



High Level International Conference on "*The Role and Status of Women in Modern Society - Between Empowerment, Leadership and Gender Discrimination*"
Bucharest, 29 - 30 MAY 2019

Day 1 - 29 MAY 2019

09:00 - 10:00

Registration of participants/Handshake

10:00 - 11:00

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

Location: Nicolae Bălcescu Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: *Mrs Alessandra Stoicescu, TV Moderator*

Keynote Address:

- Mr Marius-Constantin Budăi, Minister, Ministry of Labor and Social Justice
- Mrs Viorica Dăncilă, Prime Minister of Romania
- Ms Kristalina Georgieva, World Bank CEO
- Ms Claire Hutchinson, SG NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

11:00 - 13:00

HIGH LEVEL PLENARY SESSION I - *Towards a forward-looking perspective with regard to gender equality and the empowering role of women within our societies*

Moderator: *Mrs Alessandra Stoicescu, TV Moderator*

Keynote Address:

- Mrs Grațiela Drăghici, State Secretary, National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
- Ms Åsa Lindestam, First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden
- Ms Mariyana Nikolova, Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria
- Ms Julie Ward, member of the European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee
- Mr Mircea Geoană, President of the Aspen Institute Romania
- Mr Tuomas Poysti, Chancellor of Justice, Finland
- Ms Simona-Mirela Miculescu, Representative of the UN



Secretary-General, Head of the UN Office in Belgrade

- Ms Zorica Zaeva, member of the Social Democratic Union of the Republic of North Macedonia
- Ms Irena Moozova, Directorate - General for Justice and Consumers, Director for Equality - DG JUSTICE
- Ms Virginija Langbakk, Director, European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)
- Mr Michael O'Flaherty, Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

13:00 - 13:15 FAMILY PHOTO

13:15 - 14:30 Lunch

Location: Brâncovenesc Room of the Parliament Palace

15:30 - 17:30 Visit and cultural event at the National Village Museum "DIMITRIE GUSTI"

- Women Empowerment through Creative Industry: motivation and performance
- Meeting women entrepreneurs
- Creative start-ups and ideas in women entrepreneurships
- Tradition and innovation in business
- Successful enterprises owned and managed by women

20:00 - 22:00 OFFICIAL DINNER. FAMILY PHOTO

Location: Royal Palace Bucharest, Throne Hall

MAIN OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED

Promoting gender equality at European and global level is a matter of social fairness with respect to the way men and women are treated within our societies.

The challenges facing our societies in this area may vary and differ to a certain extent, nonetheless they encompass many common features which are generally acknowledged as societal values: equality, non-discrimination, non-stereotyping, inclusiveness, diversity and respect for human rights.



In the current changing and challenging context at both European and global levels, we have the opportunity to become more active and more consistently involved in promoting gender equality and the fighting against discrimination of any kind.

It is our joint responsibility, as decision-makers and civil society to act towards more equitable, non-discriminatory and performance-rewarding societies.

Important steps have already been taken in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women.

At European level, the Commission's Strategic Commitment on Gender Equality (2016-2019) highlights the need to step up efforts in order to promote gender equality, particularly in five priority areas: economic independence of women and men; reducing the pay gap, income and pension gap; equal opportunities in the decision-making process; combat and stop gender-based violence; and promoting gender equality in Europe and beyond the borders of the European Union Member States; as well as by integrating the transversal gender perspective into all European Union's funded activities and programs.

At the same time, **the European Social Rights Pillar** proclaimed on 17 November 2017 calls for equitable and functional economies, social welfare systems and fairer societies, reaffirms gender equality as one of the key EU principles. It also stresses that equal opportunities and treatment between women and men have to be ensured and encouraged in all areas and the fact that women and men are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value.

The European Union Action Plan 2017-2019 analyses the causes of the gender pay gap from different perspectives and presents a broad set of complementary activities to combat gender pay gaps and ensure the application of the principle of equal pay for women and men.

From the global perspective, the 25th anniversary of the UN Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action provides an opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the measures in the twelve critical areas of concern defined on this basis and to identify key challenges and discuss future priorities and actions in the context of European Union gender equality policies.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) seeks to ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the recognition and the exercising by women of their fundamental rights and freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other domain.

Moreover, the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015, describes a set of 17 universal and transformative goals and provides a world where legal, social or economic barriers have been removed, allowing women and girls to enjoy equal rights and treatment men and boys.



