

Follow-up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on women's entrepreneurship in rural and island areas and outermost regions

- 1. Rapporteur:** Elżbieta Katarzyna ŁUKACIJEWSKA (EPP / PL)
- 2. References:** 2024/2124(INI) / A10-0058/2026 / P10_TA(2026)0158
- 3. Date of adoption of the resolution:** 30 April 2026
- 4. Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM)
- 5. Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution acknowledges women in rural, island and outermost regions as important economic actors, and underlines that they still face persistent barriers in finance, childcare, transport, digital access, skills and protection from gender-based violence. According to the resolution closing these gaps is not just a fairness issue but also a competitiveness and cohesion issue for the European Union.

The resolution calls to strengthen access to funding and investment by expanding access to finance for women-led rural businesses, including venture capital, microloans, and public-private funds (**paragraphs 1, 12, 24**); addressing the gender funding gap in venture capital, alongside gender-responsive financial instruments (**paragraphs 12, 86**); simplifying administrative burdens for small women-led enterprises, including for example one-stop-shop advisory services (**paragraphs 28, 74**); and promoting mutual recognition of funding eligibility across Member States (MS) and ring-fence budgets for rural women in the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), Common agricultural policy (CAP), Horizon Europe, and Digital Europe (**paragraphs 26, 84**).

The resolution focuses on removing structural barriers to ensure equal access to land, credit and CAP funds via tackling legal and tax barriers, by introduction of gender representation benchmarks, financial incentives for young female farmers, addressing societal norms in policy recommendations and designing gender-sensitive agricultural tools and equipment (**paragraphs 20, 22, 55, 56, 62**).

The resolution calls for a boost in education as well as digital and entrepreneurial skills. It wants to expand women's access to science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) and digital training and integrate gender equality into school curricular. (**paragraphs 3, 29, 41, 45**).

The resolution calls for investment in rural infrastructure for affordable childcare, eldercare and healthcare to address the rural female

employment gap, for safe, reliable transport and digital connectivity to combat isolation and gender-based violence; as well as housing and intergenerational care models to support young families and ageing populations as well as implementing the Work-Life Balance Directive¹ and Barcelona childcare targets² to reduce unpaid care burdens (**paragraphs 64, 65, 69, 78**).

To enhance visibility of women in rural and island areas and outermost regions and better data collection the resolution calls for collection of gender-disaggregated data on land ownership, farm leadership, and informal work to inform policy (**paragraphs 30, 54, 84**), and supporting women's cooperatives and networks in agri-food, crafts, and tourism to preserve cultural heritage and boost local economies (**paragraphs 6, 45**).

By recognising women's role in preserving traditional crafts and promoting agritourism as economic drivers (**paragraphs 36, 40, 45**), the resolution asks for greater support to promote cultural and social empowerment of women in rural and island areas and outermost regions.

The resolution underlines the importance of the combat against gender-based violence and discrimination. It calls for the strengthening of protections under the Istanbul Convention and EU Directive 2024/1385, including for example mobile support units and rural helplines (**paragraphs 78, 82**); and targeted campaigns to challenge traditional gender roles and harassment in rural workplaces (**paragraphs 78, 83**).

6. Response to requests and overview of actions taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:

Consistent with the spending target under discussion, the Commission's proposal for an ambitious and dynamic Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-2034 is poised to promote a more integrated and comprehensive approach to rural development, including the provision of social services for the benefit of rural population, including women. Furthermore, the Commission proposes that at least 10% of the National and Regional Partnership Plans' (NRP plans) envelope (excluding the earmarked amounts for the CAP and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as well as the Social and Climate Fund and the EU Facility) be dedicated to a "rural target" for which Member States and regions are expected to build a consistent agenda of measures addressing rural areas specific needs and challenges. Taken together, these measures are expected to strengthen the provision of social services for rural

