging training sessions, including on women, peace and security. Overall, over 5,000 staff members of EU Member States were trained in 2018, as were a large number of gender focal persons, many of whom had over three years' of experience. Moreover, Member States reported that two-thirds of actions listed as contributing to the GAP II were formulated using **gender analysis**.

**Figure 5: EU Member States' capitals – Performance criteria in partner countries and at the capital level, 2018**



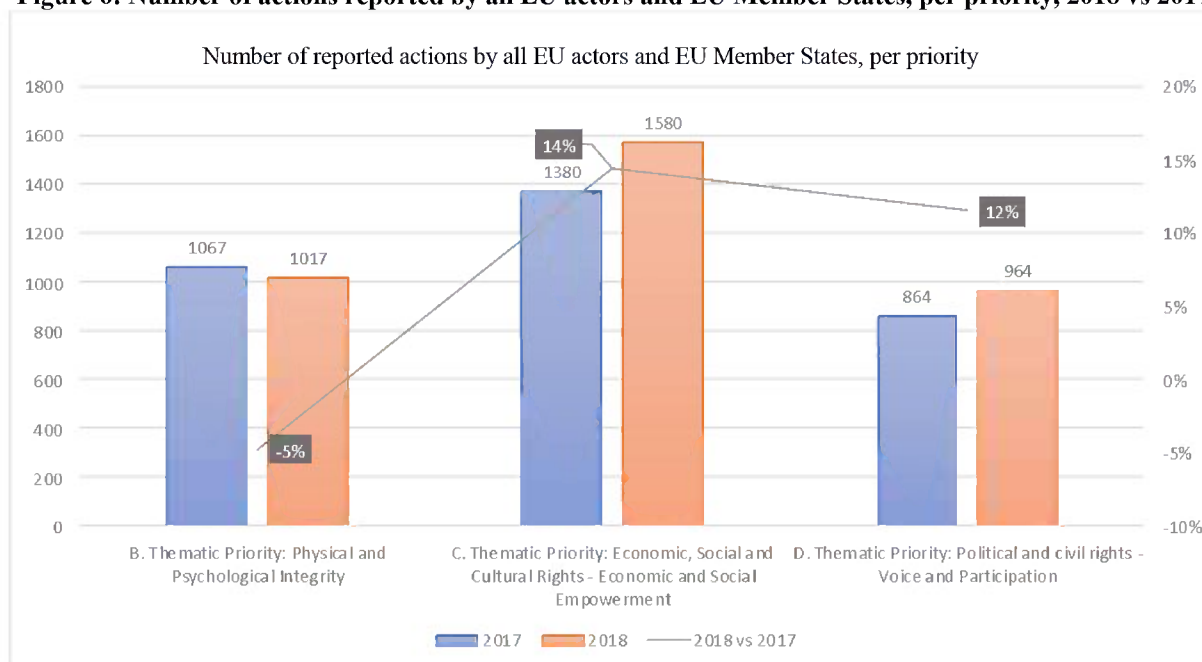
### 3. PROGRESS ON THE GAP II'S THEMATIC PRIORITIES

The analysis of progress on the GAP II's thematic priorities in 2018 is based on a selection of reports from the overall portfolio of reports received (see Annex 1 on methodology for details). While the number of actions listed in the following sections are representative of trends in decision-making and funding, they are not comprehensive. Actions are counted without referring to the amount of funds allocated to them. Moreover, numbers often differ between the graphs or figures below, and the total number of actions mentioned in the narrative text. The graphs represent the number of actions that correspond to a given GAP II priority or objective. However, in certain instances, one action corresponds to more than one objective.

Financial data derive from Commission services' institutional sources, or from the OECD for EU Member States (where applicable), in terms of overall official development assistance.

Further details and examples of the GAP II's implementation across world regions are included in Annex 3.

**Figure 6: Number of actions reported by all EU actors and EU Member States, per priority, 2018 vs 2017**



In 2018, both Commission services and EU Member States continued to support gender equality and women's empowerment around the globe. Analysis of preliminary data<sup>17</sup> for 2018 indicates that **76 % of total EU official development assistance contributed to actions marked 'G1' and 'G2' using the OECD gender marker**, up from 71 % in 2017. In the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, 58 % of total ODA contributed to 'G1' and 'G2' actions, compared to 52 % in 2017. Financial data on contributions by EU Member States<sup>18</sup> in 2018 are not yet available. Between 2015 and 2017, Member States' average contribution to 'G1' and 'G2'

<sup>17</sup> Data for the OECD creditor reporting system for 2018 will be validated in 2019, after the drafting of this report. Figures on ODA specifically geared towards gender equality for 2018 – which are more detailed than the overall ODA figures – will only be available by December 2019/January 2020. Therefore, this report uses figures for 2017, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/Aid-to-gender-equality-donor-charts-2019.pdf>. ODA data in this report only concerns ODA managed by Commission services. Data on actions under the mandate of the European Investment Bank are not included.

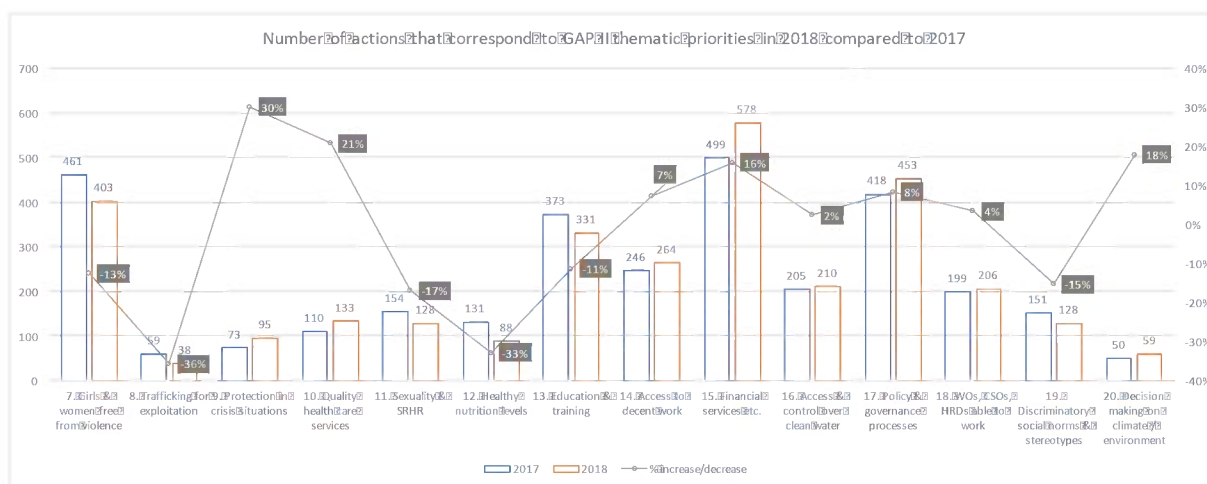
<sup>18</sup> Data used in this report is only available for EU Member States that report to the OECD.

actions experienced a slight increase, rising from 41 % to 43 %. These trends reflect continued support, in line with EU policy commitments, to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality objectives worldwide.

In 2018, the **largest number of actions reported by all EU actors combined** – EU Member States and Commission services at headquarters and in partner countries – contributed to the objectives of thematic priority C, 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment'. This follows trends observed in previous years, with an overall increase of 14 % in reported actions compared to 2017. Overall, 2018 witnessed a 12 % increase in reported actions contributing to the objectives of thematic priority D, 'Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation', and a decrease of 5 % in actions contributing to the objectives of thematic priority B, 'Physical and Psychological Integrity'. Variations in the numbers of reported actions between 2018 and 2017 is not of significant importance, given the different pace at which some programmes close and other new actions begin to be implemented. Financial commitments are often made depending on multiannual programming plans. Moreover, the percentage change in the number of actions does not reflect the financial size of the reported actions.

By combining data on the number of reported actions with the available financial data overall, it is clear that **commitments to the GAP II's gender equality and women's empowerment objectives is being sustained and gradually increasing**. The analysis in the following sections highlights thematic objectives that may require greater attention and additional resources. Gender mainstreaming efforts are yielding results across the GAP II's thematic priorities. Nevertheless, as the analysis in Part 2 affirms, the quality of gender mainstreaming must be carefully monitored and continually strengthened. The often limited use of gender analysis for action design, and of sex-disaggregated data for action monitoring and evaluation, have been constant features of the analysis for the past three years of the GAP II's implementation.

**Figure 7: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Number of actions that correspond to GAP II thematic objectives, 2018 vs 2017**



Globally, no GAP II objective was left unaddressed by EU actions in 2018. Even when EU actors are considered separately – Commission services at headquarters, EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries, and Member States at the capital level – it is clear that, on average, each group has provided support for each GAP II objective.

In terms of the number of reported actions by **EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries in 2018**, the greatest support was provided for making financial services more accessible to women (objective 15), followed by encouraging and consolidating women's participation of



women in policy and governance processes at all levels (objective 17) and combatting violence against women and girls (objective 7). The lowest number of reported actions contributed to combatting trafficking for all forms of exploitation (objective 8). This objective also experienced a decrease in the number of reported actions, with 36 % fewer actions in 2018 compared to 2017. A decrease in number of reported actions is seen also for healthy nutrition levels (objective 12). The number of reported actions decreased for these two objectives and the one on SRHR (objective 11).

The objectives which experienced the **greatest increase in support** by EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries in 2018 were equal access to quality healthcare services (objective 10), support for women's organisations, civil society organisations and Human Rights Defenders (objective 18), and promoting women's participation in decision-making on climate and environmental issues (objective 20).

At the **headquarters level, the greatest number of global actions by Commission services** supported efforts to encourage and consolidate women's participation in policy and governance processes (objective 17), followed by ensuring access to decent work for women of all ages (objective 14) and in combatting violence against women and girls (objective 7). The lowest number of reported actions concerned support for promoting, protecting and fulfilling sexual and reproductive health and rights (objective 11). However, there was a 67 % increase in the number of reported actions on SRHR in 2018, compared to 2017. These included contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Supplies programme, support for refugees and host communities in the Middle East, the Spotlight Initiative, the European Development Fund (EDF) for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, the EU/Council of Europe Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey, and the Regional Roma Survey.

#### **Box 4: EU-UN Spotlight initiative**

Through the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, the EU has provided unprecedented support to this vital political priority. Jointly launched by the EU and UN in September 2017, the initiative aims to mobilise the commitment of political leaders and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 ('Gender Equality') and SDG 16 on inclusive and peaceful societies. It pursues these aims by building new multi-stakeholder partnerships and providing large-scale, targeted support, backed by an initial dedicated EU financial commitment of EUR 500 million. The initiative includes actions to address the trafficking of women and girls, in line with SDG targets 5.2 and 16.2. In 2018 alone, the EU committed EUR 270 million for the initiative.

At the global level, the EU's **Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)** continued to contribute significantly to the GAP II's implementation, reflected in an increased number of reported actions in 2018. Half of these reported actions address thematic priority C on economic, social and cultural rights, 29 % concerned priority B's focus on physical and psychological, and 23 % addressed priority D by targeting political and civil rights. Slightly under half of these actions were multi-country initiatives. Comparisons with reports for 2017 indicate a significant increase in actions targeting thematic priority C, alongside a decrease in reported actions under priorities D and B.

Overall, **EU Member States' centrally-managed actions** most often concerned combatting violence against women and girls (objective 7), followed by women's access to decent work (objective 14) and making financial services more accessible to women (objective 15). The lowest number of reported actions addressed trafficking for exploitation (objective 8). This was also the only objective for which the number of centrally-managed actions decreased compared to 2017,

with 44 % fewer actions in 2018. Moreover, very few GAP II indicators were selected by Member States.

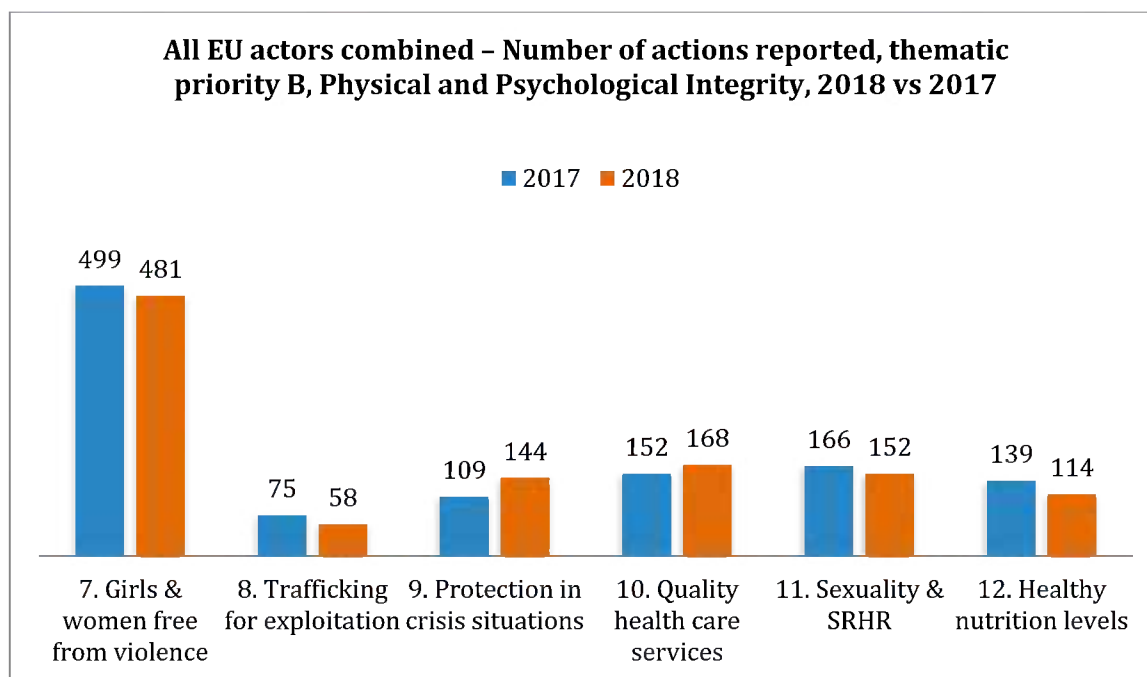
The sharpest **increase in EU Member States' support** focused on contributing to women's equal rights to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues (objective 20), followed by ensuring access to and control over clean water (objective 16), and enabling healthy nutrition levels (objective 12).

Following a steep increase in financing during the previous period on challenging discriminatory social norms and stereotypes (objective 19), 18 % fewer actions were reported in 2018 on such vital efforts that contribute to transforming societies and curbing discrimination against women and girls.

### 3.1 Thematic priority B. Physical and Psychological Integrity

In 2018, 1,017 reported actions on thematic priority B, 'Physical and Psychological Integrity', contributed to advancing SDG 1 ('No Poverty'), SDG 2 ('Zero Hunger'), SDG 3 ('Good Health and Well-being'), SDG 5 ('Gender Equality'), SDG 6 ('Clean Water and Sanitation') and SDG 16 ('Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions').

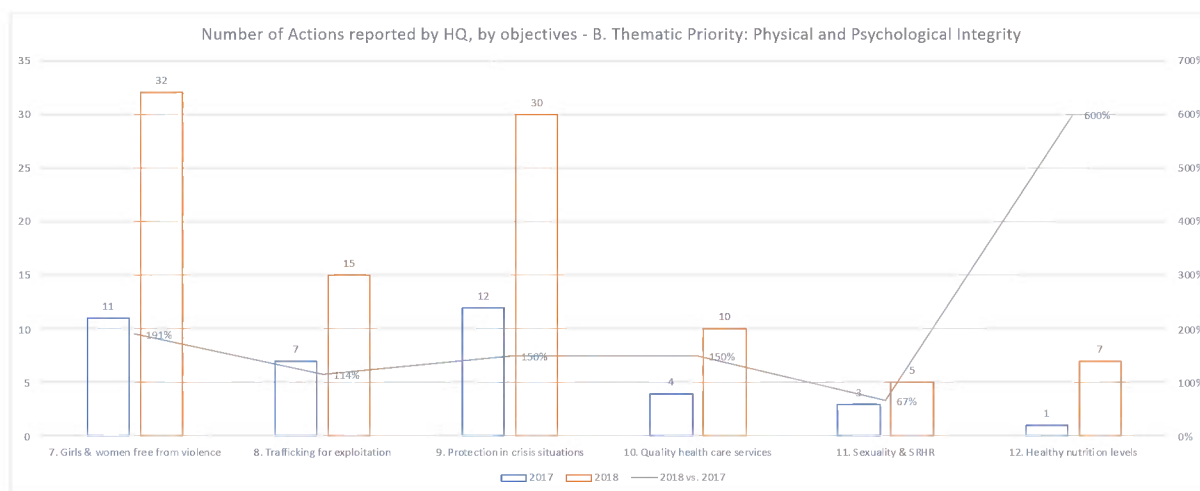
**Figure 8: All EU actors combined – Number of actions reported, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018 vs 2017**



#### 3.1.1 Commission services

In 2018, the greatest proportion of actions reported by Commission services addressed **violence against women and girls** (objective 7).

**Figure 9: Commission services – Number of actions reported, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018 vs 2017**



EU funding reached out to women and girls around the world, including in humanitarian crises, affording much-needed services for survivors of violence. In tandem, EU support was key for strengthening knowledge, institutional and legal frameworks for sustainable solutions to curbing such violence and ensuring basic health rights. The second largest proportion of EU funding in 2018 was dedicated to protecting women and men, of all ages, from sexual- and gender-based violence in crisis situations through EU supported operations (objective 9).

One notable example of EU funding in 2018 involved **EUR 5 million** to support projects by two **Nobel Peace Prize laureates, Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege**.<sup>19</sup> As Commissioner Neven Mimica explained:

*"Violence against women and girls is one of the most horrendous crimes, one of the greatest injustices of our time, and an obstacle to the development of any society. I am very pleased to be able to strengthen our support for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureates. This is how the European Union can help put an end to sexual violence, once and for all, everywhere in the world."*

In November 2018, both Nobel laureates were invited to discuss the eradication of violence against women and its impact on development, alongside EU development ministers, at the EU Foreign Affairs Council. On this occasion, High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini noted:

*"As the European Union, we admire the immense courage and tireless work of Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege, who often put their own lives at risk. We have a duty to support their work and all the people they represent, as we are doing, and this is also the best way to celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women."*

#### **Box 5: Sinjar Action Fund in Iraq and Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

<sup>19</sup> In 2018, Nadia Murad Basee Taha and Dr Denis Mukwege were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end violence against women as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

In 2018, the EU supported the Sinjar Action Fund Initiative in Iraq, which aims to create infrastructure, schools and hospitals, while encouraging the return of displaced populations.

Additional funding in 2018 was provided to the Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo, bringing the total amount of development cooperation and humanitarian aid for Dr Mukwege's Panzi Foundation to EUR 19 million. Such support has been a boon to Dr Mukwege's efforts, including a socio-economic reintegration programme for children and women who were used as sex slaves in the mining areas of the South Kivu province. These programmes achieved extremely important results in terms of providing 50,000 women with medical treatment for gynaecological conditions caused by sexual violence, providing another 500 women with socio-economic integration support and legal assistance, and enabling access to education for girl victims of sexual abuse and forced labour.

In 2018, the EU allocated approximately **EUR 30 million in humanitarian aid** to fight sexual- and gender-based violence through its protection and health programming, supporting projects all over the world.<sup>20</sup> As discussed in section 2.3.4 above, the EU led the global 'Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies' initiative between June 2017 and December 2018.<sup>21</sup>

Another way in which the EU supported the elimination of sexual- and gender-based violence was by funding knowledge generation and capacity building. At the end of 2017, the EU allocated EUR 975,000 to UNFPA, the Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility (GBV AoR) and the Women's Refugee Commission, under the EU's 'Enhanced Response Capacity' to support the implementation of the **Call to Action in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as to develop global minimum standards on gender-based violence** – a major deliverable of the Call to Action Road Map. The Northeast Nigeria Road Map was launched in July 2018, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo Road Map in March 2019. In addition, at the end of 2018, the EU awarded nearly EUR 445,000 to the Royal Tropical Institute of the Netherlands and Save the Children Netherlands to study access and barriers to medical and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual violence, including case studies in Nigeria, Yemen and Haiti. Two further capacity building projects concluded in 2018, financed by the 2016 budget. These involved the provision of EUR 600,000 to UN Women and Oxfam for the revision of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) **Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action**, which was released in April 2018. It also entailed EUR 1.2 million for the International Rescue Committee to finance the **development of tools and approaches** to conduct gender-based violence case management in hard-to-reach areas, with guidance released in August 2018.

In December 2017, the communication on 'Reporting on the follow-up to the EU Strategy towards the eradication of trafficking in human beings and identifying further concrete actions' was adopted, reflecting the EU's recognition of the trafficking of women and girls as a form of structural violence against them. Several key actions included in the communication are gender-specific and include an explicit commitment to undertaking an approach based on the **gender dimension of trafficking in human beings**, in line with the requirements for gender-specific actions of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive.

