

~~On women and climate change in Europe~~ On women's rights, gender and climate change in Europe

1 The European Union has a long-standing commitment to gender equality: it is a
2 Treaty obligation, a core EU value, a fundamental right, a key principle of the
3 European Pillar of Social Rights, and a necessary condition for the achievement
4 of the EU objectives of growth and social cohesion. The Gender
5 Equality Strategy 2020-2025 recognises the importance of diversity and
6 intersectionality. It also outlines a set of key actions including ending
7 gender-based violence and stereotypes, ensuring equal participation and
8 opportunities in the labour market, and achieving gender balance in policy- and
9 decision-making.

10 Yet, and although the first Commissioner for Equality has been appointed,
11 climate action and gender equality remain compartmentalised. The European
12 Climate Law, adopted in June 2021, does not take into account gender
13 inequalities, but states that "the transition must be fair and inclusive,
14 leaving no one behind". The EU Recovery plan states that 37% of spending will be
15 allocated to climate action and 20% to the digital transition. But the
16 allocation of spending on gender equality is not specified. The adjustment to
17 Objective 55 includes the Social Climate Fund, which states that "Fuel poverty
18 alone affects up to 34 million people in the EU today", ~~but~~ however it makes no
19 reference to the linkages between gender and fuel poverty.

20 ~~Obviously, in Europe, just as elsewhere, the impact of climate change differs~~
21 ~~between groups and individuals. It exacerbates existing inequalities and is~~
22 ~~particularly severe for disadvantaged and marginalised populations. Social norms~~
23 ~~deeply rooted in our societies can also contribute to continuing the~~
24 ~~marginalisation of some specific population groups, including people of~~
25 ~~different gender identities.~~ Obviously, in Europe, just as elsewhere, the impact of climate change differs between
26 groups and individuals. Socio-economic factors and social norms deeply rooted in our societies lead to the
27 marginalisation of specific population groups of our society, such as persons with disabilities among others, and
28 especially vulnerable groups of women, including trans people, and everyone who does not fall into the binary
29 categories of women and men. Existing inequalities, along with climate change exacerbate social injustices and have a
30 profound impact on the living and work conditions, and societal participation of vulnerable and disadvantaged
31 populations.

32 The European Parliament study on gender and energy notes that "because they have
33 a lower average income, women are more at risk of fuel poverty than men".
34 Moreover, since the end of 2021, the sharp rise in energy prices particularly
35 affects women and girls from ethnic minorities, migrant women and girls, women
36 with disabilities, single mothers and older women. Studies show that almost half
37 of single-parent families in the EU are threatened by poverty and social



38 exclusion, and almost 9 out of 10 single parents are women. Moreover, lower-
39 income single women, especially ageing women, are most at risk of poverty. Women
40 are the ones who suffer the most from inequality in the workplace, whether it is
41 unequal pay, which continues to be perpetuated in thousands of companies,
42 unequal access to employment, maternity issues, the reconciliation of work and
43 family life or even fighting against various forms of violence and
44 discrimination. If women are disproportionately present in the poorest strata,
45 they are also present in the oldest strata of the population and therefore the
46 most vulnerable. These concerns fuel a major justice issue: in general, women
47 contribute less to emissions because they have less spending power. women are on average more
48 affected by climate change, but in general contribute less to emissions because they have less spending power

49 At the same time, the most severe consequences of climate change are being
50 observed in the EU's Southern countries. In these territories, women are
51 disproportionately represented among the poorest and most marginalised segments In the EU, for
52 example, severe consequences of climate change are currently being observed in the southern countries, where the
53 factors of warming in the Mediterranean region and the warmth of the Mediterranean Sea are mutually reinforcing the
54 effects. However, increasingly severe climate events also can and will be seen in other regions of Europe. Women -
55 especially in the Mediterranean region - are disproportionately affected by the consequences. They are more likely to
56 live in flood-prone areas or in homes that are not air-conditioned during summer heat waves - as we experienced again
57 this summer. They are also the ones who suffer the most from the consequences of underfunded social systems, as they
58 bear more responsibility for running the household and being the primary caregivers
59 of the population. They are more likely to live in flood-prone areas, or in
60 housing without air-conditioning during summer heat waves – as we saw experienced once again
61 this summer.

