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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Commission concerning the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 19 March 2020 (Any Other Business item).

A Union for Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025

Information from the Commission

On 5 March this year, the European Commission launched the Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025.¹ The Strategy delivers on the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality.

The Strategy frames the Commission's work on gender equality and sets out the policy objectives and key actions for the years 2020-2025, aiming to achieve significant progress on a gender-equal Europe, 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 European society.

The policy objectives included in the Strategy are:

- Ending gender-based violence
- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Closing gender gaps in the labour market
- Achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy
- Addressing the gender pay and pension gaps
- Closing the gender care gap, and
- Achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender mainstreaming in policy areas combined with targeted actions. The intersectionality of gender with other grounds of discrimination will be addressed across EU policies.

¹ Doc. 6678/20 (Commission reference: COM/2020/152 final.)

The Strategy focuses on actions within the EU but is coherent with the EU's external actions on gender equality and women's empowerment, to be elaborated in Gender Action Plan III, which is to be launched later this year.

Examples of the Commission's key actions under the Strategy:

- Present a Victims' Rights Strategy in 2020, which will address the specific needs of victims of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, building on the Victims' Rights Directive.
- Should the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention not be possible, propose alternative legislative measures to prevent and combat specific forms of gender-based violence.
- Table binding measures on pay transparency in 2020.
- Propose the Digital Services Act² to clarify online platforms' responsibilities with regard to user-disseminated content and measures in relation to addressing illegal activities online.
- Support women as investors and entrepreneurs through Horizon Europe's European Innovation Council and through the InvestEU programme.
- Push for the adoption of the Commission proposal for a Directive on improving the gender balance on corporate boards.
- Look at the gender impact of its activities and at how to measure expenditure related to gender equality at programme level in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.
- Reach gender balance of 50% at all levels of Commission's management by the end of 2024.

² <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/new-eu-rules-e-commerce>.

Implementing the Strategy and achieving its objectives requires a joint effort across European institutions to mainstream gender equality in all policy areas. The Commission will integrate a gender perspective in all major Commission initiatives including the green and digital transitions and demographic change, facilitated by a Task Force for Equality composed of representatives of all Commission services and of the European External Action Service. The Commission calls on the European Parliament and the Council to take forward their work on the existing and forthcoming Commission proposals in a timely manner. Member States should use all the tools at their disposal; in particular, the possibilities offered for EU financial support, in order to ensure progress in the field of gender equality.

The key actions presented in the Strategy will be regularly updated and supplemented. Their implementation will be monitored and progress reported on an annual basis. These reports will serve as an annual political stock-taking of progress made.