



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 by a lunch during which the Network adopted a mission statement and rules of procedure.