



ELWN in a nutshell

Short history:

Our Finnish delegates to the ELDR Council launched the idea in Helsinki in December 1999 to create a network of European Liberal Women to promote equal opportunities. The first President was Margareta Pietikainen from the Swedish people's party of Finland.

The ELWN undertook a vast consultation of ELDR member parties through a **questionnaire in order to obtain information on the actions undertaken by parties in order to increase women's participation in political life**. The ELWN then met in Brussels on 4 April 2002 under the chairmanship of the Finnish MP and ELDR Vice-President, Maria Kaisa Aula, in order to discuss positive actions in favour of women and evaluate the outcome of the consultation - whose results were highly interesting and significant.

In the course of the following months the ELWN prepared an important document named **"Equal opportunities between women and men: the liberal way"** that was finally adopted at the **ELDR Congress in Bath on 17 October 2002**.

The ELWN met again in London on 4th July in the frame of the ELDR Council meeting. The discussion focused on the **outcome of the European Convention and on the place of equal opportunities in the draft electoral programme**. The ELWN elected Androula Vassiliou, ELDR Vice-President, to succeed to Maria Kaisa Aula as President.

At the 2005 Bratislava Congress, the ELWN discussed the issue of the **full participation of women in political and economic life** as key element of Europe's competitiveness and presented a resolution on full participation of women in politics.

In 2006, ELWN held a seminar on the topic of balancing work and family life from a liberal perspective during the Council meeting in Stockholm and co-organised a **"Win with Women" for Ukrainian politicians** in September 2006.

During the congress in Bucharest in October 2006, the ELWN staged a very well attended fringe meeting on **combating human trafficking** and proposed a resolution on the same topic which was adopted by the Congress. It also organised a visit in cooperation with Norica Nicolai to two shelters for women victims of domestic violence. This was followed followed by a lunch during which the Network adopted a mission statement and rules of procedure.

ELWN MISSION STATEMENT AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

AIMS

The European Liberal Women's Network has been set up to substantively contribute to party policy and procedure. The Network offers a platform for discussion of topical issues in addition to acting as a mentoring and support network. It builds upon and strengthens critical policy-making and advocacy skills for women.

More specifically, the ELWN aims:

1. To expand the participation of liberal and democrat women in politics at local, national and European level and within Liberal parties.
2. To strengthen relationships and exchange information between liberal and democrat women Europe-wide.
3. To ensure that liberal and democrat policies in Europe include and express women's views on all issues.

ACTIVITIES

The European Liberal Women Network:

- prepares resolutions to ELDR Congresses
- runs an annual meeting at ELDR Party Congresses and other meetings as appropriate
- set up campaigns to promote gender equality
- cooperates with ELDR member parties women's networks
- facilitate a regular exchange of information between liberal women and the actions and programmes of ELDR member parties on gender equality
- seeks to ensure a close working relationship with the European Women Lobby
- produces a newsletter
- discusses issues in an online forum
- canvasses and publicises members' views and support their campaigns.
- draws attention to women fighting for freedom and equality and to the achievements of liberal and democrat women
- sends delegations to EU events on gender equality as well as World Conferences on Women
- promotes equal opportunities and fights discrimination

MEMBERSHIP

Member parties, Lymec, Liberal International and the International Liberal Women Network, are requested to appoint an official representative to the European Liberal Women Network. European Commissioners, ALDE group members in the European Parliament and Committee of the regions are ELWN members ex officio.

Men and women of liberal parties, organisations and groups and individual women who support ELWN aims can be informed and participate in ELWN activities and events.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ELWN executive committee is composed of a chair and two vice-chairs. The executive committee oversees implementation of ELWN activities, receives and proposes resolutions for the forthcoming annual meetings and develops proposals for future activities.

The chair is responsible for setting the network direction and speaking on behalf of the network. The chair is elected for two years by the ELDR Party Congress.

The two vice-chairs are elected by simple majority among ELWN members every two years by those who are present at the annual Meeting.

The executive committee is assisted in its work by the ELWN coordinator based in the ELDR Party Secretariat. The contact person is Philipp Hansen (phansen@eldr.eu), tel: + 32 2 551 01 60, fax: + 32 2 231 19 07.