

20.05.09

## European Women's Lobby 50/50 Campaign for Democracy Parliament Elections June 2009: Summary of the "Gender Audit" of Electoral Lists and Political Programmes

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) 50/50 Campaign for Democracy has been running since September 2008 and is supported by more than 200 prominent personalities in Europe. It aims to put gender equality at the core of European policies and to promote the equal representation of women and men in the European institutions, in particular in the European Parliament (EP).

### A Gender Audit looking at the European Elections 2009 from a Women's Rights Perspective!

Our Gender Audit looks at political programmes and electoral lists for the European elections 2009 from a women's rights perspective. It evaluates the political parties' commitment to gender equality in view of the EP elections 2009 and encourages voters to be involved in European politics.

**PART I** – The Gender Audit firstly **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. Rather than focusing on the general track record of parties or of individual representatives of the parties, the audit concentrates exclusively on the existing 2009 European elections manifestos. It must also be noted that priorities might vary between a party at the European level and its national member parties.

#### Results of the review of the content of European electoral manifestos:

**EPP: RED light**

**ELDR: RED light**

**GREENS: YELLOW light**

**PES: GREEN light**



These results were based on the importance the manifestos give to **four issues** that the EWL sees as particularly relevant for the realisation of equality between women and men in Europe:

1) Stating gender equality as a specific priority;

EWL- LEF, 18 rue Hydraulique, B-1210 Bruxelles  
Tel. +32 2 217 90 20 – Fax: +32 2 219 84 51 - e-mail: [ewl@womenlobby.org](mailto:ewl@womenlobby.org)  
Website: <http://www.womenlobby.org>

- 2) Addressing reconciliation of private and working life;
- 3) Mentioning violence against women;
- 4) Integrating a gender equality perspective in important other policies. A bonus was given to manifestos addressing other women's rights-related topics.

The **RED** light indicates that the party's manifesto does not prioritise gender equality in view of the European Parliament elections 2009. The EPP and the ELDR manifestos fall into this category. The **EPP manifesto** considers two gender equality-related issues, namely family and reconciliation as well as a general reference to women and unemployment. However, it does not contain a specific section on or concrete proposals on gender equality or women's rights, and the gender sensitivity remains weak in this 31-pages long document. The two page **ELDR manifesto** presenting its "top 15" priorities does not mention the word "women" nor "gender equality" and it doesn't consider any gender equality issues. These party manifestos are clearly not integrating gender equality and women's rights as a central priority – a red light indicates to STOP on the road towards the European Parliament elections 2009! However, the traffic light could change through concrete action during the legislative term.

A **YELLOW** light signals that the party's manifesto is on the right track, but has not entirely prioritised and integrated gender equality. There is therefore room for improvement and concrete action. The **European Greens' manifesto** does not explicitly state gender equality as a priority; but women's rights and gender equality are mentioned a number of times in the document and one important and concrete measure is proposed, namely for Member States to all apply the best national laws with regards to issues of equality between men and women. This party is on the right track, but gender equality would need to be made a truly central priority in order to continue safely on the road towards the upcoming European elections.

The **GREEN** light indicates **FULL SPEED** ahead of the European Elections June 2009! However, please remember that facts and concrete **implementation** of commitments and values is what matters most, including regarding gender equality! This goes for the **PES manifesto** which is committed to six different priorities of which the fourth one is: "*Championing gender equality in Europe*". A whole section of the PES manifesto is dedicated to women's rights and gender equality and there is a clear set of proposals for how to tackle these issues. Women's organisations across Europe will be keeping a close and eager eye on the implementation of these proposals!

## **PART II – Evaluation of the presence of women on national electoral lists**

The second part of the Audit **looks at the percentage and placing of women on the electoral lists of the main national political parties in the 27 EU Member States.**

The current representation of women in the European Parliament for the four political groups reviewed in the Gender Audit 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 Liberals (40.4%) and finally the Group of the European

People's Party with only 24.03%. This somehow comes to **balance the poorer performance of the Greens and Liberals regarding the content of their manifestos.**

While reviewing the **composition of the electoral lists of national political parties** for the 2009 elections, we looked at the general percentage of women on the lists, but also more specifically, at the **percentage of women heads of lists**, given the fact that it might very well be that a party has a list with the same number of women and men, but that women are placed towards the end of the lists. The review shows that in 17 countries, there are more women on the lists than the current percentage of women MEPs. However, looking more accurately at where women are placed as heads of lists, there are only seven countries where this occurs. To view these results as presented by country, please visit the full Gender Audit Report (available in English - and in French from 29.05.09).

*We strongly invite you to read the whole Gender Audit report for more detailed information about specific countries and political parties! The Gender Audit can be read at <http://www.5050democracy.eu/>*