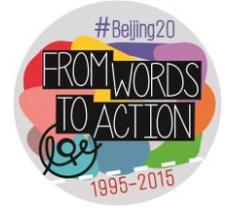




Women's organisations demand a concrete and ambitious European Union's new Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2016-2020

2015 is a turning time for women's and girls' human rights, in Europe and globally.

The international community celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, a founding human rights instrument for women and girls adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 1995. At international level, a new global post-2015 framework for development will be adopted, which should put women's rights and equality between women and men at its centre.



More importantly, in 2015, the European Union (EU) will adopt a new Strategy for action on equality between women and men for the coming 5 years. Women's organisations call on the European Commission and the EU Member States to adopt such strategy as a stand-alone goal for the EU, with dedicated resources and goals, and concrete indicators for monitoring progress. **Women and girls in Europe expect the EU to be a strong model of action and change and "walk the talk" on women's rights and equality between women and men.**

Why an EU Strategy for Equality between women and men?

Because equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU.

The EU and its Member States have the responsibility to promote equality between women and men, according to the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. With the new European Commission, we now have a Commissioner dedicated to gender equality, Ms Jourova; she now needs the means to deliver on her portfolio. The adoption of an EU Strategy on equality between women and men is **a matter of credibility and accountability for the European Union.**

Because there should be consistency between EU internal and external policies on equality between women and men.

In March, the UN Member States adopted the political declaration of the Commission on the Status of Women (59th session), which reaffirms their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. In New York, the EU and its Member States have been instrumental in ensuring that women's human rights are at the core of the commitments of the international community.

The Beijing Platform for Action stresses the need for separate and strong institutional mechanisms for women's rights. Such mechanism exists for EU external policies, through the EU Gender Action Plan for External Action 2016-2020. The EU should therefore follow this requirement and **have a dedicated instrument for equality between women and men**, in the form of the EU Strategy for Equality between women and men, accompanied by goals and indicators.

Because the Council has already committed to the realisation of the human rights of women and girls.

Last December, the Council delivered conclusions on a transformative post-2015 agenda: *"We reiterate that the empowerment and human rights of women and girls, and ending both discrimination in all its forms and violence against women and girls, must be at the core of the post-2015 agenda. Goals, targets and indicators across the framework should address legal, social and economic barriers to gender equality. We recognise the importance of involving men and boys in advancing gender equality. We remain committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the outcomes of their review conferences and in this context sexual and reproductive health and rights."*

It is time to transform words to action!

What should the EU Strategy for Equality between women and men look like?

The EU Strategy should be the instrument of the EU commitment to Equality between women and men as a stand-alone goal for the European Union.

The Strategy should give the **vision of a Europe realising equality between women and men and promoting women's and girls' human rights**. Such vision should build on the values of the EU and on universal and un-negotiable principles that the Member States share through their endorsement of international women's human rights instruments. It should be consistent with the EU external action on equality between women and men. The vision should ensure that the EU and its Member States **COMMIT** to the realisation of women and girls' human rights, **ACCELERATE** the implementation of existing legislation and the adoption of new instruments, and **INVEST** in women's rights and women's organisations.

Based on its vision, the Strategy should propose **clear objectives, and indicators and targets** to bring positive change to women and girls in Europe. These objectives and goals should be **based on the 12 critical areas identified by the Beijing Platform for Action**, in order to encompass all challenges and opportunities for the realisation of girls' and women's human rights and equality between women and men in Europe.

Such objectives and goals must be defined in accordance with:

- The work and analysis of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE);
- The calls of the European Parliament (especially through its annual report on equality between women and men in the European Union);
- The demands of the women's organisations working at local, national and European levels.

The Manifesto of the European Women's Lobby for the 2014 European Elections outlines the key areas of action identified by our 2000 member organisations throughout Europe (see below).

To realise its vision, the Strategy should provide a **strong architecture for women's human rights and mechanisms for the systematic implementation of gender mainstreaming**.

Such architecture should include and promote the establishment of **mechanisms to ensure accountability, monitoring, evaluation, and coordination** between the different actors involved at national and European level.

