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To the Latvian Green and Farmers' Union faction
Saeima of the Republic of Latvia

Official letter of support

Regarding the decision to vote in favor of denouncing the Istanbul Convention

November 5, 2025

Vilnius, Lithuania

Dear members of the Latvian Green and Farmers' Union faction,

The Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, representing the interests and values of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, expresses its deep respect for your faction for its principled and consistent defense of the natural order, enshrined in the Latvian Constitution, as expressed in your decision to vote in favor of denouncing the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (CETS No. 210) (hereinafter referred to as the Istanbul Convention).

Both the Lithuanian and Latvian Constitutions enshrine a gender model based on biological differences between the sexes and the complementarity of men and women, which is the foundation of the natural family. Meanwhile, the Istanbul Convention, which Lithuania has initialled and Latvia has ratified, introduces a different understanding of the concept of gender based on the assumptions of social constructivism, according to which gender is variable and chosen.

It should be noted that this understanding of gender does not correspond to the understanding of gender established in international law. There is a clear consensus in international law on the definition of the term "gender," which was enshrined in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. In it, "gender" is understood as male and female, in accordance with the biological definition that has been the fundamental principle of law and social organization for centuries. The Istanbul Convention defines "gender" as socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and characteristics that a given society attributes to women or men. There is no consensus in international law, as evidenced by the declarations of the countries that have ratified the Convention, which do not recognize the concept of gender enshrined in it, as well as the Czech Republic's refusal to ratify the Convention and Turkey's withdrawal from it.

The protection of women against violence can be ensured through national legislation, which allows countries to decide independently on the most appropriate measures in their national context, implementing Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence, which sets out

mandatory minimum standards for protection against domestic violence for EU Member States, or use the legal regime of the Istanbul Convention, which offers a broader but also more ideological approach to the prevention of violence against women and the concept of gender.

Lithuania has chosen to protect women from violence through national legislation. Since 2011, we have had the Law on Protection against Violence in the Family, which currently incorporates almost all the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. In 2023, the main secondary prevention measure against domestic violence came into force – the protection order against domestic violence. Thus, in essence, this law, together with the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code, guarantees all the necessary protection provided by the Convention and does not contain the ideological provisions that are characteristic of the Convention.

Therefore, each state has the right to choose the model of legal regulation for the protection of women against violence that is most appropriate for it, taking into account national traditions, constitutional values, and the needs of society.

Latvia's decision to denounce the Istanbul Convention is an expression of Latvia's sovereignty, which is in line with the principles of international law and does not conflict with any international obligations. It shows that Latvian society does not want and does not intend to implement the obligation set out in the Convention to introduce into its legal system a different understanding of gender (woman and man) than that enshrined in national constitutions.

This decision is a significant contribution to the de-ideologization of the system of protection against violence, helps to avoid the application of ideological provisions in national law, and strengthens the independence of the Latvian state in defining the concept of gender in accordance with the values enshrined in the country's Constitution.

We are convinced that your choice will preserve Latvian family values, ensure legal clarity and social harmony, and set an example for other countries in the region seeking to independently decide on measures to protect women from violence.

The Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union wishes you wisdom, strength, and courage in defending your country's values and sovereignty. We hope to continue to see active, constructive cooperation between our friendly parties, strengthening democracy and the institution of the family in our region.

Yours sincerely,

Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union

Chairman of the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union



Aurelijus Veryga