



# **Women's Economic Empowerment in the WTO System and the EU Approach**

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# General International Framework on Women's Rights

- 1979: The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which entered into force on Sept. 3, 1981.
- 1995: Approved Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action during the 4<sup>o</sup> UN Conference on Women.
- 1999: CEDAW's Optional Protocol, which *entered into force* Dec. 22, 2000.
- 2005 – The UNGA World Summit for the Millennium Development Goals: Goal n.3 “Promote gender equality and empower women”.
- 2015: the UNGA adopted the 2030 Agenda and established at Sustainable Development Goal n.5 “to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*”
- 2024: the UNGA adopted the Pact for the Future to “turbocharge” the SDGs.



# 1995 – Women Empowerment in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action



# 1995 – Women Empowerment in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

“ The Platform for Action is **an agenda for women’s empowerment**. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women 1/ and at **removing all the obstacles to women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making**. This means that the **principle of shared power and responsibility** should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities. **Equality between women and men is** a matter of human rights and a **condition for social justice** and is also a necessary and **fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace**. A transformed partnership based on equality between women and men is a condition for people centred sustainable development. A sustained and long-term commitment is essential, so that women and men can work together for themselves, for their children and for society to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.”



# 1995 – The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

## F. Women and the economy

F.1. **Promote women's economic rights and independence**, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

F.2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.

F.3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.

F.4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.

F.5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.

F.6. **Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.**



# 2015 - Empower all Women in the UN 2030 Agenda

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 established at Sustainable Development Goal 5 to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*.



**Achieve gender  
equality and  
empower all  
women and girls**



## 5<sup>th</sup> SDG

5.a Undertake reforms to **give women equal rights to economic resources**, as well as **access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources**, in accordance with national laws:

5.b **Enhance the use of enabling technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

5.c **Adopt and strengthen sound policies** and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels



# Pact for the Future (UNGA Resolution A/79/L.2) 20/09/2024

In the Pact which comprised two annexes (the global digital compact and the Declaration on Future Generations), women empowerment is addressed in a cross-cutting way and through specific objectives:

“The Pact for the Future (...)

15. **None of our goals** can be achieved **without** the full, safe, equal and meaningful participation and representation of **all women** in political and economic life. We reaffirm our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 5 to **accelerating our efforts to achieve gender equality, women’s participation and the empowerment of all women and girls in all domains** and to **eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.**

Actions: (...)

**Action 8.** We will achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.





# Pact for the Future (UNGA Resolution A/79/L.2) 20/09/2024

(...)

**Action 31. We will ensure that science, technology and innovation improve gender equality and the lives of all women and girls.**

Annex I Global Digital Compact

Principles (...)

**(d) Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and their full, equal and meaningful participation in the digital space are essential to close the gender digital divide and advance sustainable development.** Our cooperation will empower all women and girls, encourage leadership of women, mainstream a gender perspective and counter and eliminate all forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology;



# Pact for the Future (UNGA Resolution A/79/L.2) 20/09/2024

## “Annex II Declaration on Future Generations

Guiding principles

(...)

7. The achievement of gender equality, **the empowerment of all women and girls and the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms** without discrimination of any kind are **necessary requirements for a sustainable future.**”





# MINISTERS' MEETING ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Matera, 4-5-6 October



# G7 2024 - Empowering Women and Girls, Empowering Nations: A Collective Effort to Advance Gender Equality

The Italian G7 Presidency has placed gender equality and the protection and promotion of women's rights at the core of its political agenda. Capitalizing on former G7 outcomes, the Presidency has organized the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, highlighting the compromise to **guarantee to women full participation in all employment sectors, business and public life**, with a view to building a more inclusive and cohesive society. Furthermore, the members acknowledging that the declining birth rate affecting all G7 members threatens social stability and long-term development prospects, indicated "how urgent and necessary it is to work **on work-life balance policies** that do not penalize parental choices, thus **shaping a future in which personal, family and professional fulfillment can coexist.**"

Available at <https://www.g7italy.it/en/ministers-meeting-on-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/>





## Trade for Women

“The issue of gender was first introduced into the WTO in 2016 due to the **influence of non-state actors** and the **political impetus of former WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo**”.

In Anush der Boshosian “Gender-Responsive WTO: Making Trade Rules and Policies Work for Women\*.” *Trade Policy and Gender Equality*, edited by Amrita Bahri et al., Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 21–43.

