



**MINISTÈRE
CHARGÉ DE L'ÉGALITÉ
ENTRE LES FEMMES
ET LES HOMMES,
DE LA DIVERSITÉ ET DE
L'ÉGALITÉ DES CHANCES**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



Paris, 31 January 2022

PRESS RELEASE

CONFERENCE OF EQUALITY MINISTERS The Economic Empowerment of Women

On 31 January 2022, the EU ministers for equality along with Helena Dalli, European Commissioner for Equality, met for the high level conference on “The Economic Empowerment of Women: Key to substantive gender equality”. Their discussions served to highlight positive European initiatives as well as formulate concrete solutions to support women’s economic empowerment. This work will be continued throughout the French Presidency.

Organised by the Ministry for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities under the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference “The Economic Empowerment of Women: Key to substantive gender equality” was held on 31 January 2022 via videoconference. It was presided by Élisabeth Moreno, the French Minister Delegate for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities, and attended by Helena Dalli, the European Commissioner for Equality, and Carlien Scheele, Director of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

The equality ministers of the EU Member States in attendance, including the Presidency Trio (Czech Republic and Sweden), as well as Helena Dalli and Carlien Scheele discussed the various impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on women’s employment and the increasing financial insecurity affecting them. The impact of the public health crisis has been even more severe for women and girls, especially in terms of education, health and employment. Women’s freedom of choice in all areas of their lives is nonetheless dependent upon economic empowerment.

With the aim of sharing best practices as promoted by the European Simone Veil Pact, backed by the French Presidency, the conference was an occasion to highlight initiatives facilitating gender balance in the workplace, women’s access to employment and subsequently strengthening their economic empowerment. The ministers present and the European Commissioner also underscored the close link between economic empowerment of women and effectively achieving equal rights in the EU.

“Building a more equal and inclusive European Union is a priority for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In this context, equality between men and women is a major goal that will guide the actions we carry out in all areas. This is an essential issue that must be reflected in all aspects of public policy and at all levels

of society. While eradicating violence against women is an indispensable prerequisite for the path to equality, the economic empowerment of women, – at the heart of this ministerial meeting held today – is also a fundamental factor. More than simply a matter of social justice, gender equality is also a driver of economic growth and a vector for prosperity and competitiveness for all of our societies. Better societies for women means better societies for all”, **stated Élisabeth Moreno, the French Minister Delegate for Gender Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

Helena Dalli, the European Commissioner for Equality stressed, “I work to build a European Union where women and girls thrive and lead without barriers, in the same way that men do. We still have much work ahead of us when it comes to achieving full gender equality. Furthermore, while the pandemic highlighted the essential role played by women in the labour market, it also shed light on their social and economic vulnerability in this market. The discussions held this morning, which placed equality at the heart of our debates and actions and within the priorities of the French Presidency, signal the beginning of a new, more equal era.

Despite the visible signs of change, progress in the area of women's leadership in politics or in companies remain slow and unequal throughout the European Union. It is only through ambitious policy that we can boost the active participation of women in the labour market and address the deep and complex roots of inequality. The measures taken and defended by the European Commission move in this direction and respond to this pressing reality, not only for the professional progress and the economic empowerment of women, but also for the growth of European society as a whole.” »