



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2018)0066

Gender equality in EU trade agreements

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements (2017/2015(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Articles 8, 10, 153(1), 153(2), 157 and 207 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Articles 23 and 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the 2015 EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 16 June 2016 on gender equality (00337/2016),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 14 July 2015 on Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – State of Play (SWD(2015)0144),
- having regard to the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020 annexed to the Council conclusions of 7 March 2011 (07166/2011),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 3 December 2015 on the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 (SWD(2015)0278),
- having regard to the Commission’s 2017 report on equality between women and men in the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission’s 2015 communication entitled ‘Trade for All – Towards a more responsible trade and investment policy’ (COM(2015)0497),
- having regard to the Commission’s communication of 13 September 2017 entitled ‘Report on the Implementation of the Trade Policy Strategy Trade for All – Delivering a Progressive Trade Policy to Harness Globalisation’ (COM(2017)0491),
- having regard to the GSP Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European

Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008¹),

- having regard to the Conflict Minerals Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas²),
- having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), in particular Article 4(1) prohibiting slavery and servitude, and Article 14 prohibiting discrimination,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 18 December 1979,
- having regard to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women on 15 September 1995, and to the subsequent outcome documents adopted at the UN Beijing +5 (2000), Beijing +10 (2005) and Beijing +15 (2010) special sessions,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), and its Article 3 defining ‘gender’ as ‘the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men’, and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Sanctioning and Elimination of Violence against Women (Convention of Belem do Pará) of 1994,
- having regard to the 2007 joint strategy of the EU and its Member States entitled ‘Aid for trade: Enhancing EU support for trade-related needs in developing countries’ and to the Commission’s communication of 13 November 2017 entitled ‘Achieving Prosperity through Trade and Investment – Updating the 2007 Joint EU Strategy on Aid for Trade’ (COM(2017)0667);
- having regard to the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, entitled ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’,
- having regard to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises,
- having regard to the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas,
- having regard to the UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development (2015),
- having regard to the key conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on gender equality, including the Equal Remuneration Convention (No 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No 111), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention

¹ OJ L 303, 31.10.2012, p. 1.

² OJ L 130, 19.5.2017, p. 1.

(No 183),

- having regard to Chapter 7 of the Action Plan of the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State 2015-2017, adopted in Brussels in June 2015,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 February 2006 on the human rights and democracy clause in European Union agreements¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on human rights and social and environmental standards in international trade agreements²,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 November 2010 on international trade policy in the context of climate change imperatives³,
- having regard to its resolution of 11 September 2012 on the role of women in the green economy⁴,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post-2015⁵,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2016 on women domestic workers and carers in the EU⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 May 2016 on poverty: a gender perspective⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 March 2017 on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2014-2015⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2016 on implementation of the 2010 recommendations of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2017 on the impact of international trade and the EU's trade policies on global value chains¹⁰,
- having regard to its recommendation of 14 September 2017 to the Council, the Commission and the European External Action Service on the negotiations of the modernisation of the trade pillar of the EU-Chile Association Agreement¹¹,
- having regard to the 'Trio Presidency Declaration on Equality between Women and Men' presented on 19 July 2017 by Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria, the Member States

¹ OJ C 290 E, 29.11.2006, p. 107.

² OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 31.

³ OJ C 99 E, 3.4.2012, p. 94.

⁴ OJ C 353 E, 3.12.2013, p. 38.

⁵ OJ C 407, 4.11.2016, p. 2.

⁶ OJ C 66, 21.2.2018, p. 30.

⁷ OJ C 76, 28.2.2018, p. 93.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0073.

⁹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0298.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0330.

¹¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0354.

holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the 18-month period from July 2017 to December 2018,

- having regard to the study by the International Centre for Research on Women entitled ‘Trade liberalisation & women’s reproductive health: linkages and pathways’,
- having regard to the Africa Human Development Report 2016 entitled ‘Accelerating Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Africa’¹,
- having regard to the 2014 OECD report ‘Enhancing Women’s Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship and Business Leadership in OECD Countries’²,
- having regard to the results of the most recent high-level international debates on gender and trade, with particular attention to those organised under the umbrella of the EU and the WTO/UNCTAD/ITC, including, in inverse chronological order, the ‘International Forum on Women and Trade’, organised jointly by the European Commission and the International Trade Centre (Brussels, June 2017)³, the annual plenary session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO on ‘Trade as a vehicle of social progress: The gender perspective’ (Geneva, June 2016)⁴ and the WTO plenary session on ‘What future for the WTO? Trade and Gender: Empowering Women through Inclusive Supply Chains’ (Geneva, July 2015)⁵,
- having regard to the increasing international efforts to promote gender equality through trade policies, such as the UNCTAD programme on gender and development⁶ (which includes studies on the impact of trade on women, a teaching packet on trade and gender, and online training on the creation of the status of ‘gender champions’) and the World Bank working areas, all 14 of which have, since 2016, a gender strategy,
- having regard to the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) issue paper ‘The Gender Dimensions of Global Value Chains’ (September 2016)⁷,
- having regard to the ICTSD issue paper ‘The Gender Dimensions of Services’

¹ UNDP, Africa Human Development Report 2016,
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/Africa%20HDR/AfHDR_2016_lowres_EN.pdf?download.