The **Office of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator** continued to work closely with the European External Action Service and EU Delegations to provide strategic overall orientation and support, particularly to ensuring a gender-specific approach to all actions. The gender dimension of

<sup>20</sup> Examples of projects are included in Chapter 2 of the Call to Action booklet: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet\\_eu\\_leadership\\_c2a.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet_eu_leadership_c2a.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> For a comprehensive overview of all activities undertaken during the EU's leadership of the Call to Action, see: [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet\\_eu\\_leadership\\_c2a.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/sites/echo-site/files/booklet_eu_leadership_c2a.pdf)



trafficking was also included in several political dialogues with non-EU partners, as well as in the context of multilateral diplomacy. Moreover, the European Institute for Gender Equality, in cooperation with the European Commission, adopted practical guidance for EU Member States<sup>22</sup> and practitioners on gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions.

The EU also supported efforts by authorities in the Russian Federation to implement the National Action Strategy for Women in Moscow and select regions of the country. Support was channelled through the action '**Co-operation on the implementation of the Russian Federation National Action Strategy for Women (2017–2022)**', signed at the end of 2018. Implemented by the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the action will provide technical support to strengthen knowledge and expertise in local legislative, judicial and administrative structures in Russia, while raising awareness and enabling the exchange of best practices.

Funding for **nutrition-specific actions to treat severe acute malnutrition** and nutrition-sensitive prevention actions (objective 12) in the sectors of health, food assistance and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) totalled EUR 128 million. These reached more than 14 million beneficiaries, most of whom are children under the age of five and women of reproductive age.

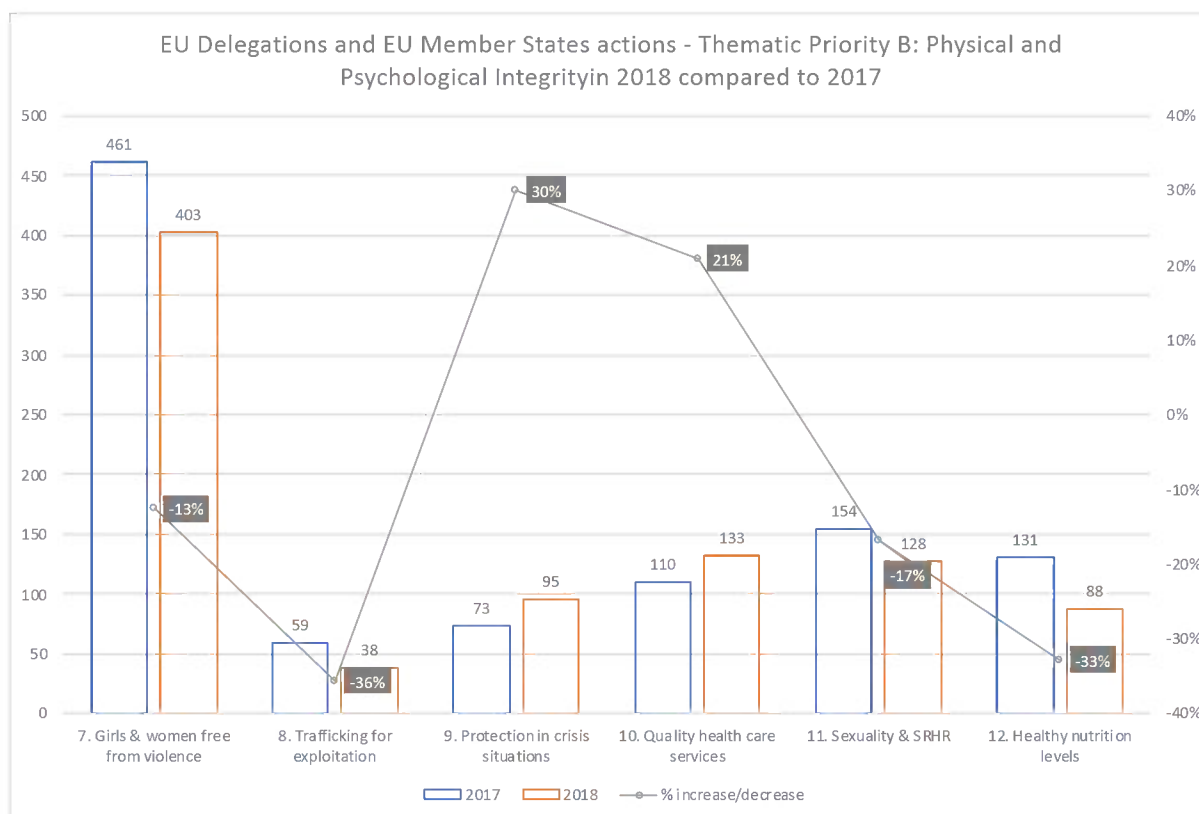
Another example of the EU's work to combat violence against women and girls in 2018 involved support for the process of reviewing and amending the Kosovo criminal code and Criminal procedural code. This support – provided through the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the EU Special Representative in Kosovo – contributed to strengthening the legal framework for the prosecution of gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual violence crimes.

### 3.1.2 EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries

**Figure 10: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Number of actions reported, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018 vs 2017**

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<sup>22</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/trafficking-for-sexual-exploitation-a-gendered-crime\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/publications/trafficking-for-sexual-exploitation-a-gendered-crime_en)

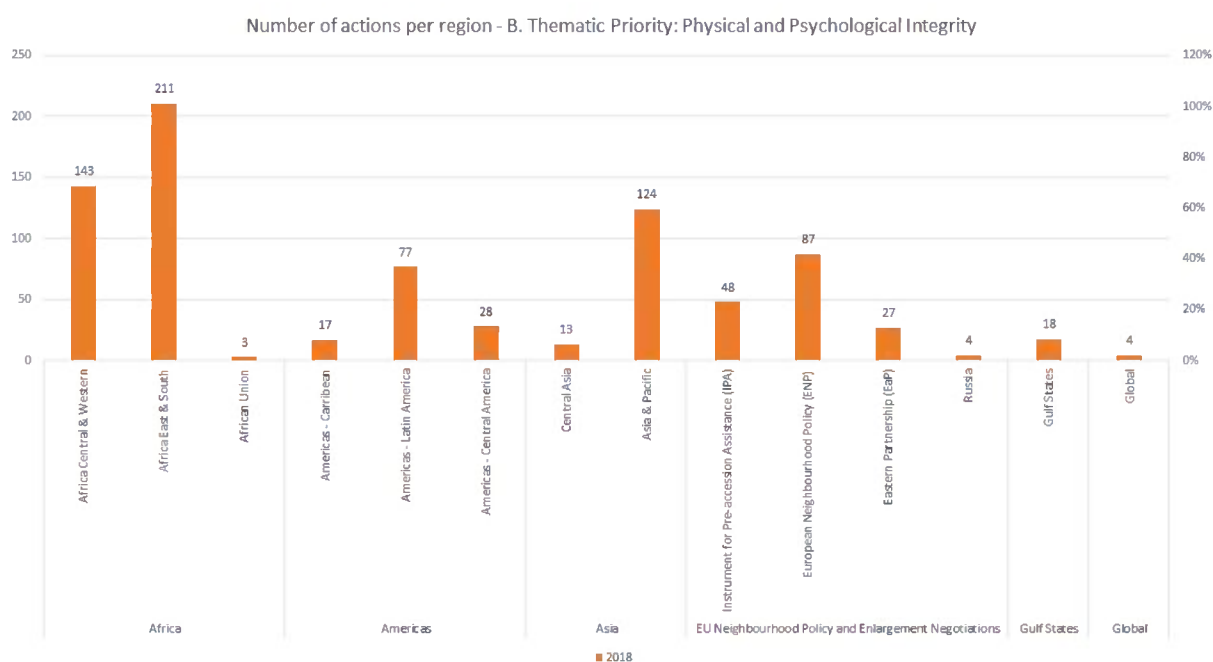


For EU Delegations and EU Member States active in partner countries, addressing violence against women and girls was of particularly high priority. This was reflected by the large number of actions reported on addressing GAP II objective 7 in 2018, although fewer actions were reported than in 2017. Mirroring trends in global actions, actions at the country level across regions also focused on protecting women and men of all ages from sexual- and gender-based violence in crisis situations (objective 9), in addition to affording equal access to women and girls to quality healthcare (objective 10).

Overall, there the number of reported actions that addressed issues of SRHR decreased in 2018 compared to 2017. Nevertheless, EU funding helped to ensure that 3,096,000 births were attended by skilled health personnel, thereby **reducing the maternal mortality** (objective 11). Furthermore, 1,492,000 women of reproductive age and children under five-years-old benefited from **nutrition-related programmes** (objective 12).

The number of reported actions contributing to the **elimination of trafficking** of girls and women (objective 8) decreased by over one-third (-37 %) in Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, as well as in Latin America. Moreover, five times fewer actions were reported in Asia and the Pacific in 2018 compared to 2017. Africa was the only region where the number of reported actions on trafficking increased, albeit only by 1 %.

**Figure 11: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Number of actions reported, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018**



## Africa

Among the EU's initiatives in Africa, in **Liberia**, **Ireland** supported 'She Leads: community-based activism, response and empowerment to prevent and respond to GBV'. In **Sudan**, **France** supported an inclusive approach – **from education to the labour market** – to break down gender stereotypes and improve economic opportunities.

Actions that contributed to objective 7 spanned a range of issues from prevention of and protection from violence against women and children (Burundi, Liberia, Mauritania), to media campaigns, research and knowledge generation against female genital mutilations (Burkina Faso, Gambia), initiative against child marriage (Cameroon, Mali), to police interventions against violence (Mauritania), supporting the work of civil society against impunity (Mali), support to justice and giving voice to survivors (Chad, Ivory Coast), support to national strategies for women's empowerment (Senegal), support to legal aid to women, including survivors of violence (Ivory Coast), and many more. For example, initiatives involved support for the Tanzania Media Women's Association. There was a clear focus on rights in many actions, alongside support for local civil society and non-governmental organisations.

A consultancy service in Mauritius supported by the EU Delegation contributed to objectives 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 by assisted in the elaboration of the country's Gender Equality Bill, Children's Bill and Adoption Bill, while delivering capacity building for the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare. Objective 9, on tackling gender-based violence in conflict situations, was addressed by actions in a number of countries, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda. Entry points varied, ranging from awareness raising to promoting peace, security and justice, supporting livelihoods, and access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

In 2018, the number of reported actions contributing to SRHR (objective 11) declined by one-third. The Spotlight Initiative involved EUR 250 million in funding for actions to combat sexual- and gender-based violence and harmful practices, including support for SRHR, in the region. The design and finalisation of these actions was underway during the course of the year, which may be the reason for the decline in reported actions. The fact that several projects were completed in 2017 and many others will be launched in 2019 could also be an explanation.



EU funds exceeded the 20 % target<sup>23</sup> for EU aid spending on social inclusion and human development. Alongside support by several EU Member States, this bridged the decrease in funding internationally in support to the SRHR. An increase in the number of reported actions and the amount of funding for SRHR is expected in the future, coupled with continuing EU support for new initiatives. For instance, in May, the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission launched a report that re-conceptualises SRHR<sup>24</sup> and a new iteration of the Muskoka methodology (Muskoka 2) was came to the fore.<sup>25</sup> These issues are discussed in greater detail in Annex 5.

During 2018, fewer actions were reported in Africa to curb trafficking (objective 8), in addition to the decrease in actions on sexual and reproductive health (objective 11). In addition to the reasons suggested above, this may be related to the high number of new actions that were initiated in 2017. It should be noted that a decrease in actions over a two-year period does not necessarily signify a decline in attention to related issues. Careful consideration of the trend at the sub-regional level is required to understand how the EU can further support trafficking and SRHR – spheres in which where the rights of women and girls are at high risk. Sustaining funding and policy dialogue to tackle possible challenges remains extremely important.

### *Americas*

While EU actors in **Latin America and the Caribbean** remain concerned about women and girls' physical and psychological integrity, the number of actions on thematic priority B were overtaken by actions on the GAP II's other priorities in 2018. Given Latin America's high rates of gender-based violence, objective 7 was by far the most frequently selected in the sub-region. Thus, under thematic priority B, 63 % of the reported actions addressed violence against women and girls. EU funding contributed to several regional programmes on this issue, including an action implemented by UN Women on 'Safe City and Safe Public Spaces'. Through a 'Triangular Project', practices from Peru and Spain were shared to improve El Salvador's information systems and analysis of femicide. Moreover, Germany implemented a specific regional programme to eliminate violence against women.

Crisis and social conflicts are frequent in the sub-region, characterised as it is by social inequalities and unrest. Therefore, 15 actions addressed the protection of women and men ages from sexual- and gender-based violence in crisis situations (objective 9) in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Uruguay. These ran the gamut from an action to tackle **femicide in Ecuador**, to promoting **democracy in Uruguay**, and strengthening security and peace in **Colombia by re-integrating and protecting boys and girls at high risk of recruitment**, while spreading a culture of peace, legality and human rights in post-conflict municipalities. Moreover, **Brazil's first human rights training** organised by the Military Police of the Defence Forces included a session on women's rights.

In the Caribbean initiatives advancing objective 7, 'girls and women free from all forms of violence against them both in the public and in the private sphere'. covered issues such as justice (Jamaica), sexual reproductive health and rights and women's rights (the Dominican Republic), and asset recovery and cybercrime (multi-country). In Jamaica, actions were funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. In Trinidad and Tobago, actions centered on

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<sup>23</sup> In 2011, the Commission committed to spending at least 20 % of EU aid on social inclusion and human development through allocations to basic social services, with a focus on health, education and social protection. For more information, see the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "Increasing the impact of the EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change", COM(2011)637 final, Brussels, 13/10/2011. This commitment was re-emphasised in the New European Consensus on Development in 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Guttmacher-Lancet Commission (2018) *Accelerate progress – sexual and reproductive health and rights for all: report of the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission*. Available: <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights>

<sup>25</sup> In June 2018, a technical working group was established with the support of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to review the Muskoka methodology and propose changes to address identified shortcomings, in addition to more comprehensively tracking donors' funding and disbursements.

addressing gender stereotypes through the 'Building Better Men' programme, and an initiative on diversity management in schools.

**Box 6: EU Delegation to Ecuador, 'More information, less violence'**

In Ecuador, the EU Delegation supported the '*Más información, menos violencia: prevención y erradicación de violencia de género, en especial femicidio*' initiative to counter gender-based violence, particularly femicide. This involved a dual focus on changing in the way femicide cases are judicially treated, while preventing the violence that contributes to femicide in high schools and through social media. The action was informed by gender analysis and results-oriented monitoring mission, and underscored by a focus on real collaboration with national institutions and NGOs.

The initiative has had an impact on government institutions and the way in which statistics on femicide are collected and analysed at the global level. While data collection challenges remain, greater awareness is evident among the five official institutions in charge gathering data on femicide cases. The NGO implementing partner is the only organisation in the country following cases of femicide, following 550 such cases in 2018. Their efforts have made the initiative a reference point for information on femicide cases at the national level.

This NGO presented their latest report at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. In response to this report, a meeting was held between the EU Delegation and the Judiciary Council Director (JCD), at which the latter proposed judicial reforms, such as the introduction of a dedicated number of judges specialised in femicide to guard against impunity and deliver fair trials and verdicts. To this end, the Delegation requested Eurosocietal's technical assistance for the Judiciary Council – support which is currently ongoing. The action has also evoked greater confidence in the justice system among survivors of violence and the relatives of femicide victims, who are increasingly willing to pursue judicial means of redress.

*Asia and the Pacific*

The greatest proportion of actions under this thematic priority addressed objective 7 on combating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG). They covered a variety of issues linked to combating VAWG, including gender mainstreaming, supporting civil society, promoting human rights and women's empowerment, food security, access to justice and education. The EU Delegation to the Pacific reported on the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls, which brings together governments, civil society organisations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls, and increase access to quality response services for survivors.

Objective 11, on sexual reproductive health and rights, was the second most selected objective in Asia and the Pacific. A focus on sexual reproductive health and rights was apparent in Afghanistan (family planning and reproductive health), India, Nepal and the Philippines (reproductive services). In Taiwan, one action focused on LGBTIQ rights.

Other frequently selected objectives included objective 12 on healthy nutrition levels for girls and women, objective 10 on equal access to quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for girls and women, and objective 9 on gender-based violence in crisis situations. Actions to foster security and peace, while reducing conflict, were implemented in Myanmar, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In Myanmar, three EU Member States – Finland, Italy and Sweden – funded a programme on sexual reproductive health and rights and combating gender-based violence in conflict-affected areas.

#### **Box 7: EU Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, ‘Inside Justice’**

In 2018, the EU Delegation financed the initiative ‘Inside Justice: Ensuring Formal Justice Sector Responsibility and Accountability to Redress Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) against Women and Girls in Sri Lanka’. Implemented by the Asia Foundation, the initiative seeks to address the barriers experienced by survivors of such violence, including impunity for perpetrators, long delays and a lack of gender-sensitivity among law enforcement and the justice system. To this end, Inside Justice aims to change the attitudes of actors in the formal justice sector towards sexual- and gender-based violence, while supporting civil society advocacy to enhance the justice sector’s accountability and response.

The Asia Foundation works in partnership with and through local civil society and human rights organisations, building on their strengths, expertise and knowledge of local contexts. Partners include Women in Need (WIN), a Sri Lankan non-profit NGO with over 30 years of experience in addressing gender-based violence. Therefore, Inside Justice’s strategies are based on engagement with civil society and justice sector, while drawing on the expertise of the Foundation’s Gender and Justice Team. One innovative strategy used by the initiative was ‘Court Observation Research’, wherein Women in Need’s lawyers observed, documented and improved understandings of gender sensitivity among the judiciary, prosecutors, lawyers and court staff. The study was carried out in five locations, tracking 50 court cases over a period of six months. The initiative’s advocacy component will be rolled out in the future, informed by such in-depth research.

#### *Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, and Russia*

Substantial progress was apparent to advance the GAP II’s thematic priorities in the **Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, and Russia**. In the Eastern Neighbourhood sub-region, 40 % of actions on thematic priority B addressed violence against women and girls (objective 7). Although this was the most frequently selected objective in the sub-region, it was targeted by roughly half as many actions in 2018 than in 2017. Similarly, in the Southern Neighbourhood sub-region, objective 7 also remained the focus of EU actions, although the number of actions that addressed violence against women fell by one-third compared to 2017. While some countries introduced ambitious legislation to combat gender-based violence and discrimination, many obstacles remain, not least as gender inequalities are embedded in discriminatory cultural norms and traditions. In the Enlargement Negotiations sub-region, objective 7 was the focus of 29 actions in five countries, and was therefore addressed by 56 % of actions reported under thematic priority B.

In 2018, EU actors in the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region and Russia considered 64 % of their reported actions to be promising practices. Of these, 7 % of all actions were regarded as partially gender-transformative and 14 % as gender-transformative. As explained above, this means that they aimed to evoke a shift or a positive change of the socio-economic, cultural, institutional, and political paradigm(s) that produce gender-based discriminations and inequalities in a given context.

Compared with 2017, there was a decrease in the number of reported actions in the region to tackle violence against women and girls (objective 7), enable women’s participation in policy and governance processes (objective 17) and expand their access to decent work (objective 14). In 2018, EU actors focused far more on women’s equal access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15), which was addressed by 18 % of reported actions. Another 14 % of actions concerned objective 17, while 13 % tackled objective 14. Undeniable progress was made to address violence against women and girls, for instance, the adoption of new legislation in many countries in



the Eastern Neighbourhood sub-region. Nevertheless, much remains to be done, especially among the Southern Neighbourhood countries, of whom only Tunisia has passed an organic law on violence against women, including domestic violence.

Continuing a stable trend since 2016, EU actors affirmed their commitment to sexuality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (objective 11). This was reflected in 12 % more actions addressing this objective in 2018 than in the previous year. However, actions to combat trafficking (objective 8) and to ensure protection from sexual- and gender-based violence in crisis situations (objective 9) decreased significantly in 2018, by 37 % and 28 %, respectively. To pinpoint the reasons for this decrease, further sub-regional analysis is required. One positive trend in 2018 concerned actions on qualitative preventive, curative and rehabilitative health and mental health services (objective 10), which increased by 56 %. This is tied to new interventions to address Syrian refugees' healthcare needs, which began in Turkey under the Facility for Refugees.

The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the 'Madad' Fund, proved particularly important in 2018. The fund supported actions to address GBV and VAWG among Syrian women refugees. These included a plethora of interventions, from information campaigns and awareness sessions, to specialised treatment in terms of mental health and psychosocial support, and risk education sessions on mine contamination threats. These actions reached out to vulnerable people in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and the Western Balkans.

**Box 8: EU Delegation to Azerbaijan, 'Global Programme to Prevent Son Preference and Gender-biased Sex Selection'**

The 'Global Programme to Prevent Son Preference and Gender-biased Sex Selection' in Asia and the Caucasus aims to build on, and strengthen, evidence-based national policies and programmes to address son preference, the low value ascribed to girls, and the gender inequalities that underlie gender-biased sex selection. Azerbaijan is among the three countries in the world with the most severe sex-ratio imbalance. This is grounded in widespread cases of gender-biased prenatal sex selection, geared towards ensuring the birth of sons to meet traditional patriarchal expectations. When the programme began, 116 boys were born for every 100 girls in the country.

