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Calls to boost number of women in political decision making

EFA group has majority female MEPs

MEPs from the European Parliament's European Free Alliance group are backing moves to boost the role of women in political decision making, and to close the gender pay gap.

The European Free Alliance in the European Parliament has a majority of female members.

Proposals to reduce the gender pay gap and move towards gender parity in political decision making were backed by MEPs on Tuesday in Strasbourg.
Across Europe, women earn on average 17.5% less than men and only 12% of top executives are women. More than a third of MEPs are women, but in national parliaments across the EU barely a quarter of members are female on average.

Galician MEP Ana Miranda, who spoke in the parliamentary debate, has also proposed that the European Parliament should use gender neutral terms in languages that distinguish between the two.

Speaking in the debate, **Ana Miranda** said:

"Almost a century after the first International Women's Day, effective gender equality remains a mirage for most women on this planet. We as female parliamentarians have an obligation to contribute to this valuable work to transform voluntary measures into mandatory ones.

"Where there are female victims of gender violence, this problem is more serious and urgent, and this Parliament must make greater efforts. Where there is discrimination in the workplace and inequality of opportunity we must also act. Where there are disparities in pay between men and women, our policy initiatives are clearly failing.

"Unless the sexual and reproductive rights of women are protected, such as the right to abortion, there cannot be effective equality. The battle for equality, social justice and dignity can never be over while half of humanity continues to be discriminated against."

EFA President **Jill Evans** said:

"In Wales the National Assembly has a very good record on representation of women and this came about as a result of positive action by political parties. Equality will not happen by default. We need to keep highlighting just how far we still need to go and put forward proposals on what governments can do."

EFA MEP **Frieda Brepoels** said:

"We need to ensure a mainstreaming of equality between men and women in all areas, and at all levels of government. This is particularly important and relevant in times of economic crisis. Strengthening women's position in the employment market is an absolute must - not only to increase participation but also to create equal conditions in terms of salaries and career progression."

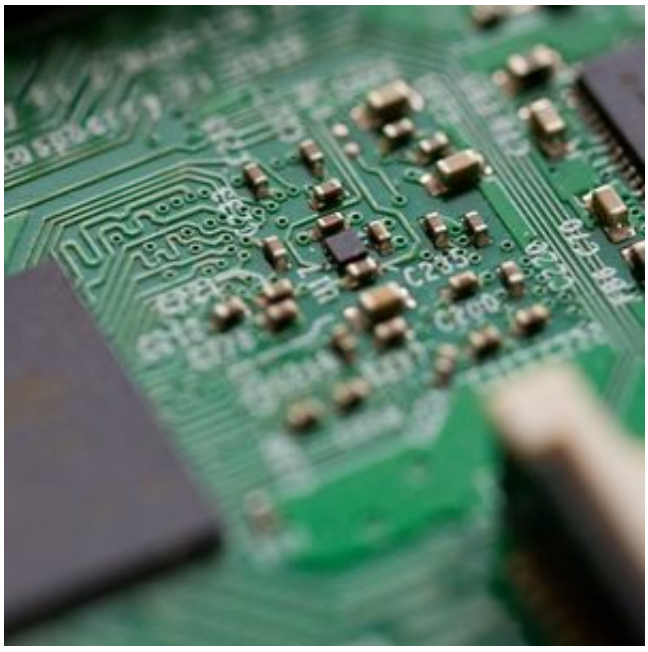
EFA MEP **Tatjana Zdanoka** said:

"The European Parliament has highlighted the challenges that women across Europe continue to face in terms of achieving equal pay and fair representation. Women make up half the population, but only make up a third of MEPs and in most national parliaments the position is much worse. I'm pleased that in the European Free Alliance group, women now make up a majority of members. I hope our example will inspire others and will encourage more women to become active in politics."

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