

Emergency Motion: Towards a Truly Intersectional Feminism within the European Women's Lobby

We are at a turning point in Europe and globally. Across many countries, we are witnessing the rise of anti-gender movements, increasing right-wing populism, democratic backsliding and coordinated attacks on women's rights, migrants' rights, LGBTQI+ rights and broader equality agendas. These developments threaten decades of feminist progress.

In this context, a strong, inclusive and forward-looking feminist movement is crucial. The European Women's Lobby (EWL), as a leading feminist voice in Europe, has an important role in ensuring that feminism reflects the diversity of women's lived realities.

Intersectionality, as developed within feminist theory and coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, recognises that women experience overlapping forms of discrimination and structural inequality based on factors such as ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, migration background, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. Intersectionality does not mean adding one group after another to a political agenda. Rather, it is a feminist analytical framework that recognises that women experience discrimination and structural inequality differently depending on their lived realities and the interaction of multiple forms of discrimination. Sexism does not affect all women in the same way, and experiences of exclusion and inequality may be shaped and intensified by factors such as disability, race, migration background, socio-economic status, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Many member organisations believe that intersectionality should not remain solely a stated value within the EWL Strategic Framework, but must be translated into concrete objectives, structures and practices. A feminism that is able to respond to these challenges must be one that includes and represents the diversity of women's experiences and realities. An intersectional feminist approach therefore seeks to ensure that feminist advocacy and policy-making reflect the complexity and diversity of women's realities across Europe, rather than reproducing exclusion within feminist structures themselves.

We therefore call upon the EWL to strengthen the integration of intersectionality throughout its Strategic Framework, policy work, advocacy, governance and internal processes, and to facilitate an open dialogue within the membership on how intersectionality can be meaningfully operationalised across the organisation.

Political Context

At a time of growing political backlash against gender equality, it is crucial that the European Women's Lobby demonstrates leadership by embedding intersectionality not only as a declaration of intent, but a lived and operational principle guiding its work.

This backlash is not abstract. Across Europe, we are witnessing increasing attacks on equality frameworks, LGBTQI+ rights, reproductive rights, gender studies and antidiscrimination policies. In many contexts, attacks targeting trans and gender-diverse people are being instrumentalised within broader anti-gender and anti-democratic strategies that seek to weaken feminist and equality movements as a whole. The current Strategic Framework process is therefore politically significant beyond internal governance questions. The way intersectionality is understood and operationalised within the EWL will shape the credibility, inclusiveness and future relevance of the organisation as a leading feminist actor in Europe.

A truly intersectional feminism strengthens feminist solidarity by ensuring that feminist movements remain capable of responding to the realities and challenges faced by all women and gender-marginalised people affected by patriarchal structures.

By recognising the diversity and complexity of women's lived experiences, intersectionality enables feminist movements to build stronger alliances, develop more effective policies and respond more accurately to structural inequality and democratic backsliding across Europe.

Europe is currently experiencing increasing political polarisation, anti-democratic tendencies and organised backlash against equality and human rights. Feminist organisations are facing growing attacks, particularly from anti-gender and far-right actors seeking to undermine progress on gender equality, LGBTQI+ rights, anti-racism and social justice.

At the same time, feminist movements across Europe and globally have increasingly recognised intersectionality as a necessary framework for understanding and addressing structural inequalities. An intersectional approach acknowledges that discrimination and exclusion are shaped by interconnected systems of power and affect women differently depending on their social position and lived realities.

Within this broader political context, the EWL Strategic Framework process represents an important opportunity to reaffirm the organisation's political relevance and leadership.

While the current framework references intersectionality as a principle, many member organisations have expressed concerns that it lacks sufficient operationalisation through concrete mechanisms, objectives and accountability structures.

Strengthening intersectionality within the EWL is therefore not only an internal organisational question, but also a political necessity to ensure that feminist advocacy remains inclusive, credible and responsive to the realities of women across Europe in a rapidly changing political environment.

Emergency Motion: Feminists Against Antisemitism: a Matter of Safety, Democracy, and Peace in Europe

As feminists committed to safety, dignity, and justice for all in Europe, we raise our voices in alarm over the rise of antisemitism. We affirm that safety, rights and voices of all women affected by hate and discrimination are part of our struggle. There is no feminism that excludes Jewish women; however, as any other woman targeted with hatred because of her religion, identity or ethnic background.

Recent attacks against Jews are warning signs. History taught us where hatred against Jews can lead when it is ignored, excused or minimised.

“Never Again” must be more than a memory; it must be a commitment to act.

European Jewish women are increasingly targeted through antisemitic hate, facing a double vulnerability as women and Jews, including through gendered hate, sexualized threats and online harassment.

Antisemitism and all kind of hatred against women threaten all of us and certainly all democratic pillars of society.

When targeted hatred infiltrates societies, women and marginalised groups are the first to bear the consequences. Feminist movements cannot remain silent.

Silence is not neutral.

A feminism that overlooks antisemitism isolates Jewish women and undermines its credibility.

Antisemitism begins with words: hate speech, lies, conspiracy myths and propaganda. It grows where violence is glorified. Denial or minimisation of sexual violence against women, including Israeli women on October 7, 2023, is a profound failure of feminist principles. Believing women in Europe cannot depend on geopolitics.

Antisemitism does not exist in isolation. It intersects with misogyny and other forms of hatred and extremism. Feminism requires consistency, diversity, universality and no hierarchy between victims, no double standards.

Free speech must be protected. We strongly call on EWL for feminist solidarity!

Political Context

Antisemitism remains a persistent and dangerous threat to democracy, human rights and women's rights. When antisemitism spreads, whether through hate speech, conspiracy theories, or acts of violence, it undermines the foundations of democratic societies. It silences voices, erodes trust in institutions, and normalizes discrimination. Antisemitism must be clearly identified, addressed openly and met with real political consequences across Europe. Empty statements are not enough; policies must ensure protection, education and accountability.

This hatred often thrives on denial, particularly in contexts involving sexualised violence, where the suffering of Jewish victims is dismissed or distorted. Such denial deepens the harm and allows antisemitic narratives to persist unchallenged. It also reveals a dangerous double standard incompatible with universal human rights and feminist principles.

Moreover, antisemitism seeks to intimidate, exclude and silence, especially those already vulnerable. It begins with hate speech and digital violence, spreading fear online before manifesting as physical attacks.

Today, we face a situation where Jewish people, and especially Jewish women, no longer feel safe in parts of Europe. That reality should alarm every democratic citizen. A continent that fails to protect its Jewish communities fails its own democratic promise.

Protecting Jewish life means defending equality, dignity and freedom for all. Standing against antisemitism is not only a moral duty; it is essential to the credibility of feminism, democracy and universal rights in Europe.