



2020/2216(INI)

18.1.2021

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on shaping the digital future of Europe: removing barriers to the functioning of the digital single market and improving the use of AI for European consumers (2020/2216(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Maria da Graça Carvalho

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Recalls that women account for 30 % of the technology workforce and 17 % of ICT specialists in Europe, and that the EU economy would be boosted by EUR 16 billion a year if women technology graduates followed through to digital jobs at the same rate as men;
2. Highlights that gender equality is a core principle of the European Union and should be reflected in all EU policies; recalls that women's participation in the digital economy is crucial to shaping a flourishing digital society and to boosting the EU's digital internal market;
3. Calls on the Commission to continue addressing the gender gap within the ICT sector and to establish policies to increase the participation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and AI, and to advocate measures in education and employment in the digital sector in order to achieve this;
4. Considers that AI can significantly contribute to promoting gender equality, provided that an appropriate legal framework is developed, conscious and unconscious biases are eliminated and the principles of gender equality are respected; stresses the lack of diversity in the AI sector within teams of developers and engineers, and the importance of using sex-disaggregated data when developing products, AI standards, algorithms and applications;
5. Expresses concern that the gender gap in digital skills puts women at a disadvantage in the emerging digital markets; stresses the importance of empowering consumers, particularly women, through teaching basic ICT skills and launching awareness-raising campaigns in order to enable them to take full advantage of the benefits of the digital single market;
6. Calls for special attention to be paid to women as vulnerable consumers and to the rise in cyber violence against women in the digital world, and welcomes the Commission's proposal on the digital services act (COM(2020)0825), which is addressing these issues.