



PRESS RELEASE Cologne, March 3, 2016

National Demo against Sexism and Racism

This year, a broad alliance is mobilizing nationally to Cologne for World Women*’s Day for the first time

(03.03.2016) A broad and strong alliance of independent migrant and non-migrant womens’* organizations, 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 sexual violence to the insufficient finances for Care-Workⁱ and the instrumentalization of feminist causes for acts of racist violence. The preparations are well underway. There will be various speeches and actions. 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 that against sexism and racism, especially after the events of New Year’s Eve in Cologne. The thematization of sexual violence that women, lesbians, trans- and inter people (WLTi*) (of color) are confronted with daily, shall stay an important topic in 2016. Strong political answers are demanded: Secured and increased finances for womens’ shelters, a renewal of the law governing sexual offenses according to the Istanbul Convention as well as sex education and anti-discrimination programs in schools.

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“Those affected by the sexualized attacks of New Year’s Eve – and by all sexual attacks that happen on a daily basis– must be given the desired solitary support: psychosocially and judicially,” says Homa Moradi of the 2nd autonomous women’s shelter in Cologne, one of the organizers. There must be action taken in order to fight the prevailing rape cultureⁱⁱ in Germany. The judicial basis in criminal law regarding sexual harassment, assault and even rape is incomplete and deficient.

The organizers demand the attention of the media and political solutions for all those affected by sexual violence, especially regarding violence against WLTi* in refugee shelters. On February 18, an open letter from the women* of the refugee shelter in Humboldt Gremberg in Cologne made evident that sexual abuse and harassment against women through the security staff are a part of the daily agenda. Privacy and safe havens for women are also claimed to be missing. The demo alliance demands direct actions as well as suitable, safe and decentralized shelters as well as psychosocial support for those affected. It is demanded that separate shelters for WLTi* as well as gay refugees be financed. The alliance also strains a fast investigation and clarification of the case from the city of Cologne as well as the police. The organizers emphasize: “A clarification is only possible if the affected women are removed from the sphere of influence of the perpetrators and after they have received solitary psychosocial support for the tough journey of the prosecutions and the publication of the occurrences.” It must not be kept silent and continuously looked away as is often the case in such situations in which sexual violence happens in a municipal field of responsibility.

Alliance for the national demo on International Women*’s Day 2016 in Cologne

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.

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. The location is yet to be announced.

Other Notices:

The appeal is online on reclaimfeminism.org in Arabic, German, English, French, Italian, Kurdish, Persian and Russian and may be signed. Already **amongst the signatures** are Bundesverband der Migrantinnen in Deutschland e.V., Bündnis 90/Die Grünen District Chapter Cologne, DIE LINKE.NRW, STAY! Düsseldorfer Flüchtlingsinitiative, Gabriele Bischoff, CEO of LAG Lesben in NRW e.V., Institute of Theology and Politics, Münster, Iranisch-Deutscher Frauenverein e.V., Köln, Isabell Suba, Berlin, Director of the film „Männer zeigen Filme und Frauen ihre Brüste“ (eng: Men show movies and women their breasts) Julia Woller, Speaker for women’s politics for Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the council of the city of Cologne, Katja Kipping, Chairperson DIE LINKE, Berlin Köln gegen Rechts – Antifaschistisches Aktionsbündnis, linksjugend [solid] Bundesverband, Prof. Dr. Stefan Timmermanns, Frankfurt UAS, ZIF, Zentrale Informationsstelle Autonomer Frauenhäuser, Köln,

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reclaimfeminism.org
[Facebook-Event for the demo](#)
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ⁱ **Care Work** includes all responsibilities from education to nursing, medical care as well as nutrition and psychosocial work, that are essential for the reproduction and functionality of a society and are mostly carried out by women*.

ⁱⁱ **Rape Culture** is a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm.

In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is a fact of life, inevitable as death or taxes. This violence, however, is neither biologically nor divinely ordained. Much of what we accept as inevitable is in fact the expression of values and attitudes that can change. (Source: finallyfeminism101.wordpress.com)