

For an inclusive feminist Europe



Stand up for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights in your EU election campaign!

The European Union (EU) is facing many obstacles in upholding its core values. Challenges such as the COVID pandemic, the Russian war against Ukraine, and the climate crisis have created unprecedented uncertainty around our common future, and have increased existing inequalities, particularly for women and girls in all their diversity. The rise of authoritarian regimes and populist movements has led to growing opposition against EU values such as: the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and equality, including a backlash against gender equality and women's rights.

Ahead of the pivotal moment that are the European elections, political parties must take a bold stand in the defence of EU values. The EU should actively tackle intersecting systems of oppression such as patriarchy, racism, neo-colonialism, and neo-liberalism. It should strive towards **a world where everyone can enjoy the same rights, and lead free and safe private and family lives, free from sexism, coercion, and violence.**

We call on European political parties to put inclusive feminism at the heart of their electoral programmes, and to commit to further advancing gender equality and women's rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in the EU and beyond.

An inclusive feminist Europe that promotes gender equality, women's human rights and SRHR in all fields, as EU values

No EU Member State has fully achieved gender equality in any field¹, even though equality between women and men is a core value of the EU, enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. SRHR are human rights, and a prerequisite to achieving gender equality. However, legislation and access vary greatly within and across EU Member States, which is particularly harmful to those most affected by intersecting forms of discrimination² and oppression. It is time for the EU to **place women's rights, gender equality, SRHR and social justice at the heart of its policymaking** – adopting an intersectional feminist approach, both within its borders and beyond, to ensure that the needs of people in all their diversity are addressed³.

WE CALL ON EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO COMMIT IN THEIR MANIFESTO TO:

- **Affirm SRHR as human rights and core EU values.** A critical step would be to support the inclusion of SRHR in the EU Treaties and of the right to abortion in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- **Apply a gender and intersectional lens, that includes SRHR, in all future EU policies** – i.e. implement gender mainstreaming – (on Gender Equality, LGBTI Equality, Youth, Roma, Health, Care, Social Rights, Human Rights, Democracy, Civic Space, Rule of Law, Climate, etc.).
- **Connect environmental and social justice issues in EU climate action;** and consider both how the climate crisis is caused by intersecting systems of oppression, and how to tackle the disproportionate impact the climate crisis has on women.
- **Support the adoption and proper implementation of an EU intersectional feminist foreign policy.**
- **Implement gender budgeting and adopt a new Multiannual Financial Framework** that ensures EU's internal and external funding instruments take a gender-transformative and intersectional approach, promote gender equality, non-discrimination, women's rights and SRHR, and support relevant CSOs, including through increased targeted budget lines.

An inclusive feminist Europe that puts an end to sexual and gender-based violence

Despite its commitment to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the EU still has a long way to go. **SGBV remains widespread** across the EU and worldwide, and increased during COVID-19. **SRHR are an undeniable component of the fight against SGBV**, from prevention to providing survivors with the care they need.

WE CALL ON EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO COMMIT IN THEIR MANIFESTO TO:

- **Prevent and combat all forms of SGBV, and adopt and implement effective EU policies in this regard,** including the Directive on combatting violence against women and domestic violence. Future EU measures should include comprehensive sexuality education, which challenges harmful gender norms and helps young people develop respectful relationships, as a key prevention measure. Definitions of SGBV should be harmonised across the EU, particularly of rape as the absence of consent.

Violations of SRHR, including gynaecological and obstetric violence and the denial of abortion care, should be recognised and combatted as forms of GBV. Survivors of sexual violence should be guaranteed access to essential support services, including SRH care.

- **Push for the ratification and full implementation of the Istanbul Convention by the EU and all Member States.**

An inclusive feminist Europe that counters the threats against its values

In recent years, authoritarian, regressive, misogynistic movements have risen within, and outside, the EU. Their concerted efforts aim to undermine European values: the rule of law, democracy, and respect for human rights, including equality and non-discrimination and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. **More than ever, gender equality, women's rights, LGBTI rights and reproductive freedom are under threat**, as are the civil society organisations (CSOs) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) who defend them.

WE CALL ON EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO COMMIT IN THEIR MANIFESTO TO:

- **Defend EU values by ensuring the EU has the political will and necessary tools,** to enforce respect for the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, including SRHR, and to guarantee an enabling and safe civic space. Firmly condemn any attacks on EU values, including on SRHR, women's rights and bodily autonomy.
- **Support CSOs and WHRDs, who promote gender equality,** non-discrimination, women's rights and SRHR: financially, through EU internal and external funding instruments; but also politically: firmly condemn threats and attacks, protect, meaningfully consult, and give visibility to these CSOs and WHRDs.

Read more: <https://en.europe.ippf.org/how-can-the-european-union-deliver-on-reproductive-freedom/>

1. As demonstrated by EIGE's 2022 Gender Equality Index.
2. On grounds of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ethnic, religious or socio-economic background, age, disability, health status, or any other grounds.
3. When it comes to access to SRHR in Europe, particular attention should be paid, among others, to women, young people, LGBTI people, people living with HIV, people living with disabilities, sex workers, Roma people and other ethnic minorities, migrant people.



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IPPF European Network cares.

We are working through our 30 autonomous national Member Associations across Europe and Central Asia so that all women, men, children and young people can lead safe and dignified sexual and reproductive lives, free from harm and discrimination.