



Women Inspiring Europe
2011 CALENDAR





Francesca Brezzi, Italy

We are all equal, but can we possibly be the same? It seems that Francesca Brezzi has always been concerned with this simple, but challenging idea. Human dignity, humanity and the basic moral principles of human nature have been the foci of her career in philosophical studies, first as a student, then as a researcher.

When Brezzi began exploring the few, known women philosophers, she discovered a need to bring the dimension of gender into philosophical discourses on the acceptance of otherness and plurality.

She also recognised that women's contributions to the field will produce not only new concepts, but whole new systems of knowledge. Today, Francesca Brezzi is a professor of Moral Philosophy and the Philosophy of Difference as well as Women's Studies at the University of Rome. She is an internationally acclaimed expert in her fields of research, and in 2006, she gave up her post as director of the university's Philosophy Department in order to dedicate all of her time to research. Her role, she says, is to assimilate all the existing information without filtering.



Facts and figures:

Hypatia of Alexandria, C370-415AD, the Greek philosopher, mathematician and astronomer is one of the first female philosophers. Developing neo-Platonism she taught ideas relating to different levels of reality and humanity's

ability to understand them. Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759-1797, the English writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights, is most known for her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), where she argues that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be

only because they lack education. Simon de Beauvoir, 1908-1986, the French existentialist philosopher, public intellectual and social theorist developed education in traditional philosophy into more radical explorations of feminism and existentialism.

Alessandra Chiricosta, University Roma Tre: Through her theoretical and practical activities Professor Brezzi has given an important contribution to the development of Gender perspective in Italy, in Europe and in Mediterranean Countries. Not only has she developed a branch of research concerning the Philosophy of Gender; her practical activities in promoting equal opportunities and enhancing the role of women in Italian society have been equally fundamental.

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Lena Olving, Sweden

For the first time in her career, Lena Olving now has female colleagues. As chief operating officer of Saab, she is the head and one of five women on the executive board of the company. The former top manager at carmaker Volvo, however, has never let gender get in her way – not even in the male-dominated industry where she has worked her entire professional life.

“I was taught by my parents that I can be whatever I want to be.” Born to a family of refugees from Estonia, Lena Olving and her two siblings learned firsthand how much one can achieve by working up from “almost nothing”.

She firmly believes that education is the key to success, “... because it gives you choices.” The rest, she says, is a mix of hard work and pure luck – and the right network. She encourages young women not to feel victimized, but rather to be realistic about their abilities. In 2010, Lena Olving was selected as Sweden’s most powerful businesswoman and is recognized internationally as a role model for women in decision-making.

Facts and figures:

The number of women on the boards of the top European companies has grown from 8% in 2004 to almost 12% in 2010. Of boards at the top 3001 European

companies women represent 11.7%, compared to 9.7% in 2008 and 8.5% in 2006 – of 4,875 board seats, women occupy 571. As a result of quota legislation Norway has 37.9% women on boards. The

proportion of women among the presidents/chairpersons of the highest decision-making body of the largest publicly quoted firms on the national stock exchange was 2.7% in the EU-27 2007.

Karin Bengtson, Swedish Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality:

The reason for nominating Lena Olving is that she has expressed that she has experience of being a sole women working in a male dominated sector and has important insights in what that can be like. She also has interesting theories on how to advance gender equality in professional business which should be taken notice of.

2011 FEBRUARY

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6 February – International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation;
 22 February – 4 March – The fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women;
 28 February – 11 March – Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Documents of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly – Beijing + 10.



Seyran Ates, Germany

With her unquenchable thirst for freedom, it is no wonder that Seyran Ates' name means "fire" in Turkish.

Born into a family of migrant workers, the close living conditions certainly taught Ates the value of freedom early on. Ates, though, was destined to take on a very different kind of life. With 18, she broke loose and wrote her first book entitled, "Where do we belong?" Twenty years later she once again posed this question in her autobiography, but this time from the perspective of a lawyer and human rights activist. Ates symbolises the conscience of Germany, a reminding voice that integration cannot occur on its own. Rather, a person must determine how to lead her or his own life, and in this respect, Ates hopes to be an example for young women and men alike.

