Nominee
LAURA CODRUȚA KÖVESI
CHIEF EU PUBLIC PROSECUTOR ELECT

Laura Codruța Kövesi made history both as the youngest and as the first woman prosecutor general in Romania, when she was appointed to the position in 2006 at the age of 33. She subsequently became the head of the Romanian Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) in 2013. Under her leadership, the DNA made notable progress against high-level corruption in Romania. Kövesi made headlines last year when she was forcibly dismissed from her position by the Romanian government who actively lobbied against her. The reason? She was involved in the investigations of multiple Romanian politicians, all suspected of corruption in the country. She continues to be a favourite among the leaders of the European Parliament, despite the Romanian government’s opposition. Kövesi is poised to become the first ever chief EU public prosecutor in the new European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO), which is set to start operating in 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS: PUBLIC PROSECUTOR; ANTI-CORRUPTION; EPPO; ROMANIA

Nominee
MAIREAD MCGUINNESS
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Mairead McGuinness has been one of the strongest voices for Ireland on a European level to date. She has strongly contributed in multiple ways to all levels and areas of Irish and the broader European society and is also well-known for the influential role she has had (and continues to have) on Brexit. She is a powerful leader in the European Parliament, for women in particular, and has a reputation for being firm but fair in moderating parliamentary debates. She became a Member of the European Parliament in 2004, was elected as Vice-President of the European Parliament in 2014, and became First Vice-President in January 2017. As First VP she oversees relations with national parliaments, in particular with the EU affairs committees of Member State parliaments. She is responsible for the Parliament’s dialogue with religious and non-confessional organisations on EU policies and legislative proposals.

HIGHLIGHTS: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT; POLITICS; VOICE OF IRELAND
Marija Pejčinović Burić is a Croatian politician. She recently assumed office as Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Previously, she was State Secretary at the Ministry of European integration, and held various roles throughout the years working on EU cooperation programmes. She became a member of the Croatian Parliament from 2008 to 2011. Later, she worked as a private consultant on EU affairs. More recently, Burić was Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia, as well as Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia - she became the third woman to hold the post of foreign minister.

HIGHLIGHTS: CROATIAN GOVERNMENT; EU AFFAIRS; COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CATEGORY IS: WOMAN IN ACTION

UNDERTAKING EXTRAORDINARY ACTIONS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN EUROPE

NOMINEE
MILENA KADIEVA
HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER

Milena Kadieva is a committed human rights lawyer with more than 17 years of active engagement with vulnerable women and girls, including Roma and Turkish minority. Apart from managing the Gender Alternatives Foundation, she leads strategic litigation cases against Bulgaria, thus impacting governmental policies from pressure by international institutions like CEDAW and EU Court on Human Rights. Kadieva's latest strategic case is noteworthy: It was on a case concerning long-term domestic violence against a woman and passivity on part of police, social services and court that further persecuted the victim and her children. Institutions refused to accept the repentence of the violence and did nothing to protect her. As a result in August 2019, the CEDAW Committee issued 11 recommendations for Bulgaria - among which to ratify the Istanbul convention and change the legislation, starting by the recognition of gender-based violence as a human right violation. Kadieva and her team are keen advocates for the aforementioned Istanbul Convention, thus working hard to promote it despite threats and online attacks.

HIGHLIGHTS: WOMEN'S RIGHTS; GENDER RIGHTS; HUMAN RIGHTS; CEDAW; EUCHR

NOMINEE
GALS4GALS LODZ /LODZKIE DZIEWUCHY DZIEWUCHOM
POLISH FEMINIST COLLECTIVE

From the city of Lodz, Gals4Gals has showed how a local initiative can fight for values across a country and an entire continent. Since 2016, the Polish feminist collective has fought for sexual rights of women, ensuring that all women are accepted – including those from groups that are usually disadvantaged (such as women from rural areas, queer women, racialized women, refugee women or trans women). Their success has led them to share their experiences with other women from across Europe. The Black Protest (led by Gals4Gals) defeated the government, kept abortion rights and changed the public support for sexual rights - from 20% to 60%. Gals4Gals have been a leader in the fight for sexual rights of women even when the national government of Poland tried to ban abortion rights in 2016. Not only have they managed to mobilize Lodz and Poland to protect their rights, they have been an inspiration for all of Europe. The collective has given ordinary women - gals - a voice in the public space.

HIGHLIGHTS: SEXUAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN; FEMINISM; MOBILIZATION, POLAND
VICKY PHELAN

A VOICE FOR WOMEN IN MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

In 2018, Vicky Phelan was instrumental in exposing the CervicalCheck controversy in Ireland after launching a High Court case against a US laboratory over incorrect smear test results from 2011. She refused to be silenced by an attempted gagging order after she took her case to court and her actions led to the revelations that hundreds of other women had similarly been denied the truth. Phelan continues to campaign tirelessly on the issue at grassroots level alongside many other Irish women who were affected by the scandal. She has also set up the patients’ support group, 221+, with fellow campaigners Stephen Teap and Lorraine Walsh. Phelan has been recognised for her achievements for Irish women to date, awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters by the University of Limerick in June 2018, an Honorary Fellowship by Waterford Institute of Technology in November 2018, named as one of the BBC’s 100 Women of 2018, and awarded a Special Recognition Award at the Woman of the Year Awards in October 2018. Her actions have meant that women around Ireland affected by the scandal have been given a voice, the malpractice has been exposed and many women were prompted to recheck results which may well have saved lives.

