



Joint statement on EU Funds for equality between men and women, accessibility for persons with disabilities and non-discrimination

Representing a coalition of European NGOs, we call upon the Council of the European Union, the Commission and the European Parliament to uphold equality between women and men, accessibility for persons with disabilities and non-discrimination in the proposal for the Common Provisions Regulation 2021-2027, as well as in the Funds specific regulations.

We regret that the equality principle has been deleted from the European Commission proposal of the CPR and that references to accessibility for persons with disabilities have not been included in the draft European Social Fund+ regulation.

It is within the EU funding principles to promote equality between women and men and combat all forms of discriminations. The EU has the obligation from the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, to do so when developing new policies and laws.

Moreover, gender equality and non-discrimination feature prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to which the EU is committed.

Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited in the EU.

Cohesion Policy is the EU main investment policy. Structural and Investment Funds for the period 2014-2020 were putting the EU in a leading position in financing equality and non-discrimination thanks to a very strong horizontal principle enshrined in article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation EU 1303/2013.

The future Common Provisions Regulations for the period 2021-2027 will apply to all shared Management Funds (European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Integrated Border Management Fund)

At a time where European societies are confronted with extremism, radicalism and divisions, it is more important than ever to promote, strengthen EU values of equality and human rights. It is therefore of utmost importance that the European Commission did not step back in fighting inequalities.

We call for a horizontal principle on promotion of equality between men and women, accessibility for persons with disabilities and non-discrimination to be included in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) 2021-2027 and in all Funds specific regulations as it is now article 7 of the CPR 1303/2013. The principle should be taken into account and promoted throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including in relation to monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

The new article should read as the article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation EU 1303/2013. Which states:

Article 7 - Promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination

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.

The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation and implementation of programmes. In particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.

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