

**France, Italy and Spain,  
commitments to promote feminism  
in their foreign policy?**

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## List of acronyms

AFD: Agence française de développement (French Development Agency)  
AfDB: African Development Bank  
AFNOR: Association française de normalisation (French Standardization Association)  
AICS: Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development  
AIDOS: Italian Association of Women for Development  
CICID: Comité interministériel de la coopération internationale et du développement  
(Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development)  
COP: Conference of the Parties  
DAC: Development Assistance Committee  
EU: European Union  
GBV: Gender-based violence  
GDP: Gross domestic product  
GNI: Gross National Income  
G20: Group of Twenty  
LGBTI+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex  
MEAE: Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs  
NGO: Non-governmental organization  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
ODA: Official Development Assistance  
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals  
SRHR: Sexual and reproductive health and rights  
UN: United Nations  
UNDP: United Nations Development Fund  
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund  
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund  
WPS: Women, Peace and Security

## Introduction

The neglect of women's rights and specific needs in the management of recent global crises has demonstrated the need to strengthen states' foreign policies in favor of gender equality. Whether it's the war in Ukraine, the conflict in South Sudan, the war between Israel and Palestine, or climate-related changes and disasters, all these events increase the vulnerability of women, the primary targets of armed conflicts and climate disruption. By deploying feminist foreign policies, states can play a more effective role in maintaining world peace and reducing inequalities.

The promotion of women's rights and gender equality are an essential factor in the development of fair, egalitarian and democratic societies worldwide. A study conducted in 2023 by Equal Measures 2030, shows that almost half of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are directly and intrinsically linked to the achievement of gender equality, and three quarters of the 169 SDG targets depend directly or significantly on it. The study also outlines the direct link between gender equality and the environmental SDGs<sup>1</sup>. The development of feminist foreign policies must be a means of tackling social and economic inequalities around the world, with a focus on the pursuit of peace and human security, sustainable development and environmental protection.

The concept of feminist foreign policy was first claimed by former Swedish Prime Minister Margot Wallström in 2014. There is no international consensus on the definition of this concept. France, for example, has adopted the principle of feminist diplomacy. The concept of feminist foreign policy “rests on the conviction that gender equality and equitable participation in political and public life are essential to international peace and security”<sup>2</sup>. An increasing number of geopolitical researchers agree that feminism is essential to the maintenance of peace and democracy in the world, and to the development of states. Adopting a feminist foreign policy therefore appears necessary to promote a new form of leadership in which collective responsibility and cooperation are the keys to democratic renewal.

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<sup>1</sup> EqualMeasures2030. (September 05, 2023). *Is gender equality critical to the success of the sustainable development goals?*. Medium.  
<https://equal2030.medium.com/is-gender-equality-critical-to-the-success-of-the-sustainable-development-goals-cb0a5bd2de4f>

<sup>2</sup> Stella Reminy-Elizor, Julia Ricci, Héloïse Versavel sous la direction de Déborah Rouach et Alice Apostoly (2023). *Feminist foreign policy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. Gender Institute in Geopolitics.  
<https://igg-geo.org/?p=11383>

Currently, several countries have officially adopted a feminist foreign policy<sup>3</sup>. Sweden, which was the first country, repealed its feminist foreign policy in 2022 under the right-wing and far-right government of Tobias Billström. This repeal was the sign of a “backlash” that continues to grow in Europe and around the world. Italy also saw the far right come to power in 2022 with the government of Giorgia Meloni. The country had made great efforts to adopt a policy more sensitive to equality between women and men, but the current government tends to return to more traditionalist and conservative values of the family and women's place in society.

On the other hand, other countries are making progress on developing a feminist foreign policy, such as France and Spain. France launched its “feminist diplomacy” in 2019 and is among the most progressive countries in this field. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France’s feminist diplomacy stands out for its strong financial commitment to feminist civil society organizations. Spain is also making progress, opting for a feminist foreign policy based on an intersectional approach and strong representation of women in political and diplomatic positions.

Through this report, the Gender in Geopolitics Institute presents the feminist foreign policies developed specifically by France and Spain, and focuses on Italy and its setbacks in terms of women’s rights and gender equality<sup>4</sup>. The aim of this research work is to provide a concise and precise analysis of the various foreign policies of these countries. This format is designed to raise awareness of the concept among the general public and experts, while enabling civil society to take up the issue and call on their governments to take effective measures to develop policies in favor of equality between women and men.

To make the reading of this report more educational, the Gender in Geopolitics Institute has chosen to draw up a fact sheet for each country, presenting feminist foreign policies. Each fact sheet follows the same typology:

- an “adoption and context” section to understand the mechanism that led to the adoption of this feminist foreign policy;
- a section on “axes and specificities” to present the content of foreign policy;
- a “gender-sensitive funding” section covering official development assistance earmarked for gender-sensitive programs, and funds dedicated to UN agencies for this purpose;
- a “strengths and limitations” section to analyze the content of countries’ feminist foreign policies and their coherence with the national and international context;

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<sup>3</sup> Argentina (2023), Canada (2017), Chile (2022), Colombia (2022), France (2019), Germany (2021), Liberia (2022), Libya (2021), Luxembourg (2018), Mexico (2020), Mongolia (2023), Netherlands (2022), Scotland (2021), Slovenia (2023), Spain (2021).

<sup>4</sup> The countries studied were chosen in response to a request from Focus 2030, and are the three countries in which we operate.

- a “recommendations” section, formulated by the Gender in Geopolitics Institute to encourage governments to improve their feminist foreign policy.

## Spain

### Adoption and background

In 2020, former Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha González Laya announced Spain's commitment to a feminist foreign policy in her inaugural speech to Parliament<sup>5</sup>. This commitment, celebrating the anniversaries of the Beijing Declaration and UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), underlines the integration of gender sensitivity into the country's external actions, including development cooperation<sup>6</sup>.

In March 2021, Spain made this vision a reality with the publication of its first feminist foreign policy strategy for the period 2021-2022<sup>7</sup>. The following year, in 2022, the Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Pilar Cancela, made gender equality a major priority of Spanish development policy, highlighting that “[o]nly a democracy free of male violence is a total democracy”<sup>8</sup>.

On October 17, 2023, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs outlined the Feminist Foreign Policy Action Plan for the period 2023-2024<sup>9</sup>. The plan aims to integrate a gender-based approach into all Spanish foreign policy actions and promote Spain's priorities for advancing gender equality globally<sup>10</sup>. It details significant financial commitments, including the goal of devoting 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) to official development assistance (ODA) by 2030<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (2021). SPAIN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: Promoting Gender Equality in Spain's External Action. 4. <https://rm.coe.int/2021-02-politica-exterior-feminista-eng/1680a287c3#:~:text=Spain%20has%20promoted%20European%20Union,Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202020%2D2025>.

<sup>6</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (2021). SPAIN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: Promoting Gender Equality in Spain's External Action. 4. <https://rm.coe.int/2021-02-politica-exterior-feminista-eng/1680a287c3#:~:text=Spain%20has%20promoted%20European%20Union,Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202020%2D2025>.

<sup>7</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores (2021). SPAIN'S FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY: Promoting Gender Equality in Spain's External Action. <https://rm.coe.int/2021-02-politica-exterior-feminista-eng/1680a287c3#:~:text=Spain%20has%20promoted%20European%20Union,Gender%20Equality%20Strategy%202020%2D2025>.

<sup>8</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (2022, November 25). Press Release 093: Spanish Cooperation fights gender-based violence in around 20 countries. [https://www.exteriores.gob.es/en/Comunicacion/NotasPrensa/Paginas/2022\\_NOTAS\\_P/20221125\\_NOTA093.aspx](https://www.exteriores.gob.es/en/Comunicacion/NotasPrensa/Paginas/2022_NOTAS_P/20221125_NOTA093.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación. 2023. PLAN DE ACCIÓN PARA LA POLÍTICA EXTERIOR FEMINISTA 2023-2024. [https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/PoliticaExteriorFeminista/2023\\_10\\_PLAN%20ACCION%20POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA%20v3.pdf](https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/PoliticaExteriorFeminista/2023_10_PLAN%20ACCION%20POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA%20v3.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Donor Tracker (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>11</sup> European Commission. (2020). Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in

## Axes and specificities

Through various strategic sectors such as security, health, climate, political representation, trade, the digital sector and gender-based violence (GBV), Spain's feminist foreign policy emerges as a transversal and global instrument in favor of gender equality, illustrating an integrated and holistic approach to diplomatic action.

Gender equality is highlighted as a cross-cutting priority in Spanish ODA. In 2021, Spain demonstrated its commitment by allocating 37% of its bilateral ODA to gender equality. Although slightly below the OECD Development Assistance Committee average, Spain ranked 17th among global donors in this area, investing US\$418 million that year<sup>12</sup>. The Humanitarian Action Strategy 2019-2026 integrates a gender approach and takes into account a feminist agenda for Spanish humanitarian action<sup>13</sup>.

In addition, the 2023 Law on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity places gender equality at the heart of Spanish cooperation, addressing gender inequalities within the renewable energy sector and promoting ecofeminism<sup>14</sup>.

Spain's feminist foreign policy places major emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in its international cooperation efforts. By 2021, Spain made a significant contribution to SRHR funding, facing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis and strengthening its commitment to initiatives such as family planning, the prevention of gender-based violence and the general promotion of gender equality<sup>15</sup>. The government recognizes the importance of core funding for organizations such as UNFPA and UNICEF, particularly in the area of SRHR<sup>16</sup>.

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EU External Action (JOIN/2020/17 final).

[<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0017>]

<sup>12</sup> Donor Tracker (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>13</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (2022). Estrategia de Acción Humanitaria. Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo. <https://www.aecid.es/documents/20120/90545/Estrategia%20Acci%C3%B3n%20Humanitaria%20en%20ingl%C3%A9s.cleaned.pdf/f3cf2160-3e60-a1e0-b47f-3155f3931068?t=1661341767917>

<sup>14</sup> Jefatura del Estado (2023, February 20). Ley 1/2023, de 20 de febrero, de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Sostenible y la Solidaridad Global. "BOE" núm. 44. [https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/2023/02/20/1/con\\_and](https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/2023/02/20/1/con_and) Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (2023). PLAN DE ACCIÓN PARA LA POLÍTICA EXTERIOR FEMINISTA 2023-2024. 17. [https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/PoliticaExteriorFeminista/2023\\_10\\_PLAN%20ACCION%20POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA%20v3.pdf](https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/PoliticaExterior/Documents/PoliticaExteriorFeminista/2023_10_PLAN%20ACCION%20POLITICA%20EXTERIOR%20FEMINISTA%20v3.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Countdown 2030. (2022). *Country Profiles: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) - Spain*. Retrieved from [<https://www.countdown2030europe.org/spain/>].

<sup>16</sup> Countdown 2030. (2022). *Country Profiles: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) - Spain*. Retrieved from [<https://www.countdown2030europe.org/spain/>].



To implement the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, Spain adopted a new national action plan in 2017, covering the 2017-2023 period<sup>17</sup>. Developed by an inter-ministerial working group, the plan aims to contribute to the protection of human rights, particularly those of women and girls, as well as their substantial participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding<sup>18</sup>. The plan promotes an integrated approach by establishing links with the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it does not provide a substantial monitoring and evaluation framework, nor a dedicated budget.

By 2023, Spain had made significant progress towards balanced representation, with 48% of women occupying ministerial posts and 42% sitting in Parliament<sup>19</sup>. To consolidate these efforts, the draft version of a new law aimed at ensuring parity in the management of major companies and in politics was passed in March 2023<sup>20</sup>. This law requires 40% women and men in the management of all listed companies with more than 250 employees and annual sales of 50 million euros. In politics, this law requires political parties to present an equal number of male and female candidates in elections, with the aim of increasing gender parity in Parliament<sup>21</sup>.

On September 19, 2023, the Spanish government reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating all forms of gender-based violence by approving an Institutional Declaration for the International Day against Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Women and Children, celebrated on September 23<sup>22</sup>. The Minister for Territorial Policy, Isabel Rodríguez, highlighted the importance of the Camino Operational Plan for the protection of the human rights of women and girls victims of trafficking over the period 2022-2026<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (2017). Plan Nacional Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad.

<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/Comunicacion/Noticias/Documents/Plan%20Nacional%20Mujeres.%20Paz%20y%20Seguridad%20TEXT0.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> PeaceWomen (2020). National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security: Spain. Retrieved from <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/spain/>

<sup>19</sup> EIGE. (2023). *Gender Statistics Database, WMID, 2nd Quarter*. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/domain/power/ES>

<sup>20</sup> Council of Ministers (2023, March 7). The Government of Spain promotes parity of representation in politics, government and business. Council of Ministers.

