



LOBBY EUROPEEN DES FEMMES EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Brussels, 26th September 2008

To Wilfried Martens, President of the European People's Party

Dear President,

RE: Candidates' lists of EPP member parties 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, to remind you of the importance of the lists of candidates for the 2009 European elections to reflect the fact that women make up more than 50% of the European population. The member organisations of the EWL in 26 member states (representing over 2000 organisations across Europe) will be in contact with national political parties on this issue, as we are aware that the composition of candidate lists for the upcoming European elections is the responsibility of national parties. I wish however also to convey this message 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 (<http://www.5050democracy.eu>) launched on 16.09.09 aims to promote citizen's participation, democracy and equality between women and men. The Campaign is already personally endorsed by more than 150 well known personalities from across Europe and across political ideologies, such European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, European Commission Vice President Margot Wallström, Prime minister of Belgium Yves Leterme, President of the Slovenian Republic Danilo Türk, French State Secretary for European Affairs Jean-Pierre Jouyet, former Irish President Mary Robinson, Nobel Price winner Orhan Pamuk, and the former President of the European parliament Simone Veil. A number of MEPs from the EPP-ED political group, such as Frieda Brepoels (Belgium) and Charlotte Cederschiöld (Sweden) have also given their support for the 50/50 Campaign. We very much hope that you will personally endorse the Campaign by filling the enclosed form.

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

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policies. The European Parliament will also need a stronger presence of women in order to improve its policy making and to be able to fulfil EU's promises regarding gender equality.

The number of women elected in the European Parliament 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 relation to achieving greater representativeness, justice and equality. At the moment only 24% of the MEPs of the EPP group members are women, which is significantly less than the average 31% in the European Parliament. Much can therefore be done to improve the situation in the European Elections next year. While the decisions on candidates' lists are made at national level, as the head of the EPP you have the possibility to recommend that the national members of your party ensure women's equal presence on the lists and the use of zipper systems.

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.

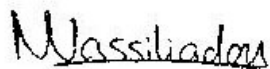
We would therefore very much appreciate your reply to the following questions in order for our members to make an informed choice when they vote for the European elections next year:

- 1) What steps are the EPP 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? And,
- 2) What concrete measures are contained in your programme for the European elections to address persistent inequalities between women and men in all areas of life?

We also would like to kindly ask you to distribute this letter to the national member parties of the EPP and forward us their answers to our questions.

I am confident that you will 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