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# WTO Director General Roberto Azevedo (2013 – 2020)



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[https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/dg\\_e/ra\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/dg_e/ra_e.htm)

*“Investing in women - and empowering women to invest in themselves - is a risk-free venture. What society gives them, **they give back ten times over**”.*

In WTO Gender Aware Trade Policy, 2017. Available at [https://www.wto.org/english/news\\_e/news17\\_e/dgra\\_21jun17\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/dgra_21jun17_e.pdf).



# WTO Join Declaration on Women and Economic Empowerment (2017)

The signatories of the Declaration agreed to **collaborate**:

- on making trade and **development policies more gender-responsive**, including by sharing experiences relating to policies and programmes aimed at encouraging women's participation in trade. by sharing best practices for conducting gender-based analysis of trade policies and for monitoring their effects.
- by sharing ways of **collecting gender data** and analysing gender-focused statistics related to trade.
- by working together in the WTO to remove barriers for women's economic empowerment and increase their participation in trade**
- by **ensuring that Aid for Trade supports efforts to analyse, design and implement more gender-responsive trade policies.**



## From the Buenos Aires Declaration:

- Some WTO Members have introduced gender equality sections in their **Trade Policy Review Reports**. According to the Secretariat “48% WTO Members under review have voluntarily included information on their gender responsive trade policies between 2018 and 2020”. (In the EU TRP of 2013, “Gender equality and women's economic empowerment” is mentioned in the “Sustainability” topic.
- From 2018 to 2019, WTO Members who endorsed the Buenos Aires Declaration proponents (127 WTO Members) with the support of the Secretariat organised the **thematic workshops mentioned in the Buenos Aires Declaration** to share experience on integrating gender into their trade policies to better understand how trade impacts women.
- In September 2020, WTO Members with the support of the Secretariat created the **Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender** (WT/L/1095/Rev.1), co-chaired by Cabo Verde, El Salvador and the United Kingdom.





# The Protagonist Role of the Secretariat

- The Secretariat launched its second **Action Plan on Trade and Gender (2021-2026)**\*. *In the plan, it was included a **WTO Bridge Programme** dedicated to strengthening women entrepreneurs trade capacity offering courses to women and providing support by reinforcing coordination and collaboration between businesswomen associations at national, regional and international levels.*
- The Secretariat created **Gender Research Hub (GSH)**, a platform idealized to promote dialogue between researchers on trade and women issues. The GSH organized the **1<sup>st</sup> World Trade Congress on Gender (2022)** and **the 1<sup>st</sup> WTO Trade and Gender Summit (2023)**.

\* The first was launched ven Before the adoption of the Buenos Aires Declaration for the period od first Action Plan on Trade and Gender (2017- 2019 – extended to 2020)



# Impact: Trade

## Trade Impact Working Group

The historic Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade shows that collaboration through the International Gender Champions can have an impact far beyond the network.

Available at <https://genderchampions.com/impact/trade>

# Why Trade is fundamental to advance women's economic empowerment?

WTO OMC

Trade  
**DIALOGUES**  
An in-depth look at the Report:

**WOMEN AND TRADE**  
THE ROLE OF TRADE IN  
PROMOTING GENDER *EQUALITY*

15 October 2020 | 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm (CET time)



# Women and Trade Report (2020)

Women tend to face disproportionately higher barriers to trade compared to men. In addition to discrimination, women face greater barriers to finance, higher costs of doing business, and more limited access to information and markets.

Because women hold a disproportionate **share of lower-skill jobs**, they can be particularly vulnerable to trade related shocks that directly expose female dominated industries to foreign competition or layoffs resulting from the introduction of new technologies. Women agricultural workers are especially vulnerable to imports because women are more likely to be engaged in less-productive, subsistence farming.



# Women and Trade Report (2020)

Businesses involved in international trade employ more women. In developing countries, women make up 33 percent of the workforce in firms that engage in trade, compared with just 24 percent in non-exporting firms.

Trade also creates better jobs for women. Workers in both developed and emerging economies are almost 50 percent more likely to be employed in formal jobs if they work in sectors that trade more or that are more integrated into global value chains.

Countries that are more open to trade, as measured by the ratio of trade to gross domestic product, have higher levels of gender equality.



# Does WTO provide for mechanisms to benefit women in international trade?

**TBT Agreement:** The relevant areas under the TBT Agreement identified as conducive to women empowerment and gender equality are those that encourage transparency of, and access to, information on technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment procedures and measures designed to give women businesses privileged access to markets through certain technical regulation or international standards requirements.