² OCDE technical report,
http://www.oecd.org/gender/Enhancing%20Women%20Economic%20Empowerment_Fin_1_Oct_2014.pdf

³ <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1632>

⁴ https://www.wto.org/english/forums_e/parliamentarians_e/ipuconf2016_e.htm

⁵ https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/a4t_e/global_review15prog_e/global_review15prog_e.htm

⁶ <http://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Gender-and-Trade/Trade,-Gender-and-Development.aspx>

⁷ https://www.ictsd.org/sites/default/files/research/the_gender_dimensions_of_global_value_chains_0.pdf

(September 2016)¹,

- having regard to the 2015 UN Women report entitled ‘Progress of the world’s women 2015-2016. Transforming economies, realising rights’²,
 - having regard to the 2017 WIDE+ gender and EU trade position paper entitled ‘How to transform EU trade policy to protect women’s rights’³,
 - having regard to the 2016 study prepared at request of Parliament’s Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee and entitled ‘Gender Equality in Trade Agreements’⁴,
 - having regard to the 2015 study prepared at request of Parliament’s Committee on International Trade entitled ‘The EU’s Trade Policy: from gender-blind to gender-sensitive?’⁵,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality under Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and the opinion of the Committee on Development (A8-0023/2018),
- A. whereas Article 8 of the TFEU states that the European Union shall, through all its actions inside and outside of the Union, aim at eliminating inequalities and promote gender equality and combat discrimination, among others, on the grounds of sex, when defining and implementing its policies and activities;
- B. whereas trade policy could serve as a tool to promote global and European values, including gender equality; whereas EU trade and investment agreements and policy are not gender-neutral, meaning that they have different impact on women and men due to structural inequalities; whereas women face gender-specific constraints, such as limited access to and control over resources, legal discrimination and the overburden of carrying out unpaid care work resulting from traditional gender roles;
- C. whereas gender equality should concern both women and men equally; whereas engagement and partnership between public and private sector stakeholders, at international and local levels, are key to promoting the synergies needed to achieve gender equality and women empowerment, and to raise awareness about issues such as:

¹ https://www.ictsd.org/sites/default/files/research/the_gender_dimensions_of_services.pdf

² http://progress.unwomen.org/en/2015/pdf/unw_progressreport.pdf

³ <https://wideplus.org/2017/06/25/wide-gender-and-trade-position-paper-is-available/>

⁴ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571388/IPOL_STU\(2016\)571388_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/571388/IPOL_STU(2016)571388_EN.pdf)

⁵ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/549058/EXPO_IDA\(2015\)549058_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/549058/EXPO_IDA(2015)549058_EN.pdf)

property rights; access to finance, education and vocational training; corporate behaviour; government procurement; the digital gap; and cultural bias;

- D. whereas trade policies aim to achieve, among other things, the sustainable and equitable economic growth and development needed to ensure poverty reduction, social justice and decent work and better living conditions for both women and men, as well as to safeguard women's rights; whereas gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is not only to be mainstreamed across all UN sustainable development goals (SDGs), but is also a standalone goal; whereas the SDG agenda acknowledges that trade contributes to the promotion of sustainable and equitable development and could contribute to the promotion of the highest international labour and environmental standards and human rights; whereas EU trade policy is an important part of the SDG framework, and a strong gender perspective is an essential element of that framework, the aim of which is to ensure fairer and beneficial outcomes for all; whereas trade policy can also expand opportunities for women entrepreneurship, access to apprenticeship and employment;
- E. whereas the complex relationship between international trade and gender demands a deep understanding of the forces at work, involving the identification, analysis and monitoring of the economic and social dynamics required to develop a efficient trade policy in pursuit of economic development that also promotes women's empowerment and gender equality; whereas trade policy must therefore take account of its direct and indirect impacts on gender, as well as of specific local contexts, in order to avoid reproducing or exacerbating existing gender gaps and stereotypes, and to strengthen gender equality proactively; whereas the success of trade policy should also be evaluated on the basis of whether it has a positive and equal impact on both women and men;
- F. whereas economic development and gender equality frequently go hand-in-hand; whereas there is a broad understanding that societies in which gender inequalities are lower also tend to grow faster;
- G. whereas the impact of trade liberalisation on individuals also depend on their geographical localisation and on the economic sector in which they are active; whereas important differences exist, both between and within countries, in terms of production structures, female labour force participation rates and welfare regimes; whereas women comprise the majority of workers in sectors such as garment and textile manufacturing, telecommunication, tourism, the care economy and agriculture, where they tend to be concentrated in more low-wage or low-status forms of formal and informal employment than men; whereas this may lead to abuses at the workplace and to discrimination, gender segregation in types of occupations and activities, gender gaps in wages and working conditions, and gender-specific constraints in access to productive resources, infrastructure and services; whereas free trade agreements (FTAs) can lead to employment shifts and losses, particularly in export-related sectors in which women often form the majority of the work force; whereas country-specific and sector-specific gender assessments therefore bring important added value when designing trade agreements;
- H. whereas in the EU in 2011, export-dependent employment accounted for about one out of every nine jobs (11 %) held by women in the EU;

