



PARITY NOW: ENDING THE GENDER POWER GAP

Side event of the 70th of the Commission of the Status of Women

WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH, 10:00 – 13:00 (NY TIME)

Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, 666 Third Avenue, 31st Floor

EWL will attend the seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 2026) that will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York from 9 to 19 March 2026.

CSW themes:

- **Priority theme:** Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers
- **Review theme:** Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

In the context of its participation in CSW, EWL will organise a side event.

Topic: 50-50 Parity in all decision-making bodies across all spheres and levels of society.

Relevance: This theme is closely linked to the CSW review theme. In addition, it will provide an opportunity for EWL to give visibility to its campaign PARITY NOW!, launched on 27 January 2026 and based upon CEDAW General Recommendation n40 on parity. On that date, EWL sent a simultaneous letter to policymakers and stakeholders calling for 50–50 parity, i.e. full equality in the participation and representation of women and men in all decision-making bodies, across all spheres and levels of society, including political, economic, and social areas. The recipients include Heads of State, relevant ministers in national governments, EU and international institutions and decision-making bodies, as well as NGOs and other partners. Follow-up actions will take place on 8 March 2026, including engagement with the press.

The panel discussions will provide an opportunity for panellists to present their national and sectorial experiences and share best practices and concrete measures that have contributed to progress towards parity.

Join this global exchange bringing together experts, decision-makers and organisations from different countries and regions to share experiences and good practices in advancing 50-50 parity worldwide. **Please note seating is limited; [registration](#) is required.**

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FINAL AGENDA

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH, 10:00 – 13:00 (NY TIME)

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10:00 – 10:10 WELCOMING REMARKS

> **Dina Loghin**, President of the EWL

10:10 – 10:40 KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Introduction to the General Recommendation NO. 40

> **Nicole Ameline**, Expert of the United Nations Human Rights Advisory Committee

Introduction to the European legal framework

> **Petra Bayr**, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The role of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in advancing parity democracy

> **Alena Mastantuono**, EESC Vice-President for Budget

10:40 – 12:40 PANEL DISCUSSION

The event will be moderated by **Mary Collins**, Secretary General of the EWL, and **Edite Kalnina**, Vice-President of the EWL

Parity Now: Achieving fifty-fifty parity in power, how can this gap be tackled concretely? (1 hour)

> **Anne Negre**, Vice-President of the European Women's Lobby and Special Advisor to the President of University Women of Europe – participating online

> **Christa Schweng**, President of the Equality Group

> **Saša Gavrić**, Adviser on Gender Issues at OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

> **Ligia Nobrega**, Senior gender expert working at the European Institute for Gender Equality
- participating online

Q&A

Parity Now: From good practice to structural change (50 min)

> **Auður Önnu Magnúsdóttir**, Managing director of Icelandic Women's Rights Association

> **Nicola Grigg**, Minister of State for Trade and Investment, Minister for Women, Associate Minister of Agriculture (Horticulture) and Associate Minister for ACC – video message

> **Iliana Balabanova**, EWL member

Q&A

12:50 – 13:00 CONCLUDING REMARKS

> **Mary Collins**, Secretary General of the EWL



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BRIEFING NOTE

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<u>Keynote speeches:</u>	
Nicole Ameline	You have long been a leading voice in advancing women’s rights through international legal frameworks, and particularly through your role in shaping General Recommendation 40. We would love to hear more about how GR40 redefines women’s participation as parity and equal exercise of power, and how this new framework can serve as a practical tool for governments, policymakers, and civil society to accelerate real structural change in decision-making spaces.
Petra Bayr	<p>Congratulation on your recent nomination as the President of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE). The CoE is the champion for Human Rights standards.</p> <p>Despite progress, the domain of political power remains far from parity in many countries. What concrete measures is the CoE take? What would you be your recommendations to close this gap?</p>
Alena Mastantuono	As you recently stepped into your new role as Vice president of the European Economic and Social Committee last October, how will you continue the committee’s work on gender equality at the EU?



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	<p>As you are responsible for budget, how will you advocate for women's rights in the the next MFF? What role will the EESC play and how can we collaborate together as civil society?</p>
<p><i>Panel Discussion I: Achieving fifty-fifty parity in power, how can this gap be tackled concretely?</i></p>	
<p>Anne Negre</p>	<p>Congratulation on the launch of the PARITY NOW! Campaign. You have sent a strong message towards equal representation of women and men in all spheres of decision-making at national, European, and international levels.</p> <p>Could you give us further data on Parity within the EU and worldwide? And explain the need for this ambitious campaign: its goals, key messages, answers, and follow-up?</p>
<p>Christa Schweng</p>	<p>As president of the Gender Equality Group (AHGE) that safeguards and advances equality within the EESC, can you share the priority of your group – especially regarding parity ? In your view, what are the main challenges in implementing the EU existing legal Framework?</p> <p>What role will the EESC play and how can we collaborate together as civil society?</p>
<p>Saša Gavrić</p>	<p>The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights is one of the major international bodies working to advance women's rights, shaping standards and supporting governments across the OSCE –</p>

	<p>Organisation for security and Cooperation in Europe - region.</p> <p>We would love to hear about one of the tools you developed for equal representation: the Gender Parity Roadmap. Could you give us inputs on its potential and results?</p> <p>Are there any results you could share from the regional areas you are working on? What lessons could we all learn from this to advance our Parity Now! Campaign? What are the challenges and points of resistance?</p>
<p>Ligia Nobrega</p>	<p>Your Agency has long been a champion on providing data and developing tools to monitor the progress on Gender Equality across Europe, for which we are all very grateful. We would love to hear about the Women and Men in Decision-making data collection and analysis and how this can support policymakers and civil society in advancing towards real changes?</p>
<p><i>Panel Discussion II: From good practice to structural change</i></p>	
<p>Iliana Balabanova</p>	<p>You have been a longstanding ally for the EWL and advancing women's rights both as its previous President and President of the Bulgarian Women's Platform.</p> <p>Across Europe the situation of women in leadership and decision-making varies. Could you give us a short presentation on women in politics and decision making in Eastern Europe and the Baltics?</p>
<p>Auður Önnu Magnúsdóttir</p>	<p>Iceland is a champion when it comes to Gender Parity. We would love to hear about</p>



	<p>the key drivers behind this success and how do you plan to sustain this leadership? Explain key measures and the process to arrive there</p> <p>What lessons can we all learn from the Icelandic experience to move forward together?</p>
<p>Nicola Grigg – video message</p>	<p>New Zealand has positioned itself as fully committed to gender equality and improving women’s participation in public life.</p> <p>Could you further explain how you managed to reach this: what were the internal processes the political steps to move towards parity, how effective these measures have been? What are the lessons for us all aiming to achieve equal representation - parity? How can we strengthen our collaboration with civil society?</p>

