

**RESPONSE FROM THE EUROPEAN LEFT TO HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH'S QUESTIONNAIRE  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION, MAY 2019**

**DEFENDING THE RULE OF LAW AND FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

1. According to your political group, what tools should the European Union (EU) use to ensure member states adhere to the founding principles of the EU, including respect for human dignity and human rights, democracy, equality, and the rule of law? Do you favor proposals to condition and restrict access to certain EU funding for member states that do not comply with EU standards on the rule of law and human rights?

*Our goal is to guarantee the fundamental human rights of all people living in Europe, men and women, by universal access to these rights, through public services and social security systems, managed by the public. The fundamental rights of citizens must not depend on the markets. They should not be left in the hands of private companies and financial markets. The purpose of fundamental human rights is human emancipation, not profit. In addition, these rights should be at the heart of public investment, state budgets, local authorities, and contributory systems.*

2. Which steps should the EU take collectively to protect journalists against attacks for their work and media pluralism in EU countries?

*The press freedom is a constitutive element of democratic society. It is the basis of our opinion formation, social understanding and public control. Rather, it has become clear in recent years that freedom of the press has to be established and defended in Europe with renewed emphasis. Worldwide, it is observed that press freedom is one of the first targets of the attacks of autocrats. Wherever right-wing populists are in power, they dismantle the separation of powers and curtail freedom of expression and the press. Free speech and opinion are the greatest danger for autocrats.*

3. Which steps should the EU take to protect civil society from legislations that can unduly restrict their rights, activities and access to funding?

*Public services and institutions guarantee and expand the rights and freedoms of citizens and form the backbone of democracy. Recovering sovereignty of the people in these domains and promoting real cooperation and solidarity amongst the different countries are crucial steps to promote a new social order, fairer and sustainable for the people.*

**TACKLING DISCRIMINATION AND PROMOTING EQUALITY**

4. What are your group's plans to address discrimination against women, promote gender equality in EU countries and protect women and girls from gender-based violence?

*Violence against women, especially at home, is still a major problem in Europe. In 2014, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) published the most comprehensive survey on violence against women ("Violence against women: an EU-wide survey", 2014). Accordingly, one in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 has been raped. Just over one in five women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from either a current or previous partner, and just over one in 10 women indicates that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before they were 15 years old. Across Europe, current efforts to prevent violence against women are not effective. While the legal framework addressing Istanbul Convention from 2014*

*varies from country to country. The Party of the European Left demand, that all women affected by violence and their children must have a legal right to immediate protection and assistance. It must be designed in such a way that it applies regardless of income, residence permit, place of origin, health restrictions or disabilities for the women and their children concerned and does not contain any proof duties which additionally burden the women concerned or endanger their safety.*

5. What are your group's plans to address racial discrimination, antisemitism, islamophobia, attacks and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, hate speech, racially motivated crimes, and attacks and promote tolerance in the EU?

*The increase in inequality between men and women in Europe is still a structural problem, in which the sexism produced by the patriarchal system permeates every social sphere, thereby limiting and undermining the quality of life of women. Economic empowerment of women through the promotion of policies to encourage a better work/life balance, and of public plans for education and re-education in equality between men and women. In order to achieve this, an expansion of public employment policies is essential, as is the promotion and development of social policies. Compliance with the sense of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly Article 21 on non-discrimination, and its modification to include the prohibition of discrimination based on gender identity.*

6. What are your political groups' propositions to advance the rights of persons with disabilities?

*People with disabilities are disproportionately often unemployed, dependent on social assistance and housed in homes. They are much more at risk of poverty and the full participation in social life is made more difficult. For the Party of the European Left a paradigm shift is necessary - we advocate anchoring self-determination as the dominant principle in disability policy and supports the self-representation claim of people with disabilities. Equality of opportunity is to be established and barriers - also in the minds of many non-disabled people - must be dismantled. The principle of barrier-free accessibility promotes solidary cohesion. Good work and income to live on, including for people with disabilities.*

### **RESPECTING MIGRANTS AND REFUGEE'S RIGHTS**

7. What migration policy does your political group support that would ensure all migrants and asylum seekers who reach EU territory are treated humanely and that respects their right to asylum? Does your political group support a policy to secure responsibility sharing among EU member states to alleviate the pressure on first countries of arrival? If your party's migration policy does not address any of these goals can you explain why and what your political group supports?

*It is high time for the reasons behind the flow of refugees to be properly identified and combated. One way of doing this is to create an economic basis through investment and trade so that, for example, African economies are integrated into the global value chain. But the EU is linking financial aid to the closure of refugee routes and is prepared to make agreements with inhumane regimes such as in Eritrea, Chad and Libya. But closing migration routes does not solve any problems, nor does it help to combat the causes of the refugee crisis. This is the direction that the FRONTEX border regime has been following for many years, but it is the wrong one. Preserving the right to asylum; creating legal opportunities for actually exercising this right; and systematically combating the military, economic, environmental and social causes of flight.*

8. What should the European Parliament do to ensure that EU external migration policy protects the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, including the right to seek asylum, and does not expose them to abuse?

*Defend migrants' and refugees' rights and put an end to the fortress Europe, establishing safe European corridors both for legal migration and receiving asylum seekers.*

### **RESPECTING RIGHTS WHILE COUNTERING TERRORISM**

9. What concrete steps should the European Parliament take to ensure that human rights, including the right to privacy, are protected in the context of the EU directives and other EU policies to counter and prevent terrorism? What should the Parliament do to ensure that Directives are subject to oversight and, if necessary, revision if they violate rights when implemented, especially if poorly transposed into domestic law?

*Privacy becomes a commodity on the web. The Party of the European Left counter this with a free and self-determined handling of data. The GDPR is a compromise of many partly conflicting interests, which was heavily influenced by the lobbying activities of the data processing companies. The EU has failed to adequately inform the population about the application. The EL calls for a swift and citizen-friendly implementation of the EU data protection regulation. The legal design of this new social space must be directed towards the protection of privacy rather than its capitalist valuation through the collection and interpretation of personal data.*

### **ENSURING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EU'S FOREIGN POLICY**

10. What should the European Parliament do to ensure that respect for and promotion of human rights are at the centre the EU's bilateral and multilateral relations with third countries, including trade policy?

*The collaboration for example with the so-called Libyan Coast Guard forces to dodge even more dangerous routes, and the dismantling of national sea rescue operation and harassment of private sea rescue lead to more deaths. Those who do not die at sea often end up in Libyan torture camps, where they are mistreated or forced to work. This policy of inhumanity must finally be ended. Instead of forcing the transit countries in North Africa to more and more foreclosure measures, the EU must open up legal and safe escape routes for people in need.*

11. Do you support a Global EU Human Rights Sanction Regime against individuals or groups of individuals responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including torture, rape, enforced disappearances, and extra-judiciary killings? How should the European Parliament further help advance justice and accountability for abuses?

*Yes, we support this proposal. The European Parliament has to become a strong voice against any form of violence, of racism and the right-wing shift in Europe. That is why it is so important to going to vote in the European Elections.*