

To the attention of  
Mr. Charles **Michel**,  
President of the European Council

Copy to Madame Ursula **von der Leyen**,  
President of the European Commission

Namur, April 8, 2021.

Mr President of the European Council, Mr **Michel**,

During your meeting with the Turkish President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in Ankara on April 6, you made several serious mistakes that a pitiful apology cannot erase. We must move forward to resolve them and build their solution.

We list three of these errors below, briefly outlined:

### **1. Error against diplomacy**

You were not alone for this visit to Ankara, you were a duo on an equal diplomatic level with Mrs Ursula **von der Leyen**, President of the European Commission.

The dictator has set a trap for both of you by placing only one seat next to his for the official meeting. And you, M. Michel, you rushed into this seat, almost lying down so badly you wanted to occupy it. Faced with Mrs von der Leyen's dismay, you did not flinch, you wanted to be seated to Mr Erdoğan's right. At that point, you could have stood up and either invited the President to sit down herself, or remained standing and requested a second seat. You remained silent.

Mrs von der Leyen expressed her disapproval, she could have remained standing herself or left the room but she preferred not to increase the incident by taking a seat on the couch, however very angry.

The dictator, meanwhile, watched your game and scored his points. You gave him this unhealthy pleasure by falling so heavily into his trap.

Many people emphasize this element by associating it with "gallantry". The good education has escaped you, of course. As for amalgamations with "gallantry", they have no place in this incident. You've been rude to an equal, so you would have been to a man or a woman. The former Federal Minister of Defense of Germany is herself warned on this subject and always favors intelligence and politeness in her actions.

### **2. Error against the European Union**

Your thoughtless attitude is detrimental to all citizens of the European Union vis-à-vis the President of Turkey, giving the dictator an image of internal conflict, weakness of intelligence and reaction on the part of the President of its Council, at a time when the question of Turkey's entry into Europe constitutes a serious and unresolved debate.

Pathetic! Rather than admit your fault and your responsibility in the trap set by Mr Erdoğan for the European Union and the open contempt of women, you complain about unfair attacks and try to reassure about your values of equality. In doing so, you are unfortunately confirming your mistake and the view of many that you do not understand and that you are not aligned with the values proclaimed by Europe.

If #sexism and #misogyny can still exist today, it is because witnesses remain silent or because they profit from this disqualification of women!

### **3. Error against human rights and particularly women's rights**

On April 6 you fell into the trap set for you by Mr Erdoğan forgetting that, on March 20, the Turkish President announced that his country was stepping out from the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating all violence against women and domestic violence, the essential Istanbul Convention!

By ostensibly taking leadership as a man over a woman who is your political equal, you offer reinforcement to the dictator on the crush he wants to impose to women and girls of Turkey, fifteen days after the authoritarian decision he took to violate gender equality, implicitly authorizing all violence against women and children in Turkey. Do you realize it?

Considering these three serious mistakes, it is obvious that a pale apology will not resolve the political vacuum that you have created for Europe in the face of its citizens nor in the face of the world whose most press organs have echoed incident.

We therefore ask for your resignation from the function of President of the European Council.

Hoping for your answer and your action, Mr President of the European Council, please accept our attentive greetings,

### **First signatories** (listed in alphabetical order)

- Clarisse **André Portela**;
- Martine **Barbé**, productrice de films;
- Ariane **Bibrowski**, psychothérapeute;
- Dominique **Costermans**, écrivaine;
- Sarah **De Baets**, Conseil des Femmes francophones de Belgique, Section Charleroi-Thuin;
- Marcela **de la Peña**, Marche mondiale des Femmes;
- G. **De Meur**, présidente du Groupement belge de la Porte ouverte
- Dominique **De Vos**, Mouvement Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes;
- Marie-Anne **Delahaut**, présidente, Fondation Millennia2025 Femmes et Innovation;
- Christine **Delmotte-Weber**, autrice et metteuse en scène;
- Anne **Fivé**, juriste retraitée;
- Michette **Fenaux**;
- Dominique **Goldberg**, Conseillère communale et de Police;
- Catherine **Haxhe**, journaliste, Centre d'Action Laïque;
- Susann **Heenen-Wolff**;
- Françoise **Kruyen**;
- Sylvie **Lausberg**, présidente du Conseil des Femmes francophones de Belgique;
- Isabella **Lenarduzzi**, JUMP;
- Michel **Lussan**, auteur-producteur;
- Gisèle **Mandaila**, Conseillère communale;
- Reine **Marcelis**, présidente de Synergie Wallonie pour l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes;
- Marie **Nagy**, députée bruxelloise;
- Sophie **Rohonyi**, députée fédérale DéFI;
- Fatiha **SAIDI**, autrice;
- Martine **Seguy**;
- Annie **Sugier**, présidente de la Ligue du Droit International des Femmes;
- Véronique Inès **Thouvenot**, directrice scientifique, Fondation Millennia2025 Femmes & Innovation;
- Sam **Touzani**, artiste-citoyen;
- Michèle **Vianès**, Présidente de Regards de Femmes;
- Joëlle **Winkel**;
- Sandra **Zidani**, humoriste;

### **The letter received nine thousand five hundred (9.500) signatures,**

between Friday 9 April, 18:00 and Tuesday 13 April at noon, closing of the signature form.

It is published here :

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