

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S MANIFESTO FOR 2024 EU ELECTIONS

Every five years, European citizens choose who represents them in the European Parliament, acting for their interests in the European Union (EU). The European Parliament elections play a decisive role in shaping the day-to-day lives and futures of millions of people. From 6 to 9 June 2024, people across Europe will be making their voice heard and decide on the direction the EU will take.

To achieve a brighter, fairer and more sustainable future, **the European Union must put human rights front and centre of its action.**

Amnesty International's manifesto for the EU elections sets out key human rights aims and policies across internal and external affairs. The calls and commitments outlined here will inform and inspire candidates and provide an essential guide for voters who want a Europe where everyone enjoys their rights and promotes human rights worldwide.

1. **A European Union firmly grounded on human rights protection for all**
2. **Protect refugees and migrants in a Europe centred on solidarity and human rights**
3. **Putting the promotion and protection of human rights around the world at the heart of EU Foreign Policy**
4. **Taking urgent and vital action on climate change**

1. **A EUROPEAN UNION FIRMLY GROUNDED ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION FOR ALL**

Amnesty International wants to see a European Union where everyone enjoys their rights and can make their voice heard in an equal and inclusive society.

➔ **MAKE EQUALITY A REALITY:** the EU and its member states improve human rights protection in policy and practice, addressing specific challenges faced by women and girls, LGBTI people, racialised people, migrants and asylum-seekers and sex workers.

- ✓ **Adopt EU legislation to provide protection against discrimination** on the grounds of age, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation in access to social protection, social advantages, education, access to and supply of goods and services such as housing.
- ✓ **Enforce standards to combat discrimination and protect from violence**, ensuring member states follow through on rights protected by EU and International law, especially with regard to racial and gender justice.
- ✓ **The EU upholds access to services** including healthcare, housing, education, and justice for all people in Europe based on need and **without discrimination of any kind.**

→ **STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRDs), CIVIL SOCIETY AND PEOPLE TAKING TO THE STREETS TO DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS:** the EU and its member states should protect civic space, including by upholding freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly, and enable HRDs and civil society organizations to contribute to decision-making.

- ✓ **Develop an ambitious EU strategy to protect civic space in the EU, in close cooperation with civil society.** This should include concrete measures to listen to the people in Europe and to protect human rights defenders facing threats within the EU.
- ✓ **Stand up for civil society and support their legitimacy,** particularly in countries where civic space is under threat.

→ **PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW:** the EU and its member states fight for protection of rights by guaranteeing plurality, equality, diversity, the respect for human dignity and a transparent and accountable state, as cornerstones of the rule of law.

- ✓ **Ensure all people in Europe have equal access to justice and a fair trial** in courts which are free and independent from political influence, including undocumented persons, racialised people, and sex workers.
- ✓ **Continue the fight for the rule of law across Europe** by using all available tools to counter violations by member states, such as infringement proceedings, Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union and budget conditionality, and strengthening the EU's ability to do so by making full use of annual Rule of Law report and dialogues.
- ✓ **Enforce existing EU legislation on Artificial Intelligence to ensure the protection and promotion of rights of people impacted by AI systems,** while assessing gaps in protection with a view of improving this legislation; and in addition, put an end to **the use, sale, and transfer of spyware technologies.**

2. PROTECT REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS IN A EUROPE CENTRED ON SOLIDARITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International wants to see a European Union committed to upholding the human rights of refugees and migrants, ensuring fair and just migration policies and sharing responsibility for protecting people seeking safety, within the EU and globally. The EU should have asylum and migration policies centred on human rights and solidarity, adequate reception conditions, and investment on safe and regular pathways to reach, live and work in the EU.

→ **EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE RESPONSES TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS, CENTRED ON SOLIDARITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS:** The EU and its member states invest into fair and functioning asylum and reception systems.

- ✓ **The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, if adopted, is implemented to the highest possible human rights standards.** The European Parliament and European Commission closely monitor and foster states' policies and practice to ensure human rights compliance, and ensure that funding allocations prioritise human rights and refugee protection.
- ✓ **EU member states invest in well-resourced, fair and effective asylum systems, and ensure people are provided with sufficient and dignified accommodation without discrimination,** no matter where they come from or how they arrived. The EU ensures safe and adequate reception is provided at borders, works towards ending detention, and reverses legislation that limits access to asylum.

