MIGRANT WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND DEMOCRATIC LIFE

- Hadia Tajik, who is of Pakistani origin, was Norway’s Labour Party’s deputy leader for seven years, and the first woman of a minority background to be named the most powerful woman in Norway by Kapital magazine.

- Rita Bosaho, born in Equatorial Guinea, became the very first black member of the Spanish Senate in 2016 and is now the director of racial and ethnic diversity at Spain’s equality ministry.

- New Women Connectors is a migrant women-led Pan-European platform working to promote the engagement of migrant and refugee women in policymaking processes.

- The European Network of Migrant Women is a migrant women-led feminist, secular, non-partisan platform that advocates for the rights, freedoms and dignity of migrant women and girls in Europe.

NUMBER OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN EUROPE

- Third-country nationals (non-EU citizens) make up 5% of the population of the EU, or 23.7 million.
- There are 447.2 million people living in the EU.
- If we consider mobile EU citizens, the figure above increases to almost 10%.
- In 2021, 2.3 million people immigrated to the EU from third countries, with 55% for men, and 45% for women. (data from Eurostat, 2021)

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION FOR MIGRANT WOMEN

- The lack of electoral rights: Migrant women who are third-country nationals are generally not allowed to cast ballots in municipal, national, or European elections.
- Intersectional discrimination: Migrant women face intersectional discrimination based on their gender identity, race, ethnicity, and migrant background, and as a result, are more exposed to gender-based violence, poverty, and social exclusion.
- Hate speech and online violence: The alarming rate of hate speech and online violence that women politicians and public figures face in Europe deter migrant women from participation.
- Under-represented in the media: Migrant women also lack visibility in the media and when they are featured, representations are often limited and stereotypical. The lack of positive representation contributes to the stigmatisation of all migrant women and can further exclude them from participation.

MEASURES TO PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THE PARTICIPATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN

- The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027) from the European Commission proposes actions around integration for migrant women, which include having more migrant women have equal participation in society, but not necessarily in decision-making processes.
- The European Commission also set up an Expert Group on the views of migration, asylum, and integration, however, consultations as a form of participation have a limited impact on legislative proposals.
- Having more migrant councils or consultative bodies can be useful to include migrants in local policymaking at the city and national levels in Europe, but there is a need to ensure sustainability and gender parity within these councils.
- Overall, there is no known actions at the EU level to increase the representation of migrant women in politics. But there are recommendations made by the Council of Europe to improve this, through mandating gender quotas, mentoring and training for women from under-represented groups, like migrant women, and collecting disaggregated data and supporting research in this area.
- Increasing funding support for migrant women-led organisations, as it is crucial that migrant women can develop and lead spaces where they can share their expertise and influence decision-making.