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307\\_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made)

<sup>21</sup> Council of Ministers (2023, March 7). The Government of Spain promotes parity of representation in politics, government and business. Council of Ministers.

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307\\_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made)

<sup>22</sup> Council of Ministers (2023, September 19). The Government of Spain reaffirms its commitment to eradicate all forms of violence against women. Retrieved from

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919\\_council.aspx](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919_council.aspx)

<sup>23</sup> Council of Ministers (2023, September 19). The Government of Spain reaffirms its commitment to eradicate all forms of violence against women. Retrieved from

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919\\_council.aspx](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919_council.aspx)

She also expressed concern about the 47 victims of femicide in 2023, calling for prevention and support mechanisms to be strengthened. Rodríguez emphasized the need for a political and social pact to support victims of GBV, stressing that it should be comprehensive, social and political, involving all sectors of society in this crucial effort<sup>24</sup>.

The Spanish digital policy defined by the “Digital Spain 2025” agenda is part of a feminist approach in response to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Agenda 2030 to promote the advancement of women’s representation in the global digital context. Among the measures, the ambitious goal of ensuring that 80% of the population acquires basic digital skills by 2025 includes an international dimension, with a specific commitment to ensuring that half of these skills are acquired by women. This initiative positions Spain as an active player in the promotion of an equitable digital environment, contributing to the overall evolution of women’s participation in the digital sector.

Finally, in its program for the Presidency of the Council of the EU, Spain affirms its commitment to implementing a European strategy for gender equality over the period 2020-2025. Its program emphasizes the promotion of equal pay, gender parity on boards of directors, and the fight against discrimination, focusing in particular on equal opportunities and the fight against discrimination based on sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age and sexual orientation<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Council of Ministers (2023, September 19). The Government of Spain reaffirms its commitment to eradicate all forms of violence against women. Retrieved from

[https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919\\_council.aspx](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230919_council.aspx)

<sup>25</sup> Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. (2023). *The pathway to progress: strengthening effective structures for gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the EU*. Retrieved from

<https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/media/atgpsy0rb/the-pathway-to-progress.pdf> and Spanish

Presidency of the Council of the European Union. (2020). *Striving for a Union of Equality: The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*. Retrieved from

<https://spanish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/media/fj0ny0rk/striving-for-a-union-of-equality.pdf>

**Table showing the various funding sources for gender equality worldwide**

	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>GDP amount (US\$ billions)<sup>26</sup></b>	1 394	1 278	1 445	1 417
<b>Military budget (billions US\$)<sup>27</sup></b>	17,19	17,43	19,59	20,31
<b>ODA amount (US\$ millions)<sup>28</sup></b>	3 220	3 171	3 642	4 593
<b>Share of ODA devoted to gender equality (%)<sup>29</sup></b>	10,14	12,04	9,1	Data note available
<b>ODA main objective of gender equality (US\$ millions)<sup>30</sup></b>	165	162	198	Data note available
<b>ODA secondary objective for gender equality (US\$ millions)<sup>31</sup></b>	162	220	220	Data note available
<b>Gender ODA linked to the WPS Agenda (US\$ millions)<sup>32</sup></b>	24	25	38	135
<b>Climate-related ODA for gender</b>	39	7	27	22

<sup>26</sup> Perspective Monde (2023). Spain's socio-economic balance sheet.

<https://perspective.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/servlet/BMTendanceStatPays?codeTheme=2&codeStat=NY.GDP.MK.TP.CD&codePays=ESP&optionsPeriodes=Aucune&codeTheme2=1&codeStat2=x&codePays2=ESP&optionsDetPeriodes=avecNomP>

<sup>27</sup> Spain Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2024. (2024). Macrotrends. [Spain Military Spending/Defense Budget 1960-2024 | MacroTrends](https://www.macrotrends.net/10123/spain-military-spending-defense-budget-1960-2024)

<sup>28</sup> OECD (2023), "Spain", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/26d68de7-en> (accessed on 15 December 2023).

<sup>29</sup> OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1> and Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>30</sup> OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1> and Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>31</sup> OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1> and Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>32</sup> Indicateur conflits, paix et sécurité. Voir: OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>; Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Consulté sur [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<b>(US\$ millions)<sup>33</sup></b>				
<b>Economic and trade-related ODA for gender (US\$ millions)<sup>34</sup></b>	<b>18,54</b>	<b>27,28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24,5</b>
<b>Gender ODA linked to governance and civil society (US\$ millions)<sup>35</sup></b>	<b>157,83</b>	<b>166,1</b>	<b>194,44</b>	<b>368,37</b>
<b>UNFPA contribution (US\$ millions)<sup>36</sup></b>	<b>2,6</b>	<b>9,4</b>	<b>4,9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>UNDP contribution (US\$ millions)<sup>37</sup></b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>4,9</b>	<b>12,1</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>UN Women contribution (US\$ millions)<sup>38</sup></b>	<b>2,4</b>	<b>1,2</b>	<b>1,8</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>UNICEF contribution</b>				

<sup>33</sup>Indicateur sur le secteur de la protection environnementale. Voir: OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>; Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Consulté sur [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>34</sup> Addition des secteurs de services financiers, soutien aux entreprises et politique commerciale. Voir: OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>; Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Consulté sur [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>35</sup> This category includes programs to promote women's participation in democratic processes, elections, equal access to information and the protection of their rights. For more information on this criterion, please consult: OECD. (2022). *Stat Creditor Reporting System*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>; Donor Tracker. (2021). *Spain ODA and Gender*. Retrieved from [https://donortracker.org/donor\\_profiles/spain/gender](https://donortracker.org/donor_profiles/spain/gender)

<sup>36</sup> Addition of regular and non-regular resources. See: UNFPA. (2022). *Top General Donors 2022: Spain*. See: <https://www.unfpa.org/data/donor-contributions>

<sup>37</sup> Addition of regular and non-regular resources. Find out more here: United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Funding Compendium 2019*. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202019.pdf>; United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Funding Compendium 2020*. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-06/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202020%200.pdf>; United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Funding Compendium 2021*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium\\_2021\\_Aug%2029.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium_2021_Aug%2029.pdf); United Nations Development Programme. (2023). *Funding Compendium 2022*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp\\_funding\\_compendium\\_2022\\_vs\\_1\\_as\\_of\\_24\\_aug\\_2023.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp_funding_compendium_2022_vs_1_as_of_24_aug_2023.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> Addition of regular and non-regular resources. UN Women (2022). *UNWOMEN Transparency Portal Data*. Last update. Retrieved from <https://open.unwomen.org/partners/spain>

<b>(US\$ millions)<sup>39</sup></b>	<b>64,8</b>	<b>67,6</b>	<b>65,2</b>	<b>61,2</b>
<b>UNESCO biennial contribution (US\$ millions)<sup>40</sup></b>	<b>Data note available</b>	<b>Data note available</b>	<b>Data note available</b>	<b>14,7</b>
<b>Funds dedicated to SRHR (US\$ millions)<sup>41</sup></b>	<b>41,83</b>	<b>50,15</b>	<b>65,56</b>	<b>Data note available</b>
<b>Three-year contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (US\$ millions)<sup>42</sup></b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>110,29</b>		

## Strengths

Spain's feminist foreign policy, adopted in March 2021, is illustrated by a series of concrete legislative commitments and guiding principles that make it a robust and influential initiative. Guided by seminal speeches on the regional and international stage, and reinforced by substantial action plans, this policy is characterized by a dynamic evolution, testifying to a constant desire to promote gender equality on a global scale.

At the national level, Spain has taken significant steps to combat gender-based violence. In 2009, the country established the Organic Law on Protection Measures against Gender Violence<sup>43</sup>, erecting a Government Delegation dedicated to GBV. To complement this, in May 2019, the government

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF. (2023). *Core resources for results 2022 Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/media/140701/file/Core%20Resources%20for%20Results.pdf>; UNICEF. (2022). *Core resources for results 2021 Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/media/122551/file/Core%20resources%20for%20results%202021.pdf>; UNICEF. (2021). *Core resources for results 2020 Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/media/99911/file/Core%20Resources%20for%20Results%20-%202020%20Report.pdf>; UNICEF. (2020). *Regular resources 2019 Report*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/media/71446/file/Regular-resources-2019-report.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> UNESCO. (2023). *Contributions from UNESCO Member States - Spain*. Retrieved from <https://core.unesco.org/en/country/ESP/contribution>

<sup>41</sup> Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung & The European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (2022). *Donors Delivering for SRHR Report 2022: Tracking OECD Donor Funding for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*. See: [https://donorsdelivering.report/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DD\\_Report2022\\_webversion.pdf](https://donorsdelivering.report/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DD_Report2022_webversion.pdf) and Médicos del Mundo (2023). *La Salud en la Cooperación al Desarrollo y la Acción Humanitaria*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicosdelmundo.org/actualidad-y-publicaciones/publicaciones/la-salud-en-la-cooperacion-al-desarrollo-y-la-accion-9>

<sup>42</sup> Global Fund. (2023). *Pledges and Contribution Report*. See: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/ft/government/>

<sup>43</sup> Ministerio de Justicia (2009). *Organic Act of Protection Measures against Gender Violence*. Retrieved from [https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/definicion/pdf/Ley\\_integral\\_ingles.pdf](https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/definicion/pdf/Ley_integral_ingles.pdf)

published a detailed guide to the rights of women victims of GBV<sup>44</sup>. Recently, in September 2023, Minister Isabel Rodríguez reiterated the Spanish government's commitment to the fight against GBV.

Spain's feminist foreign policy is also distinguished by its holistic and intersectional approach, tackling diverse sectors such as security, health, climate, ODA and political representation. Spain is particularly effective on this last point, with a strong improvement in female representation in politics over the year 2023 and its will to legislate on this point. This thematic diversity reflects a desire to integrate the gender perspective into all facets of foreign policy, testifying to a transversal and global approach.

Spain has distinguished itself by drawing up a detailed guide to its feminist foreign policy, providing a clear framework for the practical implementation of this approach. The five guiding principles, focusing on structural reform, strong leadership, coordination, participation and intersectionality, provide a coherent roadmap for orienting Spanish diplomatic action towards feminist goals.

A major strength lies in Spain's declared commitment to devote 0.7% of its GNI to ODA by 2030<sup>45</sup>. At the same time, its particularly large contributions to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF underline Spain's proactive and influential approach to SRHR in the world<sup>46</sup>.

## **Limitations**

An initial criticism lies in the lack of coherence between Spain's domestic and foreign policies on sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR). Although the country appears to be actively promoting these rights abroad, with significant contributions, debates persist on issues such as conscientious objection and specific legislation surrounding access to abortion<sup>47</sup>.

Although Spain's Feminist Foreign Policy Guide displays a commitment to full transparency on gender data, practical obstacles, such as the lack of sufficient resources, the absence of a detailed

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<sup>44</sup> Ministerio de la Presidencia, Relaciones con las Cortes y Igualdad (2019). Guide to the Rights of Women Victims of Gender Violence. Retrieved from <https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/informacionUtil/derechos/docs/mayo2019/GUIADERECHOSeng22052019.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> European Commission. (2020). Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III - An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action (JOIN/2020/17 final). [<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0017>]

<sup>46</sup> Countdown 2030. (2022). *Country Profiles: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) - Spain*. Retrieved from [<https://www.countdown2030europe.org/spain/>].

<sup>47</sup> Orihuela, R., & Whitelaw, K. (2023, June 24). A Spanish Politician's Risky Stand in Culture War. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2023-06-24/abortion-debate-in-spain-revives-culture-war-in-politics>

monitoring framework in the national action plan for the WPS Agenda, and the lack of detailed public reporting, hamper its implementation. The comprehensive collection of gender-specific data requires ongoing efforts and sufficient resources. For example, no monitoring framework or detailed budget is available in the national action plan for the WPS Agenda<sup>48</sup>. The absence of effective monitoring underlines the need for detailed public reporting to ensure effective accountability, specifying the frequency, scope and level of transparency of such reporting.

