



Joint statement on the occasion of International Women's Day 2018

Brussels, 6 March 2018

Equality between women and men is one of the fundamental values of the European Union enshrined in our treaties. Our Union is a pioneer in tackling gender-based discrimination and we can be proud of the progress achieved: Europe is one of the safest and most equal places for women in the world.

But our work is not over – the path to full equality in practice is still a long one. Women and girls still face harassment, abuse and violence. And women are still too often prevented from breaking the glass ceiling, receiving lower pay and fewer opportunities for career and business development.

We want girls and women to achieve equality 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.

Advancing women's leadership and economic empowerment is an absolute priority for us. The European Union has put forward new [legislation](#) to improve work-life balance for working parents and caregivers, and an [Action Plan](#) to close the gender pay gap; and we are making sure that we lead by example: in February 2018, the number of women in managerial positions in the European Commission reached 36%, up from 11% when we took office in November 2014. President Juncker has committed to reaching 40% by 31 October 2019 at the end of our mandate.

We are also consistent in all aspects of all our policies, both inside the EU and in our external action by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Our policy contributes to the successful global implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. This year's [European Development Days](#) will focus on the vital role of women and girls in sustainable development, their equal participation and leadership in all walks of life. In addition, this year the EU has the leadership of the "Call to Action for Protection Against Gender-Based Violence", which brings together over 60 countries and organisations striving to ensure that gender-based violence is addressed in humanitarian crises.

The European Union assists women and girls across the world who are on the move or displaced, who are victims of violence, such as through the Spotlight [initiative](#), or who are excluded from education, equal access to health and family planning services, the labour market, and political life more generally. Over 15 million girls of primary school age do not go to school around the world, so the EU is helping boost access to education from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, to South East Asia.

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 our whole society and is the responsibility of men and boys as much as women and girls.

Signatories:

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**

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

Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Commissioner / Vice-President of the Commission Jyrki **Katainen***

Budget and Human Resources Commissioner **Oettinger**

European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations Commissioner Johannes **Hahn**

International Cooperation and Development Commissioner Neven **Mimica**

Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris **Avramopoulos**

Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Commissioner Marianne **Thyssen**

Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs Commissioner Pierre **Moscovici**

Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Commissioner Christos **Stylianides**

Transport Commissioner Violeta **Bulc***

Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality Commissioner Vera **Jourová**

Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Commissioner Tibor **Navracsics**

Regional Policy Commissioner Corina **Crețu**

Research, Science and Innovation Commissioner Carlos **Moedas**

Digital Economy and Society Mariya **Gabriel**

More information

[Q&A](#)

European Institute for Gender Equality's press release on the [women in tech report](#)

On 8 March, the Commission will announce the twelve finalists of the [EU Prize for Women Innovators](#), the largest prize of its kind worldwide. Since 2011 it celebrates women who have combined scientific excellence with entrepreneurial success.

On 5- 6 June, the Commission will organise the [European Development days](#) (#shEDDs), which will be dedicated to Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development.

[The Annual Fundamental Rights Colloquium on Women's Rights in Turbulent Times](#) addressed violence and harassment against women as well as the economic and political inequality between women and men, particularly focusing on the gender pay gap and on work-life balance.

The launch of [Spotlight Initiative](#) by the European Commission together with the United Nations addresses gender-based violence at global level.

[2017 Gender Equality index](#)

[Violence against women awareness-raising video](#)

* [updated on 06/03 at 16:01]

STATEMENT/18/1601

Press contacts:

[Christian WIGAND](#) (+32 2 296 22 53)

[Melanie VOIN](#) (+ 32 2 295 86 59)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)