



Concept Note for Policy Focus Session:

“Bringing out women’s vote in the European elections 2024”

Details

Date: Wednesday, March 20th

Duration: 60 minutes

Type: Policy Focus Session

Location: NJV Athens Plaza Hotel

Time: 12:45 – 13:45

Co-host: European Parliament, Directorate General for Communication (DG COMM)

Participants: Open to all attendees of the WPL Summit

Summary

European Parliament’s DG COMM’s commitment goes beyond the regular national Parliaments’ sending out of press releases and receiving visitors groups, perhaps due to the complexity of a supranational parliament operating in 24 languages, in 27 countries. DG COMM has a specific mandate to encourage citizens to engage in European democracy, and in particular to go to vote in the European elections.

To sum it up, the European Parliament stands for European Democracy. DG COMM helps connect it to people.

Our speaker would outline the creative and impactful work carried out by DG COMM to encourage citizens to go to vote through a strategy working with trusted multipliers, such as journalists and media, as well as partnerships with civil society organisations and even private companies, to show the impact of the EU and the EP in citizens’ daily life.

How the European Parliament affects women

The current term has been an important one in terms of legislation that will protect women and foster equality in different areas. From the [Directive on “Women on Boards”](#), finally adopted after 10 years from its proposal, to the [EU accession to the Istanbul Convention](#) and the new rules on [Gender Pay Gap](#), in the

last years the EU has taken some crucial steps to implement one of the fundamental values established by the Treaty – Equality between men and women.

The last text, that will finally be adopted in the coming weeks, is the [first-ever EU Directive against Gender-based violence](#). The speaker from the EP would present a case study with off-the-record insights into how DG COMM's services made coordinated efforts to support Parliament's adopted position in the recently concluded trilogue negotiations on this text. Thanks to a carefully executed communication strategy, the co-rapporteurs, MEPs Frances Fitzgerald (EPP, IE) and Evin Incir (S&D, SE) gained visibility in the media with a strong message. The buzz created even stirred public opinion, and civil society increasingly put pressure on their national governments, in particular concerning the inclusion or not of a consent-based definition of rape.

Among the rules adopted, the text explicitly makes cyber harassment an EU crime, and will be instrumental in protecting women and girls from most forms of sexual cyber harassment. The most widespread forms of cyber-violence will be criminalised under the new rules, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate images (including deep fakes), cyber-stalking, cyber-harassment, misogynous hate speech and "cyber-flashing". This is a major step forward in combatting also gendered harassment of women in politics. For women to feel empowered to make their voices heard in political life is strictly necessary for an inclusive, gender equal and vibrant democracy.

For this reason, it is more important than ever to encourage women and girls to go to vote, make their voice heard at the EU level, and choose the representatives who can defend women's rights and fight for gender equality.

Media opportunity: there will be a unique opportunity for Women Political Leaders VIPs to pledge to vote in the European elections, including recording short videos with "Use your vote" assets on-site in Athens. They will also be able to network with EP staff of the local EP Liaison Office, and get in touch with the Liaison Office in their EU country of residence, for potential participation in future events.

NB: DG COMM has since five years a specific policy to ensure its communications are inclusive and gender sensitive, and issues an annual gender report in which it takes stock on EP and gender in the media, in public opinion, and in the communication activities carried out.

Handouts: Use Your Vote / Go-To-Vote products, EP 2024 IWD program, DG COMM 2023 Gender Report

Speaker: Raffaella de Marte, Head of the Media Services Unit, DG COMM, European Parliament. With solid expertise in the media landscape across the EU

and strong political understanding, Raffaella leads a large team including press officers located in all 27 Member States, and a support team in Brussels. She coordinates prestigious Media tours with the top management of all key media in the EU, as well as High-level roundtables with Directors, CEOs and Editors in Chief to discuss the future of the sector and the coverage of EU related news. These strategic tools help shape the European Parliament positioning in the EU media. Raffaella is continuously exploring innovation, for example extending cooperation with journalists to include digital content creators and social media-only based news platforms, as a means to reach the digitally-native generation with news from the European Parliament.

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