

FEATURES

Digitalisation and Human Rights Campaign • Second Annual WIPP Index • Generation Equality Forum • Mind the Gender Gap: UNCSW • Linking Climate Justice and Human Rights • New Human Rights Programme Officer

Astrid Thors
Chairperson of LI Human Rights Committee

Dear liberal friends,

Since the last bulletin, the entire global liberal family was devastated by the death of LI's President of Honor, former MEP, former LI President and at the moment of his passing in late April, also president of the liberals in Europe, ALDE, Hans van Baalen.

With his passing, the human rights community loses a strong supporter and a reliable partner. Hans van Baalen never shied away from raising human rights in the most difficult situations. He also knew so many actors to whom to turn when needed, for public or for more confidential interventions. His strong convictions really made a difference. We will greatly miss him and his generosity. Our thoughts are with his family.

At the time of writing, we follow the upsetting news from Afghanistan and possibly the last evacuations of Western citizens and persons with connections to those countries that were part of the operations. As LI we issued the statement that you have seen and we are urging responsible countries to provide visas and entry to people in danger. This is the most urgent task. But I do not belong to those who say that the evacuations are a defeat for crises management, civilian or military, as the conditions are so special in the country and the challenges so enormous. Mistakes have been made, but investments in education are always useful. Lessons are to be learned, but let us not draw the wrong ones.

At the same time we once more also see how authoritarian leaders are using innocent people to put pressure on countries that are firm in their actions against them. The example being Belarusian Mr Lukashenka who is "inviting" people to use his country as a transit towards the Baltic states and Poland. His behaviour leads to both human tragedies and further erosion of the asylum system.

The unfolding of other events has risked that we forget the sad anniversary of the protests in Belarus. But we do not, as the behaviour of Lukashenka is getting more erratic all the time, and new restrictions are harming the media. He certainly cannot take any measures without the blessing of his big neighbour.

We admire the courage of all the activists in Belarus and we hope that the sanctions against those responsible for the crimes against the Belarusian people and its defenders will be watertight and thus effective, leading sooner than later to the freedom of all those unlawfully jailed. Unfortunately, what is happening in Belarus can be taken as a rehearsal of what might be the case in Russia as elections are approaching.

Additionally, in Latin America, where democracy heroes are increasingly endangered and imprisoned. The entire LI leadership got extremely concerned for our VP Kitty Monterrey when on late Friday night some weeks ago heard of her fate, the unlawful stripping of her citizenship and the dissolution of her party. We are happy Kitty is safe, but the international community must stand with her and the opposition in Nicaragua.

Unfortunately, going from continent to continent, I could continue enumerating situations where liberal leaders and activists are facing enormous difficulties and endangering their own lives.

The picture is not brighter than previously, to say the least. But at the same time, we can notice how some organisations in the sports world are starting to take responsibility, like moving the ice-hockey championships out of Belarus, and how many sportspersons are taking clear positions against discrimination and in favour of human rights.

Technology can also help us in detecting abuse – a new example was the Tella documentation application that can be used in difficult circumstances with limited access to the internet, as recently in Myanmar. It was recognized by the World Justice Project this spring.

Some more good news is also that Egyptian liberal democracy activist Esraa Abdel Fattah has been released from jail. And that civil society across the world greatly influences the behaviour of firms as consumers and citizens. The Black Lives Matter movement has certainly shown its strength. Finally, racist practices are denounced in many places. This gives us strength to continue the work.

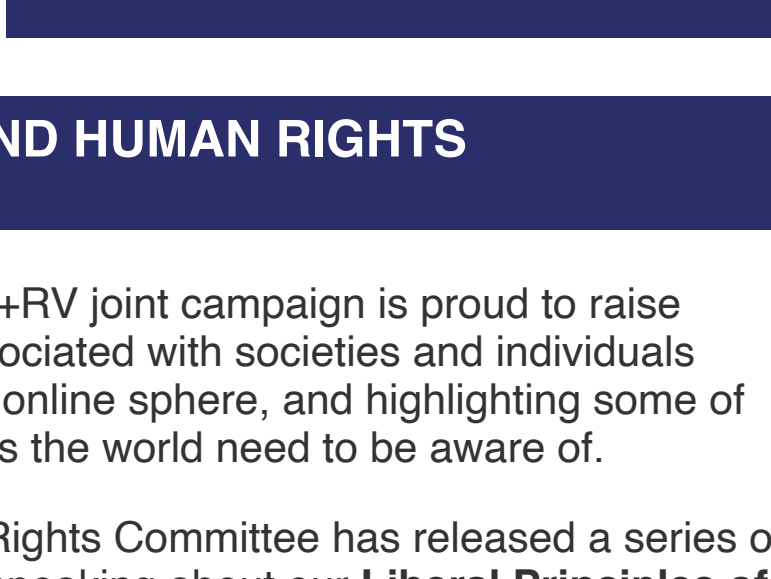
With these words, I wish all of you strength for the coming season 2021-2022, where much work awaits us. Fortunately, Irene Wang has joined us as the new Human Rights Officer. It has been a delight to start to work with her. The entire global liberal family wishes her welcome. And I am also very happy that Klara Fallt, has started her internship with LI.

