CPMR Task Force on GENDER-related Issues

In 2020, 25 years will have elapsed since the Beijing Platform for Action established how to eliminate systemic barriers that impede the equal participation of women in all spheres of life, whether in the public or private spheres. Despite the progress made, the real change has not been as expected for the majority of women and girls in the world. Today, no country or region can claim that it has achieved real equality.

Even in the most advanced regions in the EU in terms of gender equality policies, the persistence of discriminatory social norms and practices has led to de facto gender inequalities. Proof of this are violence against women, inequalities in the division of unpaid care work, the wage gap, unequal participation in private and public decision-making, etc.

**European context**

Equality between women and men is one of the European Union’s founding values (Article 2 of the Treaty of the EU), as well as an objective (Article 3 TEU), a fundamental right (Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU), a process (Article 8 Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) and a positive duty of EU laws (Fredman, 2005).

However, the European Union is still far from gender equality. With a Gender Equality Index score of 67.4 out of 100, the EU still has a lot of room for improvement. Since 2005, the EU score has increased by only 5.4 points (+1.2 points since 2015).

The new president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the first woman in charge of this institution, presented her political orientations for the next European Commission on July 16, 2019, highlighting the importance of focusing on equality, and creating opportunities for both women and men alike. To lead by example, President von der Leyen proposed full equality between men and women in the College of Commissioners. However, the new College has not achieved full equality.

The European Commission’s agenda for Europe focuses on six major ambitions (a European Green Deal, an economy that works for people, a Europe fit for the digital age, the promotion of our European way of life, a stronger Europe in the world, and a new push for European democracy), the second of which is focused on the European social market economy. A social market economy implies an economy based on social fairness, where people and business can only prosper if the economy works for them. In this area, von der Leyen has set out a series of future measures to ensure full equality between men and women, considering it to be a fundamental component of economic growth.

These measures have both a transversal character, as well as a direct character.
On the one hand, the horizontal initiatives planned include the full application of the European Pillar of Social Rights, a legal instrument to ensure that all workers have a fair minimum wage, the improvement of the working conditions of workers of digital platforms, a European unemployment benefit reinsurance scheme, the establishment of a European Child Guarantee, and the implementation of the work-life balance Directive.

In addition, direct measures on equality between women and men in political orientations focus on new anti-discrimination legislation, a new European gender strategy (which addresses the way laws impact the decisions women take throughout their lives: starting a job, running a business, getting paid, getting married, having children, managing assets, and drawing a pension), binding pay transparency measures, unlocking the Directive on Women on Boards, and EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on fighting domestic violence. In case that accession remains blocked, the President will propose that violence against women is defined as a crime in the EU Treaty.

Together with the above, von der Leyen advocated the incorporation of the gender perspective in all EU policies, thus cementing an intersectional approach. These political priorities show that equality between women and men will occupy a priority place in the EU agenda in the coming years. Therefore, it is the right time for the CPMR regions to follow these initiatives more closely, exchange ideas and experiences, and position themselves before the EU Institutions.

### 1. Objectives of the Task Force

**General Objective:**
- Ensure the mainstreaming of gender equality in all EU policy areas, while promoting and strengthening the role of regions in this field.

**Specific objectives:**
- Develop political positions and advocacy before the EU in terms of equality between women and men.
- Encourage in this area the exchange of visions and good practices between member regions.
- Advocate complementarity, synergies, and projects in the aforementioned field.

### 2. Activities

- In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic challenges, gather best practice from regions on addressing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and gender equality, and direct messaging towards a gender balanced recovery.
- Follow-up of specific European proposals on equality between women and men, such as the European Commission’s gender equality strategy, among others.
- Disseminate political messages aimed at promoting equality on the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8 March and International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, or the European Equal Pay Day (November 2020), to name a few.
- Collect, collate, and promote regional best practice to support all activities of the Task Force and to ensure fact-based lobbying.
- Develop lobbying actions in this field before the EU Institutions.
- Organise and/or participate in conferences, seminars and, where appropriate, European projects related to the subject.
3. Composition

- Basque Country proposes itself as leader, but a critical mass of CRPM member regions is needed.

4. Calendar

- First kick-off meeting the 5 February for the adoption of TORs.
- Two meetings in Brussels/Virtual, the first one in June/July and the second one in September before the CRPM GA 2020 to prepare a declaration on gender equality and to decide next steps.