In 2021 the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** published the **women entrepreneurship standard (IWA 34:2021)** developed by the International Trade Center at **an International Workshop Agreement (IWA 34:2021)**, defining what is meant by Women-owned businesses, Women-led businesses, Women-led cooperatives, and Women-led informal enterprises.

In May 2024 ISO published **the Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment (ISO 53800:2024)**.



# Standard on Women Entrepreneurship

The **women entrepreneurship standard** was proposed by the **International Trade Centre (ITC)** and the **Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS)**, with the support of the **Government of Sweden**. They organized an **“International Workshop Agreement”** where multistakeholder were invited to contribute online to **the definition of women's entrepreneurship**. This procedure to obtain a recognized ISO document is recognized to be a quick and flexible one, in which the process to obtain *the standard is largely decided by the proposing organization*. The International Trade Centre is the joint agency of the WTO and the UN, whose main goal is to support small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in the global economy. The ITC, together with the WTO Secretariat is the main responsible for advancing women's empowerment initiatives in the WTO, and for the initiative **She Trades**.



# Standard on Women Entrepreneurship

**Women-owned business:** *business that is more than 50 % owned by one or more women, whose management and control lie with one or more women, where a woman is a signatory of the business's legal documents and financial accounts, and which is operated independently from businesses that are not owned by women.*

**Women-led business:** *business that is at least 25 % owned by one or more women, whose management and control lie with one or more women, which has at least one third of the board of directors comprised of women, where a board exists, where a woman is a signatory of the business's legal documents and financial accounts, and which is operated independently from businesses that are neither led nor owned by women.*

**Women-led cooperative:** *cooperative which more than 50 % of the total number of votes are held by women, where the majority of the board of directors are women, and where the majority of leadership positions, if applicable, are held by women.*

**Women-led informal enterprise:** *informal enterprise whose management and control lie with one or more women. [The woman/women make(s) the important strategic and operational decisions about the economic unit for which her/their work is performed and about the organization of her/their work, she/they is/are not accountable to or supervised by other persons, and she/they is/are not dependent on a single other economic unit or person for access to the market, raw materials or capital items.*

Available at: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/en/#iso:std:iso:iwa:34:ed-1:v1:en>





# She Trades Initiative – ITC

Available at: <https://www.shetrades.com/>

## A global community of 19 SheTrades Hubs

SheTrades Hubs are nationally or regionally anchored resource centres for women entrepreneurs to access trainings on key topics, market and investment opportunities. Our global community comprises 17 in-country and two regional hubs across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and Middle East and North Africa region.

Discover SheTrades Hubs



# She Trades Initiative – ITC

Available at: <https://www.shetrades.com/>

## The SheTrades Initiative in Figures



UN and WTO joint agency initiative connecting 3 million women to market



US\$140 million in trade opportunities generated for women



30,000 women-led businesses directly supported



Presence in 25 countries



Global network of 350 partner organisations from 65 countries



Technical expertise in facilitating trade, improving competitiveness of women and integrating the business sector of developing countries into the global economy



Partners with private sector and governments to improve services and policies for women, build a conducive ecosystem for women to trade and foster gender equality



# ISO Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment (May 2024)

“This document gives guidance on how to promote and implement gender equality and women's empowerment. **It provides guidelines for organizations to develop the capabilities to achieve a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment.** The guidelines include the framework, resources, policies, tools and good practices for contextualizing, promoting and implementing gender equality. This document focuses on the inequality resulting from the gender specific roles assigned to women, girls, men and boys and is applicable to all types of organizations (public or private), regardless of their size, location or field of activity.

Available at <https://www.iso.org/standard/84591.html>



# ISO Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment (May 2024)

“Definitions: (...)

## women's empowerment

**process of enabling social, economic, cultural and political conditions for women to take control of their own lives and voices, development and future**

Note 1 to entry: **The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives.** It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

Note 2 to entry: This implies that to be empowered they must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have **agency and ability and control to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make choices and decisions** (such as is provided through private life/families, leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions).”

Available at <https://www.iso.org/standard/84591.html>





# World Trade Congress on Gender

## Building Recovery Through Inclusive Trade



The WTO realized that although **trade liberalization leads to the creation of new job opportunities**, these jobs are usually in low-wage sectors such as agriculture, tourism, or the garment industry. As **wage workers**, women often have neither the technical skills nor the organizational structures to defend themselves against exploitative working conditions. **Self-employed women**, on the other hand, usually run small or micro-enterprises that have few or no employees and generate little turnover, leaving women at the margins of transnational trade.

