



EMPOWER. FIGHT. RESIST.

FIVE YEARS OF **FEMINIST** STRUGGLE IN EUROPE

This book is a tribute to all the smart, amazing and BRAVE FEMINISTS, who have fought the last five years for a more equal, more open, fairer European Union. It gives you a peak into the diversity of topics we were able to work on together with activists from all over Europe and beyond. With this book, we want to say thank you to all the breath-taking, strong and determined WOMEN and men we had the honour to work with building a feminist Europe. You empower us. With you, we fight. TOGETHER WE WILL RESIST.

The last five years have shown that it matters. It is important who sits in the European Parliament; it is vital what kind of majorities dominate. That is why the upcoming election is key. They will decide in which direction Europe will head - back into the dark ages or forward towards a progressive future. Together with all of you, we want to set a feminist agenda for Europe.

by “women,” we are referring to all people who identify themselves as a woman

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FIGHT.

RESIST.

**FIVE YEARS OF FEMINIST
STRUGGLE IN EUROPE**





“Never forget that a political, economic or religious crisis will be enough to cast doubt on women’s rights. These rights will never be vested. You’ll have to stay vigilant your whole life.”

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR, French writer (1908-1986)



The feminist struggle has often been seen as a sided political priority, a battle many have tried to minimise by reminding us how much better off we are compared to a century ago – that a lot of progress has been made and that the fight is nearly won. We need to challenge this. A little equality is still better than no equality, but a little equality is not an equality. There is no such thing as a little equality. It's achieved or not.

The pay, pension and employment gaps are still there. Access to stable work is more difficult for women who tend to remain trapped in low-paid, precarious careers, and in-work poverty. Women's ability to participate equally in society is still affected by disproportionate exposure to gender-based violence, with one in three women in the EU the victim of sexual violence. Women are under-represented at a political level and they are still left out of main decision-making positions and processes, especially those whose marginalised political position intersects with other forms of discrimination (such as migrant women, women with disabilities, LGBTI* women or women from diverse origins, religions or ethnicity).

Failing to respect women's rights is a threat to society as a whole. Taking control over women's bodies, confining them to their reproductive role, is a way for authoritarian leaders and regimes to demonstrate their power.

Asserting male dominance not only narrows women's space of citizenship, it narrows everyone's and leads to a loss of democracy.

But these challenges are not left unanswered. We have witnessed millions of citizens worldwide protesting the backlash against women's and LGBTI* rights or engaging in political actions to advance the traditions and practices. We have seen the rise of global solidarity and cooperation and we, the Greens, stand proudly as an ally – as a political party that takes the feminist struggle to the institutions, to the parliaments. We work hard to ensure that gender equality and attention to intersecting inequalities is at the center of all policies. Because gender equality is not only a problem to be solved, it's a solution and a tool to advance our societies.

This book tells you the stories and voices of fierce activists and experts. People who resist and organise resistance to the women's rights backlash; who advocate for interlinking the fight for gender equality with key struggles such as climate change, racism or tax justice; who denounce the gender pay gap; who stand up to secure sexual and reproductive rights; who will not rest until gender-based violence is eradicated. We are happy to be able to contribute and build a platform through which their stories can be shared. Women are done with being silenced and we, the Greens are and will continue to be the party through which women can channel their voice.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Executive
Committee Member of the European Green Party (EGP)

AN
INTRODUCTION.

FROM THE STREETS TO THE PARLIAMENT: TIME FOR A FEMINIST AGENDA

In 2019, equal rights should be considered fundamental for all women in the EU. In 2019, we are still fighting for the self-evidence that every woman deserves equal rights and the protection thereof.

If there's anything the last years have shown us, it's that equal rights for women have become a prime battleground for right-wing populists, nationalists and neo-conservatives all over Europe. It doesn't matter whether it's city councillors in Verona declaring their city pro-life, or whether it's the Coalition for Family in Romania pushing for a referendum to ban marriage equality – the strategies are the same, the rhetoric interchangeable. A strong, well-organised and immensely well-funded coalition of so-called pro-life defenders, collectively fighting the “gender-gaga” and “LGBTI* madness”, is connected across the continent and beyond. ¹

These developments do not stand without a response. In recent years, we have witnessed a new mobilisation – diverse groups, young and old feminists, anti-racism activists, and LGBTI* campaigners have set out to fight back. From Poland's Black Monday protest against a total ban on abortion and climate activists demanding gender justice to feminists across Spain striking on the 8th of March to bring the country to a standstill, activists are setting the political agenda. Over the last five years, we have carried these messages to the European Parliament and worked on setting a feminist agenda.

The drive of activists has become our engine for fighting back – not only to counter the backlash, but to advance.

¹ “Restoring the Natural Order”: The religious extremists' vision to mobilize European societies against human rights on sexuality and reproduction, 2018

“WE HAVE HAD THE HONOUR OF MARCHING ALONGSIDE AMAZINGLY BRAVE WOMEN’S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION.”

SELF-DETERMINATION

In the last five years we have managed to include the principle of access to safe and legal sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in all major reports of the European Parliament. Together with our colleagues from other parties, we have established the “All of US” group, which fights for the right to self-determination, irrespective of party affiliation.

We have supported women in El Salvador in their fight to change a criminal code completely banning abortion with an urgency resolution of the European Parliament. We supported the “She Decides” campaign, which became a global movement to counter the massive drop in foreign aid related to sexual rights and reproductive health. This drop came about after Trump stopped all US-American aid related to legal abortion services or referrals, while also barring advocacy for abortion law reform.

AN INTRODUCTION

At the same time, we have supported local, regional and national movements of women who fight for their right to self-determination. The courageous battle of Polish women has inspired us to not give in at European level.

... IT’S ALL ABOUT POWER RELATIONS

Two and a half years ago, reports on sexual harassment in the European Parliament hit the news. While attempts have been made to label these as tragic exceptions, we have made clear that it has been and continues to be a structural problem. The debates started by the #MeToo movement have nothing to do with sex: it’s all about power.

Let’s be clear – sexual harassment does not occur because the harasser is not aware that it’s wrong. It’s not a question of cultural misunderstanding or misperception. Sexual harassment happens because the harasser thinks that he or she can get away with it. This has to change.

Of course, there's not one single answer to changing our societies in order to free ourselves from sexual harassment – instead, there are numerous puzzle pieces that must fit together. One crucial area, key to restructuring power relations, is gender parity. We need to work towards a society in which power is truly shared by all genders. Over the last five years we have seen close to no movement on the Women on Boards Directive, which is designed to make sure at least 40% of non-executive directors on company boards are women. If we're going to take the consequences of the #MeToo movement seriously, this is exactly where action is needed.

In the European Parliament, we have been fighting for structural change. The #MeToo movement has done a tremendous job of keeping the issue on the agenda, making it clear that we will not settle for a bad compromise, and that we are tired of being fobbed off with bureaucratic excuses. Time is up. The European Parliament has a role model function, and it's time that those who are responsible step up and live by the promise of a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment in the European Parliament.

... IT'S ALL ABOUT LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

One thing is clear: the European Commission has paid little to no attention to furthering gender equality within the EU. Not too long ago the European Union led by example – milestones for anti-discrimination policy were put forward at the European level, finally pushing Member States to move forward. These times have clearly passed. Throughout the last five years and earlier we have been demanding that the European Union Commission put forward a directive on fighting gender-based violence. Violence against women and gender-based violence continue to be one of the most common breaches of fundamental rights inside the European Union. It is the most brutal form of discrimination against women. And yet, up to now, no such proposal has been put forward.

That the European Union did not ratify the Istanbul Convention (the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence) is much more than a missed opportunity. Right-wing populists have instrumentalised the convention,

starting a nasty and – unfortunately, far too successful – campaign against its ratification because it “promotes the idea that gender is a social construct”. The fact that conservatives and some social democratic governments in the Member States buy into the arguments of right-wing populists is an absolute disgrace. The Istanbul Convention is about one thing: ending violence against women. Nothing else.

Its ratification would change the lives of women in the EU, making them safer, and building a future in which they can live free of any form of violence. This battle is not over yet; it’s a problem that won’t simply pass with time, which is why we will continue to pressure governments and the European Commission to deliver.

Over the last five years, we have visited women’s shelters in Hungary and Greece,

travelled to the headquarters of Ireland’s “Repeal the 8th” campaign, joined the feminist strikes in Spain and walked alongside feminists in Germany, fighting to finally allow access to abortion information. We have had the honour of marching, fighting and protesting alongside amazingly brave women’s rights activists across the European Union and beyond. This has been our motivation to work hard for change in the European Parliament and it will continue to be our motivation for the years to come.

Attacks by the driving forces of the conservative backlash have become harsher, but so has the counter movement – we are more, and we are louder. The next five years will be key for the kind of Europe we want to build. We are up for the fight to set a feminist agenda.

Terry Reintke and Ernest Urtasun, Members of the European Parliament and Greens/EFA Coordinators of the Women’s Rights and Gender Equality Committee

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of feminist parenthood

NAME.

Mary Collins

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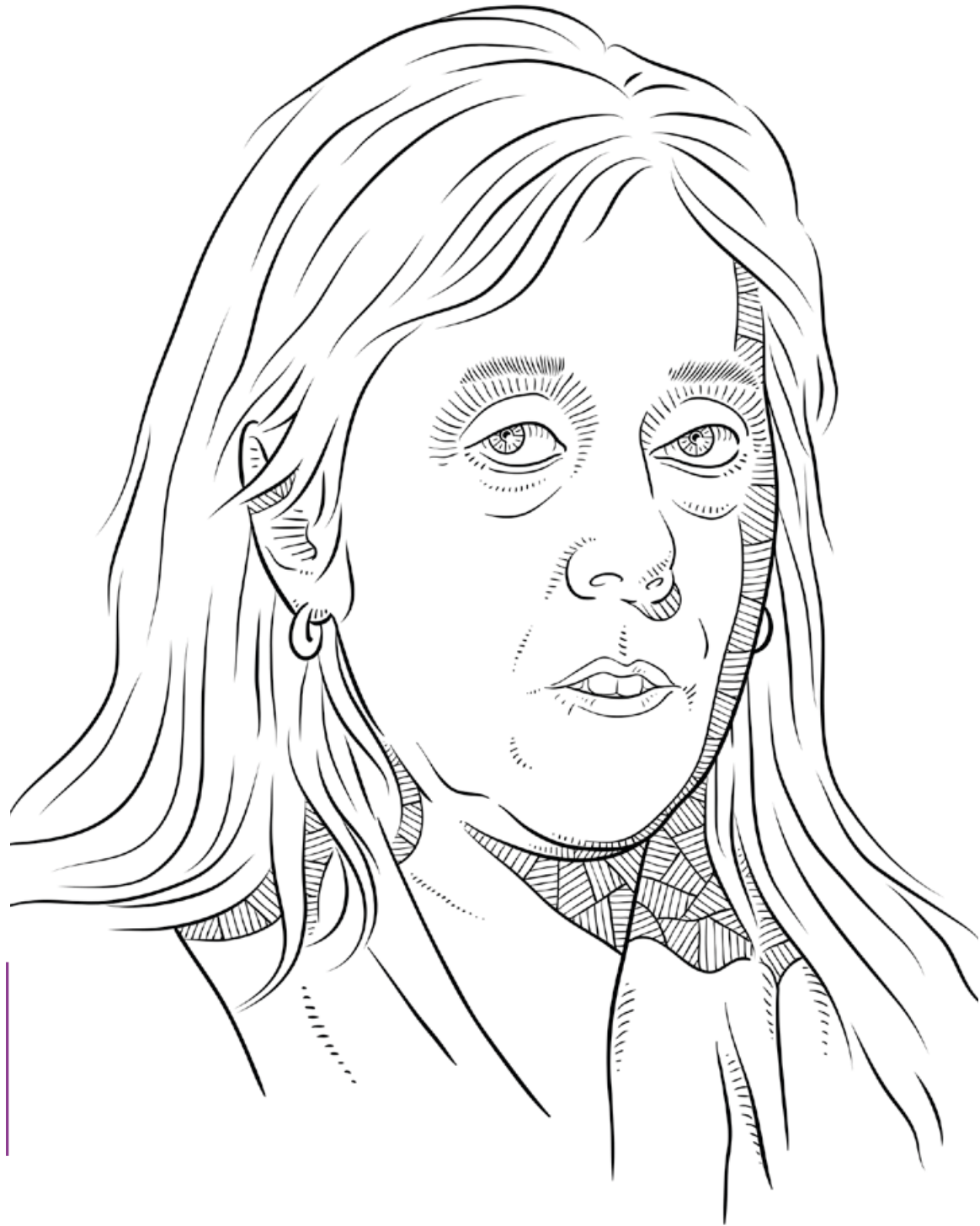
FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Frida Kahlo

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“It isn't what we say or think that defines us, but what we do.”

Jane Austen



MARY COLLINS

A NEW WORLD IS ON ITS WAY

The world is rapidly changing — only clear, decisive vision and strong female leadership will help us weather the storm and emerge with new consideration for ourselves and our planet, argues Mary Collins.

As 2019 begins, the feeling of standing on shifting sands accelerates. This is both daunting and exciting. Daunting because our world leaders are failing us, because of the backlash against women's rights in some countries, because of rising populism, and all the *isms* that make our world a hostile place, and because we're failing to take the challenges of our planet seriously.

But it's exciting too, as a new era awakens in feminist, youth, social, and tax justice movements, ecological wake-up calls and #MeToo. Steering these choppy waters towards safe harbour will

require solid navigation skills and a clear vision of where we are heading. We will definitely need more women at the helm.

2019 is also European Parliament election year and an opportunity to set that ship in motion or to turn it around. Is it a moment to look back before moving forward, to ask what can or should be done differently?

After almost ten years of economic governance, the so-called European Semester, scarred by austerity and economic/monetary priorities, it's

“All future investments must be driven through the matrix of care.”

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legitimate to ask who has benefited and whether it was worth it. While we may have saved the Euro (thus far), we have lost many of our collective goods: reduced public services, wage freezes and cutbacks in many areas essential to our common needs — health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, investments in public housing, etc. All of this has led to an explosion in inequality and rising poverty, with a disproportional impact on women.

The next decade must address these issues; in fact, we must address them now. But how? One thread that weaves through our present and our future is care, both for each other and for our planet.

All future investments must be driven through the matrix of care. This means (re)investing in public care services across the life cycle; implementing the recent political agreement on work-life-balance to ensure that both women and men can become equal earners and equal carers throughout their lives; developing and implementing a gender-sensitive/ human rights-based approach to migration; and implementing an action plan for an ecologically sustainable planet.

Women have a vital role to play in leading the way. To address the democratic deficit in 2019, vote for parity democracy, for more women at the helm as the lighthouse is on the horizon.

It's time to move ahead. In the words of Arundhati Roy¹, “a new world is on its way, on a quiet day, I can hear her breath...”

¹ Indian author and human rights activist, winner of the Man Booker Prize for Fiction (1997) for her novel *The God of Small Things*.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



CUTS TO SPENDING ON public services and social security have a disproportionate gender impact because women rely more on these services, benefits and tax credits than men do.

THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER is a cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination within the EU, and part of the European Union's economic governance framework.

