



## **Gender Equality in EU External Action: Reinforcing Commitments – Accelerating Implementation**

Public presentation of the GAP III Intermediate Evaluation Report followed by a Structured Dialogue with CSOs and LAs

### **Concept Note**

**Date:** 12 December 2025

**Location:** [Albert Borschette Conference Center \(Brussels\)](#) and online

- Morning segment with public presentation of the GAP III evaluation: Albert Borschette Conference Centre, ground floor room 0A (Rue Froissart 36, Brussels) and online
- Afternoon Structured dialogue: Albert Borschette Conference Centre, 2A and 1B and online

### **Objectives:**

The **Gender Action Plan III (2021 – 27)** provides the policy and operational framework for promoting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment gender equality in the EU's external relations and the empowerment of women and girls continue as a priority of the EU's international cooperation and development policies. With almost five years of implementation, this event will serve three strategic objectives:

- Public presentation of the findings of the intermediate evaluation: Covering the period 2021-2024, the evaluation focuses on EU action promoting gender equality in the green and digital transitions, including through Global Gateway initiatives. In addition, a specific case study will look into EU engagement with women's rights organizations in conflict, post-conflict and fragile settings. This conference will facilitate an in-depth presentation and discussion of these findings, looking at good practice, challenges and areas for improvement.
- **Structured Dialogue Platform:** The event will allow for a structured dialogue between women's rights and other civil society organisations, local authorities networks, EU policymakers, and gender equality advocates, including representatives from partner countries. Gathering diverse perspectives, it should contribute to more effective implementation of the GAP III objectives and to the orientation of policy development.
- **Enhancing implementation and policy development:** The conference will highlight the EU's commitment to gender equality, fostering informed action and accountability. Following the EU Roadmap for Women's Rights, it provides an opportunity to discuss ways to enhance EU action against the background of an evolving global landscape and geopolitical priorities and inform the preparations of the post-2027 policy framework (GAP IV)

### **Format:**

The event will take place in a hybrid setting, with – in the morning - approximately 100 in-person participants and up to 400 online participants, including from EU partner countries worldwide. The public presentation and panel discussions on the implementation of the GAP III (morning) will be followed by a structured dialogue with civil society and local

authorities' representatives in the framework of the Policy Forum for Development, with the Commission, the EEAS and Member States' gender equality experts (afternoon). The structured dialogue will feature breakout discussions.

## Participants:

Morning segment:

- Interested public, civil society organisations, local authorities
- DG INTPA /DG NEAR/DG ECHO/FPI/EEAS, DG CLIMA, DG TRADE, DG ENV
- EU Member States gender experts and international partners such as UN Women

## Agenda

Gender Equality in EU External Action: Reinforcing Commitments – Accelerating Implementation  
Albert Borschette Conference Center, ground floor Room 0A and online:

Link for online participation: <https://ec.interactio.eu/xaa0-6o5-36xl-f5n>

Click [here](https://europa.eu/!bykfvknh) (<https://europa.eu/!bykfvknh>) for instructions on how to connect.

