

High-level event

For a Renewed EU Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU external action

Brussels, 19 March 2026

Concept Note and Agenda

Context and objectives

Following the **launch of the EU Gender Equality Strategy (GES) 2026-2030** on 5 March, this event will spotlight the external dimension of the GES and launch the preparations of the new **EU Gender Action Plan** for the MFF 2028 – 2034.

In particular, the event will

- Highlight the **EU's steadfast commitment to promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as a strategic priority in all external actions**, in the context of an increasingly fragile global environment and an unprecedented global backlash against gender equality and women's rights.
- Launch the **public stakeholder consultation on the GAP IV**.
- Announce the **renewal of the EU Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) for 2028-2034**.
- Discuss opportunities to advance gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral part of the **Global Gateway investment strategy** with a focus on the economic benefits of closing gender gaps. In this context,
 - o Launch the **Team Europe Initiative Women Leadership in public ICT sector**: EUR 13 million with CFCA, ESTDEV, Enabel, Expertise France, FIAP, GIZ Lead implementer: Expertise France.
Specific Objectives Lead Coordinators: Enabel, Expertise France and GIZ
- Discuss how EU actions in conflict-affected and fragile contexts can empower women to shape the future of global peace and security and why **the WPS Agenda remains more relevant than ever** in the current geopolitical context.

Date and Venue

The event will take place in a hybrid format on Thursday, 19 March, at ACE, Avenue d'Auderghem 22, 1040 Brussels.

[Register here](#)

AGENDA

- 08:45** Arrival and coffee
- 09:30** **WELCOME** by Marjeta JAGER, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA), European Commission
- 09:35** **OPENING**
- Jozef SÍKELA, Commissioner for International Partnership, European Commission
 - Abir AL-SAHLANI, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Development, Member of the European Parliament
 - Josie CHRISTODOULOU, Commissioner for Gender Equality, Cyprus
 - Aude MAIO-COLICHE, EEAS Ambassador for Equality
- 10:00** **LAUNCH of the Team Europe Initiative *'Women Leadership in public ICT sector'***
- Video message by Eleonore CAROIT, Deputy Minister for International partnerships, France



10:30 Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment as part of the Global Gateway investment strategy.

*The **moderated discussion** will centre on the economic benefits of closing gender gaps, such as improving women's access to finance, decision-making, employment, entrepreneurship, and bridging the digital gender divide. It will also examine how these objectives are integrated into the Global Gateway investment strategy to foster an inclusive green and digital transformation in partner countries.*

Moderated by Chiara ADAMO, Deputy Director Dir G, DG INTPA, European Commission

Discussants:

- Thouraya TRIKI, Director of the International Partners Department, EIB
- Mark VAN DE VREKEN, Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
- Daniel SCHAER, Ambassador at large for Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia
- Julia JASINKA, Head of EU Trade and Economic Diplomacy, NOKIA
- Kedi VÄLBA, Regional Chair for Europe at D4D Hub Private Sector Advisory Group
- Sascha GABIZON, Executive Director, Women Engage for a Common Future

11:30 Promoting Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security in conflict-affected and fragile contexts

*The **moderated discussion** will facilitate a strategic dialogue on the future of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, outlining the new EU multi-country WPS programming and the upcoming EU Action Plan on WPS (2028–2034). Panel members will examine how the EU's ongoing commitment to gender equality in conflict-affected and fragile contexts will be translated into concrete action and leveraged for greater impact.*

Moderated by Aude MAIO-COLICHE, EEAS Ambassador for Equality

Discussants:

- Peter WAGNER, European Commission FPI Director
- Ana María ALONSO GIGANTO, Spanish Ambassador-at-large for Feminist Foreign Policy
- Florence RAES, Director UN Women Brussels
- Sanam Naraghi ANDERLINI, CEO of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
- Guillem RIUTORD SAMPOL, Head of Division for Peace, Security and Defence Partnerships, EEAS
- Linda SÄLL, Head of Programmes, The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

12:30 LUNCH RECEPTION