



Gender identity politics in Europe: Athena's March update

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

Much is happening across European institutions, and we have been busy uncovering what is going on and bringing it to the public.

Here's what we've been working on recently and what you'll find in this newsletter:

- We've published an [analysis](#) of the recent vote in the European Parliament on "recognising trans women as women." We explored its impact and whether you should be concerned about this.
- A look at the Council of Europe vote on a ban on conversion practices, offering a [case study](#) of how international institutions manufacture political consensus on contentious issues.
- An [article](#) on Ireland's leading role pushing gender identity politics in Europe.
- We also wrote to [Politico](#), a major political news outlet, about an article portraying gender-critical positions as a US-imported right-wing project, ignoring feminists, progressives, lesbian and gay activists and others who have raised concerns for years. We offered to engage to set the record straight.
- **We've been out and about** in Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland (and even made it to the UN in New York!), engaging in person with local activists and organisations.
- **We are introducing a new format: our subscriber-only webinar.** It is a personal opportunity to gain insight into our work and the European processes

we follow, and to ask your questions directly. Become a [subscriber](#) now to receive a personal invitation to our next webinar.

- **Plus:** All the recent [media coverage](#) of our work across Europe.

We are thrilled to have reached 300 monthly supporters! With no major funders, we are able to do this work only thanks to your support. We are truly grateful to each and every one of you. If you are not yet supporting our work, please consider making a contribution. Every donation helps and makes a real difference.

Thank you for standing with us.

With very best wishes,

Faika

Director Athena Forum

Donate now

Off the record: Our new webinar for subscribers



We're delighted to have run the first edition of [Off the record](#) - a new regular webinar that's exclusively for our subscribers. Each session includes a briefing on current developments inside European institutions and a live Q&A.

Off the record is unrecorded and subscriber-only. That allows for frank, in-depth discussion of developments that are often kept deliberately opaque and influenced by politically partial framing. Subscribers will receive an email with a link to register ahead of each webinar.

Become a subscriber

The European “trans women vote”: a symbolic document with damaging consequences for women



Behind an apparently symbolic recommendation lies a revealing case of defensive voting, lobbying pressure and political convenience that risks reshaping global women's rights negotiations.

Read our analysis here

Ireland's leading role in pushing European gender identity politics



Ireland has long been a key driver of gender identity policy across Europe, and shows no sign of slowing down.

In recent years we have seen the development of a coordinated European agenda in which Ireland plays a leading role and helps shape and export policies across European institutions. Irish politicians, activists and activist-politicians have been instrumental in pushing for transactivist policies in international institutions, and in driving the shift towards a gender identity focus within the EU.

Faika delivered this talk during the opening session of the conference *Gender Recognition Act 2015: Law, Rights and Safeguarding* (7 March 2026, Dublin), organised by Wicklow Women for Women.

[Read the article here](#)

Transactivist demands enabled by political indifference



The recent debate in the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on conversion therapy bans offers a case study in how international institutions manufacture “European consensus” on deeply contested issues.

[Read our analysis here](#)

Athena: Out and about



In the Netherlands, Athena Forum team member Marianne Driessen attended the launch of [Genderguide - Navigating the landscape of gender, identity and care](#). A thoughtful and welcome addition to the still limited Dutch critical literature on this topic. She also presented Athena's work and exchanged publications with Elise van Hoek, one of the authors. We hope that health services, clinicians and policymakers engage seriously with this important publication.