RESEARCH shows that if governments invested in high quality, free universal childcare, it would result in better childcare provision, higher tax revenue and a shift from spending on benefits to spending on public services. ¹

¹ <http://theconversation.com/austerity-isnt-working-for-everyone-especially-women-74115>

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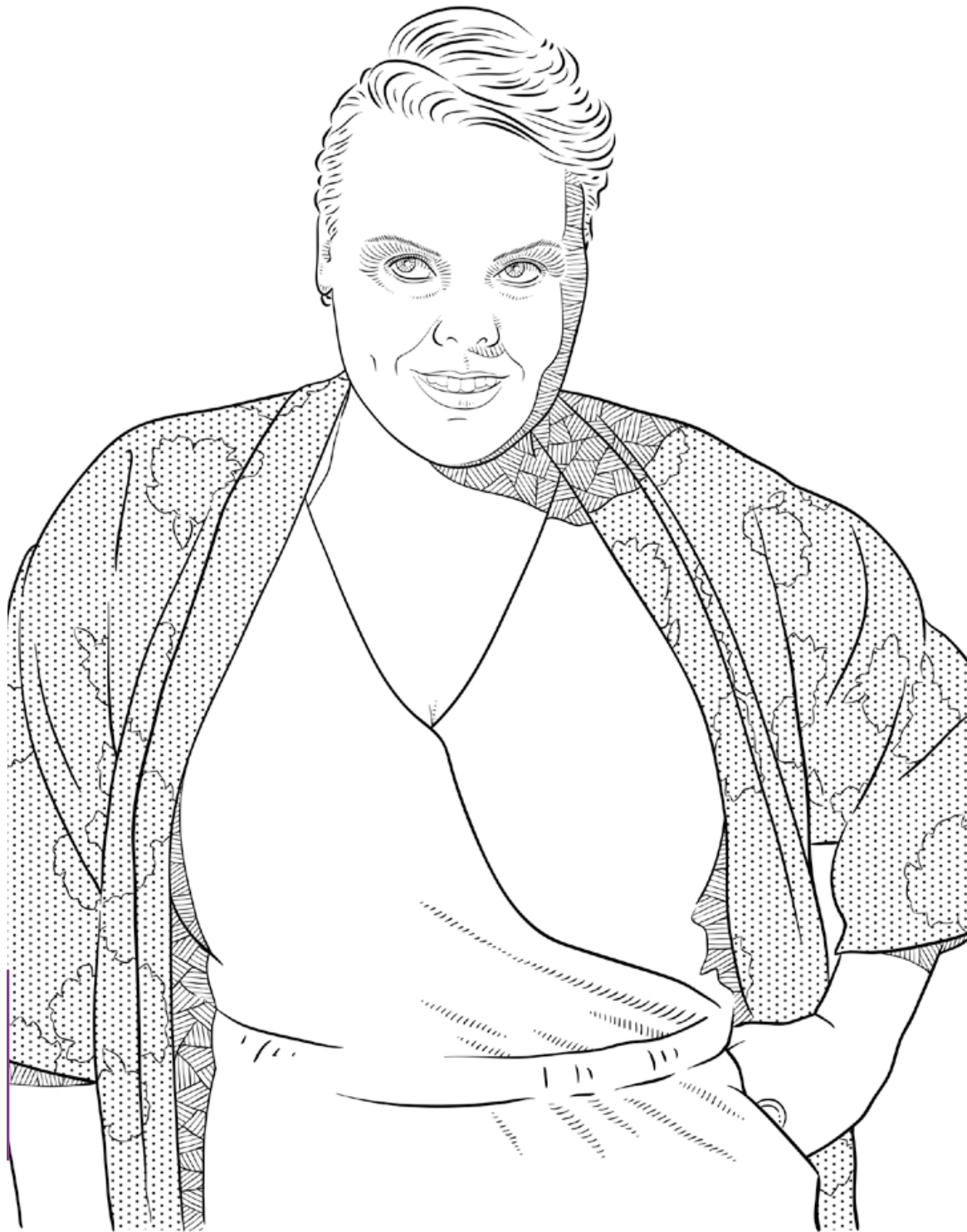
Frauen* Volksbegehren
#keinenMillimeter

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Johanna Dohnal (first
Austrian Minister for
Women's Affairs)

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“Women of the world
unite!”



LENA JÄGER

STILL FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY

From gatherings in a Vienna sitting room to a nationwide network of activists, the People's Initiative on Women's Rights in Austria has grown in size and scale, reflects Lena Jäger. The next step for this passionate group of feminists? Going beyond national borders to take the fight against the patriarchy to a global level.

STEP 1: HOW WE STARTED

In November 2016, a few days before the U.S. presidential elections and a month before the election of the Austrian President, a group of 30 women met in a Vienna living room. Both elections were struggles between a sexist on the one hand and a progressive voice on the other. Observing developments in Poland and in other European countries, none of us expected that abortion would once again become an issue.

With the inauguration of Donald Trump, a misogynist and right-wing populist would become the most powerful man in the world, changing the global political climate. In Austria, while the

progressive, pro-European camp won the 2016 presidential election, we didn't realise at the time that a right-wing conservative government would take over in less than a year.

STEP 2: UNITED IN FIGHTING THE BACKLASH

A sense of change and upheaval was in the air. Many of the more than one thousand women who joined us for the long or short term felt threatened, wary of a backlash, and feared the erosion of rights that had already been achieved. That fear, and at the same time, a strong belief that solidarity amongst women can bring about change, led to the decision to launch a second people's initiative on women's rights in Austria in the anniversary year of the first initiative of 1997.

“The greatest enemy we have encountered is a fear of change.”

It was to be a women’s initiative to meet the demands of our digitised, internationally connected world, demands that reflect a new, changed feminism that is simultaneously tangible, intersectional and understandable for all. One of the most important battles of politics in 2019: language – how to get in touch with people, build bridges between them, and disarm the weapons of populists.

3. OUR MOVEMENT

We decided to tell stories, the stories of the women and people who live in Austria and experience inequality. In the end, it doesn’t matter whether skin colour, sexuality, disability or gender discrimination are at play; the root of inequality is always, the oppression of many by few. We will find it in every country and fight it.

In the end, language was the key. Instead of using the term “non-binary” we said: “we want to decide freely how we live and who we love, without gender roles and clichés. Detached from social norms, for a world full of diversity.” These are some of the lines of our preamble. And it worked.

Several hundred women, people from all parts of the country, told their stories. Stories of single parents, of women who heard all their lives that they were “only women”. Stories of financial dependence and precariousness or stories of women trying to break through the glass ceiling. We listened, discussed and presented our demands.

Nine demands were developed in a participatory process and in collaboration with experts. They are demands that address economic inequality, such as the social inequality of women, as well as demands for the safety of the female body, which is still under attack.

4. HALF A MILLION SUPPORTERS

In two years, we have emerged as a loud political voice for women in Austria, receiving almost half a million signatures in a country with almost 6.5 million voters. We have established groups of female activists in seven of the nine federal states, reaching Austria’s population in every corner of the country.

The greatest enemy we have encountered is a fear of change, as well as a retreat into tradition and nationalism. It will take some time for women and all other marginalised groups to reach their goals, but we won’t stop fighting – neither national borders, nor the limitations of patriarchy will stop us.

It’s time to stand up and be listened to. We demand visibility and participation for all population groups, in politics, business, society and culture. In all areas of life. For genuine equality, for every one of us.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



THE AUSTRIAN GENDER EQUALITY petition acquired 481.959 votes and ranks 13th of all petitions ever filed in Austria.

THE PETITION FORMULATES demands in 9 key areas: sharing power, erasing the gender pay gap, equal sharing of care work, fighting against female poverty, childcare infrastructure, gender-sensitive education and media work, fighting violence against women, the right to decide over your own body, as well as a gender-sensitive asylum policy.

AUSTRIA has stagnated and even regressed on gender equality, despite passing an equal opportunities law in 1993. A 2016 study shows that out of all mayors in Austria, only 7% are women.

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Gotelind Alber

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**GenderCC-Women
for Climate Justice**

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

I never had role models,
I was always my own
role model. Pippi
Longstocking, rather
than anyone else

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“Life’s a bitch.
Now so am I!”
Catwoman



GOTELIND ALBER

MAKING EU CLIMATE POLICY GENDER-RESPONSIVE

Gotelind Alber, founder of GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice, calls for greater integration of gender into climate policy, alongside increased funding for gender-sensitive climate research projects.

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How can we make climate change policy-makers aware that gender is an issue that must be taken into consideration, not only in the global South, but also in the global North? We founded GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice ten years ago, as a worldwide network designed to do just that: fight for the full integration of gender into climate policy at all levels.

Comprising a diverse group of women from all over the world, with a majority of members from the

global South, we placed emphasis on gender issues in low-income countries, highlighting women's vulnerability to the impact of climate change and arguing that their needs and capacities must be taken into account.

RESHAPING THE CONVERSATION

At that time, most of the discussion around gender focused on vulnerability and adaptation; for example, on the higher number of female fatalities commonly seen during natural disasters, as well

as the additional burdens of care placed on them in times of drought, flooding and other extreme weather events.

The gender dimensions of climate change are well acknowledged in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process – gender is a regular item on conference agendas and a work programme on the subject has recently been extended. A Gender Action Plan addresses the underrepresentation of women in the process, the need for gender-responsive climate policy, and the prerequisites in terms of gender tools and capacity-building.

However, the debate still centres on gendered vulnerabilities and climate change effects, though we know that gender is clearly relevant to the mitigation of climate change. We also know that the needs, behaviours, preferences and capacities behind the drivers of climate change – energy, mobility and consumption – are also gender-differentiated and must, therefore, be considered in policies to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

THE EUROPEAN GENDER DIVIDE

Most European policy-makers point to developing countries when they debate gender and climate change, ignoring the persistent gender pay gap, gender pension gap and gender care gap that exists in even the most advanced European countries – gaps that ensure the bulk of unpaid (and under-salaried) care work is still carried out by women.

“The biggest unanswered question is: where is the money?”

Institutional settings in Europe and other industrialised parts of the world are still male-dominated, not only in terms of the share of women and men, but also when it comes to masculine structures, norms and values.

The EU and its institutions must take gender and climate justice into account in their policies, support other countries to do so, and push for the full integration of gender into all aspects of climate policy at UNFCCC levels.

A ROAD MAP FOR THE FUTURE

The EU Parliament has made steps in the right direction, but there's so much more to do. An annual or biannual action plan or road map with concrete steps, complemented by responsibilities, deadlines and an efficient monitoring mechanism would help, as might mandatory Gender Impact Assessments for policy initiatives in the fields of climate change, energy and transport. Let's make sure gender experts are involved in these assessments, so we can avoid trivialising the issue by ticking boxes without gaining deeper understanding.

A number of research projects at European levels clearly show that women are more prone to energy poverty, while men have larger carbon footprints due to their mobility behaviour and food preferences. To make progress we must include men and masculinities, and in the process motivate more men to challenge the status quo and support feminism.

Research must do more. Efforts have been made to integrate gender into EU research funding and researchers have been trained on the gender dimensions of environmental topics, but we can't stop there. For example, the 2018 calls for EU research projects (under the Horizon 2020 programme) on low-carbon energy and transport mentioned gender quite often; one, in particular, focused on women and mobility. But there are still too few researchers ready to engage with the subject and too few evaluation panel members with the necessary expertise to fully include gender in their appraisals.

THE GENDER INTO URBAN CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE

I have worked for many years with the Climate Alliance of European Cities on urban climate policy and as an independent researcher with an increasing focus on gender and climate justice. Realising that the urban climate policy community was lagging behind when it came to gender, I knew I needed to combine both topics.

In 2015, I successfully raised funds for a gender and urban climate policy project, Gender into Urban Climate Change Initiative (GUCCI). Supported by the International Climate Initiative of the German Environmental Ministry, it has recently been extended to cover 14 pilot cities in Mexico, India, Indonesia and South Africa.

We work with women's organisations in these countries to help carry out gender assessments of the cities' institutional settings, processes and climate policy approaches. Based on the results of the assessments and after consulting with stakeholders, policy recommendations for the cities are developed, while advocacy work targets urban decision-makers and practical pilot projects are being launched.

Once the project is finalised in 2020, we will invite these women's organisations to undertake a kind of South-North knowledge transfer – teaching European cities and initiatives how to carry out gender assessments, explaining their discoveries and recommending gender-responsive policies.

THE PITFALLS AHEAD

The biggest unanswered question: where is the money? It's hard to get funding for projects like GUCCI; increasingly, funding goes to much larger projects, often too big to handle for a relatively small NGO without an income. Moreover, funding considered to be gender-sensitive primarily goes into the economic empowerment of women, for example as micro-entrepreneurs in the renewable energy sector. While this is a noble cause indeed, funding like this often fails to generate reliable income for such women. Energy and climate policy simply can't become more gender-responsive if the rest of the world continues with business as usual.

Another challenge we face is the increasing noise made by climate change deniers; denying climate change often goes hand-in-hand with strong anti-gender attitudes. Both problems, climate change and gender inequality, need seismic structural shifts within our societies to challenge norms, privileges, preferences, and habits.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



PERSISTENT GENDER INEQUALITIES and the different social and economic reality between genders conditions women's responsibilities, vulnerabilities, and opportunities to respond and adapt to climate change.

WOMEN are responsible for more than 70% of water chores and management worldwide. In regions most affected by climate change, 70% of all women work in the agricultural sector but they do not participate in developing climate policies.

All aspects of climate change have a gender dimension: the causes, the impacts and the policies that respond to climate change can have different effects on women and men.

THE FIRST EVER GENDER ACTION PLAN under the UNFCCC was

adopted in 2017 at COP23 in Bonn (Germany). It aims to serve as a roadmap to ensure that gender equality is integrated in all climate change debates and actions at national and international levels.

THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) did not mention any gender or social issues. Women's organisations have been the key to putting gender on the climate agenda during the last 15 years.

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FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Simone Veil

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“Good girls go to heaven,
bad girls go everywhere.”

Jim Steinman



PETRA DE SUTTER

JOIN FORCES: ON GENDER, REPRODUCTION AND RIGHTS IN EUROPE

Petra De Sutter outlines her passionate perspective on the ideals of feminism, nurtured through her work as a gynaecologist and member of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Wary of accelerating right-wing aggression towards LGBTI* and women's rights, she urges the diverse campaigns of the European Union to unite behind one common goal.

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It is impossible to underestimate just how important human rights, the rule of law and democracy are within our everyday lives. As the basis of the rights and liberties of all men and women, they protect minorities and the most vulnerable in our societies.

As a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) since 2014 – parliamentary watchdog for these core values in

wider Europe – I have learned that they are the legacy of the Age of Enlightenment. On a more personal level, through my work as a gynaecologist, women's rights and sexual and reproductive rights are very dear to me.

On a daily basis I fight for better access to contraception and safe abortion, and against early marriage and female genital mutilation, in Europe and in the world, along with my fellow

parliamentarians of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Development (EPF). As a running candidate in the next European elections, I strive for equality and an inclusive society, with human rights acting as the beacons for my political journey.

COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD UNITE

In the aftermath of the decision by President “grab-them-by-the-pussy” Trump to reinstate the Global Gag Rule (which cuts funding for all organisations supposedly associated with abortion), the “She Decides” movement highlights the large community of people willing to fight for every woman to have the right to decide whether, with whom, and at what moment to have children. As a fundamental right, this is essential in order to end early marriage, expand opportunities for young women and achieve gender equality. This is just one example of the fights fought throughout the last years for a more feminist society.

That people of the same sex cannot marry or start a family in many European countries, and that today, even in a country such as France, lesbian couples have no access to assisted reproductive technologies is simply wrong. Forced sterilisation for transgender people is a serious human rights violation and must be abolished everywhere as soon as possible.

FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY

We have successfully voted in some resolutions and tabled a lot of written declarations during the last few years in PACE, securing the rights of transgender and intersex persons, and condemning the persecution of LGBTI* people in the Chechen Republic and elsewhere. But it hasn't always been straightforward. One of my own reports on surrogate motherhood failed to pass because of the violent reactions of conservative right-wing politicians, who did everything they could to squash debate on the subject.

I hoped to propose an international legal framework to protect children born through surrogacy arrangements, one that would help end medical tourism and exploitation. But everything was done to block the report. From procedural games in order to delay and discredit me as rapporteur, to aggressive and coordinated personal invective on social media, the attacks did not stop until the debate was over and the final vote lost. Each time the report was discussed I received hate tweets, while twice I witnessed demonstrations by religious fundamentalists in the street before the Council of Europe office in Paris.

“Feminists and LGBTI* activists must join forces in their fight for equal rights and non-discrimination.”

AN EMERGING CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE

Indeed, there is a growing right-wing ultraconservative movement in Europe, working against both women’s and LGBTI* rights. These groups (operating in a network called “Agenda Europe”) believe that the “natural order” of society must not be disturbed; giving women equal rights to men does not fit in with their bigoted world view – that women should stay at home and look after the children and that men should be the breadwinners of the family. Of course, in their view, a family consists of a man, a woman and their children. One such ultraconservative initiative “Mum, Dad & Kids” attempted to ask the European Commission to define marriage as a “permanent and faithful union of man and woman with the purpose of starting a family”. This openly homophobic campaign failed to receive enough support but shows the violence with which reactionary groups attack progressive values.

Both feminists and LGBTI* activist are the enemies of such groups because gender equality, same-sex marriage and definitely transgenderism are all seen as the same attack on the “natural” (divine) order on which societies should be based. According to their diktat, progressive feminists

and LGBTI* activists adhere to what they call the “gender ideology”, an attempt to abolish the differences between the genders. (Though this is pure nonsense, it’s important to understand this way of thinking, in order to understand and anticipate their actions.)

TOWARDS COMMON GOALS AND A SHARED VISION

That’s why feminists and LGBTI* activists must join forces in their fight for equal rights and non-discrimination. We are in this together. Equality and diversity go hand in hand, and European politicians can act as the champions in our common battle against the regression of our values.

