



EUROPEAN UNION

STATEMENT

Tuesday 08 March, 2016

VIDEO MESSAGE BY HIGH REPRESENTATIVE AND VICE PRESIDENT FEDERICA MOGHERINI ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2016

"This Women's Day makes me think of two pictures we took in Vienna last summer, when we finally reached a deal on Iran's nuclear programme. One is the official picture, where I am the only woman on stage. The second is a picture of the European Union's negotiating team, and there women are twice as many as men – as it was also the case for the US team. It was a huge success for our foreign policy, and it was a women-made success.

Our challenge today is to close the gap between these two pictures; to make sure that more and more women take relevant public roles; and that this is more and more recognised publicly.

Women are playing an increasingly relevant role in our politics, in our foreign policy, and in our societies. Our European foreign policy is putting women on the centre stage, every single day. In ten years, the European Commission has helped three hundred thousand girls get into secondary education. We are working together with local leaders who renounce female genital mutilation. We are supporting young women who say "no" to forced marriage. We are helping to spread the message that violence against women is a sign of weakness for men, not of strength.

A society where women have the same rights as men is not just more just; it is more secure, and richer. When women have no access to good education or to top jobs, we are only wasting their huge potential, which is our potential as well. And this is true both abroad and inside our own European Union.

In my everyday work I meet a great number of women presidents, foreign ministers, parliamentarians doing a great job for their countries; and activists, entrepreneurs, scientists. But I also know what it feels like to be the only woman in the room. No country across the globe can claim to have achieved the perfect gender equality.

Think again of the photos where decision makers are all white men in dark suits. When our citizens look at those pictures, they do not recognise themselves. They do not recognise our societies, and their huge diversity. This is also a matter of credibility for institutions and decision makers. We need to look like our societies, also to regain our citizens' trust: that is precious currency in these hard times.

So, when we celebrate Women's Day, we do not do it for women – but for the whole of us. Happy Women's Day!"

To watch the video please click here: <http://we.tl/crxQQcwnm9>

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