Facts and figures:
Migrating women represent almost half of the migrants to the EU. Their unemployment rate (14%) is higher than that of migrant men (11.3%). The

unemployment rate among European migrant women is 10%, compared to 19% among non-European migrant women. Among highly-qualified women in the 25-54 age group 84.7% of

European women are employed compared with 60% of non-European women. 50% of migrant girls in Europe do not go beyond compulsory education, while only 17% go through tertiary education.

German female lawyers association:
A lawyer and writer, Seyran Ates has been advocating for the right of self-determination and bodily integrity of women for many years. She is a selfless and courageous advocate of that right, and fights tirelessly against a compulsory headscarf, domestic violence and forced marriages.

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Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka, Poland

23 August 1950 – 10 April 2010

The Archbishop once described Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka as, “concrete that won’t be broken.” And he should know! Until her tragic death in the plane crash that took the life of Polish President Lech Kacinsky,

Jaruga-Nowacka was a fierce defender of women’s rights. She fearlessly called attention to cases of domestic violence, advocated for modern family policies and tirelessly campaigned for broad access to assisted conception

– a mighty undertaking in Catholic Poland! Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005, Nowacka was the first woman to hold the post of Deputy Prime Minister in Poland and had served as the Minister for Social Affairs in an earlier Polish cabinet. Starting out as an ethnographer specialising in Mongolian culture, she later quit her scientific career, co-founded the Labor Union party (she left the party in April 2004) and became Poland’s first Government Plenipotentiary for the Equal Status of Men and Women. „I’m a leftist”, she once said. “So I care about the dignified existence of every human being.”

Facts and figures: Women form 52 % of the EU’s population, but are significantly underrepresented in the decision-making bodies in most Member States and

in the European Institutions. The number of women members of national parliaments (single/lower houses) was 24% in 2009. Among senior ministers of national governments

(i.e. ministers with a seat in the cabinet), the share of women was 27%. In the European Parliament 35% are women and women make up 33% of the Commission.

Wanda Nowicka, Federation for Women and Family Planning: Izabela was a political figure who served in the national Parliament since 1993 as a member of the left wing. Always standing up for women’s rights and the rights of minorities she was a feminist and a role model for many. She was a spokesperson for school based sexual education, free contraceptives, in vitro and legal abortion. As an advocate of LGBTQ rights, Izabela Jaruga-Nowacka regularly spoke out at gay pride events and suffered verbal abuse from extremist nationalists and Christian groups.

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Stanimira Hadjimitova, Bulgaria

With degrees in both electrical engineering and management, a stellar track record at the country's biggest trade company for heavy machinery and her own firm about to take off at full speed, Stanimira Hadjimitova was on track to becoming one of Bulgaria's most successful businesswomen. Then, she met a group of female lawyers who were preparing for the UN's World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, a landmark event that would forever change the fight for equality. After co-founding an NGO in Bulgaria with them, Hadjimitova left for China. Within weeks of her trip, she had sold her company shares, left her post as director and dived full force into the fight against domestic violence, bringing along her entrepreneurial spirit and determination.

Today, she is one of the main watchdogs and policy advisors for gender equality and equal opportunities. Achievements for women were great, she says, "but we have to stay alert, keep reminding the government that their obligations are not mere promises. Today, they are the law."

Facts and figures:
Women constituted 33.5% of Research and Development personnel in the EU in 2007 with the exception of Latvia and Lithuania where women were in majority. Women are under-represented in the high-

tech sectors in the EU. Female researchers are still to a large extent under-represented in most EU-27 countries, especially in the business enterprise sector, which counted more than four times as many male researchers than female researchers.

Stoila Bongalova, Bulgarian Fund for Women:
For her, increasing the number of women in decision-making was not enough. She always advocated for women to be trained in leadership skills and be encouraged to run for office. Not convinced of party politics, she always encourages people in charge to overcome their party biases and join forces for the advancement of the country as a whole. She has contributed to the democratisation of the society and to women particularly, in many ways.

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Michaela Miroiu, Romania

Just like Don Quixote, Michaela Miroiu's quest for adventure never seems to stop. A philosophy teacher under the Ceausescu dictatorship, after 1989 she became one of Romania's most outspoken defenders of women's rights. Miroiu has said that during the Soviet's rule, books, free thinkers and knowledge were her escape – now, they are the fuel that keeps her going. Despite international recognition for her research and several scholarships to study abroad, she has always returned to Romania, saying "I learned how others do it and took it with me."

