



GENDER EQUALITY LAW IN ALBANIA:

POSITIONS, RESISTANCE AND ADVOCACY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Comments and suggestions on the Draft Law on Gender Equality from AWEN addressed to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.....	4
Informative Letter to Members of the Parliament of Albania Regarding the Draft Law on Gender Equality.....	7
Public Statement of Women's Organizations.....	19
Press Conference on the Gender Equality Law.....	21
Participation in the Committee on Human Rights and Public Information Media in the Parliament of Albania.....	22
Participation in the Committee on Health and Social Welfare in the Parliament of Albania.....	22
Letter to the President regarding the Decree of the Law "On Gender Equality"	23
Online Campaign.....	26
Media Appearances.....	27
Building the Coalition for Gender Equality and the Family.....	28
Request to AMA for verification and taking measures regarding the spread of false information in audiovisual media concerning the GEL.....	30
Urgent advocacy meetings and Amicus Curiae.....	32



1. INTRODUCTION

On November 6, 2025, Albania approved the new law "On Gender Equality," with 77 votes in favor and 36 against, after months of debates and consultations between civil society organizations, experts, and institutions. This law improves that of 2008 by updating it with European Union standards and the Istanbul Convention. The public consultation remained open for one month in the electronic register, where more than 1400 visitors were registered. Civil society organizations including women's advocacy networks, human rights groups, experts, and activists sent comments and suggestions and also became active participants in public hearings in parliamentary committees.

An informative letter was delivered to all 140 members of parliament, and meetings were held with independent institutions such as the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination.

The real objectives of the law were communicated publicly in social and traditional media, in response to disinformation campaigns.

Over 20 organizations published open letters and participated in press conferences to show that the battle for gender equality is a shared commitment.

An open letter was addressed to the President of the Republic, as a call for the decree of the law and the protection of its principles.

The battle for this law is a battle for the dignity and safety of every person who has felt invisible, mocked, unprotected.

In this document you will find all the above steps reflected, which AWEN together with other civil society organizations has undertaken.



2. COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ON THE DRAFT LAW ON GENDER EQUALITY FROM AWEN – ALBANIAN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT NETWORK ADDRESSED TO THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Addressed to: Ministry of Health and Social Protection

From: AWEN – Albanian Women Empowerment Network

Date: 07.04.2025

AWEN appreciates the initiative for drafting the Draft Law on Gender Equality as an important step for promoting and guaranteeing gender equality in Albania. We are sharing our comments and suggestions with the aim of strengthening the provisions of the draft law and ensuring its enforceability.

Comments and Suggestions

Clearer and more inclusive definitions in terminology

- **Indirect discrimination:** Clarification is needed on the mechanisms for identifying and further addressing indirect discrimination, as well as practical examples in different sectors.
- **Unpaid work and the care economy:** The law still does not express and should recognize and value women's unpaid work, especially in the childcare and elderly care sector. This could include measures for assessing and financially compensating this work and financial costs should/can be foreseen. There are similar models and practices in European countries regarding this, such as the Nordic countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, as well as Germany and France, which have recognized and supported women's unpaid work through policies such as: pension credits, dignified payments for caregivers, etc.
- **Gender-sensitive language:** The definition should clarify how it will be implemented in the field of education, public administration, and media. It should be taken into account that curricula are needed in education at all levels that inform about gender-sensitive language or gender and social inequalities. In administration, internal policies are needed as well as monitoring mechanisms for the media. Existing ones are not sufficient and do not function.



Equal gender representation and measures

- **Establishment of clear quotas and measurable objectives:** The law should determine concrete monitoring mechanisms for equal gender representation in public and private institutions, including managerial levels, regardless of the current context where the situation may appear positive regarding the quota.
- **Representation in the private sector:** There is a need for clarification on the obligations of the private sector for gender equality and monitoring or reporting measures in cases of violations and abuses.
- **Temporary measures:** The law should determine clear deadlines and conditions for the removal of temporary measures once factual equality is achieved.

Measures for gender equality in the labor market

- **Equal pay for equal work:** The law should include/contain concrete criteria for assessing equal work and specific sanctions in cases of violations.
- **Clear penalties for violations of the law:** We suggest clarifying sanctions for entities that do not respect the provisions of the law in order to ensure more effective enforceability.

Oversight and accountability mechanisms

- **Strong oversight institutions:** There is a need to strengthen the role of the National Council for Gender Equality and the creation of an independent oversight mechanism.
- **Participation of civil society organizations:** Formal inclusion of civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the law could be considered in the law, taking into account their experience in this field.
- **Reporting and transparency:** The law could include regular reporting periods on progress of gender equality measures, which happens in practice but especially including comparative analyses, specifying the periods.

Article 7. General measures for ensuring gender equality:

It is recommended to add as a general measure also ensuring the monitoring of the implementation of the legal, policy, and institutional framework regarding concrete measures/actions taken to achieve gender equality and eliminate discrimination based on gender.



Article 9. Special measures

It is recommended to review the language in point b: *Facilitating assistance for persons who have special responsibilities in the family, due to daily care for disabled family members, due to age, physical or mental disability, or for other reasons of disability.*

According to our legislation in the use of the term "persons with disabilities" or "physical or mental disability".

To specify the responsible party for approving a special measure/measures and periodic assessment of the situation for reviewing the special measures.

Article 13. Gender statistical data

The role of local government institutions/structures in collecting, processing, and reporting gender data and statistics should also be added.

Article 16. Council of Ministers

The role of the Council of Ministers regarding the approval of a temporary measure and periodic assessment of the situation for reviewing these measures should be added.

Article 21. Local self-government units

The role of the local self-government unit regarding gender budgeting should be added, as also presented above, local government has an important role so that political commitments undertaken for achieving and respecting gender equality by the government are reflected and realized in practice through the budget at the local level.

Article 22. Gender Equality Officer

The gender equality officer should also have specific university education in the field of gender equality, in addition to training and specific knowledge in this field. The gender equality officer should be part of discussions regarding gender budgeting, at the local government level - he/she should play an important role in all stages of budget preparation to ensure gender budgeting.

Also, monitoring throughout the implementation of budget programs is important.

Article 26. Employer's responsibilities for protecting the employee from violence, discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment

The employer's obligation to ensure equal pay for work of equal value should also be added.



3. INFORMATIVE LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF ALBANIA REGARDING THE DRAFT LAW ON GENDER EQUALITY

Dear Members of the Parliament of Albania,

In the context of the consultation process on the Draft Law "On Gender Equality" (DLGE), we wish to inform you about the purposes, content, and importance of this draft law, as well as to clarify some misunderstandings that have recently circulated in public opinion.

The information below is shared by the "**Gender Alliance for Development Center**" (GADC) and the **Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN)** in close consultation with legal experts in the field of international human rights law and supported by 25 civil society organizations and human rights advocacy organizations.

A law for Albanian families, justice, and the country's development

This draft law is not a legislative initiative against the family, tradition, or moral values of Albanian society. As we will argue below, this initiative that aims to strengthen justice, respect, and equal opportunities for women and men in Albania in every field of life, such as employment, education, health, media, and public life, is above all an initiative for Albanian families.

Gender equality is the foundation of democracy and social stability. It translates into practice the constitutional principles and Albania's commitments to binding international law and the current European integration process.

How was the draft law developed?

The Draft Law "On Gender Equality" is the result of a broad, comprehensive, and transparent inter-institutional and public consultation process, led by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, with the direct contribution of:

- Central and local state institutions;
- Civil society organizations and women's networks;
- Experts in the field of human rights and gender equality;
- Representatives of international institutions, including the European Union Delegation to Albania, UN Agencies, as well as bilateral and multilateral development partners.



This process was conducted in accordance with international human rights standards, clearly reflecting among others:

- The 2023 recommendations for Albania of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- Obligations arising from the EU Acquis, in the context of Albania's EU accession process;
- The fundamental principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), particularly the guarantees of Article 14 on the prohibition of discrimination and Protocol No. 12 on the protection of equality;
- Albania's commitments to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the 2024 recommendations of the Group of Experts on this Convention (GREVIO) to Albania, as well as national strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The draft law represents an important step towards fulfilling Albania's positive international obligations, strengthening the rule of law, and building a more just, more inclusive, and more dignified society for all citizens, women and men, girls and boys.

Compliance of the draft law with the international legal framework of human rights and the European Union

The Draft Law "On Gender Equality" (2025) is part of the process of improving and harmonizing the national legal framework in accordance with international human rights standards and the requirements of European integration, in relation to all Albanian citizens.

This draft law follows the same lines and is closely linked to:

- The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2022-2030, which treats gender equality as a condition for sustainable development and strengthening democratic institutions;
- The National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030, which defines legal interventions for achieving factual equality;
- The National Plan for European Integration 2024-2026, which clearly provides for the need for intervention in the legal framework for gender equality;



- The Stabilization and Association Agreement, particularly Article 99, which provides for cooperation in the social field and the integration of gender equality principles into national policies.