It goes without saying that the right-wing conservative, conservative Agenda Europe network is supported by reactionary movements from outside Europe, both from the United States and the Russian Federation. Both Trump and Putin indeed seem to share similar views where gender is concerned; they are joined by powerful men all

over the globe, such as Erdoğan and Bolsonaro, but also within Europe by politicians such as Orbán and Le Pen. It was Orbán who wanted to abolish gender studies at universities (in addition to his harassment of the Central European University, which is now moving from Budapest to Vienna). In Poland, the government wants to tighten its anti-abortion legislation and cut the reimbursement of in-vitro fertilisation.

There remains an enormous amount of work to be done in the domains of gender equality and LGBTI* rights. I believe all progressive Europeans should join forces and proactively help move our agenda forward, an agenda of rights and liberties for all. Let’s go against the dogma and patriarchy of our grandparents’ era to establish an agenda of inclusion and diversity that will shape the Europe of tomorrow. We should do this through dialogue if possible, but as activists if necessary.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



MARRIAGE EQUALITY is only a reality in 13 Member States of the European Union; 14 Member States allow for joint adoptions of same-sex couples.

MORE THAN ONE IN FOUR LGBTI* individuals have either experienced physical/sexual violence or threats within the last five years, according to a 2012 survey conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

IN THE 2019 CONTRACEPTION ATLAS, Poland scored lowest in the European Union; in 2017 the nation ended free access to emergency contraception,

with the emergency contraception pill no longer available without prescription.

NAMES.

**Bertha de León and
Teodora del Carmen
Vázquez**

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

El Salvador

ORGANISATION.

**Colectiva Feminista para
el Desarrollo Local and
Agrupación Ciudadana
para la Despenalización
del Aborto**

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Judith Butler

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“We women do
not wish to have power
over men, but to have
it over ourselves.”**

Mary Shelley



BERTHA DE LEÓN & TEODORA DEL CARMEN VÁZQUEZ

FIGHTING EL SALVADOR'S ABORTION LAWS

Teodora del Carmen Vázquez was jailed in El Salvador in 2007 after suffering a stillbirth, spending ten long years behind bars. Here she tells her story, while human rights lawyer Bertha de León decodes the nation's draconian anti-abortion laws, calling for urgent reform.

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TEODORA'S STORY

My name is Teodora del Carmen. I was detained for ten years and seven months in Ilopango Prison in El Salvador for the crime of aggravated homicide after suffering an obstetric emergency. I was arrested on the night of the 7th of July, 2007 – after I called the police and an ambulance, which did not arrive. My stillborn baby was born at my workplace; I passed out, and when I awoke I was already in detention. They told me it was because I had killed my baby, even though I had called them asking for help.

After three days, a judge at my preliminary hearing determined that I would go to jail while an investigation was conducted. Nine days after my arrest, they took me to prison. After three months I had another hearing, when the lawyer asked my family for more money, money we did not have. I was alone, with no lawyer, when they sentenced me to 30 years in prison – that was also the day my three-year-old son was left without a mum. When I entered prison, I thought that my life was over. However, once inside, I decided I wouldn't let

“We will not stop until no more women enter prison for this abortion.”

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the prison get into my head. I saw my son once a year – though for the last four years I couldn't because we did not have the money for a permit. In the ten years I was in jail, I never saw any women with money sentenced to 30 years for an abortion; in there, we were all poor.

In 2012, I met the lawyers of the Citizens' Association for the Decriminalisation of Abortion; they told us they were interested in our cases and began to investigate. That day, a flame was sparked that would eventually lead to my release on March 15, 2018. Thanks to the efforts of these organisations, some of us managed to get out and regain voices that had been silenced for years.

I won't recover the ten years I lost, but now I work hard to be a voice for girls who are still detained

and to bring justice for the “17 And More” (a political campaign dedicated to securing freedom for the women detained under El Salvador's abortion laws). We will not stop until no more women enter prison for this crime and until the women who are still behind bars are released. We are the reflection of the suffering of the women of El Salvador, but we also shine with the light of the great work of activist groups and associations.

EL SALVADOR'S CRIMINAL CODE: A SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

My name is Bertha de León, and I have defended many women who have been unfairly criminalised as a result of El Salvador's 1998 abortion law.

In April 2018, we were invited by members of the Greens/EFA, Ernest Urtasun, Bodil Valero, Terry Reintke and Molly Scott Cato, to attend a conference on behalf of the Citizens' Association for the Decriminalisation of Abortion in the country.

Accompanying me to the event, entitled “Our Bodies Our Lives”, were Teodora del Carmen Vásquez, recently released after ten years in prison, and Maria Teresa Rivera, also newly released. Our participation constituted a significant opportunity in our struggle to decriminalise abortion in El Salvador, where it is currently prohibited in all cases.

EL SALVADOR'S CRIMINAL CODE

Until 1998, a woman was legally entitled to decide to terminate her pregnancy for three reasons: if her life was at risk; if the pregnancy was the result of

rape or incest; or if the foetus was suffering from a serious congenital malformation. Accordingly, medical practitioners were also legally entitled to treat such cases.

This right ceased to exist when the Criminal Code was amended with Article 133 criminalising all terminations of pregnancy, as a result of pressure by religious and conservative groups. Prison sentences of two to eight years were introduced for the women concerned, with six to twelve years for doctors carrying out abortions.

The total criminalisation of abortion affects thousands of women. Particularly impacted are those living in conditions of poverty without access to safe and free abortions where their health and life are at risk, and in cases of rape; thus it constitutes a systematic violation of human rights.

The current criminal code does not adequately address the offence of abortion, generating great legal insecurity for women and a violation of judicial guarantees. The state fails to comply with its obligation to legislate or to repeal laws that result in violence against women.

TELLING THEIR STORIES

Many women are criminally prosecuted for having experienced obstetric complications, like Teodora del Carmen Vásquez. Convicted without evidence, Teodora served ten years in prison until her sentence was commuted by the Supreme Court of Justice.

At the European Parliament, we sought to raise awareness of the need to reform El Salvador's anti-abortion law, by providing a voice for the following women, prosecuted without even the most basic legal safeguards. I list their names here because, over and above being a lawyer, I am a witness to the injustices experienced daily in El Salvador that our deputies, institutions and leaders have decided to ignore.

> Jennifer Maria Rivas Ganuza, aged 17, was initially sentenced to 15 years in prison for the offence of attempted aggravated homicide. Her newborn had been rescued alive and uninjured from the cesspit into which Jennifer had given birth.

> Sandra Isabeth Alfaro, aged 19, was unjustly prosecuted for aggravated homicide. She miscarried a foetus of fewer than 20 weeks and suffering from anencephaly in the toilet at school, the miscarriage caused by a serious urinary tract infection.

> Evelyn Beatriz Hernandez Cruz, aged 20, was detained in Ilopango Women's Prison, having been sentenced to 30 years in prison for aggravated homicide. She gave birth in a latrine, with the newborn dying as a result of meconium aspiration syndrome.

> Imelda Isabel Cortez Palacios, in custody in San Miguel penitentiary since April 2017, was charged with attempted aggravated homicide after her newborn daughter was rescued from the latrine where Imelda had given birth. During the court case, it was established that the baby had been conceived as a

result of the repeated aggravated rapes that Imelda had been subjected to by her stepfather as of the age of twelve.

Currently, 20 women are being held in various prisons in El Salvador for similar cases, having suffered a systematic violation of their right to judicial safeguards, due process, the presumption of innocence, material defence and the principle of legality by the institutions of the criminal justice system.

FIGHTING STATE VIOLENCE

Women's organisations have nevertheless brought action to declare the total criminalisation of abortion unconstitutional, such as constitutional complaint 18-98 of November 20th 2007, regarding inadequate regulation:

"The Assembly must regulate potential cases of conflict between the right to life of the unborn and the rights of the pregnant mother, and the decision regarding the recourse for constitutional protection (Amparo) 67-2010 followed case-law in this regard, while in connection with the recourse for constitutional protection regarding the BEATRIZ case, the Legislative Assembly has yet to comply with its obligation to legislate on the exceptions allowing abortions under certain circumstances."

This absolute prohibition is a severe form of state violence against women in poverty, whose rights, inter alia, to health, life, personal integrity, personal freedom, reproductive self-determination

are compromised, and who are subjected to unfair criminal trials without even the most basic of legal safeguards.

GARNERING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

For the Citizens' Association for the Decriminalisation of Abortion in El Salvador, taking part in European Parliament conferences and carrying out awareness-raising activities remains vitally important to our struggle. Such efforts give us legitimacy in an extremely conservative and violent country, where we are stigmatised for standing up for such rights. They also make our struggle more visible at an international level, enabling more women and civil society organisations to join and support us.

It's also extremely significant that contact was made with the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador from within the European Parliament through official channels, calling for priority to be given to the discussion and analysis of the reform of the penal code on the basis of medical criteria and facts.

Letters were sent to different state institutions, stressing the need to respect and guarantee the human rights of women, while statements were successfully promoted in Parliament regarding the total criminalisation of abortion in El Salvador and its impact on the human rights of women — actions we are grateful for.

While we have not yet achieved the legal reform we seek, the solidarity shown to us gives us the strength to continue fighting for the legitimate defence of women.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



AS OF 2018, Teodora del Carmen Vázquez was the 16th woman to be freed as a result of appeals by reproductive rights groups and lawyers working under hostile conditions perpetuated by powerful anti-abortion groups.

FOUNDED IN 2009, the Citizens' Association for the Decriminalisation of Abortion seeks to raise awareness to change the Salvadoran legislation regarding abortion, to legally defend women who have been charged or convicted for abortion or related offences, and to promote sexual and reproductive health education.

26 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD

still ban abortion altogether, with no explicit legal reason for exception (even if the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest, and regardless of the consequence to their health): Andorra; Malta; San Marino; Angola; Congo-Brazzaville; Congo-Kinshasa; Egypt; Gabon; Guinea-Bissau; Madagascar; Mauritania; São Tomé & Príncipe; Senegal; Iraq; Laos; Marshall Islands; Micronesia; Palau; Philippines; Tonga; Dominican Republic; El Salvador; Haiti; Honduras; Nicaragua; and Suriname.

SINCE 2009, 33 WOMEN have been released due to pressure applied by women's rights organisations in El Salvador. To date, 23 women remain in prison as a result of the country's total ban on abortion.

NAMES.

**Sarah Chander
Isabela Mihalache**

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

United Kindom

**Romania
(Ethnicity: Roma)**

ORGANISATION.

**European Network
Against Racism**

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

**Jayaben Desai,
strike leader Grunwick
dispute in London in 1976**

Oprah Winfrey

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“I cannot imagine a
feminism that is not
anti-racist.”**

Angela Davis

**“Feminism is the radical
notion that women
are people.”**

Rebecca West



SARAH CHANDER & ISABELA MIHALACHE

“I CAN’T IMAGINE A FEMINISM
THAT IS NOT ANTI-RACIST”

Sarah Chander and Isabela Mihalache of the European Network Against Racism examine the interconnected nature of inequality, positing that the intersectional relationship between anti-racism and feminism is a defining issue for our times.

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National governments, EU institutions, and feminist organisations increasingly wave the flag for gender equality in Europe. However, for too long, these efforts have overlooked women of colour.

As a movement of grassroots anti-racist organisations, the European Network Against

Racism (ENAR) works for equality for all. This has included exploring the multiple layers of discrimination experienced by women from racial, ethnic and religious minorities across Europe. In our work, we see that the relationship between anti-racism and feminism is a defining issue for our times. Inherent to the fight against racism is also

the fight against the patriarchy – and it’s a fight that’s intersectional¹.

What do we mean when we say that patriarchy and racism are interconnected? These struggles are necessarily connected because women of colour are not impacted by only one. For example, women that are visibly Muslim are targeted for hate crimes at a higher rate than are Muslim men. In the workplace, Muslim women wearing the veil are subject to discrimination that does not impact women who don’t wish to manifest their religious beliefs. ENAR has long fought for Islamophobia experienced by Muslim women to be categorised as a feminist issue, as well as an issue of racism.

46 For Roma women, structural violence enacted by the state was inherently gendered and racialised; for instance, through coerced sterilisation in the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Sweden. The measure was meant to control the growth of the Roma population. For women of African descent the lack of representation in political institutions across Europe. Is an issue of underrepresentation on the basis of gender, race, social status and sometimes, nationality. Out of 751 Members of in the European Parliament, there is currently one sole black woman. It is important, therefore, that our movements respond to racialised and gendered oppression.

¹A concept originating from black feminists in the U.S, intersectionality is the awareness that mainstream feminist approaches do not necessarily address the multiple forms of discrimination and oppression faced by some women.

“Women of colour are simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible in European politics.”

Most policies geared towards gender equality, however, have not taken an intersectional approach. In fact, women of colour are invisible within policy-making and in practice at the level of European politics. Most EU policies on gender equality assume universal experiences for all women but because women are not a homogenous group, they are not affected by discrimination and a misogyny in the same way – they have different backgrounds, profiles and experiences.

Assessing EU gender equality policies from an intersectional perspective, we see that in their universalism, they primarily serve white, middle-class, straight, cis women.

The invisibility of women of colour in European policies is apparent in numerous fields. For example, the EU's communications on the gender pay gap highlight that women in the European Union earn on average 16% less than men for each hour worked. Such headlines completely ignore the fact that many ethnic minority women are paid less than white women and ethnic minority men. They also ignore the struggles of migrant female sex workers and other undocumented workers for whom the need for de-criminalisation, rights, protection and safety makes calls for equal pay seem distant.

Furthermore, policies to achieve gender balance in leadership positions are unconcerned with other grounds of equality. The European Commission's 2012 proposal of a target of 40% of women in management positions made no reference to the underrepresentation of minority women. There are almost no women of colour in leadership at the European Commission, and very few working as MEPs in parliament.

At a political level, the lack of representation of women of colour is reflected in how poorly our issues are addressed. Mainstream political debates largely ignore women of colour: when our issues are deemed sufficiently political, it is usually through the paternalistic, exclusive and sometimes racist lens of mainstream feminism, with little respect to the agency of the women concerned.

One of the most alarming trends to this end is the instrumentalisation of women's rights in racist and Islamophobic political discourses. We know that the far-right has increasingly attempted to utilise women's (and LGBTI*) rights to nurture hostility on migration and security issues.

This was recently reflected in mainstream politics when the European Parliament's Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) Committee passed a resolution on the role of women in preventing radicalisation. This resolution flagged Muslim women as some of the most vulnerable to radicalisation, thus further stigmatising Muslim women. The resolution made no reference at all to women radicalised in far-right movements, placing the burden of terrorism instead onto Muslim communities and women in particular.

Women of colour are simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible in European politics. We are hyper-visible when we are painted as victims or as threats. We are invisible when it is time to hear our voices, proffer a seat at the policy-making table and give us representation.

HOW DO WE CHANGE THIS?

At the political level, we need to push for an unapologetic, anti-racist and feminist discourse,

holding politicians firmly to these standards. The European Parliament should be upholding the values of equality, dignity and respect, and maintaining the vision of a society free from discrimination. It should not be marginalising and ignoring women of colour, but instead, working toward dismantling structural inequalities and empowerment. We also need to acknowledge the pressure that comes with being one of very few minority women in political positions; the pressure to fit into white institutions; the pressure to carry the cause and leave a legacy.

We have a long way to go to ensure women of colour experience equality in practice. This must include equal access to high quality, inclusive education, healthcare, employment, housing, better protection of women inside the justice system, an end to the exploitation of women in all areas, and political representation. We also need to push further the debate at EU level and the legal application of positive action by Member States, which for now remains an option for the Member States to decide on and to design.

At the movement level, the struggle has been to deconstruct old narratives around equality and introduce a new language about racism and feminism in the context of white supremacy and dominance in power structures, including European institutions.

Last year, ENAR moved to become a feminist anti-racist organisation, ensuring we uphold women's rights and foreground women of colour in our movement.

Our challenge is to achieve recognition and justice for different groups of minority women without creating hierarchies between them. Instead, we need equity and solidarity with and between women of colour in the feminist and anti-racist movements.

American political activist Angela Davis said, "I cannot imagine a feminism that is not anti-racist." Equally, there is no anti-racist fight without women and no progressive politics without centring feminism and anti-racism. We need a complete overhaul of the way we organise and the way we envision equality. Tackling the interconnected nature of inequality is where we must start.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



ACCORDING TO A 2018 EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS SURVEY, nearly one in three respondents of African descent (30%) experienced what they perceived as racist harassment in the five years before the survey.

IN FRANCE, 81.5% of Islamophobic violence recorded by the Collective Against Islamophobia in France in 2014 targeted women, most of them wearing a visible religious symbol.

IN THE NETHERLANDS, 11% of Afghani-Dutch Muslim women not wearing a headscarf said they had experienced discrimination on the basis of religion, compared to 73% of Afghani-Dutch who do wear a headscarf; for Moroccan-Dutch these figures are 15% versus 39%.

IN GERMANY, a survey found that 59% of Muslim women respondents were insulted, verbally abused or accosted.