Miroiu tirelessly campaigns for women, equal pay and participation, while fighting against stereotypes and gender-based violence.

"I like to be Don Quixote, but sometimes, it gets exhausting."



Facts and figures:
Although women outnumber men among university graduates they are under-represented among researchers and

academic staff, representing only 18% of the professors in public universities. 37% of researchers in the Higher Education Sector, 39% in the Government Sector and 19% in

the Business Enterprise Sector. Of a total of 543 Nobel Prize and Prize in Economic Sciences awarded since 1901, only 41 has been awarded to women.

Diana Elena Neaga and Valentin Nicolescu Quintus, Universitatea Nicolae Titulescu:
Professor Mihaela Miroiu is maybe the main figure of Romanian feminism after '89. In no less than 32 years of teaching professor Miroiu has been a model for her students, many of whom are now also actively involved in Romania's feminist movement promoting values like tolerance, justice, and respect for human dignity.

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5-9 June – Five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – Beijing + 5; **19 June** – Security Council Resolution 1820; **21 June** – Birth of the Commission on Status of Women; **21 June** – EIGE Grand Opening; **26 June** – Signing of the UN Charter.



Chrissie Wellington, UK

In a world of extremes, Chrissie Wellington has broken all kinds of boundaries. The English sportswoman is one of only three women to have won the Ironman World championship three consecutive times!

Her first victory came only one year after she abandoned her office job at DEFRA, the UK's development agency, and started competing in triathlons professionally. Born into an athletic family and a swimmer since she was a child, Wellington discovered a passion for running while studying at Birmingham University. A year after graduating with distinction, she ran the London Marathon for the first time and continued running during her time at DEFRA.

"Disillusioned with bureaucracy and paper pushing", she took a sabbatical in 2004 to work with an on-the-ground community project in Nepal. While there, cycling was added to her portfolio where she rode a bike to work and on trips over the Himalayas. She returned to DEFRA, but quit a few months later to go professional taking on not only triathlons, but Ironman competitions as well. The longest triathlon, Ironman is comprised of 3.8 km swimming, 180 km cycling and a marathon (approx. 42 km). In 2009, Wellington was selected as Sportswoman of the Year, and in 2010, she was appointed as a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in the Queen's birthday honors.

Facts and figures:
Women first competed at the 1900 Paris Olympic Games, in tennis and golf. A new record for women's participation in the Olympic Winter Games

was set in Vancouver in 2010 where 40 % of the athletes taking part were women. The inaugural Youth Olympic Games in Singapore 2010, with 46 % of the 3,600

athletes being female, marked the debut of teams with both men and women and athletes from different nationalities participating together in various sports.

Claire Annesley, University of Manchester:
Chrissie Wellington broke her own world record for the 'Ironman' triathlon. She writes about her life in a weblog which sends a positive message to women and girls to be proud of, respect and trust their bodies. She is also actively involved in a range of development initiatives and charities, many of which are directed at women and girls.

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Cristina Gallach, Spain

Having spent more than two decades at the forefront of foreign policy – first as a journalist, then as the spokesperson for Javier Solana at NATO and the EU as well as the Spanish EU Presidency –

Cristina Gallach is a household name in international relations and has been designated as one of Europe’s 30 most influential people with regards to policy and legislation.

Even after more than 20 years of being “on and off the record”, of broken promises and compromised beliefs, the Spaniard has remained very human, genuinely interested and refreshingly humorous. Today, Gallach is in the communications department of the European Council and has yet to decide with whom she will work: High Representative Lady Catherine Ashton or EU President Herman van Rompuy.



Facts and figures:
Women represent 52 % of the population but they only make up 21% of the news subject and they are the centre focus in merely

10% of the stories, where they are more than twice as likely to be portrayed as victims. 86% of people featured as spokespersons are men.

Rebeca De Sancho Mayoral, EU Project Consultant at Unisys: Cristina Gallach has achieved visibility in the European and International spheres throughout her entire professional career. Throughout her professional life, she has contributed not only to raising awareness of women in European foreign affairs but also provided a role-model for other women to enter into areas of work where women are still be under-represented.