In terms of political bearing, Spanish President Pedro Sánchez stands out from the rest of the administration for his hard-hitting speeches and concrete initiatives, including the “Parity Law” of March 7, 2023, guaranteeing gender parity in Spanish political bodies<sup>49</sup>. On January 22, 2024, he underscored this vision at the Casa de América, a cultural institution promoting cultural, social and economic ties between Spain and the countries of America, stressing the importance of reducing the gender gap and advocating a resolutely feminist foreign policy<sup>50</sup>. Despite these advances, the challenge persists beyond the figure of Pedro Sánchez alone, highlighting a limit in the overall political carriage of feminist foreign policy on an international scale. It is important to note that this dynamic is not yet fully inter-ministerial, suggesting a systemic problem that requires a more holistic approach within the Spanish administration.

Finally, despite the emphasis on the importance of intersectionality and diversity, notably in the program for its presidency of the EU Council, challenges persist in its application to Spanish feminist foreign policy. The lack of explicit inclusion of the LGBTI+ community in this policy guide reveals a gap in terms of intersectionality.

## Recommendations

- 1. Optimize alignment of domestic practices with discourse on the international stage.** In order to establish its credibility on the international stage, Spain should redouble its efforts to ensure greater consistency between its discourse and domestic practices, particularly in

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<sup>48</sup> Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación (2017). Plan Nacional Mujeres, Paz y Seguridad. <https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/Comunicacion/Noticias/Documents/Plan%20Nacional%20Mujeres.%20Paz%20y%20Seguridad%20TEXTO.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> The Government of Spain (2023, March 7). *The Government of Spain promotes parity of representation in politics, government, and business*. Council of Ministers. Retrieved from [https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307\\_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made.](https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2023/20230307_council.aspx#:~:text=The%20Minister%20for%20Territorial%20Policy.and%20political%20decisions%20are%20made.)

<sup>50</sup> Servimedia Agency (2024, January 22). *Sánchez asegura que cerrar la brecha de género completamente incrementaría el PIB global más de un 20%*. Cinco Días. El País. Retrieved from <https://cincodias.elpais.com/economia/2024-01-22/sanchez-asegura-que-cerrar-la-brecha-de-genero-completamente-incrementaria-el-pib-global-mas-de-un-20.html>

terms of sexual and reproductive rights, as well as in the deeper inclusion of LGBTI+ people.

- 2. Ensure better monitoring of the implementation of feminist foreign policy.** Spain must establish mechanisms for collecting data and monitoring the implementation of its feminist foreign policy, in line with its previous commitments. This initiative is particularly important in view of the current national action plan for the WPS Agenda, which does not specify either an evaluation framework or a budget. Ensuring transparent, regular and comprehensive public reporting on implementation will reinforce accountability and increase visibility of progress.
  
- 3. Strengthen inter-ministerial political support for the full and effective implementation of feminist foreign policy.** It is essential to establish formal coordination mechanisms between the various ministries in order to ensure stronger inter-ministerial political support for the implementation of feminist foreign policy. The creation of a dedicated inter-ministerial working committee, adequately resourced, would promote cohesion of effort, regular communication and harmonization of actions across the whole of government. This collaborative approach will strengthen the scope and impact of gender equality initiatives, consolidating Spain's position as a champion of feminist foreign policy leadership at international level.
  
- 4. Strengthen the application of intersectionality in all aspects of foreign policy.** Integrating the perspectives of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, and others, into all aspects of foreign policy and action will strengthen Spain's coherence on the international stage, offering a fully inclusive, equitable and sustainable feminist intersectional foreign policy.

Spain's institutional framework for gender:

The promotion of equality in Spain relies on a set of key institutions, including the Ministry of Equality, the Interministerial Commission on Equality between Women and Men, and the Secretariat of State for Equality and against Gender Violence. These entities work together to develop and implement policies aimed at guaranteeing gender equality in the country.

Spanish equality initiatives are coordinated at various levels. The Ministry of Equality plays a central role, while the Interministerial Commission facilitates collaboration between different ministries. The State Secretariat for Equality and Gender Violence provides specific expertise in the fight against gender-based violence.



Spain's institutional framework includes gender focal points within the various government departments, ensuring a cross-functional approach to gender equality. This structure reflects Spain's ongoing commitment to equality, while promoting coherence and coordination at all levels of public administration.

#### Feminist collectives:

Feminist collectives in Spain, including the Instituto de las Mujeres and the Consejo de Participación de la Mujer, play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and fighting discrimination. The Instituto de las Mujeres, as a government body, is dedicated to implementing equality policies and supporting women's rights. It works closely with the Consejo de Participación de la Mujer, a consultative body promoting the active participation of women in decision-making. These collectives work on issues such as equal pay, access to education and the fight against gender-based violence.

Their relationship with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is marked by frequent and constructive exchanges. These collectives provide the Ministry with essential information on issues specific to women in Spain, thus contributing to the development of gender-sensitive foreign policies. What's more, the Ministry, in turn, regularly consults these collectives to ensure adequate representation of feminist perspectives in its international initiatives. This collaboration strengthens the coherence and effectiveness of actions taken at both national and international level.

#### Points to remember:

1. Spain announced its commitment to a feminist foreign policy in 2020, with a concrete strategy published in 2021 and an action plan for the period 2023-2024, celebrating major international events.
2. Spain's feminist foreign policy takes a cross-cutting approach to sectors such as security, health, climate, political representation, trade and the fight against gender-based violence.
3. Efforts are being made to ensure balanced representation, notably with laws aimed at parity in large companies and in politics, but gaps remain in terms of monitoring and evaluation.
4. Spain is taking significant steps at national level to combat gender-based violence, but concerns persist about the need for a more comprehensive political and social pact.
5. Spain's feminist foreign policy is praised for its concrete legislative commitments and holistic approach, but limitations are identified, including a lack of coherence between domestic and foreign policy and challenges in monitoring implementation.

## France

### Adoption and background

On March 08, 2019, the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian and Marlène Schiappa, Secretary of State for Gender Equality, jointly declared that “For the past year, France has been at the forefront of a new dynamic: a genuine feminist diplomacy. A feminist diplomacy that leaves no subject unaddressed. A diplomacy that fights against sexual and gender-based violence. A diplomacy for the education of girls and women, boys and men, everywhere in the world. A diplomacy for the economic emancipation of women throughout the world, and particularly in Africa. A concrete diplomacy that goes beyond rhetoric, taking action and producing results to support women - all women”<sup>51</sup>.

With this declaration, France has officially become the fourth country in the world to have adopted a feminist diplomacy, after Sweden, Canada and Luxembourg. Furthermore, President Emmanuel Macron, who has used the term feminist to describe himself, has made equality between women and men the major cause of his two quinquennias and entrusted its implementation to the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). The country is also the fourth largest donor to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>52</sup>.

In 2017, the two MPs Mireille Clapot and Laurence Dumont co-wrote an information report on the place of women's rights in French diplomacy<sup>53</sup>. After several months of meetings and hearings with civil society organizations, they put forward 100 proposals for a feminist diplomacy. This report served as input for France's international strategy for equality between women and men 2018-2022, which the country set out before officially declaring that it had a feminist diplomacy. This initial frame of reference enabled France to set up institutional steering at MEAE level and lay the

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<sup>51</sup> France diplomatie. (March 08, 2019). "Pour une diplomatie féministe" - Joint op-ed by Jean-Yves Le Drian and Marlène Schiappa (March 8, 2019)

[https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/droits-de-l-homme/actualites-et-evenements-sur-le-theme-des-droits-de-l-homme/actualites-2019-sur-le-theme-des-droits-de-l-homme/article/pour-une-diplomatie-feministe-tribune-conjointe-de-jean-yves-le-drian-et#:~:text=de%20la%20police-,%C2%AB%20Pour%20une%20diplomatie%20f%C3%A9ministe%20%C2%BB%20%2D%20Tribune%20conjointe%20de%20Jean%20D,Marl%C3%A8ne%20Schiappa%20\(8%20mars%202019\)&text=La%20France%20entend%20soutenir%20l,et%20l%C3%A9ducation%20des%20filles](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/droits-de-l-homme/actualites-et-evenements-sur-le-theme-des-droits-de-l-homme/actualites-2019-sur-le-theme-des-droits-de-l-homme/article/pour-une-diplomatie-feministe-tribune-conjointe-de-jean-yves-le-drian-et#:~:text=de%20la%20police-,%C2%AB%20Pour%20une%20diplomatie%20f%C3%A9ministe%20%C2%BB%20%2D%20Tribune%20conjointe%20de%20Jean%20D,Marl%C3%A8ne%20Schiappa%20(8%20mars%202019)&text=La%20France%20entend%20soutenir%20l,et%20l%C3%A9ducation%20des%20filles)

<sup>52</sup> France Diplomatie. (2023). *French aid figures*.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/developpement/les-chiffres-de-l-aide-francaise/>

<sup>53</sup> Assemblée Nationale. (n. d.) *Information report n°844*.

[https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/cion\\_afetr/115b0844\\_rapport-information#\\_Toc25600000](https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/cion_afetr/115b0844_rapport-information#_Toc25600000)

foundations for a cross-functional approach. This strategy is based on an integrated approach to gender equality, which aims to integrate this principle into all areas of intervention, the instruments of France's external action and the country's political objectives.

France's feminist diplomacy is currently not clearly and precisely defined. In its report on "Feminist foreign policy to achieve sustainable development goals", the Gender in Geopolitics Institute highlighted this lack of definition. The conceptualization of the principle of feminist diplomacy is necessary in order to legitimize a country's foreign policy<sup>54</sup>.

In 2021, France organized the first Generation Equality Forum alongside Mexico, 25 years after the very first UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. This event made history by bringing together institutional players, civil society, youth and the private sector to make a set of commitments for sustainable development and equality between women and men<sup>55</sup>.

### **Axes and specificities**

France's international strategy is based on the sectoral priorities of sustainable development, in line with the Agenda 2030, with the priorities of the European Union and its Gender Action Plan, and the various strategies of the French ministries for education, vocational training and integration, sexual and reproductive health and rights, etc.

Feminist diplomacy is reflected in its financial commitments to official development assistance and the mobilization of all the country's operators for gender equality. For example, at the 2018 Interministerial Committee on International Cooperation and Development (CICID), France has set the target of having 100% of AFD projects evaluated according to the OECD gender marker and 50% of AFD's annual commitment volumes with a main or significant gender objective<sup>56</sup>. However, these two objectives were no longer pursued when, in July 2023, the Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development met to adopt new guidelines for France's official development assistance and international cooperation policy<sup>57</sup>. In addition, the country committed

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<sup>54</sup> Gender Institute in Geopolitics (2023). *Feminist foreign policy to achieve sustainable development goals*. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=11383>

<sup>55</sup> Forum Génération Égalité (n. d.). <https://forum.generationequality.org/fr>

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty. (n. d.). Document de politique transversale - projet de loi de finances pour 2022. French development policy. [https://www.budget.gouv.fr/rechercher?query=DPT+2022+politique+developpement&field\\_tags\\_target\\_id=&sort\\_bef\\_combine=search\\_api\\_relevance\\_DESC&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments](https://www.budget.gouv.fr/rechercher?query=DPT+2022+politique+developpement&field_tags_target_id=&sort_bef_combine=search_api_relevance_DESC&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments)

<sup>57</sup> France diplomatie. (August 1, 2023). *Adoption of guidelines for international cooperation policy and official development assistance*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/developpement/evenements-et-actualites-su>

itself in the budget programming law of August 4, 2021 relating to development and the fight against global inequalities, so that by 2025, 75% of the projects it finances will incorporate a gender dimension as a principal or significant objective, and 20% as a principal objective<sup>58</sup>.

France is aware of the alarming decline in women's rights around the world, and intends to continue defending them in international forums and developing its official development assistance, particularly towards feminist organizations worldwide. In September 2023, the country also doubled its funding for the Support Fund for Feminists Organisations to 250 million euros over 5 years, with a 65% priority for initiatives in Africa<sup>59</sup>. Since the creation of this fund in 2019, France has mobilized 134 million euros for 1,000 associations in 75 countries around the world on 7 main themes: SRHR, the fight against discrimination and sexual and gender-based violence, women's empowerment and participation in economic life, women's social and political leadership, girls' access to education, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and gender and climate<sup>60</sup>. With this fund, France has become the world's leading financier of feminist organizations.

In its feminist diplomacy, France has prioritized the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The country is convinced that gender equality and women's empowerment depend first and foremost on guaranteeing SRHR. France has defined a new international strategy for the period 2023-2027<sup>61</sup> which encompasses six thematic priorities, namely:

1. Access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and products
2. Accompanying social and behavioral change: supporting comprehensive sexuality education and transforming masculinities
3. Access to safe abortion by promoting a favorable ecosystem
4. Combating harmful practices and gender-based sexual violence
5. Equality and access to rights for LGBT+ people
6. Defending sexual and reproductive health and rights in crisis situations

Preventing and combating violence against women is also a priority. The Istanbul Convention, developed by the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and

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<sup>58</sup> France diplomatie (2022). *Feminist diplomacy*.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-feministe/>

<sup>59</sup> Focus 2030. (August 02, 2023). *CICID 2023: a new strategy for international development cooperation*.

<https://focus2030.org/CICID-2023-une-nouvelle-strategie-de-cooperation-internationale-au>

<sup>60</sup> France diplomatie. (2023). *The Fonds de soutien aux organisations féministes (FSOF): an emblematic tool of France's feminist diplomacy*.

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/diplomatie-feministe/le-fonds-de-soutien-aux-organisations-feministes-fsof-un-outil-emblematique-de/>

<sup>61</sup> France diplomatie. (2023). *France's international strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights*.

[https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a4\\_strate\\_gie-dssr-2023\\_v9\\_bd\\_cle86ff1f.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a4_strate_gie-dssr-2023_v9_bd_cle86ff1f.pdf)

domestic violence, is the most influential legal tool. France is campaigning for all EU member states to adopt this convention<sup>62</sup>. France also contributes to the “Fonds de soutien pour les survivantes et violences sexuelles liées aux conflits” (Support Fund for Women Survivors and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence), which provides compensation and reparations to women survivors and helps them reintegrate into society<sup>63</sup>.

Moreover, France contributed to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. It has adopted its third national plan for 2021-2025, with 4 key commitments: prevention by raising awareness of the issues involved in combating gender-based violence, women’s rights, and gender equality; the protection of women and girls and the fight against impunity; the participation of women in decisions relating to peace and security; and the promotion of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the National Action Plan<sup>64</sup>.

In the same vein, France provides funding for projects run by UN agencies UN Women and UNFPA, and for the International Organization of the Francophonie to support civil society.

Within the Commission on the Status of Women, France advocates and defends European unity in negotiations. The Commission was set up in 1946 and is run by UN Women. Its main aim is to monitor and evaluate progress made since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all United Nations actions. The Commission meets every year in March, and concludes with a text agreed and negotiated by all member states.

France is also committed to integrating gender into climate issues at COP negotiations every year. During the organization of COP21 in France, the country made a major contribution to ensuring that gender was integrated into the negotiations. Despite attempts at negotiations and organized events mixing gender and climate, the civil society present at this COP21 was not totally satisfied with the discussions held at this conference and declared that it is necessary to “change the system rather than the climate”<sup>65</sup>. However, France has continued to follow the commitments of this COP on gender and climate and notably at the One Planet Summit organized in Paris in 2017, where a Gender and

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<sup>62</sup> Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. (n. d.) What is *feminist diplomacy*?  
[https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a5\\_diplomatie\\_fe\\_ministe\\_2023\\_v4\\_cle0df329.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a5_diplomatie_fe_ministe_2023_v4_cle0df329.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Global survivor fund. (n. d.). <https://www.globalsurvivorsfund.org/>

<sup>64</sup> Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. (2021). France's 3rd National Action Plan 2021-2025.  
[https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/202107\\_pna\\_no\\_3-hd\\_cle8c97fb.pdf](https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/202107_pna_no_3-hd_cle8c97fb.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> Valo, M. (December 08, 2015). COP 21: *Women's voices raised against climate change*. Le Monde.  
[https://lemonde.fr/cop21/article/2015/12/08/cop21-le-climat-du-point-de-vue-des-femmes\\_4827212\\_4527432.html](https://lemonde.fr/cop21/article/2015/12/08/cop21-le-climat-du-point-de-vue-des-femmes_4827212_4527432.html)

Development platform met with 90 organizations from 35 countries who disseminated an advocacy document entitled “For climate finance that fully integrates gender”<sup>66</sup>.

The education of young girls is also a priority for France. The challenge is to enable this vulnerable population to stay in school, avoid early marriage and pregnancy, and gain access to training and employment on an equal footing with men. In 2021, France has allocated 333 million euros to the Global Partnership for Education, 50% of which is earmarked for girls’ education<sup>67</sup>. This issue is also recalled in one of the priorities of France’s international strategy for sexual and reproductive health and rights 2023-2027 with “accompanying social and behavioral change: supporting comprehensive sexuality education, and transforming masculinities”<sup>68</sup>.

France’s international strategy for gender equality 2018-2022 contains both an internal and external component. With a view to setting an example in favor of gender equality, France promotes professional equality within the MEAE. The Ministry supports equal access for women and men to jobs, training, mobility and equal pay. In addition, the MEAE has introduced a “zero tolerance” policy to combat discrimination, sexist behaviour, harassment and sexual violence within its departments and diplomatic posts<sup>69</sup>. In 2023, the Ministry was again awarded the AFNOR “Égalité professionnelle entre les femmes et les hommes” and “Diversité” labels<sup>70</sup>. The internal implementation of this professional equality policy involves the appointment of equality correspondents in diplomatic posts and MEAE departments. In France, the Sauvadet law of March 12, 2012 imposes a minimum rate of 40% of each gender in senior management positions in the three French civil services, state, territorial and hospital<sup>71</sup>. This internal component aims to promote a culture of professional equality within French institutions, particularly in an inter-ministerial framework, which will be developed in a new 2023-2025 strategy<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Gender and development platform. (January 23, 2016). *The Gender and Development Platform at COP 21*. <https://www.genre-developpement.org/2016/01/23/cop21/>

<sup>67</sup> Global Partnership (June 30, 2021). *The Global Partnership for Education welcomes the French contribution of 333 million euros announced by President Emmanuel Macron at the Generation Equality Forum*.

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/fr/news/le-partenariat-mondial-pour-leducation-salue-la-contribution-francaise-de-333-millions-deuros>

<sup>68</sup> France diplomatie. (2023). *France’s international strategy on sexual and reproductive health and rights*. [https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a4\\_strate\\_gie-dssr-2023\\_v9\\_bd\\_cle86ff1f.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/a4_strate_gie-dssr-2023_v9_bd_cle86ff1f.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. (2023). *Gender equality at the Ministry*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/l-egalite-femmes-hommes-au-ministere/>

<sup>70</sup> Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. (2023). *Diversity at the Ministry*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministere-et-son-reseau/la-diversite-au-ministere/>

<sup>71</sup> Légifrance. (2012). *LAW no. 2012-347 of March 12, 2012 on access to permanent employment and the improvement of employment conditions for contractual agents in the civil service, the fight against discrimination and various provisions relating to the civil service*. <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000025489865/>

<sup>72</sup> Ministry responsible for equality between women and men and the fight against discrimination. (November 24, 2023). *All equal - Interministerial plan for equality between women and men 2023-2027*.

**Table showing the various funding sources for gender equality worldwide**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>GDP amount (billions of US\$)<sup>73</sup></b>	<b>2 730</b>	<b>2 650</b>	<b>2 960</b>	<b>2 780</b>
<b>Military budget (billions of US\$)</b>	<b>50,12</b>	<b>52,75</b>	<b>56,65</b>	<b>53,63</b>
<b>ODA amount (millions of US\$)<sup>74</sup></b>	<b>13 435</b>	<b>14 853</b>	<b>15 506</b>	<b>17 444</b>
<b>Percentage of ODA linked to gender equality (%)<sup>75</sup></b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>Data not available</b>
<b>ODA gender equality main objective (millions of US\$)<sup>76</sup></b>	<b>228</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>Data not available</b>
<b>ODA secondary objective for gender equality (US\$ millions)<sup>77</sup></b>	<b>1 644</b>	<b>3 213</b>	<b>3 395</b>	<b>Data not available</b>
<b>Gender ODA linked to the WPS agenda (US\$ millions)<sup>78</sup></b>	<b>14,75</b>	<b>15,30</b>	<b>26,72</b>	<b>4,18</b>

<https://www.egalite-femmes-hommes.gouv.fr/toutes-et-tous-egaux-plan-interministeriel-pour-legalite-entre-les-femmes-et-les-hommes-2023-2027>

<sup>73</sup> World Bank. (n. d.). *GDP (current US\$) - France*.

<https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=FR>

<sup>74</sup> France's total ODA indicator. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*

<https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?lang=fr&SubSessionId=c04cda68-6bc5-4b47-a478-8485bac6b02a&themetreid=3>

<sup>75</sup> Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty. (n. d.). *French development policy 2023*.

[https://www.budget.gouv.fr/rechercher?query=DPT+2022+politique+developpement&field\\_tags\\_target\\_id=&ort\\_bef\\_combine=search\\_api\\_relevance\\_DESC&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments](https://www.budget.gouv.fr/rechercher?query=DPT+2022+politique+developpement&field_tags_target_id=&ort_bef_combine=search_api_relevance_DESC&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments&f%5B0%5D=type%3Adocuments)

<sup>76</sup> Gender equality indicator - main objective. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*.

[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>77</sup> Gender equality indicator - secondary objective. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*.

[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>78</sup> Peacekeeping operation indicators. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*.

<https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>

<b>Climate-related ODA for gender (US\$ millions)<sup>79</sup></b>	<b>484,22</b>	<b>956,83</b>	<b>840,71</b>	<b>575,15</b>
<b>ODA for gender linked to governance and civil society (US\$ millions)<sup>80</sup></b>	<b>170,84</b>	<b>609,2</b>	<b>1 039,57</b>	<b>1 189,92</b>
<b>Economic and trade-related ODA for gender (millions US\$)<sup>81</sup></b>	<b>591,1</b>	<b>1 224</b>	<b>851,6</b>	<b>1 765,92</b>
<b>Funds dedicated to SRHR (millions US\$)<sup>82</sup></b>	<b>5,9</b>	<b>6,9</b>	<b>25,9</b>	<b>27,9</b>
<b>UNFPA contribution (millions US\$)<sup>83</sup></b>	<b>14,3<sup>84</sup></b>	<b>17,2<sup>85</sup></b>	<b>17,2<sup>86</sup></b>	<b>17,4<sup>87</sup></b>

<sup>79</sup> Environmental protection indicators. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1>

<sup>80</sup> OECD. (n. d.). *Financing development for gender equality and women's empowerment*. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/development-finance-for-gender-equality-and-women-s-empowerment.htm>

<sup>81</sup> business and other services indicator - total. OECD. *Stat Creditor reporting system - France*. [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>82</sup> Population/health&fertility policy indicator - total. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - France*. <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?lang=fr&SubSessionId=c04cda68-6bc5-4b47-a478-8485bac6b02a&themetreid=3>

<sup>83</sup> United Nations Population Fund. (n. d.). France. <https://www.unfpa.org/fr/donor/france>

<sup>84</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Funding compendium*. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202019.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> United Nations development programme. (2020). *Funding compendium*. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-06/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202020%20.pdf>; United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Funding Compendium 2021*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium\\_2021\\_Aug%2029.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium_2021_Aug%2029.pdf); United Nations Development Programme. (2023). *Funding Compendium 2022*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp\\_funding\\_compendium\\_2022\\_vs\\_1\\_as\\_of\\_24\\_aug\\_2023.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp_funding_compendium_2022_vs_1_as_of_24_aug_2023.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement (PNUD). (2022). *Partenariat France-PNUD 2022-2023*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-11/high-res\\_lastest\\_november\\_version\\_2022\\_partenariat\\_france\\_-\\_pnud\\_2021-2022\\_dossier.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-11/high-res_lastest_november_version_2022_partenariat_france_-_pnud_2021-2022_dossier.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> Sénat. (2022). *Contributions financières : mieux assurer la place de la France dans le multilatéralisme*. <https://www.senat.fr/rap/r21-392/r21-3923.html>



<b>UNDP contribution (millions US\$)</b>	<b>3,6<sup>88</sup></b>	<b>4,3<sup>89</sup></b>	<b>7,7<sup>90</sup></b>	<b>10,16<sup>91</sup></b>
<b>UN Women contribution (millions US\$)</b>	<b>55,46</b>	<b>53,86<sup>92</sup></b>	<b>56,87<sup>93</sup></b>	<b>56,67<sup>94</sup></b>
<b>UNESCO contribution (millions US\$)<sup>95</sup></b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>488,7</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>Data not available</b>
<b>UNICEF contribution (millions US\$)</b>	<b>277,36</b>	<b>313,61</b>	<b>410,48</b>	<b>Data not available</b>
<b>Global Fund contribution (in billions of US\$)<sup>96</sup></b>	<b>1,1</b>	<b>1,3</b>		

## Strengths

By positioning itself as one of the leaders of this policy, France intends to maintain an important role in international negotiations on gender equality. Having organized the Génération Égalité Forum alongside Mexico, France has reinforced its role as a forerunner in feminist foreign policy. By launching this strategy in 2018 and focusing on development issues, France's feminist diplomacy has differentiated itself from that of its counterparts, such as Sweden, which is more focused on social issues, or Germany, which contributes financially on a more massive scale to allocations for UN agencies, for example. This difference translates into strong support for civil society organizations,

<sup>88</sup> ONU Femmes. (2019-2020). *Le Monde pour les femmes et les filles*.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c78efe065019f922db505cb/t/607449adf9e2152dd729bd32/1618233776220/un-women-annual-report-2019-2020-fr.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> ONU Femmes. (n. d.). *ONU Femmes en France*.

<https://www.onufemmes.fr/nos-actions-en-france#:~:text=Nous%20faisons%20aussi%20du%20plaidoyer,18%C3%A8me%20rang%20des%20pays%20donateurs>.

<sup>90</sup> ONU Femmes. (2021). *Nos partenaires font la différence*.

[https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/FR\\_Statement%20of%20financial%20performance%202021.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/FR_Statement%20of%20financial%20performance%202021.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> UnWomen transparency portal beta. (2022). *France*. <https://open.unwomen.org/partners/france>

<sup>92</sup> Sénat. (2022). Contributions financières : mieux assurer la place de la France dans le multilatéralisme.

<https://www.senat.fr/rap/r21-392/r21-3923.html>

<sup>93</sup> Unicef. (2020). Core resources for results.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/99911/file/Core%20Resources%20for%20Results%20-%202020%20Report.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Unicef. (n. d.). Funding for Core Resources for results.

<https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/funding/core-resources-for-results>

<sup>95</sup> Senate. (2022). *Financial contributions: securing France's place in multilateralism*.

<https://www.senat.fr/rap/r21-392/r21-3923.html>

<sup>96</sup> The global Fund data (n. d.). *Pledges & contributions*.

<https://data.theglobalfund.org/viz/pledges-contributions/time-cycle?donors=1cc31f0a-ccd0-436d-a182-e5524f12a69b>

making France the leading funder in this field. This position confirms France's role as a forerunner capable of influencing other countries to follow suit in the development of a feminist foreign policy, thanks in particular to its diplomatic influence in international bodies.

The country has developed its strategy in favor of equality between women and men in a number of development sectors: education, entrepreneurship, SRHR, the fight against gender-based violence and climate. This approach makes France an example in this field.

Every year, France continues to increase its budgets allocated to gender equality, enabling it to perform even better in its development aid policy. Every year since the launch of its strategy in 2018, the country has increased the funds allocated to support feminist organizations, endowments to UN agencies and extended this policy to several key ODA sectors.

### **Limitations**

France's concept of feminist diplomacy has yet to be officially defined. This lack of official definition makes the country's strategy towards women's rights less legitimate. What's more, France has not put in place a logical framework with precise indicators, making the evaluation of this policy less precise and impactful.

Political support for feminist diplomacy remains too weak for the time being. The country must defend feminist foreign policy in all international forums, and particularly within the European Union, where the backlash is increasingly worrying. The rights of women and LGBTI+ people are regressing in many countries, including in Europe. France must therefore assert its positions more firmly in multilateral bodies<sup>97</sup>. In addition, greater political support would boost the country's visibility and influence on the international stage, and enable it to take a leading role in the fight for gender equality.

The absence of a dedicated, gender-sensitive budget makes the funds allocated to this policy less transparent. It is currently difficult to distinguish ODA funds dedicated solely to gender equality.

France needs to develop the cross-cutting approach of its feminist diplomacy by integrating sectors currently absent from its strategy, such as the environment, trade, digital issues, migration and

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<sup>97</sup> Equipop. (February 13, 2023). Women's rights: fighting the backlash <https://equipop.org/droits-des-femmes-combattre-le-backlash-recommandations-pour-la-politique-etrangere-de-la-france/>

disarmament. The intersectional approach would also be more effective and give the country greater legitimacy in multilateral bodies<sup>98</sup>.

France must also make an effort to integrate its policy by making all sectoral ministries responsible for integrating this approach, in order to optimize the effectiveness of French feminist diplomacy. Efforts also need to be made internally, by continuing to develop professional equality within the MEAE, but also by promoting this culture of equality in other ministerial bodies.

Links with the private and research sectors are still too weak. This feminist diplomacy needs to reach out to all sectors of French public policy, and in particular to these two sectors which are not currently integrated into the French strategy.

Finally, France has a strategy for fighting for the rights of LGBTI+ people<sup>99</sup>. An ambassador is dedicated to these issues to implement this priority, which includes advocacy for the repeal of all provisions worldwide that penalize and criminalize homosexuality and transidentity. However, this strategy is not linked to France's feminist diplomacy. The ambassador's strategy on LGBTI+ rights focuses primarily on the decriminalization of homosexuality, which affects gay men only. The two strategies would have a greater impact if they were more complementary. At a time when women's rights and the rights of LGBTI+ people are in alarming decline around the world, it is all the more important to take complementary action on these two issues. The lack of a link between France's feminist diplomacy and the country's strategy for LGBTI+ rights makes the State's action less impactful. Civil society organizations also shared their recommendations for France's feminist foreign policy, particularly in the fight against “backlash”, which concerns all categories of women, including the LGBTI+ community.

These recommendations focus mainly on the need to increase funding for civil society organizations in order to combat this rollback of rights, to pay particular attention to the defense and protection of feminist activists and organizations, and to support the fight for women's rights and the LGBTI+ community at the highest level, as a key diplomatic issue<sup>100</sup>. Finally, in our report “Feminist foreign policy to achieve sustainable development goals”, we recommend that France “influence a trend towards the creation of a consortium of countries and organizations committed to defending the

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<sup>98</sup> Stella Reminy-Elizor, Julia Ricci, Héloïse Versavel sous la direction de Déborah Rouach et Alice Apostoly (2023), *La politique étrangère féministe pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable*, Institut du Genre en Géopolitique, <https://igg-geo.org/?p=11383>.

<sup>99</sup> France diplomatie. (n. d.). *France's action in favor of the rights of LGBT+ people*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/droits-de-l-homme/l-action-de-la-france-en-faveur-des-droits-des-personnes-lgbt/>

<sup>100</sup> Equipop. (February 13, 2023). *Women's rights: fighting the backlash*. <https://equipop.org/droits-des-femmes-combattre-le-backlash-recommandations-pour-la-politique-etrangere-de-la-france/>

rights of women and LGBTI+ people, guaranteeing their autonomy and fighting against all forms of violence against them”<sup>101</sup>.

## Recommendations

1. **Provide a clear and official definition of feminist diplomacy to legitimize France’s position in this field.** This definition will enable the country to better disseminate this public policy in all sectors of France’s intervention. Civil society organizations, in this regard, propose concrete solutions, and recommendations concerning France’s feminist foreign policy. The country should continue to draw from these analyses and research to enhance its actions in this regard. It is notably recommended for France to define this feminist diplomacy based on a “postcolonial, evolutionary, holistic, and intersectional approach”, also incorporating the goals of sustainable development into the orientations of this policy<sup>102</sup>.
2. **Implement an interministerial gender roadmap.** To develop the intersectionality of its feminist diplomacy and make it more impactful across all sectors of foreign policy, France must disseminate its strategy across all sectoral ministries.
3. **Promote France’s feminist diplomacy strategy at deconcentrated and decentralized levels.** To date, only central government ministries are equipped with gender focal points to implement the policy of professional equality between women and men. Decentralized institutions, i.e. prefectures and regional and departmental directorates of ministries in the provinces, as well as all decentralized territorial authorities (regional and departmental councils, public establishments for inter-communal cooperation, town halls), should also implement this policy. The central State should encourage the dissemination of this strategy at all levels of decentralization and in all decentralized government departments, so that the objectives of this diplomacy have a greater impact in all sectors of public policies.
4. **Establish a dedicated budget to the feminist diplomacy strategy that is multi-year, transparent and in line with the strategy’s objectives and expected results.** A

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<sup>101</sup> Stella Reminy-Elizor, Julia Ricci, Héloïse Versavel under the direction of Déborah Rouach and Alice Apostoly, Institut du Genre en Géopolitique (February 23, 2023). *Feminist foreign policy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=11383>

<sup>102</sup> Stella Reminy-Elizor, Julia Ricci, Héloïse Versavel under the direction of Déborah Rouach and Alice Apostoly, Institut du Genre en Géopolitique (February 23, 2023). *Feminist foreign policy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=11383>

gender-sensitive budget will provide a clearer understanding of France's actions in the context of its feminist foreign policy, making it easier to showcase on the international stage.

5. **Increase France's budget dedicated to feminist diplomacy, particularly contributions to United Nations agencies.** France is not currently among the top contributors to UN agencies, as its strategy has been to develop its bilateral ODA through the FSOE, for example. However, to be among the most successful countries in developing a feminist foreign policy, the country will have to increase its funds allocated to multilateral ODA.
6. **Implement training and awareness-raising programs for 100% of MEAE staff, to ensure that everyone embraces the principles of feminist diplomacy.** In order to pursue its ambition of being a forerunner and role model in the dissemination of this policy, the MEAE must first pursue its efforts to set an example by training all its staff in the principles of feminist diplomacy.
7. **Be more ambitious on professional equality by integrating parity representation at all job levels within the MEAE.** This measure is also intended to give women the means to reach these job levels by developing training on a parity basis, giving equal treatment to women and men in competitive examinations, and providing identical working conditions for women and men (salaries, bonuses, etc.).
8. **Develop political support for feminist diplomacy so that this strategy is better known to all.** Political support for this strategy has both internal and external implications. Better political support for France's feminist diplomacy and its achievements in the field of gender equality would enhance the country's legitimacy in international bodies, and help disseminate this policy to other countries, as well as within the French authorities themselves.

France's institutional framework for gender issues:

France's feminist diplomacy is steered by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. Actions under France's gender equality strategy are coordinated at various levels by:

- a Minister attached to the Prime Minister in charge of Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities,
- a Thematic Ambassador, General Secretary of the Generation Equality Forum,
- a High Official for Equal Rights,
- the Human Development Sub-Directorate of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, with a position for a gender and development editor.

In addition to this overall guidance, there is a network of gender focal points within all the directorates of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and diplomatic posts, as well as within French development operators (some 30 public structures under the supervision or co-supervision of the MEAE, including, for example, the Agence française de développement, France Volontaires, Expertise France, the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, etc.). Since 2020, and as part of France's policy of professional equality between women and men, all the country's ministries have been equipped with equality focal points.

#### Feminist collectives:

The Générations Féministes collective brings together over fifty French associations. This network of civil society organizations was very active in organizing the Génération Egalité Forum in France in 2021. The collective carried out numerous advocacy actions alongside the Forum and produced several technical documents, including a position paper on SRHR. These reports fed into the development of France's international strategy for gender equality, which was written in cooperation between the French government and civil society organizations.

Other civil society organizations are regularly consulted in the preparation of MEAE strategic documents. Coordination Sud, for example, has set up a gender and development commission comprising some twenty members, whose mission is to propose advocacy actions to integrate gender into France's development policies.

Civil society organizations such as Equipop and the Gender in Geopolitics Institute have published analytical reports and recommendations for improving gender equality strategies.

#### Points to remember:

1. In 2019, France announced the launch of its feminist diplomacy, with a strategy launched in 2018 (2018-2022). In 2024, the new international strategy for equality between women and men should be published.
2. France has drawn up a new sexual and reproductive health and rights strategy for 2023-2025. This is one of the priority areas of France's feminist foreign policy, and the country is a champion of the "Freedom to Decide on One's Body and SRHR" coalition of the Generation Equality Forum.
3. France has increased the budget dedicated to the support fund for feminist organizations (FSOF) to 250 million euros over 5 years (2023-2027) and its funds allocated to United Nations organizations from 2019 to 2022 (see table of financial contributions).
4. In 2023, as part of its policy for gender equality in the workplace, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs is certified by AFNOR for "Gender Equality in the Workplace" and "Diversity".

5. France has adopted a cross-cutting approach in its feminist diplomacy by integrating the fight for women's rights into various sectors such as climate, SRHR, education, combating gender-based violence, and education.
6. Efforts are still needed regarding the inter-ministerial approach of France's feminist diplomacy to ensure its deployment across all public policies in the country.
7. France has adopted an international strategy for equality between women and men and a strong policy in favor of the rights of LGBT+ individuals, but these two approaches of French diplomacy are not complementary, making their actions less impactful.

