



Athena Forum Newsletter

Sex-based rights · Democratic values · Political courage

We've launched!

It's only been three weeks since our launch, and it's no exaggeration to say that they've been intense.

First and foremost, thank you all for the very warm welcome we've received, for the dozens of messages of support and offers to volunteer. We're still working our way through them all, so please bear with us — or give us a nudge if you think we haven't yet got back to you.

Over the past weeks, we've spoken to journalists about why we set up Athena and about our [report](#) on gender identity in Europe. We've published a policy brief on the European Commission's new LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy and a response to Michael O'Flaherty's letter to the UK government. You can read more about all this below.

We joined the [Battle of Ideas](#) Festival, had many wonderful conversations with the public at our stall, and took part in an intense [session](#) on gender identity worldwide, alongside the outstanding Stella O'Malley, Bev Jackson and Kara Dansky.

We're now approaching 5,000 followers on [X](#), we're on [Instagram](#) and we have just launched our [LinkedIn](#) page. And here it is — our very first newsletter! We're also just 15 monthly [subscriptions](#) short of reaching our first milestone: 200 founding members supporting us on a regular basis. Thank you to everyone who already supports us with a [donation](#).

I couldn't be prouder of all the volunteers helping us in so many different ways. None of this would be possible without those of you standing with us.

Many of you have asked what Athena stands for. She is the goddess of wisdom, knowledge and strategic warfare. But also of reason, logic and — I kid you not — clarity of thought.

As we move forward to bring a little sanity back to Europe, let's remember how much courage — and the right amount of rage — we share between us, and keep nurturing it in one another.

With very best wishes,
Faika and the Athenians

Athena at Battle of Ideas



We were delighted to be a partner of this year's [Battle of Ideas](#) Festival — our first opportunity to present not only our report but also our wonderful merchandise: postcards, leaflets, bags and our unique Athena pins!

It was a buzzing weekend full of open exchange and genuine curiosity about what is happening across Europe. Many expressed concern about the silencing of critical voices, the stifling of debate and the lasting impact of institutional capture — in education, social services, civil society, media, health, employment and politics alike. Open debate is the antidote to what has been happening behind closed doors for far too long.



Many of you came by to say hello, get to know us and share your interest in our work. We really appreciated the conversations that took place alongside a packed festival programme!

Make sure to subscribe to the Battle of Ideas [YouTube channel](#) so you don't miss the session recordings, which will be published soon.



Amidst a conundrum of contradictions, a broad alliance is mobilising to confront a narrowing space for democratic debate. **Our session on gender identity worldwide asked:** Why has so little of this surfaced in public discourse? What happens when a rights framework becomes

immune to democratic challenge? How do we begin to open up political space for public debate, critical analysis and sex-based perspectives across the continent?

The session recording will be online soon!

Breaking the media omertà



We've had extensive media coverage of our launch, our report and our response to the EU's LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy.

Here are some highlights: [Feminist Post](#) (Italy), [Kurier](#) (Austria), [Queer Nations](#) (Germany), [Postoj](#) (Slovakia), [Sigma Live](#) (Cyprus), [Het Financieele Dagblad](#) (Netherlands), [Brussels Signal](#) and [European Conservative](#) (Belgium), [Gript](#) (Ireland) as well as in [The Sunday Times](#), [The Telegraph](#), [The New York Post](#) and [The Critic](#).

You can also listen to an in-depth interview with [SEEN in Journalism](#) on Spotify, and this [segment with Josh Howie's Free Speech Nation](#) on GB News about the push for self-ID across Europe.

More to come!

Our policy brief on the EU LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy



The EU's new [LGBTIQ+ Equality Strategy 2026–2030](#) places gender identity and self-ID at the centre of EU equality policy and seeks to mainstream them across all policy areas.

It proposes

- self-ID without age limits
- criminalising therapy for children and adolescents in distress about their sex or sexual orientation
- and expanding hate-speech laws to include “gender identity.”

The Strategy points to a broad process of institutional capture, where a contested and unscientific concept of “gender identity” is treated as settled law and integrated into the EU's policy machinery without democratic debate, evidence or impact assessment.

[Read our policy brief here](#)

Our statement on Michael O'Flaherty's letter to the UK government

Statement

in response to the letter by Michael O'Flaherty,
Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights



We have responded to the [letter](#) by Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Michael O'Flaherty, on the UK Supreme Court ruling. His remarks could undermine women's rights and judicial independence in the UK.

As one of the main drafters of the Yogyakarta Principles, he has long blurred the boundaries between human rights and ideological advocacy. His intervention reads as political pressure on independent courts and legislators.

[Read our statement here](#)

100% people-funded.



We have no big donors, no European Commission 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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