

Joint Statement by EU Commissioner Corina Crețu, CEMR President Stefano Bonaccini and President of the CEMR Standing Committee for Equality, Ibon Uribe

Femmes Forward: Women's empowerment and active participation

Today, on **8 March 2017, International Women's Day**, we jointly express our shared views and declare our commitment to strengthen our cooperation regarding women's empowerment and their active participation in public life.

1. Equality of women and men is a **fundamental right and a core European value** that is enshrined in the legal and political framework of the European Union.
2. Equal **representation and influence** of women and men in political life, at all levels, is a requirement for democracy and for our societies to thrive.
3. Women's participation in the labour market is essential for their own well-being and their contributions to the economy boost prosperity, competitiveness and growth.
4. In 2017, **inequalities still exist** in the representation of women in local and regional elected office. In the European Union, 32% of regional assembly members and 36% of municipal council members are women and only 15% of mayors are women. At the global level, there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data on local and regional elected representatives; UN Women is working in association with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) to address this.
5. These figures highlight why it is imperative to act in favour of women's **political and economic empowerment and active participation**.
6. The UN 2030 Global Agenda puts **women's empowerment at the heart of achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and, in particular, SDG 5 which is dedicated to gender equality. The SDGs are universal and binding; governments all over the world must ensure that they are reached.
7. The European Commission's **RegioStars 2017** include, for the first time, the empowerment of women and their active participation among the 5 award categories. This category will showcase examples of how ESI Funds are used in cities and regions to achieve these goals.
8. CEMR has a long tradition of advocating equality at local and regional level, most importantly through the **European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life** and its Observatory, but also through other actions such as the introduction of quotas in the statutory bodies: CEMR's Policy Committee is composed of 46% women and 54% men.

The European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Corina Crețu, the President of CEMR, Stefano Bonaccini, and the President of CEMR's Standing Committee for Equality, Ibon Uribe, jointly express their commitment to:

- Take measures in favour of women's empowerment and support their active participation in local and regional government;
- Foster the exchange of experience, good practices and peer-learning on women's empowerment, in particular with the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF);
- Support the existence and further development of networks of **equal, diverse and inclusive** municipalities in Europe and in other regions, in particular in the developing world;
- Raise awareness, stimulate initiatives and mobilise stakeholders at all levels to **accelerate progress** towards women's empowerment;
- Work in cooperation with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and UN Women to ensure the successful and sound implementation of the SDGs and in particular, to achieve equal participation of women and men in decision-making by 2030.



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Mayor of Galdakao



Corina Crețu
European Commissioner
for Regional Policy



Stefano Bonaccini
CEMR President,
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