

Political Platform for a Feminist Initiative

Feminist Initiative has a vision of a world in which all humans have the same potential and ability to live full and complete lives. This vision does not correspond to our lived reality. Women are systematically subordinated to men. This is something we want to change. Feminist Initiative continues the struggle and hard work undertaken by women throughout history to improve their lives; a tireless labour, which still takes place in homes, workplaces, streets, and schools, in literature, in music, at the theatre and in the media. Feminist Initiative puts feminist issues and concerns at the top of the political agenda.

Feminist Initiative turns to women who want to abolish the patriarchal order and to those men who join this struggle in solidarity.

Feminist Initiative does not believe that all women can agree on everything. Women differ from one another. Our interests, hopes, and wishes are different. Our circumstances, prospects, and resources divide us. We are ascribed different societal positions based on our economic conditions and our class identity, our degree of education, our country of birth, our sexual preference, our skin colour and our cultural belonging. We also differ in our values and our ways of constructing value systems. But beyond the differences lies one similarity: women's lives, choices, and opportunities are restricted by the patriarchal power structure. Patriarchal society allows men to define, subordinate, and discriminate against women. The power relations between women and men may take many forms and expressions, but they always work to the disadvantage of women.

Feminist Initiative makes demands from the point of view of a feminist analysis, which shows that although women speak with different voices, are situated in different locations, have different experiences, and live different lives under different conditions, we are all confronted by the power structure that puts men in positions of superiority and women in positions of inferiority. Within this structure, the things that men are, do and say take on a higher value than the things that women are, do, and say. This order is a social problem and a problem of justice; above all it is a problem of democracy.

Feminist Initiative sees the conditions under which women live. Images of women as sexual objects confront us every day. Men subject women to violence on a daily basis. Men rape women and girls. Women who transgress the social boundaries of gender and sexuality are harassed and discriminated against. Many single mothers live under serious economic duress. Trafficking in women occurs daily around the world, as well as in Sweden. The global labour market exploits the labour of underprivileged women. In Sweden, the gender-based income gap is increasing. Female-dominated professions consistently have low salaries. Much of the work performed by women is still both invisible and unpaid. Women carry out the majority of domestic chores and take responsibility for providing care, in the public as well as domestic spheres. Women are discriminated against professionally, with the motivation that we bear children — regardless of whether we actually do. Women receive a smaller retirement pension than men. Women are underprioritized in medical research and health care. Elderly women are

subjected to poor treatment. Women who do not fit into a white Western norm are ascribed an "other" ethnic identity and marginalized. Disabled women are discriminated against. Women's lives are put at risk because Swedish refugee policy lacks consideration for women's reasons to seek asylum. The judicial system with its courts of law acquits men who have perpetrated rape and abuse, while women and girls suffer the consequences. Women are less able than men to take up space, make themselves heard and be taken seriously within the educational, professional, corporate and judicial structures, as well as in the realms of culture, politics, and the media. We want to change all this, and much more.

Feminist Initiative also sees that the global patriarchal power system, which operates and sustains itself through violence and warfare, leads to an unequal distribution of the world's resources as well as ruthless exploitation and destruction of the environment. The regime of violence forces large parts of the world's population, especially women and children, into lives in extreme poverty. Girls are denied the right to education. Children are forced into child labour and prostitution, and are recruited as child soldiers. Feminist Initiative sees international solidarity and an anti-militaristic stance as fundamental aspects of its work.

Feminist Initiative is devoted to the thought of freeing women from gender-based inequality and injustice. We turn to the patriarchal order with our demands. We cannot permit decisions that allow some women to liberate themselves from inequality at the expense of others. We strive for the liberation of all women. This is how we create solidarity among women; this is how we continue the feminist struggle.

Feminist Initiative has grown tired of insufficient measures. Nearly all Swedish political parties call themselves feminist, but women's lives remain unchanged, day in and day out, year after year. Despite many women's tireless efforts within party politics, women's interests have never been given adequate priority. Swedish gender politics have hitherto been based on a view of equality as a non-zero sum game, meaning that women's conditions can improve without affecting those of men. Feminist Initiative builds its politics upon an analysis, which makes it clear that women's subordination results from the privileging of men. Therefore, men must agree to relinquish their privileges. We share this analysis with contemporary women's networks and organizations, as well as with the women's movement, which throughout history has fought for the human rights of women.

Feminist Initiative formulates a politics, which in every area and aspect of life poses a challenge to patriarchy. We anticipate a large degree of resistance, but expect an even **larger** and stronger feminist desire for change.