78% OF ROMA IN SLOVAKIA and 73% in the Czech Republic experience discrimination when looking for a job.

SHEROES.

GALLERY.



Feminist Strike, Spain 2019 |
By Imagen en Accion



Feminist Strike, Spain 2018 |
By Telesurenglish

**Women's March
on Washington,
January 2017**



| By Voanews

| By Mobilus In Mobili



FIGHT. RESIST.

EMPOWER.



Protest against the criminalisation of LGBT rights, April 2018 UK | By Alisdare Hickson

Action calling for the release of women incarcerated due to the criminalisation of abortion in El Salvador





**Demonstration against
presidential candidate
Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil,
September 2018**

By CPERS Sindicato



FIGHT. RESIST.

EMPOWER.

Women holding posters that read “There is no coming back from our feminist struggle” and “No to intervention to our lives.”- Women’s Day March in Istanbul, 2017
| By The Center on Conflict and Development (ConDev)



March 4 Choice, Dublin, 2016 | By Workers Solidarity Movement



Women National Strike, Brussels, 2019

| By Sebastian Raible/ @FreakkaerF





**Black March,
protesting
against the bill
to ban abortion,
Poland, 2017 |**
By GalsforGals Lodz



Polish women action in front of the European Parliament plenary, Strasbourg, 2017 | By Greens/EFA

**Prague Pride,
August 2017**
| By Catherine Shiflett





**Women's March
in Tahir, 2013**
| By Gigi Ibrahim

**Bring-back our
girls Campaign,
2014** | By Michael
Fleshman





**Feminist strike,
Argentina 2018**

By Fotografías
Emergentes

**Feminist camp in Argentina supporting the reform of the abortion
law, February 2019**

By Soledad Di Pasquale





Swedish deputy Prime Minister Isabella Lövin signing a referral of Swedish climate law while mocking Donald Trump's all male government photo, 2017 | By AFP

FIGHT. RESIST.

EMPOWER.

NAMES.

**Blanca de Riquer,
Jeanne Ponté, Arantza
Calvera, Amelia Martinez,
Elzelien Van Der Steen**

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

**France, Netherlands
and Spain**

ORGANISATION.

MeTooEP

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Gloria Steinem

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“The future depends
entirely on what each
of us does every day.”**

Mahatma Gandhi



METOOEP

TIME'S UP! OUR RIGHTS ARE NOT A POWER GAMBLE

Blanca de Riquer, Jeanne Ponté, Arantza Calvera, Amelia Martinez and Elzelien Van Der Steen explain the birth of MeTooEP, a movement designed to give a voice to the victims of sexual harassment and abuse within the European Parliament.

“Me Too wasn’t built to be a viral campaign or a hashtag that is here today and forgotten tomorrow. It was a catchphrase to be used from survivor to survivor to let folks know that they were not alone and that a movement for radical healing was happening and possible.”

– Tarana Burke, Founder of Me Too in 2006

On International Women’s Day 2018, a group of European Parliament workers decided to launch a petition calling for an end to sexual harassment and abuse in the European Parliament. Within five days, we collected 1,000 signatures from across the political spectrum. This was the start of MeTooEP, a movement of workers of the European Parliament, representing different political views, nationalities, opinions and professional roles.

That day, we decided to join forces to fight against sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the European Parliament and other institutions of power. By organising ourselves as a movement, we find ourselves with a stronger yet independent collective voice to protest against the lack of progress and measures to effectively combat sexual harassment and abuse in our workplace.

SHEDDING LIGHT ON A SILENCED REALITY

Six months earlier in October 2017, the European Parliament adopted a strong resolution calling for better internal measures to address the problem of sexual harassment within the institution, to be enforced immediately, and to create a safe space for victims to report such abuses of power. A large majority voted for three concrete measures to be put in place: an external and independent assessment of the situation regarding sexual harassment and abuse in Parliament, including an evaluation of the European Parliament's two anti-harassment committees; the introduction of mandatory training on respect and dignity for all staff and Members to ensure that a zero-tolerance approach becomes the norm; and an evaluation of the need to restructure the two harassment committees to ensure independence and gender balance.

With such a strong resolution adopted by such a big majority, we assumed that the political will clearly existed to deal with the problem.

We were wrong.

Despite powerful political declarations, nothing happened. Sexual harassment was still not taken seriously, and the requested measures remained hollow phrases.

When we got tired of listening to excuses such as "it was just a joke", "you're being too sensitive", "it only happened once", "politics works like that", "this is about cultural differences", or "politicians are like that and you won't be able to change it", we decided that we had had enough. A sense of resignation is the biggest danger, so we took action. We wanted to start shedding light on a reality that remained beneath a cloak of silence in our workplace.

In October 2018 we decided to launch the MeTooEP blog (metooep.com) to collect anonymous testimonies from victims of sexual harassment. By sharing personal stories, we hoped to break the culture of silence in our workplace. An instrument designed to support victims, the blog would encourage them to speak out, reassure them that they are not alone, create a space for solidarity and collective awareness and explain through real cases what sexual harassment is.

In the first month after the launch of the blog, more than 40 victims had anonymously shared their stories, demonstrating that the abuse of power and grossly inappropriate behaviour, including sexual assault, are widespread: around official events, in offices and during business trips.

The multitude of testimonies also showed that the EP's official data on sexual harassment (only one case in four years) did not reflect reality. Clearly, the victims' perception of the existing support structure is not positive, and they do not feel safe or encouraged to come forward with complaints about sexual harassment or to seek help. This was a clear signal for us to step up our efforts to transform the inadequate anti-harassment structures.

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

We intensified and diversified our MeTooEP campaign for the implementation of the necessary measures, knowing that a majority of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) voted in favour of these requests back in October 2017. We organised conferences, participated in events and set up countless meetings with the European Parliament Vice-Presidents, with the presidents of almost all political groups and with European Parliament President Antonio Tajani. In addition, we drafted amendments to numerous European Parliament reports asking for anti-harassment measures, encouraged Member of the European Parliament to vote in their favour, gained Europe-wide media exposure and organised demonstrations in front of the European Parliament plenary chamber.

“By sharing personal stories, we hoped to break the culture of silence in our workplace.”

After 18 months of campaigning, we have gained quite an amount of political influence and media attention – yet, for the victims of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the European Parliament not much has improved. Committees dealing with harassment have received few complaints about sexual harassment. Why? We know that some Member of the European Parliament and people in high positions can misuse their power to oppose these measures and to protect the perpetrators of harassment. The culture in this hierarchical institution will only change if its leadership and authorities are willing to embrace reforms.

That is why our latest initiative is an election pledge for all candidate Member of the European Parliament. By signing the pledge, they commit

themselves to actively fighting sexual harassment and implementing the above measures. By means of the pledge, voters will be able to elect candidates who take the problem of sexual harassment seriously, who commit to actively, preventing and denouncing sexism and sexual harassment and who – crucially – never remain silent or accept any justification for such acts.

So far, the presidents of the main five political groups of the European Parliament have signed the pledge, as well as the EP President. Ahead of the European Parliament election, we expect many Member of the European Parliament and candidates to sign up; they can be sure that we will hold them to their word and will request to act accordingly once they have been elected.

THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE SOLIDARITY

The fight against sexual harassment and abuse is a shared goal that must become a priority for all institutions. As MeTooEP, we have spoken out because we do not want others to suffer in the same way as the victims who came forward with their testimonies. Victims must feel safe to speak out and the structures of the European Parliament, as well as other EU institutions, must provide adequate support and safeguards for them. This should not be a political issue! After all, each and every one of us can become a victim of sexual harassment.

The European Parliament has the resources to implement effective measures to fight against sexual harassment and abuse. We won't accept small changes that, in the end, result in nothing. We need to keep asking for structural changes to transform our society. Prevention, education and raising awareness are crucial. We can see the feminist movement at work across Europe; the European Parliament should take this as inspiration and set their own example.

Now is the time to say: enough – no more tolerance, silence, or acceptance of harassment and sexual abuse. Once and for all, we have to stop tolerating a sexist culture that enables men who believe they are entitled to harass others, as though they have a natural entitlement. We must fight the structures and situations that prop up these attitudes and not silence ourselves if we ever witness inappropriate behaviour. The revolution of thousands of people who have seen that they are not alone; the sentiment of empowerment when experiencing collective solidarity; and the echoes of voices that will not remain silent anymore – these are the preludes of a soon-to-arrive cultural change that must affect every person, society and institution.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



DATA SHOW THAT 55% OF WOMEN in the EU have been sexually harassed in their lives, of which 32% say the perpetrator was their boss, co-worker or client.¹

IN MARCH 2019, the introduction of mandatory training on sexual harassment for MEPs was again supported by a majority, but still remains to be implemented.

IN OCTOBER 2017, Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of resolution 2017/2897 (RSP), which called on the European Parliament to implement specific measures to prevent and combat all forms of harassment.

85% OF FEMAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (MPS) in Europe have suffered psychological violence in parliament; women MPs under 40 are more likely to be harassed. Female parliamentary staff endure more sexual violence than female MPs, while the majority of European parliaments don't have mechanisms to enable women to speak out.²

¹ According to European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights statistics

² Study by Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

NAME.

Neil Datta

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

**Various, but
Brussels by choice.**

ORGANISATION.

**European Parliamentary
Forum for Sexual and
Reproductive Rights**

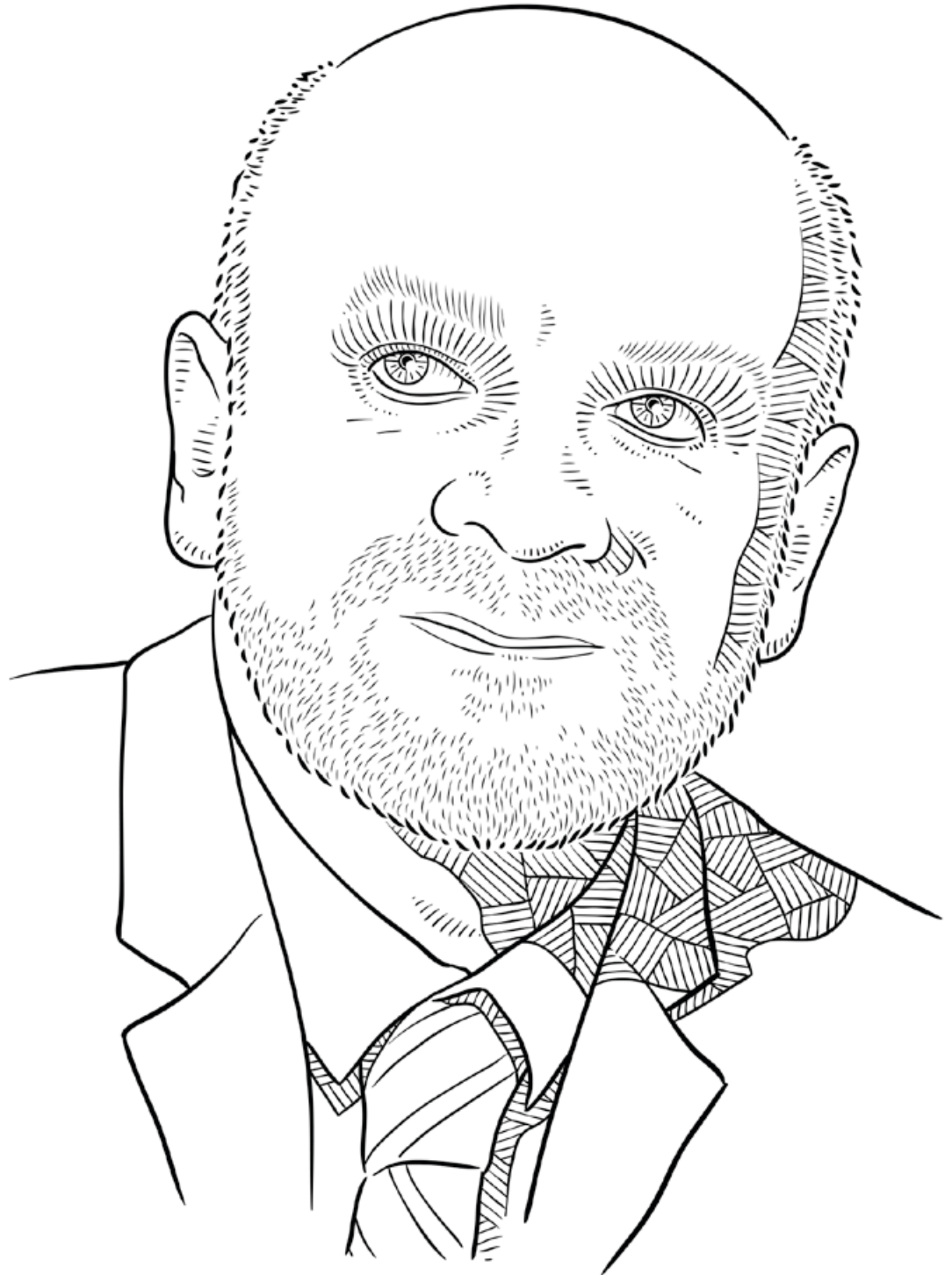
FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Simone Veil

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“Feminism is not just
about women; it’s about
letting all people lead
fuller lives.”**

Jane Fonda



NEIL DATTA

THE NEW CHALLENGE TO HUMAN RIGHTS FACING THE EU

In a year that will bring enormous challenges for the EU, Neil Datta explains that only constant vigilance and action will ensure that extremist right-wing groups fail to gain a dangerous foothold across our international communities.

It's time for anyone who believes in equal human rights for all to stand up and be counted — for there's a battle on the horizon that must not be underestimated. Never before in the history of the European Union has it been faced with such a series of major internal and external challenges, ones that could dramatically impact its position on progressive issues.

These challenges include the rise of illiberal democracies within the EU, the likely emergence of a new political party landscape, Brexit, the influence of Russia, and the greater presence of a transnationally organised, professional anti-Sexual and Reproductive Rights movement in Europe.

AGENDA EUROPE

Agenda Europe is a network of religious extremists in Europe operating from three platforms: a blog, annual clandestine summits and a common manifesto entitled “Restoring the Natural Order: An Agenda for Europe”. For this ultra-conservative group and others like it, restoring the so-called “natural order” would involve re-criminalising same-sex relations and partnerships, divorce, gay adoption, abortion, sterilisation, contraception, in-vitro fertilisation, ante-natal diagnostics, euthanasia, stem cell use and more.

The group’s increased activity at both national and European Institutional level has drawn the attention, and concern, not just of progressive groups and actors, but also of human rights bodies that have started to describe this phenomenon as a “backlash against women in Europe”.

Agenda Europe, which is behind over 15 legislative initiatives across Europe, has managed to unite over 100 anti-human rights, anti-women’s rights and anti-LGBTI* organisations from over 30 European countries. In short, the campaign is a concerted effort to chip away the recent

expansion of human rights across Europe, and their first targets are those who wish to exercise their sexual and reproductive freedoms.

DRAMATIC CHANGE FACING THE EU

The European Union plays a vital role in fighting for more equality, and retaining an open society against right-wing, populist attacks. Founded on values of respect for human rights, freedoms, democracy, equality, and the rule of law, the Union has thus far proven capable of weathering the storm of a handful of illiberal democracies and populist surges within the European Union.

But there’s a momentous wave of change facing the union, with European Parliament elections, the designation of a new European Commission, and newly-appointed presidents of the European Council and the European Central Bank – all taking place against the backdrop of discussions around the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (a five-year budget plan for the years 2021-2027).

While legal provisions relating to abortion, sexual and reproductive health are primarily a matter for

“Agenda Europe is a concerted effort to chip away the recent expansion of human rights across Europe.”

the Member States, the European Parliament can still express its opinion on these matters; it has made clear progress towards enhancing women’s reproductive choices both in the European Union and elsewhere. For example, the Parliament adopted a report on the EU’s Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 on women’s empowerment in May 2018, and in July, adopted a report on the fight against child marriage.

PLAYING AN INTERNATIONAL ROLE

The European Parliament also has the important role of approving the entire EU budget together with the Council, and therefore the capacity to safeguard priorities like equality, poverty eradication and the Sustainable Development Goals.

With the 2017 reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy in the U.S, better known as the “Global Gag Rule”, the EU now has a once-in-a-decade opportunity to put itself forward as a global leader in family planning funding, to fill the estimated vacuum of \$8.8 billion of U.S global health assistance that Trump’s policy has incurred – ensuring that life-saving funding for family planning, contraception and maternal health does not disappear. To do so, we’d need an ambitious and progressive Parliament.

