



LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Brussels, 9th October 2008

To Juan Behrend, Secretary General of the European Green Party

Dear Secretary General,

RE: Candidates' lists for the 2009 European elections and women's equal representation

I am writing to you in the context of the European Women's Lobby (EWL) 50/50 Campaign for Democracy. First, I would like to congratulate the European Green Party for the significant work already done to advance women in decision-making, and inform you about the EWL 50/50 Campaign.

Second, I would like to remind you of the importance that the lists of candidates for the 2009 European elections reflect the fact that women make up more than 50 percent of the European population. The member organisations of the EWL in 26 Member States (representing over 2000 women's organisations across Europe) will be in contact with national political parties on this issue, as we are aware that the composition of candidate lists is the responsibility of national parties. At the same time, I also wish to convey this message directly to you as the European party leader, since a consistent European approach that respects and promotes democracy and European values is important in this context.

The EWL 50/50 Campaign (www.5050democracy.eu) launched on 16.09.09 aims to promote citizen's participation, democracy and gender equality. The Campaign is already endorsed by a number of well known personalities from across Europe and across political ideologies, such as European Commission President and Vice President José Manuel Barroso and Margot Wallström, Prime Minister of Belgium Yves Leterme, President of the Slovenian Republic Danilo Türk, former Irish President Mary Robinson, Nobel Price winner Orhan Pamuk, and former President of the European parliament Simone Veil.

A number of MEPs from the Green/EFA group such as the co-president Monica Frassoni (IT), Jean Lambert (UK), Raul Romeva i Rueda (ES) have already given their support for the 50/50 Campaign and its aims. We are grateful for the support we have received from the ranks of the Greens/EFA group, and we very much hope that you will personally endorse the Campaign by filling the enclosed form, and that the European Green Party would declare its support the campaign.

One of the key messages of the 50/50 Campaign is that the current under-representation of women in the European Parliament as well as in the European Commission is a serious democratic deficit threatening the legitimacy of European institutions and political parties. If the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, it will increase the powers of the European Parliament.

EWL- LEF, 18 rue Hydraulique, B-1210 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 217 90 20 – Fax: +32 2 219 84 51 - e-mail: ewl@womenlobby.org
Website: <http://www.womenlobby.org>

Therefore it is more important than ever that the decisions of the EP take into account the needs, interests and perspectives of all the women and men who are affected by European policies. The European Parliament will also need a stronger presence of women in order to improve its policy making and to be able to fulfill EU's promises regarding gender equality.

The number of women elected in the European Parliament in the European Elections of 2009 will reflect the number and placing of women on the lists of candidates. Choices made by political parties have therefore an enormous impact on the results of the elections in what comes to achieving greater representativeness, justice and equality.

The EWL notes with great pleasure that the Greens/EFA group in the EP has almost reached the equal representation of women and men, and that the European Green Party makes effort to advance gender equality in its governing structures. We very much hope that this remarkable situation will continue after the European Elections of 2009. While the decisions on candidate lists are made at national level, as the President of the European Green Party you have the possibility to encourage the national members of your party to continue their important work for the equal presence of women in candidate lists and among elected members.

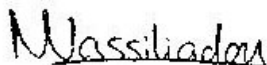
Within the 50/50 Campaign for Democracy the EWL, through its wide membership, will mobilize European voters to cast their votes for parties who both ensure equal representation of women and men on their candidate lists and commit themselves to putting gender equality on the top of their agendas. We would therefore very much appreciate your reply to the following questions:

- 1) What steps are the European Green Party and its member parties taking in order to ensure true democracy and the equal representation of women and men on the lists of candidates for the European elections next year?
- 2) What concrete measures are contained in the program of the European Green Party and its member parties for the European elections to address persistent inequalities between women and men in all areas of life?

I would also like to kindly ask you to distribute this letter to the national member parties of the European Green Party so that also they could directly answer our questions. This will help our members to make an informed choice when they vote for the European elections next year.

I am confident that you will continue to do your utmost to ensure an equal representation of women and men in the next European Parliament and put gender equality at the heart of your priorities.

Yours sincerely,



Myria Vassiliadou
Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby