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MINISTERIO
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA
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igualdad
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Equality in foreign policy and development cooperation

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/1 Spanish foreign policy



1.- The promotion of equality and of non-discrimination on the grounds of gender has become a priority of Spanish foreign policy. It is, moreover, a priority of the legislative framework developed in recent years and, in particular, since the enactment of Organic Law 3/2007 on effective equality between women and men.

The External Action and Service Act of 2014 refers to equality as one of the areas of the State's external action, placing particular emphasis on "promoting equality between men and women and eradicating gender violence, highlighting the protection of Spanish women who are victims of gender violence and of their sons and daughters abroad".

Multiple legal provisions on equal treatment and opportunities have been introduced in Spain since the approval of our country's Constitution. Active policies have been promoted through the respective Equal Opportunities Strategic Plans for 2004-2008 and for 2014-2016, which were in line with the re-

levant EU action programmes and European Commission equality strategies and through our commitments, inter alia, to the Beijing Platform for Action. Thus, Spain has made significant advances towards achieving real and effective equality, a fact reflected in our global rankings, which are substantially above average in the different international indices. [The European Gender Equality Index \(2019\)](#) ranks Spain as the ninth Member State of the European Union in terms of results; the [World Economic Forum, in its Global Gender Gap Report 2020](#) ranked Spain in eighth place at global level. The [SDG Gender Index/Equal Measures 2030](#), which evaluates gender equality with a view to the Sustainable Development Goals, places Spain at number 23 of the 129 countries examined.

2.- Spain pursues the objective of gender equality in different areas:

- Non-discrimination on the grounds of gender is a priority of human rights foreign policy that entails particular focus on

defending the rights of women and girls, and on implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (National Action Plan for 2017-2023), of which Spain has been a key promoter since the drafting of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent related resolutions.

- In 2020, Spain has been participating actively in the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which represented a critical milestone in the promotion of women's rights, the fruit of combined efforts on the part of States and civil society organizations. Through Conferences in the United Nations and the Generation Equality Forum, Spain undertakes to advance towards the realization of these commitments to making gender equality a reality.

- Spain promotes the application of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda from the firm conviction that the effective participation of women in all phases of conflicts is key to building peaceful societies and to achieving sustainable development.

► Spain has been, furthermore, a pioneer in the fight against gender violence. Our



country now has a wide range of regulations making comprehensive provision for the prosecution and elimination of any form of violence practiced against women.

- The Gender Violence Act approved in 2004 and the State Pact of 2018-2022 contain specific measures which have been integrated into Spanish foreign policy, especially in the context of the fight against human trafficking and the provision of [assistance to Spanish women who are victims of gender violence abroad](#).

- Spain was, moreover, one of the first countries to ratify, in 2011, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, and continues working actively to promote its ratification by its bilateral interlocutors.

- Spain contributes to Spotlight—the joint EU-UN initiative aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.



►► Spanish Cooperation has promoted and supported public policies on gender equality, the political, social, and economic empowerment of women, and the fight against gender violence in all our partner countries, in compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action and with the 2030 Agenda. The importance accorded to the work in the area of gender equality has already been consolidated as one of the characteristic features of our cooperation most widely acknowledged by other donor countries, by our technical and financial partners and by the OECD.

- These advances have been supported, moreover, by a [Gender in Deve-](#)

[lopment Strategy](#), an internationally cutting-edge strategy which incorporates the gender approach into planning, management and evaluation, and, in addition, by specific actions aimed at guaranteeing that women are able to fully exercise their rights through actions that mainstream the gender approach into different sectoral policies.

- [Spanish Cooperation's Strategy for Humanitarian Action for 2019-2026](#) is also focused on strengthening the gender approach in humanitarian action in all phases of the project cycle. This Strategy emphasizes that humanitarian aid must benefit women and men of all

ages equally, on the basis of a differentiated needs analysis.

►► In the area of security, disarmament and non-proliferation:

- Training initiatives have been launched at all levels, and in particular in our armed forces and law enforcement bodies, to develop and publicize the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, as well as to ensure the application of the gender perspective in the missions and operations to which they are deployed. Moreover, Spain is currently the EU Gender Military Training Discipline Leader, heading the gender training programme.

- Spain works in the OSCE to redress the gender imbalance in the area of security, promoting the participation of women, including the gender perspective in all processes related to security and peacebuilding, and contributing to advances within NATO in the application of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.
- Our country was one of the first to organize initiatives on Gender and Disarmament. Spain has offered to collaborate with the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament by taking the lead in addressing the gender dimension. Spain promotes the participation of women in decision-making and leadership in diplomacy on non-proliferation and disarmament, export controls and in multilateral forums such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The protection of women's rights is a priority in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

3.- It is Spain's intention to continue advancing the gender perspective in these and other, less explored, areas of Spanish fore-

ign policy, such as climate action, economic justice, science, migration policy, trade and security and, therefore, to consolidate Spain's role as a leader in the development of equality policies and policies adopting the gender approach. Spain participates actively in different multilateral forums, both within the European Union and bilaterally, making the utmost use of the opportunity afforded us by our membership of the Human Rights Council in the 2018-2020 period, and, in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, for the achievement of SDG 5 and the inclusion of the gender equality perspective in all the SDGs.

