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Press Release - EWL 50/50 Campaign for Democracy
European Elections 2009: Most Political Parties Lagging Behind in the Road towards Gender Equality!

Most political parties do not consider equality between women and men as a key priority, says the European Women's Lobby (EWL) in a Gender Audit Report published in light of the European elections 2009. This comes despite the strong competence of the European Union in the area. The EWL Gender Audit **analyzes the available electoral manifestos of four of the main European political parties:** the European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) and the European Greens.

The results of the review of the content of European electoral manifestos give the EPP a RED light; the ELDR a RED light; the GREENS a YELLOW light and the PES a GREEN light.

These results were based on the importance the manifestos give to four issues that the EWL sees as relevant for the realisation of equality between women and men, such as reconciliation of private and working life or violence against women. *"It is very disappointing that political parties don't prioritize over issues of equality between women and men, which should occupy a central place in our democracies. We strongly encourage women to be involved in European politics and to vote in the June elections, in order for the European Union to better fulfil their expectations and to fully contribute to equality in everyday life"*, stated **Brigitte Triems**, President of the EWL.

The Gender Audit also looks at the presence of women on national electoral lists, including as heads of lists. The review shows that in 17 countries, there are more women on the lists than the current % of women MEPs. However, looking more accurately at where women are placed as heads of lists, there are only seven countries where this occurs. The current representation of women in the European Parliament for the four political groups reviewed gives a good indication of the commitment of these groups to the promotion of women in decision-making. For the 2004-2009 legislative period, the **Greens had the highest percentage of women with a very near parity 47.6%, followed by the Socialist Group (41.2%), the ALDE (40,4%) and finally the Group of the EPP with only 24.03%.**

We strongly invite you to read the whole gender audit report for more detailed information about specific countries and political parties on www.5050democracy.eu
The EWL is the largest coalition of women's organisation in the European Union with 2500 member organisations in 30 countries.

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