I AM A WOMAN,
I AM A MOTHER.

There is no doubt that the cultural background of our society is changing, as are its role
text models and aspirations. However, despite the substantial changes that have been taking
place, women’s motherhood remains a key element of the social structure.

In recent decades, we have witnessed the massive entry of women into the workplace.
Nevertheless, this incorporation has not happened properly. Women have suffered negative
consequences and with them, family and society as a whole have too.

In general terms, women want to have kids –more kids than they actually have, recent
studies show– they want to take care of them, see them grow, be present during their
childhood and adolescence, and enjoy their family lives. But social pressure has forced them
to hide and delay their maternal vocation and to have to demonstrate that children do not
keep them from being ‘like men’.

This is a complete misconception and a mistaken human management of social change. For
practical purposes, these feelings cause a decline on the birth rate that is sinking Western
countries in a demographic winter that will carry serious consequences in the future.

It is not women, mothers or fathers, nor families who have to adapt to the labor and
economic world, but the other way around. It is the family that gives life to societies and a
healthy society is based on strong, united, and well-built families.

Motherhood must regain its rightful place as a social and human good that is worthy of
consideration and respect. It must not be denigrated, discriminated against or objectified.
Additionally, scientific progress has allowed birth control, both in terms of stopping it and
producing it. This has led to the objectification of maternity and its marketing.

Women of the World echoes the voices of those women who want to speak in terms of
women. That is why we present 10 political proposals that allow women to be themselves in
a double dimension, woman and mother, respecting their feminine identity as well as the
value and dignity of motherhood.

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I.- **REAL-TIME FLEXIBILITY**

that is also adjusted to the needs of the working mothers without discrimination of any kind, and the extension of the right to reduced working hours, regardless of the age of their kids. These measures require the necessary tax benefits for companies, so that their application will not represent a burden for them.

While the balance between family and work life seems today like a general priority in the political and business level, the results are still not the best and in many cases, couples do not have the number of children they would really want because of their work situation. Work-life balance is sometimes understood as facilitating women to work on full-time jobs while someone else takes care of their children. However, true work-life balance consists of parents being able to raise, educate and take care of their own children while living with them. A healthy society is built up when families can spend time together allowing them to strengthen as a whole unit.

Real work-life balance allows the creation of families, having as many kids as parents want as well as freely deciding the equilibrium they want for their work lives, time and dedication to their families.

We understand that the true and positive balance entails flexible schedules and the possibility to reduce the working hours, since this is the most preferable work planning for most mothers.

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1. All surveys show that Europeans are not able to fulfill their wish to have children and the often-expressed desire for a third child frequently goes unfulfilled. This is often for financial or material reasons or due to difficulties in balancing a career with family life, especially for mothers. Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on ‘The family and demographic change’ (SOC 245 – EESC – 55/2007, par. 8.13).

2. Each Member State and accession state should draw up an information and awareness-raising guide for the social partners, business leaders, human resources directors and employees, setting out arguments in favour of promoting good practice with the aim of reconciling professional and family life more effectively. Report on reconciling professional, family and private lives. Committee on Women’s Rights and Equal Opportunities, European Parliament (A5-0092/2004, par. 14).

3. The public authorities, whose responsibility it is to ensure the common good, must therefore create opportunities and provide today’s men and women with genuine freedom to start a family and have as many children as they like, without interfering with people’s personal life choices. Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on ‘The family and demographic change’ (SOC 245 – EESC 55/2007, par. 8.15).

4. In Germany, 45.3% of the working mothers have a part-time job. ‘Women in the labour force in Germany and France’, Spanish Department of Employment and Immigration accredited to Germany, published on March 2011. Available online in Spanish: http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/mundo/consejerias/alemania/consejeria/publicaciones/Public9/51.pdf [Last visit 27/02/2016].

Providing and promoting means to facilitate compatibility between labour force participation and parental responsibilities, especially for single-parent households with young children and paying special attention to the needs of widows and orphans through means including health insurance and social security, cash and in-kind transfer programs, day-care centres and facilities for breast-feeding mothers within the work premises, kindergartens, part-time jobs, paid parental leave, paid maternity leave, flexible work schedules and reproductive and child health care services. UN Resolution ‘Protection of the family; contribution of the family to the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living for its members, particularly through its role in poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development’ [A/HRC/RES/29/22, par. 20(b)].
2.- PROMOTION OF WORK FROM HOME (or telecommuting), at least in some time section (daily or weekly) of the workday, as well as the promotion of professional responsibilities by goals and of home-based labor and business entrepreneurship. This should apply to both women and men, so that he can also be involved in family life.

These measures also require the subsidiary tax support from governments to entrepreneurship and home-based work. In many cases mothers and fathers prefer this kind of work because it allows them to be in a more family-focused environment, which is certainly beneficial for both parents and children.

3.- THE AVAILABILITY OF 24 HOURS PER YEAR FOR FAMILY MATTERS WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION, but with previous notice, to parents who have underage children, in order to fill a very common parenting need, that does not cause any inconvenient for the employer.

