

# SLIDES FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY



**Humanists**  
INTERNATIONAL

# EU elections 2024 & European Humanist pledge



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# Purpose

- An election pledge sets out our priorities and asks candidate MEPs to sign it and commit to it ahead of election.
- Goals:
  - Help identify which candidate MEPs up are sympathetic to humanist values
  - Encourage prioritisation of our issues
  - Provides humanist individuals across Europe with a tool to scrutinise their local candidates
- The pledge can be shared by member organisations with their members, and also by Humanists International at the European Parliament for MEPs seeking re-election.

# What should a pledge look like?

- List of commitments should be concise and clear
- In addition to list, there should also be a more detailed version
- List should be comprehensive enough we are satisfied that someone who commits to it will be committing to implementing the range of issues and values we are concerned with, but not so long that it would be difficult for more than a very few to commit to.
- The commitments should be framed so that they are meaningful and applicable across the EU.



*I, as a candidate for the European Parliament, pledge to stand up for the human rights and equality for all lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people in the European Union and beyond, and will do so by working to:*

Strengthen **protection** in EU law and policy

Ensure an **enabling environment** for LGBTI human rights defenders

Ensure **EU leadership** on LGBTI rights

Harness the **power of my position**

Be an **ally** to under-represented voices

Signed:  
Political Group:

ILGA  
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★ **Strengthen protection in EU law and policy**

I commit to be a vocal supporter of specific measures that will ensure the highest possible level of legal protection of the human rights of LGBTI people. I will actively work with others to find strategies to close gaps in legal protection on grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the areas of anti-discrimination, hate crime and hate speech. I will work in support of measures which raise protection and support for LGBTI asylum seekers (including the adoption of the reformed Common European Asylum System), and ensure that freedom of movement is equally available to same-sex couples and their families, as confirmed by the Coman judgment. I will also actively contribute to effective implementation of policies both at an EU and national level, as a necessary step to make a real change in the lives of LGBTI people.

★ **Be an ally to under-represented voices**

I commit to use my position to amplify the voices of LGBTI people who are underrepresented and to proactively contribute to making EU policy-making more inclusive of LGBTI people who are not only excluded because of their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, but also their faith, colour, disability, socioeconomic status, and other grounds. I will do so by bringing underrepresented voices of the LGBTI community to the table, actively reaching out to hear their concerns, and putting their issues on the agenda of the EU institutions. I will also ensure that LGBTI voices are included in moving toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure no one is left behind.

★ **Ensure an enabling environment for LGBTI human rights defenders**

I commit to act as a strong and vocal defender of the important work of LGBTI organisations and human rights defenders across Europe and beyond. I will do so by actively challenging any restrictions to the space for civil society and to the rule of law and by holding EU member states accountable to their commitments. I will also work to ensure continued and accessible EU funding for civil society, including LGBTI organisations, both within and beyond the EU. I will defend the human rights of LGBTI people against all forces which seek to erode the very values and standards upon which the EU was founded.

★ **Ensure EU leadership on LGBTI rights**

I commit to ensure that the EU is a visible champion of the human rights of LGBTI people both within and outside its borders, as well as a strong ally to LGBTI activists in Europe and beyond. I will ensure that EU institutions continue to take leadership in defending the human rights of LGBTI people by adopting an EU LGBTI Strategy, and by fully taking into account LGBTI rights throughout EU policy-making. I also commit to strengthening internal and external coherence in the EU's commitment to the human rights of LGBTI people...

★ **Harness the Power of my Position**

I pledge to use the influence of my position to advance the human rights of LGBTI people, and work towards equality and inclusion both within and beyond the EU, wherever I can. I will be open to engaging in active dialogue with LGBTI activists and organisations, who are the primary experts on their own experiences and needs. I will be a strong ally to the LGBTI community and be responsive to calls to action from LGBTI organisations across all



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actions:

- ☐ support the movement for voting rights for people with intellectual disabilities in all EU countries
- ☐ challenge national authorities to provide information about the elections in an accessible way
- ☐ ensure my election campaign is accessible, for example by creating an easy-to-read version of my manifesto
- ☐ involve people with intellectual disabilities when it comes to disability issues, and beyond
- ☐ monitor that EU funds and programmes are used to promote inclusion
- ☐ demand that the European Parliament communicates in accessible ways
- ☐ advocate for an effective implementation of the European Accessibility Act
- ☐ work to make the promises of the European Pillar of Social Rights become a reality
- ☐ implement the UN CRPD through my voting decisions
- ☐ be a strong supporter of an ambitious European Disability Strategy 2020-2030.

