



## PRESS RELEASE Cologne, March 07, 2016

### National Demo against Sexism and Racism

#### Demo alliance demands consequent and suitable changes regarding the law governing sexualized violence

(Cologne, March 07, 2016) A broad and strong alliance of independent migrant and non-migrant women\*'s organizations<sup>i</sup>, feminist initiatives as well as antifascist, anticapitalist and antiracist groups based in Cologne as well as North Rhine-Westphalia has been formed in the last weeks and is organizing a national demonstration on March 12, 2016 on the occasion of International Women\*'s Day. Under the motto "Our feminism is antiracist – Reclaim feminism!" the causes and claims of those involved will be taken to the streets loudly, colorfully and with diversity: From the demand for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention against violence against women\* to problematizing the instrumentalization of feminist issues for racist propaganda. The preparations are well underway. There will be various speeches and actions as well as a performance by Berlin based rapper Sookee. According to the organizers, there are many collective arrivals of large groups planned from Aachen, Berlin, Frankfurt, Dortmund, Essen, Karlsruhe and Hamburg. 3.000 - 5.000 participants are expected.

The organizers want to send a strong signal against sexism and racism, especially after the events of New Year's Eve in Cologne. They take a powerful stand against the racist hate campaigns, the tightening of the asylum laws and the violence that the refugees, Muslim men as well as German men of color<sup>ii</sup> are increasingly confronted with since the events of New Year's Eve.

**"The penetration into the body of another person without their spoken consent alone is not a criminal offence in Germany."**

The thematization of sexual violence that women, lesbians, trans- and inter people (WLTl\*<sup>iii</sup>) (of color) are opposed to daily, shall stay an important topic in 2016. The demo alliance demands the implementation of the Istanbul Convention into German law, according to which "non -onsensual sexual acts" are penalized. Instead, current Minister of Justice Maas, is held up in the act of closing the "safety gaps" in the existing laws. Daniela Antons, one of the press spokespersons of the alliance, emphasizes: "Sexual violence in Germany is an accepted part of its culture. This can be confirmed through numbers and facts: 58% of women\* in Germany have been sexually harassed. One in seven women\* experience sexualized violence that is relevant to penal law.<sup>iv</sup> Only 5% of these cases are reported to the police. According to a study released by BMFSFJ in 2004, 91% of rapes occur in the close social environment of the victim, through relatives, friends or (ex) partners<sup>v</sup>. Yet the German self-concept is: "we" are emancipated. Affability towards offenders can still be experienced in the law governing sexual offences as well as in media dialogues." The occurrences of sexualized violence in refugee shelters in Cologne are highly understated. "Supposedly" and "alleged" are the preferred adjectives used in the coverage of the events. The focus immediately lies with the interests oft he accused men. Possible false prejudices and reputational damage for the perpetrators and their employer are to be avoided, so the general consensus. Project manager of the responsible security company, Bernhard Deschamps, and Commissioner of Social Affairs Gabriele Klug (Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen) agreed: The accusations were unfounded. In the meantime, in 2 cases 2 legally relevant charges have been filed.

According to the demo alliance, the conviction of rape cases brought to the police has hit a current low of 8.4%<sup>vi</sup>. Ellahe Sadr of Agisra states: "The penetration into the body of another person without their spoken consent alone is not a criminal offence in Germany. In the case of missing use of violence by the offender it must, for example, be proven that "enough" resistance is present through screaming, boxing, kicking or running away. If the affected person does not show these signs, they must have been threatened immediately before the act or be in a "defenseless" situation. Therefore, many cases do not fall into the judicial definition - if the threat of violence happened earlier in time or the affected was already so afraid of their attacker that a spoken threat was not needed. Many

women\* experience a state of shock or do not defend themselves, in order to make everything end quickly. A solidary psychosocial support for the affected persons through independent women\* organizations is essential for the difficult and often re-traumatizing path of filing charge and the following trial. Furthermore, Ellahe Sadr questions that the media reporting after New Year's Eve had any aim of discussing the status quo of women\*'s rights: „Otherwise, it had included the accusal and demands for changes in the mentioned sexist laws governing sexualized violence. Instead, the racist production of New Year's Eve had the target of focussing in a biased way on the assumed origin and socialization of the perpetrators and through this served to support pushing through the (Anti-) Asylum Package II as quickly as possible. The longstanding demands independent Migrant Women's selforganizations have been neither taken into consideration in the public discourse nor have they been implemented. Furthermore, the defencelessness and the deprivation of rights that female refugees are facing due to the Asylum Package II is still not publicly discussed.”

---

### Alliance for the national demo on International Women\*'s Day 2016 in Cologne

---

<sup>i</sup> **Women\***, one the one hand, makes the construction of binary genders clear. On the other hands, it makes apparent that there is not only THE women, but that the definition of „woman“stands for many different identities and life designs.