Since its commencement, the programme has contributed to a breakthrough in the recognition of the problem of gender-biased prenatal sex selection – a challenge which had previously been overlooked by the public and authorities. As a first step, the programme sought to shed light on the issue by collecting sex-disaggregated data and carrying out substantial research. This was paired with gender-transformative advocacy activities which highlighted the effectiveness of engaging men, including a fathers and daughters festival, a theatre play and media articles. The programme's evidence-based approach successfully raised awareness among relevant authorities and the public at large.

As recognition increased, efforts to address the gender-biased sex selection gained pace. For instance, advocacy efforts and policy dialogue resulted in the incorporation of a standalone section on combating sex selection in Azerbaijan's draft 'State Programme on Population Development and Demography' (2018-2030). Thereafter, a National Action Plan on Preventing and Addressing Gender-biased Sex Selection was launched. Son preference is slowly declining, with current statistics suggesting that 114 boys are born for every 100 girls. The goal is to reach 105-107 male births for every 100 girls.

**Box 9: EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 'Respect Rural Women' initiative**

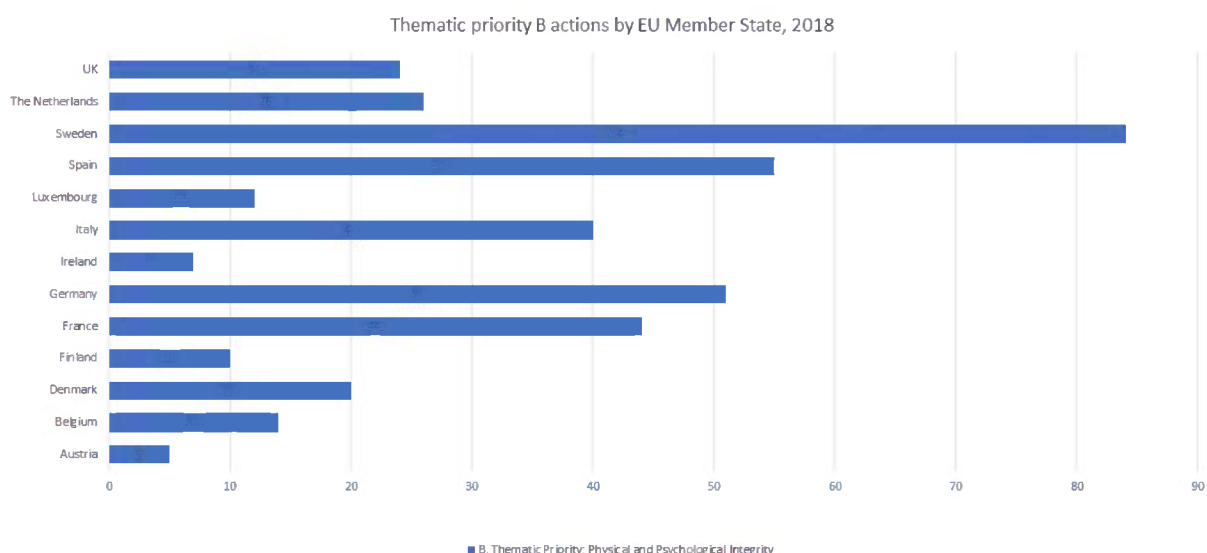
The Respect Rural Women initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina aims to contribute to the prevention of domestic violence and the empowerment of rural women in the municipalities of Banja Luka, Glamoč, Kotor Varoš, Prijedor and Prnjavor. Supported by the EU Delegation, the action centres on

raising awareness of gender-based and domestic violence – estimated to affect 52.8 % of women – while engaging communities and religious leaders from the Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic communities, and advocating for equal rights and results.

New partnerships between the EU, faith-based organisations and religious communities were an important innovative element of the initiative – given their strong capacity to influence norms – alongside the involvement of community leaders and rural women, men, girls and boys. Other key stakeholders also included local authorities, public institutions, farmers’ associations, civil society and the media. The initiative was preceded by an intensive consultation process with target groups and beneficiaries, particularly women and girls in rural areas through the Caritas Family Centre, as well as experts in the field of domestic violence, institutions and civil society organisations. The participatory approach to bring together stakeholders to discuss GBV was new experience for most participants.

### 3.1.3 EU Member States

**Figure 12: EU Member States’ capitals – Number of actions reported, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018**



At the capital level, EU Member States reported 149 centrally-managed actions in 2018 that addressed thematic priority B. The most frequently addressed objectives concerned violence against women and girls (objective 7) and healthy nutrition levels (objective 12). Most reported actions were global or multi-country in scope. This marks an increase from 115 reported actions in 2017, when access to healthcare services (objective 10) was the most frequently addressed objective.

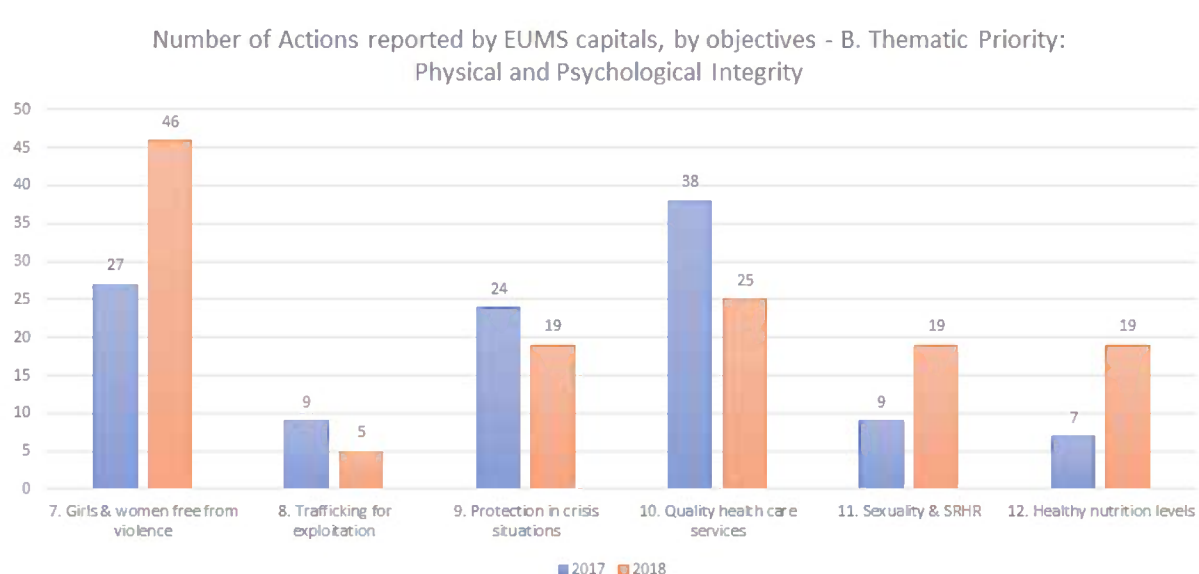
Throughout 2018, EU Member States continued to support global initiatives that promoted SRHR for millions. The ‘SheDecides’<sup>26</sup> initiative – jointly launched in March 2017 by the Governments of Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden – continued to gain traction in 2018, prompting greater attention to SRHR alongside a growing range of policy and financial commitments. EU Member States that financially supported ‘SheDecides’ included Belgium, Denmark, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden.

In addition, the International Conference on Family Planning in November 2018 reaffirmed partners’ commitments to ensuring that every woman and girl has access to high-quality, affordable family planning information and services. The United Kingdom was among the major donors in the

<sup>26</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.shedecides.com>

wake of the conference, announcing an additional EUR 222 million in funding.<sup>27</sup> In tandem, Denmark is set to double its overall funding for sexual and reproductive health and family planning in 2019. The United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden (together with Norway) remained the largest donors for SRHR initiatives. Germany's long-term financial commitments are also important to highlight, as the country committed to spending 25 % of its bilateral aid budget on SRHR and family planning.

**Figure 13: EU Member States – Selection of objectives, thematic priority B, Physical and Psychological Integrity, 2018 vs 2017**



Thematic priority B was the second most frequently addressed priority by EU Member States' actions. However, many actions covered more than one priority and several objectives. Women's access to decent work (objective 14) was the most frequently addressed. The second most commonly addressed objectives, in equal measure, were women's access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15) and enabling women and girls to live free from all forms of violence (objective 7). Very few GAP II indicators were selected.

Initiatives that tackled harmful practices featured prominently among EU Member States' actions in 2018. These included community-based interventions to combat **female genital mutilation and improve SRHR in Burkina Faso**, hand in hand with challenging discriminatory social norms. Measures in the **Horn of Africa and Iraq** sought to enhance gender equality within the women, peace and security agenda, while promoting conflict prevention and stability. Actions to support women's rights and health, including maternal health, psychosocial assistance for refugees, and initiatives to counter trafficking were also reported. Protecting women and men from **sexual- and gender-based violence in crisis situations** was the aim of several actions, as was building the resilience of households and communities in the earthquake-affected areas in **Nepal**. Social inclusion also received attention, for example, in terms of Roma children and children with disabilities, and establishing dementia-inclusive structures in two model regions in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

<sup>27</sup> European donor support to sexual and reproductive health and family planning. Trends analysis 2017-2018.

Countdown2030Europe, January 2019

<http://www.countdown2030europe.org/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/Annual%20Tracking%20Report%20-%20web.pdf>

As a result of the recent refugee crisis in Greece's immediate neighbourhood and the large arrival numbers of displaced persons, a substantial part of **Greece's** bilateral aid was channelled to national activities and initiatives to **support refugees**, with a view to lessening human suffering. A national strategy coordinated actions by several government bodies at different levels, as well as civil society organisations. A multi-faceted approach yielded positive results, as described in the box below.

**Box 6: General Secretariat for Gender Equality, Greece**

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality of Greece provided services to refugee women and children through the National Network of Structures for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women, in cooperation with municipalities, regional government bodies, government ministries and civil society organisations. Refugee women and children were provided with transport to safe shelters and counselling centres, where they received psychosocial support and, if needed, legal advice regarding asylum and relocation. Access to interpretation and cultural mediation was also available, as was access to education, training and healthcare. All services were provided free of charge. Priority was given to fostering a survivor-centred, inclusive identification regime that protects human rights and ensures the provision of comprehensive assistance.

Furthermore, the Government stepped up efforts to address challenges and opportunities related to the nexus between human trafficking and migrant smuggling. It adopted new legal measures, carried out human rights education in schools and ran awareness raising campaigns to combat trafficking.

**Box 7: Belgium's 'Integrated WASH, food security and gender and protection response' in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Since mid-2018, Belgium has supported the 'Integrated WASH, food security, gender and protection response' initiative for conflict-affected communities in the Tanganyika province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The initiative's pre-technical assessment involved mapping water points and sources to be developed or rehabilitated. Plans are afoot for Oxfam to identify and select beneficiary villages based on needs identified in consultation with beneficiary community members. This will form part of a multi-sectoral assessment taking into consideration a range of dimensions, such as emergency food security and vulnerable livelihoods (EFSVL), protection, gender and advocacy.

Thus far, the initiative has identified widespread violence and rising ethnic tensions in the wake of an influx of internally displaced persons. The Twa ethnic group feel discriminated against by the Luba and Bantu population, are unaware of how to access justice, and experience restricted mobility due to the presence of armed actors. Women and girls face particularly high risks of sexual assault and violence en route to distant water sources, alongside challenges such as forced and early marriages.

To ensure inclusiveness and duly consider the challenges faced by women, Oxfam will undertake a 'rapid care and gender analysis' to better understand gender roles and responsibilities, as well as capacities and vulnerabilities in terms of proposed programming. Such an analysis will inform water, sanitation and hygiene activities that reduce women's vulnerability and time burden. Measures by past projects may be replicated, such as installing water points closer to or within villages; diversifying water sources to reduce the amount of time spent collecting water; providing better household water storage options and water collection containers to reduce the frequency with which women travel to collect water; and hygiene promotion activities on WASH-related illnesses that oblige women to spend significant time caring for sick family members. Oxfam will also plan committee activities and meetings around women's schedules to avoid clashing with their daily activities. Training leaders on gender equality and women's rights, protection and community participation is planned to facilitate



men's and women's equal representation on water management committees.

#### **Box 8: France's Muskoka Fund**

Since 2011, France has supported gender equality and the health of women, children and adolescents in Africa through the Muskoka Fund.<sup>28</sup> Between 2011 and 2019, EUR 130 million in support was provided to Benin, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The fund has financed high-impact interventions implemented by four UN agencies – the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, UN Women and the World Health Organization (WHO) – using a collaborative, holistic approach.

To target hard-to-reach populations, such as young and adolescents, the French Muskoka Fund promoted innovative outreach tools. These include the pan-African television show 'That's life!' ('*C'est-la-Vie*'), broadcasted by 44 national channels. Similarly, the green line 'Enlighten me' ('*Guindima*') initiative has been used to inform youth about menstrual hygiene, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, anatomy and puberty, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

#### **Box 9: Luxembourg, 'Innovation in maternal health services in Mongolia'**

Luxembourg supported the telemedicine project exit phase of the initiative 'Innovation in maternal health services in Mongolia: From pilot to institutionalisation' in 2017/2018. Implemented by UNFPA and the Ministry of Health – with the full buy-in of Mongolia's authorities – the project aims to assist Mongolia to achieve the SDGs by halving the rate of maternal mortality. The second phase of the initiative involved institutionalising the results of the first phase, and assisting the provision of adequate maternal antenatal, childbirth and post-natal healthcare. To address challenges faced by obstetric and gynaecological healthcare in such a sparsely populated country, the initiative drew on lessons learned from a previous project on cardiovascular medical care.

The fully decentralised initiative involves the active participation of local health centres and hospitals. It centres on building in-country capacities to respond to the needs of women by providing maternal healthcare of the highest standard at all the levels – whether in remote health centres or in the nation's capital. Gender equality is taken into account across all operations, including communications. Thus, the project worked to establish and reinforce technical capacity for real time communication and consultation with health professionals – most of whom are women – in different locations, while enhancing their qualifications and learning opportunities. In addition, the curricula for midwives is being brought up to international standards, in terms of theoretical and practical learning.

In line with the Government's wishes, the initiative works with the national policy and plan on child healthcare and maternal and reproductive health. Issues of reproductive and sexual health are under consideration, including services for adolescent reproductive health and family planning, with a view to making the most of existing structures. An application will be developed to allow the public to access health information as needed, including on sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Efforts to disseminate such information and applications will capitalise on another complementarily EU initiative to improve Mongolia's mobile and internet networks. Moreover, while the project existed before the formulation of the GAP II, it has been aligned with the SDGs since its inception. Closer alignment with the GAP II's objectives may become possible during subsequent phases of the project.

#### **Box 10: Malta's Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers**

In 2018, Malta's Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) initiated a project on 'Psychosocial Intervention Services for Beneficiaries of International Protection and Asylum

<sup>28</sup> For more information, see: <https://ffmuskoka.org/en/home-2>

Seekers'. Due to run until 2022, the project will provide psychosocial support services to address the long-lasting effects of traumas endured in the context of migration, including depression, anxiety and gender-based violence – the latter a particularly pressing issue for migrant women and girls. The initiative is grounded on the GAP II's priorities, as well as the conviction to putting women at the centre of the decision-making process. The non-governmental organisation, Migrant Women Association Malta (MWAM), collaborated on the project's implementation to ensure a solid gender-based approach, drawing on their extensive gender expertise and experience of working with migrant women and girls. This expertise has been indispensable for working with beneficiaries.

#### **Box 11: Spain's support for addressing gender-based violence in Mauritania**

In December 2017, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) launched a project entitled 'Support for the prevention of, and coordinated intervention of the police in the effective treatment of, gender violence in Mauritania'. It aims to address Mauritania's high rates of gender-based violence – for instance, 1,200 cases were estimated in Nouakchott alone during 2017-2018 – and the cultural norms that prevent women from reporting GBV cases. Due to run until November 2019, the initiative relies on training to change the attitudes of law enforcement to issues of gender-based violence. The project is being implemented with the support of the Spanish police, drawing on the experience of the Spanish National Plan against Gender-based Violence.

Among the initiative's first results was the preparation of a manual of procedures to be used by the Mauritanian police for processing GBV cases. Practical training was also delivered, guided by the example of the police force in Spain. The initiative opened up space for dialogue on the double burden experienced by women – caused by the combination of direct violence and the socio-cultural aftermath of experiencing violence. The importance of putting women's rights first has become clear to all of the stakeholders involved in the project.

#### **Box 12: Germany initiatives to combat violence against women in Latin America**

Throughout 2018, Germany supported the 'ComVoMujer – Combating violence against women in Latin America' initiative. Launched in 2009, 'ComVoMujer' was prompted by the Commissioner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to include the private sector in its activities to create broad ownership and encourage cooperation with governmental and non-governmental actors. ComVoMujer addressed challenges by understanding the nature of the private sector and using its logic to develop innovative actions. Clearly structured internal-steering processes and permanent supervision were also vital, as well knowledgeable, multidisciplinary staff with experience in the field and valuable contacts with relevant external partners.

One of the initiative's most important counterparts was the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations of Peru (MIMP). Convinced of the benefits of a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach, the ministry signed an agreement whereby it formally committed to include the private sector in its efforts. In order to win over the private sector, and better connect all the sectors involved, the initiative elaborated a conceptual framework and indicators for safe businesses. Research studies were also conducted on the economic consequences of violence against women for companies, undertaken with the University of San Martín de Porres (USMP). Empirical evidence of the financial impacts of violence against women proved extremely useful for securing the private sector's buy-in, increasing their ownership. This prompted companies to conduct campaigns, carry out further studies, train their employees – both through workshops and online certifications – and implement special management models to prevent violence against women.

Key lessons learned included the importance of engaging the high-level managers of potential private sector partners to ensure sustainable partnerships. Alliances proved especially helpful as door-openers. Exchanging best practices and mutual learning was both an asset and an effective scaling-up strategy. It was also vital to involve the media to disseminate information and generate further

interest. Overall, the strategies applied by ComVoMujer proved extremely successful. Having started with no enterprises among its partners, the initiative is now working intensively with 100 companies and four business associations, in addition to collaborating with a further 400 enterprises.

State institutions increasingly recognise the private sector's role in curbing gender-based violence. For example, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations launched the certification, 'Safe enterprise without violence and discrimination against women', in order to encourage more businesses to implement preventive measures. The University of San Martín de Porres and academic stakeholders have conducted – and will continue to carry out – additional research on the effects of violence against women. For instance, by analysing its impacts on students' productivity.

#### **Box 13: Spain's support for the 'WE DECIDE' programme**

Throughout 2018, Spain supported the global 'WE DECIDE' programme, implemented by UNFPA (*'Programa de fortalecimiento de políticas de inclusión social, género y prevención de la violencia sexual para poblaciones en situación de vulnerabilidad, con énfasis en el ámbito de la discapacidad'*). The programme addresses the protection of women and young people with disabilities from gender-based violence, as well as issues related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. It works with civil society organisations representing women with disabilities on international quality standards grounded on gender expertise, gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data. Overall, the programme focuses on four areas. First, a global assessment of legal gaps, existing practices, standard operational procedures and services to combat violence against women and girls with disabilities. Second, support for networks of women and young people with disabilities to improve their political participation and to create opportunities for political dialogue with institutions. Third, the advancement of the 2030 Agenda through the development of specific indicators. Fourth, dedicated advocacy actions, including initiatives within the UN system and in international fora.

In 2018, the programme's activities included articulating the needs of women and girls with disabilities, supporting the amendment of discriminatory laws, and combating gender and disability-based stereotypes. The initiative also engaged in advocacy to shed light on gender-based violence against persons with disabilities, and to unlock women's and girls' potential to claim their right to live free from all forms of violence. Dialogues were arranged between the Government of Spain, programme stakeholders and beneficiaries through implementing partners so to increase beneficiaries' self-esteem and political participation.