4.- The appointment in 2018 of an ambassador-at-large to promote policies on gender equality and work-life balance reflects Spain's political will to go the extra mile take in terms of applying the gender approach by consolidating and raising the profile of equality as a cross-cutting policy, but also as a specific, independent priority of Spanish foreign policy and one whose external and internal dimensions are closely interconnected.

The internal dimension is understood to refer to:

- The establishment of measures to effectively apply and adapt the policies on equality and the work-life balance set out in Spanish law to a collective as specific as those individuals at the service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation and who, due to the nature of their work, are called to perform a significant part thereof abroad.

- Greater reflection on how to lay the foundations for the medium- and long-term structural changes that will facilitate a greater presence of women in positions of leadership so that women's political interests are integrated into the formulation of Spanish foreign policy. A part of these efforts—and one of the long-term outcomes sought—is to consolidate, in practice, a change in mentality, and to mainstream the gender approach into the very manner in which foreign policy is conceived and implemented by Spain.

/2 Human Rights



The principle of non-discrimination is at the origin of the fight for gender equality, the defence of women's rights and the empowerment of women, all of which are at the heart of Spain's human rights action. Reducing inequalities through the real participation of women in the social, political and economic spheres constitutes, moreover, a priority objective in guaranteeing the eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls.

Spain is party to eight fundamental international treaties and 10 optional protocols, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Spain works actively to promote and protect the rights of women and girls in the bilateral and multilateral spheres. As a member of the Human Rights Council for the 2018-2020 period, we promote and support specific initiatives to combat discrimination against women and girls and we collaborate with specific mechanisms, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination

against Women, and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. Spain is committed to supporting initiatives aimed at consolidating this goal and its effectiveness in practice through, inter alia, the establishment of national mechanisms for following up on recommendations.

In compliance with international gender equality commitments, Spain submitted its national report on the application of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which details the Spanish action carried out in the past five years ([Beijing National Report](#)) and in 2020 it will submit the periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a priority for Spain. The leadership exercised by our country as regards Resolution 2242, and in the creation in 2016 of the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, is a milestone in this agenda. Spain has, moreover, prepared a [Second National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security \(2017-2023\)](#), as well as the [Spanish Cooperation Action Plan on Women and Peacebuilding](#). In September 2019, Spain and Finland announced "Commitment 2025", a joint initiative to guarantee the effective participation



of women in peace processes. This document contains 10 specific commitments to be adopted by States, as well as five calls for action by the United Nations.

Spain considers the role of civil society in defending and protecting human rights—and in particular, the work carried out by individual human rights defenders—to be both fundamental and essential. Women defenders continue to be targets of extreme violence due to their work defending human rights. Spain has also set up a benchmark

human rights defenders programme that is aimed at facilitating the temporary reception in Spain of human rights defenders under threat or in a high-risk situation due to their non-violent activity in the defence of human rights.

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International development cooperation

Promoting gender equality has been one of the hallmarks of Spanish Cooperation for more than a decade. Spain has been recognized in the reviews conducted by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee as a reliable and committed partner that has consolidated significant progress in equality policy and support for feminist movements in partner countries.

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Spanish Cooperation's successive Master Plans have prioritized the application of the gender approach in two ways: through mainstreaming and by giving it specific priority. [Spanish Cooperation's Fifth Master Plan \(2018-2021\)](#) seeks the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and, more specifically, of the Targets set forth in SDG 5, supporting—as a strategic line of action—gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, as well as the promotion of their rights as the best way of moving forward towards their full citizenship and in their fight against poverty. The priority Targets of SDG 5 are:

- Target 5.2. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.
 - Line of Action (LA) 5.2.A. Work to guarantee that women who are victims of gender violence are covered by com-



prehensive frameworks that effectively protect their rights.

►► Target 5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities.

- Line of Action (LA) 5.5.A. Uphold a legal and institutional framework favourable to the incorporation of gender equality into public policy and society.
- Line of Action (LA) 5.5.B. Promote actions aimed at enabling women to strengthen their leadership and participation in decision-making spaces in public life.
- Line of Action (LA) 5.5.C. Foster women's access to economic resou-

rces. Support will be given to actions that boost productive and entrepreneurial initiatives.

In parallel, the commitment to mainstreaming gender in development actions involving the other SDGs will be maintained.