- I. whereas, according to a 2017 Commission study, almost 12 million women in the EU have jobs that depend on the exports of goods and services to the rest of the world¹;
- J. whereas on the basis of fact-based studies, UNCTAD insists in highlighting the limitations that women face in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by trade, arising from factors such as lack of technical training for better jobs, lack of public services to alleviate household responsibilities, and restricted access and control over resources, including credit and land, information as well as networks; whereas, on this basis, UNCTAD recommends that evaluations address the potential impact of trade policies on gender equality and women empowerment in areas such as employment, small business, prices, productivity in agriculture, subsistence agriculture and migration²;
- K. whereas current EU trade policy and its ‘Trade for All’ strategy is based on three key principles: effectiveness, transparency and values, but lack a gender equality perspective; whereas the Commission has renewed and expanded its commitment on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in its review of the Aid for Trade strategy, stating that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also crucial for economic development, making the most of the wide range of EU policy tools available in order to increase their overall impact on growth and poverty reduction; whereas following the provisions included in CEDAW, the EU should provide the basis for realising equality between women and men through ensuring women’s equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political, economic and public life, as well as education, health and employment;
- L. whereas women are affected by trade and trade agreements as potential entrepreneurs, consumers, workers and informal workers; whereas there is a crucial need to recognise and better understand gender-specific impacts of trade policy in order to deliver adequate policy responses; whereas in order to meet this aim, it is necessary to develop an adequate methodology to ensure that the possible impacts of EU trade policy and agreements on gender equality and women’s rights are always evaluated; whereas the Commission should make quantitative gender-disaggregated research by sectors such as, among other, business, science, and technology; whereas, until now, the EU has concluded trade agreements without undertaking assessments of their impact on women and gender equality; whereas the Commission has announced that a modernised Association Agreement between Chile and the EU will include, for the first time for the EU, a specific chapter on gender and trade;
- M. whereas gender issues and women rights are not sufficiently taken into account in the sustainable impact assessments of trade agreements;
- N. whereas an ex-ante assessment of the gender implications of trade policies can make a contribution to women’s empowerment and well-being and, at the same time, help mitigate existing disparities and avoid increasing gender inequality;
- O. whereas a review of current EU multilateral and bilateral agreements shows that 20 % of the agreements with non-European trading partners make reference to women’s

¹ http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/june/tradoc_155632.pdf

² Implementing gender-aware ex ante evaluations to maximize the benefits of trade reforms for women, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/presspb2016d7_en.pdf.

rights, and that 40 % of these agreements include references that aim to promote gender equality; whereas references in these agreements to promote women's empowerment are mainly voluntary and, when binding, they are not enforceable in practice; whereas a recent study by the Commission shows that a gender gap persists in terms of opportunities for access to jobs; whereas the study shows that empowering women could increase global GDP by USD 28 billion by 2025, and that it is essential as much from economic as social and poverty eradication perspectives, given the role of women in communities;

- P. whereas in both developing and developed countries, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the largest part of the private sector and a vast majority of employment; whereas, according to the International Trade Centre (ITC), MSMEs together represent 95 % of all firms globally, approximately 50 % of global GDP and over 70 % of total employment; whereas up to 40 % of all MSMEs are owned by women while only 15 % of exporting firms are led by women; whereas, however, OCDE figures show that women entrepreneurs still frequently earn 30-40 % less than their male counterparts¹;
- Q. whereas the public debate and reaction across Europe on trade negotiations such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) have shown the need for transparent and inclusive negotiations, taking into account the strong concerns voiced by European citizens in many countries; whereas EU trade policy should not lower any of the EU's standards, and whereas public services should always be excluded from trade negotiations; whereas any dispute settlement mechanism should be designed to guarantee the capacity of individual governments to regulate in the public interest and to serve public policy objectives; whereas progress must be expected in other critical areas of concern, such as reinforcing companies' corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations in relation to human rights; whereas a global holistic approach to corporate liability for human rights abuses is needed in the context of global value chains;
- R. whereas the UN Guiding Principles on business, trade and human rights are binding on all states and all enterprises, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership or structure;
- S. whereas the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, adopted by the Council in 2016, affirms that human rights must be mainstreamed systematically across all policy sectors and institutions, including international trade and commercial policy;
- T. whereas the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) aims, among other things, to contribute to poverty eradication and promote sustainable development and good governance; whereas GSP+ includes a conditionality aimed at ensuring the ratification and implementation of 27 international conventions – on human and labour rights, environmental protection and good governance – by eligible developing countries;