The Draft Law "On Gender Equality," which contains 52 articles divided into 8 parts, represents a qualitative step from the declarative level of gender equality principles towards an implementable and practical level, creating an updated principled and institutional basis in accordance with:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Albania (Article 18 on protection from discrimination and Articles 5, 116, and 122 on the implementation of binding international law, as part of the domestic legal order, and ratified international agreements that have priority over the national legal framework, ranked in the hierarchy of laws in Albania directly after the Constitution);
- Law No. 10221/2010 "On protection from discrimination," which prohibits discrimination, among others, on the basis of gender;
- The EU Acquis, including Directive 2000/78/EC, Directive 2006/54/EC, Directive 75/117/EEC, Directive 76/207/EEC, and Directive 97/80/EC, which set standards for equal treatment, equal pay, and the reversal of the burden of proof;
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation No. 40 (2024) on equal representation in decision-making;
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the findings of the group of experts (GREVIO) of 2024 on Albania;
- Convention No. 190 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace;
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Articles 20-38); The Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU);
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16).

Furthermore, the draft law ensures horizontal harmonization of legal protection standards with post-2008 legislation (approved or amended), including the State Budget Law, the Local Self-Government Law, the Labor Code and the Audiovisual Media Code, the State-Guaranteed Legal



Aid Law, and the State Inspection Law, guaranteeing coherence between legal and institutional instruments and effectiveness in implementation.

Regarding the definition of the concept of "gender" in the draft law

The definition of gender that has caused public concern is this:

"Gender", according to this law, has an inclusive meaning in accordance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination regarding gender identity and expression.

This definition is supported by international and European standards that recognize the comprehensive concept of gender as a social and legal category, related to gender roles, behaviors, and attributes.

This comprehensive concept of gender:

- Is sanctioned in Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Council of Europe, which recommends that member states, including Albania, integrate into national legislation a comprehensive definition of gender in accordance with human rights standards and the principles of protection from discrimination regarding the gender identity and expression of everyone;
- Is widely supported by the CEDAW Committee;
- Is a consolidated concept in the EU, thanks to the binding jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), as in cases P v. S and Cornwall County Council (1996), VP (Hungary, C-247/23, 2025), C-247/23 (Deldits), where it is emphasized that discrimination on the basis of gender identity constitutes discrimination on the basis of sex, must be considered as discrimination and unfavorable treatment on the basis of gender, and must be recognized by legislation dealing with gender equality;
- Is in accordance with ECHR standards (Article 14 in relation to Article 8), ECtHR jurisprudence, the Istanbul Convention, and the findings of its group of experts (GREVIO).

The principles of equality and prohibition of discrimination are two of the fundamental pillars of the EU legal order. Article 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty on European Union, clearly sanction that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited. Likewise, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which has the same legal status as the treaties, in its Article 21 expressly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and any institutional interpretation



made on it has covered gender identity and expression. The Court of Justice of the EU in its jurisprudence has clearly determined that discrimination against transgender persons is discrimination on the basis of gender, therefore must be recognized by legislation dealing with gender equality.

In this sense, the inclusion of the comprehensive definition of "gender" in the draft law does not constitute an ideological innovation, but fulfills a consolidated legal standard, ensuring that every citizen, regardless of gender or identity characteristics, enjoys equal legal protection with any other Albanian.

Innovations of the draft law

The draft law introduces a series of new provisions that make the implementation of gender equality measurable and mandatory in practice, including:

- Reversal of the burden of proof in accordance with Directive 97/80/EC;
- Gender-responsive budgeting, gender-sensitive language, gender mainstreaming in public policies, equal pay for equal work, valuation of unpaid work, and collection of gender data;
- Temporary and special measures to address systemic gender inequalities;
- Regulation of the dedicated gender officer and strengthening of the National Council for Gender Equality;
- Special competencies of the Parliament for post-legislative control of the implementation of the law;
- Progressive increase of women's representation from 30% to 50% within a 10-year period, in accordance with CEDAW General Recommendation No. 40;
- Expansion of protection from gender-based discrimination in sectors where inequalities are most visible (education, ICT, media, agriculture, sports, social protection, transport, energy, environment, culture, arts);
- Expansion of administrative sanctions and the right to civil compensation for non-contractual damages in cases of unfavorable treatment due to gender inequality.

Through these provisions, the draft law guarantees harmonization with the EU Acquis and with Albania's obligations to binding international law, in light of best international practices for advancing gender equality as a legal, social, and economic principle.



On the essential concepts of modern equality: "gender stereotypes" and "multiple affiliation"

One of the most important elements that distinguishes a modern gender equality law from a formal text is the way this legal act addresses gender stereotypes and the affiliation of individuals. These two concepts are not semantic issues, but foundations of contemporary equality law, widely accepted as gender equality standards.

Gender stereotypes: From legal definition to the aim for healthy social transformation

The current Gender Equality Law of 2008 mentions gender stereotypes three times, recognizing them as a root cause of structural inequalities and as a need for addressing. In the new amendments proposed by the Socialist Party Parliamentary Group, this term has been completely deleted, from three mentions to zero. This figure does not reflect a technical review, but a change of philosophy in the fight against gender inequality, which strips the law of its educational and transformative function.