¹ DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

² Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030 2022/C 484/01

communities, including women. Article 7 of the NRP Regulation proposal defines the horizontal principles applicable to the Regulation, including the obligation for Member States to comply, in the implementation of the Fund, with the principles of the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as well as the principle of non-discrimination and gender equality. Furthermore, Article 56 of this proposed Regulation commits the monitoring committee to approve for the chapter(s) under its responsibility the criteria applied and procedures, ensuring inter alia, gender equality, and taking account of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In this light, gender equality also features as a horizontal principle under the proposed Performance Regulation. This proposal includes provisions across EU budget programmes on applying horizontal principles such as gender equality. The single expenditure tracking and performance framework will make it possible to measure the budget's contribution to gender equality more accurately and thus contribute to the enhancement of gender equality in the next MFF. The reference to more targeted support for women under the proposed CAP 2028–2034 set out in Article 6 (2), together with the provisions on farm relief services in Article 17 of the CAP Regulation proposal, and complemented by the NRP Regulation proposal, in particular the recognition of gender equality as a horizontal principle and the requirement for gender-equality expenditure tracking—provides a strong framework for advancing gender equality, including in farming and rural areas. The Commission will adopt a new strategy for the outermost regions in Q3 2026 setting out the Commission's priorities for better targeting the challenges and constraints of these regions, as well as leveraging their potential; one of the objectives will be improving social fairness and supporting people in these regions. **(Paragraph 1, 76, 74, 72 and 55)**

In the 2021-2027 programming period, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) invests in measures and reforms supporting gender equality and the full and equal participation of women in the labour and entrepreneurship market across the EU, including in its rural, remote and island areas. Around EUR 2 billion will be specifically invested in women's labour market participation and non-segregation while women will also benefit from other ESF+ investments around early childhood education and care (~EUR 2.4 billion), measures around work-life balance (~EUR 2 billion) and measures supporting self-employment and business start-up (~EUR 4 billion) among others. **(Paragraph 2)**

The Long-Term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas (LTVRA) and its Rural Action Plan (RAP) aim to foster territorial cohesion, attract innovative businesses and support diversified economic activities in rural areas. The updated RAP flagship on entrepreneurship and the social economy promotes entrepreneurship, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and social economy organisations in rural areas through cooperation, best practice and knowledge exchange. The flagship on "Research and innovation for rural communities" has funded over 70 Research and Innovation (R&I) projects, including three dedicated to women-led innovation. **(Paragraph 2)**

According to the Council Recommendation of 24 November 2020 on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (2020/C 417/01), VET programmes should offer a balanced mix of vocational including technical skills and key competences, including entrepreneurship. In addition, targeted measures should be put in place to promote gender balance in traditionally ‘male’ or ‘female’ professions and address gender related and other types of stereotypes together. VET programmes should be inclusive and accessible for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, low-qualified/ skilled persons, minorities, migrants and people with fewer opportunities because of their geographical location and/or their social-economically disadvantaged situation; VET programmes should be accessible for people in rural or remote areas. The Herning Declaration (2025)³ confirmed the role of initial general education in developing basic and transversal skills, ensure an appropriate level of these skills in initial VET, including entrepreneurship. **(Paragraph 4)**

Horizon Europe’s third pillar, Innovative Europe, aims to strengthen Europe’s innovation capacity and support the development and scaling-up of breakthrough innovations. It is implemented through three main components: the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), and the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) programme. Together, these instruments contribute to a more inclusive and competitive European innovation landscape.

Supernovas, an initiative of the EIT and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities, aims to bring more women into the world of entrepreneurship and investment. The programme empowers women-led startups while also cultivating the next generation of women venture capitalists and angel investors. **(Paragraph 4)** The EIC supports this agenda through Women TechEU (grants for women-led deep tech startups), the EIC Accelerator (blended finance and equity, with 28% of latest selected companies led by women), the EIC Pre-Accelerator (targeting widening countries and outermost regions), and the EIC Women Leadership Programme (leadership and fundraising skills for women founders) — collectively reflecting a systemic commitment to closing the gender gap in breakthrough innovation in direct support of the Competitiveness Compass.

The European Innovation Ecosystems part of Horizon Europe focuses on building interconnected, inclusive innovation ecosystems across Europe by drawing on the existing strengths of national, regional and local ecosystems and pulling in new, less well-represented actors and territories, including the green, digital, and social transitions. Rural regions and women innovators are among the explicitly targeted

³ The Herning Declaration on attractive and inclusive Vocational Education and Training for increased competitiveness and quality jobs 2026-2030.