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The overall objective of the Conference lies in keeping gender equality steadily on radar and making it a significant milestone in our future actions. We cannot speak of social well-being for our citizens without the economic empowerment of women, without promoting women in all areas of social and economic environment, whether we are referring to education, the labour market, leadership, entrepreneurship or political positions at the highest level.

From a European perspective, the momentum is appropriate in the context of the ongoing debate on the future of the European Union, especially considering that the EU requires a **forward-looking perspective with regard to gender equality**, while the existing framework is due to expire in 2019.

Developing a **forward-looking perspective for promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men**, based on the EU's Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality, will contribute to ensuring accountability and long-term coordination, as well as effective implementation of the measures and monitoring the results of the public policies on gender equality in the EU. At the same time, we need to promote a coordinated and holistic approach at global level with respect to gender equality.

Gender balance is and should remain at the heart of the European model alongside the principles, values and objectives that define the success of our European project.

The Joint Declaration on equal opportunities between women and men, signed on 15th March by the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council with the upcoming Finnish and Croatian Presidencies, represents a key document for setting out the objectives, measures and joint actions specific to this area for the next period. The Declaration represents a commitment to both supporting women's participation in the labour market and women's entrepreneurship, as well as supporting women in vulnerable situations.

Building upon these achievements, the conference organized by the Romanian Presidency to the EU Council aims at launching a reflection process with regard to the way gender equality should be strengthened within our societies and policies, through facilitating the exchange of best practices, policies and initiatives taken at European and international level in this area.



Day 2 - 30 MAY 2019

9:30 - 10:30

HIGH LEVEL PLENARY SESSION II - *Towards a forward-looking perspective with regard to gender equality and the empowering role of women within our societies*

Location: Nicolae Bălcescu Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: Mrs Alessandra Stoicescu, TV Moderator

Keynote Address:

- Mrs Maria Gabriela Zoană, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, European Parliament
- H.E. Ms. Michèle Ramis, Ambassador of the French Republic to Romania
- Mrs Marina Chrysoveloni, Deputy Minister of Interior in charge of gender equality, Greece
- Mr Roberts Sprucs, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Welfare, Latvia
- Mr Lazar Lazarov, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
- Ms Minna Etu-Seppälä, Chair of Business Europe's Equal Opportunity Network
- Mr Pieter Bult, Representative UNICEF Romania
- Ms Brenda King, Chief Executive of African & Caribbean Diversity

PARALEL SESSIONS

10:30 - 11:30

Session I - *Ensuring a more active participation of women within labour markets and promoting women's economic independence. Why gender equality is key?*

Focus:

What economic gains does gender equality bring for the EU and Member States?

How can gender budgeting help achieve a more inclusive and sustainable EU?

What role does gender equality play in solving current and future challenges, such as rapid digital transformation, gender segregation in the labour market and the ageing population?



Location: I.C Brătianu Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: Ms Brenda King - Chief Executive of African & Caribbean Diversity

Speakers:

- Mrs Marina Chrysoveloni - Deputy Minister of Interior in charge of gender equality, Greece
- Ms Caterina Bolognese, Head, Gender Equality Division Human Dignity, Equality and Governance, Council of Europe
- Ms Brenda King - Chief Executive of African & Caribbean Diversity
- Ms Virginija Langbakk, Director, European Institute for Gender Equality

10:30 - 11:30

Session II - *Promoting gender balance and women's rights globally. How more women in decision-making makes a difference?*

Focus:

What is the share of women in top positions in politics, business & finance?

How do legislative and soft measures boost the number of women in key decision-making positions?

What role does institutional transformation play in creating more gender-equal organisations?

Location: Drepturile Omului Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: Ms Alexandra Gătej, Chief Executive Officer, Maldon & Wat

Speakers:

- Mr Roberts Sprucs, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Welfare, Latvia
- Ms Tiina Kukkamaa-Bah, Chief, Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE
- Ms Ligia Nobrega, European Institute for Gender Equality



11:30 - 12:00

Coffee Break

12:00 - 13:00

Session III - Women's empowerment - the role of women in promoting entrepreneurship

Focus:

Which measures can reduce the risk of poverty women face? E.g. upscaling skills

Which groups face the biggest risk of poverty (e.g. lone mothers)? Where is the biggest gap in earnings (women in couples with 3 or more children)? How can work-life balance measures help?

