

# WECF'S POSITION ON EU'S GAP IV

10 FEMINIST RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR AN AMBITIOUS FOURTH GENDER ACTION PLAN OF EU'S  
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS



**WECF**  
WOMEN ENGAGE FOR  
A COMMON FUTURE

# INTRODUCTION

This paper presents our position for an ambitious EU Gender Action Plan IV. WECF is a nonprofit ecofeminist network committed to achieving a gender-just and healthy planet for everyone. We operate using three activity areas: 'Action', 'Advocacy', and 'Awareness'. To strengthen and build capacity, we provide training, offer expertise, and grant funding to women and gender equality organisations. This supports our work in our thematic areas: 'Gender & Rights', 'Climate & Energy', and 'Toxic-free & Health'. Through our regional focal points in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and our network of partners in 70 countries, we strengthen women's rights organisations through our Ecofeminist Funds, we engage with partners in policy advocacy for gender and climate justice, and we transform public discourse in support of feminist and civil society action.



## *BUILDING ON THE SUCCESS OF EU'S GAP III*

The intermediate evaluation of GAP III has shown how successful the format has been to advance gender equality in the EU's international partnership programme, and GAP IV should build on this successful format. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gender Action Plan (GAP III), feminists had been successful in getting concrete targets, aiming that at least 85% of all actions funded by the European Union should be gender sensitive (according to OECD DAC Gender Marker 1 ranking).

Furthermore, the GAP III also prescribed that in all countries in which the EU implemented activities, at least one grant-funded activity with civil society should have as main focus **gender equality**. Other important aspects of the GAP III are that it identified several key topics for gender actions, including in the green and climate transition areas, as well as Gender Based Violence, Women Peace and Security, equal rights and equal representation.



# WE NEED AN AMBITIOUS, FEMINIST GAP IV

We see a growing and global backlash against gender equality, shrinking civic space and increasing geopolitical and economical instability. Therefore, an ambitious and coherent 4th Gender Action Plan (GAP IV) demands political priority to sustain and advance the EU's commitments to gender equality and women's rights in international partnerships.

GAP IV must address key challenges such as gender-equality implementation gaps, financing, policy coherence and accountability and meaningful engagement with feminist and women's rights organisations, as in the previous Gender Action Plan III.

## *EQUAL RIGHTS*

GAP IV needs to address the root causes of gender inequality. It needs to address structural gender inequality, unequal power relations and gender-based discrimination. GAP IV needs to support girls and women's agency, including in all thematic objectives and supported with indicators and funded activities.

In all its international partnerships, the EU GAP IV needs to advance coordinated actions to counter the growing influence of anti-gender, anti-rights, and anti-democratic organisations, that are increasingly transnational and well-resourced. These anti-rights actors undermine gender equality, human rights, and the rule of law through digital disinformation, anti-equality narratives, and attacks on civil society.

GAP IV should promote decent work, equal pay and labour rights which are essential to advancing gender equality. Women remain overrepresented in precarious, low-paid and informal work, often without access to social protection or collective bargaining and limited enforcement of rights. This is particularly relevant in sectors with a majority of women workers, such as domestic work, health care, agriculture, textiles, and in emerging sectors such as energy, infrastructure and digitalisation. Without targeted intervention, EU's Global Gateway investment initiatives risk reinforcing existing inequalities rather than transforming them.

## *EQUAL ACCESS AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES*

GAP IV needs to support women's economic activities, thus addressing persistent barriers to productive resources and ecosystem services. Women's access to finance, land, water, and (climate / digital) technologies remains highly unequal. Often, women face constraints related to control over legal identity, documentation, mobility and personal safety, limiting their participation in economic activities. These factors should be recognised as structural constraints and addressed in investment and development programmes.

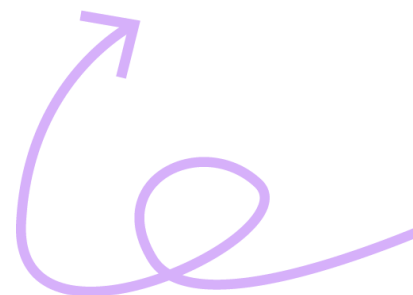
GAP IV should emphasize supporting universal, publicly financed social protection systems and promote gender-responsive budgeting as a policy tool. Investments in care infrastructure and services should be understood as productive investments that generate employment, strengthen resilience and support inclusive growth.

GAP IV should have a special focus on women in conflict, recovery contexts, (climate) crisis situations and forced displacement, where economic exclusion is both a cause and a consequence of vulnerability.

## *COMMITMENT TO A CLIMATE-JUST FUTURE*

Climate action and biodiversity protection have to be key priorities in the upcoming GAP IV. EU's external action must effectively address these biggest crises of our time which are reaping havoc on vulnerable communities, and pushing women in all their diversities, into extreme situations of violence and exploitation.

The Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), emphasises the need to take into account gender equality in climate and biodiversity policies and action. These conventions provide a clear gender equality roadmaps, translated into the Gender Action Plan Belém under the UNFCCC and the Gender Action Plan under the CBD. The challenges in each of these areas can only be solved with a common and integrated approach. Therefore, it is crucial that the upcoming EU GAP IV aligns with already existing international commitments and frameworks.



# 10 FEMINIST RECOMMENDATIONS

*for the EU Gender Action Plan IV*

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1. Apply fully an Intersectional, Gender-Transformative and Human Rights Based approach building on the successful format of GAPIII
  2. Strengthen Women's Rights and (Eco)Feminist organisations through their meaningful engagement as well as dedicated grant-funding, including an EU Feminist Fund.
  3. Ensure systemic integration of gender-equality aims across all EU external policies, including through the specific funding-targets of GAPIII that 85% of all EU funding should be in line with gender-marker one ([OECD-DAC](#)).
  4. Increase the target for EU funding that have Gender Equality as one of the main objectives to 20% of all actions, up from 5% for Gender-Marker 2 in GAPIII.
  5. Places gender-equality at the heart of Global Gateway as essential to the EU's value-based approach, including targets for the leadership of women in all their diversity in the design, implementation and monitoring of Global Gateway projects.
  6. Maintains the thematic focus and geographical scope already in GAPIII, including rights-based, inclusive, green and sustainable development.

7. Match these political commitments with adequate and predictable funding for GAP IV in the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework and the Global Gateway instrument, which must reflect the Gender-marker financial Targets of 85% and 20% ([Gender marker 1 and 2](#)).
8. Provide sufficient and accessible financial means to support gender-just climate actions. Prioritise climate solution initiatives led by women-led grassroots organisations and their networks.
9. GAP-IV should have measurable, time-bound indicators of success developed with feminist civil society organisations and local women's CSOs, integrating them into national policy dialogues and programming, including on Global Gateway, in partner countries.
10. Ensure that EU delegations regularly update their gender country profiles (GCPs) by engaging with civil society organisations, in particular (eco)feminist and women's rights organisations, and integrate priorities into their Country-Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs) and CSO roadmaps.

## STAY ENGAGED!



**WECF**

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**Women Engage  
for a Common Future**

Arthur van Schendelstraat 550  
3511 MH Utrecht  
The Netherlands  
Telefoon: +31 6 19313741

[www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)  
[www.wecf.org/de](http://www.wecf.org/de)



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@wecf\_international  
@wecf.germany



**LINKEDIN**

WECF International  
WECF Deutschland



**Bluesky**

@wecf.org  
@wecfgermany.bsky.social



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