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# Countering Anti-Gender Politics in Europe

**Evidence-Based  
Policy Recommendations  
from the RESIST Project**

**EU Horizon Europe  
EU Project  
ID 101060749**

**UK Government  
Horizon Europe  
Guarantee Scheme**

**Swiss State Secretariat  
for Education, Research  
and Innovation**

The Horizon Europe project “Fostering Queer Feminist Intersectional Resistances against Transnational Anti-Gender Politics” (RESIST) investigated the rise and impact of organised opposition to social progress in intersectional gender equality, reproductive rights, and LGBTIQ+ inclusion.

RESIST examined how reactionary ideas gain traction in parliaments and media systems across the UK, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, and the European Parliament, identifying actors and tactics that spread misinformation, stoke fear, and legitimise hate and violence.

In addition, the project examined the effects of organised ‘anti-gender’ attacks on LGBTIQ+ communities and civil society actors working on gender equality. It is based on over 250 qualitative interviews conducted with people in eight European countries, as well as with exiled individuals who have experienced and actively resisted hostility. Amongst the interviewees were politicians and civil society actors, including advocates, community leaders, journalists, researchers, educators, and social workers. This dataset was complemented by interviews with 30 civil society experts and collaboration with 40 organisations, generating in-depth insights into the experiences of those affected and the strategies developed in response to ‘anti-gender’ hostility.

The RESIST research has found that:

- I **Women’s and LGBTIQ+ rights are increasingly eroded, while public discourse, particularly concerning trans people, is becoming more hostile.**
- II **‘Anti-gender’ politics are driven by actors across the political spectrum and operate transnationally.**
- III **‘Anti-gender’ actors strategically exploit media dynamics, including sensationalism and repetitive framing, to dominate public debate on issues such as abortion, trans rights and comprehensive sexuality education. This amplifies misleading narratives and increases the perceived legitimacy of harmful claims.**
- IV **Legal protections alone are insufficient to protect individuals from ‘anti-gender’ politics. Across countries, international and progressive legal frameworks are frequently inadequately implemented and, in some cases, actively undermined by reactionary legislation.**

- V **'Anti-gender' politics exacerbate existing inequalities by further marginalising women, LGBTIQ+ people, and intersectionally marginalised groups, limiting their participation in political institutions, media representation, and access to decision making, resources, and influence.**
- VI **'Anti-gender' politics contribute to and reinforce the structural underfunding of feminist and LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations.**
- VII **Feminist and LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations play a critical role in responding to 'anti-gender' politics by providing essential services, including psychosocial support, legal counselling, safety and risk management measures, and capacity-building in advocacy, digital campaigning, and self-defence.**
- VIII **Civil society organisations create inclusive, intersectional spaces for dialogue and visibility; build strategic networks with journalists, researchers, policymakers, and funders; and develop transnational alliances. Through collective actions, including protests and public events, they challenge 'anti-gender' attacks and sustain community resilience.**

Building on robust empirical evidence, the RESIST project advances the following policy recommendations:

# Protecting Institutions and Rights

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## Recommendations for all levels of public institutions

- I **Prioritise pro-democratic values by proposing legislations, especially equality laws, and ensuring their implementation in line with such values.**
- II **Recognise that diversity and equality are important tools to improve equitable decision making. This should be promoted through consultations, as well as through a hiring process that ensures inclusion of diverse lived experiences in the structures of public authorities.**
- III **Establish policies and processes that allow for responding to disinformation campaigns, digital harassment, cyber attacks and SLAPPs—strategic lawsuits against public participation—against public sector employees, especially gender equality officers, academics, and teachers.**
- IV **Address violence against politicians who are women, LGBTQ+ or belong to minority groups, including via sanctioning harassment and hate speech online and offline, as well as during parliamentary proceedings, election campaigns and other politically charged moments.**

## Recommendations for EU institutions

- I **Keep member states accountable for obligations concerning equality bodies, the rule of law and fundamental freedom of citizens, including freedom of assembly in particular.**
- II **Make EU funding contingent on adherence to EU fundamental values, suspending support for authorities that introduce discriminatory policies.**

## Recommendations for national authorities

6

Protecting  
Institutions  
and Rights

- I Ensure the independence of equality bodies and guarantee appropriate and sustainable funding for staff operations and programmes.**
- II Ensure that legislation on participation in democratic processes, freedom of the press, and the protection of human rights defenders explicitly addresses the specific forms of violence experienced by politicians, journalists, high-level athletes, artists, and human rights defenders targeted by 'anti-gender' campaigns.**
- III Promote and fund intersectional gender equity in schools and universities by embedding equity objectives into institutional strategies, allocating dedicated resources, collecting intersectional equality data, appointing equality officers, and training educators and administrators in inclusive and equitable practices.**
- IV Ensure protection of academic staff through legislation, institutional codes, grievance mechanisms, and dedicated support services to prevent dismissal, disciplinary measures, or reputational attacks linked to research or teaching on gender equality and LGBTIQ+ rights.**

# Countering Hostile and Misleading Media Reporting

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## Recommendations for all levels of public institutions

