

Declaration

Commitment on women in digital

DIGITAL DAY 2019

The EU is facing an unparalleled shortage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) professionals. Women account for 52% of the European population, yet hold only 15% of ICT-related jobs. Women constitute only one in six of the ICT specialists in the EU and only 1 in 3 of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) graduates. This under-representation occurs at all levels of the digital economy: in the engineering and physical sciences, but also in the number of women who are employees, corporate leaders and entrepreneurs. Increasing women's visibility and engagement in the digital economy could help address the EU's ICT skills shortage and drive economic growth and wider social progress.

The low participation of women in the digital economy has complex and multifaceted roots. The main obstacles are gender bias and socio-cultural constructs, which at different life stages dissuade girls and women from taking up Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) studies and careers. It is essential to integrate awareness of gender bias across all relevant sectors including in the initial and continuous training of teachers; address structural barriers such as work conditions and culture, which hinder girls and women to enter a predominantly male-dominated field; and increase the visibility of insufficiently valued role models to inspire women and girls.

In this context, building on the [Presidency conclusions of 6 December 2018 on gender equality, youth and digitalisation](#) and the [Declaration on gender equality](#) signed by 27 Member States on 12 October 2018, the signatories of this Declaration:

- **Recognise** that gender stereotyping, cultural discouragement and lack of awareness and promotion of female role models hinders and negatively affects girls' and women's opportunities in STEM studies, related careers and digital entrepreneurship, and lead to discrimination and fewer opportunities for women in the labour market.
- **Underline** that gender bias may affect equality of men and women in relation to the advent of technologies such as artificial intelligence.
- **Agree** that given Europe's demographic decline and the increasing demand for ICT practitioners, the increase in the share of women in the ICT sector will be critical in Europe's efforts to build a more sustainable economy and society through digital innovation.
- **Acknowledge** that women in the information and communication technology sectors earn 19% less than men do, and hence are not on an equal footing with men in the sector.
- **Note** women's underrepresentation in leadership positions in the digital economy as in other productive sectors, and the urgent need to promote equality between men and women at all levels of decision-making in business and management.
- **Emphasise** the cross-sectoral nature of this phenomenon, rooted in conscious or unconscious gender bias, covering the education sector, the portrayal of women in the media and advertising on-screen and off-screen, and the responsibility of the private sector in proactively recruiting, developing and retaining women's talent and instilling an inclusive business culture in their companies.
- **Understand** that large-scale action is required to make the numerous existing initiatives more widely accessible, by integrating them in the education and training systems and in extra-curricular activities, and obtaining the support of media.

The signatories of this Declaration commit to work collaboratively with authorities and representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society on the causes of this phenomenon by:

1. **Enacting a national inter-sectoral, target-based strategy** for girls and women or integrating the Women-in-Digital strand in relevant existing national strategies. The national strategy or the related integrated strand should work to increase gender equality in the sector by focusing on education and qualifications, guaranteeing a women-friendly working environment, equal opportunities, non-discrimination in the labour market and the collection of sex-disaggregated data.

The goals of such a strategy/integrated strand may include: combating digital gender-related stereotypes; promotion of role models; early motivation of girls to explore STEM studies; stimulating the re-skilling or upskilling of women from the existing work force; establishing mentoring schemes; supporting digital skills enhancement for unemployed women and women from vulnerable groups; improving the awareness of and image of ICT careers.

Examples of impactful actions: teaching methodologies and hands-on experience with STEM; gender bias training for schools' orientation services for post-secondary education; designing and implementing educational measures (curriculum design, supportive programmes, etc.) to raise awareness of ICT as a career opportunity for girls and women; measures to guarantee equal access to ICT studies for all students early on as early contact with ICT has proven to positively impact girls' career choices; equal-pay policies for the same job or work of equal value; actions enhancing work-life balance and promoting a work culture of gender equality, including zero tolerance of sexual harassment; promoting shared paternal and maternal responsibility.

