

Open Letter to the Council of Europe

Brussels, 13th of April

Dear Secretary General,
Dear Representatives of the Council of Europe,

We, the undersigned participants and organizers of this event dedicated to advancing human rights and gender equality, write to reaffirm the critical importance of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).

At a time where violence against women remains widespread and countries withdraw from the Convention, it is essential to renew commitment to this essential document as it still stands as the most comprehensive framework to address this issue. Its principles translate into real protection, accountability, and prevention. Upholding it is essential to maintaining Europe's commitment to human rights.

1. We call on the Council of Europe to continue its strong leadership in promoting and safeguarding the Istanbul Convention, in the face of increasing threats from growing political challenges and continued misinformation.
2. We urge all the EU's member states that have not yet ratified the Istanbul Convention to do so without delay, and we call on the Council of Europe to actively support this process through political engagement, guidance, and legal expertise. Ratification of this crucial document is not merely symbolic but an essential step in ensuring equal protection of women's rights across Europe.
3. Finally, we call for the opening of constructive discussions with countries that withdrew from the Convention, particularly with Türkiye as its host country, such decisions represent a significant setback, and withdrawal cannot be the answer. Renewed engagement is essential to rebuild trust and advance the shared goal of protecting human dignity.

The fight against violence against women is central to Europe's human rights framework. We stand ready, as engaged citizens and stakeholders, to support these efforts and to contribute to a Europe where the rights, safety, and dignity of all individuals are fully protected.

Yours sincerely,

Signatories:

Anna Strolenberg	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Mélissa Camara	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Marko Vešligaj	Member of the European Parliament - S&D
Cristina Guarda	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Kira Marie Petter-Hansen	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Catarina Vieira	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Reinier Van Lanschot	Member of the European Parliament - Greens/EFA
Hanna Gedin	Member of the European Parliament - The Left
Maria Luz Martínez Seijo	Member of PACE (Spain) - Council of Europe
Marc Lamuà	Member of PACE (Spain) - Council of Europe
Daan Roovers	Member of PACE (Netherlands) - Council of Europe
Sirpa Pietikäinen	Member of the European Parliament - EPP
Matjaz Nemic	Member of the European Parliament - S&D
Irena Joveva	Member of the European Parliament - Renew
Pernando Barrena Arza	Member of the European Parliament - The Left
Emma Rafowicz	Member of the European Parliament - S&D
Evin Incir	Member of the European Parliament - S&D
Raquel García Hermida-Van der Walle	Member of the European Parliament - Renew