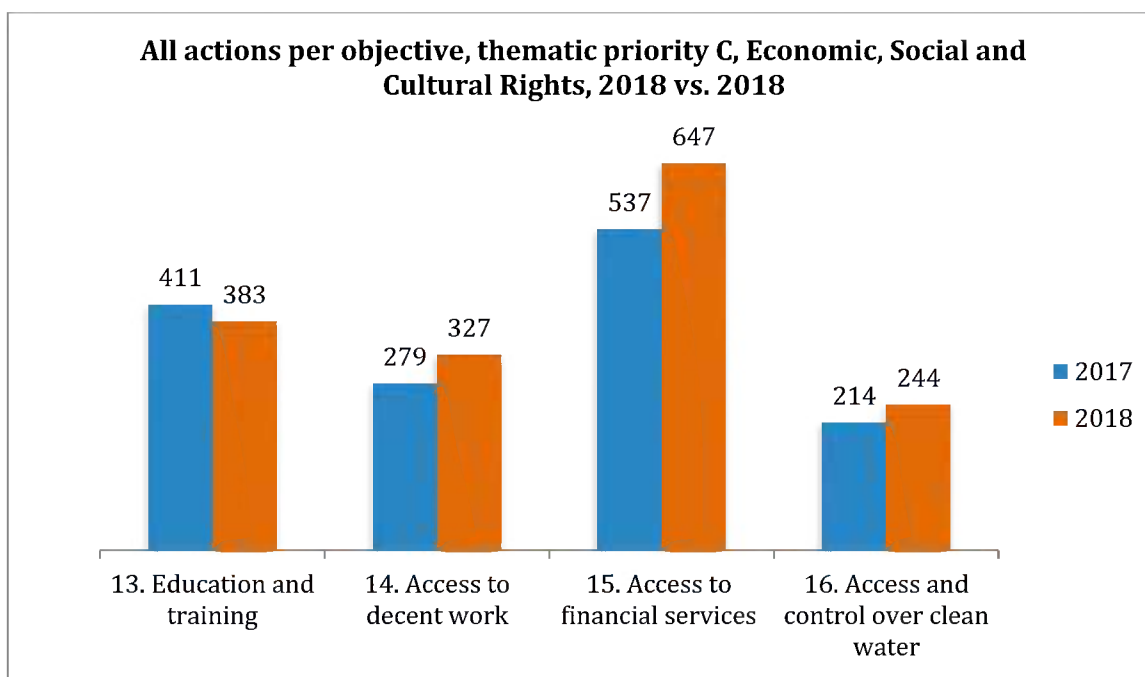
Given the invisibility of women and girls with disabilities who experience gender-based violence, political commitment to specific public policies and services is needed. In this regard, one of WE DECIDE's was the development of 'Women and youth with disabilities: Guidelines for providing rights-based and gender-sensitive services to address gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health and rights'. Based on these guidelines, UNFPA is developing operational tools to support the organisations involved in the programme. These tools will enable them to expand access to prevention, protection and assistance services to combat gender based-violence, as well as to provide access to sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls with disabilities.

### **3.2 Thematic priority C. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment**

In 2018, 1,580 reported actions focusing on thematic priority C, 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment', contributed to advancing progress on SDG 1 ('No Poverty'), SDG 3 ('Good Health and Well-being'), SDG 4 ('Quality Education'), SDG 5 ('Gender Equality'), SDG 6 ('Clean Water and Sanitation'), SDG 7 ('Affordable and Clean Energy'), SDG 8 ('Decent Work and Economic Growth') and SDG 9 ('Industry, Infrastructure and Innovation').



- Figure 14: All actions per objective, thematic priority C, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2018

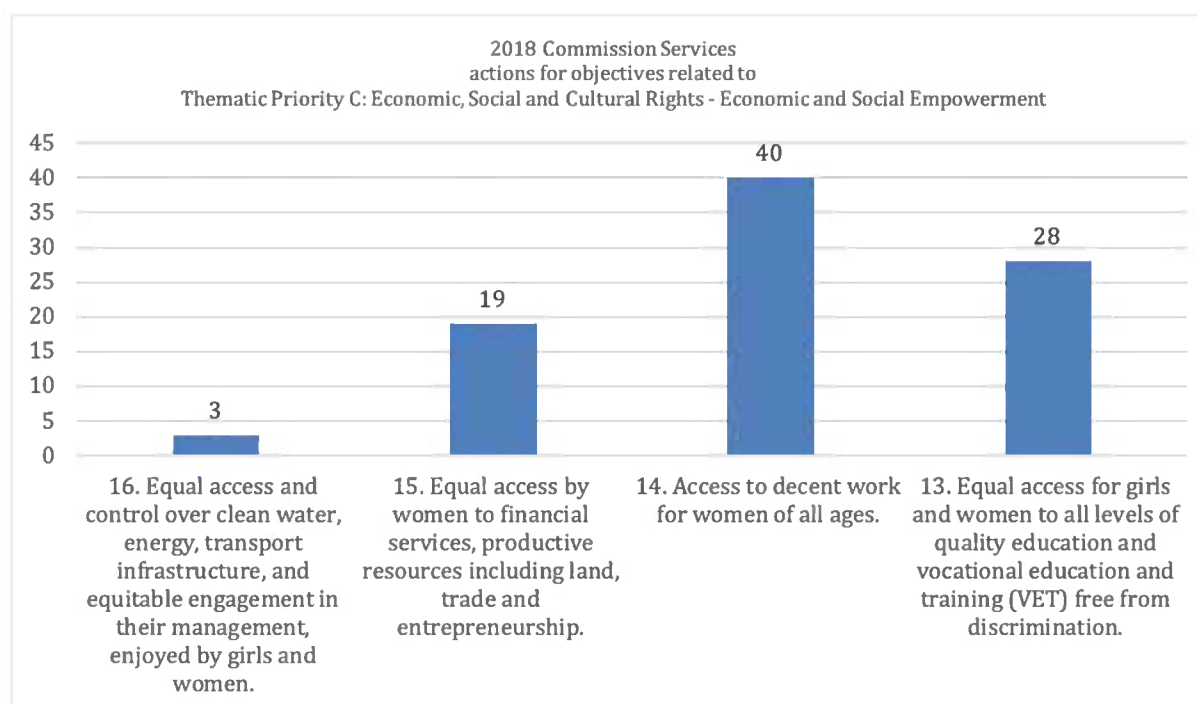


In 2018, the most well-funded and supported of the GAP II's priorities was thematic priority C, 'Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Economic and Social Empowerment'. This was the case across Commission services, EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries, and Member States at the capital level.

Promoting women's economic empowerment remained embedded in the Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs. For example, through the EU's External Investment Plan (EIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa, the European Commission and the Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO) signed an agreement to establish the **NASIRA Risk-Sharing Facility**. This aims to improve access to investment loans for entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on people who have been forced to flee to other parts of their countries (internally displaced people) or leave their countries altogether (asylum seekers or refugees), those who fled but have recently returned (returnees), and **women and young people**. Under this initiative, EUR 75 million from the External Investment Plan's Guarantee is expected to generate up to EUR 750 million in investments, and some 800,000 jobs in Africa. On the ground, NASIRA will boost financing for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises – one of the EIP's five priority areas – by addressing the **high risks involved in lending to underserved entrepreneurs in partner countries**. It will give them access to investment loans by offering local financial institutions, such as banks and microfinance institutions, portfolio guarantees containing loans to entrepreneurs.

### 3.2.1 Commission services

Figure 9: Commission services – Number of actions reported, thematic priority C, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2018



In 2018, Commission services reported 131 centrally-managed actions under thematic priority C. The largest number of reported actions addressed access to decent work (objective 14).

**Global programmes** spanned a range of sectors, such as culture, labour migration, land degradation, the environment and sustainable energy. In addition, education featured prominently in joint work with UNICEF, UNESCO and the **Digital2Equal Initiative**. Capacity building was another clear focus. Two examples in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries included support for strengthening research and innovation capacity, and capacity building for mineral institutions and small-scale private sector entities operating in low-value minerals, linked to objective 14. Two further programmes focused on aspects of migration, namely a global action to improve the **recruitment framework of labour migration**, and support for assessing the economic contribution of labour migration in developing countries as destination countries. Support for intercultural dialogue, and investment in culture and creativity, were the focus of two multi-country actions, broadly addressing objectives 13 and 14.

Examples of actions undertaken to support livelihoods and improve skills in **West and Central Africa** included ten actions to increase employment opportunities and foster inclusive development, targeting youth and **women in artisan fishing, while protecting natural resources** in Mauritania. A multi-country action sought to improve the durability of **micro-enterprises**.

In **East and Southern Africa**, actions addressed the need for quality and protective alternative education, including for displaced children in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia and Tanzania (objectives 13 and 15). The Platform for Remittances, Investments and Migrants' Entrepreneurship in Africa, 'PRIME Africa', encouraged migrant entrepreneurship. The European Union Capacity Building Mission (**EUCAP Somalia**), **in coordination with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)** supported the Somali Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development Mogadishu (MoWHRD) to **promote women's role in the maritime sector**. Within the framework of this collaboration, EUCAP Somalia and UNSOM committed to supporting the Ministry to organise a consultative conference on the subject.

Support for equal access to **finances services and productive resources** (objective 16) included an EU contribution to the Regional Housing Programme; investment climate reviews and action plans by the EU and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); and measures to strengthen fiscal governance in **Eastern Partnership** countries. A climate and energy initiative to support cities and municipalities was initiated with the Eastern Partnership Covenant of Mayors East.

Supported by the third phase of the **European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES)**, funded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, 30 prominent women representatives of the political opposition, alongside representatives of local councils and civil society outside and within Syria, elaborated a list of recommendations on empowering Syrian women in the political, economic and social spheres in 2018.

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment featured prominently on the **trade policy agenda** during 2018. A study on 'Women in trade: collecting data on women's involvement in extra-EU trade in selected EU Member States' was conducted by the International Trade Centre (ITC). It will be presented at the 'Trade for Her' conference, hosted by the European Commission on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 2019, in Brussels. More broadly, the conference will discuss barriers to trade faced by women and how these can be effectively addressed. Moreover, the Directorate-General for Trade and the Joint Research Centre published a report on '**EU Exports to the World: Effects on Employment**'<sup>29</sup> in November 2018. Replete with sex-disaggregated data, the report affirms that the EU's global exports are more important than ever, supporting 36 million jobs in the EU – including 13.7 million women workers. As of mid-2019, the report was being updated.

The '**Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) for the modernisation of the EU-Chile Association Agreement**' tested an ex-ante analysis of trade's impact on women's status by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) – the first such test in the EU context.<sup>30</sup> The EU also proposed provisions on trade and gender equality in the context of the EU-Chile Association Agreement, which were presented to Chile and published in June 2018.<sup>31</sup> The EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) Joint Committee adopted a recommendation on trade and gender in September 2018.<sup>32</sup> This seeks to increase women's access to, and the benefits they derive from, the opportunities created by CETA.

The EU-funded programme on women's economic empowerment, **WE EMPOWER**, was another notable initiative in 2018. It enabled the EU to strengthen key partnerships with like-minded countries, while influencing agenda-setting in multilateral fora in order to ensure that gender equality remains a priority global issue. WE EMPOWER targets women-led enterprises and networks, multinational companies, employer's organisations and relevant stakeholders in Europe and beyond – including countries that are part of the G7, and states in Latin American, the Caribbean, and Asia.<sup>33</sup> It draws these stakeholders together to promote business links, joint ventures and innovation between women from across regions, while supporting the exchange of good practices to increase the private sector's capacity to implement 'gender equal business'. In 2018, the programme strengthened women entrepreneurs' networks in the EU and Latin America. Analytical work was also conducted on the potential for advancing gender equality through the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement. WE EMPOWER also successfully influenced the

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<sup>29</sup> For more information, see: <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/in-focus/trade-and-jobs/>

<sup>30</sup> For more information, see: <http://trade-sia-chile.eu/en/>

<sup>31</sup> For more information, see: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/june/tradoc\\_156962.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/june/tradoc_156962.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> For more information, see: [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/september/tradoc\\_157419.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/september/tradoc_157419.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Canada, Japan, the United States of America, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

outcomes of the Canadian Gender Equality Advisory Council, the Charlevoix G7 Summit Communique and the W20 agenda and Communique. It is also supporting G7 work in France.

The EU's Common Agriculture Policy contributed to the advancement of a range of SDGs, including SDG 5 on gender equality. The recommendations of the **Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA)** noted that women's empowerment can be part of the solution to address poverty, poor skills development and inequality. The Task Force, comprising a group of African and European experts, was jointly established by the Commission services on agriculture and international cooperation and development in 2017. During 2018, the Task Force continued to advocate for strengthening the capacity of local people, notably women and youth. This includes European support for **gender-sensitive regional and local initiatives, as well as innovation hubs**.

The EU highlighted gender equality as an important area to address in a number of recent **multilateral fisheries declarations**, such as the 2017 Malta MedFish4Ever Declaration for the Mediterranean and the 2018 Sofia Declaration for the Black Sea. In September 2018, Furthermore, a high-level conference on the sustainable development of small-scale fisheries was organised in Malta by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), with the EU's support. The conference addressed ways to support the role of women in the fisheries sector. Moreover, the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) included actions to facilitate **women's fish-processing cooperatives' access** to EU vessel landing in Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar. The agreements also addressed the construction of dedicated artisanal fish-processing facilities for women's cooperatives in Guinea Bissau. The EU is currently working with Gambia to explore ways of supporting women oyster collector associations.

The Council conclusions of the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 2015, on 'Advancing gender equality in the European Research Area (ERA)', invited the Commission and EU Member States to consider integrating a gender perspective in dialogues with partner countries in the sphere of science, technology and innovation. Following up on these conclusions, **gender equality in research and innovation is being included in the agendas of Joint Science and Technology Steering Committees**, covering **Mexico** in 2018.

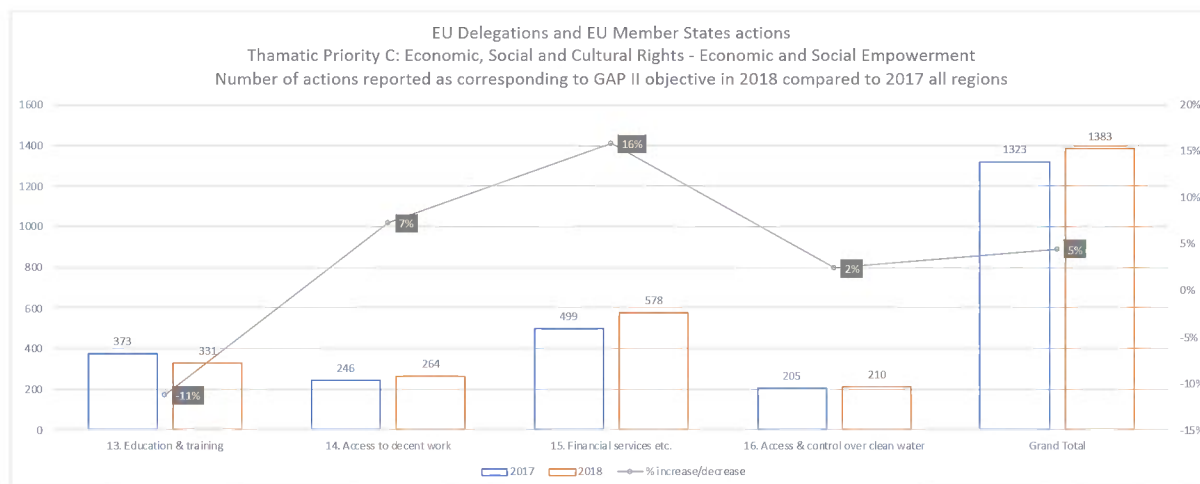
The **Horizon 2020** funding programme is the core instrument at the EU level to support and leverage research and innovation cooperation with partner countries. A specific **call on the 'gender perspective of science, technology and innovation in dialogue with third countries'** was opened in the 2018 'Science with and for Society' (SwafS) work programme. Moreover, the SwafS-funded project, 'GENDER ACTION' – launched in 2017 – included a specific objective on building new collaboration to advance gender equality in terms of international cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

In 2018, the EU dedicated over 8 % of its humanitarian aid budget to **Education in Emergencies (EiE)**, totalling EUR 91.5 million and reaching over 1 million children across the world. In May 2018, a Communication on education in emergencies and protracted crises was adopted. The new policy framework will enable the EU to leverage its resources more predictably, flexibly and effectively, based on a holistic, coordinated humanitarian-development nexus approach and clear strategic priorities. EU Member States endorsed the policy framework in the Council Conclusions, adopted in November 2018. At the G7 Summit, the EU pledged to invest EUR 72 million over three years to promoting equal access to quality education and learning opportunities in emergencies and protracted crises.



### 3.2.2 EU Delegations and Member States in partner countries

**Figure 10: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Number of actions reported, thematic priority C, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2018 vs 2017**



Marking a break with past trends, 2018 was the first year that thematic priority C, ‘Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’, received the most support of the GAP II’s three priorities by EU Delegations and Member States in partner countries. Overall support increased for decent work (objective 14), access to water (objective 16) and access to financial services (objective 15). However, it decreased globally for education and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) (objective 13).

#### *Africa*

Analysing the situation in different world regions reveals notable regional variations. For instance, in **Central and West Africa**, support for financial services nearly doubled, support for education and TVET rose by one-third, yet support for access to water and decent work decreased slightly.

Support for **education and vocational training (objective 13)** featured prominently in **East and Southern Africa**, where it was the focus of over 60 actions by EU Delegations and EU Member States. Macro-level actions included education sector reform in Namibia, an education sector support programme in Mozambique, and support for higher-level education in Somalia. As in the case of other objectives, support for **TVET was often coupled with actions linked to other issues**. For instance, in Somalia, these included improving the situation of refugees and displaced communities, and promoting renewable energy skills and women’s economic empowerment. Links were also apparent with the inclusion of children with disabilities in Zambia, the revitalisation of indigenous languages in Namibia, cross-border collaboration between Ethiopia and Sudan, strengthening civil society in South Sudan, and fostering resilience in many other countries.

Examples of a growing focus on **access to decent work** (objective 14) include support for a network of cooperatives and job opportunities for women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and support for SMEs and a budget support contract, ‘Employment for Employability’, in South Africa. The rights of workers with **disabilities** was the crux of a multi-country action. Actions related to **sustainability** featured strongly, for example, support for sustainable agriculture in Tanzania, waste reduction and recycling in Swaziland, urban mobility in Kenya, and access to energy in Mozambique. Other actions sought to improve the professionalism of journalists and media professionals in Somalia, to promote employment in Mozambique’s cultural sector, and a mentorship programme for young women in Sudan.

In many African countries, EU Delegations and EU Member States worked to bolster **civil society capacity to engage in social and economic development** and strengthen democratic processes. ‘Speak up Zambia!’ was one such initiative to empower citizens to know, claim, and secure their rights through access to justice, while enabling the media to exercise its role as a ‘watchdog’ for society. This initiative also targeted objectives 15, 17 and 18.

Initiatives linked to objective 13, on education and vocational training, were generally, but not exclusively, implemented in Mozambique, Namibia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, South Africa and Zambia. Support for education was also notable in Angola, where it also aimed to increase access to decent work (objective 14), as well as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Eswatini and Uganda. Macro-level actions included education sector reform in Namibia, an education sector support programme in Mozambique, and support for higher education in Somalia. As with other objectives, support for technical and vocational education and training was often coupled with actions on other issues. In Somalia, these included efforts to improve the situation of refugees and displaced communities, and to promote renewable energy skills and women’s economic empowerment. They also encompassed the inclusion of children with disabilities in Zambia, the revitalisation of indigenous languages in Namibia, cross-border collaboration between Ethiopia and Sudan, strengthening civil society in South Sudan, and efforts to foster resilience in a range of countries.

Objective 14 on decent work included actions that provided support for a network of cooperatives and job opportunities for women in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and assistance for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and a budget support contract on ‘Employment for Employability’ in South Africa. A multi-country action focused on the rights of workers with disabilities. Actions related to sustainability featured fairly prominently, for example, support for sustainable agriculture in Tanzania, waste minimisation and recycling in Eswatini, waste management in Comoros, urban mobility in Kenya, and access to energy in Mozambique. Other actions sought to improve the professionalism of journalists in Somalia’s media, promoted employment in Mozambique’s cultural sector, and offered a mentorship programme for young women in Sudan.

More reported activities on this priority ranged from support to cooperatives (Burundi), support to community resilience (Benin, Burundi, Cameroon), youth economic empowerment for peace and social cohesion (Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone), institutional capacity building for rural development and infrastructure (Burundi, Ghana, Guinea), urbanization and support to adaptation to climate change (Benin, Guinea), tourism and cultural heritage (Benin), modernization of technical and vocation training (Togo), securing land and resource rights (Cameroon), empowerment of women in social economy (Chad, Mauritania), leadership programme for women (Ghana), employment (Guinea), supporting female education (Niger, Senegal), and many more. These are only a small sample of the very wide array of actions that are contributing to further the status of women and gender equality in the region with EU support.

The EU Delegation programme in Burundi “Support to improve the resilience capacities of the populations most affected by the effects of the 2015 multifactor crisis in Burundi” shows that in a context of crisis transformative change is encouraged by empowerment of women and by giving them agency. In situations of crisis, women increase their resilience and that of their communities through participation in resilience funds (savings and credit groups).

Spain in Mauritania with the project “Promoting the empowerment of women in the social economy in Mauritania through their socio-economic strengthening” shows that robust analysis is key to strengthen technical, organisational and advocacy capacities of existing structures to respond to the needs of women. Pilot initiatives were supported for women’s structures in the areas targeted by the project.

**Box 14: EU Delegation to Angola, ‘Right to Land in the Cunene Province’**

The EU Delegation to Angola supported the ‘Right to Land in the Cunene Province’ (DITERCU) initiative to address gender-based discrimination in access to land. In this way, it contributes to upholding the human rights of vulnerable rural populations in southern Angola, who are severely affected by the climate change. Women are often unable to exercise their right to land, as traditional gender norms ascribe ownership of family land solely to men. While rural women carry out 50 % of farming tasks, they only own 5 % of property.

The action focuses on improving institutional capacity in the system responsible for the recognition, delimitation, cadastre, titration, registration and transfer of land. It also aims to create and strengthen systems for the prevention and resolution of land conflicts. Moreover, the initiative will create working groups of women and men to improve awareness of gender equality in access to, and the management of, land. Men’s involvement and engagement is an integral part of the project, in terms of raising awareness of, and creating support for, changes in norms around gender equality and women’s rights to land.

