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Women

# The feminist strike extends across Europe

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**In 2016 Polish feminists went on a feminist strike to defend the decriminalization of abortion and in defense of reproductive rights; months later the Argentines stopped the country in protest against femicides and went on to call months later for the first international women's strike. The contagion is spreading. Already in 2018, the feminist strike in the Spanish State was the great surprise of the day and this year the strike has broken through into Europe.**

This feminist incursion comes after a decade of austerity policies that have revealed and exacerbated social and economic inequalities. Of course, these have a clear gender impact. The struggles against the processes of privatization and cuts to the public sector of the previous cycle are taken up by the feminist movements in recent years particularly in health, education and social services, as well as the struggles in highly feminized labour sectors such as cleaning or care.

However, the crisis has had a particularly acute impact among migrant women who carry the bulk of reproductive and care burdens throughout Europe, filling the increasing gaps left by cuts and privatisation of state provision. With different intensities in each country, the presence in the feminist debate of migrant women is already an indisputable and indispensable fact. From one country to another, from the Spanish State to Belgium, demands for the right to have rights are central. With the threatening boom of the most authoritarian and reactionary right, feminism must necessarily shout loudly in an antiracist fashion. This involves taking part and building the organisations of migrant and racialized women that exist in Europe.

Precisely that same authoritarian boom began an attack on the rights and freedoms of women, trans people and the LGBTI + collective as a whole in recent years. Attacks that have consequently generated a reaction, politicization and mobilization of these same sectors. Among these struggles, we can highlight the struggle for abortion and reproductive rights in Poland or Ireland, to give examples of the most important mobilization.

Evidently, the fight against sexist violence has been a vector of radicalization on a world scale, including in Europe. This conflict has precipitated the entry of a whole new generation into feminism. Among the changes that are demanded the central one concerns the collective and structural nature of violence. After decades of a mantra in which violence was considered an intimate, personal, family problem ... this feminist cycle has exposed the systematic, structural and political character of violence. This fight is repeated in practically all European countries from Italy to Denmark, passing through Germany and France. Feminist movements in Europe are planning mobilizations and defending concrete demands.

The response to the strike call on this 8M will be a snapshot although always imprecise, of the state of feminist movements in Europe. We can affirm that, despite the unequal development of the movement in the whole of the continent, this year more countries will organize on the day of feminist strike. Feminists have launched a strike call for March 8 2019 in places including Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland or Germany where a new layer of women is getting involved and revitalizing the feminist struggle. This spreading of the call to different European countries plays a key role in the expectations we have in the Spanish State for the success of the feminist strike.

This year there will be elections to the European Parliament and, therefore, to extend and nurture the autonomous feminist movement will be fundamental to build the necessary networks to face the authoritarian offensive that can be expected with the growth of the extreme right. Perhaps this 8M, Europe trembles before the advance of feminists.