




Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019

by Elvira González Gago

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2016–2019**

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Executive summary

The Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019 (SEGE) is the European Commission (the Commission)'s policy framework for promoting gender equality in the European Union (EU) up to 2019. This evaluation examines the relevance, effectiveness and added value of SEGE, and reveals its main strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of these analyses is to make recommendations for a future framework for gender equality at the EU level. The evaluation is based on different sources of information: a literature review, interviews conducted with stakeholders and a survey administered to the national experts of the Scientific Advisory and Advocacy Group for Gender Equality (SAAGE).

Relevance

The final, intermediate and specific objectives of SEGE, as well as the associated actions proposed, are all highly relevant. The selected thematic areas were well-aligned with public perspectives, expert viewpoints and available data. Nevertheless, a number of issues related to relevance emerge. While stereotypes are often at the root of the unequal participation of women in the labour market, explicit reference to their elimination is missing in the specific objectives. In light of the precariousness of employment, a reference to quality of employment is lacking, as well as to the elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace. The specific needs of some groups of women (notably migrant women) are addressed, but not those of other groups, such as women with disabilities. Objectives and actions for groups with multiple forms of discrimination such as age and low education are also scarce, meaning that intersectionality is not sufficiently developed. Actions to address the gender pension gap do not receive the attention this topic deserves in view of its importance for gender equality.

Effectiveness

The assessment of the effectiveness of SEGE faced methodological constraints. First, the definition of objectives and actions is sometimes vague and only a few quantitative targets have been set. Second, time is a constraint to assess the progress, since many actions of SEGE require a longer time span to yield the intended outcomes, extending beyond the time span of SEGE. Third, evaluation of several objectives is related to statistical indicators that are published with a time lag of one or two years. Finally, the evolution of gender equality indicators is also influenced by external factors, including the situation of the economy or labour market reforms. Nevertheless, an assessment of the degree to which outputs and effects could be made, showing some clear differences between the thematic areas distinguished under SEGE. The Directive on work-life balance is possibly the most important output of SEGE. Significant progress towards the objectives has furthermore been recorded in the thematic areas related to access to decision-making positions and gender-based violence. The area of promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world is the thematic area that shows the least progress.

Employment and pay

SEGE has delivered significant outputs in these two thematic areas with huge potential future impact, in particular the adoption of the Directive on work-life balance and the Action Plan against the Gender Pay Gap 2017–2019. Moreover, several actions relevant for these areas have been identified at the Member State level. Still, as in other thematic areas, the actions carried out might need a longer time span than three years to deliver the intended results. Progress towards the objectives set in these first two thematic areas has, however, been limited. The gender employment gap has not been reduced and the gender pay gap has only slightly decreased. Furthermore, the existing structural imbalances of the labour market have not been corrected.

Decision-making

The third thematic area, promoting equality in decision-making, shows very good performance. Although the Directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges was blocked at the Council, most other envisaged actions were implemented at the time of the evaluation. In addition, the target of 40 % women in senior and middle management in the Commission was reached.

Gender-based violence

The fourth thematic area, relating to combating gender-based violence, has been also successful in achieving its objectives. Significant outputs of this area include the signature by all Member States of the Istanbul Convention, although not all Member States have ratified it, and the NON.NO.NEIN communication campaign, that stands out for its impact in the context of the #MeToo movement. According to SAAGE experts, the contribution of SEGE to the achievement of the objectives in this thematic area in the Member States has been the highest.

Promoting equality across the world

The Gender Action Plan II (GAPII) 2016–2020 is proving to be effective within the fifth thematic area on promoting equality across the world, as well as the support to candidate and potential candidate countries.

Gender mainstreaming

For this transversal area, the work of the Commission's Inter-Service Group (ISG) on equality between women and men is key, as it is a conductor for gender mainstreaming within the Commission. However, the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-Service Group could not be assessed, since no report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission was published. Such a report was considered as a possibility in SEGE and would have presumably assessed the work of the ISG and the state of play of gender mainstreaming within the Commission, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. This is an important gap to address.

Added value

The main added value of SEGE identified at the EU level has been its role as a framework for gender policies. SEGE brings together a wide array of gender equality objectives and actions across several fields, providing vision for and direction to gender policies in the EU. The key added value of SEGE at the Member State level has been its agenda-setting role. SEGE has influenced Member States' legislation

and regulation and policy development. It has created a space for deliberation on several topics concerning gender equality in Member States where it previously received limited attention. SEGE has increased the visibility of issues related to gender equality and it has legitimised the implementation of gender equality policies in contexts where this issue has a low priority.

Strengths and weaknesses

The role of framing policies has been one of the main **strengths** of SEGE. It thereby also provides a framework for the Commission's work on gender equality and for monitoring its progress. Other key strengths are its promotion of a holistic and multidimensional approach and making use of a variety of mutually supporting instruments, in particular of funding for gender mainstreaming. Being able to draw on the Gender Equality Unit and the Inter-Service Group are important conditions reinforcing these strengths.

The **weaknesses** of SEGE include its status as a Staff Working Document, seen by Member States and stakeholders as a political downgrade with respect to the previous strategy. The relationship with the European Semester, though important, has been limited and requires further evolution for its full potential to be realised. Inadequate attention to a number of issues including sexual harassment, the gender gap in pensions, quality of work and cultural change constitute a further weakness. There has been an insufficient focus on choices made by men. Although SEGE has been able to promote legislative changes across Member States to expand paternity leaves, beyond this right there is a need for initiatives that stimulate men to actually use their entitlement to care leave or to take up employment in female-dominated sectors, such as care, education and health. Moreover, the visibility of SEGE has been limited, including its knowledge among policymakers, which may have limited its impact. Funding for particular gender equality issues, such as combating stereotypes and segregation and preventing gender-based violence, is insufficient, according to the interim evaluation of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme.

Funding

EU funding instruments promote gender equality through a wide array of actions relevant for SEGE. They already include a significant focus on gender equality in governing regulations and management structures. This has the potential to be an effective approach to mobilising resources for achieving the objectives of SEGE. There is evidence that, to an extent, this potential is being realised. This would need to be continued into and strengthened under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027. The evaluations of the various European funding programmes reviewed, however, raise some issues. A systematic method for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within all the European and Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) has not yet been established. Difficulties have also been found tracking the gender impact of measures funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and there are challenges for performing gender-disaggregated analysis of the data. The decisions and the capacities at Member States level and within Member States in programming and implementation make a key difference to the final support for gender equality, resulting in the underuse of the potential for gender-neutral or women-friendly measures in certain countries.

The changing context for gender policies

The context for SEGE encompasses emerging trends that suggest imperatives for a future gender policy framework. Ageing, migration, digitalisation and labour market precariousness all vitally need to be seen through the perspective of gender; this needs to be understood and addressed if progress towards gender equality is not to be undermined. Backlash against gender equality has become, perhaps, the most serious challenge to be addressed for progress to be made in gender equality. New multidimensional development paradigms offer the opportunity to include gender equality as a strand in recasting social, economic and cultural development from the very beginning of such a process.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the following is recommended.

On design and governance:

- Adopt the next gender equality strategy as a Commission Communication
- Increase the resources of the Gender Equality Unit in the Commission
- Appoint a senior person in charge of championing the activity in each relevant DG and link that person with a specified person in the Gender Equality Unit
- Define objectives and actions more detailed and more specifically (SMART)
- Support a future policy framework with a communication strategy to increase its visibility
- Extend the duration of the next framework, e.g. from 4 to 6 years, to allow for impact to occur during the time span of the framework.

On thematic areas:

- Continue the five priority thematic areas and the transversal area (gender mainstreaming, funding and coordination)
 - Add two new thematic areas: 1) Action on backlash, cultural change, values and gender stereotypes; and 2) The integration of SEGE objectives with the key multidimensional policy paradigms, specifically, the European Semester, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights.
 - Add one new transversal area: Action on intersectionality.

On specific actions:

- Monitor the appropriate transposition of the Directive on work-life balance (area 1)
- Build on the learnings and achievements in this area with further regulatory measures and with a new action plan that addresses the private and public sectors (area 2)
- Keep the proposal for a Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies on the EU agenda (area 3)
- Support and drive the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Member States, continue the work towards EU accession, monitor the transposition of the Victims' Rights Directive and promote the adoption of an EU-wide strategy to combat violence against women (area 4)
- Cooperate with Member States and with international institutions (area 5)
- Pay attention to understanding and better addressing the dynamic of polarisa-

tion of public opinion regarding gender issues in the context of the backlash against gender equality (under the new thematic area on backlash, cultural change, values and gender stereotypes)

- Include gender-specific targets and gender-sensitive indicators in the European Semester and the post-Europe 2020 strategy, reinforce the gender perspective in all analytical reports, and increase the focus on gender equality in the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) (the new thematic area on integration with key multidimensional development paradigms)
- Prepare a report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission with recommendations for further reinforcing this process and develop and operationalise a shared and comprehensive understanding of intersectionality through all thematic areas (transversal area).

1. Introduction and objectives of the report

Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019 (SEGE) is the Commission's policy framework for promoting gender equality in the EU for the period now coming to a close. It is a coordinated framework for promoting gender equality in all policies of the EU and is an expression of the Commission's commitment to sustained activity in this field.

This report is an evaluation of SEGE. It establishes its main strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of offering recommendations for any future gender equality strategy at the EU level. The evaluation team has drawn on different sources of information: a literature review, interviews conducted with stakeholders and surveys administered to SAAGE experts. The triangulation of these different sources of information is at the core of the methodological approach in this evaluation.

The five main objectives for SEGE evaluation are to:

1. Identify and analyse the **actions** implemented in the 2016–19 period
 - Have the planned actions been implemented? Which of the five priorities have been addressed to a greater or lesser extent?
 - Were the implemented actions relevant? Which were the most relevant actions implemented and under which priorities?
2. Assess the **results** of the actions implemented.
 - Have SEGE objectives been achieved according to the indicators?
 - To what extent have SEGE actions contributed to the achievement of the objectives? What factors influenced the achievements observed?
 - What is SEGE's added value, according to key stakeholders?
 - To what extent did it meet the expectations of key stakeholders?
3. Assess the **role of EU funding** for gender equality
 - On the basis of existing evaluations, how relevant and effective has EU funding been for gender equality-related interventions in the current multi-annual financial framework (2014–2020)? Which fund or programme contributes to which objectives and how has their performance been in the SEGE implementation period?
4. Identify the main **strengths and weaknesses**
 - What have been SEGE's main strengths and weaknesses?
 - What are the main lessons learned?

5. Identify trends and implications for women and elaborate **recommendations for any future strategy**

- Which are the most likely implications for gender equality of key future trends: ageing, migration, labour market precariousness, climate change, digitalisation, backlash and new development paradigms?
- What recommendations can be made for a future strategy to build from the strengths and weaknesses identified and the lessons learned from SEGE?
- Are the original objectives still valid and relevant to the needs within the EU, or should the objectives be reshaped?
- What are the funding prospects for the 2021–2027 period?

The evaluation does not aim to provide a comprehensive and detailed description of each of the actions carried out under SEGE, nor does it constitute an assessment of some of the classic evaluation questions, such as its sustainability, efficiency or its financial performance, given that SEGE does not count on its own financial allocation.

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2: Methodology for the evaluation
- Chapter 3: A description of SEGE according to its intervention logic
- Chapter 4: The findings of the evaluation, paying attention to the relevance, effectiveness and EU added value of SEGE
- Chapter 5: The role of EU funding in advancing gender equality
- Chapter 6: The strengths and weaknesses identified
- Chapter 7: A review of significant social changes along with their potential or actual impact on women
- Chapter 8: Recommendations for a future strategy on gender equality in the EU

2. Methodology of the evaluation

The methodology of this evaluation combines desk research with fieldwork. In particular, this evaluation relies on a review of existing qualitative and quantitative data, whereas the fieldwork serves the purpose of generating new qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions.

Desk research and analysis of indicators

Desk research combines the review of existing evaluations and reports issued by the main stakeholders of SEGE with an examination of statistical information. The literature review has focused on available evaluations and follow-up documentation of SEGE, such as the annual reports on equality between women and men, and on documentation produced by relevant stakeholders in the EU, such as the European Parliament, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), European Economic and Social Council, Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, EQUINET, European Women's Lobby, ETUC and Business Europe. The statistics analysed include relevant information available at EU level that serves to compare the evolution of the situation for gender equality across the SEGE period of 2016–2019.

Field work: Interviews with key stakeholders

Seven phone or Skype interviews have been conducted with stakeholders, with one additional interview in written format. The duration of the interviews was approximately one hour. These interviews sought the perspective of key stakeholders regarding core issues for this evaluation, such as the relevance and effectiveness of SEGE and its added value, strengths and weaknesses. The interviews have also provided valuable input for the recommendations. The interview guidelines as well as the list of interviewees are detailed in the annex.

Field work: Consultation with SAAGE country experts

A consultation with the network of SAAGE country experts was conducted through a survey. The questionnaire, administered by e-mail, focused on a general view of the strengths and weaknesses of SEGE and on possible recommendations for the future. Experts provided accurate information and feedback on their respective country situations. The details of the questionnaire are provided in the annex of this report.

Field work: Focus group on recommendations for the new policy framework

Two internal brainstorming sessions have been carried out with four to six experts each. The first one was held in Rome on 24 July 2019, and the second one in Brussels on 27 August 2019. The aim of these sessions was to assess the findings from the documentation review, the interviews and the consultation with the SAAGE country experts, with a view to extracting lesson learned and developing recommendations.

3. The intervention logic of Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019

This chapter examines the structure that underpins SEGE to establish the intervention logic that was deployed.

3.1 Description of the SEGE framework

SEGE was published in the form of a Staff Working Document (SWD) and provides a framework for gender policies and actions taken in and by the EU. It encompasses the objectives and actions of the European Commission regarding gender equality and establishes them across five priority thematic areas of action, plus one transversal area of action. Each thematic and transversal area of action has its own specific objectives, actions and indicators.

The **five priority thematic areas** of action for SEGE are:

1. Increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence.
2. Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women.
3. Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making.
4. Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims.
5. Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

The **transversal area** for SEGE is:

1. Integration of a gender equality perspective into all EU policies.

The six areas are the same as those identified in the previous Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015. SEGE also continued the focus on gender mainstreaming.

EU funding in support of gender equality is a specific focus and can be considered a form of transversal area of action. SEGE does not have its own financial allocation, nor is gender budgeting applied to the EU budget.

A number of EU funding programmes in the 2014–2020 period facilitate the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, in particular the:

- European Structural and Investment Funds
- Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme
- Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
- Asylum, Migration and Integration Funds
- Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

Erasmus+ (the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport), the Connecting Europe Facility (the EU programme to co-fund trans-European network projects), Development Cooperation Instrument, European Neighbourhood Instrument and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights are also relevant in this regard

The main building blocks of SEGE are the objectives (intermediate and specific), actions and indicators for each area of action. These building blocks are set to achieve the final overall objective of increasing gender equality in the EU and in the world.

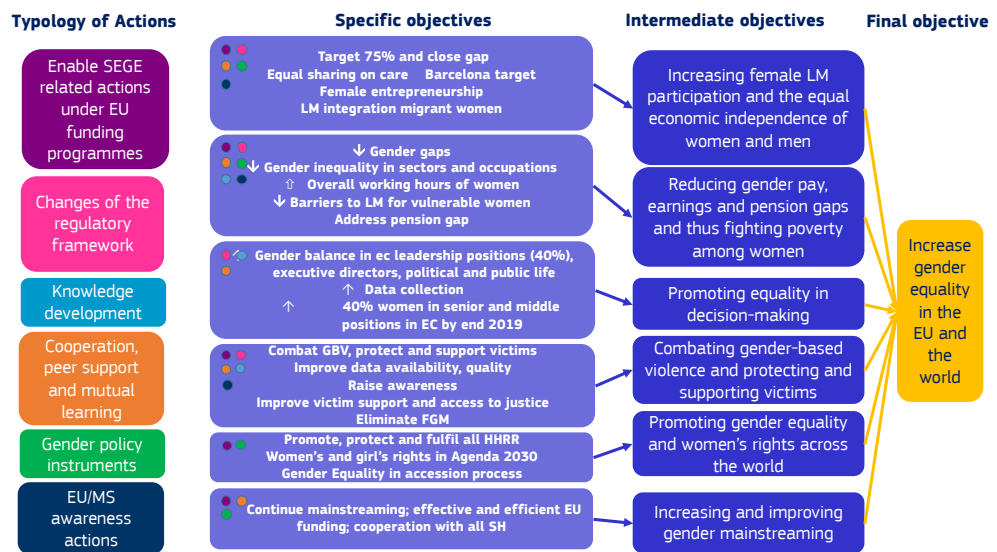
SEGE lays out a series of specific objectives that seek progress towards the intermediate objectives for each area of action. Specific objectives respond to needs which are captured by statistical indicators. There is a clear relationship between needs, actions, specific objectives and intermediate objectives.

For example, in the second priority thematic area of action for SEGE (reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women), statistical indicators show that pay is lower for women than for men. There is a need to reduce the gender pay gap to advance towards the final overall objective of gender equality. Increasing wage transparency (specific objective) is expected to reduce the gender pay gap (intermediate objective). Wage transparency, as a specific objective, can be achieved through different types of actions, such as legislative changes that compel companies to publish their gender wage gap figures, or awareness-raising instruments that motivate employees to request these figures.

Similarly, in the first priority thematic area of action for SEGE (increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence), statistical indicators show a deficiency in childcare services, thus impeding access for women to full-time work. Improving the provision of childcare services (specific objective) is expected to increase women's labour market participation (intermediate objective). The specific objective can be achieved through different types of actions such as reforms in the legal framework or changes in the existing funding instruments to steer resources toward childcare services.