<sup>ii</sup> **Person of Color** (Plural: *People of Color*, abbreviated as *PoC*) is a term for people who are seen as non-white in the mainstream society and are exposed to daily and structural forms of racism due to their ethnic or racist attributions. In colonial times the term People of Color was pre-shaped through the expression “free people of color.” In Germany the term is as of now, established in the academic context and as a self-ascription. In the past few years, various imitatives of people affected by racism has begun using the term as a self-ascription in order to provide an alternative for ascriptions used in the German language such as “migrants” and as a reaction towards the permanent exclusion in society. (Source: [www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de](http://www.mut-gegen-rechte-gewalt.de))

<sup>iii</sup> **FLTI\*** stands for women, lesbian, trans\* and interpersons. **Trans\*** (also: trans\* person) = Relatively new collective term, gaining popularity in Germany, that is based on the role model of search angriness and coding languages that use the asterisk as a place holder for possible endings (transgender, transident, transsexuell). This open term is meant to clarify the diversity of transgender and other gender identities, self-ascriptions and life designs that do not fit the norm, which includes crossdresser, neither\*nor\*, amongst others (Source: [www.transinterqueer.org](http://www.transinterqueer.org)). **Inter\***(also inter\*person), is an emancipatory collective term coined in the Inter\*Community for the diversity of intersex realities and physicality. (see Trans\*)

<sup>iv</sup> **The demo alliance makes notice of** and criticizes that data regarding the specific risks and experiences of violence of Lesbian, Trans\*- and Inter persons was not collected separately in the statics of the BMFSFY and are therefore made unapparent.

<sup>v</sup> **Müller und Schröttle (2004)**: Lebenssituation, Sicherheit und Gesundheit von Frauen in Deutschland, Langfassung der Untersuchung. Issued By the Ministry of Family, Seniors, Women and Youth, P. 78

<sup>vi</sup> **ZEIT ONLINE (2014)** <http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2014-04/studie-vergewaltigung-anzeige-verurteilung>

## Appointment Notices:

### Press Conference:

Members of the press are sincerely invited to the press conference on March 12 at 11 AM. The location is yet to be announced. There will be a detailed dossier on the backgrounds and positions of the alliance. Please apply by March 11 through [presse.demobuendnis1203@riseup.net](mailto:presse.demobuendnis1203@riseup.net).

### National WLTl\* Assembly:

The demonstration is meant to be the beginning of the continued constitution of **structures** as well as events in this year. On the evening prior to the event, March 11 at 8 PM, we invite those who are interested to a national WLTl\* assembly, focusing on networking and the further strategies regarding the proper handling of the noticeably increasing sexist and racist attacks. If you would like to attend as a journalist, please contact [presse.demobuendnis1203@riseup.net](mailto:presse.demobuendnis1203@riseup.net).

## Other Notices:

**The appeal** is online on [reclaimfeminism.org](http://reclaimfeminism.org) in Arabic, German, English, French, Italian, Kurdish, Persian and Russian and may be signed. Already **amongst the signatures** are, to name a few:

- Agisra e.V.
- Anne Wizorek, author, consultant, activist, Berlin
- Bundesverband der Migrantinnen in Deutschland e.V.,
- Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Kreisverband Köln,
- DIE LINKE.NRW,
- Dr. Elizabeta Jonuz, Uni Köln
- FFBIZ – Das feministische Archiv, Berlin
- Frau Schmitzz
- Frauen gegen Erwerbslosigkeit e.V.
- Frauen gegen Gewalt e.V.
- Frauen helfen Frauen e.V.
- Frauen Leben e.V.
- Frauenberatungszentrum Köln e.V.
- Gabriele Bischoff, Geschäftsführerin LAG Lesben in NRW e.V.,
- Institut für Theologie und Politik, Münster,
- Interkulturelle Frauenarbeit Mütze
- Iranisch-Deutscher Frauenverein e.V.
- Iranisch-Deutscher Frauenverein e.V., Köln,
- Isabell Suba, Berlin, director of the movie „Männer zeigen Filme und Frauen ihre Brüste“
- Julia Woller, spokesperson on women's issues of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the council of the City Cologne,
- Kampagne Dritte Option – Für einen dritten Geschlechtseintrag
- Katja Kipping, Vorsitzende DIE LINKE, Berlin
- Kein Veedel für Rassismus, Köln
- Köln gegen Rechts – Antifaschistisches Aktionsbündnis,
- linksjugend [solid] Bundesverband,
- Lobby für Mädchen e.V.
- PD. Dr.in Bettina Lösch
- Prof. Dr. Stefan Timmermanns, Frankfurt UAS
- Prof. Dr. Susanne Spindler, Uni Köln
- STAY! Düsseldorf Initiative of/for refugees
- ZIF, Zentrale Informationsstelle Autonomer Frauenhäuser, Köln,

## Media Spokespersons:

**Ayten Kaplan**

[Presse.Demobuendnis1203@riseup.net](mailto:Presse.Demobuendnis1203@riseup.net)

0049-157-80462394

**Daniela Antons**

[Presse.Demobuendnis1203@riseup.net](mailto:Presse.Demobuendnis1203@riseup.net)

0049-176-60800860

[reclaimfeminism.org](http://reclaimfeminism.org)

[Facebook-Event for the demo](#)

[#koeln1203](#)

---