*December 2022 World first ever Trade Congress on Gender under the theme “Gender Equality for Sustainable Trade and Recovery”.*



# WEIDE : Women Exporters in the Digital Economy Fund

- The WTO and the International Trade Center (ITC)\* launched at the MC 13<sup>th</sup> (February 2024, Abu Dhabi) the **Women Exporters in the Digital Economy (WEIDE) Fund** to help women-led businesses and women entrepreneurs in developing economies and least-developed countries adopt digital technologies and expand the online presence of their enterprises.
- Obs: The ITC is the joint agency of the United Nations and the WTO dedicated to supporting small businesses of developing countries. Under the ITC an important initiative has been developed since 2015 to address the 5<sup>th</sup> SDG, the ***She Trades*** Initiative, which comprises 17 countries and two regional hubs across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa region supporting women entrepreneurs to access trainings on market and investment opportunities. In 2020 the ITC with the support of the Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS) developed the **women's entrepreneurship standard, published by ISO as an International Worskhop Agreement (IWA 34:2021)**, defining what is meant by Women-owned businesses, Women-led businesses, Women-led cooperatives, and Women-led informal enterprises.



# WEIDE : Women Exporters in the Digital Economy Fund

[https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/womenandtrade\\_e/weide\\_video\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/womenandtrade_e/weide_video_e.htm)

## Objectives

With the support of the **WEIDE Fund**, women-led small businesses will be able to:

- ❑ Improve their business operations to increase their competitiveness
- ❑ Transact business and trade more effectively internationally
- ❑ Use new or more online channels to sell their products/services
- ❑ Create and upgrade employment opportunities
- ❑ Benefit from additional assistance provided by a corporate partner as a result of support from the Fund.



## Funding and partnership

The WTO and ITC aim to raise **US\$ 50 million** for the Fund, with an initial target of US\$ 25 million, from public and private sector partners. The Fund will actively seek partnerships with various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, development banks, philanthropic foundations and the private sector to implement initiatives aimed at maximizing the impact of the Fund's activities. Collaboration and knowledge-sharing will be crucial to achieving sustainable and scalable solutions.



## Implementation

The Fund's activities will be implemented through **projects in specific countries** in cooperation with Business Support Organizations selected through a competitive call for proposals. At the country level, the Fund will implement a two-track system tailored to meet the needs of the targeted MSMEs. Both tracks will include a grant and complementary technical assistance.

[More information](#) →





# New Services Domestic Regulation: the first «women provisions» in WTO Law

Applicable to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), specifically Article VI:4: “4. *With a view to ensuring that measures relating to qualification requirements and procedures, **technical standards and licensing requirements do not constitute unnecessary barriers to trade in services**, the Council for Trade in Services shall, through appropriate bodies it may establish, develop any **necessary disciplines**. Such disciplines shall aim to **ensure that such requirements are**, inter alia:*

- (a) **based on objective and transparent criteria**, such as competence and the ability to supply the service;*
- (b) **not more burdensome than necessary to ensure the quality of the service**;*
- (c) in the case of licensing procedures, **not in themselves a restriction on the supply of the service.**”*

Although only 72 WTO members joined the SD plurilateral initiative, the provisions will be applied on a most-favoured nation (MFN) basis, and the members that are signatories will inscribe any commitments into their schedules under GATS as additional commitments.



## New Services Domestic Regulation: the first «women provisions» in WTO law

- According to the new provisions, **when a Member adopts or maintains measures relating to the authorization for the supply of a service, including financial one, it shall ensure that “such measures do not discriminate between men and women”** highlighting that **“differential treatment that is reasonable and objective, and aims to achieve a legitimate purpose, and adoption by Members of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women, shall not be considered discrimination for the purposes of this provision.”**



## ABU DHABI MINISTERIAL DECLARATION (2 March 2024)

16. We recognise that **women's economic empowerment** and **women's participation in trade** **contributes to economic growth and sustainable development**. We take note of WTO work, including in collaboration with other relevant international organizations, through activities such as capacity-building initiatives and sharing experience to facilitate women's participation in trade.

Available at: <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/MIN24/DEC.pdf&Open=True>





# Article XX GATT 1994

## Article XX - *General Exceptions*

Subject to the requirement that such measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where the same conditions prevail, or a disguised restriction on international trade, nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent the adoption or enforcement by any contracting party of measures:

- (a) necessary to protect public morals;
- (b) necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health; ...
- (e) relating to the products of prison labour; ...
- (g) relating to the conservation of exhaustible natural resources if such measures are made effective in conjunction with restrictions on domestic production or consumption;

## GATS Article XIV - General Exceptions

Subject to the requirement that such measures are not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries where like conditions prevail, or a disguised restriction on trade in services, nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent the adoption or enforcement by any Member of measures:

- (a) necessary to protect public morals or to maintain public order;
- (b) necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health;
- (c) necessary to secure compliance with laws or regulations which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Agreement ...