## Italy

### Adoption and Context

Italy has adopted a 2021-2026 national strategy for equality between women and men. However, the country has not officially declared its intention to develop a feminist foreign policy. This national strategy is inspired by the European Union's "Gender Equality Strategy" for the period 2020-2025. This strategic document highlights five priorities: work, income, skills, time and power<sup>103</sup>. This initiative was launched during the COVID-19 period, a time when Italian women were notably three times more likely to lose their jobs than men (around 312,000 women versus 132,000 men)<sup>104</sup>.

Italy is a parliamentary republic governed by Head of State Sergio Mattarella and the Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The latter has been in power since September 2022, thanks to the victory of her far-right party, Fratelli d'Italia. She formed a government with the country's two other far-right parties, the League and Forza Italia<sup>105</sup>. Giorgia Meloni has been criticized for her conservative views and patriarchal vision of Italian society, for example, she expressed a desire to be called "Prime Minister" (in the masculine form)<sup>106</sup> and opposes abortion. Nevertheless, she is the first woman elected to this position in the country's history. Some feminist organizations have even highlighted the fact that her election has broken certain taboos in the country. Giorgia Meloni's main opposition party, the Democratic Party, has also appointed a woman as party leader, opponent Elly Schlein<sup>107</sup>.

Giorgia Meloni's government, composed of her political party Fratelli D'Italia, Matteo Salvini's League and Forza Italia created by Silvio Berlusconi, is a coalition with a neo-fascist heritage from the World War II. The Italian government, although headed by a woman, consists of 19 men and only 5 women<sup>108</sup>. In the Assembly, 129 women sit out of a total of 400 deputies<sup>109</sup>. Matteo Salvini,

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<sup>103</sup> Dipartimento per le pari opportunità. (n. d.) Strategia nazionale per la parità di genere 2021-2026. <https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/it/politiche-e-attivita/parita-di-genere-ed-empowerment-femminile/strategia-nazionale-per-la-parita-di-genere-2021-2026/>

<sup>104</sup> Dumont Baron, Y. (June 4, 2021). *In Italy, billions to reduce gender inequality*. Radio - Canada. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1798114/italie-milliards-inegalites-hommes-femmes-famille-tradition>

<sup>105</sup> All of Europe (updated January 13, 2023). *Italy*. <https://www.touteurope.eu/pays/italie/>

<sup>106</sup> HuffPost. (November 21, 2023). *Femicide in Italy: Meloni responds to critics who accuse him of embodying "patriarchal culture"*. [https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/international/article/femicide-en-italie-meloni-repond-aux-critiques-qui-l-accusent-d-incarner-la-culture-patriarcale\\_226061.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/international/article/femicide-en-italie-meloni-repond-aux-critiques-qui-l-accusent-d-incarner-la-culture-patriarcale_226061.html)

<sup>107</sup> Roberts, H. (August 6, 2023). *Is Italy's Meloni failing to deliver for women?*. Politico. <https://www.politico.eu/article/italy-giorgia-meloni-women-rights-feminism-motherhood-abortion-rights/>

<sup>108</sup> France diplomatie. (n. d.). *Composition of the government of the Italian Republic*. <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/italie/presentation-de-l-italie/article/composition-du-gouvernement>

<sup>109</sup> Parlamento Italiano (n. d.). *Camera dei deputati - deputati*. <https://www.camera.it/leg19/313>



vice-president of the Council of Ministers, is one of the leading figures in this masculinist, conservative, homophobic and xenophobic trend in the Italian government. Already Minister of the Interior in 2019, he made openly sexist and misogynistic comments, relegating women to their sole role as reproducers and housewives<sup>110</sup>.

Upon taking office, the prime minister focused her policy on the country's national interests, notably by implementing a pro-natalist and anti-LGBTI+ policy. She justifies her populist political program by the need to revive the country, but worries her European neighbors, who fear for the future of human rights in the country, and in particular the rights of LGBTI+ individuals, minorities and women<sup>111</sup>. By emphasizing that she is first and foremost a mother, Giorgia Meloni breaks with the deconstruction of stereotypes related to women. Finally, she supports the idea that implementing a gender ideology would go against the traditional family and motherhood scheme<sup>112</sup>.

### **Axes and specificities**

In its 2021-2026 national strategy for equality between women and men, Italy highlights the progress made by the country in recent years, particularly in terms of women's representation in decision-making positions, with the Golfo-Mosca law in particular, which enabled the introduction of gender quotas in the boards of directors of publicly traded companies<sup>113</sup>.

In its national strategic plan for gender equality, Italy highlights 5 priority areas for reform<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>110</sup> Padovani, M. (March 7, 2019). *For Women's Rights Day, Matteo Salvini displays...his misogyny.* l'Obs. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/droits-des-femmes/20190307.OBS1360/pour-la-journee-des-droits-des-femmes-matteo-salvini-affiche-sa-misogynie.html>

<sup>111</sup> Ricci, J. (October 14, 2022). *Italy: a populist breakthrough at the expense of women's rights and the LGBTQIA+ community.* Gender Institute in Geopolitics. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=9005>

<sup>112</sup> Scalabrelli, L. (July 04, 2023). *Are women more democratic in the exercise of power? A comparison between Italy and Tunisia.* Gender Institute in Geopolitics. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=13659&lang=en>

<sup>113</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality.* [https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita\\_genero\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita_genero_en.pdf)

<sup>114</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality.* [https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita\\_genero\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita_genero_en.pdf)

- Jobs

Italy ranks last in Europe in terms of women's participation in the labor market<sup>115</sup>. Mothers are particularly hard hit by this lack of access to employment in the country. The employment rate of Italian women is 20% lower than that of men. These figures increased during the COVID-19 period, with 49% of women having a job in 2020, compared with 67.2% of men<sup>116</sup>. Additionally, Italy's professional sectors remain gendered, with women outnumbering men in education, healthcare and social work. Italy intends to increase the number of jobs for women, while providing them with opportunities to access all sectors of the workforce in a gender-neutral way.

- Revenue

The gender pay gap remains high, particularly in the private sector. The country aims to reduce this gap by guaranteeing more equitable pay for women and men. According to the private sector employee observatory of the Italian Social Security Institute (INPS), in 2022, the annual salary difference between women and men was nearly 8,000 euros, while in 2021 the gap was 6,740 euros<sup>117</sup>. Nevertheless, in 2019, in the public sector, women's annual pay was 4.2% higher than men's, i.e. 33,683 euros versus 32,275 euros<sup>118</sup>.

- Skills

In higher education, Italian women are more educated than men, but access to degrees is still gendered. Women are more represented in fields such as psychology and law, for example. This situation reinforces the gender gap in access to jobs and remuneration. The country aims to deconstruct stereotypes related to educational sectors in order to guarantee equal opportunities for women. Nevertheless, progress has been made over the years. In 2021, for every 100 men, 136 women graduated from higher education<sup>119</sup>. The gaps are more in the training courses. In 2018, the gap between women and men in the arts and humanities field was 19.2% female graduates for 10.9% male. Conversely, in the same year, 26.5% of men graduated in engineering in manufacturing and construction compared to 9.5% for women<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality*. [https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita-genero\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita-genero_en.pdf)

<sup>116</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality*. [https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita-genero\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita-genero_en.pdf)

<sup>117</sup> Pascale, F. (November 09, 2023). *In Italy, the gender pay gap continues to widen*. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/politique/news/en-italie-lecart-salarial-hommes-femmes-continue-de-se-creuser/>

<sup>118</sup> Portase, T. (July 16, 2020). *Italy and women's limited access to the world of work*. Gender Institute in Geopolitics. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=1519>

<sup>119</sup> Eurostat data browser. (n.d.). *Graduates in tertiary education by education level - women per 100 men*. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/educ\\_uoe\\_grad09/default/bar?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/educ_uoe_grad09/default/bar?lang=en)

<sup>120</sup> ResearchGate. (November 2020). *Italy: Gender segregation and higher education*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346846309\\_Italy\\_Gender\\_Segregation\\_and\\_Higher\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346846309_Italy_Gender_Segregation_and_Higher_Education)

- Time

Beliefs that women should take care of the household are deeply rooted in the country. As a result, women spend far more time on household activities than on social or professional ones. In 2021, for example, the rate of women employed part-time is 33%, compared to 9.2% for men<sup>121</sup>.

- Power

While in the private sector, women's representation rate has largely improved with the Golfo-Mosca law of 2011, in the public sector, their representation rate remains low. Women are poorly represented in the upper echelons of public administration and in political positions. Giorgia Meloni's government is a perfect illustration of this, with only 6 women out of 24 ministers in her government<sup>122</sup>. Italy has set itself the target of achieving at least 40% of women elected at national level and in regional councils (currently around 21%), in its national strategy 2021-2026<sup>123</sup>.

To achieve better results in these sectors, Italy has set out the following measures in its national strategy<sup>124</sup>:

- Implement a more gender-sensitive government budget;
- Evaluate the gender impact of public policies ;
- Taking into account positive masculinity in all areas of public policy;
- Adopt a more inclusive approach by taking into account minorities such as people with disabilities, victims of violence and those facing significant economic difficulties.

With this strategic plan, Italy aims to improve its Gender Equality Index from the European Institute by five points by 2026. The country currently ranks 14th with a score of 63.5 out of 100, 4.4 points below the European Union average<sup>125</sup>.

Giorgia Meloni has not publicly commented on this national strategic plan. However, having always defended traditionalist values of the family and the role of women, the Italian leader has emphasized the need for women to be integrated into the world of work, while maintaining their role in the

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<sup>121</sup> Eurostat data browser (2021). *Percentage of part-time employment of adults by sex, age groups, number of children and age of youngest child.*

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst\\_hhptechi\\$dv\\_1344/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/lfst_hhptechi$dv_1344/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>122</sup> 20 minutes. (October 25, 2022). *Italy: Giorgia Meloni, a pioneer far from being a feminist.*

<https://www.20minutes.fr/monde/4007091-20221025-italie-giorgia-meloni-pionniere-loin-etre-feministe>

<sup>123</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality.*

[https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita-\\_genere\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita-_genere_en.pdf)

<sup>124</sup> Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità. (July 2021). *National Strategy for Gender Equality.*

[https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia\\_parita-\\_genere\\_en.pdf](https://www.pariopportunita.gov.it/media/2049/strategia_parita-_genere_en.pdf)

<sup>125</sup> Italia domani (April 30, 2021). *National Recovery and Resilience Plan.*

<https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/en/strumenti/documenti/archivio-documenti/national-recovery-and-resilience-plan.html>

family sphere. Moreover, Giorgia Meloni and her government are not defending equal pay, which is central to the country's strategy. With this ambivalence of ideas, Giorgia Meloni positions herself as not totally opposed to Italian women's rights, but nevertheless remains in a conservative and patriarchal posture and policy<sup>126</sup>.

Even so, Italy has made progress in combating gender-based violence. Two laws in 2019 and 2021 have strengthened the country's legal framework in this area. The 2019 law provides for increased prison sentences for perpetrators of violence, and the 2021 law enables law enforcement agencies to take action against suspects without the victims necessarily having filed a complaint<sup>127</sup>. Moreover, Giorgia Meloni's far-right party voted in favor of the ratification the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the Italian Parliament in 2013, unlike several other radical right-wing parties in Europe<sup>128</sup>.

The country addresses the issue of gender equality globally through its Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS). The Agency's objectives are to support the fight against violence against women, combat female genital mutilation and early marriage, provide psychosocial support for victims, promote women's education, SRHR, women's economic empowerment and support for women in war-torn countries. In particular, the Agency has supported women in Ukraine, a women's economic empowerment project in Colombia, the resilience of Syrian and Jordanian refugee women in the Middle East, and numerous initiatives in Africa<sup>129</sup>. One of the fundamental goals of Italian development cooperation is equality between women and men. The Agency's action is defined at strategic level in the document "Guidelines on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (2020-2024)"<sup>130</sup>.

