

## **PES Women Manifesto: “Zero-Tolerance Zone: A Europe Free from Gender-Based Violence”**

Adopted at PES Women Statutory on 15 October 2021

**One in three women globally, around 736 million, have been subjected to physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes<sup>1</sup>.** As long as women are cat-called, traumatised, beaten, raped, trafficked, murdered or in other ways denied their bodily autonomy, and while girls are still harassed in school and online, exposed to female genital mutation and forced marriage, simply because of their gender, Europe is not equal and not free from gender-based violence.

COVID-19 has increased violence against women and domestic violence, but the “shadow pandemic” of gender-based violence has been rampant in Europe and the world for years. We in PES Women say the line has been crossed far too many times. Women and girls in all their diversity have the right to live free from gender-based violence and discrimination – physical, sexual or psychological, online or offline. It is a matter of human rights. Combatting gender-based violence is about respecting our European values and standing up for equality. This sentiment was reiterated by the PES ministers for gender equality in a declaration on [5 November 2020](#) and by the [PES Presidency on 25 June 2021](#).

That is why PES Women welcomes the European Commission’s intention to put forward an EU Directive to combat gender-based violence and domestic violence before the end of 2021. Ambitious and progressive legislation coupled with sufficient funding for anti-violence initiatives are urgently needed. Europe must become a zero-tolerance zone for gender-based violence.

**This manifesto sets out PES Women’s demands for a Europe free from gender-based violence, based on three pillars: a strong legal framework, adequate funding and changing attitudes.**

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>



**We, PES Women, call for:**

**1. A strong legal framework**

- Immediate and full ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU and all Member States, because the Istanbul Convention is the strongest international tool available to implement zero-tolerance measures of prevention, protection of victims/survivors and prosecution of perpetrators.
- A horizontal, ambitious and intersectional EU directive dedicated to combating gender-based violence in all its forms, with binding measures and commitments to complement the Istanbul Convention and efficient mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The directive must encourage increased funding and measures to improve data collection, prevention, education, protection and prosecution. It must take a holistic approach to unify existing EU frameworks, in order to provide equal protection for all women no matter where in Europe they live.
- Extend the list of EU crimes in accordance with article 83(1) TFEU to cover gender-based violence against women, in order to acknowledge its severity, promote a unified European approach, and ensure the same high level of protection for women in all Member States.
- Introduce consent-based rape legislation across the EU and move away from archaic, victim-blaming practices in the legal approach to sexual assault.
- Establish a unified EU-definition of femicide and improve data collection on this tragic phenomenon, in order to raise awareness of the issue, improve EU cooperation to prevent it, and be able to better prosecute and convict perpetrators.
- Ratification and full implementation by all EU Member States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) against Women and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention on combating violence and harassment in the world of work. International accountability and ensuring women's safety in the workplace are vital steps towards closing employment gaps, improving work culture and women's role in society.

**2. Adequate funding**

- Gender budgeting must become the norm at all levels of European governance, in order to ensure that gender equality is prioritised financially and that EU money is spent in an effective and targeted way towards ending gender-based violence.



15 October

- Improved data collection on gender-based violence at national and EU-level, with sufficient funding for and improved cooperation with the European Institute for Gender Equality, Eurostat and EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to coordinate research in this field, raise awareness and underpin actions and policies with concrete numbers.
- Human trafficking, including for sexual exploitation, must be combated and victims/survivors require substantive support not least through enhanced data collection and adequate funding.
- Gender-sensitive national recovery and resilience plans with earmarked funding for combatting gender-based violence, including support to civil society organisations, women's shelters, and anti-violence projects.
- Continuation of the EU-wide pilot project to establish a joint telephone hotline linking access to anti-violence support in all EU Member States.

### 3. Changing mindsets

- Gender equality issues need to have a prominent place on the European political agenda. A formal forum to prioritize gender equality, diversity and anti-discrimination issues at Council level, so that ministers in charge of that portfolio can tackle the continuum of violence in an adequate manner.
- Mandatory, comprehensive and inclusive sex education in all national school curricula, including teaching of consent and healthy relationships to tackle gender-based violence at its roots by breaking down patriarchal structures and behaviours that lead to violence and discrimination.
- Mandatory gender-based violence prevention and sensitivity training for first responders, such as health workers, police, firefighters but also strongly encourage such training for teachers, human resources staff, public officials, journalists and the judiciary, to improve prevention, recognition of the issue and victim/survivor support.
- Gender mainstreaming at all levels of European governance with an anti-violence perspective, including in digital, employment, trade, migration, climate and youth policies.
- Cultural, political and educational efforts to establish a consent culture across the EU to combat violence and encourage a view of women that sees and treats them as individuals deserving of respect, autonomy and safety.



[www.pes.eu](http://www.pes.eu)



[www.facebook.com/pes.women](https://www.facebook.com/pes.women)



[www.twitter.com/pes\\_women](https://www.twitter.com/pes_women)

**PARTY OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS**

**10-12 Rue Guimard, B-1040**

**Brussels, Belgium**