

Plan International Recommendations - second information session EU Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan

Plan International EU Office welcomes the European External Action Service's invitation for a second information session with civil society. In light of this, building on our previous recommendations, we would like to highlight a number of points that would support a strong EU Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan that leaves no one behind.

General principles

In reference to our first submission to the EEAS in April 2019, we continue to believe that the backlash against gender equality and women and girls' rights will be a key trend in upcoming years. This is why we recommend **strong gender mainstreaming** in the action plan, **combined with targeted actions** for girls and women's human rights on specific issues or areas such as the **world of work and labour and economic rights**, where young women face particular challenges such as **unequal pay and other forms of gender-based discrimination**. The EU should continue supporting the ratification and implementation of human rights instruments such as the **UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**. This will be key in ensuring coherence with and supporting the human rights approach of key EU documents such as the upcoming EU Gender Action Plan III.

Girls Get Equal Power: empowering and protecting individuals, building resilient, inclusive and democratic societies

For equal, democratic societies where all individuals are empowered, it is important to support the **meaningful, inclusive and safe participation** of women, young women and girls in decision-making, including in the public sphere, always applying an **intersectional lens**.

In addition, we encourage the EU to continue engaging with civil society, including as in the current action plan, to **support and partner with (grassroots) youth and women's organisations defending women and girls' rights**, conduct **outreach activities** in rural areas and ensure support to HRDs working on gender equality, girls and women's rights.

Girls Get Equal Freedom Online: harnessing opportunities and addressing new technological challenges

In a world that is more and more digital, for everyone to equally benefit we believe it is important apply a gender lens in relation to digital technology. Girls and young women increasingly use digital technology and online platforms to express themselves, including as a form of political participation. **Digital literacy**, as well as their protection from **online violence and harassment** are key to support their empowerment and their freedom of expression. In his 2019 report on the situation of women human rights defenders, the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders recommends the prioritization of the protection of women defenders in online spaces, including the **right to privacy and hate speech protection**.

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