This intervention logic and the relationship between type of action, specific objectives, intermediate objectives and the final objective of SEGE is set out in the following figure.

Figure 1. SEGE objectives tree



The EU encourages or requires Member States to put these actions into practice at the national, regional or local level. Yet, it is ultimately the Member States that give shape to these policies on the ground. Gender equality as a cross-cutting issue falls within several policy areas which are often under Member States’ domain. Thus, although this evaluation focuses on the actions at the EU level, it should be noted that the EU’s role in promoting gender equality is often indirect. The operation of the linkage from EU level to the Member State level is, therefore, an important element.

In some cases, the advancement towards the intermediate objectives is not observable in the short SEGE time span (2016–2019). For this short period of time, the focus of this evaluation will be more on outputs of SEGE than on outcomes or impacts, with impact to be expected over the longer-term.

In addition to SEGE’s actions, external factors also play a role in the progress towards achieving SEGE’s objectives. The effectiveness of SEGE, thus, depends not only on SEGE’s actions. Implementation of SEGE’s actions do not take place in a vacuum. External factors may also intervene in the implementation process, and they may either reinforce or impede the effectiveness of or commitment to the strategy.

3.2 A typology of SEGE's actions

Actions in SEGE are diverse in nature, but can be broadly grouped into six types of actions:

1. **Actions to enable SEGE-related actions under EU funding instruments**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by deployment of EU funding programmes. These actions can encompass a focus on regulations and guidelines governing the programmes, training at the appropriate level to enable effective deployment, and actual investment of funds in actions required to advance specific and intermediate objectives.

2. **Changes in the regulatory framework**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by improving the regulatory framework that relates to gender equality and its implementation. The input of these actions is mainly hours of work; the outputs include the approval of new Directives, the modification of existing ones or the elaboration of instruments such as guidelines to enhance the implementation or enforcement of already existing regulations. The outcome is the improvement of the regulatory framework and the new behaviours it can stimulate.

3. **Knowledge development**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by generating new understanding of gender equality phenomena and thus enabling better design of gender equality actions. It encompasses research, preparation of reports, and development of statistical indicators. This type of action does not have a direct effect on gender equality but its outputs facilitate the design and implementation of actions that do have such an effect.

4. **Cooperation, peer support and mutual learning**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by engaging and enabling key actors to commit and effectively pursue implementation of gender equality policies. Such actions encompass structures such as the Inter-Service Group on gender equality of the Commission, initiatives for shared learning between the Member States' policy-makers, and opportunities for mutual support.

5. **Gender policy instruments**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by influencing policy processes. Gender policy instruments encompass gender mainstreaming, gender equality action plans that frame and organise initiatives, and monitoring reports on policies from a gender perspective.

6. **EU/Member State level awareness actions**

This type of action aims to achieve an impact by raising awareness. In these actions, the main input are hours of work plus funding; the outputs are awareness-raising materials, events and activities; and the expected outcome is a change in the attitudes towards gender equality, which should contribute to the progress in the achievement of the objectives.

3.3 Concluding remarks

The intervention logic identified for SEGE evidences a valuable breadth and diversity. This underpins a **convincing strategy for change**, even where this is not explicitly articulated. It enables a **flexibility** to respond appropriately within a changing context.

There are **some weaknesses**. Some specific objectives might better have been located in a different priority thematic area. The specific objective of ‘eliminate barriers to accessing the labour market of vulnerable groups, such as migrant women and single parents’ matches better with thematic area 1 (employment) than with thematic area 2 (gender pay gap), although obviously both areas are interrelated. The interrelationships evident among thematic areas should not affect the careful distribution of specific objectives for particular thematic areas.

The **vague nature in which some objectives and actions are articulated** risks undermining their understanding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It can be difficult to understand the causality chain between the actions proposed and progress towards the specific and intermediate objectives. There is a lack of clear targets; this contributes to difficulty in understanding the scope of the ambitions.

4. Relevance, effectiveness and added value of SEGE to gender equality

This chapter draws on the evaluation findings to examine the three key evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness and added value of SEGE to gender equality.

4.1 Relevance of SEGE thematic areas

The relevance of SEGE is assessed on how accurately the planned objectives and actions correspond to the needs, concerns and problems at the time when it was adopted.

In broad terms, it is important to note that Eurobarometer¹ found in 2017 that 91 % of respondents believed promoting gender equality was important to ensure a fair and democratic society; 87 % thought that promoting gender equality was important for companies and for the economy; and 84 % believed that gender equality was important for them personally. This provides a positive context for SEGE and marks out the relevance of its overall final objective, to increase gender equality.

4.1.1 Thematic area 1: Increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence

The relevance of thematic area 1, **increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men**, is underpinned by **key indicators that show difficulties for women's access to quality jobs** on a similar basis to men when SEGE was adopted.

- After a reduction of the employment gap during the economic and financial crisis between 2008 and 2014 to 11.5 percentage points (p.p.), the gap opened slightly with the economic recovery to 11.6 p.p. in 2016.
- The proportion of part-time work was much higher among women (31.4 % in 2016) than among men (8.2 %) in 2016.
- Women spent more time on household and care tasks than men, and parenthood was reflected in a lower employment rate for women with children than for women without children (6 p.p. in 2016).
- Gender stereotypes were present in European society, exerting pressure on both women and men regarding their relation to the labour market. The 2017 Eurobarometer found that: 44 % of the respondents believed the most important role of a woman was to take care of her home and family, while 43 % believed the

1 Eurobarometer (2017). This data is from after the adoption of SEGE, but it is nevertheless an approximation to public perception at the time when SEGE was adopted.

most important role of a man was to earn money.²

- The percentage of women taking parental leave was 57 %, compared to 32 % of men.
- According to the 2nd European Start-up Monitor, 14.8 % of start-up founders are female; according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2016, of every region analysed Europe had the lowest female involvement in Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity (6 %) and the lowest gender parity.

According to the Eurobarometer, 25 % of Europeans highlighted that in their workplace it was not easy for employees to take family leave and 27 % noted that employees were discouraged from taking family leave by managers and supervisors. The two main reasons for not taking parental leave were financial constraints (21 %) and use of leave by their partner (21 %).³ Interviewed stakeholders and SAAGE experts also highlighted the relevance of this thematic area and of its specific objectives.

The data, popular opinion, and stakeholder and expert viewpoints underpin the relevance of the specific objectives of thematic area 1 when SEGE was adopted. **The specific objectives are:** to reach the EU target of 75 % of men and women in employment in 2020 and close the employment gap; a more equal sharing between women and men of time spent on care and household responsibilities; improved possibilities for balancing caring and professional responsibilities; the attainment and extension of the Barcelona targets for child care; the promotion of female entrepreneurship; gender equality in research; and better labour-market integration of migrant women.

SEGE planned a good **range of actions** to achieve these specific objectives. Key actions were geared towards improving the regulatory framework, such as the adoption of the Directive on work-life balance, the evaluation of the Social Security Directive, and monitoring of the Directive on pregnant workers and maternity leave and the Directive on parental leave. The focus was put on improving work-life balance and on equal use of leave and flexible work arrangements. The coordination with the European Semester and the resulting issuing of Country-Specific Recommendations was another key intervention. Funding, in particular ESIFs, supported Member States to advance the achievement of the Barcelona targets. A gender perspective was to be integrated into implementation of the European Migration Agenda. Awareness-raising campaigns were planned to promote female entrepreneurship. Knowledge development and coordination actions were also identified. The actions planned were well aligned with the specific objectives of the thematic area.

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: While stereotypes are often at the root of the unequal participation of women in the labour market, explicit reference to their elimination is missing in the specific objectives. In light of precariousness of employment, a reference to quality of employment is lacking. The specific needs of some groups of women are addressed, such as migrant women, but not those of other groups, such as women with disabilities or other groups with multiple forms of discrimination such as age and low education, with intersectionality not sufficiently developed.

² Ibid.

³ Eurobarometer (2018).

4.1.2 Thematic area 2: Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women.

The relevance of thematic area 2, **reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women**, is underpinned by **key indicators that indicate income inequalities**.

- The gender pay gap stood at 16.3 % in 2016 in the EU-28.
- A severe consequence of the gender pay gap is the gender pension gap, which was much higher than the gender pay gap at 37.2 % in 2016.⁴

Eurobarometer found less support for the focus on thematic area 2 in that 48 % of the respondents thought that gender equality had been achieved at work. At the same time, 51 % of employees thought men and women in equivalent positions in their company or organisation were paid the same, and only 33 % thought women were paid less. Furthermore, 55 % believed that there was sufficient attention given to equal pay for men and women for equal work in their company or organisation.⁵ Interviewed stakeholders and SAAGE experts, on the other hand, highlighted the relevance of this thematic area and of its specific objectives.

The data and stakeholder and expert viewpoints underpin the relevance of **the specific objectives** for this area. These are to: reduce the persisting gender pay, earnings and pension gaps; reduce gender inequality in economic sectors and occupations; increase the overall working hours of women; ensure effective implementation of equal pay legislation; eliminate barriers to accessing the labour market of vulnerable groups, such as migrant women and single parents; and address the causes and consequences of the gender pension gap.

SEGE planned a good **range of actions to achieve these specific objectives**. Actions on the regulatory framework included an assessment of the Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation in order to promote further implementation and enforcement of the equal pay principle. Highlighting the gender pay gap and its consequence in the European Semester, including Country-Specific Recommendations, was another key intervention. Awareness-raising actions at the EU and Member States level, including the European Equal Pay Day, were planned. The actions are relevant for the specific objectives included in the thematic area.

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: Legally binding measures with respect to pay transparency are not explicitly included. Actions to address the gender pension gap in cooperation with Member States are not detailed with only a reference to measure and monitor it. There are no specific measures to address the specific objective of eliminating the barriers for specific vulnerable groups of women. Addressing sectoral segregation and its impact on gender pay gaps is focused exclusively on the information and communications technology (ICT) sector, which seems a narrow approach. Coordination with social partners to promote inclusion of gender pay gap issues in collective agreements could have been more explicitly considered. There is some potential overlapping of specific objectives with thematic area 1. For example, the elimination of barriers to accessing the labour market access of vulnerable groups and reducing segregation might better fit into thematic area 1, since its effects on women's employment are wider than the pay gap.

4 Eurostat, SILC.

5 Eurobarometer (2017).

4.1.3 Thematic area 3: Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making.

The relevance of thematic area 3, **promoting equality between women and men in decision-making**, is underpinned by **key indicators that show inequalities in decision-making** at the time.

- The share of women among members of the highest decision-making bodies of the largest nationally registered companies was 14.9 % in 2016.
- The share of women among members in the single/lower houses of the national parliaments was 28.7 % in 2016.

A slight majority of the population (51 %) thought that gender equality had been achieved in politics, while 44 % thought gender equality had been achieved in leadership positions in companies and other organisations. However, 54 % thought there should be more women in political decision-making positions.⁶ Both interviewed stakeholders and SAAGE experts consider this area and its specific objectives to be relevant.

The data, popular opinion, and stakeholder and expert viewpoints underpin the relevance of the specific objectives of thematic area 3 when SEGE was adopted. **The specific objectives are:** to continue efforts to improve the gender balance in economic leadership positions, in particular among the non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges (at least 40 % of the underrepresented sex); to improve gender balance in political decision-making and public life, including sports and in research organisations; support Member States to improve and collect data on decision-making in research organisations; and reach the target of 40 % women in senior and middle management positions in the Commission by the end of 2019.

SEGE planned a good **range of actions to achieve these specific objectives**. They focused on improving the regulatory framework, with efforts to support adoption of the 2012 proposal for a *Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges*. Actions to encourage and guide Member States to collect data and set targets for gender balance in decision-making positions in research organisations were included. Action was planned to reach greater equality within the Commission itself by achieving the target of 40 % women in senior and middle management by the end of its mandate. **The actions are relevant for the specific objectives included in the thematic area.**

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: The Directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchange was blocked by the Council, so it demands further stimulus to keep it alive.

⁶ Eurobarometer (2017).

4.1.4 Thematic area 4: Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims.

The relevance of thematic area 4, **combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims** is underpinned by **key indicators that highlight the extent of this issue**.

- 33 % of women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.
- 22 % of women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner.⁷

In 2016, almost three quarters of Eurobarometer respondents, 74 %, stated that domestic violence against women was common in their country and 29 % believed that domestic violence against men was common in their country. Almost all respondents stressed that domestic violence against women (96 %) and against men (94 %) was unacceptable.⁸

The data, popular opinion, and stakeholder and expert viewpoints underpin the relevance of the specific objectives of thematic area 4 when SEGE was adopted. **The specific objectives are:** to combat gender-based violence; protect and support the victims; improve data availability, quality and reliability; raise awareness, promote attitudinal change and foster prevention; improve victim support and access to justice; and eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM). Both interviewed stakeholders and SAAGE experts consider this area and its specific objectives to be relevant.

SEGE planned a good range of actions to achieve these specific objectives.

They focused on improving the regulatory framework, such as the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention and encouragement to the Member States to make progress on its ratification, the enforcement of the Victim's Rights Directive, and laws on European protection orders, and follow-up to the report assessing Member States' compliance with the Anti-trafficking Directive. Measures to improve the availability, quality and reliability of data were included. Awareness-raising activities, such as marking the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, were planned. The actions are relevant for the specific objectives included in the thematic area.

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: Measures against sexual harassment at work are not explicit in SEGE, though they could be addressed under some of the actions. The specific objective to 'eliminate FGM' seems too ambitious to be realistic with the actions planned.

4.1.5. Thematic area 5: Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world

The relevance of thematic area 5, **promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world**, is supported by the fact that the situation of women outside the EU, also in candidate or potential candidate countries, was on average much worse than within the EU,⁹ albeit with a large variation across countries. The area is underpinned by the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

7 FRA (2014).

8 Eurobarometer (2016).

9 European Commission (2019b).

The **specific objectives are** to: promote, protect and fulfil all human rights; promote women's rights in all international fora, in particular the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; and ensure that gender equality and the adoption of the EU gender-equality acquis are assessed in the accession process and taken into account in the financial and non-financial means of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These specific objectives are relevant to the intermediate objective of promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world.

SEGE planned a **range of actions that are relevant to these specific objectives**. These include implementing the Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020. There is a strong transversal element to action in this area. Action to mainstream gender equality and enhance the role of gender equality in EU external relations, in close cooperation with Member States and the European External Action Service, is core. Cooperation with international and regional organisations is identified. Funding and monitoring action promoting gender equality and ensuring that the needs of women are appropriately identified and addressed are valuably included, in particular of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: More needs to be done to ensure gender mainstreaming into policies such as employment, trade, public finance management, public administration reform, transport, energy, agriculture, environment, infrastructure and ICT. This requires all Commission staff to acquire knowledge of gender equality issues and how to use gender analysis.

4.1.6 Thematic area 6: Gender mainstreaming, EU funding and cooperation with all actors

The relevance of thematic area 6, **focusing on gender mainstreaming, funding for gender equality and cooperation with all actors**, lies in its transversal nature. Gender mainstreaming is supported by a vast field of literature stressing its importance as a means to improve the impact of a multidisciplinary project such as gender equality. Multidisciplinary work requires cooperation across a diversity of stakeholders. Funds are required to promote and enable change, both through projects devoted to address the specific needs of women and through other projects that include a gender perspective.

The **specific objectives of the area are** to: continue to integrate a gender equality perspective into every aspect of EU intervention (effective gender mainstreaming); continue to ensure effective and efficient EU funding for gender equality; and cooperate closely with all stakeholders active in the field of gender equality.

The **actions planned include** internal coordination in the Commission through the *Inter-Service Group on equality between men and women* to improve gender mainstreaming, and ensuring coordination with the *High Level Group on gender mainstreaming* and the *Advisory Committee on equal opportunities for women and men*. Reporting on gender mainstreaming both at the internal and external level is included. It is planned to follow up relevant national strategic developments and support knowledge exchange among Member States through a Mutual Learning Programme. Specific funding for gender equality and gender mainstreaming through the European Structural and Investment Funds is included, together with bringing a

gender perspective into preparation of the post-2020 EU funding programmes. Annual reporting on progress in gender equality in the EU is included. The actions are relevant for the specific objectives included in the thematic area.

A number of issues related to relevance emerge: Coordination with relevant external actors, in particular women's organisations in civil society and social partners, is a declared objective, but is not explicitly mentioned in any action. Coordination with EIGE or with EU institutions, such as the European Investment Bank, are not explicitly mentioned in any action. The need to improve knowledge and data collection throughout all thematic areas, other policy areas (such as health, education and social services) and other economic activity sectors is not addressed.

4.1.7 Concluding remarks

This evaluation of the final objective, thematic areas, transversal area and their specific objectives, as well as of the actions proposed, leads to the conclusion that **they all are highly relevant.**

The objectives and actions cover a wide range of issues that are important for gender equality. However, **some important aspects for underpinning relevance are missing**, in particular: the quality of employment and increasing labour market precariousness; actions to address the gender pension gap; the elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace; intersectionality that goes beyond a focus on a small number of vulnerable groups; and challenges related to cultural change and, specifically, gender stereotyping.

4.2 Effectiveness of SEGE

The effectiveness of SEGE refers to the degree in which the objectives of the five thematic areas and one transversal area are achieved and to which this contributes to the overall final objective of increasing gender equality.

The assessment of effectiveness of SEGE faces several **methodological constraints**. First, the definition of objectives and actions is often vague and only a few quantitative targets have been set. Second, time is a constraint to assess the progress, since many actions of SEGE require a longer time span to yield the intended outcomes, beyond the short time span of three years. Third, evaluation of several objectives is related to statistical indicators that are published with a lag of one or two years. For example, gender pay gap objectives are monitored by the gender pay gap indicator which is published yearly by Eurostat. However, the latest data available is from 2017. Fourth, the lack of relevant indicators does not allow a full assessment of the effectiveness of some specific objectives and actions. Beyond these issues, the evolution of gender equality indicators is also influenced by external factors, including the evolution of the economy or labour market reforms, so that proving the causal links between SEGE and effects that are observed is not possible.

