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08.03.2018 - International Women's Day

Initiatives set up by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Europe

European Commission

The European Commission issued a joint statement on the occasion of the International Women's Day 2018, signed by Vice-Presidents Frans Timmermans, Federica Mogherini and Yyrki Katainen, as well as several Commissioners, among whom Vera Jourová, Commissioner on Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner on Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, as well as several other Commission Members.

It is underlined in the statement that equality between women and men is one of the fundamental values enshrined in the treaties. The Union has been a pioneer in tackling gender-based discrimination and can be proud of the progress achieved.

But the work is not over – the path to full equality in practice is still a long one.

The aim is to achieve equality for girls and women in all aspects of life: access to education, equal pay for equal work, access to top positions in companies and politics as well as protection from violence.

In February 2018, the number of women in managerial positions in the European Commission reached 36%, up from 11% when the Commission took office in November 2014. President Juncker has committed to reaching 40% by 31 October 2019 at the end of the Commission's mandate.

Gender equality is not just about fairness and justice in Europe – it is also a necessity to achieve sustainable peace, security, development, economic prosperity and growth around the world.

Investing in the potential of women and girls is an investment in the whole society and is the responsibility of men and boys as much as women and girls.

To read the full statement, see [Joint Statement](#).



European Parliament

1) The European Parliament organised an inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting on “Empowering women and girls in media and ICT: key for the future”, European Parliament, Brussels, 8 March 2018. The Chair was Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

Parliament is of the view that more incentives are needed to get women into higher positions in the world of media and to encourage young girls to choose ICT as a career path.

During the meeting, particular emphasis was put on the issues of women shaping media, empowering women and girls through digital inclusion and advancing equality in the digital age.

A key speaker at the meeting was Vera Jourová, Commissioner on gender equality.

2) Genderfiveplus (G5+), the first European feminist think tank, will set up an event, together with the European Parliament's liaison office in London, on the consequences of Brexit for women (Europa House, London, 22nd March 2018). Many advantages have been achieved for women by the EU. Will those advantages be lost once the UK will have left the Union?

Council of Europe

Highlights from the speech of the Council of Europe's Deputy Secretary General, Gabriela Battaini-Dragoni, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2018:

Women's rights and gender equality still have a distance to go.

And no-one following the news in 2018 can be in any doubt about the urgency.

The Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – also known as the Istanbul Convention – has been ratified by 28 states, signed by the EU and described as “a gold standard” by the UN.

Now, more than ever, there is a need for a debate on the discrimination, harassment and humiliation millions of women face day in, day out. Together with the MeToo movement, we cannot afford to wait any longer and must move forward together. Now is the time.