

Union of Equality: 2026-2030 LGBTIQ equality strategy

Background

The European Institute for Gender Equality (hereafter referred to as 'EIGE'^[1]) is a decentralised agency of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality by providing technical assistance to EU institutions, in particular the Commission and the authorities of the Member States.^[2] EIGE has become the knowledge centre and the primary source for information on gender equality in the European Union.

EIGE contributes to making the European Union become a Union of Equality, where women and men, girls and boys in all their diversity are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead our societies.

EIGE's gender equality work and gender mainstreaming approach recognise the differences between women and men ('lived realities') and how lived realities due to gender inequalities are affected by other characteristics such as age, socioeconomic situation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, country of origin, urban or rural location, family situation, sexual orientation or gender identity ('in their diversity'). EIGE's approach and work reflects the complexity of gender inequalities across multiple and intersecting experiences. Among other tasks, the Agency collects and analyses data on gender equality from an intersectional perspective, develops methods to improve gender statistics and data collections amongst other main objectives^[3].

The EU commitment to gender equality

The EU Treaties enshrine equality between women and men as a core value of the EU and a fundamental right and oblige the EU to combat gender inequalities in all its activities^[4]. These provisions form the legal basis for the role of the EU and Member States in promoting gender equality and implementing gender mainstreaming.

The EU gender equality strategy, adopted in 2020, sets out the key gender equality policy objectives and measures for the EU to advance towards a gender-equal society^[5]. It



An EU Agency

reinvigorates the EU's commitment to the dual approach to gender equality that combines targeted measures to achieve gender equality with strengthened gender mainstreaming. Specifically, the Commission commits to enhancing gender mainstreaming by systematically including a gender perspective at all stages of policymaking, including evaluations, and in all EU policy areas and adopting intersectionality as a cross-cutting principle.

The Interinstitutional Agreement for the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) required the Commission to develop a methodology to measure the relevant EU budget expenditure supporting gender equality, and to strengthen the assessment of gender impacts in impact assessments and evaluations in the 'Better regulation' framework^[6].

The 2021 communication on Better Regulation^[7] builds on the commitment to improving the reporting of gender impacts. The Commission pledged to pay greater attention to the gender equality dimension and equality for all and give it consistent consideration in all stages of policymaking in line with Articles 8 and 10 of the TFEU^{[8],[9]}. Since the start of the current MFF, the Better Regulation guidelines^[10] have been updated to require the analysis of gender equality in the evaluations and impact assessments of the programmes.

Commission's 2025 communication, a Roadmap for Women's Rights, presents a renewed and long-term vision for gender equality in the EU. The Roadmap annexed to the Communication reaffirms the need for a dual approach. The Commission commits to continue gender mainstreaming in all its policies and actions. This includes mainstreaming gender in the EU budget and aligning relevant upcoming policy initiatives with the goals of the Roadmap.

The EU commitment to gender mainstreaming enshrined in the EU legal and policy framework on gender equality and recently in the European Commission's Roadmap for Women's Rights would be materialized only if the gender equality perspective is embedded in all key EU strategic policy documents, including those directly contributing to the EU's Union of Equality, and supported by robust gender statistics and data collection, effective use of gender impact assessments and gender budgeting and dedicated resources to ensure comprehensive integration.

Intersecting inequalities as a cross-cutting principle

EIGE defines intersectionality^[11] as an "analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination^[12]", originating from social relations, history, and the operation of structures of power. Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of intersectional and multiple discrimination and disadvantage that occur because of a combination of identities and the intersection of sex and gender with other grounds.

The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 recognises that women and men are a heterogeneous group and may face intersectional discrimination based on several characteristics, such as sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, migrant-status, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics^[13].

Quality, reliable, comprehensive, comparable data is crucial in understanding gender and intersecting inequalities across all areas of life and informing decision-makers to aid knowledge-based policymaking. In the “*Quality considerations for EIGE’s Gender Statistics Database (2nd edition): Evolving trends in producing gender equality data and intersectional perspectives*”^[14], EIGE highlights best practices to address challenges in gender and intersecting inequalities statistics. The main principle behind producing high-quality gender and intersecting inequalities data is gender mainstreaming, which means systematically addressing gender issues and biases at every stage of statistical production. Already from the initial stage of data collection, definitions, classifications, and methods must be consistent, free from gender bias, and capable of uncovering hidden gender inequalities. Additional layers of disaggregation should be added to uncover intersecting inequalities.

Data collection and research on gender and intersecting inequalities should be included in all key EU strategic policy documents, including in those directly contributing to the EU’s Union of Equality, to allow understanding of interactions of gender with other grounds of discrimination (e.g. ethnicity, race, age, sexual orientation, family status, disability and urban/rural differences), and tackling broader patterns of inequalities in more transformative ways.

Inadequate and inconsistent CSOs involvement in gender equality policy development and CSOs funding

EIGE’s latest data on institutional mechanisms for gender equality¹ reveals inadequate and inconsistent CSOs involvement in gender equality policy development and CSOs funding. Despite existence of formal consultation mechanisms, the involvement of CSOs in policy development is often ad hoc and under-resourced, lacking regularity and follow-up mechanisms. This limits their effectiveness and hinders the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

The EU policy strategies contributing to the EU’s Union of Equality should consider strengthening public consultations on policies and legislation, ensuring broader participation from stakeholders, including gender equality organizations, in policymaking across all areas and funding programmes. Ensuring sustainable funding for CSOs working on gender and intersecting

¹ EIGE (forthcoming), [Institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the EU: present realities, future priorities](#).

inequalities would facilitate the promotion of long-term transformative changes in gender equality and contribute to the Union of Equality.

^[1] Established by the European Parliament and of the Council Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of 20 December 2006 (OJ L 403/9 of 30.12.2006)

^[2] Article 2, Item 2

^[3] Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a European Institute for Gender Equality, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1922>

^[4] Article 2 and Article 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union, 2012/C 326/01 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF); Article 8 of the TFEU; Article 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012/C 326/02 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL:EN:PDF>).

^[5] Commission communication – A Union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>).

^[6] European Union (2020), Interinstitutional agreement between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management, as well as on new own resources, including a roadmap towards the introduction of new own resources, Official Journal of the European Union, L 433I, Publications Office of the European Union (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.LI.2020.433.01.0028.01.ENG>).

^[7] Commission communication – Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws, COM(2021) 219 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:219:FIN>).

^[8] While Article 8 refers to equality between women and men, Article 10 concerns the legal obligation of the EU to combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation when defining and implementing its policies and activities in the TFEU.

^[9] Commission communication – Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws, COM(2021) 219 final (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:219:FIN>).

^[7] https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

^[10] https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/better-regulation/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en

^[11] The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Black Feminist scholar, to speak to discrimination involving both gender and race. See: Crenshaw, K, (1989) [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminis.pdf \(uchicago.edu\)](#). *University of Chicago Legal Forum*.

^[12] [intersectionality | European Institute for Gender Equality \(europa.eu\)](#).

^[13] [CELEX:52020DC0152:EN:TXT.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#) and Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

^[14] Quality considerations for EIGE’s Gender Statistics Database (2nd edition): Evolving trends in producing gender equality data and intersectional perspectives (published on 25 September 2024), available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/quality-considerations-eiges-gender-statistics-database-2nd-edition-evolving-trends-producing-gender-equality-data-and>