Sincerely,

Astrid Thors

The devastating humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan poses a high risk for the future of women and girls, LI's Human Rights Committee warns

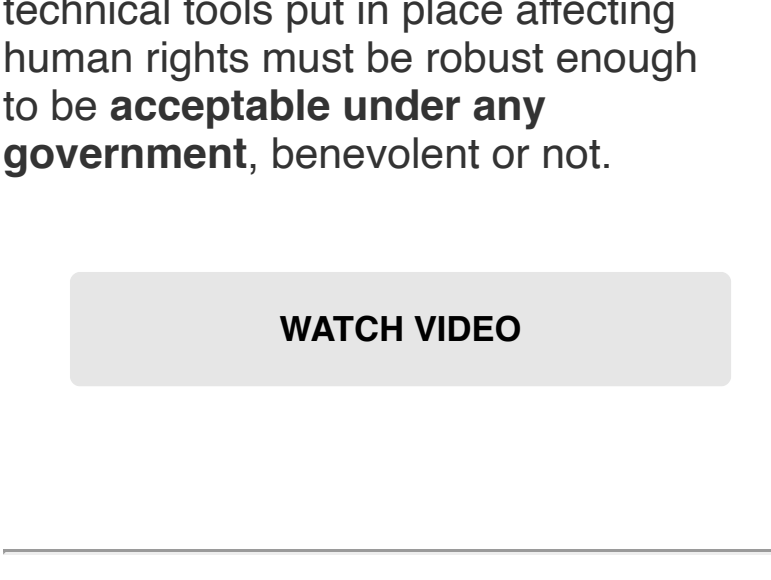
In a statement, Liberal International's Human Rights Committee expresses its deep concern over the recent events in Afghanistan and calls on state leaders and international stakeholders to make joint efforts to protect civilians in the country. The Committee condemns the extrajudicial killings and expresses its concern for the future of women and girls under the Taliban rule.



READ STATEMENT

Liberal International-RELIAL joint statement: Forcibly dissolving liberal opposition has criminalised democracy in Nicaragua

On Friday 6 August, the regime of **Daniel Ortega** in Nicaragua dissolved the main opposition party, Citizens for Freedom, and stripped its leader, Liberal International Vice President **Kitty Monterrey**, of her Nicaraguan citizenship. These are the actions of a regime that has acted to criminalize democracy and a president who is struggling to contain the desire of the Nicaraguan people to live in freedom.



READ STATEMENT

DIGITALISATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Teaming up with **Radikale Venstre**, the LI+RV joint campaign is proud to raise awareness of the human rights issues associated with societies and individuals increasingly conducting themselves in the online sphere, and highlighting some of the key issues that liberal politicians across the world need to be aware of.

Over the past few months, the LI Human Rights Committee has released a series of videos featuring prominent fellow liberals speaking about our **Liberal Principles of Digitalisation and Human Rights**. These introduce the background behind LI's digitalisation principles and why they matter for the protection of human rights.

READ MORE ABOUT THE LI+RV CAMPAIGN

Principle #2: Any legislation and technical tools put in place affecting human rights must be robust enough to be **acceptable under any government**, benevolent or not.

WATCH VIDEO

Principle #3: Access to digital communications and the right to information should be **inclusive**, where no part of the world or group in society is left behind.

WATCH VIDEO

Principle #7: Limit mass surveillance and develop alternative instruments to keep wrongdoers under surveillance without degrading the privacy and software security of the entire society and every human being.