Removing the term "gender stereotype" means that inequalities arising from cultural patterns and traditional perceptions will no longer be recognized as a social and systemic problem. In practice, this means not calling as problems the facts that girls are pushed towards "women's" professions, that men are prejudiced when they request parental leave, that women in politics are judged on appearance and not on their ideas, etc.

Precisely to challenge these realities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in its Article 5 obliges ratifying states, including Albania, to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women," while the Beijing Declaration (1995) places the elimination of gender stereotypes at the heart of factual equality. In the same spirit, the Council of Europe Strategy for Gender Equality 2024-2029 links the change of stereotypes and gender norms with strengthening democracy and equal participation in decision-making.

Multiple affiliation: the reality of inequalities arising from overlapping causes

Similarly, the concept of "multiple affiliation" has been attacked, one of the elements that gives this law identity and coherence in accordance with international standards. The latest proposals seek to completely delete this concept from the draft law, turning it into a text that does not recognize the complex reality of many citizens who are part of Albanian society.

"Multiple affiliation" is a legal concept that originates from and is closely linked to the term "multiple discrimination" and "intersectional discrimination," expressly mentioned by Law No. 10221/2010 "On Protection from Discrimination," meaning that a person may experience



discrimination based on more than one protected ground. (For example, as a woman and Roma, as a woman with disabilities, as a single father, or as a young girl from rural areas). In Albanian reality, these intersections are common and visible. When A.B, a Roma woman from a rural area, is excluded from subsidies and local programs, or when M.L, a lesbian woman with disabilities, faces stigmatization and lack of access to the labor market, they are not being treated unfavorably in relation to the rest of society only because they are women, but also for all the other aforementioned reasons, which makes their gender discrimination more complex and closely intertwined with multiple causes. These realities cannot be ignored by the main national law that claims to effectively address gender equality. Without recognition of the concept of multiple affiliation, these complex cases become legally invisible.

The concept originates from CEDAW General Recommendation No. 28, which defines gender discrimination as "all forms and manifestations, including those related to other intersecting factors." Likewise, the European Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025 and Agenda 2030 consider the intersectional approach as a condition for effective policies and for reducing inequalities. The European Commission also emphasizes in its progress reports that gender equality cannot be separated from other dimensions of economic, ethnic, cultural, or disability inequality because human reality is not divided into isolated categories.

A gender equality law cannot be blind to the social reality of every citizen it aims to protect. Removing the terms "gender stereotype" and "multiple affiliation" is not a matter of editing, but a reduction of the very purpose of the law from an instrument of transformation to a formal text, without taking into account how inequality is experienced in practice. This would bring regression not only to Albania's international obligations in the field of human rights (such as the CEDAW framework, ECHR, Istanbul Convention, Agenda 2030, European standards of equal treatment and non-discrimination) but also in relation to the current gender equality law of 2008, which if these draft amendments are approved would represent in this regard a more progressive legal instrument than the draft law of 2025 itself.

What does the Draft Law on Gender Equality improve in practice?

The 2025 draft law brings a series of essential improvements, which as mentioned above, aim at real and not just formal equality, creating concrete mechanisms for implementation and accountability in practice:

- Updates Law No. 9970/2008, including the most advanced concepts of protection from discrimination discussed above;



- Provides more complete protection for women and men in the workplace, in the public and private sector, against any form of discrimination in pay, promotion, training, or working conditions;
- Intertwines in a complementary manner with the Law on Protection from Discrimination, creating a clear system of inter-institutional coordination for implementing gender equality principles;
- Strengthens accountability and monitoring mechanisms, creating clear accountability mechanisms at all levels: ministries, public institutions, municipalities, media, and the private sector;
- Provides that each institution will have gender equality offices or coordinators, who periodically report on the implementation of the law;
- Provides for stronger administrative sanctions in cases of non-implementation or repeated discrimination;
- The Council of Ministers is tasked with periodic review of temporary measures, to ensure that equality policies have measurable impact;
- Recognizes and values unpaid care work, which is often performed by women, but remains invisible in statistics and public policies;
- For the first time, requires that institutions develop policies for the fair sharing of family responsibilities between women and men, including through community services, parental leave, and promotion of work-life balance. This approach contributes to increasing family well-being and reducing economic inequalities between genders.
- Increases equal representation in decision-making, maintaining the existing minimum quota of 30% and aiming for 50/50 equality within a 10-year period;
- Promotes fair competition, balanced representation, and development of human resources policies with gender sensitivity;
- Implementation of gender-responsive budgeting at all levels of public administration, which means that planning, distribution, and monitoring of public funds must take into consideration the different needs and impacts that policies have on women and men;
- The law strengthens education for gender equality in schools, universities, and in the professional training system, promoting respect, dignity, and social coexistence. This



process does not change the concepts of parenting or family, but helps in forming generations that understand equality as a social and democratic value. In this way, the education system becomes a partner in preventing violence, discrimination, and gender stereotypes;

- The law requires that all public institutions include gender equality objectives in their strategies, budgets, and annual reports;
- The ministry responsible for gender equality will have a coordinating, supervisory, and supportive role for the implementation of the law in all sectors;
- Cooperation between government, local government, independent institutions, and civil society will be essential for effective implementation, transparent reporting, and accountability.

