



Press Release

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EU Auditors to examine gender mainstreaming in the EU budget

Gender mainstreaming is the practice of systematically considering gender when preparing, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and activities. The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit to assess whether the Commission has used gender mainstreaming in the EU budget to promote equality.

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values enshrined in the EU treaties. Failing to promote equality may have significant negative effects on jobs, productivity and GDP growth, according to a recent study by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). EIGE also found that although there had been progress on gender equality within the EU since 2013, progress was uneven across Member States.

Already for the 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework (MFF), the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission agreed to apply “gender-responsive elements” where appropriate in budgetary procedures. However, a recent internal spending review of current EU programmes found that gender equality had not been mainstreamed across the EU budget in the same way as climate change or biodiversity. Instead, specific programmes, mainly those tackling employment and social issues, had been used to address discrimination based on gender.

“Taking into account gender when deciding and implementing the EU budget is crucial in promoting equality between women and men”, said Eva Lindström, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. “We want to see whether the Commission has applied this principle in the EU budget. This is an important analysis to undertake with negotiations for the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework currently ongoing”.

The audit report, due to be published in the first quarter of 2021, will particularly assess whether:

- there is an appropriate framework to promote gender equality;
- the MFF and the annual EU budgets incorporate a gender perspective; and
- the Commission is able to demonstrate the gender equality results of the main EU funding programmes.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ audit preview. The full preview is on eca.europa.eu.

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The audit scope includes the common agricultural policy (CAP), the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) and the Erasmus programme.

Notes to Editors

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values of the EU treaties. The 1957 Treaty of Rome introduced the principle of equal pay. Commitment to equality is expressed both in the Treaty on European Union and in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Both the Council and the European Parliament are committed to gender equality. The Commission plays a major role in incorporating gender concerns into programme implementation and in monitoring and evaluating results. In 2019, new Commission President Ursula von der Leyen placed gender equality high on her political agenda. The post of Equality Commissioner has been created and a new EU gender equality strategy is currently being developed, in parallel with negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027.

The European Court of Auditors today published a preview of its audit on gender mainstreaming. Audit Previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are based on preparatory work undertaken before the start of an audit and should not be regarded as audit observations, conclusions or recommendations.

Press contact for this preview

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