WATCH VIDEO

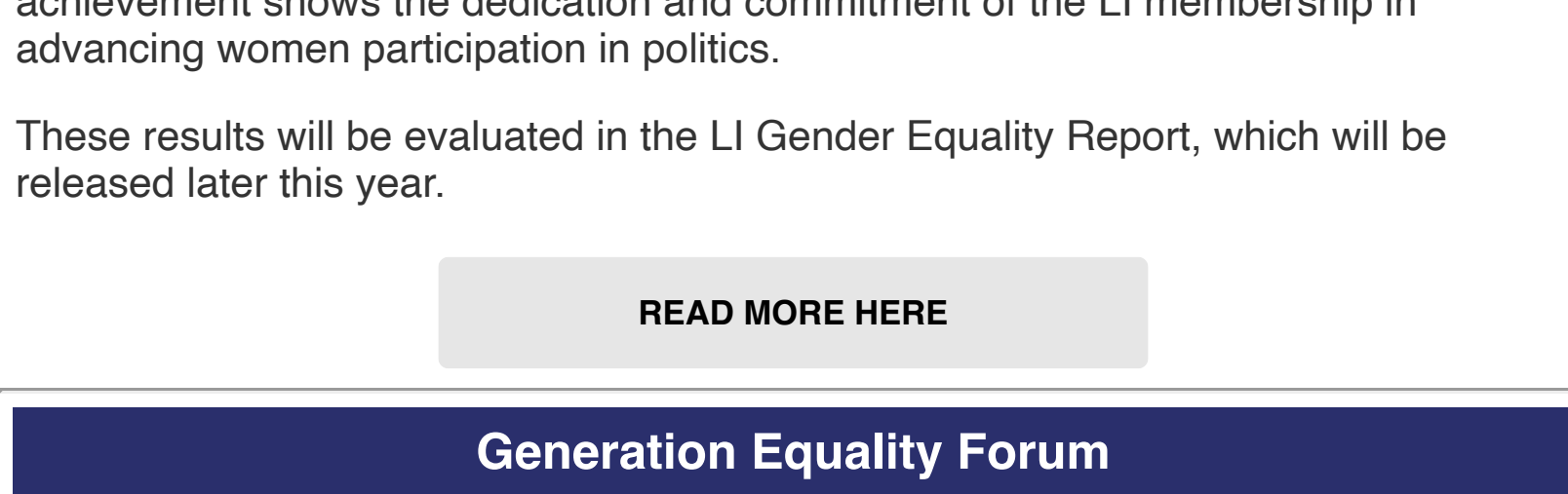
Principle #9: Transparency, accountability, and comprehensibility in the use of **artificial intelligence** must be ensured, to clarify chains of responsibility and ensure traceability in decision-making, and to allow societal oversight of the algorithms that influence the lives of citizens.

WATCH VIDEO

Principle #10: Legislation on content moderation, aimed at managing hate speech, disinformation, or other malicious content online, **must not arbitrarily restrict the freedom of speech** or encourage private companies to pre-emptively censor content.

WATCH VIDEO

CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND ANNUAL WIPP INDEX



As a long-standing advocate for women in politics, Liberal International is thrilled to index the conclusion of the 2021 Survey for the **Women in Political Parties Index (WIPP Index)**.