## Article 2 of the TBT Agreement - Preparation, Adoption and Application of Technical Regulations by Central Government Bodies

With respect to their central government bodies:

2.1 Members shall ensure that in respect of technical regulations, products imported from the territory of any Member shall be accorded treatment no less favourable than that accorded to like products of national origin and to like products originating in any other country.

2.2 Members shall ensure that technical regulations are not prepared, adopted or applied with a view to or with the effect of creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade. For this purpose, technical regulations shall not be more trade-restrictive than necessary to fulfil a legitimate objective, taking account of the risks non-fulfilment would create. **Such legitimate objectives are, inter alia: national security requirements; the prevention of deceptive practices; protection of human health or safety, animal or plant life or health, or the environment.** In assessing such risks, relevant elements of consideration are, inter alia: available scientific and technical information, related processing technology or intended end-uses of products.



# Does WTO provide for mechanisms to benefit women in international trade?

In 2021 the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO)** published the **women entrepreneurship standard (IWA 34:2021)** developed by the International Trade Center **as an International Workshop Agreement (IWA 34:2021)**, defining what is meant by Women-owned businesses, Women-led businesses, Women-led cooperatives, and Women-led informal enterprises.

In May 2024 ISO published **the Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment (ISO 53800:2024)**.



# Does WTO provide for mechanisms to benefit women in international trade?

**Tariff preferences under the Enabling Clause:** Tariff preferences in favour of imports from developing countries are also allowed under the Enabling Clause and the Appellate Body has made clear that such preferences can be conditioned on compliance with *development related criteria (and women-related considerations are obviously development related)* so long as **similarly situated countries are treated similarly in the application of such development conditions.**

Ex: The **CEDAW and the ILO Conventions on Equal Remuneration (n. 100) and on non discrimination (n. 111)** remain a requirement under the **EU Regulation that establishes the Generalised Scheme of Preferences** + for granting trade benefits for low or lower middle-income countries that commit to respect basic human, environment and labour rights. The beneficiaries' countries can benefit from **complete duty suspensions for products** across approximately 66% of all EU tariff lines, including sensitive products.

The text of the Regulation is available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02012R0978-20231128>





# The EU Approach to Women Economic Empowerment



# Equality between men and women in EU Treaties

Treaty of Rome (1957) « *men and women shall receive equal pay for equal work*»

*Treaty of Lisbon (2009)*

Article 2, TEU «*The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, (...) in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and **equality between women and men** prevail*»



# Equality between men and women in EU Treaties

Article 3, TEU

(...)

« 5. ***In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests*** and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, ***the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child,*** as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter. »

Article 8, TFEU « In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women. »



# Equality between men and women in Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

Article 23 Equality between men and women

**Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay.**

**The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.**



# Sound Directives for Women Empowerment

**1992** - Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding

**2006** - Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the **principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment** of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast).

**2010** - Directive 2010/41/EU on the application of the **principle of equal treatment** between men and women engaged in an activity in a **self-employed capacity**.

**2019** - Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

**2022** – Women on Board Directive.

**2023** – Directive to strengthen the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through **pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms**.



# **EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III: An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action (25 November 2020)**

*SDG 5 is one of the three least financed SDGs globally. The EU has made a commitment that at least 85% of all new external actions will have gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant objective or as a principal objective by 2025. (...)*

***The EU should continue to promote gender equality through its trade policy.*** *New trade agreements should include strong provisions on gender equality, including compliance with **relevant ILO and UN Conventions**. Compliance with these conventions should remain a requirement under the new Generalised Scheme of Preferences regulation, which will take effect in 2024. The EU will also continue to include dedicated gender analyses in all ex-ante impact assessments, sustainability impact assessments, and policy reviews linked to trade. (...)*



# Joint mid-term report on the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP III) Brussels, 20.11.2023 JOIN(2023)

“Among its key achievements, the GAP III has significantly improved policy-programming alignment, resulting in increased actions and funding for gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment. It has played a pivotal role in integrating a gender perspective into the **Global Gateway strategy**, aimed at ensuring that the **benefits of investment are fairly and equally accessible**, and in Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs). (...)

