

# GENDER EQUALITY & INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW EU LEGISLATURE

Open Letter to:

**Ursula von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission

**Charles Michel**, President of the European Council

**David Sassoli**, President of the European Parliament

**Helena Dalli**, European Commissioner for Equality

---

*Dear Leaders of the European Union,*

As a **group of experts representing international organisations** including the EU institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector, we would like to congratulate you on your appointments as leaders of the European Union institutions.

We are all mindful that there is a growing awareness and social pressure regarding the need to ensure that **Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusive Leadership** become a top priority of **the EU agenda**. Hence, your leadership offers a new opportunity to set the wrongs right. We therefore encourage you to fast-track your agenda courageously, correcting the unacceptable current situation. All men and women - including people with disabilities, from different ethnicities, LGBTI persons, as well as single parents - should enjoy the same rights, opportunities and possibilities to actively use their skills and talents to contribute to a stronger, *innovative and inclusive Europe*.

In particular, with 51% of EU citizens and 61% of EU university graduates being women, it is about time that the fundamental importance of Gender Equality is recognised and become an integral component of the Equality agenda. Even though the social, political, and economic case has consistently and repeatedly been proven over the last decades, *the Union has been moving towards gender equality at a snail's pace* as the European Institute for Gender Equality regularly reiterated. What we need now, is a one giant leap forward for women.

This is the reason why we gathered as a cross-sectorial group of senior professionals for a **roundtable discussion** (the first step of a 2-step process) entitled '**Gender Balance and Inclusive Leadership – How do we get there?**' – co-hosted by **MEP Robert Biedroń** (EP FEMM Committee Vice-Chair) and **Claudia de Castro Caldeirinha** (Leadership Professor and CEO of Redscope Consulting). The conversation counted with the engagement of **EP's Vice President Heidi Hautala**, and the active contribution of nearly 50 senior participants from different international sectors in Brussels: civil society, European institutions, the UN, the private sector, and academia.

As experts and practitioners, we shared the good practices and the lessons that we have learned in our respective sectors while working with Diversity, Inclusion and Gender Balance.

Together, we jointly voted on a list of 16 priority-proposals to accelerate these agendas further.

The 6 top priorities and recommendations are:

1. Implement **gender equality education** starting from primary school **for boys and girls**.
2. Introduce and monitor **mandatory gender targets & quotas** in leadership positions (deliver Women on Boards directive).
3. Implement binding **legislation to ensure equal representation** at all levels of decision making at European and Member State level.
4. **Ensure work-life balance** (implement Work-Life Balance Directive).
5. **Show zero tolerance to sexism**, harassment, violence, discrimination, offline and online. Instil a culture of inclusion, and awareness about bias and gender stereotyping, in all sectors and institutions of the EU and Member States.
6. Offer targeted **gender & leadership trainings, coaching & mentoring**, in all EU and Member States public institutions.

Please find the extended list of priorities and details below.

**We call on you, as EU leaders, to take these recommendations into account in your daily work, projects, future policies and within your institutions, to ensure all EU citizens are equally protected. Finally, and most crucially, we call on the Equality Commissioner Helena Dalli to include these recommendations in the forthcoming European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2024. Action is urgently needed, and it requires commitment, courage, vision, and concerted strategies.**

We are here to support you in your efforts and your inclusive vision. We wish you all the best in your respective mandates and we look forward to continuing this important and necessary work *together*.

*Robert Biedroń MEP (EP FEMM Committee Vice-Chair), Claudia de Castro Caldeirinha (Leadership Professor and CEO of Redscope Consulting) and 50 experts from the EU institutions, the UN, civil society, academia and the private sector. Among which, senior officials from the European Parliament, European Commission, and the Council of the EU, INGOs (e.g. Concord Europe, Search for Common Ground, Gender Five Plus), academic actors (e.g. INSEAD, ULB) and private companies (e.g. Ernst & Young, Unilever, Procter & Gamble).*

## ANNEX 1: PRIORITIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Here you find the extended list of recommendations that emerged from the discussion. They are presented in order of relevance (from most popular to less popular, voted by the 50 participants).