Here are proposals of such mechanisms:

- A clear leadership role to the EU Commissioner in charge of gender equality;
- Regular meetings of all EU Commissioners on equality between women and men;
- Inter-service coordination and meetings within the European Commission and the different DGs (with focal points in each DG, including EEAS);
- Each DG should have a transparent and measurable plan to realise its commitment to gender mainstreaming;
- Inter-institutional meetings between the EC, the EP and the Council on equality between women and men, to ensure consistency, strengthen actions and resources;
- A strengthened EC unit dedicated to equality between women and men, with human and financial resources to support the work of the Commissioner, implement the Strategy and work with the member states;
- Focal points in each member states and regular meetings of national focal points;
- Strong well-funded programmes to support women's organisations at European and national level;
- Annual reports from the European Commission and the Member States on the progress on equality between women and men, feeding into annual reviews of action.

The EU Strategy for Equality between women and men should also be elaborated based on the EU core principles of democracy and transparency. That includes foreseeing the **inclusion of women and women's organisations** in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy at European and national level, and support to women's organisations through programmes and sustainable and adequate funding.



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES

In view of the elections of May 2014, the European Women's Lobby, the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the EU, calls on all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to work towards making the following general and policy-specific demands a reality.

MANIFESTO

European Parliament elections 2014

Act now for her future, commit to gender equality!

Women and girls are half of Europe's population, and are entitled to the same rights as men and boys. Achieving substantive equality between women and men, promoting women's rights and empowering women should be a priority of the European Union (EU) and its Member States. Gender equality is an essential part of democracy, social justice, human rights and dignity. The European Parliament (EP) has the power and responsibility to create meaningful change towards equality for all, now and in the future. – European Women's Lobby #EP2014

A comprehensive framework to achieve gender equality

- ✓ Strengthen and implement the EU legal framework on gender equality.
- ✓ Adopt and implement the EU Strategy for Equality between women and men 2015-2020.
- ✓ Strengthen the EP Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.
- ✓ Ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the work of the EP.
- ✓ Appoint an EU Coordinator on women's rights and gender equality, who reports to the European Commission's President.



Sustainable funding for gender equality

- ✓ Introduce an EU budget which is gender-sensitive, environmentally sustainable and promotes social cohesion.
- ✓ Guarantee adequate EU funding for programmes, policies and actions on women's rights and gender equality.
- ✓ Urge Member States to allocate budgets for women's rights and gender equality at all levels.

Credible EU policies on gender equality at international level

- ✓ Call for women's rights representatives as full EU delegation members at United Nations (UN) and global meetings.
- ✓ Ensure consistency between EU internal and external policies, including at UN level and in the post-2015 development framework.



Women's economic independence

- ☑ Promote women's employment by effectively enforcing and strengthening EU equality legislation.
- ☑ Guarantee women's economic independence through individual rights to social protection and taxation.
- ☑ Protect all women workers, irrespective of their employment status, including pregnant workers.
- ☑ Combat women's poverty, including in-work poverty, and put an end to the gender pay and pension gaps.
- ☑ Democratise the EU semester process through the participation of the EP and women's organisations.



A Europe free from violence against women

- ☑ Establish 2016 as the EU Year to End violence against women, with substantial resources to raise awareness and support actions at all levels.
- ☑ Adopt and implement an EU Strategy to end all forms of violence against women in Europe, including prostitution, to end impunity, protect all women and give them access to justice.
- ☑ Establish an EP intergroup on sexual violence.
- ☑ Guarantee universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.



Parity democracy

- ☑ Call on political groups and parties to be inclusive of women and to work towards achieving parity in elections at all levels.
- ☑ Call on EP political groups to nominate one woman and one man as candidate for the European Parliament's presidential elections.
- ☑ Ensure gender parity and non-gender biased portfolios when nominating and appointing MEPs for decision-making positions in the EP.
- ☑ Adopt efficient binding EU-level legislation to reach parity on company boards.



Diverse in equality

- ☑ Measure equality outcomes and impact of new and existing EU policies and legislation, on all women and girls.
- ☑ Improve the EU anti-discrimination law, by extending the EU directive on sex discrimination to all fields of EU competence, and supporting the adoption of a more comprehensive directive addressing discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- ☑ Take into account women's diversity of needs and adopt appropriate measures to combat multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination experienced by women.



A caring society

- ☑ Develop standards on quality and affordable care services for children, dependent and elderly persons across the life-cycle.
- ☑ Develop a multi-layered approach that focuses on equality in paid and unpaid work to enable both women and men to become equal earners and equal carers throughout their lives.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest umbrella organisation of women's associations in the European Union (EU), working to promote women's rights and equality between women and men, and representing a total of more than 2000 organisations.

@EuropeanWomen
www.womenlobby.org
#EP2014 #EuropeanWomensVoice