

IPOL-COM-FEMM D (2021) 5774

**David Sassoli**, President of the European Parliament  
**Manfred Weber**, Group Chair of the Group of the European People's Party (EPP)  
**Iratxe García Pérez**, Group Chair of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats  
in the European Parliament (S&D)  
**Dacian Cioloș**, Group Chair of the Renew Europe group (Renew)  
**Marco Zanni**, Group Chair of the Identity and Democracy (ID)  
**Ska Keller** and **Philippe Lamberts**, Group Co-Chairs of the Group of the Greens/European Free  
Alliance (Greens/EFA)  
**Ryszard Legutko** and **Raffaele Fitto**, Group Co-Chairs of the European Conservatives and Reformists  
(ECR)  
**Manon Aubry** and **Martin Schirdewan**, Group Co-Chairs of the European United Left/Nordic Green  
Left (The Left)

Dear Presidents,

A few days ago, we celebrated International Women's day. On this day, we were reminded that women have been most affected by the pandemic and the current economic crisis. That women's rights are under pressure in Europe. And that women are still under-represented in decision making positions. On this day, an important number of EU officials and representatives from a broad political spectrum agreed that we need to push our efforts towards building a gender equal society.

However, words are not enough.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March European Parliament President, David Sassoli, Prime Minister of Portugal António Costa, on behalf of the Presidency of the Council, and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have signed the Joint Declaration on the Conference on the Future of Europe, an opportunity to shape a stronger, better and more equal Europe. The joint declaration included a commitment to ensure a gender-balanced governance structure among all its component parts.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, the Conference of Presidents endorsed the list of the European Parliament's representatives for the executive board of the Conference on the Future of Europe. On this list of seven people, only one is a woman.

We regret this decision which does not respect the idea to have a gender-balanced delegation and we express our concern over the signal we are sending to the next generations of Europeans. Let's not miss the tremendous chance given by the Conference on the Future of Europe to work our way through a gender-equal society and to improve women's rights.

We know that due to the fact that often the majority of leadership positions are held by men, both in this Parliament and in Parliaments and other settings around the world, coordination in compiling boards such

as these is imperative. Cooperation in formulating executive boards such as this one for the Conference on the Future of Europe from all groups will be essential if we are to avoid similar circumstances recurring. Active consideration of gender balance at earlier stages in formulating such bodies will therefore be crucial.

By this letter, we, therefore, ask all of you to guarantee that gender is taken into account through a gender-balanced composition of the Conference on the Future of Europe executive board, as was outlined in the joint declaration, in its overall representation, especially for the representatives chosen for the Conference Plenary by means of gender-balanced group delegations, and also in terms of experts, speakers and citizens involved as well as through the content of the discussions. We believe this is the only way we can ensure that gender-equality will not be left behind during this important moment of our democracy.

We also would like to suggest to you, President Sassoli, to address and coordinate this issue as well with the respective Presidents of the European Commission and Council (for example via an official letter) in order to ensure that when the Conference on the Future of Europe effectively starts its work, it will be gender-balanced on all levels, from all European institutions, national parliaments, experts, speakers and civil society.

We thank you very much for your attention and efforts so far on this important topic,

Yours sincerely,



Evelyn Regner  
Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

The letter is co-signed by:

Frances FITZGERALD, coordinator of the EPP Group in the FEMM Committee

Maria NOICHL, coordinator of the S&D Group in the FEMM Committee

Samira RAFAELA, coordinator of the Renew Group in the FEMM Committee

Alice KUHNKE, coordinator of the Greens/EFA Group in the FEMM Committee

Eugenia RODRÍGUEZ PALOP, coordinator of the Left Group in the FEMM Committee

Irène TOLLERET, Member of the FEMM Committee, the Renew Group