

**Question for written answer E-002421/2025/rev.1
to the Council**
Rule 144
Elena Kountoura (The Left)

Subject: The need to establish a dedicated Council configuration on gender equality

Gender equality has been enshrined in the European Treaties since 1957.¹ However, at the current rate of progress, it is estimated that it will take more than 60 years to achieve complete equality between men and women in the EU. Today, the EU has manifold challenges to face in the area of women's rights and gender equality: eradicating all forms of gender-based violence, closing the gender pay gap between women and men, improving women's access to the labour market, reinforcing women's representation in politics and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights.

While the European Parliament has the FEMM Committee at institutional level, so far there is no specific configuration dealing with gender equality in the Council. According to the Council's Rules of Procedure, the European Council is the body responsible for setting up its configurations.²

In view of the above:

1. Does the Council recognise the need to establish a dedicated configuration on gender equality, bringing together equality ministers and deputy ministers, with a view to adopting common policies and legislation on the challenges in the area of women's rights and gender equality?
2. Is the Council committed to inviting the European Council to set up such a configuration, so that equality matters are discussed at the highest political level in the EU?

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¹ Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) sets out that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work and authorises the taking of positive measures to empower women. Article 153 of the same Treaty allows for Union action in the wider domain of equal opportunities and equal treatment in the workplace and employment. Furthermore, Article 19 of the TFEU establishes the possibility of adopting legislation to combat all forms of discrimination, including on the basis of sex.

² The establishment of new Council configurations is mainly based on Article 16(6) TEU, which establishes that the Council is to meet in different configurations, the list of which is to be adopted in accordance with Article 236 TFEU. The European Council, acting by qualified majority, has the power to determine or amend the list of Council configurations.