



**Mariya Gabriel**

Commissioner for  
Digital Economy and Society

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*Honourable Berès,*

*I would like to thank you for your kind support in co-signing the letters addressed to the Ministers of the Telecom Council, on the occasion of the Girls in ICT International Day, to take action to increase the numbers of girls and women that pursue STEM and digital studies and careers.*

*As you know, a digitised Europe is expected to add €415 billion in annual GDP. Capturing the benefits of big data analytics, artificial intelligence and Internet of Things would place the most digitised nations among the fastest growing in the world with expected annual growth of 3.9% until 2020.*

*To get there, the demand for skilled ICT professionals is growing. Women comprise approximately half of the European population, yet are starkly under-represented in the digital economy. The gender digital gap is mirrored in the low and decreasing numbers of girls taking up STEM studies, of women choosing ICT-related professions, in women's under-representation in management in the ICT industry and in the number of women-led and founded tech companies.*

*Women's under-representation today means women's exclusion in a future that will be predominantly digital. This has enormous implications, social and economic in terms of lost growth. It has been demonstrated that companies with gender-diverse teams, at least one woman founder, women with a higher education degree and/or prior start-up experience are more likely to succeed. Investment in female-founded start-ups performs 63% better than exclusively male-founded start-ups. In the crowdfunding domain female-led campaigns are more successful than male-led ones, 13% to 10%. Some have even tried to quantify the growth lost by lack of diversity.*

*The EU will not deliver the expected high performance unless it taps into the potential of its female human capital.*

*Pervenche Berès  
European Parliament  
Altiero Spinelli 14G101  
60, Rue Wiertz  
1047 Brussels*

*For this reason, I have adopted on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018, the Women in Digital (WID) Strategy that aims at being cohesive, integrated and action-focused. It tackles the origin of the problem: why are women not choosing ICT studies or jobs; what is the role of societal pressure and, particularly, the media's capability to affect choices? The strategy then covers the next step: education and digital skills. What actions can we leverage to properly address the gender angle? Finally, the strategy focuses on how to ensure girls who studied STEM, and even those that did not, opt for ICT entrepreneurship.*

*The letter we addressed to the Ministers of the TTE Council was one element of the strategy. Indeed, as you might recall, the letter will be followed by concrete actions:*

- 1. First, obtain Member States' agreement and commitment to a set of indicators and possibly, even annual targets. For this, we will set up a scoreboard to be published in parallel or separately from the DESI 2019.*
- 2. Asking the Digital Champions in all member states to collect the most successful examples from their national context. These good practices would be discussed in the Digital Assembly on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of June, and, the TTE working breakfast of December 2018*
- 3. The WID event that will take place on 19 June 2018. The event will be structured around the 3 strands with the overarching goal of creating a movement, and catalysing policy actors and stakeholders into action.*

*I would very much thank you to all ready save the date of the 19<sup>th</sup> of June in your calendar.*

*If you would have any questions about the strategy, please, do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Andrea Almeida Cordero, Member of Cabinet in charge of Gender Equality: [andrea.almeida-cordero@ec.europa.eu](mailto:andrea.almeida-cordero@ec.europa.eu)*

*As Member of the European Parliament, you have an essential role to play, not only for the realisation of this strategy, but for redressing the situation of women and girls in the digital sector.*

*I count on your support to make it happen.*

*Yours sincerely,*



*Mariya Gabriel*