



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

JOINT STATEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Brussels, 8 March 2016

Today we celebrate women. We celebrate their role in society, at work, in our families and lives. We also remember their suffering, hardship and injustice, which for many is still a reality today. It is also true that we must promote gender equality not just today, on International Women's Day, but every day.

Since the very start of our European project, the European Union has been committed to achieving gender equality both within our borders and across the globe. We are proud of what we have achieved so far. More and more women both within the European Union and beyond have equal opportunities in the world of work, and are leaders in every field, be it business, politics or education.

It is essential that we continue our efforts to integrate equality for women and men into every one of our policies across the board, in each of our Member States and in the countries we work with. Also within the Commission we will continue our strong commitment to gender equality. Women are still paid on average 16% less than men for every hour worked, still make up less than a quarter of company board positions and a third of women work part-time, notably because of care responsibilities that are not equitably shared with men.

The European Union relentlessly combats sexism, discrimination, gender-based violence and inequality. Recent EU legislation secures victims' rights, addresses trafficking in human beings, and promotes equal treatment. Initiatives this year will include addressing the work life balance of parents and the participation of women in the labour market. The Commission just tabled a proposal to ratify the Istanbul Convention on combating violence against women; a clear signal that now is the time to step up our collective action.

The European Union is also committed to taking forward the new 2030 United Nations Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, which includes a strong commitment to advance gender equality and empower women and girls around the world. In humanitarian emergencies, including the current refugee crises, the European Union strives to ensure that its humanitarian assistance responds to specific gender needs, in particular the vulnerabilities of migrant women. We are taking steps to empower women, to fight for their rights and their equal access to economic resources, and to address all forms of violence against women and girls, especially trafficking, female genital mutilation and early or forced marriage. Women, as key agents and drivers of sustainable development and sustainable peace, have a crucial role to play in a world so hard hit by conflict and inequality.

We stand together, today and every other day, committed to creating a world where our daughters and sons have equal opportunities. When it comes to dreams, when it comes to goals, gender must never be considered an obstacle.

Signatories:

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans
Budget and Human Resources Vice-
President Kristalina Georgieva
Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship
Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos
Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality
Commissioner Vera Jourová
Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and
Labour Mobility Commissioner Marianne
Thyssen

EU High-Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy /Vice-
President of the Commission Federica
Mogherini

European Neighbourhood Policy &
Enlargement Negotiations Commissioner
Johannes Hahn

International Cooperation and
Development Commissioner Neven
Mimica

Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management
Commissioner Christos Stylianides

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[Annual Report on Gender Equality](#)