However, the EU's next legislative term will also be one in which the anti-sexual and reproductive rights movements that have coalesced over the previous five years are able to come in fully developed. These anti-sexual and reproductive right movements have grown over the past few years on two different planes, the first at a national level in an attempt to recreate themselves as grassroots movements that can influence politics from below, often by organising assaults on so-called "gender ideology": these are the anti-gender movements. The other approach is to become professional advocates, like any other stakeholder group or sectoral representative in the EU lobby sphere, the prime example of which is the "Agenda Europe" network.

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SIGNS OF HOPE

The good news is that people are beginning to take this threat seriously. Last year, the European Parliamentary Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Rights released a report on Agenda Europe, which

garnered impressive international attention. The report travelled far and fast, receiving coverage in many different languages. I was invited to numerous events to speak on panels on the topic and to present my findings to packed rooms of concerned listeners.

How Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, environmental policies or implementation of the EU multi-billion Euro budget will fare in a radically changed EU landscape, when even basic concepts such as human rights, democracy and rule of law are questioned, is unknown and unprecedented.

However, those who uphold progressive values can and should prepare. While a great deal is at stake in the year 2019, we remain vigilant and ready to stand up for the rights of women and LGBTI* people to guarantee equal human rights for all.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM is a network of members of parliaments from across Europe who are committed to protecting the sexual and reproductive health of the world's most vulnerable people, both at home and overseas.

THE AGENDA EUROPE STRATEGY is producing concrete results, such as the 2016 Polish bill to ban abortion, bans on equal marriage in several Central European countries and over a dozen comparable acts at national level and in European institutions, aiming to limit women's and LGBTI* rights.

THE MEXICO CITY POLICY, sometimes referred to as the global gag rule, is a U.S government policy that blocks federal funding for non-governmental organisations that provide abortion counselling or referrals, advocate to decriminalise abortion or expand abortion services.

AGENDA EUROPE is a professional advocacy network, with members that meet in secret. It's directly responsible for implementing a detailed strategy to roll back human rights.

NAME.

Olivia Lally

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Ireland

ORGANISATION.

**European Network of
Debt and Development
(Eurodad)**

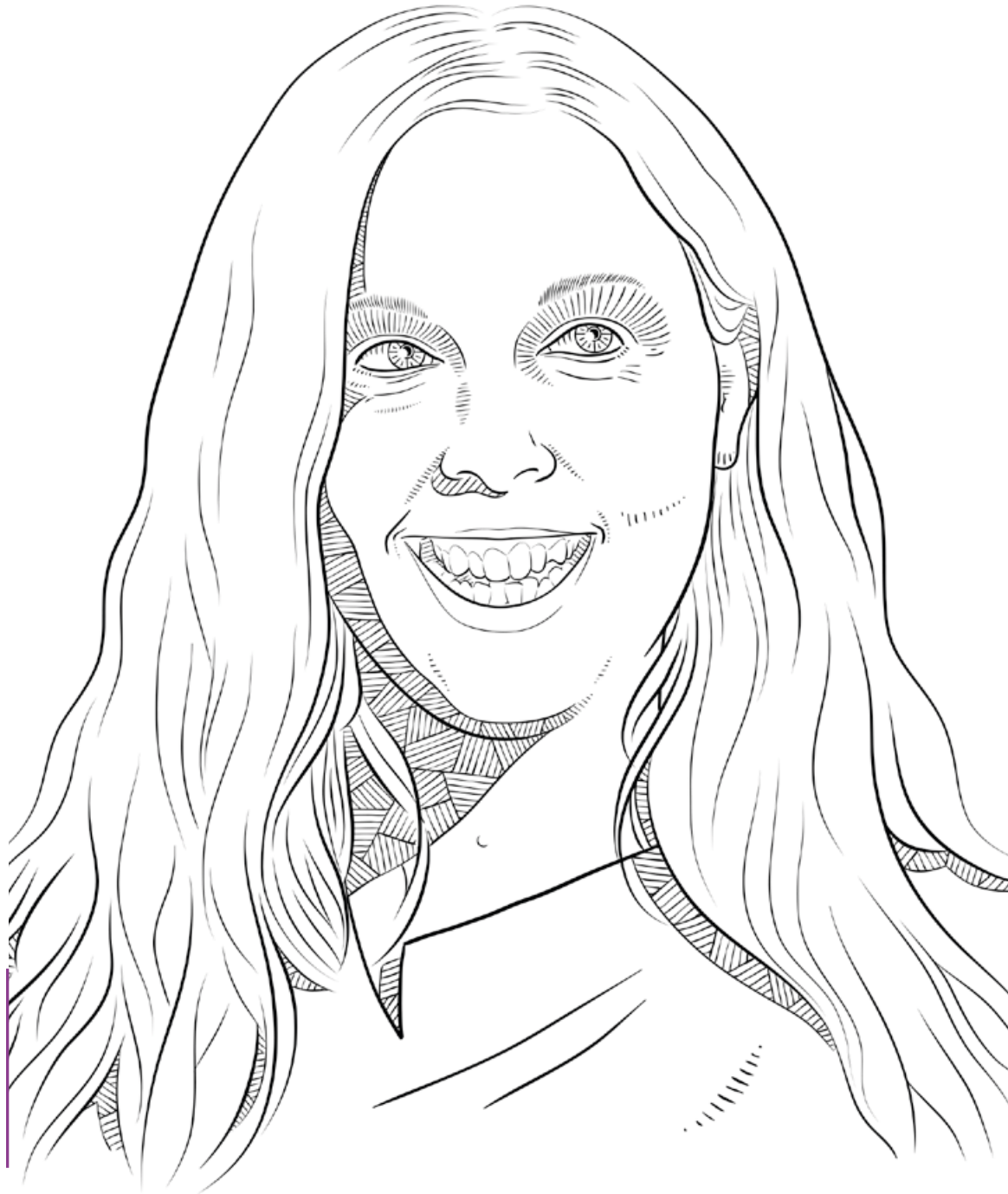
FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

I can't identify a single person – my role models are the people I see every time we mobilise against another oppression; the people who resist patriarchy in their daily lives and commit their time and energy to collective action for an equal future

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“I am not free while any women is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own.”

Audre Lorde



OLIVIA LALLY

TAX JUSTICE AND GENDER EQUALITY

Olivia Lally argues that taxation is one of the most powerful methods in existence to reduce the inequality gap between rich and poor and between men and women. By ending large-scale international tax dodging, introducing transparency and tax justice, and investing in quality gender-responsive public services, she believes governments can help to fulfil women's rights.

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World over, women experience multiple, intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination – based on sex and gender, economic position, location and social status, ethnicity, sexuality and religion. This is not an accident; the exclusion and inequality women experience reflect our histories, cultures, political choices and, critically, our economic policies. News headlines rightly focus on discrimination and systemic inequalities faced by women, but one point that is often overlooked is the many ways in which

the tax system, like other policies and structures, offers a transformative tool for redistribution and financing gender equity.

However, the tax system's transformative power is consistently undermined by current tax laws and practices, and these, in turn, perpetuate and exacerbate the inequalities faced by women. Growing up in a poor community in Ireland, I've been active in many fights for social justice and equality. Common to all is the excuse provided by successive

“Tax systems at national and global level are exacerbating women’s inequalities.”

80 governments for inaction – they can’t finance the change needed.

A recent example is the fight to decriminalise abortion in Ireland, where our cruel and restrictive law forbid abortion, even in cases of rape, incest and when the mother’s health was in danger. In the lead up to the referendum, one of the most effective arguments was that Ireland’s under-resourced and struggling healthcare system simply couldn’t provide additional healthcare services to women. At the same time that my home country can’t afford to run hospitals safely and pay nurses well, Ireland is appealing the European Commission’s decision that they must recover €14.3 billion from Apple, which the Commission says should have been paid in taxes.

Large-scale tax avoidance and evasion by multinational companies and wealthy individuals continue to deprive governments of revenue, which is desperately needed to fund quality gender-responsive public services for women and girls. Moreover, for many women – especially those living in poverty – regressive and discriminatory tax policies represent an added burden.

When tax revenues are progressively collected, they offer a predictable and sustainable source of income for governments to finance women’s rights and other priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals, including eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and addressing climate change. The good news is that there is growing international awareness of the importance of tax justice for women’s rights and the many and complex impacts our tax systems have on women’s equity.

GOING, GOING, GONE: HOW REVENUE LOSSES HURT WOMEN

Women depend on public services to a greater extent than men, due to the inequality they experience, the resulting care burden they bear, as well as the needs arising from pregnancy and childbirth. When governments fail to provide adequate care services, this often results in women stepping in to care for children, older people and their family’s health. Right now, it’s estimated¹ that women spend 2.5 times

¹ [Unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures](https://unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures)

more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men, drastically limiting the time they have available to pursue education and employment. We know women have been hit harder by austerity and a lack of funding is a common excuse for not providing the change that women need worldwide. Yet, our best estimates suggest that governments worldwide lose a staggering US\$500² billion annually due to corporate tax avoidance, with conservative estimates suggesting \$70-120³ billion lost from developing countries. When companies avoid tax, they deprive governments of revenue to fund public services like subsidised childcare, quality healthcare and education. These are essential for women's equality. Taking concrete actions to address these huge revenue losses is a key step towards tackling inequalities faced by women and girls.

WOMEN'S EXCLUSION AND TRANSPARENCY

At the outset of any discussion of women's rights, it is essential to recognise women's underrepresentation in decision-making. The barriers women experience in progressing to decision-making levels in the public and private sectors mean they are typically under-represented as, for example, policy makers and at senior level in large companies.

² <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/wp2017-55.pdf>

³ https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2015_en.pdf

Women's limited access to board rooms and high-level offices also has direct implications for their ability to access important information about the impacts of our tax systems, since a lot of this information is secret. This, for example, includes information about where multinational corporations are doing business, and how much tax they are paying in each country where they operate. Currently, the European Union is considering a proposal to make this information public – so-called “public country by country reporting”. This proposal is vital to ensure that everybody will get access to the information we need to assess the fairness of our tax system, something the European Green party has consistently supported and called for.

RACING TO THE BOTTOM: SHIFTING THE TAX BURDEN

Despite the promises to make multinational corporations pay their share of tax, the world's governments have become locked in a very costly and destructive race to the bottom on corporate taxation. One government's decision to cut taxes for corporations leads others to follow suit, and if the current trend continues, the global average corporate tax rate will hit 0% in 2052⁴.

⁴ <https://eurodad.org/files/pdf/1546849-tax-games-the-race-to-the-bottom.pdf>

While corporations are being asked to pay less, regressive tax policies like consumption taxes have been used to fill the gap from the missing corporate tax income. For example, the use of value-added taxes (VAT) have increased starkly. VAT is considered a regressive tax, because it applies the same rate to everyone, regardless of their income, wealth or employment status. This means a wealthy businessman and a poor woman pay the exact same VAT on products like infant formula. To put this in context, women continue to face barriers entering the labour force, and globally are estimated to earn 77% of what men earn while paying the same VAT.

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TAX JUSTICE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The good news is that there is growing international awareness of the importance of tax justice for women's rights and the many and complex impacts our tax systems have on women's equity. One recent development was the European Parliament's adoption of a new Gender Equality and Taxation Policies report, jointly lead by Ernest Urtasun member of Greens/EFA in the Parliament and Marisa Matias of Group of the European United Left-Nordic Green Left. It recognises the interconnectedness

of the struggles for gender equity and tax justice, and the need for European governments and the European Commission to take concrete action to analyse and address the explicit and implicit gender biases of our tax system. Critically, the report addresses the way in which the tax systems at national and global level are exacerbating women's inequalities, and calls for states to introduce transparency through public country by country reporting, support democratic tax reform at the global level, and undertake regular gender audits on all fiscal policies.

Tax is a key building block of societies. It is one of the most powerful tools we have to reduce the inequality gap between rich and poor – inside a country and between countries – and between men and women. Equally, taxes are the most sustainable source of government revenue to pay for the public services that societies rely on. Governments now need to put an end to large-scale international tax dodging, introduce transparency and tax justice, and invest in quality gender-responsive public services and fulfilling women's rights.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE lose a staggering US\$500 billion annually due to corporate tax avoidance. ¹

MEN DOMINATE in almost all positions of economic decision-making at national level, with all but one EU Member States' central banks led by a man. Only 19.6% of deputy and vice governors of Member State central banks are women, while women represent only 20% of the board members of national central banks. ⁴

CUTS IN PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS have had a drastic effect on women's employment, as women constitute on average 69.2% of EU public sector workers. ²

GLOBALLY, WOMEN are estimated to earn 77% of what men earn, while paying the same VAT. ³

1. <https://www.wider.unu.edu/sites/default/files/wp2017-55.pdf>

2. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284550875_The_price_of_austerity_the_impact_on_women's_rights_and_gender_equality_in_Europe

3. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

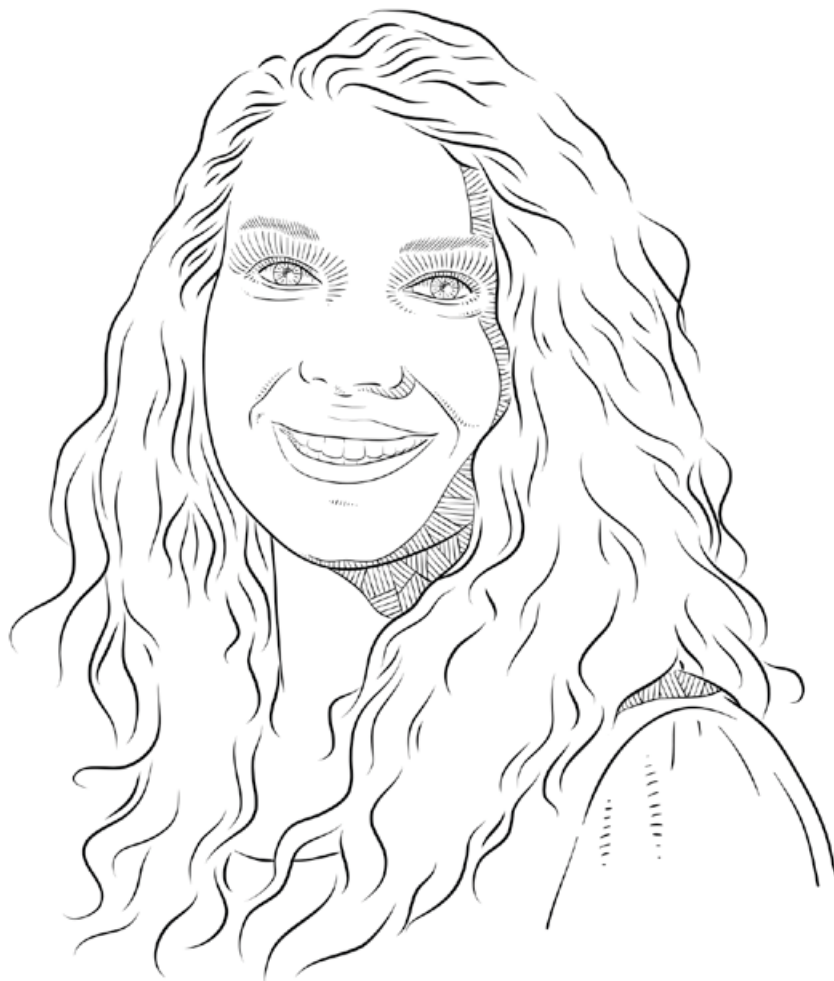
4. Data from the European Institute for Gender Equality

GALS4GALS

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN POLAND

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Gals4Gals Łódź (Lodzkie Dziewuchy Dziewuchom) is a Polish feminist collective that formed part of the country's Black Monday protest against a bill aiming to ban abortion. Members of Gals4Gals Łódź consider the victories and challenges of three years of campaigning, both as individuals and as a collective – reflecting on hard-won progress, they examine their personal motivations and experiences of women's rights in Poland.



“ **W**hen we helped to organise the Black Protest in 2016 in Poland, it was the first time we felt part of something huge. It was an event that had a great impact on the government, through mass protest with hundreds of thousands of people on the streets, and it prevented our conservative, alt-right government from restricting the abortion law. “Supported by Terry Reintke, Member of the European Parliament, Gals4Gals Łódź united Polish women to achieve a universal value for women’s rights, incorporating ourselves into the network of EU politicians, specialists and activists. Looking back, the experience empowered me and fuelled my activism. ”

NAME.

Aleksandra Knapik

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Beata Katkowska,
Lonely Black Sail
from Gryfice
(a woman who
protests all alone in
a small town during
Black Friday)

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“I am, I think,
I decide.”

**Jestem Myślę
Decyduję**

NAME.