Proper childcare involves personal matters that might be addressed during the working day, especially those related to the education of children, their health, and etcetera. These 24 hours or three days per year should be excluded from vacation hours and should exclusively fit the needs of the family.

4.- SUPPORT TO PART-TIME CONTRACTS FOR PEOPLE WITH RESPONSIBILITIES, including tax benefits so that these contracts do not detract companies.

Short time and part-time contracts sometimes cause harm to businesses that are forced to hire two people to perform the same work. Therefore, these part-time contracts should be accompanied, in cases of people with family responsibilities, with a substantial reduction in social security contributions and tax benefits for the company so that, in economic terms, they do not represent a burden to the hiring company\(^5\).

\(^5\) For example, it is estimated that in Spain, about 15% of women do not return to work after giving birth due to lack of part-time contracts (...), and in the United Kingdom, a large proportion of women go from full-time to part-time work once they become mothers. Article published at RNW (Dutch Radio). Available online: https://www.rnw.org/archive/dutch-women-spoilt-princesses [Last visit 27/02/2016].
5.- THE TREATMENT OF THE TERM ‘EXCLUSIVE DEDICATION TO FAMILY’ AS JOB CATEGORY.

“Motherhood, childcare, nursing of the elderly and other dependents, which are almost exclusively assumed by women, represent an extra work task, sometimes executed even as a full-time job. This work is rarely paid and it lacks the appropriate social recognition, although it has an enormous social importance, since it contributes to social welfare and can be measured with economic indicators such as GDP.”


This exclusive dedication to the family, even though it is an immense source of wealth in the domestic economies, perfectly quantifiable through their GDP⁶, socially discriminates against women and places them in a particular vulnerability position in some circumstances because society continues to understate the role of those engaged exclusively or mainly to the care of children, the elderly and dependents⁷. To overcome such situations, this measure would imply:

* Access to individual and shared Social Security (SS): SS fees, accredited individually by each of the spouses, would be considered “marital”, if they were interested. This would allow, in cases of separation or widowhood, the compensation of the spouse who interrupted or never started his or her working life to be devoted to family or childcare, which would have produced a significant reduction for his or her future pension⁸.

* Indirect wages through grants and benefits where the ‘exclusive dedication to the family’ category has a special bonus. Deductions in the field of the income tax when one spouse performs unpaid work within the family household⁹.

* The increase of the minimum living income tax, which represents a tax benefit for mothers in order to consolidate the matter of the exclusive dedication to the family as a social good that should receive tax advantages.

* Direct or mixed retirement with the implementation of a pension system based on agreements with financial entities¹⁰.

* Subsidized sickness and maternity leave¹¹.

These measures would narrow the social and economic independence gap faced by people with exclusive dedication to their family and, in a practical level; it would allow the mother to hire domestic help when health, maternity or age do not let her do the work.

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⁶ Therefore, unpaid work represents the 20% of the GDP in Mexico (Source: INEGI); 19,3% in Colombia (Source: DANE); and 15% in Ecuador (Source: INEC). In Spain, according to Mª Angeles Durán from the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) if the unpaid work women do had to be paid, the GDP would increase in 53%.


⁸ In Germany and Sweden this tax measure already exists.

⁹ In the Region of Valencia, (Spain), this reduction has been applied based on Art. 4 of the Regional Law 13/1997 amended by Art. 14.1.d) of the Regional Law 9/2001.

¹⁰ In July 2015 it was announced that the house work would be included in Costa Rica’s GDP; and, even though women wouldn’t receive a salary for their work, with its recognition the possibility of establishing a pension would be achievable. In Ecuador, on April of the same year the report about ‘Draft Organic Law for Labour Justice and the recognition of the House Work’ was passed for second debate, in which housewives would have a right to retirement pension, as it is granted in Argentina for a long ago.

¹¹ The Municipal Council of Madrid (Spain), maintained, for some years, a program called " Early Days " whereby domestic help was provided to families during the first four months of life of a new-born to assist in cleaning, child care, etc.
6.- THE SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE WIDOW’S PENSION FOR MOTHERS WITH MAIN OR EXCLUSIVE DEDICATION TO FAMILY.

The dedication to family limits the economic independence of women and keeps them away from the labor world during a long period of time. These circumstances mean that, in the case of being widowed, her situation becomes particularly delicate and vulnerable. In this case, the support from society and governments should be even higher than in other cases to prevent situations of discrimination and social disadvantage.

7.- SUBSTANTIAL TAX BENEFITS FOR COMPANIES THAT HIRE WOMEN WHO, DUE TO THEIR DEDICATION TO FAMILY, HAVE BEEN OUT OF THE LABOR MARKET FOR A LONG TIME.

There should be a special bonus for hiring single women, widows and those who have separated and who are in a particularly vulnerable situation and therefore, need protection and a greater support from society and governments to join the labor market. Their economic situation should not result handicapped from having been devoted to their families.

