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Gender equality is a matter of justice to women. Even in the most conservative societies we see brave women putting the issue of their rights on the public agenda. But their demands are not always turned into policies. Change does not always happen. Politicians often pay lip service to gender equality, but fail to recognise the genuine role of women in society, economy, business and politics. If Europe wants to achieve its strategic goals, we cannot miss on the issue of the participation of half of the population. If we want to make the planned conference on the future of Europe a game changer based on an authentic dialogue with citizens, we have to listen to the perspective of women - as citizens. If we want to keep European project alive and inter-generational, passing from our generation to the one of our daughters and granddaughters, we need to insist on equality as a human right and as our common obligation. We have to go beyond the European Union and offer our solidarity with the women who out there fight for equality in their own cultural and national contexts. The new strategy presented by the Commission is a good blueprint for action. But it is also a signal that Europe will never give up on human rights and justice. Let me finish with a quote from Michelle Obama: "You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own." I strongly believe as a woman and as a member of this House that the EU can be the beacon of courage and hope for women. Yes we can.