This evaluation has focused on the outputs achieved of the envisaged actions at EU and Member State level, and on the direct effects – the results – of these actions. These will be discussed for each of the six areas distinguished in the strategy.

Before examining each thematic and transversal area for effectiveness, it is important to note the **positive interrelation among SEGE's objectives**. This enhances effectiveness. Strengthening work-life balance, for example, does not only facilitate the participation of women in the labour market, but it also favours their profes-

sional development and their access to full-time jobs, having a positive impact on the gender pay gap and ultimately increasing the share of women in decision-making positions. Similarly, a decline in gender-based violence implies a change in the attitudes towards gender equality which helps to remove barriers against women's participation in the labour market. Therefore, achievements in particular areas are likely to spill over to other areas in the future.

As mentioned in the chapter detailing the methodology of this evaluation, a consultation with the network of SAAGE Country experts has been conducted through an online survey. Experts have assessed the level of advancement towards the specific objectives of each priority area in their respective Member State; they have also assessed the contribution of SEGE to this advancement. They have rated this advancement and contribution of SEGE through a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates the lowest advancement and the lowest contribution of SEGE and 5 indicates the highest. The scores are presented next in each priority area.

SAAGE country experts have also rated the added value of SEGE at EU level, with a similar scale rating. The results will be presented in the corresponding section.

4.2.1 Thematic area 1: Increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence

4.2.1.1 Key actions implemented at the EU level

The bulk of actions in this area have been implemented to respond to the specific objectives of increasing employment participation of women, closing the employment gap and achieving a more equal sharing of time spent on care and household responsibilities in order to balance caring and professional responsibilities.

The **Commission's initiative on work-life balance for working parents and carers** was adopted in April 2017. The initiative is a comprehensive package of policy and legal measures, including a proposal for a Directive on work-life balance to modernise family leave and flexible working arrangements which was adopted by the Council in June 2019. The Directive sets a European minimum standard of 10 days of paid paternity leave for fathers following the birth of their child. It also strengthens the existing right to 4 months of parental leave, by making at least 2 months non-transferable between parents and paid. It introduces a new European entitlement for carers by attributing at least 5 working days per worker per year. It strengthens the right for all carers, not only parents, to request flexible working arrangements. This is viewed as one of the most effective actions of SEGE, with significant potential impact.

The Commission monitors, **in the framework of the European Semester**, national reform measures in line with the employment guidelines, and regularly highlights problems related to female labour market participation, including Country-Specific Recommendations addressed to several Member States. The recommendations cover issues such as ensuring the availability, affordability and/or quality of (full-time) formal childcare services to promote participation of women, reducing disincentives to and facilitate the take-up of work for second earners, increasing the effective retirement age, and measures to address the gender pay gap. This coordination with the European Semester is viewed as effective in gendering the monitoring carried out by the Commission in the respective country reports. It is viewed as effective in drawing attention to challenges in particular countries and prompting action by the countries.

The Commission has continued to **monitor the implementation of relevant Directives**, notably those on pregnant workers and maternity leave (Directive 92/85/EEC) and on parental leave (Directive 2010/18/EU). In 2018, the Commission, through the Legal Network, carried out a study on ‘Family leave: enforcement of the protection against dismissal and unfavourable treatment’, mapping the legal situation in 31 countries. The study concludes that despite a good legal framework, problems with discrimination and unfavourable treatment still remain for EU workers; binding laws alone are insufficient to change and challenge gender stereotypes and improve enforcement of the rights to family leave; and a more holistic approach is needed to address together family leave, flexible working arrangements and access to childcare.¹⁰

The Commission **promoted mutual learning among Member States** to advance work-life balance in practice. It organised a mutual learning seminar to discuss Member States’ approaches to fostering fathers’ involvement in care, hosted by the German government in 2018.¹¹ In 2016, the Slovak Presidency organised a conference on ‘Work-life balance in a changing society’, which focused on key success factors. These raised awareness and increased knowledge among Member States.

The Commission has **monitored the Barcelona targets on childcare** and adopted a report in May 2018,¹² stating that the first Barcelona target concerning children aged less than 3 years had been reached at EU level, albeit with large differences among Member States, and that the second, concerning children between 3 years up to compulsory school age, had not. The cost of no participation of women in the labour market due to caring responsibilities is calculated to be EUR 370 billion a year, thus the Barcelona targets remain vital. To support advancement towards the targets, the report draws the attention to the possibility of funding childcare and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) projects in Member States using ESI Funds¹³, such as ESF,¹⁴ ERDF¹⁵ and EAFRD.¹⁶ These investments are effective in creating jobs for women, facilitating reintegration of mothers with children in the labour market, improving parents’ work-life balance, and promoting the participation of children from particular socioeconomic groups or in certain areas of the country (such as rural areas).

In May 2018, the Commission adopted a **proposal for a Council Recommendation¹⁷ on affordable and high-quality ECEC systems**. This proposal was accompanied by a quality framework for ECEC systems which can be used by Mem-

10 The 28 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. See <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/4808-family-leave-enforcement-of-the-protection-against-dismissal-and-unfavourable-treatment-pdf-962-kb>

11 See Mutual Learning Programme in gender equality. Seminar - Long-Term Paternal Involvement in Family Work - Germany, 4-5 October 2018. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mlp-gender-equality-seminar-long-term-paternal-involvement-family-work_en.

12 European Commission (2018b).

13 European Structural and Investment Funds.

14 European Social Fund.

15 European Regional Development Fund.

16 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development Fund.

17 European Commission. Proposal for a Council Recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care Systems, COM (2018) 271 final - 2018/0127 (NLE). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0271>.

ber States to improve the quality of ECEC provision and support all children, their families and the community. In 2018, the Commission organised a workshop on 'Affordable and high-quality early childhood education and care throughout regions in the EU: adapting local needs'. An extension of the Barcelona targets to other dependants, considered as a possibility in SEGE, has not been achieved, which would have been a positive action.

In relation to **promoting female entrepreneurship**, the European Network of Women Business Angels and the European network of Women web Entrepreneurs Hubs (WeHubs) were launched in 2016 and have been granted funds. The e-platform for European women entrepreneurs (WEgate.eu) was launched in 2016 and has been regularly updated since, including information on events taking place in the EU to promote women's entrepreneurship; support available to women entrepreneurs throughout Europe; and success stories of women entrepreneurs. The Commission promoted a project on peer-learning for women's entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education, financed under the EU programme for small and medium-sized enterprises, COSME. The number of women participating in these networks or data on the effects of this participation are not available. The Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, adopted in 2012, is only weakly gender mainstreamed.

The promotion of **gender equality in research organisations** has mainly been addressed through funding from the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020. The assessment of Horizon 2020¹⁸ shows that it is effective in promoting gender equality. The Commission has developed an online toolkit about 'Gender equality in academic and research organisations (GEAR)', which has been made available in all EU languages.¹⁹

The Commission ensured gender mainstreaming of the **Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals**, issued in 2016.²⁰ This plan is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. It promotes labour market integration of refugees, 'fast track' insertion into the labour market and vocational training and labour market integration of women. The Commission committed to engage in a dialogue with Member States to ensure that concerns related to the gender dimension and the situation of migrant women are taken into account in planned policies and funding initiatives, including within actions co-financed by EU Funds. However, as pointed by the Interim Evaluation of AMIF, living in reception centres can sometimes involve a high risk of sex and gender-based violence²¹ and 10 Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Greece, Germany, Italy, France, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Slovenia) identified the need to further strengthen reception structures for vulnerable targets, especially unaccompanied minors, women or victims of violence and trafficking.²²

4.2.1.2 Examples of key actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

18 European Commission (2017b).

19 See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear>.

20 European Commission (2016a).

21 Keygnaert, I. et al. (2014).

22 European Commission (2018e).

In Malta, the setting up of the Maternity Trust Fund ensures that employers do not discriminate in employment, as they need to pay into the fund whether they are employing males or females. In Germany, a law on the further expansion of public childcare facilities came into force in 2017, providing the basis for the fourth federal investment programme for the creation of childcare places²³. In Spain, a new law,²⁴ passed in 2019, has approved the gradual implementation by 2020 of equal, equally paid and non-transferable paternity and maternity leaves. In Sweden, measures concerning the employment gap are mainly aimed at the employment of migrant women.²⁵ These include the teaching of Swedish language to foreign-born women and possibilities of participating in courses to increase the quality of Swedish language for those on parental leave. In Czechia, the official retirement age has been raised to equalise the official retirement ages for women and men. Consequently, the employment rates of women aged 55 to 64 have increased, increasing the employment rates of women as a whole.

4.2.1.3 Main results

The **effectiveness of the actions implemented in this thematic area can be considered mixed** on the basis of key indicators: the female employment rate has increased, although similarly to male rates, which points to this being driven by the recovery of the labour market rather than SEGE's impact. After a reduction of the employment gap during the economic and financial crisis, led by higher male employment loss, indicators point to a slightly worse performance for women since the recovery, implying that structural imbalances have not been tackled. In 2018Q2, the employment rate²⁶ for people aged 20 to 64 reached 73.2 %, from 69.9 % in 2015Q2. The employment rate for women increased from 64.3 % to 67.5 % (+3.2 p.p.), while the rate for men grew from 75.6 % to 79 % (+3.4 p.p.). These figures also hide considerable variability among Member States. The employment rate for women (2018Q2) ranges from 50 % in the weakest Member State (Greece) to 81 % in the strongest (Sweden).

Over the 2016–19 period, there have not been significant changes in the proportion of part-time work among employed women (31.6 % to 30.9 % between 2015Q2 and 2018Q2), nor among men (8.3 % to 8.2 %). Thus, gender differences remain, again with variability across the Member States.

The latest data on the Barcelona targets is from 2017,²⁷ not allowing for a full observation of SEGE's impact. Nonetheless, 2017 figures show the **achievement of the first Barcelona target**, as between 2015 and 2017 the provision of formal childcare of children under 3 increased from 30.3 % to 34.2 % in the EU-28. There are, however wide differences across Member States within the EU, ranging from the highest performers (Denmark 71.7 %; the Netherlands 61.6 % and Luxembourg

23 See 'Gesetz zum weiteren quantitativen und qualitativen Ausbau der Kindertagesbetreuung' https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBI&jumpTo=bgbl117s1893.pdf#_bgbl_%2F%2F%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl117s1893.pdf%27%5D_1573762538929.

24 Royal Decree Law 6/2019, of 1st March, with urgent measures to guarantee equal treatment and opportunities between men and women in employment.

25 Among Swedish-born nationals, the gender gap in employment is just 2.6 percentage points, compared to 8.7 among foreign-born workers.

26 Eurostat. LFS.

27 Eurostat: SILC. Children in formal childcare or education by age group and duration percentage over the population of each age group [ilc_caindformal]. Last update by Eurostat: 23 May 2019.

60.8 %), to the lowest (Bulgaria 9.4 %; Czechia 6.5 % and Slovakia 0.6 %; 2017 figures). Regarding **the second target**, the provision of childcare for children between 3 and the mandatory school age increased from 83.3 % to 84.8 % in the same period, **thus not yet achieving the target (90 %)**. Again, wide differences among Member States are observed, ranging from the values of Belgium 99.3 %, Sweden 97.5 % or Spain 95.99 % to the values of Romania 59.8 %, Poland 57.7 % or Croatia 51.5 %.

4.2.1.4 Conclusions of the effectiveness of the thematic area

The assessment of effectiveness of actions developed under this thematic area yields mixed results. The planned actions have been implemented and the objectives have been partially achieved.

According to SAAGE experts, the level of advancement of this area in their respective country in the 2016–2019 period has been an average of 3 in the range between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest), the second highest among all thematic areas and above the average of 2.6, with wide differences across Member States. SAAGE experts point, however, to a moderate contribution of SEGE to the achievement of the objectives in their countries, due mainly to limited knowledge of SEGE among policymakers: the average of the scores assigned is 2.4 on a scale of 1 to 5, above the average mark of 2.2. Still, the similarities between SEGE and actions at the Member State level point to at least an indirect role of SEGE.

The most important output has been the **adoption by the Council in June 2019 of the Directive on work-life balance**. Although the Directive has been only recently adopted, the earlier debate on flexible working arrangements and on paternity and non-transferable parental leaves, also linked to the Commission's proposal for the Directive in 2017, has resulted in **important changes in some Member States** that have implemented actions to improve work-life balance and to extend paternity leaves. Monitoring is needed to ensure adequate transposition of the Directive.

Coordination with the European Semester has been a powerful tool and has resulted in the issuing of **Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) to countries with specific challenges**, which may prompt action by the affected Member States. This coordination could be enhanced to allow better gender mainstreaming of the post-2020 mechanism, by, for instance, defining gender-sensitive objectives and sex-disaggregated targets in the successor to the Europe 2020 strategy.

National and EU funding, including from the ESI Funds, are crucial to support advancement towards the Barcelona targets. However, as shown by non-attainment of the targets by many countries, they may not have been sufficient. The Barcelona targets have not become more ambitious nor have they been extended to cover the care of other dependants, an option in SEGE. This could be considered in the next framework for gender equality. The Quality Framework for ECEC systems should be promoted among the Member States.

Promotion of networking by **women entrepreneurs** is useful for information and mutual support. However, this is **clearly insufficient to reverse the current situation** of Europe in this area. A specific action plan for women entrepreneurship or stronger gender mainstreaming of the current Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan could be more effective.

Although the employment rate of women has increased, the employment gap has not been reduced. Thus, the existing **structural imbalances remain** and need to

be addressed. The objective of increasing participation needs to be complemented by an objective of reducing precariousness, paying due attention to the quality of employment.

4.2.2 Thematic area 2: Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women.

4.2.2.1 Key actions implemented at the EU level

In November 2017, the Commission adopted an evaluation report on the implementation of the **Pay Transparency Recommendation**.²⁸ The recommendation has generated action at Member State level, but the evaluation report shows that only 11 Member States (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Sweden and United Kingdom) had legislation on pay transparency. Only a small group of Member States had introduced pay transparency measures in their national legal systems to strengthen the principle of equal pay, as suggested in the Recommendation. Only six Member States (Germany, France, Finland²⁹, Lithuania, Sweden and United Kingdom) have either adopted new pay transparency measures or improved existing measures.

The **2017–2019 Action Plan to tackle the gender pay gap**³⁰ represents an important policy development. This plan, with 20 actions to be implemented by the European Commission, adopts a holistic approach in addressing a spectrum of root causes of the gender pay gap: sectoral segregation, vertical segregation, cultural roots and prevailing stereotypes, lack of work-life balance, and lack of proper enforcement of the equal pay principle. Through the Plan, the Commission commits to assess the possibility of amendments to the Directive on gender equality in the area of employment and occupation (2006/54/EC) to make some or all of the measures on pay transparency foreseen in the 2013 Recommendation binding or to improve sanctions and compensation to victims. It includes regular reporting on gender pay, earnings and pension gaps. However, the Action Plan does not include the gender gap in the public sector. A series of projects combating stereotypes and segregation have been financed within the Action Plan, with the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (REC) 2014–2020 and with Erasmus+, in cooperation with key stakeholders, notably representatives of schools, training providers, universities, public employment services and career guidance providers.

The European Commission launched an **evaluation**³¹ **of the Directive on gender**

28 European Commission. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. Report on the implementation of Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency. COM(2017) 671 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0671&from=en>.

29 Finland is included in the report, but in fact, this concerns the work of a tripartite working group set up to study the possibility of increasing openness of pay by means of legislation in the beginning 2019, but the group has not achieved an unanimous decision and, at the time of writing this report, no new legislation had been adopted.

30 European Commission. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. EU Action Plan 2017-2019 on tackling the gender pay gap. COM(2017) 678 final. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2017/EN/COM-2017-671-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>.

31 Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-3415794_en.

equality in the area of employment and occupation (2006/54/EC), with a focus on the principle of equal pay. The Commission will adopt a staff working document on the results of this evaluation in the fourth quarter of 2019.

In the context of the European Semester, the Employment Guidelines include a focus on minimum wage levels, which can have a positive impact on the gender pay gap (guideline 5).³² In the majority of Member States, the minimum wage rates have been increased in 2019. Some of the highest increases in nominal terms were recorded in Spain (22 %) and Greece (10 %). This can, however, not be directly attributed to SEGE or the Employment Guidelines, but possibly to the reduction of purchasing power resulting from the economic crisis.

The **Pension Adequacy Report 2018**³³ contains a dedicated section on gender differences in pension entitlement, deepening analysis of its causes and how it is likely to develop in view of trends in the labour market and pension systems. The report pays attention to groups at risk of low pension adequacy and high old-age poverty. The gender pension gap shows a downwards trend from 40.2 % in 2012 to 35.7 % in 2017. This reduction is due to improved working careers of women, but the **pension gap is likely to persist** due to the cumulative effect of the multiple gaps affecting women (e.g. pay, career duration, childcare breaks, part-time work and care for dependent adults). Close monitoring seems necessary to prevent negative side effects of undergoing reforms of pension systems in Member States to ensure sustainability in light of the ageing population with a view on the impacts on women's pensions.

The EU's Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme has funded projects promoting good practice in combating stereotypes and segregation in the labour market, with the objective of improving the gender balance in economic sectors and occupations.

The European Commission has continued to mark the European **Equal Pay Day** to raise awareness of the issues in this field.

