Just ahead of elections to the European Parliament, hundreds of thousands of people across Europe took to the streets at the weekend, calling on voters to use their ballot and to “inspire everyone to make the EU a better place for people and planet.”

The mass demonstrations on Sunday followed the launch of the “No to Hate, Yes to Change” campaign in April by citizens’ organisation WeMove, which is supporting a coalition of European NGOs and grassroots groups.

Over 200 groups took part in events in at least 52 cities calling for “a better Europe.”

In Poland, for example, 16 events were organised while in Germany rallies took place in the country’s major cities. There were similar events in London, Madrid and Paris.
Many pundits are predicting a surge in support at the elections for so-called populist and nationalist parties.

Speaking in Utrecht, where one of the events took place, Laura Sullivan, Executive Director of WeMove, said: “We took to the streets across Europe to say no to the hate of the far right and yes to the change that Europe so badly needs.”

“We took to the streets across Europe to say no to the hate of the far right and yes to the change that Europe so badly needs” Laura Sullivan, Executive Director of WeMove

"Current EU leadership is not making decisions for the benefit of people, and certainly not for the planet. The would-be alternatives offered by the far right are dangerous for all of us.”

“The escalation of crises - from food, energy, finance to solidarity - are all taking their toll on people in Europe. Through on and offline campaigning, WeMove and its campaign partners share a vision for a Europe where people are empowered and politicians are held accountable.

“We are calling on people to vote for a Europe where climate change, inequality, corporate power and women’s rights are addressed head on. This election is our opportunity to get the EU back on track,” Sullivan said, emphasising that the EU election results will impact the lives of 512 million citizens.

Jurjen van den Bergh, Director of De Goede Zaak, the Dutch group coordinating the Utrecht rally said, “With our Hart boven Hard campaign in the Netherlands, we are appealing to politicians to listen to the voices of those who want refugees and migrants to be treated humanely, to tackle climate change and to make the economy fairer.”

About the author

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