62 Furthermore, health problems caused by climate change during pregnancy are
63 growing – heat waves increase premature births – or mental health issues caused
64 by stress. Even more, in recent years, climate change in Europe has increased
65 the threat of vector-borne illnesses such as malaria, dengue fever,
66 and Zika virus, which are linked to worse maternal and neonatal outcomes. The
67 number of respiratory diseases are worrying, with air pollution among the main
68 risk factors for respiratory diseases. Elderly women with low incomes are also
69 have the greatest difficulty in accessing health care, are more
70 vulnerable to illness and therefore more vulnerable to the need for home care,
71 which is provided mainly by female relatives in the poorest families.

72 Women in poor communities are highly dependent on local natural resources for
73 their livelihoods, particularly in rural areas where the effects of climate
74 change and climate hazards have unequal impacts. Agricultural policies based on
75 intensive production models and greater investments in fossil energy production and in
76 mining activities in ecologically vulnerable areas, under the aegis of the
77 energy transition, not only leave women – whose economic activities largely
78 depend on equitable access to natural resources – more vulnerable, but also put
79 the balance of ecosystems at risk. Women in rural areas play a central role in

80 the socio-economic development of a region, they are agents of change, especially for the sustainable
81 use
82 and conservation of resources, even though women have less access than men to
83 resources such as land, investments, agricultural inputs, decision-making
84 structures, technology, training and extension services that would enhance their
85 capacity to adapt to climate change. When disasters strike, women are less
86 likely to survive and more likely to be injured due to long-standing gender
87 inequalities that have created disparities in information, mobility, decision-
88 making, and access to resources and training.

89 ~~Moreover, we cannot undervalue the role of women in the education, training and
90 empowerment of future generations, considering that, in the EU, women not only
91 have higher graduation rates than men but also because there are more women than
92 men working as educators and teachers at all levels of education. It is
93 therefore important to strengthen the educational, academic and investigation
94 areas to raise awareness and impel next generations to action, developing an
95 inter- and intra-generational network, so that they can take well-informed and
96 effective action in the future. There is a high percentage of women working in education, leading to the
97 responsibility of climate education being placed mostly on them. It is therefore important to strengthen the
98 educational and other professional areas to raise awareness and impel next generations to action, developing an inter-
99 and intra-generational network, so that they can take well-informed and effective action in the future. Education on
100 climate action is key as young children are far more vulnerable to climate-related disasters and associated health risks
101 than any other social group. As such, empowering young people is a priority. Meanwhile, the number of women
102 undertaking technical and scientific education paths is dramatically lower than the number of men, for cultural, social
103 and historical reasons. It is fundamental to fill this gap through encouraging young women and removing any socio-
104 economic barrier of access. However, the role of climate education should not fall solely on any marginalised group
105 who are more exposed to the impact of climate change, but rather be integrated into community-based learning. As
106 such, empowering young people is a priority.~~
107 Education on climate action is key as young children are far more vulnerable to
108 climate-related disasters and associated health risks than any other social
109 group.

110 **Taking gender into account at all stage of policymaking is crucial because we**
111 **need to:**

- 112 Provide support for litigation on climate change before national courts, the European Court of Human Rights,
113 as well as the Court of Justice of the EU, by providing financial support to all vulnerable persons and their
114 representing organisations, in order to define the substantive nature of the right to a healthy environment.
- 115 Use the transition to a carbon **climate**-neutral economy as leverage to achieve
116 gender equality in employment, skills and pay; work for equal pay and
117 pensions; pensions and a europe-wide minimum income, with full respect to the national welfare systems.
- 118 Tackle fuel poverty through renewable energy, energy efficiency and
119 depauperization; energy savings, especially from most energy-using consumers;
- 120 Strengthen the resilience of women and girls to make them less vulnerable