Katarzyna Gauza

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

**Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom**

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

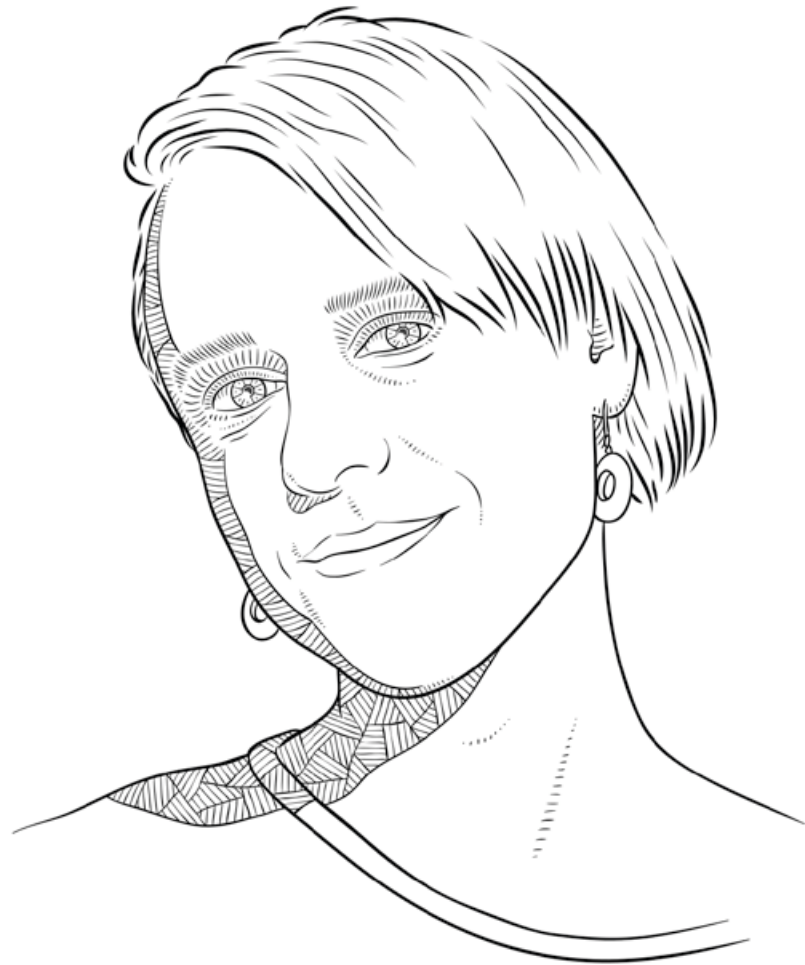
Sophie Wilson

(transwoman who designed the instruction set of the ARM processor, used in most 21st century smartphones)

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“The socialist who is not a feminist lacks breadth. The feminist who is not a socialist lacks strategy.”

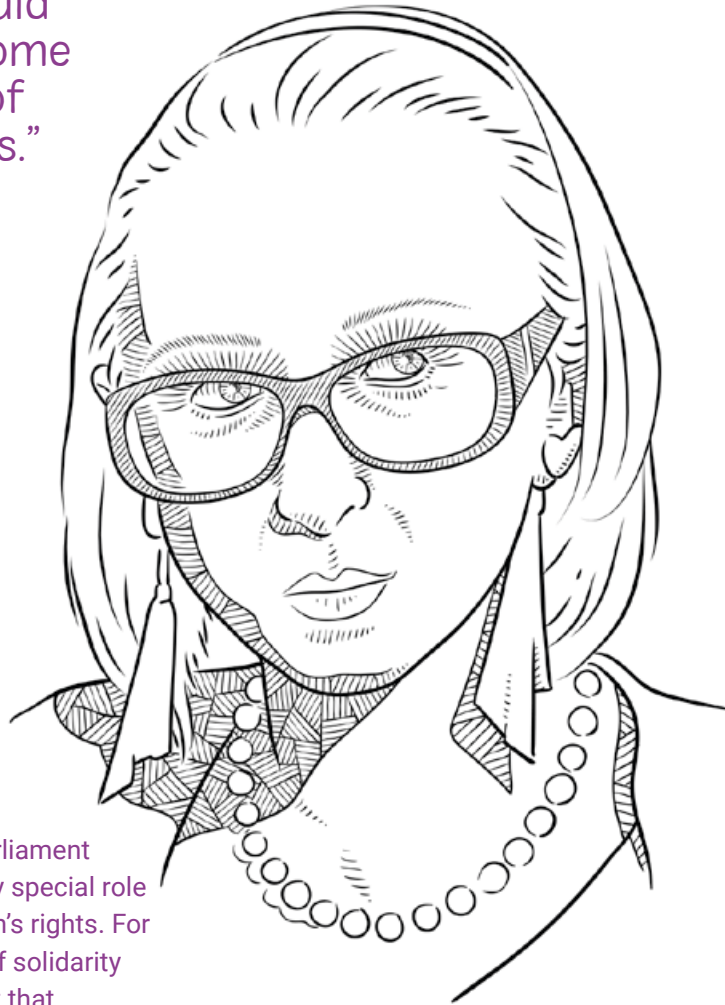
Louise Kneeland



“ I fight for human rights on many levels, but as a feminist and a transwoman, women’s rights and transgender rights are personally important to me. From my perspective, the European Union should have a stronger influence on lawmakers in Member States regarding women’s rights, reproductive rights, and LGBTI* rights. These groups face discrimination at many levels in their own home countries, but with populist, traditionalist, right-wing governments, there is little hope for change by itself within the Union States, especially within Eastern Europe.

”

“The European Parliament could and should become a guarantor of women’s rights.”



“**T**he European Parliament could play a very special role in the fight for women’s rights. For example, the sense of solidarity and words of support that Gals4Gals Łódź received in 2016 – when the Polish government wanted to criminalise abortion and introduce a total ban – strengthened our resolve.”

”

NAME.

Agnieszka Gralak

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

**Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom**

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

I do not have one but if I did, I would wish to have her present while I was a child and while growing up. She would show me which elements of the world are the products of sexism, violence and rape culture and teach me to recognise them.

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“Why do people say “grow some balls”? Balls are weak and sensitive. If you wanna be tough, grow a vagina. Those things can take a pounding.”

Betty White

NAME.

Katarzyna Iwaniuk

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom

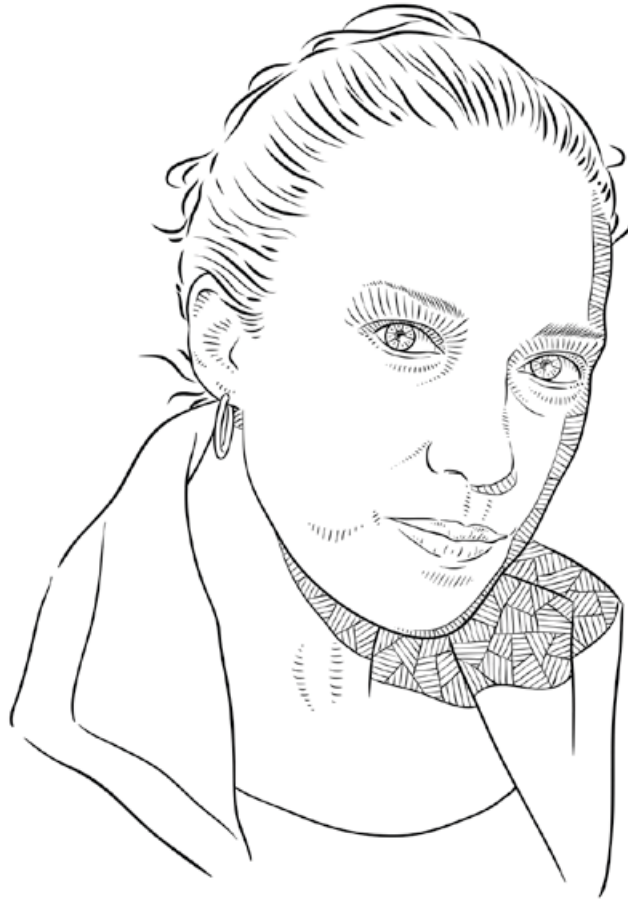
**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

**My mother, Zofia
Iwaniuk**

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“There is no tool for
development more
effective than the
empowerment of
women.”

**UN Secretary-
General Kofi Annan**



“ **W**hen it comes to feminism and the fight for more equality, my personal struggle has been centred around grappling with the vast difference in living standards that exists between the women of Western Europe and those in Poland. Here the struggle is omnipresent, with gender inequality existing in every area of social life: political, medical and in the wider public space, where I too have felt insecure as a woman. Women in the West and East of the EU live different lives, and the difference itself is overwhelming. Elevating reproductive rights into human rights within all EU Member States is absolutely critical. As the well-known Polish academic Professor Monica Płatek once said: “They who control people’s reproductive lives are in control of these people’s lives entirely.”

”

“At a time when populists and conservative communities are working hard to limit our rights, the European Parliament could and should become a guarantor of those rights. Without recognising them as fundamental human rights, inalienable and inviolable throughout the European Union, women’s rights will still be used by individual Member States as a bargaining chip in their fight for power.”



NAME.
Magdalena Gałkiewicz

PLACE OF ORIGIN.
Poland

ORGANISATION.
Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**
Suffragettes and
current feminist
leaders all over the
world, especially in
the Middle East, Asia,
Africa and South
America.

FEMINIST QUOTE.
“The animals of
the world exist for
their own reasons.
They were not
made for humans
any more than
blacks were made
for whites, or
women for men.”
Alice Walker

NAME.

Iwona Majak

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

**Maria
Sktłodowska-Curie**

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for his own improvement and, at the same time, share a general responsibility for all humanity, our particular duty being to aid those to whom we think we can be most useful.”



“ Prolonged strain and lack of quantifiable success can be hard to deal with and sustained activism can even lead to burnout – sometimes the fight for women’s rights seems like it can’t be won within one generation’s life. ”

“ Connecting with the parliamentarians Terry Reintke and Ernest Urtasun in 2016 enabled Gals4Gals Łódź to understand the power of European institutions and to learn to trust their political influence. Travelling to Brussels to attend the “European Ideas Lab” to give a workshop on women and politics in Poland was a tremendous experience for us – we experienced a whole new level of activism on a European level. Bonding as a group, we also made connections that opened new possibilities for our activism, something that would never have happened without Terry’s support.

”



NAME.

Gosia Wochowska

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

Gals4Gals, Łódź

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

Collectively, the leaders of the Women’s March worldwide.

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“When women support each other, incredible things happen.”

Kaur Rupri

NAME.

Anna Migala

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Poland

ORGANISATION.

**Gals4Gals, Łódź/
Łódzkie Dziewuchy
Dziewuchom**

**FEMINIST
ROLE MODEL.**

My mother

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“Nevertheless,
she persisted.”**



“ With financial support from Wemove.eu and the Feminist Trust Fund we expanded the reach of our activities and evolved as a Gals’ movement in Poland. We strongly believe that well-directed EU funds can solve civic problems and win feminist struggles: thanks to the Feminist Trust Fund, we can now study the language of the anti-choice propaganda. **”**

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



ON 3RD OF OCTOBER 2016, Poland's parliament considered a bill that would ban abortion in all cases except when the mother's life is threatened. The proposed law included prison terms for women and doctors.

THREE DAYS BEFORE THE VOTE, women's rights groups and individual women across Poland, mobilised by the Polish Women's Strike, organised what is now considered to be one of the largest protests in the history of the country. Thousands of women and men in Poland went on strike to protest against the bill proposal in a demonstration that became known as "Black Monday".

CURRENTLY IN POLAND, abortion is only permitted if the mother's health is at risk, there's a fetal abnormality, or the pregnancy results from rape or incest. Even then, women report that it's extremely hard to find a doctor who will perform the procedure.

UP TO 45% OF POLISH CITIZENS would vote to make abortion law more liberal than it is today.

THE FIGHT GOES ON. Gals4Gals Łódź has been fighting for women's rights in Poland for almost three years now. And, thankfully, public opinion about the abortion law is changing. We've learned that raising awareness can lead to a better social understanding of issues like reproductive rights. While the battle might be lost at Polish parliamentary level, the real war for women's rights, has just begun.

NAME.

Almudena Rodríguez

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Spain

ORGANISATION.

**L'Associació de Drets
Sexuals i Reproductius**

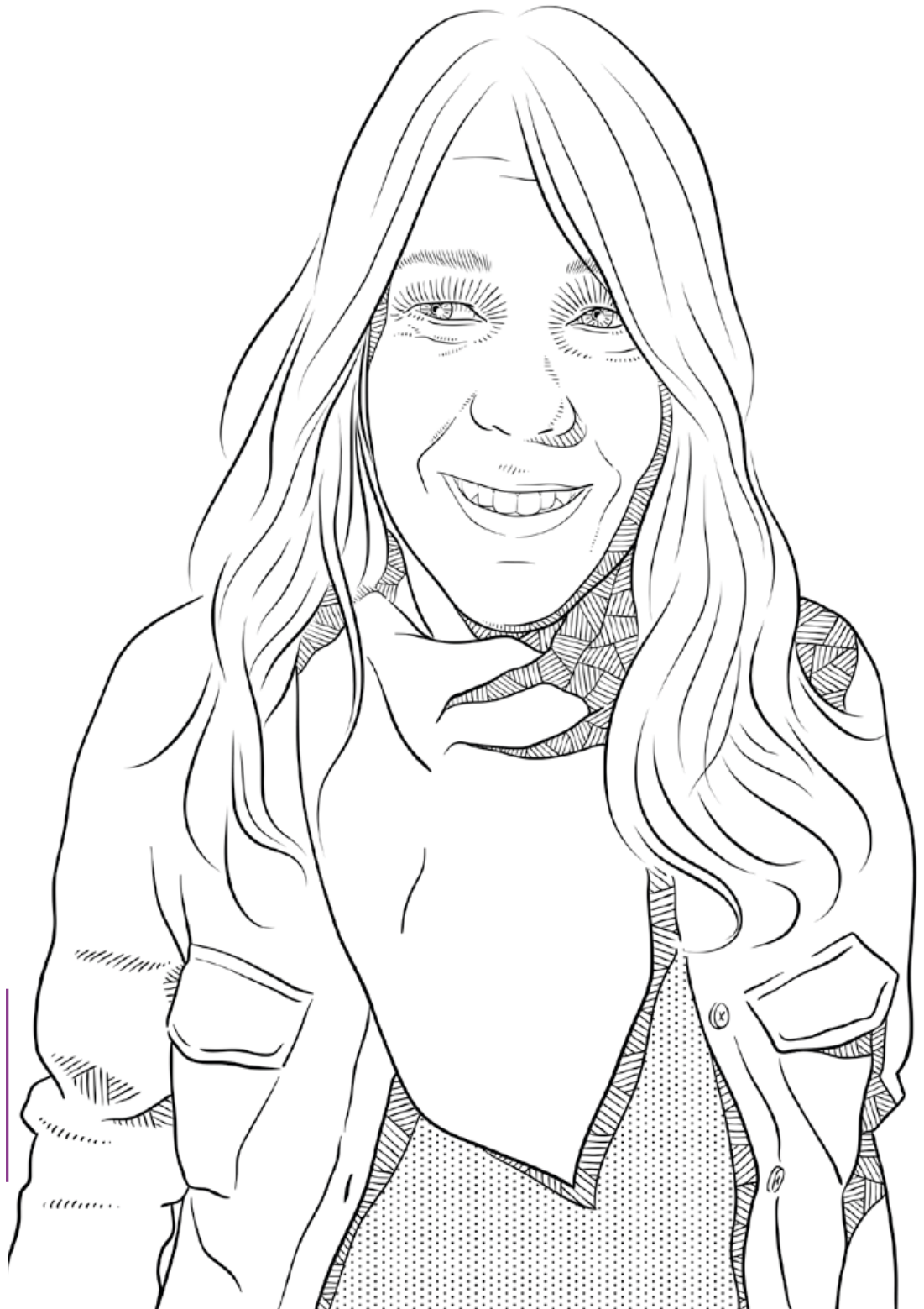
FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

**Audre Lorde
& Silvia Federici**

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“Feminism is a revolution, not a rearranged marketing strategy... Feminism is a collective adventure, for women, men, and everyone else. A revolution, well underway. A worldview. A choice. It's not a matter of contrasting women's small advantages with men's small assets, but of sending the whole lot flying.”

Virginie Despentes



ALMUDENA RODRÍGUEZ

A NEW PARADIGM WITH PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE

Almudena Rodríguez defines the struggle for body sovereignty and highlights the achievements of the Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in strengthening feminist alliances and denouncing fundamentalists. She explains that only by breaking down privilege and patriarchal structures can we reach a feminism that provides equality to all.

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The struggle for body sovereignty for all women and hetero-dissident people has been my key battle over the last years. It's a battle I have shared with my feminist colleagues at l'Associació de Drets Sexuals i Reproductius, who have faced this struggle over the last thirty years. This is a polyhedral struggle with varying angles. It claims for the right to make our own decisions concerning our bodies and to fully enjoy them without being enmeshed in heteropatriarchal and capitalist violence.

