



A decisive start to 2026

Dear {{ contact.FIRSTNAME }} {{ contact.LASTNAME }},

Our campaign on the PACE resolution on conversion practices exceeded all expectations. In just two weeks, you brought unprecedented attention to what is going on. There's never been this kind of spotlight before.

Through our campaign website, you sent over 15,000 messages to your national delegations and party leaders. We reached out to all political groups at the Council of Europe with our [briefing](#) on the harms of gender identity-based bans. We amplified [lesbian and gay voices](#). And this week we've been in Strasbourg, speaking to delegates and explaining to them the harm that's being done under the guise of human rights.

But it was always going to be an uphill struggle. Despite a herculean effort, the resolution to ban "conversion practices" was passed. You can see the [full breakdown of results here](#). The debate was attended by less than a third of PACE delegates: just 99 out of 306 showed up. With such poor attendance, 71 votes in favour was enough to establish this harmful resolution as influential "soft law" across Europe.

After years of preparation, transactivist organisations have got what they wanted: a Council of Europe resolution that frames gender identity as a protected ground and pathologises anyone who questions it. They will now use this resolution to increase pressure at national level and to advance the same agenda within the European Union. We must be ready.

This vote is not the end of the story. It marks the beginning of our efforts to push back. For 15 years, they've had a head start. That era is over. The spotlight is on. We are just getting started.

In this newsletter you will also find:

- We've submitted input to the UN Independent Expert on SOGI's report on violence and discrimination against "lesbian, bisexual, and queer women." Spoiler: lesbians are being erased.
- A look at recent media coverage of Athena's work across Europe.

We now also have a dedicated [media](#) section on our website, where you can find articles, interviews and podcasts featuring our work from outlets across Europe. Have a look and explore.

As always, we couldn't do this without your support. Thank you for standing with us.

With very best wishes,

Faika

Director Athena Forum

Institutional and policy-driven lesbian erasure in Europe: our input to the UN Independent Expert on SOGI



Our submission documents how European legal and policy frameworks have progressively undermined the rights of lesbians through institutional and policy capture, legal incoherence and lack of accountability. Although European law recognises sex and sexual orientation as protected characteristics, recent institutional practices have elevated “gender identity” without legal definition, scrutiny or impact assessment, destabilising sex-based protections and rendering discrimination against lesbians difficult to identify and address.

Read our comprehensive input on how institutional and policy frameworks marginalise lesbians by collapsing sex-based categories into gender identity-based regimes, and on the resulting harms to freedom of expression, association, access to services and democratic participation.

[Read our input here](#)

In the news



We’ve set out to widen and sharpen the public debate on gender identity. Some conversations need insisting on. Here is a selection of our media coverage from the past weeks:

- [Podcast] [Conversation](#) with Finnish podcaster Milja Mansukoski on **M-Podi – Social issues with a critical mind**, discussing why many women and lesbians go along with the demands of trans-identified men, the role of the bureaucratic-managerial class, and the emergence of mental no-go zones in European policymaking.

- **[Report]** Austrian major centre-left daily **Der Standard** [reports](#) on the launch of Athena Forum and our work to challenge the gender identity lobby in Europe.
- **[Interview | Podcast]** Long-form [interview](#) and [podcast](#) with Faika in the Austrian national daily **Kurier** on setting boundaries, women's spaces and a minimum age of 25 for hormonal and medical interventions.
- **[Interview | Podcast]** [Interview](#) in the Austrian online news outlet **exxpress.at** with Kurt Krickler, pioneer of the Austrian lesbian and gay movement, former ILGA-Europe chair and Athena Forum team member, on EU funding of transactivist groups, political pressure through soft law and ideological indoctrination. Video to full conversation (in German) [here](#).
- **[Report]** Sweden's leading daily **Dagens Nyheter** [reports](#) on growing resistance to self-ID and features Athena Forum's critique of the EU's LGBTIQ+ Strategy. Director Faika El-Nagashi calls it "an ideology that is communicated as if there were consensus."
- **[Commentary] Spiked** [features](#) Athena Forum's campaign and critique of the Council of Europe's "conversion practices" resolution. Director Faika El-Nagashi is quoted calling it a "trans-activist Trojan horse" that pressures member states to adopt affirmation-only policies under the guise of rights protection.

100% people funded



We have no big donors, no EU funding and no national government grants. We depend entirely on people like you who know that women's rights, the safeguarding of children and freedom of speech matter. If you're able, please consider supporting us financially. Thank you for standing with us.

Donate now



We are a charitable non-profit organisation registered in Austria.

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Our mailing address is:

Blechturmngasse 7/8, 1050 Vienna, Austria

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