

## Exposé

### **Policies of the ELDR Party on Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights**

Fundamental features of Liberalism are the beliefs in the individual's freedom and equality. Throughout its history, the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party has always timely responded to the developments and challenges that have threatened freedom, equality and human rights across Europe.

#### **Fundamental Human Rights**

European Liberals have always seen Fundamental Human Rights as one of their core issues and have actively participated in defining what European Fundamental Human Rights are. The European Liberals believe that societies should be built on freedom, justice and economic liberalisation where free democratic elections ([1997](#), [2003](#)) are kept, where political opinions can be expressed without imprisonment ([2010](#)) and the individual's privacy is respected ([1978](#), [2009](#)).

The source for our understanding of Human Rights is the European Charter of Fundamental Rights ([2002](#)), and it has formed the basis for our societies and how we interact with the world. Liberals think that individual freedom generates a pluralistic world where ideas and culture can thrive but where politics and religion should be kept apart ([2002](#)). European Liberals see integration as securing the individual's cultural freedom while respecting fundamental European values and Human Rights.

The European Liberals have actively been calling for a strong fight against trafficking, which the liberals see as a form of modern slavery and deprivation of freedom (inter alia [2003](#), [2006](#) and [2008](#))

#### **Equality and Minority Rights**

As a corollary to the core belief in the individual's freedom and equality, European Liberals think everyone has the right to choose over their life and that everyone should be treated on equal ground. Therefore, protecting individuals especially belonging to minorities and giving them same equal freedoms and rights has always been a top priority for the European Liberals, whether the case has been people belonging to one ethnicity, linguistic minorities, sexual minorities or indigenous people. Remedying inequalities on all aspects is a top priority for European Liberals, who stand for a pluralistic society with flourishing diversity (expressed inter alia in [1985](#); [1993](#); [1995](#); [2007](#) and [2009](#)).

That also implies working for gender equality. European Liberals condemn violence against women, calls for gender balance in politics and

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think that every woman has the exclusive right over her body (as expressed inter alia in [2000](#); [2005](#) and [2008](#)).

### **Freedom of Expression**

The right to freely express opinions is fundamental. European Liberals have been ahead of their time when new media have been developed ([1996](#)), emphasising the importance of the freedom of expression. When Europe was divided, a strong weight was given to fight media censorship and limiting the right to freely express opinions ([1981](#), [1993](#)). Lately this fight has had to be revived because of threats of media concentration ([1996](#) and [2010](#)). European Liberals think that society benefits from a transparent and pluralistic media landscape where the right to free communication and freedom of expression is secured and in no way restricted. The practice of persecuting and imprisoning political opponents is strongly condemned ([2010](#)).

European Liberals are concerned over the developments of the citizens' rights to free communication, integrity and respect for their private life and communication in a digital world. The right to respect for private life and communication is a fundamental right and there shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of these rights, except such as is proportionate in accordance with the law and as necessary in a democratic society ([2009](#) and [2010](#)).

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