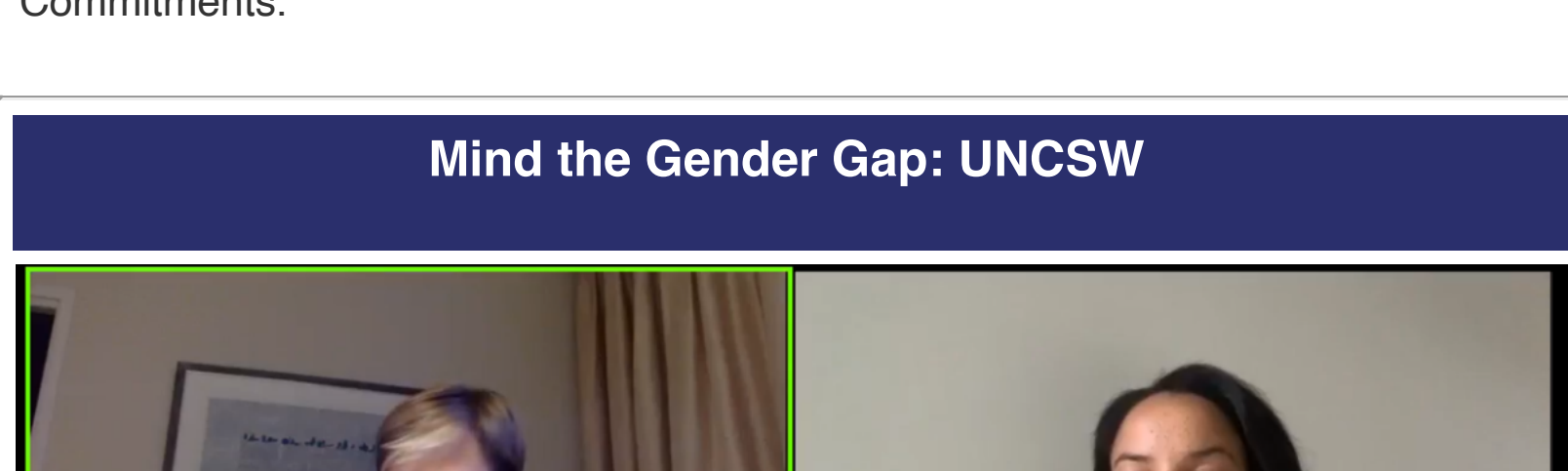
Launched in 2020, the first-of-its-kind WIPP Index was designed to assist LI member parties in boosting inclusivity within their party structures and to advance the presence of women in politics.

The LI Secretariat would like to issue a warm thank you to the member parties who participated. The success of this year's survey saw an increase of 80%, with 36 LI member parties participating this year, up from 20 parties in 2020. This achievement shows the dedication and commitment of the LI membership in advancing women participation in politics.

These results will be evaluated in the LI Gender Equality Report, which will be released later this year.

READ MORE HERE

Generation Equality Forum

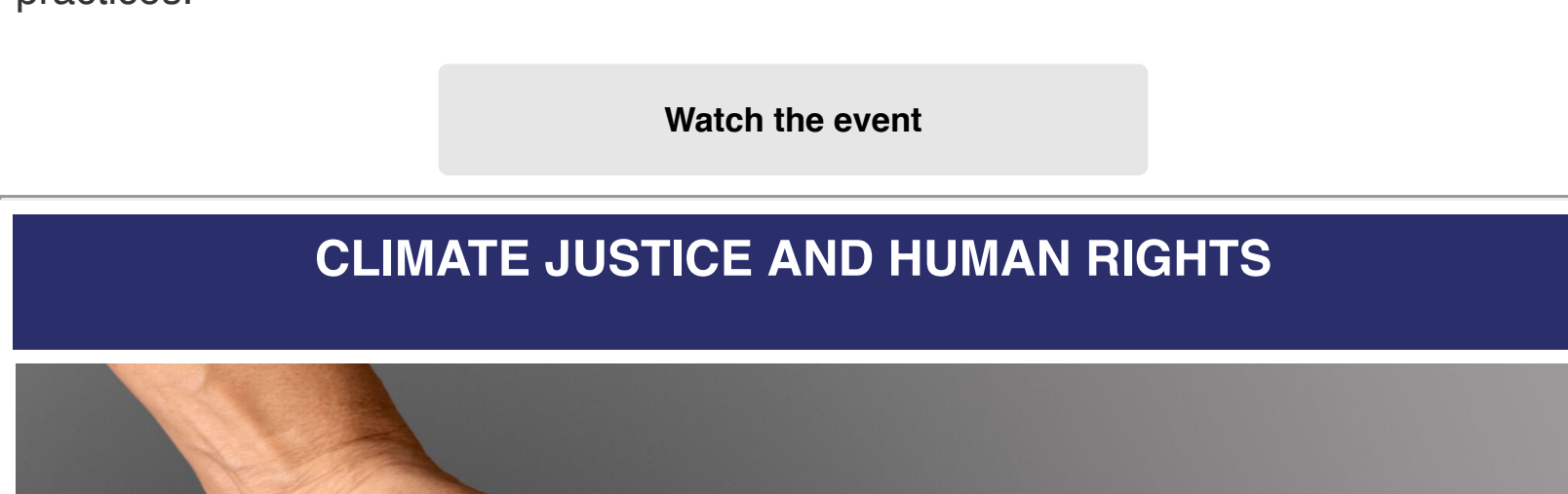


In the run-up to the Generation Equality Paris Forum, Liberal International submitted a commitment to UN Women's Generation Equality Commitment Maker. This platform provides organisations with an opportunity to make pledges to implement any of the actions outlined in the **Global Acceleration Plan on Gender Equality**.

