



# EXPERT STATEMENT

## NOWHERE TO TURN FOR WOMEN: European Elections expose betrayal from all political camps

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In the wake of the European elections, a stark reality emerges: from the far right to the liberal left, the political landscape stands accused of betraying women's rights. **The European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW) sounds a clarion call, urging vigilance against hollow promises from all sides.** This call comes at a critical juncture, as far-right parties across the continent secured unprecedented support. This significant development reflects a **broader trend of rising extremism, driven by a confluence of socio-economic factors.** As the dust settles, we urge newly elected MEPs to shoulder the responsibility of safeguarding women's rights amidst this pervasive betrayal.

Analysing the results of the European Parliament elections, we see that the European People's Party (EPP) secures 189 seats, remaining the most important political group of the European Parliament. They are followed by the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) with 135 seats, Renew Europe with 83 seats, and the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) with 53 seats, with the latter two groups suffering serious losses. The LEFT group position has remained relatively stable, now counting 36 seats. The most important shift concerns the representation of far-right groups with Identity & Democracy (ID) and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) winning 58 and 72 seats respectively, totalling 130 out of 720 seats. **With their increased representation, these groups will now play a crucial role in the legislative process, negotiating with them becoming strategic to**

**secure majority votes.** Some political observers have suggested the possibility of an alliance between the far-right and the European People's Party (EPP).

In France, the far-right party Rassemblement National has emerged as the leading party, securing over 31% of the votes. Reconquête, the party founded by a far-right politician who was convicted three times for incitement to racial hatred enters the European Parliament for the first time. **Combined, these two groups account for nearly 40% of the votes, seemingly making the far-right the dominant political force in France - a historic development.** In Italy, Giorgia Meloni's far-right party Fratelli d'Italia won 28%, ahead of the Democratic Party (PD) with 25% and the populist 5 Star Movement with nearly 10%. **This result should enable Giorgia Meloni to strengthen her influence in Brussels, where she has already managed to impose some of her priority themes, such as the fight against the influx of migrants into Europe.** In Germany, Austria, Greece, Bulgaria, the far-right has also gained significant ground, making **Spain, Denmark, Malta and Sweden counterexamples to this trend.** In some countries, newly elected MEPs from the left are also controversial figures when it comes to women's rights. A notable example is Irene Montero of the far-left party Podemos in Spain. Under her tenure as former Minister of Equality, not only the sex-based protection of women was put at risk, but the ill-conceived "yes means yes" law was introduced, resulting in the release of over 1000 convicted rapists. This law, despite its intention to protect women, led to a

legal loophole that allowed dangerous offenders to walk free. **Such complex situations underscore the pitfalls of the current political landscape, where even those positioned as champions of women's rights falter, highlighting the urgent need for a more robust and effective feminist movement within the EU.**

**This overall surge of the far-right across the EU underscores the growing appeal of their rhetoric, harnessing fears surrounding immigration, economic instability, and cultural change. While far-right parties were once sceptical of the European Union, they have increasingly built transborder support networks, promoting the idea of protecting a shared “European civilisation”. The normalisation of far-right discourse has significantly shaped the political agenda across Europe.** Topics and formulations that were once considered unacceptable have now entered mainstream political dialogue, influencing policies and public opinion. **The far-right communication strategies have been particularly effective. Utilising social media, they have bypassed traditional media filters to directly engage with the electorate.**

This prospect raises concerns from a women's rights perspective as **far-right parties advocate for the traditional family as essential for national reproduction, asserting women's so-called “duty” to take care of their families rather than fulfil their individual aspirations.** In addition, a hardening of immigration policies is likely, with stricter controls and less support for asylum seekers and refugees, **while the specific needs of migrant women remain unanswered.** The **dismantling of public services and tax cuts perpetuated by neoliberal policies defended by the far-right** directly impact women's employment opportunities further exacerbating inequalities between women and men. **The rise of the far-right also presents a challenge to democracy as this movement discourses are often connected with undermining the separation of powers, judicial governance, and international justice.** The impact of far-right leadership can be observed in several European countries where such parties hold power. In Hungary, for instance,

the ruling party has implemented stringent controls on the media and judiciary.

Meanwhile, **the dangers posed by the liberal left to women's rights are deeply concerning,** particularly due to their shift from a structural analysis of systemic inequalities to an emphasis on individual choice. This ideological pivot has led to a **refusal to address and protect women against extreme forms of violence, such as prostitution, pornography, surrogacy, and online violence,** all in the name of personal liberty. By framing these issues as matters of individual freedom, the liberal left overlooks the broader societal and systemic harms these practices inflict on women, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and abuse. This betrayal has profound consequences. By failing to tackle these critical issues, **the liberal left not only abandons women but also supports a narrative that diminishes the collective struggle for women's rights and alienates those who seek robust protections against systemic inequalities and violence.** This alienation drives segments of the population towards far-right ideologies, which, although regressive and detrimental to women's rights, present themselves as addressing the issues ignored by the liberal left, instrumentalising data and using fake news to appear to be defending women against violence perpetrated by migrant men. **In this way, the liberal left's betrayal not only fails women but also contributes to the rise of extremism, creating a perilous landscape for women's rights across the political spectrum.**



**As numerous voices across Europe advocate for a union of the left to combat the rising tide of the far right, it is imperative to recognise that women's rights must not become the scapegoat of political agreements. In this critical moment, we warn against sacrificing women's rights on the altar of political expediency. Instead, we call for the formation of a feminist union, a women's union that prioritises genuine justice and equality.**

We urge MEPs, decision-makers, citizens, and individuals throughout the EU to champion this cause. **The European Network of Migrant Women therefore calls the newly elected MEPs to make equality between women and men, and migrant women's full access to their rights and dignity a priority.** We recall the recommendations laid out in our Manifesto [TOWARDS A EUROPE OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND DIGNITY FOR ALL WOMEN](#), notably our key priorities, including:

- **Ensuring that sex-based protections of women are not eroded**, and positive measures are put in place to eradicate historic discriminations against women as a group;
- **Adopting measures to harmonise data collection on violence against women and girls**, as well as on women and girls' access to their economic, social and political rights in EU Member States with clear indicators for data disaggregation;
- **Ensuring that all forms of sexual exploitation of women are tackled properly in EU legislation**, including prostitution, pornography and surrogacy.

The fight for true justice and equality must transcend hollow promises, liberal ideologies, and conservative dogmas. It is time to forge a united front that places women's rights at the core of the political agenda. Only by doing so can we create a Europe that stands firm against all forms of oppression and safeguards the dignity and rights of all its citizens.

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