“underrepresented actors”.

The European Commission funds projects through Horizon Europe on Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in Africa to empower women entrepreneurs, and in the EU’s remote and outermost regions, by equipping local technology companies with the tools to leverage Generative AI for innovative solutions, especially in the areas of agricultural optimisation, and digital skills and learning that benefit rural, low-resource communities. **(Paragraph 4)**

The Commission promotes gender equality and women’s economic empowerment through its Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). This includes the binding and enforceable commitments to effectively implement obligations under international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. The Commission analyses the gender dimension through its Sustainable Impact Assessments to inform FTA negotiations as well as through its ex-post evaluations. The Commission also takes an active role in the Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and currently funds a project implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) on integrating a gender lens into trade policies. **(Paragraph 5)**

The Commission kicked off the implementation of Women in Farming Platform on 8 March 2026. The activities of the platform, including the reporting will be determined by the future members. The Commission will keep the European Parliament informed of the activities of the platform. **(Paragraph 7)**

The European Institute for Gender Equality’s (EIGE) support for implementation of EU policy priorities on gender equality includes analyses of gender care gaps and access to care services, gender pay and pension gaps, the Gender Equality Index and statistics on women and men in decision-making. The Commission continues to support EIGE’s work on research, data collection and analysis of key barriers to women’s equal participation in employment and entrepreneurship. **(Paragraph 9)**

Several actions from the Rural action plan’s flagship on R&I for rural communities already contribute to this objective. Within Horizon Europe’s Cluster 6 Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment, the Commission funded three projects dedicated to women-led innovation that have developed interesting tools:

The FLIARA Community of practice (CoP) is a network which brings together individuals to support and accelerate women-led innovation in rural areas. The CoP features 20 FLIARA Ambassadors, exceptional women innovators chosen from across the project’s case study countries. Grass ceiling online academy offers training activities (Massive Open Online Course -MOOC and webinar) and other resources (scientific publications, videos, etc). The SWIFT project developed 16 Women-Led Innovations Hubs in 12 countries.

In addition, the European Startup Village Forum provides an open platform for rural stakeholders to exchange knowledge, share experience and learn from one another. Furthermore, under the Rural Pact community platform, a community group on rural women has been created. Further, the EU CAP Network provides a space to exchange on agricultural and rural innovation and the activities of the European innovation Partnership for Agriculture productivity and sustainability (EIP-AGRI), with activities dedicated to women. Recently established Women in Farming Platform will promote mentorship and peer-learning activities (**Paragraph 3 and 9**)

The Commission continues to support the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE's) work on gender mainstreaming and the Agency's provision of technical assistance, guidance and tools to EU Institutions and Member States. (**Paragraph 10**)

The European Investment Fund (EIF) already supports female-led businesses by directing capital through the Gender Smart Equity Investment Programme and integrating gender-smart criteria into its InvestEU investments to foster female-inclusive management teams. The Gender Smart Equity Investment Programme is a dedicated programme designed to empower women in leadership positions across European venture capital and private equity firms. Ideally, a new fund should not overlap with existing initiatives, which can of course be strengthened. (**Paragraph 12**)

Through the Digital Europe Programme, in the 2021-2027 period the Commission has supported projects on advanced digital skills with the objective of promoting the access of women to the digital field and increasing the number of female ICT specialists. (**Paragraph 14**)

The STEM Education Strategic Plan contributes to bridging the gender gap that affects science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers. Initiatives like the STEM Week will contribute to overcome gender stereotypes and cultural biases linked to STEM education and careers and leverage role models to inspire the next generations to study and work in these fields. The Digital Education Action Plan included actions aimed at helping young female students develop their digital and entrepreneurship skills, such as the EIT Girls Go STEM⁴ and ESTEAM Fests organised in different EU Member States. (**Paragraphs 14, 15**)

Under the Commission's proposal for the CAP for the period 2028-2034, young farmers would benefit from increased degressive area-based income support, setting-up aid and investment support with higher aid intensity. This may be accompanied by other tools such as financial