Morning (hybrid format)	
09:00 – 9:45	Arrivals and Registration
09:45 – 10:15	<p><b>Opening Remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Chiara Adamo</b>, Deputy Director Human Development, Migration, Governance and Peace, DG International Partnerships</li> <li>• <b>Susanne Shine</b>, Ambassador to Belgium, Denmark</li> <li>• <b>Aude Maio-Coliche</b>, Ambassador for Equality, EEAS</li> </ul>
10:15 – 11:15	<p><b>Panel I: Accelerating GAP III Implementation through the Global Gateway</b></p> <p><b>Moderator: Visnja Bacanovic</b>, Regional Gender and Good Governance Specialist, UN Women RO Europe &amp; Central Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentation by the external evaluators (ADE S.A.)</b> – Key findings from (Part 1): Promoting Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the framework of the green <i>transition and the digital transformation</i>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Julieta González</b>, Director and EU Representative, CARE International</li> <li>• <b>Cecilia Olea Mauleon</b>, Articulación Feminista Marcosur, Péru</li> <li>• <b>Brigitte Luggin</b>, Team Leader for Gender Equality, INTPA Unit G1</li> <li>• <b>Eva Bernard</b>, Social &amp; Gender Specialist, Environment, Climate &amp; Social Office, European Investment Bank</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Katja Žvan Elliott</b>, Undersecretary and Gender Expert</li> </ul> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which promising practices and innovations are accelerating GAP III implementation?</li> <li>• How can Team Europe Initiatives foster a fair and inclusive climate and digital transition?</li> <li>• How can civil society and local authorities contribute effectively in this context?</li> </ul>
<b>11:15 – 11:45</b>	Coffee Break
<b>11:45 – 12:45</b>	<p><b>Panel II: Supporting Women’s Rights Organizations in Fragile Contexts</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Sonya Reines-Djivanides</b>, Executive Director, European Peacebuilding Liaison Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Presentation by ADE</b> – Key findings from Part 2 of the external evaluation: Promoting GEWE through CSOs in fragile contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Heran Ayele</b>, Technical Adviser, Spotlight Initiative</li> <li>• <b>Esther Waweru</b>, Senior Legal Advisor, Equality Now SOAWR, Kenya</li> <li>• <b>Hilde Deman</b>, Executive Director, Search for Common Ground</li> <li>• <b>Jonna Naumanen</b>, Senior Adviser on Gender Equality and WPS, EEAS</li> <li>• <b>Sofia Orrebrink</b>, Lead Policy Specialist in gender equality, Sida</li> </ul> <p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges and opportunities for WROs operating in fragile and conflict-affected settings?</li> <li>• How can funding, protection, and recognition for women human rights defenders be enhanced?</li> <li>• How can the WPS Agenda serve as a tool and entry point to support women's rights in fragile contexts?</li> </ul>
<b>12:45 - 13:00</b>	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Erica GERRETSEN</b>, Director Human Development, Migration, Governance and Peace, DG International Partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>13:00 – 14:00</b>	Lunch at venue
<b>GAP III Structured dialogue with CSOs and LAs (hosted by the <i>Policy Forum on Development</i>)</b>	
<b>14:30 – 16:30</b>	<b>In-person Forward-Looking Breakout Discussions in ENG running in parallel</b>

*(for online breakout groups with interpretation EN/ES/FR see different set-up and timings below)*

**Topic 1. On the Frontlines: Women's Rights Organizations as Human Rights Defenders (Room 2A)**

**Moderator:** Laura Guthrie, CONCORD

**Speakers to kick-off discussion:**

- **Gohar Shahnazaryan**, Co-Director of Women's Fund Armenia on behalf of Prospera International Network of Women's Funds
- ACT grantee, **Esther Waweru**, Senior Legal Advisor, Equality Now SOAWR, Kenya

**Rapporteur:** Marie Tempesta, IPPF

**Guiding Questions:**

- Which mechanisms could the EU put in place to better protect and support women's rights organisations (WROs) and women human rights defenders (WHRDs)? Including but not limited to in the context of shrinking civic space
- How can we ensure that the perspective of local women's rights organisations (WROs) as human rights defenders (HRDs) are captured by the EU, both from the gender side and the human rights side?
- What types of support from the EU is most effective in strengthening feminist movements and advancing women's rights on the ground (legally, financially, or politically)?
- What challenges do you face in the implementation of GAP III/CLIPs? How effective is your cooperation with EUDs and the EU broadly in implementing gender actions, and what more can be done to increase the effectiveness of this cooperation?

