epp
european people's party

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF OUR ECONOMY AND OUR SOCIETY

Resolution adopted by the EPP Political Assembly, Brussels, 4 February 2019

- Having regard to the European Commission's **Digital Agenda**, one of the seven pillars of the Europe 2020 Strategy which sets objectives to deliver sustainable and inclusive economic growth of the European Union by 2020;

- Having regard to 2018 European Commission's study on **Women in the Digital Era,** which shows that women's access to the ICT sector is essential for the sector's long-term growth and the sustainability of European economy;

- Having regard to the estimation of the EC that 900.000 ICT jobs go unfilled by 2020 because of the lack of skilled people and that over 90% of all jobs require digital skills;

- Having regard to the EPP Women Colloque of 9 April 2018;

The EPP have adopted the following:

A. whereas women account for 60% of new graduates, but are underrepresented in certain fields of education, in particular in STEM studies (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics;

B. whereas the "dropout phenomenon" of women in digital careers between the ages of 33 and 44 year old, the prime stage in someone's professional development, has a cost for the European economy of € 16.1 billion per year.

C. whereas the presence of women in European companies boards has risen to 25% in 2015, digital sectors have the highest percentage of all-male boards (17.2%);

D. whereas women's income on average is 16% lower than that of men doing the same work, this inequality in the ICT sector is 21%, due to the fact that most women in this sector tend to work in lower positions with smaller wages;

E. whereas stereotypes, internal socio-psychological barriers of women, and a strongly male dominated environment (e.g. competitive, risk-taking) prevent women from fully participating in the digital sector;

F. whereas women entering working life contribute to the increase of family incomes and revitalisation of our economies, leading to a growth of consumption, social security contributions and the volume of taxes collected;

G. whereas the lack of diversity in the digital sector not only deprives the EU from talent, vision, resources and wealth but is also a threat to innovation; whereas AI algorithms and technologies reflect the values of its developers and that of the information they draw, having more diverse teams working the development of technologies help identifying and preventing biases;

1. Urges the European Commission to put a clear focus on women in the digital sector as a key priority for action within the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), aimed at fully including women in the digital transformation of our economy and our society, regardless of their age, place of residence, or socio-economic situation.

Digital Skills for women

2. Underlines the need to remove gender-based discrimination and obstacles to access t the digital sector labour market, in particular through education and training, and recommends a new and refreshed post-2020 Digital Agenda as well as following actions become a priority of the next European Commission and MFF, and be implemented by the Member States accordingly:

(i) Encourage women and girls to be more interested in digital technology industries, through concrete actions like public information campaigns, the International Girls in ICT Day and specifically targeted projects;

(ii) Promote harmonised European education curricula (working closely with the digital technology industries) to foster clear digital careers paths;

(iii) Encourage female entrepreneurship in the digital world e.g. through specifically gender-equality target actions, given that research shows that female-owned digital startups are more likely to be successful than those of their male counterparts and that investment in female-founded startups performs 63% better than exclusively male founded startups;

Contribute to a new image of the digital sector and the image of women on Internet

3. Calls upon the EC and the EU Member States in joint cooperation with digital companies and the audio-visual and media sector to:

(i) Build a renewed image of the digital sector among women, men and mainstream society;
(ii) Fight stereotypes and misuse of the way women are depicted in Internet;
(iii) Prohibit the exploitation of women and girls via Internet and social media, amongst others by going beyond the transposition of EU law and better enforce it as regards to illegal content online, such as child pornography;
(iv) Ensure Internet remains a safe space for children, by developing their cyber-hygiene and cyber-security skills;

Women in decision-making positions in the ICT and public sectors

4. Underlines the unacceptable imbalance in the decision-making positions in the digital sector as well as in the public spheres where decisions on digital technology are taken, like governments, public administration, universities, and publicly financed R&D institutes, and recommends actions like introducing gender quota, reinforcing the idea that women have the same capabilities as men, and focusing job offers on aspects that women value, like reconciliation and personal fulfilment;

5. Underlines the key role the digital sector plays in including women in the enormous potential of new technologies for our society and economy, facilitating flexibility in labour market patterns and a better work-life balance, and urgently calls upon the European Council and the EU Member States to adopt the EU Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers;

6. Calls on the EU Member States, EPP Member Parties and their Women's Organisation to tirelessly highlight the potential of digital for the purpose of gender equality and inclusive economic growth.

If you have any question you would like to ask please contact us.

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