



Feminism in Foreign Policy

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'As long as women are not safe, no one is safe in a society.' A Ukrainian woman made this statement to German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in Shyrokyne, a village close to Mariupol, only some two weeks before Russia invaded Ukraine. During that time, I was Consul General of Germany in Eastern Ukraine and witnessed the encounter. I will never forget the moment because this statement, made at the very time and place, perfectly highlights a key principle of Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP).

However, let's make it clear: this policy is not exclusively by women, for women, but involves all genders and addresses issues of other marginalised groups too. Equality and inclusion of everybody has long-lasting effects. It can lead to more stability, strengthened peace efforts, and improved resilience. It broadens the foundation of states and societies. It is positive for everybody.

As a Scandinavian man once shared with me, the slogan 'He for she' really means 'He for he,' because men too profit from equality. Therefore, it was a very conscious decision to assign the responsibility for Germany's FFP to a man, State Minister Dr Tobias Lindner at the Federal Foreign Office.

To put FFP in a nutshell: it tackles failure to implement the '3 Rs', these being:

- **Rights:** Around the world, the rights of women and marginalised groups are restricted or not recognised at all. For instance, 189 states to date have committed themselves to promoting legal and de facto equality by ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, yet legal frameworks and implementation often remain incomplete.

- **Representation:** As is the case worldwide, including in Germany – for example in the German Bundestag (Parliament) and in the leadership of large companies – women and marginalised groups are under-represented in political, economic, and societal decision-making processes.
- **Resources:** Equal access to resources takes aim at financial resources as well as immaterial resources such as networks and education.

Studies have shown that societies are more peaceful and prosperous when everybody can participate in political, social, and economic life. Peace and security are more sustainable when decision-making on security issues is inclusive by design. We know that peace treaties co-written by women are 20% more likely to hold than others. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, global growth of up to 26% could be achieved by equal participation of women in the labour market.

Of course, Feminist Foreign Policy is not a perfect formula to end all suffering. It's not a magic wand which can immediately resolve dilemmas in foreign policy. It is about creating awareness for problems and an invitation to further develop solutions together, all of us, every day. 



Scan the QR code to access the guidelines of Germany's Feminist Foreign Policy.