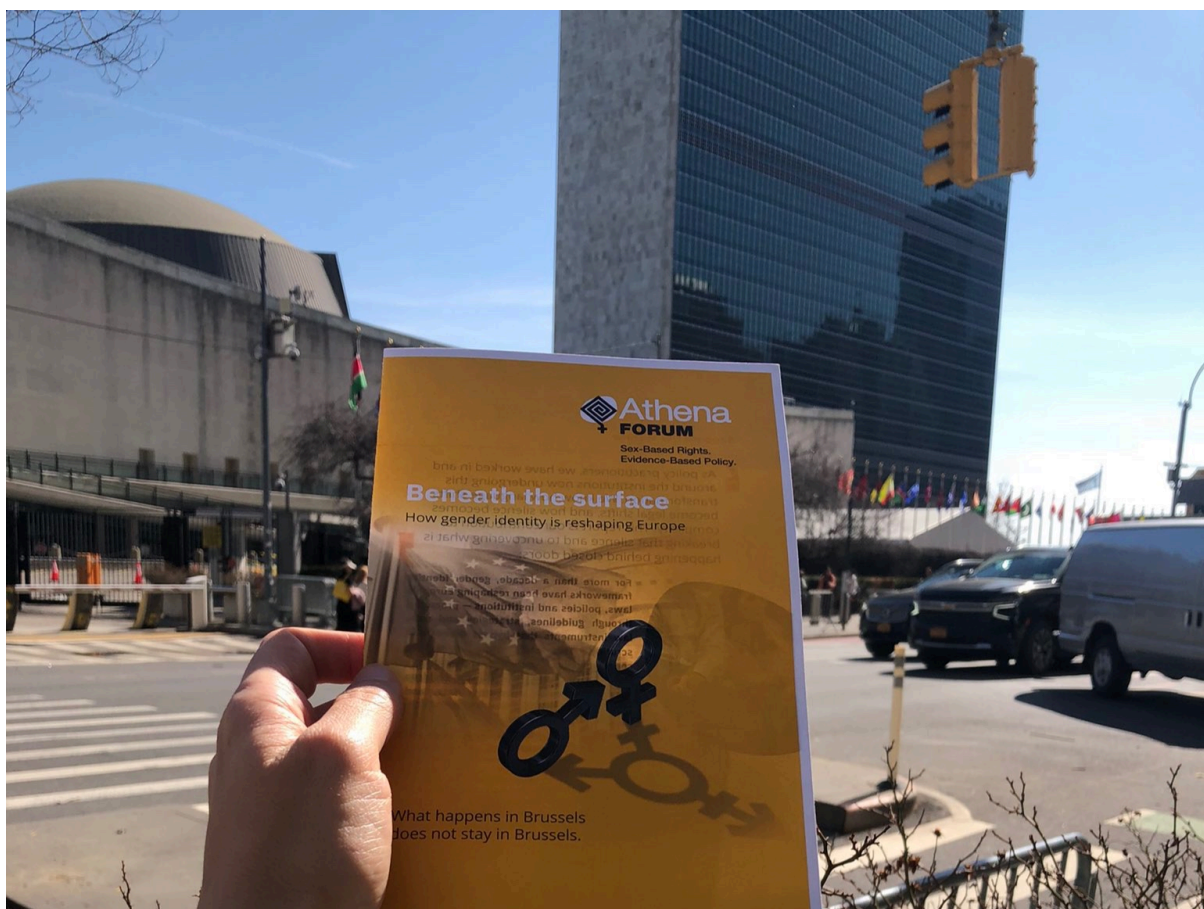
In **Spain**, Annette Pacey attended the DoFemCo feminist teachers [conference](#) on behalf of Athena Forum and had a wonderful time meeting many passionate and determined feminists. [DoFemCo](#) are a feminist teacher's organisation in Spain who do amazing work demanding equality between the sexes at all educational levels. This year the focus was on violence against women and girls in education. Among many fascinating discussions we heard how gender identity dogma has hollowed out and replaced the principles of coeducation - which in Spain means not just educating boys and girls together, but educating them in a way that is free of sexist stereotypes.



In Ireland, Faika spoke at the opening of the conference *Gender Recognition Act 2015: Law, Rights and Safeguarding* held in Dublin on 7 March. The conference was organised by the wonderful Wicklow Women for Women. It was an impressive event and brought together a wide range of thoughtful contributions and important discussions. It was also a fantastic opportunity to connect with Irish colleagues, and Faika greatly appreciated the warm welcome she received.



On International Women's Day: Three years ago, radical feminists in Barcelona said "Prou!" (enough!). Fed up with so-called feminist groups pushing policies that harm women and girls, they took to the streets. Since then there have been two separate marches on International Women's Day. Annette Pacey from Athena Forum attended the march organised by [Moviment Feminista de Barcelona](#), a coalition of radical feminist groups, marchers carried signs stating that prostitution is violence against women, that surrogacy is human trafficking, that no child is born in the wrong body, and that men are not women - and certainly not lesbians.



In New York at the UN: Yes, that's the UN building in New York City! Our thanks to the women at [ROAR Women NYC](#) who generously offered to hand out our materials as part of their on-the-ground campaign around the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meeting.

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:

- **[Opinion]** *The Daily Mail* (UK) published an [opinion piece](#) which commended the conference in Dublin organised by Wicklow Women for Women. The piece highlights Faika's presentation on the leading role Irish politicians have played in promoting gender identity policies across Europe.
- **[Podcast]** Faika joined the *Women's Declaration International* webinar and gave a [briefing](#) on recent developments in the European institutions.
- **[Report]** *Brussels Signal* [reported](#) on the Council of Europe resolution for a ban on conversion practices quoting Athena Forum who was there to witness the debate first-hand.
- **[Podcast]** Roisín Michaux [interviewed](#) Annette Pacey of Athena Forum for the *Peaked* podcast about our campaign around the Council of Europe resolution on conversion practices, and what it was like to be in Strasbourg watching events unfold from the front row.
- **[Commentary]** Norwegian magazine *Subjekt* published a guest [commentary](#) by Athena expert Anne Kalvig arguing that gender identity as legal concept undermines legal principles. You can find an English translation [here](#).
- **[Podcast]** *The Umbrella Hour* podcast [interviewed](#) Faika about the challenge of upholding sex-based rights in the European institutions. It also touched on the personal dimension of this debate, including isolation, loss and the pain of collective break-ups from what is often referred to as “the community”.

We have a dedicated media section on our website, where you can find articles, interviews and podcasts featuring our work from outlets across Europe.

Explore our media page

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.

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