

25 March 2021

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen
Vice-President of the European Commission, Věra Jourová
Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli
President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli

BPW (Business and Professional Women) Europe deplores that the President of Turkey has decided to pull out his country from the 2011 *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*.

This is a particularly strong signal of wilful undermining of the position of women position in society and refusal of their participation in the construction of the future of Turkey: leaving a Convention also better known as the Istanbul Convention, opened for signature in Istanbul, under the aegis of the then Turkish government, who was the first to ratify it in March 2012.

Pulling out from the implementation of this international Treaty signals that the current government of Turkey does not consider Turkish Women and Girls are full citizens and think they are unworthy of being protected from child marriage, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, marital rape.

The Istanbul Convention is the first international treaty addressing these issues through concrete national commitments. **In full agreement with our sisters from the European Women Lobby, we ask the Turkish Government to reconsider their intention and retain the Istanbul Convention as a national commitment and tool to fight against structural and personal violence against women.**

Domestic violence and violence against women in Turkey and elsewhere has a cost for the whole society and national community. A thriving economy cannot be created by downtrodden citizens.

The President of Turkey also demonstrates by that decision his disinterest for providing Turkish citizens – men as well as women – better social and economic situations.

BPW Europe focuses on equality in the workplace and financial independence of women, and underlines that women undergoing situations of violence, whether physical, psychological or economic, cannot provide to their full capacity the necessary education and support to their children, they are led to drop out of their personal education, creative endeavours and career path, to the great loss of firms, who are thus losing out on necessary educated and innovative employees, leaders and creators.

Unfortunately, Turkey is not the only European country who has left or not ratified the Istanbul Convention. **It beholds Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia and**

Slovakia to demonstrate that the European values include equality between women and men by ratifying and implementing the Istanbul convention, and provide women in situation of violence with concrete and structural public support.

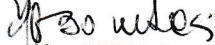
BPW Europe permanently fights against the backlash against the recognition of women's rights as human rights, and doubles down on the promotion of empowerment of women as a necessary step to build thriving companies, public services and societies.

Your Excellencies, we call on you to urgently demand that the Government of Turkey changes its decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, respecting the EU fundamental rights and, as first value, equality between women and men.

Yours sincerely,

Pinella Bombaci

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Executive BPW International

Regional Coordinator

BPW Europe



BPW Europe
Business and Professional Women

Business Professional Women (BPW Europe aisbl)

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Empowering Women to realize the Sustainable Development Goals