Party

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Signature



MEPs are being asked to pledge their commitment for human rights ahead of the 2014 European Parliament elections. The Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN) is launching today, 10 December, its European elections campaign: **Stand 4 Human Rights**.

The HRDN is an informal group of 47 NGOs operating at the EU level in the areas of human rights, democracy and peace building.

The **Stand 4 Human Rights** campaign centres around five pledges, which the HRDN is asking sitting MEPs and candidates to sign up to – and in so doing affirm that they ‘stand for human rights’ and will actively work to strengthen the European Parliament’s human rights approach should they be elected in the 2014 elections. The pledges outline straightforward actions that future MEPs can commit to undertaking:

- 1: to promote the EU’s founding principles and objectives of its human rights and democracy policy
- 2: to publicly and privately raise human rights abuses and cases of individuals at risk
- 3: to regularly meet with NGOs and human rights defenders
- 4: to support the improvement of the European Parliament’s work on human rights and democracy such as by actively supporting the establishment of a fully-fledged human rights committee
- 5: to improve transparency within the European Parliament and other EU institutions.

The full text of these pledges can be accessed on the website accompanying the campaign: [www.stand4humanrights.eu](http://www.stand4humanrights.eu). The website also contains a list of sitting MEPs who have already signed the pledge, alongside their quotes in support of the campaign, as well as videos of human rights defenders calling on the EU to reinforce its efforts to promote human rights and democracy.





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## OUR PROPOSALS

### **PROTECT A SECULAR VISION OF EUROPE**

Extreme religious lobbying being on the rise, the EU should firmly defend the impartiality of institutions, oppose attempts to involve even more religious organizations in EU decision-making processes and request more transparency regarding interest groups and their funding sources.

### **DEFEND FREEDOM OF THOUGHT FOR EVERYONE**

The EU should systematically emphasize that freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes the freedom not to have a religion or change one's religion or beliefs and that it should not be used to restrict the fundamental rights of others. EU institutions should foster their action to protect non-believers worldwide and ensure the effective implementation and evaluation of EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, including via non-biased training of EU delegations.

### **DEFEND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Except in cases of incitement to hatred, discrimination or violence, freedom of expression allows one to criticise a religion, a religious organization, its representatives or its followers. The EU should to take a strong stand in favour of freedom of expression, including by calling for the abolishment of the criminalization of blasphemy and of "insult to religious feelings" in Europe and the rest of the world.

### **FREEDOM OF CHOICE, A BUILDING BLOCK OF HUMAN DIGNITY**

Because autonomy is key to human dignity, everyone should be allowed to make choices over their own lives. The EU should uphold the autonomy of European citizens and their right to make decisions based on their own convictions and world views. In particular the EU should actively promote sexual rights, including timely, safe and affordable access to contraception, abortion and maternal health care services as well as comprehensive sexuality education in all Member states. It should also recognize the right to die in dignity and encourage member states to pass positive legislation in this domain.

### **A SOCIETY THAT VALUES ALL PEOPLE FOR WHO THEY ARE**

The EU should step up its efforts in combatting all forms of discrimination and adopt the horizontal anti-discrimination directive pending since 2008. The EU and its Member States should promote ambitious action plans for gender equality, encourage participation of women at all levels of EU institutions and ratify the Istanbul Convention. It should also to step up its action against LGBTI discrimination, including the legal recognition of LGBTI couples in all the Member states, the promotion of safe schooling for young LGBTI people and children of LGBTI couples as well as fighting discrimination related to gender identity and gender expression.

### **PRESERVING THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY**

As we will no longer be able to promote humanist values, secularism, human rights and fundamental freedoms if democracy is weakened, we call for the establishment of a permanent mechanism for monitoring democracy in Member States, making European funds conditional on respect for democracy and the rule of law and improving judicial review when a member state violates EU values.