HIGHLIGHTS: CERVICALCHECK COURT CASE; WOMEN'S RIGHTS; IRELAND
ELEONORA AZZAQUI & VERA GÜNTHER
FOUNDERS OF MIMYCRI

Mimycri is an organisation which designs and manufactures high quality bags from broken refugee rubber boats. Its founders, Eleonora Azzaoui and Vera Günther, wanted to create “stories to touch” – it is their hope that the products stimulate conversations about escape and migration. It is no surprise that in the Mimycri team, people with and without escape experience work side by side. The organisation does two things simultaneously: it addresses the key topic of migration for Europe from a new perspective, while at the same time being an up-cycling project. Mimycri successfully brings together all Europeans – the founders actively engaged in directly exchanging views with refugees concerning the topic of immigration by shaping the larger story of migration and European solidarity. In May 2019, the organisation started a project in line with its vision for Europe and together with 12 diverse people created a European flag made of destroyed rubber boats.

HIGHLIGHTS: MIMYCRI; UPCYCLING; STIMULATING MIGRATION DIALOGUE

HELEN DIXON
DATA PROTECTION COMMISSIONER FOR IRELAND

Helen Dixon became Data Protection Commissioner in 2014 and was the first woman to undertake the role. With some of the biggest tech companies in the world locating their European operations in Ireland and attention turning more and more to how data privacy is treated, Helen’s role has been a challenging one that she has undertaken with great skill and success. Her office is essentially responsible for the protection of the personal data of hundreds of millions of European citizens. She has led the Data Protection Commission through the early but critical stage of GDPR implementation and enforcement. She has dealt with noteworthy, high-profile data protection cases from across Europe such as that of Austrian privacy campaigner Max Schrems over Facebook and ultimately a battle over the transfer of data between Europe and the US that led to the striking down of the Safe Harbour agreement between the two territories. Her office has approximately 51 large-scale investigations under way, 17 of which relate to large technology platforms, including seven into Facebook.

HIGHLIGHTS: DATA PROTECTION; GDPR IMPLEMENTATION; DIGITAL PRIVACY
NOMINEE
HELJ KURJANEN
FOUNDER OF LUNE GROUP LTD.

In 2005, Heli Kurjanen founded Lune Group Ltd. as a result of being unsatisfied with an online order of a moon cup. Having started her own brand, it has since grown global – the company’s turnover in 2017 was 3.7 million euros. The company seeks to break taboos around menstruation and shares information about periods on their website and social media. They have also donated moon cups and participated in development and charity projects in developing countries. NYTKIS is well aware of the stigma related to periods in Finland and globally and the impacts that periods can have on women’s lives. Kurjanen’s work to make periods normal and as comfortable and clean as possible has been very impactful.

HIGHLIGHTS: LUNE GROUP; BUSINESSWOMAN; ISSUES SURROUNDING STIGMA
Greta Thunberg is a Swedish teenager who is credited with raising global awareness of the risks posed by Global warming and climate change, and with holding politicians to account for their lack of action on what Thunberg calls the "climate crisis". With other students engaged in similar protests, she organized a school climate strike movement, under the name "Fridays for Future". After Thunberg addressed the 2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference, student strikes took place every week somewhere in the world. In May 2019, Thunberg was featured on the cover of Time magazine, which named her a "next generation leader" and noted that many see her as a role model.

HIGHLIGHTS: CLIMATE CHANGE; FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE; GLOBAL AMBASSADOR

Johanna Nejedlová is the co-founder of Konsent, an organisation aiming to change the conversation surrounding traditional Czech attitudes towards sex and sexual violence. Working along the platform of "Když to nechce, tak to nechce" ("If she doesn’t want to, she doesn’t want to"), Nejedlová has been a dynamic force in guiding young Czech women towards a different aspect of their own rights and power. Konsent crowdfunded money to do primary prevention on sexual violence for teenagers. In one year, the organization educated about 1200 kids via a complex workshop on consent, respect and rape myths. Konsent’s self-help group for victims of sexual violence helps many young girls fully recover and support each other after being assaulted. Additionally, Nejedlová herself has joined a subcommittee of Czech Women’s Lobby focusing on violence against women, wrote a column about current women’s rights and feminist topics to relevant newspapers and radio, and additionally teamed up with artists to promote a groundbreaking art installation forcing the public to acknowledge the reality of incest and sexual violence.

HIGHLIGHTS: WOMEN’S RIGHTS; KONSENT; PROVIDING EDUCATION; VICTIM SUPPORT
During the 2019 European Parliament Elections, Síona Cahill campaigned tirelessly to encourage more student engagement and voter registration, by launching the #GenerationVote campaign, and created a 'student manifesto' for MEP candidates on climate change and education. Additionally, Cahill launched and created the #GetRegd National Voter Registration campaign to register students to vote, and during the 2018 Irish Referendum, she coordinated colleges in registering over 27,000 students in order to vote. Cahill also organised a ‘National Voter Registration day’ 4 years in a row, incorporating other youth sector bodies in Ireland. Moreover, she has delivered workshops and seminars on women and leadership, campaigning and activism – Cahill set up the USI ‘Women Lead Project’ in 2016, directly training over 120 women and self-defining women in capacity-building for leadership roles and elected positions in the students unions, student societies and community organisations, resulting in a significant increase of young female students’ unions candidates. Moreover, she has been the main contributor to the USI’s ‘Student response to the British Exit of the European Union’. Cahill has empowered students, in particular female students, to become part of the conversation around Europe, Brexit and social issues affecting Ireland and the rest of the EU.

HIGHLIGHTS: USI; EP ELECTIONS VOTER TURNOUT; STUDENT EMPOWERMENT