¹ OECD background report 'Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment through Entrepreneurship and Business Leadership in OECD Countries' (2014), http://www.oecd.org/gender/Enhancing%20Women%20Economic%20Empowerment_Fin_1_Oct_2014.pdf.

whereas it is crucial to monitor their implementation on a regular basis, to take action when needed and to pay particular attention to gender equality; whereas CEDAW is one of the relevant conventions under GSP+;

- U. whereas more than 40 % of agricultural work in the Global South is done by women;
- V. whereas the expansion of global trade and integration of developing countries into global value chains (GVCs) can carry the risk of creating gender inequalities when those are used to produce more economically competitive products; whereas it has also allowed many women workers to move from informal to the formal sector; whereas rules of origin have become increasingly important in the context of GVCs, in which the production spans across several countries; whereas clearer and more well-defined rules of origin can create a framework towards establishing full transparency and accountability throughout supply chains, and this can have a positive impact on women, particularly those working in the garment sector;
- W. whereas these new trade-related employment opportunities for women in developing countries contribute significantly to household incomes and poverty reduction;
- X. whereas the garment sector mainly employs women; whereas it is important to recall that 289 people perished in a blaze in Karachi, Pakistan, in September 2012, that a fire at the Tazreen Fashions factory, in Bangladesh, in the same year caused the death of 117 people and injured more than 200 workers, and that the structural failure of the Rana Plaza, also in Bangladesh, in 2013 resulted in 1 129 casualties and caused injuries to approximately 2 500 people; whereas all of these were garment factories;
- Y. whereas the majority of the workers in export processing zones (EPZs) are women; and whereas, in some countries, EPZs are exempt from local labour laws, ban or limit union activity and do not provide legal redress to workers, in clear violation of ILO core standards;
- Z. whereas the public and private sectors, civil society (in particular women's rights organisations), social partners and trade unions have the knowledge and potential to play a crucial role in shaping and monitoring trade policy, and in collecting data that can inform on the issues women face with regard to trade liberalisation, with a view to strengthening women's rights, their economic empowerment and the promotion of women entrepreneurship;
- AA. whereas events such as the International Forum on Women and Trade organised by the Commission on 20 June 2017 enable many economic stakeholders and representatives of civil society to exchange and launch initiatives on the impact of trade on gender equality;
- AB. whereas multilateral platforms and intergovernmental fora such as the UN SDGs and the Women20 (W20) are crucial for fostering gender-related discussion and action among experts, and for providing a good basis for consensus-building;
- AC. whereas public services, existing or future services of general interest, and services of general economic interest should be excluded from the negotiations on, and scope of application of, any trade agreement concluded by the EU (including, but not limited to, water, sanitation, health, care, social services, social security systems, education, waste

management and public transport); whereas, the Commission has committed itself to ensuring that these services remain the competence of the Member States and that governments cannot be required to privatise any service, nor be prevented from defining, regulating, providing and supporting services, in general interest at any time;

- AD. whereas trade in services and public procurement can affect women disproportionately, and whereas public procurement remains a tool allowing governments to have a positive impact on disadvantaged groups of people, especially women; whereas privatisation of health and care services risks increasing inequality and can have a negative impact on the working conditions of many women; whereas an above-average number of women are employed in public services or in the public service sector and, as users of these services, are more dependent on high-quality, affordable, accessible and demand-driven public services than men, particularly with regard to social services such as childcare and care for dependents; whereas cuts in national households and cuts to public services, as well as price increases, tend to shift this care burden nearly exclusively onto women, which will consequently hinder gender equality;
- AE. whereas the intellectual property rights (IPR) system contributes to EU's knowledge-based economy; whereas IPR provisions related to patents that prohibit the production of generic medicines can have a significant impact on the particular health requirements of women; whereas women rely more than men on affordable access to healthcare and to medicines and their availability, especially with regard to their sexual and reproductive health and rights; whereas access to medicines in non-EU countries should not be challenged on the basis of IPR protection;
- AF. whereas decisions on trade and trade agreements are only to a small extent made by women, as negotiating teams, parliaments and governments are still far from achieving gender balance; whereas gender balance in these institutions could not only lead to better integration of gender-equality issues, but also increase the democratic legitimacy of decision making;
- AG. whereas not enough human resources are allocated within the Commission and the EEAS to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in EU trade policies and, particularly, in the entire process of trade negotiations;
- AH. whereas the Commission, when working on the legal framing of relatively new trade policy areas such as e-commerce, should from the start factor in their impact on gender roles, work-live balance and the amount of unpaid work;
- AI. whereas trade in conflict minerals has proven to be linked directly to widespread human rights violations, including rape and sexual violence against women and girls, child and slave labour and mass displacements;

