

English translation of a telegram from:

The President of the Italian Republic

Addressed to:

Dr Joseph H.H. Weiler

President

European University Institute

Villa Salviati – Via Bolognese 156

50139 Florence

I would like to extend my warm greetings to the illustrious guests and the organisers of the 6th “State of the Union” Conference organised by the European University Institute that this year celebrates forty years of activity.

This year’s theme – the role of women in Europe – is a key priority.

The European Union has made great strides in strengthening the role of women in all areas of its Member States’ societies, gradually eliminating the inequalities still existing between women and men in diverse sectors. However, releasing the full potential of women on the labour market, and more generally, in the social fabric of the countries of Europe remains a goal we have yet to achieve – starting with the presence of women in our national and European institutions.

Women play a fundamental role, not only in terms of economic development, but especially in promoting human rights, education, fostering social cohesion, conflict resolution and building more peaceful, secure societies.

Women contribute with their invaluable perspectives and innovative approaches, a natural inclination to mediation and greater capacity for dialogue and openly coming to terms with diversities, that we, in an increasingly interconnected world, have to deal with on a daily basis.

These particular female skills are not yet, however, sufficiently safeguarded, and unfortunately much remains to be done to reduce the dramatic phenomenon of violence – both physical and psychological – inflicted on women.

Ensuring that women play an even stronger, more incisive role in our societies, implementing promptly and fully the principle of gender equality and so lift the veil of ignorance that still curtails the freedom of women and tramples on their dignity, means investing in the future.

I am sure that your meeting in the next few days will provide new and useful points of reflection that will help ensure that the role of women in Europe and in Italy will be increasingly recognized and beneficial to our societies.

With this hope, may I once again extend my best wishes to all those present for a successful meeting,

Sergio Mattarella