

## EPSU Condemns Turkey withdrawal and Polish vote on Istanbul Convention



*(22 March 2021) We are not “your” women, we are human beings deserving a life free from violence.*

EPSU condemns the withdrawal of Turkey from the Istanbul convention. The Turkish President, without a parliamentary debate, decided to withdraw from the same international instrument Turkey signed in 2012. It was the first in Europe and under his own Presidency, during the Turkish Chairmanship of the Council of Europe. The Convention is to prevent violence against women, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. It upholds women’s fundamental human right to a life free from violence. Turkey is not free from gender-based violence and withdrawing means condoning the current situation and accepting structural discrimination and violence.

In a few days the Polish Parliament will vote a law requesting the President to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention and propose an alternative, drafted by a ultra-conservative think-tank. EPSU urges not to move forwards with this vote and condemns this initiative.

The countries may be different but the alleged arguments to withdraw are similar: disrupt family structures, promoting LGBTQ+ families and opposition to "external models, translation or cheating to protect the rights and laws of our women." These are manipulative arguments to control women and repress the LGBTQ+ community, nothing else. It is the depiction of an unfair society, in which privileged men have the control over women and expect to rule on people's right to self-determination. We recall to the men in leadership that we are not "your" women, but human beings deserving a life without structural discrimination, violence, not a second-class citizens treatment, with constant violation of our human rights, violence, death by the hand of men that believe women are their property.

EPSU finds these actions very alarming and calls on the EU Council to unlock the discussion and ratify on behalf of the EU. Six EU Members are still to ratify the Istanbul convention and those women deserve protection too. The EU Commission promised to propose a legislative text by the end of 2021 if the situation is not unlocked. We do need an EU level instrument that would protect all women and all women workers from violence and discrimination. However, we shall not forget our sisters in Europe beyond the EU and EPSU has been active and will continue push for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by all European Countries that have not done so yet, including Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia.

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