I. Strengthening gender equality in trade: general considerations and objectives

- 1. Stresses that the EU is obliged to conduct a value-based trade policy, which includes ensuring a high level of protection of labour and environmental rights as well as the respect of fundamental freedoms and human rights, including gender equality; recalls that all EU trade agreements must include an ambitious and enforceable chapter on trade and sustainable development (TSD); stresses that trading commitments in EU agreements should never overrule human rights, women's rights or environmental

protection, and should take into account the local, social and economic environment;

2. Recalls that gender equality is firmly established in all EU policies, as stated in Article 8 of the TFEU; notes that this Article stipulates that ‘in all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between women and men’; calls on the Commission to increase policy coherence between different policies such as trade, development, agriculture, employment, migration and gender equality;
3. Stresses that fair and inclusive international trade policies require a clear framework contributing to enhancing women’s empowerment and their living and working conditions, strengthening gender equality, protecting the environment and improving social justice, international solidarity and international economic development;
4. Stresses that the overarching purpose of trade policy must be to promote mutually beneficial economic growth; recalls that while trade policy can promote other values that the European Union is pushing for in the multilateral arena, there are limits to the global issues that can be solved through trade policy and through trade agreements;
5. Insists that the new generation of trade agreements should promote relevant international standards and legal instruments, including on gender equality, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, the core ILO Conventions and the SDGs;
6. Stresses that trading commitments in EU agreements should never overrule human rights; welcomes the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and calls on the Member States to adopt and elaborate national action plans in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles, taking into account women’s rights and the need to combat gender-based violence; calls on the Commission to use trade negotiations to encourage the EU’s trade partners to adopt national action plans of their own; supports the ongoing negotiations to create a binding UN instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights; stresses the importance of the EU being actively involved in this intergovernmental process and calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage trading partners to engage constructively in these negotiations;
7. Calls on the Commission to ensure that Articles 16 and 17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are fully respected by the EU’s trade partners, as a means of combatting gender-based inequalities in the field of social and economic rights;
8. Recalls that only Member States have the competence to regulate and reverse liberalisation in services of general interest, and therefore calls on them to protect fundamental objectives such as gender equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms, public health, and social and environmental standards;
9. Emphasises the need for governments to maintain their ability to allocate resources to the achievement of women’s rights and gender equality in order to guarantee an inclusive and sustainable future for societies; stresses, in this regard, the paramount importance of respecting, in accordance with SDG target 17.15, partner countries’ democratic policy space to regulate and take suitable decisions for their own national context, respond to the demands of their populations, and fulfil their human rights obligations and other international commitments, including those on gender equality;

10. Recalls that it has called on the Commission to put an end to the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) system, and underlines that any dispute settlement mechanism should be designed to guarantee the capacity of individual governments to regulate in the public interest and to serve public policy objectives, including measures to promote gender equality as well as stronger labour, environmental and consumer rights;
11. Notes that IPR provisions in trade often have an impact on public health and on the particular health requirements of women; calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that IPR provisions in trade agreements take due account of women's rights, particularly with regard to their impact on women's health, including access to affordable healthcare and medicines; calls on the Commission and the Council to promote the protection of geographical indications (GIs) as a tool of particular importance for the empowerment of rural women; calls, furthermore, on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to reconsider the extension of protection to non-agricultural products, bearing in mind that the EU has already agreed to protect non-agricultural GI products in FTAs;
12. Recalls that the SDG require gender-disaggregated data to allow progress to be tracked towards all goals, including SDG 5 on gender equality; stresses that there is no adequate data available on the impact of trade on gender equality, and calls for sufficient and adequate gender disaggregated data on the impact of trade to be collected; stresses that such data would make it possible to establish a methodology with clear and measurable indicators at regional, national and sectorial levels, improve analysis and define objectives to be achieved and measures to be taken to ensure that women and men benefit equally from trade; underlines that particular attention should be put on quantitative and qualitative gender-disaggregated analysis of labour evolution, ownership of assets and financial inclusion in sectors that have been impacted by trade; encourages the Commission to cooperate with European and international organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, the OECD and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), as well as with national statistics offices, with a view to improving the collection and availability of such data; calls on the EU and its Member States to include in ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments the country-specific and sector-specific gender impact of EU trade policy and agreements; stresses that the results of the gender-focused analysis should be taken into account in trade negotiations – considering both positive and negative impact throughout the whole process, from the negotiation stage to implementation – and should be accompanied by measures to prevent or compensate possible negative effects;

