

FEMINIST COALITION LAUNCHES MOTERIS: NEW INITIATIVE TO PROTECT THE CIVIC SPACE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

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On 5–6 August, women's rights organisations from across Europe gathered in Stockholm to formally launch **MOTERIS: Protection of the Civic Space of Women and Girls**. This new initiative, co-funded by the European Union, will create a mechanism for monitoring women's civic spaces in Europe and will support 28 civil society actors in 14 EU States in their efforts to strengthen and defend human rights of women and girls.

The project that will last for 2 years is coordinated by the Swedish Women's Lobby, in close 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. Together, this coalition brings diverse national and EU-level expertise to address a growing challenge across the region: the shrinking space for women's rights organisations and defenders.

"We are seeing a dangerous erosion of democratic space, where women's rights organisation are put under pressure and sidelined. From defunding and legal threats to digital abuse and institutional silencing, this reality is especially stark for groups working on violence against women, reproductive rights, abolition of the system of prostitution, and those advocating for sex-based rights of women," - said Susannah Sjöberg, Secretary General of the Swedish Women's Lobby.

"The backlash against women's human rights is intensifying, and it is being felt most acutely by grassroots actors long serving at the frontline." - said Réka Sáfráni, President of the Hungarian Women's Lobby.

MOTERIS was born as a collective feminist response to these attacks. In Stockholm, partners came together to set a shared strategic direction for the project's first phase. They discussed the establishment of a unified framework to monitor restrictions on civic spaces of women, creation of practical tools to strengthen advocacy, safety, budgeting and organisational resilience, and mapping feminist actors across EU to promote coordinated and strategic responses.

In the coming months, the project will roll out a series of activities including research, training and advocacy efforts involving women's rights organisations.

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