

**HRP (Christian Reformist Party)
Bulgaria**

To: UNHR Office of the High Commissioner

Issue: Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a political party with a Christian framework, we support the protection of all fundamental human rights of all persons regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity and denounce all “violence” and unjust “discrimination” regardless. However, we have serious concerns that the Independent Expert’s report is clearly aimed at, among other things, advancing radical gender theories and ideologies that seek to erase all differences between men and women and undermine the hard-earned gains for women in the area of human rights. We would challenge his definitions for these terms which go far beyond UN consensus agreements in harmful ways. We are concerned by what appears to be an imposition of controversial notions outside the internationally agreed human rights legal framework in ways that contradict the fundamentals of universality. The term “gender identity” does not appear in any binding international agreements negotiated by the full body of UN Member States. Every time it has been proposed, it has been rejected by UN Member States because it is too controversial. The UN social policies with regard to gender equality were specifically designed to protect sex-based rights, not controversial transgender ideology. Intersectionality, gender theory and queer theory are akin to religious beliefs and should not be the underpinnings for UN policies nor international law. We are greatly concerned that the UN-appointed Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) is now at the forefront of UN efforts to reinterpret the concepts of “gender” and “gender equality” beyond the longstanding understanding of male and female and equality between the sexes which would erase all sex-based rights and protections for women and girls. The terms “gender” and “gender equality” are common terms used throughout the UN system and in multiple UN documents and resolutions adopted by consensus by UN Member States to advance the equality of women and girls and were never intended to advance highly controversial transgender polities.

The questions listed in the submission guidance by the Independent Expert on SOGI reveal that the main goal of his upcoming report is to change the world’s commonly held biological understanding of male and female and replace it with the radical concept of “gender identity.” This is the antithesis of the UN’s mandate to provide rights and protections to women and girls. Several issues are highly problematic, including the push for CSE. The Independent Expert on SOGI is seeking to implement so-called “comprehensive sexuality education” (CSE) designed to indoctrinate children and mainstream queer theory, an unhealthy belief system that encourages children to disassociate from their biological sex in

harmful ways. It should be noted the concepts of “comprehensive sexuality education” and “sexual orientation and gender identity” were specifically rejected from the 2030 Agenda by many UN Member States and that the establishment of this SOGI expert’s mandate is a deliberate attempt to override the positions of States opposed to such and coerce them into accepting SOGI rights. This is a direct assault on the sovereignty of UN Member States and an abuse of the UN system. We strongly oppose the attempt by the Independent Expert on SOGI to push harmful and ineffective “comprehensive sexuality education” as a major tool to indoctrinate the world’s children and mainstream radical sexual and gender ideologies into the rising generation. The concepts of “comprehensive sexuality education” and “sexual orientation and gender identity” were specifically rejected from the 2030 Agenda by many UN Member States, a fact that the Independent Expert is blatantly and disrespectfully ignoring.

Further, the protection of women and children against violence and discrimination is not advanced by these measures. Historically as well as currently, women/girls have been exploited for their reproductive capacity. The global reality for many women/girls is that they still suffer under enforced gender roles used as justification to exploit their bodies in practices like female infanticide, FGM, child marriages, trafficking, forced pregnancy, forced sterilizations, surrogacy camps, enforced dress codes, corrective rape, lack of access to certain transportation, lack of access to participation in public and political life, etc. The UN can’t fight sexism in all of these areas if the category of sex is erased and replaced with “gender identity.” The reason girls and women have been extended special protections and rights is because of the disproportionate amount of discrimination, harassment, and violence that girls and women experience—not because they identify as “girls” or “women” but due to the biological reality of being female and the inherent differences between the sexes. Adopting the “gender framework” which is based upon the Independent Expert on SOGI’s beliefs is privileging one belief system over others, which is a violation of the UN’s mandate to protect individuals’ freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. In order to uphold the rights and protections of girls and women, we reject the false assumptions regarding gender in the Independent Expert on SOGI’s call for input for his upcoming “thematic report.”

And finally, there are grave concerns regarding the freedom of speech, conscience and expression. Several questions (note, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) of the submission page seem to target traditional and religious views and actors that are opposed to the LGBTQ and gender agenda and ideology. The Independent Expert on SOGI is attempting to identify political and religious leaders who speak out publicly against “gender ideology.” We are concerned that such a list could be used to incite reprisals against people who exercise free expression, speech and religious liberty rights. This is alarming! In our world that emphasizes tolerance and freedom, it cannot be those who oppose LGBTQ and gender ideologies will be discriminated against.

Dr. Atanas Terziyski
Chairman HRP
Bulgaria