II. Strengthening gender equality in trade: sector-specific considerations and objectives

13. Underlines that services of general interest and services of general economic interest – including, but not limited to, water, social services, social security systems, education, waste management, public transport and healthcare – must remain exempted from the scope of trade negotiations and fall under the competence of Member State governments; urges the EU to ensure that trade and investment treaties do not lead to the privatisation of public services that could impact women, both as service providers and service users, and increase gender inequality; stresses that the issue of public provision of social services is especially salient for gender equality, given that changes in access to, and user fees of, such services and their quality can lead to uneven gender distribution in unpaid care work; points out that governments, and national and local authorities, must retain the full right and ability to introduce, regulate, adopt, maintain

or repeal any measures with regard to the commissioning, organisation, funding and provision of universal access to services of general interest and services of general economic interests;

14. Stresses that trade policy can have an impact on access to essential health services, and can therefore influence access to, and the advancement of, reproductive and sexual health and rights objectives in policies, programmes and services; emphasises, therefore, that basic healthcare – in particular access to sexual and reproductive health and rights services – are exempted from trade negotiations and notes that they fall under the competence of the Member States;
15. Calls for binding, enforceable and effective measures to combat the exploitation, and improve the working and living conditions, of women in export-oriented industries, in keeping with the objective of improving the living and working conditions of women in countries and sectors of concern, in particular in the garment, textile and agriculture sectors, in order to avoid that trade liberalisation contributes to precarious labour rights and increased gender wage gaps; believes that such measures, and the establishment of common definitions, should allow for clearer and better coordinated action with international organisation such as the UN, the WTO, the ILO and the OECD; values the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact as a good example, and as a step forward in terms of getting a monitoring mechanism in place, and calls for full compliance of its terms; calls, in this context, on the Commission, on all international actors and on all businesses concerned to acknowledge and adhere to the new OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for Responsible Supply Chains in the Garment and Footwear sector;
16. Calls for an increased focus on women working in the informal sector, recognising the need to reinforce decent work standards for women workers in this sector;
17. Underlines that women and girls tend to be ones who suffer the most, as labour trafficking is strongly linked to trafficking for sexual purposes;
18. Stresses that the impact of increasing agricultural exports generally favours women less than men, as emerging trends indicate that small farmers, many of whom are women, are often not in a position to compete in overseas markets owing to inheritance laws and a lack of access to credit, information, land and networks, as well of possibilities to comply with new rules and standards; notes that particular efforts must be made to improve the positive impact of trade on women in the agricultural sector, where they have been identified as being particularly vulnerable, but also as having a clear potential for empowerment; stresses that women-owned businesses would benefit from the elimination of gender stereotypes, from increased market access and facilitated access to finance, marketing formation and networks, and from improved capacity building and training; notes that trade liberalisation could impact women negatively in sectors such as agriculture and food processing; stresses that although women workers predominate in world food production (accounting for 50-80 % of the global labour force), they own less than 20 % of the land, and, consequently, that increasing commercial demands on and for land makes it difficult for poorer women to gain or retain secure and equitable land access; recalls the need to prevent the potentially negative impact of IPR clauses, e.g. on seed privatisation, in trade agreements on food sovereignty;
19. Stresses that women who work in subsistence agriculture face additional barriers to maintaining food sovereignty owing to the strong protection of new varieties of plants

under the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV Convention) in trade agreements;

20. Underlines that EU agricultural imports may undercut traditional small-scale farms and thereby endanger women's livelihoods;
21. Recalls the importance of MSMEs in the EU's economic structure; calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to support MSMEs, with specific focus on, and measures for, women-led MSMEs; calls on the EU and its Member States to pay particular attention to the special circumstances of women-led MSMEs when establishing export help-desks, to take advantage of the possibilities created by FTAs and to strengthen services, technologies and infrastructures (such as access to internet) that are of particular importance to the economic empowerment of women and women-led MSMEs; calls on the Commission to help set up partnerships between female entrepreneurs in the EU and their counterparts in developing countries;

III. Strengthening gender equality in trade: actions required at EU level

22. Insists that certain elements of EU trade policy, such as TSD chapters and the GSP+ system and the monitoring thereof, can help promote and uphold human rights, including gender equality, workers' rights and environmental protection; insists that binding and enforceable provisions in EU trade agreements are needed to ensure respect for human rights, including gender equality and environmental and labour protection, as well as to ensure that EU trade policy is coherent with the Union's overarching aims of sustainable development, poverty reduction and gender equality;
23. Calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure that the objectives of the SDGs, in particular Goal 5 on gender equality, and the Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019 are fully reflected in EU trade policies;
24. Regrets the fact that the EU's trade strategy entitled 'Trade for All' does not mention gender equality; welcomes the fact that the 'Report on the Implementation of the Trade Policy Strategy Trade for All' of 13 September 2017 mentions gender equality in trade and specifies that it is essential for EU decision makers to improve their understanding of the impact of trade instruments on gender equality; calls on the Commission to take this dimension into account in its mid-term review of the Trade for All strategy, and to ensure that the gender perspective is included and mainstreamed in the EU's trade and investment policy, as it would maximise the overall gains from trade opportunities for all; recalls that trade policy could contribute to promoting gender equality on the international scene, and should be used as a tool to improve the living and working conditions of women, on equal terms as men, for instance by supporting the reduction of gender pay gaps by promoting the creation of better quality jobs for women;
25. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to ensure that public procurement provisions have a positive impact – not least from a gender perspective – when they are included in the EU trade agreements; calls on the Commission to continue its efforts to support MSME access to public procurement and to develop specific measures for MSMEs owned by women; calls for the inclusion of provisions aimed at simplifying procedures, and increasing transparency, for bidders, including those from non-EU countries; calls for further promotion of socially and environmentally responsible public procurement, taking into account the aim of