What this law DOES NOT do?

To avoid any misinterpretation, we emphasize that the draft law in question:

- **Does not introduce "new genders" and does not replace biology!**

The law does not change the biological concept of gender, nor does it recognize "new gender categories." To introduce new genders in Albanian society, deep legal reforms would be needed, starting with interventions in Law 10129/2009 "On Civil Status" or by approving a specific legal framework for the recognition of new gender identities. The draft law remains in full compliance with the terminology of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects every person from discrimination without affecting biological notions.

- **Does not interfere in family life and does not change the concepts of "mother," "father," or "parent"!**

The draft law does not affect the structure of the family, does not change parental roles, and does not rewrite the basic concepts of parenting. On the contrary, it sees the family as the basic cell of Albanian society and aims to support it through measures that protect mothers at work, give fathers more rights to participate in childcare, and ease family responsibilities through new social policies. This approach is in accordance with Article 53 of the Constitution, which specifically recognizes and protects the family, as well as with the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees respect for private and family life.

- **Does not impose terminology, behaviors, or "ideological language"!**



The law does not force anyone to change their way of speaking or expressing themselves, but requires that state institutions and official documents use gender-sensitive language, i.e., a respectful, inclusive, and non-offensive language. This means that in public acts, practices, and educational materials, linguistic forms that include both genders should be used, e.g., "candidates," "employees." This is an international standard adopted by the Council of Europe and the EU, which aims at respect and equal representation, not ideological imposition.

- **Does not overlap with the Law on Protection from Discrimination!**

The draft law does not replace and does not conflict with Law No. 10221, dated 4.2.2010 "On protection from discrimination." On the contrary, it complements this framework by defining clear rules for the institutional implementation of the principle of gender equality, specifying the roles of ministries, local institutions, media, and the private sector. In this way, both laws function in harmony and in a complementary manner, covering both individual protection from discrimination and the creation of institutional policies for systemic equality and accountability.

- **Does not undermine sports, religion, or national identity!**

The law does not interfere in the way sports are organized, in religious doctrine, or in Albania's national symbols. On the contrary, it is based on the principles of respect for human dignity and non-discrimination, sanctioned in the Constitution (Article 3 and Article 18) and in the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 14 - prohibition of discrimination). Our legal framework recognizes religious communities, sports organizations, and cultural entities as important parts of Albanian social life, requiring from them only respect for equality and non-discrimination.

- **Does not impose "new ideologies," but strengthens existing principles!**

The draft law does not impose foreign ideologies or concepts that conflict with Albanian traditions. It is built on the values of respect, justice, solidarity, and human dignity, which are part of Albania's national and cultural identity. At its core, the law strengthens what Albanian society has always supported: respect for others and justice for all.

Why is this law necessary today?

In 2025, Albania still faces structural gender inequalities that limit the full development of society and the country's economic potential. Despite significant progress over the last decade, women and men in Albania do not yet have equal opportunities to build a dignified life, to influence decision-making, and to benefit fairly from the country's economic growth.

Economic and social inequalities



Women make up more than half of the population, but have lower participation in the labor market, often concentrated in low-paid sectors with limited security.

They perform most of the unpaid care work for children, the elderly, and the family, invisible in economic statistics, but vital for the functioning of any economy. This unequal burden limits women's opportunities for education, professional development, and economic independence.

Inequalities in decision-making and representation

In public institutions, decision-making policies, and governing boards, women remain underrepresented. Even though the 30% legal quota has helped improve participation in Parliament and municipalities, full 50/50 equality is still not a reality. The lack of women in key positions affects the quality of public policies, because the experiences and needs of half the population are not sufficiently reflected in decision-making.

Inequalities in the distribution of opportunities

In many fields, such as education, health, administration, media, and business, gender stereotypes and the lack of equality policies hinder the development of full human potential.

Often, women face invisible barriers to professional advancement, while men feel constrained by traditional expectations that link them to the sole role of "economic provider."

This outdated system harms both women and men, and creates an unequal and less productive society.

The need for real implementation and concrete mechanisms

The 2008 law laid the foundations for gender equality, but the lack of strong implementation and monitoring mechanisms meant that many provisions remained on paper. In a new economic and social reality, it is essential that the law is modernized, concretized, and implemented with clear institutional responsibility. Only in this way can gender equality be transformed from a legal principle into everyday practice.