**Topic 2. Women, Peace and Security: Shaping the EU's External Action (Room 1B)**

**Moderator:** Isabella Björkman, Programme Officer at CMI Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation

**Speakers to kick-off discussion:**

- **Najet Araari**, Front pour l'égalité et les droits des femmes et Ligue tunisienne des droits humains
- **rim sardaryan** (they/them), queer sista (Armenia)
- **Nada de Murashkin**, PAX

**Rapporteur:** Dorothea Koehn, CARE International

**Guiding questions:**

- How can women's full, equal, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts at all levels be strengthened? What successful examples can we learn from and what needs to be scaled up? What barriers still prevent women from participating, and how can these be addressed? What is the role of the EU, regional actors and local communities?
- How can the EU strengthen strategic partnerships with regional organisations, international financial institutions, and global women's networks to ensure women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts is prioritised, resourced and monitored?
- Where are current partnerships falling short: coordination, funding, political will, or implementation? What action needs to be taken?
- How can the EU, together with international and national partners, support the localisation of Women, Peace and Security implementation so that it reflects context-specific needs and deliver real, tangible impacts in diverse conflict and post-conflict situations? How can implementation be designed to ensure accountability, sustainability, and meaningful participation of local actors?

**14:00 – 17:30 ONLINE Forward-Looking Discussions in EN/FR/ES**

**Afternoon meeting link:**

**<https://pfddialogue-eu.zoom.us/j/86289174724?pwd=feEbxq5vddBB8TNPkqRYWb0L2ukyoS.1>**

**Meeting ID: 862 8917 4724**

**Passcode: 153441**

**Afternoon (hybrid format)****14:00- 15:30****Online - Women, Peace and Security: Shaping the EU's External Action****Moderator: Teresa Caverio, PFD****Speakers to kick-off discussion:**

- **Yvette Mushigo**, Director of SPR, Synergie des femmes pour la paix et la reconciliation des peuples des grands lacs Afrique, Bukavu, DRC.
- **Rosa Emilia Salamanca** - coordinator of the Red LAMPS
- **Ellyjoy Kithure** - Gender and peacebuilding adviser at Conciliation Resources, Nairobi

**Rapporteur: TBC**

	<p><b>Guiding Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in peacebuilding efforts at all levels be strengthened? What successful examples can we learn from and what needs to be scaled up? What barriers still prevent women from participating, and how can these be addressed? What is the role of the EU, regional actors and local communities?</li> <li>• How can the EU strengthen strategic partnerships with regional organisations, international financial institutions, and global women’s networks to ensure women’s meaningful participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction efforts is prioritised, resourced and monitored?</li> <li>• Where are current partnerships falling short: coordination, funding, political will, or implementation? What action needs to be taken?</li> <li>• How can the EU, together with international and national partners, support the localisation of Women, Peace and Security implementation so that it reflects context-specific needs and deliver real, tangible impacts in diverse conflict and post-conflict situations? How can implementation be designed to ensure accountability, sustainability, and meaningful participation of local actors?</li> </ul>
<p><b>16:00 - 17:30</b></p>	<p><b>Online - On the Frontlines: Women’s Rights Organizations as Human Rights Defenders</b></p> <p>Moderator: Teresa Caverio, PFD</p> <p><b>Speakers to kick-off discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Caroline Brac de la Perriere</b>, Mediterranean Women’s Fund - Women’s Funds Europe - Prospera Network</li> <li>• <b>Mariama Sahid</b>, SHE4PEACE, Sierra Leone</li> <li>• <b>Anwaar Owaineh</b> – MEND (Middle East Non-Violence and Democracy)</li> <li>• <b>Lama Alshirafa</b>, Dr.Haider Abdel Shafi Center - HCCD, Gaza</li> </ul> <p>Rapporteur: TBC</p> <p><b>Guiding questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which mechanisms could the EU put in place to better protect and support women’s rights organisations (WROs) and women human rights defenders (WHRDs)? Including but not limited to in the context of shrinking civic space</li> <li>• How can we ensure that the perspective of local women’s rights organisations (WROs) as human rights defenders (HRDs) are captured by the EU, both from the gender side and the human rights side?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What types of support from the EU is most effective in strengthening feminist movements and advancing women's rights on the ground (legally, financially, or politically)?</li> <li>• What challenges do you face in the implementation of GAP III/CLIPs? How effective is your cooperation with EUDs and the EU broadly in implementing gender actions, and what more can be done to increase the effectiveness of this cooperation?</li> </ul>
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