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Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, Portugal

18 January 1930 – 10 July 2004

When Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo became the first and to date only female Prime Minister of Portugal in 1979, she was also only the second woman to become an elected head of state in Europe after Margaret Thatcher.

But pioneering the way forward for women was nothing new for her. A trained industrial engineer, Lourdes Pintasilgo was one of the few female students in her class, and she became the first female key researcher at the National Nuclear Energy Commission soon after her graduation. As leader of the Catholic women's student movement during university she joined the Graal, a Catholic order for laywomen, and was soon appointed by the Vatican to act as the Church's liaison for women. During her lifetime, Lourdes Pintasilgo also held the posts of Minister of Social Affairs, State Secretary for Social Security and Ambassador to UNESCO as well as being a member of the Portuguese delegation to the United Nations.



Facts and figures:

In 1960 Sirivamo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka became the world's first female elected prime minister. Isabel Peron became the world's first woman

president when she took office in Argentina in 1974. Margaret Thatcher was the first European women prime minister when she took office in Great Britain in 1979. Vigdis Finnbogadóttir became the

first democratically elected woman president when she took office in Iceland 1972. In the EU member states (July 2010) 3 presidents and 3 prime ministers are women.

Maria de Fatima Gracio, Foundation Caring for the Future:

As a socially committed member of society she understood the importance of social rights as fundamental rights for every human being. As a woman, she strongly defended the rights of women as full and equal human beings and as bearers of a new vision for society and for human relations. As a thinker and a dreamer she was always innovative in thinking ahead of old and new challenges facing humanity.

2011 SEPTEMBER

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Rita Vella, Malta

Independence and accessibility are indispensable values for Rita Vella. At the age of 10, the young Maltese started to lose feeling in her legs. By the age of 16, she was bound to a wheelchair and had also lost the use of her hands to muscular dystrophy. Still, it didn't hold her back nor slow her down. She lived on her own, went to university and got a job. Today, Vella is the chairwoman of the Maltese Muscular Dystrophy Group and the Deputy Chair of the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and she still works part-time even though her condition is deteriorating.

At work, one of her key slogans is "Rights, not charity", but privately, Vella and her husband Kevin, who also suffers from muscular dystrophy, have another one: "Live today, not tomorrow!"

Facts and figures:
Facing the „intersection“ of gender and disability - therefore risking multiple discrimination - women with disabilities account for 16% to 20% of women in Europe. They are three

times as likely to be the victims of violence as women without disabilities and in fact nearly 80 % of women with disabilities are victims of psychological and physical violence, facing also an increased risk of sexual

violence. Women with disabilities are under-represented in democratic processes and decision-making more generally, as well as in recreational activities, culture and sport.

Joe Camilleri, Equal Rights Commission in Malta:
I admire Rita for her strong social conscience and her commitment to disability issues. Rita has had to confront many obstacles in her life. Notwithstanding the fact that the educational system failed many disabled youngsters, Rita included, she can communicate freely in Maltese, English and Italian. Rita has been an outspoken advocate for disability rights in Malta and abroad. Together with her husband, Rita has also challenged people's perceptions and misconceptions of disabled peoples' lifestyle choices in conservative Malta.

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Comfort Momoh, UK

Born in Nigeria to a mixed Nigerian-Ghanaian couple, Comfort Momoh came to the UK as a young woman to work as a nurse. She soon discovered that her real vocation would be closely linked to her cultural heritage. Even though female genital mutilation (FGM) was not practiced in her family, it is still prevalent in many sub-Saharan countries and refugee communities. For 27 years now, the trained midwife has provided medical support to women who have undergone FGM. In 1997, she set up the African Well Women's Clinic in London, one of the first institutions specifically targeted at women from communities where FGM is practised.

Equal to her commitment for patients is her fierce opposition to the “barbaric” practice. Momoh has lobbied the British parliament on FGM-related issues, including criminal law enforcement for acts of violence against British residents abroad and immigration cases related to FGM.

She served as a temporary advisor to the World Health Organisation in Geneva, represented the United Kingdom at the United Nations and has been an honorary lecturer at King's College London since 2007. In 2008 Dr Comfort Momoh was honoured as a „Member of the British Empire“ by Her Majesty the Queen.