⁴ <https://eit-girlsgostem.eu/>.

instruments for young farmers, cooperation with farm succession or advisory services tailored to young farmers. Beyond the CAP, the Commission supports women-led enterprises through the Single Market Programme, funding initiatives such as the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), which provides targeted services - including training, coaching, access to finance, private investment facilitation, and international business partnering - to women entrepreneurs. Similarly, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme fosters female entrepreneurial talent by offering hands-on learning, mentoring, and cross-border exchanges, with women constituting the majority of new entrepreneur applicants. **(Paragraph 22)**

The Commission highlights that, under shared management, Member States determine allocations within their envelopes. The Commission may encourage targeted measures (e.g., in European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development - EAFRD, European Regional Development Fund - ERDF) while respecting Member State's autonomy in programme design. Adequate indicators will reflect the participation of female entrepreneurs. **(Paragraph 25)**

Through the Enhanced Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities up to 2030, published on 6 May 2026, the Commission commits to improve the implementation of the Disability Employment Package, with sharing best practices and issuing further guidance on employment of women with disabilities, as well as transition from education to employment and AI and assistive technologies at the workplace. **(Paragraph 25)**

The needs of the outermost regions will continue to be clearly identified in the proposed National Regional Partnership (NRP) Plans. In accordance with Title VI of the proposal, the relevant Member States shall implement measures to address the challenges faced by their respective outermost regions. The proposed integrated approach aims to facilitate synergies between agricultural, regional, research, digital and innovation policies while ensuring the specific challenges faced by rural and outermost regions are adequately considered. Support for women's entrepreneurship can be provided through relevant instruments, including the CAP, as well as other EU programmes that promote territorial cohesion, innovation, and digital inclusion **(Paragraph 26)**.

The Commission highlights the added value of LEADER (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale) as it is proposed to be a mandatory instrument in the future CAP with a flexibility for the Member States to allocate the funding. The Commission has proposed a minimum of 10% of non-ringfenced amounts of NRPP to rural areas to finance measures such as LEADER as part of a comprehensive policy response to address rural needs and challenges. **(Paragraph 26)**

The Commission continues to promote best practices in simplification amongst the Member States, notably via the EU CAP Network. The Commission has proposed further use of simplified cost options in LEADER post 2027, some of them mandatory. The Commission has been

monitoring and encouraging participation of women in Local Action Groups (LAGs) and their decision making. Detailed data is available for each LAG/MS in the EU and it is the basis for further work with the Member States. **(Paragraph 26)**

The Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030 contains actions to promote the participation of women in the labour market and in public life as well as to combat gender stereotypes. Directive 2024/1385(EU) requires Member States to take preventive measures to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, to promote gender equality, mutual respect and the right to personal integrity, and to encourage all persons, especially men and boys, to act as positive role models to support corresponding behaviour changes across society as a whole. It also requires Member States to make available and distribute consent education material which promote the understanding that consent must be given voluntarily as a result of a person's free will, mutual respect, and the right to sexual integrity and bodily autonomy. **(Paragraph 29)**

While the STEM Plan aims to increase the quality and attractiveness of education in STEM (in order to strengthen the talent pool in these strategic sectors that suffer from a severe skills gap), it does encourage a STEM pedagogical approach as a way to make these subjects more attractive, especially to female learners. As part of the Digital Education Action Plan, the 2023 Council recommendation on the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training emphasises the need to increase the attractiveness of information and communication technology (ICT) studies and careers and the digital sectors for women by providing comprehensive study and career guidance. **(Paragraph 29)**

The Commission commits to the systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data, as evidence-based gender equality policy requires robust disaggregated data. **(Paragraph 30)**

Statistics from the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS), based on the Commission implementing regulation (EU) 2019/2240, provide quarterly and annual data disaggregated by sex, age, country, region, degree of urbanisation, sector of economic activity, status in employment and occupation. This statistical data is a rich source of information on the labour market situation of women in rural areas⁵, Eurostat works in close cooperation with national statistical institutes of the European Statistical System to explore implementation of the detailed, new classification of status in employment, which potentially could provide more granular data on labour force in future. **(Paragraph 30)**