To materialize gender equality policy as a Spanish Cooperation priority, there are a number of planning documents and tools enabling the implementation of the twofold strategy—specific and mainstreaming—recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action. These include:

►► [Spanish Cooperation's Gender in Development Strategy](#). Approved in 2007, this

strategy has guided the implementation of the Master Plans and has served as a vehicle for applying Organic Law 3/2007 on equality to development policy. This Strategy has adopted the Beijing Platform for Action as its navigation chart, recognizes the contribution of women's and feminist organizations, and adheres to the tenets of Aid Effectiveness, with the aim of helping women to fully exercise their citizenship and of achieving the best equality outcomes in partner countries.

►► [Sector-Based Action Plan on Gender and Development](#). This Plan sets out seven strategic lines of work, and two lines for particular attention. The strategic thematic lines are:

1. Women's political participation.
2. The fight against gender violence.
3. Sexual and reproductive rights.
4. Women and peacebuilding.
5. Women's economic and labour rights.

Moreover, two strategic lines on institutional capacity-building are included:

6. Mainstreaming the gender approach.
7. Institutionalizing the gender approach.

Lastly, two lines have been identified as meriting particular attention:

1. Women and education.
2. Gender and culture.

►► [AECID Guide for Mainstreaming the Gender Approach](#). Published in 2015, the purpose of this Guide is to offer AECID staff (both at headquarters and on the ground) guidelines applicable both to strategic planning processes and to actions, in response to the following question: How can I apply gender mainstreaming in my daily work?

Using bilateral and regional instruments, Spanish Cooperation supports public policy on equality in its partner countries in Latin America and Africa, and in certain countries in Asia; it also supports women's and feminist organizations, as well as countless projects by a diversity of civil society and local administration actors. In the coming years, new regional programmes will be launched, for the Arab world and for Sub-Saharan Africa, focused on promoting equality and defending women's rights.

In the European Union, gender equality is a priority that has been included in the new [European Consensus on Development](#) which Spain has backed at all times. In addition,



Spanish Cooperation's work and support was decisive to the [EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020](#), which set a benchmark in the sphere of cooperation.

Spain's commitment to multilateral cooperation is equally strong. Spain promoted the creation of UN Women, to which it has been a trailblazing and permanent contributor through the successive Partnership Frameworks signed, the latest of which was for 2019-2021. Likewise, Spanish Co-

operation has become consolidated as a strategic partner for other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF) that have an impact on gender equality, and for initiatives such as the Global Programme on Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls, and emblematic global funds such as the Fund for Gender Equality, which has projects all around the world.

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Consular Assistance



The [Tripartite Action Protocol to Assist Spanish Women who are Victims of Gender Violence Abroad, signed in 2015](#) by what were then the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, is an internationally trailblazing initiative that sets forth a number of commitments to improve the

assistance that was already being provided to Spanish women abroad by our network of Embassies and Consulates.

It is also in line with the 2017 National Pact against Gender Violence, which set forth the goals of improving the institutional response and enhancing assistance and protection for victims, paying particular attention to

the most vulnerable groups. Spanish victims of gender violence abroad very often find themselves in an alien cultural and social context, far from their family support network, and this can lead to situations of greater helplessness. The 2015 Protocol sets forth a common framework for collaboration between the Consulates of Spain and the Embassies' Migration and Social Security Offices, to improve this assistance. For its part, the Government Delegation on Gender Violence, in the event that a victim chooses to return to Spain, will coordinate with our network abroad and with Spain's Autonomous Communities (i.e. its regional administrations) to ensure that women who return enjoy the rights recognized to them under Spanish legislation, and to facilitate their social integration.

In accordance with said Protocol, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation undertakes, through its Embassies' Consular Sections and through its Consulates General, to:

- a) Provide the necessary consular protection and assistance to Spanish women who are victims of gender violence.
- b) Organize and, where necessary, advance the repatriation costs of the wo-



man and her children who are victims of gender violence, when the situation so requires pursuant to legislation on repatriation.

c) Issue passports or travel documents in the event of expiry, loss or theft of personal documents, pursuant to prevailing legislation.

d) Offer public information including useful telephone numbers and addresses for cases of gender violence.

e) Provide guidance on the country's medical, educational and legal services, as well as help with formalities with local authorities in cases of gender violence.

f) Protect and assist Spanish women who are victims of gender violence, so that they are not discriminated against as foreigners.

g) Include, in their list of services, a mention of these efforts in relation to gender violence.

h) Incorporate courses on gender violence into their training for staff abroad, focusing on awareness-raising and on specific attention for victims abroad, to better fulfil the commitments undertaken in this Protocol.

Moreover, the Embassies' Consular Sections and the Consular Posts will seek information about the incidence of gender violence among Spanish women resident in that country, based on the information and data published by local authorities.

In 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation created, as part of the Directorate-General for Spaniards Abroad and Consular Affairs, the position of Coordinator for Violence against Women Abroad, to streamline the application of the 2015 Protocol, making it more widely known, systematizing assistance, and improving training in this area among the staff providing this assistance abroad.