Gender equality is not only a matter of social justice, but a condition for sustainable economic development. EU and OECD studies show that economies that guarantee greater gender equality achieve faster growth, more innovation, and less poverty.

Every woman who has the opportunity to contribute to the economy and every man who shares family responsibilities adds value to common well-being.



In conclusion, this draft law is necessary because gender equality is not a luxury, but a necessity for a modern, democratic, and European Albania. It gives women and men equal opportunities to build a dignified life, to contribute to the development of the family, community, and country, and to fulfill the constitutional ideal of a free, just, and equal society for all.

Call for support

In conclusion of this informative material, we invite every member of the Parliament of the Republic of Albania to carefully read the content of this draft law and not allow the noise, misinformation, and fear campaigns to obscure its true, humane, and social essence. This draft law that speaks about Albanian families, about social justice, about equal opportunities, and about a fairer, more honest, and more dignified Albania for all its citizens cannot be portrayed as the greatest harm that is happening to Albanian society. This is not a law for division, but for unity; it is not ideology, but a reflection of the challenges of human dignity; it does not aim to separate women from men, but to make them better allies and companions in equality and respect.



4. PUBLIC STATEMENT OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Addressed to:

- Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of Albania - Chairman of the Socialist Party
- Mr. Niko Peleshi, Speaker of the Parliament of Albania
- Members of the Parliament of Albania

We, the women's and human rights organizations, express our deep concern about the continuous efforts to weaken the **Draft Law on Gender Equality**, which reflects **approximately three decades of sacrifices, lobbying, and advocacy work of Albanian women** for equality and social justice.

This law:

- **strengthens gender equality** in work, education, health, social services, and decision-making;
- **addresses gender stereotypes**, promotes the use of gender-sensitive language, and requires gender impact assessment in every law;
- **protects the rights of individuals**, harmonizing national legislation with EU standards and recommendations of international conventions;
- **does not create new genders**, does not change family life, and does not impose mandatory terminology on citizens.

We express **particular concern** about the fact that the proposed amendments cannot be part of a law that aims for **equality and respect for human rights**. Any change that undermines these principles **would be a step backward for Albanian society**, regardless of global challenges and difficulties.

We request:

1. **Approval of the law in its full form** as proposed by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, in consultation with all interest groups, **including us**, without changes that undermine gender equality;
2. **Open and transparent debate with** participation of human rights experts and civil society;



3. **Public support of the commitment to equality, dignity, and human rights** as the foundation of European integration and democracy in Albania.

Any obstacle or weakening of the law upon request from certain groups should not stigmatize us as a society and is a threat to the painstaking 30-year progress of Albanian women.



5. PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE GENDER EQUALITY LAW



Gender Alliance for Development Center
Qendra Aleanca Gjimore për Zhvillim



KONFERENCË PËR SHTYP

Ju ftojmë të merrni pjesë në Konferencën për Shtyp që do të zhvillohet në kuadër të debatit publik mbi Projektligjin "Për Barazinë Gjimore". Një nismë që synon forcimin e drejtësisë, respektit dhe mundësive të barabarta për të gjithë qytetarët.



21 Tetor 2025



15:00



Hotel Rogner

Kjo konferencë synon të sqarojë opinionin publik dhe median mbi qëllimin real të projektligjit – një ligj për drejtësi, dinjitet dhe familjet shqiptare, i ndërtuar mbi vlerat kushtetuese dhe standardet ndërkombëtare për të drejtat e njeriut.





6. PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MEDIA IN THE PARLIAMENT OF ALBANIA



7. PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE PARLIAMENT OF ALBANIA





8. LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT REGARDING THE DECREE OF THE LAW "ON GENDER EQUALITY"

Tirana, 12.11.2025

Mr. Bajram Begaj

President of the Republic of Albania

Tirana

Subject: Expression of formal opinion and request regarding the decree of the Law "On Gender Equality" 2025.

Dear Mr. President,

We, the representatives of human rights organizations in Albania, address you with respect and civic responsibility to express our formal opinion and request regarding the decree of the Law "On Gender Equality" 2025, recently voted and approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Albania.

This law is in full compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, specifically with its Articles 5, 17, 18, 116, and 122, which: guarantee the implementation and priority of application of binding international law for the Republic of Albania; guarantee non-restriction of fundamental freedoms and human rights beyond the standards established by the European Convention on Human Rights system; and determine that equality and non-discrimination are constitutional guarantees, clearly defining the obligation of our state to ensure the equal development of women and men in political, economic, cultural, and social life.