4.2.2.2 Examples of actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

In France, the Law No 2018-771 of 5 September 2018 'for the freedom to choose one's professional future' deals with gender equality and the gender pay gap. Chapter IV of this law is dedicated to 'equal pay between women and men and the fight against sexual violence and sexist behaviours at work'. It provides a common methodology to measure unjustified gender pay gaps according to an 'equal pay for equal work' principle.

In Germany, the law on Pay Transparency came into force in 2017, stating that employees in companies with more than 200 employees are entitled to wage comparison information. Furthermore, companies with more than 500 employees have to carry out an evaluation procedure every five years.

In Lithuania, the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its Implementation Plan 2018–2021 foresee a number of measures to reduce the gender pay gap, earnings and pension gaps.

³² Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2018-european-semester-employment-guidelines_en.

³³ European Commission and Social Protection Committee (2018).

In Spain, a new law³⁴ that addresses the gender pay gap has been passed in 2019. This law extends the obligation to develop equality plans, together with workers' representatives, to companies with more than 50 employees (before the law, the ceiling was 250 employees). Employers shall keep a record of average salaries, salary supplements and extra-salary perceptions, disaggregated by sex and distributed by professional groups and categories. All workers are entitled to consult the wage register of their company.

4.2.2.3 Main results

The latest data for the core indicator of this thematic area, the gender pay gap, is from 2017, which does not allow full assessment of the impact of SEGE. The unadjusted³⁵ gender pay gap has improved since 2010 in most of the countries, from 17.1 % in 2010 to 16.5 % in 2015 and 16 % in 2017 (EU-28). However, the country-level picture is very heterogeneous, from the widest pay gap of 25.6 % (Estonia) to the lowest of 3.5 % (Romania).³⁶

Beyond the evolution of this indicator, figures on gender segregation remain unchanged. Sectoral segregation remained stable at 18.8 % between 2015 and 2017 in the EU-28. Occupation segregation diminished only slightly from 24.3 % in 2015 to 24 % in 2017 (Eurostat, LFS). The share of those at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)³⁷ improved in the EU-28 from 23.8 % in 2015 to 22.4 % in 2017 but the gender gap increased from 1.4 p.p. in 2015 to 1.7 p.p. in 2017 (Eurostat, SILC). It should be noted that this indicator follows the assumption that household income is distributed equally among male and female members of household units. The gender pension gap decreased from 38.3 % in 2015 to 35.7 % in 2017 (Eurostat, SILC).

4.2.2.4 Conclusion of the effectiveness of the thematic area

The effectiveness in terms of outcomes of this thematic area of SEGE cannot be fully assessed yet since the latest data of the main indicators of the area, the gender pay gap, refers to 2017. Moreover, as in other thematic areas, the actions carried out might need a longer time span than three years to deliver the intended results. **The indicators available**, notably the gender pay gap and the at risk of poverty and social exclusion rate, **do not show significant advancements**. In spite of the positive evolution of the gender pension gap due to improved careers of women, the gap persists.

Stakeholders assessed progress in this thematic area as low. They highlight outputs achieved, notably the 2017–2019 Action Plan to tackle the gender pay gap and the evaluation of the Recommendation on pay transparency. However, at the level of impacts, on average, the level of advancement in this thematic area 2 in all Member States in the 2016–2019 period as reported by SAAGE experts was 2.6 on a 1 to 5 range, similar to the average. Wide differences across Member States can be observed. Regarding the specific contribution of SEGE to these advancements, SAAGE experts assigned an average score of 2.4, on a 1 to 5 range, slightly above

34 Royal Decree Law 6/2019, of 1 March, with urgent measures to guarantee equal treatment and opportunities between men and women in employment.

35 Meaning that systematic differences between genders in education, for example, are not included.

36 Eurostat, based on the Structure of Earnings Survey.

37 This indicator is a composite of three separate indicators measuring relative poverty (risk of poverty rate), absolute poverty (material deprivation) and access to employment (living in a jobless household).

the average of 2.2.

The results and impacts of this action plan will need to be analysed, lessons drawn and further action planned at its conclusion. The **evaluation of the Recommendation on Pay Transparency shows weak results**, which points to the need for further support to the Member States and, as included in the Action Plan, binding measures. Further action should also be derived from the evaluation of the Directive on gender equality in the area of employment and occupation (2006/54/EC), with a focus on the principle of equal pay, another significant output.

Coordination within the European Semester proved useful in developing the gender-sensitive employment guidelines and, specifically, their focus on the minimum wage rates as well as in the country reports where national gender pay and pension gaps were regularly highlighted.

Action to address the causes and consequences of the gender pension gap is focused on the development of the Pension Adequacy Report in 2018, which is an important step to better understand the issue. In the future, close monitoring of the gender impacts of reforms of pension systems being promoted in Member States to ensure long-term sustainability should detect and correct negative effects on women. Further specific actions might be required in this area.

There are no specific measures to address the specific objective of eliminating the barriers to accessing the labour market of vulnerable groups. This specific objective could be moved to the thematic area 1.

REC projects on combating stereotypes and segregation are also effective, though their scale might not be adequate.

4.2.3 Thematic area 3: Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making.

4.2.3.1 Key actions implemented at the EU level

The European Commission put forward a **legislative proposal to improve transparency of the selection of board directors in the largest publicly listed companies** in 2012, stating that the boards of these companies should be composed at least 40 % of one sex. The European Commission has continued its efforts to have the proposal adopted and has gained the support of the European Parliament and most Member States. However, this Directive proposal is blocked at the European Council level. In the meantime, however, some countries have already advanced towards setting such targets.

In 2017, the Commission adopted non-binding guidelines³⁸ to help companies disclose relevant non-financial information in a more consistent and comparable manner. The guidelines address the diversity policy to be applied in relation to the undertakings of administrative, management and supervisory bodies with regard to aspects such as age, gender or educational and professional backgrounds. In 2018, the Commission published a **Guidance to facilitate the implementation of targets to promote gender equality in research and innovation**.

³⁸ European Commission. Communication from the Commission. Guidelines on non-financial reporting (methodology for reporting non-financial information). Communication from the Commission — Guidelines on non-financial reporting (methodology for reporting non-financial information). C/2017/4234. OJ C 215, 5.7.2017, p. 1–20. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TX/?uri=CELEX%3A52017XC0705%2801%29>.

The European Commission has supported Member States and stakeholders to improve the **gender balance in political decision-making, through mutual learning and exchange of good practices between Member States**. An exchange of good practices involving 16 Member States³⁹ took place in 2016 on advancing the participation of women in political decision-making. The exchange concluded, among several issues, that a strong political will for further action and engagement is needed within Member States, as well as a comprehensive strategy and legislative measures. The exchange also highlighted the importance of the measures to balance family and work life for both women and men, and of the availability of data to monitor progress.

The Commission's Joint Research Centre has developed a monitoring tool of gender equality to capture regional differences across Europe, including data about women in decision-making.

The Commission has also provided funding for projects: Six projects to support gender equality in politics and in public debate will receive EU funding from the REC programme to be implemented in 2019–2021.

The Commission has organised and participated in events to raise awareness, such as the panel on 'Raising women's participation in decision-making: engaging men as change agents', which was organised in the framework of the European Development Days in 2018.

The European Commission has acted internally on gender equality to **meet the specific objective of reaching a 40 % target of women in middle and senior management in the Commission** by the end of the current mandate (2019). The European External Action Service (EEAS) has started to implement its Gender and Equal Opportunity Strategy 2018–2023. This strategy aims to accelerate progress towards sustainable gender balance at all levels in all functions and all job categories, both in the Brussels headquarters and in EU Delegations. Currently, the overall gender balance in the EEAS is close to equal.

4.2.3.2 Examples of actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

In Finland, the Government has set the target of at least 40 % of women on the boards of large and medium cap companies by 2020. In this country, the percentage of women on the boards of listed companies has been on a steady increase as a result of several measures to promote women's career development and higher participation in decision-making.

In Austria, the Federal Government agreed in 2017 to put forward the Equality Act of women and men in supervisory boards ('GFMA' Act) to increase the share of women on boards. This Act states that women or men (the less represented sex) must be at least 30 % of supervisory boards in enterprises related to the stock market or with more than 1,000 employees. The law applies to supervisory boards with at least six persons when announcing new members.

In France, several measures have further promoted gender equality in decision-making in recent years, such as the Law of January 2017, regarding equality and

³⁹ Information available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/who-we-work-gender-equality/mutual-learning-programme-gender-equality_en.

citizenship, which contains some provisions promoting parity,⁴⁰ or the Ordinance of January 2017, that promotes the equal access of women and men to boards of a number of institutions.

4.2.3.3 Main results

Overall, **there has been an improvement in the indicators** for this thematic area in the 2016–2019 period. Still, differences among sexes remain.

The share of women among members in the single/lower houses of the national parliaments improved in the EU-28, from 28.7 % (2015Q4) to 31.5 % (2019Q2). As in other variables, there are considerable differences across Member States, from the top performer (Sweden 47.3 %) to the lowest (Hungary 12.1 %). The share of women in national governments improved in the EU-28 from 27.4 % (2015Q4) to 30.2 % (2019Q2), again with wide differences at the country level (52.2 % in Sweden, 51.2 % in Spain and 50 % in France vs 7.1 % in Hungary).⁴¹

The share of women among members of the highest decision-making bodies of the largest nationally registered companies has also improved in the EU-28 from 22.7 % in 2015 (second half) to 27.8 % in 2019 (first half). As with other variables, there are wide differences across Member States, from top performers (France 44 %, Italy 36.6 % and Sweden 37.1 %) to low ones (Estonia 8.5 %, Greece 10.2 % and Malta 9.3 %). The share of women among executives of the largest nationally registered companies improved in the EU-28, from 14.3 % in 2015 (second half) to 17.6 % in 2019 (first half), while the share of women among presidents of these companies rose from 6.4 % to 7.4 % in the same period.⁴²

The share of women in the Commission in senior and middle management continued to increase and reached 39 % at all levels by 1 November 2018, up by 2 p.p. compared to 2017. Women accounted for 37 % of senior management (up from 35 % a year before). At middle management level, the target of 40 % was reached (up from 38 % in 2017). In addition, in July 2019 the Parliament elected Ursula von der Leyen as the first female Commission President⁴³ (to take office on 1 November 2019 for a five-year term).

4.2.3.4 Conclusion of the effectiveness of the thematic area

The effectiveness of this area in terms of outputs and achievements **can be assessed positively**.

According to the SAAGE experts, the average level of advancement in thematic area 3 in all Member States in the 2016–2019 period has been 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 5, which is equal to the average mark. Differences across national experts in this thematic area have been wide. The average specific contribution of SEGE to the achievement of the objectives in this area in all Member States, as reported by SAAGE experts, is the second lowest, with a score of 2.0 on a scale of 1 to 5, which is close to the average of 2.2.

40 This includes alternating women and men as the president of selection boards in the public service and parity in internal commissions and bodies within public institutions of the Ministry of Culture.

41 EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

42 EIGE. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs>.

43 See: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/commission-president-2019/20190711IPR56824/parliament-elects-ursula-von-der-leyen-as-first-female-commission-president>.

In terms of outcomes achieved, statistical indicators show an **improvement in the share of women in decision-making positions both in the political and economic sectors**. Given the absence of specific targets, it is nonetheless not possible to assess whether this improvement has been sufficient. The objective of reaching the target of 40 % women in senior and middle management positions in the Commission has been almost achieved.

The Directive on gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on the stock exchange was blocked at the council. Nonetheless, it is an output that requires ongoing attention given its stimulus effect.

4.2.4 Thematic area 4: Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims.

4.2.4.1 Key actions implemented at the EU level

The Istanbul Convention has been signed by all EU Member States and in 2018, Greece, Croatia and Luxembourg concluded the ratification process, bringing the number of ratifications to 21. The Commission has been working with the Council to agree on the practical arrangements to be set out in a Code of Conduct for the EU and Member States jointly to carry out their legal obligations under the Convention. However, the Convention has caused heated discussions in some Member States, centred on the Convention's use of the term 'gender' and its approach of considering violence against women to be gender-based violence. As a result, not all Member States are ready to ratify it and the EU's accession to the Convention before the European elections of May 2019 was not achieved.

EIGE, in cooperation with the European Commission, has developed gender- and child-specific recommendations **to help Member States implement the Directive 2012/29/EU on Victims' Rights and laws on European protection orders** and monitor its progress. In 2017, EIGE published a report on cyber-violence against women and girls,⁴⁴ which found that online violence is not necessarily distinct from violence experienced in the 'real world', but is rather a continuum. In 2016, a Code of Conduct with social media on countering illegal online hate speech was adopted. In 2017, its results were assessed, showing some progress, although challenges persist.⁴⁵

Several **awareness campaigns** have taken place to prevent gender violence. In 2017, the European Commission launched the NON.NO.NEIN. campaign – #SayNoStopVAW. Throughout 2018, multiple communications, actions and outputs were produced. On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), the Commission's communication activities focused on stopping sexual harassment, with the message of supporting a culture of non-violence and freedom from harassment.

In the field of prevention of trafficking in human beings, the Commission published a **study on the gender dimension of trafficking in human beings**, especially addressing the issue of trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁴⁶ The Commission has also addressed gender in its anti-trafficking

44 EIGE (2017).

45 For more details, see: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/index_en.htm.

46 See: <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/node/4946>.

strategy,⁴⁷ with trafficking for sexual exploitation identified as a particular form of gender-based violence. EIGE published a report⁴⁸ for the EU Anti-Trafficking Day, on 18 October 2018, presenting gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions. In 2018, the Heads of 10 EU agencies⁴⁹ signed the Joint Statement of commitment to working together to address trafficking in human beings.⁵⁰

The Commission aims to implement an **EU-wide prevalence survey on violence against women**, coordinated by Eurostat. In May 2017, Eurostat launched a call for proposals to test the survey, restricted to National Statistical Institutes. The pilot project, launched by Eurostat, is running in 2018/2019 in cooperation with Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Slovenia. The aim is to cover all Member States with a full-scale survey that can be carried out in the years, 2019 to 2021.

The **vulnerability of women in transit** is taken into account in the Commission's recent proposal for the revision of the Directive laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.⁵¹ The European Asylum Support Office has provided guidance on reception conditions. The Commission organised two seminars to exchange good practices on tackling gender-based violence through asylum and migration procedures in the EU in 2018.⁵² In addition, the Daphne strand of the REC Programme has funded projects aimed at improving the coordination and/or adaptation of support services for sexual and gender-based violence to include refugees and migrants.

EIGE has carried out a **study on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** in Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy and Malta in 2017, in which it was estimated that 180 000 girls and women in the EU are at risk of FGM each year.⁵³ To respond to the specific objective of eliminating FGM, over the last two years the EU has provided support for care and protection services related to FGM for more than 1.5 million

47 See: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/commission-sets-out-priorities-step-eu-action_en.

48 See: <https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/eige-publications/gender-specific-measures-anti-trafficking-actions-report>.

49 These were the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), European Police Office (Europol), European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA), European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), EU Judicial Cooperation Unit (Eurojust), European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL), and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound).

50 Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eu_agencies_joint_statement_of_commitment_to_working_together_to_address_thb.pdf.

51 European Commission. Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast). COM(2016) 465. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016PC0465>.

52 In February 2018, Greece hosted a seminar on support services for victims of violence in asylum and migration in Athens, discussing the Greek 'Protocol of Cooperation' as an example of good practice. In October 2018 in Madrid, Spain hosted a mutual learning seminar on combating trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation, where Spain presented its activities to reduce demand and promote multi-agency coordination and communication in the fight against trafficking for sexual exploitation.

53 See: <https://eige.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/female-genital-mutilation-problem-eu>.

girls and women. In addition, 8.5 million persons from 3 000 different communities have been encouraged to publicly declare that they reject this practice.⁵⁴ The Commission co-funds the web-based European Knowledge Platform for Professionals dealing with Female Genital Mutilation,⁵⁵ a transnational project implemented by a consortium of 12 partners and 4 associate partners across the EU.

The European Commission has a robust and comprehensive anti-harassment policy internally, based on a preventive approach as well as on responsive measures.

4.2.4.2 Examples of actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

In Finland, the Committee on Prevention of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2017–2020) was set up to ensure the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention 2018–2021 includes more than 40 measures to prevent violence against women and the threat of violence. The work is carried out in several administrative branches together with non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In Greece, Law 4604/2019 ‘Promoting Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender Violence’ has been recently passed as an integral legal framework to promote gender equality and the fight against gender violence. The new penal code approved in 2019 recognises that sex without consent is rape, and states that physical violence is not required for the crime to be considered rape.

In Malta, the National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence was approved in 2017, together with new relevant legislation⁵⁶ in 2019. An inter-ministerial committee on gender-based violence was set up.

In Ireland new legislation has been passed in 2017 and 2018 that has introduced a new and stronger definition of ‘consent’ (Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017), a new offence of ‘coercive control’ (Domestic Violence Act 2018) and has enhanced access to emergency ‘barring orders’.

4.2.4.3 Main results

Indicators to monitor the advancement towards objectives for this thematic area are limited. The latest available data for most variables is 2016, not allowing the impact of SEGE and thus its effectiveness to be assessed.

In general, Eurostat does not publish average values for the EU as a whole. This concerns the main variable of this indicator: the number of victims of homicide by their partner or ex-partner and the rate of victims of rape crimes. With wide differences across Member States, the rate of women per 100 000 inhabitants ranged in 2016 from 118 in Sweden or 109 in the United Kingdom (England and Wales) to 3 in Bulgaria, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia. The evolution between 2014 and 2016 is heterogeneous and does not show a clear picture in the EU.

54 See: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/54350/orange-world-and-stop-violence-against-women_en.

55 See: <https://uefgm.org/>.

56 Act XIII (KAP 581). This legislation removed Malta’s reservations regarding Articles 59 and 60 of the Istanbul Convention.