During the project identification phase in 2017, a gender analysis was undertaken and was used to inform the development of a gender-responsive results framework. Gender analysis also enabled differentiated strategies for addressing gender inequality vis-à-vis land rights. During the implementation phase, a more detailed gender analysis is planned to pinpoint women’s specific needs, expectations and interests, as well as their visibility, inclusion and the promotion of equal opportunities. While gender expertise in the province of Cunene is relatively limited, the Provincial Directorate for the Family and Women’s Promotion was consulted to enhance national ownership.

**Box 15: EU Delegation to Cameroon, ‘LandCam’**

The ‘LandCam programme’ aims to support the efforts of the Government of Cameroon to improve the management of land and natural resources by promoting more effective land governance, in the context of a broad national land reform process. Where communities have a say in land-related processes, traditionally only men are consulted. To address this, LandCam organised consultations with women. As precise challenges to women’s land rights were not clarified during these consultations, a gender analysis was undertaken. This revealed that challenges on the ground are nuanced – women can own and sell land, albeit only if the land is registered. Moreover, gender discrimination exists in cases of land scarcity and due to customary laws.

Equipped with a stronger understanding of the challenges, LandCam facilitated a dialogue between traditional leaders and women – an innovative approach nearly unprecedented in Central Africa. Preliminary results have been positive. For instance, one traditional chief who had been sceptical of women’s rights became one of the programme’s gender champions. While it is still too early to gauge impacts, the LandCam programme appears to be having a positive influence on Cameroon’s land reform process.

**Box 16: EU Delegation support for the implementation of the Tanzania Energy Efficiency Action Plan**

The EU Delegation supported the implementation of the Tanzania Energy Efficiency Action Plan, which aims to expand access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy by improving the efficiency of energy supply and consumption. Streamlined energy efficiency are set to make Tanzania’s energy sector more sustainable, gender-inclusive and climate-smart. As a result, quantifiable energy savings are expected, as are gender-inclusive skills development opportunities, job creation, investments in energy efficient infrastructure and clean energy technology.

Gender experts from the German development agency, GIZ, conducted a comprehensive gender

analysis with a focus on the field of energy. This proved extremely valuable for the design of the action, yielding vital insights on gender patterns and gender gaps in the sector. Recommendations from the gender analysis informed programme design. Gender expertise was also used to develop the ‘Gender Profile: Energy’ document by the Governance Helpdesk Tanzania. This identified important data which can be used during the initiative’s implementation, concerning women’s economic empowerment; income generation opportunities for women, men and youth; families’ wellbeing, including health and education; the different consumer patterns of women and men; and access to sex-disaggregated data.

Proactive policy dialogue with the Ministry of Energy was a promising hallmark of the initiative, seeking to promote women’s voice and their interests. Cooperation with the Tanzania Gender Sustainable Energy Network (TANGSEN) was another notable feature, as this entity promotes women’s interests in the energy sector. A specific training was organised with TANGSEN on gender mainstreaming in the sector, in which both government and development partners participated. The EU Delegation also organised a number of consultations to ensure the involvement of key stakeholders – including the Government, TANGSEN and other development cooperation partners, such as Sweden and Germany. The added value of stakeholders’ involvement was their knowledge, expertise and commitment. As a result, government representatives became more aware of the importance of gender equality and strengthened their knowledge on mainstreaming gender in the energy sector. Overall, the initiative contributed to championing energy efficiency and gender equality, with certain activities integrated into Tanzania’s Gender Action Plan for the energy sector.

### *Americas*

Many countries in **Latin America** experienced an economic slowdown in 2018, with particularly dire implications for women. As such, EU actors in the region sought to support women’s economic empowerment by implementing the bulk of their actions in the region under thematic priority C. A particular focus was placed on women’s equal access to financial services and productive resources, including land, trade and entrepreneurship (objective 15), which was considered a key strategy for women’s socio-economic empowerment in the Americas.

While Latin America – like all world regions – faces environmental challenges that affect women and girls, there is limited evidence that these issues are being addressed from a gender perspective. In 2018, very few actions addressed **water, sanitation and the environment**, predominantly in Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The Suriname Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA+) is also worth highlighting. In the **Caribbean**, several actions addressed access to and control over clean water (objective 16) in the context of reconstruction after Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Other key actions included an energy sector budgetary support initiative in Barbados, as well as a bi-national programme in Haiti and the Dominican Republic on political dialogue regarding civil society, the environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

Promoting women’s **economic, social and cultural rights** was the focus of the largest proportion of EU actions in the **Caribbean** in 2018, reflecting an increase compared to 2017. Particular emphasis was placed on improving access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15) and access to decent work (objective 14). Compared to 2017, **access to decent work received more attention** in 2018 than equitable access to and management of water, energy and infrastructure (objective 16). Among reported actions, there was also a strong focus on strengthening women’s access to finance, microcredit and financial inclusion (objective 15) to support their economic growth and rural development. By contrast, few actions addressed enhanced access to primary education.



### *Asia and the Pacific*

EU Delegations and EU Member States active in **Asia and the Pacific** continued to centre their support on equal access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15), alongside education (objective 13). This reflects a continuation of trends identified in 2016 and 2017. Focal areas under thematic priority C included women's financial inclusion; access to education, TVET and the labour market; and socio-economic, environmental and nutritional development. Greater attention was paid to access to decent work (objective 14). For instance, a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach to economic development was introduced through programmes to tackle informal employment in Afghanistan and unpaid labour in China, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. EU actors integrated GAP II priorities into their support of economic development in partner countries, across a broad range of sectoral initiatives and policies. These included fisheries management and a range of non-traditional sectors, such as waste management, infrastructure, industrial management and the environment.

#### **Box 17: OIKKO Women's Economic Empowerment Project in Bangladesh**

The EU joined forces with civil society organisations in Bangladesh for the OIKKO Women's Economic Empowerment Project to enhance decent work in the country. Funded by the EU and Austria, the project was implemented between 2015 and 2018. While it directly addressed SDGs 5 ('Gender Equality' and 1 ('No Poverty'), it was also closely linked to SDGs 2 ('Zero Hunger'), 3 ('Good Health and Well-being'), 4 ('Quality Education') and 8 ('Decent Work and Economic Growth').

OIKKO was designed to explore how to support pathways for women workers to become politically empowered and voice their demands. In Bangladesh, most women workers have low skills levels and limited employment options. Perhaps most significantly, they have been socialised into accepting little control over their professional and personal choices, as social norms place pressure on women to avoid being assertive. Recognising these constraints, the project facilitated a process called 'Empowerment Knowledge and Transformative Action' with solidarity groups of 20-25 women workers. The process helped them acquire knowledge on worker's rights, alongside knowledge vital for improving their personal lives. These micro-groups were then merged to form community workers associations (CWAs), which created a space for women workers to apply their leadership skills, attain first-hand experience of leading organisations, and develop relationships with their constituencies. The project also linked these organisations with trade unions and federations. Following the project's support, women leaders successfully supported their members and co-workers to resolve issues in the community and the workplace.

#### **Box 18: Trade Related Assistance for Mongolia**

EU support for the Trade Related Assistance for Mongolia (TRAM) programme, initiated in March 2017, aimed to enhance Mongolia's international trade and economic diversification. The project's three components include trade policy and regulation, trade facilitation by providing secretarial support, and export development.

Four sectors were identified for increasing Mongolian exports to the EU. Clusters were established accordingly. While Mongolia has a critical mass of well-educated women, women's access to leadership remains a challenge. For instance, 90 % of private companies are headed by men. Critical challenges include a lack of awareness, coupled with the prevalence of discrimination against women workers concerning maternity leave and job application processes. As such, the programme focused on awareness raising, including through the innovative use of theatre performances to raise awareness. This performance was part of life skills training activities delivered for students of vocational education and training schools. To promote women's engagement, the programme stipulated that at

least 40 % of participants in capacity building activities must be women. In 2018, this target was surpassed – 60 % of participants were women.

The programme involved a successful strategic partnership with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs, an active association within the Chamber of Commerce which includes 80 companies managed by women. While the EU Delegation's guidance facilitated gender mainstreaming in the programme, the Mongolian Chamber of Commerce was responsible for suggesting engagement with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

#### *Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, and Russia*

In the **Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, and Russia**, over 21 % of actions reported in 2018 focused on women's access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15). This reflects the continuation of the trend identified in 2017. Women's access to decent work (objective 14) was the second most frequently addressed objective in the region.

In the Eastern Neighbourhood sub-region, 35 actions (51 %) under thematic priority C addressed objective 15 – marking a steady increase compared to 2017. Actions were implemented across five partner countries. EU Member States addressed gender gaps in wages (indicator 15.3) through start-up projects for women in Azerbaijan, supported by France, as well as Sweden's investment climate advisory service projects in Belarus. In Georgia, Austria supported the implementation of agricultural and rural development strategies, sustainable mountain tourism and farming initiatives. The EU Delegations to Azerbaijan and Belarus actively supported rural advisory services for women (indicator 15.6), including by enhancing participatory decision-making processes and local socio-economic development. The Delegations to Azerbaijan and Georgia engaged in initiatives to eliminate the gender gap (indicator 15.3), particularly by supporting civil society. Moreover, the EU Delegations to Belarus and Georgia focused on promoting women's access to financial services (indicator 15.8), most notably through vocational training and the creation of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

In the Southern Neighbourhood sub-region, objective 15 was addressed by 47 actions (36 %) under thematic priority C. This reflects an increase in actions on women's access to financial services, productive resources, trade and entrepreneurship compared to 2017. Actions focused on improving women's access to financial services in the framework of inclusive economic growth, as reported by the EU Delegations to Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia, as well as by Italy in Palestine. In Egypt, the EU Delegation supported for women who are former prisoners and suffer marginalisation upon their release. Significant attention was paid to improving food security and recovering agriculture value chains – most notably by the EU Delegation to Syria, and Italy in Palestine. Both Spain and Italy addressed the gender gap in wages and different sectors of the economy (indicator 15.3) through economic development initiatives in Palestine and Tunisia.

Across the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region, women's access to finance, resources, trade and entrepreneurship (objective 15) was the focus of the highest proportion of EU commitments. Among countries in the Enlargement Negotiations region, 40 actions (37 %) under thematic priority C addressed women's access to financial services and productive resources, marking a notable increase in support for objective 15. Actions were implemented in six countries, including five regional actions implemented by the EU Office in Kosovo and the EU Delegations to North Macedonia and to Turkey. Initiatives centred on vocational training, such as those by Germany in Albania, as well as Luxembourg and the EU Office in Kosovo. The EU Delegation to Albania and the EU Office in Kosovo also addressed women's participation in agriculture, rural development and sustainable tourism in Albania. The EU Delegation to Turkey focused on responding to refugees' labour demands. In Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden made

particular efforts to champion gender mainstreaming in relation to the environment, including as an opportunity for women's employment. Four regional programmes led by the EU Delegation to Turkey focused on access to decent work (objective 14) and education (objective 13) for Syrian refugees and host communities. Moreover, five multi-country programmes promoted women's entrepreneurship in industrial development, sustainable rural development and food security. In the Eastern Neighbourhood sub-region, these programmes were implemented by the EU Delegations to Jordan and by Sweden. In the Enlargement Negotiations sub-region they were undertaken by the EU Office in Kosovo. In the Southern Neighbourhood, they were implemented by the EU Delegation to Jordan, as well as by Italy in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Lebanon and Palestine.

Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport and infrastructure (objective 16) was tackled by 30 reported actions across the region. Initiatives spanned support for the establishment of drinking water facilities in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palestine and the Ukraine, as well as solid waste management in Jordan and Lebanon. They also involved the use of gender analysis in the water sector, coupled with efforts to enhance environmental business in Palestine. Through the programme, 'Effective awareness and advocacy on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REEE)' in Jordan, research was conducted on biogas energy as an important new resource, and a harbinger of innovative business opportunities for women and men.

**Box 19: EU Delegation to Libya, 'Towards Resilience and Social Inclusion of Adolescents and Young People'**

With the support of the EU Delegation, UNICEF implemented a pilot project, 'Towards Resilience and Social Inclusion of Adolescents and Young People in Libya' in four municipalities. The 3-year project pursues its overarching aim of youth empowerment through awareness raising, life skills and vocational education training, promoting cultural and social rights, and providing psychosocial support.

Since 2016, the project has provided psychosocial support to 533 girls and 744 boys, including through reintegration activities, awareness campaigns and peace-building awareness trainings. Gender equality is at the heart of its awareness campaigns, which focus on ending harmful practices in communities and curbing negative coping strategies, such as child recruitment. Through its campaigns and by using youth skills training as an entry point, the project has become a vehicle to tackle difficult issues in support of advancing gender equality.

Dialogue on harmful practices that affect girls has proved an important good starting point. The initiative draws on the experience of work on gender-based violence in Libya, which is also addressed through another EU-funded project. Given the stigma surrounding GBV, related issues cannot be addressed directly. Thus, the project's activities were framed in the context of women empowerment's and health services. The initiative also draws on the fact that the Libyan authorities are in favour of youth empowerment, and the understanding that youth issues are not laden with the same kind of stigma as GBV. Thus, the project has spearheaded general dialogue with young people that integrates GBV-related issues indirectly, thereby curbing potential resistances.

*The Gulf States*

In the **Gulf States**, more initiatives in Yemen (12 actions) addressed thematic priority C than in Iraq (11 actions). Ensuring access to inclusive education (objective 13) was a primary concern in the region in 2018. The EU Delegation to Iraq promoted quality primary and secondary education for internally displaced persons and refugees in crisis-affected areas. It also encouraged cultural heritage education for social cohesion, coupled with a programme to strengthen the visibility of women and girls in education, with a view to fostering gender equality.



#### **Box 20: EU Delegation to Iraq, ‘Capacity Building in Primary and Secondary Education’**

Since 2017, the EU Delegation to Iraq has supported the ‘Capacity Building in Primary and Secondary Education: Improve quality and equality programme’, or the ‘Iraq Schools Programme’, to increase enrolment and reduce dropout rates. Implemented by the British Council, the gender-sensitive project targets both boys and girls, taking into account that girls are more likely to drop out of school in the country.

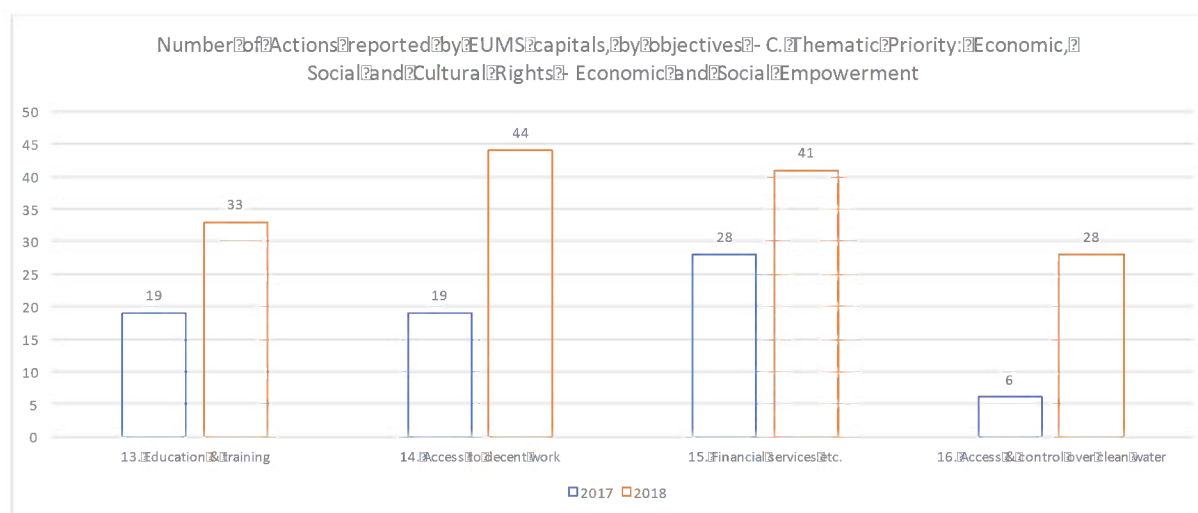
The first of the initiative’s four components involved a research study, ‘An Exploration into the Experience of Children in Education including those with Disabilities: Understanding Causes and Potential Strategies for Reducing School Dropout in Iraq’. Its findings informed the project’s recommendations to the government, reflecting the initiative’s efforts at the policy level. This component also encompassed social level efforts in 10 of Iraq’s 18 governorates. A model of active citizenship was implemented with community leaders and other active community members, such as NGOs, religious leaders, teachers and health personnel. Measures centred on campaigns on the importance of education that particularly targeted gender equality issues. Through the project’s second component, a peace-sensitive human science curriculum was developed, as was a school counselling system. The third component focused on education for children with severe disabilities, while the fourth concerned internal and external evaluation in all Iraqi schools.

An innovative strategy used by the programme was promoting the role of the educational supervisor as a ‘critical friend’ for schools. Piloted in Al-Sadaka elementary school in Al-Sadr City – an area well-known as deeply religious and tribal – the strategy enabled supervisors and staff to work together productively to outline the school’s vision, building trust, dialogue and encouraging staff self-evaluation. In collaboration with the local community, the school management team worked to improve facilities. In a short space of time, the behaviours of educators and pupils, as well as relations with the community, changed significantly. As the school’s head teacher explained, “our relation with the local community and parents has really improved. Supporting children and working closely with their families is now imbedded in the school ethos.” Above all, the programme puts children at the heart of teaching and learning process, especially girls. Particular attention is paid to children with disabilities, arranging regular visits to the homes of pupils with disabilities to encourage parents to continue sending them to school, while working to change children’s perceptions of with disabilities, encouraging them to support their classmates with disabilities both in and outside of school.

In Erbil, the programme introduced new standards, self-evaluation and a new system of external evaluation. Such thorough, objective assessments will enable management to produce more effective development plans. The Head teacher of Koya High school for Girls, for instance, explained that the programme has “had a significant impact on the school’s development. It enabled us to develop a clear vision for its trajectory and a better understanding of what the issues were and where improvements were needed.” The school credits much of its successful, high-level performance to the programme’s support.

### **3.2.3 EU Member States**

**Figure 11: EU Member States’ capitals – Selection of objectives, thematic priority C, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2018 vs 2017**



In 2018, 180 actions by EU Member States (42 % of the total actions reported) addressed thematic priority C. This marks a significant increase from 86 actions on economic, social and cultural rights in 2017. However, many of these actions covered more than one GAP II priority and several objectives. The most frequently addressed objective concerned women's access to decent work (objective 14). The second most addressed objective was increasing women's access to financial services and productive resources (objective 15). Very few GAP II indicators were selected.

Improving access to quality education and TVET, decent work, financial services and productive resources, and clean water and energy were all prominent concerns. Moreover, **training** proved a key entry point. Examples included training to bolster women's skills in business management in **Azerbaijan**, as well as training for a new generation of women leaders in **Mozambique**. Fostering resilient and sustainable livelihoods was the aim of many actions, including initiatives supporting the sustainable management of aquatic ecosystems in **East and Southern Africa**. Other key actions included the optimisation of conventional and non-conventional irrigations systems in **Palestine**, and clean cooking and electricity for households in **Uganda**. Access to land was addressed in **Guatemala** by strengthening civil society organisations' capacities to claim indigenous land rights.

#### Box 21: Czech Republic, 'Strengthening Resilience of Crisis-Affected Communities in Rakhine State, Myanmar'

The Czech Republic supported the project, 'Strengthening Resilience of Crisis Affected Communities in Rakhine State', in line with Czech humanitarian assistance and cooperation strategies. The initiative is part of the Lutheran World Federation and Czech Evangelical Diaconia's assistance for displaced communities who are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic origin and religious affiliation, particularly with the upsurge in fighting between the Arakan Army Forces and Myanmar's military forces. The project specifically addressed gender-based discrimination by targeting women heads of households and girls between the ages of 15 and 18. Especially when they are internally displaced, these women and girls are exposed to different forms of vulnerability, such as child marriage, gender-based violence, education bias, gender segregation and exclusion from household and community leadership and decision-making.

The gender analysis conducted at the project design stage was vital for understanding the delicate local context, identifying gaps and selecting areas of intervention. Based on this analysis, the project provided women and girls with education, vocational training, marketing opportunities, and opportunities to improve technical skills and develop entrepreneurship. Its support enabled 250 rights holders, on average per year, to meet their needs and those of their families through income generation and the creation of micro-businesses.

Supporting women's livelihoods has evoked substantial changes in their lives. A focus on gender equality and women's economic empowerment contributed to improving women's positions and power relations in both the private and public spheres among Rohingya Muslim and ethnic Rakhine communities. Beneficiary women became independent, their human rights increasingly acknowledged by men in their families and the community. Women's participation in decision-making processes also improved. Moreover, the action disseminated evidence on gender-based discrimination and violence at the international level, specifically at the UN Human Rights Council through the Universal Periodic Review.

**Box 22: Poland, 'Optimisation of conventional and unconventional irrigation for rural development' in Palestine**

In Palestine, Poland supported the initiative, 'Optimisation of conventional and unconventional irrigation for rural development, improved livelihoods and the activation of women and youth'. Centring on Beit Ula village, the initiative provided organisational support to the Beit Ula Women's Club, irrigation for women's home gardens, market renovation and club building. The two-year project, initiated in 2018, is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and implemented by the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM).

