

## B2 True/False/Justification

### GENDER (IN)EQUALITY AND NEXT GENERATION EU

Read a text about gender equality.

Decide whether the statements (9-16) are true (T) or false (F); then write the first 4 words of the sentence which supports your decision in the space provided.

The first one (0) has been done for you.

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Gender Equality is Goal #5 of the 2030 Agenda. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, once stated that “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself”. He meant that it was a fundamental precondition to reduce poverty, promote a sustainable future and govern responsibly. But today we often hear people speak of gender *inequality*. At the root of gender inequality is a phenomenon called bias: dangerous stereotypes have tangible effects, especially on women’s lives and often hinder their advancement in education and in the workplace. Bias is frequently unconscious, but it is deeply ingrained within our society. For example, a common gender stereotype is that girls do not excel in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). This perception may of course highly condition their future educational and professional choices and social expectations.

Data coming from the UN Gender Snapshot 2020 indicate that women are disadvantaged in many sectors, if compared to men. In some countries, poverty seems to strike them much more than men and quality education is often only a dream. In poor communities the strongest impact of climate change is particularly hitting women, but paradoxically they have been repeatedly excluded from decisions regarding climate issues. Only 21% of the heads of delegation at the 2019 UN Climate Change Conference were women.

In corporate leadership and in politics, the gender gap is also wide. In fact, only approximately 30% of women have managerial positions or play a key role in innovative research, and one out of four holds a seat in national parliaments. In more economically-advanced countries, the Gender Pay Gap is one of the most dramatic issues: in South Korea (Source: OECD, 2019), this indicator reaches 36.6%. But no country is exempt: in the European Union, the average GPG stands at about 14%, and in Italy, on average, women earn 11.1% less than men. The so-called glass-ceiling rarely allows them to reach CEO positions and most of them still work in low-paid sectors. Women are more often than not perceived as mothers, not as desirable leaders. For these reasons, we must invest in a cultural revolution and engage in dialogue and action from the early years.

The European Commission can now foster cultural change. *Next Generation EU*, the recovery proposal which will financially support member states after the coronavirus pandemic, will allocate special funds for gender balance. It is a tremendous opportunity: prevention and education can help tackle harmful stereotypes and may lead to equal opportunities, first at school and later in the workplace. In particular, the European Commission intends to increase female interest and participation in ICT and STEM, as girls rarely consider taking a science career. Things could be different if the right mentors convinced girls that maths and science are exciting subjects; if career advisors illustrated the wider opportunities these subjects would offer them; if girls were informed of the many contributions that women have made to scientific progress. Female-centred ICT and STEM programs will be designed and funded all across European classrooms, the very first places where perceptions of gender must not be distorted and universal principles of respect must be transmitted to the next generations.

0. *Kofi Annan did not consider gender equality a goal.*

<b>F</b>	<i>Kofi Annan, former Secretary</i>
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1. Bias is a synonym for gender inequality.

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2. The idea that female students are not good at scientific subjects may influence their future job choice.

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3. Quality education is almost impossible for men and women alike in poor countries.

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4. 25% of the members of national parliaments are women.

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5. In Italy the average GPG is lower than in some other European countries.

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6. Women are seldom given the opportunity to achieve managerial positions.

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7. Next Generation EU is a package of funds which aims to address the sensitive issue of gender equality.

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8. ICT and STEM careers are rarely contemplated by women.

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