

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

### **Urgent need for an EU Strategy for Equality between women and men from 2016 to 2020!**

On behalf of the Czech Women's Lobby, we are contacting you in relation to the follow-up to the European Commission's Strategy on equality between women and men<sup>1</sup> which ends on 31 December 2015. The ministers meeting at the EPSCO Council on 7 December 2015 called on the European Commission to *"Adopt, as a Communication, a new Strategy for gender equality after 2015, which should be closely linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy and which should also take into account the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development."*<sup>2</sup>

**Commissioner Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Gender Equality**, will discuss the future strategy with the European Parliament on 14 December in Strasbourg. It is crucial that she gives a firm commitment to follow up the conclusion of the Council.

As representatives of 28 women's organisations in the Czech Republic we are very concerned by the fact that the European Commission (EC) wishes to downgrade the Strategy for equality between women and men to a Staff Working Document (calling it a 'strategic engagement') as announced during the meeting of the EC Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities on 26 November and again at the EPSCO Council meeting of 7 December.

A Staff working document is far from a real commitment to make change for women and girls in Europe. On the other hand, a Strategy as recommended by the EPSCO Council provides a long-term vision and constitutes an overarching policy framework with monitoring and accountability mechanisms. In June 2015 and by a vast majority, the European Parliament<sup>3</sup> adopted its position for an EU Strategy on equality between women and men in which it calls on the Commission *to draw up and adopt a new separate strategy for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Europe.*<sup>4</sup>

We call for your full support **for a binding and comprehensive EU Strategy for equality between women and men from 2016 to 2020, and to reject any proposal which would not meet this aim.**

Jana Chržová  
CWL Chair



<sup>1</sup> Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015*, Brussels, 21.9.2010, COM(2010) 491 final

<sup>2</sup> Council of the European Union, Council Conclusions Equality between women and men in the field of decision-making, paragraph 35, Brussels, 7 December 2015

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament EU Strategy for equality between women and men post 2015, Rapporteur: Maria Noichl, adopted 9 June 2015

<sup>4</sup> European Commission Press Release: "A New Start: European Commission work plan to deliver jobs, growth and investment", 16 December 2014