



## PUBLIC STATEMENT FROM THE CENTER FOR GENDER JUSTICE

As we mark the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, we are confronting the harmful effects of disinformation regarding gender equality and the concept of gender stereotypes.

Disinformation has now moved beyond television studios and is going deep into the mindset of parents and, consequently, into the formation of the new generation. Because of this misinformation, we are taking alarming steps backwards.

The fact that teachers in a 9-year school, following the institution's own instruction, were asked to delete a material on gender equality (part of the national school curriculum) that had been shared with parents, demonstrates the extent to which not only Albanian society but also institutions are facing pressure from voices that deliberately misinterpret these issues.

Gender equality means equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, participation, and representation for women and men in all areas of life. This is not up for debate. Gender equality means that girls and women, both *de jure* and *de facto*, are equal to boys and men.

Gender equality means that women and girls do not accept male dominance in society, they are not inferior, and they have no reason to be.

Gender equality has no connection to changing biological sex and does not aim to undermine children's identities. Its sole purpose is to ensure that girls and boys grow up with equal opportunities, free from imposed roles, prejudice, or stereotypes that limit their futures.

It is important to emphasize that combating gender stereotypes is a **legal, institutional, and moral obligation** of the Albanian education system and of every professional who works with children.

Gender stereotypes are at the root of many forms of discrimination and violence: they teach girls to be submissive and boys to believe that dominance is acceptable. This is dangerous, wrong, and entirely unacceptable.

Therefore, any attempt to portray gender equality as a "threat" is, in fact, a threat to the rights and safety of our children.

We cannot allow fear, confusion, or misinformation to become traps for institutions and communities.

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Center for Gender Justice in Albania

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Qendra për Drejtësi Gjinore në Shqipëri

At a time when Albania is striving to move forward toward European standards, it is disheartening to see that voices rooted in misinterpretation managed to push back a simple informative initiative designed solely to help parents raise children free from stereotypes.

We call on educational institutions not to retreat in the face of disinformation pressures. We also urge parents to inform themselves through credible sources, to engage in dialogue with professionals, and to keep in mind that gender equality is in the best interest of their children, both girls and boys.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence should remind us that violence begins with prejudice, with stereotype, with silence. Therefore, today, more than ever, we have the duty to speak clearly, to respond firmly, and to protect the values of equality and human dignity.

**Gender equality is a community value, a democratic standard, and a fundamental right. It is not negotiable. It must be defended.**

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