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The Gender Budgeting report of the European Parliament

A preliminary study

Gender Budgeting (GB) aims at evaluating the impact of an Institution's budget on men and women, with a gender mainstreaming approach applied to every field of intervention. This kind of analysis, implemented so far by 41% of OECD countries, is, since 2003, part of the EU commitment to achieve Gender Equality by recommending the Member States to develop GB projects.

Since 2015, two feasibility studies have been implemented to develop a gender analysis of the EU Budget. In addition to them, this exploratory Gender Budgeting Report of the European Parliament outlines a specific methodology that fits the EP within the general framework and offers a preliminary analysis of the available gender data. The study makes detailed recommendations for developing a full Gender Budgeting Report to support innovative policies and strategies that may expand the EP Social Sustainability from a gender perspective.

The EP budget is a small part of the whole EU budget and consists of about 2 billion euros in expenditures covering EP operating costs like salaries and cost of offices. Since the EP budget is an administrative budget, its gender impact may be identified in term of "inputs", i.e. the expenditures for people working for the Institution both directly and indirectly. The outputs resulting from the EP expenditures may be then identified in the EP laws and regulatory norms, and only the final outcomes of the EP legislative power concern the gender impact on EU citizens. The GB Report of the EP, therefore, is focused mainly on the analysis of the gender impact of the EP expenditures in terms of inputs while offering some insight into the outputs and the outcomes as a springboard for future developments.

The EP expenditures have been analysed taking into consideration their gender impact on three main groups of stakeholders: MEPs, Staff (internal stakeholders) and Experts and Workers of service providers (external stakeholders).

The gender impact of the EP budget on these stakeholders can be evaluated according to three reclassification priorities: 1) internal stakeholders who receive resources directly (1st order), 2) internal stakeholders who receive services (2nd order) 3) external stakeholders who provide general services (3rd order). The analysis of the EP budget also takes into consideration human capabilities enabled by the expenditures (eg: Exercise of Political Power, Work, Mobility and Travel, Access to communication, to information ecc).

In the EP budget, most expenditures are statutory (employment contracts, multi-annual services, essential services etc.), and their amount cannot be changed in a short time. In this case a gender perspective needs to be developed from a GB qualitative point of view which investigates on procedures and rules governing expenditures.

The main results of the GB of the EP and the recommendations concerning the three main categories of stakeholders involved are:
MEPs: currently the EP is composed by 705 MEPs elected by the citizens of the EU countries, of which 39,5% are women and 60,5% are men. Assuming that their per capita expenditures are equal, it is possible to roughly estimate that, since the expenditures for Members of the Institution are about 207 million euros, the EP spends about 82 million euros for women and 125 million euros for men (EP Budget 2021). This imbalance cannot be fixed by the EP, depending on the results of the European elections and on the number of women running in each country, but it further highlights the lack of women's democratic representation, since they represent over half of the EU population.

To rectify the situation, the EP may decide to adopt a gender impact strategy aimed at 1) promoting the political empowerment of women among MEPs and 2) increasing the number of women among future MEPs. The first goal can be achieved by increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the EP, by offering specific training opportunities on gender issues like leadership, team building, and negotiating skills and by investigating conscious and unconscious gender bias that may influence MEPs political commitment. The second goal can be achieved by promoting projects to raise awareness on the lack of women's political representation in the EU countries with the lowest rate of women among MEPs.

Staff: 55,5% of the EP Staff are women. Such gender balance is favoured by specific gender equality recruitment rules adopted by all the EU Institutions. While the overall number of people in the EP is well balanced, a gender issue concerning leadership roles and career advancement still persists: women are 15% of Deputy Secretary-General and Directors-General and 39% of Directors and Head of Unit (2018). A more in-depth analysis is also needed to better investigate the domestic and care work load of women, who represent 75% of part-time workers, 70,4% of those taking advantage of Parental leaves and 79,5% of the beneficiaries of Family leaves (2018). Also strategies for staff replacement need further investigation.

Research on gender stereotypes, focus groups, interviews, training initiative for leadership roles are all useful tools that may be adopted to comply with the goal of gender balance in the decision making process.

Experts and employees of service providers: the available data and indicators show that the EP strives for a gender balance in the selection of experts, where possible; however, it is important to underline that the persistence of a strong horizontal segregation in some sectors makes harder to hire women: women represent 75% of all the external interpreters, 35% of experts invited to Committee hearings for External Policies (2018-2020) and 11% of ICT specialists working for compa8
nies accredited to access EP buildings. Another specific gender issue also concerns the possibility of internalizing cleaning and catering services – highly feminized sectors - to gender-balance similar process already happened in the past years for ICT, driving and security services, which mainly benefited men.

As for the companies working with the European Parliament, they need to comply to the procurement directives. EP tenders already include a general commitment to promote equality and diversity, with specific attention to equality between men and women. Thus, it is recommended to adopt specific gender procurement rules rewarding more gender sensitive service providers.

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Attached documents

Gender budgeting

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