

HOW CAN YOU PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR) IN THE EU?

IN 2019-2024, WE CALL ON YOU TO ENSURE THAT ALL EUROPEANS CAN LEAD FREE AND SAFE PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIVES, IN A SOCIETY FREE FROM SEXISM AND DISCRIMINATION. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO ACT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS OF EU INTERNAL COMPETENCE:

UPHOLD SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM, SAFETY AND DIGNITY THROUGH **POLICIES** IN THE EU



Gender equality and prevention of violence against women

Violence against women is still widespread in the EU and they disproportionately suffer from inequalities. The EU must take ambitious action to eradicate all forms of violence against women. **We urge you to ensure the EU replaces the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality with a comprehensive and binding Strategy for Women's Rights and Gender Equality**, containing strong commitments, clear indicators, and holding all EU institutions and Member States accountable. If the EU is committed to improving gender equality in the long term, **relationship and sexuality education should be a central part of this new Strategy**.

Indeed, educating children and young people on gender equality and combating sexist social norms on femininity and masculinity that harm both boys and girls is **key** to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and bullying. It is our responsibility to give all young people the skills to form healthy relationships based on respect, consent and equality.

We also urge you to continue to call on the EU and all its Member States to ratify and implement the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention (on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence), the most advanced treaty in this field.



Public health

Health, including sexual and reproductive health, is essential for the wellbeing of Europeans. The EU Public

Health policy and funding should promote equal access to high quality healthcare for all Europeans, address the specific needs of the most affected by inequalities, and support organisations working to reduce them. **We urge you to continue calling on the EU to include the promotion and improvement of sexual and reproductive health and rights in its Public Health policy.**



Youth

The **EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027** focuses specifically on youth at risk of marginalisation and discrimination and mentions the need for guidance and support on health and relationships. Relationship and sexuality education is key for young people to develop their self-esteem and the life skills they need to build happy and healthy relationships, free from gender stereotypes and violence. **We urge you to ensure that the EU promotes relationship and sexuality education in the implementation of the Youth Strategy and supports organisations providing it.**



Equality and non-discrimination

Violence and discrimination disproportionately affect many minorities in the EU. The EU must ensure that all its actions address the needs of all people living in the EU, no matter their sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, their ethnic, religious or social background, or whether they live with a disability. **The EU should adopt a strong Equal Treatment Directive to combat discrimination in all areas of competence and on all grounds.**

Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) persons are particularly targeted for their sexual orientation and gender identity. **We urge you to call on the EU to adopt a strong Strategy for LGBTI Equality**, building upon its List of Actions to Advance LGBTI Equality.



Democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights

Authoritarian, regressive, misogynistic movements have risen within the EU in recent years. Their concerted efforts aim to undermine European values: the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, including equality and non-discrimination and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Gender equality, women's rights, LGBTI rights and reproductive freedom are particularly under attack, as are the civil society organisations (CSOs) and individuals defending these rights, with tactics such as disinformation campaigns and withdrawal of funding.

You have a responsibility towards Europeans to preserve a rights-based democracy in EU Member States. **We urge you to continue to call for a comprehensive EU mechanism on Democracy, the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights; to closely monitor and denounce any negative developments regarding the rule of law, fundamental rights and civic space in EU Member States; and to ensure that the EU supports CSOs and individuals under attack.**

SECURE INCREASED EU FUNDING TO DEFEND WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

CONSISTENTLY STAND UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN ALL PARLIAMENTARY WORK



Gender budgeting

Gender budgeting is one of the key strategies available to achieve equality between women and men, by focusing on how public resources are spent. Despite the EU's commitment, a recent EP study found that there has been little, if any, progress in gender budgeting since 2015. **We urge you to hold the EU accountable to implementing gender budgeting, so that all EU spending delivers on gender equality in the 2021-27 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Annual Budgets.**



Financial support for women's rights organisations

A strong women's rights movement is crucial for gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence. The EU must financially and politically support and protect CSOs and individuals, who promote gender equality, non-discrimination, women's rights and sexual and reproductive rights, as they face specific risks. **We urge you to ensure that targeted budget lines for gender equality, women's rights and against gender-based violence exist and are increased in the 2021-27 MFF, particularly within the Rights and Values Programme.**



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)?

In 2018, a new holistic definition of SRHR was presented in the Guttmacher-Lancet Commission report "Accelerate progress – sexual and reproductive health and rights for all": "Sexual and reproductive health is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to all aspects of sexuality and reproduction, not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Therefore, a positive approach to sexuality and reproduction should recognize the part played by pleasurable sexual relationships, trust and communication in promoting self-esteem and overall wellbeing. All individuals have a right to make decisions governing their bodies and to access services that support that right."



Apply a gender lens

The EU has politically and legally committed to equality between women and men, and to promote it in all its activities. **Gender mainstreaming** refers to assessing how policies in all areas will differently affect women and men at every stage of public interventions: preparation, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies. **To ensure that a gender lens exists in all EP work, each Committee should appoint a MEP as Gender Focal Point; and the EP should have a Vice-President responsible for gender equality.**



Systematically speak out on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues

We urge you to consistently raise awareness of SRHR issues and denounce attacks on women's rights and autonomy through EP resolutions, public statements, hearings and studies. You can also join and actively participate in relevant **formal and informal intergroups** and **networks** promoting human rights, gender equality and SRHR.



Involve civil society organisations (CSOs)

Meaningful and genuine involvement of CSOs significantly improves policy-making. **We urge you to regularly engage with CSOs, including women's rights and SRHR organisations, and ensure our voices and expertise inform your work.**

For more information:

How can you, as a MEP, champion sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) – your guide to uphold SRHR in the EP

Reproductive freedom and gender equality are under attack – about the coercive movements who threaten European values

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



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