The Italian Association of Women for Development (AIDOS), recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation since 1992, can receive and manage public funds for

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<sup>126</sup> Giorgi, E., Cavalieri, A., & Feo, F. (2023). *Opposition Leader to Prime Minister: Giorgia Meloni and Women's Issues in the Italian Radical Right*. *Politics and Governance*, 11(1), 108-118. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i1.6042>

<sup>127</sup> Barsky, C. (July 12, 2023). *Lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre: un constat alarmant dans une Union qui se veut protéger des droits de tous.tes*. Institut du Genre en Géopolitique. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=14041>

<sup>128</sup> Giorgi, E., Cavalieri, A., & Feo, F. (2023). *Opposition Leader to Prime Minister: Giorgia Meloni and Women's Issues in the Italian Radical Right*. *Politics and Governance*, 11(1), 108-118. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v11i1.6042>

<sup>129</sup> Agenzia italiana per la cooperazione allo sviluppo (March 3, 2023). *8 marzo 2023 : Aics accanto alle donne con i suoi progetti in tutto il mondo*. <https://www.aics.gov.it/news/8-marzo-2023-aics-accanto-alle-donne-con-i-suoi-progetti-in-tutto-il-mondo/>

<sup>130</sup> Agenzia italiana per la cooperazione allo sviluppo (March 3, 2023). *8 marzo 2023 : Aics accanto alle donne con i suoi progetti in tutto il mondo*. <https://www.aics.gov.it/news/8-marzo-2023-aics-accanto-alle-donne-con-i-suoi-progetti-in-tutto-il-mondo/>

implementing international development programs The NGO works with local organizations and institutions in several Southern countries in the fields of women's rights as a development process, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's economic empowerment, and girls' education. AIDOS also takes into account and works with civil society organizations on the rights of LGBTI+ individuals. Finally, the NGO is an implementing partner of the United Nations Population Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Italy<sup>131</sup>.

Italy has adopted a national action plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2020 for the period 2020-2024. This plan follows the previous ones adopted in 2010, 2014 and 2016, which aimed to increase the number of women in the army, promote a gender approach in peacekeeping operations, protect the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups in conflict and post-conflict zones, and strengthen the role of women in peace processes and the participation of civil society<sup>132</sup>.

In 2017, during its term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Italy launched the Mediterranean Network of Women Mediators to promote the role of women in conflict resolution and mediation processes in the region. This network contributes to peacemaking efforts in the region. This initiative is supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation<sup>133</sup>.

Under the government of Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister before the arrival of Giorgia Meloni, Italy had stepped up its commitment to advancing women's rights by implementing the Beijing Action Program. The country had focused on adopting measures to eradicate harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and early and forced child marriage. In 2015, Matteo Renzi had allocated a total of 50 million euros to UN Women in support of gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>134</sup>.

During COP 28, Italy announced a new contribution of 5 million euros to the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa<sup>135</sup>. This multi-donor fund, managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), supports private-sector investments in renewable energy deployment and energy efficiency. Italy has

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<sup>131</sup> Associazione italiana donne per lo sviluppo. <https://aidos.it/en/>

<sup>132</sup> 1325 naps. (n.d.). *Italy*. <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/italy/>

<sup>133</sup> Mediterranean Women Mediators Network. <https://womenmediators.net/>

<sup>134</sup> Unwomen (2015). *Italy pledges new resources of up to 50 million euros will advance gender equality and women's rights*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved/step-it-up/commitments/italy>

<sup>135</sup> African Development Bank Group. (December 05, 2023). *COP28: Italy announces a contribution of five million euros to the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa*. <https://www.afdb.org/fr/news-and-events/press-releases/cop28-litalie-annonce-une-contribution-de-cinq-millions-deuros-au-fonds-pour-lenergie-durable-en-afrique-66620>

been one of the leading contributors since 2011. The fund supports financing applications that must, among other criteria, meet the gender equality requirement<sup>136</sup>.

Women's economic empowerment is one of Italy's top priorities. This priority has been incorporated into the various objectives of the G20 Summit to be held in Rome in 2021, following the Women's Forum. The holding of these two summits enabled the various stakeholders of the Women's Forum to give recommendations to the G20 participating states on equality between women and men. Emphasis was placed on including women in the economy by bringing together a range of businesses committed to improving women's conditions in a post-COVID situation<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>136</sup> African Development Bank Group. (n.d.). *Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa*.

<https://www.afdb.org/fr/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/sustainable-energy-fund-for-africa>

<sup>137</sup> La Tribune partner. (October 25, 2021). *In Milan, the Women's Forum succeeds in rallying companies around the cause of women*.

<https://www.latribune.fr/supplement/la-tribune-now/a-milan-le-women-s-forum-reussit-a-federer-les-entreprises-autour-de-la-cause-des-femmes-894743.html>

**Table showing the various funding sources for gender equality worldwide**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>ODA amount (millions US\$)<sup>138</sup></b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ODA amount (millions US\$)<sup>139</sup></b>	<b>4 761</b>	<b>4 432</b>	<b>6 085</b>	<b>7 240</b>
<b>ODA main objective of gender equality (millions US\$)<sup>140</sup></b>	<b>69</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>ODA secondary objective for gender equality (millions US\$)<sup>141</sup></b>	<b>354</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>Total share of ODA devoted to gender equality (millions US\$)<sup>142</sup></b>	<b>420</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>406</b>
<b>Gender ODA linked to the WPS Agenda (millions US\$)<sup>143</sup></b>	<b>8,42</b>	<b>11,79</b>	<b>9,94</b>	<b>14,70</b>
<b>Climate-related ODA for gender (millions US\$)<sup>144</sup></b>	<b>46,83</b>	<b>22,26</b>	<b>35,98</b>	<b>32,88</b>
<b>Economic and trade-related ODA for gender (millions US\$)<sup>145</sup></b>	<b>9,26</b>	<b>5,31</b>	<b>25,18</b>	<b>21,64</b>

<sup>138</sup> The World Bank. (n. d.). *GDP (current US\$) - Italy*.  
<https://donnees.banquemondiale.org/indicateur/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2022&locations=IT&start=1960&view=chart>

<sup>139</sup> OECD. (n.d.). *Distribution of net ODA*. OECD data.  
<https://data.oecd.org/fr/oda/distribution-de-l-apd-nette.htm#indicator-chart>

<sup>140</sup> Gender equality indicator - main objective. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>141</sup> Gender equality indicator - secondary objective. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>142</sup> Gender equality indicator - global budget. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>143</sup> Gender Equality Index - peacekeeping operations. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>144</sup> Gender Equality Indicator - Climate. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>145</sup> Gender Equality Index - economic and trade policy. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*.  
[https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<b>ODA for gender linked to governance and civil society (millions US\$)<sup>146</sup></b>	<b>5,86</b>	<b>6,33</b>	<b>2,51</b>	<b>3,65</b>
<b>UNFPA contribution (millions US\$)<sup>147</sup></b>	<b>11,5</b>	<b>5,5</b>	<b>14,7</b>	<b>22,2</b>
<b>UNDP contribution (millions US\$)</b>	<b>80<sup>148</sup></b>	<b>75<sup>149</sup></b>	<b>21<sup>150</sup></b>	<b>22<sup>151</sup></b>
<b>UN Women contribution (millions US\$)<sup>152</sup></b>	<b>8,7</b>	<b>6,5</b>	<b>7,8</b>	<b>4,2</b>
<b>UNICEF contribution (US\$ millions)</b>	<b>44<sup>153</sup></b>	<b>44<sup>154</sup></b>	<b>52<sup>155</sup></b>	<b>49<sup>156</sup></b>
<b>UNESCO contribution (millions US\$)</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>22<sup>157</sup></b>
<b>Funds dedicated to SRHR (US\$ millions)<sup>158</sup></b>	<b>61,5</b>	<b>52,6</b>	<b>Data not available</b>	<b>Data not available</b>

<sup>146</sup> Gender Equality Index - Women's rights organizations, movements and government institutions. OECD. *Stat Creditor Reporting System - Italy*. [https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV\\_DCD\\_GENDER](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=DV_DCD_GENDER)

<sup>147</sup> United Nations Population Fund. (2022). *Italy*. <https://www.unfpa.org/fr/donor/italie>

<sup>148</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Funding compendium*.

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202019.pdf>

<sup>149</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Funding compendium*.

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-06/UNDP%20Funding%20Compendium%202020%200.pdf>

<sup>150</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2021). *Funding compendium*.

[https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium\\_2021\\_Aug%2029.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Compendium_2021_Aug%2029.pdf)

<sup>151</sup> United Nations Development Programme. (2022). *Funding compendium*.

[https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp\\_funding\\_compendium\\_2022\\_vs\\_1\\_as\\_of\\_24\\_aug\\_2023.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-08/undp_funding_compendium_2022_vs_1_as_of_24_aug_2023.pdf)

<sup>152</sup> Un Women. (n. d.). *Transparency Portal BETA - Italy*. <https://open.unwomen.org/partners/italy>

<sup>153</sup> Unicef. *Core resources for results 2019*.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/71446/file/Regular-resources-2019-report.pdf>

<sup>154</sup> Unicef. *Core resources for results 2020*.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/99911/file/Core%20Resources%20for%20Results%20-%202020%20Report.pdf>

<sup>155</sup> Unicef. *Core resources for results 2021*.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/122551/file/Core%20resources%20for%20results%202021.pdf>

<sup>156</sup> Unicef. *Core resources for results 2022*.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/140701/file/Core%20Resources%20for%20Results.pdf>

<sup>157</sup> Unesco. (2022). *Core Data Portal*. <https://core.unesco.org/fr/home?biennium=41&quarter=2022Q4>

<sup>158</sup> Donor delivering for SRHR. *Tracking OECD Donor Funding for sexual and reproductive health and rights - report 2022*. [https://donorsdelivering.report/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DD\\_Report2022\\_webversion.pdf](https://donorsdelivering.report/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/DD_Report2022_webversion.pdf)



<b>Three-year contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (US\$ million)</b>	<b>133<sup>159</sup></b>	<b>153<sup>160</sup></b>
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## Strengths

Italy has been a more or less constant contributor to United Nations agencies since 2019, often appearing in the top ten contributor countries. Support for projects in countries of the Global South is provided through the AICS, which works mainly in the health, education and environment sectors.

By adopting the post-COVID-19 recovery and resilience plan, Italy made a commitment to the European Union to include gender equality as a strategic priority in this plan. This priority includes combating women's job insecurity and gender-based violence, which increased during the pandemic<sup>161</sup>.

In 2021, Italy contributed to important decisions in favor of women's economic empowerment by organizing the Women's Forum, on the sidelines of the G20, in a context of post-COVID recovery. Progress made during this forum enabled the companies involved to make important commitments in favor of women's economic empowerment.

During COP 28, Italy announced that it was increasing its financial support to the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa by 5 million euros. The country is one of the nine contributors to this fund, designed to promote private investment to improve electrification in Africa. Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme in the fund's criteria<sup>162</sup>.

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<sup>159</sup> The global fund. *Gouvernement and Public Donors - Italy*.

<https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/government/profiles/italy/>

<sup>160</sup> The global fund. (August 25, 2019). *The Global Fund welcomes Italy's increased contribution*.

<https://www.theglobalfund.org/fr/news/2019/2019-08-25-global-fund-welcomes-italy-increased-contribution/>

<sup>161</sup> Donà, A. (October 10, 2022). *Gender equality in the Italian recovery and resilience plan: the depoliticizing effect of the technocratic Draghi government*. open access on: Taylor & Francis Online.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23248823.2022.2132904>

<sup>162</sup> African Development Bank Group. (n.d.). *Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa*.

<https://www.afdb.org/fr/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/sustainable-energy-fund-for-africa>

## Limitations

Italy's far-right leader Giorgia Meloni's slogan is "God, family, homeland". Her rise to power and her anti-feminist stance are at odds with the possibility of implementing a feminist foreign policy. In 2021, under the previous government, Italy had taken a number of steps towards gender equality around the world, including hosting the Women's Forum and the G20 in the country. Currently, the topic of women's rights is only discussed at a national level, and in a retrograde manner with patriarchal and conservative measures.

Meloni has stated that she has no intention of calling into question the Italian law decriminalizing abortion, passed in 1978. Nevertheless, she has repeatedly declared her desire to boost the birth rate, using anti-abortion rhetoric. In an interview, her Minister for the Family, Natality and Equality stated in an interview, "Yes, unfortunately, it's a right"<sup>163</sup>, referring to abortion. In Italy, in 2023, 70% of gynecologists refused to perform abortions, citing a concept in the law called "conscientious objection"<sup>164</sup>. In addition, the Italian government has proposed to set up "a fund to eliminate the economic and social causes that can push women not to complete their pregnancy"<sup>165</sup>, Italy's fertility rate being the lowest in the European Union (1.27 children per woman).