- ✓ **Truly independent and transparent border monitoring mechanisms are established and rolled out**, allowing scrutiny and accountability of policies and practices that violate human rights at borders.
- ✓ **The EU and its member states ensure proactive search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean and take all possible steps to ensure that people's lives are saved at sea. NGOs conducting rescue operations and other lifesaving activities can do so without restrictions.** No-one is disembarked in countries where they may be exposed to serious human rights violations. An independent Commission of Inquiry into deaths in the Mediterranean is put in place.

→ **A EUROPEAN UNION THAT UPHOLDS HUMAN RIGHTS FOR EVERYONE WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, INCLUDING REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS:**

- ✓ **The EU upholds access to services** including healthcare, housing, and education **for all people in Europe based on need and without discrimination of any kind.**
- ✓ **EU legislation is revised and implemented to fully address discrimination** based on sex, gender, race, ethnicity or nationality, and its scope expanded to include discrimination by law enforcement, immigration and border guards.
- ✓ **The EU ensures that procedures, permits and processes for people coming to Europe to work, to study, visit or join family members are non-discriminatory, affordable, accessible and meet their needs.**
- ✓ **EU standards on decent work are strengthened by ensuring migrant workers have reliable permits, fair and decent working conditions, and full coverage by labour law and social protection.** Fair, safe and healthy working conditions are guaranteed for all workers in all sectors across Europe.
- ✓ **EU institutions monitor member states' compliance with EU and international law as it applies to refugees, migrants and racialised people**, enforce and use the tools at their disposal if states fail to uphold these standards.

→ **ENSURE THAT MIGRATION COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES PUTS HUMAN RIGHTS AT ITS CORE:**

- ✓ **The EU and its member states engage with non-EU countries based on the principle of global solidarity.** Asylum and refugee protection systems are strengthened, and safe and regular pathways expanded, including by significantly expanding refugee resettlement to match global needs.
- ✓ **All migration cooperation has transparent and accountable EU funding, human rights monitoring and impact assessments, and clear mechanisms to suspend the partnership in case of human rights concerns.**
- ✓ **The EU and its member states review all existing agreements with third countries for their compliance with human rights**, such as those with Libya, Tunisia and Türkiye.
- ✓ **The EU firmly rejects proposals to offshore asylum processing to non-EU countries or outsource the responsibility to process asylum applications to non-EU countries**, as they undermine the global refugee protection system.

3. PUTTING THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD AT THE HEART OF EU FOREIGN POLICY

Amnesty International wants the European Union to put human rights, justice, and accountability for human rights violations first in relations with third countries and at multilateral fora. To help build a world where everyone can fully enjoy their rights, the EU should strengthen its commitment to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in practice inside and outside its borders.

→ **STEP UP EU AND MEMBER STATES' ENGAGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES AND HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.** The EU and its member states have the potential to act as true champions for human rights worldwide. The key is for the EU and its member states to put human rights at the centre of their foreign policy and consistently act on their human rights commitments both in policy and in practice, as a reflection of EU values and interests. Business-as-usual relations with third countries amid serious human rights violations only fuel impunity for abuses, while emboldening and enabling repressive states to challenge the very foundations of the international human rights system.

- ✓ **Review migration cooperation agreements** with neighbouring countries such as Tunisia, Libya and Türkiye to ensure that they are not contributing to human rights violations, by including human rights monitoring, impact assessments, transparent and accountable EU funding and mechanisms to suspend partnerships in case of human rights concerns.
- ✓ **EU to ensure that its cooperation does not contribute to crimes against humanity or other crimes under international law**, including the crime of apartheid, the illegal occupation and the widespread violations by the state of Israel against Palestinians.
- ✓ **Redouble EU efforts on justice and accountability**, ensuring robust, consistent and coherent EU engagement across multiple ongoing conflicts and human rights crises including Occupied Palestinian Territories, Ukraine, Iran and Sudan.

→ **CHAMPION THE UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM:** Escalating challenges to the international human rights system and a global crackdown on those defending all our rights require the EU and its member states to forge truly global partnerships and enhance support initiatives at United Nations and other multilateral fora which address **economic social and cultural rights**, the **elimination of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia**, promoting **climate justice** and support for **international justice for war crimes**.