- I Support and fund initiatives that track information manipulation, interference and disinformation, and coordinated harassment, enabling early intervention and informed policy responses.**
- II Support media literacy and fact-checking initiatives by civil society organisations that promote equality and human rights.**
- III Support the integration of equality and human rights into journalism education and training, by funding the development of core human-rights and ethical reporting modules in journalism curricula at universities, training programs, and professional development courses.**
- IV Support collaborations among universities, civil society organisations, and media associations to co-create equality and human rights initiatives.**
- V Strengthen the financial, institutional, and human resources of media watchdogs, press councils, and other established oversight bodies to address shortcomings and wrongdoing in media coverage effectively.**

# **Safeguarding and Strengthening Civil Society against 'Anti-Gender' Politics**

9  
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## Recommendations for all levels of public institutions

- I **Actively consult and support civil society engagement, including through funding for advocacy, watchdog activities, strategic litigation, monitoring, and campaigning.**
- II **Provide funding to cover safety measures and extraordinary costs for civil society organisations targeted by 'anti-gender' campaigns, including contingency support for security measures or legal challenges, to ensure they can continue their public-facing activities.**

10

Safeguarding  
and  
Strengthening  
Civil Society  
against  
'Anti-Gender'  
Politics

## Recommendations for EU institutions

- I **Include civil society as a key area of the EU Rule of Law Report, with a view to monitoring developments that contribute to the shrinking of civic space, and to issuing targeted recommendations to Member States, to ensure a free, autonomous, inclusive, and pluralistic civil society. In this context, explicitly identify the rule-of-law concerns affecting feminist, LGBTQI+, and intersectional civil society organisations and the communities they serve.**
- II **Explicitly acknowledge politically motivated pressure and reprisals affecting feminist, LGBTQI+, and intersectional civil society organisations in the implementation of the EU Strategy for Civil Society, address these challenges through subsequent political guidelines, and support their democratic resilience through adequate, sustainable, and transparent funding.**
- III **Ensure long-term, efficient and flexible funding for civil society organisations working on equality, democracy and rule of law through instruments such as AgoraEU; safeguard core-funding for civil society organisation at European level that include operational costs; continue supporting civil society activities that include advocacy, strategic litigation and campaigning; and improve access to EU funding mechanisms for small and grassroots organisations including via re-granting schemes.**

# Recommendations for national authorities

- I **Allocate dedicated and fully costed budget lines to implement intersectional gender equality and LGBTIQ+ action plans at all levels of government.**
- II **Provide long-term, sustainable funding that covers operational costs for feminist and LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations collaborating on action plans, with safeguards to protect this funding from politically motivated reprisals.**
- III **Recognise anti-feminist and anti-LGBTIQ+ attacks as threats to domestic security, including as forms of politically motivated hate crime and, where applicable, terrorism.**
- IV **Strengthen awareness within law enforcement of 'anti-gender' politics, enhance collaboration with civil society organisations and event organisers, and improve coordination with local authorities and security actors. This is to ensure comprehensive risk assessments and early identification of potential attacks, so that events such as Pride can be safely organised for participants at risk, including those vulnerable to racial profiling.**

# Explore More RESIST Resources

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All RESIST resources are available on the [RESIST website](#) and [project repository](#), offering evidence, guidance, and interactive tools for journalists, policy-makers, and civil society.

13

Explore  
More  
RESIST  
Resources

## **For Civil Society. Strengthening Civil Society Against Anti-Gender Politics**

A summary of our research findings on common strategies and tactics used by ‘anti-gender’ actors, the effects of ‘anti-gender’ politics on individuals, communities, and democracy, and the ways in which civil society resists and responds to these challenges.

## **RESIST/ANCE. Strategies for a Better World**

An interactive, collaborative serious game for 2-3 players (or larger workshops) that helps participants explore how ‘anti-gender’ mobilisations operate, their real-world impacts, and strategies to resist them. RESIST/ANCE provides a safe space to learn, reflect, and act together. The game is available for free. For more information, visit the RESIST project website.

## **For Journalists. The Role of Media in European Anti-Gender Politics**

A deep dive into how media shapes ‘anti-gender’ politics across Europe. This resource provides detailed analyses for journalists to understand how ‘anti-gender’ politics take hold of media debates.

## **Research Reports**

Detailed reports presenting the project’s methodologies, case studies, and in-depth analysis of ‘anti-gender’ politics across Europe.

## **Solidarity and Struggle. Resisting Anti-Gender Politics**

A free self-paced online course aimed at non-specialist, general audience learners. Using interactive activities, it conveys the findings of the RESIST Project and other research about ‘anti-gender’ mobilisations.



For all materials and downloads, visit the **RESIST website** and **project repository**.



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Output type

Toolkit

#### Other Info

Project Deliverable D4.1:

Tools for stakeholders including policy recommendations. Work Package 4 - Re-invigorating Feminist Theories.

#### Outputs repository

[zenodo.org/communities/resistproject](https://zenodo.org/communities/resistproject)

#### Project website

[theresistproject.eu](https://theresistproject.eu)

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