Liberal International pledged to continue producing the WIPP Index in order to measure and enhance the position and influence of women in political parties, conducting education and training for women, and working to promote women's role in politics in regional organizations around the world.

This commitment will be showcased during the Action Coalition High-Level sessions at the Generation Equality Paris Forum and featured on a virtual World Map of Commitments.

Mind the Gender Gap: UNCSW

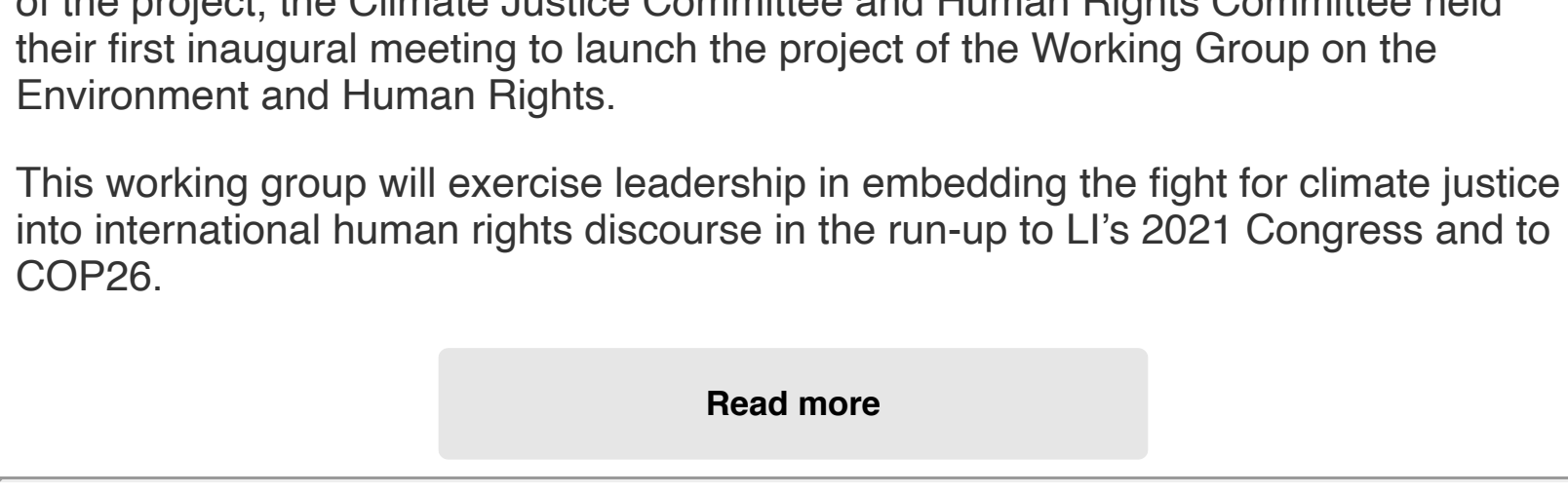


Held one week after **International Women's Day**, experts gathered at Liberal International's side event: **Mind the Gender Gap: Supporting Women in Political Parties**, for the **NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York**. They discussed what political parties can do to better support the advancement of women in politics.

Drawing on best practices from **LI's inclusivity handbook**, itself based on the results of LI's WIPP Index survey, the panel exchanged top tips and shared best practices.

Watch the event

CLIMATE JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS



This month, **Liberal International** and **ALDE-PACE** launched a project to find the missing link between human rights and the environment. As an integral component of the project, the Climate Justice Committee and Human Rights Committee held their first inaugural meeting to launch the project of the Working Group on the Environment and Human Rights.

This working group will exercise leadership in embedding the fight for climate justice into international human rights discourse in the run-up to LI's 2021 Congress and to COP26.

Read more

STATEMENTS

Read the statement

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UPDATE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Appointment of New Programme Officer

Get to know Irene

New Staff Intern

Get to know Klara

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UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
Until further notice	Liberal International Office working remotely
13 Sep 2021	48th UN HRC Council
1-3 Oct 2021	LI 204th Executive Committee Meeting

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