- ✓ **Amplify EU and member state efforts to protect women rights and gender equality** and resist efforts to rollback agreed human rights standards at United Nations fora (e.g. General Assembly Third Committee, Commission on the Status of the Women).
- ✓ **Consistently support the United Nations Human Rights Council**, including the Special Procedures and independent investigative and fact-finding mechanisms on human rights situations, irrespective of the country or situation.
- ✓ **Push back against all challenges to international human rights standards and the international human rights framework**, ensuring that the EU and the European Parliament throw all their political weight behind the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other efforts toward international justice in all contexts.

→ **DEFENDING DEFENDERS: STEP UP EU ACTION TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS (HRDS), INCLUDING BY MAINSTREAMING THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HRDS ACROSS ALL EU POLICIES, AND GUARANTEEING FACILITATED VISA ACCESS TO HRDS**

- ✓ **The European Parliament engages on individual HRD cases and brings HRDs pro-actively and regularly into its exchanges.**
- ✓ **European Parliament works to improve policies and practices on HRDs across the EU**, including by pushing for the adoption of:
 - **Council of the EU Conclusions on HRDs** providing a strategic vision of EU support to HRDs globally.
 - A coordinated **EU visa policy** that takes account of **the specific needs and risks HRDs face**.
 - **Country-specific strategies in member states** that address the **intersectional challenges and risks** faced by women HRDs, LGBTI rights defenders, indigenous and environmental HRDs and those defending economic and social rights from corporate abuse.

4. TAKING URGENT AND VITAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Amnesty International wants the EU and its member states to take urgent and vital action to tackle climate change which is essential to protect the rights of current and future generations. It is high time for the EU to live up to its commitments and obligations and scale up the much-needed action on the path towards a green and just transition.

→ **THE EU AND ITS MEMBER STATES SHOULD STICK TO THEIR COMMITMENTS TO PHASE OUT FOSSIL FUELS AND CUT DOWN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, WHILE ENSURING A TRULY AND GREEN ENERGY TRANSITION, WHERE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IS CENTRAL, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE EU.**

- ✓ Aim for a **near-total reduction of greenhouse gas emissions** by 2040.
- ✓ **Avoid relying on risky technology** such as carbon capture and storage, carbon removals, gas as a transition fuel and new and unproven fuels such as hydrogen.
- ✓ **Live up to their obligations under the Paris Agreement and international human rights law**, by massively scaling up their provision of climate finance to lower income countries for all the three pillars of adaptation, mitigation and loss damage for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy across all sectors.
- ✓ **Fulfil their obligations as outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to protect all persons against human rights harms caused by businesses, including harms resulting from businesses' contributions to climate change.** This should include adopting and enforcing laws obliging all business enterprises to respect human rights and conduct human rights and environmental due diligence on their global operations, value chains and business relationships.

→ **PROTECT AND ENABLE ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS:** the EU and its member states should recognise environmental rights defenders as key agents for change and scale up support for all individuals, groups and organizations within and outside the EU, who demand climate justice and who are at the forefront of the right for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all, despite facing increasing restrictions and threats to their lives.

- ✓ Develop an **EU strategy to ensure the rights of environmental HRDs** wherever they are, and take measures to protect them from undue criminalization, threats and violence. The strategy should:
 - Give strong political backing for defenders domestically and internationally;
 - Consider the barriers and discrimination they face, but also their knowledge, know-how, and collective ways of organizing as Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities, other racialized people and groups, campesino and rural and other marginalized communities affected by climate change, including as children and younger people, and women;
 - Call to repeal measures that unduly limit the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly and other human rights;
 - Provide practical support for those facing barriers and risks, including with robust implementation of the EU Guidelines on HRDs, accessible funding, increased mobility and relocation opportunities.
- ✓ **Support and facilitate the participation of HRDs, including those protecting the environment, in decision-making processes at all levels** in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its sister conventions, as well as in other key national and multi-lateral processes where decisions about achieving climate justice are discussed and taken. Such participation must take into account their knowledge and know-how as women, people of different ages and abilities, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant communities and other racialized people and groups, campesino and rural communities.

→ **THE EU AND ITS MEMBER STATES SHOULD FULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION OF THE CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS BY UPHOLDING THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.**

- ✓ **Include the right to a healthy environment in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**, in line with the landmark resolutions by the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council recognizing this right.
- ✓ **Support regional initiatives such as a protocol enshrining this right in the European Convention on Human Rights and establish a Reykjavik Committee**, as agreed by the 2023 Council of Europe Reykjavik Summit, with a composition of independent experts in order to develop policy recommendations for CoE Member States to ensure an effective and meaningful political recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right.