

## **Overcoming regression in women's rights and gender equality: What are the progressive answers?**

**Public Conference**

**European Parliament, room A3G-3**

**Thursday, 7 March 2019 (14:00-17:30)**

On the eve of the International Women's Day, it's time to ask "What is the status of gender equality across Europe in 2019?" In spite of the significant progress made in the past century, the world has unfortunately witnessed a worrying trend of growing regression of acquired women's rights and gender equality. Within the EU, the Gender Equality Index shows persistent inequalities with only a marginal progress. Backlashes against women's rights and gender equality can be seen from nearly all EU Member States and in key areas such as in the field of labor and social rights, political and economic decision-making, education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, LGBTI rights, preventing and combating violence against women and gender-based violence. Sexist hate speech, misogyny and online violence seem to become more and more socially accepted. Women's rights organizations experience difficulties in accessing funding due to restrictive criteria and administrative burdens while facing a generalising more hostile environment which favours harmful stereotypes from a young age. The recent ban on gender studies in Hungary, the plans to repeal measures fighting gender-based violence in Spain and Poland, the high rates of conscientious objections to abortion in Italy, the heated debate around medically-assisted procreation in France or around the advertisement for abortion-law in Germany are just examples for a general trend of a retrogressive agenda across Europe.

Unfortunately, we are well beyond the point where recognition of this disturbing negative trend suffices. This conference therefore aims at mapping the signs of backlash and addressing the root causes of the regression in women's rights and gender equality in times when in a wider context democracy, fundamental rights and rule of law are put in question, whilst looking for progressive solutions to safeguard achieved fundamental rights and to advance gender equality ranging from sexual and reproductive health and rights to gender violence or LGBTI rights across all EU countries.

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14:00      **Opening**

**Amandine Clavaud**, Policy Advisor on Europe and Gender Equality, Fondation Jean-Jaurès

**Laeticia Thissen**, Policy Advisor on Gender Equality, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

14:10      **Introductory Remarks**

**Christian Veske**, European Institute for Gender Equality

**Agnes Hubert**, FEPS Scientific Council Member & President of Gender Five Plus

14:30      **Mapping Backlashes in Gender Equality across the EU**

**Elena Zacharenko**, International Planned Parenthood, Poland

**Zuzana Madárová**, ASPEKT (feminist and publishing organisation), Slovakia

**Marina Skrabalo**, Solidarna (Foundation for Human Rights and Solidarity), Croatia

**Lia Migale**, Casa Delle Donne, Italy

Moderator:

**Eszter Kováts**, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest

**Questions & Answers**

16:00      **What are the progressive strategies to overcome these regression trends?**

**Catriona Graham**, Policy and Campaign Officer, European Women's Lobby

**David Paternotte**, Sociology Researcher, Université Libre de Bruxelles

**Eszter Kováts**, Policy Officer on Gender Equality in East-Central Europe, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

**Florian Lang**, PhD Researcher, VUB Political Science Department

Moderator:

**Stefanie Ricken**, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, S&D Political Advisor

**Questions & Answers**

17:30      **Conclusion**

**Irene Donadio**, International Planned Parenthood Brussels

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