4.2.4.4 Conclusion of the effectiveness of the thematic area

Significant outputs have been achieved, while time is required to assess their impact.

Mixed progress was reported by stakeholders regarding the degree of the achievement of the specific objectives of this area. The average level of advancement in the Member States reported by SAAGE experts has been 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 5, the highest across the thematic areas. As in other areas, there are wide differences across Member States. The specific contribution of SEGE to the achievement of the objectives in this thematic area has been rated as 2.5 on a scale of 1 to 5, also the highest mark.

The main outputs in this thematic area relate to the Istanbul Convention and its signature by all Member States and support to implementation of the Directive on victims' rights and enforcement of other laws on European protection orders. These actions hold potential impact for the intermediate objective, although it is difficult to assess the extent of their effects.

Awareness-raising campaigns stand out as important outputs in the context of the '#MeToo' movement, including a focus on stopping sexual harassment. This awareness-raising focus on sexual harassment needs to be complemented by legislative, research and funding actions.

Important outputs have been achieved towards improving data collection in cooperation with Eurostat.

4.2.5 Thematic area 5: Promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world

4.2.5.1 Key actions undertaken at the EU level

In the 2016–19 period, the EU continued to promote and financially support gender equality and women's empowerment across the globe, implementing actions of the Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020.⁵⁷ In this regard, gender equality has been prominently included in the EU's political positions and dialogues with partner countries.

Gender equality remained an important subject of debate and cooperation with relevant international and regional organisations, in particular the UN, but also the International Labour Organization (ILO), the G20, the G7, NATO, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization of American States (OAS), the African Union (AU), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM).

In 2018, the Commission adopted the **Reflection Paper 'Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030'**,⁵⁸ in the follow-up to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and as part of the debate on the future of Europe. In this document, the need to prioritise ambitious additional actions to deliver on the promise of gender equality in the EU was emphasised.

⁵⁷ European Commission. Joint Staff Working Document, Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020. SWD(2015) 182 final. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/102584_es.

⁵⁸ European Commission (2019a).

Policy dialogue and technical assistance continued to **bring gender equality into the enlargement and neighbourhood policy process**. In 2018, new gender analyses were carried out in Kosovo, Turkey and Ukraine. In 2018, EIGE supported the project ‘EIGE’s cooperation with the EU candidate and potential candidate countries 2017–2019: improved monitoring of gender equality progress’. The IPA⁵⁹ II funded EUR 5 million for the programme ‘Ending Violence against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds’, particularly focused on the most disadvantaged groups of women in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. Efforts have been made to include the gender mainstreaming perspective into the actions funded by IPA. Moreover, in the EU accession process, the Western Balkan countries have developed their legal and policy frameworks, establishing institutions and gender equality mechanisms, albeit still in an early phase of development.⁶⁰

The Commission has continued its policy dialogue on women’s empowerment with the Union for the Mediterranean. The UfM Regional Dialogue on Women’s Empowerment took place in 2018 in Lisbon, in line with the fourth edition of the UfM High-Level Conference on Women (Women4Mediterranean). It involved the creation of a mechanism to monitor progress towards gender equality made by the UfM countries.

In December 2018, the EU adopted its new strategic approach to Women, Peace and Security to promote the implementation of UNSC resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security.⁶¹ This emphasises women’s leadership and the need for meaningful, equitable participation, as well as for the integration of gender perspectives into all EU policies related to security, conflict prevention and resolution, and long-term peace building.

The European External Action Service issued new guidelines on gender mainstreaming for the EU civilian missions.⁶²

The EU-UN Trust Fund provided EUR 500 million to the Spotlight Initiative for the 2018–2024 period. The initiative is made up of regional programmes and focused investment in targeted countries to stop violence against women and girls.

The Commission continued to actively promote gender equality in relation to trade. A Sustainable Impact Assessment⁶³ was launched in June 2018, in support of the negotiations to modernise the EU-Chile Association Agreement, including gender issues. Similarly, a Recommendation⁶⁴ on trade and gender was agreed in September 2018 by the Joint Committee of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada.

4.2.5.2 Examples of actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

In 2018, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched a handbook for Sweden’s

59 Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance.

60 Civil Society Forum of the Western Balkans Summit Series (2018).

61 Council of the EU (2018).

62 See: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12851-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

63 See: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/november/tradoc_157550.pdf

64 See: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/september/tradoc_157419.pdf

feminist foreign policy. It contains a selection of methods and experiences that can provide examples and inspiration for further work of the Swedish Foreign Service, other parts of the civil service and society as a whole.

The Netherlands has worked on achieving gender equality through gender diplomacy and gender-specific programmes worldwide. It supports civil society organizations and individual defenders of women's rights, encouraging cooperation with companies that enhance the working conditions of female employees and opportunities for female entrepreneurs. It also works towards strengthening women's rights and gender equality in international conventions, resolutions and agreements.

4.2.5.3 Main results

The indicators for the impacts of this thematic area are those of Sustainable Development Goal 5, to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'⁶⁵ and focus thus on the final impact and not on the specific objective. **Some of these indicators show progress**, such as a significant decline in the prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage. However, the figures continue to be high. Moreover, there is **limited progress in structural issues**, such as legal discrimination, unfair social norms and attitudes, asymmetrical decision-making powers on sexual and reproductive issues, and low levels of political participation.⁶⁶

The GAP II Annual Implementation Report 2017 identifies important effects of its implementation: it has brought greater alignment of the EU's activities in external relations with the 2030 Agenda and a shift in institutional culture, as the EU is making greater use of gender expertise to strengthen its actions and to contribute more comprehensively to gender equality outcomes. In particular, the use of gender analysis in the formulation of EU external actions has increased. Almost all EU Delegations have carried out a detailed gender analysis.

4.2.5.4 Conclusion of the effectiveness of the thematic area

According to the SAAGE experts, the average level of advancement in Member States in this thematic area in their respective countries in the 2016–2019 period is 1.7 on a scale of 1 to 5, the lowest mark, and with a contribution of SEGE of 1.5, also the lowest record. Nevertheless, the role of the EU actions in this thematic area is by far more relevant in comparison to Member State level actions, given the importance of the EU at the international level, and in particular with regard to the candidate and potential candidate countries.

The main outputs of this area are the actions implemented in the framework of GAP II; the adoption in 2018 by the Commission of the Reflection Paper 'Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030'; the adoption in 2018 of its new strategic approach to Women, Peace and Security; and the gender analyses carried out in Kosovo, Turkey and Ukraine in the framework of the enlargement and neighbourhood policy process.

The limited improvement in these indicators cannot be attributed to lack of effectiveness of SEGE. On the contrary, SEGE can have a positive impact on them together with other strategies and actions implemented at the international level. In this regard, the effectiveness of the actions implemented seems significant, particularly as reflected by the cultural shift reported in the implementation report of GAP II.

65 See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

66 UN (2019).

4.2.6 Thematic area 6: Gender mainstreaming, EU funding and cooperation with all actors

This area is a set of three transversal issues: gender mainstreaming, EU funding and cooperation with all actors. However, in Annex 1 of SEGE, it is presented as a sixth thematic area and, as such, has been considered in the reconstruction of the intervention logic for this evaluation.

4.2.6.1 Key actions implemented at the EU level

EIGE launched its gender mainstreaming platform in 2016. The platform includes information on **practical tools and methods of gender mainstreaming**, as well as information on mainstreaming in selected sectors. EIGE has published four online gender mainstreaming toolkits, explaining how to carry out gender mainstreaming in practice, starting from the early planning phases, all the way through to the final implementation and evaluation.

The European Investment Bank's Board adopted in 2016 the 'EIB Group Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment'.⁶⁷ It aims at embedding gender equality in EIB's activities, covering lending, blending and advisory activity both inside and outside the European Union.

The regulations governing the European Structural and Investment Funds has stimulated a **significant gender focus and gender equality expenditure**. A gender equality perspective has been taken into account in the preparations of the post-2020 generation of EU funding programmes, with gender equality embedded as a cross-cutting priority to be reflected in the individual programmes' design.⁶⁸ The role of EU funding for gender equality will be analysed in detail in Chapter 5 below.

With the theme of cooperating with all actors, in 2018, the Commission organised four seminars on gender equality to exchange views among the Member States' governmental representatives within the **Mutual Learning Programme**, covering issues such as: support services for victims of violence in asylum and migration; promoting fathers' involvement in family work; activities to reduce demand and promote multi-agency coordination and communication in the fight against trafficking for sexual exploitation; and initiatives to overcome the underrepresentation of and discrimination against women in all media professions, as well as issues of gender stereotypes and sexism in media content.

The Commission has cooperated with technology companies and engaged senior managers to sign up to a declaration to achieve gender balance in companies.⁶⁹ So far, 20 information technology companies have co-signed this declaration, committing to provide an inclusive and gender-balanced work culture and environment.

In November 2018, the Commission organised a meeting of the European Integration Network devoted to the integration of migrant women, and another conference to discuss how to attract women to the transport sector.⁷⁰

67 European Investment Bank Group (2016).

68 European Parliament. Answer given by Mr Oettinger on behalf of the European Commission. Question reference: E-005441/2018. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2018-005441-ASW_EN.pdf.

69 See: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ceos-tech-companies-sign-declaration-committing-gender-balanced-work-culture>.

70 See: https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/social/events/conference-how-attract-women-transport-sector_en.

The Commission Recommendation in June 2018, on standards for equality bodies,⁷¹ should, if effectively pursued, stimulate the independence and effectiveness of equality bodies in all areas of their work including to assist victims of discrimination.

In October 2018, the Austrian Presidency of the Council organised an informal meeting of gender equality ministers, the first meeting of its kind since October 2011. The meeting led to the signature of a joint **declaration on gender equality as a priority of the European Union today and in the future**. The declaration raises the importance of regular meetings of EU ministers for gender equality and calls for a dual approach to be fully put in place, combining gender mainstreaming and specific actions and for a high-level and a stand-alone EU gender equality strategy. The 2018 Presidency Conclusions **ask the Commission to adopt a Communication setting out an EU gender equality strategy for the period post 2019**.

The **EU Advisory Committee on equality between women and men** has continued meeting twice a year and has issued opinions on different policy areas to guide the Commission's work, such as in the area of childcare, the needs of women on the move, combating female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, gender balance in decision-making in politics, new challenges for gender equality in the changing world of work and, lastly, on the future gender equality policy after 2019, giving recommendations and calling for specific actions of the EU institutions and the Member States.

4.2.6.2 Examples of actions stimulated at the Member State level

SEGE has served to promote the implementation of actions at the Member State level in this thematic area. A number of examples illustrate this.

In Bulgaria, the Government and the rest of the public institutions are obliged to implement the integrated gender mainstreaming approach in all policies at all levels of Government: central, regional and local. The basic document is the National Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality between Women and Men 2016–2020.

In Ireland, a National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017–2020: creating a better society for all was elaborated by the Department of Justice and Equality in April 2017 with specific requirements for data to facilitate gender mainstreaming and for enhancing the capacity for implementation of gender mainstreaming within the public sector.

In Portugal, the government has launched gender budgeting. The Budget Law 2018 stipulates that government departments should prepare a report analysing the gender impact of their sectoral public policies.

In Luxembourg, the National Action Plan for Equality 2015–2018 has been evaluated and a new plan has been approved for 2019–2023, based on a public consultation survey. The functioning of the Inter-ministerial Committee has been reformed.

4.2.6.3 Conclusion of the effectiveness of the thematic area

SEGE includes a set of indicators to monitor the progress in this thematic area, such as the number of analyses of national strategic documents carried out or the number of exchanges of good practice. However, there is no available data concerning these indicators in the key sources of information such as SEGE or the European Commission's annual reports on equality between women and men in the EU, and

71 European Commission (2018c).

no targets set, so it is not possible to assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved.

According to the SAAGE experts, the average level of advancement in this thematic area in the 2016–2019 period has been 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 5, similar to the average. The views also suggest that there is a wide variation in the degree of progress across Member States. The specific contribution of SEGE to the achievement of objectives has been awarded an average score of 2.3 on a scale of 1 to 5, slightly above average.

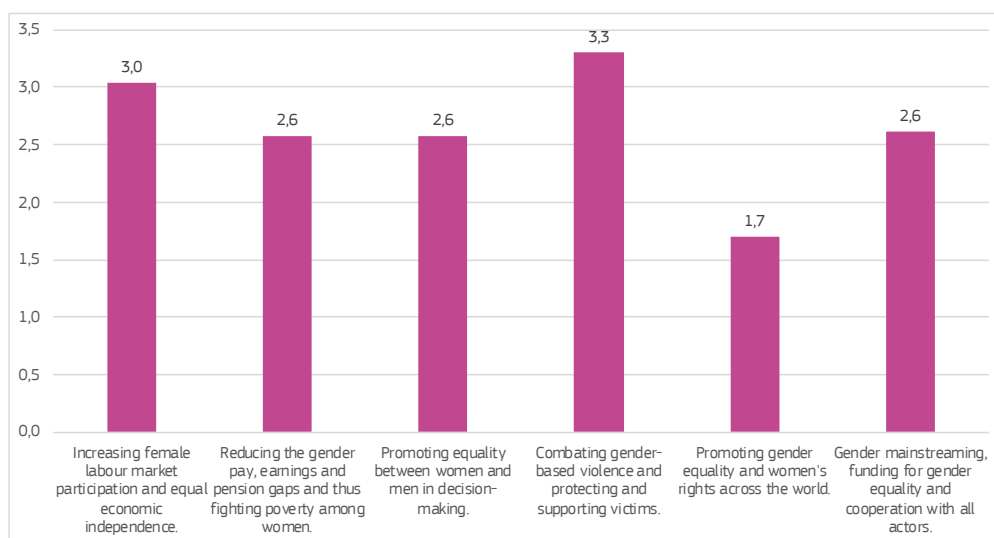
The **joint declaration of the informal meeting of gender equality ministers in 2018 calling for a high-level and stand-alone EU gender equality strategy** and the demand to the Commission by the 2018 Presidency Conclusions to **adopt a Communication setting out an EU gender equality strategy for the period post-2019** can be viewed as an important result of the work done in the framework of SEGE.

The effectiveness of the work of the Inter-Service Group could not be assessed, since the Commission has not issued a **report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission**. Such a report could have assessed the work of the ISG and the state of play of gender mainstreaming within the Commission, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. This would be an important gap to address.

4.2.7 Concluding remarks

Overall, progress towards objectives in the Member States is considered in the medium range by SAAGE experts, with an average score across all Member States and all thematic areas of 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 5. There are differences across thematic areas, although these are not wide. Combating gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims has made the highest progress in the Member States, followed by increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence. In contrast, the area of promoting gender equality and women’s rights across the world appears as the least developed thematic area.

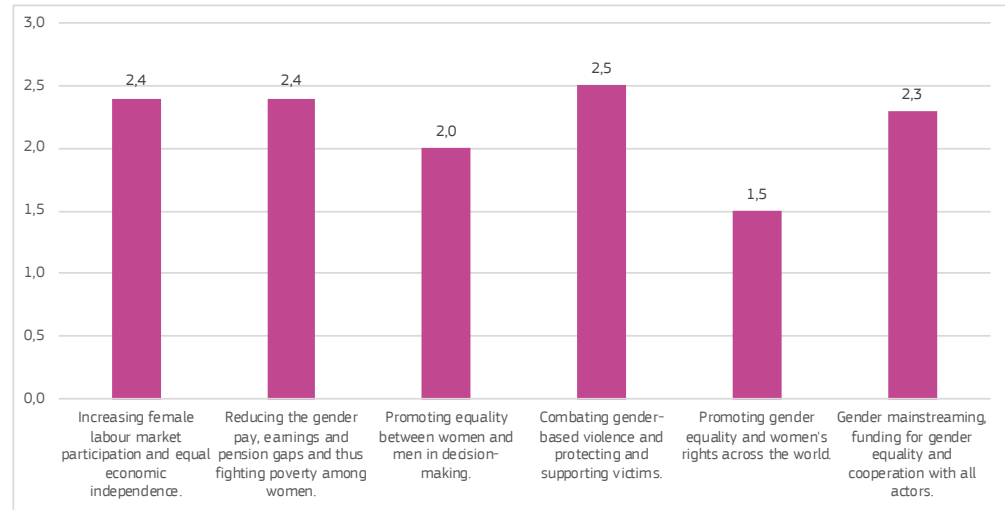
Figure 2. Level of progress on SEGE thematic areas (Member States’ average), (1 to 5 scale)



Source: Survey of SAAGE experts.

The **specific contribution of SEGE to the progress shown above obtains a score of 2.2** on a 1 to 5 range, a medium to low level of contribution. Differences can be observed between the thematic areas, although these are not wide. Combating gender-based violence obtained the highest score and promoting gender equality and women's rights across the world obtained the lowest. A clear relationship between the advancement of thematic areas and the contribution of SEGE however cannot be observed.

Figure 3. Specific contribution of SEGE to progress on objectives (Member States' average), (1 to 5 scale)



Source: Survey of SAAGE experts.

4.3 Analysis of the added value of SEGE

4.3.1 Added value of SEGE at EU level

The main added value for SEGE identified at the EU level has been its role as a framework for gender policies. SEGE brings together a wide array of gender equality objectives and actions across several fields, providing vision for and direction to gender policies in the EU. This gives structure to and emphasis on gender equality policies. SEGE enables dissemination of EU work on gender equality through the publication of the annual reports on equality between women and men in the EU. SEGE highlights the multidimensionality of gender equality issues and how different problems, or thematic areas, are interrelated.

4.3.2 Added value at Member State level

The European added value of SEGE can be analysed in terms of volume, scope, role and process effects.