Italy is making efforts to contribute to peacekeeping and military operations, but despite this positive development, violations of the rights towards migrants, refugees and asylum seekers continue. Italy, through its anti-immigration policies and rhetoric, has an ambivalent stance on the question of peacekeeping in its region.

In June 2023, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, Dunja Mijatovic, visited Italy to promote women's rights and gender equality in Italy, and in particular for migrant minorities arriving in Italy. In particular, she met with feminist civil society organizations and emphasized the importance of the country taking radical measures against gender-based violence,

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<sup>163</sup> Jacomini, R. (July 3, 2023). *In Italy, Giorgia Meloni cuts access to abortion*. l'OBS. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/monde/20230703.OBS75276/en-italie-giorgia-meloni-rogne-l-acces-a-l-ivg.html#:~:text=Giorgia%20Meloni%20a%20r%C3%A9p%C3%A9t%C3%A9%20%C3%A0,'acc%C3%A8s%20%C3%A0%20l'IVG>

<sup>164</sup> Jacomini, R. (July 3, 2023). *In Italy, Giorgia Meloni cuts access to abortion*. l'OBS. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/monde/20230703.OBS75276/en-italie-giorgia-meloni-rogne-l-acces-a-l-ivg.html#:~:text=Giorgia%20Meloni%20a%20r%C3%A9p%C3%A9t%C3%A9%20%C3%A0,'acc%C3%A8s%20%C3%A0%20l'IVG>

<sup>165</sup> Daniel, L. Dereudre, C. Clavaud, A. Zeller, L.L. (January 2023). *Women's rights: combating the "backlash" - recommendations for French foreign policy*. Equipop and Fondation Jean Jaurès. [https://equipop.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/rapport\\_backlash\\_Equipop\\_FondationJeanJaures.pdf](https://equipop.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/rapport_backlash_Equipop_FondationJeanJaures.pdf)

which is still all too prevalent in Italy. She took the example of the shortage of shelters for women victims of gender-based violence<sup>166</sup>.

Furthermore, in the 2021-2026 national strategy for equality between women and men, the country does not include LGBTI+ minorities. This notion is totally absent from the country's strategic documents. The Meloni government is largely hostile to the rights of LGBTI+ individuals and has taken measures against people from this community. In 2023, Meloni's government ordered town halls to stop recognizing children of non-biological parents. Same-sex marriage is still not recognized in the country, only civil unions since 2016<sup>167</sup>.

Italy's low political commitment to issues of gender equality does not allow for a strong stance on the subject. The national strategy for equality between women and men is led by the Ministry for the Family, Natality and Equality, and has no international scope. What's more, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation does highlight gender equality as a sector in its own right but only as a secondary subject compared to other state priorities.

## **Recommendations**

1. **Treat gender equality as a sector in its own right.** At present, this sector is indicated as transversal in the actions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, but does not appear in the global themes on which Italy focuses. The Ministry highlights its actions on disarmament, energy and the environment, counter-terrorism, the fight against corruption, Agenda 2030 and cybersecurity, but does not take gender equality into account in a comprehensive way.
2. **Set up a national action plan implementing the national strategy for equality between women and men for 2021-2025.** In the absence of this action plan, the Italian strategy loses substance and lacks specific indicators to measure the country's progress in this area.
3. **Take measures to revise the national framework for women's rights in Italy.** The country still has a long way to go to improve conditions for women in the workplace in

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<sup>166</sup> Council of Europe portal. (June 26, 2023). *Italy: time to radically change migration policy and effectively promote women's rights and gender equality*. <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/commissioner/-/italy-time-for-a-sharp-change-in-migration-policies-and-effective-advancement-of-women-s-rights-and-gender-equality>

<sup>167</sup> Latour, F. (July 28, 2023). *In Italy, homosexual parents lose their rights*. Radio Canada. <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/maj/1999712/italie-meres-lesbiennes-peres-gais>

particular. Women need to be encouraged to go out to work, with equal pay, appropriate social rights for mothers, and so on.

4. **Increase the proportion of women in political representation positions in the country.** The current government has a very low proportion of women (only 6 women out of 24 ministerial posts). A more gender-balanced government would be more representative of society and therefore of women's issues.
5. **Taking measures to improve the living conditions for LGBTI+ individuals.** The Italian government has just taken highly restrictive measures against the social conditions of the LGBTI+ community by no longer recognizing double parenthood for children born into a homoparental couple. This decision has significantly rolled back social rights for this gender minority.
6. **Increase contributions to United Nations agencies for gender-sensitive programs.** Contributions to UN agencies help increase a state's official development assistance and are an effective way to contribute to programs that promote the rights of women and gender minorities around the world.
7. **Have a clearer and more effective political framework for the defense of women's rights and gender equality.** Currently in Italy, the national strategy for equality between women and men is carried out by the Ministry for the Family, Natality and Equal Opportunities. This portage has reinforced the return to a conservative policy on family and gender equality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation does not have a strong policy in favor of gender equality.

Italy's institutional framework for gender:

Italy's national strategy for gender equality for 2021-2025 is overseen by the Ministry for the Family, Natality, and Equal Opportunities. International cooperation policies are managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation funds the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development, which implements development projects in countries of the Global South.

Feminist collectives:

A few days after the election of Giorgia Meloni in 2022, feminist organizations gathered to protest against the arrival of the far right to power. The transfeminist collective “Non una di meno” organized these demonstrations and continues to issue regular calls for protests across the country.

Since 1992, the NGO Italian Association of Women for Development (AIDOS) has been recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as a structure that can receive and manage public funds for the implementation of international development programs in favor of the defense of women’s rights and their empowerment. The association is a partner in the implementation of programs with UNFPA and HCRUN in many countries in Africa and the Middle East.

Points to remember:

1. In 2022, Italy elected a far-right government that is steadily rolling back the rights of women and LGBTI+ minorities. Comprising a majority of men, the government advocates deeply masculinist, conservative, homophobic, and xenophobic ideas.
2. Italy has no official feminist foreign policy. The actions of the current conservative and patriarchal government do not suggest the adoption of a gender-sensitive foreign policy.
3. The country has put in place a national gender equality strategy for the period 2021-2025 aimed at reducing gender gaps in the workplace.
4. The country is one of the top ten donors to United Nations agencies.
5. Italy has contributed 5 million euros to the Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa. This fund aims to support private investment to improve energy conditions, with gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.
6. Italy has adopted a new national plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda 2020 for the period 2020-2024. This plan, which is supposed to take up the commitments of previous plans, is being undermined by the current government's anti-migration policy, which is making the situation in the Mediterranean even more unstable.

## Ranking France - Spain - Italy

**Notation:**

- 0 Nothing in place
- 1 Aware of lack, willing to fill it
- 2 Currently being implemented
- 3 Achieved

	Criteria	FRANCE	SPAIN	ITALY
<b>Operational application</b>	GDP Investment (%)	2	2	1
	Feminist foreign policy employees	3	2	1
	Multi-stakeholder steering committee	2	2	1
	Transversality & Interdepartmentality	2	2	1
	Evaluation by an advisory body	3	1	0
	Government sustainability	2	2	1
<b>Rhetoric and coherence</b>	Intersectional approach	1	1	0
	Anticolonial approach	3	3	3
	Stakeholder consultation	3	3	1

	<b>Monitoring feminist foreign policy on the international stage</b>	3	2	1
	<b>National feminist policies</b>	2	3	1
	<b>Parity in politics</b>	2	3	0
	<b>Coherence between feminist foreign policy and national feminist policies</b>	2	2	0
<b>Thematic sectors</b>	<b>Humanitarian aid</b>	2	3	1
	<b>Women, Peace and Security Agenda</b>	3	3	2
	<b>Climate</b>	3	2	2
	<b>Education</b>	3	2	2
	<b>SRHR</b>	3	3	2
	<b>Civil society and government</b>	2	3	1
	<b>Digital</b>	1	2	1
	<b>Combating anti-rights movements</b>	3	3	2
	<b>TOTAL SCORE OUT OF 63</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>24</b>

## Conclusion

Developing a feminist foreign policy is a slow and complex process, but it is a necessary tool for maintaining peace and supporting development in the countries of the South. By adopting a feminist foreign policy, states commit themselves to fighting for women's rights and gender equality at international level by defining priority objectives. To meet these objectives, countries must raise awareness within bilateral and multilateral bodies, make firm political commitments and fund national and international programs in favor of women's rights and LGBTI+ minorities.

The cases of France and Spain, while imperfect, demonstrate the progress made in terms of equality between women and men around the world. Support for civil society and the representation of women in politics and diplomacy are two essential factors in this development. States must also strengthen their administrative and legal frameworks in order to develop gender-sensitive budgets and, above all, adopt a cross-cutting approach so that this issue is addressed in all sectors of public policy. States must also take into account the subject of intersectionality, so as to consider all the causes of discrimination against women, LGBTI+ individuals, people with disabilities, religious minorities, people from migrant backgrounds, etc.

On the other hand, the case of Italy shows the dangers of rising nationalism in Europe. The arrival in power of the extreme right in 2022 has catastrophic consequences for Italian society, but also for feminist diplomacy worldwide. A true "backlash" is underway in Italian society, with a conservative, masculinist, homophobic, and xenophobic government. The principles advocated by Giorgia Meloni's government are already having a detrimental effect on the rights of women and LGBTI+ individuals, notably, for example, since the ban on recognition of non-biological parents on children in same-sex couples. The consequences for peacekeeping in this region, where thousands of migrants arrive every year, are also worrying for minorities.

International feminist policies must be supported by structured political bodies using tools that enable measurement, evaluation and capitalization. The dissemination of best practices by States should enable other countries to commit to taking gender into account in all areas of their policies. The influence of states on the international scene is also important in disseminating these ideas and succeeding in taking concrete measures at the highest decision-making level. International organizations such as the European Union also have a role to play in encouraging states to adopt feminist foreign policies. Their influence should enable action to be taken by driving common dynamics in favor of defending the rights of women and LGBTI+ individuals, and of gender equality.



In this report, the Gender in Geopolitics Institute presents a ranking of the feminist foreign policies of France, Spain and Italy. Based on criteria taken from the analyses of each country, this ranking aims to popularize and demonstrate the achievements of these countries and the efforts still to be made. France tops the ranking, ahead of Spain and Italy. France and Spain have officially adopted a feminist foreign policy and have been working to implement it at national and international level for several years. Overall, there is still room for improvement in terms of the interministerial approach to the policy, the financial commitments made by the countries concerned, and the stability of political support and governmental continuity. What's more, the two countries do not cover all the sectors studied in the same way. For example, although Spain has adopted a national action plan for the Women, Peace and Security Agenda similar to France's, it mobilizes few resources and lacks a detailed monitoring framework.

French and Spanish feminist foreign policies could benefit greatly from a more cross-functional approach in several ways. Firstly, strengthening the inter-ministerial approach would involve greater collaboration between different ministries, ensuring a more harmonious integration of the gender perspective into all spheres of foreign policy. In terms of financial commitments, a cross-cutting approach would ensure gender-sensitive budgets in all sectors, maximizing the impact of allocated resources. Political stability, the third axis, would be strengthened by integrating the gender perspective in a coherent way, ensuring continuity and sustainability in the fight for gender equality. In addition, adopting an intersectional approach, taking into account the multiple dimensions of identity, would enable a better understanding of the different forms of discrimination, thus ensuring a more comprehensive and inclusive response. Finally, integrating a decolonial dimension would strengthen the fight against systemic inequalities, acknowledging and addressing the implications of colonialism in foreign policy, thus positioning France and Spain as world leaders in gender equality and social justice in foreign policy.

For Italy, many changes need to be made if the country is to make progress on gender equality policies. The country has not officially declared its intention to develop a feminist foreign policy, but does have a national strategy for equality between women and men. However, with the current government led by Giorgia Meloni, it is unlikely that the country will adopt this concept to define its foreign policy.

In this sense, at a time when the radical right is increasingly gaining a foothold in Europe, and when there are worrying setbacks for women's rights and LGBTI+ minorities, the European Union can play an essential role. Given the EU's existing initiatives, such as its Gender Equality Action Plan (GAP III) 2021-2025 or the European Strategy 2020-2025 for Gender Equality and LGBTIQI+

equality, the adoption of a feminist foreign policy at European level could appear to be a logical follow-up to its actions. This initiative could encourage member states to adopt a feminist foreign policy, and position the European Union as a leader on the international stage in bringing this dynamic to other international bodies.

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