

50/50 Coalition

“NO MODERN EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY WITHOUT GENDER EQUALITY”

Introduction: Why is there a need for a cross-party coalition for 50/50 gender balance in all European institutions and a 50/50 campaign ahead of the EU 2014 elections?

In 2014, Europeans will elect a new European Parliament. Will there be gender balance among the MEPs? Will the President of the European Parliament be a woman after 13 years with male presidents? We will also see a new European Commission led by its President. Will the Commission consist of 50% women and 50% men? Will the President be a woman for the first time?

Women represent more than half of the population of the EU, but they are not represented equally in decision-making at all European levels.

This current and lingering under-representation is a serious obstacle to the democratic legitimacy of the European Union.ⁱ

The EU states that Equality between women and men is one of its main objectives and a fundamental value.ⁱⁱ Moreover, gender equality in decision-making is mentioned as one of the priorities in the *European Strategy for Equality between Women and Men* 2010-2015 as well as in *The European Pact for Gender Equality* (2011-2020).

1. Who are we and what are our aims?

To achieve 50/50 gender balance in the European institutions after the elections in 2014, a cross-party coalition of MEP's came together with the support of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) to make parity become a reality in the European institutions.

A modern and genuine democracy requires gender equality; the equal representation of women and men in the making of decisions that affect their lives.

We are convinced it is high time for concrete actions ahead of the European elections in 2014!

We believe that gender equality is a condition for modernising our political systems, so that women and men in their diversity equally share rights, responsibilities, and power. Gender equality should be at the heart of European initiatives to engage citizens in decision-making, to increase the legitimacy of the European Union, and to progress towards policies that reflect the needs and aspirations of all Europeans.

2. Our demands

We call for all decision-makers, individuals and organisations interested in the promotion of democracy and justice to support this Campaign at all levels and across the boundaries of countries and political parties.

- **Each Member State should nominate one female and one male candidate for the Commissioner's post as well as for all top jobs/positions in the EU institutions**
- **Member States and the European Council to promote and ensure gender parity in the executive board and in top positions of the European Central Bank**
- **The European Parliament political groups are called upon to nominate one female and one male candidate for the president elections of the EP, and to ensure gender parity in the nomination of chairpersons within the committees, as well as in the composition of their Bureau.**
- **The European political parties are called upon to promote and ensure gender representation in their bureau/decisional bodies and promote women candidates for decision-making positions in the European Parliament**
- **In view of the European elections 2014, national political parties are called upon to compose their electoral lists in a way that will ensure gender parity in outcome**
- **The European Council has to put women in policy decision-making/parity as a high level issue on the agenda.**

ⁱ At the moment, less than **35%** of Members of the **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT** are women. European Parliament has been chaired by a woman only twice. After the mid-term elections 2012, only **three** of the **14** Vice-Presidents of the Parliament are women (21% a decrease from 43%). The president of the European Parliament is man. 9 out of 27 Commissioners are women.

ⁱⁱ **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Chapter III, Article 23**

Equality between men and women must be ensured in all areas, including employment, work and pay. The principle of equality shall not prevent the maintenance or adoption of measures providing for specific advantages in favour of the under-represented sex.

TEU, Article 3 It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.