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
1. <i>Implement <b>gender equality education</b> starting from primary school for boys and girls.</i>	<p>Educate children and school professionals about diversity and inclusion, not neglecting boys' education</p> <p>Highlight the significant <b>role of women</b> in history – encourage visible and diverse role models.</p> <p>Encourage early exposure of girls and boys to all professions to overcome traditional gender roles in the workplace (e.g. girls in STEM, boys in caring careers).</p>
2. <i>Introduce and monitor <b>mandatory gender targets &amp; quotas</b> in leadership positions (deliver Women on Boards directive).</i>	<p>Implement targets and quotas for all leadership positions, in all sectors (public, private, etc), especially when there is overrepresentation.</p> <p>Use <b>EIGE research, data and recommendations</b> strategically.</p>
3. <i>Implement <b>binding legislation to ensure equal representation</b> at all levels of decision making at European and Member State level.</i>	<p>Implement gender-balanced party <b>nomination lists, support structures and zipper system.</b></p> <p>Create a pipeline for female political leaders.</p> <p>Introduce, disclose and monitor political parties' <b>gender equality policies and agendas.</b></p> <p>Restrict appointments of nominees until gender balance is reached.</p>
4. <i>Ensure <b>work-life balance</b> (fully implement Work-Life Balance Directive).</i>	<p><b>Rethink and redesign modern work places, cultures and schedules</b> – make them inclusive for women and men throughout the lifecycle.</p> <p>Protect Family Culture</p> <p>Promote equality of family and household tasks &amp; childcare between men and women (Education programs)</p> <p>Access to reproductive rights &amp; health.</p>

<p>5. <i>Show zero tolerance to sexism, harassment, violence, discrimination, offline and online. Instil a culture of inclusion, and awareness about bias and gender stereotyping, in all sectors and institutions of the EU and Member States.</i></p>	<p>Introduce and implement mandatory <b>Unconscious Bias Trainings and Coaching</b></p> <p>Use <b>inclusive language in communication, advertisements and media</b> to create cultures of awareness.</p> <p>Pay particular attention to sectors where gender equality is weak (e.g. women in STEM, men in caring professions).</p> <p>Tackle the ‘Think leader - think male’ bias.</p>
<p>6. <i>Offer targeted gender &amp; leadership trainings, coaching &amp; mentoring.</i></p>	<p>Move from “tick the box” approaches to sustainable gender equality and inclusion strategies (with actionable objectives, impact, etc).</p> <p>Incorporate these customised Learning &amp; Development paths into <b>organisational priorities &amp; performance management</b>.</p> <p>Adopt <b>Reverse Mentoring</b>.</p> <p><b>Effectively communicate</b> the benefits of Gender equality, and Diversity &amp; Inclusion initiatives (why is it good for people, organisations, and societies).</p> <p><b>Train both top and mid-level managers</b> on Inclusive Cultures and tools. Involve teams.</p>
<p>7. <i>Gender Mainstreaming &amp; Gender Budgeting.</i></p>	<p><b>Inclusive communication in all policies, programs and resource allocation</b> (clarity and coherence of message in all EU languages).</p> <p><b>Reporting</b>/measuring of progress, KPIs, scoreboard, etc.</p> <p><b>Fund programs</b> for women-entrepreneurs.</p>
<p>8. <i>Intersectionality approach: Targeted legislative measures (deliver Antidiscrimination Directive).</i></p>	<p>Include minorities, ethnicity, age diversity, disability, cognitive profiles, etc.</p> <p>Find sustainable and ethical ways of collecting data on minorities (e.g. ethnicity, LGBTI+, etc).</p> <p>Consider roadmap by <b>European Networking of Anti-Racism roadmap</b></p>

<p>9. <i>Encourage role models and Leading by example.</i></p>	<p>Make top level EU <b>management accountable</b> for delivering gender equality and D&amp;I target and results.          Make <b>women role models visible online and offline</b>. E.g. Wall of pictures of inspirational role models.          Create <b>opportunities for visibility of models of inclusive leaderships</b> – women and men.</p> <p>Promote inclusive behaviours (e.g. refuse to take part in events and conference where women are not present, like the ‘no woman no panel’ initiative).</p>
<p>10. <i>Systemic Change - Fix the system, not women</i></p>	<p><b>Creating an European Label for products made by companies with gender balanced boards and leadership.</b></p> <p>Pay special attention to the unfair impact of certain policies and services on disempowered groups.</p>
<p>11. <i>Inclusive Recruitment Strategies &amp; internal Policies, Culture</i></p>	<p><b>Use artificial Intelligence</b> positively for unbiased recruitment.</p> <p>Fair and transparent recruitment and promotion procedures.</p> <p><b>Rotate chairing</b> of meetings.</p> <p><b>Facilitate inclusive conversations</b> across different groups</p> <p>Access to <b>reproductive rights &amp; health</b>.</p>
<p>12. <i>Mentality / Culture Change</i></p>	<p>Encourage <b>public debate and discussion</b> in society, media &amp; organisations from the different sectors.</p>
<p>13. <i>More collaboration and acceleration in EU Legislative proposals &amp; programs.</i></p>	<p><b>Joint actions</b> from the different EU institutions (e.g. European Parliament &amp; European Commission moving forward the <b>EU Strategy on Gender Equality</b>).</p>