

# EFA WOMEN'S FORUM

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## THE FLENSBURG DECLARATION, 2020

“More Women in Politics make for Stronger Democracies”

In line with UN WOMEN, UN Development Programme, the IPU's Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the European Women's Lobby, the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament, EFA WOMEN'S FORUM declares that:

The participation of women in politics continues to be limited by structural sexism, unequal power relations, and economic, cultural, and psychosocial barriers. Women are still underrepresented as voters and as politicians, and the prevalence of gender-based violence makes women's access to political decision-making processes on equal terms even more challenging.

Women are also confronted with additional forms of discrimination based on factors such as: age, functional diversity, belief, ethnic or social background, belonging to a specific linguistic community or national minority, or sexual orientation. This leads to discriminatory practices, sexism, and gender-based stereotypes among politicians, the media, and the public. It distorts women and girls' perception of their own capabilities for participation and discourages or limits their aspirations. As well as this, political parties are generally established in line with a default-male perspective.

From local to global level, the participation of women in politics contributes to creating free, fair and equal societies. Feminist leadership is transformational and provides new frameworks for women as empowered agents to bring the core values of equality to the construction of new social and political structures.

However, feminism goes way beyond gender parity. Feminism is the revolution for equality and diversity and represents a rupture to patriarchal power structures. Feminism is sorority, collective action, social and climate justice, the fight against fascism, and the fight for human rights.

Therefore, EFA member parties and stakeholders commit themselves to:

1. **Remove all barriers to the participation of women in democratic processes**, encouraging participation as candidates and as voters through training, awareness campaigns and ensuring gender parity in management bodies and electoral lists.
2. **Foster women's empowerment and networking** among women representatives and decision-makers, advancing the debate on gender equality, including the need to promote parity in political spheres.
3. **Ensure equal participation of women** and women's organisations and networks in decision-making processes, and address gender discriminatory clauses in constitutions and laws.

4. **Encourage the exchange of good practices on gender equality**, such as organising empowerment programmes for young women to have a strong presence in leadership positions.
5. **Advocate for the work of women in peace-building** and make their contributions visible and valued. Gender-equal participation contributes to longer and lasting peace after conflict.
6. **Produce a Gender Action Plan with an intersectional approach** to ensure equality and non-discrimination in political decision-making and internal party functioning, which should include conducting impact assessments, identifying and implementing innovative strategies to correct any gender bias, and setting targets and monitoring progress via indicators and the collection of gender-disaggregated data.
7. **Create protocols to prevent and combat violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence** including online, and to establish zero tolerance to sexism with clear channels for reporting sexual harassment.
8. **Implement gender budgeting** in the party budget by incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality.
9. **Promote a more sustainable work-life balance** by means of concrete measures.
10. **Adopt positive action policies**, special measures and/or quotas to promote women's participation at all levels of decision-making and to set targets based on parity as a prerequisite for funding.

The EFA Women's Forum commits itself to deeds not words - achieving gender equality by adopting specific measures to implement them.

The EFA Women's Forum commits itself to include incentive policies for the implementation of these measures by linking the achievement of these proposals to the volume of funding accessible.

The EFA Women's Forum will present a Gender Action Plan to the EFA General Assembly 2021, in order to set out its priorities for the coming years.