Regional TEIs, Global Gateway flagship projects and other regional initiatives address the gender-specific dimension of cross-border and global challenges, complementing country level interventions, to promote public health capacity, universal and fair access to basic services, sexual and reproductive health and rights, **women’s economic empowerment in the green and digital transitions**, gender-responsive migration management, and peace and security.”



# Ex. of Global Gateway Program in Tanzania

‘Breaking the Glass Ceiling’ programme in Tanzania aims to free women from all forms of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres and to promote women’s economic empowerment, through opportunities in the green and digital sectors, and financial support to women’s business.



Today, the European Union-funded "Breaking the Class Ceiling" program is convening a key meeting on women's economic empowerment in Tanzania. Different Stakeholders are gathering to discuss challenges and solutions to women's access to financial services

EU in Tanzania @EUinTZ · Jun 20

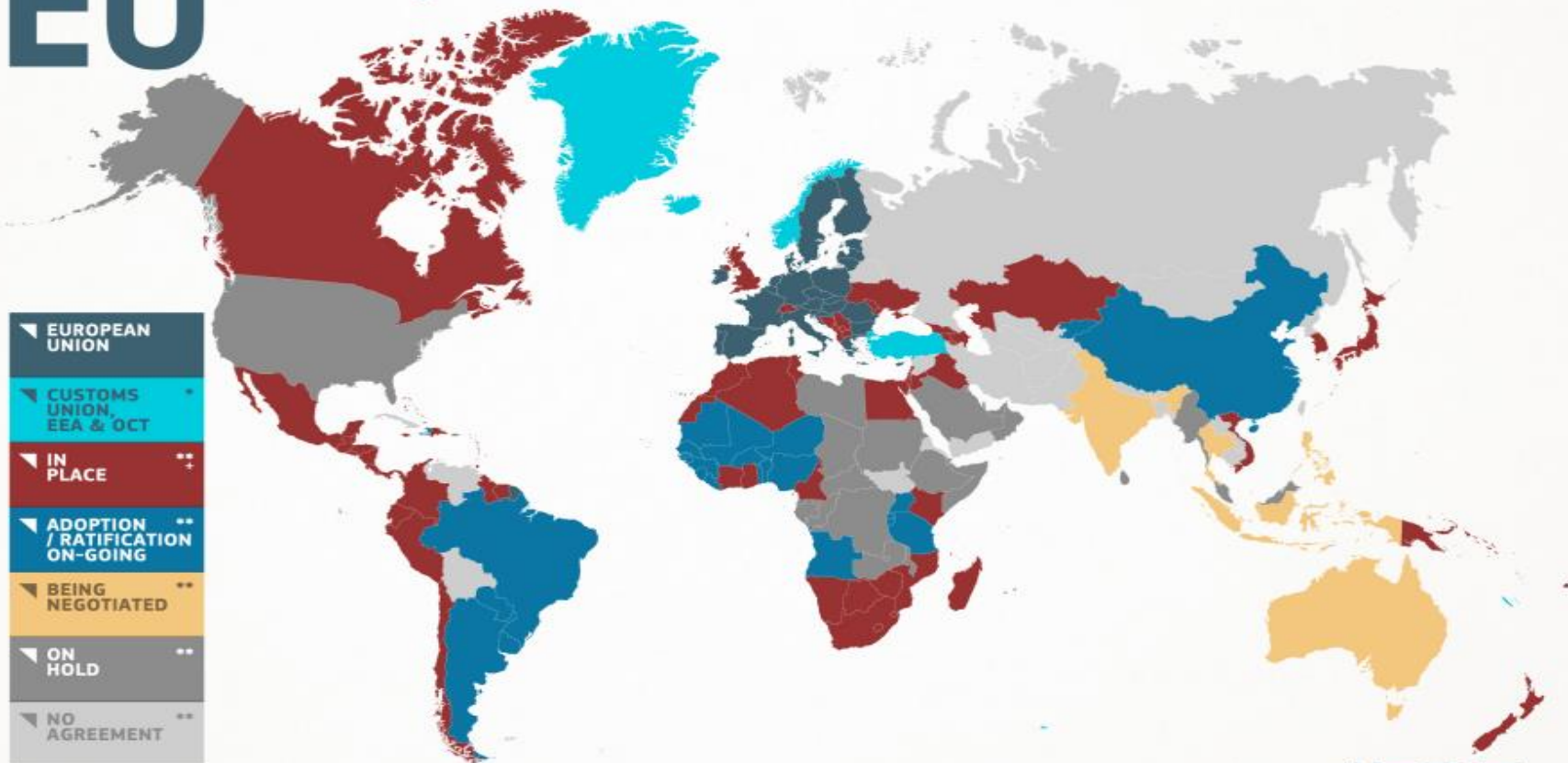
Kupitia, programu yake ya "Breaking the Glass Ceeling" leo, Umoja wa Ulaya unafanya mkutano muhimu kuhusu uwezeshaji wa kiuchumi wa wanawake nchini Tanzania. Wadau mbalimbali wameusanyika kujadili changamoto na suluhisho za upatikanaji wa huduma za kifedha kwa wanawake.





