European Parliament
2024-2029

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

2026/2071(INI)

17.11.2026

DRAFT REPORT

on gender equality in the digital age: social media that works for women and girls
(2026/2071(INI))

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Rapporteur: Eleonora Meleti

CONTENTS

Page

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION 3

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT 7

ANNEX: DECLARATION OF INPUT 8

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on gender equality in the digital age: social media that works for women and girls

(2026/2071(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Articles 1, 21, 23 and 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act)[1],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)[2],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act)[3],

– having regard to Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence[4],

– having regard to Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities[5],

– having regard to the Commission proposal of 17 September 2026 for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council entitled ‘EU KIDS Act – EU Keeping Internet Digital Spaces Accountable and Trustworthy’ (COM(2026)0681),

– having regard to the Commission communication of 5 March 2020 entitled ‘A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025’ (COM(2020)0152), and the Commission communication of 5 March 2026 entitled ‘Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030’ (COM(2026)0113),

[1] OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2065/oj.
[2] OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj.
[3] OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj.
[4] OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj.
[5] OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p.69, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2018/1808/oj.

– having regard to its resolution of 17 September 2026 on the impact of social media and the online environment on young people[6],

– having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2025 on the protection of minors online[7],

– having regard to its resolution of 14 December 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on combating gender-based violence: cyberviolence[8],

– having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A10-0000/2026),

A. whereas women and girls are exposed to specific forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence; whereas between 2019 and 2023 the number of deepfake videos increased by 550 %, with 98 % of all deepfakes being pornographic, and of those targeted in deepfake pornography, 99 % are women[9];

B. whereas the rapid development of generative AI creates new opportunities but also facilitates new forms of abuse, including the creation and dissemination of non-consensual intimate imagery and manipulated sexual content;

C. whereas online abuse can have consequences beyond the digital environment, affecting women's mental health, self-esteem, professional opportunities and willingness to participate in public discourse;

D. whereas social media can contribute to the dissemination of gender stereotypes and unrealistic standards concerning appearance, lifestyle and success, potentially affecting body image, self-perception and psychological development;

E. whereas girls and young women may be particularly vulnerable to online manipulation, cyberbullying, commercial exploitation, sexualisation and social comparison on account of their age and stage of psychological development;

F. whereas the development of the digital economy and the growing role of social media platforms provide new opportunities for women to develop businesses, reach audiences, access markets and generate income;

G. whereas according to Eurostat figures for 2025, 57 % of young women in the EU aged 16 to 24 reported having encountered hostile or degrading online messages, whether directed at them personally or at others; whereas the figure for young men was 50 %;

Challenges facing women and girls on social media

1. Stresses that women and girls must be effectively protected against all forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including cyberbullying, online

[6] Texts adopted, P10_TA(2026)0313.
[7] OJ C, C/2026/1708, 24.4.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2026/1708/oj.
[8] OJ C 251, 30.6.2022, p. 2.
[9] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2026/785000/IUST_BRI(2026)785000_EN.pdf

harassment, hate speech, stalking, doxxing, impersonation, sextortion, non-consensual sharing of intimate imagery and sexualised deepfakes;

2. Highlights the specific risks arising from the rapid development of generative AI and calls for the effective implementation of the AI Act and other relevant EU legislation to address emerging forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence;

3. Expresses concern about the amplification of unrealistic standards of beauty, body image and lifestyle, as well as harmful stereotypes, through social media, including through the promotion of materialism, advertising and influencer content and the use of filters and algorithmic recommendations, and the potential impact of such standards on self-esteem, self-perception and psychological development;

4. Notes that the lack of female role models in science, technology, engineering and mathematics discourages young girls from pursuing careers in science and technology, limiting their ambitions and reinforcing gender inequalities;

5. Calls for effective measures to prevent and address the creation and dissemination of images of women and girls without their consent, including AI-generated or otherwise manipulated images, and for accessible reporting, removal and victim-support mechanisms to be put in place;

6. Calls for particular attention to be paid to the specific vulnerabilities of girls and young women online, including their exposure to cyberbullying, sexualisation, objectification, social comparison, commercial pressure and harmful or misleading content, while recognising the importance of their rights to information, participation and expression;

Social media as a tool for empowering women and girls

7. Stresses that women should not have to choose between being safe or visible online and that measures protecting women from digital violence should therefore go hand in hand with measures enabling their participation;

8. Stresses that digital platforms can provide women and girls with opportunities to express themselves, build professional identities, access information and communities, raise awareness and exchange experiences, including across borders;

9. Encourages the promotion of positive representations of women and girls online, in order to broaden opportunities and challenge persistent gender stereotypes;

10. Recognises that social media can provide women with opportunities for entrepreneurship, creativity, employment, income generation and access to national and international audiences and markets;

11. Encourages the development of networks and platforms connecting women creators, entrepreneurs, investors, businesses, professional organisations and civil society;

12. Observes that women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are less likely to seize the opportunities offered by social media; estimates that women who are already online are 30 to 50 % less likely than men to use the internet for income-generating

activities, to improve skills and knowledge and to find business-related information and opportunities[10];

13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate women's access to relevant EU and national funding, investment, mentoring, training and business-support programmes, in particular for women-led digital businesses, start-ups and SMEs;

Building a better digital world for women and girls

14. Welcomes the EU KIDS Act proposal, aimed at strengthening the protection of children online, including through age-appropriate safeguards and enhanced protection against harmful online content and practices; stresses the importance of effectively addressing the specific risks faced by girls in digital environments;

15. Calls on the Commission to assess the need for a dedicated EU legislative framework on cyberbullying and hate speech online, with a specific focus on girls and women as the main victims, with common minimum standards for prevention, reporting, victim protection and cooperation between competent authorities and relevant support organisations;

16. Calls for the gender dimension to be integrated into the implementation and enforcement of the Digital Services Act, including through assessments of the actual or foreseeable negative effects of any gender-based violence committed in the digital environment, and the serious consequences these might have for victims' physical and mental well-being;

17. Stresses that effective implementation, enforcement and coordination of existing EU legislation, including the Digital Services Act, the General Data Protection Regulation, the AI Act and the Directive on combating violence against women, should remain a priority;

18. Calls on online platforms to take age and gender-specific vulnerabilities into account when designing safety measures, default settings, new features and emerging technologies, reporting mechanisms, recommender systems and other relevant features;

19. Calls for stronger cooperation between public authorities, platforms, researchers, civil society and women's organisations to identify emerging risks and assess the effectiveness of existing safeguards;

°

° °

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

[10] https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditc2023d1_en.pdf.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Type your content here...

ANNEX: DECLARATION OF INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that she included in her report input on matters pertaining to the subject of the file that she received, in the preparation of the draft report, from the following interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register[1], or from the following representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies:

1. Interest representatives falling within the scope of the Interinstitutional Agreement on a mandatory transparency register
2. Representatives of public authorities of third countries, including their diplomatic missions and embassies

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that she has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.

[1] Interinstitutional Agreement of May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register (OJ L 207, 11.6.2021, p. 1, ELI:http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_interinstit/2021/611/oj).