

The European Parliament and the Promotion of Human Rights in Third Countries: A Comparative Study of the Parliamentary Diplomacy of the Ninth Legislative Term on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Relation to Iran and Mexico

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DOI: 10.22096/hr.2025.2060330.1747

Received Date: 11/05/2025 - Accepted Date: 01/11/2025

Abstract

This article explores the role of the European Parliament in advancing human rights—particularly women's rights and gender equality—in third countries, with a specific focus on Iran and Mexico during its ninth legislative term (2019–2024). As a norm-driven global actor, the European Union employs parliamentary diplomacy as a strategic instrument to promote democratic values and human rights abroad. Within this framework, the European Parliament seeks to influence domestic developments in third countries through tools such as resolutions, interparliamentary dialogues, and engagement with civil society organizations. Grounded in the theoretical perspectives of constructivism and social institutionalism, the study conducts a comparative analysis of the Parliament's approaches to Iran and Mexico, aiming to identify the key factors that shape the effectiveness of parliamentary diplomacy. The findings suggest that success in this domain is contingent upon variables such as the internal political dynamics of target countries, alignment with broader EU foreign policy mechanisms, and the ability to build networks with non-state actors. By focusing on the gender dimension of parliamentary diplomacy, this research addresses a gap in the human rights literature and demonstrates that, while operating under the normative framework of global human rights discourse, the European Parliament has at times advanced strategic interests and challenged the legitimacy of political regimes in third countries. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach.

Keywords: Parliamentary diplomacy; European Parliament; women's rights; gender equality; EU norm-driven action.

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