



Samira Rafaela c.s.,
Members of European Parliament

to: his excellency Charles Michel,
President of the Council of the European Union

Brussels, 10 March 2020

Re: Democratic deficit in the European Parliament and the necessary revision of the European Electoral Act

Your Excellency,

The European Union is a beacon for democracy, freedom and the rule of law. These values have made Europe objectively one of the best places for its citizens to live and to thrive. Membership of the EU has served to inspire Member States to foster these values to the fullest. In the process, the European community has evolved into a political entity with democratic institutions to safeguard and promote the values we cherish, namely through our directly elected European Parliament, which in turn elects the European Commission. Furthermore, democratically elected governments back the members of your Council. There still are however, flaws in the democratic fabric of our ever-evolving Union. Today we urge you and your Council to address one of these flaws.

A European Union that values equality between the citizens that make up our society should have institutions that reflects those values. Currently the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage is limiting citizens' representation in the European Parliament, where their Members exercise their right to maternity, paternity or parental leave during the latter stages of pregnancy or following the birth of a child. Not only are such limitations creating a democratic deficit for some European citizens but they further undermine the core European tenet of gender equality, with the majority of Members affected being pregnant and post-natal women. Your Council should rectify this wrong. In the year 2020 our European Electoral Act should provide for the possibility of temporary replacement of a Member of the European Parliament that is availing of their right to maternity, paternity or parental leave. Attempts to this end have been made before, but all in vain. We call on you to change this pattern under your presidency. We believe it is time.

In due time we will debate our policy proposal and come to a position as a Parliament. We will do this as we always do: through an open debate, in a transparent manner. Through this letter we offer you the chance to join our tradition of transparency and openly commit to the cause we have laid out in this letter. We respectfully ask that you, as President of the Council of the European Union, are willing to commit to a revision of the abovementioned Act, so that Members of the European Parliament can become mothers and fathers, knowing their seat will not be vacated without a replacement in the process. Furthermore, we ask you to work to make this the new standard for all the national parliaments that support your Council. No citizen should be without representation, just because their representative is giving birth to the next generation of Europeans.

Yours sincerely,

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Karen Melchior
Linea Søgaaard-Lidell
Katalin Cseh
Abir Al Sahlani
Susana Solís Pérez

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