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**SOC 708  
GENDER 39**

**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Joint Declaration "Gender Equality as a Priority of the European Union  
today and in the future"  
*Information from the Presidency*

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Delegations will find attached an information note from the Presidency on the above subject, with a view to the meeting of the EPSCO Council on 6 December 2018 (Any Other Business item).

# Preface

The Joint Declaration entitled “Gender Equality as a Priority of the European Union today and in the future” was proposed at the initiative of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, by the current Presidency Trio of Estonia, Bulgaria and Austria.

It was signed on the occasion of the Informal Meeting of Gender Equality Ministers on 12 October 2018 in Vienna and is supported by twenty-seven EU Member States.

The aim of the Joint Declaration is to reaffirm gender equality as a priority of the European Union. The twenty-seven signatories called for a high-level and stand-alone EU Gender Equality Strategy and for a full realization of the dual approach combining gender mainstreaming and specific actions.

The Joint Declaration further calls for a strong network and continuous dialogue between all relevant actors in the area of gender equality and for systematic and effective cooperation between the Member States and the European institutions. In this document, twenty-seven Member States also voice their commitment to actively facilitate regular exchanges between relevant actors and to use the momentum of the Trio Presidency to strengthen gender equality in the European Union.



(c) BKA/Martin Votava



(c) BKA/Michael Gruber



(c) BKA/Christopher Dunker

# Joint Declaration

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the **European Union's Treaties** as a fundamental right, a value, and a goal of the Union. Nine in ten European citizens believe that gender equality is important to ensure a fair and democratic society.<sup>1</sup> Gender equality is a vital aspect of all policy areas at both national and European level. The aim of this Joint Declaration is therefore to reaffirm gender equality as a priority of the European Union, including through the following actions:

We call for a **full realization of the dual approach** combining gender mainstreaming and specific actions. Strengthening gender mainstreaming in all policy areas, especially by including a gender equality perspective in high-level discussions and proposed policy documents is essential. A gender perspective should be integrated in all key processes concerning the future EU policies, including post-2020 programmes and funding. At the same time, gender equality depends also on its prominence as a political stand-alone goal, strong institutions and regular exchanges between relevant actors.

We call for a **high-level and stand-alone EU Gender Equality Strategy**. Such a strategy is necessary for ensuring effective long-term planning and in order to better concentrate efforts on common priorities. It is a prerequisite for meeting the needs and aspirations of European citizens and for fostering a fair and democratic society at a time of rapid change. A stand-alone Gender Equality Strategy would increase the visibility of the topic, strengthen commitment and accountability, and allow for monitoring of progress with a view to ensuring sustainable implementation.

<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 465 (2017)

# Gender Equality as a Priority of the European Union today and in the future

We call for a **strong network and continuous dialogue** between all relevant actors in the area of gender equality and for systematic and effective cooperation between the Member States and the European Institutions. Our ambition is to actively facilitate regular exchanges between relevant actors. Regular meetings of EU Ministers for Gender Equality and active exchanges between the political level and relevant bodies such as the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming, the European Institute for Gender Equality, and the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men are key in this regard. Moreover we stress the impact of an active and regular involvement of gender equality expert bodies in the European Semester and cross-sectoral cooperation to promote gender mainstreaming in all EU activities.

**We commit to use the momentum of the Trio Presidency**

- by visibly joining forces in a joint Trio declaration on gender equality;
- by defining and strongly promoting shared priorities in the area of gender equality; inter alia by including a gender equality perspective in high-level discussions and proposed policy documents;
- by promoting and supporting continuity beyond the Trio Presidencies, inter alia through the exchange of good practices and lessons learned;
- by adopting conclusions within the framework of the review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; and
- by following up on the commitments and indicators agreed upon in these conclusions.

We, the signatories, are committed to actively contribute to the implementation of the above outlined actions with the aim of reaffirming gender equality as a priority of the European Union, and call upon all Member States, and the EU institutions, committees and bodies to join us in this effort.

# SIGNATORIES

H.E. Riina SIKKUT  
Minister of Health and Labour,  
Republic of Estonia

H.E. Juliane BOGNER-STRAUSS  
Federal Minister for Women, Families and Youth  
Republic of Austria

Jari PARTANEN  
State Secretary, Ministry of Transport and  
Communications,  
Republic of Finland

Juliane SEIFERT  
Undersecretary of State, Federal Ministry for Family  
Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth,  
Federal Republic of Germany

H.E. Lena HALLENGREN  
Minister for Children, the Elderly and Gender Equality,  
Kingdom of Sweden

Zuhai DEMIR  
State Secretary Combating Poverty, Equal  
Opportunities, People with Disabilities, Urban Policies  
and Science Policy,  
Kingdom of Belgium

H.E. Eva KJER HANSEN  
Minister for Fisheries and Equal Opportunities  
and Nordic Cooperation,  
Kingdom of Denmark

H.E. David STANTON, T.D.  
Minister of State, Department of Justice and Equality  
with Responsibility for Equality, Immigration and  
Integration,  
Ireland

Vincenzo SPADAFORA  
Undersecretary of State,  
Republic of Italy

H.E. Ingrid van ENGELSHOFEN  
Minister for Education, Culture and Science  
Kingdom of the Netherlands

H.E. Biser PETKOV  
Minister of Labour and Social Policy,  
Republic of Bulgaria

Aurelia Grațiela DRĂGHICI  
Secretary of State, National Agency for Equal Op-  
portunities between Women and Men,  
Romania

H.E. Nada MURGANIĆ  
Minister for Demography, the Family, Youth and Social  
Policy,  
Republic of Croatia

H.E. Ksenija KLAMPFER  
Minister of Family, Labour, Social Affairs and Equal  
Opportunities,  
Republic of Slovenia

Soledad Murillo de la VEGA  
Secretary of State for Equality,  
Kingdom of Spain

Adam LIPÍŃSKI  
Secretary of State,  
Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment,  
Republic of Poland

H.E. Ionas NICOLAOU  
Minister of Justice and Public Order,  
Republic of Cyprus

Marina CHRYSOVELONI  
Deputy Minister at the Ministry of the Interior  
Hellenic Republic

H.E. Lydia MUTSCH  
Minister for Equal Opportunities,  
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

H.E. Helena DALLI  
Minister for European Affairs and Equality  
Republic of Malta

**Vienna, 12 October 2018**

# ADDENDUM

**Hereinafter listed signatories  
have signed the Joint Declaration  
“Gender Equality as a Priority of the  
European Union today and in the future“  
ex post facto**

Rosa MONTEIRO  
Secretary of State of Citizenship and Equality  
Portuguese Republic

Marlène SCHIAPPA  
Secretary of State for Gender Equality and the Fight  
against Discrimination  
French Republic

H.E. Andrej BABIŠ  
Prime Minister  
Czech Republic

Eitvydas BINGELIS  
Vice-Minister of the  
Ministry of Social Security and Labour  
Republic of Lithuania

H.E. Jānis REIRS  
Minister of Welfare  
Republic of Latvia

H.E. Ján RICHTER  
Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family,  
Slovak Republic

H.E. Victoria ATKINS MP  
Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability  
United Kingdom of Great Britain  
and Northern Ireland

**Vienna, 9 November 2018**