

## Letters

# The right man in the right job is often a woman

*From Mrs Margot Wallström, Mrs Diana Wallis and Ms Neelie Kroes*

Sir, As the Financial Times has extensively reported, European democracy will face a moment of truth in the coming days. Two important appointments will be made for the European Union – the President of the European Council and the High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission – and once more it is looking more and more likely that *only men* will be nominated.

A new European Commission will also be appointed in the coming weeks. Though President José Manuel Barroso has urged his fellow members of the European Council to keep in mind the importance of gender balance when presenting their candidates, it still looks as if the new Commission will

have fewer women than the current one.

This would be bad for Europe, bad for democracy and bad for women.

It is time to move from words to deeds on gender equality by appointing women to leading positions in the EU, as Jerry Buzek, President of the European Parliament, also suggested recently to the European Council.

There is no lack of names; no shortage of qualities and competence. Many women are active in European politics, working for the benefit of our societies. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, for example, has been mentioned for the post of President of the European Council; Elisabeth Guigou and Catherine Ashton as potential High Representative/Vice President of the European Commission. We need a collective political

commitment to ensure political representation of women. Women

make up a majority of the population, and in the 21st century European democracy cannot afford to use only half of its people's talents, ideas and experiences. When women sit at the table, they can help to ensure that the political decisions reflect the needs of the *entire* population.

The right man in the right job is often a woman. Appointing women would make Europe richer and more representative and bring it closer to all citizens. This can happen, but it requires some bold decisions. NOW. Margot Wallström, Vice-President, European Commission  
Diana Wallis,  
Vice-President, European Parliament  
Neelie Kroes,  
European Commissioner