

#MeTooEP campaign calls on MEPs to pledge support

Written by Martin Banks on 19 April 2019 in News
News

Candidates standing in the European elections next month are being asked to back the campaign to combat sexual abuse and harassment.



Photo Credit: European Parliament

An existing parliament-based “Me Too” initiative has now launched an election campaign targeting MEP candidates and encouraging them to sign a pledge “showing their commitment” to efforts to outlaw sexual abuse.

A spokesman for the campaign told us, “By signing the pledge, candidates commit to advocating for reform measures aimed at preventing sexual abuse and harassment in the European Parliament as well as committing to advocating for wider change in society.”

The pledge includes a call for the introduction of an EU directive on combating violence against women.

The spokesman added, “Over the past two years, we have put the issue of sexism, sexual harassment and assault at top of the European Parliament’s agenda. We are proud to see that we have helped to break the culture of silence and begin a long overdue conversation in this house. However, despite progress, more needs to be done.

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“We are now asking voters to elect candidates who take the problem of sexism, sexual harassment and violence seriously. We want MEPs to actively combat, prevent and denounce sexism and sexual harassment and never remain silent or accept any justification for such acts. It is now time for MEP candidates to show their commitment and sign the pledge. We ask you to join us in the fight for all of our rights.”

The “Me Too EP” movement is a group of workers in the Parliament, all with different political views, opinions and work positions, who have come together to fight against sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault in the institution and other institutions of power.

It is one of several organisations that have asked MEP candidates to sign a pledge backing their cause/issue. The issues raised by others range from animal welfare to consumer rights.

“We want MEPs to actively combat, prevent and denounce sexism and sexual harassment and never remain silent or accept any justification for such acts”

The Me Too EP group was formed last March, when 1,000 signatures were collected, requesting the full implementation of a 2017 parliament resolution on combating sexual harassments and abuse. The group says, however, that this resolution has still not been fully implemented.

The campaign has also launched a blog collecting anonymous testimonies designed, it says, to “break the culture of silence in our workplace, to support the victims, and to encourage them to speak out and share their stories.”

The numerous testimonies of victims of sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault of people working in parliament includes one from a woman complaining about a former colleague who had spread “fake stories” about her.

The woman, who is not named, says, “I have been working in this institution for 2 years now having started as an intern in a political group. This was my first ‘serious’ position, but I had no friends inside or outside the institution.

A man working for my group approach me and started talking with me. I thought ‘great! A nice person inside this huge place’. After some time, I noticed that he wanted something more, so I introduced

him to my boyfriend to get him to stop making a move on me.

“A year later, two colleagues asked me if I have had sex with the same man working for our group. Apparently, he had told half of the group about a ‘secret sexual relation’ between us but this never, ever happened. I told him to stop spreading lies about me, and ever since, he has not helped me with a file.”

She adds, “It looks like he only works with girls that accept his fake sex stories.”

About the author

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