Facts and figures:
Three million girls and women are subjected to female genital mutilation worldwide each year, that's 8000 girls

per day. The European Parliament estimates 500,000 girls and women living in Europe are suffering with the lifelong consequences of female

genital mutilation. On 24 March 2009, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on combating female genital mutilation in the EU.

Nominator:
In recognition of her relentless work and passionate drive to raise the awareness of the Female Genital Mutilation issue and various social works she has done over the years, Her Majesty conferred on Dr. Mrs Comfort Momoh the title of the “Member of the British Empire” MBE Award in 2008.

2011 NOVEMBER

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Vaili Maria Jämsä, Finland

Born in 1930, Vaili Maria Jämsä remembers times when women did not have the right to vote, receive an inheritance or sign a work contract, and when there wasn't childcare or proper healthcare for women.

Jämsä stepped forward as an instigator of change, establishing the country's first equal rights associations as well as several charities and committees for gender equality and equal opportunities.

An entrepreneur in farming herself, she also founded an interest group for private, small- and medium-sized businesses. Today, Vaili Jämsä is the vice member of the local council's social board as well as the local senior citizens board. She is the chairperson for the pensions' organisation and has founded yet another organisation lobbying for the rights and participation of widows. Lots need to be done still, she says.

“It isn't until Christmas isn't about women working and men celebrating and being celebrated, that we all live equally.” Coming from Lapland, the land of Santa Claus, she must know.

Facts and figures:
The population of Europe is ageing; around 17% of EU population are over 65, of these 59% are women, in the age group 85 and over

women represent 71%. Over 40% of women over 65 are widows. The average at-risk-of-poverty rate for older women is 22% against 16% for older men.

Vaili Jämsä-Uusitalo, University of Oulu:
Vaili Maria Jämsä is known in her village as a person who brings new knowledge to her fellow villagers. Despite her age – she is 87 – she is a great friend to many young people. She is the best kind of role model for any woman in Europe.

2011 DECEMBER

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5 December – CEDAW General recommendation N° 26 on women migrant workers; **7 December** – Signing and proclaiming of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; **10 December** – Human Rights Day; **13 December** – Adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; **18 December** – Adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); **20 December** – Adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women; **20 December** – Establishment of EIGE; **22 December** – Entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women



The European Institute for Gender Equality, or EIGE, is a European agency which supports the EU and its Member States in their efforts to promote gender equality, to fight discrimination based on sex and to raise awareness about gender equality issues.

Its tasks are to collect and analyse comparable data on gender issues, to develop methodological tools, in particular for the integration of the gender dimension in all policy areas, to facilitate the exchange of best practices and dialogue among stakeholders, and to raise awareness among EU citizens.

On the occasion of International women's Day on 8th March 2010, EIGE announced the launch of the „Women of Europe“ resource pool activity. This resource pool is an ongoing project and contains information about women from all over Europe acting as role-models, and as sources of inspiration for others. The resource pool will be used by EIGE and its stakeholders in search of realistic evidence of success in the form of testimonials, expert or speaker interventions. Over time as the activity gains momentum, the 'Women of Europe' resource pool will become an integral part of the Institute's resource centre pooling experience and bringing recognition to their achievements. Among the women who have applied or have been nominated for the resource pool, every year 12 women figure in this „Women Inspiring Europe“ Calendar. This initiative provides visibility as well as paying homage to some of Europe's most remarkable women in highlighting their achievements and success stories. The 2011 calendar is the first of its kind under this initiative.

For 2012, the Institute continues to encourage nominations from and about women active in all professional spheres, who set positive examples for women in Europe.

A Woman can either nominate herself or can be nominated based on any of the following:

1. How the nominee believes she has managed to break stereotypes about women. (i.e. behaving in an unusual way, producing innovative ideas);
2. How the nominee believes she achieved visibility and recognition by way of her actions;
3. How the nominee believes she has contributed to her society and to other women in particular.

The nominations for the Women Inspiring Europe Calendar 2012 will be open from 1 December 2010 to 31 May 2011. For further information about the activity and for 2012 nominations please consult the following web page: www.eige.europa.eu/women-inspiring-europe