Location: I.C Brătianu Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: Ms Gianina Dimitrescu, Director, National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men

Speakers :

- Mr Lazar Lazarov - Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria
- Mrs Virginia Oțel, Communication Leader, Garanti Bank Romania
- Ms Alexandrina Satnoianu, European Institute for Gender Equality

12:00 - 13:00

Session IV - Gender equality - a prerequisite for social and economic growth in the EU. How far are we from closing the gender pay gap & gender employment gap?

Focus:

Which categories of employees are most affected?

What measures contribute to closing the gender pay gap and gender employment gap?



Location: Drepturile Omului Room, Palace of the Parliament

Moderator: European Institute for Gender Equality

Speakers:

- Ms Christina Verchere - CEO OMV Petrom Romania
- Ms Minna Etu-Seppälä - Chair of BusinessEurope's Equal Opportunity Network
- Ms Virginija Langbakk, Director European Institute for Gender Equality
- Ms Malinka Koparanova, Senior Social Affairs Officer and Gender Focal Point, UNECE

13:00 - 14:30

Lunch

Location: Brâncovenesc Room, Palace of the Parliament

14:30 - 15:00

Closing Remarks

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SESSION I: Ensuring a more active participation of women within labour markets and promoting women's economic independence. Why gender equality is key?

MAIN OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED

Gender equality represents one of the fundamental values of the European Union. At present, active policies remain a necessity in ensuring a better use of women's capacities and for improving women's participation in the labour market, fair and equitable remuneration policies that contribute to their economic independence, equal representation in leadership positions.

At the same time, achieving the balance between professional and private life is prerequisite for setting-up a more equitable framework that fosters women's participation to economic and social life.

Facilitating the reconciliation of work and private life becomes even more important in the context of demographic change and evolutions of labour markets. In this regard, the recent adoption, at European level, of the Directive on work-life balance represents a consistent progress in the Union's efforts to ensure and promote gender equality in the labour market, by providing conditions to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life for all European citizens, especially for women. It reaffirms one of the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which is an integral part of the process of strengthening the EU social dimension.

At the same time, women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a matter for social justice and democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's perspective to be taken into account.

Women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organizations, as well as in public office. However, the low proportion of women among economic and political decision makers at the local, national, regional and international levels reflects structural and attitudinal barriers that need to be addressed through positive measures. Governments, transnational and national corporations, the mass media, banks, academic and scientific institutions, and regional and international organizations do not make full use of women's talents as top-level managers, policy makers, diplomats and negotiators.

The equitable distribution of power and decision-making at all levels is depending on us. In addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, all actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.



Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men to economic activities will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning.

SESSION II: Promoting gender balance and women's rights globally. How more women in decision-making makes a difference?

MAIN OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED

The European Union is an active promoter of a rights-based approach to development cooperation, which plays an important role in achieving the objectives of sustainable development (SDGs). This approach promotes inclusion and participation, nondiscrimination, equality and equity, transparency and accountability. Gender balance is at the centre of EU values and is enshrined in its legal and political framework. Women's rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls is also a priority of the European Union in all areas of external action.

An important feature of the action at EU level in respect to promoting sustainable development refers to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The recent adoption, by the EU Council, of the *Conclusions paving the way towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030*, reaffirms the commitment of the EU to keep its leading role in implementing the 2030 Agenda and remaining a firm supporter of the multilateral approach to tackling global challenges.

At the same time, this demarche represents the basis for a future EU strategy for the implementation of Agenda 2030.

SESSION III: Women's empowerment - strengthening the role of women in entrepreneurship

MAIN OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED Women play a significant role in the economic development cycle, by contributing and supporting the economy extensively and sustainably, in many different sectors, whether being employed or employing others. One of the key components of a sustainable economic growth in developed societies has proven to be the financial empowerment of women.

It is a known fact that many of the world's largest and most successful enterprises are owned or managed by women. Unfortunately, the empowerment of women remains behind in many countries of the world. Some of the challenges in increasing the number of women involved in entrepreneurial activities are related to: the difficulty in accessing entrepreneurial knowledge and networking, difficulty accessing financial resources lack of lack of entrepreneurial confidence.



SESSION IV: Gender equality - a prerequisite for social and economic growth in the EU. How far are we from closing the gender pay gap & gender employment gap?

MAIN OBJECTIVES ENVISAGED

Women have a harder time making ends meet because they are concentrated in lower level and lower paid jobs, take longer career breaks, and are more likely to stay out of the labour market to reconcile work and care responsibilities. Closing these gaps are crucial for boosting women's economic independence and a driver for economic growth.