# EU trade agreements 2024

Updated 24/07/2024



\* European Economic Area (EEA) / Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT).

\*\* Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), Investment Agreement, Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), Partnership and Co-operation Agreement with preferential element (PCA).

+ The updated agreements with Tunisia, and Eastern and Southern Africa are currently being updated; the updated agreement with Chile is under ratification. The DCFTA with Georgia does not apply in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.



RE-GLOBE

## EU Trade Agreements

The EU currently has **44 trade agreements** in place with **76 partners**.

“The EU is the world's 1st trader of goods and services, imports and exports combined, accounting for an estimated 16.1% of world trade (data from 2023)”

“[O]pen and rules-based trade supports over 30 million European jobs” **OPEN SUSTAINABLE ASSERTIVE TRADE**  
- For a resilient and competitive Europe, European Commission, November 2024



# Relevance of International Trade & Trade Agreements for the European Union

The **EU is the world's largest exporter**, with a total annual export of almost **€4 trillion**.

**EU exports of goods to partners with which we have an agreement** grew by 1.2% in 2023. Meanwhile, EU exports to partners **without** an agreement declined by 2.2%

The EU imports 28% of its **critical raw materials** under trade agreements; this could further rise once a free trade agreement with Australia is concluded, especially for critical raw materials such as lithium, manganese, bauxite, copper and cobalt.

Data from: OPEN SUSTAINABLE ASSERTIVE TRADE - For a resilient and competitive Europe, European Commission, November 2024



## EU FTAs TSD Chapters

The **new generation of free trade agreements (FTAs)** concluded by the EU after the Lisbon Treaty, include **trade and sustainable development chapters** implementing international labour conventions and environmental provisions: **Canada, Central America, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador, Georgia, Japan, Mexico, Moldova, Singapore, South Korea, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Vietnam, Kenya and New Zealand.** In addition, negotiations are going on with **Australia, India, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and the Mercosur.**



# EU new generation of Free Trade Agreements

- **South Korea** [2011 (provisionally), 2015 (fully)]
- **CETA** [2017 (provisionally)]
- **Japan** [2019]
- **Singapore** [2019]
- **Vietnam** [2020]
- **United Kingdom** [2021]
- **New Zealand [2024]**

EU-South Korea Art. 13.4.2 “recognising full and productive employment and decent work for all as a key element of sustainable development for all countries and as a priority objective of international cooperation and to promoting the development of international trade in a way that is conducive to full and productive employment and decent work for all, including men, **women** and young people.” Annex 13: (...) **cooperation on trade-related aspects of the ILO Decent Work Agenda**, including on the interlinkages between trade and full and productive employment, labour market adjustment, core labour standards, labour statistics, human resources development and life-long learning, social protection and social inclusion, social dialogue and **gender equality**.”



# European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2018 on gender equality in EU trade agreements (2017/2015(INI))

“26. Calls on the Commission and the Council to promote, in trade agreements, the commitment to adopt, maintain and implement gender equality laws, regulations and policies effectively, **including the necessary active measures to promote gender equality and women empowerment at all levels;**

27. Welcomes the commitment by the Commission to ensure that the trade negotiations **to modernise the current EU-Chile Association Agreement will include, for the first time in the EU, a specific chapter on gender and trade;** stresses the need to be informed of the content of this chapter; **calls on the Commission and the Council to promote and support the inclusion of a specific gender chapter in EU trade and investment agreements, building on existing examples such as the Chile-Uruguay and the Chile-Canada FTAs,** and to ensure that it specifically foresees the commitment to promote gender equality and women empowerment; (...)”