Working with, and strengthening an existing women's group proved vital for the action's achievements. The 20-year-old Beit Ula Women's Club has grown to encompass 500 women members, acting as a hub to bring women together to run a weekly community market, and to take part in training courses on irrigated garden cultivation, vegetable growing, processing and marketing. The club also organised sports sessions and workshops, in addition to creating a reserve fund for small loans. In an area where women's employment opportunities are severely limited due to social restrictions and the overall shortage of jobs, the club enabled women to earn an income, feed their families, gain new skills and self-esteem, and participate in building a strong organisation and community. The club has the support of the local municipality and has been commended by the Minister of Agriculture. Membership fees, rental fees for market stalls, and hiring out conference rooms provide the club with a source of income. This, coupled with its strong organisational foundation and capacity building, will ensure the entity's future sustainability.

**Box 23: Lithuania in Azerbaijan, 'Improve women's skills in autonomously running and managing businesses'**

'Improve women's skills in autonomously running and managing businesses' was a joint project by the Embassy of Lithuania in Azerbaijan and the US State Department's Emerging Donor Challenge Program (EDCP). The project addressed discrimination in access to economic and financial assets and services, while seeking to influence traditional customs that limit women's access to economic and entrepreneurial opportunities in the Ganja region.

While the project was small in scope, its impact was immense. It supported 23 young women to develop their managerial, business and leadership skills by building their capacities on a range of issues. These women participated in three full-day trainings on topics such as communications – including social media, communication strategies and public communications – and leadership skills, including types and styles of leadership, time management and team work. Training also focused on and business plan development, running the gamut from marketing strategies to pricing, cash flow management, depreciation, value cost, turnover capital and legal issues in businesses. A woman branch manager of Azerbaijan's biggest bank was invited to share her experiences. Acting as a role model for participants, she incentivised them on remaining committed positively contributing to community development. By the end of the trainings, five participants wrote personal development plans, while another three elaborated business plans. One participant launched her own business to deliver vocational training and language courses.

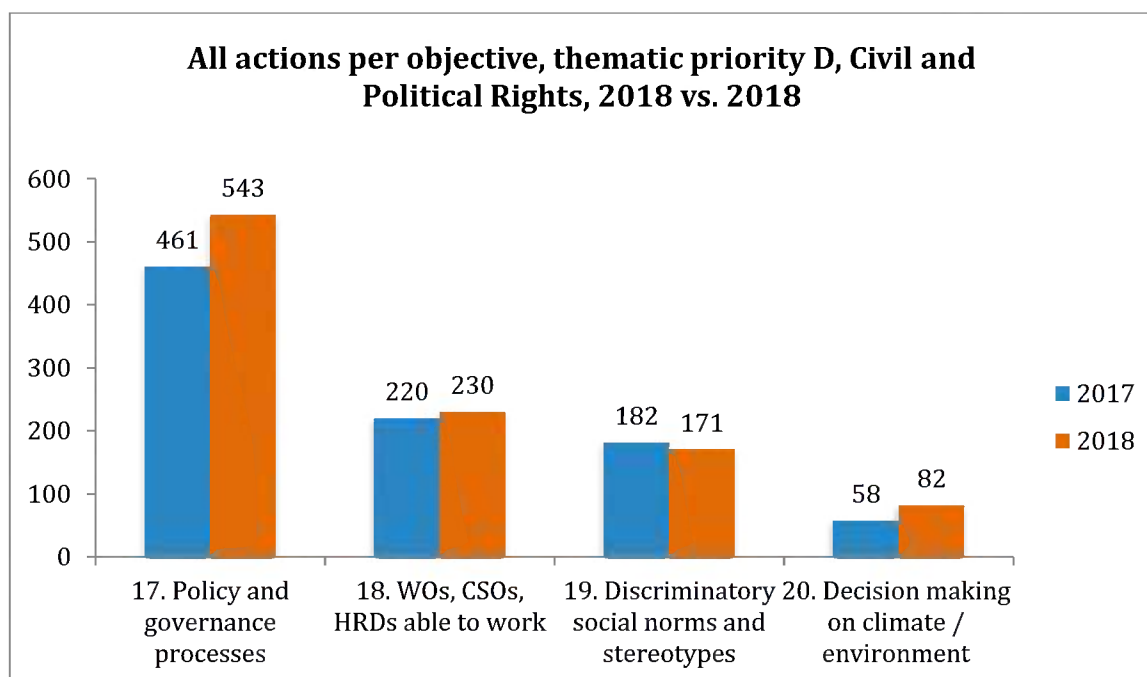
The project provided an opportunity for young women to acquire the capacities and knowledge that stand to empower them economically and socially, contributing to real changes in their everyday

lives. Participants were motivated to pursue entrepreneurship and navigate social resistances that deem it ‘inappropriate’ for women to take an active role in business. The initiative also underscored the importance of changing the entire environment surrounding women’s economic empowerment, by introducing new approaches in the education system, local government institutions and business associations.

### 3.3 Thematic priority D: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation

Overall, 964 actions were reported by EU actors on thematic priority D, ‘Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation’. These initiatives contributed to advancing SGD 5 (‘Gender Equality’) and SDG 16 (‘Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions’).

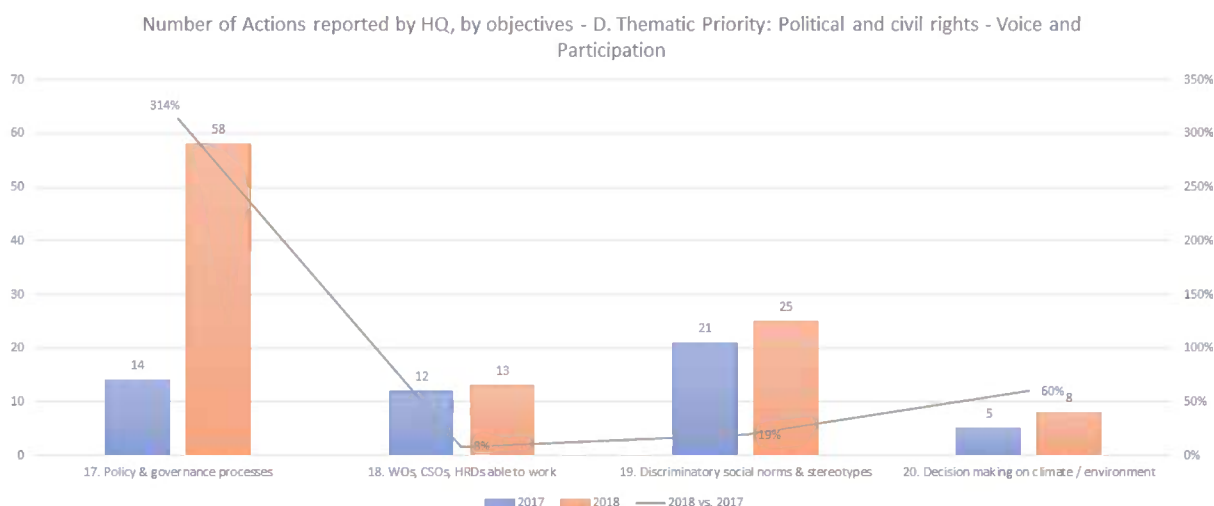
**Figure 12: Number of all actions reported, thematic priority D, Political and Civil Rights, 2017 - 2018**



#### 3.3.1 Commission services

**Figure 19: Commission services – Number of actions reported, thematic priority D, Political and Civil Rights, 2018**





#### Box 24: EU ‘INTER PARES – Parliaments in Partnership’

Launched in 2018, the ‘INTER PARES Parliaments Programme’ is an initiative to strengthen representative, inclusive democracy by supporting for the effective functioning of parliaments in partner countries through peer-to-peer approach involving exchanges with EU Member States’ parliaments. Financed by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), with funding of EUR 5 million, the programme focuses on six thematic areas: gender equality and women empowerment, human rights, citizens’ engagement and civil society, youth, climate change, and digital technologies. Throughout all of its activities, the initiative seeks to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment, while leveraging its influence on the institutionalisation of gender equality commitments.

Among its focus areas, the programme plans to strengthen the role of women members of parliament (MPs), assist the establishment or strengthening of committees on gender equality and/or women’s parliamentary caucuses, and support the introduction of gender-sensitive legislation and budgeting. The programme will also the iKNOW Politics platform<sup>34</sup>, a joint initiative with International IDEA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). With users from over 190 countries, the platform leverages the use of information and communications technology for women of all ages, enabling them to share experiences, resources and empowerment strategies for women’s political participation and representation.

Support will be provided to update the publication, ‘Women in Parliaments: Beyond Numbers’, so as to include more successful strategies by which women can overcome the political, social, economic, ideological and psychological obstacles to participating in parliamentary election. The programme will also maintain a ‘World’s Parliaments Gender Impact Database’, developing a system to monitor key quantitative and qualitative impact indicators on women parliamentarians and women staff in parliament secretariats.

Among the actions undertaken to support **civil society’s defence of human rights** (objective 18) in 2018, an EU project focused on women journalists and Human Rights Defenders in Yemen, Iraq, Sudan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Gender equality was a focus of an action to support ‘**CSOs as actors of governance and development**’ and reinforce women’s role as agents for change. This initiative promoted women’s participation in decision-making, while strengthening women’s civil society organisations’ capacities and their engagement and participation in decision-making. Other examples of working with civil society included collaboration in the framework

<sup>34</sup> For more information, see: [www.iknowpolitics.org](http://www.iknowpolitics.org)



partnership agreements, such as with the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), with Women Engaged for a Common Future (WECF) and with Cooperation Internationale pour le Developpement et la Solidarite (CIDSE).

Efforts to challenge and change discriminatory social norms (objective 19) were addressed by initiatives to foster cultural and religious pluralism, most notably in Niger and Nigeria, as well as actions to promote cross-border cultural connections for peace, social inclusion and development in Niger and Burkina Faso. Other programmes that contributed to objective 19 included, for example, supporting the monitoring and effective implementation of core international conventions in countries engaged in the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+), as well as Kyrgyzstan. Women's participation in environmental and climate-related decision-making (objective 20) was targeted by a special programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.<sup>35</sup>

Overall in **Africa**, relatively few actions reported by Commission services at the headquarters level contributed to thematic priority D. Three multi-country actions addressed women's empowerment in Morocco and Benin, as well as women's and girls' voice and participation, and support for institutional and community resilience.

In the **Americas**, four reported actions contributed to thematic priority D. Three of these also contributed to priorities B and C, and are outlined above. The fourth, comprising a Framework Partnership Agreement and grant between the European Commission and Articulación Feminista MARCOSUR (AFM) addressed women's participation in governance processes (objective 17).

One action under thematic priority D was reported in **Asia and the Pacific**, namely 'Safe and Fair: Realising women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region'. This initiative also addressed priorities B and C within member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In the **Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region**, a regional development and protection programme for refugees and host communities in the Middle East – most notably in Lebanon and Jordan – supported civil society (objective 18) and sought to change harmful norms (objective 19), while simultaneously addressing women's physical and psychological integrity (thematic priority B). This was one of many centrally-managed actions in the region that covered more than one thematic priority and addressed several objectives.

In the Southern Neighbourhood sub-region, as in 2017, several ongoing actions related to film and media work. For instance, support to enhance the gender-responsive film sectors in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. This initiative also aimed to tackle the underrepresentation of women in the audio-visual sector, while challenging gender stereotypes (objective 19).

A regional CSO network for women's rights and gender equality was supported under the framework of a EU regional programme, 'Ending violence against women in the Western Balkan countries and Turkey'. In the Enlargement Negotiations region, actions to promote Roma integration and empowerment at the local level in the Western Balkans and Turkey addressed equal involvement in policy and governance processes (objective 17), while upholding political and civil rights and changing discriminatory social norms. The action also addressed supported civil society

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<sup>35</sup> The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, 22 March 1989; the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International, 10 September 1998; the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, 22 May 2004; and the Minamata Convention on Mercury, 10 October 2013.

organisations (objective 18), who were further supported through a civil society in Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

**Box 25: Kenya's 'Ms President' television series**

In 2018, the EU began funding the two-year 'Ms President' initiative in Kenya through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, with additional support from the High Commission of Canada. 'Ms President' is a 26-episode, reality television series on the prime-time Kenya Television Network, produced by Media Focus on Africa.<sup>36</sup> Its overall objective is to build sustainable capacity for peace-building, conflict management and crisis preparedness in Kenya, while specifically enabling women and girls to become empowered as key players in preventing the spread of violent extremism and radicalisation. The action also sought to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors and media practitioners to prevent violence against women and protect human rights, while bolstering dialogue between these actors and government officials, as well as local and national conflict resolution and peace-building groups.

The initiative involved an extensive consultation and outreach campaign organised by Media Focus with women's CSOs, including a Muslim women's rights organisation, alongside other NGOs, networks, radio and social media platforms. Over 1,000 women of all ages and ethnic, social, economic, religious, political and geographical backgrounds applied to take part in the series. Of these applicants, 25 women were selected as participants. These 'candidates' received training on a range of topics, such as marginalisation of those with limited economic prospects, ethnicity, peace-building, the divisive narratives used by extremist groups, reconciliation, social cohesion, violence, human rights, women's participation, breakdowns in community and citizen-state relationships, and the women, peace and security agenda. They also benefitted from training on communication skills. Training sessions were filmed, with the footage used in the opening episodes of the series. Each episode focused on a selected topic, on which candidates engaged in challenges and tasks, first in groups, and later individually.

One of the initiative's key components was targeted outreach and community mobilisation in three violence-prone coastal counties. Women representatives of local organisations were trained in facilitating dialogue. In tandem, local screenings of the television programme were organised, followed by dialogue sessions on the issues raised. 'Ms President' proved a new, refreshing series in the Kenyan television landscape, where the diversity of women is not often showcased. As the programme is educational and thought-provoking, it aims to build recognition – among women, men, girls and boys – that women and girls can play key leadership roles in politics and peace-building.

In 2018, the Commission services responsible for international cooperation and development secured the services of the **technical assistance facility, 'Media4Democracy'**, to support EU Delegations in implementing the EU Guidelines on **Freedom of Expression** in their diverse contexts. This technical facility included a marked gender perspective in their trainings and ad hoc support. It also worked to prepare a handbook on the actions that EU Delegations can carry out to protect freedom of expression and, more specifically, journalists in the face of emergency situations. Women journalists are particularly prone to experience threats, violence, abuse and sexual assault in conflict zones or areas with fragile security situations. They also face discrimination at work, as editors tend to avoid assigning them to cover sensitive topics or contexts – often because they fear that ensuring women journalists' safety will be complicated and expensive. Women freelancers are especially vulnerable as they lack institutional support or resources to ensure their safety. In 2017, UNESCO recorded the highest number of women journalists killed since 2006. The proportion of women media professionals killed worldwide rose

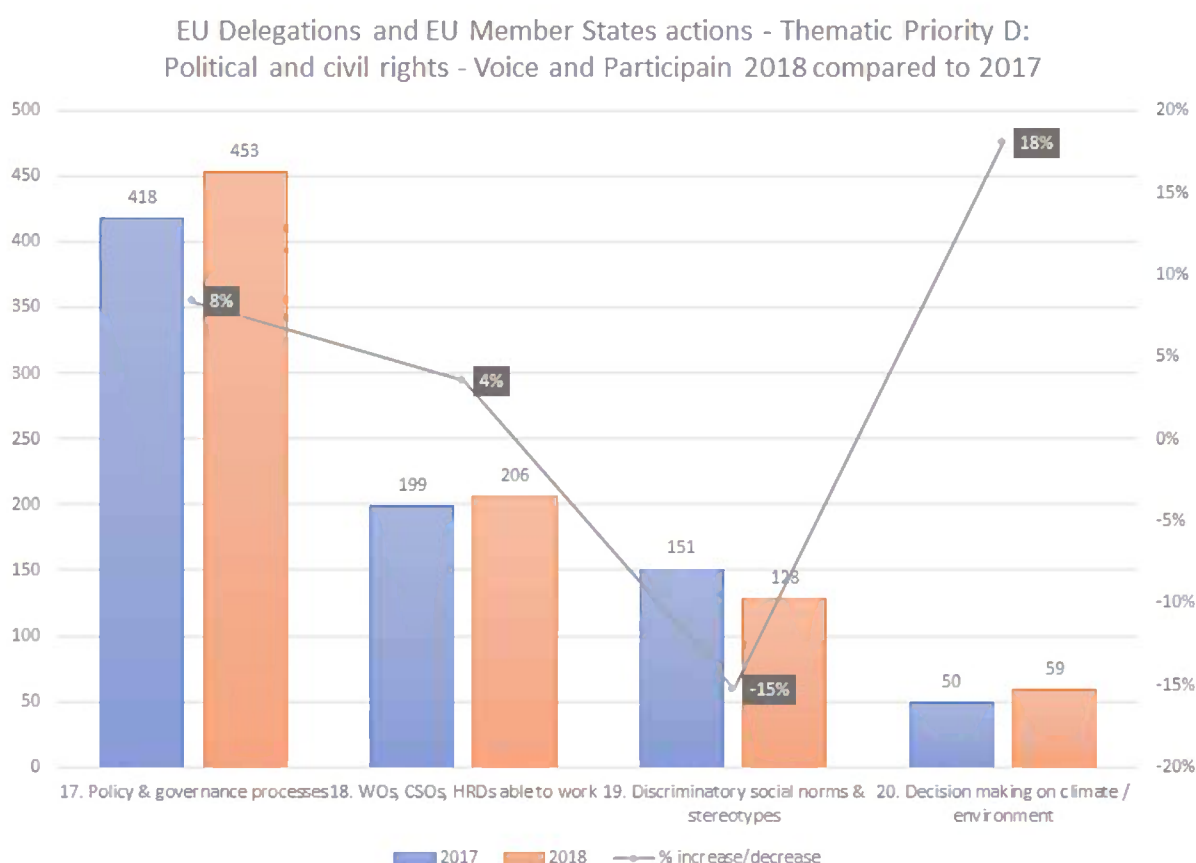
<sup>36</sup> For more information, see: <https://mfa.ocular.co.ke/ms-president/>

from 4 % in 2012 to 14 % in 2017. Moreover, in 2017, four out of the seven journalists killed in Europe were women.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the handbook will pay special attention to women journalists, exploring ways to support and protect them.

In 2018, the EU-funded action, ‘**Gender-Sensitive Transitional Justice**’ was implemented in several countries to increase the effectiveness of transitional justice processes by prioritising survivors and their needs. As a result of the initiative, survivors of sexual violence related to past armed conflict in **Nepal** published their stories on an online platform launched in 2018. This was a major milestone for women collectively breaking their silence, while creating an enabling environment for truth, justice, dignity and reparations. A Transitional Justice Resource Centre – the first of its kind in **Kosovo and the Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations region** – was established in 2018 at the University of Pristina. It provided students, who were born during or after the war, with a gender perspective on conflict and peace-building, with a specific focus on conflict-related sexual violence. The Centre will also offer education programmes, academic resources, scientific research and awareness raising activities on transitional justice.

### 3.3.2 EU Delegations and Member States in partner countries

**Figure 20: EU Delegations and EU Member States in partner countries – Number of actions reported, thematic priority D, Political and Civil Rights, 2018 vs 2017**



In 2018, the greatest increase in the number of reported actions by EU Delegations under thematic priority D concerned support for women’s participation in decision-making processes on

<sup>37</sup> For more information, see: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/16173\\_en08.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/16173_en08.pdf) and <https://en.unesco.org/news/murder-tv-reporter-victoria-marinova-bulgaria-dg-voices-concern-over-rise-proportion-women>

environmental and climate-related issues (objective 20). Similar trends were apparent in actions reported by EU Member States in partner countries.

Actions geared towards enhancing the capacities of civil society **and women's organisations** (objective 18) also increased. Support for **women Human Rights Defenders was reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**. Support for women's organisations featured in actions contributing to a range of objectives, such as tackling violence against women and girls (objective 7).

Compared to 2017, there was a decline in the number of reported actions that contributed to **challenging and changing discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes** (objective 19) in 2018. However, this trend was counterbalanced by an increase of reported actions addressing this objective by the EU Member States at the capital level.

### *Africa*

In **Africa**, the number of actions that addressed thematic priority D increased in 2018 – 77 % for objective 20, 53 % for objective 17, and 45 % for objective 18. Actions on challenging and changing discriminatory norms (objective 19) remained at the same level as in 2017. The most commonly addressed indicators under this thematic priority were indicators related to women's participation in policy and governance processes (objective 17). By contrast, no indicators related to participation in climate and environmental decision-making (objective 20) were selected.

Actions that contributed to objective 17 spanned a range of issues of promotion and protection of human rights (Burundi), budget support for gender (Burkina Faso), institutional capacity building and strategies for gender equality (Cameroon, Senegal, Liberia), promoting more women in politics (Cameroon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali), support to the justice sector (Benin, Cameroon), support dissemination information and public dialogue on women's rights (Gabon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger), supporting civil society in promotion of women's' rights (Benin, Chad, Mali), public finance management (Cameroon, Liberia), including support to multilateral organizations in their work in the country, and many more. These are only a small sample of the very wide array of actions that are contributing to further the status of women and gender equality in the region with EU support.