- 121 to the impact of climate change by giving them access to decent
122 employment, social protection, health systems, education, public services and building a "Social
123 Union" etc.;
- 124 ~~Create tools for a women-inclusive economy, fostering women's~~
125 ~~entrepreneurship and self-employment; Reinforce social smart and eco-friendly housing structures~~
126 ~~that will protect vulnerable populations and especially single-parent families; Ban discriminatory practices~~
127 ~~(income etc.) for women to access housing, which affect them more, i.e. as it makes it harder to leave violent~~
128 ~~and harmful relationships;~~
 - 129 ~~Create tools for a women-inclusive economy, fostering women's sustainable entrepreneurship and self-~~
130 ~~employment; Ensure safe and non-discriminatory work environments for women and all other genders,~~
131 ~~preventing any form of abuse and/or harassment and assuring that women can pursue a professional career in~~
132 ~~equal conditions with men;~~
 - 133 In this sense, it is necessary to promote public welfare systems to support caring, reproductive and domestic
134 tasks and a proper involvement of men in these activities in order to guarantee an equitable distribution of
135 these activities.
 - 136 ~~Opt for measures to support entrepreneurship that women prefer, i.e. aimed~~
137 ~~at improving their personal skills, self-confidence and capabilities,~~
138 ~~education, lack of information, difficulties in accessing social and~~
139 ~~business networks or life-related issues and difficulties in reconciling~~
140 ~~work and family life (while men are more interested in direct support); Develop inclusive~~
141 ~~programmes to support women and marginalised communities in developing their~~
142 ~~entrepreneurial skills within the context of climate adaptation to better equip them for~~
143 ~~the future; facilitate easier access to loans to all, and at low or decent interest rates for~~
144 ~~women and marginalised communities who face economic discrimination, and~~
145 ~~specifically for women entrepreneurs; encourage women to undertake scientific and~~
146 ~~technological academic and professional careers, especially in sectors related to the~~
147 ~~ecological transition, and in other sectors they are underrepresented.~~
 - 148 ~~Promote a gendered corporate social responsibility; responsibility, requiring all companies to~~
149 ~~publicise average remuneration of men and women per employment category and justify differences in~~
150 ~~remuneration, if any~~
 - 151 Promote inclusive governance by international bodies and national
152 governments, with the integration of more women and marginalised groups
153 into decision-making;
 - 154 Increase the civic and associative participation of women responsible for
155 the management of natural resources, through their empowerment,
156 contributing to a greater visibility of their social and resilience role
157 in addressing climate change;
 - 158 Create the necessary conditions so that women can benefit equally from the

159 distribution of the benefits of environmental management.

160 **Unless gender equality is explicitly included in policies, programmes and**
161 **projects, gender inequalities which are deeply rooted in social norms, practices**
162 **and institutions, will persist. Thus, for the European Greens, the following**
163 **elements are crucial:**

- 164 It is essential that gender mainstreaming – in all its diversity and
165 intersectionality – fully accompanies efforts to take a comprehensive and
166 coherent approach to actions against climate change. We must recognise
167 that gender inequalities coexist with other structural inequalities,
168 including location, age, ethnicity, and disability, etc., while
169 mainstreaming strategies should also reflect these aspects;
- 170 Gender must be taken into account in the work of all EU Institutions and
171 the Commission: it must be considered from the beginning and in all
172 policies, even in areas that are seen by some as gender neutral: climate
173 change, energy, transport, trade and agriculture;
- 174 Gender mainstreaming must take place at all stages of the policy process,
175 from issue identification to policy formulation, implementation and
176 evaluation. Assessing gender needs and conducting gender audits are
177 strongly recommended;
- 178 There must be gender impact analyses of previously completed policy cycles
179 and projects to identify gender implications in both current and future
180 policy-making and programming to guide them and make them more effective;
- 181 Gender budgeting: we need gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that
182 budget decisions are based on gender analyses and promote equality between
183 women and men, and all other genders. Further, there must be a robust
184 monitoring and regular evaluation of policies;
- 185 ~~We support the elaboration of an EU Women's Rights Charter promoting~~
186 ~~women's participation in the labour market and sexual and reproductive~~
187 ~~rights (including abortion) to be laid down in both the Treaty and the~~
188 ~~Charter; amendment of the treaties including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union to~~
189 ~~include measures promoting gender equality and women's full participation in society including in the labour~~
190 ~~market and sexual and reproductive rights (including abortion);~~
- 191 We support the proposals to enshrine in the Primary Law the gender
192 terminology, implement gender mainstreaming at all stages of EU
193 legislations and programmes, and ensure 'gender parity' within the EU
194 Institutions and related bodies themselves;
- 195 ~~We support combatting gender-based violence and the definition of it as an~~
196 ~~'EU crime'. Fight against gender-based violence, advocate for a strong EU budget for Daphne and other~~
197 ~~funding mechanisms and policies in view of preventing and fighting gender-based violence.~~



- 198 □ Call for the implementation of the EU Minimum Wages Directive to safeguard a decent living wage for
199 workers, with full respect to national labour market models, so that every citizen, including marginalised
200 groups of our society, persons with disabilities and especially vulnerable groups of women, all genders and
201 LGTOI+ persons, in Europe can live a life in dignity.