This struggle not only aims to obtain the right to abortion, free of stigma and hidden violence, but it's also dedicated to restructuring the current economic model to put people at the centre of it. A model where caring for people is considered a central element of the economy. Above all, the struggle for body sovereignty requires to smash each and every patriarchal structure be it in the social, economic, cultural and political spheres.

To truly win this fight we need much more than the safeguarding of the right to abortion with law – we also need cultural transformation within our society, putting an end to the culture of privilege that the few enjoy.

STRENGTHENING THE FEMINIST NETWORK

Only by creating new feminist alliances in Europe and globally can we achieve what we desire. We will only succeed if we work together, always remembering that our struggle is also against racism, the criminalisation of poor people, the criminalisation of land, the destruction of the environment and the current heteropatriarchal and neoliberal system.

Institutional feminism, for the privileged, is a feminism that supposedly fights for equality but continues to only fight for the few, not the many. Instead, we must work with a sense of intersectional feminism, in order to respect and further recognise the existence of diverse types of feminism: autonomous, decolonial, Muslim and Roma feminism among many others.

Under the current suffocating climate of neoliberalism and of criminalisation of groups confronting the system, women's bodies and those standing in opposition to the heteronormative system become the clear centre of attacks of fundamentalist groups.

DENOUNCING FUNDAMENTALISM

We are under attack from fundamentalism of all types, which is why the Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, along with the many other feminist collectives in Catalonia and the Spanish state, has decided to face such groups head on. The time has come to be courageous and “forget the pragmatism that comes from the well-off ones” as the journalist and writer Rosa Maria Artal once said.

We now host events with space for debate and reflection, and denounce fundamentalist groups online, finding out who they are, how they work, and which public institutions are financing them. We have condemned these groups from within political institutions like the Catalan Parliament, Barcelona City Council and regional government, calling on the government to take the fight against fundamentalists more seriously.

The more progressive groups of the European Parliament must show courage and directly confront them. It's time to leave behind the political interests and objectives that uphold patriarchal structures – and clearly support the European citizens on the ground involved in these fights for many years. Political engineering is now pointless; the moment has come to take a risk. Feminist groups have acquired knowledge in this struggle and must be recognised as principal actors in the fight against extreme right fundamentalism.

“We are under
attack from
fundamentalism
of all types.”

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THE ASSOCIATION OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

More spaces for grassroots organisations and feminist collectives must be opened; for such organisations working on a daily basis with communities, constantly striving to realise their rights. We need to encourage and place our trust in a true co-creation of policies. We need to avoid fashionable speeches that speak of a supposed equality, without prompting any actual change. Because ultimately, feminism is transformative, liberating and disruptive to the status quo.

The discourse of the Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights is feminist, intersectional, anti-neoliberal, and consistently against patriarchal structures. With the objective to disseminate this discourse we attended a European Parliament event called “Together against the backlash on reproductive rights in Europe!” invited by Ernest Urtasun. There we showed that only by working closely with women on the ground and understanding their lived experiences can we guarantee and protect their rights.

We have initiated and continued to strengthen strategic alliances with feminists from all over. We have also linked with our Polish, Argentinian and Andorran sisters currently involved in the fight to protect the right to abort, and with our Latin-American feminist colleagues, who inspire us to go for something new every day.

NOT JUST FOR THE FEW

The year 2018 was an important year for the Spanish feminist movement – the women’s strike was an overwhelming experience, an apparent awakening of feminism for many young women. While moments like these have the power to change everything, such success cannot stay with the privileged feminists of the few, those who talk of equality and empowerment while forgetting other women and abandoning the class struggle against neoliberalism and against racism.

We must alert other sectors of society to this problem and the way it co-opts and corrupts feminists’ concepts and language, emptying it of political content. We must show that the success of our feminism is the only pathway that can protect us from the reactionary fundamentalists.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The biggest challenge before us is to put the brakes on and fight the rise of the extreme right and fundamentalists. We must build a new paradigm with people at the centre. In order to do this, the Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights, together with our feminist colleagues, will continue to work towards creating new alliances.

We will repeat over and over again our message: that without recognition, the exercise of our sexual and reproductive rights, and body sovereignty, it will not be possible to construct a new inclusive, democratic society, free of violence and privileges that only exist for the few.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



ONE OUT OF THREE young person states they have suffered sexist violence in the last twelve months, according to the Association of Family Planning of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

ON THE 8TH OF MARCH 2018, the International Women's Day, Spanish women organised the biggest women's strike in history, with more than 5.3 million people seconding the strike to some degree. The 2019 women's strike continued the same trend with more 1,500 events organised and massive demonstrations in more than 500 Spanish cities and villages.

ACCORDING to an Association of Sexual and Reproductive Rights survey, six out of ten people do not know their sexual and reproductive rights.

NAME.

Che Van Dýck

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

USA

ORGANISATION.

**Founder of the Digital
Leadership Institute**

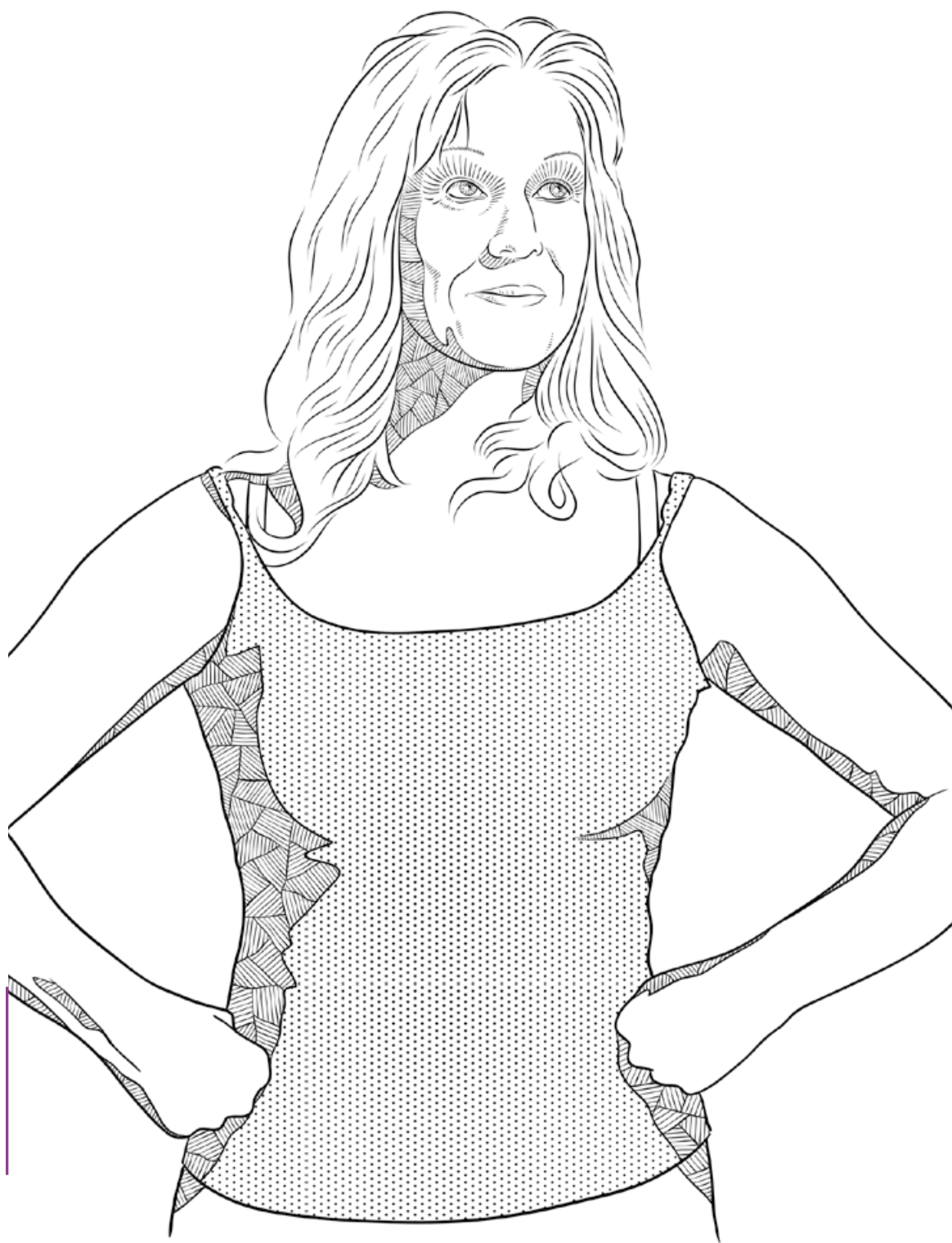
FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Gloria Steinem

FEMINIST QUOTE.

**“Stand for something
or fall for anything.”**

Irene Dunne



CHE VAN DÛCK

DIGITAL WOMANCIPATION: A CALL TO ACTION

Che Van DÛck, founder of the Digital Leadership Institute, examines the ways in which the world's women are being marginalised by the digital disruption today, and explores our options for closing the gendered digital gap.

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In the 2013 preamble to the Women 2020 report, I wrote the following: “No strategy for Europe that aims to be smart, sustainable and inclusive can be achieved without the contribution of Europe’s women as economic actors of the first order, as agents of positive social change and as leaders in politics, academia and business. If Europe’s unique promise to the world is the richness and diversity of its human capital, Europe’s women represent our greatest opportunity for delivering on this promise to Europe and to the world.”

Since I wrote the above, little has changed to increase the contribution of women to a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe. Here and around the world, oligarchs have assumed critical leadership roles; marginalisation of people on the basis of race, origin and socio-economic background has become the order of the day; and the war on women has continued unabated – often encouraged by chauvinism of the highest order. In an environment of increasing disenfranchisement of the 99%, the dismal dearth of women in decision-making has been the

FIGHT. RESIST.

EMPOWER.

harbinger of a greater slide into tyranny of the right and of populism across the board.

Whether for influencing elections, channelling news – real and fake – or showcasing people from all over the political spectrum, the battleground for society’s hearts and minds today is increasingly digital. And to say that the medium itself is indifferent to the battle is to seriously underestimate the power of technology, which itself is ruled by another elite fraternity: young or old, but always white and male.

That a digital “disruption” is occurring at the same time as this apparent political upheaval is not a coincidence and they may even enjoy a causal link. The rift between educated and non-educated, blue-blooded and common, the haves and the have-nots, has existed since before the Social Contract that allegedly held chaos and self-serving brutishness at bay. But in the Digital Age – that *not* coincidentally also bears witness to the ushering in of the Anthropocene Era – these differences are exaggerated, exacerbated, publicly tried, and then executed with a digitally-induced mob frenzy from both the Left and the Right.

DIGITAL UNDERBELLY

In an online world where such extremism feeds party politics, voices that plead for reason, unity, cooperation and solidarity are often drowned in a flood of ones and zeros that either creates digital echo chambers for the like-minded, or polarises those with opposing viewpoints, or both. Subtle and even subversive manipulation of the digital landscape by those who control digital media

“The engagement of women and girls in digital sectors is both an economic and a social imperative.”

creates scenarios where fanatics with delusions of grandeur accede to power, and disruption of a real kind occurs: political, economic and social.

For those with a *real politik* agenda, who would ostensibly reap the reward of a new world *lack of order*, the benefits far outweigh the cost of “hacking” our democracies. Consolidating digital means, overtly or otherwise, in order to manipulate elections, global financial markets, power production or vital resource distribution, leads to a zero-sum situation, where tyrannical puppets with right-wing agendas hold hostage the silent, democratic majority. Cue ensuing erosion of real democratic processes, and the risk of democracy itself falling victim to digital terrorism of the lowest form. As the pattern repeats, by polarising and destroying democracies from the inside out, one by one around the world, global destabilisation occurs.

Whose endgame is this? Is it ours? Is it yours? If not, we need to act. With nothing short of our social-democratic rule of law at stake, it is important to consider just how much Europe's and the world's women are being marginalised by the digital disruption today, and to understand our options to close the gendered digital gap and put an end to the misogynist and elitist brand of power that this transition is engendering.

DIGITAL DOMINATION

In Europe today, a woman is less likely than a man to:

- > Enjoy online access
- > Be digitally skilled, even in a rudimentary way
- > Study Computer Science formally or hold a technical or leadership role in a digital field of any kind.

Since 2005, demand for IT experts in Europe has grown eight or more times the job market, to over 3 million people working in digital sectors. At the same time, participation by women in these areas has flatlined in terms of absolute numbers and even dropped as a relative percentage of all IT professionals to under 17%. In the same period, the Digital Scorecard for Europe shows a persistent lag in digital skill levels of Europe's women, representing about 12 million more digitally unskilled women than men, and a staggering total of 150 million European women with no or low digital skills.

In 18 European countries, men enjoy greater online access than women, they are far more likely to formally study Computer Science across the

board, and they hold 80% percent of technical and leadership roles in Europe's ICT organisations. In Europe, tech entrepreneurs are four times more likely to be men than women, and in some places the ratio of male to female tech starters is closer to 100:1. Finally, men make up 97% of corporate CEOs and hold 85% of board roles in Europe's private sector, including in tech. In a word, digital leadership in Europe and around the world, is dominated by men.

Despite this, a 2016 European Commission study found that full participation of women in Europe's ICT sector would annually contribute as much as €16 billion to the economy and would provide a quick win to address the exploding digital skills gap that could leave as many as 1 million IT jobs unfilled in Europe by 2020. This, coupled with the risk of increased exclusion brought about by digitisation, makes engagement of women and girls in digital sectors both an economic and a social imperative.

DIGITAL DISRUPTION

Domination of the digital society by men continues in a context in which our lives and livelihoods are becoming increasingly digitised as well, and where the rate of that digitisation is also increasing. The advent of the internet, mobile devices and cloud-working has put huge connectivity and computing power in the hands of individuals, and market leaders even in traditional sectors of the economy are reinventing themselves as "digital".

The onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, characterised by digitisation of the world's power and production facilities across a vast landscape populated by massive amounts of data, is set to further dwarf the “consumer” digital transformation already happening. To all of this add innovations like machine learning and AI – where the rate of autonomous innovation is uncharted and The Singularity may even already be upon us – and we have a doomsday scenario for evil-minded tyrants and naive frat boy ingenus alike, where the only other common denominator is a shrill absence of women.

104 The digital disruption has not gone entirely unchecked however. To date, Europe has celebrated some key successes in the battle to safeguard our personal data and privacy from massive digital appetites, perhaps with some thanks due to a diligent group of high-powered female “tech titans” in Brussels. An increasingly sophisticated and well-oiled lobby machine rolling out in Europe, coupled with digital capital owners themselves losing control of the disruption, means that our ability to influence the direction, nature and depth of the digital transformation down the road will certainly diminish. For this reason, and the unanswered risks to democracy and rule of law itself, greater accountability in the leadership of our digital society, in the form of increased diversity of that leadership, is critical and urgent.

DIGITAL BUBBLE

Fortunately, traction for inclusive digital transformation is growing at the European level, encouraged largely by successes in achieving gender balance in initiatives like European Code Week that, since 2013, has reached nearly 1 million people, half of whom are girls and women. A revitalised Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition is also now actively seeking pledges to increase participation of girls and women in digital studies and careers in Europe, placing the priority on this matter that it deserves. The list of women policy-makers in Europe who have championed digital gender equality is a long and impressive one, including the editors of this publication and also EU Commissioners Redding, Kroes, Geoghegan-Quinn, Thyssen, Jourova and Gabriel. The biggest challenge facing these digital inclusion advocates has not been in getting gendered messaging into European and even global discourse on tech, but in ensuring that it receive sustained attention, resources and treatment beyond their respective missions.

To this end, the recent success of Mariya Gabriel, current European Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, in including indicators on *participation of girls and women in digital sectors* in the Digital Scorecard for Europe is a particular reason to celebrate. In this way, we will begin to measure what we treasure, and the data itself – like that shared above – can create the starting point for an appropriate course of action to level the digital playing field. These inroads, as significant as they may be,

are not enough to counter the risks to our society, economy, and even our democracies, however, that arise from permitting a single worldview to dominate the narrative of our digital society at the exclusion of all others.

DIGITAL WOMANCIPATION

All hope is not lost. Digital technology did also facilitate the Women's March, the largest mass demonstration of humans on the planet in herstory. It also fostered the #MeToo movement that gave a new voice to victims of toxic masculinity, and itself added to a lexicon whose mere existence and digital propagation creates a new paradigm in empowerment for the persecuted. Digital technology, and the internet specifically, also led to the "rainbow wave" — now historical 2018 mid-term U.S. Congressional elections.

