

## PRESS RELEASE

### **WOMEN'S FORUM BRUSSELS CLOSING WITH A CALL FOR MORE INCLUSIVE EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE**

**Speakers say fully integrating women at all levels of decision-making will promote  
sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe**

**Brussels, 29 January 2014** – The **Women's Forum Brussels** closed yesterday with calls to fully integrate women in governance and deploy more proactive policies in order to restore confidence and competitiveness in European Union.

“Women in the political sphere need to debate and propose innovative solutions, accepted by the majority, to achieve full representivity of women. We need to consolidate and build on the progress that has already been made, and break up remaining pockets of resistance,” said **Tokia Saifi, French member of the European Parliament from the European People's Party group**.

In a wide-ranging talk on how to help foster the European economy, **European Parliament Vice-President Isabelle Durant** commented, “Women, at all levels of corporate structure, enhance economic competitiveness. Europe needs to encourage female participation in the labour force. The glass ceiling is not the only barrier we need to break, but it is one place where we can start. Women must be present in all fields, from maintenance to senior executive tasks.”

“Failure to close the gender gap through economic laws is a waste, and puts at risk Europe's economic recovery” added **Irene Khan, Director General of the International Development Law Organization**.

The half-day **Women's Forum Brussels** took place at the European Parliament January 28. It brought together powerful women members of the European Parliament and top opinion-shapers from corporations and civil society. The conference, which gathered some 160 participants, aimed to generate more input from women on key topics including drivers for growth, fixing the leaky leadership pipeline and boosting the representivity and public image of European politicians.

“Europe was founded on human rights and fundamental freedoms”, said **Jacqueline Franjou, CEO of the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society**. “If our societies are to evolve towards greater sustainability, more fairness, stronger growth and increased social progress, women must be able to take their rightful place. We need women's voices to be heard and women's talents to be deployed, so that we can boost confidence in Europe, and construct a vision of the future based on the values of sustainability and equal opportunity.” she added.

The Women's Forum Brussels meeting resulted from years of involvement in the work of the **Women's Forum for the Economy and Society** by a number of top women in the European Commission and European Parliament.

The Women's Forum Brussels was partnered by the following corporations: **L'Oréal, Mazars, and Veolia; Thalys, and Vranken-Pommery Monopole**. Media partners included: **EurActiv, France Médias Monde, and La Tribune**.

As it enters its 10th year, the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society continues to pioneer new topics and geographies, with a third **Women's Forum Brazil planned for 26-27 May 2014 in São Paulo, the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Women's Forum Global Meeting, in Deauville in October 2014**, and plans to set up a Women's Forum in the Middle East.

#### About the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society

Since 2005, the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society has been the world's leading platform featuring women's views and voices on major social and economic issues. Deploying women's experience and expertise across all generations and geographies, it offers practical discussions on how to overcome barriers and create new horizons and opportunities, as well as broad, rich and surprising debate on important ideas. The Women's Forum also promotes the advancement of women world-wide via business and social networks.

Further information can be found on [www.womens-forum.com](http://www.womens-forum.com).

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