Based on these constitutional principles that guide the Albanian legal order, the law "On Gender Equality" 2025 constitutes an essential step towards achieving substantive and not merely formal equality regarding opportunities and fair treatment for all Albanian citizens, women and men, without any distinction and discrimination.

Below, we present to you our formal opinion and request regarding the importance of decreeing this law.

This law completes the legislative framework of our country, bringing it in line with international law standards for gender equality and the European Union Acquis. We find it appropriate to clarify, despite the massive disinformation campaign that has accompanied this important law, that it is in full compliance with:



- The European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe;
- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- General Recommendation No. 40 of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 2024) for equal representation in decision-making;
- The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the findings of the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) of 2024 for Albania;
- Convention No. 190 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace;
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 16);
- The EU Acquis, including Directive 2000/78/EC, Directive 2006/54/EC, Directive 75/117/EEC, Directive 76/207/EEC, and Directive 97/80/EC, which set standards for equal treatment, equal pay, and the reversal of the burden of proof;
- The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Articles 20-38); The Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU);

The law ensures horizontal harmonization of legal protection standards with post-2008 national legislation (approved or amended), including the Law "On protection from discrimination"; the State Budget Law, the Local Self-Government Law, the Labor Code and the Audiovisual Media Code, the State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Law, and the State Inspection Law, guaranteeing coherence between legal and institutional instruments and effectiveness in implementation.

The entry into force and implementation of this law will directly impact:

- Increasing women's representation in public and private institutions;
- Strengthening institutional mechanisms for integrating gender perspective and gender-responsive budgeting in public policies;
- Developing a more inclusive and transparent administration based on gender equality;



- Guaranteeing equal protection at work and creating safe professional conditions for all women and men;
- Including education and training on gender equality in professional and public training systems;
- Improving democracy and rule of law indicators, in accordance with the European Commission's assessment standards and the European Union's recommendations for candidate countries.

This law, which has been prepared with broad participation of all interested institutions and organizations, and has been coordinated with the responsible institutions of the European Union and the UN, has already been voted and approved in a transparent and regular process by the majority of members of the Parliament of Albania.

We, the representatives of human rights organizations, signatories of this formal opinion and our request, encourage the decree of this law by you and its entry into force as soon as possible, so that its implementation can begin, to advance gender equality, which is not only a matter of social justice, but impacts economic growth, improved governance, and strengthening of institutions in our country. The implementation of this law will also help address repeated recommendations from international institutions such as the CEDAW and GREVIO Committees for Albania regarding delays in carrying out reforms in the field of gender equality.

Based on the above presentations, with respect, we request from you:

- The decree of the law "On gender equality" 2025, in force without delay;
- To appeal to responsible institutions to prepare without delay the sub-legal acts and procedures for the implementation of this law.
- To publicly support your support for the law and its importance for equality between men and women in society, a very important message for institutional and social mobilization.

We believe that your decision to decree will be a powerful message, which will resonate within and outside the country, that gender equality is a national priority in Albania and not just a declaratory act.

With confidence for further cooperation and with full commitment, we thank you in advance for your attention and your role regarding this essential matter for Albanian society.



9. ONLINE CAMPAIGN



**Ka shumë dezinformim
mbi ligjin për barazinë
gjinore.**

Ja disa të vërteta.



10. MEDIA APPEARANCES

Ligji për Barazinë Gjinore në Shqipëri: Tani ta shohim të vihet në zbatim

Dezinformimi online nga kundërshtarët e ligjit të ri për barazinë gjinore nuk duhet të errësojë çështjen e vërtetë: ky legjislacion jetik u miratua nga parlamenti, por tani kemi nevojë që ai të funksionojë në praktikë, jo vetëm në letër.

Nga [Ines Leskaj](#) — 10:39 | 10/11/2025 Në [Opinion](#) Kohe leximi: 5 minuta

AA 0





11. BUILDING THE COALITION FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE FAMILY

On January 20, 2026, in the context of recent developments affecting gender equality and fundamental rights in Albania, the Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN) and the "Gender Alliance for Development" Center (GADC) organized a meeting with other civil society organizations to discuss efforts to repeal Law No. 64/2025 "On Gender Equality" and to build a common strategic approach for protecting the law and the cause of gender equality in Albania.

