



**Debate at European Parliament on the 6th July 2023
Introduction speech by Özlem Alev Demirel - MEP THE LEFT**

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for your invitation and the possibility to speak to you. I am happy to have you here in Brussels this whole weekend especially in these days, where women raise up against war and militarisation.

We Women for Peace condemn every war and every invasion of another country. We have done so in the past - during NATO's wars against Afghanistan, Libya, in the former Yugoslavia and many other wars and armed conflicts - and we do so today with regard to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We demand an end to the war in Ukraine.

Political solutions are needed. Instead, we see NATO's strategy to prolong this war for its own geopolitical interest. We oppose this strategy loud and clear. I/ we do not want Ukraine to become a second Afghanistan in 20 years.

The militarisation and more and more armament - Clare and I heard many speeches in that regard in this house - is the main aim and argument to counter this war. The German foreign minister is talking about a feminist foreign policy but she mean militarisation. But women are standing for PEACE!

NATO is telling us we/ they would fight for democracy, telling us they would fight for women's rights. Yet we know painfully from our past and present that militarism and war always and everywhere weaken women's rights and democracy.

A PEACE strategy that is what we are fighting for! A strategy that includes diplomacy and disarmament, a strategy against all wars!

NATO uses 'feminism' in its narrative to make war and weapons chic with fancy female influencers. All the more important to be part of the meeting of the strong women of WomenAgainstNato.org today. Your appeal is an appeal for all of us - an appeal for peace and justice.

Our answer to the ongoing war and the total destruction of human life and nature is our struggle for PEACE. This answer is a true one as internationalists for PEACE for Ukraine against the threat of coming wars as the current rearmament - madness clearly shows us that the dangers of war are increasing.

That is why we are committed to a strong PEACE movement.

And we know that a PEACE movement can only be as strong as women are a strong part of it!

Thank you.