### **FREE AND PLURALIST MEDIA AS A BACKBONE OF CITIZEN EMANCIPATION**

A free and diverse media allows the development of pluralistic public debate allowing citizens to confront opinions and build their own. The EU should establish a systematic monitoring of the freedom of the press, media pluralism and concentration in each EU member state, it should urgently address the issue of the safety of journalists on the one hand and whistle-blowers on the other and enhance European cooperation in the domain of disinformation.

### **CIVIL SOCIETY AS A COUNTER-POWER AND KEY PROMOTER OF EUROPEAN VALUES**

In order for civil society to help concretize European values and act as a counter-power, the EU should drastically increase funding for national secular grassroots civil organizations and EU networks promoting the rule of law, appoint a Commissioner responsible for the dialogue with civil society, improve the mechanism of European Citizens' Initiatives and make European citizenship more concrete by improving transparency and foster possibilities for citizens to get involvement at all stages of decision-making.

### **SECULAR AND PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A CONDITION FOR EQUALITY**

Because civic skills are fundamental for citizens to succeed in life and shape society, Europe should develop citizenship education and reinforce its focus on freedom of thought, critical thinking and media literacy, improve the validation of skills acquired in informal or non-formal education environments such as cultural activities and sports and facilitate multidisciplinary work between civil society and teachers in the preparation of specialized teaching material.

### **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT**

Research and innovation should be conducted in the spirit of free inquiry and the scientific method, embedded in a democratically-set ethical framework. The EU should keep religious dogma out of science, especially stem cells research. So that civil society helps bring results to citizens, flexibility and simplification should be key drivers of the next EU R&I Framework Programme. Social sciences and their role in informing policy making should be emphasized. Technological applications, especially transhumanism and artificial intelligence, urgently need a clear European set of rules before global standards are built and must be socially controlled by a sufficiently representative set of social actors and the creation of a European agency to monitor the concrete impact of IA applications on the society is suggested.

### **NO HUMAN DIGNITY WITHOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS**

EU authorities should allow greater budgetary flexibility, include as a priority the fight against inequalities in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, implement the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, establish a minimum wage in each EU country, strengthen the European Youth Employment Initiative, step up against social dumping, strengthen European social dialogue and promote high-quality public services in accordance with the principles of universality and equal access.

### **A STRONG EUROPE PROMOTING PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE WORLD STAGE**

For the EU to promote peace and human rights, it has to be irreproachable internally. Furthermore, it should improve its decision-making procedure on foreign policy by abolishing unanimity voting in the Council, further involving the European Parliament, strengthening the European diplomatic network, making human rights the backbone of its global action, enhancing efforts to disarm and combat the proliferation of weapons and guaranteeing respect for international law in all circumstances.

#### A COMMON IMMIGRATION POLICY, BASED ON SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

It is only via solidarity between Member States and solidarity with migrants that Europe can address migration. The EU has to establish a common immigration policy, the absence of which is unacceptable in terms of human rights. It should set up safe and legal access routes and reception centres for asylum seekers, revise the Dublin Regulations, ensure equitable distribution and solidarity among Members States, promote integration and train personnel to properly handle complex cases such as LGBTI or atheist asylum seekers.

#### SOLIDARITY WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS: CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The effects of global warming are now scientifically proven and quantified. Despite the evidence, short-term competitiveness and business-as-usual still prevails. The EU must fully implement the Paris Agreement, improve air, water and food quality, protect biodiversity, invest in sustainable mobility, promote the circular economy and reform its agriculture. It should lead in reaching Sustainable Development Goals and step up the fight against tax evasion and fiscal fraud. It should ensure that trade agreements respect fundamental rights.



# Drafting Process

1. Submission by Forum members of key themes
2. Drafting of Pledge and Presentation of Pledge
3. Feedback period
4. Translations and Formatting
5. Launch of pledge and dissemination
6. Election May 2024

# Guidelines

- The list of commitments should be concise and clear so that candidates and others understand it immediately.
- In addition to the list, there should also be a more detailed version to give background and more argument.
- The list should be long enough we are satisfied that someone who commits to it will be committing to implementing the range of issues and values we are concerned with, but not so long that it would be difficult for more than a very few to commit to.
- The commitments should be framed so that they are meaningful and applicable across the EU.

## Examples of previous pledges by CSOs



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