

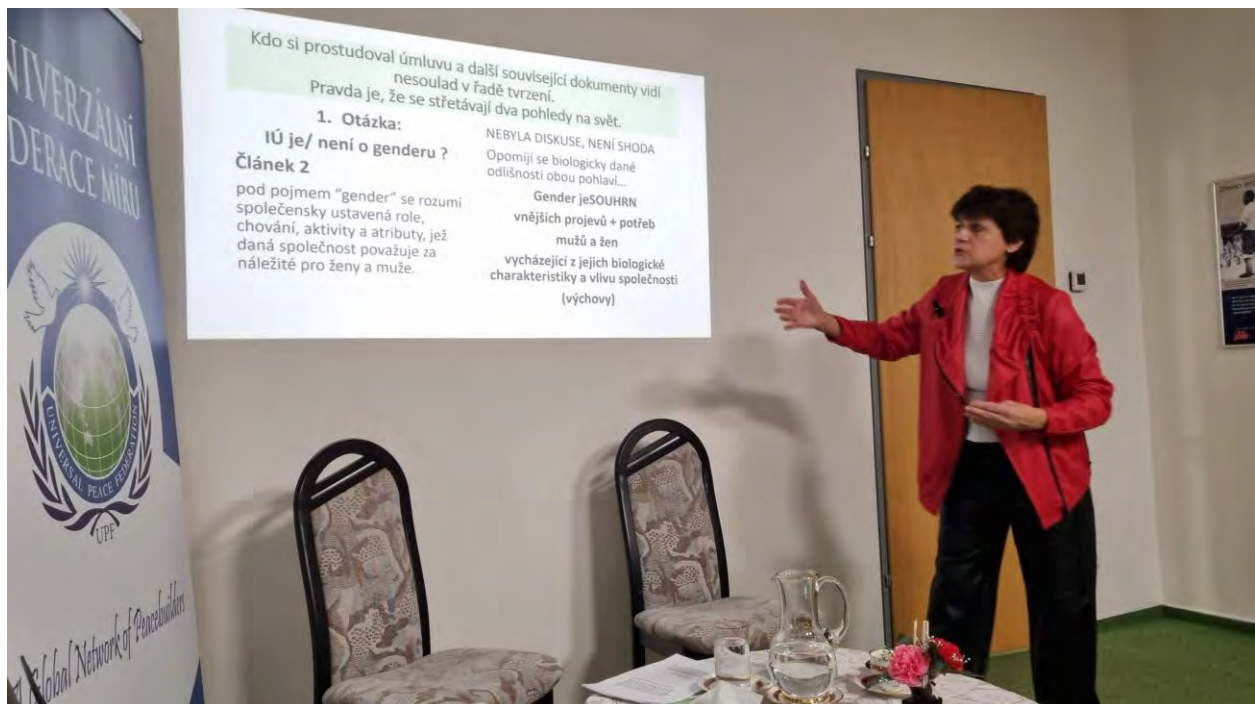
UPF Czechia debates The Istanbul Convention - and What Next?

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There are several issues of public interest which divide public opinion in Czech society, from the political scene right down to the family level. Controversial issues are for example: marriage for all, surrogate motherhood and the Istanbul Convention (IC).

The Istanbul Convention, formally known as the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, is a human rights treaty of the Council of Europe opposing violence against women and girls, and domestic violence. It was adopted in 2011, entered into force in 2014 and was ratified by many European countries. But some voices of opposition warn that the document also includes elements of gender ideology and supports culture wars.



In order to understand more deeply the content and purpose of the Istanbul Convention, the Czech UPF chapter hosted a lecture entitled: The Istanbul Convention - and What Next? at the Prague Peace Embassy on January 31, 2024. The guest speaker was Hon. Nina Nováková, member of the Czech Parliament who has been dealing with this issue for many years.

The lecture took place only three days after the Senate of the Czech Republic (upper chamber of the Parliament) rejected its ratification.

Nováková stated that public debate about the IC had started in 2018. Two opposing camps had formed, and much misinformation has been disseminated. Those who do not agree with the IC are often stigmatized as turning a blind eye to violence against women, blocking progress or being supporters of Russian president Vladimir Putin.

On the other hand, those who agree with and support the IC are often labelled as being anti-family, supporting gender ideology and seeking to weaken Europe.



As a result of the cultural war, cases of gender dysphoria are increasing, even by as much as 40% in the UK.

According to educational manuals used in some nations to support gender ideology, a human being is born neither masculine nor feminine, but develops into a man or a woman depending on the type of education and societal influences to which they are exposed.

It is problematic that there is no definition of the term gender. Gender-based violence means men committing violence against women, explained Mrs. Nováková.

Gender identity is another undefined term.



Mrs. Nováková quoted some statistics to show that sexual violence had increased in the European countries which ratified the IC eight to ten years ago; in France, for example, sexual violence has increased three-fold in the last five years.

The Istanbul Convention claims to fight against stereotypes, said Mrs. Nováková, but there is no pattern or norm of a right stereotype.

GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) is an independent expert body mandated by the convention to monitor the implementation of the convention and in practice can influence the national legislature.

The lecture stimulated many questions and a lively discussion ensued.