

## **VILNIUS COMMITMENT TO CHANGE**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

1. This document is issued by the delegates of the *Advancing Women in Leadership Roles Forum in Europe* held in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 9 to 11 October 2017.
2. It draws from, and builds on, the important initiatives and activities of the past years, both inside and outside the Olympic Movement, particularly Olympic Agenda 2020, the 2014 IWG World Conference on Women and Sport's Call "*Lead the Change, Be the Change*", and the European Commission's "*Gender Equality in Sport. Proposal for Strategic Action 2014-2020.*"

### **FORUM COMMITMENT**

While one of the International Olympic Committee's gender equality targets of achieving gender balance among athletes at the Olympic Games has almost been achieved, the European Olympic movement is far from realising the other crucial aim – of having at least 30 per cent of elected positions occupied by women by 2020.

**The Forum delegates agreed that it is time to leave our comfort zones and change the paradigm. They concluded that:**

1. Gender equality is not a women's issue. It is a human right. It is in everybody's interest to have this human right respected as soon as possible.
2. The Olympic Movement is values-based, and so should be the governance of its organisations. Gender equality is one of the basic values of Olympism, and it is a core principle of good governance.
3. Balanced leadership = better leadership = better governance. Balanced leadership is a prerequisite for achieving the full potential of the sports movement.
4. Gender inequality implies many missed opportunities and potential risks. Sameness in decision-making is an important risk factor.
5. Nothing will change unless both men and women join efforts, and unless current sports leaders commit to the objective of achieving gender balance in their organisations. It is very important to also have men as gender champions.
6. Achieving the ultimate goal of gender balance requires an institutional transformation, which, in turn, requires a strategic approach. Support for the development and implementation of strategies on gender equality by the leaders of the European sports movement is key.

7. It is important that any strategy and action plan is considered in the cultural, historical and geographical context of each country, region and organisation. Locally, a step-by-step approach needs to be adopted to reflect the different pace of progress.
8. Leaders in sport must take personal accountability for making the cultural and structural change required to deliver gender-balanced leadership.
9. A gender-inclusive organisational culture needs to be created and nurtured through education for both men and women. Internal communications, images, terminology and human resources policies matter.
10. The power of positive female role models cannot be underestimated.
11. Involving young people, especially athletes, in the governance of sports organisations is essential.
12. Women need to leave their comfort zones and fight for office. Positive action should be taken to bridge the existing confidence gap, which often prevents women from running for leadership positions.

**The Forum delegates acknowledged the leading role and responsibility of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) in advancing women in leadership roles in the European sports movement.**

1. They invited the EOC Executive Committee to adopt, allocate appropriate resources to, and implement a strategy on gender equality with clear goals and indicators.
2. They invited the EOC Executive Committee to consider mechanisms that would encourage NOCs to present candidates of both genders for elections, and ensure that delegations are as gender-balanced as possible.
3. They supported the current activities of the EOC and its Gender Equality in Sport Commission (GESC), and called on European National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to implement the 2016 Recommendations of the GESC.
4. They called for continuity in the work of the GESC, and advocated gender balance in its membership and future compositions, to lead by example.

**The Forum delegates emphasised that many good recommendations and best practices already exist, and that what remains to be done is to transform them into concrete positive action, in a strategic manner.**

**They encouraged members of the European Olympic movement to make use of existing funding opportunities, including Olympic Solidarity and the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union, and existing resources (e.g. e-learning platforms), to put the action into practice.**

**Finally, while striving to achieve the IOC's aim of at least 30 per cent of elected positions in sports organisations to be held by women by 2020, and acknowledging the current situation and the diversity among countries and organisations in Europe, the Forum delegates agreed that gender balance has to be the goal.**