4.3.2.1 Volume effects

Volume effects refer to how SEGE adds to existing action, either by supporting national action in general ('mirroring') or in specific areas of national policy ('boosting'). Overall, in 2015–2019, significant funds have been dedicated to gender equality actions identified in SEGE, including about EUR 6.2 billion of ESIF. However, given the

lack of evidence on the role played by SEGE in this respect, the volume of effect of SEGE cannot automatically be considered high. This may be related to the lack of visibility for this investment and to the lack of visibility for the quantitative impact, in terms of beneficiaries, from this funding.

4.3.2.2 *Scope effects*

Scope effects refer to how SEGE broadens existing actions by supporting groups or policy areas that would otherwise not have received support. SEGE has had a scope effect on the expansion of national policies in some Member States in areas such as parental leave, pensions, the gender pay gap or gender-based violence, which would otherwise not have or would hardly have received support.

SEGE has had a regulatory impact on Member States. A number of legislative measures at the Member States level are directly linked to SEGE. Even in countries where the link between SEGE and actions at the national level is not explicit, the actions often correspond to policy ideas promoted by SEGE, which suggests that this agenda-setting role has been more intense in practice than perceived.

In particular, the proposal for a Directive on work-life balance inspired considerable changes in the regime of parental leaves in several Member States, already before its adoption in 2019. The Recommendation for strengthening the principle of equal pay (Recommendation C(2014) 1405 final), although adopted before SEGE, has been followed and further developed by the Commission over the years, keeping it on the agenda and inspiring legislation in a number of Member States. The debate on a women's quota for corporate boards has had a significant impact on the legislative process in some Member States.

SEGE has drawn attention to issues such as the gender pension gap, parental leaves or gender violence. SEGE has helped to raise awareness and increase the visibility of problems both in general terms and in specific issues such as the debate on a women's quota for corporate boards. The annual reports on equality between women and men in the EU, which compare and contrast countries, have led to more awareness and steered government action.

As was the case for previous presidencies, SEGE proved to be a useful instrument for the Austrian EU presidency in 2018 to set out specific actions and meetings during its Presidency.

4.3.2.3 *Role effects*

SEGE has legitimised the implementation of gender equality policies in contexts where this issue has a low salience. It has also promoted the adoption of tools and methodologies in Member States, such as gender budgeting and gender impact assessment. Role effects also refer to the ways in which SEGE supports policies that are taken up at other administrative levels or that are mainstreamed. In some Member States, SEGE has prompted methodologies and action plans, created at the central level, to be implemented at the local and regional levels. It has influenced local governments which are responsible, for example, for gender violence policies in some countries.

4.3.2.4 *Process effects*

Process effects refer to how SEGE influences the way Member States administrations and organisations involved in the programmes promoted by SEGE operate. SEGE has provided the basis for cooperation between the Commission, the other

European institutions, Member States and stakeholders. SEGE has promoted the co-ordination of gender equality policies, though to a limited extent. It has supported the involvement of actors such as NGOs in the process through ESF funding. SEGE has, in general, created space for deliberation on varied topics concerning gender equality in the Member States.

4.3.3 Concluding remarks

The main added value of SEGE identified at the Member States level has been its agenda-setting role, increasing the scope of gender-based policymaking in Member States. SEGE is viewed as initiating and supporting policy changes at the Member State level for the benefit of gender quality. EU monitoring and publishing results on gender equality targets, such as the Barcelona targets, have had an impact on national policies. The Country-Specific Recommendations under the European semester have played a similar role, including in the field of childcare

5. The role of EU funding for gender equality: current programming period 2014–2020

European funding programmes are a **key instrument for SEGE** to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The budgetary allocation of SEGE is thus distributed through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs), in particular the ESF and ERDF, and other programmes, such as REC, Horizon 2020, EaSI and AMIF. The difference between the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF 2014–2020) and the SEGE period (2016–2019) is worth noting, particularly as the MFF preceded SEGE in its formulation, meaning that the funding framework and amounts were already set when SEGE was adopted.

5.1 European Structural and Investment Funds

The European Parliament has pointed out that ‘the ESI Funds constitutes the most important financial support for the implementation of gender equality policy in the EU’.⁷² In the period 2014–2020, EUR 6.2 billion was programmed for measures promoting gender equality through ESIFs.⁷³ As specified in the Common Provisions Regulation, ‘The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective are taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including in relation to monitoring, reporting and evaluation’.⁷⁴

The **European Social Fund** is especially relevant for gender equality. The promotion of gender equality in the current programming period is both a horizontal principle and is directly addressed under one of its investment priorities. Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 on the European Social Fund includes a focus on relevant gender issues, such as the economic independence of women, education and skills upgrad-

72 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0075_EN.html.

73 European Commission (2015).

74 Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320–469. Art.7. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R1303>.

ing and the reintegration of female victims of violence into the labour market and into society. It makes gender mainstreaming a compulsory part of all phases of programmes and projects financed by the ESF, including preparation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. This involves the use of gender-disaggregated indicators in the monitoring and evaluation of the Operational Programmes. However, in spite of these efforts, **a systematic method for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the ESI Funds has not yet been established** nor have targeted actions been linked to an overall gender mainstreaming strategy.⁷⁵

For the 2014–2020 period, approximately EUR 4.6 billion was programmed for gender equality within the ESF. Of this amount, EUR 1.6 billion was allocated to the Investment Priority ‘equality between men and women’ (IP 8iv). This Investment Priority mainly supports the provision of quality childcare, individual guidance for women, vocational training, arrangements at the workplace to reconcile work and private life, development of tools and instruments, awareness-raising programmes for employers, change management in organisations, and financial incentives. This Investment Priority was chosen by 12 Member States (Austria, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and United Kingdom).⁷⁶ IP 9.iii includes actions of training of key actors for the prevention and combating of discrimination, domestic violence, gender violence and human trafficking.

There are no mid-term evaluations yet of ESI Funds in 2014–2020. The ESF synthesis of Annual Implementation Reports of 2017, submitted in 2018⁷⁷ (the most recent to date), provides some useful insights. At the EU level, participants are well balanced from a gender perspective, with an equal share of women and men reached by the interventions, although with noticeable differences among Member States. For example, in Greece, 82 % of participants are women, while in Germany, it was 41 %. The ESF, from other evaluations, has improved the capacities of many stakeholders involved in the previous programming periods, and in 2014–2020 has led to structural reforms, making gender mainstreaming and gender equality a more relevant topic in national policies.⁷⁸

Estimations based on financial data available in the Open Cohesion database show that **almost all ESF measures have the potential to affect gender equality (92 %)**, and that a significant share of ERDF measures could directly or indirectly affect gender equality (55.3 %). However, decisions taken by regions and Member States in their programming and implementation strategies, as well as their capacity to implement interventions that take the gender dimension into account, make a key difference to the extent to which these allocations support interventions promoting gender equality. Clear guidelines and support to maintain attention to gender equality and overcome the limitations found in the EU Cohesion Policy have been recommended.⁷⁹

At the national level, concrete examples have been found regarding ESF contributions to SEGE’s objectives. In the United Kingdom, for example, the ESF has had an

75 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0075_EN.html.

76 European Commission (2015).

77 European Commission (2017f).

78 European Commission (2018i).

79 European Parliament. REGI Committee (2018).

impact in the reduction of the gender gaps in employment. It has increased the skill levels of employed women, encouraging their progression in employment and thus helped address the gender employment and wage gap.⁸⁰

The ESF often acts together with the other ESIFs, such as the ERDF or the EAFRD. **The cooperation among these three ESIFs has been especially relevant in the field of ECEC**, to address the lack of available places, issue of affordability, the lack of quality services, improving parents' trust in these services, and promoting the participation of children from particular socioeconomic groups or in certain areas of the country, such as rural areas.⁸¹

The Commission's proposal for a regulation of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)⁸² includes a specific objective of 'promoting women's labour market participation, a better work/life balance including access to childcare, a healthy and well-adapted working environment addressing health risks, adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change, and active and healthy ageing'. Moreover, the ESF+ restates gender equality as one of its principles and proposes gender-disaggregated data across its indicators.

The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** has an important role in the promotion of gender equality principles in several intervention areas (European Commission 2018).⁸³ ERDF funding contributes to the achievement of SEGE's objectives in supporting investment in childcare, caring for older people, and other public and private social infrastructure. This investment has been particularly relevant considering that these services faced cuts in public funding at the national, regional and local level.⁸⁴ Approximately EUR 1.25 billion was programmed for investment in childcare infrastructure for the 2014–2020 period.⁸⁵ ERDF has also supported the mainstreaming of gender equality with specific measures and contributed to the reduction of gender segregation in occupations and sectors.⁸⁶ In Hungary, for example, the ERDF contributed to make working environments more family friendly, in Germany it promoted the presence of women in engineering and ITC sectors, and in Latvia it promoted gender balance in the healthcare sector.

The ERDF involves relevant bodies responsible for promoting gender equality and non-discrimination in its management: representatives of gender equality bodies and women's associations are involved in the Monitoring Committees and project selection procedures. Project selection criteria take gender equality into account. Gender equality and ethnicity were referred to in 65 % of OPs.⁸⁷ However, mainstreaming equal opportunities and gender equality principles into all ERDF intervention areas is still perceived as very difficult or difficult by almost 30 % of Managing

80 UK Government. Department for Work and Pensions (2018). 'European Social Fund impact evaluation: research design and scoping study'.

81 European Commission (2019b).

82 European Commission. Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+). COM(2018)382 final. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A0382%3AFIN>.

83 European Commission (2018a).

84 European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)).

85 European Commission (2015b).

86 European Commission (2018a).

87 Ibid.

Authorities. As a result, little attention is being paid to the specific needs of women in the intervention design. Measures supporting female entrepreneurship, for example, are often not designed with attention to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs. Difficulties have also been found tracking the gender impact of ERDF-funded measures. This lack of focus reduces the effectiveness of ERDF-funded actions with respect to gender equality⁸⁸.

The **European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development** (EAFRD) has also been relevant to ensure the necessary funding to support public services and social infrastructure in rural areas and promoting access to land and investment for women.⁸⁹

5.2 Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme

Launched in 2014, the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) Programme aims at further developing a Europe of rights and equality in accordance with the Europe 2020 Strategy. Funding is delivered to NGOs, public authorities and other organisations for activities that further REC's aims.⁹⁰ The REC Programme has nine specific objectives, including 'Promote equality between women and men and to advance gender mainstreaming' and 'Prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women, and other groups at risk'. These two objectives account for around 35 % of the REC funds. The overall budget for gender equality in the area of fundamental rights, equality and citizenship via REC 2014–2020 is EUR 439.5 million.

The following priorities are addressed under the objective to 'Promote equality between women and men and to advance gender mainstreaming': equal economic independence of women and men and work-life balance (44 % of resources earmarked); promoting good practices regarding gender roles and overcoming gender stereotypes in education and training and in the workplace (44 % of resources) and support for EU-level networks on gender equality themes (12 %).⁹¹

REC has funded projects to promote good practices on combating stereotypes and segregation in the labour market; to incentivise equal participation of women and men in public forums, in leadership positions in politics and in the corporate sector; and to support public authorities and civil society in relation to the 'New Start to Support Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers' initiative which are all relevant to SEGE's objectives. REC has funded projects addressing gender gaps over the life cycle, which should help Member States analyse existing gender gaps and develop effective measures to tackle them, in particular the gender gap in pensions.⁹² These projects are oriented to national authorities and bodies responsible

88 Ibid.

89 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017IP0075>.

90 Right by your side. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bfbdb566-db37-4eff-85c2-b68b0b223b19>. See also: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/rec>.

91 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017IP0075>. See also European Commission (2018f).

92 European Commission (2019b); European Commission. Commission implementing decision of

for gender equality.

The **Daphne strand of the REC has funded a variety of projects aimed at preventing violence and providing meaningful support to its victims**. REC finances projects which help to protect and support victims of violence, such as women and children, activities to raise awareness and prevent violence, and support the treatment of perpetrators of violence. The majority of resources have been earmarked for fighting and preventing violence linked to harmful practices (39 % of resources) and for supporting victims of gender-based violence, domestic violence or violence in an intimate relationship provided by specialised support services aimed at women (24 %)⁹³. Some of these projects focus on ‘primary prevention’, such as changing social attitudes and behaviours to end tolerance of all forms of violence.

This contribution of REC to SEGE’s objectives is, however, according to the results of the interim evaluation, only moderate due to the limited budget allocated to the Programme.

The Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme and Europe for Citizens programme, will be replaced as of 2021 by the Rights and Values programme, which is part of the Justice, Rights and Values Fund. This new fund has been allocated EUR 841.3 million and comprises two programmes: the Justice programme (promoting a European justice area and cross-border cooperation), and the Rights and Values programme (to promote rights, values and equality). Under the programme Rights and Values, endowed with EUR 641 705 000, the equality and rights strand will dedicate a substantial amount to gender equality, focusing on preventing and combating inequalities and discrimination. This strand includes gender and the promotion of gender mainstreaming. Under the same programme, the Daphne strand will continue its focus on preventing and combating violence and supporting and protecting victims.

5.3 Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

Horizon 2020 has been programmed as ‘the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever’.⁹⁴ **Gender equality is promoted in three ways under Horizon 2020.**⁹⁵

- Gender balance in advisory groups (50 % target) and evaluation panels (40 %) — data will be published in Horizon 2020 monitoring reports.
- Grant beneficiaries are encouraged to aim at gender balance and equal opportunities in research teams engaged in projects.
- Gender dimension in research content (i.e. taking account of women’s and men’s biological characteristics and social/cultural factors).

30.10.2017 modifying the Commission Implementing Decision C(2017), adopting DG Justice’s annual work programme for the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) programme serving as a financing decision for 2017. C(2017) 7154 final. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/files/rec_2017_p1_modification/c_2017_7156_f1_commission_implementing_decision_en_v2_p1_949521_en.pdf.

93 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017IP0075>. See also European Commission (2018f).

94 European Commission (2014b).

95 European Commission (2015b).

Horizon 2020 mainstreams gender equality and the gender dimension in research as a cross-cutting issue in each of the different parts of the work programme. The programme includes three mainstreaming objectives: to foster equal opportunities and gender balance in project teams; to ensure gender balance in decision-making in research organisations; and to integrate the gender dimension into research content. Gender mainstreaming is backed up with resources for its implementation. Applicants have the opportunity to include training and specific studies on gender as eligible costs in their proposals and grants are offered for ‘Support to research organisations to implement gender equality plans’ and for ‘Promoting Gender Equality in Horizon 2020 and the European Research Area’. Gender issues are considered as ranking factors in the evaluation criteria for proposals, such as gender balance in staffing or the way in which sex and/or gender analysis is taken into account⁹⁶.

Several Horizon 2020 projects launched in 2018 contributed to the support of gender equality in research and innovation, such as the ‘European Community of Practice to support institutional change – ACT’ with a budget of almost EUR 3 million. Another example is the knowledge-sharing and policy-building cluster event⁹⁷ on gender equality plans, co-organised by DG RTD and the Research Executive Agency in February 2018, for all gender equality plan projects funded to date under Horizon 2020 and the 7th Framework Programme⁹⁸.

The interim assessment of Horizon 2020⁹⁹ shows that progress has been made in promoting gender equality. Gender balance in decision-making is close to being achieved with 53 % of women in advisory groups and 36.7 % in evaluation panels. 6 022 experts declared having gender expertise in 2016 (3 904 women and 2 118 men). The number of gender-flagged topics has increased. However, although progress has been made, data quality concerns remain and there are still monitoring problems.

The Horizon Europe¹⁰⁰ proposal follows on from Horizon 2020. Horizon Europe should ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and a gender perspective in its research and innovation content, as one of its stated aims is the elimination of gender inequalities and promotion of equality between women and men in research and innovation.

5.4 Programme for Employment and Social Innovation

The Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme aims to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working

96 European Parliament. European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2017 on EU funds for gender equality (2016/2144(INI)). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52017IP0075>. See also European Commission (2018f).

97 Gender Cluster Event: main highlights available at: <http://www.plotina.eu/2018/05/07/gender-cluster-event-main-highlights/>.

98 Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020: 16. Science with and for Society. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-swfs_en.pdf.

99 European Commission (2017b).

100 European Commission. Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination. Available at: [COM/2018/435 final https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:435:FIN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:435:FIN).

conditions.¹⁰¹ As per its regulation, EaSI contributes to ‘the promotion of equality between women and men in all its axes and activities, including through gender mainstreaming and, where relevant, through specific action to promote women’s employment and social inclusion’. The General objectives of the Programme (Article 4) include ‘to promote equality between women and men, including through gender mainstreaming and, where appropriate, gender budgeting’, and ‘to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’.¹⁰²

This has been reflected in several projects. For example, in 2018, the European Commission allocated EUR 4.24 million for social innovation projects related to work-life balance strategies.¹⁰³ The selected projects aimed to develop, test and implement innovative work-life balance strategies in the workplace¹⁰⁴. The relevance of EaSi for gender equality appears, however, to be limited, as stated in the mid-term evaluation.¹⁰⁵

5.5 Asylum Migration and Integration Fund

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) was set up for the period 2014–2020 with EUR 3.1 billion, with the general objective of promoting an ‘efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common Union approach to asylum and immigration’. AMIF includes gender mainstreaming among its founding principles. It has funded projects relevant to SEGE’s objectives through its requests for proposals, such as the integration of migrant women, or the integration of relocated and resettled persons with a focus on vulnerable groups, including women and children. AMIF has funded projects to promote fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals, with specific criteria favouring women.

