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Gender Impact Evaluation of the Recovery, Resilience and Transformation Plan for Spain

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study quantifies the impact of the Spanish Recovery and Resilience Facilities (RRF) funds on gender equality. The Spanish government has received €69.5 Billion that will be devoted to 108 investment projects with the aim of recovering and transforming the economy and the society from the devasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects seek four main objectives: green transformation, digital transition, social and territorial cohesion and gender equality.

There is substantial evidence that the outbreak and subsequent developments of the pandemic may have worsen the situation of women, adversely affecting the path towards gender convergence. On the one hand, the measures adopted to contain the expansion of the virus may have been more severe for the high-contact services such as personal care, tourism, retail, and hospitality sectors where women are overrepresented. On the other hand, women have absorbed a disproportionately larger amount of the household needs resulting from school lockdowns and the impossibility to outsource domestic services. As a result, the pandemic has exacerbated the “double shift” phenomena among working women, making it more difficult to advance in their professional careers.

The RRF could be a powerful tool to correct and compensate the gender asymmetric effects of the pandemic on the economy and the society. However, the gender assessment of the Spanish plan does not suggest that the funds will fully succeed in achieving this goal. This study identifies that a 0.8% of the RRF will be invested in projects targeted directly to improve the employability and living conditions of women (see Table 1 in the report). However, the other remaining projects, that we refer as Gender Blind Investment, are expected to have only a limited impact on women’s prospects.

The study follows the input/output methodology to assess the effect of the Gender Blind Investment projects. Both approaches conclude that less than 40% of the RRF funds will revert directly on women. The reason is that mot of the investment projects will be devoted to the green and the digital transformation and will maintain or create employment mostly in sectors where women are underrepresented (i.e. construction, information and communication, transport and energy).

Finally, the evaluation of the RRF funds from the outcome perspective indicate that €4.999,68 Million will contribute to reduce gender inequality across the different domains in the Gender Equality Index. A

large fraction of these funds, a 59%, will revert in the Time and Knowledge domain, which in Spain are the less gender egalitarian domains.

This assessment indicates that the impact of the funds on gender equality will be rather moderate. The study also indicates that the “new economy”, after COVID-19, will be more skilled, digital and green. Accordingly, new employment opportunities will appear in sectors such as information and communication, energy, scienced and technology. To prevent the current economic transformation from hindering gender convergence, it will be extremely important to devote efforts and resources to incentive the participation of women in these sectors, which currently are highly male dominated.

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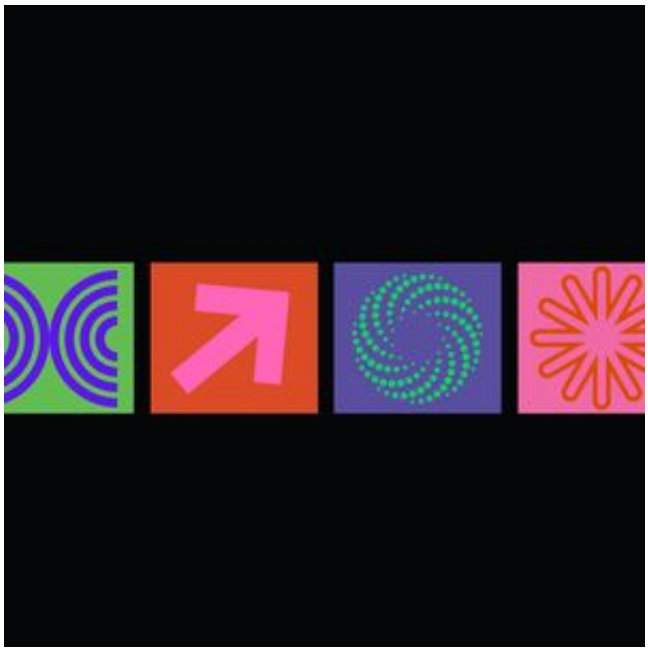
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Alexandra Geese

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