8.- THE REPORTING AND ACTIVE PURSUIT OF ANY PROVEN DISCRIMINATORY GESTURE, both in society and in the workplace, against the working woman who wants to have children or who is exclusively or partially devoted to the care of her family.

This type of discrimination is unfortunately, a common practice. This discrimination occurs in terms of wages, hiring processes, wrongful dismissals, harassment, etc., not only against mothers but also women who want to be mothers or who could be. Women are discriminated against today in the West, not so much because they are women but because they are mothers.

12 The future of Europe depends on its ability to foster societies that welcome young men and women, and whereas in this context, achieving the desire for parenthood or caring for dependent adults or the disabled, should not conflict with education or career choices or constitute a barrier to staying in or returning to education or pursuing a career, Motion for a European Parliament Resolution:


14 To ensure that maternity, motherhood, parenting and the role of women in procreation must not be a basis for discrimination nor for restricting the full participation of women in society (A/HRC/RES/29/22, par. 12).
9.- THE ELIMINATION OF SOCIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL POLICIES AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT RESPECT WOMEN or their identity in terms of its biological and social conditions, nor the collaborative complementarity of sexes.

The feminine identity, women’s main characteristics, the value of motherhood and dedication to the family, are hidden and ignored in educational programs with the negative social consequences that this entails. A disjointed, false and manipulated reality is drawn and women are turned into ‘men’ annulling the complementarity of the sexes and in consequence, the wealth and emotional balance involved in it. The dedication to family is presented as something negative, removing from its social and economic value, which is translated into the discrimination against women who freely choose to dedicate themselves to their family or dependent relatives.

This imposition of the gender ideology we have been living in schools discriminates against a segment of the population and therefore it should be eradicated. While the percentage of domestic tasks performed by men is higher now, it is women who perform most of them as a personal life choice. The free choice of women in regard to their life must be respected, especially when their dedication to the family is a major engine of the countries’ economy.

10.- THE UNIVERSAL ABOLITION OF SURROGACY.

Wombs for rent, understood as gestational substitution does not constitute any progress or social improvement, especially not for women’s rights. This is a new form of exploitation of women by their ability to be mothers, and trafficking that turns children into commodities. Hence, it constitutes a flagrant violation of the dignity of both the mother and child. Motherhood must not be traded. Permitting surrogacy means that, as with prostitution, women can be used to satisfy a desire, no matter how legitimate or genuine this one can be.

Although we advocate the universal ban on the surrogacy, we propose a simple and effective way to end this practice: the refusal to allow the registration of buyers as parents of children born through surrogacy arrangements, since this would work as deterrent and would radically reduce the business and exploitation that surrogacy involves.

15 The European Parliament (EP) has clearly condemned the practice of surrogacy, without distinction between “altruistic” and “for-profit” surrogacy. On 5 April 2011 the EP adopted a resolution, asking Member States to acknowledge the serious problem of surrogacy which constitutes an exploitation of the female body and her reproductive organs. This resolution also emphasised that women and children are subject to the same forms of exploitation and both can be regarded as commodities on the international reproductive market, and that these new reproductive arrangements, such as surrogacy, augment the trafficking of women and children and illegal adoption across national borders. “New EU policy framework to fight violence against women” (A7-0065/2011, par. 20-21).

Likewise, it was adopted by EP Plenary on 30 November 2015 a resolution that condemns the practice of surrogacy, which undermines the human dignity of the woman since her body and its reproductive functions are used as a commodity; considers that the practice of gestational surrogacy which involves reproductive exploitation and use of the human body for financial or other gain, in particular in the case of vulnerable women in developing countries, shall be prohibited and treated as a matter of urgency in human rights instruments. Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2014 and the European Union’s policy on the matter (A8-0344/2015, point 114).
Women of the World Global Platform is an initiative launched by the Spanish organization Profesionales por la Ética (Professionals for the Ethics) in coalition with Woman Attitude and Femina Europa and supported by a large number of worldwide organizations, to become the voice of the women who speak in terms of women.

Women of the World is formed by a growing number of partners which work to make the international institutions and politicians, both at national and international levels, aware of what we, the women of world, think and demand. And to make things change.

We are breaking into old-fashioned radical feminism and gender ideology.

We will not accept anymore that the international institutions develop policies that ignore, fight or suppress feminine identity, motherhood or the value of the prior dedication to the family.

We are regaining for women their full identity, their role as women in their own families, in society and labour market, and we will give motherhood back its value and dignity.

Our reasons and our goals are set in our Statement, translated into 11 languages, supported by more than 146 NGOs from 47 different countries and more than 17,000 women from 72 countries. Support come from very different cultures and countries such as Republic of Congo, Kenya, Cameroon, Nigeria, Iraq, Morocco, Sudan, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Lebanon, New Caledonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Martinique, St. Lucia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia, Croatia, Serbia, Republic of San Marino, Ukraine, El Salvador, Cuba, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, among others.