**Delegate:** Ali I. Özdemir

**Country:** The Kingdom of Belgium

**Committee:** The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

**Topic:** Recognition and Visibility of Transgender Women

**School:** Middle Eastern Technical University

Belgium is one of the pioneers of the rights of transgender women. In 2021, ILGA-Europe ranked Belgium as second in the European Union for LGBT rights protection, behind Malta.

Shieldings for discrimination established in sexual orientation in employment, housing, and public and private accommodations were enacted in 2003, and on gender identity and expression in 2014. Transgender people have been allowed to change their legal gender since 2007, though under certain circumstances which were repealed in 2018.

The Law of 10 May 2007 on transsexuality grants Belgians the right to change their legal gender. Before this, a gender swap was only possible through a court judgment. Between 2002 and 2012, there was a yearly average of 30 men and 14 women who officially changed their legal gender, with an increase after the 2007 law came into effect. Conditions included that the person has a "persistent and irreparable inner conviction to belong to the sex opposite to that mentioned in the birth certificate" and that "the physical body is adapted to the opposite sex as far as possible and justified from a medical point of view", meaning applicants were required to undergo sterilization and sex reassignment surgery.

In Belgium, To alter legal sex, an adult person has to apply to an application with a statement that their legal sex is not correlating with their gender identity. No surgery or other medical or psychological medicament or opinion is required. After filling an application, the applying person will be informed about the legal consequences of a requested change. The applicant has to renew their intent to have their legal sex changed within three months of application and to declare that they are aware of the legal consequences of a change. Minors between 12 and 16 have the possibility to change their first name, but not sex. Minors aged 16 and 17 have the possibility to apply for a sex change with parental consent and a psychological opinion confirming that their decision has been taken freely and without any outside pressure.

According to the National Register, 727 transgender Belgians altered their legalized gender under the new legislation in 2018. Many Belgian hospitals, the Ghent University Hospital (UZ Gent) among them, are known for their specialization in sex reallocation operation. Many French trans people go there due to a lack of welcoming hospitals in France.

Humanity are freer to think now. The delegation of Belgium suggests all countries gather about transgender women. They are also part of the community, and the community should be one piece, not divided. Mutual understanding, empathy, and respect are needed.

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