The Interim Evaluation of AMIF noted that living in reception centres can sometimes involve a high risk of sex and gender-based violence.¹⁰⁶ Ten Member States (Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Sweden and Slovenia) identified the need to further strengthen reception structures for vulnerable target groups, especially unaccompanied minors, women and victims of violence and trafficking.¹⁰⁷ In Ireland vulnerability of women to sexual exploitation in asylum reception centres has been highlighted by civil society organisations.

101 See: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>.

102 Regulation (EU) No 1296/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (‘EaSI’) and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for Employment and Social inclusion. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1296>.

103 See EaSI-PROGRESS - Innovative work-life balance strategies to facilitate reconciliation of professional and caring responsibilities: Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&angId=en&callId=525&furtherCalls=yes>.

104 European Commission (2019b).

105 European Commission (2017c).

106 Keygnaert, I. et al. (2014).

107 European Commission (2018e).

5.6 Concluding remarks

EU funding instruments promote gender equality through a wide array of actions relevant for SEGE, based on a significant focus on gender equality in governing regulations and management structures. This has a potential to be an effective approach to mobilising resources behind the objectives of SEGE. There is clear evidence that, to an extent, this potential is being realised. This would need to be continued into and strengthened under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027.

The evaluations of the various European funding programmes reviewed, however, raise some issues:

- **A systematic method for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within all the ESI Funds has not yet been established.** In particular, mainstreaming equal opportunities and gender equality principles into all ERDF intervention areas is still perceived as very difficult or difficult by almost 30 % of Managing Authorities.
- Difficulties have also been found **tracking the gender impact of ERDF-funded measures** and there are challenges of **gender-disaggregated analysis**.
- The decisions and the capacities at Member States level and within Member States in programming and implementation make a key difference to the final support for gender equality. There is a **need to continue to provide clear guidelines and support** to sustain effective attention on gender equality.
- The impact on gender equality of the REC programme has been only moderate, despite valuable focus, due to the limited amount of resources available to the programme.
- While significant progress has been made on gender equality under Horizon 2020, **data quality concerns** remain and there are still monitoring problems.
- The relevance of the EaSi programme for gender equality appears to be limited, as stated in the mid-term evaluation.
- Under AMIF, there is a need to further **strengthen refugee reception structures** for vulnerable target groups, including women or victims of violence and trafficking.

6. Strengths and weaknesses

A number of strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019 can be identified.

6.1 Strengths

- **SEGE plays a role in framing policies**

SEGE has created a framework that groups actions into different thematic areas, and thereby frames policies for gender equality in an ‘umbrella document’. The continuation from previous gender equality strategies has provided vision and direction to gender equality policies, building a long-term perspective, especially given the continuity with the previous strategy in 2010–2015.

- **SEGE underpins a holistic and multidimensional approach to gender equality**

SEGE involves five interrelated thematic areas and is underpinned by a sixth transversal area. This enables a holistic approach in seeking a comprehensive focus on gender equality and provides for a multidimensional approach of interrelated mutually reinforcing areas of action.

- **SEGE has a strong intervention logic**

SEGE makes use of a variety of instruments, relevant to advancing stated specific and intermediate objectives, that overall underpin a strong intervention logic. These instruments have the potential to be mutually reinforcing. Regulatory actions, for example, are complemented with policy measures and their implementation supported with funding. Coordination with stakeholders contributes to strengthen their capacity and enable policy measures and implementation of regulatory actions.

- **SEGE can enable access to funding**

Funding is one key instrument for SEGE to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in a number of key policy areas. This, in effect, establishes a significant budgetary allocation for the pursuit of SEGE objectives over the funding period 2014–2020. This is enabled by the promotion of gender equality in the current programming period being both a horizontal principle and directly addressed through targeted measures in the individual programmes.

- **SEGE can draw on the infrastructure of the Gender Equality Unit and, more widely, the Inter-Service Group**

The Gender Equality Unit of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers actively involves and engages stakeholders and furthers progress on all actions under SEGE. A well-staffed and resourced unit has been central to delivering the quality work required for SEGE to succeed. The multidimensional nature of SEGE requires

coordination across different policy areas. The Inter-Service Group offers a valuable space to drive the mainstreaming of gender equality across the various policy domains of the European Commission in a coordinated manner.

- **Monitoring and reporting system of SEGE**

SEGE includes a system of indicators, aligned with intermediate and specific objectives, which serves for monitoring the evolution of the actual situation in the EU along several variables relevant for gender equality and SEGE's thematic areas. While there are limitations, this system of indicators is one key feature of SEGE's framing role. Annual reports on equality between women and men in the EU contribute to assess progress and prompt debate at the EU level.

- **SEGE gives practical expression to EU values and asserts gender equality as a shared concern for the EU**

SEGE provides an important marker and standard in a context of backlash both in Europe and beyond. It is positive that the EU shows consensus on these policies and it enhances the potential of the EU to make a difference in other countries where the situation of women can be critical.

- **SEGE objectives and actions demonstrate a strong relevance to need, issues and problems present**

The evaluation conducted of the final objective, thematic areas, transversal area and their specific objectives, as well as of the actions proposed, leads to the conclusion that they all are highly relevant. The objectives and actions cover a wide range of issues that are important for gender equality.

- **SEGE has delivered valuable outputs and realised key achievements**

The most striking outputs of SEGE are the Directive on work-Life balance and the Action Plan to tackle the gender pay gap (with the notable absence of the public sector). The implementation up to 2017 of the GAP II by the EEAS is another success. During the implementation period of SEGE the first Barcelona target was achieved at EU level, and although it was adopted before SEGE, SEGE did contribute to this achievement by monitoring the target and keeping it on the EU agenda during the period. The advancements in participation of women in decision-making posts, including in the political sphere, also constituted an important success. SEGE has furthermore contributed to enhancing the gender dimension of other strategies of the European Commission, such as the European Semester under the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Social Pillar. SEGE has shaped gender-relevant policies at the Member States level.

A number of the outstanding outputs are emerging, understandably, towards the end of SEGE. It will be important to analyse their results, draw lessons from their implementation, and develop further action to build on their potential.

6.2 Weaknesses

- **The status of SEGE as a Staff Working Document**

The low status of SEGE as a Staff Working Document (SWD), implying a political downgrade with respect to the previous strategy, has limited the support to and interest in SEGE by stakeholders. This has been noted by the Parliament and the

Council.¹⁰⁸ Since there are an abundant number of strategies in different fields at the EU level, the status of SEGE as a SWD raises concerns about the low priority given to gender issues by the European Commission. This may have limited its impact, since a SWD does not give the credibility needed to prompt action.

- **Limited knowledge of SEGE**

SEGE has not been as well known among stakeholders nor among a wider audience as might have been expected from an EU gender strategy. This is probably a result of its SWD status and of a low-profile communication strategy, which has involved a limited dissemination among stakeholders. Interestingly and importantly, in spite of limited knowledge of SEGE, many of its main outputs, such as the Directive on work-life balance and the Action Plan against gender pay gap, are well known.

- **Vague definition of objectives and actions, and absence of concrete targets**

The wording of some specific objectives and of particular actions in SEGE is vague. This can impede a correct understanding of the activity proposed and its purpose, possibly limiting SEGE's capacity to effectively achieve its objectives. Although SEGE's objectives are related to statistical indicators, these are not always linked to concrete targets. The absence of concrete targets not only limits the understanding of the objectives but also their credibility.

- **Challenges associated with deploying funding programmes**

While access to funding programmes is an important strength of SEGE, it carries some challenges. These include, in particular, the lack of a systematic method for implementing gender mainstreaming across all funding programmes; the sometimes-limited capacity of regions and Member States to mainstream equal opportunities and gender equality principles into their interventions without adequate support and guidance; the limited budget allocated to key funding programmes with significant potential; and data quality concerns leading to difficulties in tracking the gender impact of funded measures.

- **Limited coordination with the European Semester**

The relationship of SEGE with the European Semester, though important, has been limited. The gender equality unit of DG JUST has participated in the European Semester and Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) relevant for SEGE's objectives have been issued. SEGE integrates the employment target of 75 % of the Europe 2020 Strategy, disaggregating it by sex and aiming at closing the employment gap by 2020. However, the annual country reports issued in this context reflect a limited analysis of the gender situation and the gender impact of some policy measures; the number of CSRs related to gender issues is limited, and many countries do not receive any recommendations; and the Social Scoreboard of Indicators and the rest of the indicators used to assess progress in Member States towards the Europe 2020 objectives only include gender concerns to a limited extent. This coordination could be enhanced to allow better gender mainstreaming of the post-2020 mechanism, by, for instance, defining gender-sensitive objectives and sex-disaggregated targets in the upcoming post-Europe 2020 Strategy.

108 European Parliament (2018b); European Parliament. Text adopted, single reading 2016/2526(RSP) - 03/02/2016. Available at: <https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/summary.do?id=1422591&t=d&l=en>.

- **Lack of focus on cultural change values and gender stereotypes**

Challenges related to cultural change and their potential impacts on women and gender equality are not adequately addressed by SEGE. Gender stereotypes are addressed in an inconsistent and fragmented way, focused on care responsibilities and barely linked to sexual harassment, violence against women, or access to decision-making positions. Although projects funded by REC on combating stereotypes and segregation are effective, their scale might not be adequate. Patriarchal culture has always been an issue, but the need for this focus has intensified with the onset of a backlash against gender equality and women's rights.

- **Limited effectiveness of awareness-raising campaigns**

As the results of the Eurobarometers on work-life balance, violence against women and gender equality show, awareness-raising actions are insufficiently developed in quantitative and qualitative terms for the cultural change intended to be achieved. The goal of cultural change is complex, rooted in the engagement of values, and demands a new generation of awareness-raising activities that evidence a new approach and a new capacity to engage values and achieve cultural change.

- **Inadequate attention to some policy issues**

The quality of employment that women have access to, in particular lower-educated women and women with multiple forms of discrimination, receives little or no attention in SEGE. Increasing labour market precariousness and its potential impacts on women are not adequately addressed.

While there has been valuable knowledge development and focus on the gender pension gap, actions to address the issue have been limited. The actions to address the causes and consequences of the gender pension gap have focused on the elaboration of the Pension Adequacy Report. The 2018 Report provides a valuable foundation to build on in this area.

The elimination of sexual harassment in the workplace has received limited attention under SEGE. However, given the increasing attention to this issue, further action could have been expected.

Funding is crucial to support advancement towards the Barcelona targets. However, as evidenced by the non-attainment of the targets by many countries, it may not have been sufficient. The Barcelona targets have not become more ambitious nor have they been extended to cover care of other dependants, a possibility raised in SEGE.

Promotion of networking by women entrepreneurs is useful for information and mutual support. However, this is clearly insufficient to reverse the current European situation. A specific action plan for female entrepreneurship or stronger gender mainstreaming of the current Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan could be more effective.

- **Inadequate attention paid to intersectionality**

Although intersectionality has been considered in SEGE, including groups such as migrants or single parents, other intersectional groups, such as women with disabilities, LBTQI women or women with low education, have not been included in a similar manner. A limited understanding of intersectionality is evident and there have been a limited number of specific measures to address the specific needs of marginalised minority groups.

- **Insufficient focus on the choices made and the influences on choices by men**

One of SEGE's achievements has been to promote legislative changes across Member States to expand paternity leaves. However, beyond this right, there is a need for initiatives for men to actually use their entitlements to care leave. Gender segregation in employment offers another example of this, and needs particular initiatives to encourage men's employment in female-dominated sectors, such as care, education and health.

- **Gender mainstreaming**

A report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission, raised as a possibility in SEGE, has not been published. Presumably, the report would have assessed the work of the ISG and the state of play of gender mainstreaming within the Commission, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. This would be an important gap to address.

7. Societal changes with potential implications for progressing gender equality

This chapter draws from the evaluation findings to briefly examine key dimensions of social changes identified that are likely to have an impact on prospects for gender equality. The trends analysed are: ageing of the population, migration, climate change, digitalisation, labour market precariousness, the backlash against gender equality policies, and new multidimensional development paradigms. The gender dimension of these trends, such as migration and climate change,¹⁰⁹ demographic and technological changes,¹¹⁰ and the backlash against gender equality policies,¹¹¹ has received some attention. All pose challenges, open opportunities and suggest directions for any new framework for gender equality.

7.1 Ageing of the population

The life expectancy of Europeans has been increasing and, simultaneously, birth rates have been declining over recent decades. Both factors contribute to an increase in the share of persons aged over 65 within the whole population. The European Environment Agency estimates different scenarios for 2050 regarding the share of persons over 65 years ranging between 32.9 % and 27.1 %, compared to 19.2 % in 2015¹¹² in the EU-28.

Persons will have on average longer and healthier lives, especially women, given their longer life expectancy compared to men. Given the **gender pension gap**, this raises concerns about female poverty among the older population. Similarly, an ageing population will also increase the number of persons with disabilities in Europe. The longer life expectancy of women makes it likely that the number of women with disabilities will increase at higher rates than that of men.¹¹³

An ageing population will increase the **demand for long-term care, household and healthcare services**. If formal care services remain underdeveloped and/or unaffordable, women's labour market participation might be affected as they could

109 European Investment Bank Group (2016).

110 European Parliament (2018b).

111 European Parliament FEMM Committee (2018).

112 See: European Environment Agency (2016). Population trends 1950–2100: globally and within Europe. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/total-population-outlook-from-unstat-3/assessment-1>.

113 European Economic and Social Committee (2018).

be obliged to become the main caregivers to parents and frail relatives as they age, in the absence of these services.¹¹⁴ However, the changing attitudes of younger generations towards gender roles and stereotypes as well as their career choices could counterbalance this. The reduction of birth rates implies that families are having a lower number of children, which means a higher share of families with a single child or two children, and thus, a higher share of families with no daughters, which would increase the number of men as informal carers.

Population ageing increases the relevance of developing care services for older people. Yet funding for care policies has recently been reduced under austerity policies, heightening the need to increase social spending on care policies, such as social care, mental care and the care of older people. This will be central to the pursuit of gender equality, given the gender dimension of care.

7.2 Migration

Migration can compensate some effects of population ageing. It increases the share of younger people in the population. However, migration prospects are more difficult to forecast than those of ageing. Migration flows can quickly change as a result of economic crisis, migration policies, political conflicts or wars. Still, economic and demographic asymmetries across countries are likely to remain in the coming decades, continuing to act as important drivers of international migration.¹¹⁵ Migration has several implications for gender.

According to UN projections, net migration is projected to account for 82 % of population growth in high-income countries between 2015 and 2050. Migration can compensate the repercussions of an ageing population on the labour market participation of women. Migrant employment, particularly **migrant women's employment, in the sector of care of older people** is already considerable.

Many migrant women will need support to overcome the **barriers to fully participate** in society and in the labour market, such as language and skills training. Predominant cultural values in the countries of origin of migrant population in Europe are often closer to so-called traditional values that stand in contrast to gender equality. Thus, an increase in the share of the migrant population could increase support for these values in the society as a whole, unless this is addressed.

The **social and political reaction to migration flows**, particularly perceptions of migration flows as a threat, is used to get social and political support for radical nationalist movements and shape political agendas as a whole. These movements also usually defend values that reject gender equality policies. They are often proponents of a shift of competences from the EU to Member States, or they even call for an exit from the EU.

Refugee flows are not easy to predict, as they are linked to war, ethnic and political conflict. Living in refugee camps can involve a high risk of sex and gender-based violence.¹¹⁶ Refugee women often do not have separate facilities or services in refugee camps, such as sleeping and sanitation facilities, including toilets and show-

114 European Commission (2018h); Gabriele, S., Tanda P. and Tediosi F. (2011); European Commission (2013).

115 UN (2015).

116 Keygnaert, I. et al. (2014).

ers, and specific healthcare services, including prenatal and postnatal care. Women interpreters, who could enable women to speak by themselves with refugee camp workers without the presence of a man, are often not available.

7.3 Climate change

Climate change is a complex phenomenon that is likely to have an impact on the living conditions of people as a result of the increase in the intensity and frequency of disasters induced by natural hazards, such as droughts, intense rainfall, snow avalanches and dust storms, with significant variance across geographies and demographics.¹¹⁷ The effects of climate change are likely to more severely affect the poorest and most marginalised segments of society, including vulnerable women¹¹⁸. There is a general lack of research on sex and gender differences in terms of vulnerability to the impact of climate change, especially about health-related impacts.¹¹⁹

From the point of view of policy responses, particularly the process of greening of the economy, climate change points to the need for a transition towards a sustainable economy. This implies the **creation of green jobs**. Green jobs are expected to proliferate to a large extent in sectors with historically limited female representation, such as construction, manufacturing, engineering or energy.¹²⁰ It is already known that women are more likely than men to end up in low-paying jobs and they are more likely to suffer from low levels of employment security and limited social mobility¹²¹. It would be important that the shift towards green jobs includes a gender perspective and does not continue these phenomena.

Women and men are challenged to adapt their agricultural practices to changing climate conditions. Interventions to strengthen livelihoods and food security are more effective and efficient when gender-differentiated knowledge is acquired and properly understood.¹²² This principal will need to apply to the significant adaptations now required.

7.4 Digitalisation

The future of work is uncertain and there is no consensus on the future impacts of digitalisation. Debate often concentrates on the issue of ICT jobs. Yet, despite the growing demand for ICT specialists and digital profiles, the percentage of Europeans with ICT-related education is in decline for both genders. There are fewer women than men who are taking up ICT-related jobs and education. There is a decrease in women taking up ICT-related higher education when compared to 2011. Thus, there is a growing gap between men's and women's participation in the digital sector in education, career and entrepreneurship.¹²³ **There are four times more men than**

117 UNDP (2016).

118 UNDP (2016).

119 UNDP (2016).

120 ILO (2015).

121 ILO (2015).

122 FAO (2007). People-centred climate change adaptation: Integrating gender issues.

123 European Commission (2016d).

women in Europe with ICT-related studies and the share of men working in the digital sector is 3.1 times greater than the share of women. There is a decrease in participation and leadership and investment by women in the entrepreneurial digital sector, although female-owned start-ups are more likely to be successful. The Digital Education Action Plan¹²⁴ of the European Commission seeks to address this gender gap by encouraging girls and boys to take up ICT-related education and to adapt to the needs of the digital age.