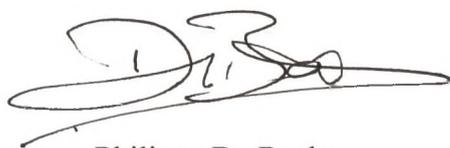
2. **Encouraging the media** to take appropriate measures to create a positive public image of women in ICT, based on the diverse selection of ICT professions and successful role-models; to combat stereotypes and promote gender equality in their broadcasts dealing with technology and science as well as to promote the portrayal of women in scientific and technical roles and in leadership positions on-screen and off-screen.
3. **Establishing a Europe-wide Girls & Women in ICT Day** to take place on the same day across the EU. The purpose would be to raise awareness of role models in STEM fields, encouraging girls and women to opt for STEM-related studies and work opportunities; and to display the link between STEM education and real professional pathways, as well as engage men in awareness-raising work to represent the importance of a more gender-balanced industry and society.
4. **Encouraging and promoting a non-discriminatory work culture (including work conditions)** in companies through measures such as i.e. cooperation platforms, awards/badges or other incentives relevant in the country; and by curating the creation of dedicated multi-stakeholder platforms sponsored by the private sector for partnerships with schools, universities, recruitment agencies, media and start-up incubators in offering STEM-focused vocational guidance, mentoring assistance, scholarships and venture capital opportunities to support women entrepreneurs and start-ups led by women as well as combatting sexual harassment. This work should include strategic partnerships with industry such as the CEOs of high-tech companies. Companies participating in the

platforms may be incentivised in terms of access to public funding and in public procurement.

5. **Advancing greater compositional balance, where possible**, of men and women in national and European bodies, boards and committees dealing with digital matters.
6. **Continuously improving monitoring** mechanisms and indicators on the evolution of women' engagement and real participation in the digital economy and society.

The signatories of this Declaration invite the social partners to support this declaration and contribute to its successful implementation. The signatories will assign responsibility for 'Women in Digital' to a Minister to work with national stakeholders and the European Commission on the actions in this Declaration. The signatories of this Declaration invite all Member States, EFTA and EEA Countries to sign it.

**For the Royaume de Belgique /
Koninkrijk België**



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Minister for Digital Agenda

For the Česká republika



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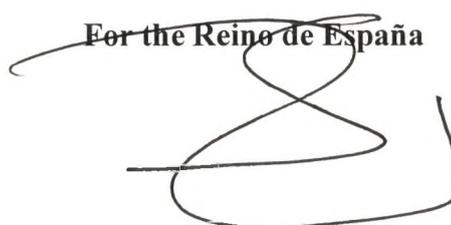
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For the Ελληνική Δημοκρατία



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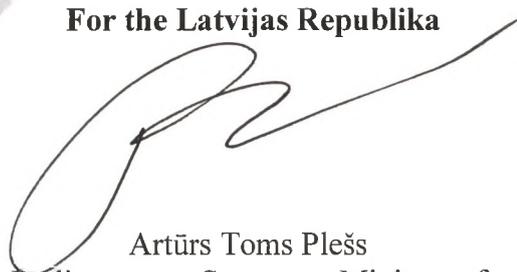
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Republiken Finland**



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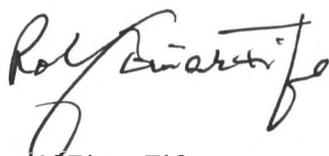
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For the Kongeriket Norge



Rolf Einar Fife
Ambassador to the EU

Done in Brussels on 9 April 2019 in one original in the English language.

DIGITAL DAY 2019

Signature Ceremony

Republik Österreich

**Signs the
DECLARATION**

Commitment on women in digital

For the
Republic of Austria

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Oberreiter', written in a cursive style.

Thomas OBERREITER

Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative

Done in Brussels on 5 April 2019 in one original in the English language.