Using digital tools to foment the kind of positive change we want to see is only a start. While the tech world is still a virtual male locker room, unwelcoming and even hostile to women, it is into this very lion's den that women must now enter — to become designers, builders, and yes, leaders of our digital society. To accomplish this, as a first step we must collectively become more active in promoting a neutral internet to ensure that owners of digital means cannot close these channels at will and stifle the voices of those with less means. Actions that promote digital human rights are also essential for ensuring that access and affordability of the internet remains a top global policy priority.

We women must also individually pursue studies and career paths, especially entrepreneurship, that focus specifically on critical technologies — blockchain, AI, machine learning, data science, cybersecurity — without ever considering that "it's too late" or "these things are not for me." In fact, harnessing the power of mature women in the workforce, those "in transition," and the very same who are systematically marginalised by the patriarchy because of gender, age and/or race, presents its own opportunity: for the women themselves to become more economically and politically self-sufficient, and for our society to benefit from the diversity and plurality of greater female voices and vision in decision-making.

DIGITAL ROLE MODELS

The benefit of having more women in leadership — to disrupt the old boys' club, "bropreneur" startup scene, and technology sectors across the board — has been well documented. Despite the preponderance of evidence, however, nothing has changed for over a decade. The conditioning of women themselves into accepting that they are second-rate citizens or that their interests are inherently tied to success for the white, male minority, is a key consideration in tackling this imbalance. Regardless of the cause, more visible women role models — real and fictional — in leadership, entrepreneurship, and in strategic STEM sectors, is a critical factor in tipping the balance.

Thankfully, the media and entertainment industries, themselves challenged by the digital disruption that, at least for a time, threatened the very foundation of these arcane misogynist hierarchies, seem to be slowly getting the message. With the physical battle over female autonomy being taken aggressively into the virtual realm, however, greater safeguards for girl and women role models – actors, journalists, politicians – who enjoy even a minimal level of visibility online, must be given attention. The Istanbul Convention, championed by the Council of Europe, is a global milestone in this direction, of which we as Europeans can be duly proud. It goes without saying that our democratic political structures – the very ones currently under threat – are also those that must serve to protect even the most vulnerable who enter the online and offline lion's den.

DIGITAL SOCIAL INNOVATION

Hurdles notwithstanding, it is imperative that women assume greater decision-making power in the private and public sectors, in the latter case by also leveraging the very digital platforms designed to hinder such outcomes. As the adage goes, "if you are not at the table, you are on the menu." It is time for women to be both at the table and calling the shots. Naturally, this also requires a certain amount of solidarity among women, and a genuine effort by each of us, to the woman, to set and deliver personal commitments to bootstrap each other in our collective path to the top. Too long has the patriarchy succeeded in exploiting differences among women to keep us out of leadership and on the sidelines regarding decisions that affect us all collectively and intimately.

As a survivor of the attacks on Brussels, I was challenged by Jerry Springer to articulate a nuclear option as the sole remedy for countering terrorism and radicalisation in the world. My response then, as now, was that more women in leadership, not just in keeping the peace but in avoiding conflict outright, is the only path to greater understanding and to addressing the underlying socio-economic and geopolitical struggles for which radicalisation is only a symptom. My position was not popular then, nor is it now, in a period when exploiting base human fears to threaten the very fabric of our democratic societies has become the norm.

This is exactly the situation that must change. As Neelie Kroes, my own long-time role model, once said: "Social innovation will eat technological innovation for lunch." An ambitious global movement of women seeking to improve our plight as a species, and that of our fellow creatures and planet, is certainly the kind of social change that would be innovative under the status quo. Such a movement enabled by technology is a reality as appealing as it is intimidating, and therefore entirely worth pursuing.

Hence, something else I wrote in 2013 still also holds true: "Full participation of women in the economic, social and political life of Europe... is arguably the single most important factor contributing to realising a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe. To reformulate a line from (then) U.S. President Obama's State of the Union address: "Success for Europe's women is success for Europe." If it was not audible before, this message is now loud and clear."

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!

SINCE 2005, the Digital Scorecard for Europe shows a persistent lag in the digital skill levels of Europe's women.

IN EUROPE, tech entrepreneurs are four times more likely to be men than women.

A 2016 EUROPEAN COMMISSION STUDY found that full participation of women in Europe's ICT sector would annually contribute as much as €16 billion to the economy.



NAME.

Patricia Jiménez

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

Peru and Belgium

ORGANISATION.

Global Dialogue
Programme of the
Heinrich Böll Foundation,
EU Office

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Rita Segato

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“The impunity that covers femicide is the macho response of the patriarchal state to violence against women.”



PATRICIA JIMÉNEZ

FEMINICIDE/FEMICIDE: COMBATING A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Patricia Jiménez has worked since 1998 for the Heinrich Böll Foundation at the European Union office. In her contribution, she explores the awareness that has been generated in the EU over twelve years of campaigning on femicide and the difficulty this institution in implementing its political commitments in their relations with third countries. While progress has been made, she explains, there is still a long way to go before femicide can be eradicated around the world.

The term “femicide” was coined by writer and activist Diana Russell in 1970. She wanted to draw attention to the systematic violence against women which, in its most extreme form, results in the killing of women. It is the greatest obstacle to gender equality and the most widespread violation of human rights, affecting all social levels in different ways.

In the 1990s for the first time, women’s rights campaigners vocally condemned the many murders of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, highlighting the impunity surrounding them. According to official figures, some 6,000 women and girls were killed in

the country between 1999 and 2006. Mexico was no exception in the region: in Guatemala, 1,188 women were murdered between 2001 and August 2004, while 2,933 women were murdered in El Salvador in 2001. In Honduras, 442 women and girls suffered violent deaths between 2002 and 2005, and in Nicaragua, 203 women were murdered between 2003 and 2005.

Europe was also no exception. Though there are no formal statistics on femicide in the EU, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights survey on gender-based violence showed in 2014 that one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual

violence since the age of 15. Thus, this dramatic reality was taking place in both regions, even though it was not something covered by the European media.

In 2006 the Heinrich Böll Foundation decided to work in cooperation with civil society organisations and the Greens/EFA in the European Parliament (EP) to give visibility to this outrageous reality, condemn the impunity surrounding it, and call for universal accountability, requesting governments to fulfil their human rights obligations and protect women. Our goal was to spark a dialogue process with the EU that would equip us in the fight against feminicides in Latin America. However, along the way the sad reality that violence against women is also a serious problem in Europe emerged.

FIRST STEPS OF OUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Since the introduction of the 2004-2009 legislature, Green/EFA Members of the European Parliament already familiar with the issue of feminicides in Mexico and Central America have tried to bring the topic to the attention of the European Parliament. The parliamentary way was to bring a so-called Own Initiative Report (INI) report before the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM).

After initial strong reluctance and denial of the phenomenon by conservative Members of the European Parliament, the FEMM committee finally decided to accept the proposal, with the creation of the first draft assigned to the Greens/EFA group. The drafting process was opened to civil society groups, which suggested content and made requests for EU action.

In this context, the FEMM committee and the Subcommittee on Human Rights organised a conference in 2006, under the slogan "No more killing of women!". This conference was instrumental in combating the conservative forces trying to boycott the subject and led to the adoption of a pioneering European Parliament resolution on the murders of women (femicides) in Central America and Mexico.

It was the first European Parliament document on the matter and the beginning of the European Union's role in fighting this phenomenon. The resolution called on the EU institutions, Member States, Mexico and the countries of Central America to make eradicating violence against women and femicide an aim in all areas of their relations.

This was the start of an intensive process of dialogue and lobbying that brought together a number of Members of the European Parliament, the Heinrich Böll Foundation and various civil society organisations and women's rights defenders.

THE CONFERENCE ON FEMINICIDES, AN ANNUAL TRADITION

To push for our agenda, from 2008 we started to co-organise an annual international conference on feminicides, taking place one year in Europe and the following in Latin America. This conference gave feminist organisations, activists, academics and experts from Europe and Latin America the opportunity to annually report on violence against women and femicide to representatives of the EU and their respective countries. Ten international

conferences on feminicides and a multitude of other workshops were organised over the last ten years, connecting a vast network of experts and activists, creating and disseminating knowledge, and setting clear demands that were shared by experts, civil society, representatives from different institutions such as the UN, and policy makers.

FIRST RESULTS: EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT TO COMBAT FEMINICIDES

In 2010 the Spanish Government – which at the time held the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU – invited a delegation of women’s rights defenders from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to a joint meeting of the EU Council’s working parties on human rights, and Latin America and the Caribbean. This meeting resulted, for the first time, in the inclusion of a paragraph on combating gender-based violence in the Fifth EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit declaration in 2010.

Also, with enthusiasm we received the news that in the 2012 report, Rashida Manjoo, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, wrote that feminicide or “...gender-related killings are the extreme manifestation of existing forms of violence against women.” She maintained that “culturally and socially embedded, these manifestations continue to be accepted, tolerated or justified – with impunity as the norm. States’ responsibility to act with due diligence in the promotion and protection of women’s rights, is largely lacking”. In her statement, Ms. Ranjoo corroborated feminist theories according to which feminicide is linked to patriarchal cultures and state’s impunity perpetuates it. This international

“Our goal was to spark a dialogue process with the EU that would equip them in the fight against feminicides in Latina American.”

recognition motivated us to continue with our EU and Latin-American policy dialogue campaign.

A CLEAR OUTCOME: A NEW CHAPTER ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The first EU-CELAC¹ Summit in Chile in 2013, planned to include a chapter on gender (Chapter 7) in their 2013-2015 Action Plan. The basis of the chapter would be to create a formal bi-regional dialogue with two priority areas: women’s participation in politics and in the economy. Here we saw a great opportunity, and through our efforts and those of a number of different lobbying mechanisms, we made it possible for a third priority area to be included – the eradication of violence against women. The adoption of a chapter on gender in the EU-CELAC Action Plan clearly stated political will to address the issue of violence against women as a priority in their bi-regional activities.

¹ Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

After this great success, our strategy focused on the implementation of this chapter, so that these nice words would not be lost in the wind. First, we managed to adopt a new urgency resolution on femicide in the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat), asking that the gender dialogue be defined with the participation of women's organisation and civil society representatives from both regions and to guarantee funds for its effective implementation.

NEXT STEPS!

Given that the European External Action Service (EEAS) has a crucial role to play in the implementation of chapter 7, but has not yet been able to do so, we have been advocating for a New Framework for EU-Latin America Cooperation to Promote Gender Equality and Eradicate Violence against Women and Femicide. The Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) – which came into force in 2014 – and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) – which came into force in 1994 – are, in our view, the most suitable regulatory frameworks to guide the implementation of the gender chapter.

The cooperation of the two bodies or mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the two conventions could facilitate the achievement by EU and Latin American countries of recommendations made by the same bodies. The only and best way to achieve this is for the EEAS to put forward the

participation of these mechanisms in the bi-regional dialogue within chapter 7.

CONCLUSION

This advocacy campaign has clearly shown the importance of persistent lobbying by civil society organisations, of connecting common struggles in different regions and of cooperation between feminist organisations to achieve common goals. Although there is still work left to do to achieve real, mindful cooperation between the EU and Latin America on the fight against gender-based violence, we can say that femicides have moved from being invisible in the EU political agenda to become an area of action. The intensification of massive demonstrations calling for action against gender-based violence, seen in both Latin America and in Europe, and the international campaign #NiUnaMenos – “not one less” are both key signs of huge success in this battle.

However, we can also observe that hard-won gender equality rights are under serious threat. Religious and conservative doctrines are strangling gender mainstreaming in public policy (e.g. education and health), anti-feminist speeches are being replicated and some politicians are even daring to put into question the very notion of gender-based violence. These tendencies seem to have been orchestrated and coordinated on both sides of the ocean. It's in this context that all our lobbying strategies, feminist and civil society networks and contact with progressive decision-makers need to continue and to be interconnected. A time for intensified global coordination to combat this backlash is coming; we must be ready.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



2,795 WOMEN were killed in 23 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2017.

THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION (IC) is the first instrument in Europe to set legally binding standards on preventing and combating violence against women and girls at an international level. All EU member states have signed it but still seven (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and the United Kingdom) have not yet ratify it.

FEMINICIDE/FEMICIDE is “the violent death of women based on gender, whether it occurs within the family, a domestic partnership, or any other interpersonal relationship; in the community, by any person, or when it is perpetrated or tolerated by the state or its agents, by act or omission” (MESECVI, 2008)

#NIUNAMENOS (“NOTONELESS”) is an Argentinian fourth-wave grassroots feminist movement, which has spread across several Latin American and European countries that campaign against gender-based violence.

NAME.

Emmanuelle Josse

PLACE OF ORIGIN.

France

ORGANISATION.

AP. F – Collectif pour une
parentalité féministe

FEMINIST ROLE MODEL.

Louise Michel

FEMINIST QUOTE.

“I’m tired of being
treated like a
second-class citizen.”
Rosa Parks



EMMANUELLE JOSSE

FACING THE STRUGGLES OF FEMINIST PARENTHOOD

Emmanuelle Josse, founder of the AP.F - Collective for feminist parenthood, argues that women's status as mothers leaves them at a permanent disadvantage in the professional sphere. The collective's focus on the introduction of equal leave for a second parent at the birth of their child is designed to help relieve women's burden of care.

Parenthood and the burdens of family life still fall mainly on women, in accordance with the heteropatriarchal model that exists at the moment in France and Europe. The exploitation of women's free work in the domestic sphere undermines their autonomy and sense of wellbeing. In the professional sphere — where work is paid for — women's status as mothers leaves them at a permanent disadvantage, while growing tensions between these two spheres falls squarely on their shoulders.

The sphere of productive work covers the process of making consumables goods, whereas the sphere of reproductive work includes all the activities by which people are "made". Taking care of them by providing

them with food, for example, guiding their education, providing support during illness, etc. — in short, everything that makes a decent life for a person. This is the whole point of care, which combines free work in the domestic sphere with low-paid work carried out, once again, by women, who are often racialised and from working class backgrounds. We decided to create the AP.F - Collective for feminist parenthood in order to provide a political response to these tensions. One of our first battles is the introduction of parental leave for the second parent that is equal to that of the mother: 16 weeks in France. We emphasise the notion of "second parent" because it's important to take into account the diversity of families, particularly homo-parental families.

“Growing tensions between two spheres falls squarely on the shoulders of women”.

At present in France, the second parent is entitled to only 11 days of leave when their child is born. Not only is this amount of leave not enough, the leave itself is optional, with only seven out of ten fathers taking it. As a result, after experiencing pregnancy and childbirth, many women quickly find themselves alone caring for a child who requires constant attention. To make matters worse, this is also a time when women find themselves more vulnerable: according to the Collège des Gynécologues Obstétriciens Français, motherhood has painful psychological consequences for 15 to 20% of women.

In addition to being exhausting, this mono-care leads to a raft of other inequalities in the domestic space. It's a twofold issue — both a public health concern and a problem for gender equality.

The 11 optional days for the second parent granted by French legislation is not the most unfavourable or least advantageous arrangement in force within the European Union. But, within the framework of the

social Europe to which we aspire, surely the most advanced countries in terms of social law, such as Sweden, should be taken as a model. In recent months, European institutions have addressed the subject of parental leave at the time of birth, but the proposals made are based on the lowest standards in the European Union — which counts as members seven countries that do not have a legal paternity leave scheme. The Directive on Work-Life Balance validates the principle of paternity leave of a minimum of ten days (paid at the same level as sick leave in the Member State).

To move forward, we need to mobilise three types of actors. First of all, the public, some of whom already aspire to an evolution of the existing legal framework — younger generations want a longer leave guaranteed by law. Secondly, companies, which tend to consider that the issue of working life/ personal life rhythms is not a subject that concerns them; and finally, the political leaders who often hold back, assuming that such a measure will be costly for the State, rather than a real step towards more equality.

The task is therefore immense! Conservative forces refuse to question the heteropatriarchal model for moral reasons (“this family model should be the only valid one”) or for economic reasons (“for several centuries women have been taking on care work in an invisible manner, why should that change now?”) But we remain full of optimism, sure in the knowledge that our fight corresponds to the growing aspirations of European women who call for a more egalitarian parenthood.

GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT!



EUROPEAN WORKING WOMEN spend almost three times as much time in unpaid care work than men (22 hours per week of unpaid work, compared to the nine hours done by men).

THE DIRECTIVE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE establishes for all EU Member States the right to a Paternity Leave of a minimum of ten days (paid sick pay level), to a Carers Leave of five days per year per person and introduces the payment reference in two out of the four months per parent of the existing Parental Leave.

MOTHERHOOD has painful psychological consequences for 15 to 20% of women, according to the Collège des Gynécologues Obstétriciens Français.

A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP has been shown between men's engagement in unpaid work and women's employment rates¹.

THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE that leaves paid below 80% of salaries are not taken up by most men.