Digitalisation of the economy goes beyond employment in ICT sectors and occupations related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The way digitalisation will shape the future is more about the way ICT will impact on the rest of the economy and society. Automation to date has mainly influenced sectors like agriculture and manufacturing, where the share of men in employment is high. In the future, however, automation is likely to spread across most sectors and occupations, including those with a higher share of women, such as the retail trade or food and beverage services. It is also expected that the number of jobs will grow in sectors with a higher share of women as well, such as business services, health, education and social services. From the gender perspective, therefore, the impact of digitalisation on employment is not clear and ‘women and men have just as much to gain and fear from new digital technologies’.¹²⁵ As mentioned in Acemoglu and Restrepo,¹²⁶ ‘the more powerful countervailing force against automation is the creation of new labour-intensive tasks, which reinstates labour in new activities and tends to increase the labour share to counterbalance the impact of automation’.

Digitalisation has and will have an impact on new forms of work, such as platform jobs or the so-called **gig economy**. There are data limitations concerning the number of workers in the gig economy in Europe and their gender composition, as this is not often considered in key labour statistics, such as the Labour Force Survey. A review of several estimates presented in the literature across different European and North American countries points to a higher share of men in the gig economy in most countries.¹²⁷ The development of employment in the gig economy must be closely followed and gender-disaggregated data is needed, including about the quality of the employment.

Any focus on digitalisation must note that **social networks are now key communication channels**, including for political discourse. There is growing concern that social networks tend to lead people to focus on opinions similar to their own, promoting a more polarised discourse. Digitalisation in this regard raises concerns about growing hate speech, against women but also against men, and about online or cyber violence¹²⁸.

Digitalisation may play a greater role in shaping our decisions, as individuals and as societies, supported by technologies such as **artificial intelligence (AI)**. AI often makes predictions or shapes decisions for individual cases based on the reality of already gendered thinking. For example, AI-guided actions to promote the employability of the unemployed might reproduce already existing gendered job patterns, if AI assigns unemployed men to male-dominated occupations and women to

124 See https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en.

125 OECD (2017).

126 Acemoglu and Restrepo (2018).

127 Hunt, A. and Samman, E. (2019).

128 Council of Europe (2016).

female-dominated occupations on the basis of the probability of a successful job placement.

7.5 Labour market precariousness

Precariousness in the labour market in Europe is increasing, influenced by several factors, including the aftermath of the financial crisis.¹²⁹ Women remain over-represented in traditionally precarious sectors and part-time employment.¹³⁰ **Insecure forms of work for women perpetuate gender inequalities.**¹³¹ Precariousness is likely to involve a dependency on the income of other persons, such as a partner or relatives. Precarious employment usually involves lower wages, which in the case of women implies increasing the gender pay gap. Precariousness has a long-term impact on women's pensions and contributes to increasing the gender pension gap. Precarious employment is more likely to damage women's health compared to men's.¹³²

The situation of precariousness in the employment of women with care responsibilities is particularly relevant. As shown by Hašková and Dudová¹³³ for Eastern EU countries, insecure jobs accepted by women with care responsibilities as a temporary strategy may turn into a trap, preventing them from finding a stable job in the future. This relationship between precariousness and maternity has the risk of affecting the professional careers of women in the long-term beyond temporary periods of precariousness. Precariousness affects young people more, but the economic crisis has extended the age range affected by precariousness to 25–34 years old.¹³⁴ This has important gender consequences as it overlaps with the core of the maternity age.

129 Eurofound (2018).

130 ILO (2012).

131 ITUC (2011).

132 Menéndez, Benach, Muntañer, Amable, and O'Campo (2007).

133 Hašková and Dudová (2016).

134 Bekker, Chung and Houwing (2013).

7.6 Backlash: cultural change, political contest and gender stereotypes

A **backlash against gender equality policies has emerged**. This backlash is quite heterogeneous in terms of its content across the EU, but tends to be based on traditional gender stereotypes. It ranges from reactive opposition to gender equality policies to the proactive promotion of a social transformation towards traditional values. Several emerging populist and far-right parties in various EU countries challenge or openly reject women's fundamental rights and their economic and social empowerment¹³⁵, in particular of the most vulnerable of women -trans women, lesbian and bisexual women, migrant women and Roma women. The backlash against gender equality policies often operates within broad political movements also shaped by nationalism, scepticism towards climate change, negative attitudes toward migration, and an anti-EU stance. It has become perhaps the most serious challenge to be addressed for progress to be made in gender equality. It has the potential to erode existing achievements, diminish protections against discrimination and block further progress¹³⁶. **This does not go uncontested** as there is a rise of the feminist movement, as well as the LGTBI and green movements, including political parties that reflect very different values, more akin to those espoused in the EU treaties.

On the other hand, in recent years, a cultural change has involved a lessening of gender stereotypes and a balancing of the perceptions of women and men with respect to, for instance: work-life balance obligations, choices and economic roles.¹³⁷ Backlash can be located within a broader cultural clash over the values that people believe should shape human development and interaction, and, more specifically, the European Union. It puts the cultural change witnessed at risk. The engagement of values within this cultural shift that underpin this backlash reflect a **polarisation in the European society** of the attitudes towards several issues, including gender equality. As mentioned above, it is of concern the way social networks are reducing interactions between persons with opinions different from their own, contributing to the polarisation of public opinion.¹³⁸

7.7 New multidimensional development paradigms

Emerging multidimensional development paradigms set a new framework for social, economic and cultural development that provide a vibrant context within which to rethink, act and progress gender equality. These new development paradigms include the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The ongoing European Semester process that started in 2011 adds to this trend as it monitors EU countries' efforts towards the multidimensional Europe 2020 targets on employment, research and development, climate change and energy, education, poverty and social exclusion.

These paradigms also make explicit reference to gender equality as a key dimension. Two of the 20 key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights

135 ETUC (2019).

136 European Parliament (2018b).

137 European Commission (2014a).

138 Dixon and Juan-Torres (2018).

concern gender equality and its monitoring scoreboard of indicators includes gender-related indicators. The European Semester provides a framework for the coordination of economic policies across the European Union. Under the Semester, the Commission monitors Member States' efforts towards reaching the Europe 2020 targets and issues CSRs – Country-Specific Recommendations – which also address gender equality-related problems. The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals is committed to gender mainstreaming and includes a specific goal dedicated to gender equality.

7.8 Concluding remarks

The societal changes described in this chapter have implications for gender equality that will need to be addressed or taken advantage of in any future framework for gender equality. New multidimensional development paradigms offer the potential for innovation in the pursuit of gender equality and the opportunity to include gender equality as a strand in recasting social, economic and cultural development from the very beginning of such a process. Ageing, migration, digitalisation and labour market precariousness all need to be seen through the perspective of gender and this needs to be understood and addressed if progress towards gender equality is not to be undermined. Backlash focuses attention on the cultural dimension of change and on the need to attend to cultural change if gender equality is to be progressed.

8. Recommendations for the future framework

This final section draws on the report and its findings to make recommendations for the future policy framework. It is important to stress the need for the continuity of policy strategies for gender equality, reflecting sustained commitment, offering continuity of actions, building on achievements, and working towards the achievement of full equality in practice between women and men.

The recommendations presented refer to changes that are considered important for the next gender equality framework. They do not refer to strands of work that require continuity as these are deemed to be evident. The recommendations are structured to cover the design and governance of a new framework, the definition of its objectives, and actions under it.

8.1 Recommendations on the design and governance of a new framework

- **Status of the new framework**

Increase the status of the next gender equality framework to the highest possible level, in any case higher than a Commission Staff Working Document. It should ideally be adopted as a Communication, as the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010–2015 was.

- **Reinforce the work of the Gender Equality Unit and of the ISG**

Increase the resources available for the Gender Equality Unit in the new framework, given its important initiator and coordination role.

Reinforce coordination in and commitment by other DGs within the ISG in order to work in a more impactful manner and to underpin effective and coherent gender mainstreaming.

There will be a number of gender-related activities that entail joint responsibilities in different DGs. For these specific activities, appoint a senior person in the relevant service in charge of championing the activity and link that person with a specified person in the Gender Equality Unit. This should ensure coordination and support as needed.

- **Clarify objectives and actions and set targets**

Define objectives and actions more specifically in the future framework to clarify ambitions and responsibilities in the implementation of actions by DGs, including expectations at the Member State level.

Establish clear and accountable targets to contribute to the increased credibility of the political commitment.

- **Communication strategy**

Pay more attention to the communication strategy. Establish communication objectives, identify key audiences, create core messages, and identify tailored approaches for each audience using effective channels.

- **Duration of the next framework**

Extend the duration of the next framework, e.g. from 4 to 6 years, to allow for impact to occur during its time span.

8.2 Recommendations on the thematic areas for a future framework

- **Continuation of current thematic priority areas**

Continue the five thematic priority areas and the transversal area (gender mainstreaming, funding and coordination) pursued under SEGE.

- **Add two new priority thematic areas**

Pursue action on backlash, cultural change, values and gender stereotypes in order to promote a popular and institutional culture concerned for gender equality and to identify and effectively combat gender stereotypes, attending to the backlash against gender equality in public and political discourse.

Pursue stronger integration with the key multidimensional policy paradigms, specifically the European Semester, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The objective of this new thematic area should be to establish and reap synergies, advance gender equality and evolve thinking in relation to gender equality, and engage directly with the emerging development paradigms and their design for the future.

- **Add one new transversal area**

Pursue action on intersectionality across all the thematic areas of the new framework. This will ensure that attention is given to women with multiple overlapping and interdependent forms of discrimination, such as origin, age, low education and disabilities. This will involve conceptualising and operationalising an intersectional approach in the framework.

8.3 Recommendations regarding actions and activities to be included in a future strategy

8.3.1 Thematic area 1: Access to employment and economic independence

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Monitor the appropriate transposition of the Directive on work-life balance. Support Member States in the design and implementation of policies, both through mutual learning activities and through funding programmes to ensure the full potential in the Directive is achieved. Use research and mutual learning actions to better understand how to encourage women and men to choose flexible time arrangements, part-time and parental leaves to the same extent and develop

initiatives to support an application of the knowledge developed in this regard.

- Focus on quality of employment, in particular of lower-educated women and those with multiple forms of discrimination as regards to adequate pay, labour conditions and working hours. Study the prevalence of non-standard forms of work among women compared to men and assess the impact of the Directive 2003/88/EC on working hours on women and develop it further as needed.
- Maintain the focus for action on the Barcelona targets and expand them to include care of other dependants. Promote among the Member States the Quality Framework for ECEC systems.
- Adopt a specific action plan for female entrepreneurship to address the barriers faced by women entrepreneurs.
- Establish as a key focus for action in this thematic area sectoral and occupational segregation by gender. Expand the scope of sectors involved and focus on the choices of women and men in relation to taking up employment in gender-segregated sectors.
- Continue the focus on the integration of migrant women under this thematic area and expand it to removing barriers to employment for a wider range of intersectional groups.

8.3.2 Thematic area 2: Gender pay, earnings and pension gap

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Build on the learning from the evaluation of the '2017–2019 Action plan to tackle the gender pay gap' and the key achievements realised in this area, develop further regulatory measures as required and adopt a new action plan to ensure a holistic, coherent and sustained approach to this issue in the private and public sector.
- Address the gender pension gap, based on the learning achieved through SEGE.
- Support Member States to better understand the root causes of gender pay gaps and design effective measures, including through mutual learning and funding.
- Reinforce dialogue with social partners to promote the use of tools for wage transparency, wage audits and inclusion of clauses related with wage-setting mechanisms aimed at reducing the gender pay gap in collective agreements.

8.3.3 Thematic area 3: Equality in decision-making

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Keep the proposal for a *Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of listed companies* on the EU agenda and continue to promote progress in practice on this issue.
- Improve data collection at the EU and Member State level.

8.3.4 Thematic area 4: Gender-based violence

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Support and drive the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Member States, continue the work towards EU accession, monitor the transposition of the Victims' Rights Directive and promote the adoption of an EU-wide strategy to combat gender-based violence.
- Support Member States in the design, funding and development of projects de-

voted to enhancing the fight against gender-based violence, trafficking and female genital mutilation, including a focus on new forms of violence and new technologies deployed.

- Support grassroots organisations and local and regional governments dealing with the prevention of violence and providing services to victims of all forms of violence, through funding and cooperation.
- Implement the further stages of the EU-wide prevalence survey on violence against women, coordinated by Eurostat, and expand it to all Member States. Ensure appropriate data dissemination.
- Deepen the focus on eliminating sexual harassment, particularly at the workplace, including action to ensure the full and effective implementation of the provisions on sexual harassment in the EU gender equality Directives.

8.3.5 Thematic area 5: Women's rights across the world

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Implement the GAP II 2016–2020, in cooperation with Member States and with international institutions.
- Promote the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- Continue to monitor and support candidate and potential candidate countries in their focus on gender equality, and continue to integrate the gender perspective into the programmes funded by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

8.3.6 Thematic area 6: Backlash: Cultural change, values, and gender stereotypes

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Explore values dominant in public and political discourse and in institutions, and explore how to define and engage gender equality values. Give due attention to understanding and better addressing the dynamic of the polarisation of public opinion regarding gender issues in the context of the backlash against gender equality.
- Tackle gender stereotypes transversally, including not only in relation to care responsibilities, but also in relation to broader labour market choices, the gender pay gap, sexual harassment, violence against women, and access to decision-making positions. Design actions to effectively unpick the common sense that forms around such stereotypes, focusing on a range of systems including: education and learning, media and social media, advertising, and institutional cultures.
- Explore and develop new approaches to awareness raising with a view to better engaging with the dynamic of cultural change and better embedding gender equality values in this process.

8.3.7 Thematic area 7: Integration with key multidimensional development paradigms

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Promote a stronger integration with the European Semester and with the post-Europe 2020 strategy, the inclusion of gender-specific targets and gender-sensitive indicators, the inclusion of a gender perspective in all analytical reports, and increasing the focus on gender equality in the Country-Specific Recommendations.

- Deepen the integration and coordination achieved with the European Pillar of Social Rights as it gains traction and evolves in its implementation.
- Pursue integration and coordination with the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda with a view to advancing implementation of Goal 5 alongside gender mainstreaming across all the Sustainable Development Goals.

8.3.8 Transversal area: Gender mainstreaming, funding, cooperation and intersectionality

Priority actions in this area should include:

- Elaborate a report on gender mainstreaming in the Commission with recommendations for further reinforcing this process.
- Keep the focus on the multi-annual framework 2021–2027, ensuring that regulations include the objective of gender equality. Focus on the implementation of the regulations to ensure the potential in this approach is fully realised. Guidelines and support for Member States' and regions' gender mainstreaming capacity will be important.
- Pursue and support a systematic method for implementing gender mainstreaming across all funding programmes.
- Reinforce the budgetary means of funding programmes, such as the new Rights and Values programme, to ensure impact is possible.
- Address the challenges related to tracking the gender impact of funded measures spent on specific measures for gender equality and on gender mainstreaming activities.
- Develop and operationalise a shared and comprehensive understanding of intersectionality through all thematic areas and this transversal area.
- Develop knowledge and collect data throughout all thematic areas, including other policy fields such as health, education or social services, in order to help to design better policies.

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Annex I: Fieldwork

This annex provides the details of the fieldwork for this report, including the list of interviewees, the topics covered by the interviews with stakeholders and by the survey of SAAGE experts.

I.1 Interviews

List of interviewees

Stakeholder:

- EQUINET
- EWL
- European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination
- International Network on Leave Policies & Research
- COFACE
- EIGE
- ETUC
- Business Europe

I.2 Topics covered by stakeholder interviews

- Overall assessment of the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019 (SEGE).
- EU added value of SEGE.
- Strengths and weaknesses of SEGE.
- Lessons learned and recommendations for the future policy framework.

I.3 Topics covered by the survey among SAAGE Country experts

- Achievement of the objectives in the Member States
- Added value of SEGE at EU level
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Recommendations for the new strategy.

Annex II: List of Country Experts

ACRONYM	MEMBER STATE	COUNTRY EXPERT
AT	Austria	Claudia Sorger and Nadia Bergmann
BE	Belgium	Danièle Meulders
BG	Bulgaria	Rossitsa Rangelova
CY	Cyprus	Chrystalla Ellina
CZ	Czechia	Alena Krizkova
DE	Germany	Alexandra Scheele
DK	Denmark	Anna Amilon
EE	Estonia	Helen Biin
EL	Greece	Thomas Georgiadis
ES	Spain	Elvira González Gago
FI	Finland	Hanna Sutela
FR	France	Anne Eydoux
HR	Croatia	Ivanka Buzov
HU	Hungary	Dorottya Szikra
IE	Ireland	Ursula Barry
IT	Italy	Silvia Sansonetti
LT	Lithuania	Ruta Braziene
LU	Luxembourg	Robert Plasman
LV	Latvia	Anna Zasova
MT	Malta	Rose Marie Azzopardi
NL	The Netherlands	Suzanne Bouma and Renée Romkens
PL	Poland	Malgorzata Druciarek
PT	Portugal	Virgínia Ferreira and Lina Coelho
RO	Romania	Livia Popescu
SE	Sweden	Anita Nyberg
SI	Slovenia	Aleksandra Kanjuo Mrčela
SK	Slovakia	Magdalena Piscová
UK	United Kingdom	Helen Norman and Colette Fagan

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