The horizontal actions of the Rural Action Plan include actions such as enhancing statistics on rural areas, including increasing the granularity of collected statistics, the EU Rural Observatory which has the objective

⁵ Eurostat does not produce statistics on women in tourism disaggregated by rural areas and does not currently envisage developing such statistics in the future.

to produce improved knowledge on rural areas and make it accessible through a rural data platform, develop a definition of functional rural areas and rural proofing. **(Paragraph 30)**

The 2019 Council Recommendation on access to social protection calls on Member States to improve transparency and simplify access to social protection schemes by ensuring that information on rights and obligations is available, accessible and understandable for all workers and self-employed persons. In this context, while the EU framework supports and encourages such efforts, the organisation and implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building programmes remain primarily a responsibility of the Member States, taking into account their specific institutional and social contexts. **(Paragraph 35)**

As part of the Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness, adopted on 5 March 2026, the Commission will foster inspiration, connection and mutual care by building intergenerational partnerships with, e.g., community centres. The Commission will promote intergenerational cultural exchanges and inclusion in line with the Culture Compass for Europe. Several projects on social entrepreneurship and intergenerational themes are funded under Erasmus+. Over 1500 projects under the European Solidarity Corps have contributed to intergenerational causes⁶. **(Paragraph 38)**

While traditional crafts, food production, agritourism and local value chains can play an important role in strengthening the social and economic fabric of rural areas, recent evidence by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) also highlights the untapped potential of rural territories in a range of innovative and high value-added activities benefiting from greater access to space or proximity to natural resources. In this context, the LTVRA stresses the importance of support for digital skills, innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship training in emerging sectors, which can also contribute to empowering rural citizens and fostering the diversification and long-term competitiveness of rural economies. **(Paragraph 45)**

In 2023-2024, the Commission promoted a series of dedicated workshops on EU competitive programmes (Connecting Europe Facility, Digital Europe, LIFE; Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, and the Single Market Programme), provided information on all relevant calls for projects, and created an advisory tool exclusively for the outermost regions. Similar initiatives will be launched under the upcoming new Strategy for outermost regions. **(Paragraph 48)**

The Commission's Strategy for generational renewal in agriculture (2025) underlines that land policy across the EU would benefit from stronger cooperation and data sharing across Member States. As a key flagship initiative, the Commission aims at establishing a European

⁶ https://youth.europa.eu/solidarity/young-people/about_en

Land Observatory to enhance transparency and cooperation in domains such as land transactions, prices, use changes, and market trends. To support this initiative, the Commission is conducting a Pilot Project, which will lay the analytical foundation for this Observatory. This project will assess data availability, accessibility and quality, with gender-disaggregated data included as element of the analysis.

In addition, the Commission has established an Expert Group on Farmland, composed by Member State authorities and EU stakeholder organisations. Among its tasks, the group will facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices in the field of access to farmland, encompassing land mobility services, alternative ownership and business transfer models, land banks and reused abandoned land, involvement of state-owned financial institutions to enhance farmland access, and strategies to reduce land transaction costs for small farms. **(Paragraph 54)**

The EU Anti-Poverty Strategy announced a series of initiatives aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion across age groups, including at fostering the active participation of working age individuals who are able to work but excluded from the labour market (and the economy), particularly of people belonging to vulnerable groups. Funding from the ESF+ is available to Member States to support these actions. Importantly, the Commission will launch in 2026 a first-stage social partner consultation to explore possible legislative action at the EU-level to support the activation of those excluded from the labour market, focusing on supporting the identification and outreach to those excluded from the labour market and the establishment of individualised pathways towards labour market integration, involving all relevant authorities and strengthening their cooperation. **(Paragraph 59)**

The Vision for Agriculture and Food (2025) highlights the importance of attracting more women and young people in the profession, including by improving working and living conditions in agriculture and rural areas. Improving attractiveness of the farming sector is the key purpose of the Generational Renewal Strategy (2025), which aims to foster entrepreneurship and facilitate access to capital, land and skills for young farmers to start and thrive in their activity. **(Paragraph 63)**