Activities that contributed to objective 18 ranged from strengthening CSO (Benin, Burundi, Chad, Niger, Sierra Leone), to support to the rule of law (Mauritania), to improving national monitoring and evaluation system and gender mainstreaming (Senegal), human rights defenders (Liberia), encouraging advocacy with the business sector (Ghana), the local development platform programme (Capo Verde), the Spotlight Initiative, as well as core funding for UN Women and UN Trust Fund in support of peace and security (Mali).

Examples of EU actions in Africa included cultural events, collaboration with women journalists, the promotion of youth employment and awareness raising on gender issues to change discriminatory norms. A multi-country action in **Southern Africa**, **'Untying the Gender Knot'**, promoted gender equality in schools and communities to reduce HIV infections and teenage pregnancies. Moreover, youth-led radio initiatives in **South Africa** aimed to build safer communities through civic engagement and advocacy.

### **Box 30: EU Delegation to Madagascar, 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building' initiative**

In Madagascar the EU supported a 'Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building' initiative implemented by the NGOs, CARE and Handicap International. It works to increase local communities' capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters – including capacities of the private sector and decentralised coordination structures – via an inclusive approach and the use of new



technologies. The programme responds to environmental hazards, such as cyclones and floods, to which the 85 coastal “Fokontany” (traditional villages) in the initiative are especially vulnerable. The initiative is related to SDG 13 (‘Climate Action’), as well as SDG 5 (‘Gender Equality’), SDG 11 (‘Sustainable Cities and Communities’) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Between June 2017 and January 2018, the initiative placed those most vulnerable at the centre of its efforts, reaching out to 135,456 people and supporting the development of 88 response plans. Moreover, 111 Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) groups were formed, with 2,572 members – 66 % of whom are women, and 3.27 % are people with disabilities. These groups proved a key resource for resilience during the cyclone season, providing members with a form of savings-led insurance to support them during disasters. One element of good practice is the initiative’s built-in ‘crisis modifier’, which allows the organisation of multi-sectoral emergency response in other geographic regions in the event of a disaster.

#### **Box 31: EU Delegation to Somalia, ‘Somalia Social Contract’**

In 2018, the EU supported the initiative ‘Somalia Social Contract: Contributing to state building and inclusive politics’ to support the introduction of gender equality standards and women’s human rights in Somalia’s ongoing peace-building and state formation processes. It addresses gender-discriminatory laws, customs and traditions that prevent women and men from participating equally in these processes. In this context, the initiative seeks to enable women’s participation in upcoming elections. In tandem, it aims to influence the development of gender-sensitive laws to embed and sustain free and fair elections for all in Somalia’s political landscape, through a rule-based system. The initiative was significantly influenced by the Somalia National Development Plan (NDP), which recognises the role women have played and will continue to play in politics, community mobilisation, peace-building and human society in Somalia.

Gender expertise was provided by key civil society partners, IIDA Women’s Development Organisation and the Somali Women’s Association (SWA). For instance, gender analysis was undertaken by IIDA and its partners during past projects related to the security sector. These CSOs also added by ensuring that citizens’ voices and interests were represented in the initiative. Consultations at the grassroots level enhanced understanding of gender equality issues on the ground, enabling the identification of effective strategies and approaches to create a gender-sensitive agenda in which women’s issues are well-articulated. Several meetings were held with civil society and government counterparts, such as the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, yielding consensus on the need for synergies between the public sector and civil society organisations to advance women’s rights. This marks a significant step forward, as past reconciliation processes were government and donor-driven. As a result of dialogue and consultative meetings, representatives of ministries, parliament and national institutions committed to achieving universal suffrage, human rights and gender equal standards. To ensure the sustainability of results, it will be necessary for the EU and its CSO partners to continue lobbying the Government to ensure that new gender-sensitive laws and policies enacted.

#### **Box 26: EU Delegation to Burkina Faso, ‘Gender Budget Support’ initiative**

The EU signed a financing agreement with Burkina Faso in December 2018 to provide gender budget support – aimed at assisting the Government to promote women’s rights and gender equality. The initiative is a key part of broader budgetary support for good governance, and addresses the GAP II’s objective of advancing women’s participation in policy and governance processes at all levels (objective 17).

After Morocco, Burkina Faso is only the second country to receive gender budget support. Its context is particularly favourable, given the country’s active Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Ministry was intimately involved in the development of the initiative, as was the EU



Delegation's gender focal person. Overall, the initiative focuses on four areas: gender-sensitive budgeting; a database on gender-based violence; the construction of well-equipped reception and care centres for survivors of gender-based violence; and the revision of the law on gender quotas. By including indicators in all four areas, the initiative has the potential to be truly transformative – as progress on these indicators will influence the disbursement of funds – both in terms of the use of gender-responsive budgeting and the revision of the gender quota law. The financing agreement includes extensive information on these indicators, including responsible services, the frequency of measurement, baseline results, data collection methods and guidance for data interpretation.

As a result of the gender budget support initiative, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection's position has grown stronger, more valued and more dynamic in its coordinating role with the Ministry of Finance. One key lesson learned by the initiative was the importance of pairing budget support with institutional support, so that gender ministries have sufficient weight in their interactions with ministries of finance. Other useful lessons include the importance of using clearly-defined indicators, and sustaining lobbying to ensure the availability of funds for implementing gender-responsive budgeting in ministries.

#### **Box 27: EU Delegation to Liberia and Ireland, 'SHE Leads' project**

In Liberia, the 'SHE Leads' project focused on the prevention of gender-based violence through an 'Engaging Men in Accountable Practices' (EMAP) component and women's 'Economic and Social Empowerment' (EASE) component. The project complemented an initiative of One-Stop Centres, where survivors of gender-based violence receive treatment and support. Both initiatives were supported by the EU, implemented by the International Rescue Committee and financed by Irish Aid. Ownership at the government level has been strong, with the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social providing an important platform for coordination.

The gender expertise of both Irish Aid and the International Rescue Committee informed the project's design, as did knowledge gained through previous projects, global learning, and data from national GBV clusters, groups and One-Stop Centres. Engagement with community stakeholders provided essential information which was fed back to steering committees, facilitating dialogue. Local NGOs and women's groups were closely involved in the project's formulation, providing feedback on its components. Models by the project were designed, tested and validated in consultation with these partners.

'SHE Leads' activities were implemented in five communities where the country's five One-Stop Centres are located. Its advocacy activities contributed to the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill, signed for a period of one year through an Executive Order issued by the former president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The project also advocated for, and conducted an iterative simplification of, the original Domestic Violence Bill, so that Liberian citizens with varying literacy skills and understanding of legal concepts can comprehend the law. Engaging men and boys in communities was a key focus of the initiative, given their important role as agents of change. To this end, the International Rescue Committee expanded the scope of EMAP to include boys' engagement as well as men's – a suggestion originally made by the women's groups consulted for the project. Awareness raising on free services and the importance of treating all forms of GBV led to an increase in the number of cases addressed across the One Stop Centres.

To advance women's economic empowerment through the EASE component, 'SHE Leads' supports women to generate and save their incomes, while exercising financial decision-making within their households in a sustainable manner. Linkages were forged between Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), women's discussion groups and social enterprise groups. The associations' social funds are used on a needs-based basis to support the women in One Stop Centre communities, such as support for emergency referrals to response services.

## *Asia and the Pacific*

In **Asia**, thematic priority D was increasingly important for EU cooperation in the region in 2018. Most reported actions under this priority addressed women's equal rights and ability to participate in policy and governance processes (objective 17). Actions included support for public finance management (PFM) reforms in **Indonesia, Nepal and Timor Leste**; democratic development, elections and electoral capacities in **Afghanistan, Myanmar and Nepal**; good governance and local governance, peace-building in **Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and Myanmar**; and justice in **China and Vietnam**. Afghanistan and Myanmar were the countries most involved in measuring women's representation in peace negotiations. Gender-responsive budgeting at local and national level was undertaken predominantly in **Myanmar, Nepal and the Philippines**. Moreover, **Afghanistan, Cambodia and Nepal** were the principle countries monitored women's **representation in parliaments**. The second most frequently addressed objective in the region concerned support for women's organisations, civil society organisations and Human Rights Defenders (objective 18), with most related actions implemented in **India**.

There was far less of a focus on challenging and changed discriminatory social norms and gender and (objective 19) and women's participation in decision-making processes on climate-related and environmental issues (objective 20) in the region.

### **Box 34: EU Delegation to Lao People's Democratic Republic, 'Strengthening civil society'**

In Lao People's Democratic Republic, the EU financed the initiative, 'Strengthening civil society to protect and promote social, economic and cultural rights of ethnic communities in Bokeo province'.

Implemented by Plan International through its local partner, the Community Association For Mobilising Knowledge In Development (CAMKID), the initiative addressed challenges in the implementation of labour laws and decent working conditions at the community level – for instance in the context of the use of chemical products in banana plantations recently established by Chinese investors.

As the operating space for civil society is extremely restricted – with local associations only permitted to register with the authorities since 2009 – support for CAMKID was an innovative step in the country's context. The organisation was actively involved in the design of initiative through a specific design workshop. The programme's implementation, moreover, accessed gender expertise from another small local NGO in the province, which supported CAMKID through a context-specific assessment of gender roles in local communities. Within the context of the labour laws, women's rights were discussed at community level, including with reference to local laws which embody the country's international commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As CAMKID staff speak different local languages, they made sure information was accessible to the local population, especially women.

While the programme did not result in transformative changes in women's rights, incremental steps were taken and small victories attained. For instance, in the wake of the initiative, women in targeted communities are more involved in decision-making, and women community leaders are more confident to speak up. As one such leader put it, *"Being a community leader is empowering because I can make decisions at local level or within my family. I am more confident to speak in front of people and always share my views in the village's meetings."* There is also some evidence of slowly changing gender roles, as some men in the villages began to help with domestic care work, such as looking after children or fetching water. Although the initiative was welcomed by the Government as a means of disseminating legal information and potentially strengthening the rule of law, it did not influence government policies or legal systems. Nonetheless a research study by the initiative was discussed at the provincial level, entitled 'Labour Rights, Child Rights and Gender Justice for Lao

**Box 35: EU Delegation to Timor-Leste, 'Partnership to improve service delivery through strengthened Public Finance Management and Oversight'**

In Timor-Leste, the EU supported an initiative entitled 'Partnership to improve service delivery through strengthened Public Finance Management and Oversight'. Launched in 2015, it aimed to advance sustainable development through the enhanced effectiveness, integrity, transparency, accountability and citizen-orientation of public service delivery. Its two components were direct budget support and capacity building, including a focus on addressing women's training needs. At least 50 % of participants in capacity building activities are women. Gender equality was among the initiative's main objectives, particularly in terms of strengthening women's capacities – including of women members of parliament – and gender budgeting.

The initiative was in line with the GAP II's priorities, although it was formulated before the GAP II was developed. Moreover, while no gender analysis or EU gender expertise preceded the initiative's formulation, UN Women contributed their expert knowledge of gender-responsive budgeting to the formulation process. In 2016, the EU Delegation undertook a gender analysis to develop the EU's Timor-Leste Gender Action Plan – itself replete with two public finance management-related indicators – which influenced the initiative's implementation and informed policy dialogue. The inclusion of gender indicators in the programme strengthened the monitoring of its performance on gender equality.

In terms of results, positive trends were visible in the wake of the initiative; yet, it remains to be seen whether sufficient ownership exists to sustain the programme's momentum. Overall, the initiative was highly relevant as its promotion of gender-sensitive budgeting has the potential to contribute to the implementation of Timor-Leste's gender-sensitive policies and laws.

*In Central Asia, EU efforts promoted the political and civil rights of women and girls, particularly in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, by working to change discriminatory norms (objective 19) and supporting civil society (objective 18). In Kyrgyzstan, support was provided for state and civil society efforts to combat torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading forms of treatment. In Asia, reports for 2018 only once selected two key objectives under priority D – concerning women's participation in policy and governance processes (objective 17) and in decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues (objective 20). Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations and Russia*

Despite continued attention to political and civil rights in the **Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations** region, the proportion of reported actions (26 %) in 2018 fell compared to the previous year (32 %). Equal rights for women to participate in policy and governance processes (objective 17) was the third most frequently selected objective in the region. Notable initiatives supported **gender budgeting in Ukraine**, the **rule of law in Palestine**, and women's participation as electoral candidates in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Tunisia. Other actions advanced the **women, peace and security agenda in Albania, Ukraine, and Tunisia**, and promoted **women's role in local governance in Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia**. Reported actions also encouraged the use of affirmative action to ensure that more women are hired in the **civil service**, in line with **Kosovo's** law on gender equality.

<sup>38</sup> For more information, see: <https://plan-international.org/publications/rights-and-gender-justice-lao-workers-chinese-banana-plantations>



**Box 36: EU Delegation to Yemen, ‘Building Peace and Enhancing Human Rights’**

The EU Delegation to Yemen supported an initiative on ‘Building Peace and Enhancing Human Rights in 16 Yemeni Governorates’, implemented by a local NGO, the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights. This partner was able to operate independently in different areas despite the extremely difficult security situation. The project focused on monitoring and documenting human rights violations in 16 governorates, in addition to providing legal support to victims, especially extrajudicial detainees, in six governorates. It also centred on raising awareness of human rights and the rule of law in six governorates, particularly among police officers, prosecutors, judges, the Ministry of the Interior, and seizure and detention officers. In seven governorates the initiative sought to initiate community dialogue on the importance of human rights protection and the rule of law. Moreover, across all areas, the initiative worked to support civil society, women's organisations and Human Rights Defenders. Between 2018 and 2019, Mwatana provided legal support to 43 victims of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance in the governorates: Aden, Alhudida, Hadramout, Marib, Sana’a and Taiz.

While designing the project, gender aspects were taken into account. These included the importance of giving priority to women in the recruitment of the project team, especially in the field, as well as prioritising women survivors, providing them with legal support and documenting cases. Particularly as five of its seven field lawyers are women, Mwatana was keen to give opportunities to these women field lawyers. Their efforts proved exemplary. For instance, Thuraya, Mwatana’s Field Legal Support Assistant at Hodidah, continued to work in the governorates even when the conflict escalated to such an extent that she was forced to flee her home.

**Box 28: EU Delegation to Moldova, ‘Budget Support to Police Reform’**

The EU Delegation to Moldova supported the ‘Budget Support to Police Reform’ initiative as part of the broader EU ‘Support to Police Reform Programme’ which aims to refashion the police force as more service-oriented and citizen-focused. The initiative applied a gender mainstreaming approach, while focusing on strengthening the position of women within the police force. The objective is to ensure that 20 % of police positions are held by women by 2020, with a minimum of 15 % at the officer rank and in management positions. When the project began, only 14 % of police officers were women and none of them were in positions of authority.

One direct result of the initiative was the formation of the Police Women Association (PWA), formally registered as an interest group with the Ministry of Justice in 2017. Its main purpose is to attract young women to a careers at the sub-officer or officer levels in the police force (external role), while furthering the professional interests of women within police services (internal role). Association members serve as role models, inspiring others women to the ranks of the police. The Association also organises regular free workshops for women and men police officers on gender equality, in addition to lobbying for women’s interests by organising educational events on work-related issues, such as how to balance private and professional life. Overall, the initiative may be regarded as a promising practice as it encourages women to join law enforcement and aspire towards management positions – a major step forward in Moldova. In the wake of the initiative, the police’s male-dominated management is more eager to promote women, and to make their interests, needs and expectations visible.

**Box 29: EU Delegation to Syria, ‘Women’s Dialogue in Atareb’**

In 2018, the EU Delegation to Syria supported a ‘Women’s Dialogue in Atareb’, a component of the ‘Support to Stabilisation and Transition in Syria II’ (USTS) programme, co funded by the EU and the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. In the context of this broader multisectoral stabilisation programme, women’s social participation is supported through gender mainstreaming approaches, as well as by targeted activities for women. Gender-sensitive measures that have explicitly considered

women's specific needs included activities to improve street lighting and waste management, as well as to provide psychosocial support and education – such as the creation of a women's and youth centre in northern Hama. While these benefit the entire population, they have particularly improved women's lives.

The local women's dialogue component was piloted in the framework of broad local dialogue processes in Atareb, Aleppo. A gender analysis was carried out during the preparation phase, and a gender focal person was appointed for the stabilisation programme. The women's dialogues involved the exclusive participation of local women's initiatives and associations, and specifically sought to expand women's role in civil society organisations and local self-government structures.

Overall, the dialogue component served as a useful tool for promoting gender-sensitivity and a culture of in communities, while affording donors a better understanding of local actors. Positive change was evoked at the community level. Women have taken on more responsibilities, and key local stakeholders are more aware of the benefits of women's representation. The initiative also facilitated horizontal networking between actors, including between women. Following consultations with core group of women, concrete guidance criteria were formulated for increasing women's representation within civilian institutions. Moreover, in line with recommendation by EU partners, implementing partners are striving to engage and hire more women. Key lessons learned from the implementation experience include the need for long-term commitments to sustain change, including continuing such activities for women and fostering further community engagement and horizontal networking for activists.

### *Americas*

In **Latin America**, all four of the objectives under thematic priority D were addressed in 2018. Ensuring women's equal rights and to participate in policy and governance processes was most frequently addressed (objective 17). Thereafter, actions most commonly addressed support for women's organisations, civil society organisations and **Human Rights Defenders** (objective 18), most notably in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Compared to 2017, greater support was given to objective 18 in 2018 in the Americas, as well as to challenging discriminatory social norms and stereotypes (objective 19). Women's participation in decision-making on climate and environmental issues was rarely addressed (objective 20).

Many actions reported were workshops and initiatives, covering a variety of issues – from local development in **Uruguay**, to peace and gender-sensitive public policy in **Colombia**, support for civil society projects in **Brazil**, women's political rights in Paraguay, and gender-sensitive fiscal justice in **Bolivia**. In **Colombia**, a focus was placed on human rights and peace, with support provided for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In **El Salvador**, **Spain** supported an initiative on strengthening gender mainstreaming in public administration (*'Fortalecer los procesos de transversalidad del principio de igualdad en la administración pública Salvadoreña'*), as discussed in the box below.

In the **Caribbean**, priority D was the least frequently addressed of the GAP II's three thematic priorities. Actions centred on women's participation in governance (objective 17), continuing trends observed in previous years. Efforts to address this objective has been on the rise since 2016, when it was addressed in four instances, rising to nine in 2017 and 10 in 2018. Actions specifically addressing gender issues were implemented in the **Dominican Republic** through technical assistance for gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the National Indicative Programme (NIP) 2014-2020. Other initiatives focused on women's empowerment to support democratic governance, while one adopted a child rights approach to local administration, with a view to enhancing participatory municipal management.



### Box 39: Spain's support for mainstreaming in El Salvador

In 2018, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) supported an action to strengthen gender mainstreaming in El Salvador's public administration (*'Fortalecer los procesos de transversalidad del principio de igualdad en la administración pública Salvadoreña'*). The strategic scope of this action was the Institutional Strengthening Fund for Development (FFID), which aims to increase public administration capacities to overcome poverty, while promoting sustainable development and gender equality.

As part of the initiative, a gender analysis of budgets was undertaken, as was an analysis of the state of gender mainstreaming in public administrations. This drew on the annual analysis of gender mainstreaming across institutions conducted by El Salvador's National Women's Institute, *Instituto Salvadoreño para el Desarrollo de la Mujer* (ISDEMU), which highlights best practices. Among the components key components was the creation of a system for planning public policies using a gender perspective. To this end, the 51 entities that comprise the National System of Substantive Equality (SNIS) were provided with tools and good practices to incorporate guidelines based on the 'Law on Equality, Equity and the Eradication of Discrimination against Women'. Another component involved making budgeting and public expenditure more gender-responsive by training of civil servants. The initiative also encompassed a pilot project that encouraged all public institutions to adopt the 'gender equality seal', developed by UNDP. This pilot was implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Council of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (*Consejo Nacional de la Mediana y Pequeña Empresa*) and the Ministry of the Environment, in collaboration with UNDP.

The action contributed to positive change as it identified investments in gender equality, as well as by raising awareness of the fact that gender equality concerns more than merely gender-based violence – rather more subtle, complex forms of discrimination must also be tackled. Moreover, the innovative use of the 'gender equality seal' proved useful, targeting every aspect of institutions – from human resources to planning – through the use of indicators related to gender equality.

### Box 40: EU Delegation to Trinidad and Tobago, 'A Sexual Culture of Justice'

The EU funded an activity-based, human rights programme in Trinidad and Tobago, entitled, 'A Sexual Culture of Justice: Strengthening LGBTQI and GBV Partnerships, Capacity and Efficacy to Promote and Protect Rights'.<sup>39</sup> It is envisioned as an advocacy initiative for social change to transform gender norms and sexual rights, grounded in local analysis and action-based research. This community-university collaboration initiative supports both long-standing and emerging local efforts to transform approaches to intimate partner violence, homophobia, bullying and policing, while building partnerships and organisational capacity. Running from April 2017 through to March 2020, the initiative is implemented by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) of the University of the West Indies, in partnership with six leading LGBTI and feminist organisations in Trinidad and Tobago – CAISO, Friends for Life, I Am One, the Silver Lining Foundation, Womantra and the Women's Caucus.

