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Stop all forms of gender-based violence: A manifesto for an inclusive and comprehensive EU gender-based violence policy for all

Together we call on the European Union to adopt a forward-thinking and truly inclusive approach to gender-based violence - that leaves no one behind and strives to achieve real change in the lives of all people, without discrimination. To meaningfully address gender-based violence in the European Union, we must promote inclusion, safety, protection, well-being and effective remedies for those most at risk.

In the lead up to International Women's Day, 8 March, and the expected publication of a draft EU law to address violence against women and domestic violence, the under-signed organisations have adopted this manifesto for a truly inclusive EU law and policy. We welcome the leadership of the European Commission in taking action, and the engagement of the European Parliament, and urge everyone who will be involved in this effort to take an inclusive and intersectional feminist approach.

People facing marginalisation and intersectional discrimination - such as racialised women, women with disabilities, sex workers, those of lower socio-economic status, experiencing homelessness, with precarious or irregular migration status, as well as people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics including trans and non-binary people, are among the *most at risk* of gender-based violence and *least protected and supported* by existing efforts to prevent and tackle violence and other harm.

Measures that aim to address gender-based violence by focusing on increasing criminalisation, policing and incarceration can make many people and communities more vulnerable, reproducing structural, institutional and interpersonal discrimination and violence.¹

We urge the European Union decision makers to strive for an ambitious and comprehensive package of legal, policy and financial measures to address gender-based violence and to ensure victims' rights that:

- Centres the perspectives, concerns and recommendations of those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Takes an intersectional and rights-based approach, recognising that to achieve gender equality and freedom from gender-based violence and protect fundamental rights for all, we have to address all forms of violence, in particular when linked to gender, gender identity and expression, sex characteristics, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age, disability,

¹ Victoria Law: Against Carceral Feminism. 17.10.2014, Jacobin. Available: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/10/against-carceral-feminism/>

class, religion and migration status, and that those who experience intersectional discrimination face greater vulnerability to all forms of gender-based violence and domestic violence.²

- Addresses structural and historical harms and drivers of gender-based violence, and underlying issues such as poverty and oppression, including those created, enabled and normalised by states.
 - Addresses the laws, policies, practices and by-laws that discourage and prevent victims from reporting - such as those that criminalise aspects of sex work including clients, migration and homelessness - or that deny survivors access to essential sexual and reproductive health services, as well as gender-based and intersectional violence perpetrated by police.
 - This requires review and reform of such laws, policies, practices and by-laws as well as specific measures to promote inclusion, safety, well-being, remedy and reparations for particularly affected groups, including in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where the increased powers of the police and requirement to present personal identity and vaccination documents increase the risk of policing of marginalised groups.
- Prioritises a social, community and survivor-centred approach over further criminalisation, invests in holistic social and support services, including mental health and sexual and reproductive health care, social protection and harm reduction, information provision, community interventions, and mechanisms that enable people to access services, remedies and stability, including residence status, without conditions or requirements to engage with law enforcement and the criminal legal system. Ensures that all women as well as people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics fleeing violence are able to access safe, suitable and stable accommodation and other support services without furthering the cycle of abuse.
- Addresses harmful practices such as female genital mutilation; human trafficking; and non-consensual medical interventions such as forced abortion, forced contraception, forced sterilisation, intersex genital mutilation, forced gender reassignment, through this rights-based and intersectional feminist approach.
- Ensures safety and protection for people who do wish to engage with authorities and with the criminal legal system, protection from secondary victimisation, including sanctions, penalties and immigration enforcement, and ensures accessibility of the justice system and procedural accommodation for victims, including people with disabilities.
- Does not fall behind, and rather builds upon, existing European standards, including the Istanbul Convention and the Victims' Rights Directive.³

² Towards Gender Justice Rethinking EU Gender Equality Policy From an Intersectional Perspective. Equinox-Initiative for Racial Justice, 2021

³ The EU Victims' Rights Directive refers to gender-based violence as "violence that is directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression or that affects a person of a particular gender disproportionately. See: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32012L0029&from=en>

Signed by:

Amnesty International

Center for Reproductive Rights

European Federation of Organisations working with Homeless People (FEANTSA)

European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

The European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA-Europe)

European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA)

Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice (Equinox)

Fair Trials

International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)

La Strada International

PICUM- Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants

TGEU - Transgender Europe