

## **OII Europe comment on worrying attacks against intersex rights by former Danish Minister for Gender Equality**

*Release date: 10 September 2024*

*Link: [Worrying attacks on intersex rights in Denmark – OII Europe](#)*

OII Europe wishes to express its profound concern over an opinion piece by ex-Danish Minister for Gender Equality<sup>[1]</sup>, Marie Bjerre, which was published in a prominent Danish newspaper on the 14th of August, during Copenhagen Pride Week.

The views expressed by Marie Bjerre, in her position as Minister, present intersex people (along with trans and gender diverse persons) as posing a threat to the achievement of gender equality in the country. These views not only presuppose that safeguarding the rights of intersex people comes at the expense of others, but also validate and actively support the further marginalisation, exclusion and exposure to online and in-person hate and violence of intersex people in Denmark and beyond, all the while masquerading itself as “protecting gender equality”.

The false claims made by Bjerre in her opinion piece, about the fact that “there are only two biological sexes” constitutes blatant misinformation, which adversely impacts the lives of all Danish intersex people. Moreover, Mrs. Bjerre clearly instrumentalizes the media storm around Algerian boxer Imane Khelif during the 2024 Paris Olympics as further ‘material’ to depict intersex people as a threat to the safety of women and as jeopardising the ‘fairness of sport’.<sup>[2]</sup> There are critical issues of violence against women and girls in sport (as well as other areas of life) that require our attention, such as, for example, violence and abuse perpetrated by cisgender male coaches, trainers, and sponsors. However, misrepresenting trans women, intersex or gender-diverse people as threats not only undermines the serious violence experienced by all women and girls in sports, but also reinforces seriously harmful patriarchal beliefs.

The lives of intersex people should not be instrumentalized and used as political ammunition. We firmly reject the co-option of human rights language, the deployment of the term “wokeism” (often used by far-right and anti-gender actors) and the positioning of the protection and fulfilment of the rights of intersex and endosex people, as being conflicting and incompatible. We affirm that our rights and struggles are inextricably interlinked.

Misinformation about intersex persons has serious real-life consequences, and by making such false claims, Mrs. Bjerre actively contributes to fueling intolerance towards intersex persons in Denmark. Her remarks also show a lack of commitment to addressing the real needs of intersex people, and effectively stands in direct opposition to the commitments already made by Denmark, when in April this year, they co-sponsored a UN Human Rights Council resolution<sup>[3]</sup> calling for the better protection of intersex people.

OII Europe wishes to express our concern over the situation in Denmark for intersex people. Among other worrying measures, the ‘I’ for intersex was removed from the LGBTI+ acronym in all political contexts, and all intersex specific topics were taken out of the latest LGBT+ action plan, which launched in 2022. This removal constitutes a grave backsliding in the rights of intersex people, and actively contributes to their invisibilisation.

OII Europe calls on the Danish government to:

1. Recommit to safeguarding the rights of intersex people, by re-adding the I to the 'LGBTQ+' acronym that was removed at political level.
  2. Uphold its obligation to safeguard the rights of intersex people, by virtue of the UN Human Rights Council resolution that it recently co-sponsored, the various UN Conventions that it has signed and ratified, and in light of UN Treaty Body recommendations that it has received.
  3. Commit to start preparing human-rights based legislation that upholds the rights of intersex people in Denmark
  4. Include areas of action within the Danish LGBT+ barometer for which Denmark has been receiving recommendations from the United Nations.
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<sup>[1]</sup> On August 29 2024, Marie Bjerre became Minister for European Union Affairs.

<sup>[2]</sup> See OII Europe statement on 2024 Paris Olympics and Hateful attacks against athletes Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting, available at: <https://www.oiiurope.org/condemns-hate-speech-against-two-athletes-olympics/>

<sup>[3]</sup> See United Nations Human Rights Council resolution "*Combating discrimination, violence and harmful practices against intersex persons*", available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/g24/048/06/pdf/g2404806.pdf>