The Commission recognises that transport plays a crucial role for the outermost regions, the most remote parts of the EU. Islands and outermost regions are usually particularly affected by transport poverty, including regarding residents' access to essential socioeconomic services, high dependence on air and maritime transport and lower substitutability of transport modes. The outermost regions' specificities are embedded in EU policies, legislative proposals and programmes. For instance, the revised Trans-European transport network Regulation increases the number of ports, airports, and urban nodes eligible for 'Connecting Europe Facility' (CEF) funding. The Commission favours complementarities and synergies in making the most of all opportunities under EU funds, without duplication of financing. **(Paragraph 64)**

Further, the Rural Action Plan includes actions on rural mobility, digital

connectivity, access to services and rural-urban linkages. (**Paragraph 64**)

Concerning the Work-life balance directive, the Commission is now following up on the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgement concerning full transposition in one Member State, assessing the conformity of national measures and is organising meetings with Member States to discuss potential conformity issues. As mentioned also in the Gender equality strategy 2026-2030, Member States are to report to the Commission about the implementation in 2027 and the implementation report will consequently be prepared by the Commission in 2028. The Commission will also prepare the Commission report on the progress made on the Barcelona targets for 2030' and on the Council Recommendation on long-term care (end 2027) and the Implementation dialogue on care is planned. (**Paragraph 65**)

With regards to the provision of affordable childcare and related care services, with a view of enabling equal participation and inclusion of women in the labour market and the economy, the Commission will launch first-stage social partner consultations to explore possible avenues for legislative action at the EU-level, as part of the follow-up initiatives to the EU Anti-Poverty Strategy (2026) focused on supporting the active inclusion of the working age population. (**Paragraph 65**)

The Commission agrees with the Parliament that housing may play a role in women's entrepreneurship in rural and island areas and outermost regions. The Commission notes that the European Affordable Housing Plan⁷ acknowledges the issue of depopulation in rural areas including some outermost regions of the EU that are facing difficulties in accessing essential services - including social services - and infrastructure. Specifically, one of the actions of the Plan focusses on driving forward Member States' structural reforms to increase housing affordability and states that reforms should support both urban areas facing shortages as well as rural and remote territories experiencing demographic decline. The staff working document⁸ that accompanies the Plan also refers to intergenerational differences in access to housing and the disparities in wealth accumulation. At the same time, the Commission notes that housing is mainly within the remit of Member States, regional and local authorities and intergenerational housing concepts for rural areas that combine housing, care and community life for young families and older people must be rooted in subsidiarity empowering the local level to deliver solutions tailored to their unique needs. (**Paragraph 69**)

The EU adopted its first ever piece of legislation on combating violence against women and domestic violence in May 2024: Directive (EU) 2024/1385. The Directive establishes a comprehensive set of measures

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025DC1025>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52025SC1053>

of protection, access to justice and support for victims of violence against women and domestic violence. It also requires robust measures of prevention and criminalises certain forms of violence against women offline and online. **(Paragraph 78)**

When they live in rural areas, women victims of violence or domestic violence are considered to be victims experiencing intersectional discrimination and therefore exposed to an increased risk of violence. For this reason, the Directive (EU) 2024/1385 requires Member States to provide them with specific support. The Commission will pay attention to whether Member States' national action plans (to be adopted by June 2029) properly address the objective of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, as required by the Directive, including with regard to groups of victims experiencing intersectional discrimination (hence including women living in rural areas). **(Paragraph 82)**

The proposed MFF regulation encourages the Member States to adopt a comprehensive policy response for thriving rural areas and integrated planning (recital 31). According to the specific objectives laid out in article 3 of the proposed NRP regulation, the future plans should foster the attractiveness of territories, including supporting strategies for the integrated development of rural areas and territorial services and infrastructure, as well as improve quality of life and living standards in rural areas, to ensure generational renewal. **(Paragraph 84)**

The Commission welcomes efforts to improve visibility and accessibility of EU funding for women in rural areas but recalls that, under shared management, Member States are responsible for designing and promoting their programmes, including targeted outreach. The Commission supports awareness-raising and encourages MS to prioritise inclusive communication strategies. **(Paragraph 84)**