ensuring equal treatment of women and men, equal pay for male and female workers and the promotion of gender equality, building on the experience of the sustainable public procurement rules of ‘Chile Compras’;

26. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to adopt, maintain and implement gender equality laws, regulations and policies effectively, including the necessary active measures to promote gender equality and women empowerment at all levels;
27. Welcomes the commitment by the Commission to ensure that the trade negotiations to modernise the current EU-Chile Association Agreement will include, for the first time in the EU, a specific chapter on gender and trade; stresses the need to be informed of the content of this chapter; calls on the Commission and the Council to promote and support the inclusion of a specific gender chapter in EU trade and investment agreements, building on existing examples such as the Chile-Uruguay and the Chile-Canada FTAs, and to ensure that it specifically foresees the commitment to promote gender equality and women empowerment; calls for the promotion of international commitments on women’s rights, gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women in all EU trade agreements, based on the Beijing Platform for Action and the SDGs; calls as well for provisions to be included in these trade agreements ensuring that their institutional structures guarantee periodical compliance reviews, substantial discussions and the exchange of information and best practices on gender equality and trade, through, among others, the inclusion of women and experts on gender equality at all levels of the administrations concerned, including trade negotiating teams, joint committees, expert groups, domestic advisory groups, joint consultative committees and dispute settlement bodies;
28. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to promote agreements at multilateral level to expand the protection granted by gender-sensitive EU laws such as the Conflict Minerals Regulation;
29. Calls on the European Investment Bank (EIB) to ensure that companies participating in projects co-financed by the EIB shall be required to adhere to the principle of equal pay and pay transparency, and to the principle of gender equality, as set out in Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council¹;
30. Is convinced that CEDAW is of great importance for all policy areas, including trade; stresses that all Member States have acceded to CEDAW; invites, therefore, the Commission to include a reference to CEDAW in trade agreements and to take steps towards the EU’s accession and ratification of the Convention; calls on the Member States to incorporate the principle of gender equality in their legal systems, abolishing all discriminatory laws and adopting appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
31. Calls on the EU to ensure that provisions based on the core labour standards and conventions of the ILO are included in trade agreements; calls on the Commission to work with the Member States towards the ratification and implementation of these

¹ Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23).

conventions, in particular Convention No 189 concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers and Convention No 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities, as they address the needs of workers globally, and to ensure that social rights, non-discrimination and equal treatment are included in trade agreements; calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to work further within the ILO towards the implementation of these conventions and the reinforcement of international labour standards for decent work on global value chains, with particular focus on women; recalls that effective implementation of these standards and conventions has a positive impact on working conditions for women in the EU and in non-EU countries; calls on the Commission to ensure that trade agreements between the EU and other partners contribute to the eradication of practices such as the exploitation of employees, especially women;

32. Calls on the Commission to ensure that social and environmental standards, particularly labour rights subscribed to in FTAs and autonomous regimes, apply throughout the territory of trade partners, and, particularly, in EPZs;
33. Stresses the importance of monitoring the implementation of the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) and GSP+ systems, particularly as regards the implementation of core conventions; points out that the GSP + conventions include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979, Convention No 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, and Convention No 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value; points out that upholding and implementing such conventions helps further gender equality; acknowledges that the GSP and GSP+ systems are valuable tools for promoting respect for human rights; calls on the Commission to find ways to improve these systems by means such as reinforcing their conditionality to the removal of legal discrimination against women, and to continue linking economic incentives to the effective adoption, implementation and appropriate monitoring of core human rights, and of environmental and labour conventions that are particularly relevant to women; welcomes the Commission's mid-term evaluation of the GSP systems in this regard;
34. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to ensure, in negotiations at WTO level: that due consideration is given to gender equality when preparing new rules and agreements, and implementing and reviewing existing agreements, included in the WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism; that transparency is increased in the entire process of WTO negotiations; and that a gender focus informs all current and future negotiations in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, services and e-commerce; calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States, furthermore, to defend and promote an improved position for women in global value chains (making the best use of WTO tools such as the Trade Facilitation Agreement), to develop capacity-building programmes and organise regular expert discussions and the exchange of good practices, to support the adoption of gender-related measures within the WTO's administrative structure and, more particularly, to ensure that the WTO Secretariat has the technical capacity to undertake gender analysis of trade rules (including the means to conduct gender impact assessments in all phases of its work, such as, e.g., quantitative studies of women benefitting from technical assistance); calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States, lastly, to make use of WTO tools to address gender issues, both in its jurisprudence and in on-going trade negotiations, and, equally, to support improved cooperation between the WTO and other international

organisations, such as UNCTAD, UN-Women and the ILO, in efforts aimed at promoting inclusive international trade and women's rights and equality;

