MOTERIS

PRESS RELEASE

LATEST EU BUDGET DRAFT CUTS AGORAEU BY 30%, THREATENING FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

AgoraEU, the EU's main programme funding the fight against violence against women, equality between women and men, and women's rights organisations (WRO) would fall from €7.6 billion to €5.3 billion

Brussels, 15 October 2026

As EU leaders meet in Brussels today for the European Council, the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU has presented its latest Negotiating Box for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, the draft of the EU's next long-term budget. It removes €2.3 billion from the European Commission's proposal for AgoraEU, the programme women's rights organisations across Europe rely on for direct EU funding.

AgoraEU merges Creative Europe and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV). Its CERV+ strand funds equality between women and men, the fight against male violence against women, anti-discrimination, civic participation and civil society organisations.

According to the budget table annexed to the draft, AgoraEU would receive €5.3 billion over seven years, just 0.33% of an EU budget of €1.6 trillion. The word "women" does not appear once in the Irish Presidency's draft, even though women make up more than half of Europe's population.

"It is very telling that the Agora budget cut proposal that would drastically affect funding for WROs comes from the Irish presidency when only a few days ago they convened a high-level conference on equality data where WROs were entirely excluded", said Anna Zobnina, Executive Director of the European Network of Migrant Women.

Research carried out by the MOTERIS project in 15 EU Member States found women's rights disappearing from EU budget priorities and shrinking civic space for women's rights organisations and defenders, going largely unaddressed at EU level.
Europe must be consistent in defending its values: human dignity, non-discrimination and equality between women and men.

About MOTERIS: The project is coordinated by the Swedish Women's Lobby in partnership with the European Network of Migrant Women, the Hungarian Women's Lobby, the Coordination Française pour le Lobby Européen des Femmes (CLEF) and the Lithuanian Women's Lobby. The project works on EU budget advocacy and the shrinking space for women's rights organisations across Europe.

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