Participating organizations:

1. "Gender Alliance for Development" Center (GADC)
2. Albanian Women Empowerment Network (AWEN)
3. LGBT Alliance
4. British Embassy
5. Institute of Roma Culture in Albania (IRCA)
6. Institute for Development and Civic Initiatives (IZHIQ)
7. Partners Albania
8. Q.P.S. Vatra
9. "Today for the Future" Center
10. "Shelter Edlira Haxhiymeri" Center
11. Center for Science and Innovation for Development (SCIDEV)
12. Center for Gender Justice
13. Legal Initiatives Center (QNL)
14. Center for Children's Rights in Albania (CRCA)
15. Center for Rights at Work
16. "Equality in Decision-Making" Network
17. Free Legal Service TLAS
18. Gender Peace Security Association



19. National Association of Municipalities of Albania (SHKBSH)

20. Different Equal

21. Un RCO

22. UN Women

23. WFD Albania

24. YWCA Albania

In this context, the participating organizations engaged in building a common approach, considering it necessary to create a broad coalition that will bring together key civil society actors, experts, and international partners. This coalition aims to serve as a common platform for coordinating actions, exchanging information, and increasing impact in defense of gender equality and fundamental rights. Through this cooperation, the aim is to overcome existing fragmentations and build a stronger and more unified voice at the public and institutional level.

The coalition was named: Coalition for Gender Equality and the Family.

Social media pages were opened on Facebook and Instagram, which will be used for information and education.





12. REQUEST TO AMA FOR VERIFICATION AND TAKING MEASURES REGARDING THE SPREAD OF FALSE INFORMATION IN AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA CONCERNING THE GEL

Tirana on 19.03.2026

Request

Addressed to: Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA)

Subject: Request for verification and taking measures regarding the spread of false information in audiovisual media concerning *Law No. 64/2025 "On gender equality"*

Dear Sirs,

This reaction is presented in support of the principles of the rule of law and the public's right to accurate information, in the context of obligations arising from audiovisual media legislation and international standards for freedom of expression and media responsibility, and the obligation that audiovisual broadcasting activity guarantees the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination, and the prohibition of sexism in the media.

From the analysis of broadcast content in several audiovisual media services, it appears that legally unfounded claims have been spread regarding Law No. 64/2025 "On gender equality." Specifically, this law has been consistently presented as an act that aims to create or recognize other genders beyond man and woman and undermines the institution of the family. This position refers to an aspect/regulation that does not exist in the legal text. These claims find no support in the normative content of the law and constitute a clear form of public disinformation. Law No. 64/2025 aims to guarantee and strengthen equality between women and men, in accordance with constitutional and international human rights standards, including obligations arising from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). According to international standards, the promotion of gender equality does not undermine the institution of the family, but contributes to its strengthening on the basis of equality, dignity, and mutual respect.

In accordance with Law No. 97/2013 "On audiovisual media in the Republic of Albania," as amended, audiovisual media service providers are obliged to respect the principles of accurate and responsible information. In particular:

- Article 4 provides for the fundamental principles of audiovisual activity, including the obligation that audiovisual broadcasting activity ensures objective and impartial



information to the public, by accurately presenting facts and events, as well as respecting the free formation of opinion, as audiovisual broadcasting activity guarantees the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination, the prohibition of sexism in the media, and gender representation in audiovisual media in accordance with applicable legislation;

- Article 33 requires that informative programs respect the criteria of truthfulness, impartiality, objectivity, and not undermine human dignity and fundamental rights;

In this context, the spread of false information about the content of a law constitutes a direct violation of these provisions, because:

- distorts legal reality;
- undermines the public's right to accurate information;
- negatively affects the formation of public opinion on matters of high interest such as fundamental human rights, and specifically gender equality between men and women, as provided for in Law No. 64/2025.

According to standards developed in European jurisprudence, freedom of expression is accompanied by duties and responsibilities, especially in the context of public information on matters of general interest.

In light of the above, the spread of false claims about Law No. 64/2025 constitutes a deviation from the standards of truthful information, a form of disinformation that undermines the public interest, undermines fundamental human rights, and consequently a practice that legitimizes AMA's regulatory intervention in exercising its legal competencies.

Guaranteeing a media environment based on accuracy and responsibility is essential for the functioning of democracy and the protection of human rights. Disinformation about the content of a law that aims for gender equality not only undermines the public but also risks the quality of democratic debate.

For the above reasons, the Audiovisual Media Authority is requested to:

1. Conduct monitoring and verification of media content where inaccurate information has been spread;
2. Establish the distorted references, referring to Law No. 97/2013, particularly Articles 4 and 33;



3. Take the appropriate administrative measures against the responsible entities;
4. Strengthen oversight mechanisms to prevent disinformation on matters related to fundamental human rights and specifically gender equality.

LINK:

[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gk-7m_9fwy8\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gk-7m_9fwy8)

(Discussion on the above-mentioned Law begins after 35.00 min.)

We thank you in advance for your attention.

With respect,

Coalition for Gender Equality and the Family

13. URGENT ADVOCACY MEETINGS AND AMICUS CURIAE

AWEN, together with partners such as GADC, also initiated urgent advocacy meetings with key institutions, including the EU Delegation, the Ombudsman, and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. In addition, AWEN co-led the preparation of an *Amicus Curiae* document for the Constitutional Court, providing legal analysis in support of the Gender Equality Law.