35. Calls on the Commission to support international efforts to promote the inclusion of a gender perspective in trade policy and in programmes such as the She Trades initiative of the International Trade Centre (ITC), aimed at connecting one million women entrepreneurs to markets by 2020¹, and encourages, in this regard, the international exchange of best practices on gender-responsive policies and programmes within such organisations and bodies such as the WTO, the ITC and the UN;
36. Calls on the Commission to reinforce CSR and due diligence in FTAs, in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines; urges the EU to reinforce CSR, and to take due diligence into account, in free trade agreements, and encourages the WTO to take gender equality into account in its trade policy; stresses as well the importance of addressing this issue in other international and multilateral organisations and forums, such as the UN, the World Bank and the OECD; recalls that in 2010 Parliament requested that companies publish their CSR balance sheets and called for the introduction of due diligence requirements for all undertakings and the consolidation of the CSR concept; welcomes, therefore, that large companies are required to disclose non-financial and diversity information as of 2017, in accordance with the Non-Financial Reporting Directive;
37. Emphasises the need to enhance codes of conduct, labels and fair-trade schemes, and of ensuring alignment with international standards such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the UN Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises;
38. Calls on the EU to ensure that the secretariats of the EU institutions responsible for trade policy and negotiations have the knowledge and the technical capacity to incorporate a gender perspective in the entire process of negotiations, from inception to application and evaluation; welcomes the appointment within the structure of DG Trade of a gender focal point responsible for monitoring whether gender aspects are taken into account in EU trade agreements and for ensuring gender mainstreaming in EU trade policy; asks the Commission to provide gender training, or to make use of the training provided by, for example, UNCTAD, to ensure that officials and negotiators are aware of the issues pertaining to gender equality and trade; calls on the Member States to recruit women at all levels within their trade ministries; calls on international organisations such as the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and the ILO to promote the equal presence of women in their internal structures, particularly in leading positions; calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to engage actively in, and to support, efforts to organise regular discussions and actions on gender and trade;
39. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to ensure an improved participation of women in decision-making bodies, both in the public and in the private sector;
40. Calls on the Commission and the Council to conduct trade negotiations transparently, to respect fully the best practices established in other negotiations and to ensure that, at all stages of negotiations, Parliament is kept informed in a timely and regular manner; calls

¹ <http://www.intracen.org/itc/women-and-trade/SheTrades/>

for negotiating teams to be gender balanced in order that they are fully able to take into account all gender aspects of trade agreements; calls on the EU and the Member States to ensure inclusive participation in trade consultations, both at EU and WTO level, including for women's rights organisations, trade unions, businesses, civil society and development organisations, and to increase transparency for European citizens putting forward initiatives and publishing information relevant to the negotiations;

41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the goal of gender equality is given particular attention in their development cooperation, and that it is mainstreamed throughout the assistance programmes, especially programmes linked to the Aid for Trade Strategy; calls on the EU to make more funds available for cooperation programmes linked to gender equality and the professional training of women; calls on the Commission to support the least developed countries, financially and through capacity building, in an effort to increase the coherence between trade, development and human rights, including gender equality; stresses that decreased tax revenues resulting from cuts in tariffs need to be addressed in the framework and financing of the sustainable development agenda;
42. Calls on the Commission to promote female entrepreneurship in developing countries, focusing especially on those countries in which women face greater constraints than men when it comes to access to credit, infrastructure and productive assets;
43. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the possibility of building up pre-apprenticeship training programmes for providers, employers, workforce practitioners and other industry stakeholders, allowing them to network with their peers from across the EU and to learn from a variety of successful programme models, ultimately with a view to creating favourable conditions for women to partake in the opportunities offered by free trade agreements;
44. Calls on Commission and the Member States to combine their efforts to adapt policies in areas such as education and vocational training with a view to promoting greater gender equality in the distribution of employment opportunities offered by exports;
45. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to carry out bilateral cooperation activities aimed at improving the capacity of, and conditions for, women to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by these agreements and, with this in sight and to institute and facilitate cooperation, to establish a joint committee on trade and gender and to supervise its application, ensuring appropriate participation of private stakeholders, including experts and civil society organisations active in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and guaranteeing wide representation, by community and by sector, through accessible means of consultation (such as online discussions) beyond structured dialogues;
46. Calls on the Commission to explore further how EU policies and trade agreements can promote women's economic empowerment, and female participation in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and how to close gender gaps when it comes to access to, and the use of, new technologies;

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47. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.