

EN

E-002340/2025

Answer given by Ms Lahbib

on behalf of the European Commission
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Period poverty is first and foremost a gendered aspect of poverty¹. The inability of women and girls to afford and access menstrual products, sanitation facilities and information could make them miss school or work and negatively impact their health. More than one fifth of the EU population lives at risk of poverty or social exclusion, with women being at higher risk than men, according to Eurostat (EU-SILC)²

EU initiatives, such as the Council Recommendation on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion³, are addressing the challenge of poverty. The planned EU Anti-Poverty Strategy should aim at helping people's access to the essential protections and services, along with addressing the root causes of poverty, addressing the multidimensional phenomenon of poverty and relating to gender equality challenges. The ambition is to have a systemic approach, looking at how all public policies can impact poverty. To feed into this reflection leading to the Strategy, a public consultation was launched in July 2025. Combating women's poverty is also an objective set out in the Roadmap for Women's Rights presented ahead of International Women's day in March 2025⁴.

Addressing menstrual health is crucial for achieving Social Development Goals on poverty, education, health and gender equality by 2030. The Roadmap for Women's Rights⁵ includes access to affordable menstrual hygiene products as a specific objective. Besides the adopted revision of the Value Added Tax Directive⁶, other concrete measures and actions to pursue the objectives of the Roadmap for Women's Rights will be set out in the next Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030 in view of promoting the highest standards and protecting women's physical and mental health and well-being.

¹ This issue was also addressed in PQ E-1082/25.

² Living conditions in Europe - poverty and social exclusion - Statistics Explained - Eurostat : https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_poverty_and_social_exclusion#:~:text=In%202024%2C%2093.3%20million%20people%20in%20the%20EU,women%20than%20for%20men%20%2821.9%25%20compared%20with%2020.0%25%29.

³ Council Recommendation 2023/C 41/01 of 30 January 2023 on adequate minimum income ensuring active inclusion (*OJ C 41*, 3.2.2023, p. 1). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2023_041_R_0001.

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/news/eu-roadmap-womens-rights-renewed-push-gender-equality-2025-03-07_en

⁵ Annex to the Roadmap on Women's Rights - Declaration of principles for a gender-equal society | European Commission: https://commission.europa.eu/document/7d965089-e332-473a-88a9-e246f214e3bf_en.

⁶ Council Directive (EU) 2022/542 of 5 April 2022 amending Directives 2006/112/EC and (EU) 2020/285 as regards rates of value added tax, *OJ L 107*, 6.4.2022, p. 1. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2022/542/oj/eng>.