# A paradigm shift in women's provisions in EU FTAs and IIAs

**EU-New Zealand FTA** (negotiations concluded in June 2022, entered into force on 1 May 2024.)

**EU-Chile FTA** (negotiations concluded in December 2022)

**EU-Kenia FTA** (negotiations concluded in June 2023)

**EU-Angola Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA)**  
(negotiations concluded in December 2022, entered into force on 1° September 2024)



“The European Parliament has asked for **gender mainstreaming in EU trade agreements to be reinforced**, calling for **gender issues to be taken into account throughout the texts and during negotiations**. **Parliament is particularly keen for all trade agreements to include dedicated chapters on gender equality and women's empowerment, with binding and enforceable gender provisions and provisions for proper monitoring and compliance.** It has also called for **comprehensive ex ante and ex post gender analysis of potential and actual impacts**, and for **gender balanced representation and gender expertise on trade negotiating teams** and **the bodies established to advise on, monitor and assess the implementation of trade agreements”**



## EU-New Zealand FTA

(Council Decision (EU) 2024/244 of 27 November 2023 on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand)

first agreement to integrate **the new TSD approach**.

**a dedicated trade and gender equality article (see also the EU PTAs with Chile and Kenya, and the SIFA with Angola)**

in instances of **serious violations of core labour and climate commitments**, namely **the ILO fundamental principles and rights at work, and of the Paris Agreement**, sanctions can be applied - these sanctions may take the form of **compensation** by the party who is complained against, or also **suspension of 'the application of obligations under the covered provisions'**

***none of the other provisions in the TSD chapters are subject to sanctions***

**DAGs advise on all aspects of the agreement**, and their activity is not limited to the TSD chapter, as was the case in previous EU FTAs (except the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement)



# Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and New Zealand

**SEEKING to advance** gender equality and **the economic empowerment of women** by promoting the importance of gender inclusive policies and practices in economic activities, including international trade, in an effort to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination (Preamble)

## **Article 19.4 - Trade and gender equality**

1. The Parties recognise the need to advance gender equality and **women's economic empowerment** and to promote a gender perspective in the Parties' trade and investment relationship. Moreover, **they acknowledge the important current and future contribution by women to economic growth through their participation in economic activity, including international trade**. Accordingly, the Parties emphasise their intention to implement this Agreement in a manner that promotes and enhances gender equality.
2. The Parties recognise that **inclusive trade policies** can contribute to **advancing women's economic empowerment** and gender equality, in line with **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Target 5** and the objectives of the **Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment adopted at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires on 12 December 2017**.



6. Each Party shall effectively implement its obligations under the United Nations conventions to which it is a party that address gender equality or women's rights, including the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979, noting in particular its provisions related to eliminating discrimination against women in economic life and in the field of employment.** ...

9. Acknowledging the importance of the work on trade and gender being carried out at the multilateral level, **the Parties shall cooperate in international and multilateral fora, including at the WTO and OECD, to advance trade and gender issues** and understanding, including, as appropriate, through voluntary reporting as part of their national reports during their WTO Trade Policy Reviews.



# EU-Angola Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA) entered into force sept. 2024 - ARTICLE 35 - Investment and gender equality

1. The Parties recognise that **inclusive investment policies** can contribute to **advancing women's economic empowerment and gender equality, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the UN 2030 Agenda**. They acknowledge **the important contribution by women to economic growth through their participation in economic activity, including investment**. The Parties underline their intention to implement this Agreement in a manner that **promotes and enhances gender equality**.

2. The **Parties shall work together bilaterally and in relevant fora**, as appropriate, to strengthen their cooperation on **investment-related aspects of gender equality policies and measures, including activities designed to improve the capacity and conditions for women, including workers, businesswomen and entrepreneurs, to access and benefit from the opportunities created by this Agreement**.



# The EU Single Entry Point

## Chief Trade Enforcement Officer Single Entry Point -

<https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/single-entry-point-0>



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRADE

Directorate F – Enforcement, Market access, SMEs, Legal affairs and Technology  
Unit F1 – Single entry point on Enforcement, Market access and SMEs

### COMPLAINT

relating to alleged violations of commitments stemming from free trade agreements (FTA) concluded by the European Union or Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences (GSP) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008<sup>1</sup>



# Operating guidelines for the Single Entry Point and complaints mechanism for the enforcement of EU trade agreements and Arrangements (December 2023)

## Who can submit a complaint

### For TSD or GSP complaints:

- a. EU Member States
- b. **Entities having their registered office, central administration or principal place of business within the Union**
- c. **Industry associations of EU companies**
- d. **Associations of EU employers**
- e. **Trade unions** or trade union associations formed in accordance with the laws of any **EU Member State**
- f. **EU Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs) formed in accordance with EU trade agreements (for TSD complaints)**
- g. **NGOs formed in accordance with the laws of any EU Member State**
- h. **Citizens or permanent residents of an EU Member State**





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Co-funded by  
the European Union