



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR

**PEACE & FREEDOM** EUROPEAN SECTIONS



### Message for the European Parliamentary elections,

We, as members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in Europe, expect the candidates for the European Parliament to uphold the goals of the European Union, which are to promote peace and the well-being of its people.

WILPF works for **feminist peace** grounded in equality, justice, and a non-violent approach. Throughout our long history, we have consistently drawn attention to the links between systems of oppression, racism, nationalism, militarism, and patriarchy, fueling global and individual insecurity. We have continuously raised our voices against war and its economic profit that is damaging to our societies, violating (women's) rights and freedoms, irreversibly destroying our environment, and diverting money from social infrastructure, welfare and care.

WILPF raises awareness that far-right politics in Europe promote authoritarian and illiberal developments at the expense of the most vulnerable. We denounce the revival of anti-gender actors presenting themselves as protectors of "traditional" values and "commonsense", while attacking gender as a concept and damaging civil liberties, LGBTIQ+ rights, legal provisions for reproductive rights, including access to safe and legal abortion. Their neoliberal political practices disempower people all over the world, especially in the global South.

WILPF stresses that women are disproportionately affected by cuts in the public sector, both as employees and as those who must bear the burden of unpaid care work. Today's militarization is the biggest in EU's history and is the opposite of our goal "move the money from war to peace".

The Russian war against Ukraine marks the end of the project of a „Common European House“ and the vision of **“common security”**, as laid down in the Paris Charta of OSCE. The EU uses the language of war that unites the majority of European governments and institutions and the established media today. The continuous integration of NATO in the European defense pillar contains the risk of escalating into a pan-European or even nuclear world war. This is why we urge to re-structure the multilateral system for more democratic participation. Utmost priority must be given to diplomacy and negotiations. Several time in history, WILPF has been demanding ministries of peace and peace budgets

In response to Hamas' 7 October 2023 attacks, the government of Israel initiated one of the heaviest aerial bombardments in recent history against Gaza and conducted a series of acts that amount to genocide against Palestinians. The war must be stopped by immediate cease-fire and a stop of weapons delivery, followed by a fair political process towards reaching a just and sustainable peace in the region. As we condemn the violence against all innocent civilians, especially women and children, we support the return of the Israeli hostages and we urge to allow humanitarian assistance for Palestinians in Gaza. We demand to end occupation and create conditions for a rights-based future for the Palestinian people.

WILPF advocates for the local and regional implementation of the **Women Peace and Security Agenda/WPS** and respective NAPs to prioritize **protection** and **prevention**, based on a deep-rooted feminist conflict analysis. The concept must be based on an intersectional human security approach. It includes meaningful participation of women, protection from all forms of violence (SGBV) – as human rights defenders (especially indigenous communities), as peace builders and promoters of non-violent resistance.

WILPF insists that the **Sustainable Development Goals/SDG** are essential in bridging the conflict prevention gap and demands their implementation within a comprehensive framework: Parliamentarians need to address the connections of poverty and the detrimental effects of militarization with climate justice.

WILPF insists that the new **EU Pact for Migration and Asylum** deepens the crisis at European borders, where brutal human rights violations occur daily. It sets a precedent that allows member states to bypass their responsibilities to asylum seekers by using border procedures that increase the risk of unlawful deportations. The Pact systematically expands the use of detention at external borders, particularly concerning for unaccompanied minors and families. It undermines the individual right to obtain refugee status. For women there is a major risk to be returned to situations of abuse, torture, or death. We are convinced that only social inclusion of immigrants and refugees can guarantee to prevent marginalization, violence, extremism and support the building of an active diaspora that can make a change.

**The EU's enlargement policy/ENP** is guided by a unilateral economic and geopolitical interest. For the future of Europe, it is important to pay attention not to impoverish, alienate, and disempower people in the European periphery in a neo-colonial way.

## Feminist Peace is the Missing Piece

This is what WILPF requests from candidates for the European Parliament:

1. **Invest in peace, diplomacy and negotiations on all levels** to stop wars. Promote universal disarmament; systematically expand EU's civilian instruments for mediation, prevention of violence (Istanbul Convention), civilian conflict management, reconstruction and aftercare. Re-purpose the European Peace Facility and Peace Funds for peace-building, peace education, social justice and creative alternatives. We demand measures that prepare for peace not war!
2. **Abandon militarized and racialized border management concepts** and introduce asylum policies that demonstrate explicit solidarity and a welcome spirit for migrants and refugees. Struggle against racism, discrimination, hate speech, fear, fake antagonisms and (new) walls. No outsourcing of asylum procedures to third countries and re-establish a European Sea Rescue Mission!
3. Highlight disarmament and demilitarisation as important aspects of **climate action and environmental justice**
4. **Promote investment in regional and small-scale agriculture and supply chains** that respect sustainable ways of production and trade and the protection of natural resources. Avoid neo-colonial extractivism. Push for renewable energies and a **nuclear free Europe!**
5. **Redirect and increase resources for a caring society:** education, health, culture, research to combat inequality, strengthen commons and guarantee a decent life for everyone!
6. **Support fair and just neighborhood policies (ENP)** for enlargement strategies centered around co-dependency, solidarity and equality within and between countries. Put in place mechanisms that ensure broad and inclusive consultations and not an approach where only the political elite is part of the "dialogue". Enlargement needs a conflict-sensitive work towards the development of democratic and constitutional institutions and instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes, good governance and feminist economy!

WILPF in Europe, 09.05. 2024. For further information:

Signed by the following sections: Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and international members from Lithuania, Hungary