



Brussels, 10 October 2018

Dear Mr TAJANI, President of the European Parliament,
Dear Mr TUSK, President of the European Council,
Dear Mr JUNCKER, President of the European Commission,

Your Excellencies,

We, female Vice-Presidents and Members of the European Parliament, together with the European Women Alliance (EWA), have undertaken to establish the Women's European Council (WEUCO) to promote gender equality as a high priority on the EU political agenda.

On the occasion of the European Council in October, we recall the values and aspirations enshrined in the Treaties, whereby the Union shall aim in all its activities to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women.

WOMEN LEADING THE EU

In May 2019, European citizens will vote to elect their new representatives in the European Parliament. The European Commission, the European External Action Service and the European Council will also welcome new leadership. All elections are central to the exercise of democracy, but the elections we will undertake in seven months' time are particularly so.

For too long women have been under-represented in the decision-making process across the EU institutions. No woman has ever been President of the European Commission, the European Council, the European Central Bank or the Eurogroup. It is high time for a more balanced leadership of the European Union.

To be able to respond to the challenges of our time, EU leadership must consist of voices from all parts of society. We urge women to stand as candidates and call on Member States to ensure gender balance when proposing candidates for leadership positions. We call for appointments to leadership positions to be carried out in the spirit of universal and equal suffrage, and for all voters to be able to choose their representatives in conditions of genuine equality and transparency.





EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION

While increased female representation is essential, it is not sufficient to ensuring equal opportunities for all. To this end, we call on the European Council, the European Commission and Member States to step up actions to promote a modern and efficient welfare state, which responds to digital and technological change, ensuring sustainable growth through higher female participation in the labour market and inclusive social policies.

To achieve a fairer and more prosperous society, it is necessary to substantially increase the rate of female employment throughout the EU, taking advantage of digital and technological innovations.

Therefore, we call for:

- the removal of all material and immaterial obstacles impacting the number and quality of female labour participation;
- the strict implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal jobs between women and men;
- the European Commission and the Member States to secure funding and to improve access to existing funds in order to promote and support women entrepreneurs, particularly in the framework of the digital transformation of industry;
- the European Commission and the Member States to address the gender gap in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector and to ensure that women and men – equally – can take advantage of the opportunities that come with the digitisation of the European economy and society;
- an acknowledgment of the need for parents and carers to better balance private and professional responsibilities with a view to a sustainable and fair labour market;
- investment in human capital, training and lifelong learning to equip female workers in a changing labour market and to prepare for a potential change of career path in accordance with the growing demand for e-skills in many different sectors, while ensuring fair and sustainable working conditions;
- shaping a modern, effective and people-centred welfare system to achieve higher living standards, social inclusion, elimination of poverty, innovation and competitiveness.

Yours,





Ms Mairead McGUINNESS

Ms Evelyne GEBHARDT

Ms Heidi HAUTALA

EUROPEAN WOMEN ALLIANCE

Ms Cecilia WIKSTRÖM

Ms Karima DELLI

Ms Vilija BLINKEVIČIŪTĖ

Ms Christine REVAULT D'ALLONNES BONNEFOY

Ms Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ

Ms Helga STEVENS

Ms Anna Maria CORAZZA BILDT

Ms Dubravka ŠUICA

Ms Terry REINTKE

Ms Silvia COSTA

Ms Monica BENOVA

Ms Tokia SAĪFI

Ms Alessia MOSCA

Ms Molly SCOTT CATO

Ms Maria GRAPINI

Ms Inmaculada RODRÍGUEZ-PIÑERO FERNÁNDEZ

Ms Kerstin WESTPHAL

Ms Miriam DALLI

Ms Birgit SIPPEL

Ms Elly SCHLEIN

Ms Martina WERNER

Ms Maria NOICHL

Ms Biljana BORZAN

Ms Maria Gabriela ZOANA

