International Women's Rights Day 2017 – Lots Achieved and So Much More To Fight For!

statement & call to action, non-discrimination

On 8 March, **International Women´s Rights Day**, Transgender Europe (TGEU) joins the celebration of the advances of the women´s rights movement worldwide: so much has been achieved, but there is so much more to fight for!

TGEU is alarmed by the recent attacks on reproductive rights in Europe, in the name of traditional and religious values that affect women and trans people alike. Everyone is entitled to fundamental human rights, including the right to bodily integrity and the right to found a family. But although women and trans people[1] have fought hard to gain respect and recognition, these rights are constantly under attack.

Making decisions about one's own body is a fundamental human right. A woman's right to make their own decisions about their own body, e.g. the number and spacing of children is being challenged till today, as in Poland. While other countries criminalize abortions, as in Malta or Ireland, making its availability a socio-economic issue. As only those who can afford it can access abortion services abroad. **TGEU calls on the trans community in Europe to stand in solidarity with women in these countries and all places where reproductive rights are being challenged.**

Similarly to women, trans people have a long history of others taking and making decisions about their bodies. To date, 22 European countries force trans people to undergo sterilisation before recognizing their gender identity. Fortunately, trans activists in an increasing number of countries have successfully pushed for ending forced sterilisation in gender recognition procedures.

Dr. Petra De Sutter, professor of gynaecology at Ghent University comments, "Sexual and reproductive health and rights are a right of every woman, whether cis or trans. Together we must join to say no to forced sterilisation and yes to inclusive feminism and transparenthood."

TGEU Policy Officer **Mari-Liis Sepper** adds "Respect for reproductive rights and freedom of choice is as relevant to every trans person as to any woman. Sterilisation requirements should be banned immediately as a breach of the right to bodily integrity."

TGEU stands with the feminist movement in calling for the securing and advancing of reproductive rights for all women and trans people.

TGEU calls upon policy makers, healthcare professionals and the media to strongly denounce any backlash or attacks on these rights.

1. Most trans people have a gender identity of man or woman (or boy or girl), but for some people it does not fit neatly into one of those two categories. Moreover, experiences of gendered human rights violations of cis-women and transwomen may be different and require appropriate attention, hence addressing separately women and trans people. ??