The programme addresses several issues identified in the EU Delegation's strategy and relevant for the European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR), particularly LGBTI rights and gender-based violence. It is also grounded on the understanding that effectively addressing GBV and realising LGBTI rights in Trinidad and Tobago depend on building community and organisational capacity, strengthening strategic alliances and linking strategic information to tangible action.

As a gender-transformative initiative, the programme encompasses a number of related activities with diverse actors, focused on transforming attitudes and behaviours related to gender-based violence. These include gender-based violence trainings, training for teachers on 'safer schools', police training, media creation, the collection of life stories collection, and the 'Add All Three' campaign.

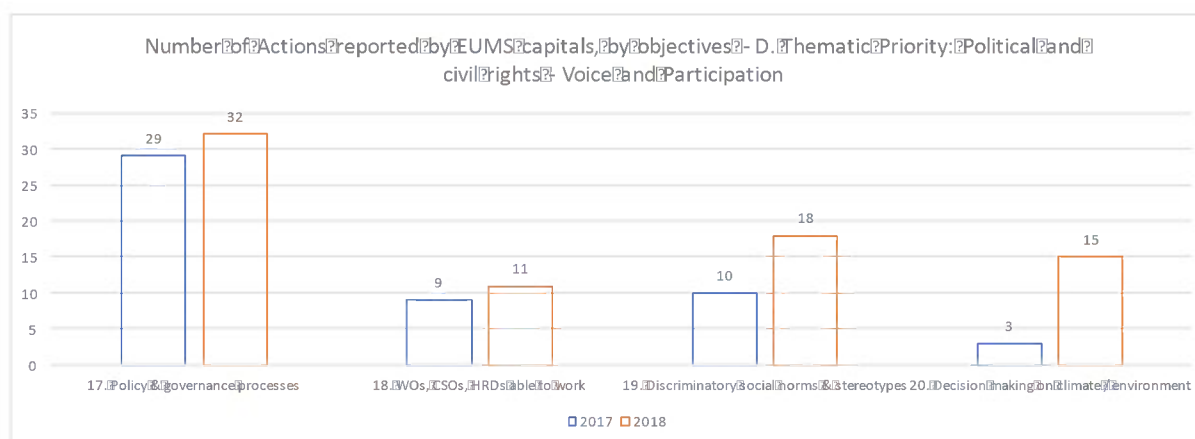
<sup>39</sup> For more information, see: <http://portal.caribbeansexualities.org>

The programme has elaborated knowledge products and toolkits, shared with partners and other affiliated organisations. Information gathered by the programme informs policy and political dialogue, including advocacy for the decriminalisation of homosexuality, the promotion of LGBTI issues, the approval of a gender policy, gender-responsive budgeting and comprehensive support to tackle gender-based violence.

### 3.3.3 EU Member States

At the capital level, EU Member States reported a total of 89 centrally-managed actions that addressed thematic priority D in 2019. Most reported actions related to political and civil rights were global or multi-country in scope. Overall, thematic priority D was the least frequently addressed of the GAP II's thematic priorities by Member States at the headquarters level.

**Figure 21: EU Member States' capitals – Number of actions reported, thematic priority D, Political and Civil Rights, 2018 vs 2017**



Support for women's participation in governance processes (objective 17) dominated actions funded by EU Member States in 2018. Compared with 2017, more actions were reported in this regard. However, few actions selected corresponding indicators.

In 2018, the greatest increase in reported actions by EU Member States concerned women's participation in decision-making on climate change and environmental protection (objective 20). To date, this objective was addressed by far fewer actions than other objectives. The second most significant increase in reported actions concerned challenging discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes (objective 19).

Many reported actions contributed to objectives under thematic priorities C and D. Women's political empowerment was the focus of a **literature review of research on the digital harassment** of women, as well as the effectiveness of aid interventions to support women's leadership. Another **action-research oriented project, 'Empowerment and Accountability'**, funded studies on the importance of women's organisations and women's political agency in fragile and conflict-affected settings. **Fostering ethical media** and creating opportunities for overcoming gender stereotypes was a focus in **Belarus**.

#### Box 30: Italy's support for sustainable rural development, 'Ge.Mai.Sa 2'

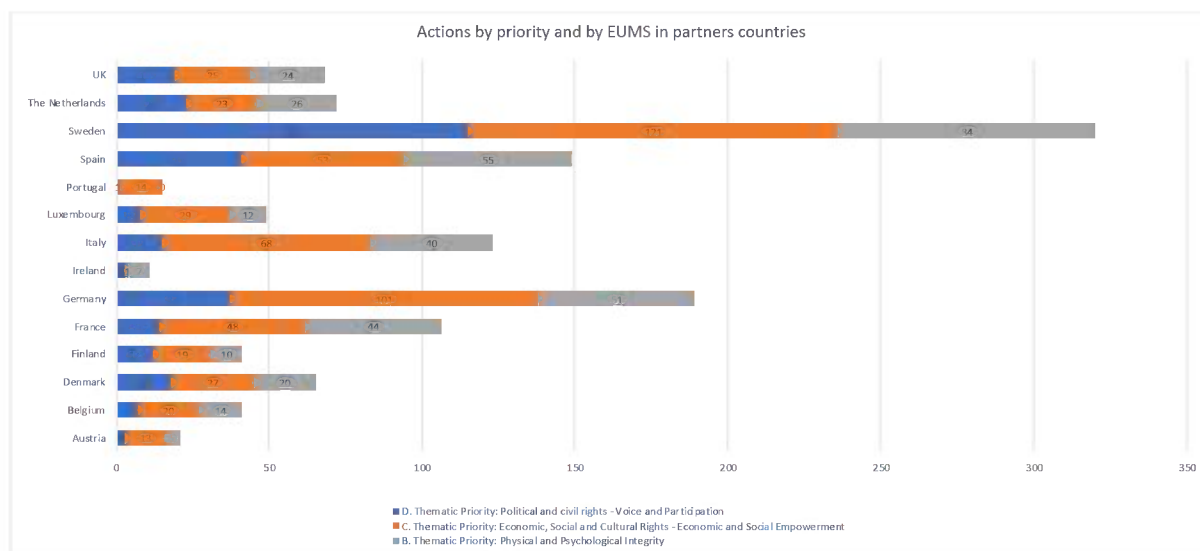
Italy's 'Ge.Mai.Sa 2' initiative supported sustainable rural development and food security through a multi-dimensional approach to women's empowerment. Funded by the Italian Agency for

Development Cooperation and implemented by CIHEAM Bari, the initiative worked with rural women and Gender Units of agriculture ministries in six partner countries. Based on a previous pilot project in Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia, the action was expanded to Jordan, Morocco and Palestine for 2018-2020. The initiative may be considered a promising transformative practice as it supported a process of change in societal gender relations. It contributed to giving more of a voice to women in rural areas so that they appreciate their own value and become involved in decision-making processes, within their households, communities and socio-political contexts.

Guided by a technical-scientific committee – comprising local and international gender experts – the initiative developed its methodological approach to women's empowerment, alongside tools to concretely improve rural women's economic opportunities and living conditions. The initiative's multi-dimensional approach to empowerment merged awareness raising of women's rights and political empowerment, with economic empowerment, the acquisition of skills and tools, and the reinforcement and exchange of women's knowledge around food production and food security. It also promoted links between the public and private spheres, thereby affecting households' division of labour and gender roles. By using a systemic approach of mapping and selecting existing human and organisational resources, the programme built strong partnerships that spanned three levels of governance – from the micro or local level, to the intermediate level of governmental institutions, and the macro level of institutions and ministries. The initiative also mobilised a range of stakeholders by promoting new initiatives and synergies, as well as by networking with civil society.

Promoting communication flows between these actors - who are continually engaged in monitoring the impact of new practices – enabled the evaluation and validation of the initiative's innovative training tools. These include 'value chain knowledge', which was enhanced through vocational training, delivering ad hoc equipment, promoting women's rights, expanding access to information on available local resources, creating local networks and implementing economic activities via a value chain approach.

**Figure 22 EU Member States' capitals – Number of actions reported per Member State in partner countries, thematic priority D, Political and Civil Rights, 2018**



EU Member States' support for women's organisations and civil society working (objective 18) represented the smallest proportion of reported actions in 2018. Nevertheless, actions addressing this objective increased by 20 % compared to 2017. Examples of such activities are provided in the boxes below.

#### Box 31: United Kingdom's 'Empowerment and Accountability research'



The United Kingdom's programme, 'Empowerment and Accountability Research' on women's collective action demonstrated the value of collaboration between activist groups and women's caucuses for legislative outcomes for women. These findings helped to legitimise the work of women activists and their NGOs at a time when civic spaces are under close scrutiny and shrinking worldwide. A separate paper by the programme highlighted the types of sexual harassment faced by women in politics. Through such research, the programme hopes to draw attention to the need for protection from harassment for all women in assemblies, as well as in the media.

#### **Box 32: Latvia's implementation of the Development Cooperation Guidelines 2016-2020**

Throughout 2018, Latvia implemented its Development Cooperation Guidelines 2016-2020, which provide the framework for Latvian development cooperation in partner countries. As a policy-planning document, the guidelines determine the objectives, results and priority sectors of Latvia's bilateral and multilateral development cooperation policy – the overall aim of which is to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in developing states. The guidelines establish gender equality and human rights as overall horizontal priorities to be mainstreamed in all development cooperation activities, using a human rights-based approach.

The process of drafting the guidelines was informed by inclusive consultations held with a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society organisations, line ministries, academia and organisations working in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment. Relevant EU policy frameworks also informed the guidelines, such as the Council Conclusion on Gender in Development (2015), the European Consensus on Development (2006), and the Council Conclusions on the Gender Action Plan II 2016-2020. National commitments to gender equality provided the overall framework for the guidelines, alongside the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

As gender equality is a fundamental principle for the guidelines, actors participating in calls for proposals must include a gender perspective in their applications. Omitting gender mainstreaming would hinder the possibility of winning a call. Thus far, however, this has never occurred, as implementing partners have been extremely interested in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

One of the guidelines' key elements is a commitment to increase official development assistance for gender equality – from 0.17 % of gross national income (GNI) in 2016-2020, to 0.33 % by 2030. The guidelines' priority on good governance, inclusive economic growth and security includes a performance-based indicator on gender equality, specifically that *"by 2020, 8 % of the bilateral ODA managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main objective of which [...will be] gender equality"* against a baseline of 0 % in 2015.

The first evaluation of the guidelines in 2018 found that ODA managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for actions with gender equality as their main objective was 6 % in 2016 and 9 % in 2017. The evaluation considered this a marker of 'significant progress', indicating a pace of change fully in line with the SDGs. Data for 2018 will become available after current projects and programmes' final reports have been received and verified.

#### **Box 33: Netherlands, 'Leading from the South' (LFS) programme**

Running from 2017 to 2020, the 'Leading from the South' (LFS) programme is a key policy instrument of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands to advance women's rights and gender equality. Through grant making, capacity building and resourcing, the programme supports women's rights organisations, movements and networks in their lobbying and advocacy capacities, via four women's funds in the Global South. These are the South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF) in Asia, the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) in Africa and the Middle East, the Fondo Mujeres del Sur (FMS) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the International Indigenous Women's Fund

Ayni (FIMI) on a global level for indigenous women.

In 2018, the programme supported 122 women's rights organisations in 67 countries. Through the programme, women's organisations in developing countries access unique networks that enable them to make an essential contribution to the struggle for equal rights for women. In addition to financing, the programme provides a linking and learning component which contributes to its sustainability. The initiative's in line with SDG 5, and supports the targets of the global goal on gender equality. While the GAP II did not influence the initiative's formulation, the programme is aligned to the GAP II's thematic priority D on voice and participation.

The initiative is especially promising as it is led by feminist women's organisations committed to championing women's rights. It may be considered transformative as it contributes to a shift towards more direct financing for women's organisations in lower, lower- and middle-income countries. Having four regional women's funds as intermediate financiers, the knowledge and capabilities of these feminist organisations are recognised. It is also transformative as the four funds finance local women's rights organisations who address local gender-based discrimination and inequalities, involving continual dialogue, discussion and enriching learning from diverse points of view.

**Box 34: Portugal's promotion of women's rights in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe**

In 2018, Portugal supported a women's rights project designed by women's groups and civil society organisations to promote a more equitable political, economic, and social environment for women in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe. The project promotes research studies on gender equality and women's participation, whose evidence will be used for policy and political dialogue with policy-makers on improving legal frameworks, as well as implementing laws and policies to protect women's rights. The initiative is informed by an in-depth gender analysis on barriers and gender stereotypes that hinder women's participation at all levels of private and public life. This analysis was conducted by the initiative's partners – Minjderis di Guiné No Lanta (MIGUILAN) in Guinea-Bissau, the Organisation of Women of Cape Verde (OMCV), and the Platform for Human Rights and Gender Equity (PDHEG) in São Tomé and Príncipe.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

### 4.1 Conclusions

The report shows evidence of a significant increase in engagement with the GAP II during 2018, including greater **management ownership**. The implementation of the **transformative agenda** (Council Conclusions 2014) is **steady**, although the pace of implementation can be further accelerated.

The year was marked by **increased coherence and coordination** among EU institutions, as well as between these institutions and EU Member States. **Political and policy dialogues** took place in most countries, with gender equality and human rights on the agenda. Violence against women and girls was the topic most often discussed, followed by the gender dimensions of other issues, such as governance and justice, decent work, trafficking and social protection. These formal and informal dialogues enabled **EU actors to raise issues which are particularly sensitive in certain countries**, such as child marriage, female genital mutilation and teenage pregnancy. The development of the **Spotlight Initiative on gender-based violence** also provided key opportunities for high-level dialogue. There is evidence of **higher visibility accorded by EU actors to gender equality issues** during high-level international events, such as the G7 Summit, as well as in national events, such as those linked to International Women's Day, among others.

Gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the implementation of the **women, peace and security** agenda, continued to be standing items of political and/or human rights dialogues and sub-committees with partner countries.

A notable achievement this year was the Council's adoption of **Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security** in December 2018. The conclusions welcomed the EU's strategic approach to women, peace and security<sup>40</sup>, while highlighting its complementarities and synergies with the GAP II.

**Commitment to gender mainstreaming** continued to gain traction, including through the use of **gender analysis** in the formulation of many more actions in 2018 than in previous years. All **EU services made greater use of gender expertise** to strengthen their actions and to contribute more comprehensively to the GAP II's objectives, as well as gender equality outcomes more broadly. These efforts included a **growing network of gender focal persons**, bolstered by management support and access to training. Increased **engagement with national gender equality mechanisms, women's civil society organisations** and academic institutions also informed the formulation of actions in many instances, alongside policy and political dialogues.

Progress was made on the GAP II's target to ensure that, by 2020, **85 % of new programmes are marked 'G1' or 'G2'** using the OECD's gender equality policy marker – an instrument for measuring progress on EU actors' financing for the political priority of gender equality. In 2018, the number of new actions marked 'G1' or 'G2' increased in the **Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations** region, reaching 55.05 % in 2018, compared to 43.13 % in 2017. This was also true for 68 % of new international cooperation and development initiatives – compared to 65.9 % in 2017, 58.8 % in 2016 and 51.6 % in 2015.

Data on **EU Member States' performance on the same target is encouraging**. However, nuance is lost when Member States' averages are focused on. Overall, 50.51 % of new programmes by EU Member States, for which data is available, were marked 'G1' and 'G2' in 2018 – up from 50.1 % in 2017 and 43.75 % in 2016. The same was true for 51.8 % of new programmes by all Commission services in 2018, compared to 54.6 % in 2017 and 49.6 % in 2016.

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<sup>40</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/37412/st15086-en18.pdf>

As noted throughout this report, the number of new actions that were marked as contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment does not indicate the amount of funds invested in these actions.

It is clear that **reaching the target of 85 % will require more focused efforts**. In addition, greater direct attention to gender mainstreaming in will be vital, for instance by using modalities such as blending. Those sectors whose potential to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment remains must be the focus for the remainder of the GAP II's implementation.

Throughout 2018, **EU Member States' contribution** to the GAP II's implementation was evidenced by the consistent implementation of the gender equality policy across their international relations and cooperation activities. At the partner country level, EU Member States' progress is reported together with that of EU Delegations. At the capital level, EU Member States reported on a **wide range of good practices and measures to correct weaknesses in the GAP II's implementation**. These included, for example, contracting external gender expertise for strategic and ad hoc issues, as well as creating specialised task forces and working groups on gender equality and women's empowerment. The application of the OECD gender marker was confirmed at the budgetary approval stage in many cases, while the use of gender-sensitive corporate results' frameworks and the collection of sex-disaggregated data increased.

As discussed in this report, **five minimum performance standards** are indicated in the GAP II as prerequisites for the implementation of the EU's gender equality priorities. Of these five, the least frequently addressed by EU Delegations in 2018 were the need to provide a justification when a programme was marked 'G0' using the OECD gender marker, and the use of sex-disaggregated data throughout the programme and project cycle. However, **more EU Delegations showed evidence of compliance** with the performance standards in 2018 than in 2017. Sex-disaggregated data was used systematically by 25 % more EU Delegations across the world, while 19 % more EU Delegations made timely use of gender expertise for planning purposes.

Among **EU Member States in partner countries**, the standards that were least frequently met included carrying out a gender analysis for priority sectors (cited by 37 % of Member States which submitted reports) and the selection of GAP II objectives (44 %). On average, in 47 % of reported cases, the 'G0' marking was justified, 49 % used sex-disaggregated data throughout the programme and project cycle, and 50 % used gender expertise in a timely manner for planning and programming.

In 2018, the greatest proportion of reported actions by Commission services and EU Member States centred on **advancing economic, social and cultural rights objectives**, the focus of the GAP II's thematic priority C. The other GAP II thematic priorities were also frequently addressed. Overall, combatting violence against women and girls was the focus of the greatest portion of actions spearheaded by Commission services during the year.

## 4.2 Ways forward

The success of the GAP II's implementation requires, first and foremost: (i) gender-responsive leadership at all EU levels, from political to managerial, (ii) sufficient in-house capacity and capability to systemically integrate a gender perspective and conduct gender analyses, and (iii) close dialogue and cooperation with EU Member States, coupled with the engagement of civil society and other partners, such as multilateral and regional organisations, academia and the private sector.

To achieve the GAP II's objectives and relevant SDGs, greater efforts are needed by all EU stakeholders in the following spheres:

### **Reaching the target**

- Substantially improve gender mainstreaming in the most challenging areas – such as in trade, infrastructure-related investments, private sector investments and blending, security-related initiatives and climate change actions – as a condition for reaching the target of 85 % of new programmes marked 'G1' or 'G2' by 2020.
- Pay particular attention to thematic areas which are transformational for gender equality, or which received less attention in 2018, such as, for instance, addressing discriminatory social norms and stereotypes, women's protection in crisis situations and combatting the trafficking of women.

### **Quality of gender mainstreaming**

- Include gender analysis systematically as a core part of context analysis for the identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring of all actions, in all sectors, at headquarters, in EU Delegations and within CSDP missions and operations.
- Increase EU in-house capacity to mainstream a gender perspective in policy development and use gender analysis for designing and implementing initiatives, activities, programmes and projects.
- Ensure that expert capacity and capability are available and accessible in EU institutions and EU Member States, both to conduct gender analysis and to support the systematic integration of a gender perspective.

### **Training and learning**

- Deliver targeted training, especially for EU Delegations which do not fulfil the GAP II's minimum performance standards.
- Mainstream gender equality in EU training at all levels and in all sectors, with a focus on core training – such as training on procedures, programme and project management – in addition to integrating gender in pre-deployment and pre-posting training, and providing refresher courses for middle and senior management.
- Share good practice experiences and research findings more widely among Commission services, EU Member States and with other actors, in order to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of all actions, including political and policy dialogue.

### **Data, results and indicators**

- Provide clear guidance and support for the correct use of the OECD gender marker as a means of improving the quality of actions.
- Accord greater priority to the integration of sex-disaggregated data through its prompt and thorough collection, storage, analysis and use in all EU actions, and the full and deliberate integration of such data into core procedures, such as monitoring templates and work plans.
- Support partner governments' national statistical offices to improve data collection, including in the context of SDG monitoring.
- Move progressively from measuring the numerical increase of women in processes and programmes – using sex-disaggregated indicators – to designing and monitoring more

transformative initiatives that aim to promote changes in social norms, with a view to advancing gender equality, fulfilling the rights, and meeting the needs and interests of all members in affected communities, while leaving no one behind.

- Align core institutional guidance with the GAP II to ensure that sectoral indicators are gender-sensitive and that they are included, as appropriate, in results monitoring frameworks.

### **Working with civil society and other key partners**

- Involve and closely consult civil society organisations, especially women's organisations, at the country and regional levels in terms of context and problem analyses, including for the evaluation of programmes and policies, in order to enhance the effectiveness of EU actions.
- Increase cooperation with civil society organisations – including those that work to involve men and boys in promoting gender equality, and religious organisations, among others – that play key roles in promoting and supporting gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment.