

November 25, 2025

**To the attention of:**

- **Edgars Rinkēvičs**, President of Latvia, info@president.lv
- **Evika Siliņa**, Prime Minister of Latvia, (**New Unity**) pasts@mk.gov.lv ; ieva.ziberga@mk.gov.lv
- **Aivars Lembergs**, leader of the coalition member Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS), zzs@saeima.lv ; info@zzs.lv
- **Ainars Šlesers**, leader of the opposition party Latvija Pirmajā (Latvia First, LPV), lpv@saeima.lv
- **Linda Liepina**, member of parliament Latvija Pirmajā (Latvia First, LPV), lpv@saeima.lv
- **Vilis Kristopansvilis**, member of European Parliament, (Latvija Pirmajā), kristopans@europarl.europa.eu

**Regarding: Latvian parliament's vote to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention**

*(Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence)*

Dear President Rinkēvičs, Prime Minister Siliņa, Aivars Lembergs- leader of ZZS, Ainars Šlesers- leader of LPV, Linda Liepina- member of LPV party, Mr. Vilis Kristopansvilis- Member LPV party, European Parliament,

Women's Declaration International (WDI)\* is writing to you to offer feedback to Latvia's potential withdrawal from the [Istanbul Convention](#) (Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence). Women's Declaration International supports the Istanbul Convention. We are an international, female-only organisation, consisting of volunteer women from across the globe dedicated to protecting women's **sex-based** rights. Women's Declaration International works in particular for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls that result from the replacement of the Category of sex with that of 'gender identity'. Women's Declaration International encourages governments and international institutions to ensure that use of the words *woman* and *girl* be returned to the age-old understanding of the terms, linked solely to **biological sex**. Any use of the word '**gender**', for example in describing stereotypical roles, behaviours, or one's physical presentation, is based on material reality in that two sexes and only two sexes exist. Ideally, the word **gender**, which has in recent years increasingly become nonsensical, progressively falls out of usage.

WDI has learned that Latvia's Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS) recently circulated a statement that the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Science had violated the Istanbul Convention by using it for other purposes: to promote a different understanding of gender, "reinforcing gender ideology" in Latvia. It is this latter aspect of the debate in Latvia which has incited WDI to contact you. We share the above-mentioned concern of the Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS).

Women's Declaration International encourages all signatories of the Istanbul Convention to lobby for modifications to the document, in essence, to save it. The Istanbul Declaration causes confusion through promoting the concept of **gender identity** which in itself has no connection to the defense of women and girls and therefore, any reference to **gender identity** (ex. article 4.3) should be removed. Ideally, removal of all use of the word **gender** in the Istanbul Declaration is recommended. Satisfactory linguistic modifications could transform this valuable Convention, making it acceptable to all Latvian political parties, and in addition, such linguistic modifications could motivate European countries (and beyond) that have not yet ratified it, to do so. This is potentially a critical moment in both Latvian, EU and international history. Latvia could be the EU country able to make a major and positive impact and indeed to alter the EU's future, in defense of women and girls. Latvia could help to straighten the course of the ocean liner 'EU', sorely in need of radically improved navigation in all things related to women and girls. Please help Latvia be that country.

Kindly see below several examples of specific wording in the Istanbul Declaration which today actually cause prejudice toward women and girls, due to the ever-evolving inaccuracy regarding current use of terms *woman*, *girl* and *gender*. Please see the related suggestions below, from WDI, for possible amendments to the Istanbul Declaration in the interest of linguistic clarity in relation to defending the rights of women and girls. (*n.b. An appendix has also been added to further address the issue of contemporary language use and to provide sources of discussion re. gender identity.*)

In closing, President Rinkēvičs, Prime Minister **Siliņa**, Mr. Lembergs, Mr. Šlesers, Ms. Liepina, Mr. Kristopansvilis, please accept this communication from Women's Declaration International\*, written in good faith, requesting you to continue the debate about the Istanbul Convention and requesting you to help your population learn about the increasingly precarious situation of women and girls caused by ideologically motivated linguistic usage in innumerable national, European and international documents which were originally meant to support and protect women and girls, but which have lost their impact due to confusion caused by the ever-changing use of the word **gender**, and by the insertion and generalised use of the term **gender identity**. WDI hopes you can save the Istanbul Convention and render it a document that truly supports the safety and dignity of women and girls.

Respectfully submitted, for Women's Declaration International \_\_\_\_\_

## **Examples of wording in the Istanbul Declaration which cause prejudice toward women and girls:**

1. WDI (Women's Declaration International) recommends that the use of the word **gender** be removed from the Istanbul Convention. In the definition below, the word **stereotype** is a suitable replacement for '**gender**'

### **Article 3c (definitions):**

**"gender"** shall mean the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men;

2. WDI suggests '**Gender-based violence**' be replaced with '**sex-based violence**'.

### **Article 3d (definitions)**

**"gender-based violence against women"** shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately;

3. WDI suggests the term '**Gender identity**' be eliminated where appropriate from any document pertaining to rights and protection of women, thus reinforcing biological sex as the sole attribute of womanhood.

### **Article 4.3 Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination**

The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, **gender identity**, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

4. Because the use of the term **gender** in the Istanbul Convention does not refer solely to biological sex (female), WDI perceives the entire Article 6 as worthy of deletion, or alternately, that the article title: **Gender-sensitive policies** be replaced with: **Biological sex-sensitive policies**.

### **Article 6 – **Gender-sensitive** policies**

Parties shall undertake to include a gender perspective in the implementation and evaluation of the impact of the provisions of this Convention and to promote and effectively implement policies of equality between women and men and the empowerment of women.

## **\*Who are we?**

**Women's Declaration International**, is an international female only group, consisting of volunteer women from across the globe dedicated to protecting women's sex-based rights. Our volunteers include academics, lawyers, writers, organizers, activists and health practitioners, who aim to represent the total breadth of the human female experience.

General inquiries and information: [info@womensdeclaration.com](mailto:info@womensdeclaration.com), Website: [website@womensdeclaration.com](http://website@womensdeclaration.com).

[WDI's Declaration of Women's Sex-Based Rights](#), with upwards of 39,000 signatories, reaffirms the sex-based rights of women that are set out in the Convention of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979 (CEDAW).

**Please see Appendix below**

# APPENDIX

the purpose of this appendix is:

1. to provide sources for further information about the current confusion of the terms **sex** and **gender**
2. to provide sources useful to the discussion on ‘gender identity ideology’ and the consequent harm caused toward women and girls

**LANGUAGE** - Use of the word ‘*gender*’ in international agreements, conventions, as well as in national and EU legislation, no longer systematically makes the connection to biological sex. The word **gender** is increasingly being used in the context of gender identity ideology. To provide an example, the [Canadian government’s website](#) demonstrates how use of the word **gender**, in its current use, no longer promotes protection for girls and women.

## UN Special Rapporteur Reem Alsalem (Geneva)

-Women’s Declaration International supports the work of **Ms. Reem Alsalem, UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences**.

-WDI encourages Latvian politicians and their staff to become familiar with Ms. Alsalem’s work in regards to the effect of gender identity ideology on the rights of women and girls.

-[This link opens to the UN page for Ms. Alsalem’s work](#)

-Please note: WDI especially recommends politicians familiarize themselves with the June 2025 speech, media Q&A session, and published report by Reem Alsalem (UN Human Rights Council Fifty-ninth session 16 June–11 July 2025): Speech- [Disregarding the material reality of sex can have devastating effects, says Reem Alsalem / HRC59](#).

Media session- [Q&A: Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls](#)

Report- [Sex-based violence against women and girls: New frontiers and emerging issues](#).

-A prior report, also by Ms. Alsalem, which specifically addresses males in women’s and girls’ sports, is both pertinent and useful in this discussion: [Violence Against Women and Girls in Sports](#) (August 2024)

## Think Tank Athena Forum (Austria)

-Changes in the way the words **sex** and **gender** are understood in law and governance are explored in a recent policy report, titled [Beneath the Surface: How Gender Identity is Reshaping Europe](#) published by an Austria-based think tank, Athena Forum.

## Think Tank MCC Brussels (Belgium)

-MCC Brussels in November, 2025 coordinated an event at the European Parliament- “The Threat of Trans Ideology in Europe: Women’s Rights in Danger”. Guest speaker Kelly-Jay Keen’s talk: [Europe’s Trans Ideology Unmasked](#) and MCC visiting scholar Dr. Ashley Frawley’s talk: [How Brussels is smuggling Gender Ideology into Europe’s Classrooms](#)

-MCC Brussels has published two studies written by Visiting Research Fellow, Dr. Ashley Frawley, available online:

1. [Mission Creeps How EU Funding and Activist NGOs Captured the Gender Agenda Dr Ashley Frawley](#);
2. [Indoctrinating children: how Brussels embeds gender Identity in the classroom Dr Ashley Frawley](#).