

Ursula von der Leyen
President-elect European Commission

Brussels, 7 October 2024

Object : Letter to European Commission President-elect, Ms von der Leyen

Dear President von der Leyen,

First of all, both in my name as PES Women President and on behalf of Lina Gálvez, S&D Member of European Parliament and FEPS Vice-President, of Joanna Scheuring Wielgus, S&D Group Coordinator of the FEMM Committee, of Katarina Barley, PES Executive Vice-President, and of Helene Fritzon, Vice-President of the S&D group, I would like to congratulate you on your election as European Commission President.

During your first term of office, the personal commitment you emphasized in promoting a Union for Equality proved successful. This was reflected with concrete actions such as the appointment of a dedicated Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, the creation of an internal Equality Task Force and an improved gender balance in the College. These efforts led to important legislative steps and achievements during your mandate, for which we can be very proud of. While we must thank you for this, much remains to be done. We must also express our deep disappointment regarding the lack of parity and the decreased emphasis given to gender equality in the new Commission structure of this new term. It is even more concerning to see this happening in a context which has become increasingly regressive regarding human and women's rights. We must not forget that, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) [index](#), it will take more than 60 years to achieve full equality in the EU, and the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed progress even further.

Furthermore, the decision to subordinate the Equality portfolio under another -rather than maintaining it as a stand-alone responsibility, as we had expected from your new political guidelines (page 20)- represents a significant step backwards. This sends a concerning signal to us, as well as to the women who constitute more than half of the EU population. Additionally, following your announcement, the topic of Equality was unfortunately overlooked by various media outlets.

As gender matters touch upon a wide range of policies, we urge you to make gender equality and gender mainstreaming a top priority in the Commission. This includes appointing a gender equality special envoy under your responsibility to facilitate the effective coordination of this issue across all Commission portfolios. In order to truly achieve change, it is also critical to not rely solely on a single Task Force within Directorate-General (DG) Equality. We need the dedicated Equality Task Forces in each DG, with adequate administrative and budgetary support to back these efforts, to ensure that each Commissioner contributes to mainstreaming equality in their respective fields of competence. We believe this is the only way to guarantee that gender equality is fully integrated into all EU policies, legislation, and funding programmes. That being said, we acknowledge and welcome the inclusion of some of our key demands on the mission letter that you addressed to the new Commissioner. We now hope to see them turn into concrete legislative proposals.

We wish you all the best for your mandate as Commission President, and we look forward to receiving a prompt and comprehensive reply regarding what you intend to do in this regard.

Best regards,

Zita Gurmai
President
PES Women



This letter, addressed to Ursula von der Leyen has been co-signed on October 7th 2024, by:



Katarina Barley
Executive Vice-President
PES



Heléne Fritzon
Vice-President
S&D Group

Joanna Scheuring-Wielgus
S&D Group Coordinator
FEMM Committee



Lina Gálvez
S&D Member of Parliament
FEPS Vice-President