

UNI EUROPA WOMEN'S COMMITTEE STATEMENT

Anti-feminism that has been accelerated by the European far right in the EU has become a significant concern in Europe. Equal rights for women have become a prime battleground for right-wing populists, nationalists and neo-conservatives in governments and parliaments all over Europe. The movement and far-right ideology is dangerously spreading and is gaining influence through associations and in society.

One of the many important consequences of the 2008 economic crisis has been the growth of ultra-nationalist policies and messages against all those whom right-wing or far-right movements and parties consider inferior to them, whether because of their race, origin, gender, or sexual orientation. As a result, the strengthening presence of these parties in various governments of the European Union the confinements we have endured due to the COVID Pandemic and the measures that have had to be taken have only strengthened these movements.

Without undermining all the consequences, those concerning women and minority gender groups are serious and extremely worrying, because these parties, all over Europe, are spreading messages,–sometimes even by women, that trivialise violence against women and vulnerable groups. In several instances they are trying and sometimes succeeding to repeal laws such as those on voluntary termination of pregnancy, marriage equality or assisted reproduction rights. Education and research on gender equality is being undermined and inhibited. For example, in Spain, women striving for equal rights are referred demeaningly to “feminazis”. We cannot accept that feminists and all those who defend equality are systematically denigrated.

All the attacks on women’s rights seem to have a mutual objective: to promote a return to the former role of women as guardians of the home, children and spouse at no cost to society and to once again strip them of their independence, and exclude them from labour market decision making roles.

The resolution of the UNI Europa Women’s Committee is, that we will continue to safeguard the equality we have achieved for women and vulnerable groups and continue to fight for a world for all genders to stand equal in all aspects of society. We stand up, defend and we want to systematically and with fervour ensure the protection of fundamental rights for all against neo-liberal policies of the right and far right.

Our trade unions, by bringing workers together with progressive citizens' movements and associations, constitute a bulwark and an alternative against the dismantling of solidarity and the “collective”. We must strengthen our awareness-raising actions vis-à-vis our activists and more particularly with regard to young people.

The UNI Europa Women’s Committee calls on trade unions to continue raising awareness and to provide education on equal rights for the world of work.

The UNI Europa Women’s Committee calls the employers organisations and governments to develop and promote policies and legislation that ensure equality and rights for all EU workers and citizens.

The UNI Europa Women's Committee urges the Commission to ensure that the EU continues to deliver on the commitments made in the Strategic engagement to advance and promote equal and inclusive societies in Europe, to prevent and combat different forms of hatred, to protect the values of our democratic societies and the rights and freedoms of European citizens especially through the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul convention and the ILO Convention C190.