

## Press release – VP McGuinness on women's rights: "Not an option, but a duty"



Two days after International Women's Day (8 March), EP Vice-President McGuinness opened the plenary session conveying Parliament's support to all women facing the public health emergency posed by the Coronavirus.

McGuinness (EPP, IE) declared: 'On the occasion of International Women's Day, we must remember that millions of women and girls around the world are still prevented from fully developing their skills and playing their role in society, and this is also the case in the EU. Realising women's rights is not an option – it is a duty – and it is possible where there is political will.' Welcoming the [new 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy](#) presented by the Commission on 5 March, she added that Parliament stands ready to work on the legislative proposals with a clear commitment to strengthen gender equality and women's rights in the EU and around the world.

MEPs speaking on behalf of their political group welcomed the new Gender Equality Strategy and called for action and concrete implementation, not just words. Many underlined that gender-based violence remains a challenge and called on all member states and the EU to urgently ratify the Istanbul Convention. The fight against stereotypes, femicide, the gender pay and pension gap, online violence and the lack of women in decision-making were

mentioned as the other main challenges that need to be tackled .

Click on the links below to watch the videos of the interventions:

[Opening statement by EP Vice-President McGuinness](#)

[Round of political group speakers](#)

[Closing remarks by Croatian Secretary of State for European affairs, Nikolina Brnjac](#)